

On Turning Ten & Mending

Alex, Shelby, Shahrade and Jenna

On Turning 10 by Billy Collins

- American poet from New York, born March 21st 1941
- Most of his poems are known for humour, but this one talks about a more serious topic



On Turning Ten

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad
light--

a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by
two.

But I can lie on my bed and remember every
digit.

At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the
garage
as it does today,
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to
myself,
as I walk through the universe in my
sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary
friends,
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe
there was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of
life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

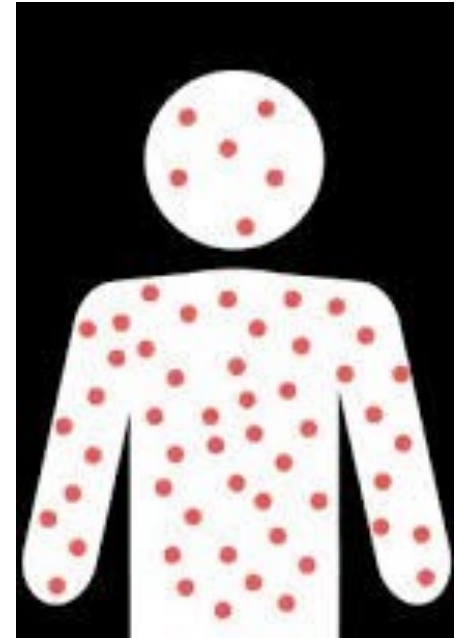
Billy Collins

Imagery

“The whole idea of it makes me feel like I’m coming down with something, something worse than any stomach ache or the headaches I get from reading in bad light— a kind of measles of the spirit, a mumps of the psyche, a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.”

Metaphor

“a kind of measles of the spirit, a mumps of the psyche, a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul”



Imagery

Metaphor

"At four I was an Arabian wizard... at seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince"



Imagery

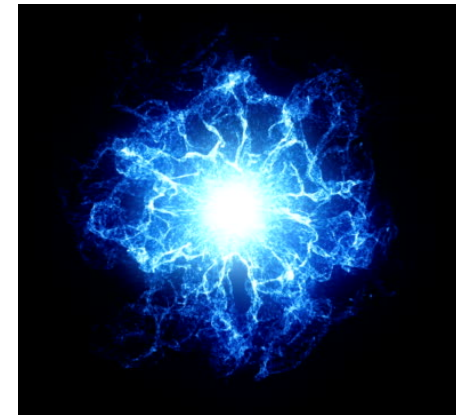
"But now I am mostly at the window watching the late afternoon light. Back then it never fell so solemnly against the side of my tree house, and my bicycle never leaned against the garage as it does today, all the dark blue speed drained out of it."

Personification

"light... never fell so solemnly"

Metaphor

"all the dark blue speed drained out of it"



Imagery

"This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself, as I walk through the universe in my sneakers. It is time to say goodbye to my imaginary friends, time to turn the first big number."

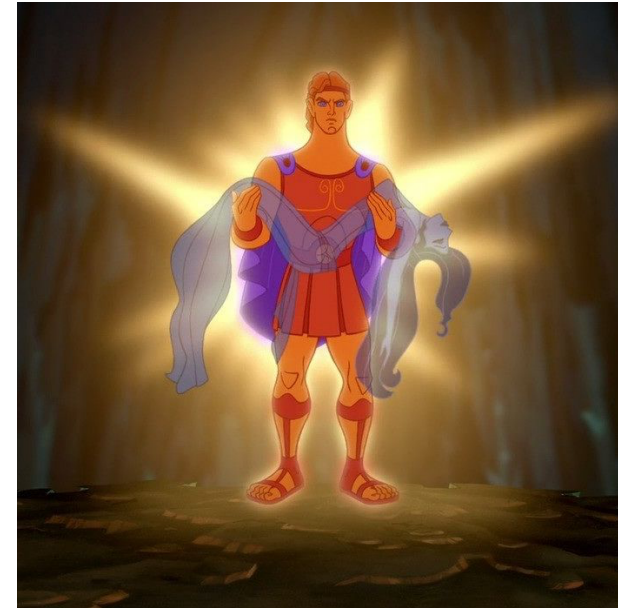


Imagery

"It seems only yesterday I believed there was nothing under my skin but light. If you cut me, I could shine. But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life, I skin my knees. I bleed."

Metaphor

"sidewalks of life"



Tone & Attitude

Tone: melancholic/sorrowful

- Realization of how when you age and mature you start to lose your creativity and imagination

Connotation

- “measles of the spirit, mumps of the psyche, disfiguring chicken pox of the soul”: childhood illnesses that can leave permanent scars; turning 10 is scarring his emotional sense of wellness
- “Arabian wizard... soldier... prince”: adventure/fantasy heroes from imagination

Hyperbole

- “I walk through the universe in my sneakers”

Paradox

- “The perfect simplicity of being one, and the beautiful complexity introduced by two”

- Open poem
- Free verse

Repetition

- “like I’m coming down with **something, something** worse than any stomach ache”

Style

Interpretation

Speaker: Billy Collins

- 1st 4 stanzas are his young voice
- last stanza is his adult voice

Theme:

- Coming-of-age/maturing
- Losing imagination/creativity
- Life's purpose

Mending by Luci Shaw

Born in 1928 in London, England

Author of eight volumes of poetry

Lectured in North America and abroad
about art and spirituality

1953 high honors graduate of
Wheaton College, Illinois



Mending

Mending by Luci Shaw

*Here I am, a needle in time,
a sharpness glinting through some poor
torn paisley of fabric, pulling the swift nerve of my suture
behind me through invisibility, then flashing
back out, eager for the next stitch and the next,
a hopeful mending of what will never be
a seamless garment.*

*As the fabric of seasons shrinks,
shreds again – fibers of old cloth
wearing thin, needing to be rewoven –
my failed needle waits for a spool of fresh, glowing
thread,
keeping itself steel bright and its point
quick and its eye open
for the next rip.*

Imagery

Metaphor

"Here I am, a needle in time"

"fabric of seasons"

"eager for the next stitch"

Personification

"eager for the next stitch"

"a hopeful mending"

"my failed needle waits"

"keeping its steel bright and its
point quick and its eye open"



Tone/Attitude



Tone/Attitude: hopeful

Connotation

- Paisley: intricate, unique fabric, like life

Allusion

- “glowing thread”: thread of life in Greek mythology, spun by the 3 fates

Style

- Free verse
- Open poem

Alliteration

- "...**poor** torn **paisley** of fabric, **pulling**..."
- "... As the fabric of **seasons shrinks, shreds** again..."

Speaker: Luci Shaw

Theme:

- Experiencing life's stages
- No life is perfect
- Life's ups & downs

Interpretation

Summary

- Both poems are about life & aging
- *On Turning Ten* is about coming-of-age, maturing, & losing imagination and creativity
- *Mending* is about experiencing different stages, the ups and downs of life
- Billy Collins looks back with regret and remorse, but Luci Shaw looks forward with hope