

10 years before the speaker was born
 Create an image of a happy care free mother and friends
 Pattern and fashionable imagery
 Repetition of 'I'm' suggest the speaker is trying to insert their presence into the picture
 Metaphor for a glitter ball
 Before the speakers mother was theirs. 'mine' shows that they cherish their mother
 Rule of the speaker interrupts the mood with these nostalgic memories creating a discarded mood. That the speaker being born was a negative thing
 Suggest that the mother is dead or that her past self is dead
 The right pavement could have been Hollywood
 Suggesting the speaker wanted the character the mother was before the speaker was born
 Rule of 3 (youth) the poem begins and ends in the ballroom because that was memory the speaker loved

I'm ten years away from the corner you laugh on
 with your pals, Maggie McGeeney and Jean Duff.
 The three of you bend from the waist, holding
 each other, or your knees, and shriek at the pavement.
 Your polka-dot dress blows round your legs. Marilyn.
 I'm not here yet. The thought of me doesn't occur
 in the ballroom with the thousand eyes, the fizzy, movie tomorrows
 the right walk home could bring. I knew you would dance
 like that. Before you were mine, your Ma stands at the close
 with a hiding for the late one. You reckon it's worth it.
 The decade ahead of my loud, possessive yell was the best one, eh?
 I remember my hands in those high-heeled red shoes, relics,
 and now your ghost clatters toward me over George Square
 till I see you, clear as scent, under the tree,
 with its lights, and whose small bites on your neck, sweetheart?
 Cha cha cha! You'd teach me the steps on the way home from Mass,
 stamping stars from the wrong pavement. Even then
 I wanted the bold girl winking in Portobello, somewhere
 in Scotland, before I was born. That glamorous love past
 where you sparkle and waltz and laugh before you were mine.

Written to sound as if she is the reader is speakers mother
 Connotations that speaker mother was sexy, glamorous and lived a lavish lifestyle
 Busy lifestyle
 The mother was a trouble maker and had to face consequences for being late etc. this tells the reader that the speaker is looking back at memories of when their mother was young
 Shoes and fashion link to the first stanza. Acts as evidence of the mothers past life
 Familiar smells
 Rhetorical question creates an uncomfortable irony. Also suggest that the mother was popular with the boys and gives hint to first love
 Almost as if the speaker is telling the mother this is who she was before they were born. This creates a sense of regret or disappointment

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Context:

The poet is talking about her mother as a teenager. In the first stanza she is describing a photo of her mother with friends. This was written as the poet wished she knew her mother before she was born.



Themes:

- Motherhood
- Sacrifice
- Hope
- Love
- Memories
- Childhood

