

UR A POET AND U DIDN'T KNOW IT

SAMPLE POEM: MY AUSTRALIA BY SARA MANSOUR [PARTIAL ANNOTATION]

'Where are you *from*' given its own line to emphasis thematic importance. Italics indicate **tone** and invite the reader to imagine the expression of the person asking the question.

Use of **enjambment** to emphasise the word 'Welcome'. Good point for discussion. Does the exchange that comes beforehand imply acceptance?

'No one is told to go back'. Possible reference to Australian practices relating to refugees and asylum seekers: real world connections.

'Freshly roasted Lebanese coffee kissing Asian bakeries good morning'. Use of metaphor implying warmth, community. Also invites the reader to imagine the smells of the street.

Use of metaphor 'Tupac on our tongues' connects to cultural/community understanding of hip hop as potentially 'outsider' music. Contrasts to the italicised 'unofficial National Anthem' which implies that 'real' Australians 'come from down under'

Personification of water. It's salty, it hurts, but 'we', the potential outsiders, 'take it in our stride'. Implies resilience and acceptance.

When people ask me where I'm from

I tell them Punchbowl.

More often than not they smile and reply

No, where are you *from*?

I sigh, roll my eyes and in an explanatory tone say:

Punchbowl? You know, it's near Bankstown?

The city where mouths do not ebb the flow of

Welcome

In over 60 different tongues

Where over 100 nationalities are housed under one postcode.

This is my ode to the only place I know

Where no one is told to go back;

Because everyone understands

This is my ode to home

My Australia is

Walking through the streets of Punchbowl

with the smell of freshly roasted Lebanese coffee

kissing the Asian bakeries good morning

The eucalyptus towers overhead and the frangipanis

scent my breath as we sing the unofficial National Anthem

"I come from a land down under"

Living from beat to beat, bumping down the streets

with Tupac on our tongues

and we're headed for the beach.

Water,

so unapologetically salty to the eyes but we

take it in our stride

Remembering all the lessons at Greenacre pool and at school,

when Cronulla hit high tide.

Use of **enjambment** to emphasise the line 'where I'm from'. Highlights the theme of Australian identity in the poem.

Question and answer set a conversational tone. Connects the reader to the poet's (or her character's) real life experience.

'Mouths do not ebb the flow'. Use of **imagery** to imply depth of diversity.

Poet tells us what form of poetry she is writing (ode) so we are aware that she is 'paying homage' to her home. Allows reader to infer theme and to understand 'rules'.

Use of personal pronoun 'My' implies a sense of belonging or ownership. Good discussion point: would all Australians consider the country to belong to the author/subject of the poem? Why or why not? Use evidence to support contentions.

Vocabulary choices like 'tower' imply symbolic importance of a tree that might be seen as 'quintessentially Australian'.

'Frangipani's scent my breath creates imagery and a sense that the environment is part of the poet or the subject of the poem. It is as natural as breathing.

'Living from beat to beat bumping down the streets' establishes a musical rhythm to these lines in the poem.

Use of euphemism 'high tide' implies a peak or danger. Possible reference to Cronulla Riots. Helps to establish a sense of the subject of the poem.

My Australia is
Barbeques. Or as my dad still says, *'baarb-b-que'*
Meat, sizzling on the fire,
homemade tabbouli and tomato sauce
Pavlova cake and knafeh; the perfect cultural dichotomy
And it's not hard to see, no matter our creed
We always rep our team
#wanderersFC

This country will never be tainted by café sieges
We will always ride together
From the mountains where the bushfires rage
We stand together down to the shore,
where the lifesavers age
under that Great Southern Sun.

My Australia is one where
Women wear their saris and their colourful hijabs proudly
Men don sweat-stained collars like war badges
You can get the best pho in Sydney
The realest Lebanese and Chinese and you feel at ease
Because no one judges your garlic breath
or the tabbouleh stuck in your teeth.

It is a place where you can get the most authentic spices
In shops where foreign signs sit like jewelled crowns atop their doors.
It is neighbours passing barbequed meat over the fence
And always saying hello.
It is all the stoic traditions. It is stoic.
A community that has been hardened by media headlines.
It is targeted. It is judged. It is 3am sirens and perceived thugs
but it is also where
the call to prayer gently interludes with the ringing of church bells

It is coexistence and artistic resistance, like,
the four elements youth hip hop festival and
the largest poetry slam in the country.
It is my dad's voice, 25 years on,
accent thick with resilience, warm like an autumn breeze
Smelling of petrol and truck smoke all the forgotten things
All the zaatar and the tahini and the crushed petals that were once dreams
Saying to me
we are lucky
It's not perfect, but it's home. It will never
be perfect but it will always be home.

My Australia is
Home
When the rest of the world
says no.