Away by Tony Birch

Away
the warmed hollow
of your childhood bed
the place where you
once laid and rested
is away

your young breath singing
rising through morning air
to fill the rooms of houses
and the life you had –
away

fingerprints marking time
on a kitchen table
a bicycle wheel turning
its windmill in the yard
playful hands swept through
locks of hair to untangle –
away

and along the road
running away from us
where secrets are told
with darkest whispers
I see your gentle feet
leaving their dance
in a red dirt track –
away

How might the words 'warmed hollow' appeal to the reader's senses? For example, inviting the reader to imagine a cosy, safe space.

What is the effect of the repetition of the word 'away' in this poem? For example, could it reinforce a sense of loss? Could it help to create a specific tone? How does the author juxtapose the word with other words or phrases for effect? For example, 'and the life you had --/away'.

How does the author's use of vocabulary create a specific sense of character or time? For example, the words 'childhood' and '*once* rested'.

How does the author use imagery to appeal to the reader's senses? For example, using **visual** imagery to invite the reader to imagine a child's breath filling a house. Using **auditory** imagery which could allude to the vitality of the young subject or ask the reader to imagine singing more literally.

Is the phrase 'fill the rooms of houses' literal or metaphorical? For example, could it allude to the day-to-day act of living in houses or might it be symbolic of the energy and exuberance of a young child?

How does the author's choice of vocabulary contribute to a specific sense of place? For example, a 'red dirt track' rather than a 'dirt track' or a 'dusty track'.

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