

Simon Armitage

Kid It does not tell us anything about Batman and Robin - it's only when we begin to read the poem that the identity of the 'kid' becomes clear. Later, when we have read the poem, it could remind of us when we were 'kids,' living in the shadow of someone we admire.

Batman, big shot, when you gave the order Robin taking orders;
Batman superior. Plosive alliteration. Super-hero status.

to grow up, then let me loose to wander setting him free **Could no grow up until Batman allowed.**

leeward, freely through the wild blue yonder **naval slang** as you liked to say, or ditched me, rather, Batman's status diminishing.

in the gutter ... well, I turned the corner. **Double meaning.**

Reference to the fact he reached new stage in his life.

Now I've scotched that 'he was like a father

to me' rumour, sacked it, blown the cover

on that 'he was like an elder brother' **mocking clichés; sense of anger?**

story, let the cat out on that caper

with the married woman, how you took her

downtown on expenses in the motor. **British slang**

Holy robin-redbreast-nest-egg-shocker!

Holy roll-me-over-in-the-clover, **Batman specific phrases.**

Mocking with humour and connection voice still has with childhood.

I'm not playing ball boy any longer **metaphor**

Batman, now I've doffed that off-the-shoulder

Sherwood-Forest-green and scarlet number **Ridicule for his own old identity**

for a pair of jeans and crew-neck jumper;

now I'm taller, harder, stronger, older. **Learning to be independent.**

Batman, it makes a marvellous picture: **Very contrasting**

imagery here. We don't expect Batman to live like this. Could it be that he can not manage without his boy wonder?

you without a shadow, stewing over **double meaning ; stewing chicken giblets in the pressure cooker, feeling the pressure of being on own.?**

next to nothing in the walk-in larder,

punching the palm of your hand all winter, **anxious to get going, but unable to move anywhere.**

you baby, now I'm the real boy wonder. **American slang**

There is a serious message behind the comedy - we are encouraged to consider whether heroes and hero-worship can really sustain young people growing up. However marvellous the admired person may be, a young person has to learn to be independent - taller, harder, stronger, older (line 18) and to live their own life.

This poem contains various examples of slang, for example naval slang - wander leeward (line 2), British slang - the ordinary word motor (line 11) for the amazing Batmobile, and American slang - baby (line 24). The mixture of styles adds humour and perhaps helps to illustrate the growing-up process: Robin is trying out a mixture of things.