

The Apple-Raid

Darkness came early, though not yet cold;
Stars were strung on the telegraph wires;
Street lamps spilled pools of liquid gold;
The breeze was spiced with garden fires.

That smell of burnt leaves, the early dark,
Can still excite me but not as it did
So long ago when we met in the park –
Myself, John Peters and David Kidd.

We moved out of town to the district where
The lucky and wealthy had their homes
With garages, gardens, and apples to spare
Ripely clustered in the trees' green domes.

We chose this place we meant to plunder
And climbed the wall and dropped down to
The secret dark. Apples crunched under
Our feet as we moved through the grass and dew.



Understanding the poem

- Who 'met in the park'?
- What did they do?
- From what part of the tree did they steal the fruit?
- How did they carry it?
- How do you know that what the poet is describing happened a long time ago?

Looking at words

Explain the meaning of these words and phrases as they are used in the poem:

a spiced **b** district **c** clustered **d** plunder **e** loot **f** lies cold



The clusters on the lower boughs of the tree
Were easy to reach. We stored the fruit
In pockets and jerseys until all three
Boys were heavy with their tasty loot.

Safe on the other side of the wall
We moved back to town and munched as we went.
I wonder if David remembers at all
That little adventure, the apples' fresh scent.

Strange to think that he's fifty years old,
That tough little boy with scabs on his knees;
Stranger to think that John Peters lies cold
In an orchard in France beneath apple trees.

'The Apple-Raid', Vernon Scannell

Exploring further

- In which season of the year do you think the apple-raid took place? Give your reasons.
- Why do you think the boys went 'out of town' to steal apples?
- Look at these descriptions: 'liquid gold', 'green domes', 'the secret dark'.
 - a Say what each is describing.
 - b Do you think it is a good description? Why? Why not?
- Why do you think John Peters 'lies cold' in France?
- How do you think the poet feels when he remembers 'that little adventure'?

Extra

Act out the poem from when the boys meet in the park to when they return to town. Think about what the boys would say and do during 'that little adventure'.