How does Rumens present her ideas in 'The emigree’?
Be able to identify techniques and explore the effect on the reader.

**Task:** Fill out the themes grid. Which poems could you write about for each theme?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Period/Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1606</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
<td>Shakespeare</td>
<td>Jacobean/Shakespearean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Blake</td>
<td>Industrial Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Ozymandias</td>
<td>Shelley</td>
<td>Romantic Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>My Last Duchess</td>
<td>Browning</td>
<td>Set in 16th C Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>A Christmas Carol</td>
<td>Dickens</td>
<td>Victorian/Dickensian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>The Prelude</td>
<td>Wordsworth</td>
<td>Romantic Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Charge Light Brigade</td>
<td>Tennyson</td>
<td>True event - Crimean War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>AIC set</td>
<td>Priestley</td>
<td>Edwardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>World War One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>AIC written</td>
<td>Priestley</td>
<td>Post War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Bayonet Charge</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Set in WW1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Storm on Island</td>
<td>Heaney</td>
<td>The Troubles in Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>War Photographer</td>
<td>Duffy</td>
<td>War in 60s/70s/80s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The emigree</td>
<td>Rumens</td>
<td>City invaded in 90s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Tissue</td>
<td>Dharker</td>
<td>From The Terrorist at My Table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Checking out me history</td>
<td>Agard</td>
<td>Moved to Britain in 70s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Remains</td>
<td>Armitage</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Poppies</td>
<td>Weir</td>
<td>War in 21st C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Kamikaze</td>
<td>Garland</td>
<td>Set in WW2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does Rumens present her ideas in 'The emigree'?
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A displaced woman pictures the country and the city where she was born. Neither the city nor the country is ever named and this lack of specific detail seems intentional. It is as if Rumens wants her poem to be relevant to as many people who have left their homelands as possible.

Emigrants are people who have left the country of their birth to settle elsewhere in the world. The spelling of the word Rumens chooses - émigrée - is a feminine form and suggests the speaker of the poem is a woman.

The exact location of the city is unclear and precise details of it are sparse. Perhaps it only ever really existed in the émigrée's imagination.
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Rumens suggests the city and country may now be war-torn, or under the control of a dictatorial government that has banned the language the speaker once knew. Despite this, nothing shakes the light-filled impression of a perfect place that the émigrée’s childhood memories have left. This shows the power that places can have, even over people who have left them long ago and who have never revisited since. Though there is a clear sense of fondness for the place, there is also a more threatening tone in the poem, suggesting perhaps that the relationship with the past and with this place is not necessarily positive for the speaker.
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Key Words

- ‘emigree’ - a woman who has had to leave their home country, usually for political reasons
- ‘tyrant’ – an oppressive and unpleasant ruler
- ‘branded’ – marked by burning the skin – usually used for animals
- ‘frontiers’ – boundaries or borders, an extreme limit
- ‘molecule’ – the smallest part of a substance
- ‘docile’ – meek and obedient
How does Rumens present her ideas in 'The emigree'? 
Be able to identify techniques and explore the effect on the reader.

Carol Rumens ‘The émigree’

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.

Dec 15-12:57
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Comprehension Questions
1. When does the speaker say she left the country?
2. Which month is mentioned in the first stanza?
3. Which word ends each stanza?
4. What colour are the streets of the city?
5. How do the frontiers close?
6. What does the city taste of?
7. Why can the speaker not go back to her country?
8. Where does her city take the speaker?
9. What is she accused of?
10. Where does her city hide?

Deeper Thinking Questions
1. What do you think the city might represent?
2. What could the oppressive forces symbolise?
3. How does Rumens structure this poem?
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Compare the ways poets present the effects on conflict in 'The emigree' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.
'The emigree'
Rumens

Context:
Rumens was born in London and grew up there. She’s been described as someone who has a fascination with elsewhere. The word emigree is the feminine form of the word, implying the speaker is a woman who has left her home country due to war.

Themes:
Effects of conflict
Identity

S
The final stanza has more caesurae than the first two stanzas, reflecting how the speaker feels confined in her new city when ‘they’ threaten her.

P
Each stanza ends with the word ‘sunlight’, reinforcing the positive view the speaker has of her home city.

L
‘I am branded by an impression of sunlight’ - the verb ‘branded’ implies that her positive view is permanent and won’t change despite the negative news about ‘war’ and ‘tyrants’. However, ‘branded’ implies the memories are painful for her.

I
‘bright, filled paperweight’ - metaphor for her memories which are positive and fixed - her memories are not going to change.

T
‘The worst news I receive cannot break my original view’ - The strength of the speaker’s memories are shown here. However, the enjambment after break implies that the memories are false, undermining the positive view she has. Images of ‘tanks’, ‘tyrants’ and ‘war’ reinforce this.