**In the Snack Bar**

Formica-laminate used for worktops; cheap

Hyperbole-little moments given great importance

Alliteration-C sound is harsh, like smash of cup

A cup capsizes along the formica,   
slithering with a dull clatter.   
A few heads turn in the crowded evening snack-bar.  
An old man is trying to get to his feet  
from the low round stool fixed to the floor.  
Slowly he levers himself up, his hands have no power.  
He is up as far as he can get. The dismal hump  
looming over him forces his head down.  
He stands in his stained beltless garberdine  
like a monstrous animal caught in a tent  
in some story. He sways slightly,  
the face not seen, bent down  
in shadow under his cap.  
Even on his feet he is staring at the floor  
or would be, if he could see.  
I notice now his stick, once painted white  
but scuffed and muddy, hanging from his right arm.  
Long blind, hunchback born, half paralysed  
he stands  
fumbling with the stick  
and speaks:  
‘I want –to go to the-toilet.’

**Stanza 1**-first impression of man in snack bar

-appearance

-other’s treatment of him

Suggests mystery, fear

Dehumanised-identified by disabilities rather than face

unstable

Seems bizarre, alien to those around him

Simile-compared to a frightening creature, trapped and struggling to escape-dehumanised

Unkempt, not well cared for

Long, loose woollen jacket

Suggests bleakness, unpleasantness

Personification-hump/ disabilities overpowering him

Personification-man reduced to disabilities rather than whole person

Suggests difficulty/ struggle

Suggests difficulty

Contrast-clatter seems sharp and loud, dull makes it sound every day and ordinary-emphasises his clumsiness

Personification-cup hiding out of embarrassment

Suggests difficulty of proposed plan-2 flights seems nothing to an able-bodied person

**Stanza 2**-describes difficult and lengthy journey to and from toilet:

-how man copes with everyday tasks

-how weak and slow his movements are

-the speaker’s patience with the man

Dashes used to emphasise staccato-slow, stammering-form of speech-nervous, uncertain

clumsy

Rule of three-emphasises excess of his disabilities

Man has no control

Uncared for

It is down two flights of stairs, but we go.  
I take his arm. ‘Give me-your arm-it’s better,’ he says.  
Inch by inch we drift towards the stairs.  
A few yards of floor are like a landscape  
to be negotiated, in the slow setting out  
time has almost stopped. I concentrate  
my life to his: crunch of spilt sugar,  
slidy puddle from the night’s umbrellas,  
table edges, people’s feet,  
hiss of the coffee-machine, voices and laughter,  
smell of a cigar, hamburgers, wet coats steaming,  
and the slow dangerous inches to the stairs.  
I put his right hand on the rail  
and take his stick. He clings to me. The stick  
is in his left hand, probing the treads  
I guide his arm and tell him the steps.  
And slowly we go down. And slowly we go down.  
White tiles and mirrors at last. He shambles  
uncouth into the clinical gleam.  
I set him in position, stand behind him   
and wait with his stick.  
His brooding reflection darkens the mirror  
but the trickle of his water is thin and slow,   
an old man’s apology for living.  
Painful ages to close his trousers and coat –  
I do up the last buttons for him.  
He asks doubtfully, ‘Can I- wash my hands?’  
I fill the basin, clasp his soft fingers round the soap.  
He washes, feebly, patiently. There is no towel.  
I press the pedal of the drier, draw his hands  
gently into the roar of the hot air.  
But he cannot rub them together,  
drags out a handkerchief to finish.  
He is glad to leave the contraption, and face the stairs.  
He climbs, and steadily enough.  
He climbs, we climb. He climbs  
with many pauses but with that one  
persisting patience of the undefeated  
which is the nature of man when all is said.  
And slowly we go up. And slowly we go up.  
The faltering, unfaltering steps  
take him at last to the door  
across that endless, yet not endless waste of floor.  
I watch him helped on a bus. It shudders off in the rain.  
The conductor bends to hear where he wants to go.

Simile-suggests magnitude of simple journey to this man

Gradual movement-slow

Repetition-idea of small, tentative steps taken

Dashes used for staccato speech

Poet comparing his experience of the world to the man’s-introduces list of experiences/hazards through sound, smell and touch

Alliteration-repeated ‘s’ like a whisper-indicates patient nature of speaker

Careful thought put into every movement

Indicate danger

Onomatopoeia-emphasis on navigation by sound-emphasises startling and intimidating nature of everyday issues

Suggests desperation, helplessness

Searching in uncertainty

Suggests patience of speaker

Repetition-emphasises duration of journey, hardship

Moving clumsily

Emphasises length of journey

Harsh light of toilet emphasises his unappealing appearance and difference from others

Lacking grace

Patient, caring nature of speaker

Contrast with ‘gleam’ of bathroom

Showing deep thought, worry, sadness

Metaphor-comparing urinating to apology-feeble, embarrassing

pathetic

Emphasis on duration of time, difficult of simple task

Embarrassment and helplessness

Question used-must ask permission for simple task-helpless and pitiful

Uncertain, nervous

Suggests closeness

Lack of strength

Onomatopoeia-emphasis on harsh nature of unfamiliar sounds-contrast with gentle motions of speaker

Mimics movements of man

Idea of constantly needing support and help

Contrast-although footsteps are unsteady (“faltering”, “endless”), determination is still strong (“unfaltering”, “not endless”)

Emphasises duration of time taken

Repetition-mirrors descent-positive, hopeful

Feeling of hope-even though progress is slow, it is still progress, has still achieved goal

Alliteration-p sound is powerful, uplifting

Repetition-gradual progress, long journey

Suggests unfamiliarity, anger with object

Suggests difficulty

Wherever he could go it would be dark  
and yet he must trust men.  
Without embarrassment or shame  
he must announce his most pitiful needs  
in a public place. No one sees his face.  
Does he know how frightening he is in his strangeness  
under his mountainous coat, his hands like wet leaves  
stuck to the half-white stick?  
His life depends on many who would evade him.  
But he cannot reckon up the chances,  
having one thing to do,  
to haul his blind hump through these rains of August.  
Dear Christ, to be born for this!

Exclamation-poet’s opinion-pitying, angry with God that such a life should exist; disgust with society’s ignorance

Appeal to Christ-ironic-Christ taught compassion for those most in need

Metaphor-even in allegedly summery/happier times, still experiences difficulties

Personification-dehumanised, reduced to disabilities

Slow, difficult process

Rely on

Suggests society deliberately avoids assisting the disabled

Rhetorical question asks reader to question society’s perception of disability

Simile-wet leaves=limp, unpleasant, cling to things-feeble, no strength, desperate

Comment on society’s perception of disability-fear of the unknown

Comment on society’s perception of disability-see the problem, not the person

Creating sympathy

Double meaning-“dark”-reference to blindness; “dark”-negative, bleak, helpless

**Final stanza**- writer reflecting on experience of man

**‘Hyena’-Edwin Morgan**

Use of personal pronoun to engage reader-makes them feel targeted, on edge

First person, immediate-dramatic monologue

I am waiting for you.

I have been travelling all morning through the bush

Menace/threat, as comment is aimed at reader

and not eaten.

African village of huts

I am lying at the edge of the bush

Intense heat, lack of water

on a dusty path that leads from the burnt-out kraal.

Present tense-hyena speaking directly

I am panting, it is midday, I found no water-hole.

Alliteration-aggressive ‘f’ stop sound imitates aggression of animal

I am very fierce without food and although my eyes

Alliterative ‘s’ sound-hushed, secretive focus

are screwed to slits against the sun

you must believe I am prepared to spring.

Quick, fast movement

Assumption, create simpression of arrogance

**Overall impression in stanza 1**

Hyena as threatening character, enduring harsh conditions but well-adapted

Rhetorical question-playful and provocative, enticing reader into response

What do you think of me?

Simile-coarse fur is similar to arid landscape of African savannah-hyena well-adapted to suit environment, becomes environment

I have a rough coat like Africa.

Extended simile-compared to habitat, hyena bragging about how well-adapted it is to environment-representative of Africa

Cunning, sly

I am crafty with dark spots

like the bush-tufted plains of Africa.

Hyena as chaotic, full of life, poised and ready

To lie spreading one’s entire body out, take up space

I sprawl as a shaggy bundle of gathered energy

Simile-hyena thinks highly of itself, sees itself as large, imposing, impressive

like Africa sprawling in its waters.

Metaphor-hyena sees itself on patrol, in control, in charge of area, position of power

I trot, I lope, I slaver, I am a ranger.

Ungainly/ clumsy movement

I hunch my shoulders. I eat the dead.

Used to provoke disgust and distaste in the reader

**Overall impression in stanza 2**

Hyena as powerful creature that represents African landscape; is dominant, well-adapted and thinks highly of itself

Personification-moon as threat-‘hard’ and ‘cold’ negative words

Rhetorical question mimicking structure of the last stanza-toying with reader, playing on reputation

Do you like my song?

Wide open grassland

When the moon pours hard and cold on the veldt

Metaphor-continuing on from idea of moon as a threat-dark associated with danger and mystery-hyena revelling in these qualities as a ‘slave’

I sing, and I am the slave of darkness.

Over the stone walls and the mud walls and the ruined places

Idea of destruction and danger

and the owls, the moonlight falls.

Extended metaphor-reflects moon as slave

I sniff a broken drum. I bristle. My pelt is silver.

Long, mournful, expressive cry

Hair standing upright in anger/fear-hyena always alert and ready to attack

I howl my song to the moon – up it goes.

Would you meet me there in the waste places?

Rhetorical question-mirrors beginning of stanza, yet question appears more of a challenge/sinister invitation-intimidating

**Overall impression in stanza 3**

Playing on stereotype of hyena’s nocturnal nature and familiar howl, hyena is made to seem threatening and mysterious, intimidating to reader.

It is said I am a good match

Almost self-deprecating-hyena discussing negative assumptions of itself as a vulture

for a dead lion. I put my muzzle

Idea of lion as prize

Side of body, between ribs and hips

Mouth/snout

at his golden flanks, and tear. He

Majesty of lion contrasts with baseness of hyena

is my golden supper, but my tastes are easy.

Metaphor-emphasises large number of strong teeth

‘fangs’-vampyric nature of hyena, feasting on others, ripping and tearing flesh aggressively

I have a crowd of fangs, and I use them.

Oh and my tongue – do you like me

Hanging out of mouth in relaxed fashion

when it comes lolling out over my jaw

Rhetorical question-playing on stereotype of hyenas as playful creatures-hyena laugh

very long, and I am laughing?

Short sentence is chilling-no cheer or joy surrounding hyena, only violence and threat

I am not laughing.

But I am not snarling either, only

Suggests hyena is not being overtly aggressive, but quietly threatening

panting in the sun, showing you

**Overall impression in stanza 4**

Hyena defying common stereotypes of it-as a lazy scavenger/clown. Made to seem more threatening and an active hunter

what I grip

carrion with.

Decaying flesh of dead animals

Mirrors first stanza

I am waiting

Idea of hyena as predator waiting for opportune moment

for the foot to slide,

Rule of three-hyena preparing itself, understands process of hunt well

for the heart to seize,

Tissue connecting muscle to bone

for the leaping sinews to go slack,

for the fight to the death to be fought to the death,

lifeless

Repetition-familiarity with process

for a glazing eye and the rumour of blood.

Hidden, secretive, prepared to pounce

Hint, waiting for telltale signs of death

I am crouching in my dry shadows

till you are ready for me.

Unsettling-cold, calculating, unfeeling-no remorse or second thought over actions-brutal and savage nature emphasised in final lines

My place is to pick you clean

Idea of innate nature of beast

and leave your bones to the wind.

**Overall impression in stanza 5**

Return to moment of attack in stanza 1-intensity and immediacy of moment returns

Hyena portrayed as a savage and unfeeling creature, dedicated to the hunt

**‘Winter’-Edwin Morgan**

Suggests slow process of death; rotting

Personification-seasons dying adds drama; idea of winter as a symbol of death

Idea of time passing, winter as a time of old age

The year goes, the woods decay, and after,

Regal, angelic, white, pure

many a summer dies. The swan

Metaphor-haunting image, last remnant of life in decaying park

Pond in west end of Glasgow

on Bingham’s pond, a ghost, comes and goes.

Weather taking hold

It goes, and ice appears, it holds,

bears gulls that stand around surprised,

Almost oxymoron? Fading light is heavy on eyes

blinking in the heavy light, bears boys

Repetition, change in meaning-dyes=change in colour-contrast with whiteness of winter

when skates take over swan-tracks gone.

After many summer dyes, the swan-white ice

Return to idea of ghost swan-white colour symbolism-pure, deathy pale, untouched

glints only crystal beyond white. Even

Self-mocking tone

Colour symbolism-blue= sadness

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

First person, present tense-moment unfolding as we read

I find one stark scene

Wind blowing strongly, aggressively

Stark-severe, bare

cut by evening cries, by warring air.

Suggests distress, harsh conditions

Violent/harsh image of wind

The muffled hiss of blades escapes into breath,

Repetition-idea of slow decaying process

Onomatopoeia- painfully cold wind, weather seen as harsh and violent

hangs with it a moment, fades off.

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

the line of trees, the woods that fall, decay

and break, the dark comes down, the shouts

Darkness personified-looming over, absorbing noise and life

run off into it and disappear.

Fog personified-“drives” suggests power

“monstrous” suggests unusual, frightening force

At last the lamps go too, when fog

drives monstrous down the dual carriageway

Return to speaker-winter as threat

out to the west, and even in my room

Idea of immediacy and present moment

and on this paper I do not know

Metaphor-ice as a window to nothing but dead of winter

Water usually reflective, here shows nothing

“grey”=dull, bland, empty “dead”=main theme

about that grey dead pane

of ice that sees nothing and that nothing sees.

Repetition/inversion-winter as dead time-lifeless, empty

**‘Slate’-Edwin Morgan**

Short sentence-dramatic. Reference to Book of Genesis “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”-denial of God’s power, power given to elements

Rural island off west coast-sandy beaches, rocky cliffs

There is no beginning. We saw Lewis

Powerful, unpredictable forces of nature

Idea of creation

laid down, when there was not much but thunder

Personification-seas actively changing landscape, idea of pirates taking of own will

and volcanic fires; watched long seas plunder

Simile/ alliteration-painful process of shaping country, leaving scar

Staffa-uninhabited west coast island, rocky

faults; laughed as Staffa cooled. Drumlins blue as

Drumlins-small hill, composed of ice

bruises were grated off like nutmegs; bens,

Metaphor-glen as backbone of Scotland. Glens= tough, experience all elements

alliteration

Simile-contrast with previous simile-pain contrasted with ease of destruction-power of nature, speed of change

and a great glen, gave a rough back we like

to think the ages must streak, surely strike,

Rough treatment

Alliteration-tough conditions faced by glen/Scotland (extended metaphor)

S sound=soft, contrasts treatment of Scotland

seldom stroke, but raised and shaken, with tens

Hyperbole

Rule of three-excess of torment/harsh conditions

of thousands of rains, blizzards, sea-poundings

shouldered off into night and memory.

Shrugged off, perilous weather and harsh treatment easily forgotten-Scotland as a robust and strong nation

Memory of men! That was to come. Great

Personification of landscape-impatiently waiting for change, like a petulant child-playful image

Idea of hope-still power to change, opportunity for growth

Caesura (deliberate break in flow)-contrast with flowing description of glen Human history as brief moment

in their empty hunger these surroundings

Contrasting image-rainbow symbol of hope, sun appearing-but ‘sorry glory’-temporary, transitional-all change is temporary until the next

threw walls to the sky, the sorry glory

of a rainbow. Their heels kicked flint, chalk, slate.

Return to idea of rough landscape

Idea of petulant child re-emerging-kicking heels like a child stamps their feet in frustration

**‘Good Friday’-Edwin Morgan**

Precise, like diary entry or captain’s log-gives sense of importance

Sudden, sharp movement

Three o’clock. The bus lurches

Shortened word indicates Glaswegian accent

round into the sun. ‘D’s this go –‘

Casual, clumsy

Long street in the centre of Glasgow

he flops beside me – 'right along Bath Street?

- Oh tha's, tha's all right, see I've

got to get some Easter eggs for the kiddies.

Character feels sense of closeness with speaker, despite random nature of encounter

Character revealing a secret to speaker

I’ve had a wee drink, ye understand –

ye’ll maybe think it’s a – funny day

Assume speaker’s response

Dashes indicate faltering speech-rambling train of thought

to be celebrating – well, no, but ye see

I wasny working, and I like to celebrate

Repetition-losing train of thought; desperately trying to keep hold of speaker’s attention

when I’m no working – I don’t say it’s right

I'm no saying it's right, ye understand - ye understand?

But anyway tha’s the way I look at it –

I’m no boring you, eh? – ye see today,

Rhetorical question-does not wait for answer, continues regardless of speaker’s feelings

take today, I don’t know what today’s in aid of,

whether Christ was – crucified or was he –

Background to man-unreligious

rose fae the dead like, see what I mean?

Pronunciation indicates stark difference between man and speaker

You’re an educatit man, you can tell me –

- Aye, well. There ye are. It’s been seen

time and again, the working man

has nae education, he jist canny – jist

Repetition of ‘jist’-man feels he is limited, embarrassed over status

Repetition of ‘bliddy ignorant’-class divide-difference between working class and middle class

hasny got it, know what I mean,

he’s jist bliddy ignorant – Christ aye,

bliddy ignorant. Well –' The bus brakes violently,

Movement mimicking abrupt stop of bus

Abrupt end to conversation

Uneducated, unsophisticated, lacking knowledge/awareness

he lunges for the stair, swings down – off,

Clumsy, casual

into the sun for his Easter eggs,

on very

Structure mimics content-reflects man stepping clumsily down the stairs

nearly

steady

legs.

**‘Trio’-Edwin Morgan**

Present tense, instamatic poem-like snapshot in time

Main street in Glasgow city centre

Coming up Buchanan Street, quickly, on a sharp winter evening

Represent stars guiding three wise men

a young man and two girls, under the Christmas lights –

Represents idea of gift giving

Allusion to biblical tale-three wise men and gifts

The young man carries a new guitar in his arms,

Represents baby Jesus

the girl on the inside carries a very young baby,

Represents animals present at Jesus’ birth

and the girl on the outside carries a chihuahua.

And the three of them are laughing, their breath rises

Metaphor of joy, establishes positive mood of poem-protects from harsh weather by optimism

in a cloud of happiness, and as they pass

Colloquial Glaswegian accent; indicates excitement

the boy says, ‘Wait till he sees this but!’

The chihuahua has a tiny Royal Stewart tartan coat like a teapot-

Simile-light-hearted, cute image-harmless

holder,

the baby in its white shawl is all bright eyes and mouth like favours

Simile-baby as a prize, treats on a wedding cake-symbol of love and hope

Pure, innocent

in a fresh sweet cake,

the guitar swells out under its milky plastic cover, tied at the neck

Similar to white colour of shawl-innocence and purity

with silver tinsel tape and a brisk sprig of mistletoe.

Joy and happiness emanating from group-contrast with winter setting

Reminder of Christmassy feeling

Orpheus (Greek mythology)-had power to bring objects to life through music

Brisk-vitality, liveliness-reflects energy, vigour and purposefulness of trio’s movements

Special, reinforces festive feeling

Orphean sprig! Melting baby! Warm chihuahua!

Three exclamations-focus attention on each object-contrast with longer sentences of previous stanzas

The vale of tears is powerless before you.

Metaphor(biblical phrase-when confronted with trio, sadness is instantly overcome

Contrast with religious imagery-religious faith no more relevant or important than feeling of goodwill and happiness, qualities of generosity, compassion and kindness are inherent in all, not just those of faith

valley

Whether Christ is born, or is not born, you

Gives up

put paid to fate, it abdicates

Personification of fate-no match for joy and goodwill symbolised by group

under the Christmas lights.

Monsters of the year

Retreat, easily defeated-scatter implies minimal effort in defeat

Issues/ troubles personified-like knights defeating a beast –fairytale element

go blank, are scattered back,

Army/knight metaphor extended-military connotations of ‘march’

can’t bear this march of three.

Contrast/repetition-outwardly, group of three have made no major impression to rest of street, but within parenthesis (Morgan’s reflection)-their impact is more lasting

– And the three have passed, vanished in the crowd

(yet not vanished, for in their arms they wind

the life of men and beasts, and music,

Simile-joy as a protector from negative feelings/cold

laughter ringing them round like a guard)

at the end of this winter’s day.

Optimistic message-trio as a symbol of hope and joy