

Personal poem

The Way **My Mother** Speaks

I say her phrases **to myself**

Absence, loneliness, isolation

in my head

Metaphor-'shallows'=water-feeling of anxiety, drowning. Shallow breathing=panicky, short sharp breaths

or under the shallows of my breath,

Contrast with shallow breathing-soothed by words

restful shapes moving.

Repetition=comfort of words; mimics trains rhythmic movements

The day and ever. The day and ever.

The train this slow evening

Assonance-elongated vowels mimic slow, languid nature of journey

goes down England

Meandering, slow pace of journey emphasised

browsing for the right sky,

Colour symbolism-blue skies=happiness, joy; grey=boredom, misery, bad things to come-journey from Scotland (happy) to England (sad)

too blue swapped for a **cool grey**.

For miles I have been saying

What like is it

Inversion/dialectal speech-contrasts
with standard English of rest of poem
Language and identity strongly linked

Idea of secrecy-unspoken language, but
integral to speaker

the way I say things when I think.

Repetition/contrast-
overwhelmed/unnerved by feelings of
leaving home

Nothing is silent. Nothing is not silent.

What like is it.

Repetition-soothing, comfort of
mother's dialect

Only tonight

Briefness of moment, reflection

Contrast-firm ambiguity in emotions

I am happy and sad

like a child

Simile-innocent, naïve-ending of one
chapter of life, starting anew-
nostalgia for past, childhood

who stood at the end of summer

and dipped a net

Tentative, careful

Unknown, mysterious nature of
new place-pond-hidden depths to
explore

in a **green, erotic pond**. The day

Repetition-journey continuing
towards new destination

and ever. The day and ever.

Contrast-conflicting emotions in
departure from home

I am **homesick, free, in love**

Nostalgia-strong ties to home and
family

with the way my mother speaks.