

The Emigrée

Key Learning: to analyse and understand the poem 'The Emigrée.'

Background/about:

- **Title:** An emigrée is normally a person forced to leave a country for political or social reasons. It is a feminine version of 'immigrant,' and hints that the narrator is a woman.
- **Content:** the poem deal with the theme of remembering. The Poet, Rumens, presents the reader with a city remembered from her childhood.

Suggests that it is no longer there or she is no longer there.

Suggests she is no longer a child and is remembering the time she was and when she had to leave.

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.

Metaphor - Suggests that it's important to her because she remembers it vividly. Sunlight could also reflect that it was a nice, bright and happy place for her.

Superlative - emphasises how fond she was of the place.

Hints at the reason they were asked to leave.

Suggests that the fond memories she has will stick with her forever.

Emphasises how she loved the country and that she will never be able to forget it. Not even the bad news can ruin how much she loves it.

Adjectives here emphasise the fondness of her memories. The fact that it was a beautiful country. 'Whote' could suggest innocence, the innocence of her as a child or the people that were made to leave.

Reinforces to the reader that she was a child - emphasises her innocence. Could suggest that what she remembers isn't completely accurate.

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.

The lie banned by the state could refer to anything positive she has to say about her homeland.

Could also suggest that the language used in that country has also been banned.

No matter what she will always be positive about that country - she has really strong and happy feelings towards it despite the fact this might be 'banned by the state.'

Military language - again hinting at why they were asked to leave?

Emphasises the idea that they were forced to leave - unplanned and unprepared.

Personification- shows us how much she loves the country that she constantly thinks about and remembers it.

Metaphor
- it is still a part of her and her life.

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.

Repetition- could suggest innocence could suggest surrendering.

Repetition of sunlight - to emphasise how fond she was of it.

Shadow and sunlight - oxymoron - emphasising the difference between her home country and where she is now and how she is uncomfortable there compared to where she was.

She is unable to talk about her home land as again it is considered wrong and has been 'banned.'

Themes:

Theme	Evidence	Analysis
Exile: The speaker seems to be an exile from an unknown city.	'émigrée', 'I left it as a child', 'the frontiers rise between us', 'there's no way back', 'I have no passport'.	Perhaps this mysterious and now unreachable city the speaker recollects is meant to represent the past, to which they can't return to. A repeated comparison like this, which runs through the poem, is known as an extended metaphor.
News reports: Words and phrases associated with TV news bulletins used throughout.	Vocabulary of the newsroom - 'worst news', 'at war', 'tyrants', 'rolls its tanks', 'banned by the state'.	The vocabulary used throughout the poem depicts a war-torn country under the control of a brutal government. If the speaker's memories are of childhood, perhaps these terms are meant to represent the harsh realities of the adult world.
Light and shade: References to sunlight is repeated all the way through.	'sunlight-clear', 'branded by ... sunlight', 'bright, filled paperweight', 'the white streets', 'tastes of sunlight', 'being dark', 'my shadow falls as evidence of sunlight'.	The repeated references to sunlight suggest the speaker has an idealised, almost dream-like picture of the past, where it is always sunny. However, the place is not as perfect as she remembers it and mentions of 'dark' and 'death' imply that things are not as ideal as her memories suggest. There is a sense that her relationship with the place may be threatening to her in some way.

Structure:

- The poem is composed of three stanzas. The first two stanzas are eight lines each and the last stanza has nine lines. Why there's an extra line is unclear. Perhaps it suggests the speaker just can't let go of the memories and just doesn't want the poem to end?
- The poem does not use rhyme, but there is a suggestion of a rhythmic pattern of five stresses to the line - although this pattern never fully establishes itself as a regular rhythm. Perhaps this reflects the speaker's state of mind, which though positive in many ways is also uneasy, unsettled and complex.

Learning Homework

- Learn TWO metaphors from the poem
- Learn ONE example of personification
- Learn one image of sunlight
- Learn one reference to darkness
- Learn ONE simile