

## THE WAY MY MOTHER SPEAKS

Word choice comforting, love, close relationship

Word choice private experience, alone

Paradox confusion echoes speaker's feelings

Broad vowels slow it down like the train journey

Emphasise the distance travelled

Colloquial language and repetition

I say her phrases to myself  
in my head  
or under the shallows of my breath,  
restful shapes moving.  
*The day and ever. The day and ever.*

Repetition mimics movement of the train, emphasises loss and how long the negative feelings will last, do not want to forget

The train this slow evening  
goes down England  
browsing for the right sky,  
too blue swapped for a cool grey.  
For miles I have been saying  
*What like is it*  
the way I say things when I think.  
Nothing is silent. Nothing is not silent.  
*What like is it.*

Repetition of "nothing" connotations of negative feelings, loss, hesitancy and confusion. Sounds in their head so silent but they can hear them as if they are real/overwhelming. Double negative shows a realisation that they do not need to abandon roots/ reluctant to forget their mother and past.

Antithesis of change, links to something permanent, reflects a dialect, conveys a sense of belonging to your roots

First person narration, makes it personal and shows the speakers actions

Metaphor connotations of anxiety, longs to hear the familiar words

Stanza 2 – transition, change is present through the symbolism of the train journey

Word choice of "browsing" connotations of searching, looking for where they belong "right sky" suggests there is a place that looks right and suits them

Word choice of "blue" connotations of sun, warmth, comfort and happiness. "cool grey" connotations of misery and cold, uncertainty. Focus on lack of perfection in both places

Highlights the contrasting identities. The way the speaker thinks and acts are different. Link to roots and background etc.

Stanza 3 – more positive, sense of excitement, bittersweet experience

Only tonight  
I am happy and sad  
like a child  
who stood at the end of summer  
and dipped a net  
in a green, erotic pond. *The day  
and ever. The day and ever.*  
I am homesick, free, in love  
with the way my mother speaks.

Word choice suggests once in a lifetime opportunity

Symbolises a time of change, growing up and moving on

Repetition emphasises the continuing journey and permanent change

List – contradiction of positive and negative, more positive as journey ends, moving forward, link to past and stay in love with roots and memories which will remain with them.

Word choice – contrast/confusion, more confident and hopeful for the future. Simile – compares the speaker to a child, suggests innocence and hope as moving in adulthood, connection to past but embracing present to thrive in life

Word choice of "dipped" suggests tentative, cautious approach

Metaphor – links to growing up and emerging sexuality Word choice of "pond" suggests new depths to explore, new experiences, excitement

Repetition – full circle, return to title, free to create own future and remain connected to the past, positive tone to end

- Real and metaphorical journey
- Explores difficulties and conflicting emotions related to the future and growing up
- Connections to mother and positive sense of identity/roots/past
- Reflects life and the challenges ahead
- Train journey reflects the journey from childhood to adulthood and leaving security and warmth behind us
- Emotions are personal and specific

### Themes

- Childhood
- Identity
- Growing up
- Nostalgia
- Relationships
- Emotions

### Links to

- In Mrs Tilscher's Class (growing up)
- Originally (identity)
- War Photographer (contrast)
- Mrs Midas (conflicting emotions)
- Valentine (contrast)