What happens?

A speaker recalls a suppressed accent and imagines releasing its words into her own speech.

The main idea

Recovering a suppressed regional voice becomes an act of love and cultural inheritance.

1. “box”

Method: Extended metaphor

An accent is imagined as a physical inheritance that can be locked away.

2. “rusted”

Method: Adjective

Long suppression has made release difficult, not unnecessary.

3. “furnace”

Method: Metaphor

The speaker’s mouth becomes a place where inherited language is remade with force.

4. “pigeons”

Method: Simile

Freed words resemble creatures able to find their way home.

Form and structure

Free verse with enjambment and dialect words; the movement from containment to release shapes the poem’s argument.

Development, voice and tone

Accent hidden — Restrained and hurt. Lessons and punishment explain why a family voice has been kept out of public hearing.

Accent escaping — Affectionately attentive. Small sounds reveal a linguistic identity that suppression has not entirely erased.

Inheritance and return — Defiant and liberating. The speaker wants to use the words herself and send them openly into the world.

Context

Berry’s Black Country vocabulary challenges the social hierarchy that treats some accents as less legitimate than standard speech.

Comparison links

Name Journeys: linguistic pressure. A Wider View: recovering the lives of earlier generations.

Recall question

Why is the accent presented as something that can be freed?