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Vultures

Theme

Omnipresence of evil. Even warm loving creatures can be evil. Even evil creatures can be good.

Tone

Depressing / miserable

Mood

Grim / gloomy

Form

Enjambment - fast pace

4 stanzas

Free verse

No Rhyme pattern.

Each section of the poem is marked by a line of indentation rather than a new stanza. This could possibly indicate how one idea flows to the next as the poem develops. The arrangement of lines appears to be almost like a list, a building up of evidence. The short lines running on to the next could suggest a continuous flow of content that supports the poet's theme.

Vocabulary

Despondent - miserable

Harbinger - messengers

Channel-house - place where bodies are kept

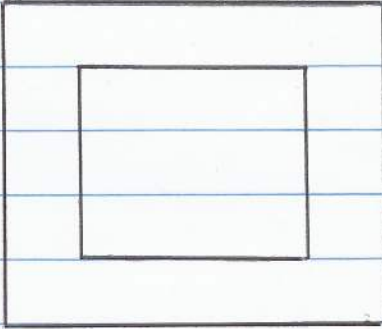
Providence - fate/God

Encapsulated - closed in

Kindred - family

Perpetuity - everlasting

Root of the poem

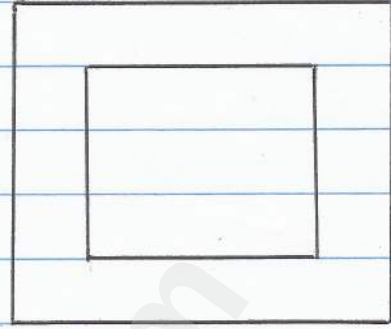


Vultures

Look disgusting, eat rotten food and are generally disgusting.

Poet reveals there is good inside which is a redeeming feature.

Also capable of love.



Guard

On the outside described as respectable person coming home from work. The very nature of what he does for a living is evil and this sits at the heart of what he is trying to do

This brings up an important Question

It is better to be an evil creature capable of doing good or a good person capable of doing evil. Which is more disturbing?

This is the clash of good and evil. Evil can live with good and good can live with evil

- 1 In the greyness
- 2 and drizzle of one despondent
- 3 dawn unstirred by harbingers
- 4 of sunbreak a vulture
- 5 perching high on broken
- 6 bones of a dead tree
- 7 nestled close to his
- 8 mate his smooth
- 9 bashed-in head, a pebble
- 10 on a stem rooted in
- 11 a clump of grass
- 12 feathers, inclined affectionately

At the start of the poem is **Pathetic fallacy**. This is when the weather indicates the mood. **Alliteration** in "drizzle, despondent, dawn" helps to emphasise the bleak tone. "Harbinger" is an **Omen** - indication of something bad is going to happen. "Sunbreak" is then described as a negative thing which is weird as light is generally indication of good. "Broken bones" is **personification**. Tree is given bones that are broken - a person in pain. The scenery relies on the **Semantic field of death**. "nestled close to his mate" is like someone cosing up to a loved one. Doesn't feel right. Brings back to contrast of good and evil. Line 9-12 is a very vivid description and trying to build up this description of the vulture. A pebble - like the head. Stem - long, thin neck. Gross feathers - just gory in general. "affectionately" - after all this horrible description it shows the potential for love and care.

13 to hers. Yesterday they picked
14 the eyes of a swollen
15 corpse in a water-logged
16 trench and ate the
17 things in its bowel. Full
18 gorged they chose their roost
19 keeping the hollowed remnant
20 in easy range of cold
21 telescopic eyes

Lines 14-19 mainly describing the evil, putrid behaviour of the vultures. Eating an empty corpse's eye and its bowel. Using realistic vocabulary to disgust the reader. "Easy range of cold telescopic eyes". Easy range - suggests a weapon or gun. Cold suggests metal and telescopic eyes suggest telescopic sights. This is a **metaphor** - vultures are so concerned about death that they are being described weapons - cold, mechanical but capable of affection.

22 Strange
23 indeed how love in other
24 ways so particular
25 will pick a corner
26 in that charnel-house
27 tidy it and coil up there, perhaps
28 even fall asleep - her face
29 turned to the wall!

"Strange" is **enjambement** and also after the word it creates a pause; like the poet is thinking. The whole stanza is **personification**. Love being compared to a woman going inside a slaughter house and even falls asleep. It shows how love can exist with the evil and gore and ignore it as well. Just like in the heart of the vulture, "even sleep" indicates that she is comfortable, "turned to the wall!" can be interpreted to people being lined up against walls before being gunned down by firing squads.

30 . . . Thus the Commandant at Belsen

31 Camp going home for

32 the day with fumes of

33 human roast clinging

34 rebelliously to his hairy

35 nostrils will stop

36 at the wayside Sweet-shop

37 and pick up a chocolate

38 for his tender offspring

39 waiting at home for Daddy's return.

40 return...

Line 30 - Stating job title - not sugar coating it. "Going home for the day" indicates it was just another day at work, nothing bothering him. Line 32-35 is powerful imagery. Especially "rebelliously" indicates you can't get rid of it and it ~~ha~~ haunts you. It gives hope when he goes home it will be a reminder and he won't be at ease. No implication of remorse or guilt. "Daddy's return" - not father but daddy - indicating he is loved and respected. Lines 36-38 shows a kind gesture and another side to him. Tenderness indicating soft gentle love.

41 Praise bounteous

42 providence if you will

43 that grants even an ogre

44 a tiny glow-worm

45 tenderness encapsulated

46 in icy caverns of a cruel

47 heart or else despair

48 for in the very germ

49 of that kindred love is

50 lodged the perpetuity

51 of evil

This whole stanza goes back to the root of the poem. There are 2 metaphors here

Lines 41-46. Praise the lord. Tiny glow-worm indicating how dull and small it is which is closed in a cold cavern. That in that cold heart there is a tiny bit of good. **Vulture**

Line 48-51. Despair - Contrast to praising. Love described as germ; for every love to your fellow man there is everlasting evil. That in that infected love or infected good; at the very heart of it is corruption or evil. **The Guard**

Further analysis

There is no good people or bad people. There are only more good people and more bad people.

The vultures perform a vital ecological service, and act on instinct. The humans, who have the ability to make moral decisions are where the evil resides.