



Ozymandias  
Percy Bysshe Shelley  
(1818)

**Speaker:** The poem is polyphonic (has many voices) the traveller, Shelley and Ozymandias himself are heard  
**Addressed to:** Society  
**About:** The rule and legacy of "Ozymandias"

Ozymandias is a **sonnet** written by Romantic poet, Percy Shelley. The sonnet explores the legacy of Ozymandias, another name for **Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II**, whose statue was discovered at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was brought to London in 1821. The narrator is told about the statue by a "traveller" who saw the statue in the desert. He describes "two vast and trunkless legs of stone" and the "shattered visage" of the statue, emphasising how the statue has decayed and eroded over time due to the power of nature. The statue still has a "sneer of cold command" which reinforces how Ozymandias was a cruel dictator, who felt he was **superior** to those he ruled.

The **volta** (turning point) of the sonnet occurs on line 9, where the traveller recounts the words on the pedestal of the statue: "my name is Ozymandias, king of kings! Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" Clearly, Ozy believed his "works" and powerful legacy would last forever, however Shelley **ironically** ends the poem with a reminder that human power is temporary, as "nothing beside remains" of the "colossal wreck" that is now his statue. Shelley **mocks** Ozymandias for believing his power and rule would last forever, and he uses the sonnet form to remind the reader that human power cannot last, but art, language and nature will remain forever powerful.

**Key quotes:**

"Half-sunk, a **shatter'd** visage lies" (**use of powerful adjectives**)

"wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command" (**alliteration**)

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings"

"colossal wreck" (**metaphor**)



Romantic poet

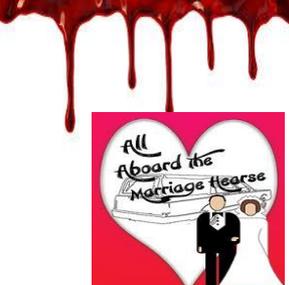
 **WORDS** critique of dominant rulers

Human power is temporary

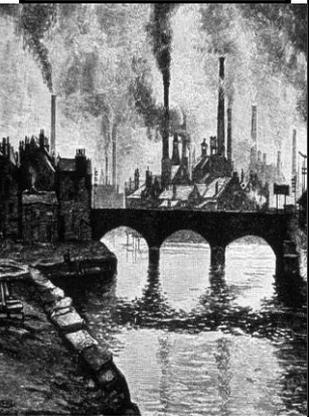
Sonnet form

Schadenfreude

**Links to other poems:** *Exposure, London, Tissue, Storm on The Island, The Prelude, My Last Duchess, The Emigree*



manacles



London

William Blake

(1794)

**Speaker:** William Blake

**Addressed to:** The citizens of London

**About:** Blake, inspired by the French Revolution, wants to send a warning/ incite revolution in London

*London* by Romantic poet William Blake is a **powerful critique** of the government and royalty during the 1700s. Blake writes in first person, as though he is exploring the streets of London. He describes the streets as "chartered" suggesting they are owned and not free. The people also have "marks of weakness, marks of woe," as though London has branded them with misery and pain. **Anaphora** is used in the second stanza to emphasise how "every" person he sees is oppressed and under the control of those in power. The metaphor "mind-forged manacles" creates an image of people who are **imprisoned** – they cannot think clearly as society has confined them in their own negative and miserable thinking. "Mind-forged" also conveys how the people have helped create their own shackles as it seems impossible they will be able to break free from their self-imposed chains.

In Stanza three, **colour imagery** is used to describe the "blackning" church which Blake suggests is hypocritical as it sends "Chimney Sweepers" to their deaths. Blake also **personifies** the "soldiers sigh" which "runs in blood down Palace walls." Here, Blake suggests that the government/ royalty are responsible for the deaths of soldiers, who fight wars whilst royalty and those in power remain unharmed. The poem ends with reference to the "marriage hearse" being "blighted" by the "Harlots curse"- creating a **cyclical structure** as Blake implies that marriage is a dead institution plagued by sexual diseases and doomed to fail

In every voice: in every ban, The mind-forg'd manacles I hear" (**metaphor**)

"the hapless Soldiers sigh/Runs in blood down Palace walls " (**personification**)

"I hear/ how the youthful Harlots curse /Blasts the new-born Infants tear And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse" (**oxymoron**)



critique of power

Romantic poet

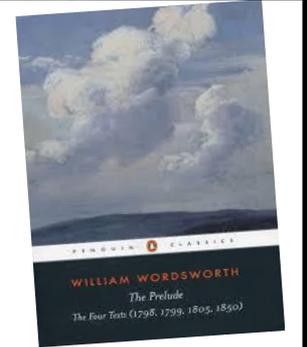
French Revolution

corruption

**WORDS**

**Links to other poems:** [Ozymandias](#), [My Last Duchess](#), [Tissue](#), [The Prelude](#), [The Emigree](#)





## The Prelude

William Wordsworth  
(1850)

**Speaker:** Wordsworth  
**Addressed to:** Published after his death by his wife to celebrate **his life**  
**About:** The power of nature over man

*The Prelude*, by William Wordsworth is an **autobiographical account** of the life of William Wordsworth, the famous **Romantic poet** published by his wife after his death. *The Prelude* explores one episode of Wordsworth's life: the "boat-stealing" incident. The poem begins: "one summer evening led by her" – Wordsworth immediately **personifies** nature as a powerful and mystical. The beginning of the poem focusses on the beauty of nature: the moon is "glittering" and "sparkling" and far above is nothing but "stars." A **tranquil image** is created of the Lake District, and Wordsworth seems to be in awe of it as he rows out, fixing his view on the "craggy ridge" as he rows deeper into the lake. The boat is an "elfin pinnace" – magical. However, Wordsworth is overly "proud" of his rowing abilities and the **simile** "my boat went heaving through the water like a swan" emphasises how he feels he is in control of the lake. The **volta** occurs with the word "when," which signals his realisation that the mountain is bigger than he realised, emphasised by the **repetition** of "huge peak, black and huge" which may suggest he is lost for words, unable to convey his fear of being out on a lake, potentially lost. The mountain is personified and described in **gothic terms** as "grim" and "like a living thing" which terrifies Wordsworth. He hurries back with "trembling oars" in "grave and serious mood" contrasting with previous graceful descriptions of his rowing and surroundings. This moment seems to trouble Wordsworth for days afterward, causing his "dreams" to be haunted. The poem is written in the form of an **epic poem** to emphasise how Wordsworth realises that nature is the most powerful (or heroic) not man.

### Key quotes:



"One summer evening (led by her) I found  
A little boat tied to a willow tree" (**personification**)

"But now, like one who rows, Proud of his skill/ I fixed my view  
upon the summit of a craggy ridge/far above  
was nothing but the stars and the grey sky" (**mystical imagery**)

"huge peak, black and huge" (**repetition**)

"With **trembling** oars I turned/homeward went, in **grave**  
And **serious** mood" (adjectives)



Epic poem

Romantic poetry

insignificance of man compared to nature

Autobiographical

**Links to other poems:** *Storm On the Island, Ozymandias, My Last Duchess, Tissue, Exposure*



My Last Duchess  
Robert Browning  
(1842)



**Speaker:** A Duke  
**Addressed to:** An envoy  
**About:** the real life Duke of Ferrera, whose young wife Lucrezia died in suspicious circumstances in 1561



*My Last Duchess* is a **dramatic monologue** told from the perspective of a Duke. Browning uses the dramatic monologue form to demonstrate how the Duke is **arrogant, self-absorbed and abuses the power** he has. In the poem he is addressing the envoy of Count Tyrol who has come to ask the Duke to marry his master's daughter now that he is a widower. The Duke invites the envoy to gaze upon his "Last Duchess" who was painted by "Fra Pandolf" - an artist. The Duke seems paranoid that a relationship developed between his Duchess and the artist and also that the Duchesses' "looks went everywhere." The **motif** of a "spot of joy" (her blushing) is used throughout the poem to emphasise how the Duke is paranoid she fell too easily for other men. Browning use **caesuras and hyphens** to show the Duke's increasing frustration that the Duchess looked at other men and did not appreciate his "gift of a nine-hundred years old name." Although the Duke is supposedly speaking to the envoy, he appears to get lost in his own words and reveals "I gave commands; then all smiles stopped" - a **euphemism** that suggests he has killed the Duchess in order to control her. The portrait of her he seeks to hide behind a curtain and only show when he decides to serves as a metaphor for the control he wanted to hold over the Duchess in life, reflective of the **patriarchal society** Browning and the Duke lived in. The end line of the poem references a statue of "Neptune" "taming a sea horse" - a metaphor for the control the Duke believes he holds over the Duchess. **Ironically** Browning shows how the Duke is still consumed by thoughts of the Duchess so perhaps she holds the power after all.

**Key quotes:**

"That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, Looking as if she were alive."

"Sir, 'twas not her husband's presence only, called that spot of joy into the Duchess' cheek" (**motif**)

"I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together." (**euphemism**)

"Notice Neptune, though, Taming a sea-horse" (**metaphor**)



**WORDS**

dramatic monologue

Narcissism/arrogance

patriarchal society

Victorian poet

**Links to other poems:** *Ozymandias, Checking Out my History, London, Tissue, The Prelude*



## Charge of the Light Brigade

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1854)

**Speaker:** Tennyson  
**Addressed to:** Society  
**About:** The Light Brigade – a real British Cavalry group who rode to their deaths due to a wrong instruction from their military leader

### Key quotes:



“All in the valley of Death/ Rode the six hundred.” (metaphor)

“Theirs not to make reply,/Theirs not to reason why,/ Theirs but to do and die.” (repetition)

“Jaws of death/ mouth of Hell” (metaphors)

“Honour the light Brigade!” (imperatives)

'TCOFLB' by Alfred Lord Tennyson praised the **heroism** of the British light brigade cavalry who were led into a charge at the Battle of Balaklava on 25 October 1854. The British brigade were vastly outnumbered by Russian troops and it is now believed that a wrong or miscommunicated order was sent, which Tennyson alludes to in the poem through the phrase 'someone had blundered'. Men were killed, injured and hundreds of horses lost.

Tennyson uses **speech** at the start of the poem (“half a league onward”) to immerse the reader in the battle. The **metaphor** describing the men riding into “the valley of death” enforces the bravery of the men as they go to their inevitable deaths, and is also an allusion to the bible, presenting the men as saviours and heroes in the face of evil. This imagery is extended later in the poem as the men riding into the “jaws of death” and the “mouth of hell” reminding the reader of how inescapable the situation was.

**Alliterative sounds** are used in the poem to mimic the sound of the battle, for example “shot and shell” and **dactylic diameter** is used to echo the sound of horses hooves in the valley. **Repetition** of “canons” is also used to make it seem like the men are surrounded. The poem **questions** whether men should follow blind orders, but also celebrates the bravery of the men, using imperatives to remind the reader to “honour” what was “left” of the “six hundred.”



### WORDS

narrative poem

dactylic dimeter

brutality of war

heroism/ bravery

**Links to other poems:** *Exposure, Bayonet Charge, Remains, War Photographer, Kamikaze*





## Exposure

Wilfred Owen  
(1917)

**Speaker:** Wilfred Owen, a soldier  
**Addressed to:** society  
**About:** exposing the reality of trench life/ warfare to those at home



*Exposure* is written by Wilfred Owen – a soldier who died tragically a week before the end of WW1. The poem explores the horrifying experience of trench warfare. Owen opens the poem **personifying** the weather as an enemy to the men, as it is “merciless” in how it continually attacks the men, making their “brains ache.”

Sibilance is used to mimic the sounds of snow falling; the snow is presented as more “deadly” than the “sudden successive flights of bullets” heard fired by the enemy from faraway. A reminder to the reader of **the power of nature over man**.

**Owen questions** why the soldiers are at war and living in these hellish conditions to the point where he asks “is it that we are dying?” By the end of the poem, Owen becomes increasingly **nihilistic** as he states “for love of God seems dying” as the men are enduring such terrible conditions they appear to **be losing their faith in God**, which would have been shocking at the time as it suggests they don’t believe they will go to heaven if they die, so war seems **futile**. At the end of the poem, Owen draws the reader’s attention to all the dead bodies (“all their eyes are ice”) being attended to by the “burying party.” A **cyclical structure** is created with the final line “but nothing happens” as still the men await their inevitable fate: death, either at the hands of the enemy or the weather.

## Key quotes:

“Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knife us . . . ” (**personification**)

“but nothing happens” (**refrain**)

“what are we doing here?” (**rhetorical question**)

“all their eyes are ice” (**metaphor**)

exposing the reality of war

power of nature

horror or trench warfare

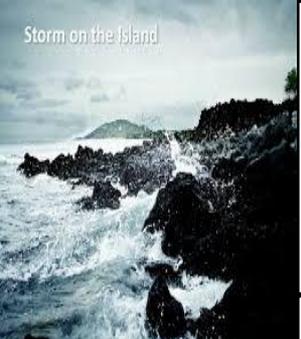
nihilism/futility (pointlessness)

cyclical structure

**Links to other poems:** *Bayonet Charge*, *Charge of the Light Brigade*, *Ozymandias*, *Storm On The Island*



## WORDS



# Storm on the Island

Seamus Heaney

(1966)



**Speaker:** Heaney?  
An Islander?

**Addressed to:** The reader through direct address/ colloquial tone

**About:** The power of nature/ the troubles in Northern Ireland



*Storm on The Island* is a **dramatic monologue** that explores the power of nature over man and reminds the reader of their own insignificance compared to nature. The poem begins "we are prepared" which **builds tension** and reminds the reader that the islanders have suffered the damaging effects of a storm before. An image of a barren, empty island is created through the description of "no trees" and "no natural shelter" as Heaney emphasises that these islanders have no protection against the violence of the storm. The constant use of "you" immerses the reader in the poem, reminding us that this experience of awaiting a forth-coming storm is a universal. The **oxymoron** describing the sea as "exploding comfortably" down the cliff reminds the reader that nature is both a saviour and destroyer of man – also reinforced through the simile describing how the sea "spits like a tame cat turned savage" – a reminder of the unpredictability of the sea, and how like a beloved pet, it can turn from friend to foe in an instant. **Plosive alliteration and onomatopoeic sounds** are used to mimic the sounds of the storm, and a fragmented structure is used to emphasise the chaos of it. This is coupled with the use of a **semantic field** of war to depict how nature can be an enemy to man. The poem can also be read as a **metaphor for the troubles in Northern Ireland** between Protestants and Catholics, which resulted in considerable violence. Ireland is a country which has been invaded previously – the poem may be an **allegory** for the experience of attack from external forces.

## Key quotes

"We are prepared: we build our houses squat"  
**(caesura/tension)**



"You might think that the sea is company,  
Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs" **(oxymoron)**



"the flung spray hits/ the very windows, spits like a  
tame cat /turned savage" **(simile)**

"We just sit tight while wind dives/and **strafes**  
invisibly. Space is a **salvo**" **(war semantic field)**

power of nature/ human vulnerability

plosive alliteration/ onomatopoeic sounds

fragmented structure

metaphor for troubles in Northern Ireland

**Links to other poems:** *The Prelude, Exposure, Ozymandias, Kamikaze*

## Bayonet Charge

Ted Hughes

(1957)

**Speaker:** 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrating a soldier's experience

**Addressed to:** society

**About:** a soldier's experience during WW1 – "going over the top"

*Bayonet Charge* opens **in media res**, focussing on the experience of a soldier, going on a charge with a bayonet. The chaotic opening immerses the reader in the horror of the battle as the soldier stumbles past a hedge which "dazzled" with rifle fire. Hughes describes how the once "patriotic tear" which had brimmed in the soldier's eye before he went to war is now "sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest." This **simile** allows the reader to realise how the soldier is being dehumanised and becoming more like a weapon of war.

Midway through the poem the soldier has an **epiphany** (realisation) "He wonders 'In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations / Was he the hand pointing that second?' The stars and the nations are impersonal, even cosmic forces that decide his fate. They work mechanically and unemotionally like 'clockwork'. The soldier realises he is merely a hand on a clock, **a cog in the machine**, exploited by much larger and more powerful forces, like the government. As the poem develops a "yellow hare" is killed, reminding the reader of the destruction of nature and how nothing can escape the machinery of war. As the soldier runs, he drops "king, honour and human dignity" as he realises they are simply "luxuries" which must be abandoned to survive. By the end of the poem he is now "dynamite" – ready to explode.

### Key quotes:

"The patriotic tear that had brimmed in his eye /sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest" (**simile**)

"In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations/Was he the hand pointing that second?" (**metaphor**)

"King, honour, human dignity, etcetera/ dropped like luxuries" (**simile**)

"His terror's touchy dynamite" (**metaphor**)

reality of war

power of propaganda

soldiers are disposable

human survival

brutality of World War One

**Links to other poems:** *Exposure, Charge of the Light Brigade, Kamikaze, Poppies*





## Remains

Simon Armitage

(2008)

**Speaker:** A soldier  
(Guardsman Tromans)

**Addressed to:** Society

**About:** A soldier's experience of being in the Iraq war and killing his enemy

*Remains* is a **dramatic monologue** about the true experience of Guardsman Tromans who served as a soldier during the invasion of Iraq by British and American forces.

The monologue explores how Tromans and his other fellow soldiers stopped a "bank" raid and killed their enemy in a violent way. Armitage uses **graphic imagery** to present the death of the enemy as he is described **metaphorically** as "the image of agony." Moreover his enemy's body is treated carelessly as his "guts" are "carted off" in the back of a lorry – this casual language emphasises how the body of his enemy is treated carelessly, which seems to scar the speaker.

The **volta**, "end of story, except not really" conveys how the soldier cannot simply move on from killing his enemy – he is psychologically traumatised and sees his "blood shadow on patrol." As the poem develops the soldier returns to his **civilian life**, and Armitage explores his PTSD in more depth, revealing how "the drink and drugs won't flush out" the memory of killing his enemy. The end line of the poem: "his bloody life in my bloody hands" is an **allusion to Macbeth** and is **symbolic** of the guilt the soldier feels – this line reminds the reader the soldier carry around the memory of killing his enemy forever. Armitage may want to raise awareness of the support soldiers need to cope with what happens at war.

## Key quotes:



"probably armed, possibly not" (**repetition**)

"I see every round as it rips through his life" (**alliteration**)

"one of my mates goes by and tosses his guts back into body/ and then he's carted off in the back of a lorry" (**colloquial/chatty language**)

"end of story, except not really" (**volta**)

"his bloody life in my bloody hands" (**allusion to Macbeth**)

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

dramatic monologue



## WORDS

volta

psychological distress

Allusion

**Links to other poems:** *War Photographer, Poppies, Bayonet Charge, Charge of the Light Brigade, Kamikaze, The Émigrée*



## Poppies

Jane Weir

(2009)



**Speaker:** a mother  
**Addressed to:** society  
**About:** raising awareness for the Homefront/ traditional female experience of war. Written to reflect experience of modern warfare

*Poppies* is a **dramatic monologue** told from the perspective of a mother whose son has left to go to war. The poem **moves in time** to explore the relationship between the mother and her son – she remembers him as a young child, and clearly misses this time, when they used to “play at being Eskimos.” Midway through the poem, it is revealed the son is “intoxicated” with the idea of war. He sees joining the army and leaving home as “like a treasure chest” which is “overflowing,” perhaps revealing he is blinded to the reality of war and the dangers of the world outside his mother’s home. After he leaves, the mother goes into his bedroom and “released a songbird from it’s cage” a **metaphor** for the mother releasing the emotions she has had to hide or for the son leaving the mother’s protection, presented here as a cage. A dove flies from “pear tree” leading the mother to the grave of a soldier – potentially her son, which she leans against “like a wishbone” a **simile** which demonstrates her **fragility**. The poem is **ambiguous** (open to interpretation) but the final line of her “hoping” to “hear” his “playground voice on the wind” suggests she wishes she could go back in time to when he was little, and stop him from going to war.

### Key quotes:



“I was brave, as I walked with you/the world overflowing like a treasure chest” (**simile**)

“I went into your bedroom, released a song bird from its cage” (**metaphor**)

“I traced the inscriptions on the war memorial, leaned against it like a wishbone” (**simile**)

“I listened, hoping to hear your playground voice catching on the wind.” (**metaphor**)



### WORDS

Homefront perspective

dramatic monologue

domestic/war semantic field(s)

Remembrance: grief/loss

power of propaganda

**Links to other poems:** *Remains, Kamikaze, War Photographer, Bayonet Charge, Charge of the Light Brigade, The Emigree*



## War Photographer

Carol Ann Duffy

(1985)

**Speaker:** Written from 3<sup>rd</sup> person, about a War Photographer

**Addressed to:** Society

**About:** The experience of a war photographer who has seen global death and conflict

*War Photographer* is narrated by an **omniscient** (god-like) narrator, who narrates and describes the emotions and experiences of a war photographer who has returned from abroad to develop the picture he has taken. He develops the pictures in his "dark room" where the "red light" softly glows, an image of blood and violence, reinforced by the personification of the film as "spools of suffering." Duffy creates a sense of the scale of suffering through the **listing** of various cities who have suffered terribly due to conflict: "Belfast, Beirut, Phnom Penh." As the WP develops the pictures his hands "tremble" revealing how he has been moved and altered by what he has seen. Duffy uses the **biblical metaphor** "all flesh is grass" to remind the reader that all human life is temporary, and that the WP understands this more than most due to what he has witnessed abroad. As the poem develops, it is clear the WP is struggling to adapt to life in "rural England" and Duffy **alludes** to the photo *Napalm Girl* to create a **contrast** between England and other war zones. By the end of the poem, the reader realises how the public don't give enough attention to images of war, as only "five or six" are chosen to be published in the newspaper, despite there being a "hundred agonies" to choose from. Duffy describes how the reader's eyes only "prick with tears", before continuing with their weekend activities. The poem ends with the WP flying back out to another conflict zone, creating a cyclical structure to show how the WP sacrifices his life but the public "do not care"

### Key quotes:



"in his darkroom he is finally alone"

"running children in nightmare heat" (**allusion to Napalm Girl**)

"All flesh is grass" (**metaphor**)

"a hundred agonies in black and white" (**metaphor**)

"they do not care" (**monosyllabic/short sentence**)



### WORDS

cyclical structure

spectator of conflict/ bears witness

PTSD

internal frustration/cynicism

**Links to other poems:** *Remains, Poppies, Charge of the Light Brigade, Bayonet Charge, The Emigree*



Tissue  
 Imtiaz Dharker  
 (2006)

**Speaker:**  
 Dharker  
**Addressed to:**  
 Society – a call  
 to readdress  
 power held by  
 those who are  
 wealthy/ elites  
**About:** How  
 those in power  
 maintain their  
 power

*Tissue* explores the fragility of human life through the **extended metaphor** of life being similar to paper. The poem opens: “paper that lets the light shine through, this is what could alter things.” In religious texts like the Koran and the Bible, “light” is often used to represent the truth, and Dharker may be suggesting we have moved away from the moral messages of the Bible and need to return to these texts to reengage with what is important – being moral citizens. Dharker explores how **“maps”** are also written on paper and are **symbols of power**, as maps are often written by those who have been victorious in war. She references “rivers” and “mountainfolds” on the maps, reminding the reader that nature is permanent but humans are not. Dharker also describes how paper in modern life reflects how we as a society have become **materialistic** and she hopes “fine slips” from our “credit cards” may “fly our lives like paper kites” – a **simile** emphasising how she hopes we can rid ourselves of the shackles of consumerism. Throughout the poem Dharker desires structures to be made from “paper” – perhaps because paper can be easily adapted and remoulded if needed. She hopes we never again have to build with “brick” which she seems to view as a **symbol** of how power is held by a minority and not the majority. Instead she wishes “daylight” to metaphorically “break through capitals and monoliths” perhaps reflecting her desire for a “transparent” society which would be flexible and work for everyone. The **poem seems to call for harmony** and for power to be built collectively. “Turned into your skin” emphasises how if we built a fairer society, we would all feel a sense of belonging.

“paper that lets the light shine through, this is what could alter things.” **(extended metaphor for hope)**

“If buildings were paper, I might feel their drift, see how easily they fall away on a sigh” **(extended metaphor)**

“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.” **(simile)**



“let the daylight break through **capitals and monoliths”** **(symbols of power/capitalism)**

extended metaphors of paper and light  
 (fragility and hope)

fragmented structure/ written in free  
 verse/enjambment



**WORDS** ambiguity

Dharker a “Calvinist”

**Links:** *Ozymandias, London, Checking out Me History, The Emigree*



The Émigrée  
 Carol Rumens  
 (1993)

**Speaker:** An unnamed, displaced women  
**Addressed to:** society  
**About:** The power of memory and place, conflict and displacement

*The Emigree* by Carol Rumens tells the story of a **displaced person**, who is reminiscing about the country and the city where he or she was born. Neither the city nor the country are ever named in the poem, which perhaps is a deliberate choice to allow the speaker to speak for all displaced people. However émigrée – is spelt in the feminine form, which may suggest it is a woman speaking. The speaker is clearly **nostalgic** for her past city which she can remember “sunlight clear.” “Sunlight” is referenced **four times** in the poem, serving as an **extended metaphor** for optimism and positivity. The place the speaker grew up in is now “at war” and “sick with tyrants,” however the speaker will not allow her view of the place she loves to be altered. **Contrasting images** are used in the poem to emphasise the positive memories of her childhood with the present problems in the country she grew up in; which now has “tanks and frontiers” which “close like waves;” creating an image of the city trying to control and suffocate those who now live there. The speaker reinforces how she cannot return: “I have no passport,” but she will not allow this to impact the way she views the city she grew up in. The city is **personified** as having “shining eyes” and the speaker wants to “comb its hair” reinforcing the love she feels for her city which overcomes the ambiguous “they” who now control her city. The poem can also be read as an extended metaphor for the speaker longing for the simplicity of her childhood, which she cannot return to now she is an adult.

**Key quotes:**



- “sunlight-clear” (**extended metaphor**)
- “the bright filled paperweight” (**metaphor**)
- “it may be at war, it may be sick with tyrants” (**repetition**)
- “it tastes of sunlight” (**sensory language**)
- “I have no passport, there’s no way back) (**repetition**)

Emigree: (someone who leaves one country to settle in another for political reasons)



- displacement
- nostalgia/ power of memory
- free verse/ enjambment
- power of place

**Links to other poems:** *Tissue, London, The Prelude, Checking Out me History, My Last Duchess, Poppies, Remains, War Photographer*



# Checking Out me History

John Agard

(2004)



**Speaker:** John Agard

**Addressed to:** Society

**About:** How history is Eurocentric and written by those in power – Agard celebrates black history



*Checking Out me History* explores how power has been traditionally held by those in Europe and therefore the history of the world is told through a white, European lens (eurocentrism.) Agard uses a **fragmented structure**, and writes **phonetically** using **slang** and **rhyme** to **create an authentic Caribbean voice** – therefore giving a voice to those who have not been celebrated in traditional British history. The poem begins: **“dem tell me”** to remind the reader that Agard has always been led to believe a White British version of history, to the point where he feels those in power have “bandaged” up his “eye” to his own history not allowing him to celebrate people from his country who have helped contribute to British history and wider society. **Rhyme** is used to create a **comedic effect**, but also **mocks** the simple, limited version of history that is taught in Britain: for example “dem tell me bout Dick Whittington and he cat /But Toussaint L’Ouverture no dem never tell me bout dat.” Agard **switches from rhyme to free verse** to create **three choruses** in the poem – one about Toussaint L’Ouverture, one about Nanny de Maroon and one about Mary Seacole – all of these choruses are written in free verse which **slows down the pace** of the poem and emphasises everything that each of these figures has done to contribute to history – for example Toussaint L’Ouverture who helped “lick back” French leader Napoleon and also inspired millions of enslaved people to seek freedom and equality. The final stanza finally uses “I” to demonstrate how Agard is now “carving out” his own identity by telling an different historical narrative.

## Key quotes:



“Dem tell me / Wha dem want to tell me Bandage up me eye with me own history” **(metaphor)**

“Dem tell me bout ole King Cole was a merry ole soul but dem never tell me bout Mary Seacole” **(rhyme)**

“Dem tell me wha dem want to tell me But now I checking out me own history /I carving out me identity” **(first-person)**



## WORDS

Eurocentric

free verse

phonetics: authentic Caribbean voice

critique of how history is written by those that hold the most power.

**Links to other poems:** *Tissue, My Last Duchess, London, The Emigree*



# Kamikaze

Beatrice Garland

(2001)



**Speaker:** The daughter of a Kamikaze pilot

**Addressed to:** New generations of Japanese society/ Western audience

**About:** Japanese Kamikaze fighter pilots/ the fate of those who didn't go through with their missions

*Kamikaze* explores the experience of a Kamikaze fighter pilot whose story is told by his daughter. The poem begins in **third person**, as the reader is invited to imagine the pilot "embarking" on his "one-way journey into history" with the "powerful incantations" of Japanese **propaganda** encouraging him to complete his suicidal mission. As the poem develops, the daughter imagines how the pilot is distracted from his mission by the **power of nature**: for example, "fishing boats strung out like bunting on a green-blue translucent sea" – this **simile** emphasises the power and beauty of the sea perhaps making the pilot feel homesick.

Evocative imagery is used as the poet uses **colour** and references to various sea creatures like "silver fishes," "crab" and "tuna" to create an image of life and vitality, all of which encourages the pilot to turn around. Moreover, the pilot remembers **happy memories** with his "brothers" – all of which encourages the pilot to turn back. In the final two stanzas, the **voice of the daughter** is more clearly heard. She explores how her "mother never spoke again in his presence" and how she and her siblings had to grow up as though "this was no longer the father they loved." The final part of the poem takes on a **confessional tone**, as though the daughter feels guilt for ignoring her father. The poet ends on a ironic note – she realises the **irony** that her father didn't complete his suicidal mission, but the way he is treated when he returns home is similar to death anyway. Garland perhaps wants to generate sympathy and raise awareness of the pressures Kamikaze pilots were under to avoid the label of 'coward'.

## Key quotes:



"a shaven head full of powerful incantations and enough fuel for a one-way journey into history"

"little fishing boats strung out like bunting on a green-blue translucent sea" (**simile**)

"And though he came back/ my mother never spoke again in his presence." (**voice of the daughter**)

"And sometimes, she said, he must have wondered which had been the better way to die." (**irony**)



## WORDS

narrative poem

power of nature

shifts in voices/ perspectives

blinding power of war

**Links: Poppies, War Photographer, Remains, Bayonet Charge, Charge of the Light Brigade**