



A promotional banner for 5 ESSAYS. On the left, a cartoon character with spiky hair sits at a desk with a laptop, looking stressed with hands on his head. A clock on the wall shows 5:30. Text reads 'KILLER DEADLINE? WE KILL DEADLINES'. On the right, a red banner says '50% OFF ON ALL ORDERS' with 'LIMITED TIME ONLY' below it. Below the banner, it says 'PREMIUM QUALITY | NO PLAGIARISM | DEADLINE DRIVEN' and an 'ORDER NOW' button.

## Introduction

The poem *The Charm of 5:30*, is unique in that it immediately associates a specific emotion with a time of day. Typically the modern reader associates 5:30 with traffic, chaos, and fatigue from the challenges of the workday. Although there are important tasks that we must accomplish, the speaker offers a pleasant alternative to approaching a portion of our day. David Berman's poem is a narrative dramatic composition. Using historical reference and observational assessment the reader is encouraged to reassess the value of the day.

## Paragraph 1: Emotional Effect

The poem immediately creates a euphoric feeling, beginning with the word "charm" in the title. The poem references a choice between reading a novel set in England and appreciating the day. There is a sense of irony in the fact that a reader can either appreciate the language describing an experience, or go create an experience with which to write about. As the speaker recalls pleasant memories from the past, there is an interpretive sense of discovery. In other words as a reader you feel like you are taking this walk through nature with the speaker. One

quote, “within inches of the perfect distance from the sun,” is great. It can be interpreted to mean that we must engage the process. It is necessary for us to go somewhere to explore in order to find that perfect distance from the sun.

### **Paragraph 2: Meaning**

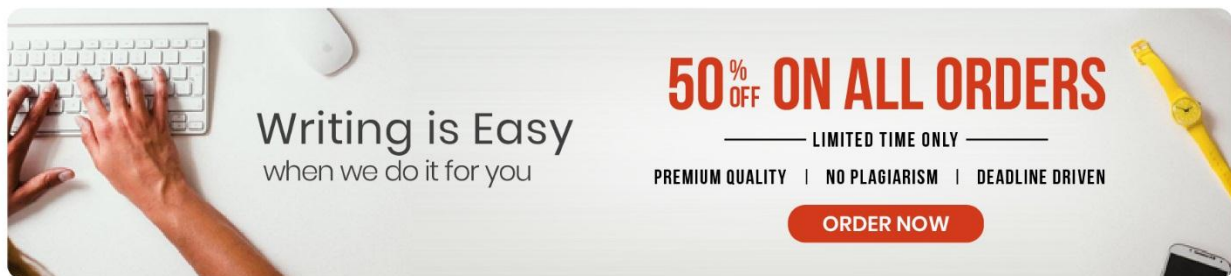
The immediate reference to 5:30 is an indication of time. There is a recognition that 5:30 usually means so many different things to so many people. Although not specifically stated it is assumed that this is 5:30 pm although given the description of the sun it could easily be am. One meaning that I derived from this poem is the importance of hope in the midst of trials. This sentiment is discovered in phrases like “headstones in the graveyard...saying hello.” It reminds me of inspirational speakers who remind us that many great ideas and inventions are lying dormant in the grave. It indirectly causes the reader to reflect on what the end of their life will be like. So even though it is light and beautiful, it has a serious undertone in the imagery and message.

### **Paragraph 3: Speaker**

The speaker is someone who has decided to take a more leisurely approach to life. This may not have been a realization that they came to immediately. Perhaps there were certain life changing incidents that led them to this point. If we assume that 5:30 is relative to PM or evening then the day is winding down. However, there is a sense of calm and enjoyment that the speaker embodies. It is an encouragement for the reader to join them in appreciating the beauty of life. I love the statement, “we’re too busy getting along.” Typically in 5:30 pm traffic people are doing just the opposite. There are blaring horns, and people shouting out their windows for traffic to move. The bottom line is this speaker appears to be someone that is wise and gives us permission to take a different route or make alternative life choices.

#### Paragraph 4: Dramatic Situation

The embodiment of the drama is found in the very specific details of the moment. Taking time to reflect on the simple yet meaningful moments in life create a dramatic narrative. It could be the discovery of “red tints in cola” or an expensive flashlight in a winter coat. The reason why such moments can be considered dramatic is that they are often throw away moments. How many times can we as readers relate to packing away winter clothes without giving them a second thought? However, the idea that by looking in the pockets we can find something of value now is exciting and dramatic. Discovering the color within a favorite beverage is equally exciting. How many times have we sipped on a drink that although enjoyable has become mundane?



Writing is Easy  
when we do it for you

**50% OFF ON ALL ORDERS**  
LIMITED TIME ONLY

PREMIUM QUALITY | NO PLAGIARISM | DEADLINE DRIVEN

**ORDER NOW**

#### Paragraph 5: Poetic Sound Devices

One of the unique things about this poem is the careful use of sound devices and rhythm. The actual rhythm is within the technique of narrative and descriptive language. For example there are short phrases, long phrases, and short phrases within long phrases. This creates an almost organic experience where the reader is never bored while engaging the text. Additionally, there are specific techniques such as onomatopoeia and alliteration. Examples of onomatopoeia could include the phrase, “random okay’s ring through the backyard.” This is powerful as there

was an earlier reference in the poem to a phone, which obviously rings. Examples of alliteration could include "contact....carports."

**Paragraph 6: Dominant images/Sensory References**

When the sky is metaphorically compared to blueberries and cream it is a brilliant visual image. It uniquely incorporates the senses of smell, taste, and sight (visual image) of a delicious dessert. It further validates the necessity of the title which refers to this time as charming or alluring. In a very real sense the day becomes almost edible. There is a technique used to humanize certain inanimate objects such as a tombstone at a graveyard. This is creative because most if not all tombstones have writing. So the idea of that inanimate object taking on human characteristics is great imagery and simultaneously stretches a known truth.

Comparing warm wind to the air in the tire is a special way to connect touch and sound with a familiar experience. Most readers have either changed a tire or know someone who has. Either way we are familiar with the hiss of a tire as the air is being let out. Therefore it is easier to imagine how the warm air must feel blowing from a tire valve. Or worse yet blowing from a gash in the tire treading. We can therefore easily understand how hot and dry that hissing wind must have felt for the speaker.

**Paragraph 7: Figurative language**

I love the comparison between the narrators voice comparative to that of a nineteenth-century senator. It is an ode of sorts our understanding of human history. We are using modern phrases but imagining how it would sound 50 or 100 years ago. It could be a subtle reminder of the fact that the human experience is truly a universal experience. There was also an interesting parallel between the gin and tonic references relative to James Madison.

The female that is imagined in the poem is “drinking gin-and-tonics...” in close proximity to a “homemade alter to James Madison.” It is common knowledge that James Madison drank whiskey each day, usually by the pint. Therefore almost as a way of honoring him the woman is drinking her alcoholic beverage of choice. Naturally there is humor in the irony of that imagery, if the reader is careful enough to explore or understand it.

### **Paragraph 8: Specific Techniques**

The use of line breaks is especially powerful as a technique. For example the statement, “In fact I’ll bet you something...” is short but powerful. If the reader was not previously paying attention they are going to lean in to grab the next point. It reminds me of the movie Groundhog Day where the main character is stuck in a time loop. After repeating the same monotonous day he begins to reexamine life and his own sense of entitlement.

This poem could actually be considered a continuation of the lessons learned in Groundhog Day. The conscious awareness by the speaker that they will recall this present moment at some point in the future is revealing. In essence it is them acknowledging what is important in life. Further, the reader imagines that when recalling these memories they will do so with joy and thankfulness. This attitude is refreshing especially in a society where most people live with constant regret.

There is also a reference to historical persons of significance. For example there is reference to President Regan, James Madison, and even Kermit Roosevelt. What is particularly revealing about the Kermit Roosevelt reference is the context in which the speaker remembers Roosevelt. The speaker is sitting on his porch thinking about Kermit Roosevelt and the next line is “following the course of an ant.” Well historically we know that Kermit the son of President Roosevelt *followed* his father. In fact they explored several continents together and perhaps there

were ant's they discovered on the journey. We also know that Kermit Roosevelt was someone who despite his pedigree battled depression and alcoholism. There is almost a reflective lesson that we can take from history in this instance. Focusing on the meaning of life and coming to terms with certain essential truths can bring a greater sense of joy and fulfillment.

### **Paragraph 9: Tone**

The more granular the poem analysis becomes the deeper the contextual understanding of the message. While it initially appears almost whimsical and reflexive deeper analysis uncovers powerful truths. The necessity in finding life's value and holding onto fleeting yet important memories is clearly stated. At the beginning of the poem the reader has a choice whether or not to follow the journey or bury themselves in a novel set in England. It could be considered a tone that is both informative, and also warns the reader of potential pitfalls of getting caught up in the hustle and bustle of life.

### **Paragraph 10: Significance**

The title has great significance as mentioned earlier. Charm can also be interpreted as magnetism. There is almost a spiritual reverence with which the speaker admires where we stand from the sun. The title in essence is highlighting not just the beauty of that physical time, but the allure of this season in our lives. In the title of the poem the speaker is calling us to value present moments.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned in the introduction, David Berman's poem is a narrative dramatic composition. It has been insightful in discovering what is dramatic and important about 5:30. As we reflect on the experience of the speaker we should subsequently reflect on our own experiences. The value of using historical references is that we can learn from their experience.

Life has a tendency to come full circle. If we don't learn the value of life now then perhaps we will be the grave that is standing up and saying "hello", when it's too late.



Got deadlines?  
We eat 'em for breakfast.

**50% OFF ON ALL ORDERS**  
LIMITED TIME ONLY

PREMIUM QUALITY | NO PLAGIARISM | DEADLINE DRIVEN

**ORDER NOW**