

Themes: death and the passage of time

Present tense: unfolding before us and the passive poet.

'Winter', by Edwin Morgan

Tone: sad and mournful

Repetition of goes, decays, fade

1 The year goes, the woods decay, and after,

First 3 verbs establish bleak mood - over time, things become less vibrant & alive.

2 many a summer dies. The swan

Specific detail adds to realism of poem

3 on Bingham's pond, a ghost, comes and goes.

swan could be used as a sign of beauty, life: instead it's a ghost.

word choice

4 It goes, and ice appears, it holds,

Even the ghost, a shadow of life, goes.

5 bears gulls that stand around surprised

alliteration: draws attention

word choice - the gulls' surprise shows that this is an unexpected loss they couldn't prepare for.

6 blinking in the heavy light, bears boys

word choice - 'heavy' suggests the

7 when skates take over, swan tracks gone.

light is oppressive.

'skates', not 'people wearing skates' - people are controlled by the time of year.

8 After many summer dyes, the swan-white ice

metaphor: 'dye' refers to summer's abundance of colours.

9 glints only crystal beyond white. Even

'crystal beyond white' is impossible. Colour has been completely drained away

10 dearest blue's not there, though poets would find it.

First reveal

11 I find one stark scene

of narrator, who is completely passive.

Line is both optimistic - we can remember things we loved, even when they're gone - and pessimistic - Morgan's a poet, and he hasn't found 'dearest blue'

12 cut by evening cries, by warring air.

violence and conflict

13 The muffled hiss of blades escapes into breath,

- onomatopoeia of 'hiss'
- repetition of 's' sound.

Suggests humanity's lack of power or importance.

word choice - 'stark' means bleak and desolate

The potentially fun scene of people skating is depicted in a stark, desolate manner

Repetition of 's' and end on soft 't' sound gives a sense of breathing

The process of things fading is listed and clearly shown.

14 hangs with it a moment, fades off.

Repetition of 'fades', use of lots of commas to break up the sentence, emphasises the gradualness of the process.

15 Fades off, goes, the scene, the voices fade

16 the line of trees, the woods that fall, decay,

17 and break, the dark comes down, the shouts

word choice - 'comes down' suggests deliberate care.

18 run off into it and disappear.

personification - people are defined by their noise, not as individuals.

19 At last the lamps go too, when fog

This shows people as a part of the natural world, NOT as something separate and safe from it.

Finally, man made technology fails.

detail adds to realism.

20 drives monstrous down the dual-carriageway

fog is personified 'monstrous' suggests something actively threatening and hostile.

21 out to the west, and even in my room*

West is where the sun sets

Our rooms are where we are both secure and vulnerable

22 and on this paper I do not know

The poet is in his element, where he should be master.

23 about that dead grey pane

24 of ice that sees nothing and that nothing sees.

* Setting moves to speaker's room, where we would expect warmth and security, but even there winter/death/time cannot be escaped.

Reference to ice in the park, which represents death.

repetition of 'nothing' emphasises the nihilism of the ending.

Death both 'sees nothing' - it's dead - and is seen by nothing - it can't be understood.