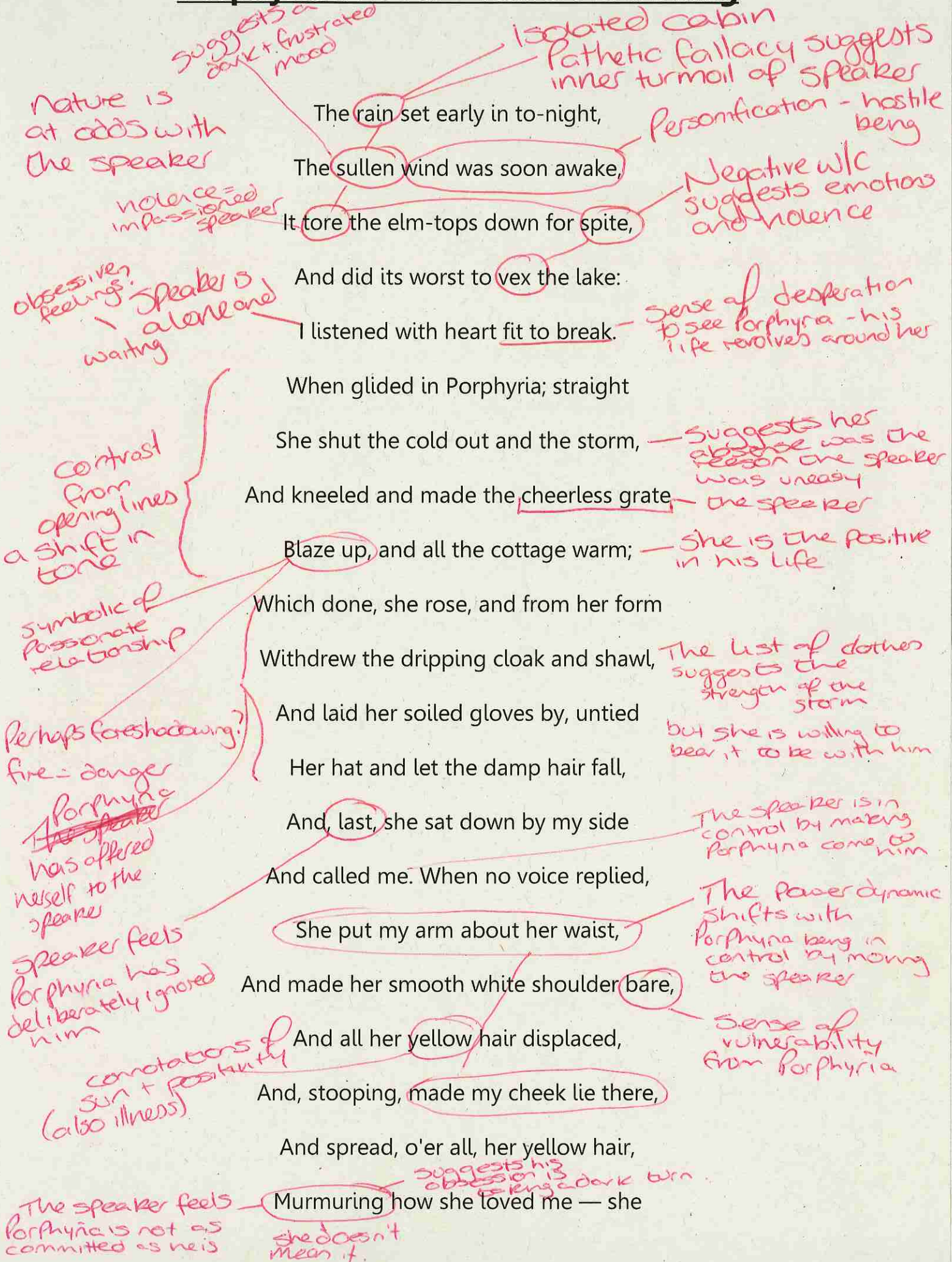


Porphyria's Lover – Robert Browning



Repeated possessive pronouns convey his fixation.

her claim to love him is weak

Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,

To set its struggling passion free

From pride, and vainer ties dissever,

And give herself to me for ever.

But passion sometimes would prevail,

Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain

A sudden thought of one so pale

For love of her, and all in vain:

So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes

Happy and proud; at last I knew

Porphyria worshipped me; surprise

Made my heart swell, and still it grew

While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,

Perfectly pure and good; I found

A thing to do, and all her hair

In one long yellow string I wound

Three times her little throat around,

And strangled her. No pain felt she;

I am quite sure she felt no pain.

As a shut bud that holds a bee,

I warily oped her lids: again

The speaker is hesitating about engaging with her

violent suggestions he feels this is only a momentary engagement + Porphyria will not truly be with him forever

The speaker was alone + Porphyria attended a party

Porphyria has made her feelings clear but speaker has no confidence in strength of her love.

he is a death to her

We only hear the speaker's voice - dramatic monologue.

Although he knows she loves him, he still doubts the strength of this love.

repetition emphasises the importance to the speaker that he own Porphyria

diminutive form heightens her vulnerability

monosyllabic words make this message seem empty

eccentric simile signals delusion of speaker - what has he done wrong? Does he expect to be stung.

synecdoche

enjambment highlights how simply stated this is. we are horrified.

suggests Porphyria is of upper class + speaker if lower not approved of

she is rich he is poor

sinister change in mood/tone

Tension builds

he realises Porphyria holds him in high regard

speaker is surprised by revelation that Porphyria does love him

w/c connotations of reverence/worship can Porphyria be described as these things?

Simple nature of statement reinforces horror of actions and disturbed thoughts of speaker.

Caesura

Inversion to delay the realisation of what is going on

Does the speaker?

intense enjoyment

Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.

And I untightened next the tress

About her neck; her cheek once more

Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:

I propped her head up as before,

Only, this time my shoulder bore

Her head, which droops upon it still:

The smiling rosy little head,

So glad it has its utmost will,

That all it scorned at once is fled,

And I, its love, am gained instead!

Porphyria's love: she guessed not how

Her darling one wish would be heard.

And thus we sit together now,

And all night long we have not stirred,

And yet God has not said a word!

her character?
metaphorical? purity
physical? death
but vessels

The speaker feels he has given new life to Porphyria.

she is not moving
OR
she has been there a long time

He genuinely believes he has done what she wanted

Porphyria has been reduced to an object.

The imagery of a man playing with a corpse is intensely disturbing.

Challenges religious judgement of Victorian society.

He feels he has done the right thing

His passion is intensified by her death - he is the victor in love

There is a reversal of roles. Speaker exerts power over Porphyria

Porphyria has been forged of this metal through act.

dehumanises Porphyria

Porphyria is now defined by him

Speaker believes her wish was to be with him forever

Anaphora

Themes

Love

Obsession

Sin

Form

Dramatic monologue.