

# Analysis of philip larkin essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



First sight is an intense yet fulfilling interpretation of a newly born lambs first glimpses of the world. The poem also explores the difficulties the young lamb faces through its first experiences of the harsh environment and how they have to deal with it as they find their feet in the world. Born in winter the lambs have yet to experience “ earth’s unmeasurable surprise” which is the warmth and beauty the earth can provide. The title “ First Sight” could be interpreted as being the “ first sight” the new born lambs have of their new surroundings or it could be the poet’s “ first sight” of the new born lambs. Whatever the interpretation, the readers are left in no doubt that the poem is about new beginnings in harsh environments and survival against all odds. The poem consists of two regular stanzas each containing 7 lines.

Throughout the poem there is a sense of regularity Larkin uses the regularity of the poem to assure the reader that although the lambs have been born at winter what the lambs have to endure is temporary despite their lack of awareness to conditions which will come.

This is supported through the regular iambic pentameter which generally gives a sense of natural flow. Also, throughout the poem, A, B rhyme scheme adds to regularity of the poem even though the lambs see this as harsh as they know no different. The internal rhyme scheme at the end two lines of each stanza indicate change is on the horizon and inevitable for the lambs whether they realise this or not this structural technique of internal rhyme allows the reader to feel sympathy for the lambs but also hope that they the best to come. As well as the link between both stanzas through rhyme, the ideas of the links of the last stanza link also “ cold” and “ snow” are both detrimental to lambs at birth as they will not have the fleece of a fully grown

sheep, Larkin uses this link to place the lambs in a temporary vulnerable position. Throughout the poem Larkin uses contrasting lexis to make distinctions between the lamb's perspective of the surroundings and what they see as permanent to be in fact temporary.

Lambs which are the colour white are portrayed as pure and angelic which is a stark contrast between the dark environments they have been placed into. Larkin is using the lambs as a symbol to represent innocence which evokes sympathy in the reader as the lambs are not aware of the natural progression of seasons. It is unfortunate that the lambs have to be born into the harsh winter however; Larkin provokes hope due to the season's continuous cycle with warmer seasons to come which will be more attractive to the newly born lambs than winter the lambs will be eventually happy. The metaphor "bleating clouds the air" is a clever use of metaphoric language used by Larkin to describe the surroundings of the clouds and how the lambs bleating could be cries of anguish from the lambs at their unfortunate position of knowing no better. The oxymoron "sunless glare" provides a dark sinister description of the surroundings with the season been conveyed as winter the days will be short and the nights long giving the reader a dim lifeless picture of the lambs surroundings.

Another clever uses of literary devices is the use of alliteration in the last line of each stanza "wretched width of cold" and "utterly unlike the snow" both sentiments reflect the difficulties the lamb faces in the first few weeks of birth with their only protection from the elements been their mother, this emphasises to the reader that the lambs position is a survival at all odds

situation. The verb “wretched” conveys an evil attitude towards the fierceness of the winter weather however the dark lexis is always supported throughout the poem with hopeful lexis to keep the reader looking at the bigger picture of the world the lambs have been placed in and the winter weather is only temporary. “There lies hidden round them” the adjective hidden portrays hope for the lambs as they are unaccustomed to the brighter seasons to come and will be able to tolerate the seasons to come easier. Excitement builds within the second stanza at “earth’s unmeasurable surprise” This supports the constant portrayal of hope amidst the semantic field of winter e. g. “wetly” “snow” “cold”.

This provides a reminder to the reader that the season is temporary. This suggests that Larkin isn’t actually describing the lamb’s environment but using the poem metaphorically to represent human life and how emotions such as happiness and sadness come and go uncontrollably just like the seasons. A human cannot change their emotions automatically, change occurs over time just like the lambs will find in the seasons to come. Linking back to the question the theme of natural progression through stages of life is prominent. The Harsh description of the lamb’s first stage on the natural progression of their life cycle provides a constant reminder to the readers that situations are temporary and there are chances in future of happiness just like the lambs unaware surprise of the summer seasons.