

Charge of the Light Brigade (Tennyson)

“B_____ they rode and well
Into the j_____ of D_____

Into the m_____ of H_____”

Charge of the Light Brigade (Tennyson)

WHAT:

- Soldiers as **brave, heroic** and **fearless**
- Battlefield as **perilous** and **brutal**

HOW:

- **'Boldly'** = courage of the soldiers - they know what they are facing and continue regardless.
- **'Well'** - a sense of pride / respect - sees them as good fighters
- Adds to the **semantic field of bravery** = Tennyson celebrating the heroism of the soldiers

WHERE: “Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell”

HOW:

- **Personification** in 'jaws', 'mouth' = ominous
- **Bestial image** of soldiers swallowed by war. Predatory?
- **Refrain** - unity and strength in their task
- **Dactylic metre** - pace, energym, drama
Ballad form - learning

WHY:

- **Poet Laureate** - important moments in British history
- A celebration of unity and strength, rather than a criticism.
Glorification.
- Critique of war? Critique of higher positions?

Exposure (Owen)

“Our _____ ache in the
_____, iced east
_____ that _____ us”

Exposure (Owen)

WHAT:

- nature personified as **cruel, punishing** - worse than enemy soldiers

HOW:

- “**knife**” - wind is sharp, dangerous, lethal
- **personification** in “**merciless**” - weather like an enemy: uncaring, inhumane
- **sibilance** (‘s’ sounds) creates harsh, cutting tone like sound of wind
- **collective pronoun ‘our’** - shared experience - unity is only form of comfort and defence

WHERE: “Our brains ache in the merciless iced east winds that knife us...”

HOW:

- repeated **refrain** of ‘nothing happens’ gives **cyclical structure** - war is repetitive, pointless, achieves nothing
- use of **pararhyme** (half-rhymes) throughout - sense of disorientation, lack of clarity, no comfort or satisfaction

WHY:

- Owen fought in trenches in WW1 until killed at age of 25
- witnessed first hand **reality** and **futility** (pointlessness) of war
- worst damage of all is **emotional and spiritual numbness**

Bayonet Charge (Hughes)

“King, _____, human dignity
_____ / dropped like
_____ in a yelling
alarm”

Bayonet Charge (Hughes)

WHAT:

- chaotic, terrifying, urgent
- reasons for fighting = empty, hollow, propaganda

HOW:

- **'King, honour, human dignity'** - lists serious reasons for going to war - propaganda
- juxtaposed by **'etcetera'** - dismissive, cynical attitude towards these things now at war
- metaphor of **'dropped like luxuries'** - king, country now irrelevant, unhelpful in heat of battle - only panic and survival: 'yelling alarm', not heroism or bravery

WHERE:

"King, honour, human dignity, etcetera
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm"

HOW:

- **setting** of poem **in media res** - immerses reader in chaos of battle, disorientating
- **enjambment** portrays how reasons for fighting fall away in panic of moment
- **asyndetical listing** - pace, urgency and confusion - death is inevitable and approaching rapidly

WHY:

- **Emotional distress** of war - overloads senses and reason
- **Crisis of identity as soldier due to futility** of war
- Hughes' trying to empathise with soldiers - experienced conflict second-hand, through poets like **Owen** + stories from father and uncle

Remains (Armitage)

“Then I’m home on _____.
But I _____ / and he _____
again through the doors of
the _____”

Remains (Armitage)

WHAT:

- traumatising, oppressive, permanent psychological damage
- uncontrollable resurfacing of repressed emotions

HOW:

- **'home', 'leave'** - momentary relief and distance from war
- **'blink'** - closes speaker off from present moment and isolates them with their thoughts
- **'bursts'** = violent verb - metaphor for memory returning from subconscious mind - uncontrollable

WHERE:

“Then I’m home on leave. But I blink and he bursts again through the doors of the bank.”

HOW:

- **caesura** (pause) after 'leave', but line continues: memory of killing stays with him even when home, defies geographical boundaries
- **enjambment** after 'blink' - we are drawn down into his subconscious mind with him
- **cyclical structure** as words repeated from start of poem: memory recurs endlessly

WHY:

- Real life story of **Guardsmen Tromans**
- from Armitage's collection of interviews with soldiers from Gulf Wars - **'The Not Dead'** - exploring hidden effects of war like **PTSD**
- dangers of repression, uses **poetry to give a voice** to unspoken feelings

Kamikaze (Garland)

“Only we children still

_____ and _____ / until

_____ we too _____

to be _____”

Kamikaze (Garland)

WHAT:

- long-term **emotional** damage: shame, embarrassment
- **far-reaching, unnatural** effects of war on **civilians** as well as soldiers

HOW (language):

- **'laughed'** - children innocent at first, don't understand why father is ostracised (cut off)
- **contrast** of **'silent'** - start to ignore him
- **'learned'** - not natural behaviour, society conditions us to judge others; corruption of innocence
- **'gradually'** - happens slowly so we don't notice

WHERE:

“only we children still chattered and laughed till gradually we too learned to be silent”

HOW (structure):

- **enjambment** reinforces the contrast in the family's behaviour
- **temporal shift** (shift in time) in stanza 6 - creates sense of distance between the **past** (father's mission) and the **present** (daughter imagining his experience): makes him seem even more isolated and makes the poem even more tragic

WHY:

- War forces people to think and behave in **extreme, unnatural** ways (**Kamikaze pilots**)
- soldiers **judged as heroes or failures**, not as who they really are
- tragic **destruction of family relationship**, and of childhood innocence

The Emigrée (Rumens)

“There once was a _____,
I left it as a _____, / but my
memory of it is
_____ - _____”

The Emigrée (Rumens)

WHAT:

- long-term emotional damage, displacement, exile
- romanticised memory of place and past - an illusion but still important, protecting

HOW (language):

- **'There once was'** - allusion to childhood fairytales - a story that she often tells herself - comfort, routine, home = magical, but also idealised, illusory
- **'left'** - euphemism - doesn't specify reasons for leaving - instead focuses on positive aspects
- **'sunlight'** - motif repeated at end of each stanza - determined, optimistic

WHERE:

"There once was a country ... I left it as a child but my memory of it is sunlight-clear."

HOW (structure):

- childlike **tone** and **rhythm contrasts** with harshness of new country, also seen in **contrast in imagery of light and dark**
- uses **layers of imagery** throughout poem (instead of a more conventional narrative) to create an impression (an unclear view) of how the speaker feels - confused, disorientated, overwhelmed

WHY:

- From her collection 'Thinking Of Skins' - imagining different lives.
- Empathy with people affected by war **indirectly** (civilians, not just soldiers).
- *Poem can be read as **extended metaphor** for transition from childhood to adulthood - conflict with harshness of adult life and real world*

War Photographer (Duffy)

“A _____ preparing to intone
a _____.”

Belfast. _____.
All flesh is _____.”

War Photographer (Duffy)

WHAT:

- solemn (serious and sad), duty-bound, important
- conflicted, desensitised, cynical

HOW (language):

- **metaphors** 'priest', 'Mass' - photos commemorate sacrifice of lives in conflict + '**Intone**': needs to give importance, purpose to their deaths, otherwise pointless
- **asyndetical listing** of brutal civil conflicts - horrors of war blur together, become meaningless
- '**all flesh is grass**': allusion to Book of Isaiah - often an epitaph (words on tombstone) - reminder of mortality, how all human life is transient

WHERE:

"a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass."

HOW (structure):

- **cyclical structure**: poem starts and ends by describing him doing his job, showing:
 1. this has become normal, ongoing routine - becoming **desensitised** (losing his ability to feel normal emotions)
 2. futility - photos **do not change how we act**, and wars continue even though we can see how awful it is

WHY:

- Based on experiences of Duffy's friends McCullin and Griffiths, both famous war photographers
- Poses ethical question: right or wrong to take photos instead of helping?
- Forces responsibility on to **readers** (of newspapers & of poem)

Poppies (Weir)

“All my _____ / _____,
rolled, turned into _____ /
slowly _____”

Poppies (Weir)

WHAT:

- anxious, concerned, voiceless
- represses natural maternal instincts, but hard to remain brave

HOW (language):

- metaphor of “**turned into felt**” - crushing, compacting, compressing of emotions into something tough & strong + imagery of textiles: domestic, female perspective
- **asyndetical listing** of processes: ‘**flattened, rolled**’ - physical, laborious intensity of silence women endure in times of conflict

WHERE:

“all my words / flattened, rolled, turned into felt slowly melting.”

HOW (structure):

- **enjambment** before ‘**slowly**’ - lengthens loss and grief & acts out ‘**melting**’ of ‘steely’ strength - impossibility of maintaining this pose - powerlessness as strength dissolves
- **caesura** - experience is fragmented, disjointed, unsettling - feelings of loss and disconnection

WHY:

- Weir knew about conflict from living in Ireland during The Troubles
- Haunted by story of Wilfred Owen’s mother learning of his death as end of war being celebrated
- Deliberately created **ambiguity** over son’s death in poem - wanted this to be **universal** to all families who had sent loved one to war

Ozymandias (Shelley)

“My name is _____, _____
of _____; / _____ on my _____ ye
mighty, and _____.”

Ozymandias (Shelley)

WHAT:

- proud, arrogant, boastful, overconfident
- thinks he is divine, immortal
- but punished for hubris (overconfidence)

HOW (language):

- **repeated possessive pronouns 'my'** - self-centred, greedy + 'name' symbolising reputation
- **hyperbole** in 'King of Kings' - sees himself as above other rulers, divine
- **imperative verbs 'Look', 'despair'** = commanding, controlling, domineering
- **juxtaposition** with 'nothing': irony that power now faded away; his understanding of power seems foolish

WHERE:

"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

HOW (structure):

- **volta (turning point)** to shows decline of Ozymandias' power + use of **sonnet form** (usually a love poem) to mock Oz's love for power
- iambic pentameter (regular rhythm) broken in line 10 with 1 extra syllable to show how he tries to dominate but ends up overreaching

WHY:

- destroyed Egyptian **statue** of Ramesses II (Ozymandias in Greek) brought to England in 1818
- **Romantic** ideas: human power is insignificant (unimportant) compared to **nature** and time & **hubris** will always be punished

My Last Duchess (Browning)

“_____ grew, I gave _____;
then all smiles _____
together.”

My Last Duchess (Browning)

WHAT:

- jealous, controlling, dangerous
- sinister: hides violence behind veneer (thin layer) of sophistication

HOW (language):

- 'commands' - strong, forceful word - proud
- 'Stopped' - harsh, abrupt tone - revels in his power to control wife (& also life and death). Also **euphemism** (avoiding saying 'murder' directly): violence hidden behind sophisticated veneer
- 'This' = indirect, evasive about reasons - cannot admit weakness of jealousy

WHERE:

"...This grew; I gave commands;
then all smiles stopped together"

HOW (structure):

- **Semi-colons** create **caesurae** (pauses) where we have to imagine the things he doesn't admit.
- **form (dramatic monologue)** and **layout (one long stanza)** = psychological portrait of Duke's self-centred, controlling nature shown through structure of poem: he controls the narrative

WHY:

- Browning interested in **criminology** (study of crime).
- Imagines effects of extreme power on a person (**cruel, unkind, corrupt**)...
- ... but also how power **protects and enables corruption** (abuse of power).
- **Power of art**: to preserve, to capture?
- **Romantic** ideas about nature / emotion

Checking Out Me History (Agard)

“_____ tell me / what dem
want to tell me /
_____ up me eye with
me own _____ / _____
me to me own _____”

Checking Out Me History (Agard)

WHAT:

- power can be **controlling, damaging, disabling**
- education and knowledge decided by people in power & used to control, oppress

HOW (language):

- **'dem'** (English government) - use of **third person pronoun** and **non-standard phonetic spelling** - feels different & apart from England - defiant tone, poem as form of protest
- **'blind'** - **metaphor**: loss of sight & understanding, unable to see who he really is - shocking, violent image because done deliberately
- **'bandage'** - metaphorically wounded - schools think they are helping children but are damaging and limiting them

WHERE: "Dem tell me / wha dem want to tell me / bandage up me eye with me own history / blind me to me own identity"

HOW (structure):

- stanzas about White British history are **ordered, repetitive, using quatrains** (four line verses) - reflects his experience of education as repetitive, unnatural, forced
- **contrasted** with stanzas about Black history are written in **free verse**, with more pace, rhythm & natural imagery: passion & joy at discovering own history & culture

WHY:

- Agard grew up in British Guiana & learned **curriculum decided by English government** 8,000 km away, instead of history of West Indies
- **frustration, anger and sadness** at own voice and experienced being ignored
- Wants to **reclaim and celebrate his culture and voice**
- similar to Black Lives Matter movement?

Tissue (Dharker)

“paper _____ and
_____/ and thinned to be
_____, turned into
”

Tissue (Dharker)

WHAT:

- central metaphor of paper to represent **alternative understanding of power**
- power not about control / lasting forever, but instead about accepting **fragility & transience**

HOW (language):

- **'transparent'** - lets light through - metaphor for truth, understanding - beautiful, delicate image: *paradox that power lies in fragility: true power is ability to be accepting, forgiving*
- tricolon of **'smoothed', 'stroked', 'thinned'** - layers images of nurture and respect - like layers of tissue - power requires care and humility
- **direct address** to reader in **'your skin'** - personal tone - reveals hidden meaning of tissue as human skin - true meaning of poem is to do with human life and message about human power needing to be more forgiving, accepting

WHERE:

"paper smoothed and stroked and thinned to be transparent, turned into your skin."

HOW (structure):

- images relating to paper are **layered** through the poem. This is like the way that tissue is created from lots of connected layers.
- **final stanza just one line long** (other stanzas all quatrains) - so we notice true meaning of poem: paper teaches us about human life and human power
- **enjambment** throughout poem adds to feeling of movement and beauty

WHY:

- Dharker lived in **Pakistan, India, Wales and Scotland** - described herself as a **'Scottish Muslim'**
- Interested in what connects people of **different cultures**
- We are like paper: fragile, beautiful and powerful - but need to re-imagine what *power is first*

London (Blake)

“How the

_____ - _____’s cry /

every _____ Church

”

London (Blake)

WHAT:

- **inequality - suffering** of poor & vulnerable people
- institutions that should be helping are corrupt, neglectful and hypocritical

HOW (language):

- **“chimney-sweepers”** - small children - vulnerable, need protecting.
- **emotive language: ‘cry’** - miserable, asking for help.
- **‘blackning Church’**- **symbol** for religious corruption: they fail in duty to help the weak despite pretending to be ‘appalled’ (shocked); hypocrisy because should show charity

WHERE:

“How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls”

HOW (structure):

- In this stanza, uses **trochaic rhythm** to add pace and urgency to his message
- rest of poem has **rhyming quatrains** (four line stanzas) and simple **iambic rhythm** to sound like a child’s nursery rhyme. Poem has simple tone, to make the idea that powerful people are cruel and uncaring seem obvious and simple too.

WHY:

- **Industrial Revolution** = factories, growth of big cities, spread of capitalism
- This led to: **pollution, greed, corruption, inequality of wealth, child labour**
- Blake was an **early Romantic**: horrified by **damage** that Ind. Rev. was having on **nature, childhood and the imagination**

Storm on the Island (Heaney)

“But _____. When it begins the
flung _____ spits like a _____
_____ / turned _____”

Storm on the Island (Heaney)

WHAT:

- **violent, wild, unpredictable**
- **defies** our attempts to control it

HOW (language):

- **'spits'** - storm personified as aggressive and angry
- **'savage'** - wild, violent - has no rules that control its behaviour
- also shown through **sibilance** and **plosives**
- **simile** in **'like a tame cat'** - we think nature is gentle - under our control - but this is hubristic (overconfident)...
- ...**contrast** between **'tame'** and **'savage'** - two sides to nature - both gentle *and* powerful - unpredictable
- enjambment before **'turned'** - can change without warning

WHERE:

"But no. When it begins, the flung spray ...
spits like a tame cat / turned savage."

HOW (structure):

- **Volta** (turning point) in **'But no'** and **enjambment** before **'turned'** show how nature can change without warning
- This poem is written in **free verse** (no rhyme) to show the power and freedom of the storm
- **Contrast in tone** from beginning (confident, steady) to end (violent, dramatic) to show punishment for overconfidence

WHY:

- Heaney **grew up on a farm** - flat and exposed - close to sea - frequent storms
- **power of nature** needs to be respected
- but also odd and **illogical** that we dramatise this as a battle between humans because in reality nature is *impersonal* and uncaring

The Prelude (Wordsworth)

“A huge p____, b_____ and
h_____ ... u_____ its head”

The Prelude (Wordsworth)

WHAT:

- **intimidating, foreboding, ominous**
- punishing speaker for **hubris**

HOW (language):

- **repetition** of 'huge' at either end of line - sense of being overwhelmed - claustrophobic
- **simplistic, monosyllabic tone** - poetic skill has deserted speaker - paralysed by sense of sublime
- **personification** in 'upreared' - monstrous, terrifying, divine (godlike) power - 'head' = conscious, intentional, pursuing him

WHERE:

"a huge peak, black and huge ... / Upreared its head."

HOW (structure):

- **chiasmus** (mirrored word order within a line) shows entrapment, fixation, awe at nature
- **volta** (turning point) to reflect contrast between youthful hubris (arrogance) at start and unease, insignificance at end

WHY:

- Early **Romantic**, grew up in Lake District
- **sublime** power of nature - more powerful than human actions
- poem as an extended metaphor for transition from confidence and innocence of **childhood** to experience and concerns of **adulthood** ('huge peak' symbolises exposure to size and harshness of world)