



ONE SHEET REVISION

'Poem at Thirty-Nine' by Alice Walker

Summarise what the poem is about in full sentences:

Annotate the poem with points you remember from your initial study:

Poem at Thirty-Nine

How I miss my father.
I wish he had not been
so tired
when I was
born.

Writing deposit slips and checks
I think of him.
He taught me how.
This is the form,
he must have said:
the way it is done.

I learned to see
bits of paper
as a way
to escape
the life he knew
and even in high school
had a savings
account.

He taught me
that telling the truth
did not always mean
a beating;

though many of my truths
must have grieved him
before the end.

How I miss my father!
He cooked like a person
dancing
in a yoga meditation
and craved the voluptuous
sharing
of good food.

Now I look and cook just like him:
brain light;
tossing this and that
into the pot;
seasoning none of my life
the same way twice; happy to feed
whoever strays my way.

He would have grown
to admire
the woman I've become:
cooking, writing, chopping wood,
staring into the fire.

What is the background to the writing of 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'?

What is Walker's intention in writing this poem?

When was this poem written?

How have events in Walker's own life influenced her writing of 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'?

to describe

to illustrate

to comment

to advocate

| Language | | Structure and form | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Example and effect | | Example and effect |
| Personal pronoun | | Free verse | |
| Verbs | | Short lines | |
| Imagery of money | | Refrain | |
| Semantic field of cooking | | Enjambment | |
| Simile | | Repetition | |
| Metaphor | | Punctuation | |

What other poems in the anthology can we link to this poem to and why?

How is the theme of childhood explored in the poem 'Poem at Thirty-Nine'?