Walking Away

SUMMARY

The speaker begins by recalling a specific event that happened almost exactly 18 years ago. It was a sunny day at the end of summer when the leaves were just starting to change color and the sidelines had just been repainted on the football field. That event was his son's first football game. After the game, the son moved uncertainly away from his father, like a satellite that had been dislodged from its established path, to join a disorganized group of other boys.

The speaker can still picture in his mind how his son looked as he walked away from his father towards the school. The boy's appearance provoked sharp, poignant emotions in the speaker, similar to the emotions he would experience seeing a half-grown bird released into the wild. The boy moves uncertainly as if he is looking for some kind of guidance or direction but not finding any.

When he remembers how uncertain his son looked, moving away from his father for the first time but also, in a way, for good, the speaker feels there is some lesson in the memory that is hard to put into words. It is a lesson about the natural progression of life: parents are given children to care for but then the natural course of maturity takes those children away. That maturing process involves many minor but still difficult challenges that help the child grow strong and establish his permanent adult identity.

The speaker has other memories of saying goodbye to people, but none of those memories still draws his attention or generates emotional pain so strongly. The speaker wonders if the reason that this memory still haunts him so powerfully is that it suggests an important idea that only God could truly convey to people. The idea is this: that at a certain moment in their lives, it is best for children to leave behind the guidance and protection of their parents so they can become mature adults; and parents, if they love their children, must allow their children to leave them.

THEMES

GROWING UP

The poem is a reflection on one of the poet's memories about his own son, and asks how children grow up. At first, the path to maturity seems to be undergoing certain established rituals and experiences. But then the poem suggests that maturity is even more about a certain *kind* of experience tied to independent exploration and challenges. The pathway to maturity, the poem thus suggests, may not necessarily be about walking *to* some set destination, but about walking *away* from structure and security—especially that offered by adults and parents. Children must leave behind that guidance and protection if they are to learn, grow, and take on their own adult identity.

At the start of the poem, the child is undergoing several coming-of-age experiences—playing sports, attending school. These experiences are traditional stepping stones to maturity, but for the child first encountering them, they are new, unfamiliar worlds that he must learn to navigate on his own. Just as the season is about to change—the leaves are "just turning"—the child, too, is entering an important phase of change in his life.

The speaker begins with a memory of his son playing his "first game of football" with the "touch-lines new-ruled." The football field is a new territory with new rules that the child must master. And after the game, the child "drift[s] away" like a "satellite / Wrenched from its orbit." The child has had one consistent orbit or environment in his life so far, a place close to his parents. Now, however, he "walks away" from the parent "towards the school," another unknown territory whose rules and codes he must learn on his own.

The poem thus suggests that maturity is less about the specific experiences a child undergoes and more about learning to *navigate* those disorienting new experiences independently. The fact that the speaker's son drifts away to join a "scatter of boys" and walks towards the school as if walking "[i]nto a wilderness" suggests that he will experience chaos and disorder in his new environments. And he will not be told exactly *how* to navigate this chaotic world; he finds "no path where the path should be." The child is used to having guidance in unfamiliar territory, but he needs to venture out on his own and explore unmapped territories in order to grow up.

The child thus departs "[l]ike a winged seed loosened from its parent stem." If a seed simply fell to the ground when it left parent plant, the parent might block its access to light and nutrients. Seeds have wings so they can be carried through the air to a new place, where the seed can find all the resources it needs to survive and grow. But there are no set paths through the air. The journey the seed must make is uncharted. The speaker describes this journey as one of "the small, the scorching / Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay." It may be painful as well as challenging for the child to make an uncharted journey. But as the fire is necessary to give the clay its own shape, the journey is necessary to help the child find his own identity.

Maturity, then, does not mean following a clear path smoothly towards a set goal. It means struggling on a path that is often

unclear, towards an unknown destination—without the protective help of adults. In the last stanza, the speaker acknowledges that the child's journey to "selfhood," his own adult identity, therefore "begins with a walking away." In stanza two, the child was "walking away" "towards the school." Now, however, the child is simply "walking away." He doesn't have a set destination. He is just setting out on his own. It is not so much particular activities that allow a child to grow up so much as acting independently.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 3-12
- Line 19

PARENTAL LOVE AND LETTING GO

The poem explores the nature of parental love and the painful costs of that love. Early on, the speaker's metaphors suggest that children need their parents to provide structure and guidance. But as the poem goes on, the speaker acknowledges that what the child really needs is to be allowed to find his own way, even if the way is painful. The poem finally concludes that true parental love means letting go of control over a child's life, even though this letting go also brings pain for the parent.

The poem's imagery initially suggests that a parent's job is to provide their children with structure and guidance. The speaker's child is compared to "a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit." A satellite is meant to follow a set path. This image is used when the child starts "drifting away" from the parent, implying that the parent provides the stabilizing path the child needs. Being "[w]renched" away from that stability seems painful for both parent and child.

The child is next compared to a "half-fledged thing," a bird that has only partially developed the feathers it needs to fly. If the bird is not ready to fly, the image implies, it should remain in the nest with the parent. This "half-fledged thing" also "finds no path where the path should be." Just as the satellite needs an orbit, the parent believes the child needs a path. He should not have to find his own way through the "wilderness."

Later, however, the child is described with images of things that cannot reach their full potential unless they are set free and subjected to stress. The speaker acknowledges that parents must allow their children to face challenging experiences in order to grow—however challenging this proves for the parent on the sidelines.

The departing child is now compared to a "seed loosened from its parent stem" and a clay vessel being "fire[d]." Seeds must detach in order to grow; clay must be fired in an oven to achieve strength and structure. A child, similarly, needs to detach from his parents and undergo difficult "[o]rdeals" to develop strength and form his own adult identity. But these ordeals can be "[s]corching," not only for the *child*, but also for the *parent* who must watch the child struggle and resist the desire to help. The child is described as "one's clay," the parent's own creation. The parent still feels a strong connection to the child and suffers alongside him.

The speaker again affirms that true parental love means allowing the child to face these challenges on his own, so he can achieve maturity and independence. But it has also been challenging and painful for him to let his child go. The child needs to "walk[] away" from the parent to mature and develop his own "selfhood." As such, if the parent loves his child, then he will "prove[]" it by "letting [the child] go."

"[P]rove," means not only "demonstrate" but also "to test, to put to trial." Letting the child go is a painful trial for the parent. Indeed, the fact that this memory still haunts the speaker after eighteen years reveals just how painful a parent's job can be.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-20

LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

LINES 1-3

It is eighteen ...
... watched you play

The speaker begins by setting up the context for his poem. The poem is a description of a memory recounted from the first-person point of view, as the pronoun "I" in line 3 indicates. This description is addressed directly to someone, the "you" in line 3, who is also the subject of the memory. The apostrophe—the first-person address directly to another person—gives the poem a particularly strong sense of emotional intimacy, almost as if readers are overhearing a private conversation (the speaker's conversation with another person or even with himself, since the "you" being addressed is someone who is not necessarily present to the speaker).

The reader can infer that this memory has strong emotional significance for the speaker. The speaker remembers the exact day when the event took place ("almost to the day") even though it was "eighteen years ago." He delays saying exactly what the event was until lines 3-4, establishing the setting first. The time was a "sunny day with the leaves just turning"—the ending of summer and the beginning of fall, with the leaves just starting to change color. The place was a playing field with "touch-lines," or sidelines, "new-ruled" for the start of the new season. These details not only allow the reader to picture the event but also carry symbolic significance: it turns out that this event marks the end of one season and the beginning of another in the life of the speaker's son, the "you" being

addressed.

The event is the son's "first game of football." Participation in organized sports is a traditional rite of passage for young people, especially young men. The football game is a well established, well organized experience. There are touch-lines that demarcate the field and tell the son where he can and can't go, and those lines are "new-ruled," or set down on the field again, at the start of every new season, as the games take place regularly every year. But even if football is a familiar tradition in the larger culture, it is new for this particular boy. He has to learn the rules and rituals that belong to this unfamiliar environment.

The first stanza also establishes the irregular meter of the poem. The irregular meter, combined with the frequent device of enjambment, means the poem sounds less like a formal artistic artifact and more like the authentic, spontaneous recollection of a genuine memory.

LINES 4-5

Your first game ...
... go drifting away

Adjusting to this new environment means leaving behind the old family environment that used to provide order to the boy's life. The speaker describes him with a simile as being like "a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit." The boy used to have an "orbit," a path he followed regularly in his daily life. Now he is leaving that path. The word "wrenched" suggests a violence associated with this change, as if this transition is painful—for the boy and for the speaker, his father. Since parents provide the path for their children to follow early in life, being wrenched from that "orbit" means being wrenched away from the parent. The new experience for a child, navigating a strange environment, is thus also a new experience for the parent, who watches the child achieve a kind of independence for the first time.

The speaker is likely wondering how the child will cope with his new independence. After the game, he watches as the child goes "drifting away." He's left one path behind and hasn't found the new path yet. The speaker may be concerned about whether the child will be able to navigate this new environment successfully.

The last word of the first stanza is "away." "Away" will prove to be a significant word in the poem, as it features in the title and is repeated in every stanza. Ending the first stanza on this word emphasizes that the key theme in this poem is the separation of parent and child—what this separation means for the child's maturing and what it demands of the parent's love.

Along with the meter, the first stanza establishes the rhyme scheme of the poem. The poem, arranged in five-line stanzas (a.k.a., quintains or quintets), follows a regular rhyme scheme of ABACA. Since the A rhymes are the *only* rhymes (there is no partner word to rhyme with the B and C words), and because there are three A rhymes in each stanza, the words that form the A rhymes stand out with particular prominence.

The speaker uses the A rhymes to draw connections between supporting or contrasting ideas and to emphasize key words. In this first stanza, "play" is rhymed "away," reminding the reader that what appears to be a simple game is actually a momentous event in the child's life -- his first movement away from his parents and towards his mature identity as an adult.

Enjambment is used throughout the poem to help capture the experience of this momentous event. One important function of enjambment is the way it allows temporary ambiguity in the poem's meaning. When the thought is not completed at the end of the line, the reader might entertain one idea about what the completed thought might be, only to discover that it is something else entirely when they reach the next line. For example, the enjambed line 3 ends with "I watched you play." Readers could imagine that the speaker is describing a small infant. But they would learn in the next line that the play refers to a "game of football," and that the child must be much older. Immediately the child imagined in the reader's mind would transform from an infant into an adolescent -- a rapid transition that might mirror the speaker's own sense of how quickly his son has grown up.

The final line of the stanza is also enjambed. The reader knows that the child is "drifting away" without knowing where he is going. The speaker, too, is watching the child set off on his path to maturity without knowing where that path will take him. In different ways throughout the poem, enjambment and the ambiguity it creates help the reader experience something similar to the speaker's own experience.

LINES 6-8

Behind a scatter ...
... thing set free

The second stanza draws out still further the theme of separation between parent and child. The child who was simply "drifting away" at the end of the first stanza is drifting toward, the reader now learns, a "scatter of boys." He is leaving his father to join a group of his peers at "the school."

Like the football field, the school represents a stepping stone in the path towards maturity. It is another new environment that the child must learn to navigate on his own. There are rules and regulations that govern behavior on the field and in the school, but the child has to learn those rules—and even within this ordered environment, there can still be confusion and disorder, as the term "scatter" suggests. Navigating the new social environment can be the most difficult challenge of all.

And of course, the child must face these challenges without the guidance of his parent. The speaker says, "I can see / You walking away from me towards the school." As the speaker

phrases it, the child reaches the school—and the maturity it represents—only by first leaving the parent.

This line stands out as significant, containing as it does the title of the poem. The use of consonance, alliteration, and assonance throughout this stanza add to that significance. Note the prevalence of /b/, /s/, /f/, /w/, and /k/ sounds:

> Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
> You walking away from me towards the school
> With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free

These add a sense of cohesion and emphasis to these lines, and the repetition of sounds also suggests a sort of inevitability as the sounds just keep piling up. The /w/ sounds in particular draw attention to the title phrase—"walking away"—while the /f/ sounds connect the speaker's child—the "half-fledged thing"—to "free[dom]." Also note the assonance of long /i/ and /ee/ sounds:

> Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
> You walking away from me towards the school
> With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free

These add to the rhythm and musicality of these lines. Altogether, these repeated sounds convey to the reader that this is the central event that prompted the poem's creation: the speaker's memory of his child walking away.

LINES 9-10

Into a wilderness, ...
... path should be.

The child's walking away from the parent is the central event described in the second stanza. Of course, the child is not only walking *away* from something but also *towards* something. If the parent is concerned about the child being"[w]renched from [his] orbit," he might take comfort in the idea that school will provide a clear new path, another source of guidance. But lines 8-10 challenge this idea.

In line 8, the speaker describes the departing child as being "set free." This might initially sound positive. Freedom is an aspect of adulthood that young people look forward to as they mature. But once again, the speaker uses enjambment to introduce ambiguity, directing the reader's interpretation first one way and then the other. Line 8 is enjambed, and when the reader reaches line 9, they realize that there is a negative as well as a positive aspect to this freedom. In line 9, the reader learns that the child has been set free "[i]nto a wilderness"—an inhospitable, threatening environment that offers no guidance for survival. This idea is reinforced when the speaker says the child walks like one who "finds no path where the path should be." In leaving the parent for his peers, sports, and school, the child has not left behind one stable source of guidance for another. He's entered a confusing world that he must learn to navigate for himself.

Finding his own way, learning to be independent, might be essential to the child's process of growing up. But it can be nerve-wracking and emotionally painful for the parent to witness. The speaker says specifically that the child walks "[w]ith the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free." "Half-fledged" refers to the stage of life for a bird when it has some but not all of the adult feathers it needs to fly. The bird is maturing but is not fully able to survive in the world on its own. With this metaphor, the speaker conveys that he doesn't think the child is completely ready to be on his own. This is likely why he sees the child walking with "pathos"—a quality evoking pity or sadness.

The sight of the departing child provokes pity in the speaker as he imagines the difficulties the child will have to endure as he struggles with new challenges. There is a part of him that believes the child shouldn't have to struggle so much, or wishes that he didn't: the child finds no path "where the path should be." The speaker believes there ought to be some help, some guidance for the child just entering a new world, especially when he hasn't yet developed all the skills he needs to survive in that world. And so, it is particularly painful for the parent to watch, not only as his child walks away from him, but walks away just when he appears to need his help the most. In the next stanza, the speaker will reflect further on this question of whether the child ought to have help as he moves through these traditional rites of passage.

LINES 11-12

That hesitant figure, ...
... its parent stem,

The third stanza develops ideas from the first two stanzas while also introducing a new perspective. It begins with a further description of the child walking away from the parent: "That hesitant figure, eddying away." "Hesitant" echoes line 5 ("drifting away") and line 10 ("Who finds no path"), with the idea that the child feels unsure, not knowing where to go next. The word "eddying" also reinforces this idea. "Eddying" refers to the circular movement of water. An object trapped in an eddy of water would move back and forth, around and around, not forward in a clear direction.

These terms represent the child as uncertain and uneasy. By repeating the word "away," and placing it prominently at the end of the line, the speaker emphasizes that this uncertainty and unease come from leaving the parent.

But with line 12 comes a new perspective. Line 11 is enjambed. It ends with "away," which places the emphasis on the child's painful departure. But the sentence continues over into line 12, where the speaker compares the departing child to "a winged seed loosened from its parent stem." This simile introduces a new understanding of the parent-child separation:

That hesitant figure, eddying away
Like a winged seed ...

A seed *needs* to separate from its parent. Unlike the satellite of line 4, which is meant to stay on the same path indefinitely, the seed needs to move to a new place. If a seed simply fell from the parent plant and started growing right beside it, the parent plant would absorb the sunlight and the nutrients in the soil that the young seed needs, and the seed would die. The seed *must* get away from the parent plant in order to survive and grow. This is why seeds evolved "wings"—small flaps that extend on either side like the wings of a bird—so that the wind can pick up and carry the seed away somewhere new.

The seed simile, then, suggests that is natural and necessary for the child to leave the parent. And, moreover, the child has the capacity to find his own way successfully. The metaphor of the "half-fledged" bird in line 8 evoked a bird not yet capable of using his wings, suggesting that the child is not ready for independence. In this simile, however, the seed *does* have functioning wings—a fact that the sounds of the line emphasizes:

Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,

The consonance and sibilance here add emphasis to the line. The sibilance especially evokes the sensation of a soft breeze, of the seed gently drifting through the air on its own.

LINES 13-15

Has something I ...
... one's irresolute clay.

In these lines of the third stanza, the speaker starts to offer a new response to his son's departure. He also indicates what moved him to write this poem about the event.

The speaker says that the child's "hesitant figure" "[h]as something I never quite grasp to convey." This line represents an aporia for the speaker. He is uncertain what deeper meaning lies in this image. The phrasing of the line makes clear, however, that this image is highly significant to him.

The verbs "[h]as" and "grasp" are in the present tense. If the speaker had said, "*Had* something I never quite *grasped* to convey," this would have meant that on that day, 18 years ago, there was something he did not understand at the time. The reader would not know if that day was significant to him in the long run or not. But the present tense verbs indicate that it *was* significant. If the boy's figure "has" something now, in this moment, then "figure" must refer, not to the actual child, but to the memory or the image of the departing child that the speaker still sees in his mind's eye. And if the speaker says, "I never quite grasp," he means that he has tried many times since that day to grasp the meaning of that memory and that he is *still* trying.

The verbs, then, indicate that this event is an exceptionally strong memory that the speaker revisits often, and that he has been struggling for years to fully comprehend the meaning of this event. This struggle, this aporia, is the reason for the poem. He thinks that writing this poem might help him to comprehend the meaning of that moment and to convey or share it.

The speaker sees that the significance of this moment has something to do with a universal natural process—with "nature's give-and-take." For creatures (and some artifacts) to develop and grow strong, they need to be subjected to stress. Stressful moments, difficult tests, help develop the very capacities necessary to survive such tests. This natural process might "take" away a creature's comfort or security, but it "give[s]" new ability and maturity in return.

The speaker does not fully comprehend this process, but he dimly understands that it is at work in this moment. He has been regretting that his son is immature (a "half-fledged thing") because his immaturity makes it difficult to navigate his new environment difficult. But in fact, as he now admits, it is precisely the difficulties—the "[o]rdeals"—that will *allow* his son to mature. The son's separation from the father might be painful, but it is the kind of pain he ultimately needs. The poem helps the speaker learn this lesson by allowing him to describe it with metaphors.

The speaker conveys his insight with the metaphor of clay in a kiln. When a potter sculpts a vessel from clay, the vessel must be fired in a kiln, or oven, for the form to be set and the material to be strengthened. Without that firing, the vessel's shape will keep collapsing and changing, as if "irresolute" or unsure what shape to take. ("[I]rresolute" echoes "hesitant" in line 11). Clay makes it very obvious how apparently painful and destructive acts—"scorching" a vessel, subjecting it to "fire"—can actually be healthy and necessary.

By using this metaphor to describe his son, the speaker is better able to understand how similarly painful ordeals can be healthy and necessary for a child. For the child's adult identity to take form, he needs to confront his own ordeals. By allowing him to use these metaphors to develop his thoughts, writing a poem about his memory has helped the speaker understand what the memory means.

LINES 16-18

I have had ...
... perfectly show –

At the beginning of the final stanza, the speaker indicates again why this memory was significant enough for him to write a poem about it: "I have had worse partings, but none that so / Gnaws at my mind still." The present-tense verbs in line 13 suggested that the speaker had been continually reflecting on this moment since it occurred. Now, the speaker explicitly affirms that this moment "still" remains with him as one of his strongest memories. "Still" is also followed by a caesura, which

gives the word more emphasis.

More specifically, the memory "[g]naws" at him. This verb, like "[w]renched" in line 5, suggests a kind of violence in this particular "parting," violence that still carries emotional pain when the speaker reflects on it. "Gnaws" also carries the idea of returning to an object over and over to try and draw something from it, like a dog gnawing at a bone to get all the meat from it. The memory has "[g]naw[ed]" at his mind because he has been struggling not only to "grasp" its meaning but also to accept it.

Even if the speaker knows intellectually that it is healthy and necessary for children to face challenges on their own, it can still be hard to accept the thought of watching your child struggle and not helping him—or the thought that he no longer needs your help. "God alone," the speaker concludes, "could perfectly show" the truth of this fact, or make it perfectly convincing: that letting the child go at this moment is right, even though it may feel wrong. The ordinary events of human life, like a child's first football game, can only "roughly / Say[]" this truth. They leave the parent with some traces of doubt and anxiety over whether they have done the right thing, at the right time, in letting the child depart.

LINES 19-20

How selfhood begins ...
... the letting go.

The speaker has suffered gnawing doubt and anxiety in the 18 years since this football game. But now he appears to be at peace with the memory, with the child's "parting[]" and his decision to allow it. This peace is indicated by the structure of the final lines.

Lines 16 and 17 are enjambed. The thought carries over the end of the line and breaks in the middle. It isn't perfectly aligned with the poetic form, as though the speaker is still struggling to process it. The last two lines, however, are more regular and are end-stopped. The speaker has found the right form to express his thoughts; he sees what this moment means and has "grasp[ed] [how] to convey" it. This confidence is conveyed by the meter:

> How selfhood begins with a walking away,
> And love is proved in the letting go.

These lines are some of the most metrically regular in the poem. Line 19 begins with an iamb (da DUM) and then has three anapests (da da DUM); except for the unstressed syllable "the," line 20 has four iambs. The regular metrical pattern, with the emphasis it places on the final syllables of the lines, makes the lines sound smoother and more decisive than the first three lines of the stanza. The speaker, then, seems ultimately calm and confident about the meaning he has found in this painful memory.

Line 19 speaks to what he has learned about children and growing up. The phrase "walking away" is repeated here, as it was in line 7. But in line 7, the child walked away *towards* the school. In this line, the child simply walks *away*. The poem began with the child going through some traditional rites of passage. But ultimately, it is not the particular activity that matters for the child's maturing. What matters is that he acts independently—that he leaves behind the protection and guidance offered by his parents and faces his challenges, whatever they may be, on his own.

Line 20, in turn, speaks to what he has learned about parents and parental love. Its parallelism with line 19 indicates how closely the child's maturing and the parent's love are bound together. The subject noun "love" at the start of line 20 parallels the subject noun "selfhood" at the start of line 19. The phrase "letting go" likewise parallels "walking away." The child can only walk away because the parent is willing to let go. And the parent allows the child to walk away and find his "selfhood" because of his "love" for the child. It has been hard for the speaker to articulate these truths and hard to accept them, but the act of writing the poem seems to have helped him do both.

SYMBOLS

CHANGING SEASONS

One symbolic aspect of the poem is the time of year. The speaker is relating his memory of his son's first football game, which took place as the seasons were changing, at the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. As the poet's son recounts, this poem is based on his first day of school in 1938, and so the event likely did really happen at this time of year. But the speaker *makes* the time symbolic with the way he describes it. He does not simply say "A sunny day in early September." He indicates the time, rather, by saying the leaves were "just turning."

The verb "turning" forces the reader to imagine two different states: the before and after, what the leaves turn *from* and what the leaves turn *to*. The poem is likewise focused on the transition between two states: childhood and adulthood, and how this moment represents the speaker's son changing from one to the other. So with this description of the time of year, the speaker makes the changing seasons a symbol of the change in the son's life.

Where this symbol appears in the poem:

- **Line 2:** "leaves just turning"

WALKING AWAY

The poem is based on the speaker's taking his son's literal act of walking away and expressing it as a

symbol for the whole process of maturing and growing into adulthood. The speaker first describes the memory of this particular event, the son "walking away from [him] towards the school" after playing his "first game of football." After using similes and metaphors to express his conflicting emotions, the fear and hope raised by this event, the speaker discusses what this parting was really "[s]aying"—what its meaning or symbolism was. He concludes that "selfhood begins with a walking away." In other words, this one act of the boy walking away from his father after the football game symbolized the whole process of how children grow up and seek their own adult identity, and the way they must leave behind parental guidance and protection in order to undergo this process.

Where this symbol appears in the poem:

- **Line 7:** "You walking away from me"
- **Line 19:** "selfhood begins with a walking away"

POETIC DEVICES

SIMILE

Similes help the speaker both to articulate a difficult truth and to accept it. The poem describes a memory that the speaker has carried for eighteen years and that has "something [he] never quite grasped to convey." It has been difficult for him to fully comprehend the meaning of his memory and to convey that meaning, or put it into words. But similes allow him to get at that "something" by approaching it indirectly, saying what it is *like* even if he can't say exactly what it is.

The central event of the poem is the speaker's son walking away from him after playing his "first game of football." The speaker uses several similes to describe this event, how the boy's figure appeared as he left. In lines 4-5, the speaker says the boy went "drifting away" "like a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit." This simile not only conveys the boy's sense of unfamiliarity and unease in his new environment but also helps explain it: the boy is uncomfortable because he has left the path he *ought* to be following, as satellites are meant to follow their same orbits.

It is true that, while they are young, children need to be guided along a secure path, usually by their parents. But it is also true that, at a certain point, they need to be allowed to leave that path behind. Another simile helps the speaker see and accept this difficult truth of parenting. In line 12, he describes the same event, the boy's walking away, with the simile of "a winged seed loosened from its parent stem." Unlike a satellite, a seed is meant to leave its old environment behind. If it doesn't find a new territory to grow, where it won't have to compete with the parent plant for resources, it won't survive.

The satellite simile represented the child's departure as unnatural. But the seed helps the speaker understand how it *can* be natural and necessary for children to leave their old, secure environments, even if they seem painfully insecure as they do so. This simile, then, helps the speaker towards his final conclusion a few lines later, in line 20, that "love is proved in the letting go." If the winged seed needs to be "loosened" in order to grow, then the loving parent must be willing to loosen it.

Where Simile appears in the poem:

- **Lines 4-5:** "like a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit"
- **Line 12:** "Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem"

METAPHOR

Metaphor, like simile, helps the speaker to "convey" indirectly ideas that are difficult to communicate exactly. They also help the speaker find peace with this painful memory by helping him understand how the event represented an act of love.

The metaphors, by describing the event indirectly, help the speaker "roughly / Say[]" something that is difficult to "perfectly show." The speaker's son is in one way still a child. It is only his "first game" of football. But in another way he is already an adult—yeah because he is at the very first stages of adulthood. The speaker captures this complex, in-between quality with the metaphor of the "half-fledged thing" in line 8. A fully fledged bird is one that has grown all the adult feathers it needs to fly. A half-fledged bird is not fully an adult, because it is still missing half of those feathers. But those feathers have started growing, which means it is no longer a baby. The metaphor helps convey why the speaker feels he must allow his son to "walk[] away" but also feels a painful sense of "pathos," or sympathy for the son's struggles, as he watches him go.

Another metaphor helps the speaker grasp why children need to walk away from their parents. In lines 14-15, the speaker refers to "the small, the scorching / Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay." Here the child is described metaphorically as a clay vessel. The "[o]rdeals" he endures as he struggles in his new environment are ultimately necessary to give him a lasting identity and strength, just as "fir[ing]" clay in an oven is necessary to give it strength and permanent shape. "Walking away" might be an ordeal, but the metaphor of firing clay enables the speaker to see how this ordeal helps "selfhood begin[]." Love is "proved," then, in allowing the child to walk away.

Where Metaphor appears in the poem:

- **Lines 8-9:** "half-fledged thing set free / Into a wilderness"
- **Lines 14-15:** "the small, the scorching / Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay"

REPETITION

The speaker uses repetition of key words and phrases to reinforce the reader's sense of the poem's key theme and to help the reader understand what this theme means to the speaker. The phrase "walking away"—immediately significant as the poem's title—is repeated twice in the poem (lines 7 and 19). The single word "away" is also repeated in every stanza: in "drifting away" in the first stanza, and in "eddying away" in the third.

The repetition alone reminds the reader that this poem is an exploration of what "walking away" means for a parent and for a child. The speaker builds that sense of meaning also by the way he places the repeating words. "Away" and "walking away" appear first in more casual, less noticeable ways. It pops up in the middle of line 7:

> You **walking away** from me towards the school

And it also appears in enjambed lines—as in lines 5:

> Wrenched from its orbit, go **drifting away**

And line 11:

> That hesitant figure, **eddying away**

But when "away"/"walking away" is repeated for the final time in line 19, it appears at the end of the line and the line is clearly end-stopped, causing the reader to pause and reflect:

> How selfhood begins with a **walking away,**

By varying his placement of this repeated word/phrase, the speaker allows it to build in emphasis and importance over the course of the poem until both the speaker and the reader appreciate the true significance of walking away: that it represents the beginning of the child's journey to "selfhood."

The repetition of "away" also suggests how this memory of the son's walking away has affected the speaker. Although the event took place "eighteen years ago," the speaker confesses that no other parting "[g]naws at [his] mind still" like this one. The word "gnaw" suggests a continual, repetitive biting and wearing down. The continual repetition of the word "away" helps give the reader a sense of how this memory, of watching the son "walking away," constantly returned to the speaker's mind throughout the last eighteen years.

Where Repetition appears in the poem:

- **Line 5:** "drifting away"
- **Line 7:** "walking away"
- **Line 11:** "eddying away"
- **Line 19:** "walking away"

ENJAMBMENT

The speaker uses enjambment frequently in the poem. Its most important effect is to create temporary uncertainty or ambiguity in the poem's meaning. The reader is suspended at the end of the line wondering how the speaker's thought will conclude, or perhaps even imagining that the speaker means one thing only to realize in the next line that he meant something else.

For example, in line 5, the speaker tells the reader that the boy went "drifting away." This phrase ends the line and the stanza, so the reader must wait to see *where* the son goes drifting off to, with an uncertainty that mirrors the speaker's own uncertainty about his child's path.

Line 8 ends by describing the son as "set free." This phrase might initially suggest to the reader that the son's departure is, for him, a positive experience, something he embraces. But the enjambed line leads, in line 9, to the phrase "Into a wilderness." If the son has been set free into difficult, inhospitable terrain with no clear path forward, perhaps this is not a positive experience for him after all.

The enjambment at line 11 creates a similar ambiguity. The speaker now describes the son as "eddying away." The verb "eddying," referring to circular currents in water, also suggests movement with no clear path forward. The image suggests that the son is lost, making no progress. But line 12 tells the reader that the son is eddying away "Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem." Seeds have to separate from the parent plant in order to successfully take root and grow, and eddying away on the wind is the best way for them to do that. Now the reader knows that the son is, in fact, doing exactly what he needs to do to make progress.

The event the poem describes, of letting a child start making his own, difficult journey towards "selfhood," is a great challenge for a parent partly because it brings its own ambiguities. When is the right time to let the child "walk[] away"? When are they ready to confront their own "scorching / Ordeals"? The enjambment helps the reader understand the speaker's challenge a little better by creating a parallel sense of ambiguity in the poem. And when the last two lines appear as end-stopped rather than enjambed, this indicates that the speaker has at last come to a greater sense of certainty that he responded in the right way to this challenge, accepting this moment as the right time to let go.

Where Enjambment appears in the poem:

- **Lines 3-4:** "play / Your"
- **Lines 4-5:** "satellite / Wrenched"

- **Lines 5-6:** “away / Behind”
- **Lines 6-7:** “see / You”
- **Lines 7-8:** “school / With”
- **Lines 8-9:** “free / Into”
- **Lines 9-10:** “one / Who”
- **Lines 11-12:** “away / Like”
- **Lines 13-14:** “convey / About”
- **Lines 14-15:** “scorching / Ordeals”
- **Lines 16-17:** “so / Gnaws”
- **Lines 17-18:** “roughly / Saying”

APOSTROPHE

The poem was subtitled "For Sean" in its original publication, and the speaker addresses the poem directly to his son Sean, speaking to him throughout as "you." With this direct address, known as apostrophe, the speaker talks as if the son can actually hear him: "I watched you play / Your first game of football."

As a device, apostrophe is most often used to speak to people who are not actually physically present, which makes the speaker's address to "you" all the more poignant. The poem is all about the difficulty of parting with a child. Speaking to an absent child as if he were present reinforces the reader's sense of how the speaker's emotional difficulty: how he, as a parent, must let the child walk away but still wishes he could keep him there.

The direct address "you" is used, however, only in the first half of the poem, when the son's walking away is causing the most emotional turmoil for the speaker. By the end, the speaker has accepted the son's parting and that "selfhood begins with a walking away." He subtly signals this acceptance by no longer addressing the son as if he were present.

Where Apostrophe appears in the poem:

- **Line 3:** “you”
- **Line 4:** “Your”
- **Line 7:** “You”

APORIA

The poem comes to an aporia in the third stanza:

> That hesitant figure ...
> Has something I never quite grasp to convey

The speaker expresses uncertainty both about what this remembered event means ("Has something I never quite grasp") and about how to express that meaning ("to convey"). This uncertainty is significant because it suggests to the reader just how important this memory is and, in fact, why the speaker came to compose the poem.

The line is phrased in the present tense, with the verbs "has" and "grasp." The present tense indicates that the speaker is *still* trying to understand this event and its significance even after 18 years. This day was not just one day among many but a defining day for the speaker's life. And the poem is not just a casual reminiscence but an attempt to find out exactly what that day defined. The speaker has had trouble "convey[ing]" the memory's significance to others. He writes the poem to put that significance into words, both to share it with others and to clarify it for himself.

Where Aporia appears in the poem:

- **Lines 11-13:** “That hesitant figure, eddying away / Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem, / Has something I never quite grasp to convey”

PARALLELISM

The speaker uses parallelism in the final two lines to reflect in the poem's form what he is communicating in its words. The lines read:

> How selfhood begins with a walking away,
> And love is proved in the letting go.

These two lines are written with a parallel structure: a subject noun (selfhood/love) followed by a verb (begins/is proved) and a participle phrase (walking away/letting go). The parallel structure makes clear to the reader how directly the two lines are connected. In order for the child to "walk[] away", the parent must first "let[] go." And the reason the parent lets go is that their "love" for the child means they want the child to move successfully towards maturity and "selfhood."

This intimate relationship between the child's maturing and the parent's love forms the emotional crux of the poem. The speaker's love for his child is the reason he does not wish to let him go; it is also the reason he *must* let him go. The poem is, in part, the speaker's attempt to discern how something so painful -- for the parent and perhaps the child too -- could be the right path to take. By drawing a connection between love and letting go, the parallelism of the final lines helps make that difficult truth a little clearer.

Where Parallelism appears in the poem:

- **Lines 19-20:** “How selfhood begins with a walking away, / And love is proved in the letting go.”

CONSONANCE

Consonance is used to create connections between the words that express key ideas in the poem, especially ideas that seem counterintuitive. For example, lines 14 and 15 feature repetition of the /l/, /s/, and /r/ sounds:

the small, the scorching
Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay

The idea here is that difficult, distressing experiences are not a negative but actually a positive thing for a young person on their way to maturity. It may seem counterintuitive, though, to connect what's distressing to what's beneficial for a child. Repeating the same consonants throughout the lines creates a sense of connection in their sound, which may help the reader perceive the connection in their meaning. Similarly, note the shared /f/ sounds in "half-fledged thing set free," which connect the child—still not yet fully grown—to the necessity of freedom.

Similarly, line 20 repeats the /l/ and /v/ sounds:

And love is proved in the letting go

Again, the connection between loving a child and letting them go might be difficult to see. The whole poem is based on addressing that difficulty. But the speaker uses consonance to create a sense that these words belong together aurally and so enhance the reader's sense that they belong together thematically: love is *not* opposed to letting go.

Also note the soft /w/ consonance and sibilance of lines 11 and 12:

... eddying away
Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,

These gentle sound may make the reader think of a soft breeze, which evokes the image of a seed gently detaching from its stem and drifting through the air.

Where Consonance appears in the poem:

- **Line 2:** "sunny," "just turning"
- **Line 3:** "touch-lines new," "since," "watched"
- **Line 4:** "first," "football," "satellite"
- **Line 6:** "Behind," "scatter," "boys," "can," "see"
- **Line 7:** "walking away," "towards," "school"
- **Line 8:** "With," "half-fledged," "set free"
- **Line 9:** "wilderness," "one"
- **Line 11:** "away"
- **Line 12:** "winged," "seed loosened," "its," "stem"
- **Line 13:** "something," "quite grasp," "convey"
- **Line 14:** "take," "small," "scorching"
- **Line 15:** "Ordeals," "fire," "irresolute," "clay"
- **Line 16:** "have had"
- **Line 17:** "my mind"
- **Line 19:** "with," "walking away"
- **Line 20:** "love," "proved," "letting"

ASSONANCE

The irregular meter and enjambment gives an informal, conversational tone to the poem, almost as if the speaker is simply saying his thoughts aloud. But the assonance creates a unified sound throughout the lines that keeps the poem within the realm of lyric poetry. Lyric poetry is closely associated with music and song lyrics, and the harmonious sound created by assonance gives the poem a musical quality. The first stanza, for instance, assonates a number of vowel sounds, including the long /ee/ (eighteen, years), the long /o/ (ago, almost, go), the long /i/ (lines, I), and the long /u/ (new-ruled, you), in addition to the long /ay/ sounds of the end-rhyming words (day, play, away).

The third stanza is also highly musical, an effect created in part through its use of assonance. Take lines 13-15, with their long /ay/ and /o/ sounds:

... convey
About nature's give-and-take – the small, the scorching
Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay.

The assonance also functions, like rhyme, to create subtle links of sound between words that serves to connect their meanings. In stanza two, for example, note the long /ee/ and long /i/ sounds:

Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
You walking away from me ...

The assonance here adds to the musicality of the lines and also underscores the fact that the speaker stays behind, watching his child walk away from him.

Where Assonance appears in the poem:

- **Line 1:** "eighteen years," "ago," "almost," "day"
- **Line 2:** "day," "leaves"
- **Line 3:** "lines," "new-ruled," "I," "you," "play"
- **Line 4:** "game," "like," "satellite"
- **Line 5:** "away"
- **Line 6:** "Behind," "I," "see"
- **Line 7:** "me"
- **Line 8:** "free"
- **Line 10:** "be"
- **Line 11:** "away"
- **Line 12:** "loosened," "parent stem"
- **Line 13:** "convey"
- **Line 14:** "nature's," "take," "scorching"
- **Line 15:** "Ordeals," "clay"
- **Line 16:** "so"
- **Line 17:** "my mind"
- **Line 18:** "alone," "show"

- **Line 19:** “begins with”
- **Line 20:** “go”

VOCABULARY

Touch-lines (Line 3) - The lines on either side of a playing field for football (called "sidelines" in American football).

New-ruled (Line 3) - The lines have just been redrawn on the field.

Satellite (Line 4) - An object that orbits or circles around another object in space.

Pathos (Line 8) - A quality evoking pity and compassion.

Half-fledged (Line 8) - A bird is fully fledged when it has developed all of the feathers it needs to fly. A half-fledged bird has only partially developed those feathers.

Gait (Line 9) - Manner of walking.

Eddying (Line 11) - Moving in a circular way (an eddy is a circular movement of water within a larger current that creates a small whirlpool).

Winged (Line 12) - Wings on a seed are extensions of tissue on either side of the seed that catch the wind and allow the seed to "fly."

Scorching (Line 14) - Burning.

Ordeals (Line 15) - Today, "ordeal" refers to an especially distressing or painful experience. Historically, an ordeal also referred to a severe test used to determine an accused person's guilt or innocence. In this poem, the term suggests a painful challenge but also a test that the maturing child must go through.

Fire (Line 15) - Clay vessels are fired, or baked in an oven (kiln), to make the vessels strong and durable and to set their shape.

Irresolute (Line 15) - Hesitant, uncertain, indecisive.

FORM, METER, & RHYME

FORM

The poem is divided into four stanzas of five lines each (making them quintains or quintets). The different stanzas perform different functions in the development of the poem. Stanza 1 is largely a neutral description of the memory. Stanza 2 begins to develop the speaker's emotional response to the memory with images that suggest that the child is not ready to part from the parent (the "half-fledged thing") or that he's in an environment where he shouldn't be ("a wilderness").

Stanza 3 starts to shift that emotional response with a different set of images. Now the images suggest that the child *should* depart from the parent (the "winged seed") and that this environment, though challenging, will help him grow (with "[o]rdeals which fire one's irresolute clay"). In stanza 4, the speaker steps back to reflect on what he has learned over the course of this emotional journey. The painful emotions reflected in stanza two still haunt him, but he has also come to accept that the images in stanza three reflect the real truth about parenting and growing up: that parting is necessary for the child to mature, and reflects the parent's love. The four stanzas help clarify how the speaker's response to this memory develop over the course of the poem, from recollection, to resistance, to acceptance, to reflection.

METER

The poem has a highly irregular meter that is perhaps categorized as free verse (though, given the steady rhyme scheme, some might argue this isn't actually true free verse). Some lines have four beats (tetrameter) while others have five (pentameter); sometimes the rhythm is anapestic (da da DUM) and sometimes iambic (da DUM); some lines end with a stressed syllable (masculine endings), others with an unstressed syllable (feminine endings). The irregular meter, along with the frequent enjambment, creates a conversational tone to the poem, as though the speaker is simply saying what's on his mind rather than carefully altering his words to fit an artistic form. The conversational tone adds to the intimacy and sincerity of this autobiographical poem.

The last two lines, however, do have a more regular meter. They scan like this:

> How selfhood begins with a walking away,
> And love is proved in the letting go

Both lines begin with an unstressed syllable and end with a stressed syllable; both are also end-stopped. Line 19 is almost perfectly anapestic, with just one irregular two-syllable foot in "How self-." Line 20, similarly, is almost perfectly iambic, with just one three-syllable foot in "in the let-." With this comparatively regular meter, fit into end-stopped lines, the speaker does offer a more perfectly crafted poetic form at the poem's very end. The sense of control and precision in the meter enhances the sense of confidence and finality in the words, which sum up the difficult lesson that the speaker has spent the whole poem trying to reach.

RHYME SCHEME

The poem follows a rhyme scheme of ABACA. Take the first stanza:

> A ... almost to the day –
> B ... just turning,
> A ... watched you play
> C ... like a satellite

A ... go drifting **away**

Every rhyme in the poem is a perfect rhyme. This highly regular rhyme scheme combines with the poem's uneven meter to create a balance between the intimacy and authenticity of ordinary conversation and the more regular musical form of lyric poetry. Lyrics were originally poems set to music, which often feature repeating refrains. Repeating the A rhyme sounds three times in each stanza creates the slight suggestion of a refrain through this more frequently repeated sound.

In particular, the poem creates a partial refrain from the word "away." It features as one of the A rhymes in stanzas 1 and 3 (lines 5 and 11). "Away" is the C line in stanza 4 ("I have had ...") and so it has no rhyming line in that stanza, but it is close enough to third stanza that the reader still hears "walking away" in line 19 as rhyming with "irresolute clay" in line 15 and the other long /a/ sounds ("away," "convey") in stanza 3. Turning "away" into a faint refrain for the poem serves to highlight the key theme of the poem and give the reader a sense of how this memory has been constantly repeating, like a refrain, in the speaker's mind during the eighteen years since the "walking away" occurred.

SPEAKER

The speaker is very closely identified with the poet, Cecil Day-Lewis. The poem was dedicated "To Sean" when it appeared in Day-Lewis's published work. Sean is Cecil Day-Lewis's first-born son, and Sean Day-Lewis himself has written that the poem looks back to his "nervous first day of school in 1938." The reader can infer, then, that the speaker is, like the poet, an older man and a father, looking back on a memory of his son.

The poem is told from the first-person point of view and is addressed to "you," the son, although the son is not imagined to be physically present (making this address and example of apostrophe). As it proceeds, it reveals more and more of the speaker's reaction to this memory.

The speaker begins by simply describing the memory. Only the fact that he recalls it so vividly after 18 years indicates how significant it is to him. In stanza 2, the word "pathos" suggests more of the speaker's emotional reaction to the memory: the image of his son's retreating figure evoked sadness and pity in him. In stanza 3, he reveals that he has been struggling over the past 18 years to understand the meaning of this moment. He also reflects more explicitly on that meaning—how the moment represents a natural, universal process but how the process is painful nevertheless. Finally, in the fourth stanza, the speaker says most clearly that this moment was, in some way, the most difficult parting of his life. But he also reveals that he has finally understood and accepted the lessons contained in that moment about maturity and parental love.

SETTING

The poem centers on the speaker's memory of his son's first football game. The only concrete setting described in the poem is the setting of the game. The time was the end of summer and the beginning of the fall, when the leaves were "just turning." (This is a usual time of year for football, but it is also a symbolic time, representing the end of the son's childhood and the beginning of his adulthood.) The place was a football field on the grounds of the school, towards which the son walks after the game.

In the concrete, literal sense, the setting is an ordinary and orderly place. It is just a school and a playing field, one that is well tended with the "touch-lines new ruled." But the actual setting, where the event really took place, is gradually transformed in the reader's mind by the speaker's description. The speaker describes the son walking towards the school with the metaphor of a young bird "set free / Into a wilderness." If the reader visualizes this image, they will picture a wild, harsh, disorderly place. There are no neat lines here telling the son where he can and cannot go, as there were on the newly lined football field. Here, there are "no path[s]." So the actual setting where the event took place differs significantly from the "imaginative setting." This imaginative setting conveys what this first football game *represents* to the speaker (that is, his son setting off on his own into the unknown).

CONTEXT

LITERARY CONTEXT

Cecil Day-Lewis was highly attuned to the traditions of poetry and to his place within those traditions. He once said, "I myself have been technically influenced, and enabled to clarify my thoughts, by such diverse poets as Yeats, Wordsworth, Robert Frost, Virgil, Valery, Auden and Hardy. They suggested to me ways of saying what I had to say." In the early part of his career in the 1930s, Day-Lewis was actually part of a literary group with W.H. Auden and the poet Stephen Spender. In the 1960s, when he published "Walking Away" in his volume *The Gate*, he was thinking especially about the tradition of English lyric poetry.

The term "lyric" originally referred to a poem written to be set to music (such as Robert Burns's "A Red, Red Rose"). Lyrical or lyric poetry has a simplicity and a melodic quality that connects it back to music. In a 1965 lecture titled "The Lyric Impulse," Day-Lewis wrote that lyric poetry is "the purest and simplest form of poetry." It "expresses a single state of mind, a single mood, or sets two simple moods one against the other." It is not dominated by "irony or complexity," but "say[s] ... only one thing at a time" with "[b]revity, simplicity, purity."

Day-Lewis discussed romantic love poems as a primary

example of lyric poetry, citing Wordsworth's "A Slumber did My Spirit Steal." But "Walking Away," with its exploration of parental love and loss, is a closely related kind of love lyric. It could be described as "set[ting] two simple moods one against the other"—the parent's pain at the child's departure against his acceptance of it—but there is also a simplicity to these moods in that both stem ultimately from the parent's love of the child. The poem's frank, unqualified declaration of love aligns it closely with Day-Lewis's description of the "lyric impulse," which, he said, "asks one thing of [a poet] above all, a pure commitment without reserve or circumspection to the creature of his love."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"Walking Away" was published in 1962 in Day-Lewis's volume of poetry *The Gate*. It appears with the dedication "For Sean" at the top. Sean is Cecil Day-Lewis's first-born son, and Sean Day-Lewis wrote that "Walking Away" is "a memory poem, looking back to my nervous first day at school in 1938." But although the poem is closely autobiographical, Sean also affirms that it is "addressed to all caring parents at all times." Jill Balcon, Cecil Day-Lewis's second wife, has noted that the poem does, indeed, "usually bring[] many reactions whenever it is broadcast or read in public … Anyone who has lost a child, or simply left one at the new school gate, can identify with the parting" (*Complete Poems*, "Introduction").

Day-Lewis's concern with the relationship between parent and child, and their separation, may have been influenced by his own childhood. His mother died when he was young, and he had a difficult relationship with his own father. They grew estranged, especially after his father remarried, and this division between them brought troubling feelings of guilt for Day-Lewis when his father died in 1937. He wrote in his autobiography that he had dreams "[f]or many years after my father's death" about their fractured relationship. If "Walking Away" was inspired by an event one year after his father's death, he may have been thinking back to his relationship with his father and hoping that his own son's departure need not anticipate the same division between them.

MORE RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Sean Day-Lewis Reflects on "Walking Away" — A reflection on the poem by the poet's son Sean Day-Lewis, to whom "Walking Away" is dedicated. (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jan/12/why-my-father-cecil-day-lewis-poem-walking-away-stands-the-test-of-time)
- Recitation of "Walking Away" — A recording of the poem "Walking Away" read aloud. (https://youtu.be/PXQqFutT67E)
- Biography of Cecil Day-Lewis — A detailed biography of Cecil Day-Lewis that focuses on the development of his poetry. (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/cecil-day-lewis)
- Cecil Day-Lewis's "Complete Poems" — A Google book edition of Cecil Day-Lewis's "Complete Poems," with extensive previews of the text. (https://books.google.com/books?id=fhvC6c7xXhIC&lpg=PP1&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=

HOW TO CITE

MLA

Devlin McNair, Maria. "*Walking Away.*" *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 29 Oct 2019. Web. 22 Apr 2020.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Devlin McNair, Maria. "*Walking Away.*" LitCharts LLC, October 29, 2019. Retrieved April 22, 2020. https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/cecil-day-lewis/walking-away.