

### Remains:

Simon Armitage's poetry is known for its colloquial style, strong rhythms and voice. He deals with personal relationships, often drawing on his own life experience. He often uses the monologue form in his poetry to create immediate and moving characters

In preparation for this his TV work, he interviewed veteran soldiers of different wars, including the Gulf War. The reference to 'desert sand' in this poem suggests that it reflects the experiences of soldiers in the Gulf War.

There's an intertextual link to 'Macbeth' with the blood and guilt of killing.

### Kamikaze:

Beatrice Garland listened to lots of peoples' stories that fuelled her writing. Here she recounts a story told by someone else about a place and time beyond the poet's own direct experience. The story recounted in one voice, with an ending in someone else's direct words - is a structure she uses in other poems too.

The poem reflects the immense social pressure brought to bear on the pilots to carry out kamikaze missions as part of Japan's war effort during World War Two. Instead of simply thinking of the poem as being about a military mission in the past, it might also prompt the thought that suicide missions are part of modern day conflicts too and are very much in the news.

### Exposure:

World War One began in 1914 and at first it was predicted that it would end swiftly. By the winter of 1917 both sides had sustained massive losses and extreme cold weather made the misery even worse. It was said to be the coldest winter in living memory. The soldiers suffered from [hypothermia](#) and frostbite and many developed trench foot, a crippling disease caused by feet being wet and cold and confined in boots for days on end.

Owen and his fellow soldiers were forced to lie outside in freezing conditions for two days. .

Owen and a number of other poets of the time used their writing to inform people back in Britain about the horrors of the war and in particular about life on the front line. He, like many others, had anger and saw war as a waste.

Owen had joined the army in 1915 but was hospitalised in May 1917 suffering from 'shell shock' (today known as PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).

Owen eventually returned to the war but was tragically killed just days before the war ended; he was just 26. He is now regarded as one of Britain's greatest war poets.

### My Last Duchess:

**Robert Browning** (1812-1889) was heavily influenced as a youngster by his father's extensive collection of books and art. He lived in Italy for many years.

Browning is best known for his use of the *dramatic monologue (speaks directly to a listener)*. *My Last Duchess* is an example of this and it also reflects Browning's [love](#) of **history** and **European culture** as the story is based on the life of an Italian Duke from the sixteenth century. The Duchess is thought to be the first wife of the Duke of Ferrara, who died three years into their marriage.

**Commented [RG1]:** Maybe links to the excitement see the poem

### Checking out Me History:

**John Agard** was born in the Caribbean, in 1949. He moved to the UK in the late 1970s and is well known for **powerful and fun performances** of his work.

He uses non-standard phonetic spelling (written as a word sounds) to represent his own accent, and writes about what it is like being black to challenge racist attitudes, especially those which are unthinking.

The poem is a protest about how history is taught. The poem gives examples of powerful black figures from history, often involved in conflicts themselves in one way or another. Noticeably the poet emphasises how we often celebrate our national or cultural history, without looking at the history and culture of those we were in conflict with.

### Ozymandias:

**Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792-1822) is one of the most famous poets in all of English literature. He was one of a group of poets who became known as **The Romantics**.

He came from a wealthy family and was in line to inherit both riches and his grandfather's role as an MP.

Shelley was well known as a 'radical' during his lifetime and some people think *Ozymandias* reflects this side of his character. Although it is about the remains of a statue of Ozymandias (another name for the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II) it can be read as a criticism of people or systems that become huge and believe themselves to be invincible.

Inspired by the recent unearthing of part of a large statue of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramesses II. The Egyptians Pharaohs believed themselves to be Gods in mortal form and that their legacy would last forever.

### Bayonet Charge:

Ted Hughes (1930-1998) was born in Yorkshire, in the North of England, and grew up in the countryside. After serving in the RAF for two years, he won a scholarship to Cambridge University. The themes of the countryside and human history already deeply influenced his imagination by the time he started writing poetry as a student. There is reference to the propaganda of war; that men realised war was not like what they had been told. There is an emphasis that men were weapons and nothing more.

### Charge of the Light Brigade:

Alfred Tennyson started writing poetry from a young age and published his first poems while still a student at Cambridge. His poems range from those focused on the legend of King Arthur to those dealing with the loss of a loved one.

In 1850 he became *poet laureate*. This meant he had to write important poems about events that affected the British nation. He focuses on a battle during the Crimean War where the Britons took a massive hit against the 'more powerful' Russian army.

The soldiers were respected for following orders, even though they knew they maybe wrong. Some press criticised the way the soldiers blindly followed orders. Lord Tennyson wrote the poem as a protest to the press; to highlight the bravery and the soldiers' glorious sacrifice.

### War Photographer:

Duffy was inspired to write this poem through her friendship with someone who was a war photographer. She was especially intrigued by the peculiar challenge faced by these people whose job requires them to record terrible, horrific events without being able to help them directly.

Throughout the poem, Duffy provokes her reader to consider their own response when confronted with the photographs that we regularly see in our newspaper supplements and why so many of us have become desensitized to these images. By viewing this issue from the perspective of the photographer, she also reveals the difficulties of such an occupation (many war photographers die).

The poem is also looking at the contrast between the war zone and safety of being back home and the way people just do not understand the truth, after all a single photo cannot show everything.

### London:

William Blake was a poet in Victorian/Georgian England. He wrote a selection of poems in his anthologies 'Songs of Innocence and Experience' from experience. The 'Experience' poems were often more bitter and cynical and challenging of society.

The poem is set during a time in England where there was poverty, child labour. Women had no rights, death rates from disease and malnutrition were high and the industrial revolution has resulted in many large oppressive factories. Blake's poems often railed against these and how London, arguably the greatest city in the world at that time, was so dirty and corrupt.

### The Prelude (Stealing the boat):

William Wordsworth was a romantic poet who was born in the Lake District, he wrote poems about the world we live in which challenged people and the way they thought at the time. During this time 'epic' poems of large length, and Man's place within the world, were common. This extract is from a much larger poem, it looks at the spiritual and moral development of a man growing up. Wordsworth believed in beauty and the power of nature.

### Storm on the island:

Seamus Heaney was born in Northern Ireland in 1939, the eldest child in what was to become a family of nine children. Much of Heaney's poetry is centred on the countryside and farm life that he knew as a boy. The first 8 letters of the title spell 'Stormont' which is the name of the Government buildings in Northern Ireland. The word Island also has a phonetic similarity to Ireland. Therefore the poem works on two levels: as a description of the storm and as an extended **metaphor** for the political situation in Northern Ireland.

### Poppies:

Jane Weir - The poem is based very heavily around the idea of Poppies as memorials and therefore the idea of memory.

### Tissue:

Imtiaz Dharker was born in 1954, Pakistan but she grew up in Glasgow. Tissue is from her poetry collection called 'The terrorist at my table'. Most of the poems in that collection relate to religion, terrorism and global politics.

The poem is written from the point of view of someone today looking out at the conflict and troubles of the modern world; destruction, war and politics, money and wealth as well as issues like terrorism and identity. The poem remarks how nothing is meant to last, that it would be better not to hold too tightly to that and instead we should be willing to let go and pass things on in their time to be remade.

### The Emigree:

Carol Rumens - Emigree relates to the word emigrate, the idea that a person goes and settles in another country, sometimes not feeling welcome to return.

The poet bases many of the ideas on modern examples of emigration from countries like Russia or the Middle East where people are fleeing corruption and tyranny.