

**Write a short story ending with the line:**

**He must have wondered which had been the better way to die.**

**Target: use a repeated motif.**

He awoke to the sound of curtains being drawn. Like fingernails being scraped down a blackboard, the scratching, screeching sound pierced his being. Reluctantly, he heaved himself out of bed and slowly and heavily went through the motions of preparing for his day.

The daunting prospect of filling 15 hours of daylight swept over him. Shops? Park? Walk?

No plans interested him remotely.

No one to talk to.

No physical or emotional contact to sustain him.

So...should he simply draw the curtain again and retire into the empty darkness? No – that wasn't the answer. But he was struggling to find the solution that was for sure. Walk then – exercise and fresh air was at least the healthy option!

Dressed and out; passing people and people passing him. He felt invisible and insignificant but thankfully he was able to pause occasionally and peer through the open curtains and observe other's lives offering him a semblance of connection to humanity.

On he walked through the once comforting streets of his youth where now all he experienced was hostility and rejection. On he walked until he entered the blanket of solitude provided by the wooded parkland. At least here the trees could not reject him! But he was still alone – oh so alone.

Turning back towards 'home', he caught a glimpse of his eldest daughter laughing with her friends. Desperately, he tried to catch her eye. Obstinate, she refused to engage...

Back past the warm homes of united families gathering to enjoy their evening meal behind closed curtains. Back past the cold stream of humanity. Back through his front door; trying to ignore the cold shoulder of his wife and younger children.

As usual he ate dinner alone. As usual he undressed alone. As usual he drew the curtains against the dark night – always alone. As usual he was trapped in the dark, stark reality of his own loneliness.

He must have wondered which was the better way to die.