

1966

# Death of a Naturalist

strong semantic field

All year the flax-dam festered in the heart  
Of the townland; green and heavy headed  
Flax had rotted there, weighed down by huge sods.  
Daily it sweltered in the punishing sun. — *unrelenting*

onomatopoeic suggests beauty amongst negative setting  
supernatural - relishing in environment  
contrast used to emphasise joy

5 Bubbles gargled delicately, bluebottles  
Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell. — *synaesthesia - sound acts like a visual element.*

There were dragon-flies, spotted butterflies,  
But best of all was the warm thick slobber  
Of frogspawn that grew like clotted water

10 In the shade of the banks. Here, every spring *caesura highlights content of boyhood joy.*  
I would fill jampotfuls of the jellied  
Specks to range on window-sills at home, — *metaphor - leisurely*

On shelves at school, and wait and watch until  
The fattening dots burst into nimble- *plurive*  
15 Swimming tadpoles. Miss Walls would tell us how *primary - delicate - fragile - eager*

The daddy frog was called a bullfrog  
And how he croaked and how the mammy frog  
Laid hundreds of little eggs and this was  
Frogspawn. You could tell the weather by frogs too  
20 For they were yellow in the sun and brown  
In rain.

abrupt end - shift in mood.

single moment - realisation is vivid - contrast to 'every' spring.

Then one hot day when fields were rank  
With cowdung in the grass and angry frogs  
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges

more violent semantic field, but no contrast this time

25 To a coarse croaking that I had not heard  
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus. *deep + unknown - change in voice: puberty?*

Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked  
On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped: — *repulsive images*  
The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat — *onomatopoeia of violence and disgust*

30 Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.  
I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings  
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew  
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it. — *desperation.*

army connotations  
alliteration  
caesura emphasises unusual sound

sentences structure: caesura: central concern of poem.

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structurally: 2 uneven stanzas, 2nd representing shift from joy to disgust.