

“On Turning Ten” by Billy Collins

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light--
a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
But I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself,
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe
there was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

Directions In order to earn credit, answer the following in full sentences unless citing a direct quote.

1. How does the speaker feel about growing up? THESIS JOOS.

J ustifies discussion	<i>Write your thesis statement here.</i>
O pinion	
O ne main idea	
S pecific	

2. How does this author’s message compare or contrast with that of the previous poet?

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3. Quote specific lines from this poem to support your thesis statement. Choose the two strongest and write them below. Be prepared to support your decisions!

Quote #1	
Line Number(s)	
Quote #2	
Line Number(s)	

4. **Highlight and label** examples of the following:

❖ **Epizeuxis** (Highlight **1** example)

the repetition of words in succession within a same sentence such as “The horror, the horror” in *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.

❖ **Metaphor** (Highlight **3** examples)

a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics. For example, “The assignment was **a breeze**.” (This implies that the assignment was not difficult.)