

Tich Miller by Wendy Cope

Theme – Bullying, alienation, isolation

Title – Using Tich's name makes us feel connected to the girl at the heart of the poem. She is not a statistic: she is a real person.

Language and imagery

- 'glasses with elastoplast-pink frames' – sickly colour – introduces idea of illness
- 'one foot three sizes larger than the other' – child's perspective – brutally simple and straightforward language – no hiding from the truth - arouses our sympathy
- 'always the last two left standing' – regular occurrence
- 'wire-mesh fence' – link to prison, cage – girls are trapped in their bodies and their shared plight
- 'We avoided one another's eyes' – isolated from the group but not joined in any sort of solidarity with one another
- 'fortunate bird' – unlike the girls, the bird is free, uncaged, graceful
- 'Have Tubby!' – first indication that the speaker is left out because she is considered overweight – cruel nickname
- 'Usually they chose me, the lesser dud' – bitterness as speaker reflects that she was chosen because the other children thought she was not quite as bad as Tich – the word 'Usually' reinforces idea of ritual humiliation
- 'she lolloped, unselected' – onomatopoeic 'lolloped' suggests Tich's awkward gait – we can easily visualise her slow progress to where she was not even wanted
- 'I learned to get my own back, / sneering at hockey players who couldn't spell – speaker found her own way to bully others – cruelty breeds cruelty – used her academic strengths to belittle others
- 'Tich died when she was twelve' – last line stands alone – dramatic – we focus on it – starkly simple and shocking statement – no attempt to soften the blow – line stands alone, just as Tich did