**The Way My Mother Speaks**

Personal poem

I say her phrases to myself

Absence, loneliness, isolation

in my head

Metaphor-‘shallows’=water-feeling of anxiety, drowning. Shallow breathing=panicky, short sharp breaths

or under the shallows of my breath,

Contrast with shallow breathing-soothed by words

restful shapes moving.

Repetition=comfort of words; mimics trains rhythmic movements

The day and ever. The day and ever.

The train this slow evening

Assonance-elongated vowels mimic slow, languid nature of journey

goes down England

Meandering, slow pace of journey emphasised

browsing for the right sky,

Colour symbolism-blue skies=happiness, joy; grey=boredom, misery, bad things to come-journey from Scotland (happy) to England (sad)

too blue swapped for a cool grey.

For miles I have been saying

Inversion/dialectal speech-contrasts with standard English of rest of poem

Language and identity strongly linked

What like is it

Idea of secrecy-unspoken language, but integral to speaker

the way I say things when I think.

Repetition/contrast-overwhelmed/unnerved by feelings of leaving home

Nothing is silent. Nothing is not silent.

Repetition-soothing, comfort of mother’s dialect

What like is it.

Briefness of moment, reflection

Only tonight

Contrast-firm ambiguity in emotions

I am happy and sad

Simile-innocent, naïve-ending of one chapter of life, starting anew-nostalgia for past, childhood

like a child

who stood at the end of summer

Tentative, careful

and dipped a net

Unknown, mysterious nature of new place-pond-hidden depths to explore

in a green, erotic pond. The day

Repetition-journey continuing towards new destination

and ever. The day and ever.

Contrast-conflicting emotions in departure from home

I am homesick, free, in love

Nostalgia-strong ties to home and family

with the way my mother speaks.