

Plenty



SUMMARY

Back when I was a kid, and the five of us children would run around like wild while my mother was in a state of quiet distress, our old enamel bathtub—which was stained from age and rough with holes—sat on its griffin-shaped claws, never full of water.

Filling the tub was too expensive in our vast area of drought, where even dams couldn't retain water and windmills stopped working. In the same way, Mommy's smile stopped working. Her lips were pulled back and held down in an expression that I interpreted as meaning she was angry about something I had done.

I didn't know at the time that her frown was like a buckle sealing out trouble. She was always thinking about that trouble, keeping things locked shut and tied up: anxieties about money, shopping lists for things like over-the-counter pain medicine, oatmeal, gas, bread.

She even factored in the cost of toilet paper, and each month seemed to go on for far too many weeks. Her mouth was like a lid keeping all of this down.

We thought she was stingy. We skipped our chores, stole cookies, and best of all, when she was far enough away that she couldn't hear us, we would steal an extra, valuable inch of water in the bathtub.

It would come up to our chests, feeling so wrong yet delightful. We would lounge in this lush, hidden warmth that came out of fat brass faucets, which were like old, accommodating accomplices to our crime.

Now the bath bubbles come up to my chin. I am self-indulgent, devoted to luxury and pleasure. The shower is a hot waterfall and water is abundant, almost overabundant, here. I leave the heater on.

And I miss my sisters, who all live in different places now, as well as those bathroom arguments and also, finally, my mother's smile, set free from the ties of meager, parched times and our long childhood.

stingy and unkind), and how when their mother wasn't around, she and her sisters would rebel against such stinginess. Once an adult, however, the speaker finds sympathy for her mother as she comes to understand the burden of poverty on a mother trying to raise five children in a drought. The poem thus illuminates the way time and maturity can provoke a shift in perspective and change people's understanding of their own past.

The poem begins with the speaker remembering her childhood. She [juxtaposes](#) her and her siblings' loud and boisterous play, which is indicative of their health and happiness, with the "quiet despair" of her mother—something the children seem totally unaware of or unconcerned by.

Not understanding that her mother was constantly worrying about money and making ends meet, the speaker interpreted her mother's frown as evidence of disapproval at "some fault" of hers. And because they didn't understand their mother's motives and just thought her stingy, the children rebelled. For example, the speaker remembers her and her sisters "skipping chores," "swiping biscuits," and stealing "another precious inch" of bathwater. These actions seemed like triumphs at the time, but the speaker, as an adult, now understands what they must have cost her mother, who was just trying to keep the family afloat.

As an adult, the speaker luxuriates in her life of "excess, almost." Compared to the strictness of her childhood, being able to use as much hot water as she wants makes her feel like a "sybarite"—that is, someone who is devoted to indulging in pleasure and luxury. She feels this way because of her upbringing, suggesting the lingering impact of her childhood on her adult perspective. The poem then ends with the speaker thinking fondly of her sisters and finally even of her mother, the phrase "at last" implying that, for a long time, the speaker was only able to associate her mother with the strictness she imposed on the family.

There is a sense of regret here, as if the speaker wishes she had understood her mother's motives sooner. It isn't clear whether the mother's smile being "loosed from the bonds / of lean, dry times" implies that the mother has died or is simply no longer experiencing financial difficulty now that her daughters' "long childhood" is over. Either way, there is a hint of loss in the speaker's tone at the end, as if she realizes the toll poverty and her own previous lack of understanding took on the relationship between her and her mother.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-32



THEMES



TIME, MATURITY, AND PERSPECTIVE

"Plenty" recalls a childhood in which the speaker and her sisters felt resentment towards their mother due to her strict rationing of everyday goods, even bathwater. The speaker recalls how she thought her mother was "mean" (i.e.,



PARENTAL LOVE AND SACRIFICE

Though the speaker thought her mother stingy as a child, as an adult the speaker is able to recognize her mother's strength and force of will in the face of difficulty. By comparing her own relative luxury to her mother's experience of just trying to keep chaos at bay, the speaker gains an appreciation of her mother's sacrifice and is able to remember her childhood tenderly, realizing that even though she and her sisters didn't have much materially, they had "plenty" of love and care. Parental love, the poem implies, is its own form of wealth.

The speaker describes her mother's smile as an "anchor" and "a clasp to keep us all from chaos." This description draws attention to the way parents shoulder the responsibility of keeping their children fed and housed while also shielding them from understanding the weight of this burden. By keeping the reality of poverty and her own responsibilities from her children, the speaker's mother allowed them to retain their innocence a little longer, granted them the luxury of not having to worry about where their next meal was coming from.

The speaker sees this as a sacrifice; her mother chose to prioritize her children's well-being and sense of security over being liked or even understood by them. As an adult, the speaker recognizes that her mother's "sums and worries" and her "shopping lists" were in fact evidence of that which they had "plenty" of: love and care. She feels that she and her sisters were fortunate to have a mother who looked after them so diligently.

The speaker acknowledges the strength it must have taken for her mother to run a household during a drought with very few resources. Now able to luxuriate in hot showers and heating she doesn't ever have to turn off, the speaker finally appreciates what her mother gave up in order to make sure the family had enough "aspirin, porridge, petrol, bread," and even toilet paper. The speaker understands that her mother was unable to take anything for granted, that everything she and her sisters had growing up they had because her mother planned ahead and sacrificed something else in order for them to have it.

While her mother struggled to make ends meet, the speaker remembers even these difficult times with a fondness that suggests that the care she received as a child was indeed enough. Even the tub that was "never full" was, after all, a source of "secret warmth," and it's clear that when the speaker takes baths now as an adult that she takes pleasure in her memories of "bathroom squabbles" with her family. While they may not have had much in material terms, then, it is clear the children were loved; the speaker, looking back, feels that love was more than enough.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-16
- Lines 29-32



LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

LINES 1-2

*When I was ...
... mother's quiet despair,*

The poem begins with the speaker reminiscing about her childhood, when she and her siblings would "run riot"—that is, run around wildly. The use of the phrase "run riot" is [hyperbolic](#), or exaggerated, and meant to illustrate the [juxtaposition](#), or contrast, between the children's carefree existence and the mother's "quiet despair." It immediately signals to the reader how overwhelmed the mother must have felt trying to care for five children.

The use of the word "riot" also allows for an [internal rhyme](#) between "riot" and "quiet," putting added pressure on the relationship between the children and the mother, between their innocent rowdiness and the distress that comes with knowledge and responsibility.

The poem immediately introduces a bit of tension through its use of [meter](#) as well. The first line is in perfect [iambic pentameter](#), meaning that it is composed of five iambs (feet with an unstressed syllable followed by a **stressed** syllable):

"When I | was **young** | and there | were **five** | of us,"

Iambic pentameter naturally infuses the line with a sense of balance and harmony. There is an idyllic quality to the speaker's remembrance, as if she quite enjoys thinking about her childhood. The second line, however, contains 13 syllables, disrupting the balance established in the first line. Because the line still follows the unstressed-stressed pattern of iambic pentameter, however, there is a sense that the line is attempting iambic pentameter but falling short. This echoes the imbalance between the children and the mother, their chaotic energy and her despairing state. The line enacts a sense of things getting away from her, but there is still more of a sense of control than not—the meter doesn't fall apart completely, the line just goes on a few beats too long.

LINES 3-4

*our old enamel ...
... was never full.*

The speaker recalls the bathtub her family used while she was growing up. She remembers it being "old," "age-stained and pocked," and that it was "never full." The image of a tub with "griffin claws" might seem luxurious, but this tub has clearly

seen better days—an early hint at the family's poverty. The phrase "never full" is also telling; she doesn't say that the tub was always *empty*, only that it was never *full*. They weren't totally destitute, then, but rather had to be very careful with resources. By the end of the poem, it will become clear that her mother's careful planning and calculating was to thank for them having any water at all.

The poem also begins to make use of [consonance](#), [assonance](#), and [alliteration](#). The consonance of /l/ and /p/ sounds along with the assonance of /aw/ and /ay/ sounds in lines 3-4 ("our old enamel [...] was never full.") contributes, along with the continued use of [iambic](#) pentameter, to the passage's cadence and rhythm:

our old enamel tub, age-stained and pocked
upon its griffin claws, was never full.

Even though the speaker is describing the tub's flaws, the rhythm of the passage infuses the recollection with a feeling of pleasure. It seems the speaker has a fondness for her memory of this imperfect tub.

LINES 5-7

*Such plenty was ...
... Like Mommy's smile.*

The speaker goes on to explain that "such plenty"—in other words, a bathtub full of water—was "too dear" (i.e., too expensive) in the drought that surrounded her family. The drought is both a literal reality that contextualizes the family's struggle and also somewhat [metaphorical](#).

The [imagery](#) of the "dams leaked dry and windmills stalled" is a description of the physical world, but the speaker then compares the external reality with her mother's smile through the use of [simile](#); like the windmills, her mother's smile has "stalled" because of the drought. It's clear that for the speaker, there is no clear divide between the general hardship of the drought and the hardship faced specifically by her family, especially her mother.

These lines again contain strong [consonance](#), [assonance](#), and [alliteration](#). The alliteration and consonance of heavy /d/ sounds is particularly strong, giving these lines a harder edge, while /l/ and /m/ sounds end the sentence on a solemn note:

Such plenty was too dear in our expanse of drought
where dams leaked dry and windmills stalled.
Like Mommy's smile. [...]

LINES 7-10

*Her lips stretched ...
... all from chaos.*

Having compared her mother's smile to the "stalled" windmills

during the drought, the speaker goes on to describe what replaced her mother's smile during these years: a frown, her "lips stretched back / and anchored down, in anger." The [enjambment](#) here evokes the image at hand—the lips stretching across the line break itself.

The speaker interpreted her mother's anger as directed at her for "some fault" of her own. One can imagine the toll this took on their relationship; the speaker grew up believing she was always doing something wrong, something to elicit her mother's anger. It is only now as an adult that she recognizes her mother was simply trying to maintain some degree of control over the "chaos" that threatened to overtake her family.

The combination of [assonance](#) and [consonance](#) in the words "anchored" and "anger" reveal a relationship between the mother's seeming anger and the children's actual safety. Where once she saw her mother's downturned lips as evidence of her disapproval, now the speaker sees them as evidence of what her mother was dealing with in trying to provide for the family through difficult times.

Similarly, [alliteration](#) creates a relationship between the words "clasp" and "chaos," suggesting that their mother was strict not because she didn't love her children, but on the contrary, because loving her children meant sacrificing her own likability so that she could make ends meet.

In fact, line 10 is filled with shared sounds that reflect this tension:

it was a clasp to keep us all from chaos.

The mixture of harsh /p/ and /k/ sounds suggest the mother's tight grip, while the hissing, [sibilant](#) /s/ sounds feeling slightly threatening, perhaps evoking the "chaos" trying to break through.

LINES 11-16

*She saw it ...
... hard on this.*

As the speaker describes the chaos her mother was always attuned to when she was a child, that [sibilance](#) from line 10 continues with a vengeance:

She saw it always, snapping locks and straps
the spilling: sums and worries, shopping lists.

The sibilance contributes to a sense of intensity in these lines; the mother's state of mind is akin to a tightened string, on the verge of snapping. Adding to this effect is the sharp [consonance](#) of popping /p/ sounds in "snapping," "straps," "spilling," "shopping," "aspirin," "porridge," and "petrol."

The use of [asyndeton](#) in this list blurs the distinctions between one source of concern and the next. Not having enough money

is something that infuses every moment, every scenario, with the possibility of chaos. The [enjambment](#) between the stanzas here reflects that chaos, that sense of "spilling."

The speaker understands from her adult perspective that her mother must have constantly been afraid of "spilling" her worry and stress onto her children, whom she wanted to shield. But in keeping these worries to herself, she was constantly preoccupied with what might go wrong.

By listing some of the specifics of her mother's shopping lists, the speaker illustrates that the mother couldn't take even the most basic necessities for granted. Everything was thought out, accounted for, planned in advance. She didn't have the luxury of forgetting her responsibilities as a mother, not for a second.

The speaker realizes that when it came to her mother's carefully run household, "even the toilet paper counted." In other words, even knowing there would be enough toilet paper was not something her mother could take for granted. She had to keep track of all of it, even the things other, more privileged people might never have to think about.

In light of this, the speaker says that "each month was weeks too long." This is again [hyperbole](#), an exaggeration meant to imply that the mother had to somehow make resources stretch much longer than what felt comfortable.

The speaker describes her mother's mouth as a "lid clamped hard" on the reality of their situation. This [metaphor](#) implies that if her mother was strict and unsmiling, it's because she couldn't afford to be otherwise—there was too much at stake. She didn't want the children to see or worry about how dire their situation was, so she kept it to herself.

LINES 17-20

*We thought her ...
... another precious inch*

The speaker realizes now, as an adult, how hard her mother worked to keep the family afloat while also never letting on that there was danger of going under. As a child, however, the speaker and her sisters simply thought their mother "mean."

The word mean suggests both stinginess and a lack of warmth or kindness, and it points to the way that children, not understanding the context for their parents' actions, may interpret those actions as cruel and ungenerous for the very sake of being cruel and ungenerous. Due to their lack of understanding, the speaker and her sisters resented their mother for her strict rations and absence of smiles.

Acting from their lack of understanding and subsequent resentment, the speaker and her sisters "skipped chores" and "swiped biscuits," not knowing what these little acts of rebellion must have cost their mother in worry. The [parallelism](#), or parallel grammatical structure, between these two phrases—"Skipped chores, / swiped biscuits"—implies that to the children, it was all the same. They were getting away with

something, breaking rules that to them seemed arbitrary (i.e., random, without any real reason).

The [consonance](#) of /s/, /p/, and /k/ sounds between "Skipped" and "swiped biscuits" also illustrates this parallel—that to the children, skipping a chore or taking an extra biscuit was a way of indulging in some act of pleasure and defiance that their mom would never know about. They did it because it felt good, and because they couldn't understand why they shouldn't.

"Best of all," the speaker claims, when their mother wasn't around to hear them do it, they would steal "another precious inch" of bathwater. While there is no hierarchy between skipping chores and swiping biscuits (in other words, the speaker doesn't place importance on one over the other), there is a hierarchy between those acts of defiance and stealing extra bathwater. The speaker sees this as having been the ultimate form of defiance because it yielded the most amount of pleasure—that extra inch she describes as "precious," indicating that it was of great value to them.

LINES 21-24

*up to our ...
... old compliant co-conspirators.*

That extra "precious" inch of bathwater that the children stole came up to their chests. The [enjambment](#) between stanzas suggests that abundance of water, which rises to fill the break between lines. Because chests are associated with the heart, this detail also suggests that in the warm enveloping water of the bathtub, the children found some of the comfort that they were unable to find in their mother, who was too preoccupied with trying to provide for them to offer more tender forms of care.

The speaker describes these baths as "lovely sin." The fact that this luxury had to be stolen perhaps made it all the sweeter. The image of the children "lolling luxuriant in secret warmth" further evokes a womb; the children are enveloped by the warm waters, comforted and nurtured by the water "disgorged from fat brass taps" much the way infants are comforted and nurtured by nursing at a mother's breast.

This memory is infused with sensory detail, and the [consonance](#) of /l/ sounds in "lovely," "lolling," and "luxuriant" emphasizes the luscious qualities of this particular act of defiance. The speaker even [personifies](#) the faucets of the bathtub, calling them her "old compliant co-conspirators." This seems to imply a kind of benevolence on behalf of the tub, as if it were in on the secret. This sense of benevolence is important because it underlines the children's sense of safety and the fact that they feel nurtured, even if not directly by the mother. Their environment is nurturing to them and their environment is an extension of their mother's hard work and care.

LINE 25

Now bubbles lap ... am a sybarite.

The memory of that extra stolen inch of bathwater spills into the present. The speaker, now an adult, still luxuriates in the pleasure of a warm bath. She claims to be a "sybarite," which is a person who is self-indulgent, a person who is dedicated to luxury and pleasure. The speaker's use of the word sybarite perhaps suggests a bit of guilt; after having grown up with so little, indulging in pleasure feels sinful, excessive.

She is maybe thinking of her mom's sacrifices, of how little pleasure she was able to grant herself while trying to make ends meet for her family. Or perhaps the speaker is a sybarite *because* of how she grew up. That is, she is hungry for the warmth and luxury she missed out on as a child. Perhaps guilt and pleasure are, for her, a little difficult to untangle, as her early memories of pleasure were wrapped up in moments of defiance, of doing things she knew she wasn't supposed to be doing.

However one interprets it, it is clear that the speaker's upbringing has impacted her perspective as an adult. The word sybarite is yet again an instance of [hyperbole](#), or exaggeration for dramatic effect. She is only a sybarite in comparison to the lack of luxury which defined her childhood; after all, there is nothing objectively excessive about taking a bath. It only feels excessive because she knows how hard to come by water was for her family when she was young.

LINES 26-28

*The shower's a ...
... the heating on.*

The speaker likens the shower to "a hot cascade," infusing an everyday activity that many might take for granted with a kind of childlike wonder. The use of the word "cascade" indicates a kind of boundlessness—she is no longer measuring out one extra inch of water. She notes that in her adult home, "water's plentiful, to excess, almost."

This passage indicates that the notion of what is "plenty" is relative; compared to what she grew up with, what she has now feels nearly excessive. She admits to leaving the heat on, suggesting that she's not worried about the cost. Unlike her mother, she doesn't need to keep track of every little thing. There is an ease to the speaker's adult life that her mother presumably never had, at least not when she was a child.

One might assume, due to the relative ease and luxury of her adult life, that the speaker has everything she wants or needs, that her childhood might feel empty in comparison to her present. Yet it's also worth noting that the speaker's way of comforting herself when she was a child—enveloping herself in a warm bath—is still evident. Her hot showers and leaving the heating on is an extension of her need as a child for some kind of nurturing presence.

LINES 29-32

And miss my ...

... our long childhood.

By beginning the final stanza with a coordinating conjunction ("And"), the speaker associates the action of leaving the heating on with the feeling of missing her "scattered sisters." Though she lives a life of relative ease and luxury, the speaker feels nostalgic for "all those bathroom squabbles" with her sisters. Despite the hardship of her childhood, a childhood in which the bathtub was never quite full, the speaker realizes now that what they did have growing up was more than enough. She is finally able to miss even her mother, who she now recognizes as having sacrificed a great deal to care for her and her sisters. The image of her mother's smile being "loosed from the bonds/ of lean, dry times and our long childhood" is ambiguous: it might suggest the mother has died, or it might just mean that the mother is no longer stretched thin to the point of breaking now that her children are grown, and that she is again able to smile. Either way, there is a note of regret in the speaker's phrasing—regardless of whether her mother is still alive or not, one can imagine that for many years their relationship was strained by the speaker's lack of understanding for her mother's situation. Now that time and maturity have leant the speaker perspective, she is able to see that though their bathtub (which by the end of the poem might be seen as [symbolic](#) for the nurturing and care the children received growing up) was "never full," it was also far from empty. She realizes that she has more to be grateful for than she had previously understood.



SYMBOLS



WATER

Water in the poem [symbolizes](#) love and comfort.

Though the bathtub that the speaker describes in the poem is a literal bathtub from her childhood, the speaker also uses it to reflect how she felt as a child; the fact that the tub was "never full" literally reflects the family's financial circumstances, but also signals that the speaker, as a kid, never felt totally enveloped by love and warmth. Her childhood was instead "dry."

That the landscape at the time was going through a "drought," with its "dams" all dry, enhances this symbolism. The speaker directly connects the drought to her mother's lack of affection, comparing "Mommy's smile" to stalled windmills (which, while not explicitly linked to water, are a part of the drought-ridden landscape in the poem). The speaker believed her mother "mean" and stingy, so it makes sense that she'd be symbolically connected to the parched environment.

Later, in lines 20-24 ("stole another precious [...] old compliant co-conspirators."), it becomes clear that a warm bath was a source of comfort and pleasure for the children in a home

marked by poverty. In the bathtub the children felt nurtured, cared for, and enveloped in ways that their mother could not always provide. That the water felt "precious" again implies that it represented *more* than just water. And as an adult, the fact that the speaker's shower feels like "a hot cascade," or waterfall, with water "plentiful, to excess, almost" implies that she no longer wants for the kind of comfort she was denied in childhood.

At the same time, by the end of the poem, the speaker revises her earlier summation of her childhood. It becomes apparent that though the bathtub was "never full," it was certainly not *empty*. In other words, though the children would have liked to feel more tenderness, more warmth, more nurturing from their mother, the speaker recognizes that what they did receive was not only enough, it was "plenty."

Where this symbol appears in the poem:

- **Lines 3-4:** "our old enamel tub, age-stained and pocked / upon its griffin claws, was never full."
- **Lines 5-6:** "Such plenty was too dear in our expanse of drought / where dams leaked dry and windmills stalled."
- **Lines 20-24:** "stole another precious inch / up to our chests, such lovely sin, / lolling luxuriant in secret warmth / disgorged from fat brass taps, / our old compliant co-conspirators."
- **Lines 26-27:** "The shower's a hot cascade / and water's plentiful, to excess, almost, here."
- **Line 32:** "dry times and our long childhood"

beginnings of words, but within them as well. The effect is that the passage enacts what it is describing through the use of sound: so many /l/ sounds all at once forces the reader to slow down and experience the pleasure of "lolling" in a hot bath.

Where Alliteration appears in the poem:

- **Line 2:** "running," "riot"
- **Line 5:** "dear," "drought"
- **Line 6:** "dams," "dry"
- **Line 7:** "smile," "stretched"
- **Line 8:** "anchored," "anger"
- **Line 9:** "not," "knowing"
- **Line 10:** "clasp," "keep," "chaos"
- **Line 11:** "snapping," "straps"
- **Line 12:** "spilling," "sums"
- **Line 13:** "porridge," "petrol"
- **Line 14:** "paper"
- **Line 17:** "Skipped"
- **Line 18:** "swiped," "biscuits," "best"
- **Line 21:** "such," "lovely," "sin"
- **Line 22:** "lolling," "luxuriant," "secret"
- **Line 23:** "from," "fat"
- **Line 24:** "compliant," "co-conspirators"
- **Line 29:** "miss," "my," "scattered," "sisters"
- **Line 30:** "squabbles"
- **Line 31:** "my," "mother's," "smile," "loosed"
- **Line 32:** "lean," "long"

ASSONANCE

The poem utilizes [assonance](#) sparingly but effectively, adding rhythm and melody to an otherwise conversational-sounding poem.

There are essentially two ways that assonance appears in this poem: on its own, or combined with [consonance](#) to create [internal](#) or [slant rhymes](#). An example of assonance appearing on its own is in lines 3-4 ("our old enamel [...] was never full.") in the repetition of /aw/ sounds in "pocked," "upon," and "claws." This repetition does not result in rhyme, but it does give the passage a sense of rhythm.

This happens again in line 23, albeit more intensely, with the repetition of /ah/ sounds in "fat," "brass," and "taps." Because the assonance words are consecutive, there's a stronger emphasis on the end of the line--almost like a drummer striking a drum three times in a row.

Finally, in lines 29-30 ("And miss my [...] and, at last"), assonance ramp up the poem's pace:

And miss my scattered sisters,
all those bathroom squabbles and, at last,

The short /ih/ and /ah/ sounds lend themselves to a sense of



POETIC DEVICES

ALLITERATION

[Alliteration](#) is one of the many tools Dixon uses to create rhythm in the poem and to place emphasis on particular words. The use of alliteration is perhaps more noticeable because the poem, generally speaking, eschews [rhyme](#); whatever rhythm there is, then, is created through the use of [meter](#) and other sonic devices, such as [consonance](#) and [assonance](#).

The effect of alliteration changes depending on how close together or far apart the alliterative words are, and which specific sounds are being repeated. So, for instance, in lines 5-6 ("Such plenty was [...] and windmills stalled."), the alliteration of /d/ sounds ("dear," "drought," "dams," "dry,") is spaced apart, but is also insistent: there's not just two alliterative words, but four. The overall effect of the alliteration here is more rhythmic than anything else.

In lines 21-22 ("up to our [...] in secret warmth"), the alliteration of /l/ sounds at the beginning of "lovely," "lolling," and "luxuriant" is compounded by the fact that these words are also utilizing consonance—the /l/ sound isn't just showing up at the

momentum which culminates in the word "last," emphasizing the time it's taken for the speaker to arrive at this realization of her mother's love and sacrifice, a realization that comes perhaps a bit too late, and is therefore bittersweet. The strong [sibilance](#) here makes the lines all the more striking for the reader.

Elsewhere in the poem, assonance works together with consonance to create rhyme. In line 2 ("all running riot to my mother's quiet despair"), the assonance of the long /i/ followed by the consonance of the /t/ in "riot" and "quiet" together form an internal rhyme. Likewise, assonance and consonance work together in the second stanza to form a slant end rhyme between "stalled" and "fault," and an internal rhyme between "anchored" and "anger."

Where Assonance appears in the poem:

- **Line 1:** "young," "us"
- **Line 2:** "running," "riot," "quiet"
- **Line 3:** "age-stained," "pocked"
- **Line 4:** "upon," "claws"
- **Line 6:** "stalled"
- **Line 7:** "Mommy's"
- **Line 8:** "anchored," "anger," "fault"
- **Line 9:** "mine," "I," "thought," "not"
- **Line 11:** "snapping," "straps"
- **Line 23:** "fat," "brass," "taps"
- **Line 28:** "leave," "heating"
- **Line 29:** "miss," "scattered," "sisters"
- **Line 30:** "bathroom," "at," "last"
- **Line 32:** "dry," "times"

CONSONANCE

[Consonance](#) adds music and lyricism to the poem, often drawing readers' attention to particular images. In the end of the first stanza, for example, note the thick consonance of /l/, /t/, /p/, and /k/ sounds:

our old enamel tub, age-stained and pocked
upon its griffin claws, was never full.

The mixture of these fluid and spiky sounds, combined with the [assonance](#) of these lines (i.e., "pocked," "upon," "claws"), creates a striking musicality, evoking for the reader the image of the imposing, yet only partially-full, bathtub.

Later, in stanzas 3 and 4 ("of mine, I [...] hard on this."), the consonance combines with some pretty heavy [sibilance](#) to create a nearly [cacophonous](#) effect. For example, take lines 10-13, with their intense repetition of the harsh /p/ and /k/ sounds, plus the constant hissing /s/ (and some lolling /l/ sounds, just make things even more of a tongue-twister!):

it was a clasp to keep us all from chaos.

She saw it always, snapping locks and straps,
the **spilling**: sums and worries, shopping lists
for aspirin, porridge, petrol, bread.

The reader can feel, through this medley of sounds, the distraction and sense of overwhelm the speaker's mother must feel in trying to keep track of every little thing, in seeing the possibility for chaos lurking behind every mundane decision. This cacophony gives way to a near absence of consonance in the fifth stanza, which perhaps reflects the innocence and simplicity of the children's perspective, not knowing what their mother was dealing with and therefore simply thinking her "mean."

Where Consonance appears in the poem:

- Line 2
- Line 3
- Line 4
- Line 5
- Line 6
- Line 7
- Line 8
- Line 9
- Line 10
- Line 11
- Line 12
- Line 13
- Line 14
- Line 15
- Line 16
- Line 17
- Line 18
- Line 19
- Line 20
- Line 21
- Line 22
- Line 23
- Line 24
- Line 25
- Line 26
- Line 27
- Line 29
- Line 30
- Line 31
- Line 32

SIBILANCE

[Sibilance](#) shows up throughout the poem, at first to accentuate the difficulty of the mother's situation--in the second and third stanzas, it coincides with descriptions of her absent smile and her awareness of all the things that might go wrong in terms of keeping her family safe. Take lines 10-12, with their many /sh/ and /s/ sounds:

it was a clasp to keep us all from chaos.
 She saw it always, snapping locks and straps,
 the spilling: sums and worries, shopping lists

Later, sibilance is used to emphasize the opposite: the secrecy and pleasure of the children's stolen inch of water in the bathtub. In lines 21-23 ("up to our [...] taps"), the presence of /s/ sounds, combined with the slowness created by the [consonance](#) of /l/ sounds, helps to evoke the speaker's feelings about doing something she knows she's not supposed to be doing; the "lovely sin" made perhaps all the more pleasurable because of the sense of conspiracy she's indulging in, even going so far as to [personify](#) the faucets as "co-conspirators":

up to our chests, such lovely sin,
 lolling luxuriant in secret warmth
 disgorged from fat brass taps,

This sense of pleasure and indulgence spills over to the following stanza, where the speaker claims to be a "sybarite." There is continued sibilance in the description of the water as a "cascade" and in her admission that water is plentiful "to excess, almost" in her adult home.

Finally, sibilance occurs in the concluding stanza of the poem with the words "miss," "scattered," "sisters," "squabbles," "last," "smile," and "loosed." It seems that here, upon realizing her fondness for these childhood memories, the speaker is able to reconcile her mother's absent smile and constant worry with the pleasure she and her sister's felt in stealing that extra inch of bathwater. The speaker recognizes that despite the "leanness" of her childhood, it was not devoid of pleasure.

Where Sibilance appears in the poem:

- **Line 6:** "stalled"
- **Line 7:** "smile," "lips stretched"
- **Line 10:** "clasp," "us," "chaos"
- **Line 11:** "She saw," "snapping locks," "straps"
- **Line 12:** "spilling: sums," "shopping lists"
- **Line 13:** "aspirin"
- **Line 17:** "Skipped"
- **Line 18:** "swiped biscuits – best"
- **Line 19:** "she," "earshot"
- **Line 20:** "stole," "precious"
- **Line 21:** "chests, such," "sin"
- **Line 22:** "secret"
- **Line 23:** "disgorged," "brass taps"
- **Line 25:** "sybarite"
- **Line 26:** "shower's," "cascade"
- **Line 27:** "excess, almost"
- **Line 29:** "miss," "scattered sisters"
- **Line 30:** "squabbles," "last"
- **Line 31:** "smile, loosed"

ENJAMBMENT

Dixon uses [enjambment](#) to pace the poem. Along with the use of (a rather loose) [iambic](#) pentameter (that is, meter that utilizes five [iamb](#)s—feet comprised of one unstressed syllable followed by one [stressed](#) syllable—per line) the enjambment here lends itself to a measured tone.

Approximately one-third of the lines are enjambed; the other two-thirds are [end-stopped](#). In this poem, enjambment tends to assist the reader in making sense of syntax. In other words, line breaks coincide with natural stopping points in the sentence, often at the end of a clause or where one would naturally pause to catch their breath.

In lines 7-10 ("Like Mommy's smile [...] all from chaos."), the use of enjambment helps to create a kind of bridge between the speaker's childhood naiveté and her adult understanding of why her mother's smile went missing in those years. There is an elasticity to this sentence as it goes from describing the mother's frown to describing the speaker's feeling, as a child, that her mother's unhappiness was her fault, to finally accommodating her adult perspective: that her mother was simply overwhelmed with her responsibilities and trying to keep them all safe. The sentence unfolds across four lines, so the reader is forced to go through these stages of understanding that mimic the speaker's own journey from childhood innocence to adult understanding.

Stanzas 4 and 5 are good examples of the push and pull between enjambed and end-stopped lines in this poem. Stanza 4 ("for aspirin, porridge [...] hard on this.") features only end-stopped lines, giving it a more clipped feel. This is in keeping with what the speaker is addressing in this stanza: the difficulty of her mother's situation, of trying to make ends meet.

In contrast, stanza 5 ("We thought her [...] another precious inch") is mostly comprised of enjambed lines. In describing her and her sisters' secret rebellion against their mother's rules, the lines become shorter and more enjambed. There is the sense of their mother's careful order being disrupted.

Where Enjambment appears in the poem:

- **Lines 3-4:** "pocked / upon"
- **Lines 5-6:** "drought / where"
- **Lines 7-8:** "back / and"
- **Lines 8-9:** "fault – / of"
- **Lines 9-10:** "then / it"
- **Lines 12-13:** "lists / for"
- **Lines 18-19:** "all / when"
- **Lines 19-20:** "earshot / stole"
- **Lines 20-21:** "inch / up"
- **Lines 22-23:** "warmth / disgorged"
- **Lines 26-27:** "cascade / and"
- **Lines 31-32:** "bonds / of"

ASYNDETON

There are just a couple instances of [asyndeton](#) in the poem. In lines 12-13 ("the spilling: sums [...] porridge, petrol, bread."), the speaker lists of the things that were always weighing on her mother's mind—common household staples which she needed to make stretch throughout the month. The omission of a coordinating conjunction at the end of the list (between "petrol" and "bread") indicates that this list isn't by any means exhaustive; it's just a sampling of the countless things her mother had to worry about running out of and the "chaos" that would ensue if they did.

In lines 17-18 ("We thought her [...] best of all"), the speaker recalls how she and her siblings would disregard their mother's rules; they "Skipped chores, / swiped biscuits" and, "best of all," stole extra bathwater. The asyndeton in line 18 (rather than a comma and a coordinating conjunction after "biscuits," there is just an em dash) has a similar effect to the instance above. The breaking off of the em dash implies that there were probably many other little rebellious acts the sisters engaged in besides skipping chores and swiping biscuits, but rather than listing them all, the speaker cuts herself off to get to the "best" part: the extra bathwater.

Note that "Skipped chores, / swiped biscuits" is also an example of [parallelism](#); the parallel grammatical structure insinuates that skipping chores and swiping biscuits were on par with each other, unlike the stealing of bathwater, which has been set apart as "best of all."

Where Asyndeton appears in the poem:

- **Lines 12-13:** "the spilling: sums and worries, shopping lists / for aspirin, porridge, petrol, bread."
- **Lines 17-18:** "Skipped chores, / swiped biscuits"
- **Line 18:** " – best of all"

JUXTAPOSITION

[Juxtaposition](#) appears in multiple ways in this poem. In line 2 ("all running riot to my mother's quiet despair"), the speaker juxtaposes the carefree rollicking of children with the tense silence of the mother, showing the very different experiences children and adults may have even within the same home. The title of the poem is also juxtaposed with the ending of the first stanza, which portrays an old bathtub that was "never full." The contrast between the word "plenty" and the image of the tub that is never full immediately introduces a tension into the poem.

In stanzas 4-7, the poem juxtaposes the difficult reality of the speaker's mother with the pleasure of the children taking hot baths, and later the adult speaker, whose own life is very different from her mother's. The pleasure and luxury of the hot shower and the heating that is never turned off further emphasize the mother's difficult situation, and evokes the

speaker's own sense of guilt for not better understanding her mother's sacrifices. It also goes to show that though the speaker and her sisters may never have had quite as much as they would have liked, they were also not unhappy—something only hindsight is able to illuminate.

In line 21, the speaker refers to the stolen bathwater as "lovely sin"—an [oxymoron](#). This too is a form of juxtaposition, as two contrasting ideas—the idea of loveliness, and the idea of sin—are pushed together to evoke the speaker's complicated feelings around having stolen the extra bathwater. She knows she shouldn't have done it (and especially now, as an adult, understanding what it must have cost her mother), yet she can't deny the pleasure of that extra bit of warmth and comfort.

Where Juxtaposition appears in the poem:

- **Line 2:** "all running riot to my mother's quiet despair,"
- **Line 4:** "was never full."
- **Lines 14-16:** "Even the toilet paper counted, / and each month was weeks too long. / Her mouth a lid clamped hard on this."
- **Lines 17-28:** "We thought her mean. Skipped chores, / swiped biscuits – best of all / when she was out of earshot / stole another precious inch / up to our chests, such lovely sin, / lolling luxuriant in secret warmth / disgorged from fat brass taps, / our old compliant co-conspirators. / Now bubbles lap my chin. I am a sybarite. / The shower's a hot cascade / and water's plentiful, to excess, almost, here. / I leave the heating on."

IMAGERY

Most of the [imagery](#) of this poem revolves around the bathtub and the mother's (mostly absent) smile. In the first stanza, the bathtub is introduced in relation to the mother's "quiet despair." It is depicted as "old," "age-stained and pocked," and "never full."

This lack is tied to the "expanse of drought" in the second stanza, a drought which has resulted in dry dams and stalled windmills. The speaker then compares the stalled windmills with her mother's absent smile, replaced by a frown. Clearly the drought and the lack of resources and the mother's despair are all entangled, though it is only as an adult that the speaker is able to understand why.

Later in the poem, the imagery around the bathtub changes. Rather than being characterized by its old age and ugliness, the speaker remembers it for the sheer pleasure she felt while "lolling" in the hot water. The speaker remembers the warmth as a kind of luxury and even the phrase "disgorged from fat brass taps" seems to imply abundance. This sense of abundance connects her to her adult self, whom she claims is "a sybarite." It seems the speaker learned her love for luxury and self-indulgence as a child in a bathtub, seeking some "secret warmth." There is a sense of what wasn't provided to her as a

child, as well as what was; all in all, she seems to be more grateful for her childhood than not.

In the final stanza, the speaker feels a nostalgia for "all those bathroom squabbles," which at the time probably felt like real arguments, but now she hears their echoes as proof that she was surrounded by people who loved her. Her mother's smile has a ghostly quality; regardless of how it has been "loosed from the bonds" of poverty and drought, there is a sense of it lingering with the speaker now in a way that is both comforting and tinged with regret.

Where Imagery appears in the poem:

- **Lines 3-4:** "our old enamel tub, age-stained and pocked / upon its griffin claws, was never full."
- **Line 5:** "expanse of drought"
- **Line 6:** "where dams leaked dry and windmills stalled."
- **Lines 7-8:** "Like Mommy's smile. Her lips stretched back / and anchored down"
- **Lines 20-23:** "stole another precious inch / up to our chests, such lovely sin, / lolling luxuriant in secret warmth / disgorged from fat brass taps,"
- **Line 25:** "Now bubbles lap my chin."
- **Line 26:** "The shower's a hot cascade"
- **Line 30:** "all those bathroom squabbles"
- **Line 31:** "my mother's smile"
- **Lines 31-32:** "loosed from the bonds / of"
- **Line 32:** "lean, dry times"

METAPHOR

The first [metaphor](#) in the poem actually begins as a [simile](#). It appears in line 7 ("Like Mommy's smile.") when the speaker compares the windmills stalled by drought to her mother's smile. What this simile is actually describing is the *absence* of her mother's smile; her smile was replaced with "lips stretched back / and anchored down." Here the simile gives way to metaphor; the mother's frown is like an anchor in that her lips are weighed down by the presence of something heavy (her concern over the well-being of her family), but the word "anchor" also implies a strength, a groundedness. In other words, the speaker recognizes that her mother was in fact an anchor for the family, keeping them from being metaphorically lost in the chaos of a storm.

In line 10 ("it was a [...] all from chaos.") the speaker acknowledges that her mother's frown was "a clasp" to keep the family from this chaos that she could see though the children couldn't. Likewise, in line 16 ("Her mouth a lid clamped hard on this."), the mother's mouth is described as a lid, indicating the way she contained all the stress and worry and responsibility of trying to keep the family cared for without letting the children glimpse the dire nature of their situation.

The speaker describes her shower as "a hot cascade" in line 26;

this speaks to the feeling of abundance she has in her adult life. Finally, in the last two lines of the poem, the speaker describes her mother's smile as being "loosed from the bonds / of lean, dry times and our long childhood." The metaphor may imply that her mother is finally free to smile again, now that she is no longer trying to provide for a large family in the middle of a drought. This is a reference to the metaphor of the anchor from earlier—now that she is no longer responsible for keeping her family safe from potential chaos, there is nothing "anchoring" her lips down. She is free of that responsibility.

Where Metaphor appears in the poem:

- **Line 7:** "Like Mommy's smile."
- **Lines 7-8:** "Her lips stretched back / and anchored down"
- **Line 10:** "it was a clasp to keep us all from chaos."
- **Line 16:** "Her mouth a lid clamped hard on this."
- **Line 26:** "The shower's a hot cascade"
- **Lines 31-32:** "my mother's smile, loosed from the bonds / of lean, dry times and our long childhood."

PERSONIFICATION

At the end of the sixth stanza, the speaker remembers her and her sisters thinking of the bathtub faucets as their "old compliant co-conspirators" in their stealing of extra bathwater. This small moment of [personification](#) speaks to the imagination and playfulness of children, while also evoking the speaker's sense of guilt for doing something she knew she wasn't supposed to be doing.

By seeing the faucets as "co-conspirators," perhaps the children were able to assuage their guilty consciences; after all, they weren't acting alone but in concert with the home itself, which they interpreted as on their side in this rebellion against their mother's careful rations.

This notion that the children felt the bath was acting *with* them speaks to the children's sense of safety and belonging. Though they rebelled against their mother's rules which they didn't understand or felt were unfair, they also felt aided and abetted by their environment which, after all, was an extension of their mother's care taking. So even though they did not always feel nurtured by their mother directly, the fact that they were able to find comfort and warmth in the bathtub is something the speaker is now able to understand as an aspect of the home their mother made for them.

Where Personification appears in the poem:

- **Line 24:** "our old compliant co-conspirators."



VOCABULARY

Running riot (Line 2) - In this case, *running riot* means to run around without restraint; uncontrolled.

Enamel (Line 3) - An ornamental and protective coating applied to a hard surface.

Griffin claws (Lines 3-4) - Refers to the feet of a claw-foot tub, which in this case are shaped like griffin claws (a griffin is a mythological creature with the body of a lion and the head, wings, and claws of an eagle).

pocked (Line 3) - Rough; covered in holes or pits.

Dear (Line 5) - In this context, *dear* means expensive and hard to come by.

Mean (Line 17) - Stingy; ungenerous.

Lolling (Line 22) - Lounging; sprawling.

Luxuriant (Line 22) - Abundant, lush.

Disgorged (Lines 22-23) - Poured out; discharged.

Compliant (Lines 23-24) - Accommodating; cooperative.

Co-conspirators (Lines 23-24) - Accomplices.

Sybarite (Line 25) - Someone who is devoted to luxury and pleasure; a self-indulgent person.

Cascade (Line 26) - A small waterfall.

Squabbles (Line 30) - Small, petty fights.

expected 10 syllables and/or make use of other poetic feet.

The first stanza sets up an expectation that the poem will mostly adhere to a regular meter, as three out of the four lines are in near-perfect iambic pentameter (the second line runs on three syllables too long, and its stresses are irregular):

When I | was young | and there | were five | of us,
all run- | ning ri- | ot to | my moth | er's qui- | et
despair,
our old | ena- | mel tub, | age-stained | and pocked
upon | its grif- | fin claws, | was nev- | er full.

As the poem moves on, the meter gets looser and looser. By stanzas 5-7 ("We thought her [...] the heating on."), only the occasional line is actually 10 syllables long, most of them being much shorter.

This reflects the rebellion of the speaker and her sisters against their mother's strict rules, which they didn't understand as necessary at the time. Shorter lines, such as line 20 ("stole another precious inch"), seem to indicate in their shortness what these acts of rebellion potentially cost the speaker's mother—not being able to make resources stretch until the end of the month, perhaps.

Other lines, such as lines 25 ("Now bubbles lap my chin. I am a sybarite.") and 27 ("and water's plentiful, to excess, almost, here.") stretch beyond the 10 syllable mark, reflecting the excess of the speaker's current circumstances.

Finally, the poem returns to 10 syllables in its final line, though its inconsistent stresses still keep it from being a perfect iambic pentameter:

"of lean, | dry times | and our | long chi- | ldhood."

This imperfect return to balance seems to indicate the speaker's understanding that though her childhood wasn't perfect, she was provided more than enough love and care.

RHYME SCHEME

"Plenty" does not have a [rhyme scheme](#). In fact, it hardly uses rhyme at all. This keeps the poem from feeling overly constructed, preserving its conversational, reflective tone.

There are only a handful of instances of subtle rhyme, which can be attributed to the presence of [consonance](#) and [assonance](#) throughout the poem. For example, in line 2, note the [internal rhyme](#) of "riot" and "quiet." The rhyme helps draw attention to the contrast between the children's innocence and the mother's state of distress.

Another internal rhyme pops up with "anchored" and "anger" in line 8. This rhyme is not quite a full rhyme, but rather a [slant or near rhyme](#); nevertheless, it illustrates the relationship between the speaker and her mother, and the speaker's feeling



FORM, METER, & RHYME

FORM

"Plenty" consists of eight four-line stanzas (a.k.a. [quatrains](#)), for a total of 32 lines. This gives the poem a feeling of regularity and structure that reflects the mother's attempts to "keep [the children] all from chaos." At the same time, though, the speaker also often uses [enjambment](#) between stanzas. This, combined with the lack of [rhyme scheme](#) and conversational tone, creates a sensation of spilling out of the prescribed form, as though the speaker is unable to stick within the rigid confines of the poem. One might say, then, that the more structured aspects of the poem reflect the speaker's strict upbringing, while the more relaxed aspects reflect her current state of self-indulgence, or at least her feeling of self-indulgence as she soaks in a hot bath remembering her lean childhood.

METER

The poem is written in a mixture of [free verse](#) and [iambic pentameter](#), a meter in which each line consists of five iambs—poetic feet with an unstressed-stressed, da-DUM, syllable pattern. That said, the poem's meter is relatively relaxed and loose. Many lines fall short of or run over the

as a child that she was to blame for her mother's unhappiness. Moments like these, however, are not part of any broader pattern of rhyme in the poem.



SPEAKER

The speaker of this poem is someone looking back on childhood with the maturity that comes with age. As an adult, the speaker is able to recognize the difficulty of their mother's situation as a parent of five children during a drought. It's clear that while the speaker may have resented the mother for her strict rules and rations as a child, they now understand and appreciate the hard work and sacrifice that goes into being a parent, and the poem expresses the speaker's myriad feelings in realizing this—a mixture of empathy, admiration, nostalgia, and regret.

It's also worth noting the autobiographical nature of the poem. Dixon herself is one of five sisters, and grew up in the Karoo region of South Africa, which is semiarid and prone to droughts. The poem does not explicitly state the speaker's gender, but as it is autobiographical, it is fair to assume that the speaker is Dixon herself. Given that the poem is usually interpreted in this way, we've used female pronouns throughout this guide; do note, however, that it's possible to understand the poem on its own, it without knowing anything about the poet.



SETTING

The first six stanzas of the poem are all written in the past tense, and take place in the speaker's childhood home. This home is marked by poverty and drought; the drought more than anything can be seen as the setting of this poem, as it is the lack of water which makes the children's warm baths and stolen inch of water feel so luxurious.

In the second-to-last stanza, poem switches to the present. The speaker is located in a bathtub inside her house. Based on this information, it is safe to assume that the speaker is reminiscing on her childhood while taking a bath—the bath itself having reminded her of the tub she and her sisters used as children.



CONTEXT

LITERARY CONTEXT

Isobel Dixon grew up in South Africa and studied English Literature at Stellenbosch University. She later earned her postgraduate degree in English Literature and Applied Linguistics in Scotland. "Plenty" was published in South Africa in 2001, in Dixon's first collection, *Weather Eye*, though it later appeared in her first English publication, *A Fold In the Map*, as well.

As a contemporary poet and literary agent, her work has been influenced by fellow contemporary writers (including other South African writers, writing in both English and Afrikaans) as well as canonical English-language writers. Among her [poetic influences](#) are Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, Derek Walcott, and Emily Dickinson, as well as many novelists and memoirists. Contemporary poems that similarly focus on the shifting relationships between parents and children include Seamus Heaney's "[Follower](#)" and Robert Hayden's "[Those Winter Sundays](#)."

Dixon doesn't belong to a particular school of poetry, though generally she can be referred to as a lyric poet. Her work is often oriented towards the natural world, and though she might be described as a "nature poet," her work deals just as much with humanity—with the emotional and the political, and in particular her own family and experiences of in-between-ness as someone who has lived in vastly different cultures and landscapes.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Dixon was born in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa in 1969. When she was three years old her family moved to the Karoo region, which was farther inland and semiarid, in an effort to relieve her father's asthma. Dixon has cited these landscapes—the coastal hills and the almost-deserts of South Africa—to be a great source of inspiration in her work.

Dixon was pursuing her master's degree in Edinburgh during the 1994 general elections in South Africa. This election was momentous as it officially marked the end of apartheid in South Africa—for the first time, citizens could not be denied the right to vote based on their race. This resulted in the election of the African National Congress, a fully democratic political party, and the election of Nelson Mandela, the country's first black head of state, whose administration set to work dismantling institutionalized racial segregation and investigating human rights violations. While Dixon had initially planned on going into academia, the 1994 election and everything it symbolized caused her to re-evaluate; in short, [she said](#) it made her want to do "something more creative and grass roots."

She now lives in Cambridge, England and works in London as a literary agent, often representing other South African writers. She is the Head of Books at Blake Friedmann.



MORE RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- "[About Me](#)" — A brief introduction to Isobel Dixon, written by the poet herself. (<http://www.isobeldixon.com/about-me>)
- [More Poems About Childhood](#) — A roundup other poems that involve speakers reminiscing on their childhoods.

<https://poets.org/text/poems-about-childhood>

- [The Poem Out Loud](#) – A video recording of Dixon reading "Plenty" at Poetry Parnassus in 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLANCOzYZz4>
- [The Karoo](#) – A compilation of images of the Karoo region of South Africa. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdvtZ-oJciI>
- [An Interview with Dixon](#) – A conversation with Dixon for LitNet. <https://www.litnet.co.za/the-people-behind-the-books-isobel-dixon-poet-literary-agent-uk/>



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