

## Drifters – Free verse

### 1. What is the story in the poem?

The story is about a family who are incapable of settling down and are constantly moving house. While the kids find it fascinating the oldest girl cries because she was happy where they last lived. The wife chooses not to ask why they're moving this time. She has a memory

-What is the poet trying to say?

This family are marginalised from society. They can't find success anywhere they go. Bruce Dawe shows how they constantly move with the symbol of the "green tomatoes". They never live in the one place long enough for the tomatoes to ripen. They only spend about 1 month to a month and a half in the one place. The poem is told through the perspective of the wife who isn't given a name. The name is a symbol of identity and influence, you are identified by your name and for someone to call you by your name suggests they have some form of regard for you. The husband has the most influence and say in the house and this is indicated by the poet giving him a name. "the bottling set she never unpacked from Grovedale". This shows how the wife has accepted the fate she lives. As she knows she will be constantly moving, unpacking then packing again and again it's just time wasting so she keeps them packed. She has a memory of the first time they moved to Grovedale and how "she held out ! her hands, bright with berries". During this time she was hopeful for the bright future, settling down and planting her roots, which the tomatoes could not, and living in a secure lifestyle. The berries are a symbol of her dreams and hope. This time, as they move again, they carry their last shrivelled fruit which represents the wife's hope and prospect for a settled life has died with it. Perhaps she regrets saying to tom "make a wish" as she may have unwillingly given her influence and power to him. What he wished for was not what she wanted and because of that she has lost hope of a happy future.

-Analysis of the specific devices:

Alliteration - "bright with berries"

Symbolism - green tomatoes, bottling set,

Berries and the name

### 2. How does it fit into identity and belonging?

This poem shows how somebodies identity can become obsolete in a

relationship if one of the partners abuses the trust given to them. She loved him and this is indicated in the last line 'Make a wish, Tom, Make a wish'. She had his interests in her heart which clearly shows her love for him. Instead of respecting that and treasuring it, he abused it and seems to be taking advantage of it by gaining more influence and power in the household. This all comes together under the Identity vs Role Confusion stage where she is not sure of her standing in the house. Every time he would say were moving, she would question it. Although she disapproved of it they ended up moving anyway so after countless attempts of trying to stop it, she eventually gave up which shows us how her identity and influence is slowly being taken by Tom. "She won't even ask why they're leaving this time, or where they're headed for". This is the moment where she lost her power and role in the household, at this stage the only person with a say in the house is Tom.

3. Suggestions: – The wife writing a letter to her mum about how she feels.
- essay on why husbands should treasure their Wives
  - Short story which expands on the line "make a wish, tom, make a wish" and change it into a short scene.

Letter from eldest daughter to her friend she is leaving behind explaining her hardships.

Persuasive speech from daughter to parents to stay