

# Revelation

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# Narrative

- Poem is about a young girl who goes to a farm to collect eggs and milk. Whilst at the farm she is taken to the door of a shed housing a big black bull. She becomes afraid and runs away trying to stop the milk from spilling and eggs from breaking. As she runs she notices boys at the farm hurting small animals.

# Central Concerns

- **Transition from innocence to experience (childhood to adulthood)**

**The girl is frightened of the bull, in the same way she fears the “big boys” who are rough and destructive and might hurt her. She makes a connection between the boys and the bull, as she runs from both.**

**Sudden realisation that there is a difference between the sexes, and that the male sex is, on the whole, bigger and more physically powerful and will hurt her. This is her “revelation.”**

# Revelation

- What does this word mean?
- something revealed or disclosed, especially a striking disclosure, as of something not before realised.

# Importance of the title

- The title means that the **persona** (the person speaking in the poem) has realised something significant. She realised from the experience of seeing the bull for the first time that evil exists in the world.

I can remember once being shown the black bull  
when a child at the farm for eggs and milk.

They called him Bob--as though perhaps

you could reduce a monster

with the charm of a friendly name.

At the threshold of his outhouse, someone

held my hand and let me peer inside.

# Sensual imagery

- Imagery that appeals to the readers senses:

Taste

Touch

Smell

Sight

Hearing

At first, only black  
and the hot reek of him. Then he was immense,  
his edges merging with the darkness, just  
a big bulk and a roar to be really scared of,  
a trampling, and a clanking tense with the chain's jerk.  
His eyes swivelled in the great wedge of his tossed head.  
He roared his rage. His nostrils gaped.



And in the yard outside,  
oblivious hens picked their way about.

The faint and rather festive tinkling  
behind the mellow stone and hasp was all they knew  
of that Black Mass, straining at his chains.

I had always half-known he existed--  
this antidote and Anti-Christ his anarchy  
threatening the eggs, well rounded, self-contained--  
and the placidity of milk.

I ran, my pigtails thumping alien on my back in fear,  
past the big boys in the farm lane  
who pulled the wings from butterflies and  
blew up frogs with straws.

Past thronged hedge and harried nest,  
scared of the eggs shattering--

only my small and shaking hand on the jug's rim  
in case the milk should spill.

# Symbols

- Eggs and milk symbolise innocence and purity

Eggs – fragile shells containing young chicks

Milk – white colour of purity

# Bull

- Symbolises danger and evil

In which parts of the poem does this symbolism take place?

- Imagery used in stanza 1
- Connections to religion in stanza 2
- Connection to the boys in stanza 3
- Threat towards the eggs and milk

# Structure

- Poem is divided into three stanzas
- What do you notice about the stanzas?
  
- Stanza 1 – 14 lines
- Stanza 2 – 9 lines
- Stanza 3 – 8 lines

- Stanza 1 – Revelation
- Stanza 2 – Realisation
- Stanza 3 - Reaction

# Possible critical essay tasks

Choose a poem which seems to be about an ordinary everyday experience but which actually makes a deeper comment about life.

Explain what the poem is about and go on to show how the techniques used by the poet help to make the ideas memorable.

Choose a poem which describes a scene or incident vividly.

Briefly state what is being described and then go on to show how the poetic techniques used make the description vivid.

Choose a poem which deals with childhood, adolescence, family life or old age.

Show how the poet deepens your understanding of any of these stages of life by the choice of content and the skilful use of poetic techniques.

Choose a poem in which the poet creates a particular mood or atmosphere.

Show how the poet creates this mood or atmosphere by his or her choice of subject matter and use of poetic techniques.