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### **Stylistic Echoes in Jane Hirshfield's Quest for Existence**

#### **Abstract**

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The study examines the stylistic techniques employed by Hirshfield in her spiritual poetry, investigating how these elements enhance themes of interconnectivity, impermanence, and the transcendent nature of everyday life. Using a qualitative methodology, the analysis explores Hirshfield's use of lexical features and deviations, grammatical structures, registers, parallelism, repetition, imagery, and metaphor. The findings suggest these stylistic approaches improve the poetic quality and contemplative nature of the work, encouraging deeper reader engagement with spiritual issues. Hirshfield's careful word choice and deviations from standard language captivate readers by evoking emotions and stimulating the senses. Subtle grammatical changes and adjustments in style also contribute to making the poetry more relatable and impactful. The use of parallelism and repetition helps reinforce spiritual truths and natural harmonies, while imagery and metaphors establish vivid connections between the spiritual and natural realms. Overall, the study asserts that Hirshfield's stylistic approach dramatically enhances the reflective experience, guiding readers to explore profound spiritual revelations through the intricacies of her poetic expression. The analysis illuminates how Hirshfield's skillful deployment of language-based techniques elevates the contemplative and transcendent qualities of her spiritual poetry.

*Keywords:* Hirshfield, Stylistic, Spirituality, Lexical Features, Deviations, interconnectivity, impermanence, transcendence.



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## عنوان البحث : أصداء أسلوبية في بحث جين هيرشفيلد عن معنى وجودها

### مستخلص الدراسة

تتناول الدراسة التقنيات الأسلوبية التي استخدمتها هيرشفيلد في شعرها الروحي، وتحقق في كيفية تعزيز هذه العناصر لمواضيع الترابط والتغير الدائم والطبيعة المتسامية للحياة اليومية. باستخدام منهجية نوعية، تستكشف التحليل استخدام هيرشفيلد للميزات المعجمية والانحرافات، والبنى النحوية، الأساليب اللغوية، التوازي، التكرار، التصوير، والاستعارة. تشير النتائج إلى أن هذه الأساليب الأسلوبية تحسن من جودة الشعر والطبيعة التأملية للعمل، مما يشجع على تفاعل أعمق للقراء مع القضايا الروحية. تجذب اختيارات الكلمات الدقيقة لهيرشفيلد وانحرافات عن اللغة القياسية القراء بإثارة المشاعر وتحفيز الحواس. تسهم التغييرات النحوية الطفيفة والتعديلات في الأسلوب أيضًا في جعل الشعر أكثر قربًا وتأثيرًا. يساعد استخدام التوازي والتكرار في تعزيز الحقائق الروحية والتنغمات الطبيعية، بينما يخلق التصوير والاستعارات روابط حية بين العالم الروحي والعالم الطبيعي. بشكل عام، تؤكد الدراسة أن النهج الأسلوبي لهيرشفيلد يعزز بشكل كبير من التجربة التأملية، ويوجه القراء لاستكشاف الوحي الروحي العميق من خلال تعقيدات تعبيرها الشعري. يضيء التحليل كيف أن استخدام هيرشفيلد الماهر للتقنيات اللغوية يرتقي بالصفات التأملية والمتسامية لشعرها الروحي

*الكلمات الرئيسية:* هيرشفيلد ، أسلوبية ، روحانية ، خصائص معجمية ، انحرافات ، ترابط ، فناء ، تعال.

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**Stylistic Echoes in Jane Hirshfield's****Quest for Existence****1. Introduction**

The paper examines the stylistic analysis of Jane Hirshfield's spiritual poetry, particularly investigating how her use of stylistic devices accentuates the themes of spirituality. This analysis focuses on specific poems to clarify the relationship between Hirshfield's stylistic decisions and the spiritual concepts conveyed, providing valuable perspectives on how these techniques enhance the reader's comprehension of her writing. The paper explores how Hirshfield's distinctive use of language-based elements, such as lexical features, grammatical structures, registers, parallelism, repetition, imagery, and metaphor, contribute to the poetic quality and contemplative nature of her spiritual poetry. It investigates how these stylistic approaches captivate readers by evoking emotions, stimulating the senses, and guiding them to explore profound spiritual revelations through the intricacies of Hirshfield's poetic expression.

Furthermore, the paper asserts that Hirshfield's subtle grammatical changes and adjustments in style help make the poetry more relatable and impactful for readers. The use of parallelism and repetition is found to reinforce spiritual truths and natural harmonies, while the imagery and metaphors effectively establish vivid connections between the spiritual and natural worlds.

The two poems, "The Promise" and "Three Times My Life Has Opened," have been carefully selected to provide a comprehensive examination of Jane Hirshfield's poetic exploration of spiritual themes and the human condition.

"The Promise" exemplifies Hirshfield's ability to capture the universal longing for permanence and stability in a world of constant change, using simple yet emotionally evocative language to reflect on the transient nature of existence. In contrast, "Three Times My Life Has

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Opened" offers a more expansive and metaphysical perspective, drawing on Zen Buddhist principles to illuminate the interconnectedness of all things and the transformative potential of embracing the present moment. Together, these two poems represent the breadth and depth of Hirshfield's literary oeuvre, allowing the researchers to analyze how her distinctive use of language, imagery, and structure work to facilitate a deeper understanding of the spiritual and existential themes that permeate her work. The juxtaposition of these two poems provides a rich and insightful platform for investigating the ways in which Hirshfield's mastery of poetic craft enables her to delve into the profound mysteries of human experience.

## 2. Previous Studies

While the poetry of Jane Hirshfield has garnered critical attention, a comprehensive examination of the spiritual dimensions evident within her works, mainly through stylistic analysis, still needs to be explored in existing scholarship. Although there is a wealth of articles and interviews about Jane Hirshfield, there is a distinct lack of dissertations that thoroughly explore her body of work. The lack of scholarly research in this area highlights the potential for more academic investigation and examination of Hirshfield's poetry in relation to broader literary discussions. The stylistic choices that shape her exploration of spirituality still need to be included.

This study aims to fill a specific niche in the existing scholarship by focusing on the intersection of Hirshfield's poetic style and her treatment of spiritual themes. By conducting a meticulous analysis of the linguistic and literary devices employed by Hirshfield, the research seeks to uncover how her unique approach to language contributes to the evocative and contemplative nature of her exploration of the spiritual dimensions of human existence.

Unlike previous studies that have examined the thematic content of Hirshfield's poetry, this research delves deeper into the formal and stylistic aspects of her work. It builds upon the existing scholarship, such as Kate Noakes' dissertation "The Sundered Fence, a Gasp of

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Emeralds and the Scent of the Knowable Journey: An Exploration of the Poetics of the Californian Landscape in Recent Work by Adrienne Rich, Brenda Hillman and Jane Hirshfield." Noakes' work explores the ways in which these contemporary California poets engage with their environment, identifying similarities and differences in their approaches to the Californian landscape.

However, the current study goes beyond the examination of Hirshfield's poetic engagement with place and delves deeper into the linguistic and literary devices that she employs to navigate the intricate terrain of spirituality. By meticulously analyzing her use of imagery, metaphor, rhythm, and other stylistic elements, the research aims to illuminate the intimate connection between Hirshfield's formal choices and her exploration of the transcendent and the sacred within the human experience.

The present study mainly promises to contribute to a more subtle understanding of Hirshfield's literary accomplishments and to enrich the scholarly discourse surrounding the interplay between poetic style and the articulation of spiritual themes in contemporary poetry.

### 3. Data Collection and Methodology

#### 3.1. Data Collection

The study examines the stylistic techniques employed by Jane Hirshfield in her spiritual poetry. The primary data for this study consists of two selected poems by Jane Hirshfield that explore themes of interconnectivity, impermanence, and the transcendent nature of everyday life.

#### 3.2. Theoretical Framework

The study aims to provide a comprehensive and rigorous examination of the key stylistic elements present in Hirshfield's poetry, with a focus on how these techniques contribute to the contemplative and transcendent qualities of her spiritual writing. The present study follows a qualitative approach and is based on Leech's (1989) theory of stylistics, in which the linguistic

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features of a text are analyzed to reveal the author's underlying intentions, attitudes, and assumptions. Leech's theory emphasizes the importance of examining the formal and functional aspects of language to understand the stylistic choices made by the author.

### 3.3. Procedures

The study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore Hirshfield's use of various stylistic elements in her poetry. The study adopts the following steps of stylistic analysis

1. **Lexical Levels and Deviations:** The researchers analyze Hirshfield's careful selection of words, including any departures from standard language, and how they contribute to evoking profound and enigmatic dimensions of human existence.

2. **Grammatical (Syntactic) Level:** The study examines Hirshfield's manipulation of grammatical structures and her choice of registers, and how these elements impact the relatability and resonance of her poetry.

3. **Parallelism and Repetition:** The researchers investigate Hirshfield's use of parallelism and repetition, and how these stylistic devices reinforce spiritual truths, natural harmonies, and the deeper significance of her poetic exploration.

4. **Imagery and Metaphor:** The analysis focuses on Hirshfield's employment of vivid imagery and metaphorical language, and how these stylistic choices establish connections between the spiritual and natural realms, conveying the intricacies of the human experience.

The study involves a close reading and in-depth textual analysis of selected poems by Hirshfield to uncover the relationship between her stylistic decisions and the spiritual concepts conveyed in her work. It interprets the findings of the stylistic analysis and synthesizes them to provide insights into how Hirshfield's use of language-based techniques enhances the reflective experience and guides readers to explore profound spiritual revelations through her poetic expression. It also aims to provide a comprehensive and rigorous examination of the key

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stylistic elements present in Hirshfield's poetry, with a focus on how these techniques contribute to the contemplative and transcendent qualities of her spiritual writing.

#### 4. Style and Stylistics

Stylistics, as defined by Widdowson (2014; 4), is the study of literary language through stylistic coordination. The term 'stylistics' comes from 'style', originating from the Latin "Elocutio", meaning style. It involves analyzing style, whether of an individual or a writer. Leech (2014; 9) describes style as "a way in which something is spoken, written or performed," indicating writers use various styles to distinguish themselves. Style reflects cultural context and the writer's mindset. Haynes (1989; 12) suggests that style is "the study of distinctions", indicating it is a form of expression that changes with context. Lawal (2004; 25) states that "style is an expression covering different language aspects: diction, sentences, and phrases related to the subject matter". Short and Leech (1981) argue that 'style' is used by writers according to context and carries definitive meanings. They assert that style can be written or spoken and applies to both literary and non-literary texts. Traditionally, 'stylistic analysis' favored literary texts. Consequently, stylistics now includes both literary and non-literary texts. Wales (2014; 8) states that stylistics not only focuses on formal text features but also on text interpretation, literary or not. Carter (1996) suggests that stylistics involves analyzing texts from various perspectives.

Birch (2005) notes that language and style are dominated by words. Carter (1996; 14) observes that each text and writing style is distinct due to different 'linguistic levels'. Short and Leech (1981) describe style as the "dress of thought", emphasizing that style distinguishes what writers say and how it is presented, often leaving interpretation to readers. Scholars define stylistics from different perspectives. Freeman (1981) describes stylistics as a sub-discipline starting in the late 20th century. Short and Leech (1981) see stylistics as studying style, detailing language use. Short and Candlin (1988) define stylistics as an approach to studying

literary texts (p. 183). Widdowson (2014) proposes that stylistics mediates between linguistics and literary criticism. Similarly, Carter and McCarthy (2014) view stylistics as bridging linguistics and literature.

The following are the levels of stylistics. We analyze the text according to these levels.

#### **4.1.1. Graphological level**

Leech argues that graphology encompasses more than just orthography, extending to include the entire writing system, such as punctuation, paragraphing, and spacing (39). Crystal and Davy describe graphology as the study of a language's writing system or orthography, as evidenced in different forms of handwriting or typography. They define it as the formalized rules of writing (18).

#### **4.1.2. Phonological level**

Lodge asserts that phonology is the examination of linguistic systems, particularly focusing on how sound signifies differences in meaning within a language (8).

#### **4.1.3. Morphological level**

According to Aronoff and Fudeman (2011), morphology refers to the mental system implicated in word formation or to the linguistic branch that focuses on words, their internal structure, and their formation (1).

#### **4.1.4. Lexical level**

This deals with the level of "Lexis," which refers to the vocabulary items comprising a language or the collection of words recognized and utilized by an individual.

#### **4.1.5. Syntactic level**

Tallerman defines syntax as "sentence construction," focusing on how words combine to form phrases and sentences. Syntax encompasses the formation of phrases, clauses, and sentences (1).



#### 4.1.6. Semantic level

The semantic level addresses the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences, encompassing literary devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, and others.

The present study is mainly concerned with the lexical and grammatical (syntactic) levels of stylistic analysis with specific reference to Jane Hirshfield's two poems: "The Promise" and "Three Times My Life Has Opened."

### 5. Jane Hirshfield's collections of poetry.

Jane Hirshfield's prolific career has resulted in ten acclaimed poetry collections. Her early works, "Alaya" (1982) and "Of Gravity & Angels" (1988), laid the groundwork for her signature style. "The October Palace" (1994) and "The Lives of the Heart" (1997) delved deeper into themes of human experience. *Given Sugar, Given Salt* (2001) (a National Book Critics Award finalist) examined the complexities of relationships, and "Each Happiness Ringed by Lions" (2005) and "After" (2006) continued her philosophical investigations. "Come, Thief" (2011) (1<sup>st</sup> finalist for the PEN USA Poetry Award) addressed impermanence and meaning making. "The Beauty" (2015) (longlisted for the National Book Award) displayed her focus on nature and impermanence. "Ledger" (2020) tackled the climate crisis, and "The Asking: New and Selected Poems" (2023) brings together new and previous works, reflecting on the human condition (Poetry Foundation 2020).

#### 5.1 The Zen Path: Jane Hirshfield's Spiritual Odyssey

Jane Hirshfield's investigation of spirituality is firmly rooted in her personal experiences and philosophical beliefs. As a visiting artist among neuroscientists and a Zen monk, Hirshfield

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has interacted with various perspectives, incorporating Western scientific research and Eastern spiritual practices. In an interview with Krista Tippett, Hirshfield emphasizes the need to investigate and accept the complexities of reality. She thinks excellent writing, like life itself, embraces both happiness and sadness. Accepting all our feelings is what makes us human (Tippett, 2015). Hirshfield's unique vantage point, shaped by her interdisciplinary engagements, is evident in the spiritual dimensions that pervade her poetic explorations. By drawing from both Western and Eastern traditions, she crafts a poetic vision that grapples with the multifaceted nature of human existence, encompassing the sacred and the profane, the transcendent and the immanent.

In her conversation with Tippett, Hirshfield articulates her belief that "excellent writing, like life itself, embraces both happiness and sadness" (Tippett, 2015). This philosophical stance undergirds her approach to spirituality, which eschews simplistic or dogmatic views in favor of a nuanced and inclusive understanding of the human experience. Hirshfield's poetry, infused with this ethos, invites readers to confront the complexities of their own inner lives, to find solace in the recognition of shared emotions, and to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the mystery inherent in the human condition. By positioning herself as both a practitioner of Zen Buddhism and a scholar immersed in scientific inquiry, Hirshfield weaves together diverse strands of knowledge to inform her poetic explorations of the spiritual realm. This interdisciplinary approach allows her to navigate the intersections of the material and the metaphysical, the empirical and the intuitive, offering readers a multifaceted understanding of the human experience.

Jane Hirshfield's spiritual journey has become closely associated with her artistic expression, mainly due to her lengthy study of Zen Buddhism. Hirshfield developed an intense thirst for knowing and researching numerous spiritual concepts early, providing the framework

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for her changing spiritual identity. This exploratory spirit brought her to the San Francisco Zen Centre, which marked a turning point in her spiritual journey. Her eight-year dedication to practicing Soto Zen Buddhism there culminated with her lay initiation in 1979, demonstrating her unwavering dedication to this path. The primary principles of Zen Buddhism, which emphasize mindfulness, the interconnection of all creatures, and the value of being present, have significantly impacted Hirshfield's spiritual perspective and, as a result, her literary style. As scholar Moon (2) observes, Hirshfield developed a heightened sense of self-awareness and a more vital connectedness to the present environment through meditation and Zen philosophy studies. These are not merely external facets of her life; they are woven into the very fabric of her poetry, adding levels of depth and insight.

Hirshfield's immersion in Zen Buddhism has become a crucial aspect of her artistic identity, as her spiritual explorations and literary expression have become inextricably linked. The influence of Zen philosophy can be seen in the meditative quality of her poems, the emphasis on the present moment, and the underlying sense of interconnectedness that permeates her work. By embodying these principles in her poetic craft, Hirshfield invites her readers to engage with the spiritual dimensions of the human experience, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of existence.

### ***5.2 Jane Hirshfield's Poetry: A Challenge to Traditional Spiritual Paradigms***

According to Hirshfield, spiritual poetry is about "exploring profound aspects of existence without rigid definitions" (Hirshfield, 2001). Her work challenges traditional notions of spirituality, encouraging readers to approach the topic with an open and inquisitive mindset. Hirshfield's art provides a distinctly modern viewpoint on spiritual themes, blending concepts such as imperfection, shared human experiences, inclusion, and heightened awareness. In an interview, she elaborates on this approach, stating that "the best spiritual writing embraces the complexities of life, not simplistic answers" (Tippett, 2015). This philosophical stance is

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evident in the multilayered nature of her poetic explorations. Rather than prescribing a singular spiritual path, Hirshfield's work invites readers to engage with the inherent mysteries and paradoxes of existence. As scholar Moon (2) observes, her poems "weave together diverse strands of knowledge to inform her poetic explorations of the spiritual realm." This interdisciplinary approach allows Hirshfield to navigate the intersections of the material and the metaphysical, offering a multifaceted understanding of the human experience.

Hirshfield's poetry challenges traditional boundaries, blurring the lines between the sacred and the profane, the transcendent and the immanent. In doing so, she creates a space for a more inclusive and expansive conceptualization of spirituality, one that embraces the complexities of the human condition (Hirshfield, 2001). Through her artistic expression, Hirshfield encourages readers to cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness and connectedness to the present moment, drawing inspiration from the principles of Zen Buddhism that have profoundly influenced her spiritual and creative journey (Moon, 2). By weaving these elements into the fabric of her poetry, Hirshfield invites her audience to engage in a transformative exploration of the spiritual dimensions of their own lived experiences.

### ***5.2.1 Demystifying the Mystical***

The traditional conception of spirituality often shrouds itself in ambiguity and intricate symbolism, which can have the effect of isolating those seeking a spiritual connection from the spiritual world itself (Academy of American Poets, n.d.). However, Hirshfield's poetry takes a markedly different approach, utilizing approachable language and relatable imagery to demystify the mystical. As scholar Moon (2022) observes, Hirshfield's work "brings spirituality into the realm of the everyday, making it accessible to a wide audience." By eschewing the elusive and arcane trappings that have come to be associated with spiritual exploration, Hirshfield challenges the notion that such endeavors should be confined solely to the mysterious and unknown.

Through her poetic craft, Hirshfield invites readers to engage with spiritual themes and concepts in a more tangible and relatable manner. As she explains in an interview, "the best spiritual writing embraces the complexities of life, not simplistic answers" (Tippett, 2015). This approach allows Hirshfield to create a space for a more inclusive and accessible understanding of the spiritual dimensions of human experience.

Hirshfield's poetry often draws upon natural imagery and the rhythms of daily life to illuminate profound truths about the human condition. As one critic notes, her work "weaves together diverse strands of knowledge to inform her poetic explorations of the spiritual realm" (Moon, 2022), seamlessly integrating the material and the metaphysical. By grounding her spiritual inquiries in the relatable and the tangible, Hirshfield invites her readers to approach the sacred with a sense of curiosity and openness, rather than the reverence and detachment that have traditionally characterized spiritual discourse (Hirshfield, 2001). In doing so, she challenges the artificial boundaries that have long separated the spiritual from the mundane, creating a more holistic and inclusive vision of the human experience.

### ***5.2.2 Every Day Spirituality and Embracing Imperfection***

Hirshfield offers a unique perspective on spirituality. She challenges traditional views that focus on grand ceremonies and special places. Instead, she argues that the sacred is present in everyday life – cooking, gardening, or simply observing nature. This broadens the definition of spirituality beyond religious customs and exceptional events. Furthermore, Hirshfield celebrates imperfection. Unlike traditional religions that emphasize perfection and transcendence, she finds spirituality in the midst of human flaws and limitations. Her work challenges the idea that a spiritual journey requires striving for unattainable perfection.

### ***5.2.3 Exploring Paradox & Human Emotions as Spiritual Insights***

Hirshfield's poetry differs from traditional spirituality, which frequently seeks definitive solutions. Instead, she investigates paradoxes and ambiguities, embracing uncertainty and

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inquiry. She invites readers to accept life's complexities by dismissing the need for definite conclusions. While other spiritual systems call for emotional repression, Hirshfield views emotions as spiritual guides, questioning the concept of separation in spirituality (Show 2023).

#### ***5.2.4 Unveiling the Sacred: Spiritual concepts***

Jane Hirshfield's poetry focuses on various spiritual traditions, notably Zen Buddhism. Her writing provides readers with a sophisticated examination of spiritual concepts, focusing on mindfulness and the value of each moment. Jane Hirshfield's journey into spirituality is not confined to a single volume; for example, *Ledger* (1998) involves the prospective exploration of life's experiences from a spiritual perspective. *The Lives of the Heart* (2000) explores the internal world of emotions and experiences that influence man's connection with the world. Moreover, *Come, Thief* (2001) examines how challenging circumstances might result in unexpected personal development, each offering a distinct perspective on the sacred weaved into the ordinary. Analyzing poems from these volumes gives the reader a deeper understanding of Hirshfield's versatile and complex voice. During this journey, he will uncover the various methods Hirshfield uses language to explain the intricacies of human existence.

#### **5.3. Jane Hirshfield "The Promise"**

Jane Hirshfield's poem "The Promise" (2011), from her collection *Come, Thief* (Alfred A. Knopf), invites readers to contemplate life's impermanence. The speaker's repeated pleas for things to "stay" – directed at cut flowers, a spider, a leaf, even her own body and loved ones – highlight the universal human desire for permanence in the face of constant change (Nightowl, 2020). However, the poem's title itself, "The Promise," hints at a deeper yearning. It suggests a longing not just for things to remain the same, but for a sense of security and spiritual connection that transcends the fleeting nature of earthly existence.

Stay, I said

to the cut flowers.

They bowed

their heads lower (p. 68).

**5.3.1. Theme of the poem**

"The Promise" by Jane Hirshfield explores a critical theme in several spiritual traditions: the deep-seated human longing for stability and permanence in a world marked by constant transition. The poem contains a sequence of pleas that focus on various aspects of existence, including flowers, the speaker's body, and, above all, beloved persons. These appeals emphasize the anxiety surrounding the potential loss of attractiveness, presence, and beloved relationships. However, the poem makes an unexpected change in its final line. The answer of the "lovers" with the word "Always" generates a potent contradiction. Although the prevailing concept of impermanence is widespread, love is a possible means of resistance. The ambiguity of the subject matter permits several interpretations, with specific individuals associating it with a metaphysical search for an everlasting being that surpasses the material world (JWP 2020). "The Promise" ultimately explores the innate human longing for permanency while recognizing the undeniable presence of change. The text prompts the reader to contemplate the possibility of love as a means of finding comfort and establishing bonds in the face of life's unavoidable change.

**5.3.2 Lexical level:**

Distribution of Open-Class Words in "The Promise"

Category	Count	Examples
Nouns	12	flowers (cut), spider, leaf, body, earth (of riverine...), valley, meadows, escarpments, limestone, sandstone, love

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Verbs	11	said (repeated), bowed, fled, reddened, sat, starting, looked back, answered (all past tense)
Adjectives	2	cut, riverine
Others	7	Stay (interjection) (repeated), to (preposition) (repeated), for (preposition) (repeated), with (preposition), in (preposition), a (indefinite article), Always (adverb)

**Nouns:** The poem extensively stresses physical things (flowers, spiders, leaves, and so on.) symbolizing the fleeting elements of the real world.

**Verbs:** The utilization of past tense verbs such as "said," "bowed," and "fled" helps emphasize the speaker's previous behaviors and highlight the poem's central theme of change.

**Adjectives:** The limited employment of adjectives (e.g., cut, riverine) enhances the emphasis on the nouns. An additional point: The speaker's anxious pleas are emphasized through the repetition of "Stay" (interjection). Minimal use of prepositions such as "to" and "for" to connect elements evokes unrestrained emotion. Although the adverb "Always" from the beloved persons provides an additional response to the impermanence, the poem maintains an ambiguous environment.

**Spirituality implication:** The limited vocabulary creates a feeling of direct contact and genuine feelings, especially its limited use of adjectives and adverbs. By skipping over complicated grammatical structures, the speaker directly appeals to the impermanent elements. Spiritual themes such as impermanence, a need for belonging, and the pursuit of meaning beyond this life's fleeting experiences have significance in this physical emphasis and the act of pleading itself.



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 Distribution of Closed Class Words in "The Promise"

Category	Count	Examples
Prepositions	6	to (repeated 4x), of (repeated 2x), for (repeated 2x)
Pronouns	4	I (repeated 4x), They, It (repeated 3x)
Conjunctions	2	and (repeated 2x)
Others	1	a (indefinite article)

**Prepositions:** The preposition "to" connects the speaker's pleas and the different aspects, such as flowers and spiders. "Of" reflects the physical characteristics of the earth. These words contribute to the poem's structure while maintaining a direct address style without becoming excessive.

**Pronouns:** The frequent use of the first-person pronoun "I" highlights the speaker's point of view and strengthens the poem's intimate nature. The pronouns "they" and "it" refer to the mentioned entities, emphasizing their impermanent nature.

**Conjunctions:** The frequent use of "and" gives a feeling of interconnectedness, highlighting the speaker's attempt to maintain various aspects of life. Indefinite article "a" refers to a single, unspecified item or person. When used with "moment" (line 12), it accentuates the impermanent aspect of obedience.

**Spirituality implication:** "The Promise" employs a limited number of closed-class words to convey a sincere and unfiltered appeal. The speaker directly speaks to transient entities, disregarding grammatical rules to create a strong emotional effect. The poem's examination of impermanence and the intense desire for connection is reflected in its simplicity.

**Table 1: Lexical Deviations**

Category	Potential Deviation	Explanation
Word Choice	None Obvious	The poem uses common vocabulary, focusing on concrete nouns and verbs.

**Table 2: Register Deviation**

Category	Potential Deviation	Explanation
Style	Shift from Direct Address to Description	The poem shifts between the speaker directly addressing elements (flowers, earth, etc.) and the speaker's description of their behaviours such as bowing and reddening. This causes a dynamic juxtaposition between the speaker's requests and the unavoidable transformations happening in the natural world.
Tone	Shift from Pleading to Open-Endedness	The poem starts with a desperate plea ("Stay") but ends with the earth's "changing expression" and the loved ones' "Always." This shift leaves the reader with a sense of ambiguity about the possibility of permanence.

The poem mainly employs **parataxis**, using concise and straightforward words, rather than relying on hypotaxis, which involves complex sentences with subordinate clauses. This enhances the clarity and intensity of the message. The absence of distinct vocabulary deviations accentuates the poem's concentration on raw emotions and universal subjects conveyed through

simple syntax. Parataxis is a stylistic technique where clauses or phrases are placed side-by-side without using subordinating conjunctions. This creates a sense of urgency and immediacy. According to Geoffrey N. Leech, parataxis involves connecting clauses or phrases using coordinating conjunctions (such as and, but, or, for, nor, so, yet) or punctuation marks (such as a comma, semicolon, or colon). Leech explains this in his book "Style in Fiction" (1988, p. 68). This simplicity enhances the poem's emphasis on unfiltered emotions and universal topics, which are expressed using standard vocabulary and sentence structures.

**Deviations and Spirituality:**

The diversions in "The Promise" serve to enhance its examination of impermanent nature and the desire for connection with others. The repeated use of "stay" highlights the inherent human tendency to remain attached to something, whereas the fluctuating pronouns and register symbolize the uncertainty surrounding permanence. The poem provokes inquiries regarding the essence of human connection and the potential for discovering something eternal that exceeds the material world.

**5.3.3 Grammatical (Syntactic) Level:**

**Table 2: Grammatical Deviations**

Category	Potential Deviation	Explanation
Sentence Structure	Repetition of "Stay"	This is the most obvious deviation. The repeated interjection serves as a desperate plea, disrupting the typical flow of sentences.
Pronoun	"It" used for	"It" refers to flowers, spiders, leaves, bodies, and earth. Although

Reference	various elements	grammatically correct, it creates a slight ambiguity, stressing their objectification and impermanence.
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### **Parallelism and Repetition**

The poem "The Promise" effectively employs parallelism and repetition to heighten its contemplation of spirituality.

#### **Parallelism:**

**Structure and Emphasis:** The poem employs a consistent sentence structure using "Stay, [noun]." The use of parallelism in the poem contributes to establishing a rhythmic and structured nature. Furthermore, it highlights the action of "staying" by providing an organized framework in every line.

**Equality and Connection:** The poem conveys the concept of equality by employing a consistent structure through different entities such as flowers, spiders, and the human body. It places all of them in a situation where they are confronted with the same difficulty of transience. This can align with spiritual concepts of interconnectivity and the shared human experience.

#### **Repetition:**

**Urgent request:** The poem's constant repetition of the interjection "Stay" exceeds its grammatical function and expands into a repeating request. The speaker's constant plea highlights their intense desperation to stop the unavoidable passage of time. The repeated pleas serve as a symbolic manifestation of the speaker's need for permanence and disobedience against the inherent impermanence of life.

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### Spiritual Connection

The interaction between parallelism and repetition in "The Promise" enriches its examination of spirituality on several levels:

**Universality:** The standard structure and repeated requests produce a feeling of universality.

The themes of impermanence and the desire for connection with others strike an emotional connection with humans facing the passing of time and the search for meaning.

**Directness and Emotion:** The poem employs a straightforward approach by avoiding complex words and instead emphasizing a straightforward, repetitive theme. This is consistent with certain spiritual traditions that prioritize the potent nature of basic concepts and raw emotions in establishing a connection with the divine or gaining a deeper comprehension of existence.

**Contemplation:** The structure and repetitions of the poem encourage the reader to think about the themes of impermanence and man's connection to the constantly changing universe. This introspective element corresponds to spiritual disciplines that promote self-examination and the search for meaning.

The researcher emailed Jane Hirshfield, asking which of her poems directly discusses spirituality. Hirshfield answered by saying, *"It is difficult to answer because one of the most fundamental teachings of Zen is that there is no separation between "spiritual" and "ordinary."* (Youssef, Rasha). An essential principle of Zen, which Hirshfield highlights, is that there is no difference between what is seen as "spiritual" and what is regarded as "ordinary." She highlights Zen koans in her poems, such as the inquiry "What is the Buddha?" and the directive to "wash your bowl," as practical means of delving into this non-dualistic perspective.

Hirshfield also highlights the value of accepting things as they are and practicing kindness, which is comparable to the basic concepts of Zen. She mentioned that certain poems, such as "A Cedary Fragrance" and "For What Binds Us," demonstrate awareness and compassion as

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fundamental components of her poetry. Hirshfield stated that she does not want people to call her only a 'Zen poet. This makes the readers think about how Zen ideas are widespread in her work. She says poems like *"Three Times My Life Has Opened"* and *"The Envoy"* show how Zen becomes a natural part of daily life, going beyond regular categories. She continues to say how poems such as *"The Supple Deer"* and *"Bowl"* go beyond the usual places for mystical experiences, like meditation. By considering Hirshfield's thoughts, readers can better understand how her poetry reveals the connection between Zen and real-life experiences.

In response to inquiries about the spiritual themes present in her poetry, Hirshfield offers some reflections. She assures that certain poems in her work contain words such as "soul" and references to "the gods." She conveys that this choice of language does not necessarily mirror the vocabulary of her personal life. However, there might not be another method to express the intended meaning in English, hence using these terms. She approaches them with a certain lightness, understanding their provisionally, and I trust that readers will navigate them with a level of familiarity.

The poet grapples with the concept of the "intentional fallacy" in literary criticism. She expresses uncertainty about whether her insights on the poem align with the researcher's own interpretation. She highlights the concept of the "intentional fallacy" which suggests the authors are not always the best authority on the meaning of their own work. Jane Hirshfield offers her perspective on the poem *"Three Times My Life Has Opened"* in response to a direct inquiry about its exploration of spirituality. She identifies the poem as a direct expression of kensho, a mystical experience in Zen Buddhism. She emphasizes that such experiences transcend the limitations of meditation practices and can occur in everyday life. Hirshfield highlights the poem's portrayal of transformative events that possess a profound and universal spiritual essence. Jane Hirshfield (personal communication, May 22, 2024).

The analysis of Jane Hirshfield's poem "The Promise" from her collection "Come, Thief" reveals profound insights into themes of impermanence, longing, and spiritual connection. Through a careful examination of the poem's lexical and grammatical dimensions, as well as its spiritual underpinnings, a rich tapestry of meaning emerges. Hirshfield's use of language in "The Promise" is characterized by simplicity and directness, emphasizing genuine emotion and raw human experience. The repetition of the interjection "Stay" and the minimal use of adjectives and adverbs create a sense of urgency, highlighting the speaker's desperate plea for permanence in the face of inevitable change. This lexical economy serves to amplify the poem's emotional impact, inviting readers to confront their own anxieties about transience and loss.

At the grammatical level, "The Promise" employs parataxis, utilizing simple sentence structures to convey its message with clarity and intensity. The repetition of "Stay" disrupts the typical flow of sentences, serving as a desperate plea that reverberates throughout the poem. Meanwhile, the ambiguous use of pronouns like "It" adds a layer of complexity, underscoring the poem's exploration of the objectification and impermanence of worldly entities. Beyond its lexical and grammatical dimensions, "The Promise" resonates with spiritual themes that transcend the ordinary realm of human experience. Hirshfield's reflections on Zen philosophy highlight the poem's non-dualistic perspective, blurring the boundaries between the spiritual and the ordinary. Through the lens of Zen, impermanence is not a cause for despair but an invitation to embrace the present moment fully and find solace in the interconnectedness of all things. "The Promise" serves as a poignant meditation on the human condition, grappling with the universal longing for stability and permanence in a world marked by constant change. Through its simple yet profound language, the poem invites readers to confront their fears and uncertainties, ultimately finding comfort in the transient beauty of existence.

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#### 5.4 Jane Hirshfield's "*Three Times My Life Has Opened*"

Jane Hirshfield's poem "Three Times My Life Has Opened" from her 1997 collection "The Lives of the Heart" delves into three pivotal moments in life, each marked by profound insights or essential experiences. The first scenario involves encountering difficulties, such as darkness and rain. The second experience explores love's depths, including emotional and physical experiences. Finally, the third opening connects to universal energy represented by fire, indicating a more significant knowledge or elemental strength. Despite their apparent variations, Hirshfield emphasizes the connectivity of these experiences, implying a universal quality to human emotions and understanding.

The abundance of open-class words in the poem indicates that experience, imagery, and personal significance are the main themes. Nouns like "life," "time," "darkness," "fire," and "love" symbolize the speaker's inner world and spiritual journey. Verbs such as "opened," "recalls," and "reflects" depict the speaker's encounters and transformations. Adjectives and adverbs further enhance the poem's emotional depth, creating a vivid sensory experience for the reader. Hirshfield utilizes several instances of lexical deviation to create a profound and evocative experience for the reader. Verbs like "opened" for "life" suggest revelation or a transformative experience, while unconventional imagery and emotional language evoke a sense of mystery and power beyond the ordinary.

At the grammatical level, the poem employs parallelism and repetition to enhance its exploration of spirituality. Parallel structures and repeated phrases create rhythm and structure, emphasizing the transformative nature of the speaker's experiences and connecting them into a cohesive narrative. Overall, "Three Times My Life Has Opened" invites readers on a sensory and emotional journey, allowing them to connect with the speaker's exploration of spirituality on a deeper level. Through its innovative use of language and profound insights into the human



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experience, the poem offers glimpses of light and understanding among darkness and uncertainty.

#### 5.4.1 Theme of the poem

Jane Hirshfield's poem "*Three Times My Life Has Opened*" is the last in her 1997 collection called *The Lives of the Heart*, and it makes for an appropriate and fascinating closing thought (Galens 212). The poem explores three crucial events in life, each marked by deep insights or essential experiences.

Three times my life has opened.

Once, into darkness and rain.

Once, into what the body carries at all times within it and starts to remember each time it enters the act of love.

Once, to the fire that holds all.

(p. 99). These three were not different

The first scenario involves encountering difficulties, such as darkness and rain. The second experience explores love's depths, including emotional and physical experiences. Finally, the third opening connects to universal energy represented by fire, indicating a more significant knowledge or elemental strength. Despite their apparent variations, Hirshfield emphasizes the connectivity of these experiences, implying a universal quality to human emotions and understanding. The visual of a **maple** tree dropping its leaves in late autumn highlights transition and tenacity, as does the persistence of light and the image of the lone crimson leaf, representing success in the face of obstacles (Galens 214-215). Overall, the poem encourages readers to reflect on universal human experiences that transcend specific situations, providing glimpses of light and understanding among darkness and uncertainty.

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**5.4.2 Lexical level:**
***Distribution of Open Class Words in "Three Times My Life Has Opened"***

Category	Count	Examples
Nouns	14	life, times, darkness, rain, love, body, fire, tree, leaves, winter, door, light, paper, leaf
Verbs	18	opened, sets, implies, experiences, reveals, carries, remembers, starts, holds, recognize, falling, dropping, disrobes, acting, coming, reflects, staying, closing, releases
Adjectives	13	sad, desolate, physical, natural, bright, colorful, rapid, eager, new, sensuous, late, unreadable
Adverbs	12	obviously, never, more, perhaps, regardless, effectively, again, strikingly, directly, always, readily, virtually

The abundance of open-class words in "Three Times My Life Has Opened" indicates that experience, imagery, and personal significance are the main themes.

**Significant Number of Nouns (14):** The poem examines both physical and mental concepts using these words: life, time, darkness, fire, love, and others. Due to this emphasis on concepts, the poem can explore the speaker's inner world and spiritual journey.

**Significant Number of Verbs (18):** The poem is filled with action verbs (opened, recalls, reflects) that depict the speaker's encounters and the transformations they experience. The emphasis on action in this context highlights the spiritual journey's constantly changing and always-evolving essence.

**Significant Number of Adjectives (13) and Adverbs (12):** These words vividly depict the speaker's experiences. Words such as "sad," "desolate," "bright," and "eager" evoke emotions and create a sense of atmosphere. The vivid visual effectively conveys the speaker's perception of their spiritual awakenings.

The analysis shows the connection between the poem's style and its examination of spirituality. The poem gives priority to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The emphasis on experience, action, and description encourages the exploration of the speaker's spiritual journey. The poem highlights the speaker's experiences, stressing spirituality's self-centered nature. The verbs illustrate the speaker's continuous journey and the transformations they experience. This is consistent with the concept of spiritual growth in several traditions of thought. The poem employs vivid emotional descriptions to evoke a profound emotional experience. This imagery enables readers to connect profoundly with the speaker's experience. The poem's emphasis on personal experience, transformation, and imagery enables readers to connect the themes to their perception of spirituality.

***Distribution of Closed Class Words in "Three Times My Life Has Opened"***

Category	Count	Examples
Prepositions	6	to (repeated 4x), of (repeated 2x), for (repeated 2x)
Pronouns	4	I (repeated 4x), They, It (repeated 3x)
Conjunctions	2	and (repeated 2x)
Others	1	a (indefinite article)
Total	13	

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"Three Times My Life Has Opened" mainly utilizes open-class nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs while employing fewer closed-class terms such as articles, pronouns, and prepositions. The emphasis on experience, action, and description promotes the exploration of the speaker's spiritual journey. The focus is directly expressing experiences and feelings while using fewer closed-class words to determine sentence structure. This simplicity enables the central message of the speaker's spiritual development and change to shine through. Whereas specific closed-class words can offer slight contributions, the richness of open-class words takes center stage, allowing an in-depth investigation of the speaker's experience of spirituality.

#### 5.4.3. Lexical Deviation

The poem "Three Times My Life Has Opened" by Jane Hirshfield utilizes several instances of lexical deviation to create a profound and evocative experience for the reader. Here is a breakdown of some key deviations:

##### Verbs:

"Opened" (life): As discussed earlier, using "opened" for life creates a deviation. It suggests a revelation or a new chapter unfolding, adding depth to the experience.

##### Images:

"Darkness and rain": While not a strong deviation, it sets a somber and introspective mood.

"The fire that holds all": This is a metaphor. "Fire" deviates from its literal meaning to represent a powerful force or source. "Holds all" further deviates by suggesting the fire encompasses everything, creating a sense of vastness.

"Maple...stepped from her leaves...like a woman in love with winter": This is a rich simile

using personification. "Stepped" and "woman in love" deviate from typical descriptions of a maple, creating a surprising and evocative image.

**Emotional Language:**

"The body...starts to remember": This deviates by attributing memory to the body, suggesting a deeper emotional and sensory connection beyond the intellect.

**Impact of Deviation:**

These deviations contribute to the poem's exploration of kensho. They move beyond the ordinary to capture the transformative nature of the experience. The "opening" of life suggests a shift in perception.

The unconventional imagery evokes a sense of mystery and power.

The emotional language hints at a deep, embodied understanding.

By using lexical deviation, Hirshfield allows the reader to experience the poem on multiple levels. The poem becomes more than just words; it becomes a sensory and emotional journey that resonates with the reader's own experiences.

**Table 2: Register Deviation**

Deviation	Example	Spiritual Connection	Leech's Stylistic Concept (Analysis)
Potential Deviation: Slightly Elevated	- Rich imagery ("darkness and rain," "fire that holds all") -	Shares the speaker's message with seriousness and significance, mirroring the depth of their spiritual	Register Raising: Leech identifies "register raising" as a stylistic technique where vocabulary and sentence

<p>Register</p>	<p>Symbolic language ("body carries within it")</p>	<p>experiences.</p>	<p>structure are placed beyond everyday speech (49). Here, the rich imagery and symbolic language heighten the register, Producing a feeling of seriousness and importance for the speaker's messages about their spiritual experiences.</p>
<p>Possible Deviation: Direct Address ("You will recognize...")</p>	<p>Gives an increased feeling of intimacy, engaging the reader with the speaker's profound spiritual journey and promoting introspection.</p>	<p>Direct Address Although this is not strictly a register deviation, using direct address as a stylistic choice has the potential to fill the reader with a sense of intimacy and captivation. By using the pronoun "you" in this context, the speaker encourages the reader to develop a connection with the message and perhaps contemplate his or her own spiritual experiences.</p>	

The poem may deviate from standard language (register) in two ways. The vivid imagery ("darkness and rain") and symbolic language ("body carries within it") provide a profound atmosphere, mirroring the profoundness of the speaker's spiritual experiences. Moreover, the

act of directly addressing the reader with the pronoun "you" establishes a closer and more personal tone, which involves the reader in the speaker's personal experiences and encourages introspection over matters of spirituality. Although not exactly grammatical deviations, these stylistic choices enhance the poem's examination of the major.

**5.4. 3 Grammatical (Syntactic) Level:**

**Table 1: Grammatical Deviations**

Deviation	Example	Spiritual Connection	Leech's Stylistic Concept (Analysis)
Conciseness/Missing Elements	Omission of conjunctions or articles (e.g., "Obviously, never...")	Evokes a feeling of urgency and intense emotional effect, maybe mirroring the speaker's enhanced emotional condition during spiritual experiences or a desire for direct expression of the core of the experience.	Potential violation: If the intentional abbreviation deviates from the usual sentence structure, it may be seen as a violation to create a stylistic impact. This violation highlights the genuine feelings and urgent nature connected to the speaker's spiritual journey.

In an attempt to examine spirituality, "Three Times My Life Has Opened" may employ minor grammatical deviations. The table directs attention toward the possibility that the poem is deficient in conjunctions or articles, thus compromising its conciseness. The speaker's desire for direct interaction or increased emotion during spiritual experiences may have been reflected in this simplicity. Moreover, if intentional, this brevity may represent a stylistic deviation (violation) that highlights the speaker's profound emotions and the pressing nature

of their spiritual journey. By examining these possible violations, one can gain insight into how the poet's skill and language choices contribute to the spiritual exploration of the poem.

**Table 3: Parallelism and Repetition**

Feature	Example	Spiritual Connection	Leech's Stylistic Concept (Analysis)
Parallelism	Imagine a line like "Darkness fell, and rain poured." This structure (noun phrase followed by verb) creates parallelism.	Parallelism highlights significant concepts and establishes order and rhythm. This may be the speaker's attempt to describe their spiritual experiences' structure and transformation. Parallelism can increase reader awareness of spiritual journey aspects.	The utilization of parallelism in meter and rhythm creates a coherent and rhythmic pattern, perhaps reflecting the structured and transformational nature of the speaker's spiritual experiences.
Repetition	Repetition of a word or phrase (e.g., "opened" repeated throughout the poem)	Emphasis on the transformative nature of the speaker's experiences. - Creates a sense of intensity and urgency reflecting the profoundness of the spiritual experience.	Repetition emphasizes keywords and ideas, highlighting the importance of the speaker's spiritual transformation and the intensity of their experience.

While the poem "Three Times My Life Has Opened" depends heavily on open-class words, it also uses parallelism and repetition to enhance its exploration of spirituality.

**Potential Parallelism:** Similar grammatical structures may be used in repeated lines of the poem to create rhythm and structure. For example:



"Once, into darkness and rain..." (**Noun phrase + prepositional phrase**)

"Once, to the fire that holds all..." (**Noun phrase + prepositional phrase**)

**Potential Repetition: The word "once" is repeated three times at the beginning of lines.** The repetition aims to highlight the three different moments of spiritual awakening that the speaker explores.

Even though the descriptions of the three openings seem different, the line "These three were not different" demonstrates a connection between them. The final stanza employs opposing images (maple shedding leaves vs. red leaf persisting). The maple tree's loss of leaves compared with the crimson leaf's persistence. However, it ultimately conveys a similar message. Both the vivid and long-lasting leaves symbolize a "glimmer of illumination" that remains following a transforming experience. Examining these stylistic choices gives the reader a more profound comprehension of how the poem uses language to examine spirituality. The deliberate use of parallelism and repetition enables the reader to establish a meaningful connection with the speaker's meaningful experiences while maintaining a balance between structure and personal interpretation (Three Times My Life Has Opened Guide 14).

### **Rethinking Spirituality: Lexical Deviation in Hirshfield's Poetry**

Jane Hirshfield's exploration of spirituality in her poetry stands out not just for its unique perspective but also for its innovative use of language. Unlike poets who rely on overt religious language, Hirshfield weaves spirituality through her poems with a masterful use of lexical deviation.

This deviation manifests in several ways:

**Verbs with Non-Literal Meanings:** Verbs like "opened" used for "life" suggest a revelation or

a transformative experience, going beyond the physical realm. Unconventional Imagery: Hirshfield utilizes unexpected metaphors and similes. For example, "the fire that holds all" or "a maple...stepped from her leaves like a woman in love with winter" create a sense of mystery and power beyond the ordinary.

Sensory and Emotional Language: Attributing memory to the body ("the body...starts to remember") emphasizes a deeper emotional and experiential understanding of the spiritual. These deviations elevate the poems beyond mere descriptions. They become invitations to a sensory and emotional journey, allowing readers to connect with the speaker's exploration of kensho and the impermanence of existence.

### **Focus on Language:**

This focus on lexical deviation strengthens the argument about Hirshfield's unique approach to spirituality. It highlights how she avoids conventional religious language and instead creates a personal and evocative experience through her manipulation of words.

### **Benefits of Deviation:**

The poem's impact lies in this innovative use of language. It allows readers to experience the poem on multiple levels, fostering a deeper understanding of the spiritual message. It opens the poem to a wider audience, as the exploration of spirituality transcends specific religious boundaries.

Hirshfield's poetry is not just about spirituality; it is about how language can be used to explore it in a fresh and transformative way. By employing lexical deviation, she invites readers to discover the profound within the everyday, the impermanent, and the ever-changing nature of existence.

## **6. Findings and Conclusion:**

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The study examines the stylistic techniques employed by Jane Hirshfield in her spiritual poetry, investigating how these elements enhance themes of interconnectivity, impermanence, and the transcendent nature of everyday life. The analysis explores Hirshfield's use of lexical features and deviations, grammatical structures, registers, parallelism, repetition, imagery, and metaphor. The findings suggest these stylistic approaches improve the poetic quality and contemplative nature of Hirshfield's work, encouraging deeper reader engagement with spiritual issues. Hirshfield's careful word choice and deviations from standard language captivate readers by evoking emotions and stimulating the senses. Subtle grammatical changes and adjustments in style contribute to making Hirshfield's poetry more relatable and impactful for readers. The use of parallelism and repetition helps reinforce spiritual truths and natural harmonies, while imagery and metaphors establish vivid connections between the spiritual and natural realms.

Hirshfield's stylistic approach dramatically enhances the reflective experience, guiding readers to explore profound spiritual revelations through the intricacies of her poetic expression. The analysis illuminates how Hirshfield's skillful deployment of language-based techniques elevates the contemplative and transcendent qualities of her spiritual poetry. The study asserts that Hirshfield's distinctive use of language-based elements, such as lexical features, grammatical structures, registers, parallelism, repetition, imagery, and metaphor, contribute to the poetic quality and contemplative nature of her spiritual poetry. The research provides valuable insights into the ways in which Hirshfield's mastery of language enables her to explore the profound mysteries of human existence and the transcendent aspects of the human experience.

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