

Musee des Beaux Arts

by
W. H. Auden



"Fall of Icarus" by Breughel

D = diction
I = imagery
D = details
L = language
S = syntax

1. About suffering they were never wrong,
2. The Old Masters; how well, they understood
3. Its human position; how it takes place
4. While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
5. How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
6. For the miraculous birth, there always must be
7. Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
8. On a pond at the edge of the wood:
9. They never forgot
10. That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
11. Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
12. Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
13. Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.
14. In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
15. Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
16. Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
17. But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
18. As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
19. Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
20. Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
21. Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Your impression?
TONE?
positive? neg? both?
indifferent?