

Context

Themes and ideas

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Ozymandias	Shelley was a romantic poet; Shelley was a radical thinker who distrusted the powerful; Ozymandias = Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II.
War Photographer	Duffy presents the peculiar challenge faced by war photographers: recording horrific events without power to intervene
Exposure	Owen was a combatant poet; fought and died in World War One; he was outspoken against jingoistic propaganda that glorified war
London	Blake lived in London; published 1794 – a time of poverty, child labour, prostitution & industrial change; fear French Revolution (1789) might repeat .
Kamikaze	Explores social pressure placed upon kamikaze pilots during Japanese war effort; uses the viewpoint of the pilot's family to reveal shame and regret
Storm on the Island	Heaney grew up in rural N.Ireland and bases much of his poetry on countryside and farm life; poem set in an isolated cottage near the sea, exposed to a storm
Remains	Presents the dark, disturbing images of a soldier suffering post-traumatic stress disorder; written for Armitage's 2007 documentary 'The Not Dead'; uses monologue style
Charge of the Light Brigade	The Battle of Balaklava during the Crimean War 1853-1856; an order given to the 'Light Brigade' was misunderstood leading them straight into Russian artillery; news of the disaster in Britain caused sensation and outrage
Bayonet Charge	Written by Hughes in 1957 but focuses on a nameless soldier during WW1; describes the experience of being ordered to 'fix bayonet's and go 'over-the-top'; Hughes interested in relationship between man and nature
Poppies	Set in modern day but alludes heavily to Armistice Sunday 'Poppy' tradition; poem written during modern conflicts- Iraq and Afghanistan; uses war memorial as a symbol of personal loss and memory
The Prelude: Stealing the Boat	Wordsworth was a prominent Romantic poet: works during this era focused on intense emotion of an individual and humankind's relationship to nature; this is an extract from a longer, autobiographical poem written in blank verse.
My Last Duchess	Browning eloped with wife Elizabeth to Italy away from her over-protective father; loosely based on Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara, whose first wife died mysteriously in 1560- he went on to remarry. Written from his perspective
The Émigrée'	Title taken from word 'emigrate'- a person leaving a country to resettle elsewhere; examples in the poem that the narrator is fleeing tyranny/war or that her country has changed in her absence
Tissue	Dharker uses poems to discuss issues such as religion, global politics and identity. Explores modern day conflicts such as wars/terrorism, money/wealth/history and religion- compares these to material qualities of tissue
Checking Out Me History	Challenges ideas of how history is taught and relationship between 'facts' and 'truths; history is obscured by race and culture; presents powerful figures of black history in contrast with trivial Eurocentric examples of culture

Ozymandias

The ephemerality of power; the foolishness of hubris; the cruelty of tyrants; the eternal nature of time; the immortality of art.

War Photographer

Emotional pain and psychological pain; anger at detachment from the suffering of others; power of memories; after-effects of conflict

Exposure

Nature presented as enemy; physical and emotional pain of soldiers; reality and boredom of war; hopelessness and futility.

London

Misuse of power & ownership by monarchy & church; oppression of less-fortunate; moral/physical decay; restriction of freedom & thought; rapid urbanisation

Kamikaze

Destructive nature of patriotism & duty; internal conflict; the power and beauty of nature; the extraordinary power of nostalgia; shame and regret.

Storm on the Island

Nature in conflict with mankind; the power & relentlessness of the natural world; fear is invisible & very powerful.

Remains

The way guilt affects the minds of ex-soldiers; the graphic brutality of conflict; the terrible power of memory

Charge of the Light Brigade

The nobility and glory of war; admiration for the bravery and sacrifice; contrast between brutality of battlefield & nobility of soldiers; admiration for the way soldiers obey orders.

Bayonet Charge

Fear and the survival instinct; The dehumanisation of soldiers; war destroying man and nature; the insignificance of life; the physical & psychological effects of war.

Poppies

Mourning the loss of childhood; effect of war on others; sacrifice of parent and child; emotional turmoil; the innocent of nostalgia and power of memory

The Prelude: Stealing the Boat

The spiritual growth of the poet; nature's power over mankind our insignificance as human beings; threat and fear.

My Last Duchess

The power of individuals; family violence; conflict between husband and wife; hubris/pride as an unattractive quality

The Émigrée'

Power of memory and nostalgia; the threat and danger caused by conflict; close relationship between people and places; the conflict between freedom and restriction.

Tissue

Power of paper to record memories; paper is fragile, yet it controls our lives; life is more complex & precious than the things we create; human life is fleeting & temporary.

Checking Out My History

Anger and frustration at Eurocentric education; celebration of Caribbean and African culture; freedom of expression vs slavery; a challenge to the meaning of history.

	Language	Form and structure
Ozymandias	'antique land' = this will have a timeless story/moral; 'king of kings' = Godlike hubris of some rulers; 'colossal wreck' = oxymoron shows power is fragile; 'lone and level sands stretch' = time & nature will outlast man.	sonnet form = fleeting nature of power; ironic contrast between inscription and reality; anti-climax highlighted by caesura .
War Photographer	'spools of suffering set out' – paradox – chaos & suffering reduced to order – similar to war graves. 'All flesh is grass'- suffering and pain normalised for WP. 'A stranger's features faintly start to twist...' double-meaning of twist- connotations of pain/anguish. 'The reader's eyeballs prick/with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.'- 'prick' = short emotional pain - internal rhyme 'tears' and 'beers' suggests detachment	4 stanzas of equal length – regular rhyme scheme – echoes the care photographer the takes
Exposure	'Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knife us '- nature is personified– irony as we expect armies to assault; Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army'- nature personified with military imagery– ironic as 'dawn' usually brings hope – 'melancholy' mirrors bleakness of soldiers' feelings; 'We turn back our dying' dramatic- bitter- pronoun 'we' captures collective; 'But nothing happens.' – refrain – blunt, monotonous – ironic as we expect war to be glorious.	first person plural (our, we, us) – collective voice – half-lines reflect confusion & fading energy
London	Emotive language and tone = sorrow and misery; repetition of 'marks' and 'every'; black'ning church' & 'Runs in blood down palace walls' = criticism of ruling bodies; 'mind-forged manacles' = psychological imprisonment.	Dramatic first-person monologue; regular ABAB rhyme scheme reinforces the relentless oppression and misery (& walking pace).
Kamikaze	'Her father embarked at sunrise' –dramatic opening–'sunrise' associated with Japanese national identity; 'Little fishing boats/strung out like bunting' – vivid and idyllic; 'bunting' simile has connotations of celebration. 'A tuna, the dark prince.' metaphor for dangers lurking in nature. 'He must have wondered which had been the better way to die.' metaphorical death; final line- deep shame/rejection.	Third person narrative voice –we don't hear the pilot's voice – he is cut off . Russian doll' structure – story is 'passed down' – shame remembered forever
Storm on the Island	'We are prepared: we build our houses squat' –conversational, strong opening statement – feeling of safety – 'squat' = broad and wide – 'We' = collective; 'spits like a tame cat/Turned savage.' – violent imagery- simile= familiar things become frightening – enjambment creates shock; Exploding comfortably -oxymoron describes the sea – military imagery; Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear. ' narrator is thinking philosophically – confusion – invisibility of storm contrasts with the solidity of 'squat'	All one stanza – compact, sturdy like the houses – poem shifts from ideas of safety to ideas of fear
Remains	'probably armed, possibly not' – doubt and ambiguity – contrasts with the brutality we see later; One of my mates goes by and tosses his guts back into his body – 'mates' is casual and colloquial – 'tosses' is disrespectful – body seems like a piece of rubbish. his bloody life in my bloody hands' - double-meaning on 'bloody'- swearing & guilt – Macbeth allusion amplifies guilt & suggests mental imbalance.	Tone shifts from anecdotal to graphic – volta (turning point) at start of fifth stanza (' End of story, except not really)
Charge of the Light Brigade	'Into the jaws of death/Into the mouth of Hell' – Satanic imagery– battlefield personified as man-eating beast; 'Storm'd at with shot and shell' storm = anger/fury of battle –alliteration reinforces intensity – implies courage of soldiers; 'Honour the Charge they made/Noble six hundred!' – reader asked to respect and remember – 'noble' emphasises fine personal qualities – undying glory	Dactylic dimeter –echoes horse-beat cadences; varied rhyme scheme - drama/momentum of early verses is replaced by sorrow/solemnity by the end.
Bayonet Charge	'Suddenly he awoke and was running - raw'- adverbial and participle recreates the panic and surprise of sudden orders- raw= could refer to pain or youth of soldiers; 'Bullets smacking the belly out of the air' – nature personified as winded person - ferocity of the battlefield; 'King, honour, human dignity, etcetera/Dropped like luxuries' – listing – former passions are nothing compared to fear.	stanzas alternate -1 st stanza = frantic, 2 nd stanza = slow motion, 3 rd stanza = waking up to fear & reality of war
Poppies	'Steeled the softening of my face' – contrast between exterior strength, interior weakness; 'songbird' bird imagery–symbolises freedom of beautiful/delicate child; 'dove' symbolises death & mourning/ mother's new-found inner peace 'slowly melting' mother contrasts with son's excited lack of control – 'intoxicated'; 'hoping to hear your playground voice' – represents inability to let go – poignant last line;	irregular structure = emotional turmoil – caesura shows her breaking down with sadness – stream of consciousness
The Prelude: Stealing the Boat	2'It was an act of stealth/And troubled pleasure' – oxymoron hints at guilt & foreshows later emotions; 'Lustily I dipped my oars into the silent lake' imagery of sexual conquest ('lustily I dipped') nature is 'silent' and waiting; 'a huge peak, black and huge' – black has nightmarish connotations – 'huge' physical & psychological effects; "But huge and mighty forms...were a trouble to my dreams'- nature has profound and long-lasting effect.	free verse structure – iambic pentameter makes it conversational & personal- poem changes from euphony (pleasant sounding) to cacophony (harsh and rough sounding)
My Last Duchess	'That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,Looking as if she were alive.' – possessive pronoun 'my' suggests ownership – sets suspicious and sinister tone; 'she liked what'er she looked on, and her looks went everywhere.' – criticism of her cheeriness & friendliness – 'everywhere' – flirtatious; 'My gift of a nine-hundred years old name.' suggests the pride he has in his lineage; 'I gave commands;/then all smiles stopped together.' – possibly a euphemism for her murder – cold and chilling – her liveliness wiped away with ease.	dramatic monologue in iambic pentameter – in conversation with visitor – builds towards confession – rhyming couplets = control
The Émigrée'	'There once was a country...' – first line – fairy-tale atmosphere, ellipsis hints all is not well; 'the bright, filled paperweight.' – 'bright' = joy, vitality, positivity, 'filled' = many memories, paperweight = solid and fixed . 'My city takes me dancing through the city/ of walls.' Contrast between freedom/joy(dancing) and restriction (walls) – amplified by enjambment & caesura	. 1 st two stanzas – lots of enjambment – final stanza – end-stopping and caesura to suggest confinement.
Tissue	'Paper that lets the light shine through, this/is what could alter things' – light is symbol for truth/God – also thin paper/skin comes with old age & wisdom; . 'If buildings were paper I might feel their drift' – buildings are really temporary – 'drift' has connotations of impermanence, movement; 'might fly our lives like paper kites'- we are controlled with ease by money/wealth	free verse – stanzas build up in layers, like human identity – final line is directed at reader ' your skin '
Checking Out Me History	1. 'Dem tell me ...' – repeated throughout – amplifies anger – 'dem'- poem points finger at oppressors – phonetic spelling; 'Blind me to me own identity'- deprived of true history - contrasts with Nanny de Maroon – 'see-far woman'; 'I carving out me identity' – associations with African craft – peeling away the prison of British history to find truth & self-expression	Childish rhymes to mock British history – italicised stanzas are more poetic/passionate – no punctuation = rebellion against Standard English