Talking in Bed

SUMMARY

Chatting with one's lover in bed should be the easiest kind of communication. Couples have so much history together in the bedroom, and pillow talk is basically synonymous with intimate candor between two people.

But my lover and I are increasingly silent in bed. Outside our window, a strong but intermittent wind piles up clouds and scatters them again, and shadowy cities rise in the distance. The world outside the bedroom is indifferent to the situation inside. Nothing outside can explain why, in the special intimacy of this setting, we find it harder and harder to say things that are both honest and sweet—or at least not false and harsh.

THEMES

RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

"Talking in Bed" reflects on the breakdown of communication between longtime romantic partners. The speaker points out that the closeness of a long relationship should make "Talking in bed"—communicating in the most intimate setting—especially easy. Yet in the speaker's experience, the opposite is true: in private moments, they and their partner increasingly strain for words that are "not untrue and not unkind." The poem suggests that honest and loving talk becomes harder once partners get to know each other extremely well. Familiarity breeds contempt, or at least an emotional complexity that makes superficial conversation seem false. As a result, romantic intimacy doesn't cure loneliness; it just imposes its own form of isolation.

The speaker finds that pillow talk is far less easy and intimate than it should be—at least, in the context of their own relationship. "Talking in bed ought to be" the "easiest" form of communication, the speaker believes, because it builds on the special closeness of a romantic relationship. This communication should be especially smooth in a long-term relationship, given the partners' deep history together: "Lying together there goes back so far." (In other words, they've been going to bed together for a long time.) In fact, in the popular imagination, pillow talk—conversation between lovers in bed—is synonymous with the intimate exchange of feelings, secrets, etc. It's an "emblem," or symbol, "of two people being honest" with each other. But in the speaker's relationship, this conventional idea has proven false. "More and more time passes silently" between the speaker and their lover, causing the speaker to question why communication has become so "difficult."

Though the poem offers no pat answers, it suggests that, for longtime couples, the challenge isn't talking per se—it's talking honestly *and* lovingly. The speaker and their partner struggle to "find / Words at once true and kind, / Or not untrue and not unkind." That is, they may have plenty to say to each other, but because they've built up a long history together, honest communication would likely be complex and painful rather than simple and affectionate. Since they don't feel they *should* say everything they *want* to say, they fall back on silence as the easier option. Even when they do talk, they settle for words that are "not untrue and not unkind" rather than genuinely candid and caring.

So while the *speaker* may remain puzzled as to "why" talking in bed is so hard, the *poem* drops some clues. It suggests that the intimacy of the bedroom, which seems to offer a "unique distance from isolation," merely switches out one form of isolation for another. If anything, physical/domestic closeness makes emotional bonding harder, because it precludes the kind of superficial talk that happens at the start of a relationship.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-12

HUMANITY, NATURE, AND ALIENATION

The speaker of "Talking in Bed" broods on the "wind[]," "clouds," and "towns" outside their bedroom window, feeling alienated from all of them. "None of this cares for us," the speaker declares, implying that neither nature nor the rest of society can help this human couple work out their problems. Through these few small details, the poem suggests that relationships languish, in part, because they divide lovers from the rest of the world. A couple's extreme closeness can distance them from other people, eroding their happiness over time. Worse, no amount of human closeness can bring *nature* closer, or solve people's fundamental sense of alienation in an indifferent universe.

The view from the couple's window seems to highlight their loneliness and mirror their unease, hinting at sources of tension in their relationship. A restless—but "incomplete[ly]" restless—wind blows clouds here and there, perhaps symbolizing the speaker's (or the couple's) own ambivalent restlessness. For example, the couple may feel conflicting desires for romantic exploration and domestic stability. Meanwhile, "dark towns heap up on the horizon," as if reflecting a heaviness or darkness in the speaker's (or couple's) mood. This detail also positions the couple far from other people, as if the nearest human contact is out on the "horizon."

While the world outside the window may *reflect* the couple's problems, it can't explain or fix those problems. The speaker observes that the sky and towns don't "care[] for us" or help explain the silent tension the couple feels. These two are alone with their dissatisfaction—and their dissatisfaction may spring from their aloneness. Their longtime intimacy seems to have cut them off from others (e.g., people in the distant "towns"). Meanwhile, nature, as represented by the windy sky, remains indifferent to humans no matter what. It creates and threatens relationships as carelessly as it "Builds and disperses clouds." The speaker laments that "Nothing" outside "shows why" the relationship *inside* these walls has become so tense. Nature and society can seem to mirror individual problems but cannot solve them. No divine or human intervention is available to this couple.

As a result, the couple feels fundamentally stuck. The poem provides no consolation, apart from the possibility of finding "true and kind" words every now and then. It suggests that couples ultimately have to make the best of their "difficult" situations—without any help from the surrounding world.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 5-12

LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

LINES 1-3

Talking in bed ...
... people being honest.

The poem begins with what seems to be a general reflection on relationships. According to the speaker, "Talking in bed" as a couple "ought to be" the world's "easiest" kind of communication. After all, any longtime couple will have accumulated a lot of shared history, especially in the intimacy of the bedroom: "Lying together there goes back so far." In fact, there's a cultural expectation that *pillow talk*—conversation between couples in bed—will be especially candid, intimate, and revealing. Such talk is an "emblem," or cultural symbol, "of two people being honest."

However, that "ought to" suggests a qualification is around the corner. Maybe pillow talk *should* be open and honest, but for the speaker and their partner, it's not. The next stanza will reveal that the speaker isn't just discussing romance in general; they're discussing their own current romance.

This opening stanza begins to establish the poem's form. It's the first of four tercets, all of which use iambic pentameter (five-beat lines with a da-DUM, da-DUM rhythm) and a tightly woven rhyme scheme (ABA CAC DCD EEE). The form looks strict, yet the meter contains frequent variations, and most of the rhymes are inexact. (For instance, "easiest"/"honest" is a *light rhyme*; the "-est" syllable is stressed in "easiest" and unstressed in "honest.") These tensions and "imperfections" in the form hint at tensions and imperfections in the couple's relationship.

LINES 4-7

Yet more and ...
... on the horizon.

After the more general remarks in the opening stanza, lines 4-7 zero in on a particular setting—as well as two characters.

It turns out that, when the speaker was musing about "Lying together in bed," they were referring specifically to their own, current relationship. This relationship does not appear to be going well. While the intimacy of the bedroom "ought to" make communication easy—in the speaker's view, at least—communication between *this* couple has broken down.

"More and more time passes silently" between the speaker and their unnamed partner. For whatever reason, the two don't talk much in bed these days, and the repetition of "more" indicates that the problem is getting worse. Ironically, greater closeness has made communication harder, not easier. (The poem never reveals these characters' names, ages, genders, etc. This may be the poet's way of making their experience seem more universal—and/or the reticent speaker's way of avoiding painful details.)

Rather than explaining the situation in depth, the speaker suddenly juxtaposes the bedroom scene with the view from the bedroom window:

> Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest
> Builds and disperses clouds about the sky,
> And dark towns heap up on the horizon.

This imagery is sparse, yet richly symbolic. The "unrest," or partial unrest, of the wind may reflect the romantic restlessness of the speaker and/or their partner. The wind's formation and destruction of clouds is a reminder of the world's constant change—perhaps even the way people grow together, then drift apart. The "dark" towns that seem to "heap up" in the distance hint at a psychological darkness piling up within, and weighing on, the couple themselves. These towns lie "on the horizon," so they may represent some kind of approaching disaster for the relationship. In a more literal way, these distant towns emphasize the couple's loneliness: in their tense and unhappy state, they seem far from any help.

Broadly, the wind/clouds and towns may represent nature and society, respectively. Both are potential sources of consolation or healing (if one is in a stifling relationship, one might want to go touch grass or hang out with other people). But neither looks encouraging in this moment, and both are "Outside," beyond the bedroom. The couple seems sealed off from the

world, trapped in their own awkwardness.

LINES 8-11

None of this ...
... true and kind,

Lines 8-11 reflect on the scene outside the window, which the poem juxtaposes with the scene inside the bedroom. Observing the restless wind and dark towns, the speaker broods that "None of this cares for us," and "Nothing shows why" communication in their relationship has become so strained. That is, nothing outside the room—whether natural or human—explains, solves, or even sympathizes with the problems inside. The lovers are on their own.

What strikes the speaker as especially frustrating, and ironic, is that their situation seems to place them "At [a] unique distance from isolation." In other words, cuddling with a lover in bed is supposed to be the pinnacle of intimacy. It's about as close as you can get to another person—and yet the *interactions* between the speaker and their partner feel increasingly distant. The longer they're together, the "more difficult" it becomes "to find / Words at once true and kind."

It's not as if they can't think of *anything* to say to each other. They just have a hard time finding things to say that are both honest and sweet. Presumably, it would be much easier to tell lies or trade complaints, insults, etc. But they prefer not to do that, so they mostly stay silent. (Notice how this emphasis on truth raises the possibility that "Lying in bed," in the first stanza, was a pun. Lovers sharing a bed may be "An emblem of two people being honest," but that doesn't mean honesty in this situation is actually easy.)

The enjambments at the ends of lines 8 and 10 underscore the speaker's confusion and hesitation. The line break after "why" (line 8) seems to leave this question-word dangling in the air for a moment. The line break between "find" (line 10) and "Words" (line 11) is especially poignant: it's as if the speaker struggles so much to communicate, they even have to pause and search for the word "Words"! At just six syllables, Line 11 is also the shortest line in the poem, and it throws the meter off completely. These effects, too, illustrate the communication breakdown between the speaker and their partner.

LINE 12

Or not untrue and not unkind.

Line 12 ends the poem with a grimly ironic kicker. The problem isn't just that the couple struggles to find words that are both "true and kind." (Although that would be ominous enough.) They even struggle to tell each other things that are "not untrue and not unkind."

The "not un___" phrasing is an example of litotes, which in turn is a form of understatement and verbal irony. Litotes describes things by saying what they aren't, so it tends to sound dry or snarky. Here, it revises the previous line, making the lovers' situation sound even more grim. Not only do they struggle to make conversation that's both true and kind, they struggle to make conversation that's *not* actively false, harsh, or both. (Notice how the repetition of "not" adds to the negative mood of the ending.) Beneath their silence, they seem to be holding back some honest things they want to say, but don't dare say for fear of jeopardizing the relationship. At the same time, they don't want to tell outright lies. They seem willing to settle for half-truths and mild endearments, but even those have become "difficult to find." They may be cuddling in bed, but the thrill is gone.

Like line 11, line 12 falls short of the standard ten syllables in a pentameter line. This effect mimics the way the lovers' communication falls short (of truth, kindness, etc.). The closing rhyme between the opposites "kind" and "unkind"—with "unkind" getting the final say—hints that this relationship is balanced at a dangerous tipping point.

SYMBOLS

WIND AND CLOUDS

The restless, or semi-restless, wind in lines 5-6 seems to symbolize the restlessness of the speaker/couple. The speaker describes the wind's "unrest" as "incomplete," meaning that the wind's not blowing all the time; it intermittently kicks up and dies down. It "Builds" up "clouds" only to "disperse[]" them again, like a kid making sandcastles and knocking them over. This personified wind seems a little bored or ambivalent, as if it doesn't know quite what it wants to do.

The same may be true of the speaker—and the speaker's partner. In a romantic context, restlessness usually translates to the desire to leave a relationship and/or explore other romantic options. Perhaps the speaker (and perhaps the speaker's partner) is feeling this kind of "unrest," but in an "incomplete" way. They've been together a while, and communication between them is breaking down, so perhaps they're unsure whether they want to stay together (keep "Build[ing]" their relationship) or go their separate ways ("disperse[]"). They're also *restless* in a literal sense as they lie awake "in bed."

Where this symbol appears in the poem:

- **Lines 5-6:** "Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest / Builds and disperses clouds about the sky,"

TOWNS

The dark "towns" in line 7 seem to symbolize society or humanity in general. They also reflect the darkness of the speaker's, or couple's, mood.

The towns lie far away on the "horizon," underscoring how isolated this couple feels. (Even though, in theory, they should be "At [a] unique distance from isolation" as intimate partners.) The rest of society, or humanity, can't help them with their problems; they're alone together in this situation. Meanwhile, the way these "dark" towns "heap up" (in the speaker's perception, at least) suggests a *psychological* heaviness and darkness—the burden of depression, anxiety, etc. they're feeling in their silence.

Where this symbol appears in the poem:

- **Line 7:** "And dark towns heap up on the horizon."

POETIC DEVICES

REPETITION

"Talking in Bed" uses repetition (or repetition with variations) at two key moments.

First, there's the diacope in line 4:

> Yet more and more time passes silently.

The ambiguous grammar of this line gives it two subtly different, but equally valid, potential meanings: "But, increasingly, time passes in silence" and "But more and more of our time passes in silence." Either way, the repetition of "more" emphasizes that this romance isn't just strained but *increasingly* strained. Things aren't getting any better with time.

Then there's the repetition in the last two lines:

> Words at once true and kind,
> Or not untrue and not unkind.

The slight modification here has the effect of a subtle revision. First, the speaker admits that they and their partner struggle to be simultaneously honest and kind with each other. Then, they're forced to qualify even this admission: the couple settles, sometimes, for avoiding outright lies and cruelty. The double "not" gives the ending a distinctly negative tone, while the awkward rephrasing (the litotes of "not untrue" and "not unkind") suggests how awkward the relationship itself is.

Where Repetition appears in the poem:

- **Line 1:** "Talking in bed"
- **Line 4:** "more," "more"
- **Line 11:** "true and kind"
- **Line 12:** "not untrue and not unkind"

JUXTAPOSITION

The poem juxtaposes the tense situation inside the couple's bedroom with the world "Outside." Inside, the couple is lying together in strained silence. Outside, a fitful wind "Builds and disperses clouds about the sky," while "dark towns" seem to "heap up on the horizon." The speaker moodily adds that "None of this cares for us."

This juxtaposition seems potentially symbolic, with the windy sky standing in for nature and the towns for humanity/society. Both the wind and towns are indifferent to—don't "care[] for"—the couple's tension; in other words, nature and society can't solve individual, private problems. Meanwhile, these partners in their bedroom seem cut off from any other source of help or care.

The juxtaposition also contrasts the silence and stillness indoors with the restless activity outdoors. The wind is busy and perhaps noisy, and even the far-off towns—which don't literally look as if they're in motion—are given the active verb "heap up." Outside, all is change and energy; inside, all is stasis and suppressed tension. "Nothing" outside "shows why" things inside are as tense as they are. But the couple may inwardly feel as restless and gloomy as the weather, even if they can't or won't express those feelings. (Note that the restless wind is also an example of pathetic fallacy, as the speaker seems to be projecting their own restlessness onto nature.)

Where Juxtaposition appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-9

ENJAMBMENT

The poem uses enjambment three times, each time to help convey uncertainty or irresolution. Look at lines 5-6, for example:

> Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest
> Builds and disperses clouds about the sky,

Enjambment, by definition, leaves a phrase "incomplete" before completing it in the following line. Here, that mirrors the "incomplete unrest" of the wind; the tension and hesitation in the language help evoke the fitful weather the speaker is describing. Enjambment can also emphasize words that fall just before or after the line break. Here, it draws attention to the word "unrest," which is thematically important to the poem. (This couple is restless in both a literal and figurative sense.)

Similarly, the enjambment in lines 8-9 emphasizes the word

"why." Fittingly, the word seems to hang in the air for a moment like an open question:

> None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why
> At this unique distance from isolation [...]

The stress on "why" also underscores the uncertainty and doubt clouding this relationship.

Finally, in lines 10-11, enjambment creates a pause that mimics the couple's struggle to express themselves:

> It becomes still more difficult to find
> Words at once true and kind,

It's as if, even in their own thoughts, the speaker hesitates for a moment, searching for the right "Words" to complete the phrase.

Where Enjambment appears in the poem:

- **Lines 5-6:** "unrest / Builds"
- **Lines 8-9:** "why / At"
- **Lines 10-11:** "find / Words"

IRONY

The poem is laced with irony of both the situational and verbal kinds.

Right up front, the speaker notes the irony of their situation. A couple who have been together a long time should find communicating easier and easier, not harder and harder, and pillow talk in particular is supposed to be the height of conversational intimacy. Yet this couple's communication feels "more and more" strained, and they remain all but silent as they lie in bed together. Ironically, long-term physical closeness seems to have decreased their emotional intimacy.

Togetherness also seems to have made them feel more alone. The speaker observes that, in theory, they and their partner (like any long-term couple) are at a "unique distance from isolation." That is, when you're lying in bed with someone, possibly without clothes on, you're as far from isolated as anyone could be. There would seem to be no barriers at all between you and the other person. Yet, ironically, this couple does feel a *psychological* barrier, which prevents them from talking openly and honestly.

Finally, the poem's last line uses the form of verbal irony, or understatement, called litotes. The couple doesn't just strain to find "Words" that are both "true and kind"; they even strain for words that are "not untrue" and "not unkind." The litotes has a weakening effect, implying that "not untrue" falls somewhat short of true and "not unkind" falls somewhat short of kind. In other words, these lovers are settling for half-truths and half-hearted endearments—and it's a struggle even to come up with those. They're resisting the temptation to say harsh things, tell outright lies, or both.

Where Irony appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-4
- Lines 8-12

VOCABULARY

Emblem (Line 3) - A symbol; a design or picture that represents something.

Incomplete unrest (Line 5) - Partial or intermittent turbulence (suggesting a strong wind that rises and dies down, rather than a full-fledged storm).

Disperses (Line 6) - Scatters.

FORM, METER, & RHYME

FORM

"Talking in Bed" consists of four three-line stanzas, or tercets. These stanzas are written in iambic pentameter (five-beat lines that alternate unstressed and stressed syllables), and they feature an unusual, interlocking rhyme scheme (ABA CAC DCD EEE).

There's no specific name for this poetic form, but it's faintly reminiscent of terza rima, a classic form that also uses tercets and an interlocking rhyme scheme. Terza rima is closely associated with the medieval Italian poet Dante, who famously wrote about hell, purgatory, and heaven (in the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*). If Larkin is distantly echoing Dante here, he may be suggesting that this romance is stuck in a kind of limbo, or is a mix of the heavenly and the hellish.

METER

The poem is written in iambic pentameter. This means that its lines generally follow a five-beat, unstressed-stressed rhythm (da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM), albeit with variations. Readers can hear this rhythm clearly in line 4, for example:

> Yet more | and more | time pass- | es si- | lently.

Iambic pentameter is the most common meter in English poetry, and it provides the basic template here. However, while most metrical poems vary their meter somewhat, this poem contains a high number of variations. Lines 1 and 2, for example, each start with a trochee (a stressed-unstressed foot) rather than an iamb (unstressed-stressed), and line 1 contains another trochee as well:

Talking | in bed | ought to | be eas- | iest,
Lying | toge- | ther there | goes back | so far,

Larkin was a master of metrical technique, so he had no trouble following the standard beat when he wanted to! In this poem, the many variations seem related to the couple's communication problems. They're no longer "Talking" as fluidly as they used to, and the rough meter reflects this. Notice, also, that the final two lines (lines 11-12) fall short of the usual ten syllables, as if mimicking the way the couple struggles to find "Words" at all.

RHYME SCHEME

The poem uses a tightly interlocking rhyme scheme:

ABA CAC DCD EEE

However, there's some looseness to the rhymes themselves: several are slant rhymes ("silently"/"sky"/"why" or "horizon"/"isolation"). This tension between strict scheme and loose rhymes might subtly reflect the couple's own tension—their restlessness within the confines of their room and relationship.

Significantly, none of the poem's rhymes form a perfect pair (and only a pair). One line-ending word is unrhymed ("far"); the only rhyme pair is imperfect ("horizon"/"isolation"); and the rest of the rhymes are tripled rather than paired ("easiest"/"honest"/"unrest," "silently"/'sky"/"why," "find"/"kind"/"unkind"). Again, these features suggest the imperfection, instability, or discord of the poem's *romantic* pair.

Notice that the final rhyme is *almost* an identical rhyme—"kind"/"unkind"—except that these words are actually opposites! The words match in one sense and mismatch in another sense, mirroring the way the couple themselves are simultaneously matched and mismatched. (They're *both* silent in bed, and they've been together for a while—but they may not belong together.)

SPEAKER

The speaker is one half of a relationship that seems to be struggling. At the very least, the speaker and their partner are struggling to communicate.

They've been a couple for some time now ("Lying together there goes back so far"), and while this history "ought to" make them more in tune with each other—especially in the privacy of the bedroom—the exact opposite is the case. They're finding it increasingly "difficult" to interact both truthfully and kindly. In other words, when they want to say something "true," it isn't necessarily "kind," and vice versa. As a result, they hold back on candid conversations *and* words of endearment, and they feel "more and more" tense in each other's company.

SETTING

The poem is set in a bedroom, where two lovers or spouses—the speaker and an unidentified partner—lie silently together. The speaker provides no detail about the room itself, apart from the fact that it contains a "bed." However, the speaker briefly describes the view from the bedroom window(s): a windy "sky" and a few "dark towns" visible in the distance.

This sparse description reflects the apparent loneliness and deprivation of the couple's emotional life. They seem isolated from those faraway towns, as if they've closed themselves off from the rest of the world. They should be at a "distance from isolation," but really, they're in the thick of it, despite their physical closeness. The wind's sporadic "unrest" seems to mirror their inner restlessness and tension.

CONTEXT

LITERARY CONTEXT

From the publication of his second collection, *The Less Deceived* (1955), until his death in 1985, Philip Larkin was one of the UK's most popular poets. The editor-critic J. D. Scott grouped Larkin, along with a number of other post-World War II English writers (including Larkin's close friend Kingsley Amis), into a school he called "The Movement." The Movement poets rejected many of the formal and stylistic experiments of the previous, modernist generation. They gravitated toward a plainer style along with characteristically English settings and themes.

Larkin published "Talking in Bed" in his 1964 collection *The Whitsun Weddings*. This slim volume contains many of Larkin's best-loved poems and, by poetry's standards, was a huge success. Poems like "Talking in Bed," "Mr Bleaney," "An Arundel Tomb," and "The Whitsun Weddings" itself reflect a sense of disenchantment with love, work, sex, religion, and more. This attitude became strongly associated with Larkin, who once claimed that "Deprivation is for me what daffodils were for [William] Wordsworth."

Like many of his other well-known poems, "Talking in Bed" takes a skeptical or pessimistic attitude toward love and domesticity. In a way, its basic scenario—two romantic partners lying silently beside each other—mirrors the imagery of "An Arundel Tomb," in which the carving on an antique tomb depicts a husband and wife resting side by side. That poem ends a shade less pessimistically, however:

[...] The stone fidelity
They hardly meant has come to be
Their final blazon, and to prove

Our almost-instinct almost true:
What will survive of us is love.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Philip Larkin was born in 1922 and died in 1985. For most of his life, then, Larkin lived under the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. Though old enough to fight in World War II, Larkin was excused from service due to poor eyesight. After the publication of *The Whitsun Weddings*—which was received well critically and sold in large numbers—Larkin received the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. Later in life, he turned down the position of UK Poet Laureate.

Larkin's poetry is strongly associated with the culture and atmosphere of mid-20th-century Britain. Britain narrowly avoided bankruptcy after World War II (1939-1945) and was slow to recover economically. Prosperity returned to the country during the 1950s and 1960s, however, and Larkin wrote "Talking In Bed" during these boom years. Against a cultural background of relative optimism about home and family, Larkin's poetry paints a darker picture of domestic life, informed in part by his troubled relationship with his own parents. Though Larkin never married, he had several long-term and at times overlapping romantic partnerships, notably with two scholars/academics: Monica Jones and Maeve Brennan (said to be the inspiration for much of *The Whitsun Weddings*).

MORE RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- The Poem Aloud — Listen to Philip Larkin read "Talking in Bed." (https://www.youtube.com/shorts/csE17epe9Jo)
- The Poet's Life and Work — A brief biography of Larkin at the Poetry Foundation. (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/philip-larkin)
- Larkin on TV — The South Bank Show visits and interviews Larkin in 1981. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdeEFErYVtk)
- The Larkin Society — The website of the Philip Larkin Society, dedicated to the poet and his legacy. (https://philiplarkin.com/)
- More on "The Movement" — A retrospective on the postwar literary movement with which Larkin is associated. (https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/the-1950s-english-literatures-angry-decade)

LITCHARTS ON OTHER PHILIP LARKIN POEMS

- Afternoons
- An Arundel Tomb
- A Study of Reading Habits
- Church Going
- Coming
- Home Is So Sad
- MCMXIV
- Mr Bleaney
- Poetry of Departures
- The Trees
- The Whitsun Weddings
- This Be The Verse
- Water

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