*Song Analysis – Uneven Odds*

Lyrics:

I once knew your father well

He fought tears as he spoke of your mother's health

I guess a part of him just couldn’t return

Forgiveness is a lesson he cursed you to learn

As your guardian I was instructed well

To make sense of God’s love in these fires of hell

No I don’t expect you to understand

Just to live what little life your broken heart can

Maybe your light is a seed

And the darkness the dirt

In spite of the uneven odds

Beauty lifts from the earth

From the earth

From the earth

As the years move on these questions take shape

Are you getting stronger or is time shifting weight?

No one expects you to understand

Just to live what little life your mended heart can

You’ll always remember the moment God took her away

For the weight of the world was placed on your shoulders that day

Maybe your light is the seed

And the darkness the dirt

In spite of the uneven odds

Beauty lifts from the earth

From the earth

You’re much too young now

So I write these words down,

“Darkness exists to make light truly count.”

1. Determine the subject of the poem:

* What does the song mean?

The lyrics are pretty straightforward, the song talks about the loss of a mother and the heavy impact it leaves on her family (her child and her husband.) It fast forwards into the future and follows along with the child and how she/he copes with the problem.

* Does the poem address a social, psychological, historical, or mythical phenomenon.

I would say it addresses a social phenomenon because it influences organisms sufficiently alive to respond to one another. It also includes influences from past generations.

1. Identify the poem’s narrator:

* Who is speaking? To Whom?

The child’s guardian is speaking directly to the child, in the second paragraph he/she states, “As your guardian, I was instructed well” “To make sense of God’s love in these fires of hell.”

* Under what circumstances? Identify the setting

The guardian is taking care of the child, after the mother died and the child’s father left her/him. The first verse suggests that the death of the mother was not a natural death, rather an accident caused by someone else, who they must forgive.   
Forgiveness is a lesson, he cursed you to learn,”

1. Note the diction (word choice) of the poet

* What are the words’ denotations and connotations?

Denotations - literal or primary meaning of a word:

The guardian is literally speaking to the child, directly.

“No I don’t expect you to understand” “Just to live what little life your broken heart can.”

Connotations – an idea or feeling that a word invokes

There are some phrases in the song that invokes a feeling and is not meant to be taken literally.

“Maybe your light is a seed” “and the darkness the dirt”

* Are the words concrete or abstract?

I would say the words in the song are concrete because the meaning and effect is conveyed by visual means and the writer uses patterns of words and letters.

* Is the song free of clichés?

Yes absolutely, the song has no clichés whatsoever.

* How does the diction contribute to or detract from the song?

The choice of words and style or enunciation the singer uses contributes to the poem, makes it all the more meaningful and powerful.

1. Determine the tone of the poem

* Is the poem serious? Ironic? Satiric? Contemplative? Ambiguous?

The poem/song is definitely serious, the whole song talks about how the child feels about his/her mothers death.

* Point out the words that set the tone?
  + “Forgiveness is a lesson he cursed you to learn”
  + “Just to live what little life your broken heart can”
  + “In spite of the uneven odds beauty lifts from the earth”
  + “You’ll always remember the moment God took her away”
* Determine whether the tone changes within the poem

No, the tone doesn’t change within the poem

1. Determine the rhythmical devices used by the poet

-What is the basic metrical pattern? Line length?

I think the basic metrical pattern is dactylic because it consists of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables. I cannot determine the line length because I’m not too sure what it is.

* What is the length of the stanza?

4 lines

* What is the rhyme scheme? End rhyme? Internal rhyme?

I think the rhyme scheme is a free verse scheme.

* Does the poet employ any other metrical devices?

I don’t think it does

* What form does the poem take? Open or closed?

It takes the form of a closed poem

1. Note the use of other literary devices?

* What allusions does the poem contain?

In some ways, I would say it is an allusion to the Bible.

* Listen to the sounds in the song. Make note of assonance, alliteration, and onomatopoeia.

Assonance: No evidence of assonance

Alliteration: No evidence of alliteration

Onomatopoeia: No evidence of onomatopoeia

* Does the poet use figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, imagery, irony, personification, antithesis, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, allegory, paradox, understatement, or overstatement?

Metaphor: “Forgiveness is a lesson he cursed you to learn” “To make sense of God’s love in these fires of hell” “Maybe your light is a seed

And the darkness the dirt”

Simile: “He fought tears as he spoke of your mother's health”

Symbolism: Death, Forgiveness

Imagery: Singer paints a picture of what the child’s life is like after the death of his/her mother.

Personification: “Maybe your light is a seed” “ And the darkness the dirt”

Hyperbole: “To make sense of God’s love in these fires of hell”

Allegory: The hidden meaning of the song is about mourning the mother’s death.

Overstatement: “For the weight of the world was placed on your shoulders that day”

* Are there any examples of synecdoche or metonymy?

Synecdoche: No sign

Metonymy: No sign

* Note the use, or absence, of punctuation?

There is no use of punctuation, except commas because it is a song

* Titles are important. Is the title the best the writer could have chosen? What would be a better title for the work? Why?

I strongly feel like the title “Uneven Odds” is the best title that could have been chosen because the song, essentially is about the child’s luck and how she/he copes with it. So, it is about his/her uneven odds. I can’t think of any other title that would fit better with the lyrics.

1. Determine the values of the poem

* Does the poet succeed in recreating his experience within the reader? How?

Yes, the way the singer/guardian explains what the child is going through, I can understand exactly what the child is feeling.

* Is the experience intensely felt by the reader?

Yes, even though I didn’t go through what the child went through of losing two parents, I could sense his/her feelings from how the guardian/writer chose to explain the child’s well being.

* Does the poem succeed in sharpening the reader’s awareness of something significant?
* Yes, the whole meaning of the song is about learning to forgive. It really is a difficult thing to lose your mother. No one will love you like your mother will.