**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

**‘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

Stark-severe, bare

cut by evening cries, by warring air.

Suggests distress, harsh conditions

Violent/harsh image of wind

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

Wind blowing strongly, aggressively

The muffled hiss of blades escapes into breath,

Repetition-idea of slow decaying process

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

**‘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

Personification-harsh, unforgiving weather; everyday occurrence (“wanders”)

**From Glasgow Sonnets (i)**

Dirty, unclean, waste

A mean wind wanders through the backcourt trash.  
 Hackles on puddles rise, old mattresses  
 puff briefly and subside. Play-fortresses  
 of brick and bric-a-brac spill out some ash.  
5 Four storeys have no windows left to smash,  
 but in the fifth a chipped sill buttresses  
 mother and daughter the last mistresses  
 of that black block condemned to stand, not crash.  
 Around them the cracks deepen, the rats crawl.  
10 The kettle whimpers on a crazy hob.  
 Roses of mould grow from ceiling to wall.  
 The man lies late since he has lost his job,  
 smokes on one elbow, letting his coughs fall  
 thinly into an air too poor to rob.

Assonance-links words, reinforces metaphor; emphasises layers of decay flourishing

Personification-kettle usually shrill, alarming-worn down, broken

Alliteration-harsh plosive b sound is aggressive; uninviting place

Repetition/play on words emphasises rubbish surrounding area

Hackles-hairs that rise up when angry or alarmed-personification-aggressive/defensive environment

Atmosphere conveys sense of sadness, deprivation, poverty.

Weak, pathetic

Alliteration emphasising his flaw

Personification-unpredictable environment

Unsettling image

Worthless place, destroyed

Buttresses=source of defense/support-allusion to war, need to defend

Violence, destruction

Personification-exhausted, worn out, waste

**Edwin Morgan**

**Edwin Morgan- Glasgow 5 March 1971 (1972)**

Makes it seem like an important event; like we should be aware of this date already

Oxymoron-diamonds usually seen as perfect

Rough, sharp jaggy edges

With a ragged diamond  
of shattered plate-glass  
a young man and his girl  
are falling backwards into a shop-window.  
The young man's face  
is bristling with fragments of glass  
and the girl's leg has caught  
on the broken window  
and spurts arterial blood  
over her wet-look white coat.  
Their arms are starfished out  
braced for impact,  
their faces show surprise, shock,  
and the beginning of pain.  
The two youths who have pushed them  
are about to complete the operation  
reaching into the window  
to loot what they can smartly.  
Their faces show no expression.  
It is a sharp clear night  
in Sauchiehall Street.  
In the background two drivers  
keep their eyes on the road.

Indicates danger of situation-prepared for something terrible to occur, protecting selves

Creates image of couple-surprised and shocked; spreading bodies out to stabilise themselves; bizarre image, almost comical, dehumanised

Alliteration-‘w’ sound imitates shocked, open mouthed expression of victims

Patent material

Contrast-creates gory image

Fast flow of blood-lots of blood shooting out-gory image

Artery severed-indicates danger of situation

Tells us how glass look on face-beard of glass-absurd image

Present tense-feel part of the moment

Enjambment-(lines follow on)-creates a sense of immediacy to the poem

Metaphor-indicates glass is shining brightly, eye-catching; reference to type of shop?

Morgan’s Main Points

* Glasgow can be a violent city
* Glaswegians do not care deeply about one another
* Glaswegians can be aggressive, selfish and violent