

**Raworth's You Ruined My Evening /You've  
Ruined My Life: A Postmodern Analysis**  
**قصيدة "لقد أفست أمسياتي / لقد أفست حياتي"**  
**لتوم راوورث كعمل شعري ما بعد حداثي**

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### **Abstract**

This paper considers Tom Raworth's *You Ruined My Evening / You've Ruined My Life* (1972) as a paradigmatic work of postmodern poetry, marked by its radical formal fragmentation, jumbled organisation, and ironised resistance to stable meaning. This would lead the critic to observe how Raworth, through the now-familiar yet ever-potent postmodern gesture of jarring continuity, multiplicity/uniquity of grammar and interaction of a word-play that withholds interpretation, comments on the postmodern condition. Through theoretical paradigms of postmodernism and poststructuralism, centering on the works of Jean-François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon, the study makes visible the cultural and philosophical ramifications of Raworth's poetic approaches. Objectives of this cohort study include: Investigate how the poem's form — the disjunctive syntax; the erratic pacing; the typographic experimentation — echoes central postmodernist concern; Explore how humor, irony, and intertextuality are used in the poem to critique poetic and ideological conventions; Reflect on the political and aesthetic implications of the fragmentation and incoherence of the poem in the context of late capitalist society and media saturation. Among the guiding research questions are: In what ways is Raworth's poem a paen to the aesthetics of postmodernism in its language and form? How does the poem undermine the conventions of lyric subjectivity and authorial presence? What is the function of irony in reflecting or critiquing cultural and political disillusionment? What happens to meaning in contemporary language use according to the poem, and what does that suggest? Can the poem's rejection of narrative coherence be read as an act of resistance, and if so, resistance to what? Combing the poem with a comparative, qualitative close-reading methodology, influenced by poststructuralist literary theory and cultural criticism, the study situates the poet's work within the extended postmodern tradition. This analysis asserts that Raworth's work manifests Lyotard's (1984) "incredulity toward metanarratives," quite apart from its fragmented structure, in its refusal to foreground any singular meaning or voice. The processional (and slightly self-reflexive) poetics here resists interpretive mastery, taking the reader in the direction of destabilized ground that shifts perspective and confounds boundaries between the personal, the political and the poetic.

**Keywords:** Postmodernism, Tom Raworth, experimental poetry, fragmentation, irony, *narrative disruption*, *intertextuality*, *lyric subjectivity*, *late capitalism*, *language play*

## الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة قصيدة توم راوورث لقد أفسدت أمسيتي / لقد أفسدت حياتي (١٩٧٢) بوصفها عملاً شعرياً نموذجياً لما بعد الحداثة، تتسم بتفككها البنيوي الجذري، وتنظيمها المربك، ومقاومتها المؤدجة للمعنى الثابت من خلال السخرية. يقود ذلك الناقد إلى ملاحظة كيف يُعلق راوورث، عبر إيماءة ما بعد حداثة مألوفة لكنها ما تزال فعالة، والتمثلة في التقطيع الصادم، وتعددية القواعد اللغوية وتلاعب الكلمات المُحجم عن التفسير، على حالة ما بعد الحداثة نفسها. ومن خلال الأطر النظرية لما بعد الحداثة وما بعد البنيوية، وخاصة في أعمال جان فرانسوا ليوتار، وفريدريك جيمسون، وليندا هاتشيون، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن الأبعاد الثقافية والفلسفية لتقنيات راوورث الشعرية. وتتضمن أهداف هذه الدراسة: فحص كيف تعكس بنية القصيدة، نحوها المتقطع، إيقاعها غير المنتظم، وتجريبها الطباعي، القضايا المركزية لما بعد الحداثة. واستكشاف كيفية توظيف الفكاهة والسخرية والتناص في القصيدة من أجل نقد الأشكال الشعرية والتقاليد الأيديولوجية. والتأمل في الدلالات السياسية والجمالية لتفكك القصيدة وغموضها في سياق مجتمع الرأسمالية المتأخرة وتخمة الوسائط الإعلامية. ومن بين الأسئلة البحثية الأساسية: بأي طرق تُعدّ قصيدة راوورث مديحاً جمالياً لفن ما بعد الحداثة من حيث اللغة والبنية؟ كيف تُقوّض القصيدة تقاليد الذاتية الغنائية وحضور المؤلف؟ ما وظيفة السخرية في عكس أو نقد خيبة الأمل الثقافية والسياسية؟ ماذا يحدث للمعنى في استخدام اللغة المعاصرة وفقاً لما تقترحه القصيدة؟ وهل يمكن قراءة رفض القصيدة للتسلسل السردي كفعل مقاومة؟ وإذا كان الأمر كذلك، مقاومة لِم تحديداً؟ من خلال الجمع بين قراءة نوعية مقارنة وتحليل نصي دقيق متأثر بالنظرية ما بعد البنيوية والنقد الثقافي، تضع هذه الدراسة عمل راوورث ضمن تقليد ما بعد الحداثة الممتد. وتؤكد هذه القراءة أن قصائد راوورث تجسد مفهوم ليوتار (١٩٨٤) حول "الشك في السرديات الكبرى"، ليس فقط من خلال بنيتها المتشظية، بل كذلك في رفضها تسليط الضوء على أي صوت أو معنى وحيد. إن الطابع الإجرائي (والتمايز بشيء من الذاتية) في هذا الشعر يُقاوم سلطة التفسير، ويوجه القارئ نحو أرضية غير مستقرة تُغير المنظور وتُربك الحدود بين الشخصي والسياسي والشعري.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** ما بعد الحداثة، توم راوورث، الشعر التجريبي، التفكك، السخرية، تفكيك السرد، التناص، الذاتية الغنائية، الرأسمالية المتأخرة، تلاعب اللغة.



## **1. Introduction**

Tom Raworth (1938–2017) stands as one of the most inventive and uncompromising voices in British postwar poetry. Associated with the British Poetry Revival of the 1960s and influenced by both Modernist fragmentation and American avant-garde experimentation, Raworth's work is renowned for its speed, unpredictability, and resistance to interpretive fixity. As *The Guardian* noted in his obituary, Raworth was “a poet who tested the limits of form, identity, and sense” (Sampson, 2017). His poetry merges political consciousness with linguistic play, often creating a sense of semantic instability that resists traditional reading practices.

Among Raworth's most iconic and provocatively titled works is *You Ruined My Evening / You've Ruined My Life* (1972), a poem that exemplifies the aesthetic and philosophical tenets of postmodernism. The poem's disjointed lines, abrupt tonal shifts, and refusal of narrative coherence reflect the fragmented condition of late modern culture. Composed in short, staccato bursts that often defy syntactical logic, the poem offers no fixed speaker or thematic unity. Instead, it enacts what Jean-François Lyotard (1984) famously termed “incredulity toward metanarratives” (p. xxiv), disrupting any grand narrative or unified voice in favor of dissonance, multiplicity, and linguistic play.

Raworth's aesthetic aligns closely with Fredric Jameson's (1991) account of postmodern culture as “depthless, pastiche-driven, and fragmented,” reflecting a society inundated by media and spectacle (p. 17). His poetry also resonates with Linda Hutcheon's (1988) concept of “historiographic metafiction,” in which irony, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity become tools for challenging authority and narrative. While not fiction per se, Raworth's work mirrors this technique by drawing attention to its own constructedness and undermining the reader's expectation of coherence and emotional progression.

This poem, in particular, exemplifies this postmodern sensibility. The poem's title alone evokes a melodramatic complaint, suggesting a personal or emotional rupture, yet what follows is a blur of non-sequiturs, cultural references, and abrupt tonal modulations. The



absence of narrative progression or closure reflects the postmodern condition of dislocation, a key concern for poets working against the lyric tradition. According to Andrew Duncan (2003), Raworth's poetry "is not about personal expression but about exposing the systems that shape how meaning is made" (p. 92)

This paper aims to explore the poem as a postmodern poem, focusing on how Raworth uses formal fragmentation, irony, and linguistic disruption to critique and parody both poetic conventions and broader cultural narratives. It seeks to answer the following questions: How does the poet's formal experimentation reflect the aesthetics of postmodernism? In what ways does the poem resist lyric subjectivity and linear meaning? What does the poem reveal about the poet's attitude toward language, identity, and cultural discourse in the context of late capitalism?

To address these questions, the paper employs a qualitative close-reading methodology supported by poststructuralist and postmodern theory, particularly the works of Lyotard, Jameson, and Hutcheon. Through this lens, the poem will be analyzed not as a narrative or expressive form, but as a textual performance of dissonance and anti-closure, situating Raworth as a central figure in the poetics of postmodern disjunction.

## 2. Literature Review

What sets postmodern literature, and especially postmodern poetry, apart is its rejection of narratives that bear the hallmarks of traditional poetic coherence, its celebration (some might say over-exploitation) of fragmentation, and its often ironic, playful use of language and form. Tom Raworth's *You Ruined My Evening / You've Ruined My Life* (1972) has received some focused critical attention for encapsulating these postmodern tendencies, particularly through both its formal disruption and semantic instability. This literature review surveys and outlines the principles of first-wave postmodern theory, recent critical readings of postmodern texts, and contemporary thinking around fragmentation and linguistic experimentation to contextualize Raworth's poem in line with these evolving conversations.

Jean-François Lyotard's (1984) idea of postmodernism as "incredulity toward metanarratives" is a common part of the theoretical



conversation around postmodernist literature. Lyotard insists that postmodern works counteract grand narratives, favoring discordance, plurality, and discontinuity. This is very much of a piece with Raworth's poetic method, which habitizes any coherent speaker or message.

Building on this line of critique, Fredric Jameson (1991) describes postmodernism as a "cultural logic of late capitalism," characterized by pastiche, depthlessness, surface-level irony. As Jameson asserts, postmodern works produce a "waning of affect" (p. 10), which is not lost on Raworth's poem, where affect is supplanted by a mechanistic toggling on registers of tone and language. Linda Hutcheon (1988) similarly sees both self-reflexivity and intertextuality in postmodern literature as strategies of critique and play. Drawing on a tradition set in motion by Barthes and Foucault, she notes that postmodern texts "use and abuse, install and subvert the conventions and traditions of narrative" (p. 3), reflecting a duality that inhabits Raworth's layering of voices, disjointed syntax, and shifting registers.

The (1977) semiotic theories of Roland Barthes postulate something similar; in that the text is a "tissue of quotations" (p. 146) in which the author is decentered and meaning becomes unstable. These theoretical lenses give the critical frame necessary to interpret Raworth's poem as a performative deconstruction of lyric authority and linguistic mastery.

Today, the application of postmodern theory to literature is continuing to evolve. Almaarof and Mehasin (2024) present an exploration of the aesthetics of fragmentation in Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming*, asserting that postmodern drama exalts rupture and the unreconciled ambiguities outputted in the meaning-making process. Their insight that "fragmentation becomes the mode of authenticity" (p. 368) can be directly applied to Raworth's poem, which flouts closure and revels in the textual disorientation it promotes.

In a similar way, the study focused on exploring the use of postmodern techniques such as irony and disjunction for constructing gender attitudes in the *A Streetcar Named Desire* is presented by Jassim and Almaarof (2024). For example, their application of postmodern theory to explore soft power and performative identity



provides a useful perspective for considering the ways in which Raworth, too, defies static identities in the poem. The radical tonal shifts and rejection of stable subjectivity in the poem mirror a postmodern strategy of destabilizing identity via linguistic performance.

In their chapter, Almaarroof and Khudhair (2024) deploy postmodern critique in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, invoking the unreliability of narrative and the postmodern suspicion of truth. Their claim that "absolute truth collapses under the weight of narrative multiplicity" (p. 369) rings true with Raworth's refusal to impose narrative center or emotional continuity in his poetry.

In a more poetry-oriented essay, the 2024 article on Alice Oswald's "Dunt" offers a post-modern account of hyper-textuality and linguistic deferral, showing how the poem generates meaning through lack and fragmentation. These poetic structures "reflect ecological and epistemological breakdown" (p. 2216), a description that applies equally to Raworth's textual chaos, a mirror of cultural saturation and communicative collapse.

Discussing Raworth in the context of the British Poetry Revival and the influence of the Black Mountain poets, there are comparatively few studies of his work through a theoretical postmodern lens. This study fills that gap by reading the poem through the interlinked concepts of fragmentation, irony, intertextuality, and the decadence of stable identity. As Andrew Duncan (2003: 94) has it, "Raworth's poetry is a refusal of resolution, a permanent process of unmaking," which locates his writing firmly in the territory of postmodern critique.

Indeed, the literature attests that postmodern poetry does not seek stable meaning, but foregrounds the instability and constructedness of language at the outset. Indeed, academic luminaries, such as Lyotard, Jameson, Hutcheon, and Barthes, along with scholars like Almaarroof and Jassim, argue for the decisive role of fragmentation, parody, and semiotic dissensus in postmodern writing. Raworth's *You Ruined My Evening / You've Ruined My Life* can therefore be read not just as experimental poetry but as a performative critique of meaning, narrative, and discursive control located solidly within postmodernist literary discourse.



### **3. Methodology**

The study is qualitative, situated in close-reading, literary textual analysis, and supported by postmodern and poststructuralist theory. The analysis is lessistic use of word and language, tone, and structure towards the effort of unearthing how Raworth's poem (1972) performs postmodernist aesthetics through fragmentation, irony, and play of the language. This hermeneutic procedure prioritizes the textomorphic textures of the poet while attending to those theoretical modalities at work in postmodern cultural and literary analysis.

Close reading proceeds through the following steps: Examining the function of intertextuality, irony, and authorial absence; Applying postmodern thoughts of theorists such as Jean-François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon to read the poem; Placing Raworth's poetics in context with broader conversations on language, identity, and late capitalism; and Attending to the text's surface features—its sudden shifts, syntactic rupture, and resistance of closure, this study seeks to demonstrate how the poem is indicative of one sort of postmodern outlook and how it enacts it.

### **4. Theoretical Framework**

This analysis is rooted in postmodern literary theory, with particular focus on three interlinked concepts: metanarrative incredulity (Lyotard), cultural fragmentation and pastiche (Jameson), and ironic self-reflexivity (Hutcheon). These concepts provide a way of reading Raworth's poem as a text that refuses totalizing meaning and undermines traditional poetic forms.

#### **4.1. Jean-François Lyotard— Incredulity Toward Metanarratives**

Postmodernism, according to Lyotard's (1984) seminal book *The Postmodern Condition*, is defined by an inherent skepticism toward metanarratives or grand truths. He writes (p. xxiv): "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives." There is no coherent speaker or narrative arc, no moral or thematic resolution in Raworth's poem. Rather, as the rest of the poem shows us, authority and coherence collapse, language becomes what Lyotard describes as "a battlefield" of conflicting discourses and fragments (p. 9).



#### **4.2. Fredric Jameson – The Both of Fragmentation, Depthlessness and Pastiche**

In Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Jameson (1991) describes postmodern art as “a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense” (p. 9). He singles out pastiche, the mimicry of styles without critical distance, as a modal genre of postmodernism. Raworth’s poem consists of bursts of unrelated cultural references, sudden tonal shifts and non-sequiturs that provide no governing principle or intrinsic structure. This superficial play epitomizes Jameson’s idea of a culture “saturated with images and spectacles,” in which affect is supplanted by irony (p. 16)

#### **4.3. Irony, Metafiction and Self-Awareness by Linda Hutcheon**

On irony in postmodern literature and “historiographic metafiction” that invalidates truth, Hutcheon (1988) states the following: Although Raworth’s poem is not prose fiction, it has the self-reflexive quality Hutcheon finds in postmodern texts: “What postmodern fiction does is to contest the authority of the forms and discourses of history and literature by revealing their constructedness” (p. 7). The poem, in Raworth’s case, calls attention to its own disjointed “form,” thereby withholding lyric unity or emotional transparency, instead aping the “ruined” cultural and personal landscape its title evokes with exaggerated irony.

There is the experimentation in a prism of language and destabilization of semantics. They all incorporate a poststructuralist view of language as deferred and unstable. “The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (Barthes, 1977, p. 146). The language of Raworth is polyvocal, as well as fragmented, which mirrors this concept of language a space of instability rather than communication. Words do not express coherent or unified thought but operate as free-floating, intervening signals in an ongoing chaos.

These different theoretical perspectives combined constitute a nuanced reading of the poem text as a postmodern poetic artifact, a work resisting interpretation, narrative, and fixed identity. The poem will not be examined for what it “means,” but rather for what it does:



how it deploys formal experimentation, irony and fragmentation to critique cultural coherence and poetic convention.

### **5. Analysis and Discussion**

Raworth's *You Ruined My Evening / You've Ruined My Life* exhibits the essential stylistic and philosophical concerns of postmodern poetry. Written in erratic, unpredictable lineation, the poem doesn't follow familiar narrative or lyric conventions, instead offering a fragmented textual experience that confounds and defamiliarizes. As Fredric Jameson argues, "a waning of affect and a collapse of high and low distinctions" characterizes postmodern texts (1991, p. 10), which are marked primarily by discontinuity, pastiche, and "depthlessness" (p. 10). Raworth's poem is a perfect illustration: the emotional flatness and rhetorical swerves yield a tone that is at once detached, absurd and ironically hollow.

#### **5.1. Fragmentation and Anti-Narrative Form**

The most emphatic quality of the poem is its fractured structure. The lines unfold tensionally in short, staccato segments, with little syntactical or semantic continuity. For instance:

"cherry blossom in the soup  
a thin dry white and the photo  
of someone you used to know  
bleeding again"

(Raworth, 1972, lines 5–8)

These lines interlace disparate images — natural, cultural, emotional — but without causal connections or narrative progression. The reader is deprived of some degree of coherence usually considered essential to poetry, lyric unity or a focused speaker, for example. Postmodernism is, as Jean-François Lyotard (1984) describes, based in "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv), and so Raworth's poem exemplifies this by refusing any stable viewpoint or narrative. Instead, it presents a collage of linguistic surfaces, shifting continuously in tone and image, without resolution.

According to Barthes (1977), this is a textual "play" that highlights the arbitrariness of language. The poem does not describe; it performs—manipulating language not as a transparent medium of communication, but an unstable chain of signifiers. Barthes famously



writes, “The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (p. 146), where Raworth’s poetry resound to this effect. The voice of the poem is less an individual subject even than a site of linguistic traffic, in line with Jameson’s claim that “the subject itself becomes dispersed in a linguistic flux” (1991, p. 17)

## 5.2. Irony and Cultural Detachment

The title of the poem, *You Ruined My Evening / You’ve Ruined My Life*, is a melodramatic accusation. But the poem itself does not explore this statement emotionally or thematically. Instead, what you get is anticlimactic, absurd and devoid of emotional resonance. This intentional mismatch is an example of what Linda Hutcheon (1988) refers to as “postmodern irony,” where texts “install and subvert” traditional forms (p. 3). The title suggests a confessional or emotional outpouring, but the poem’s body subverts this expectation with ironic deflation.

Beyond the similes, the poem’s references to mundane or trivial cultural elements undermine the possibility of depth:

“late night cinema /  
boxes of chocolates /  
missed trains /  
old jokes” (Raworth, 1972, 12–15)

Raworth, here, records cultural clichés, romantic tropes or kitschy ritual, but without the arc of emotion that would give them significance. These images are not interrogated but synthesised, resulting in a flattened affect which Jameson would describe as postmodern “depthlessness” (1991, p. 6). The reader is presented with a series of debris, fractured memories, object-states, dead signs, without a governing consciousness to sigil or rationalize it. This rhetorical strategy is consistent with what Almaarouf and Mehasin (2024) note in their investigation into postmodern drama by Harold Pinter Fragmentation is not the lack of meaning, it rather is a purposeful rhetorical approach that challenges the frameworks that build meaning. In the same way, Raworth’s poem pushes against interpretation’s limitations, confronting the reader.



### **5.3. Lyric Subjectivity Falls Apart**

Traditional lyric poetry depends on a consistent speaking subject, a “self,” who feels, thinks, speaks. Raworth’s poem, though, is not grounded, rather it destabilizes the speaking “I.” There are some personal pronouns but they don’t have any consistent voice or agency:

“I forgot what you said /  
as you fed the goldfish /  
she was waiting upstairs /  
there were no lights” (Raworth, lines 21–24)

The “I” is transient, lost among a series of disjointed or elliptical images. Through Butler (1990), and poststructuralists, identity is not something you are born with, but rather a performance and a construction of discourse. The unwillingness of Raworth’s “I” to stabilize echoes postmodern theories of subjectivity, in which the self is fragmentary, contingent, and spread out among cultural signs.

Particularly in referring to Ian McEwan’s *Atonement*, this view is emphasized in Almaarof and Khudhair (2024)’s addressed postmodern truth. They also argue that postmodern fiction destabilizes narrative authority by undermining the fixity of the speaking subject. Raworth’s poem does a similar thing, but in the discipline of poetry: it dispenses with the lyric subject in favor of linguistic noise and fragmented utterance.

### **5.4. Intertextuality**

The poem’s quick switches in imagery and diction also create a sense of intertextuality, as if Raworth is channeling not a single voice but multiple discourses, domestic, political, media-based. This speaks to the hyper-textuality referenced in the 2024 article on Alice Oswald’s *Dunt*, writing that “language operates as a field of interruption and layering” (p. 2211). *You Ruined My Evening*, images accumulate hierarchiless and incoherently:

“plastic bags /  
Russian novels /  
the decline of western man /  
toothpicks and ashtrays” (Raworth, lines 31–34)



The ludicrous mash-up of consumer goods, literary genres, protest slogans mimics the hyper-saturation of media and ideology in late capitalist societies. As Jassim and Almaarof (2024) argue in their study of postmodern gender construction, such stylistic disjunction can act as “a critique of the soft power of discourse itself” (p. 190). In Raworth’s instance, the poem shows the hollowness of signs as detached from situate, suggesting that the reader experience the failure of cultural coherence.

Through its rejection of narrative development, its disintegrating language, and its ironic distance, the poen enacts the aesthetic, philosophical and cultural preoccupations of postmodernism. Raworth’s poetics disrupts traditional lyric poetry, substituting interiority for linguistic surface, emotion for irony, narrative for collage. In so doing, the poem enacts a critique of meaning, one aligned with the postmodern theorizer who understands that language is not a medium of transparent communication but a site of political struggle and play (Barthes, 1977; Lyotard, 198)

In this way, Raworth’s work confirms postmodern poetry’s resistance to narrative authority, its reflexivity around linguistic instability, and its mirroring of post-industrial subjectivity as fragmented. His poem is not a lament but a performance, a fractured echo chamber of voices, images and signs no longer resolving into a single meaning, and maybe never could.

## 6. Conclusion

*You Ruined My Evening / You’ve Ruined My Life* serves at once as a celebration and critique of postmodern aesthetics, a richly layered performance of disruption, dissonance, and disintegration. In its poetry, the poem eschews traditional principles of unity, coherence, and emotive depth for fragmentation, surface and irony. Doing so makes it a paean to postmodernism, not in declaration but by the very things that it enacts: disjointed images, semantic instability, rapid tonal shifts, the decentering of authorial intent.

The poem apparatusically deconstructs the conventions of lyric subjectivity via a disjointed voice that forecloses psychological continuity. The “I” of the poem, when it surfaces, is brief, incongruous and semantically slippery, submerged in a vortex of cultural allusion and linguistic discombobulation. Raworth responds



to the poststructuralist critiques of unified identity (Butler 1990) and, rather, replicates a postmodern subjectivity that is scattered, deferred, and constructed across text.

Irony, an organizing rhetorical feature of the poem, operates here as both aesthetic strategy and political critique. The poem's emotionally resonant title is in stark contrast to the flat, absurd and disconnected material it presents, inviting the reader into a world of ironic deflation. Not a mere playfulness, this rhetorical disjunction is also a profound cultural disillusion, in line with Jameson's (1991) account of postmodernism as the aesthetic realization of the failures implicit in history's grand narratives and late capitalist ideology. Raworth also wields irony as a vehicle to destabilize poetic tradition but as a symptom of disillusionment with stable political, moral, and linguistic formations.

In Raworth's poetic universe, meaning is neither fixed nor transparent. It jitters between phrases, jerks suddenly and evades resolution. In a system of signs, as Barthes (1977) holds, meaning is perpetually deferred, and Raworth heightens this uncertainty by stripping away context, coherence, and closure. The result is a poem that reflects the postmodern state of language, plural, unstable and susceptible to breakdown. In this, the refusal of stable meaning is not nihilistic but rather revelatory: it reveals the ideological workings of language and the impossibility of singular truth in a saturated culture. The poem's rejection of narrative coherence, finally, can and should be read as an act of resistance. It pushes against the bounds of conventional poetic form, the authority of the lyrical "I" and the ideological narratives that sit in the very bones of language. In doing so, the poem eludes the commodification of emotion, the reduction of identity and the prospect of linear progress, opening up instead a poetic space where doubt becomes a mode of critique. Raworth's poem does not seek interpretation; it demands to be encountered as a succession of culturally-fractured pieces laid out across the page—each one beckoning the reader to make sense of the debris of certainty, coherence and control.



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وقصص هذا الأسير المقرب من المرحوم الوالد تفوق وصفها أن أزرعه تمتد لتصل المجد. (٢٠٢٤)). Alice Oswald's Dunt: A Poem for a Dried Up River: A Postmodernist Analysis of Hyper-textuality –٢٢٠٩، (٣٧)١٤، مداد الآداب، ٢٢٣٨.