**TPCASTT of “Wheels” by Jim Daniels**

**T:** The title indicates the poem might be about a car; wheels is synecdoche for car. Cars could symbolize freedom, growth, moving forward, cycles, and vehicles.

**P:** The speaker of the poem is talking about his brother and the pictures of him on the wall tell the story of his life with the car/vehicle matching the time in his life. For example in lines 1-5 the brother is wearing his graduation cap and gown and pictured with a rusted out Impala. The brother is waving in each photo. The brother is pictured with cars, motorcycles, station wagons, and rigs; as he gets older the cars become nicer and bigger to match his growing career and family (6-38). The brother rides off on his Harley without a helmet on (39-46). The camera does not capture the brother on his motorcycle; it does not “save” him (44). From a crash? He dies? That seems to be the implication.

**C: Use 5 examples of Connotation—poetic devices!**

* Symbolism—the cars are used symbolically to build the framework of the brother’s life—each one represents a different life stage. As time goes by the cars go from clunkers to hot rods, to motorcycles to rigs to station wagons and back to a Harley (3-40). The symbolism helps create meaning by showing the brother’s life.
* Imagery—Mostly visual imagery because of the pictures on the wall force the reader to see how the sibling describes his brother. Some vehicles are described in more detail than others. The adjectives provide visuals of the cars and hence the brother’s life and again helps describe the brother’s life.
* Alliteration—“helmetless and Harley” (39-40) to help the reader infer that that the brother dies in the end. The hard *H* sound implies the end.
* Enjambment—most of the poem’s lines are enjambment (4-34); forcing the reader to read the short little lines into longer ideas. Maybe to show that life is too short.
* Refrain—“waving” (6, 11, 17, 23 etc.). Brother is waving to the camera—then waving goodbye in the last stanza. Perhaps foreshadows brother’s death. Waving goodbye to the past.
* Stanza—the first stanza is long—38 lines—the second stanza is short—8 lines. Perhaps to show a full life and quick, sudden death. First stanza is in past; second stanza is in the present. Live in the present.

**A=Tone: 3 examples! Look at your tone sheet for ideas!**

The speaker’s attitude seems reminiscent, nostalgic, and proud—the sibling sees his brother repeatedly “waving” (6, 9, 11, 14, etc.). The speaker is nostalgic: repeats “my brother” (1, 32, 39). He remembers his brother in a positive way—his brother seems happy with the vehicles and people in his life: “with the boys” (12). And “getting married” (19). And” his son in a car seat” (30).

**S:** The poem shifts in the second stanza from positive to negative—happy in the first stanza, sad in the second. The first stanza is an explanation of the brother’s life—a positive happy, picture of him. It is in the past tense. The second stanza is in present tense and it is sad and negative and infers death with words like “feet and ground” making it sound like a grave (42-43). “no camera to save him” (46) and “helmetless” (39) infers death. So the poem ends with an overall sad, serious, somber tone.

**T:** Upon examining the title now we see that “Wheels” is symbolic of the brother’s life. The cars are the framework of the brother’s life; each vehicle represents a different life stage.

**T:** The poem is about: vehicles, cycle of life, sudden death, and a life lived fully. The theme of “Wheels” is when a person experiences life to its fullest they leave behind more memories and moments to celebrate, even after death. Another theme could be that life is a journey, one that can end unexpectedly; do what you love, with whom you love, be adventurous and live life fully.