IN A LONDON DRAWINGROOM



George Eliot

WHAT HAPPENS? A confined view of a smoky city becomes an account of hurried, joyless human life.

BIG IDEA **A narrow urban view expands into a criticism of a society that restricts attention, feeling and individuality.**

FOUR EVIDENCE FRAGMENTS · ZOOM IN, THEN EXPLAIN

"Like solid fog:"

Simile

Built structures acquire the enclosing quality of an atmospheric obstruction.

"Pauses to feed the hunger of the eye"

Personification

Looking becomes a frustrated need for nourishment.

"All closed, in multiplied identity."

Paradoxical phrasing

Repetition erases the distinctiveness identity should imply.

"The world seems one huge prison-house & court"

Metaphor

The final judgement makes urban deprivation a form of punishment.

FORM

A single stanza of 19 lines in blank verse; the unbroken form can reinforce the oppressive continuity of the scene.

CONTEXT

Eliot describes an industrial urban environment, connecting smoke and repeated architecture to the experience of modern city life.

COMPARE IT WITH…

A Wider View: industrial confinement and the desire for more space.
Thirteen: city life under restriction.

VOICE, TONE & FEELINGS · FOLLOW THE SHIFTS

Window view

CONFINED AND DISSATISFIED

Smoke and opposite houses block the sky and give the eye little variety.

People and vehicles

ALIENATED

Movement offers no relief because hurried individuals fail to notice one another.

Closing judgement

CONDEMNING

The apparent street scene becomes a metaphor for systematic imprisonment.

FULL POEM: use your anthology. Evidence fragments are prompts for close reading.