

HIGHER

The Way My Mother Speaks Textual Analysis Practice

I say her phrases to myself

in my head

or under the shallows of my breath,

restful shapes moving.

The day and ever. The day and ever.

The train this slow evening

goes down England

browsing for the right sky,

too blue swapped for a cool grey.

For miles I have been saying

What like is it

the way I say things when I think.

Nothing is silent. Nothing is not silent.

What like is it.

Only tonight

I am happy and sad

like a child

who stood at the end of summer

and dipped a net

in a green, erotic pond. The day

and ever. The day and ever.

I am homesick, free, in love

with the way my mother speaks.

Textual Analysis Questions

1. Look at lines 1-4. With close reference to the text, explain how the writer creates a sense of isolation and loneliness in the opening to the poem. **4 marks**
2. Look at lines 13-16. Explain how and why the writer uses contrast to convey her experience moving away from home. **4 marks**
3. Look at lines 16-20. Explain how Duffy's use of imagery helps to convey her emotional state at this point in the poem. **2 marks**
4. Duffy often explores her own personal experiences in her poetry. With reference to this poem and at least one other poem by Duffy, explain how Duffy uses poetic techniques to convey a personal experience. **10 marks**

20 marks