

Eden Rock

Author: Charles Causley

Context

- Causley was born in Cornwall in 1917.
- His father died in 1924 in the First World War; he was raised by his mother
- Causley became a school teacher in Launceston, where he studied.
- Causley was a very religious character, and he included many religious symbolisms in his poetry
- His work was simple, mainly for adults and similar in style for children.

Structure & Form

- The poem is a *simple narrative* of 5 *quatrains* – the last line of the final quatrain being separated from the rest of the stanza
- Many half rhymes are used in the poem
- **e.g.** grass ↔ dress ; bank ↔ think
- The separation of the final line from the stanza could be used to suggest the separation of the parents and the child
- **Enjambment** is used to perceive life running into death, also running with the “stream” in the poem.
- The poem's concluding stanza takes a *poignant* approach; it conveys the religious consideration(s) of the afterlife and its **ambiguity**..

Analysis

- The poem has great **specificity** in its descriptions...
 - “twenty-five”, “same suit of genuine Irish tweed” “still two years old”
 - “twenty-three”, “sprigged dress”, “straw hat”, “the colour of wheat”
 - “old H.P. Sauce bottle” “same three plates” “tin cups painted blue”
- ...the descriptions are very precise; this poem must therefore be a very fond memory or a passing into **heaven**, suggested by the title?

The Title

The title of the poem is very significant...

What comes to mind when the word Eden is used.. most likely, an image of paradise and sanctuary
Causley was a *religious person* (AO3), perhaps his use of the word Eden is to *show the significance of his parents, who have passed away.*

Focus of Religious Imagery

- “They are waiting for me somewhere beyond **Eden Rock**” - *waiting in heaven, beyond paradise*
- “Her hair”..”**takes on the light**” - *the Transfiguration of Jesus, where his appearance changed.. a sign of God*
- “The same **three plates**” - *the trinity of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*
- *The picnic could be a reference to the Last Supper before Jesus was captured and put to death?*
- “The sky **whitens**” - *very holy imagery*
- “..as if lit by **three suns**” - *the trinity again*
- “the drifted **stream**” - *a reference to Styx (stepping across a river into the afterlife) perhaps?*
- “they **beckon to me**” - *loved ones calling to a peaceful death?*
- “Crossing is **not as hard as you might think**” - *a meaning that death is peaceful?*
- “I had not thought **it would be like this**” - *heavily ambiguous; good or bad connotation of the afterlife, commonly discussed amongst religious groups*

Task 1

Re-read the poem and look through the stanzas to find *direct focus* towards the *parents* – link to your context, how are Causley's *parents* significant to **this poem** and **the afterlife** (*religious POV*)

Task 2 (Exam Practice)

Write a *full essay* comparing the *poem contexts* (*will require further independent research*), *themes, structures and languages*.

Your inference, analytic and contextual points should be concise and succinct