

Poetry Anthology

Poems of Power & Conflict





Power & Conflict Poetry

The Most Revealing Moments in the Texts

1. Power

1.1 Tyranny & Oppression

Shelley's <i>Ozymandias</i>	
1. In the opening lines of <i>Ozymandias</i> , Shelley uses the decaying statue of Ozymandias as a metaphor to explore the fragility of human accomplishments and how they are gradually consumed by the natural world.	<i>"Half sunk"</i>
2. Shelley develops this theme to expose the tyranny of caesarism that he saw in his society, exposing it to be both cruel and unjust.	<i>'sneer of cold command'</i>
3. Finally Shelley juxtaposes the human desire for immortalisation with the reality of human transience in the face of the terrifying power of nature.	<i>'boundless and bare'</i>

Browning's <i>My Last Duchess</i>	
1. In the opening of <i>My Last Duchess</i> , an exploration of the violent objectification of women, Browning traces the speaker's desire to exert full physical and psychological control over his dead wife through her portrait.	<i>'The curtain have drawn for you'</i>
2. The Duke then reveals his fear and revulsion at female sexuality, distastefully criticising the Duchess and slighting her honour, and revealing fragile ego and arrogant desire for status and possession.	<i>'Half flush that dies along her throat'</i> <i>'A heart... too soon made glad'</i>
3. Finally Browning reveals the speaker's cold malice: how his jealousy turned to murder and how his impulse for ownership resulted in the final 'taming' of the Duchess as a piece of art.	<i>'I gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped'</i> <i>'Taming a sea horse'</i>

Blake's <i>London</i>	
1. Blake opens the poem with the speaker mourning the loss of his city: the wonder and wild beauty of London is shown to be lost to rationalism, modernity and work.	<i>'charter'd street'</i> <i>'charter'd Thames'</i>
2. Blake then explores the inescapable suffering and corruption inflicted by the industrial revolution on the working classes.	<i>'mind-forg'd manacles'</i>
3. Finally, full of despair, Blake examines the city's destruction of innocence and youth.	<i>'youthful harlot's curse'</i> <i>'marriage hearse'</i>

Rumens's <i>The Émigrée</i>	
1. In the opening lines of <i>The Emigree</i> Rumens contrasts the idealised and nostalgic memories of the speaker's home with the reality of the place now 'sick with tyrants'.	<i>'branded by an impression of sunlight'</i> <i>'sick with tyrants'</i>
2. Rumens then describes the internal contradiction between the passing of time, which should distance the speaker from her identity and past, with the reality that purity of her memory pulls her ever closer to it.	<i>'graceful slopes glow even clearer as time rolls its tanks'</i> <i>'frontiers rise between us, close like waves'</i>
3. Finally, Rumens juxtaposes the joy the personified vision of her past city brings with the isolation felt when she compares it with its current incarnation.	<i>'docile as paper; / I comb its hair and love its shining eyes.'</i> <i>'They accuse me'</i>

Agard's *Checking Out Me History*

1. In the opening lines of <i>Checking Out Me History</i> Agard reveals the destructive nature of a British school system that has silenced the voices of its previous colonial subjects.	<i>'bandage up me eye'</i>
2. As exemplified by his performance, Agard shifts into irregular rhyme and short verse in order to celebrate the achievements of the ethnic minority historical figures previously silenced by the myths of Empire	<i>'Toussaint / a slave / with a vision / lick back'</i>
3. Finally, Agard weaves together this history of resistance and rebellion to colonial subjugation and demands that the post-colonial voice and identity be heard.	<i>'carving out me identity'</i>

1.2 Nature's Power vs. Human Transience

Wordsworth's *Extract from The Prelude*

1. As <i>The Prelude</i> opens, Wordsworth presents nature as a submissive, and even sensual pleasure: the speaker seems to exude confidence and control.	<i>'I unloosed her chain'</i>
2. After the volta, the tone of the poem shifts and Wordsworth reveals nature's terrifying immensity: nature is personified as a savage and unpredictable power	<i>'huge peak, black and huge'</i> <i>'Towered up between me and the stars'</i>
3. Finally, the speaker is left distant from the beauty of nature and shocked by the effects of the sublime.	<i>'blank desertion'</i>

Heaney's *Storm on The Island*

1. Unlike the Romantic poets, Heaney describes the landscape as bleak and inhospitable, something to be endured in order to survive.	<i>'wizened earth'</i> <i>'tragic chorus in a gale'</i>
2. Heaney then shows us that despite nature's beauty, or however much we think we can control or domesticate it, nature remains a volatile force.	<i>'You might think that the sea is company / Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs'</i> <i>'spits like a tame cat / Turned savage'</i>
3. Finally, Heaney leaves us with a sense of awe and respect for both the force of nature and island living: it is not idealised or romanticised but emphasises that humans are the subject of huge and unknowable forces that we do not control.	<i>'empty air'</i> <i>'Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.'</i>

Dharker's *Tissue*

1. In the opening stanzas Dharker uses the metaphor of 'tissue' to explore the connections that paper creates between individual nostalgia, personal relationships and wider human history.	<i>'thinned by age or touching'</i>
2. Later, Dharker explores the temporary nature of human structures and institutions: nation states, religions and buildings and instead hints we should 'fly our lives like paper kites'.	<i>Buildings 'drift' and 'sigh'</i> <i>'Maps too', 'borderlines', 'grocery shops'</i>
3. In the final stanzas, Dharker quietly rages against the pointlessness of human pride and empire building, and instead implores us to embrace, and face our short and fragile lives.	<i>'find a way to trace a grand design / with living tissue'</i> <i>'raise a structure never meant to last'</i>

2. Conflict

2.1 Glory, Honour and The Soldier

Tennyson's <i>Charge of The Light Brigade</i>	
1. Tennyson presents the Battle of Balaclava in Charge of The Light Brigade as a solemn and unified journey which is both dramatic and exciting.	'valley of Death' repetition of 'cannon'
2. Later in the poem, Tennyson exalts the power of Empire by glorifying war and violence in order to celebrate the valour and devotion of the soldiers.	'Flash'd' / 'Plunged' / 'Reel'd' / 'Shatter'd'
3. Finally Tennyson challenges the reader to 'honour' the Light Brigade: here we see a subtle challenge to the Victorian class system, it is the soldiers who are venerated, not their superiors.	'Honour the Light Brigade'

Owen's <i>Exposure</i>	
1. Owen opens the poem by establishing that, despite the rapid and terrifying mechanisation of warfare during WWI, it is the elements which cause soldiers the most suffering.	'merciless iced east winds that knife us' 'Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army'
2. Owen highlights how the soldiers are forced to suffer passively, they are compelled by an unseen force to remain.	'But nothing happens.' 'We cringe in holes'
3. Owen then goes on to describe how the tension and banality of war has left the soldiers as empty shells, hollow martyrs to a god they no longer care about.	'crusted dark-red jewels' 'For love of God seems dying'

Hughes's <i>Bayonet Charge</i>	
1. Hughes opens the poem in medias res, disorienting the reader by throwing them straight into the action and forcing them to share the soldier's experience.	'running raw'
2. Hughes then explores how war dehumanises the men who fight them: their weapons becoming a part of their bodies which have become a mechanised tool of death.	'numb as a smashed arm'
3. Finally, having witnessed the industrial scale destruction caused by WWI, Hughes explores the conflict between man and nature.	'yellow hare'

Armitage's <i>Remains</i>	
1. Armitage starts the poem almost mid-conversation: it is as if the narrator is confiding in a third party, a psychiatrist, family member or the reader.	'probably armed, possibly not'
2. Armitage then shifts and contrasts this colloquial tone with the violence and brutality of war and its effects on the human body.	'tosses his guts back into his body'
3. Finally, Armitage then forces the reader to experience the mental scarring and anguish of this conflict on soldiers such as Tromans.	'blood shadow' 'his bloody life in my bloody hands'

2.2 War, Family and Wider Society

Garland's *Kamikaze*

1. Garland opens the poem with the speaker imagining her father preparing to 'embark' on a kamikaze mission during the final, desperate days of WWII.	'sunrise' 'powerful incantations' 'one way journey into history'
2. Garland then contrasts this nationalistic semi-religious vision of glory with the pilot's daydream-like nostalgia for family and nature.	'huge flag waved first one way then the other in a figure of eight'
3. Finally, Garland explores how the focus on honour and duty in Japan's ultra-conservative society has destructive consequences	'my mother never spoke again' 'he no longer existed'

Weir's *Poppies*

1. Weir opens <i>Poppies</i> by revealing the conflict between nostalgia, parental pride and modern perceptions of remembrance with subtle yet violent imagery of war.	'crimped petals / spasms of paper'
2. Despite the speaker feeling a sense acceptance, Weir also reveals the longing for the intimacy of motherhood when tracing the ghosts of memories and the loneliness and internal conflict in having 'released a song bird from its cage'.	'being Eskimos' 'released a song bird'.
3. Finally, Weir contrasts the memorialisation and mourning of military personnel, with what is so often overlooked, the loss and melancholy of the mothers who are left behind.	'I listened, hoping to hear / your playground voice catching the wind'

Duffy's *War Photographer*

1. Duffy opens <i>War Photographer</i> in a moment of personal reflection: she explores the dual role of the photographer's work, to rearrange and give order to the chaos of war, whilst also to change and heal the world like a priest.	'spools of suffering' 'ordered in rows' 'intone a mass'
2. Later, Duffy explores the dislocation felt due to the photographer's paradoxical existence: the safety of his home in 'rural England' contrasted with the inescapable realities of the war and suffering that he documents.	'ordinary pain' 'half formed ghost'
3. Finally Duffy, with savage cynicism, explores the role of the war photographer in a world of transient attention spans and a self-absorbed public.	'eyeballs prick with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers'

Conflict Poetry					
Poem	Year	Techniques	Quotations		Context
The Charge of the Light Brigade Alfred Lord Tennyson	1854	Anaphora	'half a league'	'theirs but to do and die'	Crimean War
		Dactylic dimeter	'jaws of death / mouth of hell'	'shot and shell'	Battle of Balaclava
		Personification	'noble six hundred'	'when can their glory fade?'	Miscommunication
		Metaphor	'someone had blundered'	'honour the light brigade'	Poet Laureate = patriotism / propaganda
Exposure Wilfred Owen	1917	Jarring metre	'But nothing happens'	'knife us'	Nihilism – the pointlessness of existence
		Assonance	'sudden successive flights of bullets'	'war lasts, rain soaks, clouds sag stormy'	Owen's personal experience of the First World War
		Repetition	'streak the silence'	'all their eyes are ice'	Owen hospitalised in 1917 with 'shell shock' (PTSD)
		Refrain	'merciless iced east winds'	'snow-dazed'	Owen was an outspoken critic of the war
Bayonet Charge Ted Hughes	1957	Enjambment	'raw-seamed hot khaki'	'shot-slashed furrows'	Hughes' father was a WWI veteran
		Semantic fields of war and nature	'bullets smacking the belly out of the air'	'King, honour, human dignity etcetera dropped like luxuries'	Hughes' poems often explore nature
		Third person	'cold clockwork of the stars'	'sweating like molten iron'	Anonymous soldier
		Juxtaposition	'patriotic tear'	'yellow hare'	Describes the experience of 'going over-the-top'
War Photographer Carol Ann Duffy	1985	Religious imagery	'spools of suffering'	'Rural England.'	Duffy's friendship with a war photographer
		Regular rhyme scheme	'ordered rows'	'ordinary pain'	Belfast, Beirut, Phnom Penh – sites of conflict
		Regular stanza length	'tremble'	'half-formed ghost'	The media is reductive
		Juxtaposition	'nightmare heat'	'a hundred' 'five or six'	Desensitisation
Kamikaze Beatrice Garland	2007	Italics for direct speech	'one-way journey'	'like a huge flag'	Cultural appropriation
		Colour imagery	'powerful incantations'	'as though he no longer existed'	Kamikaze = suicide attacks made by Japanese WWII soldiers
		Range of speakers	'like bunting on a green-blue translucent sea'	'chattered and laughed'	Extreme patriotism
		Metaphor and simile	'fishes flashing silver'	'better way to die'	Rejection and isolation
Remains Simon Armitage	2008	Short clauses	'probably armed'	'his bloody life'	Poem based on Armitage's 2007 film <i>The Not Dead</i>
		Enjambment	'possibly not'	'in my bloody hands'	Based on interviews with veteran soldiers
		Colloquialism	'rips through his life'	'drink and the drugs'	'Desert sand' = Gulf War
		Half rhyme + four beat rhythm = ironic jollity	'tosses his guts'	'end of story, except not really'	First-person narrative mirrors interview style
Poppies Jane Weir	2009	Ambiguous voice	'individual war graves'	'flattened, rolled, turned into felt'	Commissioned by Carol Ann Duffy
		Dramatic monologue	'blockade of yellow bias binding'	'like a treasure chest'	Refers to Armistice Sunday, which commemorates WWI
		Symbolism	'sellotape bandaged'	'tucks, darts, pleats'	Weir experiences 'The Troubles' in Ireland
		Irregular structure	'steeled the softening of my face'	'the dove pulled freely'	Alludes to contemporary wars in Afghanistan and Iraq

Power Poetry					
Poem	Year	Techniques	Quotations	Context	
London William Blake	1794	Anaphora	'charter'd street' 'charter'd Thames'	'blackning Church'	From 'Songs of Innocence and Experience'
		Metaphor	'marks of weakness / woe'	'hapless Soldiers sigh'	Blake was a Romantic poet
		Juxtaposition	'in every cry'	'youthful Harlots curse'	Industrial Revolution
		Iambic rhythm	'mind-forg'd manacles'	'blights with plagues the Marriage hearse'	Oppression and individual freedom
Extract from 'The Prelude' William Wordsworth	1798	Simile	'straight I unloosed her chain'	'like a swan'	The sublime and enlightenment
		Personification	'small circles glittering idly in the moon'	'a huge peak, black and huge'	Romantic ideals of the power of nature
		Enjambment	'with an unswerving line, I fixed my view'	'upreared its head'	Autobiographical poem – Lake District
		Iambic pentameter	'she was an elfin pinnacle'	'huge and mighty forms that do not live like living men'	Spiritual growth and development
Ozymandias Percy Bysshe Shelley	1818	Sonnet form	'vast and trunkless'	'King of Kings'	Romantic poetry
		Iambic pentameter	'half sunk a shattered visage lies'	'Look on my Works, ye Mighty'	Sympathising with the French Revolution
		Oxymoron	'wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command'	'Nothing beside remains'	Criticism of absolute power
		Irony	'stamped on these lifeless things'	'lone and level'	Ancient Egypt
My Last Duchess Robert Browning	1842	Dramatic monologue	'looking as if she were alive'	'daylight / cherries / white mule'	Browning moved to England due to his overprotective father
		One speaker	'if they durst'	'nine-hundred-years-old name'	
		Rhyming couplets	'spot of joy'	'I gave commands'	Based on Duke Alonso of Ferrara
		Enjambment	'too soon made glad / too easily impressed'	'all smiles stopped together'	Set in Ferrara, 1564
Storm on the Island Seamus Heaney	1966	Assonance	'we are prepared'	'exploding comfortably'	Much of Heaney's poetry is about farm life
		Enjambment	'it blows full / Blast'	'spits like a tame cat'	The poem is an extended metaphor for the Troubles in Ireland: conflict between Unionists and the Nationalists
		Pronouns	'leaves and branches can raise a tragic chorus in a gale'	'we are bombarded with the empty air'	
		Extended metaphor		'it is a huge nothing that we fear'	
The Emigrée Carol Rumens	1993	Repetition of 'they'	'sunlight-clear'	'like a hollow doll'	About a female emigrant
		First person perspective	'bright, filled paperweight'	'It tastes of sunlight'	Fear of tyranny
		Simile	'branded by an impression of sunlight'	'comb' / 'love'	Corruption, dictatorship and violence
		Metaphor	'white streets' / 'white plane'	'my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight'	Sense of identity and belonging
Tissue Imtiaz Dharker	2006	Extended metaphor	'lets the light shine through'	'a sigh, a shift'	Dharker was born in Pakistan but grew up in Scotland
		Modal verbs	'age or touching'	'borderlines' / 'brick' / 'block'	Much of her poetry deals with cultural identity
		Repetition	'stroked and turned transparent'	'the sun shines through'	Industrialisation and urbanisation
		Enjambment	'I might feel their drift'	'turned into your skin'	Permanence and transience
Checking Out Me History John Agard	2007	Non-standard English	'dem tell me'	'fire-woman'	Criticism of Eurocentrism in teaching
		Repeated quatrain	'blind me to me own identity'	'a healing star'	Non-standard phonetic spelling to reflect his own dialect
		Lack of punctuation	'bandage up me eye with me own history'	'a yellow sunrise'	
		Enjambment	'beacon'	'I carving out me identity'	Agard was born in Guyana

'Ozymandias' (1818)

by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Summary

The poet hears a description of a ruined statue that stands in the middle of a desert. The inscription underneath the statue, and the expression on its face, indicate the hubris (foolish pride) of the king it depicts. He evidently believed that his works would last forever, but now this ruined fragment is all that remains of them. The poem ends with a description of the emptiness which stretches around the 'colossal wreck'.

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Glossary

'Ozymandias' - a Greek version of the name of the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramesses II

'antique' - ancient

'trunkless' - missing the body (trunk)

'visage' - face

'pedestal' - statue base

'ye' - archaic form of 'you'

Language

Imagery / Metaphor / Irony

At the centre of the poem is its powerful imagery of the ruined statue, with its tyrannical expression and proud inscription, and the empty desert that stretches all around it. It serves as a metaphor for the passing of time and the futility of human pride and power. The inscription is deeply ironic, given the disappearance of all of the 'works' of Ozymandias.

Alliteration

The hard alliterative phrase 'cold command' emphasises the cruelty of Ozymandias. The alliterative adjectives of the poem's concluding lines ('boundless and bare' / 'lone and level') emphasise the

emptiness of the surrounding desert still further, drawing the reader's attention to Shelley's description of the wilderness.

Form

Sonnet Form

Although the poem is a sonnet, Shelley uses the form loosely, and many of the rhymes are only half-rhymes (such as 'stone' / 'frown'). Enjambment also obscures the rhymes, so that the poem sounds almost like blank verse to the ear, which suits its solemn subject. Sonnets are associated with love and nature, and the word comes from 'sonnetto' meaning 'little song'. Because Shelley's Romantic philosophy idealises nature, this could be reason for the form choice; other critics suggest that it could symbolise the egotistical nature of Ozymandias / Rameses II – ie his love for himself.

Ekphrastic

An ekphrastic poem is a vivid description of a scene or, more commonly, a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating and reflecting on the "action" of a painting or sculpture, the poet may **amplify and expand its meaning**.

Speaker

We hear about the statue from a speaker who heard about it from a traveller who had seen it. This distancing of the narrative (it's third-hand to us) could serve to undermine the power of the tyrannical ruler, just like the passage of time does.

Structure

Sentence Structure / Caesura

The poem consists of four sentences of highly varied structure and length. The longest, which lasts from lines three to eleven, builds up a detailed picture of the tyrannical pride of Ozymandias, culminating in the proud inscription: 'Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'. This hubristic exclamation stands in sharp contrast to the short, blunt sentence which follows: 'Nothing beside remains'. The emptiness of the desert is emphasised by the full stop after this short sentence, which creates silence in the middle of a poetic line (caesura).

Extract from *An introduction to 'Ozymandias'* by Stephen Hebron

15 May 2014

'*Ozymandias*' is one of Percy Bysshe Shelley's best-known and most accessible poems. It was written sometime between December 1817 and January 1818, and was probably the result of a sonnet competition between Shelley and his friend Horace Smith, who stayed with the Shelleys at their home Marlow between 26 and 28 December. In such competitions two or more poets would each write a sonnet on an agreed subject against the clock.

Shelley lived in a period when the British government, fearful of revolution, took oppressive measures against radicalism. A Romantic, Shelley was radical thinker and poet inspired by the French Revolution and wrote pamphlets attacking religion, tradition, monarchy and Empire.

Ozymandias the poem can be seen as an attack on caesarism and the tyranny of both Napoleon and of George III (who comes in for more direct criticism two years later in the poem *England 1819*, also a sonnet) whose empire building leads to the exploitation of both the cultures they colonised as well as the working class at home. It is also a meditation on the power of creativity to outlast tyranny.

Ramses II was a military conqueror and a great builder, but Shelley's sonnet illustrates how the achievements of even the mightiest tyrants are obliterated by time. Theft of art by the agents of the British Empire, such as the Parthenon Marbles and the statue of Rameses II (*Ozymandias* in Greek) in order to be displayed in the British Museum as part of a desire to exert cultural power, mirrors *Ozymandias*' own hollow desire to be immortalised.

Core Vocabulary

consume (v), consumed	To eat drink, use up or completely destroy something
egotist (n), egotistic (adj), egotistically (adv)	A person who is completely self-obsessed, arrogant or narcissistic
ekphrastic	A poem that centres on a work of art and then explores or dramatizes the a character's or reader's response to it
ephemerality (n) ephemeral (adj), ephemerally (adv)	Something that lasts only short time before passing
transience (n), transient (adj)	Something that is brief and temporary
mortality (n), mortal (adj)	Something that will eventually die
despot (n), despotic (adj), despotically (adv)	A single cruel ruler
tyrant (n), tyrannical (adj), tyrannically (adv)	Using power in a cruel and random way
Caesarism	Rule of violent force by a political strongman (like Julius Caesar)

1. The phrase _____ creates an image of drowning in sand which emphasises the fragility of human life and how it is consumed by the natural world.
 - a. 'Half sunk'
 - b. 'antique land'
 - c. 'whose frown'

2. The noun phrase _____ describes Ozymandias' broken and unrecognisable face which emphasises how time causes even the strongest of structures to crumble and decay and obliterates us from history and memory.
 - a. 'trunkless legs'
 - b. 'cold command'
 - c. 'shattered visage'

3. The statue's 'wrinkled lip' and 'sneer of cold command' reveals...
 - a. The callous and harsh nature of a ruler who seemed to feel disgust and disdain for his subjects.
 - b. That Ozymandias was often angry and upset about giving orders.
 - c. The ruthless and harsh nature of a man who was probably a killer

4. The imperative phrase _____ shows Ozymandias' desire to belittle others as well as simultaneously glorify himself as a 'King of kings'.
 - a. 'boundless and bare'
 - b. 'the hand that mocked them'
 - c. 'Look on my works ye mighty and despair'

5. The phrase 'lone and level sands' reveals...
 - a. that nature is long and straight and is scary because it travels vast distances.
 - b. the insignificance of the nature's power in contrast the lonely power of man.
 - c. the terrifying vastness of nature's power in contrast with the transient insignificance of human life.

'My Last Duchess' (1842)

by Robert Browning (1812-1889)

Summary

The Duke of Ferrara describes his previous wife to a visitor, who has come to arrange his marriage to the daughter of another nobleman. He became angry because, in his view, she smiled too easily at other men. He refused to discuss his anger with her, preferring to arrange for her to be murdered. He wants complete possession of his wife, and now he has it, because she survives only as a painting behind a curtain. Only he is permitted to draw back the curtain. She is part of the art collection about which he evidently enjoys boasting.

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Glossary

'Fra Pandolf' - a fictional painter who is a monk

'countenance' - face

'earnest' - serious and honest

'durst' - dared

'mantle' - shawl

'courtesy' - politeness

'My favour at her breast' - a ribbon given as a sign of love

'dropping of the daylight' - sunset

'trifling' - silly behaviour

'forsooth' - a mild oath, similar to saying 'for goodness' sake'

Language

Imagery

The poem's final image is of an artwork. The Duke is proud of it because it is valuable, but it also illustrates the poem's themes of pride and control. 'Neptune', the Roman god of the sea, symbolises the Duke, with his godlike power over life and death, while the 'sea-horse' represents the Duchess, whom he 'tames' by turning her into a lifeless work of art.

Natural Speech

Browning creates a realistic sense of natural speech, using techniques such as interjections in the middle of sentences: 'A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad'. The reader feels that they are getting a direct glimpse of the speaker's thought process.

Irony

The reader is not supposed to take the Duke's words at face value. There is heavy irony in the poem. The Duke evidently considers his actions reasonable: he should be able to protect his 'nine-hundred-years-

old-name' from being spoiled by what he sees as immodest behaviour. But the reader is supposed to see him as a cold, proud tyrant, who will murder rather than 'stoop' to discuss his jealousy with his wife.

First Person Pronouns

The frequent repetition of the first person pronoun 'I' throughout the poem, and the way the poem ends with the first person pronoun 'me', emphasise the Duke's proud, tyrannical and controlling attitude.

Punctuation / Caesura

Browning's use of semicolons adds silence in the middle of a poetic line (caesura) between the blunt clauses surrounding the sinister disappearance of the Duchess. Browning also adds a full stop at the end of this section, adding a further, longer pause, which symbolises the silence of death: 'This grew; I gave commands;/ Then all smiles stopped together.'

Form

Dramatic Monologue

A dramatic monologue is a poem spoken by one person, who is not the poet. There is usually at least one other person present. Dramatic monologues are set at a critical moment, and the words reveal important aspects of the speaker's character.

Ekphrastic

An ekphrastic poem is a vivid description of a scene or, more commonly, a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating and reflecting on the "action" of a painting or sculpture, the poet may **amplify and expand its meaning**.

Structure

Rhythm and Rhyme Scheme

Browning uses iambic pentameter and rhyming couplets. However, he varies the rhythm from its regular pattern and frequently uses enjambment, so that the reader still has the impression of natural speech (see above).

Extract from Hannah Gadsby- on the male gaze in art: 'Stop watching women having baths. Go away.'

Art history taught me I have no place in history,' said Hannah Gadsby in her furious, hilarious, devastating stand-up show Nanette. 'Women didn't have time to think thoughts; they were too busy taking naps naked in the forest.' This is the central idea advanced in Gadsby's new two-part ABC series *Nakedy Nudes*. Her thesis is that the current ideals of beautiful bodies and strict gender norms have a long past, inherited from the ancient Greeks and their Renaissance relatives.

The TV show, which follows Gadsby's previous ABC art documentaries, calls out what interviewee and Sydney artist Deborah Kelly says is women's overwhelming depiction as 'prone, boneless and sexually available' objects throughout much of western art history – all pale glowing limbs and Renaissance ideals. 'The body [is] to be looked at by a man,' says Gadsby in the series.

'An artist, almost always assumed to be a bloke, looking at a body in the picture frame, almost always a woman.' 'The sheer number of paintings of unconscious women is distressing,' she says over the phone. 'Most of those women are being watched by conscious men within the painting itself. And that's normalising a very distressing thing. We see it a lot.'

An extreme case of this is also explored by the great Victorian poet Robert Browning in his poem *My Last Duchess* in which he explores the persona of the Duke of Ferrara, who commissions an artist to paint the portrait of his late wife, and reveals his almost psychopathic desire to control his wife totally, in life and in death, through her immortalisation in the art that he owns and can now gain pleasure from at will.

'It's good to take stock of that in light of what's happening at the moment – with what people are speaking about culturally,' she says, referring to the reckoning against sexual harassment and assault that has followed allegations against Harvey Weinstein. 'We haven't invented that problem in this generation, we haven't invented it this century. This is something we've inherited and it will take a long time to unpick, but it's not worth defending.'

'We're not seeing anything new,' she reiterates. 'The art world doesn't exist in a vacuum. Being an object, being objectified, [creates] a toxic culture, because we don't have the same cultural influence as men do. They've written the story, they have the power.'

1. Core Vocabulary

consume (v), consumed	To eat drink, use up or completely destroy something
egotist (n), egotistic (adj), egotistically (adv)	A person who is completely self-obsessed, arrogant or narcissistic
ekphrastic	A poem that centres on a work of art and then explores or dramatizes the a character's or reader's response to it
despot (n), despotic (adj), despotically (adv)	A single cruel ruler
tyrant (n), tyrannical (adj), tyrannically (adv)	Using power in a cruel and random way
yearn (v), yearning (v), yearningly (adv)	An intense feeling of longing or desire for something, often something that has been lost

- 1. The possessive pronoun 'my' reveals...**
 - a. the Duke's boastful desire to control and own his wife.
 - b. an ominous and cruel nature.
 - c. that he wanted her but could not have her.

- 2. The repetition of the phrase _____ shows both that female sexuality bother the Duke, their bodies seen as a challenge to patriarchal control which he distastefully gossips about implying that she is flirtatious and cheating.**
 - a. 'not the first'
 - b. 'spot of joy'
 - c. 'half flush'

- 3. The possible metaphor the Duke uses for another man having sex with his wife is...**
 - a. 'Broke in the orchard for her'
 - b. 'dies along the throat'
 - c. 'the white mule she rode with'

- 4. The ambiguous comment 'I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together reveals...**
 - a. that the Duke hated her smiling and stopped her doing it.
 - b. the Duke casually alludes to having his wife murdered to assuage his jealousy.
 - c. the Duke's wife never listened to him and to show her power, carried on smiling.

- 5. The off the cuff final metaphor _____ highlights that from the Duke's perspective, women were seen as his to enjoy, not as people in their own right and needed to be controlled like animals as part of a display of wealth and status.**
 - a. 'Notice Neptune'
 - b. 'Never to stoop'
 - c. 'Taming a sea horse'

'London' from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794) by William Blake (1757-1827)

Summary

Blake presents London as a place of darkness and corruption where innocence is destroyed. Everything is owned by those with power and wealth ('chartered'), even the river, and the poorer inhabitants of the city are suffering. The 'cry' of the 'chimney sweep' and the 'blackening church' suggest that organised religion is doing nothing to relieve the sufferings of the poor. The church is 'blackening' because of the soot from coal fires, suggesting that it too is touched by the dark influence of the city. Even the newly married and the newly born are touched by corruption in the form of the 'harlot's curse', which may be a reference to venereal disease being spread by widespread prostitution in the city.

I wander through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet,
Marks of weakness, marks of woe .

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear:

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening church appals,
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace-walls.

But most, through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

Glossary

'woe' - great sadness; 'manacles' - chains for the hands or ankles; 'hapless' – unfortunate; 'harlot' – prostitute; 'blights' - afflicts with disease

Language

Repetition

Blake's repetition of the word 'chartered' emphasises his bitterness at the exclusive ownership of everything by the wealthy and powerful, including the public areas such as the streets and the river, which should be common property, according to his view. His repetition of the word 'every' emphasises how he sees suffering everywhere.

Juxtaposition

Blake uses juxtaposition powerfully in the final stanza, as he places sharply contrasting images next to each other: the 'infant' and 'marriage' compared to the 'harlot'. Even the marriage vehicle is described as a 'hearse', which is normally associated with funerals, thus giving hints of death and decay even at an occasion which is supposed to be full of joy and life.

Form and Structure

Ballad Form

The regular rhyme and rhythm of the poem make it like a ballad - a popular form of poetry that was usually set to music. This form reflects Blake's desire to depict the lives of ordinary people.

Extract from Andrew Lincoln's – Blake's Radical Politics

In Blake's London, the condition of the poor and their children was beginning to receive more attention from social reformers. Improvements in hygiene and medical knowledge had led to increased life expectancy, but the rise in the population, poor harvests and war created serious hardships.

Orphans and the illegitimate children of the poor could be sold into apprenticeships that offered meagre prospects; young boys were used to sweep chimneys (by scrambling up as 'climbing-boys'); prostitution and dire housing conditions were continuing problems. Some philanthropic initiatives attempted to address these issues, but asylums and charity schools were often linked to the exploitative apprenticeship system that trapped them in a cycle of poverty.

In 1788 David Porter tried to initiate legislation to protect apprentices, but the resultant bill was drastically diluted by the House of Lords. The cause was taken up by others, including the Society for the Bettering of the Condition of the Poor. Such moves were accompanied by a new drive to improve the education of the lower orders, initiated in the 1780s by the Sunday School movement. But even as these reforming movements gathered pace, children were beginning to be sent from London workhouses to labour in northern cotton mills.

Blake, a Romantic, and his wife were radicals who also challenged these conditions, he famously described the factories near where he lived as 'dark Satanic Mills' which he later condemned in his poem 'Jerusalem'. In fact, Blake often felt that the law itself was the problem and was deeply influenced by both the French Revolution of 1789 and the American War of Independence and how they tried to liberate people from existing bonds of tradition and political systems.

2. Core Vocabulary

consume (v) , consumed (v), consuming (v)	To eat drink, use up or completely destroy something
despair (n) , despair (n), despairing (v)	Complete loss of hope
sentimental (n) , sentimentality (n)	A feeling of sadness or tenderness often for the past and linked to a memory of a place or an object
nostalgia (n) , nostalgic (v)	A sentimental feeling or attachment to a period in the past
subjugate (v) , subjugation (n)	To control or dominate someone after conquering them
oxymoron	A type of juxtaposition. Deliberately contradictory terms are placed directly next to each other for effect e.g. "deafening silence"
yearn (v) , yearning (v), yearningly (adv)	An intense feeling of longing or desire for something, often something that has been lost
condemn (v) , condemning (v), condemned (past tense)	To disapprove of something or to sentence / hand out a judgment or punishment such as death

1. The adjective _____ shows the speaker's frustration at the city being mapped and nature being controlled by man, in opposition to Blake's Romantic ideals of nature being allowed to flow freely.
 - a. 'Thames'
 - b. 'charter'd'
 - c. 'wander'

2. The repetition of the _____ emphasises the physical impact, almost like a brand, that class and poverty has made on the people of London caused by the destruction and disorder of the Industrial Revolution.
 - a. metaphor 'mind forged manacles'
 - b. noun 'woe'
 - c. noun 'marks'

3. The metaphor 'mind-forge'd manacles' depicts...
 - a. how people had made metal chains for prisoners using their minds
 - b. the isolation and suffering caused by the mental bonds created by debt and modern society.
 - c. how the poor are trapped in prison or a work house.

4. Which metaphor is a commentary on the corruption of Christianity and its failure to do its duty of protect the least fortunate.
 - a. 'Every blackning church appals'
 - b. 'the happless soldiers sigh'
 - c. 'blood down the palace walls'

5. The oxymoron _____ juxtaposes the joy of marriage with the misery of death due to society's corruption of the young and the abandonment of the weak which has destroyed all of the good in life.
 - a. 'youthful harlots'
 - b. 'infants tear'
 - c. 'marriage hearse'

'The émigrée' (1993)

by Carol Rumens (born 1944)

Summary

An exile treasures her beautiful memories of her home country, which cannot be affected by the terrible things which have since happened there. She left as a child, so the memory is simple and innocent, and it cannot be spoiled by reality, because she cannot return to the country and witness its current condition which has been spoiled by tyranny and oppression. The people in her adopted country cannot understand her attachment to this memory, but she clings to it, as an imaginary place of happiness and freedom.

There once was a country... I left it as a child
but my memory of it is sunlight-clear
for it seems I never saw it in that November
which, I am told, comes to the mildest city.
The worst news I receive of it cannot break
my original view, the bright, filled paperweight .
It may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants,
but I am branded by an impression of sunlight.

The white streets of that city, the graceful slopes
glow even clearer as time rolls its tanks
and the frontiers rise between us, close like waves.
That child's vocabulary I carried here
like a hollow doll, opens and spills a grammar.
Soon I shall have every coloured molecule of it.
It may by now be a lie, banned by the state
but I can't get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight.

I have no passport, there's no way back at all
but my city comes to me in its own white plane.
It lies down in front of me, docile as paper;
I comb its hair and love its shining eyes.
My city takes me dancing through the city
of walls. They accuse me of absence, they circle me.
They accuse me of being dark in their free city.
My city hides behind me. They mutter death,
and my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight.

Glossary

émigrée' - French for a female emigrant: someone who has left their home country
'filled paperweight' - a paperweight consisting of a glass ball with a pretty scene inside
'branded' - permanently marked
'docile' - submissive / obedient

Language

Imagery and Juxtaposition

Rumens uses imagery of light, beauty and love to describe the memories of the exile. The imagery of sunlight suggests the light and warmth of the exile's memories. A filled paperweight preserves a beautiful scene under glass. It is a small, portable item, so like the memories, it can be carried with the exile.

Imagery of dolls (or possibly pets) emphasises the idea that the memory is a treasured possession of a child, which she loves and cares for.

Rumens juxtaposes these images of light, beauty and love to the reality of the city. It is described as 'November' - the first really dark month when autumn turns to winter. There is war and tyranny affecting the city, and time is placing a border between the exile and her home country - 'time rolls its tanks'. But the grim reality only serves to increase the attraction of the remembered city, whose 'white streets [. . .] glow even clearer'.

Senses

Rumens uses three of the five senses to make the central image, of sunlight, more vivid. The exile sees the sunlight: 'sunlight-clear'. She is touched by it: 'branded by an impression of sunlight'. It even has a taste - the language of her home country 'tastes of sunlight'.

Personification

The city is personified: 'my city comes to me'. This suggests that the speaker's memories have taken on a life of their own.

Structure

Free Verse

Rumens does not use rhyme or a regular rhythm, but the language is densely packed with imagery and repetition, creating an enclosed, carefully crafted poem, like the carefully preserved memory of the city which it celebrates.

Repetition

The word 'sunlight' ends each stanza, reinforcing this central image of light and happiness.

Extract from 'In the 21st century, we are all migrants' by Mohsin Hamid in National Geographic

ALL OF US are descended from migrants. Our species, *Homo sapiens*, did not evolve in Lahore, where I am writing these words. Nor did we evolve in Shanghai or Topeka or Buenos Aires or Cairo or Oslo, where you, perhaps, are reading them. Even if you live today in the Rift Valley, in Africa, mother continent to us all, on the site of the earliest discovered remains of our species, your ancestors too moved—they left, changed, and intermingled before returning to the place you live now, just as I left Lahore, lived for decades in North America and Europe, and returned to reside in the house where my grandparents and parents once did, the house where I spent much of my childhood, seemingly indigenous but utterly altered and remade by my travels.

We move when it is intolerable to stay where we are: when we cannot linger a moment longer, alone in our stifling bedroom, and must go outside and play; when we cannot linger a moment longer, hungry on our parched farm, and must go elsewhere for food. We move because of environmental stresses and physical dangers and the small-mindedness of our neighbors—and to be who we wish to be, to seek what we wish to seek. None of us is a native of the place we call home. And none of us is a native to this moment in time. We are not native to the instant, already gone, when this sentence began to be written, nor to the instant, also gone, when it began to be read, nor even to this moment, now, which we enter for the first time and which slips away, has slipped away, is irrevocably lost, except from memory.

To be human is to migrate forward through time, the seconds like islands, where we arrive, castaways, and from which we are swept off by the tide, arriving again and again, in a new instant, on a new island, one we have, as always, never experienced before. Over the course of a life these migrations through the seconds accrue, transform into hours, months, decades. We become refugees from our childhoods, the schools, the friends, the toys, the parents that made up our worlds all gone, replaced by new buildings, by phone calls, photo albums, and reminiscences. We step onto our streets looking up at the towering figures of adults, we step out again a little later and attract the gazes of others with our youth, and later still with our own children or those of our friends—and then once more, seemingly invisible, no longer of much interest, bowed by gravity.

Core Vocabulary

dislocation (n) , dislocated (v)	Being removed or disturbed from something's proper or original place or state.
detached (adj)	To be separate or disconnected from something
outsider (n)	A person who does not belong to a certain group
nostalgia (n) , nostalgic (v), nostalgically (adv)	A sentimental feeling or attachment to a period in the past
sentiment (n) , sentimental (adj) , sentimentally (adv)	A feeling of sadness or tenderness often for the past and linked to a memory of a place or an object
longing (n) , longing (adj)	A yearning desire for something or someone

1. The metaphor which depicts the purity and innocence of the speaker's memory in *The Emigree* is?

- a. "mildest city"
- b. "sunlight clear"
- c. "impression of sunlight"
- d. "There was once a country... I left as a child"

2. In The Emigree the verb "branded" emphasises...

- a. In The Emigree the verb "branded" emphasises the almost physical permanence of the speakers experience and memories of her childhood and of her city.
- b. In The Emigree the verb "branded" emphasises the almost physical impermanence of the speakers experience and memories of her child and of her city.
- c. In The Emigree the verb "branded" emphasises the almost physical permanence of the speakers experience and memories of her child and of her city which are violently scarring and shocking

3. In The Emigree which quote uses a caesura to emphasise the split between childhood and the adult world?

- a. "November / which, I am told"
- b. "docile as paper; / I comb its hair"
- c. "I can't get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight"
- d. "There once was a country... I left it as a child"

4. Rumens then describes the internal contradiction between...

- a. the passing of time, which takes the speaker further from her identity and past, the purity of her memory pulls her ever further from it.
- b. the passing of time, which should distance the speaker from her identity and past, with the reality that purity of her memory pulls her ever closer to it.
- c. the passing of time, increases the purity of her memory and pulls her ever closer to it.
- d. the passing of time makes her older but also means she remembers her identity and past.

5. List one quote from The Emigree which creates a sense of sinister foreboding almost as if the speaker is being followed or watched by an unnamed force?

- a. The repetition of "They accuse me" and "circle me" create a sense of sinister foreboding almost as if the speaker is being followed or watched by an unnamed force which surrounds them.
- b. The repetition of "dancing through the city" and "my shadow falls" create a sense of sinister foreboding almost as if the speaker is being followed or watched by an unnamed force which surrounds them.
- c. The repetition of "sick with tyrants" and "banned by the state" create a sense of sinister foreboding almost as if the speaker is being followed or watched by an unnamed force which surrounds them.
- d.

'Checking Out Me History' (2007) by John Agard (born 1949)

Summary

The poet lists many examples of historical and legendary figures and events which were taught to him at school, and points out that there are other important historical figures and events which were excluded. He implies that this is because the excluded figures are of African heritage, and perhaps seen as inferior to a Eurocentric British education system. The history taught in schools is white history, and therefore of less relevance to him than his 'own history'.

Dem tell me
Dem tell me
Wha dem want to tell me

Bandage up me eye with me own history
Blind me to me own identity

Dem tell me bout 1066 and all dat
dem tell me bout Dick Whittington and he cat
But Toussaint L'Ouverture
no dem never tell me bout dat

*Toussaint
a slave
with vision
lick back
Napoleon
battalion
and first Black
Republic born
Toussaint de thorn
to de French
Toussaint de beacon
of de Haitian Revolution*

Dem tell me bout de man who discover de balloon
and de cow who jump over de moon
Dem tell me bout de dish ran away with de spoon
but dem never tell me bout Nanny de maroon

*Nanny
see-far woman
of mountain dream
fire-woman struggle
hopeful stream
to freedom river*

Dem tell me bout Lord Nelson and Waterloo
but dem never tell me bout Shaka de great Zulu
Dem tell me bout Columbus and 1492

but what happen to de Caribs and de Arawaks too
Dem tell me bout Florence Nightingale and she lamp
and how Robin Hood used to camp
Dem tell me bout ole King Cole was a merry ole soul
but dem never tell me bout Mary Seacole

From Jamaica
she travel far
to the Crimean War
she volunteer to go
and even when de British said no
she still brave the Russian snow 45
a healing star
among the wounded
a yellow sunrise
to the dying

Dem tell me
Dem tell me wha dem want to tell me
But now I checking out me own history
I carving out me identity

Glossary

- '1066' - the date of the Norman Conquest - a key date in the history of England
- 'Dick Whittington and he cat' - a legendary story about the Lord Mayor of London, Richard Whittington (1354-1423), with little to no basis in historical fact
- 'Toussaint L'Ouverture' - a former slave of African descent who led a rebellion against the French rulers of Haiti in 1791
- 'Napoleon' - French emperor who conquered much of Europe in the early 19th century.
- 'Nanny de maroon' - Queen Nanny of the Maroons (1686-1755), a leader of escaped slaves in Jamaica, who fought with the British slave owners, helped slaves to escape, and supported slave rebellions
- 'Lord Nelson' - Lord Nelson won a great victory against Napoleon's navy at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805
- 'Waterloo' - Lord Wellington defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815
- 'Shaka de Great Zulu' - a chief of the Zulu tribe in southern Africa, who ruled the Zulus from 1816-1828
- 'Columbus and 1492' - Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas in 1492
- 'Caribs and Arawaks' - native American peoples displaced or killed by colonial occupation of the Caribbean and the Americas following its discovery by Europeans (see above)
- 'Florence Nightingale' (1820-1910) - a pioneering nurse who improved healthcare standards during the 19th century. She is particularly famous for her work during the Crimean War.
- 'Mary Seacole' (1805-1881) - a mixed race Jamaican nurse who worked to assist wounded servicemen during the Crimean War

Language

Non-Standard Dialect

The poet makes use of Caribbean dialect, with non-standard grammar such as 'he cat' rather than 'his cat', and also imitates Caribbean pronunciation with words such as 'dem' instead of 'them'. The strong Caribbean sound adds to the poem's project of defining a separate identity, distinct from British identity.

Imagery

Agard uses imagery of light and fire when describing the heroes of black history. Toussaint L'Ouverture is a 'beacon'. Mary Seacole is a 'healing star'. Both of these images suggest that these figures offer guidance to the poet as he builds his own identity.

Agard also uses imagery of sight, referring to how he has been blinded by white history, but the heroes of black history will restore his vision. For example, Nanny the Maroon is a '*see-far woman*'.

At the end of the poem, Agard uses a metaphor of sculpting - 'I carving out me own identity'. This creates the idea that his identity is something which he must craft carefully himself, and that, like something carved from stone, it will last.

Pronouns

Agard's use of pronouns creates a clear distinction between himself ('me'/'I') and those who taught him white history ('dem'). This is established strongly at the start of the poem with the repetition of 'Dem tell me'. At the end of the poem, Agard repeats the first person pronoun 'I' to emphasise how he is taking control of his own identity.

Structure

Two Part Structure

The poem is clearly divided into two types of section: those in ordinary type, which repeat the refrain 'Dem tell me', and those in italic type, which celebrate the heroes of black history.

The tone of the sections in ordinary type is rebellious and often dismissive. Figures of legend and fairytale (such as Dick Whittington and Old King Cole) are mixed with real historical figures (such as Lord Nelson), which suggests that the history served up in the traditional curriculum is far from reliable.

Rhythm and Repetition

The sections in ordinary type have a rhythm which is created by the repetition of 'Dem tell me'. This repetitive structure adds to the defiant tone.

5 – EMPIRE AND SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH MEMORY

‘I think he would be very proud of the continuing legacy of Britain in those places around the world, and particularly I think he would be amazed at India, the world’s largest democracy – a stark contrast, of course, with other less fortunate countries that haven’t had the benefit of British rule. If I can say this on the record – why not? It’s true, it’s true.’

Boris Johnson of Winston Churchill, on whom he has just finished writing a book

‘I am strongly in favour of using poison gas against uncivilized tribes. It would spread a lively terror.’

‘I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion.’

Winston Churchill

‘Come over here, Kingslee,’ my teacher’s Canadian voice called excitedly, as she beckoned me towards her. She was never usually nice to me, so I was a bit suspicious about her calling me over with such enthusiasm. When I got close enough, she put her hand on the shoulder of my seven-year-old self with just the right weight of touch to communicate the monumental solemnity of the occasion.

Pointing to the painting on the wall, she said, ‘Kingslee,’ and then drew in a dramatic breath to add power to the punchline,

'this man stopped slavery.' She managed to pull her eyes away from the picture and turned them in my direction, her gaze instructing me to be thankful.

She expected me to share in her joy, but I was just thoroughly confused. 'What, all by himself, miss?' I asked. 'Don't you mean he helped?'

Her face distorted and she took the exact same flustered breath that liberals everywhere would take in 2008, right before they were about to lecture any black person who had the gall to declare themselves a non-supporter of Barack Obama. (I was there in 2008, I was one such sinner, I know that face of 'you can't possibly know what is good for you and how could you be so ungrateful' very well.) 'No Kingslee, he stopped slavery,' she retorted, clearly annoyed at my refusal to blindly accept what I was being told.

We were on a school visit to the National Portrait Gallery and the painting on the wall was of one Mr William – patron saint of black emancipation – Wilberforce. I did not have the strength or wherewithal to argue back with my teacher, I was only seven after all, but I knew her statement was absurd, hence the memory staying put. By what force of magic could an educated adult be compelled to believe that one man, all by himself, could put an end to a few centuries of tri-continental multi-million-pound business enterprise – and genocide – by the sheer force of his moral convictions? What's more, why would this teacher try to convince me, of all the students in our class, of such an absurdity? I was not the only child of Caribbean origin in our class, so it could not have been a 'let's just pick out the black kid' scenario, but I was the only one who went to pan-African Saturday school, and thus had demonstrated a particular penchant for challenging what I was being taught. Courtesy of that community schooling, by the time this teacher was telling me that Wilberforce had set Africans free I already had

some knowledge of the rebel slaves known as 'Maroons' across the Caribbean, and of the Haitian Revolution, so I had some idea that the enslaved had not just sat around waiting for Wilberforce, or anyone else for that matter, to come and save them.

• While it's certainly true that Britain had a popular abolitionist movement to a far greater degree than the other major slave-holding powers in Europe at the time, and this is in its own way interesting and remarkable, generations of Brits have been brought up to believe what amount to little more than fairy tales with regard to the abolition of slavery. If you learn only three things during your education in Britain about transatlantic slavery they will be:

- 1 Wilberforce set Africans free
- 2 Britain was the first country to abolish slavery (and it did so primarily for moral reasons)
- 3 Africans sold their own people.

The first two of these statements are total nonsense, the third is a serious oversimplification. What does it say about this society that, after two centuries of being one of the most successful human traffickers in history, the only historical figure to emerge from this entire episode as a household name is a parliamentary abolitionist? Even though the names of many of these human traffickers surround us on the streets and buildings bearing their names, stare back at us through the opulence of their country estates still standing as monuments to king sugar, and live on in the institutions and infrastructure built partly from their profits – insurance, modern banking, railways – none of their names have entered the national memory to anything like the degree that Wilberforce has.

In fact, I sincerely doubt that most Brits could name a single

3. Core Vocabulary

Eurocentric (adj). Eurocentrically (adv)	An ideology focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world; implicitly regarding European culture as the most valuable and important
enjambment (n)	A thought or sense, phrase or clause, in a line of poetry that does not come to an end at the line break, but moves over to the next line without pause.
post-colonial (n) , post-colonialist (adj)	The study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism
subject (n)	A person or group of people brought under the control of another group, usually by force
Counterpoint (n)	In music this is two voices that interweave in a harmony yet sound different
subjugate (v) , subjugation (n)	To bring under control by violent conquest
subversion (n) , subvert (v)	To undermine the power and authority of
oppression (n) , oppress (v), oppressing (adj)	To control someone by the unjust use of authority
Cultural-repression	The act of restraining and controlling a group of people's history and culture
Oral tradition (n)	The culture of telling stories verbally rather than writing them down.
Creole (language) (n)	A stable language developed from the merging of several other languages often European and Caribbean and African
Linguistic heritage	The history and culture of a group linked to their language

1. **The repetition of which phrase 'others' the state education system and the people who teach it?**
 - a. 'Bandage up me eye'
 - b. 'to freedom river'
 - c. 'Dem tell me / Dem tell me.'
 - d. 'she still brave'

2. **The metaphor which shows the violent scarring and the legacy of injury done by Eurocentric cultural repression is?**
 - a. 'carving out me identity'
 - b. 'Bandage up me eye' and 'blind me to me own history'
 - c. 'lick back'
 - d. 'I checking out me own history'

3. **In Checking Out Me History which phrase trivialises and subverts traditional ideas of history?**
 - a. 'all dat'
 - b. 'Dem tell me'
 - c. 'Dick Wittington and he cat'
 - d. 'Wha dem want'

4. **What shift does Agard make in the counterpoint?**
 - a. Agard shifts to a new voice which mocks past black achievements and belittles their struggles using a nursery rhyme style.
 - b. Agard shifts to a new voice, like a musical counterpoint, which is in irregular rhyme mimicking a nursery rhyme or song to celebrate the successes of black historical figures.
 - c. Agard shifts to a new voice, like a musical counterpoint, which is in irregular rhyme, imitating the irregular history he is celebrating, mimicking a nursery rhyme or song to celebrate the successes of black historical figures.
 - d.

5. **Agard contrasts establishment figures with historically subjugated peoples to emphasis the one sided nature of history when he says...**
 - a. 'Republic born / Toussaint de thorn'
 - b. 'what happened to de Carabs and de Arawaks too'
 - c. 'Lord Nelson and Waterloo / but dem never tell me about Shaka de great Zulu'
 - d. 'ole King Cole was a merry ole soul'

Extract from *The Prelude* (1850) by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was one of the greatest Romantic writers, known particularly for his nature poetry. He believed that the natural world could be a source of inspiration and guidance which replaced traditional religion. In this extract from his epic autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, Wordsworth remembers an incident from his youth which had a great effect on his mind. Wordsworth's focus on mountainous scenery is typically Romantic. Prior to the Romantics, artists and writers were not interested in mountains for their own sake. They focused on tamed rather than untamed nature. A mountain peak epitomises wild nature that can never be controlled or civilised by humanity.

Summary

Wordsworth describes rowing across a lake in the middle of mountainous scenery. The rugged shape of a huge mountain peak makes an impression on his thoughts, pushing out images of familiar elements of nature that are more connected to human life.

Wordsworth focuses on the influence of the mountain on his mind. He implies that the wild, untamed world has become a part of his mental landscape. Its stern grandeur has influenced his philosophy.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cove, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace ; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark , –

And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Glossary

'nor without' - with (6)

'idly' - normally 'lazily'. Here, 'calmly' (9)

'craggy' - rocky and rugged (14)

'elfin' - having a supernatural or magical charm (17)

'pinnacle' - small boat (17)

'lustily' - with energy and enthusiasm (17)

'stature' - size (25)

'covert' - area covered by trees (31)

'bark' - boat (32)

Language

Personification

At the start of the extract, Wordsworth describes how he is 'led by her' - nature is personified as a female who is guiding him. Later, the mountain is described as having "voluntary power" and a 'purpose of its own', suggesting that it has made a deliberate decision to impress itself upon Wordsworth's mind. The personification becomes menacing as the mountain 'strode after me', and Wordsworth retreats before its imposing presence.

Imagery

Wordsworth describes his boat's movement as 'like a swan' to emphasise its beauty and grace as it glides over the mountain lake. This natural simile also creates a sense of unity with nature, which is later broken when Wordsworth is confronted with the incomprehensible mountain.

Repetition

Wordsworth's repetition of the word 'huge' when describing the mountain is very striking, and emphasises its menacing and awesome grandeur.

Form

Epic

This is an extract from *The Prelude*, which is an epic poem - a long poem with a serious subject and one or more heroic figures. As it is an autobiographical epic, the hero of *The Prelude* is Wordsworth himself. The serious subject is the development of his mind, particularly through contact with nature.

Structure

Three Part Narrative Structure

The extract tells a story (a narrative) in three parts. In the first section, Wordsworth sets out into the wild scenery with confidence. In the second, the mountain looms before him, and he is frightened and mystified by its mighty presence. In the final section, Wordsworth reflects on the impact of his experience of untamed, wild nature.

Blank Verse

Wordsworth's use of blank (unrhymed) verse is suitable for his serious, philosophical purpose.

Extract from *The Sublime's Effects in Gothic Fiction* from *The-Artifice.com*

Gothic literature is a combination of horror fiction and Romantic thought; Romantic thought encompasses awe toward nature. Essentially, Romanticism is a reaction against the Enlightenment, a time that revolutionized scientific thought, and emphasizes emotional response and intuition over clinical knowledge. Romantic literature causes personal pleasure from natural beauty, and Gothic fiction takes this visual reaction and subverts it by creating delight and confusion from terror. This use of terror is called the sublime.

What separates experiencing the sublime from experiencing beauty is the disruption of harmony. As stated above, it shows elements of Romantic reactions to human experience while utilizing fear as well.

According to Edmund Burke (a nineteenth century philosopher), the imagination experiences both thrill and fear through what is "dark, uncertain, and confused." The sublime stems from potent awe and terror that stresses someone's limits, surpassing all other responses and overloading the recipient in both their revulsion and fascination.

In regards to the Romantic view of the environment, the sublime can occur when natural grandeur overwhelms an individual to the point of causing fright or a feeling of helpless insignificance. Overall, approaching the sublime occurs when a sight or experience is "awesome" or "awful" in the old meaning of both words: characterized by or inspiring awe, and awe is an emotion containing fear, wonder, and reverence.

4. Core Vocabulary

consume (v), consumed	To eat drink, use up or completely destroy something
egotist (n), egotistic (adj), egotistically (adv)	A person who is completely self-obsessed, arrogant or narcissistic
ephemerality (n) ephemeral (adj), ephemerally (adv)	Something that lasts only short time before passing
transience (n), transient (adj)	Something that is brief and temporary
mortality (n), mortal (adj)	Something that will eventually die
dwarf (v), dwarfs (v)	To make something seem small or insignificant

1. In The Prelude, nature is personified as...

- a. a masculine yet submissive lover to be enjoyed by the speaker.
- b. a fantastic and submitting lover to be enjoyed by the nature.
- c. a feminised and submissive lover to be enjoyed by the speaker.
- d. a feminised and subservient force to be enjoyed by the sublime.

2. Which verb shows that the speaker is almost undressing the boat as if it were a submissive lover?

- a. The verb 'stepping' shows that the speaker is almost undressing the boat as if it were a submissive lover
- b. The verb 'unloosed' shows that the speaker is almost undressing the boat as if it were a submissive lover
- c. The verb 'led' shows that the speaker is almost undressing the boat as if it were a submissive lover
- d. The verb 'found' shows that the speaker is almost undressing the boat as if it were a submissive lover

3. After the volta, nature is personified as...

- a. After the volta, nature is personified as a savage and terrifying monk.
- b. After the volta, man is personified as a savage and terrifying monster.
- c. After the volta, the sublime is personified as a savage and terrifying monster.
- d. After the volta, nature is personified as a savage and terrifying monster.

4. The quote that shows the speaker is lost for words due the vast power of nature is...

- a. 'black and huge' shows the speaker is lost for words due the vast power of nature.
- b. 'A huge peak' shows the speaker is lost for words due the vast power of nature.
- c. 'A huge peak, black and huge' shows the speaker is lost for words due the vast power of nature.
- d. 'grim shape' shows the speaker is lost for words due the vast power of nature.

5. The speaker is left feeling '_____ desertion' due to the effects of the _____ .

- a. The speaker is left feeling 'trembling oars' due to the effects of the mountain.
- b. The speaker is left feeling 'trembling desertion' due to the effects of the sublime.
- c. The speaker is left feeling 'blank desertion' due to the effects of the sublime.
- d. The speaker is left feeling 'blank desertion' due to the effects of the 'no familiar shapes'.

‘Storm on the Island’ (1966)

by Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)

Context

The Irish writer Seamus Heaney was one of the greatest poets of recent times. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1995.

This poem is taken from the collection *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), which focuses on the Northern Irish rural landscape where Heaney grew up. The violence of the natural world in this poem may be an allegory for the political violence which was going on in Northern Ireland at the time it was written. The ‘empty’ air which does so much damage could be a reference to the political ideas which inspire people to violent action.

Summary

The speaker lives on an island which is frequently battered by storms. He describes how there is no natural shelter. Nature appears to be an opponent against whom the islanders must fight.

We are prepared: we build our houses squat ,
Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.
The wizened earth had never troubled us
With hay, so as you can see, there are no stacks
Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees
Which might prove company when it blows full
Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches
Can raise a chorus in a gale
So that you can listen to the thing you fear
Forgetting that it pummels your house too.
But there are no trees, no natural shelter.
You might think that the sea is company,
Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs
But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits
The very windows, spits like a tame cat
Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives
And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo .
We are bombarded by the empty air.
Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

Glossary

‘squat’ - low and solid

‘wizened’ - hard and weatherbeaten

‘stooks’ - bundled hay

‘strafes’ - sprays with bullets (here, this is metaphorical)

‘salvo’ - series of gunshots (again, this is metaphorical)

Language

Colloquial Language

Heaney’s use of everyday speech (‘you know what I mean’) gives the poem an earthy, homespun feel. The speaker is describing things which he has experienced personally. Additionally, ‘as you can see’ gives the reader the sense that the speaker is giving a personal tour of his home.

First Person Plural

The speaker uses the first person plural ('we'), which shows how he speaks for a whole community.

Imagery

The islanders are familiar with the sea, so its powerful roar is normally a comfort to them, a situation which Heaney expresses using the apparently oxymoronic 'exploding comfortably'. But this comfort is taken from them when the storm hits, and Heaney describes this using the imagery of something comfortable and familiar that turns terrifying: 'a tame cat / Turned savage'.

Heaney concludes the poem with imagery of weaponry to describe the fierce storm, creating the sense that it is aggressively attacking the island. For example, the wind is described as a military aeroplane that swoops low ('dives') to scatter gunfire ('strafe') those on the ground.

Language of Negation

Heaney repeatedly uses language of negation. He uses 'no' three times, 'nor' once and finishes with the words 'empty' and 'nothing'. This language emphasises the emptiness of the treeless island which is filled only with the wind.

Monosyllables

The line describing the construction of the houses consists entirely of words of one syllable, which adds to the sense of the houses' solidity: 'Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.'

Structure

Free Verse

Most of the poem is written in free verse, with no regular rhythm or rhyme scheme. However, there are half rhymes in the first two lines and the last two lines. These stand out and emphasise the ideas, first, of the solidity of the houses ('squat' / 'slate') and second, of how the wind is terrifying yet insubstantial ('air' / 'fear').

No Stanzas

The solid block of text on the page adds to the sense of solidity, suitable for the description of tough houses and people who must withstand the elements.

Heaney's Storm On The Island

Extract from Aran Islands in the dead of winter - a life-changing experience, Irish Central

The ferry finally rolled into the tiny harbour. On our right side, cottages, ruins and stone walls flashed by. To the left of us, the shoreline wove in and out, sandy stretches of beach giving way to rocky outcrops. Paradise for some people might be palm trees and sunshine or the top of a mountain, but drinking in the ocean air, I had found mine. This was the tiny Aran island of Inismor.



While the island makes a suitable home for some unexpected varieties of Alpine and Mediterranean flowers, it does not lend itself well to farming or agriculture. What green fields you see on Inismor were grown out of determination as generations of islanders created a layer of arable soil by spreading seaweed and sand on top of the limestone. Interestingly, a local informed us, this meant that the islanders suffered much less during the Great Hunger than those on the mainland, accustomed as they were to relying on alternate methods of farming and what they could take from the sea.



The patchwork quilt metaphor is synonymous with Ireland's landscape, and while I've always understood it looking at Ireland from above during the descent into Shannon or Dublin, I've never witnessed it so clearly on the ground as I did on Inismor. The stone walls section off the fields into parcels of land, some so small you can't help but wonder. When you reach a high enough elevation, towards the center of the island, the walls stretch out as far as you can see, white cottages dotted in between like grazing sheep.

The stone walls may seem like a relic of times past, but many still serve their purpose and are maintained, as proven by a young guy in a hoodie and track pants who we saw stacking stones back together on a section of a wall that had toppled down.



5. Core Vocabulary

paradox (noun), paradoxically (adv), paradoxical (adj)	A contradictory statement that proves to be true
precarious (adj) precariously (adv)	Not securely held or in position; dangerously likely to fall or collapse
tempestuous (adj), tempest (noun), tempestuously (adv)	Stormy, volatile and turbulent.
robust (adj), robustly (adv)	Strong, healthy and vigorous.
Idealised (verb)	A representation of something as perfect or better than reality

MCQs: Heaney's *Storm On The Island*

1. In SOTI, which quote shows the islanders robust sense of confidence?

- a. The quote which shows the islanders' robust sense of confidence is 'we build our houses squat'
- b. The quote which shows the islanders' robust sense of confidence is 'never troubles us'
- c. The quote which shows the islanders' robust sense of confidence is 'we build our houses prepared'
- d. The quote which shows the islanders' robust sense of confidence is 'we are prepared'

2. The adjective 'wizened' emphasises...

- a. The adjective 'wizened' emphasises the intelligence and wise nature of the earth
- b. The verb 'wizened' emphasises the shrivelled and infertile nature of the earth.
- c. The adjective 'wizened' emphasises the shrivelled and infertile nature of the earth.
- d. The adjective 'wizened' emphasises the shriven and fertile nature of the earth.

3. Complete the quote 'Spits like a tame cat...'

- a. 'Spits like a tame cat / Turned savage'
- b. 'Spits like a tame cat / Turning savage'
- c. 'Spits like a tame cat / Turned ravage'
- d. 'Spits like a tame cat / Turned savage'

4. Which other quote shows us that despite nature's beauty, or however much we think we can control or domesticate nature it remains a volatile force.

- a. 'You might think the sea is company / Exploding comfortably'
- b. 'listen to the thing you fear'
- c. 'raise a tragic chorus in a gale'
- d. 'pummels your house'

5. The phrase 'it is a huge nothing that we fear'

- a. ...reveals the paranoid power of nature, it is both intangible yet formidable.
- b. ...reveals the paradoxical power of nature, it is both tangible yet formidable.
- c. ...reveals the ephemeral power of nature, it is both intangible yet formidable.
- d. ...reveals the paradoxical power of nature, it is both intangible yet formidable.

'Tissue' (2006)

by Imtiaz Dharker (born 1954)

Context

Imtiaz Dharker (born 1954) was born in Pakistan, but grew up in Glasgow, Scotland. Although she had a Muslim upbringing, she has described herself as a 'Scottish Muslim Calvinist', indicating how her identity comes from multiple sources and cannot easily be defined.

Summary

This poem is a meditation on the power of the written word. Although paper is fragile, it contains the words which mean so much that they have a greater weight than buildings.

Even though the buildings are physically heavier and stronger, they do not hold the same weight of meaning as paper can. Because of its capacity to hold powerful words, paper could change the world. Paper both reflects and affects human lives. Although they are fragile, as human life is, written words have more importance than the proud monuments built by the powerful. At the end of the poem, paper turns into skin - the word is made flesh. Words are an intimate, intrinsic part of our identity, more essential to humanity than the apparently more impressive creations of political power.

Paper that lets the light
shine through, this
is what could alter things.
Paper thinned by age or touching,

the kind you find in well-used books,
the back of the Koran , where a hand
has written in the names and histories,
who was born to whom,

the height and weight, who
died where and how, on which sepia date,
pages smoothed and stroked and turned
transparent with attention.

If buildings were paper, I might
feel their drift, see how easily
they fall away on a sigh, a shift
in the direction of the wind.

Maps too. The sun shines through
their borderlines, the marks
that rivers make, roads,
railtracks, mountainfolds,

Fine slips from grocery shops
that say how much was sold
and what was paid by credit card
might fly our lives like paper kites.

An architect could use all this,

place layer over layer, luminous
script over numbers over line,
and never wish to build again with brick

or block, but let the daylight break
through capitals and monoliths ,
through the shapes that pride can make,
find a way to trace a grand design

with living tissue, raise a structure
never meant to last,
of paper smoothed and stroked
and thinned to be transparent,

turned into your skin.

Glossary

'Koran' - the most important book of Islam, which Muslims believe was dictated to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel. In a Muslim family, the Koran has pride of place in the home, and traditionally is used for recording major family events, such as births and deaths.

'sepia' - a reddish-brown colour associated with old photographs

'monoliths' - a large upright block of stone, serving as a monument

Language

Imagery

The poem's imagery consists of examples of paper - thin paper in the Koran, maps, receipts - which are contrasted to more solid constructions: buildings, brick, block, capitals, monoliths. The paper is shown to be more significant, even though it is so fragile, because it is more meaningful and more human, and could have more effect - it could 'alter things', perhaps ushering in more humility and love, in contrast to the 'shapes that pride can make' with blocks of stone.

This contrast could indicate a belief in the greater significance of art, as compared to politics, building on Percy Bysshe Shelley's assertion that 'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world', as well as the old proverb that 'the pen is mightier than the sword'. Dharker also uses imagery of light: it can 'shine through' thin paper; the 'sun shines through' maps, illuminating their symbols; if an architect built with paper instead of block and brick, 'daylight' could 'break through'. Light traditionally symbolises truth, and this imagery suggests that a focus on words and communication rather than power and politics would allow a greater perception of truth.

Structure

Free Verse

The poem has no rhyme or rhythm, although it is laid out in four line stanzas. This could suggest an attempt to find order in a shifting, unstable world. The final line is separate, which draws attention to the concluding idea that paper and humanity, word and flesh, are intrinsically linked.

Dharker's Tissue

Extract from *In Ancient Rome, a slave would continuously whisper 'Remember you are mortal' in the ears of victorious generals, Vintage News.com*

At a Roman triumph, the majority of the public would have their eyes glued to the victorious general at the front—one of the most coveted spots during Roman times. Only a few would notice the aide in the back, right behind the commander, whispering into his ear, **“Remember, thou art mortal.”** What a reminder to hear at the peak of glory and victory!

It is reminders like this one that we desperately need in our own lives—a thought or an idea that we'd rather ignore, do everything to avoid and pretend is not true. Most often, our ego runs away from anything that reminds us of the reality that sits at odds with the comfortable narrative we have built for ourselves. Or, we are simply petrified to look at life's facts as they are. And there is one simple fact that most of us are utterly scared to meditate, reflect on and face head on: We are going to die. Everyone around us is going to die.

“Memento mori” means, literally, **“remember death.”** In the early 21st century, we in the privileged global north rarely encounter death close up and personal as an everyday part of our lives. With all of our technological, surgical, pharmaceutical inventions and devices, we expect, almost demand, to live a long life, live it in good health and look good doing it. We live in denial that we will die.

But past civilisations - from the ancient Greeks to the Victorians - were acutely aware of their own mortality. *Memento mori* was the philosophy of reflecting on your own death as a form of spiritual improvement, and rejecting earthly vanities. Often this was depicted in daily life through art, a basic memento mori painting would be a portrait with a skull but other symbols commonly found are hour glasses or clocks, extinguished or guttering candles, fruit, and flowers as well as the Victorian practice of photographing someone that has recently died.

6. Core Vocabulary

precarious (adj) precariously (adv)	Not securely held or in position; dangerously likely to fall or collapse
ephemerality (n) ephemeral (adj), ephemerally (adv)	Something that lasts only short time before passing
transience (n), transient (adj)	Something that is brief and temporary
mortality (n), mortal (adj)	Something that will eventually die

1. The noun “tissue” relates ...

- a. The noun "tissue" relates to the paper that we write on as well as human "tissue", and is shown to be transient and it is spiritual fulfillment rather than materialism which brings joy.
- b. The noun "tissue" relates to both the paper and how art allows us to express ourselves and is more important than material things.
- c. The adjective "tissue" relates to both the paper that we write our histories on as well as human "tissue", our flesh and bodies, both are shown to be transient and it is spiritual fulfillment rather than materialism which brings joy.
- d. The adjective "tissue" relates to both the paper that we write our histories on as well as human "tissue", our flesh and bodies, both are shown to be transient and it is spiritual fulfillment rather than materialism which brings joy.

2. In the first stanza of Tissue, which phrase shows how human artefacts are treasured and valued as loved ones seek to make connections with the past.

- a. In the first stanza of Tissue, which verbs "lets the light shine through" shows how human artefacts are treasured and valued as loved ones seek to make connections with the past.
- b. In the first stanza of Tissue, which verbs "thinned by age and touching" shows how human artefacts are treasured and valued as loved ones seek to make connections with the past.
- c. In the first stanza of Tissue, which verbs "alter things" shows how human artefacts are treasured and valued as loved ones seek to make connections with the past.

3. The metaphor "Paper that lets the light shine through" shows...

- a. how paper reflects a sense of hope, more specifically the metaphor "light" focusses on the sense of guidance and salvation that learning from history can bring.
- b. how paper reflects the delicacy of human relationships and bodies shining a "light" on the truth inside of us bursting to come out.
- c. how paper and our history reflect a sense of hope, more specifically the metaphor "light" focusses on the sense of guidance and salvation that learning from history can bring; the verb "shine" implying honesty and inevitability.

4. In the final stanzas, Dharker quietly rages against...

- a. *the pointlessness of human history and relationships building and instead implores us instead to focus on making money and gaining material wealth.*
- b. *the pointlessness of human tissue and effort and instead implores us to embrace and face our short fragile lives. the pointlessness of human pride and empire building and instead implores us to embrace and face our short fragile lives.*
- c. *the pointlessness of human tissue and effort and instead implores us to embrace and face our short fragile lives. the pointlessness of human pride and empire building and instead implodes us to embrace and face our short fragile hives.*

5. The metaphor "raise a structure never meant to last" implores us to ...

- a. The metaphor "raise a structure never meant to last" implores us to build relationships with those who are most important to us, value our families and loved ones in the knowledge that they are ephemeral: we must embrace our mortality and treasure the time we have.
- b. The metaphor "raise a structure never meant to last" implores us to build house with those who are most important to us, value our families and loved ones in the knowledge that they are ephemeral: we must embrace our mortality and treasure the time we have.
- c. The metaphor "raise a structure never meant to last" implores us to build relationships with those who are least important to us, value our families and loved ones in the knowledge that they are ephemeral: we must embrace our mortality and treasure the time we have.
- d. The metaphor "raise a structure never meant to last" implores us to build relationships with those who are most important to us, value our families and loved ones in the knowledge that they are permanent: we must embrace our mortality and treasure the time we have.

'The Charge of the Light Brigade' (1854)

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Summary

Tennyson celebrates the bravery of a military unit which charges the enemy despite facing impossible odds: they are 'six hundred' against an 'army'. Though they are aware that a strategic error has been made ('someone had blundered'), they dutifully follow orders and charge into a valley under heavy artillery fire, engage the enemy in close combat, then retreat. Few of them survive the attack.

I

Half a league , half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered .
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell ,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right through the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the sabre stroke
Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell ,
While horse and hero fell.
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

Glossary

'Half a league' - about a mile and a half

'blundered' - made an error

'shot and shell' - artillery fire

'sabres' - swords

'Cossack' - soldier from southern Russia

Context

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) is one of the greatest Victorian poets. He was poet laureate for much of Queen Victoria's reign. During the 1850s, when Britain feared invasion by Russia, he wrote several patriotic poems celebrating the British war effort.

This poem is based on an historical incident that took place during the Crimean War, a conflict in Eastern Europe between the Russians on one side, and Britain and her allies on the other. On 25th October 1854, following a misunderstanding about an order from high command, Lord Cardigan led the Light Brigade in a frontal assault on well-armed and well positioned Russian artillery and infantry units. As a light cavalry unit, they were not equipped for such an attack, and faced almost certain death.

Language

Repetition

Tennyson repeats 'Into the valley of Death / Rode the six hundred' with slight variations four times. The repetition suits his purpose of memorialising the courage of the Light Brigade. He also repeats 'cannon' to emphasise the extent of artillery fire which the Light Brigade bravely faces.

Religious Imagery

Tennyson describes the battleground as the 'valley of Death'. This is an allusion to Psalm 23: 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.' The soldiers, almost all of whom would have had a strong Christian faith, are trusting in God regardless of whether they survive the battle. If they die, they hope for eternal happiness in heaven.

Graphic Imagery

Tennyson does not flinch from describing the close combat with the enemy in graphic detail. The enemy soldiers are 'shattered and sundered' - chopped into pieces - by the 'sabres' of the attacking British troops. This graphic description is further accentuated by Tennyson's use of alliteration.

Rhetorical Question

Tennyson uses a rhetorical question ('When can their glory fade?') to underline his central argument: that the troops should be honoured for their courage and devotion to duty.

Imperative

Tennyson leaves the reader in no doubt at the poem's conclusion, ending forcefully with a command to 'Honour the Light Brigade, / Noble six hundred!'.

Onomatopoeia

The low vowel sounds of 'volleyed and thundered' mimic the continual booming of artillery.

Form

Ballad

Tennyson's use of strong rhythm and repeated refrains makes the poem sound similar to a ballad, a popular form of narrative poetry that is typically set to music. The refrains are somewhat like the chorus of a ballad.

Structure

Rhythm

Tennyson uses dactylic dimeter to emulate the sound of hooves thundering as the cavalry charges. A dactyl consists of one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

Three Part Narrative Structure

The majority of the poem follows a clear narrative structure, beginning with the charge in stanzas one to three, then engagement with the enemy in stanza four, then retreat in stanza five. The final stanza stands apart from the narrative, as rather than telling the story, it simply comments on the glory and the nobility of those who charged.

The British Empire & The Charge of the Light Brigade

Between the years 1815–1914, 10 million square miles of territory and 400 million people were added to the British Empire. Britain was the 'Mother Country' of a worldwide empire which covered a fifth of the land in the world, and Britannia 'ruled the waves' and Britain regarded itself as 'ruler of the waves'. The songs 'Rule Britannia' and 'Land of Hope and Glory' exemplify this.

British people thought that they were doing the world a favour by taking the British, government and Christianity to the rest of the world, ending slavery and barbaric traditions, bringing 'civilisation' and an international 'Pax Britannica', or 'British peace'. However Empire also made the British rich, young men of many backgrounds left home to find wealth and adventure in India and Africa. They felt they owed Empire, King and God everything

Tennyson was **Poet Laureate** (employed by the country to be the national poet) from 1850-1892 and part of his role was the glorification of Queen and Empire. Tennyson wrote this poem in 1854 about the **real life** 'Battle of Balaclava' in the **Crimean War** and was the mouthpiece of the establishment. The public did not receive news of battles through technology – it was depicted for them through stories, paintings, poems and newspapers. The poem is (despite a hint of subversion regarding the officer classes) a commemoration and a propaganda piece glorifying the sacrifices of British cavalymen.

The 'Light Brigade', a cavalry unit fighting on horseback, were left stranded by poor communication and mixed signals from the military leadership. They fought bravely but had been doomed by their instructions and a lack of support. Of the 666 men known to have ridden in the charge, 110 killed (less than 17%), 129 wounded, plus another 32 wounded and taken prisoner. Additionally, 375 horses were killed. To the Russians the Battle of Balaclava was a victory and proved a welcome boost in morale—they had captured the British base (from which seven guns were removed and taken as trophies).

1. Core Vocabulary

glorify (verb) , glorification (noun)	To praise, worship or present as admirable when it is not justified.
empire (noun)	A group of countries controlled by one ruler.
martyr (noun) , martyred (past tense noun)	Someone who is killed due to political or religious beliefs.
sacrifice (noun)	Something that is given up to help a higher purpose. This could be a gift or even a life.
precarious (adj) precariously (adv)	Not securely held or in position; dangerously likely to fall or collapse
patriot (n) , patriotic (adj), patriotically (adv)	someone who loves and defends their country.

1. The repetition of 'Half a league, half a league' creates a sense of...

- urgency and motion as if the Light Brigade are driving forwards on an almost holy journey.
- that the Light Brigade are a vast distance away from the Russians and desperately need to catch them.
- the Light Brigade being a mid-table team.

2. The _____ emphasises the bravery and patriotism of the soldiers as they drove forwards lacking hesitation and full of courage.

- repetition of 'theirs'
- rhetorical question 'Was there a man dismay'd'
- noun 'soldier'

3. The sensory verbs 'Volley'd and thunder'd' and 'Storm'd' create...

- a sense of the pride and confidence of the soldiers.
- a sense of chaos and being trapped in a disorientating storm of violence.
- A sense of doom as the weather seems to stalk the men and kill them

4. The _____ ties the men to almost biblical legends who have fought death, Satan and suffering and have escaped doom and found glory in doing so.

- the biblical allusion 'Back through the mouth of hell'
- repetition of 'Canon to the right of them'
- violent verbs 'reel'd' and 'shatter'd'

5. The repetition the imperative verb _____ challenges the reader to respect the soldiers and their sacrifice despite the failure of the generals.

- 'Noble six hundred'
- 'All that was left of them'
- 'Honour the Light Brigade'

'Exposure' (1918)

by Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

Summary

Soldiers suffer due to exposure to the winter cold in the trenches. Their chief enemy is nature, not the opposing army. They dream of home, but it is beyond their grasp; they are shut off from the home fires, which are burning low in any case. They must return from their dreams to cold reality, unsure even of whether their suffering has any meaning.

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us . . .
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent . . .
Low drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient . . .
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
 But nothing happens.

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.
 What are we doing here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow . . .
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,
 But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew,
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance ,
 But nothing happens.

Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces—
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-dazed,
Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.
 —Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk fires, glozed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets jingle there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs;
Shutters and doors, all closed: on us the doors are closed,—
 We turn back to our dying.

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath , we lie out here; therefore were born,
 For love of God seems dying.

Tonight, this frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands, and puckering foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in shaking grasp,
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
 But nothing happens.

Glossary

'salient' - trench reaching into enemy territory

'poignant' - painfully moving

'melancholy' - deeply sad

'nonchalance' - uncaring attitude

'glazed' - covered with a deceptive appearance, but also suggesting the 'glow' of embers

'loath' - unwilling - 'not loath' is a double negative, meaning 'willing'

'puckering' - wrinkling up

Context

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) is one of the most famous soldier poets of the First World War.

He experienced the horror of the trenches first hand, and his bitter and graphic descriptions of the sufferings of the soldiers stand in sharp contrast to the more patriotic and celebratory verse of earlier soldier poets such as Rupert Brooke. He was killed in action shortly before the end of the war.

Language

Personification

Owen's key technique is personification. Nature is personified as the enemy, and a worse enemy than the guns of the opposing soldiers. The bullets are 'Less deadly than the air'. Even dawn, usually associated with hope, is described as a 'melancholy army'.

First Person Plural Perspective

The poem is written in the first person plural ('we', 'our', 'us'), which emphasises that the poet and the soldiers are suffering together: it is a collective experience.

Assonance / Onomatopoeia / Sibilance

Owen makes skilful use of sound to suggest the noises of the battlefield. For the distant guns, he uses assonance and onomatopoeia: 'flickering gunnery rumbles'. For the sound of bullets, he uses sibilance to suggest their hissing sound as they fly through the air: 'Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence'.

Structure

Rhyme and Rhythm

There are many half rhymes in the poem, such as 'knife us' / 'nervous' and 'stormy' / 'army'. A full rhyme would give a sense of certainty, but the mood of the poem is one of doubt and confusion, and the half rhymes add to this. The poem's uneven rhythm and line lengths also add to this mood.

Repetition

Owen repeats 'But nothing happens' four times, ending the poem with these words, to emphasise the sense of futility and paralysis.

Owen's Exposure

1. Brief Biography:

In April, after being blown into the air by a shell, Owen spent several days sheltering in a hole near the corpse of a fellow officer, and was shortly after diagnosed with shell shock. In June 1917 he was sent to Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh where he wrote many of his poems. In September 1918, Owen returned to the front during the final stages of the war in order to fight alongside his men. On 11th November 1918: as the bells rang out for Armistice, the Owen family received the telegram informing them of Owen's death.

2. Preface by Wilfred Owen

This book is not about heroes. English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about deeds or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, dominion or power,
except War.

Above all, this book is not concerned with Poetry.

The subject of it is War, and the pity of War.

The Poetry is in the pity.

Yet these elegies are not to this generation,

This is in no sense consolatory.

They may be to the next.

All the poet can do to-day is to warn.

That is why the true Poets must be truthful.

If I thought the letter of this book would last,

I might have used proper names; but if the spirit of it survives

Prussia,—my ambition and those names will be content; for they will

have achieved themselves fresher fields than Flanders.

*Note.—This Preface was found, in an unfinished condition,
among Wilfred Owen's papers*

1. Core Vocabulary

purgatory (n)	A place or state of suffering between heaven and hell
passive (adj) , passively (v)	Accepting what happens to you without resistance
banality (n) , banal (adj)	Dull and boring
trauma (n) , traumatic (adj), traumatically (adv)	A distressing or disturbing experience.
tension (n) , tense (adj)	A feeling of anxious anticipation, an inability to relax
poignance (n) , poignant (adj), poignantly (adv)	A sense of regret and sadness

Owen's *Exposure* MCQs

1. The metaphor _____ reveals that despite the rapid mechanisation of war there is an unexpected contrast, here it is the weather that is personified as a sinister and murderous force that stalks and remorselessly attacks the men.
 - a. 'merciless iced east winds that knife us'
 - b. 'Our brains ache'
 - c. 'Low drooping flares confuse our memory'

2. The _____ shows how the men are fighting the force of nature where even the rain clouds create an ominous sense of dread and helplessness.
 - a. 'bullets streak the silence'
 - b. 'mad gusts tugging on the wire'
 - c. 'Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army'

3. The refrain 'But nothing happens' reveals...
 - a. that the soldiers are passive and empty shells who seem to be frozen in time in a permanent state of purgatory.
 - b. the soldiers are bored and stuck in France with no chance of getting home as they wait for the boat.
 - c. that the men are unsure whether they are alive or dead.

4. The metaphor 'crusted red jewels' implies...
 - a. That the blood and sacrifice of the men is justified in order to save the wealth and property of the ruling classes.
 - b. That the battleground has the remains of destroyed houses and people's valuables littering it, highlighting the negative impact on normal life.
 - c. That the blood and sacrifice of the men and their injuries is both valuable and wasted.

5. Owen describes how the men have become empty shells, hollow martyrs to a war they no longer care about when he uses the _____ .
 - a. biblical allusion to Jesus' crown of thorns when he says 'puckering foreheads crisp'
 - b. the tricolon 'smile true on child, or field, or fruit'
 - c. the metaphor 'all their eyes are ice'

'Bayonet Charge' (1957)

by Ted Hughes (1930-1998)

Summary

A soldier charges over muddy ground towards the enemy as bullets fill the air. He almost pauses suddenly, unable to comprehend what he is doing. He is shocked out of his momentary contemplation by the sight of a terrified hare. Motivated more by animal fear than any human virtue, he charges towards the enemy.

Suddenly he awoke and was running – raw
In raw-seamed hot khaki, his sweat heavy,
Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge
That dazzled with rifle fire, hearing
Bullets smacking the belly out of the air –
He lugged a rifle numb as a smashed arm;
The patriotic tear that had brimmed in his eye
Sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest, –

In bewilderment then he almost stopped –
In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations
Was he the hand pointing that second? He was running
Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs
Listening between his footfalls for the reason
Of his still running, and his foot hung like
Statuary in mid-stride. Then the shot-slashed furrows

Threw up a yellow hare that rolled like a flame
And crawled in a threshing circle, its mouth wide
Open silent, its eyes standing out.
He plunged past with his bayonet toward the green hedge,
King, honour, human dignity, etcetera
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm
To get out of that blue crackling air
His terror's touchy dynamite.

Glossary

'bayonet' - a knife fixed to the end of a rifle, for use in close combat

'raw-seamed hot khaki' - the rough material of a soldier's uniform

'clods' - lumps of muddy earth

'molten' - melted ('molten iron' would be red hot)

'like / Statuary' - frozen, like a statue

'furrows' - ruts or narrow, shallow trenches in the ground

'hare' - wild animal similar to a rabbit, but larger

Context

Ted Hughes was born in 1930, and therefore did not have personal experience of the First World War. However, his father fought in the trenches, and this poem is Hughes' attempt to imagine what his father's experiences were like, based on the stories he had been told. The First World War was mostly trench warfare. Soldiers sheltered from the enemy guns in trenches most of the time, but occasionally they were ordered to charge towards the guns, as in this poem. This usually resulted in heavy casualties among the attacking soldiers.

Language

Juxtaposition

Hughes creates a contrast between the more noble motivations for fighting and the animal terror which actually motivates the soldier to continue the charge. In the first stanza, this contrast is created by the 'patriotic tear' which

has become merely a pain in the soldier's chest, like 'molten iron'. But the contrast is strongest in the final stanza, where 'King, honour, human dignity etcetera' are 'dropped like luxuries' - the soldier cannot afford them in the heat of the battle; he must depend upon animal emotion to keep him going.

Imagery

Hughes describes the soldier as having just woken up at the start of the poem. He develops this further with the simile 'Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs', which creates a sense of bewilderment and disorientation.

Hughes uses the imagery of 'cold clockwork' to suggest the inhumanity of large scale modern warfare: the soldier is just one small part of a huge war machine. By the end of the poem, though, he has become 'dynamite' - he has not only been dehumanised, he has been turned into a devastating weapon.

There is also natural imagery throughout the poem: 'hedge', 'clod' and 'furrows' - and the terrified 'hare' of the last stanza - remind us of the normally peaceful rural setting which is being ripped apart by warfare. Also, the fact that the hare is running in a 'circle' suggests the futility of war, and the way in which the soldiers are trapped within it.

Structure

Three Part Structure

Hughes starts the poem *in medias res* (Latin: 'in the middle of things') - the soldier is already charging towards the enemy in the first stanza, which is full of violent imagery. The second stanza pauses the action while he contemplates his situation, but as it ends, he is thrust back into the action, motivated by terror to continue the charge.

1. Extract from *The Teenage Soldiers of World War One*, BBC website.

War teaches many things to boys who pick up a weapon to fight. They learn the true meaning of fear. They test their own capacity for courage and the limits of human endurance, physical and mental. Boy soldiers evoke a particular sadness, resonant as they are of the destruction of youth and possibility.

The motives of these teenage soldiers varied - many were gripped by patriotic fervour, wanted to escape grim conditions at home, wanted adventure or were scared of being called a coward and could not resist the pressure from society. Technically they had to be 19 to fight but the law did not prevent younger boys joining due to the desperate need for troops.

Recruitment officers were paid two shillings and sixpence for each new army recruit, and would often ignore any concerns they had about age. On top of this, many people at the start of the 20th Century didn't have birth certificates, so it was easy to lie about how old you were. There was, however, a minimum height requirement of 5ft 3in (1.60m), and a minimum chest size of 34in (0.86m).

Fifteen-year-old Cyril Jose was a tin-miner's son from Cornwall whose sense of adventure drove him to join. From his training camp he wrote an excited letter to his sister:

'Dearest Ivy, stand back. I've got my own rifle and bayonet. The bayonet's about 2ft long from hilt to end of point. Must feel a bit rummy to run into one of them in a charge. Not 'arf. Goodbye and God bless you, from your fit brother, Cyril.'

1. Core Vocabulary

in medias res (n)	A place or state of suffering between heaven and hell
mechanisation (j), passively (v)	Accepting what happens to you without resistance

primal (n) , banal (adj)	Dull and boring
tension (n) , tense (adj)	A feeling of anxious anticipation, an inability to relax

Heaney's Bayonet Charge MCQs

1. **Hughes opens the poem _____, disorientating the reader by throwing them straight into the action and forcing them to share the soldier's experiences.**
 - a. in a panic
 - b. with the metaphor
 - c. in medias res

2. **Hughes then bombards the reader with sensory imagery such as _____ to mimic the realities of war and its surreal beauty.**
 - a. 'green hedge'
 - b. 'dazzled with rifle fire'
 - c. 'field of clods'

3. **Hughes then explores how war dehumanises the men who fight in them: their weapons becoming part of their bodies which in turn have become mechanical tools of death when he uses the _____.**
 - a. 'Bullets smacking the belly out of the air' which shows how nature has suffered like man, their wounds imitating and mirroring one another.
 - b. 'Like a man who had jumped up in the dark', the simile describing the soldiers literal actions to show the disconnection he has from himself.
 - c. 'rifle numb as a smashed arm' which hints at the futility of weaponry and how both nature and an have become disfigured due to war's brutality.

4. **The second stanza creates a sense of otherworldly calm as the soldier pauses to philosophise on the meaningless and hollow nature of war when he describes _____.**
 - a. the metaphor 'hung like / Statuary in mid-stride'
 - b. the metaphor 'cold clockwork of the starts and the nations'
 - c. 'In bewilderment then he almost stopped'

5. **Finally, having witnessed the industrial scale destruction caused by WWI, Hughes explores the conflict between man and nature in the image of the _____.**
 - a. 'yellow hare'
 - b. 'terror's touchy dynamite'
 - c. 'King, honour, human dignity, etc'

'Remains' (2008)

by Simon Armitage (born 1963)

Summary

The speaker recounts his experiences dealing with looters following the invasion of Iraq. He and his fellow soldiers shot dead one looter, who may have been unarmed. The memory of the violent, agonising death of the looter haunts the speaker, staying with him despite his attempts to remove it with drink and drugs. He is clearly traumatised by what he has done and what he has seen, and cannot leave it behind when he returns home.

On another occasion, we get sent out
to tackle looters raiding a bank.
And one of them legs it up the road,
probably armed, possibly not.

Well myself and somebody else and somebody else
are all of the same mind,
so all three of us open fire.
Three of a kind all letting fly, and I swear

I see every round as it rips through his life –
I see broad daylight on the other side.
So we've hit this looter a dozen times
and he's there on the ground, sort of inside out,

pain itself, the image of agony.
One of my mates goes by
and tosses his guts back into his body.
Then he's carted off in the back of a lorry.

End of story, except not really.
His blood-shadow stays on the street, and out on patrol
I walk right over it week after week.
Then I'm home on leave. But I blink

and he bursts again through the doors of the bank.
Sleep, and he's probably armed, possibly not.
Dream, and he's torn apart by a dozen rounds.
And the drink and the drugs won't flush him out –

he's here in my head when I close my eyes,
dug in behind enemy lines,
not left for dead in some distant, sun-stunned, sand-smothered land
or six-feet-under in desert sand,

but near to the knuckle, here and now,
his bloody life in my bloody hands.

Context

Simon Armitage (born 1963) is a British poet who often focuses on the experiences of ordinary people. This poem is part of a collection, *The Not Dead*, which was originally broadcast as part of a television documentary recording the experiences of soldiers. Armitage made use of the words and phrases of the soldiers themselves, turning them into verse. The speaker fought in Iraq, which was invaded by the USA and Britain in 2003. The invasion and resulting power vacuum was followed by widespread civil unrest and a breakdown in the rule of law, which the invading forces struggled to contain.

Language

Colloquial Diction

Armitage uses colloquial diction (everyday language). This gives us the impression that the soldier is simply retelling his experiences in his own voice.

Graphic Description

Armitage describes the violent death of the looter with graphic details, but still in the ordinary language of the soldier: 'sort of inside out'. The matter-of-fact 'tosses his guts' and 'carted off' are particularly shocking, as they suggest that the dead body of the looter is being treated casually, without any respect.

Metaphor

Armitage uses metaphor to describe the way that the soldier is haunted by the looter's death. The looter is described as 'behind enemy lines': he has succeeded in finding his way back to Britain by invading the soldier's mind. The 'bloody hands' at the end of the poem symbolise the speaker's guilt about what he has done.

Repetition

Armitage repeats the phrase 'probably armed, possibly not' in the first and second sections of the poem to emphasise how the soldier is haunted by the question of whether the man he killed was armed.

First Person Plural / Singular

The speaker mostly uses the first person plural ('we') in the first section, emphasising that he did not act alone, but in the second section, he switches to the first person singular ('I' / 'my'): once home, he is alone with the memory and the guilt.

Structure

Two Part Structure

The poem is clearly divided into two sections. In the first four stanzas, the soldier describes the killing of the looter in graphic detail, while in the second four stanzas, he describes how the memory of the killing haunts him.

Free Verse

Armitage uses free verse, which adds to the impression that the soldier is simply retelling his experiences in his own voice, without any attempt to make them more beautiful or 'poetic'.

Forgotten Heroes: The Not Dead, The Guardian, 2007.

Is there anything so sad as an old man in tears? Private Holland had never been further than the Manchester Ship Canal when he went off to Malaya, to fight in the jungle. He shot people, ran over a man who had his hands up, saw his own friends die next to him. And he's been haunted ever since, reliving it all in his bed every night. He's 78 now.

Guardsman Tromans is good at describing the fear. It's like a car crash, or when you're being mugged, "and you get that feeling for a split second when you don't know what's going to happen to you. If you can imagine that feeling 24 hours a day, seven days a week - that's what it felt like to be there." For Tromans, "there" was Iraq, this time round. He's on the dole now, and drugs, in and out of trouble.

And here's Fusilier Beddoes, with one half of his face in shadow to hide the scars where the bullet went in. He was in the Balkans. Peace-keeping they called it, but the men in the blue hats had to sit by and watch, unable to do anything as the death squads went on their daily killing sprees. The peace-keepers had to deal with the aftermath - men, women and children, killed. Beddoes, back home now, shouts at his own children and wife. But she still stands by him, she understands, even if the country doesn't. It means her husband cares. "It's the people who don't care - they're the ones who are scary," she says.

These are Forgotten Heroes: The Not Dead (Channel 4), men who came back from war and went off the rails - "big time" says Tromans.

There are hundreds of them: more Falklands veterans have killed themselves since 1982 than died in the South Atlantic. That's just one shocking statistic. The survivors are largely ignored - though not, thankfully, by film-maker Brian Hill and poet Simon Armitage, whose wonderful work this is.

It's bold, brave, beautiful television; it makes you think, and it leaves you numb. Fitzsimons had joined up at 16, excelled in training, saw active service in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, and won a distinction as a sniper. In 2004, after eight years, he applied to have his contract extended, but was discharged. "They said he had anxiety disorder," Liz says. What did the army do to treat it? "Nothing that I'm aware of."

1. Core Vocabulary

<p>visceral (adj), viscerally (adv)</p>	<p>An instinctive feeling in the gut.</p>	<p>The shock of my friend's death affected me viscerally, and I became paralysed with dread.</p> <p>The soldier was wounded viscerally and was expected to die of infection.</p>
<p>colloquial (adj), colloquialism (n), colloquially (adv)</p>	<p>Language used in ordinary non formal situations. Often slang.</p>	<p>Tromans uses colloquial language to describe his experiences revealing he is talking to somebody he trusts or knows well.</p>
<p>nullify (v), null (adj) nulled (v, past tense)</p>	<p>To cancel out something or neutralise it.</p>	<p>After the war, his feelings and emotions were nullified, no love, no joy. Just pain.</p>
<p>terse (adj), terseness (n), tersely (adj)</p>	<p>Abrupt, sparing use of words.</p>	<p>Armitage uses terse language to emphasise the anxious and tense emotions of the soldier retelling his story: it is on edge, alert, almost as if on patrol.</p>
<p>morality (n), moral (adj), moralistic (adj) moralise (v)</p>	<p>A person's principles which decide right and wrong, good or bad behaviour.</p> <p>Tromans seems to question his own morality when he repeats "probably armed, possibly not"</p>	<p>Tromans seems to question his own morality when he repeats "probably armed, possibly not"</p>
<p>weary (adj), weariness (n)</p>	<p>A feeling of extreme tiredness and lack of desire to continue experiencing something.</p>	<p>"On another occasion" reveals the multiple patrols and harrowing experiences that Tromas has become weary of.</p>

Armitage's *Remains* MCQs

1. **The two phrases which display a colloquial, almost conversational tone are:**
 - a. "On another occasion"
 - b. "we got sent out"
 - c. "legs it up the road"
 - d. "same mind"

2. **Which aside shows the narrator wrestling with his conscience and how the moral ambiguity of not knowing whether he did the right thing or not causes him internal conflict**
 - a. "On another occasion"
 - b. "probably armed, possibly not"
 - c. "legs it up the road"
 - d. "sort of inside out"

3. **The verb "tosses" when describing his "guts back into his body" reveals...**
 - a. ...that the speaker is sensitive to the victim's suffering and feels it as if he himself was suffering.
 - b. ...the disgust Tromans' feels for having to see such visceral gore, he wants to avoid it at all costs.
 - c. ...the casual nature of violence and how it disgusts Tromans' in its dehumanisation of Tromans himself.
 - d. ...the careless and casual nature of violence and dehumanisation of Iraqi's and how Tromans was once desensitised to it but is now disgusted.

4. **The juxtaposition of which phrase reveals that there is no hope in war, merely suffering, futility and the fragile transience of human life?**
 - a. "broad daylight on the other side" and "rips through his life"
 - b. "sort of inside out" and "rips through his life"
 - c. "rips through his life" and "rips through his life"
 - d. "broad daylight on the other edge" and "rips through his life"

5. **The phrase "blood shadow" literally relates to the dark stain of blood left on the street days later, however it could be...**
 - a. ...a metaphor for the memory which stains his mind almost like a "blood" curse which haunts and punishes him.
 - b. ...a metaphor for the stain which curses his mind almost like a "drugs" which punishes him.
 - c. ...a simile for the memory which stains his mind almost like a "blood" curse which haunts and punishes him.
 - d. ...a metaphor for the memory which stains his mind almost like a "blood" curse which hanks and pushes him.

6. **The repetition of which phrase reveals the speaker's feeling of deep responsibility for his actions and an almost Macbeth -like psyche shattered by guilt.**
 - a. "drink" and "drugs"
 - b. "probably armed, possibly not"
 - c. "dug in behind enemy lines"
 - d. "bloody life in my bloody hands"

'Kamikaze' (2013)

by Beatrice Garland (born 1938)

Summary

A mother tells her children of her father's failure to carry out his suicide ('kamikaze') mission. She wonders what aspects of life drew him to cling to it and lose his honour. She thinks it must have been when he noticed the beauties of the sea, the fishing boats and the fish, and remembered the joys of his youth, growing up as the son of a fisherman, that he decided to turn back. When her father returned, he was utterly rejected by the community, as one who had disgraced himself. Even his own children eventually learned to ignore him. The mother wonders whether her father regretted his decision not to carry out the suicide attack.

Her father embarked at sunrise
with a flask of water, a samurai sword
in the cockpit, a shaven head
full of powerful incantations
and enough fuel for a one-way
journey into history

but half way there, she thought,
recounting it later to her children,
he must have looked far down
at the little fishing boats
strung out like bunting
on a green-blue translucent sea

and beneath them, arcing in swathes
like a huge flag waved first one way
then the other in a figure of eight,
the dark shoals of fishes
flashing silver as their bellies
swivelled towards the sun

and remembered how he
and his brothers waiting on the shore
built cairns of pearl-grey pebbles
to see whose withstood longest
the turbulent inrush of breakers
bringing their father's boat safe

– *yes, grandfather's boat* – safe
to the shore, salt-sodden, awash
with cloud-marked mackerel,
black crabs, feathery prawns,
the loose silver of whitebait and once
a tuna, the dark prince, muscular, dangerous.

*And though he came back
my mother never spoke again
in his presence, nor did she meet his eyes
and the neighbours too, they treated him
as though he no longer existed,
only we children still chattered and laughed*

*till gradually we too learned
to be silent, to live as though*

*he had never returned, that this
was no longer the father we loved.*
And sometimes, she said, he must have wondered
which had been the better way to die.

Glossary

'kamikaze' - a Japanese warrior who makes a suicidal attack on the enemy. During World War Two, this was done by deliberately flying an aeroplane into an enemy target. 'Kamikaze' translates literally as 'divine wind' - the mission was understood in religious terms.

'samurai sword' - a traditional sword used by a Japanese warrior

'cockpit' - the pilot's section of an aeroplane

'incantations' - prayers. Kamikaze warriors believed that they would be rewarded in the next life for their sacrifice.

'translucent' - a surface that light can shine through. The sun's light can shine through the sea, making the fish below the surface partly visible.

'cairns' - heaps of stones

'whitebait' - small, silver coloured fish

Context

'Kamikaze' is set during World War Two, when Japanese pilots frequently made suicidal attacks on enemy targets (see glossary). Beatrice Garland is writing about a culture and events of which she has no personal experience.

Language

Imagery

Garland uses vivid imagery of the coast, the sea and sea creatures. This is central to the poem, because it is the sight of the sea and the memories of childhood spent by the sea which inspire the father to give up his suicide mission. For example, Garland emphasises the beauty of the pebbles, comparing them to precious pearls, when she describes them as 'pearl-grey'. Pearls come from the sea as well, so this description of the pebbles is strongly evocative of the riches of nature which draw the father back from his mission to the joys of life on earth.

Third / First Person Narrative

The story of the failed kamikaze warrior is told from the perspective of his daughter, who sympathises with him. The reader hears her own words in the first person in the italicised sections, which adds a greater level of personal poignancy to her thoughts about her father's disgrace. The switch to the first person also brings to life the conversation the mother has with her children about their grandfather, who has evidently continued his father's trade, because the fishing boat has become his (*'yes, grandfather's boat'*).

Voiceless Father

We never hear the voice of the father himself, even though he is evidently still alive. His silence reflects the shame of his position when he does not carry out the attack.

Structure

Three Part Structure

The poem's seven stanzas have a clear three part structure. The first stanza describes the kamikaze warrior setting out, full of determination to carry out his mission. The second to fifth stanzas give reasons for his return - he loves life too much to give it up. The sixth and seventh stanza describe the consequences of his return - his shame and disgrace in the eyes of the community for having failed to carry out his mission.

Free Verse

The poem is laid out in stanzas, but has no regular rhythm and no rhyme. The lack of obvious poetic devices makes it sound like a very personal, intimate account - a snapshot of family history.

Core Context: Garland's Kamikaze

Source A

Source A is taken from the BBC website and describes Japanese ideas of honour and attitudes to warfare during World War Two.

When Emperor Hirohito made his first ever broadcast to the Japanese people on 15 August 1945, and enjoined his subjects 'to endure the unendurable and bear the unbearable', he brought to an end a state of war - both declared and undeclared - that had wracked his country for 14 years.

He never spoke explicitly about 'surrender' or 'defeat', but simply remarked that the war 'did not turn in Japan's favour'. It was a classic piece of understatement. Nearly three million Japanese were dead, many more wounded or seriously ill, and the country lay in ruins.

Although some Japanese were taken prisoner, most fought until they were killed or committed suicide. In the last, desperate months of the war, this image was also applied to Japanese civilians. To the horror of American troops advancing on Saipan, they saw mothers clutching their babies hurling themselves over the cliffs rather than be taken prisoner.

The other enduring image of total sacrifice is that of the kamikaze pilot, ploughing his plane packed with high explosives into an enemy warship. In Japan, kamikaze was presented in poetic, heroic terms of young men achieving the glory of the short-lived cherry blossom, falling while the flower was still perfect, today, the word 'kamikaze', meaning 'divine wind', evokes among Japan's former enemies visions of crazed, mindless destruction.

What in some cases inspired - and in others, coerced - Japanese men in the prime of their youth to act in such a way was a complex mixture of the times they lived in, Japan's ancient warrior tradition, societal pressure, economic necessity, and sheer desperation.

Nationalists and militarists alike looked to the past for inspiration and the Japanese found it in the concept of 'bushido'. Delving into ancient myths about the Japanese and the Emperor in particular being directly descended from the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, they exhorted the people to restore a past racial and spiritual purity lost in recent times.

Japan's samurai heritage and the samurai code of ethics known as 'bushido' have a seductive appeal when searching for explanations for the wartime image of no surrender. The great classic of Bushido - 'Hagakure' written in the early 18th century - begins with the words, 'Bushido is a way of dying'. Its basic thesis is that only a samurai prepared and willing to die at any moment can devote himself fully to his lord.

Although this idea certainly appealed to the ideologues, what probably motivated Japanese soldiers at the more basic level were more mundane pressures. Returning prisoners from Japan's previous major war with Russia in 1904-5 had been treated as social outcasts. The Field Service Code issued by General Tojo in 1941 put it more explicitly:

"Do not live in shame as a prisoner. Die, and leave no ignominious crime behind you."

Source B

Source B is an article by Sam Louie, from the magazine Psychology Today in 2014. In it he discusses ideas linking to honour and suicide in some Asian cultures.

Suicide has long been a way to preserve one's family honour in Asia. Unlike the West, where religions like Christianity view suicide as a sin carrying a negative connotation, suicide among Asian countries is seen as a means of atoning for disgrace, defeat, or any other dishonourable action or event.

This tradition of suicide instead of defeat, capture, or perceived shame was deeply entrenched in the Japanese military culture and dates back hundreds of years when the Japanese samurai reigned. The samurai lived by the Bushido code of loyalty and honour until death.

In feudal Japan, much like other Asian cultures, the family was central and paramount to existence thus shame and dishonour affected the whole family. Families share genes. If one noble samurai lord became widely known to have done something shameful, this would have affected the prospects of his whole family. His daughters would not marry well, and his brothers would have to work much harder to achieve any position of influence and power.

The reason a samurai accepted suicide so readily was that their families instilled in them a strong sense of duty. Families, not wishing to be harmed by the actions of one rogue family member, would for the sake of their place in society demand that the one erring member should kill himself rather than damage the whole family's reputation. Unlike Christianity where suicide is sin, the sins from the family of the dead Japanese individual bring restitution and restoration to the family tainted by the original blemish.

Not surprisingly, this view of suicide as a means to preserve your family and culture's honour still permeates among the Japanese. According to the World Health Organization, Japan has the highest suicide rate among Asian countries with more than 30,000 Japanese killing themselves each year. Worryingly, taking your life is seen as an honourable way of atoning for public disgrace and expression of one's deep sense of shame. "Suicide in Japan, often misunderstood in America, is the ultimate means of taking responsibility for having brought shame to one's group. This most personal act is, in Japan, still an act that expresses a supreme concern for what others think," writes John Condon in his book *With Respect to the Japanese*.

Because of high emphasis on in-group belonging and affiliation with family and other social networks, dishonouring yourself places Japanese individuals at a risk of losing their place in society, isolating them and severely damaging their mental health. "In this country, it is difficult to live without belonging to a group, and once you fall out there is hardly a chance to go back in," says Yasuyuki Shimizu, who represents a non-profit organization for suicide prevention. This sense of hopelessness and isolation is something Japan needs to tackle for the sake of future generations.

2. You need to refer to Source A and Source B for this question.

Both sources describe the different attitudes of some Asian countries to honour at different points in history. Use details from both sources to write a summary of the differences between the impact of family now and in the past.

[8 marks]

1. Core Vocabulary

ritual (n) , ritually (adv), ritualistic (adj)	A religious or solemn ceremony with things that happen in a specific order and at specific times.	Kamikaze became a ritual part of bushido culture: men sacrificed themselves for the honour of the nation.
ostracise (v) , ostracised (past tense)	To exclude someone from a group or from society.	Soldiers who brought shame on their families were ostracised . Tromans, ostracised by society, turned to drink and drugs.
permeate (v) , permeates, permeated	To spread throughout something.	The concept of honour permeated Japanese culture.

Garland's Kamikaze MCQs

1. **The nouns "sunrise", and the "samurai sword"**
 - a. ...are symbolic of the importance of the conservative Japanese nationalisation, bushido, which drove men to sacrifice themselves for their country – 'the land of the rising sun'
 - b. ...are symbolic of the importance of the conservative Japanese nationalism, which drove men to sacrifice their friends for their country – 'the land of the sinking sun'.
 - c. ...are symbolic of the importance of the conservative Japanese nationalism, bushido, which drove men to sacrifice themselves for their country – 'the land of the rising sun'
 - d. ...are symbolic of the importance of the conservative Japanese nationalism, hara-kiri, which drove men to sacrifice themselves for their country – 'the land of the rising sun'.

2. **Which phrase reveals the spell-like nature of the sacred rituals surrounding the samurai culture of bushido culture which implies a sense of indoctrination revealing the men to be almost possessed by nationalistic fervour?**
 - a. "shaven head"
 - b. "journey into history"
 - c. "samurai sword"
 - d. "powerful incantations"

3. **The metaphor "one-way / journey into history" reveals...**
 - a. ...the idea that martyrdom will not be remembered as heroic, the enjambment even mimicking the sacrifice of his explosive laden plan falling out of the sky.
 - b. ...the idea that martyrdom will be remembered as heroic, the caesura even mimicking the sacrifice of his explosive laden plan falling out of the sky.
 - c. ...the idea that martyrdom will be remembered as heroic, the enjambment even mimicking the sacrifice of his explosive laden plan falling out of the sky.
 - d. ...the idea that martyrdom will be remembered as heroic, the enjambment even mimicking the sacrifice of his explosive laden plan falling out of the cockpit.

4. **The metaphor of the sea behaving like "huge flag waved first one way then the other in a figure of eight" seems to symbolise the importance of nationalism and the societal pressures faced to fight, yet...**
 - a. ...also it could be nature calling to war, guiding him to his target, and reminding him that he should complete his mission.
 - b. ...also it could be nature calling him back down to land, guiding him away from his target and reminding him that, through the Mobius band like movement, nature, unlike war lasts forever and he should follow it instead.
 - c. ...also it could be nature calling him back down to land, pushing him towards his target and reminding him that, through the Mobius band like movement, nature, unlike war lasts forever and he should follow it instead.
 - d. ...also it could be nature calling him back down to land, guiding him away from his target and reminding him that, through the Mobius band like movement, nature, unlike war lasts forever and he should follow it instead.

5. **The metaphor "he no longer existed" reveals...**
 - a. ...his daughters love him regardless of his actions and support him no matter what
 - b. ...how love is earned through conforming to tradition and how his shame had ostracised him.
 - c. ...how love is earned through not conforming to tradition and how his shame had ostracised him.
 - d. ...he has disappeared and never came back from his suicide mission.

6. **Which phrases explore how Japanese concepts of honour bring shame to an entire family allowing dishonour to permeate and destroy not just a family but society?**
 - a. "the dark prince"
 - b. "my mother never spoke again"
 - c. "he came back"
 - d. "which had been the better way to die."

'Poppies' (2009)

by Jane Weir (born 1963)

Summary

A mother describes the moment when her son leaves home to fight in a war. The main focus of the poem is the mother's sadness and sense of loss as she releases her son into the world, which contrasts with his excitement. She tries to be brave, but struggles to keep a grip on her emotions. The mother fears that her son may join those whose names are inscribed on the war memorial. Alternatively, the final stanza can be interpreted as meaning that the son has actually died, and the mother is mourning him.

Three days before Armistice Sunday
and poppies had already been placed
on individual war graves. Before you left,
I pinned one onto your lapel, crimped petals,
spasms of paper red, disrupting a blockade
of yellow bias binding around your blazer.

Sellotape bandaged around my hand,
I rounded up as many white cat hairs
as I could, smoothed down your shirt's
upturned collar, steeled the softening
of my face. I wanted to graze my nose
across the tip of your nose, play at
being Eskimos like we did when
you were little. I resisted the impulse
to run my fingers through the gelled
blackthorns of your hair. All my words
flattened, rolled, turned into felt,

slowly melting. I was brave, as I walked
with you, to the front door, threw
it open, the world overflowing
like a treasure chest. A split second
and you were away, intoxicated .
After you'd gone I went into your bedroom,
released a song bird from its cage.
Later a single dove flew from the pear tree,
and this is where it has led me,
skirting the church yard walls, my stomach busy
making tucks, darts, pleats , hat-less, without
a winter coat or reinforcements of scarf, gloves.

On reaching the top of the hill I traced
the inscriptions on the war memorial,
leaned against it like a wishbone.
The dove pulled freely against the sky,
an ornamental stitch. I listened, hoping to hear
your playground voice catching on the wind.

Glossary

'bias binding' - a strip of fabric sewn on - may indicate military rank

'Eskimos' - tribal people who traditionally greet each other by rubbing noses

'intoxicated' - drunk (here, with excitement)

'pleats' - folds

Context

This poem was one of several that were written while British soldiers were involved in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, [at the request of the poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy](#). Duffy wanted poets to give new perspectives on the experience of warfare. Weir commented that, 'I wrote the piece from a woman's perspective, which is quite rare, as most poets who write about war have been men. As the mother of two teenage boys, I tried to put across how I might feel if they were fighting in a war zone.'

Armistice Sunday is the Sunday that follows 11th November, the date on which the First World War ended. It is a day for remembering those who died in war, and many people attend services during which wreaths of poppies are laid on war memorials. Red poppies have become a symbol of remembrance of the war dead, because so many poppies grow in the fields which have been disturbed by warfare. Their bright red colour is a reminder of the blood that was shed.

Language

Imagery

Weir uses imagery of war and suffering to suggest the mother's fears for her son. 'Spasms', 'bandaged' bring to mind injury, while 'blackthorns' of hair may be an allusion to Christ's crown of thorns. 'Blockade' and 'reinforcements' are military terms, and the poppies and mention of 'Armistice Sunday', 'war graves' and a 'war memorial' all bring to mind those who died in warfare. The focus on remembering the dead suggests that the mother is already mourning the loss of her son.

Weir also uses imagery of birds: the caged bird she releases symbolises her son, while the dove which leads her to the graveyard, and remains above her while she looks at the war memorial, symbolises peace. But it may be the peace of a soul at rest: the peace that follows death.

Juxtaposition

Weir creates a strong contrast between the mother's sadness and the son's excitement at the 'treasure chest' of possibilities which his new life offers him. He is so excited that he is described as 'intoxicated' (drunk) with the thrill of setting out into the world.

The Senses

Weir makes use of the sense of touch to emphasise the mother's longing to keep hold of her son. She tenderly tidies up his clothing, removing cat hairs and smartening up his collar, but she wants to go further: she wants to rub her nose against him, to touch his hair. She resists the temptation - she does not want to become too emotional.

At the end of the poem, the sense of hearing is used to bring to mind once again the idea of a mother's tender love for her little son, but here, it is separation rather than closeness that is emphasised, as the 'playground voice' suggests the moment when the mother first left her young son at school.

Caesura

The pause in the middle of line 18 emphasises the mother's struggle to contain her emotions: 'my words [. . .] slowly melting. I was brave'.

Structure

Two Part Chronological Structure

The poem follows a chronological sequence, describing the events before and after the son's departure. There is a clear divide at line 23, where the poet focuses on the mother's reactions after the son has left, and the mood becomes more mournful.

Free Verse

The poem has no regular rhythm and no rhyme, giving it the feel of a very personal diary entry.

Weir's Poppies

Source A

Source A is taken from the BBC website and describes the history of The Unknown Soldier

The unknown soldier's journey from trench to tomb

The unknown warrior was carried from a French battlefield 90 years ago, to be laid to rest among kings and statesmen in Westminster Abbey. But how did this symbol of the sacrifice of war come to be chosen?

In 1916, a Church of England clergyman serving at the Western Front in World War I spotted an inscription on an anonymous war grave which gave him an idea.

That moment of inspiration would blossom into a worldwide ceremony that is still being replicated in the 21st Century - the grave of an unknown warrior, symbolising those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The Reverend David Railton caught sight of the grave in a back garden at Armentieres in France in 1916, with a rough cross upon which was pencilled the words "An Unknown British Soldier".

In August 1920 Mr Railton wrote to the Dean of Westminster, Herbert Ryle, to suggest having a nationally recognised grave for an unknown soldier. The idea - which had also been mooted by the Daily Express newspaper the year before - was presented to the government and quickly taken up.

Memories of the war, in which a million British people had died, were still raw and the thousands of bodies that lay unidentified were a blight on Britain's conscience. "Those parents and wives who had lost men to war didn't have anything tangible to grieve at, so the unknown warrior represented their loss," says Terry Charman, a historian at the Imperial War Museum.

But there was a procedure in choosing a single corpse to represent the many unnamed dead. The unknown warrior's body was chosen from a number of British servicemen exhumed from four battle areas - the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres. These remains were brought to the chapel at St Pol on the night of 7 November 1920, where the officer in charge of troops in France and Flanders, Brig Gen L J Wyatt, went with a Col Gell.

"The point was that it literally could have been anybody," says Mr Charman. "It could have been an earl or a duke's son, or a labourer from South Africa.

"The idea really caught the public mood, as it was a very democratic thing that it could have been someone from any rank."

On the morning of 11 November 1920 - two years to the day after the war had ended, the body of the unknown warrior was drawn in a procession through London to the Cenotaph. This new war memorial on Whitehall was then unveiled by George V.

At 11.00 there was a two-minute silence, and the body was then taken to nearby Westminster Abbey where it was buried, passing through a guard of honour of 100 holders of the Victoria Cross.

In a particularly poignant gesture, the grave was filled with earth from the main French battlefields, and the black marble stone was Belgian.

3. Using relevant quotations, summarise the history and importance of The Unknown Soldier.

1. Core Vocabulary

tangible (adj), tangibly (adv)	Something that you can feel or perceive by touch.	Weir makes the mother's grief, normally private and pushed to the background, tangible and real.
--	---	---

Weir's Poppies MCQs

- The _____ "before you left" shows a break in the speaker's memory, a shift from one time period "before" to after her child left - almost seems as if her life itself is split in two.**
 - caesura
 - juxtaposition
 - enjambment
 - simile
- The phrase "crimped petals, / spasms of paper" of the poppy, a memorial to the fallen soldiers of war, attached to the mother could be seen as symbolic of...**
 - ...both that the poppy is broken, revealing that the mother does not care for him, but also that he is wriggly and trying to get away.
 - ...both the transience of life in its "crimped", broken and withered state, foreshadowing the death of his youth like a withered flower but also the "spasms" of pain and suffering that lead up to it.
 - ...both the power of love in its "crimped", and "red" state foreshadowing her love for her son like a flower but also the "spasms" could suggest she cannot control him
 - ...both that he is a hero and respects the dying soldiers and their families and well as her love for him and desire for him to come home.
- Which anecdote contrasts a nostalgic sense of intimacy of the motherly bond with the vulnerability of youth and the fact that the speaker and her son have drifted apart.**
 - "smoothed down"
 - "sellotape bandaged around my hand"
 - "white cat hairs"
 - "being Eskimos"
- The list of verbs in the phrase "flattened, rolled, turned into felt" shows...**
 - ... the speaker's desire to soften her anguish: felt muffles and silences and this homely imagery of sewing and crafts seems to reflect a desire to smother the destruction and suffering of war.
 - ... the speaker's desire to soften her pride: felt muffles and silences and this homely imagery of sewing and crafts seems to reflect a desire to smother the destruction and suffering of war.
 - ... the speaker's desire to soften her anguish: felt muffles and silences and this savage imagery of sewing and crafts seems to reflect a desire to smother the destruction of knitting.
 - ... the speaker's desire to harshen her anguish: felt muffles and silences and this homely imagery of sewing and crafts seems to reflect a desire to smother the destruction and suffering of biscuits.
- Which metaphor sees the speaker come to terms with the fact her son needs to be set free and make his own decisions, outside of her protection, which may harm him?**
 - "released a song bird from its cage"
 - "overflowing like a treasure chest"
 - "a single dove flew from the pear tree"
 - "I went into your bedroom"
- The metaphor "your playground voice catching on the wind"...**
 - ...reveals a mental yearning for the time before her child left for war and was seemingly lost forever, the noun "playground" revealing how intangible the memory is now becoming, reminding us both of the ephemeral nature of life and relationships.
 - ...reveals a sentimental yearning for the time before her child left for war and was seemingly lost forever, the noun "wind" revealing how tangible it is now becoming, reminding us both of the ephemeral nature of life and relationships.
 - ...reveals a sentimental yearning for the time before her child left for war and was seemingly lost forever, the noun "wind" revealing how intangible the memory is now becoming, reminding us both of the ephemeral nature of life and relationships.
 - ...reveals a sentimental yawning for the time before her child left for war and was seemingly lost forever and is, the noun "wind" revealing how intangible it is now becoming, reminding us both of the ephemeral nature of life and relationships.

'War Photographer' (1985)

by Carol Ann Duffy (born 1955)

Summary

A war photographer has returned from abroad and is developing the photos he has taken.

This is before digital photography, so he must use trays full of chemicals to turn the film into developed photographs, and this must be done in a darkened room where the only light is red.

Although he tries to be businesslike, the gradual appearance of the terrible images in the photographer's developing trays disturbs him, and brings back memories of the awful things he has witnessed. He reflects on how little all these sufferings will affect the readers of the newspapers for which he takes his photographs. As he leaves once more for abroad, he considers how little the inhabitants of peaceful England care about the sufferings of those in conflict zones.

In his darkroom he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
faintly start to twist before his eyes,
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
of this man's wife, how he sought approval
without words to do what someone must
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white
from which his editor will pick out five or six
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
he earns his living and they do not care.

Glossary

'spools' - rolls of film awaiting development

'intone' - solemnly recite a prayer

'Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh.' - areas of conflict in the seventies and eighties, in Northern Ireland, Lebanon and Cambodia respectively

'solutions' - the chemicals used to turn camera film into developed photographs

'dispel' - remove

'Sunday's supplement.' - the glossy magazine that accompanies a Sunday newspaper

'impassively' - without emotion

Context

Carol Ann Duffy (born 1955) is a British poet. She is the first woman to be appointed Poet Laureate, a position she has held since 2009. Duffy has a Catholic background, and although she no longer practises, Catholic imagery and ideas are often present in her writing.

The 'running children' in the second stanza could be an allusion to a famous photograph taken during the Vietnam War, in which a young girl in agony runs towards the camera. She is naked, having torn off the clothes which were covered in napalm (a burning chemical built into bombs that were dropped during this war).

Language

Religious Imagery

The photographer is described as being like 'a priest preparing to intone a Mass'. Catholics believe that at Mass, the bread and wine on the altar are transubstantiated, and become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, whom they believe is God the Son, offering Himself as a sacrifice upon the altar. This is known as the doctrine of the Real Presence. Duffy uses this idea as a metaphor for the way in which the presence of the people in the photographs becomes real for the photographer as he develops them. Like Christ on the cross, the people are suffering. 'All flesh is grass' is a biblical phrase, which means that human life is transitory. The Bible was written by people who lived in a Mediterranean climate, in which grass does not last long. It quickly withers and dies in the heat of the sun.

Juxtaposition

Duffy creates a strong contrast between peaceful England and the horrors of conflict zones.

This is most vividly expressed in the phrase 'fields which don't explode'. A field is an image of rural calm, and the landmines laid under the ground in conflict zones, which frequently kill and maim civilians, rip apart this peaceful scene. Duffy makes the conflict scene particularly shocking by describing how children are affected by these explosions. 'Running children' would be a joyful scene in a peaceful environment, but as with the fields, Duffy subverts this ordinarily happy and peaceful image, so that it becomes a 'nightmare'.

Structure

Two Part Structure

Duffy creates a clear two part structure. In the first two stanzas, the photographer prepares the photographs for development. The turning point (volta) of the poem is at the beginning of the second stanza: 'Something is happening'. Here, the presence of the dying man becomes real for the photographer and he is drawn to contemplate the man's suffering. This is analogous to the moment in the Mass when the priest consecrates the bread, and it is transubstantiated (see religious imagery, above).

Rhyme

Although the poem has a regular rhyme scheme, this is mostly obscured by enjambment, creating a muted, solemn tone. The most noticeable rhyme is within a line: 'tears' rhymes strongly with 'beers'. This clear rhyme creates a strong juxtaposition between the brief pity felt by the newspaper readers and how it is soon forgotten as they return to the pleasures of their peaceful life in England.

Flashback

The poem is based in multiple points in time, with the present time sparking many memories of past experiences. The haunting of the present by the past is emphasised by the phrase used to describe the image of the dying man as it gradually appears in the developing photograph: 'a half-formed ghost'.

Duffy's War Photographer

Source A

In September 1914, Lord Kitchener, Britain's War Minister, banned journalists from the Western Front. In this article, Hamilton Fyfe, a war reporter describes his attempt to overcome this problem by joining the Red Cross.

The ban on correspondents was still being enforced, so I joined a French Red cross detachment as a stretcher bearer, and though it was hard work, managed to send a good many despatches to my paper. I had no experience of ambulance or hospital work, but I grew accustomed to blood and severed limbs and red stumps very quickly. Only once was I knocked out. We were in a schoolroom turned into an operating theatre. It was a hot afternoon. We had brought in a lot of wounded men who had been lying in the open for some time; their wounds crawled with lice. All of us had to act as aids to our two surgeons. Suddenly I felt the air had become oppressive. I felt I must get outside and breathe. I made for the door, walked along the passage. Then I found myself lying in the passage with a big bump on my head. However, I got rid of what was troubling my stomach, and in a few minutes I was back in the schoolroom. I did not suffer in that way again.

What caused me discomfort far more acute - because it was mental, not bodily - were the illustrations of the bestiality, the futility, the insanity of war and of the system that produced war as surely as land uncultivated produces noxious weeds: these were now forced on my notice every day. The first cart of dead that I saw, legs sticking out stiffly, heads lolling on shoulders, all the poor bodies shovelled into a pit and covered with quicklime, made me wonder what the owners had been doing when they were called up, crammed into uniforms, and told to kill, maim, mutilate other men like themselves, with whom they had no quarrel. All of them had left behind many who would be grieved, perhaps beggared, by their taking off. And all to no purpose, for nothing.

Source B

In 2011 The Guardian newspaper asked several modern day war reporters to describe the moment that most affected them in a piece called 'The shot that nearly killed me: War photographers – a special report'. In it they describe their emotions when witnessing the brutality of war.

Adam Ferguson, Afghanistan, 2009 I was one of the first on the scene. The Afghan security forces normally shut down a suicide bombing like this pretty quickly. I was able to get to the epicentre

of the explosion. It was carnage, there were bodies, flames were coming out of the buildings. I remember feeling very scared because there was still popping and hissing and small explosions, and the building was collapsing. It was still very fresh and there was a risk of another bomb. It was one of those situations where you have to put fear aside and focus on the job at hand: to watch the situation and document it.



This woman was escorted out of the building and round this devastated street corner. It epitomised the whole mood – this older woman caught in the middle of this ridiculous, tragic event. I wish I could have found out how her life unravelled, but as soon as the scene was locked down, I ran back to the office to file.

As a photographer, you feel helpless. Around you are medics, security personnel, people doing good work. It can be agonisingly painful to think that all you're doing is taking pictures.

When I won a World Press award for this photograph, I felt sad. People were congratulating me and there was a celebration over this intense tragedy that I had captured. I reconciled it by deciding that more people see a story when a photographer's work is decorated.

Ron Haviv, Bosnia, 1992 These are the Serbian warlord Arkan's men. They've just executed these Muslim civilians – a butcher, his wife and sister-in-law; the start of what became known as ethnic cleansing.



I had taken a photograph of Arkan with a baby tiger, which he'd liked, and he'd agreed for me to travel with his troops to photograph his "mission". The soldiers were yelling at me not to shoot, but I'd promised myself I'd come out of this with an image to prove what was happening.

I was shaking when I took this shot. None of them were looking at me so I lifted my camera, just trying to get them in frame. When I put it down, they looked over. They didn't realise I'd taken photos.

Later, Arkan caught me photographing another execution and said he'd process my film and keep the ones he didn't like. I'd hidden the film from earlier in the day in my pocket and figured that if I fought hard enough for the film in my camera, he wouldn't search me.

When the pictures were published not long after, Arkan said in an interview, "I look forward to the day I can drink his blood." He put me on a death list, and I spent the next eight years trying to avoid him. Eventually, these images were used to indict him at The Hague.

2. You need to refer to Source A and Source B for this question. Both sources describe the experiences of war photographers.

Use details from both sources to write a summary of what you understand about the different experiences of war reporting.

[8 marks]

3. You now need to refer only to Source A from lines 1 to 10.

How does the writer use language to describe the impact of war?

[12 marks]

1. Core Vocabulary

<p>transubstantiation (n)</p>	<p>The Christian belief that during Eucharist the bread and wine given to worshippers turns into the blood and body of Christ when it is being consumed.</p>	<p>Perhaps Duffy is trying to suggest that the images the photographer takes are designed to become real when the reader consumes them causing them internal pain, just like the Christian belief in transubstantiation.</p> <p>Almost as if through the act of transubstantiation the horrors of war are passed from the image into the psyche of the reader and become real once more.</p>
<p>dichotomy (n)</p>	<p>A division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different.</p>	<p>Duffy presents the dichotomy between the war photographer's comfortable home in "rural England" and the horrors and suffering he has seen abroad.</p>
<p>somber (adj), somberly (adv)</p>	<p>Having a feeling of deep seriousness or sadness.</p>	<p>The ritual is a somber and respectful procedure that seems to provide some peace and tranquility for the photographer.</p>
<p>voyeur (n), voyeuristic (adj), voyeuristically (adv), voyeurism (n)</p>	<p>A person who enjoys watching other, sometimes their pain or distress and sometimes for sexual pleasure.</p>	<p>The dislocated and detached description of the "blood stained into foreign dust" is almost voyeuristic: the photographer merely watches and records, he does not help or give assistance and is completely separate from the people in the war zones he photographs.</p>
<p>ambiguous (adj), ambiguously (adv), ambiguity (n)</p>	<p>Something that does not have a clear meaning and is open to more than one interpretation.</p>	<p>In stanza four, the role of the reader is morally ambiguous: they seem to care, "eyeballs prick with tears", but only briefly before they carry on with their own privileged lives.</p>
<p>impassive (adj), impassively (adv)</p>	<p>Not showing or feeling emotion .</p>	<p>When the photographer "stares impassively" it could both highlight a calm and confident sense of purpose that he must continue to record the horrors of war, or a nullification of his feelings, like many soldiers he sees his task as futile.</p>
<p>tumult (n), tumultuous (adj)</p>	<p>Loud, confusing or chaotic situation.</p>	<p>The tranquility of the "dark room" contrasts sharply with the tumult and chaos of a warzone.</p>

Duffy's War Photographer MCQs

- 1. Which phrase is a possible metaphor for both the sanctuary and privacy of a photographer's workshop as well as the darkness of war and the speaker's mental anguish?**
 - a. "finally alone"
 - b. "the only light"
 - c. "dark room"
 - d. "church"
- 2. The noun "spools" in the metaphor "spools of suffering" refers to rolls of film...**
 - a. ... but also symbolises the tightly wrapped and suppressed memories immortalised in his pictures and could reveal how he is trying to contain the horrors that he has witnessed that so easily unspool in his mind.
 - b. ... but also symbolises the tightly wrapped up and suppressed photos immortalised in his pictures and could reveal how he is trying to publish the horrors that he has witnessed.
 - c. ... yet reveals how bad the peoples' experiences were, like their bodies were "unspooling" mimicking the gore of war.
 - d. ... but also symbolises the lightly wrapped up and suppressed memories immortalised in his pictures and could reveal how he is trying to contain the horrors that he has witnessed.
- 3. Which adjective hints at the photographers desire to control the chaos he has seen, categorising the suffering he has captured, almost like a form of therapy?**
 - a. "red and softly glows"
 - b. "ordered rows"
 - c. "Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh"
 - d. "spools of suffering"
- 4. The metaphor "a priest preparing to intone a Mass"...**
 - a. ...shows how the speaker sees the Photographer as almost holy, a "priest", whose intention is to sacrifice souls, the noun "Mass" even mirroring the imagery of how Christ gave his body to save humanity in much the same way as the images of war could use the victims as martyrs to save the world from Christianity.
 - b. ...shows how the speaker sees the Photographer as almost holy, a "priest", whose intention is to save souls, the noun "Mass" even mirroring the imagery of how Christ sacrificed his body to save humanity in much the same way as the images of war could use the victims as martyrs to save the world from sin.
 - c. ...shows how the speaker sees the Photographer is actually a holy "priest", whose intention is to save souls, the noun "Mass" even mirroring the imagery of how Christ sacrificed his body to save humanity in much the same way as the images.
 - d. ...shows how the speaker sees the Photographer as almost holy, a "priest", whose intention is to save souls, the noun "Mass" even mirroring the imagery of how Christ sacrificed his buddy to save humanity in much the same way as the images of war could use the victims as martyrs to save the world from sin.
- 5. Which metaphor reveals how his memory begins to haunt him with faint details of his images: the photo either being blurred, unclear and almost spectral or revealing the final act of a man dying and his spirit leaving his body?**
 - a. "A stranger's features / faintly start to twist"
 - b. "stained into foreign dust"
 - c. "without words"
 - d. "half formed ghost"
- 6. The savage cynicism of the phrase "eyeballs prick / with tears between bath and pre-lunch beers" attacks the complacency of Western privilege, the internal rhyme...**
 - a. ...slows down the sentence revealing the irrelevance of the reader's hypocrisy.
 - b. ...speeds up the sentence revealing his anger at the hypocrisy of the reader.
 - c. ...slows down the sentence revealing his hypocrisy at the anger of the reader.
 - d. ...speeds down the sentence revealing his anger at the hypocrisy of the reader.