

# Poems of the decade: Revision notes

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## Eat me:

### Themes:

- Abusive relationships- feederism is a type of abuse that is often the result of a fat fetishism
- Consensual and nonconsensual abuse
- Power and powerlessness
- Male power
- Eating disorders- effect of food on mental state

### Structure and form:

- Fable/Parable- consequences of abusing power
- Ten neat tercets- confinement and control
- Internally unstructured- dysfunctionality/ the speaker's hidden power
- Half- rhymes- 'cake' and 'weight' add to sense of claustrophobia
- Alliteration- 'too fat' connotes self hatred
- Italics- Inclusion of the male voice

### Language:

- Consonance- 'bigger the better', 'b' sounds are memetic
- Idealistic metaphor- 'jacuzzi', 'breadfruit' 'desert island'
- Adverb- 'his' gives male possession and control
- Contrast- 'desert island after shipwreck', her immobile position
- Water imagery- water is very powerful and destructive 'a tidal wave of flesh'

## Chainsaw vs Pampas grass:

### Themes:

- Masculine power- stereotypes of male aggression
- Power and powerlessness- Pampas grass is the original victim but remains powerful
- Male and female – chainsaw masculine, Pampas grass highly feminized
- Man and nature – manmade items are made ineffectual in the face of the natural world

### Structure/Form:

- Disjointed and uneven sentence structure- unrestrained power of either man or nature (mimetic)
- Use of the end-stopped line- Man's confinement of the natural world/ symbolic of man's confinement of the female.
- Anecdotal tone- personal experience

### Structure and form:

- Four sections- Shift in time, place and attitudes
- Ordered tercets- appearance of understanding of ideas
- Unstructured lines- long and rambling, reflective of a child's misunderstanding
- Free-verse- unordered nature of memories

### Language:

- Complex language- 'hyperborean blue'
- **Contrasts child's vocabulary**- 'a cock'
- Macabre imagery- 'chill of tiles, steel hooks, chrome surgery tools'
- Assonance- 'nosy, rosy, big soft hands' creates voiceless 'o' sounds reflecting a sound of awe
- Sibilance- 'soft' 'sud-lucious' are comforting
- Irish dialect- 'new wee baby'

## Effects

### Themes:

- Death/ personal loss- the tone of this poem is both regretful and melancholy
- Coping with serious illness
- Ageing- A breakdown in mental stability. The speaker suggests the modern struggle that people have in looking after their ageing parents
- Generational differences

### Structure and form:

- One long stanza- Overwhelming, suggests a progression in time.
- End stopped lines- finality of the mother's death
- Enjambement- emphasises a confusing mental process reflective of the mother's own mental instability
- **Interjection of the mother's voice**- italics mean that her words are second-hand; she is voiceless
- Rhyme at the end- feeling of ultimate guilt and reflection

### Language:

- **Shifting image of mother's hands**- 'scarred' and 'raw', then without the 'gold strap' watch, at the end 'blotched and crinkled'
- Sibilance- 'chopping/slicing' harsh domestic existence
- Personification- 'knives that lay in weight'
- Descriptions of objects
- Adverb- 'Giving love the only way she knew' suggests a difficult relationship
- Repeated verbs- 'gulped' 'stared' suggests how degenerative disease make a persons existence hopeless.

- Juxtaposed tones- One sarcastic and bitter, one the speaker's more optimistic wife and the monotonous repetition of the answer machine

#### Language:

- Hyperbole- creates satirical humour
- Cultural references- suggestion that society's culture has grown monotonous
- Sarcastic/ Ironic language
- Colloquialism- the speaker's individuality of language sets him apart from the monotonous voice

### On her blindness

#### Themes:

- Stoicism- the mother's attempts to pretend she can see suggest society's need for people to remain stoic despite their struggles
- Illness- effect of a person's illness on themselves and their loved ones
- Ageing- effects of ageing on individual and loved ones
- Loss- effect of loss on family members

#### Structure/ Form:

- Three different voices- interjection of the mother's voice highlights reality compared to her appearances. Father's voice suggests treatment with humour as opposed to sympathy.
- Neat couplets- Appearance of order and calm
- Caesura, enjambement and end-stopped lines- creation of inner chaos which is not immediately noticeable, just like the mother's illness.
- Repetition- 'to be honest' integrates this sense of the hidden struggle

#### Language:

- Sparse use of figurative language- emphasises the blunt approach to mother's disability, refines poem's importance (illness is not sugar coated)
- Cynical humour (simile)- 'bumping into walls like a dodgem'
- Pronoun- 'One shouldn't say it' use of formal diction in order to suggest British attitude towards illness as something not to be discussed with others
- Listing- 'visit exhibitions, admire films...' emphasises the extent to which his mother attempted to do everything despite her struggles
- Imagery- 'gold Autumn' 'ablaze with colour' suggests the beauty of the world which the mother could not experience

### Ode on a Grayson Perry urn

#### Themes:

- Modern society- Turnbull poses a direct comparison to Keats' society
- Beauty and Art- Beauty is subjective