**Early Purges TPCASTT**

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| CONNOTATIONAllusion – “purges” is a very powerful word often associated with historical ethnic cleansing. Could the poem possibly symbolize something more than just animals on a farm? | TITLE 1 -early means young or first -purges means getting rid of something, like  vomiting maybeTITLE 2- refers to those first times we are exposed to  The extermination of pests before we really understand the moral issues. Purges is also a historically charged word referring to  ethnic cleansing, creating moral questions about who the”pests” are and who decides tTo exterminate them. ‘ | PARAPHRASE |
| Speaker is an adult looking backVulgar, crude dictionAuditory imagery makes kittens sound pathetic so we feel sorry for them. Alliteration of the “S” sounds helps us hear the water.Dan’s opinion, not speaker’sSimile – compares kittens to inanimate objects, no longer living thingsSpeaker’s emotions – why would he be afraid?Tactile imagery – kittens no longer soft.Punctuation – this event is never completely forgotten, the emotions haunt the speaker. Also, why are these animals identified as pests?Auditory imagery – pups are not sympathetically presented like kittens were. Speaker’s words echo Dan’s.Metaphor – shows the tension about this issue outside the farmSpeaker’s final words – is this his message? | I was six when I first saw kittens drown.Dan Taggart pitched them, 'the scraggy wee shits',Into a bucket; a frail metal sound, Soft paws scraping like mad. But their tiny dinWas soon soused. They were slung on the snout Of the pump and the water pumped in. 'Sure, isn't it better for them now?' Dan said.Like wet gloves they bobbed and shone till he sluicedThem out on the dunghill, glossy and dead. Suddenly frightened, for days I sadly hungRound the yard, watching the three sogged remainsTurn mealy and crisp as old summer dung Until I forgot them. But the fear came backWhen Dan trapped big rats, snared rabbits, shot crowsOr, with a sickening tug, pulled old hens' necks. SHIFT: before we had the feelings of the child, now we have the thoughts of the adultStill, living displaces false sentimentsAnd now, when shrill pups are prodded to drownI just shrug, 'Bloody pups'. It makes sense:  'Prevention of cruelty' talk cuts ice in townWhere they consider death unnaturalBut on well-run farms pests have to be kept down. | At the age of 6, the speaker first saw Dan Taggert, (farmhand?). drown kittens in a bucket.Their little paws made soft pathetic noises, but the water from the pump soon drowned them.Dan believes he did what was best and then tosses their wet little corpses onto the manure pile.The speaker is afraid and sad as he watches the little bodies gradually dry up.Eventually he forgets, but is then reminded when he sees other farm “pests” also killed.As he grows older, his experience changes how he feels until now he can be indifferent to pups being killed. It is common sense.People in the towns might talk about animal cruelty, but on farms, it is necessary to control the pest population. |

Attitude: Speaker starts out sympathetic to the animals, identifying with them as their deaths cause him to be afraid, but after the shift after the fifth stanza, speaker is now an adult and has developed Dan’s practical and desensitized attitude.

Theme: While the author appears to state his message at the end of the poem, “on well-run farms pests have to be kept down”, he does spend five out of seven stanzas creating sympathy for the “pests.” Also, these animals are not really presented in “pest” type activities; instead they are defenseless babies.

Also, the word “purges” in the title opens the interpretation of the poem to possibly discussing how we deal with all pests in society – human and animal. Suddenly, the moral and ethical questions become more profound if we are discussing the extermination of human “pests.”

Perhaps the author just wants us to think about our attitudes towards maintaining an efficient farm or society. He’s not necessarily taking one side or the other, just saying: We should carefully consider the issues surrounding the extermination of any pests.