

Poem focuses on the importance of origins and how we define our identity.

Red has connotations of anger - how she felt about being forced to leave.

**Themes**

- \*Identity
- \*Loss
- \*Childhood
- \*Isolation

Mother is optimistic and happy about move - clear contrast to Duffy's emotions - unsure if father is there with them or at the new place.

**Originally**

"We" - decision to move affected all of them. Assonance of "our own" reinforces her sense of belonging to that place.

Alliteration draws attention to the lack of control she felt.

Brothers share her feelings. Word choice of "bawling" emphasises how upset they are - repetition of "home" reflects childish habit of repeating one's self.

We came from our own country in a red room  
 which fell through the fields, our mother singing  
 our father's name to the turn of the wheels.  
 My brothers cried, one of them bawling, Home,  
 Home, as the miles rushed back to the city,  
 the street, the house, the vacant rooms  
 where we didn't live any more. I stared  
 at the eyes of a blind toy, holding its paw.

List focusing on increasingly specific details shows how much she was thinking about it and her memories there.

Personification - reflects her own desire to run home - shows the distance travelled to.

Word choice emphasises her innocence - like a child seeking comfort.

Metaphor - childhood compared to a major uprooting - change and transitions that are outwit their control - moving from the comfortable to the uncertain.

Reflects her uncertainty as they head to the unknown.

Elongated, drawn out phrasing/ long sentence show slow stages of childhood.

All childhood is an emigration. Some are slow,  
 leaving you standing, resigned, up an avenue  
 where no one you know stays. Others are sudden.  
 Your accent wrong. Corners, which seem familiar,  
 leading to unimagined, pebble-dashed estates, big boys  
 eating worms and shouting words you don't understand.  
 My parents' anxiety stirred like a loose tooth  
 in my head. I want our own country, I said.

Emphasise her confusion and feeling of not belonging - unfamiliar landscape/ culture.

Confronted by behaviour and language that's alien to her. Plosives of "big boys" shows she finds them threatening which emphasises her youth.

Short abrupt sentences show how sudden the changes were - accent serves as another barrier despite speaking the same language.

Simile - shows her parents are worried about them not settling in - tooth comparison highlights idea of a constant irritant or something you can't ignore.

Used 2nd person to involve reader and make them reflect on their childhood and the things they adapted to.

Autobiographical element shows she still hasn't adjusted and links back to the start.

But then you forget, or don't recall, or change,  
 and, seeing your brother swallow a slug, feel only  
 a skelf of shame. I remember my tongue  
 shedding its skin like a snake, my voice  
 in the classroom sounding just like the rest. Do I only think  
 I lost a river, culture, speech, sense of first space  
 and the right place? Now, Where do you come from?  
 strangers ask. Originally? And I hesitate.

Simile - she is finally adopting to new home - shows how easy it has become for her to lose her accent.

Alliteration draws attention to the fact her brother has become like the other boys - he now fits in to their new home.

Use of Scots language reveals she still feels attached to her Scottish roots. "Skelf" means a small bit - shows she is starting to adjust now too.

Rhetorical question - She questions what makes up self and identity but can't decide. She lists some of the things she left behind and wonders if these things influence who she is now.

**Carol Ann Duffy**

Poet struggles to define her identity - acknowledges that she has changed since she was young and that lots of things make up her identity.

Short sentence - hesitation reveals that she has mixed feelings about her true origins - wasn't able to adapt as well as her brothers but feels included now.

- \* Lack of regular rhythm reflects lack of order in her own life at the time.
- \* Regular structure of 3 stanzas with 8 lines. Poem divided into a straightforward chronology.
- \* Poet matures throughout poem. The starts with a confused tone and moves on to one of reflection.