

# **Power and Conflict**

## **AQA Poetry**

### **Last Minute Revision**



- **Model Answers**
- **Practice Questions**
- **Key Quotes**



## *Model Answers*

**Compare the ways poets present ideas about identity in *The Emigrée* and in one other poem from *Power and Conflict*.**

### **The Émigrée**

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.

CAROL RUMENS

The poets successfully present ideas about identity, indeed the narrator in 'The Emigrée' reveals her identity to be shaped by the city she comes from whilst 'Checking Out Me History' shows the narrator's anger at having his history and identity hidden from him

In 'Exposure', the power of nature is presented as torturous. The repetition of "but nothing happens" creates a sense of sameness, waiting in the trenches as if trapped in hell. The conditions of war are unchanging and so nothingness would be like torture as they nothing is happening for the speaker. Nothing happening would be torture as the soldiers would always be on edge, waiting for an attack or waiting for a call up to the front lines, ultimately leading to your doom. The reader would sympathise with the speaker as waiting around for four years would lead to mental instability and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) mixed with shell shock.

In 'The Prelude', nature is presented as peaceful and untouched. This can be seen in the quote "lustily I dipped my oars into the silent lake". The adverb "lustily" creates a sense of taboo, as if the speaker knows he is disturbing nature, but it excites him anyway. The adjective "silent" emphasises the untouched tranquillity of nature he is disturbing. This can further be seen in the quote "like a living thing strode after me". Since the speaker has disturbed nature, nature is taking revenge. The simile is effective as it creates an impression of the mountain taking massive strides towards the speaker, terrifying him. The verb "strode" is used instead of walked or stepped as it shows nature is both majestic and terrifying. It has sublime power. The reader would empathise with the speaker as they would feel terrified as well if they were put in that situation.

In "Exposure", nature is presented as active and dangerous. This can be seen in the quote "the air that shudders black with snow... flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew". The personification of the shivering air emphasises unbearable coldness the soldiers feel. The alliteration of 'f' creates a paradoxical image because on the one hand, the snowflakes appear soft and harmless however their relentless falling creates a smothering and ultimately dangerous environment for the soldiers. The verbs 'pause' and 'renew' suggest a repetitive unending cycle - the snow is falling continuously, threatening to engulf them all.

In conclusion, the power of nature is explored through a range of techniques by Wordsworth and Owen. In "The Prelude", the power of nature is explored through how intimidating of the mountains are and how it can make someone scared. In "Exposure", the power of nature is explored through the harsh conditions of trench warfare. Trench warfare had harsh winds and a cold that stabbed through every soldier. This essay has examined both poems in detail.