

✓ Toomey 1

Emma Toomey ✓

Ms. Peters ✓

English ✓

15 March 2013 ✓

*Creative Title*

An Hallucination That Would Not Last: Foreshadowing Bierce's *An Occurrence At Owl Creek*

~~By: Emma Toomey~~

*terrible and strong opening*

Can one man desperately want to believe in an hallucination to a point where he can defy Death itself? In Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence At Owl Creek," the author tests the readers' minds to believe in the twisted effects Death may cause to a man's physical and mental being.

*at risk* Even though the readers assume that Peyton Farquhar is going to avoid Death, Bierce leaves the readers with several hints that tell otherwise. ]

To begin, Death itself faces a challenge when a man tries to defy his fate. This man tries to "escape" from the grips of reality through his mind and being, but soon realizes that his death cannot be avoided: "Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him" (Bierce 2). The author shows the readers that Death can overcome any man's will to live no matter how passionate it may be. Death comes in all shapes and forms and cannot be avoided if it is written in one's destiny. *analysis* ~~To conclude~~, Bierce's audience does not understand the message he is trying to write quite yet due to the literal meanings of his writing, but his fate is clearly written behind the figurative use of his words.

*5 is the end of the paper. Be careful now you use transitions.*

In addition, Bierce continues to foreshadow the man's tragic fate with the subtle hints found throughout his entire piece. Another hint is shown when readers become distracted once again by the ticking of the man's watch. The readers do not understand what it is at first to the unique way Bierce describes it: "And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality" (Bierce 3). Bierce eventually allows the readers to know what the "metallic percussion" sound truly is as he explains how the man is deeply disturbed by his life dwindling away. The man senses Death <sup>is</sup> coming and desperately wishes for time to stop. The ticking of his watch appears to be extremely loud because the man is holding on to every tick of time that he can grasp.

Time causes him great pain, for he appears to be dying quicker than he expected: "The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the trust of a knife; he feared he would shriek" (Bierce 3). The man cannot bear to handle the intervals of silence, for he needs the ticking to insure how much he has left to live. He awaits Death with every tick unknowingly as his hallucination of life slowly begins. ~~To end~~ <sup>Thus, +</sup> the man's life is hinted to be cut short by Bierce's unique display of time dwindling away by the ticks of a watch.

Furthermore, Bierce's foreshadowing starts to take a turn as it highlights the changes in the man's physical state. The man, who is now known to be Peyton Farquhar, is thought to be still alive due to the permanent changes that are made to his entire being: "Something in the good use of adj clause

awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived" (Bierce 6). In this moment, Farquhar feels an extremely painful change occurring throughout his entire being. The readers believe that Peyton's senses are being enhanced when truly he is just experiencing the changes going from Life to Death. ✓ good

Peyton Farquhar continues to lose more of his mind and soul as Death captures everything within him. The readers associate the words on the paper with their literal meanings, but Bierce intends them to be so much more: "He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance" (Bierce 9). The stars appear to be malign to him because they will end up leading him to Death<sup>2-0</sup> and Farquhar wants to avoid Death at all costs. Usually, stars lead travelers to destinations they wish to reach. The stars Farquhar sees leads him towards the thing he wants to avoid the most. He is almost blind when he follows them<sup>2-0</sup> and this is one of the several hints that shows he is going to die whether he wishes to or not. To summarize, Peyton's fate lies in the hands of Death as the constellations of his terminating life lead him towards it.

Overall, Bierce's foreshadowing in "An Occurrence At Owl Creek" is one of the main reasons in why the piece is so incredibly powerful and shocking to its readers. It shows the beauty of Life and the darkness of Death. It questions what the readers believe as it makes them think that Farquhar is still somewhat alive when he is in fact dead. The literal meanings of Bierce's words also confuse the readers into thinking he is going to overcome Death. However, the figurative meanings show that a Death is indeed going to occur at the Owl Creek Bridge.

Emma —

This was great — Very  
well written with superb analysis —

Excellent —

Works Cited

Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge."

*An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce-Full Text Free Book.* The  
Millennium Fulcrum Edition, n.d. Web. 13 Mar 2013. <<http://www.fullbooks.com/An-Occurrence-At-Owl-Creek-Bridge.html>>.

*Perfect*

## How Bierce Foreshadows the Ending

By: Emma Toomey

✓ *good*  
Ambrose Bierce foreshadows the ending to his short story, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" several times throughout the piece. The foreshadowing is hidden behind strong imagery, *stay in 3rd* ~~the first time you read it, though.~~ *Bierce* ~~You can tell that he~~ foreshadows throughout *the story giving subtle* his piece because he gives slight clues on how the main character, Peyton Farquhar, feels *throughout the hanging* when he is being hanged. Bierce describes how *✓ good* Peyton falls and how his mind interprets the fact that he is dying. He writes how Peyton feels as if he is spinning in a vortex when he is really just hanging in midair by the rope. *great* ~~He also writes how~~ Peyton feels as if the rope has broken and he is completely free of it. *R-O* *2-0* The rope has not broken at all and Peyton just feels his neck snapping while he falls to his death. *100%*

Ambrose Bierce describes in magnificent detail as he foreshadows Peyton dying and entering the light he has to face. Peyton thinks that he is still alive and travels through the woods in order to return home to his family. However, Peyton is clearly not alive as he feels that he is walking on air as he travels. He is most likely hanging dead below the Owl Creek Bridge by that point in the story. Peyton also supposedly hears *A* Aeolian harps during the story; *T* this is another clue that Bierce gives the readers to tell them that Farquhar is in fact dead. *R-O* ~~This is a clue because Aeolian harps are played by the wind and this could mean that Peyton might have felt the wind while he was hanging.~~ *A* ~~It is also considered to be a clue because Aeolian harps and harps in general are usually associated with heaven,~~ *and are played by the wind itself.*

# Thesis Statement for "An Occurrence at Owl Creek"

By: Emma Toomey

Despite the assumption that the main character, Peyton Farquhar, is still alive throughout the story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek," Farquhar is in fact dead, but the author, Ambrose Bierce, makes the readers think otherwise due to strong imagery he uses in order to hide when he is foreshadowing.

A bit too  
wordy. MAKE  
your compact  
point - thesis  
and to the

Even though Peyton Farquhar appears to be fighting for his life throughout Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek," Bierce gives the reader subtle hints of Farquhar's fate through imagery and foreshadowing,

✓ Hansen 1

Abigail Hansen ✓

Ms. Peters ✓

English ✓

15 March 2013 ✓

No quotations

Death Will Dawn Upon Farquhar

Can the thought of death being on the horizon cause one to do extraordinary

tasks that allow he or she to live? In Ambrose Bierce's *An Occurrence at Owl Creek*

*Bridge*, Peyton Farquhar dreams of escaping his fate, but in the end his fate is

determined and he will not survive. Although the reader easily gets caught up in Peyton

Farquhar's plan to escape, throughout *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, the author,

Ambrose Bierce, uses subtle hints to foreshadow that Farquhar's death is on the

horizon. Bierce foreshadows throughout *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* and shows

that the death of Peyton Farquhar is inevitable. Even though it may seem as if Farquhar

is escaping death, if one pays attention to the subtle details it becomes clear that

Farquhar is dreaming. The author uses imagery and details to help the reader

understand that Farquhar is coming closer to death. The details, though very diminutive,

bring the whole story together. After re-reading the story again, one realizes that these

details foreshadow Farquhar's fate.

To begin with, Death should be respected, for Death itself is inescapable. Death is above everyone on this planet, and this helps the reader to understand that Death is coming: "Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is received with formal

manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him" (Bierce 2). Although the reader does not know that Peyton Farquhar is going to die, if the reader is capable of catching these hints, he or she should know that Death is going to take someone's life, (possibly Farquhar) in the near future. This foreshadows the ending of the story because it is saying that death is something that can not be escaped.

*sd use um  
1 to text quote!*  
Secondly, Peyton Farquhar, a Confederate plantation farmer, heads to the Owl Creek Bridge to burn it down. He wants to prevent the Federal Army from invading the South. After getting caught by a Federal unit, his life is on the line. The punishment for doing so is death. His life is coming to an end and he can do nothing to prevent it. He hears a "sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality" (Bierce 3). He becomes impatient between each stroke. This loud, sharp sound of the ticking clock symbolizes that Farquhar's time is running out.

Furthermore, Bierce lets the reader know that Farquhar is actually dying: "Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived" (Bierce 6). There is an awful disturbance inside of Farquhar's body, and by saying this Bierce is letting the reader know that the escape is not real and that Farquhar is in fact dying. Bierce is saying that Farquhar is undergoing an awful change in his body and this change is death. Farquhar "noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass" (Bierce 6). Farquhar is seeing every blade of grass and he is seeing all of the dewdrops which suggests that Farquhar is seeing the world in a different way than ever



before. He is noticing things that he would never notice under normal circumstances, but because he is dying he wants to capture the beauty and the essence of the world around him.

In addition, Farquhar hears the sound of AEolian harps which is made by the wind: "A strange roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their branches the music of the AEolian harps" (Bierce 8). Farquhar is actually hearing the wind in the trees around him, but he is taking in the noise as the sound of AEolian harps. AEolian harps are very heavenly and in this story, they are symbolizing that Farquhar is leaving life on Earth and entering a new life in Heaven.

To conclude, *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* when re-read has many different examples of foreshadowing the death of Peyton Farquhar ~~inside of it.~~ *wordy* *Dead wood*

Even though the reader gets caught up in Farquhar's escape plan, Ambrose Bierce hints at Farquhar's death through very subtle foreshadowing throughout *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*. Catching these subtle details takes a lot of concentration, but when found it is obvious to the reader that Bierce was telling him or her the whole time that Farquhar will die.

- Well-written
- insightful and sophisticated

Works Cited

Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce--Full Text Free Book*. The Millennium Fulcrum Edition, n.d. Web. 13 Mar 2013. <<http://www.fullbooks.com/An-Occurrence-At-Owl-Creek-Bridge.html>>.

Perfect

DEAD WOOD

Ambrose Bierce foreshadows throughout the whole story of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" ~~that the death of Peyton Farquhar is inevitable~~. It seems that Peyton is escaping and is not going to be killed, but if one pays attention to the <sup>subtle</sup> details it becomes clear that Farquhar is dreaming. Some things that help one to understand the story are the details. The details, though very <sup>diminutive</sup> small, bring the whole story together. After re-reading the story again, one realizes that these details were not as hard to catch as <sup>foreshadow Farquhar's</sup> fate. <sup>use a stronger vocab please and thank you</sup> Some of these details are the quotes that state about how Farquhar is thinking about freeing his hands or throwing off his noose help the reader to understand that these things are really not happening. <sup>hat?</sup> It also talks about Farquhar closes his eyes so that the last moments of his life can be focused on his wife and children. Farquhar <sup>has</sup> had been distracted. The story states that Farquhar had fallen asleep and that he walks through the gates and walks up the white walkway which the reader can assume is the entrance to Heaven. These details show that Farquhar was simply dreaming about <sup>work</sup> escaping and not actually doing so. <sup>?</sup>

things - really??

Even though Ambrose Bierce foreshadows about the death of Peyton Farquhar throughout the whole story of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," the reader must carefully comb through the story in order to catch these cunning, difficult to catch, and intellectual literary techniques.

thesis needs work-

Although the reader may not catch it at first, Bierce plays a trick on Farquhar by foreshadowing his death. He does this by using the word "foreshadow" in the title of the story.

✓ Pawlak 1

Kelly Pawlak ✓

Ms. Peters ✓

English ✓

18 March 2013 ✓

*Creative  
Title*

The Journey of Death: Bierce's *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* ✓

Is the battle against Death worth the beauty life? In Bierce's *An Occurrence at*

*Owl Creek Bridge*, Payton Farquhar fights and tries to use all of the mental power he

has to keep his life, but he realizes that Death is stronger than any power and will

overcome one's thoughts and feelings to bring one to his or her new home. [Even

though the reader is easily swept into Farquhar's "escape" from death, Bierce uses elaborate literary techniques throughout the story to foreshadow that Farquhar's life will

be cut to an end.]

As Farquhar stands with undying fear on a plank waiting to be hanged, Bierce

foreshadows Death as supreme figure who when comes receives high respect from all.

Death is dignified and even more powerful than those who have witnessed him many

times: "Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with

formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him" (Bierce 2). The

personification of Death foreshadows that Death is near and will be coming to take over

somebody's life very soon. One understands that Death is a highly respected power

that is feared by its witnesses and challengers. At this point in the story the setting is

intense and gives one a feeling of fright and anxiety. ~~Being read the first time through,~~ **DEAD WOOD**

One can tell that the future will be fierce, but one may not realize right away that this

*ellent  
question*

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thesis*

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nd  
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~~quote is foreshadowing~~ <sup>DEAD WOOD</sup> that Death is on its way to overcome Farquhar. It is also clear that even when one may be familiar with Death, Death is still a threat to him or her.

Although all of the soldiers have seen death time and time again, every time Death comes, he or she is frightened. ~~At some point in the future of the story, the soldiers will~~ <sup>DELETE</sup> ~~once again be encountered with the unforgiving and horrendous spirit known to all as~~ Death.

<sup>Farquhar</sup> ~~Beginning to~~ notice his surroundings move in a way he has never noticed before;

Farquhar's mind began to move rapidly as as he realized the position he was in.

Farquhar shut his eyes and focused "to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children" (Bierce 3). Farquhar thinks of his very "last thoughts" as he forces his eyes to close for his unending sleep. Bierce indicates that Farquhar is thinking about his family

for the last time, ~~he ever will in his life on earth.~~ <sup>DEAD WOOD</sup> Farquhar will never think ~~a thought while~~ <sup>or hear his</sup>

~~his heart is beating~~ <sup>st</sup> ever again. <sup>hidden</sup> After Farquhar thinks his final thoughts, he notices the beauty of the earth in a way he has never noticed before. Farquhar sees the golden

sun and sparkling waters, soldiers, the fort, and is highly distracted by all of this: "The water touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift--all had distracted him" (Bierce 3). One can assume that Farquhar is empty of any thoughts or memories

from real life and is on his journey to heaven above. Everyone has heard about the "journey" to eternal life. This can be described in many ways, but the most common is that one begins to become distracted by positives and negatives of this world, and can see every little detail, good or bad. Farquhar can see the gold, shining, water. He can

feel the mist down the stream, and a single piece of driftwood in the distance. Farquhar can also notice the soldiers who have lead him to his death. Farquhar will continue to experience this world he has never noticed before instead of ~~being stuck~~ <sup>facing</sup> in reality.

After Farquhar went through his last great bona fide thoughts, he heard a noise that he could not immediately recognize. A very emphasized sound of pain that rang like a blacksmith's hammer was noticed by Farquhar: "Striking through the thought of his dear ones was sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality" (Bierce 3). As Farquhar was thinking of the people he loves and may never see again, he heard a piercing sound like a hammer on a steel block that would not leave Farquhar. The Blacksmith's hammer may represent Farquhar falling off the plank down into the stream. As the hammer was loudly pounding, Farquhar felt pain as if his neck was being squeezed by a rope. The sound Farquhar was actually hearing was the ticking of his clock. Although the ticking of a clock is not usually unbearably loud, Farquhar hears the sound as a more exaggerated noise because he knows the

✓ good use of formal quotation

ticking of the clock represents time running out as he comes closer to his end. The sound is becoming more and more intense and is ... "as slow as the tolling of a death knell" (Bierce 3). A death knell is a bell that rings when one has died. This usage of figurative language tells the reader that Farquhar is dead because a death knell is ringing somewhere announcing his death. For Farquhar, the death knell is the ticking of his watch. Farquhar hears the slow sound ticking down and has realized that time is

✓ good

running out at this point in the story. The ticking of a clock foreshadows that time is nearly over for Farquhar and his life on earth has been seized.

<sup>2-8</sup>  
~~The reader can now be sure that Farquhar is~~ <sup>DEAD wood -- Get to the point</sup> <sup>effaced</sup> ~~clear~~ of consciousness, but one

must likely does not know that Farquhar is going to die soon. Now Farquhar is barely conscious and can only feel pain: "He was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fullness--of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought" (Bierce 5).

~~At this point in the story~~ Farquhar is completely unconscious and has no thought supporting his physical feelings. (The meaning of congested is full, therefore Farquhar's body is filled with pain in his organs and bones.) He has no thoughts on the pain he is feeling. However, moments later, Farquhar became enclosed... "in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum" (Bierce 5). Farquhar is on his

✓ "airplane" to heaven. On his flight up, Farquhar is feeling horrendous pain that will not stop because Farquhar is doing everything he can too fight Death. "Like a vast pendulum" is a simile to being hanged. As soon as Farquhar is hanged, the pain is relieved because he is out of consciousness, and is now swinging on a calming cloud to heaven. The cloud relieves Farquhar of pain because his final destination will soon be reached, heaven.

Floating down the stream of his death, Farquhar's senses and ways of viewing the world have changed. Farquhar's body is terribly disturbed and dead at this point, but something has purified Farquhar at the same time that made him notice everything differently: "Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted

✓ this lacks clarity

✓ good

✓ good



and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived" (Bierce 6). In a now dead and horrible state, Farquhar's senses are now very prestigious and particularly drawn to the smallest beauties of nature. Seeing "gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream," "dewdrops upon a million blades of grass," and "the beating of the dragon flies' wings" takes away from all of the pain Farquhar is experiencing. ✓ good

Farquhar is in an enchanting world he has never before seen, but the situation is bittersweet because Farquhar is realizing that he has not been appreciating all of this beauty his whole life. As Farquhar feels infinite in a world of beauty, he also feels awful that he has missed out on noticing all of this beauty his entire life. ✓ good

Now peacefully landed ashore, Farquhar is relieved because he thinks he has escaped the sentinels. Suddenly, Farquhar can hear the sounds of harps playing from the trees and wind: "A strange roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their branches the music of AEolian harps" (Bierce 8). A light came shining through the trees upon Farquhar as a gorgeous sound played with the wind. This alluring sound symbolized that he has reached the gates of heaven, and his life in a new place has begun. In Greek mythology, *AEolian* refers to a beautiful heaven like sound. Bierce then explains how Farquhar remains still "until retaken."

"Retaken" can mean to gain possession again. Farquhar is dead until he is taken into his after life by angels playing "AEolian harps." The harps awaken Farquhar and pull him to another world. Farquhar's death has been announced by this point in the story, but it may be difficult for the reader to pick up the death in Bierce's engaging usage of figurative language.

As Farquhar looks up at the stars which appear ... "unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations" (Bierce 9). he knows something has changed <sup>(R-O)</sup> and Farquhar knows he is somewhere he has never before encountered. Farquhar notices the stars were "arranged in some order which had a secret malign and significance" (Bierce 9). ✓ good

The stars were shining in a way he has never seen and the stars were notable. The stars could be people who he has never met, but truly love Farquhar (Evil and Death are taking away from Farquhar noticing the people who love him because he does not want to die and Death is overpowering him.) As Farquhar continues through an

unknown place he hears strange whispers in his ear: "The wood on either side was full of singular noises, among which--once, twice, and again-- he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue" (Farquhar 9). These whispers are unclear to Farquhar, but they keep repeating to Farquhar. <sup>Independent - new point</sup> Through the entire story death has been violent, but Death

is now seen calm and is leaving with class. Death is introducing Farquhar to Heaven and the people Farquhar will be joining. Farquhar's friends and family have been awaiting him and are welcoming him as they are whispering words of love into Farquhar's ear. The sounds are unfamiliar to Farquhar because the sounds are coming from people he has never met, and though the whispers may be frightening to Farquhar, the whispers are for the better. The whispers are giving Farquhar comfort and are letting him know that he is in his new home, and his new life has begun. Although his new life may not seem as great as his last, this one may turn out to be better because it will last forever. Eventually, all of the people who love Farquhar will join him in his new home eternally.

— Sentence is awkward

There is a lot of inference on your part here— Try to relate to the text only—

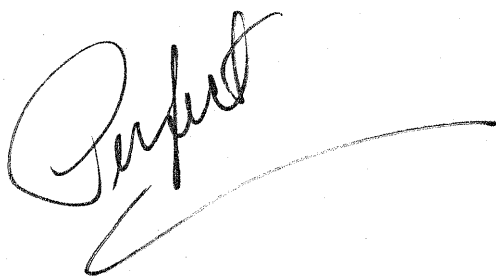
In the final analysis, although the reader is tempted into believing Farquhar's "escape" from death, Bierce uses literary techniques to foreshadow that Farquhar will not live beyond being hung. Farquhar can not escape Death even though escaping is what his heart and mind desires. When one's time has come, there is no way out.

Kelly -

Excellent paper with wonderful analysis. Remember to explain your ideas and make sure your ideas can be supported by the text. A couple sentences lacked clarity; overall, outstanding job.

Works Cited

Bierce, Ambrose. "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge." *An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce - Full Text Free Book*. The Millennium Fulcrum Edition, n.d. Web. 22 Jan 2013. <<http://www.fullbooks.com/An-Occurrence-At-Owl-Creek-Bridge.html>>.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pawlak", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

# An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge

## Foreshadowing

STAY OUT  
OF FIRST  
PERSON!

Although we may not realize it at first, Ambrose Bierce does an excellent job foreshadowing the death of Peyton Farquhar. The first clue I pick up on how the ending is foreshadowed is when Bierce describes how a Lieutenant and his soldiers were standing and staring with stone eyed faces. This hints that something bad is going to happen because everyone is so serious, ~~the mood of ill omen is present.~~ ~~The next literary term I found that foreshadowed is when Bierce describes death as a dignitary or leading light that when is present receives proper demonstration of respect by people who are not expecting it. This gives away a lot of evidence because death would not be explained in such a way if it were not to happen further on into the story.~~

When Farquhar is hung, everything he sees is described in an extremely detailed way. Farquhar can see every little detail of the world, just as it is described to be when someone is in the process of death. He sees water being touched by the golden sun, young mists under the banks in the stream, driftwood dancing, and a sharp sound that he hears to be slow like the fee of a death toll. If Farquhar was not near death, he would not see life in such a precise way. The way Bierce describes Farquhar's feelings also foreshadows his coming death. Farquhar can feel streams of fire heating him at a temperature he can hardly handle and he is full of congestion. Other details near the end that foreshadowed that Farquhar was dead was when it he could no longer see clearly and he was thrown on the gravel on the bank of the stream. The final clue that foreshadowed Farquhar's death was when ~~he~~ ~~that~~ he would remain on the gravel until retaken. Retaken means awakened and in this case to another place, but not the earth.

great details

???

I don't understand this

How? Why? explain  
Prove it — with  
your ideas / third  
secondary level support

## An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

Thesis statement

Even though the reader <sup>is</sup> ~~can become~~ easily <sup>swept into</sup> taken away in Farquhar's mental plan to <sup>"escape"</sup> ~~from death~~ ~~abscond the sentinels~~, Bierce uses elaborate literary techniques throughout the story to foreshadow that Farquhar's life will be cut to an end.

excellent —  
just some word  
choice issues —

✓ Landers 1

Caily Landers ✓

Ms. Peters ✓

English ✓

15 March 2013 ✓

Caught Between Life and Death: Bierce's *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* ✓

Wonderful Intro - Can one be caught between life and death? In Ambrose Bierce's *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, the main character, Peyton Farquhar, is caught between life and death as his spirit fights for life. Despite the fact that the reader is surprised to find that Peyton Farquhar actually dies, Bierce foreshadows throughout the story and illustrates that Farquhar will die.

In the beginning of *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* Bierce refers to Death as a person: "Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received..." (Bierce 2). ✓

When death comes <sup>one</sup> you must respectfully allow Death to be in control. Death is coming <sup>12-0</sup> and there is no way for Peyton to avoid it. As Farquhar hangs on the edge of the bridge all he can help but think <sup>of</sup> is that he is going to die. Death is a referee in a basketball game; <sup>camera splice</sup> once he or she blows the whistle, the player knows that the game is over and cannot be repeated. In this case, Farquhar is the player; as the game comes closer to its end, he realizes that there is no way he can avoid the final whistle. Death is in control, and one must obey its orders. <sup>great</sup>

Wonderful analogy  
} Extended Metaphor

To continue, Bierce foreshadowed that Farquhar knew his death was inevitable, so he tried to slow time down: "A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish

stream" (Bierce 3). From this, Bierce shows Farquhar is trying to bend time in order for him to live for as long as possible. Farquhar is trying to hold on to the beauty in the little details in life, and he does not want to let go of his consciousness and forget these beautiful things. ✓

As time passed, Peyton Farquhar's heart began to race faster and faster. As time goes by, Farquhar realizes that as every second passes he is slowly coming closer to death. The pounding in his ear is a reminder of what is coming for Peyton: "Striking through the thought of his dear ones was sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion..." (Bierce 3). Through this, Ambrose Bierce foreshadows that Farquhar's time is running out with every tick of his watch.

Furthermore, Bierce hints that Farquhar is coming closer to death. When he washes up on the shore and "escapes" from the soldiers, he hears "the music of AEolian harps" (Bierce 8). One only hears AEolian harps when he or she is at peace with heaven. From this, the reader can infer that the AEolian harps are a sign that Farquhar has already died and has become one <sup>with</sup> of heaven. ✓  
at This statement also supports the fact that Farquhar's consciousness and "escape" were both false, and he was still hanging from the edge of Owl Creek Bridge.

In the final analysis, Bierce foreshadows throughout the story that Peyton Farquhar is caught in the middle between life and death, and there is no way for him to predict which side he will take. Although the reader may be shocked to find that Peyton Farquhar in fact does die, the author, Ambrose Bierce, foreshadows throughout the story to show that Peyton Farquhar has already been taken by death.



Works Cited

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Perfect -

I loved your  
analysis - very  
insightful

Fix your mess I want  
this for a student copy-  
excellent!!  
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