PHILIP LARKIN

Notas de clase:

*His form of writing it is not easy to read. It requires thinking, hard thinking.*

*He is a controversial writer.*

*It was an expert in romantics. 1970s-80s.*

*He does not like to read que poems out loud: not to impose his reading of his poems to anybody. --- esto no es de este autor.* J. H. Prynne

PHILIP LARKIN:

Philosophical.

The poem “Going Going” is meant to be an ecollogical poems. A poem about ecology.

I was sending u the strength of iron to study

Going

There is an evening coming in  
Across the fields, one never seen before,  
That lights no lamps.  
  
Silken it seems at a distance, yet  
When it is drawn up over the knees and breast  
It brings no comfort.  
  
Where has the tree gone, that locked  
Earth to the sky? What is under my hands,  
That I cannot feel?  
  
What loads my hands down?

At the beginning death seems like a far off event, always something to be worried about later, so maybe is the feeling we have when we are young. And after, reaching old age, there is no hope, or a chance to escape. Living world in form of a tree.

Wants

It talks about the feeling of being alone. But that we are not prepared for that, even if we want to, maybe even society it is not prepared for that.

And then, in the second stanza it talks about oblivion, that could refer to the death or about the state of boing completely alone, achieving the wish of the first stanza.

Beyond all this, the wish to be alone:  
However the sky grows dark with invitation-cards  
However we follow the printed directions of sex  
However the family is photographed under the flag-staff -  
Beyond all this, the wish to be alone.  
  
Beneath it all, the desire for oblivion runs:  
Despite the artful tensions of the calendar,  
The life insurance, the tabled fertility rites,  
The costly aversion of the eyes away from death -  
Beneath it all, the desire for oblivion runs.

Days

What are days for?

Days are where we live.

In the first stanza, there is like an explanation about life and time, explained with a sense of innocence and even kind of simple.

But in the second, this tone changes, the tone is more urgent or even desperate. Probably saying: “priest and the doctor” makes a reference to the conflict between religion and science.

They come, they wake us

Time and time over.

They are to be happy in:

Where can we live but days?

Ah, solving that question

Brings the priest and the doctor

In their long coats

Running over the fields.

I Remember, I Remember

Parody of the First World War.

Coming up England by a different line  
For once, early in the cold new year,  
We stopped, and, watching men with number plates  
Sprint down the platform to familiar gates,  
'Why, Coventry!' I exclaimed. "I was born here.'  
  
I leant far out, and squinnied for a sign  
That this was still the town that had been 'mine'  
So long, but found I wasn't even clear  
Which side was which. From where those cycle-crates  
Were standing, had we annually departed  
  
For all those family hols? . . . A whistle went:  
Things moved. I sat back, staring at my boots.  
'Was that,' my friend smiled, 'where you "have your roots"?'  
No, only where my childhood was unspent,  
I wanted to retort, just where I started:  
  
By now I've got the whole place clearly charted.  
Our garden, first: where I did not invent  
Blinding theologies of flowers and fruits,  
And wasn't spoken to by an old hat.  
And here we have that splendid family  
  
I never ran to when I got depressed,  
The boys all biceps and the girls all chest,  
Their comic Ford, their farm where I could be  
'Really myself'. I'll show you, come to that,  
The bracken where I never trembling sat,  
  
Determined to go through with it; where she  
Lay back, and 'all became a burning mist'.  
And, in those offices, my doggerel  
Was not set up in blunt ten-point, nor read  
By a distinguished cousin of the mayor,  
  
Who didn't call and tell my father There  
Before us, had we the gift to see ahead -  
'You look as though you wished the place in Hell,'  
My friend said, 'judging from your face.' 'Oh well,  
I suppose it's not the place's fault,' I said.  
  
'Nothing, like something, happens anywhere.'

The final stanza is like a conclusion. His thought are interrupted, and he blames the place.

In these lines, the speaker describes a family he did not visit to find some childhood happiness. He describes the boys who would’ve lived there as being “all biceps” and the girls as “all chest.” They would’ve owned a “Ford” car and their “farm” could’ve provided him with a place he could “Really” be himself. Once again this line is in quotes in order to bring light to the phrase. The speaker knows it is a cliché.

He starts speaking about thing that happened to him. His childhood.

The speaker arriving to Coventry, his hometown. He looks around looking for recognizing something, but he doesn’t. It seems that Coventry was not a home for him.

Church Going

Once I am sure there's nothing going on  
I step inside, letting the door thud shut.  
Another church: matting, seats, and stone,  
And little books; sprawlings of flowers, cut  
For Sunday, brownish now; some brass and stuff  
Up at the holy end; the small neat organ;  
And a tense, musty, unignorable silence,  
Brewed God knows how long. Hatless, I take off  
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence,  
  
Move forward, run my hand around the font.  
From where I stand, the roof looks almost new-  
Cleaned or restored? Someone would know: I don't.  
Mounting the lectern, I peruse a few  
Hectoring large-scale verses, and pronounce  
"Here endeth" much more loudly than I'd meant.  
The echoes snigger briefly. Back at the door  
I sign the book, donate an Irish sixpence,  
Reflect the place was not worth stopping for.  
  
Yet stop I did: in fact I often do,  
And always end much at a loss like this,  
Wondering what to look for; wondering, too,  
When churches fall completely out of use  
What we shall turn them into, if we shall keep  
A few cathedrals chronically on show,  
Their parchment, plate, and pyx in locked cases,  
And let the rest rent-free to rain and sheep.  
Shall we avoid them as unlucky places?  
  
Or, after dark, will dubious women come  
To make their children touch a particular stone;  
Pick simples for a cancer; or on some  
Advised night see walking a dead one?  
Power of some sort or other will go on  
In games, in riddles, seemingly at random;  
But superstition, like belief, must die,  
And what remains when disbelief has gone?  
Grass, weedy pavement, brambles, buttress, sky,  
  
A shape less recognizable each week,  
A purpose more obscure. I wonder who  
Will be the last, the very last, to seek  
This place for what it was; one of the crew  
That tap and jot and know what rood-lofts were?  
Some ruin-bibber, randy for antique,  
Or Christmas-addict, counting on a whiff  
Of gown-and-bands and organ-pipes and myrrh?  
Or will he be my representative,  
  
Bored, uninformed, knowing the ghostly silt  
Dispersed, yet tending to this cross of ground  
Through suburb scrub because it held unspilt  
So long and equably what since is found  
Only in separation - marriage, and birth,  
And death, and thoughts of these - for whom was built  
This special shell? For, though I've no idea  
What this accoutred frowsty barn is worth,  
It pleases me to stand in silence here;  
  
A serious house on serious earth it is,  
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,  
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.  
And that much never can be obsolete,  
Since someone will forever be surprising  
A hunger in himself to be more serious,  
And gravitating with it to this ground,  
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,  
If only that so many dead lie round.

It seems that he has a conflict about his attraction to churches. He enters looking for something, but he always leaves unsatisfied. Then he think about the use of churches when they wont be used.

Then he starts thinking about the spiritual reasons about the people coming inside.

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Life is meaningless.

He is considering who the very last believer or pilgrim, or seeker of truth will be who enters the building. Lastly, he considers the option that the seeker will be as is he, someone who is “uninformed” and unclear on the purpose of religion.

Description of the speaking entering in a church. He is not sure about the reason he wants to be there.

He is confused about the inside and the views. He signed the book, give some money, and go away because that place was not worth it.

The speaker continues his prospective description of who the last visitor of the church will be. This person might be as he is, curious about the place because of its long-lasting nature. It can please one to “stand in silence here.”

At this point, we have the impression that the speaker holds no real regard for religion or the true structure of the church. But we get in doubt with: “A serious house on serious earth.”

A landlady tells the speaker that the room he's considering renting was formerly occupied by a man named Mr. Bleaney.

The speaker tells the landlady he'll rent it. The speaker now lies in the same bed of Bleaney.

He's learned all of Bleaney's old habits. He's also learned about the yearly schedule that shaped those habits.

At the same time, the speaker wonders if Bleaney felt a persistent fear that our living conditions reflect who we truly are. The speaker says that these are things he doesn't know for sure about Bleaney.

Mr Bleaney

‘This was Mr Bleaney’s room. He stayed  
The whole time he was at the Bodies, till  
They moved him.’ Flowered curtains, thin and frayed,  
Fall to within five inches of the sill,

Whose window shows a strip of building land,  
[Tussocky](https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/207833#eid17212545), littered. ‘Mr Bleaney took  
My bit of garden properly in hand.’  
Bed, upright chair, sixty-watt bulb, no hook

Behind the door, no room for books or bags —  
‘I’ll take it.’ So it happens that I lie  
Where Mr Bleaney lay, and stub my fags  
On the same saucer-souvenir, and try

Stuffing my ears with cotton-wool, to drown  
The jabbering set he egged her on to buy.  
I know his habits — what time he came down,  
His preference for sauce to gravy, why

He kept on plugging at the four aways —  
Likewise their yearly frame: the Frinton folk  
Who put him up for summer holidays,  
And Christmas at his sister’s house in Stoke.

But if he stood and watched the frigid wind  
Tousling the clouds, lay on the fusty bed  
Telling himself that this was home, and grinned,  
And shivered, without shaking off the dread

That how we live measures our own nature,  
And at his age having no more to show  
Than one hired box should make him pretty sure  
He warranted no better, I don’t know.

Ignorance

Strange to know nothing, never to be sure (paradoxe)  
Of what is true or right or real, (basic philosophical)  
But forced to qualify or so I feel,  
Or Well, it does seem so: (examinating ignorance)  
Someone must know.  
  
Strange to be ignorant of the way things work:  
Their skill at finding what they need,  
Their sense of shape, and punctual spread of seed,  
And willingness to change;  
Yes, it is strange,  
  
Even to wear such knowledge - for our flesh  
Surrounds us with its own decisions -  
And yet spend all our life on imprecisions,  
That when we start to die  
Have no idea why.

describes young lambs taking their first steps into the big wide world in the snow. The poet seems to wait with the lambs and the earth itself, for that ‘immeasurable surprise’ which lies in store for the lambs, when spring comes. The poem presents a vivid description of the grass and flowers beneath the white canopy of winter’s snow. The poem prevalently touches upon innocence: lambs, snow, new-borns.

He doesn’t know what is true, right, or real, but someone has to know.

We have to take decisions, and they will always be imprecisied.

Death will arrive and we do not know why.

Talking about what would be after our death.

First Sight

Lambs that learn to walk in snow  
When their bleating clouds the air  
Meet a vast unwelcome, know  
Nothing but a sunless glare.  
Newly stumbling to and fro  
All they find, outside the fold,  
Is a wretched width of cold.  
  
As they wait beside the ewe,  
Her fleeces wetly caked, there lies  
Hidden round them, waiting too,  
Earth's immeasureable surprise.  
They could not grasp it if they knew,  
What so soon will wake and grow  
Utterly unlike the snow.

The Whitsun Weddings

That Whitsun, I was late getting away:

    Not till about

One-twenty on the sunlit Saturday

Did my three-quarters-empty train pull out,

All windows down, all cushions hot, all sense

Of being in a hurry gone. We ran

Behind the backs of houses, crossed a street

Of blinding windscreens, smelt the fish-dock; thence

The river’s level drifting breadth began,

Where sky and Lincolnshire and water meet.

All afternoon, through the tall heat that slept

    For miles inland,

A slow and stopping curve southwards we kept.

Wide farms went by, short-shadowed cattle, and

Canals with floatings of industrial froth;

A hothouse flashed uniquely: hedges dipped

And rose: and now and then a smell of grass

Displaced the reek of buttoned carriage-cloth

Until the next town, new and nondescript,

Approached with acres of dismantled cars.

At first, I didn’t notice what a noise

    The weddings made

Each station that we stopped at: sun destroys

The interest of what’s happening in the shade,

And down the long cool platforms whoops and skirls

I took for porters larking with the mails,

And went on reading. Once we started, though,

We passed them, grinning and pomaded, girls

In parodies of fashion, heels and veils,

All posed irresolutely, watching us go,

As if out on the end of an event

    Waving goodbye

To something that survived it. Struck, I leant

More promptly out next time, more curiously,

And saw it all again in different terms:

The fathers with broad belts under their suits

And seamy foreheads; mothers loud and fat;

An uncle shouting smut; and then the perms,

The nylon gloves and jewellery-substitutes,

The lemons, mauves, and olive-ochres that

Marked off the girls unreally from the rest.

    Yes, from cafés

And banquet-halls up yards, and bunting-dressed

Coach-party annexes, the wedding-days

Were coming to an end. All down the line

Fresh couples climbed aboard: the rest stood round;

The last confetti and advice were thrown,

And, as we moved, each face seemed to define

Just what it saw departing: children frowned

At something dull; fathers had never known

Success so huge and wholly farcical;

    The women shared

The secret like a happy funeral;

While girls, gripping their handbags tighter, stared

At a religious wounding. Free at last,

And loaded with the sum of all they saw,

We hurried towards London, shuffling gouts of steam.

Now fields were building-plots, and poplars cast

Long shadows over major roads, and for

Some fifty minutes, that in time would seem

Just long enough to settle hats and say

    I nearly died,

A dozen marriages got under way.

They watched the landscape, sitting side by side

—An Odeon went past, a cooling tower,

And someone running up to bowl—and none

Thought of the others they would never meet

Or how their lives would all contain this hour.

I thought of London spread out in the sun,

Its postal districts packed like squares of wheat:

There we were aimed. And as we raced across

    Bright knots of rail

Past standing Pullmans, walls of blackened moss

Came close, and it was nearly done, this frail

Travelling coincidence; and what it held

Stood ready to be loosed with all the power

That being changed can give. We slowed again,

And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled

A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower

Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

Home is so Sad

Home is so sad. It stays as it was left,  
Shaped to the comfort of the last to go  
As if to win them back. Instead, bereft  
Of anyone to please, it withers so,  
Having no heart to put aside the theft

It is about the importance of home. He talks about being alone. He tells people who would come back home, that it wont be the same.

And turn again to what it started as,  
A joyous shot at how things ought to be,  
Long fallen wide. You can see how it was:  
Look at the pictures and the cutlery.  
The music in the piano stool. That vase.

Afternoons

depiction of post-war Britain.

Summer fading: progression of time.

After the Second World War new housing developments were designed but the [Speaker](https://poemanalysis.com/diction/speaker-in-poetry/) soon takes the shine off these as he notes them as being merely ‘an estateful of washing’. Marriage has lost its luster.

The final lines of this stanza suggest that their [romance](https://poemanalysis.com/genre/romance/) has faded. Children and the monotony of daily life has gradually taken the sheen off these relationships, just as the wind physically disturbs their former meeting places.

[Summer is fading:](https://genius.com/9231322/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Summer-is-fading)  
[The leaves fall in ones and twos](https://genius.com/17120101/Philip-larkin-afternoons/The-leaves-fall-in-ones-and-twos)  
From trees [bordering](https://genius.com/11880291/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Bordering)  
The [new](https://genius.com/20050934/Philip-larkin-afternoons/New) [recreation ground.](https://genius.com/9274983/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Recreation-ground)  
[In the hollows of afternoons](https://genius.com/9274984/Philip-larkin-afternoons/In-the-hollows-of-afternoons)  
[Young mothers assemble](https://genius.com/9274987/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Young-mothers-assemble)  
[At swing and sandpit](https://genius.com/11880382/Philip-larkin-afternoons/At-swing-and-sandpit)  
[Setting free their children](https://genius.com/11816939/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Setting-free-their-children).  
  
[Behind them, at intervals,](https://genius.com/16421051/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Behind-them-at-intervals)  
[Stand husbands in skilled trades](https://genius.com/11816923/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Stand-husbands-in-skilled-trades),  
[An estateful of washing,](https://genius.com/16451321/Philip-larkin-afternoons/An-estateful-of-washing)  
[And the albums, lettered  
Our Wedding, lying  
Near the television:](https://genius.com/17183442/Philip-larkin-afternoons/And-the-albums-lettered-our-wedding-lying-near-the-television)  
[Before them, the wind  
Is ruining their courting-places](https://genius.com/9231355/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Before-them-the-wind-is-ruining-their-courting-places)  
  
[That are still courting-places](https://genius.com/17183467/Philip-larkin-afternoons/That-are-still-courting-places)  
[(But the lovers are all in school),](https://genius.com/9274997/Philip-larkin-afternoons/But-the-lovers-are-all-in-school)  
And their children, [so intent on  
Finding more unripe acorns,](https://genius.com/11574109/Philip-larkin-afternoons/So-intent-on-finding-more-unripe-acorns)  
[Expect to be taken home.](https://genius.com/11574123/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Expect-to-be-taken-home)  
[Their beauty has thickened.](https://genius.com/11574076/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Their-beauty-has-thickened)  
[Something is pushing them  
To the side of their own lives.](https://genius.com/9231337/Philip-larkin-afternoons/Something-is-pushing-them-to-the-side-of-their-own-lives)

Talking in Bed

Talking in bed ought to be easiest,  
Lying together there goes back so far,  
An emblem of two people being honest.  
Yet more and more time passes silently.  
Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest  
Builds and disperses clouds in the sky,  
And dark towns heap up on the horizon.  
None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why  
At this unique distance from isolation  
It becomes still more difficult to find  
Words at once true and kind,  
Or not untrue and not unkind.

It’s a poem about how loneliness can invade even the most intimate moments (and insignificance).

The poem describes a journey through the city. Yet we have no helpful map to guide us or locate where we are: precisely where ‘Here’ is remains a mystery when we begin reading Larkin’s poem.

2. It is as if this place where nothing much is happening and there is little of note to see is the last place one would expect to find a built-up urban settlement.

3. focus again, this time from the town’s environs to the people themselves. But it’s true that this town is on the edge of civilisation.

It’s ‘fishy-smelling’ because of Hull’s location on the North Sea, and this part of the English coast was important for Britain’s fishing industry, and it’s a city still under construction.

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Being alone (romantic being unromantic).

Here

[Swerving east, from rich industrial shadows  
And traffic all night north; swerving through fields  
Too thin and thistled to be called meadows,  
And now and then a harsh-named halt, that shields  
Workmen at dawn;](https://genius.com/24271096/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Swerving-east-from-rich-industrial-shadows-and-traffic-all-night-north-swerving-through-fields-too-thin-and-thistled-to-be-called-meadows-and-now-and-then-a-harsh-named-halt-that-shields-workmen-at-dawn) [swerving to solitude  
Of skies and scarecrows, haystacks, hares and pheasants,  
And the widening river’s slow presence,  
The piled gold clouds, the shining gull-marked mud,](https://genius.com/24271097/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Swerving-to-solitude-of-skies-and-scarecrows-haystacks-hares-and-pheasants-and-the-widening-rivers-slow-presence-the-piled-gold-clouds-the-shining-gull-marked-mud)  
  
[Gathers to the surprise of a large town:](https://genius.com/24283506/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Gathers-to-the-surprise-of-a-large-town)  
[Here domes and statues, spires and cranes cluster  
Beside grain-scattered streets, barge-crowded water,  
And residents from raw estates, brought down  
The dead straight miles by stealing flat-faced trolleys,  
Push through plate-glass swing doors to their desires -  
Cheap suits, red kitchen-ware, sharp shoes, iced lollies,  
Electric mixers, toasters, washers, driers –](https://genius.com/24283546/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Here-domes-and-statues-spires-and-cranes-cluster-beside-grain-scattered-streets-barge-crowded-water-and-residents-from-raw-estates-brought-down-the-dead-straight-miles-by-stealing-flat-faced-trolleys-push-through-plate-glass-swing-doors-to-their-desires-cheap-suits-red-kitchen-ware-sharp-shoes-iced-lollies-electric-mixers-toasters-washers-driers)  
  
[A cut-price crowd, urban yet simple, dwelling](https://genius.com/24283760/Philip-larkin-here-589672/A-cut-price-crowd-urban-yet-simple-dwelling)  
[Where only salesmen and relations come  
Within a terminate and fishy-smelling  
Pastoral of ships up streets, the slave museum,  
Tattoo-shops, consulates, grim head-scarfed wives](https://genius.com/24283815/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Where-only-salesmen-and-relations-come-within-a-terminate-and-fishy-smelling-pastoral-of-ships-up-streets-the-slave-museum-tattoo-shops-consulates-grim-head-scarfed-wives);  
[And out beyond its mortgaged half-built edges  
Fast-shadowed wheat-fields, running high as hedges,  
Isolate villages, where removed lives  
Loneliness clarifies.](https://genius.com/24284427/Philip-larkin-here-589672/And-out-beyond-its-mortgaged-half-built-edges-fast-shadowed-wheat-fields-running-high-as-hedges-isolate-villages-where-removed-lives-loneliness-clarifies) [Here silence stands  
Like heat. Here leaves unnoticed thicken,  
Hidden weeds flower, neglected waters quicken,  
Luminously-peopled air ascends;  
And past the poppies bluish neutral distance](https://genius.com/24284503/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Here-silence-stands-like-heat-here-leaves-unnoticed-thicken-hidden-weeds-flower-neglected-waters-quicken-luminously-peopled-air-ascends-and-past-the-poppies-bluish-neutral-distance)  
[Ends the land suddenly beyond a beach  
Of shapes and shingle. Here is unfenced existence:  
Facing the sun, untalkative, out of reach.](https://genius.com/11668278/Philip-larkin-here-589672/Ends-the-land-suddenly-beyond-a-beach-of-shapes-and-shingle-here-is-unfenced-existence-facing-the-sun-untalkative-out-of-reach)

The Dean of a school talks with a former pupil. The Dean mentions that [Larkin](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Poems-of-Philip-Larkin/author/) attended school with Dockery whose son now also attends.

The conversation fades away as Larkin remembers nighttime incidents at the school that he had to explain.

Larkin returns to his old room but the door is locked. He leaves on a train and begins to think about Dockery. His memories of Dockery are vague and he falls asleep just as he seems on the cusp of remembering.

Larkin wakes up when the train arrives in Sheffield. He changes trains and reflects on his own life. Larkin worries that he has wasted his life when he realizes that Dockery has had a son whereas Larkin has achieved little.

He realizes that life is constantly passing everyone by.

PASSING OF TIME.

Dockery and Son

‘Dockery was junior to you,

Wasn’t he?’ said the Dean. ‘His son’s here now.’

Death-suited, visitant, I nod. ‘And do

You keep in touch with—’ Or remember how

Black-gowned, unbreakfasted, and still half-tight

We used to stand before that desk, to give

‘Our version’ of ‘these incidents last night’?

I try the door of where I used to live:

Locked. The lawn spreads dazzlingly wide.

A known bell chimes. I catch my train, ignored.

Canal and clouds and colleges subside

Slowly from view. But Dockery, good Lord,

Anyone up today must have been born

In ’43, when I was twenty-one.

If he was younger, did he get this son

At nineteen, twenty? Was he that withdrawn

High-collared public-schoolboy, sharing rooms

With Cartwright who was killed? Well, it just shows

How much ... How little ... Yawning, I suppose

I fell asleep, waking at the fumes

And furnace-glares of Sheffield, where I changed,

And ate an awful pie, and walked along

The platform to its end to see the ranged

Joining and parting lines reflect a strong

Unhindered moon. To have no son, no wife,

No house or land still seemed quite natural.

Only a numbness registered the shock

Of finding out how much had gone of life,

How widely from the others. Dockery, now:

Only nineteen, he must have taken stock

Of what he wanted, and been capable

Of ... No, that’s not the difference: rather, how

Convinced he was he should be added to!

Why did he think adding meant increase?

To me it was dilution. Where do these

Innate assumptions come from? Not from what

We think truest, or most want to do:

Those warp tight-shut, like doors. They’re more a style

Our lives bring with them: habit for a while,

Suddenly they harden into all we’ve got

And how we got it; looked back on, they rear

Like sand-clouds, thick and close, embodying

For Dockery a son, for me nothing,

Nothing with all a son’s harsh patronage.

Life is first boredom, then fear.

Whether or not we use it, it goes,

And leaves what something hidden from us chose,

And age, and then the only end of age.

High Windows

"High [Windows](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Poems-of-Philip-Larkin/symbols/#Windows)" explores the differences in society that emerged throughout the 1960s. The poem begins with the poet looking at two young people and knowing that they are able to have sex with one another while using the birth control methods that were made available following extended campaigns in Britain in the 1960s. He describes this as "paradise." The poet then wonders whether a person might have looked at him in the same appraising light 40 years earlier. Society during the early 20th century had begun to move away from religion and there seemed to be "no God any more." The poet thinks of the sky seen through high windows. The sky seems endless and empty.

## Analysis

When I see a couple of kids

And guess he’s fucking her and she’s

Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm,

I know this is paradise

Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives—

Bonds and gestures pushed to one side

Like an outdated combine harvester,

And everyone young going down the long slide

To happiness, endlessly. I wonder if

Anyone looked at me, forty years back,

And thought, That’ll be the life;

No God any more, or sweating in the dark

About hell and that, or having to hide

What you think of the priest. He

And his lot will all go down the long slide

Like free bloody birds. And immediately

Rather than words comes the thought of high windows:

The sun-comprehending glass,

And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows

Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.

Annus Mirabilis

Sexual intercourse began  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(which was rather late for me) -  
Between the end of the Chatterley ban  
And the Beatles' first LP.  
  
Up to then there'd only been  
A sort of bargaining,  
A wrangle for the ring,  
A shame that started at sixteen  
And spread to everything.  
  
Then all at once the quarrel sank:  
Everyone felt the same,  
And every life became  
A brilliant breaking of the bank,  
A quite unlosable game.  
  
So life was never better than  
In nineteen sixty-three  
(Though just too late for me) -  
Between the end of the Chatterley ban  
And the Beatles' first LP.

"a remarkable year." The phrase is borrowed exactly from a John Dryden poem of the same name that told the story of 1666 that included a British naval battle against the Dutch and the Great Fire of London. "[Annus Mirabilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Poems-of-Philip-Larkin/annus-mirabilis-summary/)" attempts to locate the exact moment in time when the sexual revolution of the 1960s became a reality. [Larkin](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Poems-of-Philip-Larkin/author/) suggests that sex itself began in 1963 between the time when Lady Chatterley's Lover (1927) by D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930) was no longer banned and when the Beatles released their first album. Relationships before this point had been largely focused on marriage which Larkin describes as "a wrangle for the ring." After this point sexual relations were free and more of a game. Larkin believes that the game was "unlosable" but mentions that the sexual revolution came slightly too late for him.

Homage to a Government

Next year we are to bring all the soldiers home  
For lack of money, and it is all right.  
Places they guarded, or kept orderly,  
Must guard themselves, and keep themselves orderly  
We want the money for ourselves at home  
Instead of working. And this is all right.  
  
It's hard to say who wanted it to happen,  
But now it's been decided nobody minds.  
The places are a long way off, not here,  
Which is all right, and from what we hear  
The soldiers there only made trouble happen.  
Next year we shall be easier in our minds.  
  
Next year we shall be living in a country  
That brought its soldiers home for lack of money.  
The statues will be standing in the same  
Tree-muffled squares, and look nearly the same.  
Our children will not know it's a different country.  
All we can hope to leave them now is money.

Irony.

This Be the Verse

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.

    They may not mean to, but they do.

They fill you with the faults they had

    And add some extra, just for you.

The poem is about genetic inheritance and upbringing, what we inherit and what we pass on. Our parents mess us up, but it’s not really their fault because they were messed up by their parents. This is the way of humanity – like a coastal shelf where deposits of sand build up, so the misery deepens over generations. You can “get out” by killing yourself or shrugging off any sense of responsibility, or you can refuse to have children and hence not pass the misery on even further (Larkin never married and had no children).

But they were fucked up in their turn

    By fools in old-style hats and coats,

Who half the time were soppy-stern

    And half at one another’s throats.

Man hands on misery to man.

    It deepens like a coastal shelf.

Get out as early as you can,

    And don’t have any kids yourself.

Going, Going

I thought it would last my time—

The sense that, beyond the town,

There would always be fields and farms,

Where the village louts could climb

Such trees as were not cut down;

Tension about country side and the city.

Countryside is being replaced by new cities.

Overexplotation of the environment.

Nature is overcrowded with people wanting to contemplate nature

England would disspear if they continue like this: traditional houses. This change will happen soon.

Modern world destroys the old one. And the old one is going to a museum.

Commission by the environment.

I knew there’d be false alarms

In the papers about old streets

And split level shopping, but some

Have always been left so far;

And when the old part retreats

As the bleak high-risers come

We can always escape in the car.

Things are tougher than we are, just

As earth will always respond

However we mess it about;

Chuck filth in the sea, if you must:

The tides will be clean beyond.

—But what do I feel now? Doubt?

Or age, simply? The crowd

Is young in the M1 cafe;

Their kids are screaming for more—

More houses, more parking allowed,

More caravan sites, more pay.

On the Business Page, a score

We: referring to England

Of spectacled grins approve

Some takeover bid that entails

Five per cent profit (and ten

Per cent more in the estuaries): move

Your works to the unspoilt dales

(Grey area grants)! And when

You try to get near the sea

In summer . . .

       It seems, just now,

To be happening so very fast;

Despite all the land left free

For the first time I feel somehow

That it isn’t going to last,

That before I snuff it, the whole

Boiling will be bricked in

Except for the tourist parts—

First slum of Europe: a role

It won’t be hard to win,

With a cast of crooks and tarts.

And that will be England gone,

The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,

The guildhalls, the carved choirs.

There’ll be books; it will linger on

In galleries; but all that remains

For us will be concrete and tyres.

Most things are never meant.

This won’t be, most likely; but greeds

And garbage are too thick-strewn

To be swept up now, or invent

Excuses that make them all needs.

I just think it will happen, soon.

**An Arundel Tomb**

Begining: empyteness. Aristocrat. He was not very important to them.

Older man in love with a young woman. The poems ends: our relationship remains In existence because we like each other.

Tomb:

Time has transfigured (into untruth) them. Eternity? Untruth.

Approach to a love poem.

What will survive of us? Love

God is not love, is the survive of the features.

It ends up being a poem about death.