

Family

everything else

Time

Love

Structure

Stanzas

AFTERNOONS

3 unrhymed stanzas  
regular

life of mothers is regular/boring

3 stanza to show ongoing away happening

# Afternoons

Life is changing  
happy times  
are slowly disappearing  
leaves are falling  
people's responsibilities  
are changing  
Life as a mother has  
taken over  
what mothers can  
see

Summer is fading: idea that summer is going / journey of life / youth fades  
metaphor

The leaves fall in ones and twos - can't control how they fall / it irregular

From trees bordering - em, ambience / break down in life / something taken over

The new recreation ground.

In the hollows of afternoons - feeling empty lives / they are less / lives not fulfilling  
No joy / pointless / domestic life is empty / hyperbole  
being put together / all the same / boring lives  
becomes a routine identity.

Young mothers assemble

At swing and sandpit

Setting free their children. - foreshadows what they will be doing later in life.  
mothers can escape from a dull / boring life

Behind them, at intervals,

Stand husbands in skilled trades, of workers in the relationships. Shows the position  
of women society

An estateful of washing - metaphor for how much work a mother has to do in her  
life

And the albums, lettered

Our Wedding, lying - double meaning. 'lying' about the love they once shared, or  
it could literally be lying on the floor

Near the television: show how television has broken them apart and has become  
between them

Before them, the wind - memories been blown away

Is ruining their courting-places - go on dates, but they don't go anymore because  
they had children / youth is fading.

That are still courting-places

(But the lovers are all in school), - words like 'fading' which forces readers to feel  
like the moments are happening now. This then  
forces the reader to reflect on their own position  
in the lives.

And their children, so intent on - children are focussed on finding 'unripened acorns'  
unrealistic love. Trying mature wicker. They are  
not aware what to expect.

Finding more unripe acorns,

Expect to be taken home.

Their beauty has thickened. - idea of them changing / don't look the same / don't have  
time to look after themselves, looking after the children

Something is pushing them - mothers being pushed out of their own lives

To the side of their own lives. - mothers have lost their identity. They have no more  
personal life. Everything else has taken over.

PHILIP LARKIN

Stanza one and three are similar in topic so the  
poem reflects the continual, monotonous cycle of  
the mothers' lives.

metaphors to compare the change of seasons with the  
passing of youth and relationship  
written in present tense.

## Context

Larkin is a modern, contemporary poet. This poem  
was written in a post-war Britain. Larkin was  
very cynical and held a negative view about life.

He often wrote about everyday life  
He was never married, he didn't believe in having  
children. He felt it was pointless

He was also did not like materialistic people.

The poem focuses on the unsatisfactory nature of all of  
our lives in that we'll all have to grow up and  
eventually realise we've lost our truth.

The poem is about love, be and  
what their love was like ~~then~~  
before they had children. They  
watch videos to remind them  
what it was like, and where  
they went on dates. Children,  
responsibilities and also love have  
a relationship change. The  
poem connects the seasons with  
the passage of time.  
Dream about what they could  
of had.

- Family
- everything else
- Time
- Love

● = structure

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life as a mother has  
taken over  
what mothers can  
see

being shown as animals  
they are wild

mothers lives and  
their jobs are  
finally

ambivalent has been  
used to portray the  
break down of the  
old courting places  
younger generation  
taking over

changing responsibility  
of motherhood  
mothers being trapped  
in a cycle

what the mothers  
can see in the park

Summer is fading: idea that summer is going / journey of life / youth fades  
metaphor

The leaves fall in ones and twos - can't control how they fall / it irregular

From trees bordering - em, ambivalent / break down in life / something taken over

The new recreation ground.

5 In the hollows of afternoons - feeling empty lives / they are less / lives not fulfilling  
no joy / pointless / domestic life is empty / hyperbole  
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becomes a routine identity.

Young mothers assemble

At swing and sandpit

Setting free their children.

foreshadows what they will be doing later in life.  
mothers can escape from a dull / boring life

only there for a little bit of time, they are not

supported, not there all the time, not supported

Behind them, at intervals,

10 Stand husbands in skilled trades, of women society

workers in the relationships, shows the position

An estateful of washing - metaphor for how much work a mother has to do in her  
life

And the albums, lettered

Our Wedding, lying

double meaning, 'lying' about the love they once shared, or  
it could literally be lying on the floor

Near the television;

show how television has broken them apart and has become  
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memories been blown away

is ruining their courting-places

go on dates, but they don't go anymore because  
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That are still courting-places

words like 'fading' which forces readers to feel  
like the moments are happening now, this then  
forces the reader to reflect on their own position  
in the lives.

(But the lovers are all in school),

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children are focussed on finding 'unripened acorns'  
unrealistic love, trying mature wicker. They are  
not aware what to expect.

Finding more unripe acorns,

Expect to be taken home.

idea of them changing / don't look the same / don't have  
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Their beauty has thickened.

mothers being pushed out of their own lives

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That are still courting-places - words like 'fading' which forces readers to feel  
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Finding more unripe acorns, unrealistic love. Trying mature wicker. They are  
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