

- * Written from perspective of elderly invalid woman confined to her bed.
- * Use of Scots to add expression and make tone more colloquial.
- * 10 4-line stanzas (quatrains) creating tight structure - reflects constrictive life woman leads confined in bed.
- * Monologue form to give better understanding of woman's character and her reaction to her situation.

Single word title reminds us that her life consists of only this - without it she would be free.

Starts poem by taking about her daughter - shows she is important in some way.

Commentary on what it is to be old in our society on the humiliation and helplessness one feels when forced to be dependent on next generation.

Repetition confirms the similarity of her routine and how boring and wearing it must be.

Speaker feels ashamed that she can't take care of herself like she used to - woman contrasts her new self with the old.

The have switched roles - humiliation.

Role-reversal has shifted the control in the relationship - enjambment.

Negative thoughts about her appearance - too many physical changes - lost strength + beauty - list suggests illness/disease.

Can't be out living life so has to be told things by her daughter - she has all of the power.

Negativity towards daughter's attitude.

Short sentence - bleak thought about holding off the inevitable - aware she is facing death soon.

Metaphor reminds speaker of her confinement and certainty of her bleak fate.

Simile - compared to a chicken - vulnerability, ugly, unnatural, being prepared for the end.

Shows how long she has been in this state - expected to sit on the sidelines and observe life taking place.

Lack of genuine concern and her automatic response before giving her another poor meal - their interactions have become robotic.

Metaphor - imagines she can hold time - it's thin and will soon slip away. Takes up reflective tone.

Repetition suggests she wants daughter to feel guilty and isn't grateful for poor treatment - daughter should've tried harder to repair relationship.

Bed

She is that guid tae me so she is an Am a burden tae her, I know Am ur. Stuck here in this **big blastit bed year in, year oot**, ony saint wuid complain.

There's things she has tae dae fir me A' wish she didnae huv tae dae. Am her wean noo, wey ma great tent o' nappy, an champed egg in a cup, an mashed tattie.

Aw the treats A' used tae gie her, she's gieing me. A' dinny ken whit happened. We dinny talk any mair. Whether it's jist the blethers ha been plucked oot o' us

an Am here like some skinny chicken, ma skin aw bubbles and dots and spots, loose flap noo (an yet as a young wuman A' took pride in ma guid smooth skin.)

Aw A' dae is sit and look oot this windae. A've seen hale generations grow up an simmer doon fray this same windae - that's no seen a lick o' paint fir donkeys.

The Kerrs have disappeared, but the last Campbells ur still here so Am telt - tho' hauf the time A' dinny believe her: A've no seen any Campbell in a lang time.

My dochter says 'Awright mother?' haunds me a thin broth or puried neep an A say 'Aye fine,' an canny help the great heaving sigh that comes oot

my auld loose lips, nor ma crabbit tut, nor ma froom when A' pu' ma cardie tight aroon ma shooders fir the night drawin in. Am jist biding time so am ur.

Time is whit A' hauld between the soft bits o' ma thumbs, the skeleton underneath ma night goon; aw the while the glaring selfish moon

lights up this drab wee prison. A'll be gone and how wull she feel? No that Am saying A' want her guilty. No that Am saying Am no grateful.

Jackie Kay

Contemplates time and how much she has left - questions the fact her death may have on her daughter.

Alliteration and expletive suggests frustration + bitterness she feels about being trapped.

Easy to chew/ swallow baby/invalid food - lacking in enjoyment - like her life.

Metaphor - exaggerates the size to suggest how ridiculous the situation is. Also shows she can't control her body anymore.

Short blunt sentences highlight breakdown in their relationship.

Small talk/intimacy has gone - word choice of "plucked" suggests violence/harshness - communication has gone forever.

Window symbolises the woman - reflects her neglected state as she's seen very little attention or excitement.

Old age has brought her ugliness and disrepair - doesn't take pride in who she is anymore - youth is seen as "guid" - age is looked down on.

Thinks daughter is lying to avoid hurting her feelings - although she may be wrong as she hasn't seen anyone.

Enjambment - highlights length of the sigh and extent of sorrow it reflects.

Has to take care of herself and stay warm in her solitary bed.

Word choice - connotations of death - fragile, weak - time has defeated her.

Personification makes us think of the daughter and others who don't see her enough.

- Themes**
- * Old Age
 - * Isolation
 - * Relationships