William Faulkner speaks on "A Rose for Emily" in 1955:

I feel sorry for Emily's tragedy; her tragedy was, she was an only child, an only daughter. At first when she could have found a husband, could have had a life of her own, there was probably some one, her father, who said, "No, you must stay here and take care of me." And then when she found a man, she had had no experience in people. She picked out probably a bad one, who was about to desert her. And when she lost him she could see that for her that was the end of life, there was nothing left, except to grow older, alone, solitary; she had had something and she wanted to keep it, which is bad—to go to any length to keep something; but I pity Emily. I don't know whether I would have liked her or not, I might have been afraid of her. Not of her, but of anyone who had suffered, had been warped, as her life had been probably warped by a selfish father . . . .

[The title] was an allegorical title; the meaning was, here was a woman who had had a tragedy, an irrevocable tragedy and nothing could be done about it, and I pitied her and this was a salute . . . to a woman you would hand a rose.