



Casehistory: Alison (head injury)

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Task One

Read the poem at least twice, using your phone or a dictionary to help define any unusual words.

Task Two

Look at stanza two (I would like to have known) and stanza seven. Why might the speaker not remember?

Remember: Use specific quotations to support your ideas.

Task Three

How have the themes of memories and time been developed throughout this poem? Refer to specific language devices in your answers and refer to at least three examples with clear analysis.

(She looks at her photograph)

I would like to have known
My husband's wife, my mother's only daughter.
A bright girl she was.

Enmeshed in comforting
Fat, I wonder at her delicate angles.
Her autocratic knee

Like a Degas dancer's
Adjusts to the observer with airy poise,
That now lugs me upstairs

Hardly. Her face, broken
By nothing sharper than smiles, holds in its smiles
What I have forgotten.

She knows my father's dead,
And grieves for it, and smiles. She has digested
Mourning. Her smile shows it.

I, who need reminding
Every morning, shall never get over what
I do not remember.

Consistency matters.
I should like to keep faith with her lack of faith,
But forget her reasons.

Proud of this younger self,
I assert her achievements, her A levels,
Her job with a future.

Poor clever girl! I know,
For all my damaged brain, something she doesn't:
I am her future.

A bright girl she was.

Extension: Identify possible themes in this poem and compare this with one poem of your choice in *Character & Voice*.

You should aim to produce two paragraphs of analysis that link the two poems together.