Symbols In The Grapes Of Wrath

In the novel The Grapes of Wrath the author, John Steinbeck, put many symbols in the book. Some of the symbols in the book are about a migrant family and what the author intended what the title of the book to mean.

For the title of the book Steinbeck wanted it to mean the growing anger of the oppressed migrants. This symbol is revealed at the end of chapter 25. It is revealed by the author when he was describing how big farmers harvest crops such as grapes. The tone that the author is trying to give to the reader is sorrow and anger. “There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, the straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange.” (Steinbeck 336) It shows that the harvest of crops is wrong because the harvesting consists of destroying food instead of giving it to starving people. The author is trying to use the grapes to represent the migrant families. Also, as farmers continued to harvest grapes to make wine it symbolizes the wrath growing in homeless, starving people as they see the process of wasting food. Another symbol in the book is Rose of Sharon’s stillborn baby. It represents the conditions that migrant families have to go through. The failed pregnancy was intended to mean the impossibility of pursuing a life in the fatal environment of prejudice. Also, another symbol is the land turtle in chapter 3. Steinbeck wanted it to represent a narrow vision. It authorizes individuals to move ahead on a determined path. “And over the grass at the roadside a land turtle crawled, turning aside for nothing, dragging his high-domed shell over the grass.” (Steinbeck 22) The quote is implying that Tom and Ma take the land turtle approach. When it is implied for Ma it means persevere against hardship. For Tom it means this attitude is limited because it is preventing him from having a wider vision. Tom eventually breaks out of this land turtle approach when he sees other people belonging as one big soul. Steinbeck also applies that the narrow vision of the land turtle to the landowners that achieve their goal to make more profit. Another symbol that stands out in the book is the dying dog in chapter 13. The symbol is to foreshadow many tragedies that the family will face. Most of the tragedies that the Joad family experience are not unavoidable, like the dog getting run over on the highway. “On the top of the truck, the suffering hound dog crawled timidly to the edge of the load and looked over, whimpering, toward the water.”(Steinbeck 124) This quote shows the suffering that the family will go through, like the dog went through.

In conclusion, in the novel The Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck, there are many symbols that stand out to the reader. Some are more obvious that others and some the reader has to look deep for. Steinbeck wanted most of the symbols to represent tragedy for the family and how hard life was for them.