

Plenty college essay



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In 'Plenty' the poet, Isobel Dixon, uses different types of language to convey her ideas about the different memories of childhood, several other poems in the collection of 'Songs of Ourselves' also deal with the idea of childhood memories. This poem can be connected with "Little Boy Crying" because in 'Plenty' the children have a different perception of what is going on with their mother, and in "Little Boy Crying" we also see a difference in perception between the adult who is punishing the child and the child's description of the adult as "The ogre towers above you" This description is very exaggerated and shows the child's very immature perception of what is going on around them. There are several different memories used throughout the poem, such as, regret, that she didn't understand what her mother had to cope with, which then transfers to guilt that she hadn't helped her more. The poet uses sibilance, metaphors, personal voice and enjambment to express her ideas. She also uses lists and groups of words such as words that imply something is under a lot of strain but still being held together. The significance of the title being 'Plenty' is that it creates a contrast toward the content of the poem where the characters are poor and don't have 'Plenty'. The poet's viewpoint is that when children are young they don't understand what their parents are trying to do and that they are rebellious and they don't realise their parents are trying to help them, however when they grow up and are adults themselves they understand that their parents were only trying to help them. The poem consists of 8 stanzas. In the first stanza, the poet describes her childhood and what her family was like, in stanza two, the poet describes how they didn't have any money. In the third stanza, it is a continuation from the second stanza.

Stanza four is a list of everything that they need to afford but can't. Stanza five describes how the children rebelled against their mother and disobeyed her because they didn't understand. Stanza six describes how they disobeyed their mother by taking more water than they could afford. Stanza seven, the poet is an adult and can afford to have the water up to her chin and stanza eight, the poet describes how she understand how her mother felt now and how she misses her childhood now she has everything she wants. To express her view on the family's poverty, the poet uses the metaphor of things being held together, for example, 'clasp', 'snapping', 'anchored', 'locks' and 'straps'.

The example of 'clasp' gives the image of something being shut and fixed. In the poem the clasp is holding the family together firmly and keeping everything from complete chaos. 'Snapping' gives the implication that there is something that can't be controlled. 'Her lips stretched back and anchored down', the children only ever see her frowning.

When something is anchored down, it is very difficult to move. An anchor is designed to hold a heavy object still. All the mother's worries are the heavy object, which takes a lot to hold down, and keep from escaping. Related postgame of things 'locks' and 'straps' are things that can stand a certain amount of tension, until they break.

All these words give the suggestion that things are at breaking point. The children's mother is trying to keep her family from falling apart. The poet writes about the family's poverty by using lists and indirect language. An example of indirect language would be, 'upon it's griffin claws, was never

full'. In this line, she describes how the bath was never full therefore implying they hadn't got much water, which suggests they are living in poverty.

The mother keeps account of what they can afford and can't on a list. Sums and worries, shopping lists' she then uses enjambment between the two stanzas to split the list up into things she does and things she has to buy to keep her family afloat. ' For aspirin, porridge, petrol, bread. Even the toilet paper counted', they couldn't have things they wanted. It was all things they needed to live on.

The children in the poem are described as if they are planning a conspiracy against the mother. The poet portrays the mother as if she is deliberately depriving the children of things they want, ' We thought her mean'. The children do as little as possible to help the mother. Skipped chores', ' swiped biscuits' and ' stole another precious inch'.

These words give the children a carefree happy image, like they don't see what is happening around them, or they are choosing to ignore it. ' Stole' gives the representation of a child being told not to take something, but taking it anyway, just to see if they can get away with it. The children knew they weren't allowed to have anymore water but they took some anyway, forbidden fruits always taste the sweetest. They treat their mother as an enemy, and deliberately defy her authority, ' when she was out of earshot'. The poet uses personal voice to suggest that the mother was up against not just one but all of her children.

The poet uses metaphors to describe the mother's mood, 'such plenty was too dear in our expanse of drought where dams leaked dry and windmills stalled. Like mommy's smile', this suggests the children aren't as blind to their mother's misery, they do see that their mother is smiling less, and believe that like the water there is a drought of smiles and they don't understand why. The mother keeps all the problems from the children, but they seem to know what's going on. The mother's mood is described as 'quiet despair', she tries not to let her children know that they have money problems. Her children don't seem to understand why she is always worried, 'in anger at some fault', at the end of this line the poet uses enjambment and goes onto the next stanza where it says, 'of mine, I thought' before the end of the stanza it is general, and then it goes on to be more specific. The poet uses enjambment to make it less specific first, as she is unsure of what it is that upsets her mother, she thinks it is to do with her and her sibling's behaviour.

The poet also depicts the child's adult life. When she grows up she looks back on the past, and sees all her mother had to go through. She lives in luxury and wealth; 'now bubbles lap my chin' she loves her new life and not having to deprive herself of anything. The poet uses a number of words that suggest wealth and luxury, 'lap', 'cascade', 'plentiful', 'excess'. Lap' gives the image of a river or lake, a bountiful amount of water.

'Cascade' illustrates a waterfall, a large amount of water flowing. 'Excess' gives the impression that she has more than she needs. She no longer has to suffer for not having things. Now she has heating she never wants to be cold, she has as much water as she wants from her 'fat brass taps', the taps '

disgorge' the water, there is so much of it and so she indulges herself in life. In the last two stanzas the poet illustrates through sound and choice of words what she has now, she also explains her regret. The mother is a cold, hard bath character in her memory, because she didn't have a life of luxury.

All the children can remember is her hard frown. A lot of her memories take place in the bathroom, which is where she probably had the most fun with her sisters. The poet uses sibilance to describe them, 'scattered sisters' this suggests she has lost touch with them. There is a lot of regret in this as she says she leaves the heating on and then after using enjambment she says that she misses her scattered sisters, this connects the two. She wishes she could share with them all her luxuries.

The sentence, 'we thought her mean' is very short, this implies a lot of regret, and it's like she's thinking out loud. 'Thought' is past tense, she can now understand what it was like for her mother and regrets not having her mother there with her to enjoy the luxuries. In the poem 'Plenty' memories of childhood are present in different forms of feelings, such as regret and guilt. The poet is successful in conveying the feelings and portraying messages through her language. The poem gives people images of what life is like for people who live in poverty. The children in the poem acted completely oblivious to the problems their mother had.

It shows that children don't always want to see things. In the poem the children tried to pretend their mother was happy and they had a happy home life, although they did see her sadness sometimes in the way she acted, 'Where dams leaked dry and windmills stalled. Like mommy's smile'.