

**LUCOZADE**

What is the poem about?

General ideas and wider themes.

**BED**

What is the poem about?

General ideas and wider themes.

**KEEPING ORCHIDS**

What is the poem about?

General ideas and wider themes.

## What is the poem about?

"Lucozade" is about a Jackie Kay visiting her dying mother in hospital as a young girl. She is frightened about losing her mother and feels troubled by the negative environment of the hospital. The mother wants Kay to remove the stereotypical gifts associated with illness as they simply serve as a reminder of her condition. After Kay does remove them, her mother is uplifted. Positive ending as the mother has a moment of hope and gets better.

## Themes?

Family relationships - we see the girl put in a difficult situation. Parents are usually the comforting ones but the girl has to step into that role. We see how close family is when there's a risk of losing someone.

Illness - explores the difficulties of seeing a loved one in a bad state but still managing to overcome this. Poem is a celebration of recovery and rejection of the stereotypical associations of illness.

## What is the poem about?

"Bed" is about an elderly woman who is confined to her bed due to old age/illness. The speaker feels like a burden and regrets what her life has become and the fact her body has let her down. We learn she has nothing to do but stare out of her window and wait for death. She resents the people out living the life she could have if able to leave. We wonder if the woman is appreciative of what her daughter does for her or is actually criticising her. The poem also deals with the possible resentment younger generations may feel when having to take care of an elderly relative.

## Themes?

Family relationships - explores idea of relying on family, the responsibility you have for taking care of them and how some make people feel guilt for not doing this.

Ageing/time - explores the difficulties of ageing and how it affects your body and mind.

Treatment of the elderly - poem is a critique of how the elderly are treated in society. Idea of them being a burden.

## What is the poem about?

"Keeping Orchids" is about Jackie Kay's first few meetings with her birth mother. We see how hopeful Kay is to form a relationship with her but the experience leaves her shaken and dejected. Kay makes a continuous effort to hold this relationship together but the mother's unwillingness to open up and share means they can never really form one. Negative ending as we see a clear separation as they fail to establish the relationship due to the history (or lack of) behind them.

## Themes?

Family relationships - Looks at the idea of what a family relationship is and how Kay and her birth mother can't have this. This mother and daughter had a chance at a relationship but this was taken away because of a choice made earlier.

Adoption - explores the struggles of adoption and how this is different to normal family relationships.

**DIVORCE**

What is the poem about?

General ideas and wider themes.

**MY GRANDMOTHER'S  
HOUSES**

What is the poem about?

General ideas and wider themes.

**GAP YEAR**

What is the poem about?

General ideas and wider themes.

## What is the poem about?

A daughter has fallen out with her parents and decides that she wants to be separated by them. The girl gives several reasons for wanting to leave them and describes idealistic parents which don't exist but she thinks she deserves. We see the girl trying to be taken seriously and show that she feels she has the right to request this separation.

Humorous poem but also quite serious about giving children the power to get out of unhappy family relationships.

## Themes?

**Family relationships** - Explores a negative family relationship and mocks the typical teenage attitudes towards family. On a more serious note, it also considers the fact that a separated family is a big issue for children and looks at the idea of a child having the power to end a relationship.

**Adolescence** - written for children to show complex emotions children go through. Explores the typical mindset of a teenager and the challenges of growing up.

## What is the poem about?

"My Grandmother's Houses" is about Kay's memories of the different houses associated with her grandmother. The first house is her preferred home which clearly reflects her personality and the time span/experiences of her life. The second home is the one the council has forced her to move to. We are made aware of how she feels she doesn't fit in there. The third house is the posh one her grandmother used to clean. We see Kay becoming more aware of the differences in class. Poem ends on a negative note as we see the grandmother in a chaotic environment which doesn't suit her personality.

## Themes?

**Family relationships** - we see the difference between several generations. We learn about the grandmother's unwillingness to step into the modern world and Kay's fascination with her. We also see the grandmother's sense of duty in making Kay aware of religion and showing her how to work for a living.

**Class** - poem explores the different social classes as we see the lower class grandmother having to clean houses for little money and the posh woman with her big house who looked down on them.

## What is the poem about?

"Gap Year" is about Kay having to learn how to cope with her son's departure on a gap year. The first section tells the story of Kay's longing for her baby to finally arrive and the excitement when he finally does arrive. The second section skips 18 years. It covers Matthew's adventures and Kay's struggle to accept the distance and get over her fears of what might happen. The poem looks at the selfishness/recklessness of the younger generation but also the overcautious aspects of the older generation.

## Themes?

**Family relationships** - explores what it's like to see family dynamics change. Focuses on what it's like for parents to see their kids leave home - the struggles of the parent to let go and the children's inability to understand their fear.

**Growing up/time passing** - explores excitement and fear of seeing your child setting out into the world. Also explores idea of children seeking separation from parents and their own independence in the world.