

“Do Now” Work

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?

	Power of humans	Power of nature	Effects of conflict	Reality of conflict	Loss	Negative emotions	Identity	Individual experiences	Memory	Fear	Experience of soldiers
Sayonara Charge											
Checking out me history											
Exposure											
Extract from the Prelude											
Kamikaze											
London											
My Last Duchess											
Ozymandias											
Poppies											
Remains											
Storm on the island											
The Charge of the light brigade											
The emigree											
Tissue											
War Photographer											

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1606	Macbeth	Shakespeare	Jacobean/Shakespearean
1794	London	Blake	Industrial Revolution
1817	Ozymandias	Shelley	Romantic Period
1842	My Last Duchess	Browning	Set in 16th C Renaissance
1843	A Christmas Carol	Dickens	Victorian/Dickensian
1850	The Prelude	Wordsworth	Romantic Period
1854	Charge Light Brigade	Tennyson	True event - Crimean War
1912	AIC set	Priestley	Edwardian
1917	Exposure	Owen	World War One
1945	AIC written	Priestley	Post War
1957	Bayonet Charge	Hughes	Set in WW1
1966	Storm on Island	Heaney	The Troubles in Northern Ireland
1985	War Photographer	Duffy	War in 60s/70s/80s
1993	The emigree	Rumens	City invaded in 90s
2006	Tissue	Dharker	From The Terrorist at My Table
2007	Checking out me history	Agard	Moved to Britain in 70s
2008	Remains	Armitage	Iraq
2009	Poppies	Weir	War in 21st C
2013	Kamikaze	Garland	Set in WW2

In Silence Please



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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

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not specific

positive,
good
memories

perjambent

→ metaphor

- Solid memories
- positive

→ metaphor

↳ simile

- ↳ metaphor - linked to war.

~~sunlight.~~

→ language

- Lack of hope

simile

→ metaphor

trapped in
her new
city.

Threatening

↳ protect her (city)

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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.

