**How does Poppies and one other poem present memories?**

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|  | **Poppies** | **Remains** | **Comparison (Similarities VS. Differences)** |
| **Context**  **(Only use for RELATE)** | Modern, probably Iraq war.  Gives a voice to a mother. | Modern, Iraq war – Basra  Voice of a soldier  PTSD |  |
| **Structure** | The ‘voice’ of a mother – First person – ‘I’ ‘I wanted to graze my nose…’ | ‘Voice’ of a soldier  ‘myself and somebody else’ – shows a distance.  ‘I see every round’ | Similarities about memory  Similarities about whose ‘voice’ is used. Both 1st person. |
| **Patterns** | Semantic field of sewing. ‘tucks’ ‘darts’ ‘pleats’  Memories of sewing labels, buttons – role of a mother. Remembers her past – happier times. | ‘probably armed, possibly not’ repetition.   1. Memory - PTSD 2. Guilt. He’s not sure. Justifies his memory of the moment. | Different |
| **Language** | Title – ‘Poppies’ memory of WWI and the dead soldiers linked to her dead son now. Poppies red. Blood. | Colloquial language – ‘he’s carted off on the back of a lorry’ - memory of what happened. Links to the memory of Wilfred Owen in WWI, showing nothing changes in war. | Different |
| **Imagery** | ‘playground voice’  ‘Like a wishbone’  Vulnerable imagery of the mother’s feelings and memories | ‘rips through his life’  ‘tosses his guts back into his body’  Hard and violent imagery. He remembers every detail. | Different |
| **Theme** | Motherhood and loss.  ‘released a songbird from its cage ‘ symbol of freedom. | PTSD and how it stays with you. Memories never leave your mind. ‘end of story, except not really’ | Similar |

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Remains, by Simon Armitage and Poppies, by Jane Weir are both poems written to show the impact of memory on different people. Remains focuses on the traumatic memories of a soldier while Poppies is linked to the memories of a bereaved mother. Both poems use first person. Poppies gives the mother a ‘voice’, and shows her deeply sad feelings of a mother’s memories, ‘I pinned one onto your lapel’, while Remains focuses on the soldier’s memories that will not go away, ‘I see every round’. Both poems are set in modern wars, and Remains is set in Basra during the first Iraq war.

The patterns in Remains help the reader to understand how damaging a bad memory can be. ‘Probably armed, possibly not’ is repeated later in the poem and shows the soldier suffered flashbacks to the moment he shot a ‘looter’. However, Poppies uses a semantic field to link back to a mother’s memories of her son. The language, ‘tucks’, ‘pleats’ and ‘darts’ refer to sewing and her memories of being a good mother who sews tags into school clothes and mends torn shirts. Modern audiences would be feel the pain of the mother through this simple and domestic act.

The title ‘Poppies’ has many connotations, for example, it links back to the memories of WWI and the Armistice. The poem is set during November as she ‘pinned one onto your lapel’. The red of the poppy also has links to blood, death and remembering the millions of fallen soldiers. In contrast, Remains uses colloquial language to casually refer back to past events, like ‘End of story, except not really’, which reminds the reader that the soldier is suffering from PTSD and going home is not the end of his bad memories. Remains focuses on the PTSD more than other poets over the decades, perhaps to highlight that all soldiers have seen, heard or done things they cannot forget.

Remains also uses powerful imagery to show the detail of the memories suffered by the soldier. The metaphor, ‘…rips through his life’ focuses on the action taken by the soldier and the consequence to the man. The verb ‘rip’ indicates extreme and horrific violence, which is why the soldier cannot forget. However, Weir uses gentler and more poignant imagery, ‘overflows like a treasure chest’, which is used to show how her son viewed the opportunities ahead of him. A modern audience is unlikely to see war as an opportunity for heroism, but more for adventure and travel.

Both poems share the clear theme of memory. Both poems show that whether the memory is of a close relative or a traumatic event, that memory will not fade. Weir’s reference to a ‘wishbone’ and Armitage’s reference to ‘six feet under’ show the true memory of war; death and vulnerability.