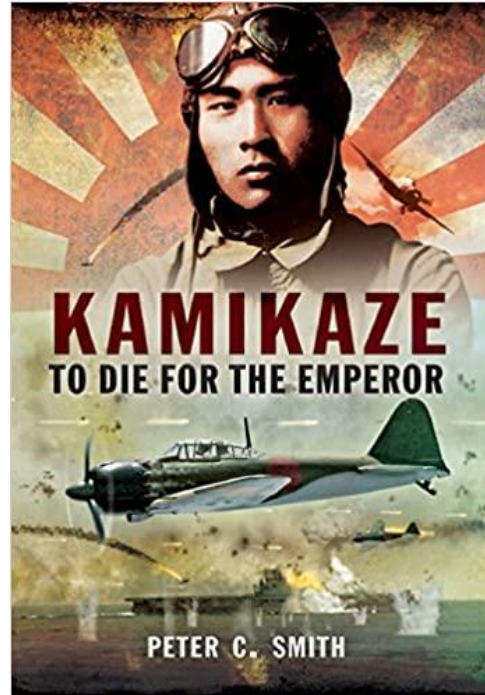


Year 9 GCSE English Literature



Week beginning 1st June 2020

Welcome Back to English Lessons

We missed you!

LO: To understand the context of the poem Kamikaze

- Over the next few weeks (only one lesson a week at the moment) we will be studying the poem

Kamikaze by Beatrice Garland



What is Kamikaze?

- A Japanese word meaning Divine Wind
- It was used to describe a special group of Japanese pilots in WWII who were willing to practice the ancient Japanese cultural tradition called Bushido - which means way of the warrior.
- This tradition was founded sometime between the 11th and 14th centuries and it set out the way of behaving as a Samurai. (Courage, loyalty honour etc.)
- An important part of being a Samurai warrior was that if you lost your honour by losing a battle you killed yourself with your sword (Hari Kari).
- Kamikaze pilots were expected to kill themselves by flying their planes with bombs on board into enemy warships.

Lets find out what it was like to be a Kamikaze pilot:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=488&v=F3qoNE4XwhM&feature=emb_logo



Kamikaze by Beatrice Garland

Her father embarked at sunrise
with a flask of water, a samurai sword
in the cockpit, a shaven head
full of powerful incantations
and enough fuel for a one-way
journey into history

but half way there, she thought,
recounting it later to her children,
he must have looked far down
at the little fishing boats
strung out like bunting
on a green-blue translucent sea

and beneath them, arcing in swathes
like a huge flag waved first one way
then the other in a figure of eight,
the dark shoals of fishes
flashing silver as their bellies
swivelled towards the sun

and remembered how he
and his brothers waiting on the shore
built cairns of pearl-grey pebbles
to see whose withstood longest
the turbulent inrush of breakers
bringing their father's boat safe

– *yes, grandfather's boat* – safe
to the shore, salt-sodden, awash
with cloud-marked mackerel,
black crabs, feathery prawns,
the loose silver of whitebait and once
a tuna, the dark prince, muscular, dangerous.

*And though he came back
my mother never spoke again
in his presence, nor did she meet his eyes
and the neighbours too, they treated him
as though he no longer existed,
only we children still chattered and laughed*

*till gradually we too learned
to be silent, to live as though
he had never returned, that this
was no longer the father we loved.
And sometimes, she said, he must have wondered
which had been the better way to die.*

The Poem



- A narrative poem (tells a story)
- Written from the viewpoint of the daughter of a Kamikaze pilot
- Tells how her father did not die an honourable death because he did not kill himself - he turned the plane around and went home.
- When he gets home he is shunned by his family and friends because he did not do the right thing.
- It ends by asking whether his life was better lived in isolation or would have been better if he had carried out his mission.

The Context

- Beatrice Garland is a British author and poet. She worked as a clinician and researcher for the NHS and was also a teacher. She is 82 years old.
- Her works are based on stories she has been told by the people she has worked with. She said “I spend a lot of the day listening to other people’s worlds.” She has no direct experience of the story told in Kamikaze – it is therefore a work of fiction.
- The poem reflects the enormous social pressures put on soldiers in WWII to behave in a particular way – the expectations of their country, their peers, their families etc. (It is not just the Japanese)

The Context Continued

- Despite its links to a historical military practice it also has relevance today - think about suicide bombers (Ariana Grande concert).
- It is designed to make us think about conflict both in the past and the current day.
- From a collection of poems written in 2013 called 'Fireworks' that focuses on life and death in the natural world.
- Garland has a particular interest in wanting to understand what makes young men and women so committed to a cause that they are prepared to give up their lives for it. (Personal conflict rather than duty to country)

Homework Task

- Complete the questions on the context of the poem that are on the website. This PowerPoint is also there so you can use that to help you answer the questions too.
- Send your completed work to Mrs Shaddock

maryon.shaddock@grangepark.kent.sch.uk

End of Lesson

- Have a good week everyone. I will look forward to seeing your work and seeing all of you again next Tuesday.

Goodbye!