

Compare the ways poets present the power of memory in 'Poppies' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

### Poppies

Three days before Armistice Sunday  
and poppies had already been placed  
on individual war graves. Before you left,  
I pinned one onto your lapel, crimped petals,  
spasms of paper red, disrupting a blockade  
of yellow bias binding around your blazer. 5

Sellotape bandaged around my hand,  
I rounded up as many white cat hairs  
as I could, smoothed down your shirt's  
upturned collar, steeled the softening  
of my face. I wanted to graze my nose  
across the tip of your nose, play at  
being Eskimos like we did when  
you were little. I resisted the impulse  
to run my fingers through the gelled  
blackthorns of your hair. All my words  
flattened, rolled, turned into felt, 10 15

slowly melting. I was brave, as I walked  
with you, to the front door, threw  
it open, the world overflowing  
like a treasure chest. A split second  
and you were away, intoxicated. 20

After you'd gone I went into your bedroom,  
released a song bird from its cage.  
Later a single dove flew from the pear tree,  
and this is where it has led me, 25  
skirting the church yard walls, my stomach busy  
making tucks, darts, pleats, hat-less, without  
a winter coat or reinforcements of scarf, gloves.

On reaching the top of the hill I traced  
the inscriptions on the war memorial,  
leaned against it like a wishbone. 30

The dove pulled freely against the sky,  
an ornamental stitch. I listened, hoping to hear  
your playground voice catching on the wind. 35

Jane Weir

Compare the ways poets present the reality of conflict in 'Bayonet Charge' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

### **Bayonet Charge**

Suddenly he awoke and was running – raw  
In raw-seamed hot khaki, his sweat heavy,  
Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge  
That dazzled with rifle fire, hearing  
Bullets smacking the belly out of the air –  
He lugged a rifle numb as a smashed arm;  
The patriotic tear that had brimmed in his eye  
Sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest, –

In bewilderment then he almost stopped –  
In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations  
Was he the hand pointing that second? He was running  
Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs  
Listening between his footfalls for the reason  
Of his still running, and his foot hung like  
Statuary in mid-stride. Then the shot-slashed furrows

Threw up a yellow hare that rolled like a flame  
And crawled in a threshing circle, its mouth wide  
Open silent, its eyes standing out.  
He plunged past with his bayonet toward the green hedge,  
King, honour, human dignity, etcetera  
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm  
To get out of that blue crackling air  
His terror's touchy dynamite.

Compare the ways poets present the abuse of power in 'London' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

## London

I wandered through each chartered street,  
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,  
A mark in every face I meet,  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,  
In every infant's cry of fear,  
In every voice, in every ban,  
The mind-forged manacles I hear:

How the chimney-sweeper's cry  
Every blackening church appals,  
And the hapless soldier's sigh  
Runs in blood down palace-walls.

But most, through midnight streets I hear  
How the youthful harlot's curse  
Blasts the new-born infant's tear,  
And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse.

Compare the ways poets present the power of the natural world in 'Storm on the Island' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

### **Storm on the Island**

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,  
Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.  
The wizened earth had never troubled us  
With hay, so as you can see, there are no stacks  
Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees  
Which might prove company when it blows full  
Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches  
Can raise a chorus in a gale  
So that you can listen to the thing you fear  
Forgetting that it pummels your house too.  
But there are no trees, no natural shelter.  
You might think that the sea is company,  
Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs  
But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits  
The very windows, spits like a tame cat  
Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives  
And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo.  
We are bombarded by the empty air.  
Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

Compare the ways poets present military conflict in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

### 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!" he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd:  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honor the charge they made!  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

Compare the ways poets present power in 'Ozymandias' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

## *Ozymandias*

**Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1792 - 1822**

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Compare the ways poets present the power of place in 'The Emigree' and in one other poem from 'Power and Conflict'. [30 marks]

*Carol Rumens*  
by **The Émigrée**

*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.*

*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.*

*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.*