

Candidate 4

Dissertation books = A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini
 Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Adichie

S.A.T. 13; leaving the white glow of filling stations
 where Sweeney fled before the bloodied heads
 What blazed ahead of you? A faded road made?
 Engine, voices, heeded hearts and the cold nosed gun?
 Where you were not known & far from what you knew
 Still scared to find spent cartridges
 Acid brassy, ejected,
 For you & yours & yours & mine fought shy / Could not
 crack the whip or seize the day. I turn to find you
 on your knees / And kneel before you, in brimming grass
 And gather up cold handfuls of dew. To wash you clean.

3 When all the others were away at mass I was all here
 as we pecked potatoes.
 Little pleasant splashes from each other were used
 vs to our senses.
 So while the parish priest went hammer & tongs at
 prayers for the dying / I was remembered her head bent towards
 my head.
 Her breath in mine, our blent dripping towels, never closer than
 the whole rest of our lives.

7. In the last minutes he said more to her than in all their life
 together.
 His head bent down towards her propped up head. He called her good and
 girl. Then she was dead.
 The space we stood around
 emptied into us to keep, fit penetrates
 A cool ramifying fervor, silence beyond
 silence listened for -

As you ploughed the harvest bow you implicated the mellowed
 silence in you. In wheat that does not rest but brings news on its
 tightens twist by twist. I tell & linger it like Braille.

And if I spy into its golden loops I see us / walking below
 the railway slopes. ~~the~~ the end of art is peace, could be the motto
 of this trail device. like a drawn snare shipped lately by the spirit of corn.

6. Seamus Heaney, writing late 20th century, wrote

various collections of poems in which he beautifully
 depicts his relationships to his family. Heaney wrote
 many of his poems following the death of his mother
 and cousin, using his loss as his poetic inspiration.

Using a variety of verses, poignant imagery and
 various structures, Heaney displays the theme of loss
 in 'The Strand at Lough Beg', 'The Clearances' and
 'The Harvest Bow'.

'The Strand at Lough Beg' is a beautiful poem
 written which Heaney dedicated to his cousin following
 his cousin's murder. Heaney ~~clear~~ creates a story in
 which he loses his cousin as Heaney did not actually

witness his cousin's death and he regrets not being
 with him. He uses this poem as a formal goodbye towards
 his cousin. This contrasts the other poems to follow as this is the only loss in which
 Heaney presents an external loss.

Immediately, ^{in the poem} Heaney ^{skillfully} alludes to the fact

that he lost his cousin due to danger and violence;

'Where Sweeney fled before the bloodied heads', Heaney's reference to Sweeney - a madman who murdered a saint - conveys that the location Heaney's cousin was heading towards was dangerous and 'bloodied heads' alludes to the death of his cousin. Heaney is aware that his cousin was in a violent location - in Ireland during the Troubles - however, he ~~is~~ illustrates through questions his confusion over his cousin's death as he does not know exactly how he was killed; 'What blazed ahead of you? ... Engines, voices, bearded heads and the cold nosed gun?' Through his placement of 'you', Heaney we realise that Heaney is using this poem as a platform to reach out to his cousin for answers. The climactic list emphasises the routine nature of these killings by the IRA and also depicts the murder and how it occurred - in Heaney's mind. By imagining the murder, Heaney is able to come to terms with the loss of his cousin.

Heaney describes how the loss of his cousin

came as a surprise considering their family is very shy towards the barbaric nature of 'the Troubles'; 'For you and yours and yours and mine might shy / Could not crack the whip or seize the day.' Through Heaney's use of word play reminds the reader of how the family were all intertwined and emphasizes Heaney's strong relation to his cousin. The cliché use of metaphors conveys how ^{their} Heaney's family were typical, safe people, they did not like to step out of their comfort zones or get involved in big events. Heaney even describes his cousin as being 'scared to wind spent cartridges' which again highlights his cousin's distance to violence and discomfort around objects which could cause harm.

In the last stanza of the poem, Heaney ^{gravely} depicts his cousin's death and the ultimate loss.

'I turn to wind you on your knees', Heaney's ~~revelation depicts the cousin's~~ position in which Heaney finds his cousin suggests he may be praying ~~for money his bullets for mercy and~~

which reminds the reader of religion's involvement in 'The Troubles' as it was an origin of a lot of conflict and is the possible reason for his cousin's death.

Heaney continues to use religious imagery; 'And kneel before you, in the brimming grass / And gather up cold handfuls of dew. To wash you, cousin'. Heaney's 'kneeling' is symbolic as another religious image as people 'kneel before' ~~praise~~ God in church. It suggests that Heaney refers to his cousin as God in his moments of death & Heaney washing his cousin is ~~suggests~~ a religious ritual, possibly to cleanse his cousin from the sins of others. The setting of death, 'in brimming grass' is also significant as both Heaney and his cousin were brought up around agriculture, therefore it is an appropriate place to let his life to end as he is surrounded by familiarities. By including himself in the last moments of his cousin's life through the poem, Heaney can gain closure in the loss of his cousin as he can imagine he witnessed the loss of his cousin and

also made his cousin's death more peaceful for the
 cousin. The poem contrasts the poem to follow as Heaney it is the only poem in which Heaney depicts the explicit involvement of violence in the loss.

After The death of Heaney's father also inspired Heaney to write a poem about his loss. 'The Harrest Bow' is an elegy dedicated to Heaney's father in which Heaney uses the bow as a physical link between Heaney and his father, the past and the present and art and nature. Contrastingly to 'A Strand at Lough Beg' Heaney does not refer to his father's death but instead conveys how the Harrest Bow acts as a symbol of Heaney's father after his loss. Heaney switches between past and present tense in the poem to explain the significance of the bow. ~~Heaney uses a metaphor to convey the the~~ Heaney uses a variety of imagery to describe the bow; 'in wheat that does not rust but brightens as it brightens, twists by twist.' 'Brightens' suggests the bow illuminates and holds hope and proper whilst Heaney also conveys that by not 'rusting' it will never decay and will always be immune to death.

The internal rhythm mimics the plaiting of the bow suggesting that Heaney's father evokes these specialities of the bow and that because of his father, the bow will never die and therefore his father's spirit will not either.

Heaney then uses ~~ex~~ past tense to create a nostalgic tone whilst referring to a memory that the bow evokes; 'And if I spy into its golden loops / I see us, walking between the railway slopes'. Heaney highlights how the bow triggers ^{rare} intimate memories of rare times when the two spent time together. 'Golden' again suggests the bow is precious, in which to Heaney it is as it elucidates his father's presence in his memory. The fast rhythm of the poem that mimics the plaiting of the bow is then broken down as Heaney states, 'the end of art is peace, could be the motto of this frail device'. The statement is emphasized by the loss of rhythm conveying it's significant meaning; Heaney suggests that art is

inspired by chaos, death and destruction out of which
 when concluded create peace and tranquility. Heaney
 is suggesting that the poem and the bow are an outcome
 of this belief, as both were inspired and created through
 death and loss. Connecting such a powerful statement
 to a 'frail' device, creates contrast, which emphasizes
 the unspoken value of the Harvest Bow. Heaney
 alludes to its undetermined value again through the
 referring to it as
~~use of oxymoron~~, 'a throwaway love knot of straw'.
~~Heaney says~~ how the use of oxymoron ~~and~~ creates
 contrast, comparing the literal value of the bow to its
 personal value. Although it may not be worth a lot
 of money, to Heaney it is precious as it keeps the
 memory of his father vivid, and romanticises his loss.
 Heaney concludes the poem similarly to 'Strand at
 Leugh Beg' ^(SAMB), by bringing closure to the loss of his
 father, 'like a drawn spore slipped later by the
 spirit of corn'. Similarly to SAMB, Heaney ~~was~~
~~on~~ ^{links} ~~connects~~ the agriculture back to his family during the

The loss. The simile, 'like a drawn snare', ~~step on~~ connects Heaney's father's past of hunting and agriculture, which ultimately connects his father's loss of life with the familiarities of agriculture. Heaney uses this technique in SABB. The simile also conveys how although The Harvest Bow has trapped the spirit of Heaney's father, it is now starting to slowly release it as Heaney has now found closure over the loss. ~~The~~ Heaney uses both poems ~~to~~ ^{emotive} as gestures of in which he seeks for closure of the loss of these two relationships he had, with his cousin, and his father. *

Contrastingly, 'The Clearances', which are sonnets written by Heaney ~~to~~ describing the loss of his mother, were extremely emotive and heartfelt and include

little connection to agriculture and no link to violence, unlike SABB and THB.
Heaney's use of elegy in THB and sonnets in The Clearances contrast SABB, as THB and Clearances use emotive verbs of poetry to describe a loss where as SABB does not.

* However, contrastingly to SABB and 'The Clearances';

The Harvest Bow is the only poem in which Heaney does not refer to religion or use religious imagery when describing the

- o loss
- o family
- o goodbyes
- o emotive
- o religion

the loss of his father.

'The Clearances' is composed of eight scenes in which Heaney describes his relationship with his mother and how her loss affected him. In the third scene, Heaney depicts the how mundane household chores were brought to life by his mother; 'when all others were away at mass, I was all hers as we peeled potatoes'. The insight reveals Heaney's possessiveness over his mother, suggesting he adored the time he spent with her. This admiration and closeness emphasizes how difficult leaving his mother would be. In the scene, Heaney also ~~was~~ alludes to his mother's illness, expressing her loss, 'So while the parish priest at her bedside went hammer and tongs at prayers for the dying', Heaney uses an almost disgusted tone to convey his disapproval and suggest he viewed the priest's actions as invasive. This suggests that Heaney may have been in denial of ever his mother's poor health. He continues to convey the pair's close relationship, ~~and~~

'6. 'her head bent towards my head'. The emotive
 image conveys how the pair were each other's
 strength, they held each other up and looked to
 each other for salvation. This emotive depiction
 is contrasting to SAMB and TMB, as Meaney ^{shys} ~~shys~~
 away from revealing a lot of intimate interactions
 between him and other family members. ^{but} ~~however,~~
^{exposes these interactions when born}
 Meaney ~~does~~ ^{contrast} this when writing about his mother. ^{his}
 emphasized his love for her and to emphasize the
 centrality of desiring her; ^{suggesting they were closer than any other relationship he held} He concludes the third sonnet
 'by in ~~an~~ an almost cyclical nature; 'Mer
 breath in ^{mind} ~~my~~, at silent dripping hours, never
 closer the whole rest of our lives.' Meaney cyclically
 refers back to the domestic kitchen refers to signify
 the importance of the memories when remembering
 his mother. He ~~alludes~~ alludes to the God Genesis,
 'her breath in mine', suggesting his mother breathed
 life into him and conveying that she is responsible
 for his creative success. He also conveys how he is

aware that they physically will never be closer again after losing her, as to when they were during these tasks.

In the seventh sonnet, The seventh sonnet is dedicated to the death of Heaney's mother. Heaney uses a short statement to describe her death, 'then she was dead.' The short statement emphasizes the suddenness of her departure. Unlike SAMB and TMB, there is no run up to her death in this sonnet, it is sharp and abrupt. This symbolizes how compared to the other sons', his mother's was the most unexpected. He uses a metaphor to convey how painful the loss of his mother was, 'the space we stood around emptied / into us to keep, it penetrated'. The metaphor literally, the room was cleared after her death. However, metaphorically, Heaney suggests that after her loss he absorbed her spirit and all of her memories. 'Penetrated' explicitly conveys how painful and difficult this loss was to Heaney. This again contrasts SAMB and TMB as Heaney never explicitly reveals

how he feels about the loss of his cousin or father.

In sestet eight, Heaney concludes the sestet, and ultimately the collection of sonnets, by referring back to his mother as, 'a silence beyond silence listened for.' Heaney suggests that he will always long to hear her unspeakable words, and refers back to their lack of communication, as they did not talk but instead rested their heads against each other. This suggests that Heaney still has not found closure over the loss of his mother and contrasts this poem to *SAHB* and *TMB*, as he has not metaphorically put his mother to rest yet.

To conclude, Heaney effectively uses a variety of poetic techniques and treatments to convey the theme of loss.