Annotate and TPCASTT: title, paraphrase, connotation/diction, attitude/tone, shift(s) in speaker or attitude, title revisited, and theme.

Making Frankenstein

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He could not, *no*, he could not, *no*, although

He wheedled and cajoled, begged and promised,

But they would not, *no*, they would not

Take him to see *The Curse of Frankenstein*.

Then his uncle called and offered and they caved.

So next it was the matinee then home

And nothing said, until he sat through dinner like

Some little diplomat, and after that excused himself

And took his plate and headed up to bed.

Still nothing said. *No*, but midnight he woke up screaming.

Morning, his father cleared the plates then turned,

“That’s *that*,” he summarized, “too anatomical.”

“What’s anatomical?” the boy asked back.

This was summer 1957.

Monarchs foraged flowers, working colors

With their yes-now-no-now light arrhythmias.

By afternoon leaves shimmered in the heat,

And in the evening intermittent waves

Of fireflies telegraphed their kind

While in the little deeps of darkened houses

Window units swallowed oceans of air,

Until the boy, deep in his house, slept hard enough

That when he woke he couldn’t close his hands.

“But what was anatomical?” he asked again.

His father climbed a ladder to the attic where

He bumped around then climbed back down

Carrying an old foxed *Gray’s Anatomy*

Packed full with illustrations, what seeing these

The boy felt certain were the pictures of mixed meats.

That night the windows purred, and nothing budged,

Till breakfast brought another book, this time

One on pathology, which meant more pictures plus

Diseases, where the worst were best

And came from “intimate contact.”

“But what was intimate?” he later pestered,

Till his father downed his drink and said,

“That’s how you made your way into this world.”

*Mother* rose and left the room. The boy sat silent;

He sat there calmer than the noggin of a cat,

Until he stretched and, yawning, mentioned that

He might just go on up and get to bed.

But secretly he understood; he knew

For good-and-always that in fact

His father wasn’t a serious man

So he was on his own and had to make

Sense out of things himself, even if

Some sense went wrong, like Frankenstein’s,

Who wasn’t a serious man either —

And *that* was *really that*, even if it meant

You’d sink one day without so much as SOS.

Some nights that summer, sleepless, eyes pinned wide,

He’d slip outdoors to watch his parents on the porch,

Their cigarettes, their quiet talk, and then,

For nothing he could tell, their laughter as

His father fixed another round of drinks.

And after that more laughter, like cicadas.

The boy watched this, as now he sometimes drives

The five miles out-of-way to see that house again.

And, never-you-mind his knowing better,

Sometimes just his doing this sets off

Imaginings that he is standing in the kitchen

Saying, “Oh my dear animal family,

How I loved you. How richly we purred.”

And sometimes too it sweeps back over him,

His thinking that his father wasn’t a serious man.

Those times, slowing the car, he says to himself,

“Well then, you are not a serious man either.”