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**Opening paragraph excerpt**

**Explore the theme of change in ‘Afternoons’ by Philip Larkin and a poem of your choice**

The poem I have to chosen to compare “Afternoons” by Phillip Larkin with, and how it presents the theme of change is “As Imperceptibly as Grief” by Emily Dickinson.

Even though both poems are directly linked to the theme of change, each poet presents very different approaches to it. ‘Afternoons’ looks at the changes we undertake in life as we grow older, from a physical perspective when our ‘beauty has thickened’ and from a perspective of the roles we play in life when ‘something is pushing them to the sides of their own lives’. Whereas, Emily Dickinson presents a voyeuristic poem, with the narrator observing that ‘summer lapsed away’, possibly reflecting initial regret about the passing of time and the changing of seasons as it is ‘As imperceptibly as grief’. Both poems are set in different time periods – the 19th and 20th century – but they both use the seasons as a background for establishing the theme of change within the poem.

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The imagery used to represent change in both poems is achieved through different means as well. The theme of change in ‘Afternoons’ is possibly highlighted through the metaphor of the children in the poem as ‘unripe acorns’ – they are getting ready to grow into the change their parents have gone, as they are ‘unripe’. In ‘As Imperceptibly as Grief’ is shown through the image of ‘twilight’. The noun ‘twilight’ indicates the key moment when day changes into night, which signifies the end of the day is drawing near or in the case of the poem the life of the narrator could be heading towards its ‘dusk’ phase.

Structurally, the poems can be considered quite similar in the way they present change as they both open up with a focus on the season of ‘summer’ coming to an end, whereas in ‘Afternoons’ summer is ‘fading’ but in ‘As Imperceptibly as Grief’ summer is ‘lapsing’. However, the end of the poems do differ significantly. At the end of ‘Afternoons’, a somber mood is present as the realisation that the inevitability of change in life means that some point there will be ‘something’ that will be ‘pushing them to the side of their lives’ possibly hinting that change will make the importance we play in life seem less significant. However, the end of ‘As Imperceptibly as Grief’ does not focus on becoming less important in life, but the change that will inevitably come will be potentially happier as it will lead ‘Into the Beautiful’ and with the positive associations of ‘Beautiful’ indicating something upbeat and optimistic about this change.

Both poems make me ponder on the change that lays ahead for me: will I respond to the changing roles I will undertake in life positively or negatively, as seen in the poems? I prefer the optimistic outlook of ‘As Imperceptibly as Grief’ as this poem presents change as bittersweet. Change will happen and it can be ‘Beautiful’ and does not have to push you ‘to the side’.