

# Taming the Beast in The Dream

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Taming the Beast in The Dream Dreams have long been the basis for extensive analysis, their meanings interpreted and reinterpreted. Some people believe that dreams reflect our repressed emotions, providing a necessary outlet for the negative aspects of our reality. Others find answers through dreams, believing that dreams provide simple solutions to seemingly complex issues in our lives. Louise Bogan, in her poem "The Dream," describes a dream that expresses both repression and solution. It is a poem about fear, and Bogan's message--the message of the dream, in fact--is that fear can be tamed through trust. In the first stanza of the poem the speaker describes the fearful dream she had. Bogan introduces the symbol of a mighty horse that embodies the fear and retribution carried from the speaker's childhood, fear and retribution that have been "kept for thirty-five years" (3). Bogan effectively uses metaphorical language as she describes the fear personified in the horse as it "poured through his mane" (3) and the retribution as it "breathed through his nose" (4). The source of her fear is unclear, but it may be that the horse is a symbol of life that can be both beautiful and terrifying. The imagery created when the speaker tells us, "the terrible horse began / To paw at the air, and make for me with his blows" (1-2) describes a sense of entrapment as life corners her and spews forth repressed fear and retribution, emotions that must be faced. The speaker's shame at her cowardice is clear in the second stanza as she describes how she "lay on the ground and wept" (5). It is at this

point that Bogan introduces another symbol in the poem, a woman who "leapt for the rein" (6). The stranger's strength and cour..... middle of paper .....eaning is clear, the last line contains three successive iambs in "put down his head in love." Also, after a routine rhyme scheme of abab in the first three stanzas, Bogan introduces new tension in the last stanza with an abba rhyme scheme. The word "love" comes fresh and unexpectedly to rhyme with "glove," just as Bogan's poem points out that with trust comes peace, often just as fresh and unexpectedly. Louise Bogan points out in her poem that life is rarely as predictable as we might like, but it must be faced, regardless of our fears. Like the speaker, we may be surprised by the gentleness and peace we find when we face life head on, offer it our love, and surrender to its power--just as it surrenders to ours. Works Cited Bogan, Louise. "The Dream." The Riverside Anthology of Literature. Ed. Douglas Hunt. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton, 1990. 730.

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