

Context

- * written in 1899
- * Boer war - 1880-81 (South Africa)
- ↳ mid 19c - common to London in 19c.
- * English poet and novelist
- ↳ focuses on tragedy.

Structure

- ↳ 2 stanzas - 'tragedy' + 'irony'
- ↳ large role in conveying anti-war poem/message.
- ' juxtaposes 'hoped return' with death
- ↳ reader feels more sympathetic.

Fragmented with dashes

- ↳ emphasises significance
- ↳ wife's directness as she comes to terms with reality

Form

- Narrative - receives call her husband has died
- postman brings letter written by husband
- ↳ looking forward to returning

ABAB, regular → no sing-song quality - sombre tone
pace changes - shorter sentences whereas first stanza is descriptive.

Dramatic Irony

- * describes husband's letter to be full of 'hoped return'
- ↳ audience knows he's dead
- ↳ naively ignores sympathy from audience
- * 'the wife sits in the post line' - passive verb
- ↳ feels useless and incomplete - waiting for letters.

A Wife in London

JOHN HARRIS

Recurrent (sad) imagery

- * 'when we write now to the grave.'
- ↳ anti-war message, referring to the grave.
- ↳ unpleasant and emphasises 'irony'

Key Themes

- * loss - juxtaposition of soldier's optimism and his service

- * Grief - tragedy of warfare and widower

- * Relationships - 'new race'

Poetic Imagery

WAR + LOSS

- * 'fading vapour' - sombre, melancholic tone / atmosphere
- * 'summer weather' - optimism in imagery of bright and burn.

Fore Shadowing

- * 'glimmers cold' - 'warning paper'
- ↳ foreshadows his death even the loss of light
- ↳ her happiness is gone.

- * light symbolises hope - 3rd stanza.

Contrast between telegram and letter

- * telegram - 'flashed' and delivered by a 'messenger's knock'

stopped 'staring' - uncomprehending, blunt.

- * letter - 'fresh firm' - lengthy

humanises the death of her husband whilst the telegram is formal and unhumanely.

Links

between them | Urooj Mohammad 11g