

# Poetry - May 2014

Poetry (A)

19/20 [A]

A B C D  
4 5 5 5

-2-

2

A. F. Moritz's poem 'Better Days' is a reflective poem that explores the speaker's ~~nostalgia memories~~ <sup>from boyhood into manhood</sup> transition from ~~boyhood into manhood~~ into adulthood, in order to express the surprising importance of ~~adversity and struggle~~ <sup>adversity and struggle</sup> in the path towards happiness and ~~fulfillment~~ <sup>and fulfillment</sup>. The poet's delineation of the ~~frivolousness~~ <sup>of youth</sup> and of the ~~momentary pleasures~~ <sup>of youth</sup> of the joyful memories, in comparison to the meaningfulness of the ~~constant~~ <sup>of youth</sup> struggles of life impresses upon the reader the details of life taken for granted ~~and is~~, ultimately suggesting that it is the moments of challenge and struggle that define who one becomes.

Good on content, not on style.

Moritz begins his poem by depicting the joy-gleeful carefreeness of youth as a ~~transitory phase~~ <sup>phase</sup> that of rebellion and pleasure-seeking that is lost in adulthood. ~~The~~ <sup>g.</sup> Moritz commences his poem with ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> the word "Never" ~~which~~ <sup>which instills</sup> instilling a tone of ~~finality~~ <sup>bitter</sup> finality due to its trochaic rhythm ~~which~~, suggesting ~~stressing~~ <sup>stressing</sup> how the ~~amusing~~ <sup>amusing</sup> amusements of youth are irretrievable. The metaphor "wash of sweetness and awe" depicts the ~~scarcely~~ <sup>scarcely</sup> ephemeral and enthusiasm that fills memories of the laid-back atmosphere of youth, further emphasising the speed ~~to~~ <sup>in</sup> in which time passes by. The word "wash" is particularly meaningful as it ~~portrays~~ <sup>portrays</sup> illustrates how youth is ~~clean~~ <sup>clean</sup> the cleansing and quality and purity of youth which is ~~untainted~~ <sup>untainted</sup> by the ~~str~~ <sup>str</sup> difficulties and

B



08AB02

brutality ~~is~~ life as an adult. The juxtaposition between the positive connotations of the words "sweetness" and "dew" create a semantic field of tranquility, peace, and happiness, further contrasting with the phrase "Never anymore" which forebodes the short-livedness of such enjoyment. The words ~~The~~ use of enjambment in the ~~first~~ first stanza further extends this image by quickening the pace of the lines, illustrating the underlying ~~qui-~~ rapidity ~~which~~ ~~with~~ ~~in~~ ~~is~~ of the fading away of juvenility, and further evoking a sense of nostalgia from the reader for the unfortunate departure of youth.

B

~~Maritz~~ Maritz continues the speaker's contemplation of his memories of the past by depicting how <sup>his</sup> youth was defined by a hedonistic, rebellious and adventurous approach to life. The poet's illustration of the fleetingness of this period however, ultimately suggests that there is more to life <sup>than</sup> the insignificant escapades of youth. <sup>of his</sup> Maritz effectively encapsulates the freedom and reckless carefreeness of youth in his descriptions: "moist nights full of girls", "boys ripened" and "holy drunkenness". ~~which~~ The listing of these haphazard images and the synaesthesia of the "moist nights" and "boys ripened" which depicts a mix of <sup>the</sup> tactile and

Purposeful

Gd explanation

and senses illustrates the chaotic intermingling of these sharp ~~with~~ snapshots of the revelry of youth and ~~the~~ the confusion of drunkenness. The oxymoronic phrase "holy drunkenness" in



Particular ~~emphasises~~ <sup>illustrates</sup> the shocking ~~combination~~ <sup>way</sup> of profane and youth believe these ~~stap~~ <sup>stap</sup> reckless joys to be their heaven. This shocking mixture of the heavenly divine with the profane further illustrates the naivety and irresponsibility of the period. Yet in the midst of all this loss of control Moritz hints at the underlying security that comes with youth with his line "defiantly that never failed or brought disaster" which illustrates that beneath the complete loss of control of drunkenness and parties lies the stable foundation of ~~so~~ and support that comes with being young and knowing there is more of life to live and plenty of family to help. The repetition of the word "never" from the first stanza however again ~~also~~ <sup>eminently</sup> reminds the reader that such ~~at~~ pleasures are ~~only~~ only momentary and time must ~~ultimately~~ <sup>ultimately</sup> pass.

Moritz further ~~explains~~ the escapades of youth with his depiction of the Meritz. punctuates the speaker's reflections on the happiness of youth by ~~is~~ with a dawning realisation of the way such memories have been taken for granted and the way less ~~joyful~~ joyful, pleasant memories have come to hold greater value in adulthood. This is best depicted in the fourth stanza which features ~~are~~ a poignant change in tone with the phrase "All these things accepted".



B

The caesura of the ~~comma~~<sup>full stop</sup> preceding "All" momentarily marks a ~~change~~<sup>in direction</sup> end to the reveries of youth and invokes a tone of thoughtfulness. The use of the ~~past~~<sup>euphemistic</sup> participle ("accepted") further highlights how in hindsight there lies something beyond the whirlwind adventure of infancy. This is ~~for~~ stressed again with the word "one" which ~~has~~ echoes the finality of the "never" in stanza one. The "unnoticing hunger" with which the realities of youth were devoured adds to the nostalgia <sup>for</sup> of the subconscious, effortless eagerness ~~and~~ enthusiasm, dynamism and energy of youth. The naturalness of this phenomena of youthful dynamism is developed in the simile "as an infant / accepts the nipple" which depicts the unquestioning <sup>quality of the</sup> ~~innate~~ ~~knowledge~~ ~~of what must be~~ ~~way~~ ~~life~~ ~~flows~~ and is acceptance of the ~~shocking~~ ~~or~~ ~~hard~~-back, carefree irresponsibility of youth and highlights the ease with which life would flow. This part of the poem effectively depicts how life has a set structure at youth that is readily accepted and easily taken for granted, but only truly appreciated when one ~~has~~ must make their own life choices in ~~the~~ adulthood. In this way the "nipple" symbolises the security and support of that time, something which is absent in adulthood.

However, ~~the~~ ~~month~~ ~~moves~~ ~~away~~ ~~from~~ <sup>goes on to</sup> <sup>show</sup> the greater value of the challenges of the



turning point between childhood and adulthood as the most valuable aspect of a person's memories in the second half of the poem which explores how memories of adversity are far more prominent in hindsight. This is ~~it~~ shown when the poet writes how memories of struggle come "unsumamed", "blotting<sup>g</sup> out" everything else. The word "unsumamed" continues the imagery of the divine from "holy drunkeriners" and expresses how the speaker cannot control the incoming of these unpleasant memories. Similarly the word "blotting" juxtaposes against the "wash" of childhood, illustrating a further antithesis between the ~~lowliness~~ of youth and the ~~in~~exhausting and mystery of adulthood and manhood. ~~is~~ Likewise, the word "blotting" also marks how adulthood and struggle creates character, something absent in the "wash" and cleanliness of youth. The time of the great importance of this time in a person's life is further emphasised by the poet's description of how the "poverty" and "struggle" of life mark the "muddy seedtime of early manhood". The word "muddy" further extends the poet's symbolic motif of cleanliness and dirtiness depicting how the transition into adulthood is neither as clear or as simple and secure as the period of childhood. Yet the word "seedtime" offers some reassurance, metaphorically depicting how it is in a time of hardship that character truly grows and blooms. All in all, Moritz reminds

B and C



reader that although youth is past it is simply the beginning of a much grander life cycle.

In the final stanzas of the poem Maritz explores ~~the~~ the memories that hold the most value to the speaker. ~~The memories~~ The memories mark a change in the role of the speaker which becomes more active as the poet shifts from <sup>the detached</sup> stative verbs of the first ~~for~~ half of the poem ("accepted") and ~~the~~ to a ~~flow~~ of rhetorical questions and active interaction. This change notes the greater definition and character the persona has gained after the "poverty" of adulthood. The speaker's inquisitive questions about the nature of the old man's visits to the diner ("What did he fill it with?", "And where's he gone") suggest a greater ~~at~~ consciousness of those around him than the drunken escapades of youth making how the speaker has developed following the troubles of young manhood. ~~That~~ His clear admiration for the persistence of the old man which is a common theme in the final stanzas ("studious waker", "night after night", "eager eyes") depicts his incredulity at the desperation for knowledge and enthusiasm of someone who has less long to live. ~~That~~ The old man's incredible tenacity is further appreciated by the synaesthetic phrase "sour light" which ~~again~~ captures how despite the unpleasantness of his surroundings (as denoted



by the acerbity of the word "sour" / he is able to prevail. More importantly, the "light" also makes how the light of heaven and death is not far yet the man chooses to live life to the fullest no matter its length. These observations of the man mark the speaker's realisations of the importance of not wasting time and living life to the fullest no matter if days are "better" or not.

The final stanzas of the poem convey Moritz's message that just like the transitory phase of youth struggle too is passing and by persevering we can find that memories of challenge and ~~struggle~~ struggle are amongst the most valuable of life's experiences. The personal sentimental descriptions of the old man as a "friend" shows that it was the stranger and not the unnamed "boys" and "girls" of youth that inspired him to strive for a better tomorrow in his time of struggle. The word "hoped" illustrated how the old man's dedication to his work was a source of inspiration for the boy and depicts a sense of renewed optimism from the "muddy" <sup>and philosophical</sup> ~~final~~ line of the ~~line~~ poem: "I have disappeared, into the heaven of better days" can be read not particularly as sign of the death of the speaker but ~~the~~ <sup>his</sup> transition into a period of joy from that of difficulty. The title of the poem



2 The title of the poem is therefore relevant because it illustrates how life will ~~continue~~ continuously move between cycles of better days and ~~times~~ of difficulty. In this sense the poem offers readers a reason to keep persevering.

The natural free verse nature of the poem's ~~All in all~~ structure adds to the success of its execution as it places the speaker <sup>in</sup> at a status parallel to the reader creating a sense of comfort and empathy.

All in all, 'Better Days' is about the overall importance of hardship in building character and strength in life. The speaker's pondering questions about the cycle of happiness and hardship ~~warns~~ readers encourages readers not to give up when challenged and inspires them to persevere as it is the challenges of life that make an impact on one's ~~newer~~ memories ~~and~~ ~~days~~, so better days may come.

Thorough and purposeful argument

