

Retrieval:

What do you think the poem Kamikaze is about the most? Look at the words below and list them in order or priority – the themes that you think are the most important at the top and the ones you think it is least about at the bottom.

You can add in any others if you wish

Death

Memories

Disgrace

Honour

Nostalgia

Cowardice

Fear

Home

Family

YOUR TASK: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

What do you think links the photos on the right?

What are your impressions/thoughts or feelings about what you see?



A WAR PHOTOGRAPHER'S PURPOSE

'I'm a witness and I want my testimony to be honest and uncensored. I also want it to be powerful and eloquent and to do as much justice as possible to the experience of the people I'm photographing.'

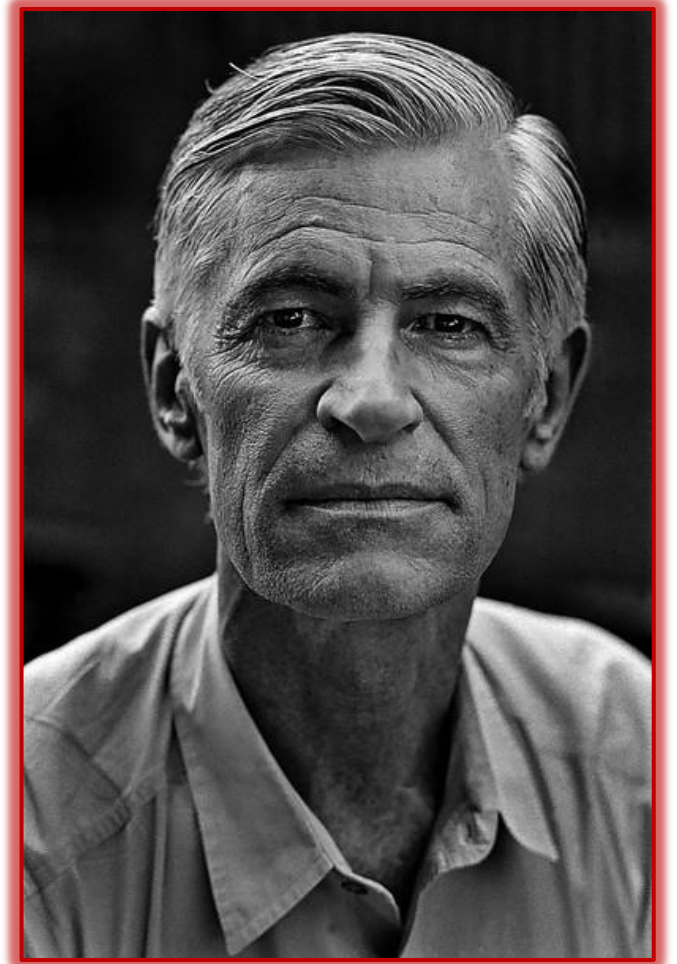
James Nachtwey
(War Photographer)

Watch the clip of the interview with him.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2_kQ4-pUas

Watch the following video clip (8 mins) of an interview with someone who was injured working as a war photographer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzAff-lx-oM>



What is the purpose of a war photographer?

LET'S READ

WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

In his dark room he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
faintly start to twist before his eyes,
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
of this man's wife, how he sought approval
without words to do what someone must
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black and white
from which his editor will pick out five or six
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
he earns his living and they do not care.

STANZA ONE

What is the effect of the adverb 'finally'? What does it suggest about the war photographer?

The speaker lists places of conflict in the final line, using caesura to create a pause after each one. Why?

What is the significance of the colour 'red'? What could it symbolise?

Why do you think the speaker is not the war photographer himself? Why does Duffy create this distancing effect?

**In his dark room he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.**

How does the use of assonance with the repeated 'o' sound help emphasise the image of the priest?

How does 'ordered rows' juxtapose the idea of conflict? Why the use of sibilance in the second line?

'All flesh is grass' is a quotation from the Old Testament, Book of Isaiah. What other words belong to the semantic field of religion and why is it included?

Can you use the following ambitious vocabulary in your annotations?



Melancholic: Sadness

Assonance: Repetition of vowel sounds.

STANZA TWO

Why does Duffy use enjambment here? What is the effect?

Why the short statement of 'Rural England'?

Why is 'though seem to now' relegated to the next line? Why does Duffy want to 'delay' this revelation?

Duffy deliberately uses the noun 'solutions' here. Why? How can it be seen as ambiguous? Why the use of sibilance?

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays beneath his hands, which did not tremble then though seem to now. Rural England. Home again to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel, to fields which don't explode beneath the feet of running children in a nightmare heat.

What is the speaker saying about the photographer's home? How does it compare to the war zones he is used to?

'Which did not tremble then though seem to now' – What does this mean? What is the speaker suggesting about this photographer?

'The photographer documents conflict but is also at conflict with himself' – How does this stanza back up this statement?

Can you use the following ambitious vocabulary in your annotations?



Ambiguity: Having more than one interpretation.

STANZA THREE

Why does Duffy use caesura after 'something is happening.' What is the effect?

Why has Duffy deliberately used the noun 'ghost'?

What does this stanza suggest about the power of a photograph?

Something is happening. A stranger's features faintly start to twist before his eyes, a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries of this man's wife, how he sought approval without words to do what someone must and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

What are the connotations of 'twist'?

'...to do what someone must' – What does this suggest about the photographer and the profession?

Highlight the poet's use of alliteration and explain the effect. Why has it been used?

Can you use the following ambitious vocabulary in your annotations?



Ambiguity: Having more than one interpretation.

STANZA FOUR

Can war ever be 'black and white'? Is conflict as simple as that?

Why 'Sunday's supplement'? Why do you think Duffy deliberately chooses this day in order to convey her message? What is a supplement?

How does the speaker imply that sympathy from readers is short-lived?

A hundred agonies in black and white from which his editor will pick out five or six for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers. From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where he earns his living and they do not care.

What message is Duffy trying to convey in the last two lines of the stanza?

All the lines throughout the poem are of a similar length. Why?

When will the war photographer stop?

Write the answers to these questions in your books in full sentences

1. How might the war photographer in this poem feel?
2. Why do you think Duffy has written this poem? What might her purpose have been?
3. How is this poem **similar** to other poems?
4. Which poem is it the most **different** from and why?
5. Do you like this poem? Explain your thoughts.

Challenge: *'The photographer in the poem isn't actually affected by war because he is able to forget about it when he gets home.'* **What are your views on this statement?**