

'their beauty has thickened.' Larkin is talking about how the children are growing up. The fact that this is a sentence in itself, ending with a caesura and breaking up the final stanza shows the importance Larkin has placed on this line, it is as though it is a sudden change, that time moves so fast that you cannot tell when a person changes from being a child to becoming an adult.

The final lines suggest that it is an increase in the responsibilities, awareness and independence that has caused the children to grow up, 'something is pushing them' not 'someone' and as a result it is due to uncontrollable forces that as people grow up they lose their freedom, things like family school and work all play a part in shaping the future of children and developing guidelines within which they have to live from an early age.

There is more controlling you when you are an adult and as a result the poem is saying that everyone must grasp every opportunity because some are fleeting and things will fade and change and become nothing but memories in a photo album, and everything happens so quickly that things are easily missed and childhood is gone before we even have time to appreciate it.

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