Annotation: Language Structure

Sister Heart (excerpt) by Sally Morgan

Here I am
curled in the corner
of a cold stone room
with no one to hug
but me

A too-high window throws shadow lines on the moonlit floor

Shadow lines

Straight lines

Hard lines

Barred lines

The use of line breaks is important in this verse poem given that it has almost no punctuation.

Breaking a line allows the author to emphasise a word, idea, symbol or emotion. For example, breaking the fourth line of the first stanza at 'hug' could both emphasise the word 'hug' and create a sense of loneliness by juxtaposing it with the fragment 'but me' placed on the line by itself.

Note the uneven distribution of lines per stanza in this verse poem. Why might the author have made this decision? For example, could it allow her more freedom to create varying

The structure of a stanza can help to create rhythm. For example, the repetition of the word 'lines' in the fourth stanza could create a driving rhythm for the reader, and the repetition may serve to emphasise a symbol or idea.

Like lines on a map slashing hills and creeks ridges and plains rocks and spinifex

Old people laughed when Mum told them about the Boss's paper map

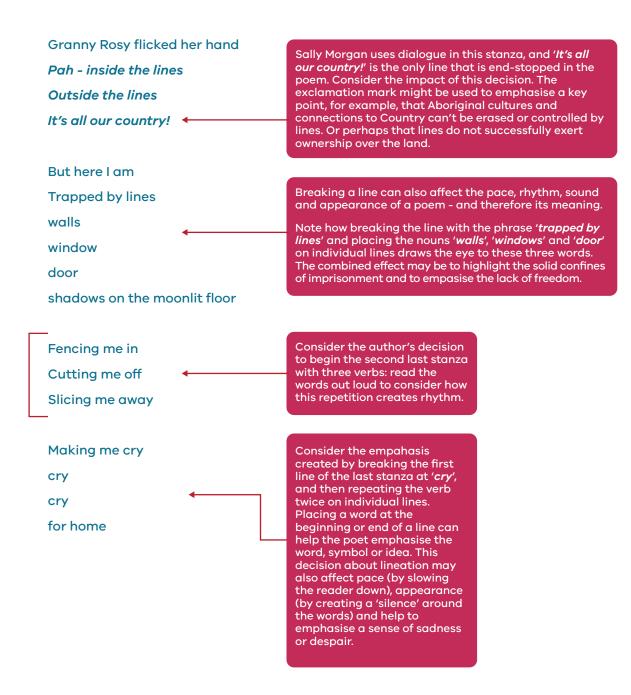
Grandpa Mick shook his head

Hills won't move for a line

Trees won't bend for a line

Note the repetition of the noun 'lines' in the fourth and sixth stanzas; this decision could extend the rhythm established in the third stanza and may be intended to empahsise the word and its symbolism. For example, lines may be symbolic of order, control and/ or loss of freedom.

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This extract is from Sally Morgon's book 'Sister Heart' © 2015 published by **Freemantle Press**. This excerpt has been reproduced with the permission of the author. You are encouraged to explore the complete text when using this sequence in the classroom. **Teaching notes** for the text are also available.