In the poem, “Jamie”, Elizabeth Brewster uses the story of Jamie, a deaf loner, to illustrate the attitude and lifestyle of a social outcast. This poem tells Jamie’s tale of how, due to his sudden deafness at the age of sixteen, he faces alienation. Because he can no longer hear what people are saying about him, he substitutes their voices with his worst imaginings, assuming that they are criticizing him without his knowledge. As a result, he seeks a life of solitude, choosing the loneliest jobs, and learning to live that way. This can be compared to the lives and attitudes of many outcasts. Some feel removed from society because they have experienced a tragedy or something similar (such as deafness) and believe that no one else can relate to them. They could react differently testing the world around them as if it is new, such as when Jamie “(kicks) a stick, (raps) his knuckles on doors” (line 5) examining the silence around him. Some people may try to reach then, such as counsellors, but they are so distant that their mouths seem to be moving without any sound escaping their lips (line 8). Not all outcasts are so because of an incident; it might instead be because of their inability or lack of motivation to relate to their peers. They may, however, react in the same way. Like Jamie, an outcast cannot know what is really thought of them, not because they cannot hear what is said to them, but because they cannot hear what is said of them. Therefore, they assume the worst and see the worst in people. In order to prove themselves right, they may “(dive) into their eyes and “drag” up sneers.” (line 13), that is, do or say what they know will generate a negative reaction, allowing them to feel justified in their accusations and that they are in the right. Outcasts “(become) accustomed to an aimless and lonely” (line 17) existence, and seek it out. The poet describes Jamie as being like a stone, which is solitary and silent, but also hard, unchanging, and cold. He is also compared to an old stump, perhaps showing that, like a stump, he once had potential to be something, but was cut short. Also, the fact that it is an old stump could show the passage of time, how he has spent his whole life this way. In addition, despite being the title of the poem, Jamie’s name is only used one other time. This could represent his namelessness and insignificance to all around him. The poet does show a different aspect of Jamie, though. Every now and then, when he gets drunk, he expresses his secret desire for friendship as he runs alone, laughing, through the streets. (lines 22-23). The poet’s use of laughter implies slight madness, which demonstrates how far he has been removed from what some people would call normal life. His need for human companionship is described with the use of ‘hunger’ (line 21), as if he is going mad with a craving for friendship. He then dreams of a utopic where the barriers of society come “(crashing)” (line 26) down. Perhaps all outcasts have, in some maybe small way, a desire to be with their own kind, and to belong there. If they take a chance, then maybe someday they will, and if society were a little more accepting, then they would not have to in the first place. Perhaps the poet wrote this poem to make people more aware of other people’s plights and feelings, and how their own actions can affect them.