

Unlocking the Mysteries: A Comprehensive Study Guide for Philip Larkin's Poetry

WATER

If I were called in
To construct a religion
I should make use of water.

Going to church
Would entail a fording
To dry, different clothes;

My liturgy would employ
Images of sousing,
A furious devout drench,

And I should raise in the east
A glass of water
Where any-angled light
Would congregate endlessly.

Philip Larkin

*Reference: Philip Larkin, The Complete Poems,
edited and with an introduction and commentary
by Archie Burnett, Farrar, Straus and Giroux,
New York, 2013.*

Welcome to our comprehensive study guide for one of the most prominent poets of the 20th century, Philip Larkin. In this guide, we will delve into the captivating world of Larkin's poetry, exploring his themes, techniques, and the emotions he evokes within his readers.

Understanding Larkin's Poetry

Philip Larkin was known for his ability to capture the essence of everyday life through his carefully crafted verses. From themes of love, mortality, and decay to observations on society, Larkin's poems resonate deeply with readers on a universal level. In order to fully grasp the complexity and beauty of his work, it is essential to explore the intricacies woven throughout his poems.



Study Guide for Philip Larkin's The Poems of Philip Larkin by Course Hero ([Print Replica] Kindle Edition)

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Exploring Larkin's Key Themes

Larkin's poetry revolves around a few key themes that he approaches with remarkable depth and sensitivity. Some of these themes include:

- **Death and Mortality:** Larkin often contemplates the inevitability of death, the fleeting nature of life, and the fear of dying in his poems.
- **Love and Relationships:** His exploration of love often reflects a sense of longing, disappointment, and the complexities that come with human connections.

- **Isolation and Loneliness:** Larkin's portrayal of solitude and isolation serves as a reflection of the modern human condition.
- **Society and Decay:** He offers critical observations on societal structures, decay, and the ephemeral nature of progress.

Unveiling Larkin's Techniques

Delving deeper into Larkin's craft, we uncover the various poetic techniques employed by the renowned wordsmith. By analyzing these techniques, we gain a profound appreciation for his mastery of the written word. Some of these techniques include:

- **Imagery:** Larkin's poetry is filled with vivid visual imagery that paints a precise picture in the reader's mind.
- **Symbolism:** Through the use of symbols, Larkin imbues his poems with deeper meanings, inviting readers to unravel their complexities.
- **Meter and Rhythm:** Larkin's deliberate use of rhythmic patterns and meter adds musicality to his verses, enhancing their emotional impact.
- **Irony and Satire:** With a sharp wit, Larkin employs irony and satire to shed light on societal issues and human foibles.

Key Poems to Explore

Now that we have a basic understanding of Larkin's themes and techniques, let's dive into some of his most significant works:

1. "This Be The Verse"

This Be The Verse

BY PHILIP LARKIN

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.
They may not mean to, but they do.
They fill you with the faults they had
And add some extra, just for you.

But they were fucked up in their turn
By fools in old-style hats and coats,
Who half the time were sippy-stern
And half at one another's throats.

Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens like a coastal shelf.
Get out as early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself.

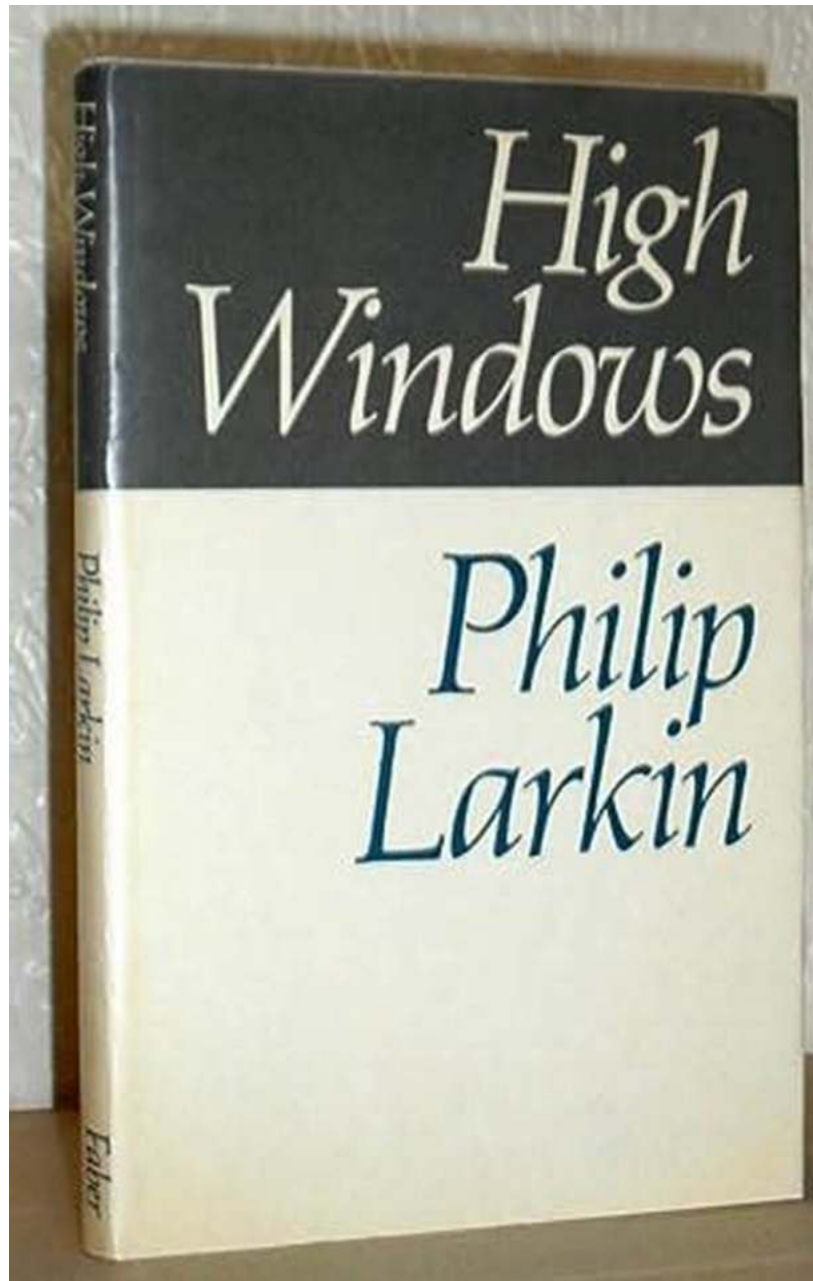
One of Larkin's most famous poems, "This Be The Verse," explores the theme of familial relationships, highlighting the impact of nature versus nurture.

2. "An Arundel Tomb"



"An Arundel Tomb" reflects on the timeless nature of love and memorialization, as Larkin observes a medieval tomb of a noble couple.

3. "High Windows"



"High Windows" represents Larkin's exploration of mortality, desire, and the longing for eternal youth.

Why Study Larkin?

Studying Philip Larkin's poetry is more than just an academic pursuit. It is a journey that allows readers to delve into the depths of human emotions, challenging societal norms, and reflecting on the fleeting nature of life itself.

Larkin's mastery of language and his unique perspective offer profound insights that resonate with readers of all backgrounds.

As we conclude our comprehensive study guide for Philip Larkin's poetry, we hope that you have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for his incredible body of work. Remember, poetry has the power to transcend time and connect us on a profound level, and Larkin's poems are a testament to this enduring truth.



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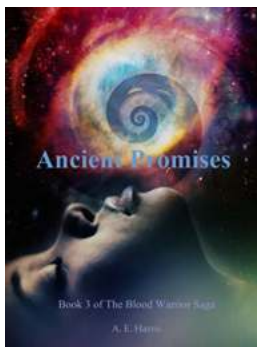
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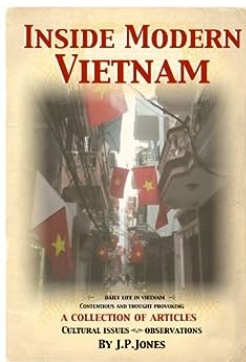
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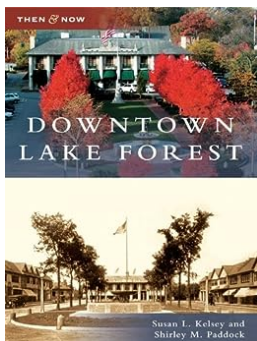
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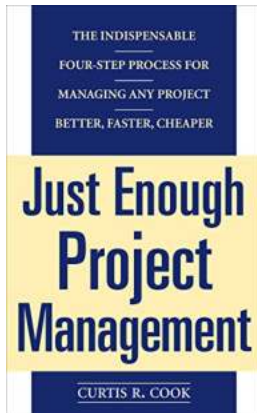
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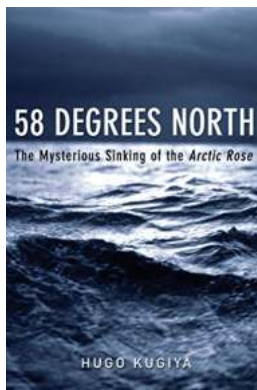
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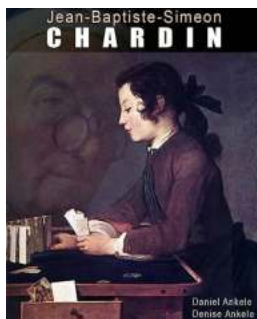
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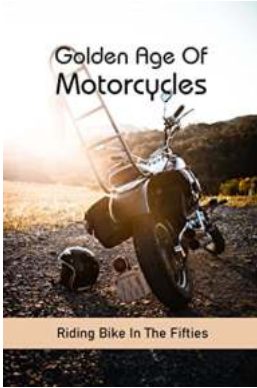
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