

Major themes in the *Conflict* collection

- SILENCE
- SUFFERING
- DEATH
- ABANDONMENT
- DESTRUCTION
- IDENTITY
- PERSONAL/INTERNAL CONFLICT
- NATURE
- FEAR
- DECAY
- LOSS
- FUTILITY
- ISOLATION
- OUTRAGE
- REGRET
- FREEDOM

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

Personal Conflict/Inner
conflict / Identity /
silence

A Poison
Tree

In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree..

Conflict +
Destruction

A Poison
Tree

With care and culture all may find
Some pretty flower in their own mind,
Some talent that is rare.

Personal
Conflict/Inner
conflict

Envy

And if this tree were discontent,
Or wished to change its natural bent,
It all in vain would fret..

Personal
Conflict/Inner
conflict

Envy

It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure.

Personal
Conflict/Inner
conflict

Boat Stealing

I struck, and struck again,
And, growing still in stature, the huge cliff
Rose up between me and the stars

Conflict +
Fear

Boat Stealing

With trembling hands I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the cavern of the willow-tree.

Conflict +
Fear/silence

Boat Stealing

In my thoughts
There was darkness – call it solitude,

Conflict +
isolation/alienation
/silence

Boat Stealing

Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

Conflict +
Destruction/decay

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;

Conflict +
Destruction/death

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

Conflict +
Death/silence

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;

Conflict +
Loss

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:

Conflict +
Death

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

Conflict +
isolation/silence

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;.

Conflict +
loss

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

And the might of the Gentile, unsmeared by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.

Conflict +
futility

The Destruction
of Sennacherib

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –
We can find no scar,
But internal difference,
Where the Meanings, are –

Personal
Conflict/Inner
conflict

There's a Certain
Slant of Light

None may teach it – Any –
'Tis the Seal Despair –
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air –

Conflict +
futility

There's a Certain
Slant of Light

When it comes, the Landscape listens –
Shadows – hold their breath –
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death –

Conflict +
futility/loss/silence

There's a Certain
Slant of Light

Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have set us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

Conflict +
loss

The Man He
Killed

But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.!

Conflict +
loss/futility

The Man He
Killed

I shot him dead because –
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough;

Conflict +
regret/futility/Identity

The Man He
Killed

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat, if met where any bar is,
Or help to half a crown.

Conflict +
outrage/regret/futility
/abandonment

The Man He
Killed

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?.

Conflict +
outrage/loss/futility

Anthem for
Doomed Youth

No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

Conflict +
loss/futility

Anthem for
Doomed Youth

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Conflict +
loss/futility

Anthem for
Doomed Youth

we found the place again, and found
the soldier sprawling in the sun.

Conflict +
nature/abandonment

Vergissmeinnicht

As we came on
that day, he hit my tank with one
like the entry of a demon.

Conflict + inner
conflict/regret

Vergissmeinnicht

We see him almost with content,
abased, and seeming to have paid
and mocked at by his own equipment
that's hard and good when he's decayed.

Conflict +
futility/loss/abandonment

Vergissmeinnicht

But she would weep to see today
how on his skin the swart flies move;

Conflict +
loss/nature

Vergissmeinnicht

For here the lover and killer are mingled
who had one body and one heart.
And death who had the soldier singled
has done the lover mortal hurt.;

Conflict +
loss/Identity/suffering

Vergissmeinnicht

Did they hold ceremonies
to reverence the opening of buds?
Were they inclined to quiet laughter?

Conflict +
loss/Identity/silence

What Were
They Like?

Sir, their light hearts turned to stone.

Conflict +
destruction

What Were
They Like?

When bombs smashed those mirrors
there was time only to scream.

Conflict +
suffering

What Were
They Like?

Sir, laughter is bitter to the burned mouth.
A dream ago, perhaps. Ornament is for joy.
All the bones were charred

Conflict +
outrage/ suffering

What Were
They Like?

It was reported their singing resembled
the flight of moths in moonlight.
Who can say? It is silent now.

Conflict +
loss/destruction/
Identity/silence

What Were
They Like?

For her eggs laid in their nest of sickness.

Conflict +
illness/destruction

Lament

For the ocean's lap with its mortal stain.
For Ahmed at the closed border.
For the soldier with his uniform of fire.

Conflict +
alienation/Identity

Lament

For the hook-beaked turtles,
the dugong and the dolphin,
the whale struck dumb by the missile's thunder.

Conflict +
suffering/nature/
destruction

Lament

For the burnt earth and the sun put out,
the scalded ocean and the blazing well.
For vengeance, and the ashes of language.

Conflict +
suffering/nature/loss
/destruction/Identity

Lament

Little adulteress,
before they punished you.

Conflict +
injustice/futility

Punishment

almost love you
but would have cast, I know,
the stones of silence.
I am the artful voyeur.

Conflict +
futility/abandonment
/silence

Punishment

I who have stood dumb
when your betraying sisters,
cauled in tar,
wept by the railings

Conflict +
futility/abandonment
/silence

Punishment

who would connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge.

Conflict +
outrage

Punishment

How can I possess such a cloth?
Just ask for a flag, my friend.
Then blind your conscience to the end.

Conflict +
outrage/Identity

Flag

What's that fluttering in a breeze?
It's just a piece of cloth
that brings a nation to its knees.

Conflict +
outrage

Flag

What's love in all this debris?
Just one person pounding another into dust,
into dust. I do not know the word for it yet.

Conflict +
outrage/destruction/
silence

Phrase Book

Where is the British Consulate? Please explain.
What does it mean? What must I do? Where
can I find? What have I done? I have done
nothing. Let me pass please. I am an Englishwoman.

Conflict +
outrage/abandonment
/Identity

Phrase Book

This is my front room

where I'm lost in the action, live from a war,
on screen. I am Englishwoman. I don't understand you.
What's the matter? You are right. You are wrong.
Things are going well (badly). Am I disturbing you?

Conflict +
outrage/abandonment
/Identity

Phrase Book

At last I'm taking off this coat,
this black coat of a country?

Conflict +
freedom/Identity

Honour
Killing

I'm taking off this veil,
this black veil of a faith
that made me faithless
to myself,

Conflict +
freedom/Identity

Honour
Killing

that tied my mouth,
gave my god a devil's face,
and muffled my own voice.

Conflict +
futility/freedom/abandon
-ment/Identity/silence

Honour
Killing

Let's see
what I am in here
when I squeeze past
the easy cage of bone.

Personal
Conflict/Inner
conflict /Identity

Honour
Killing

Let's see
what I am out here,
making, crafting,
plotting
at my new geography.

Conflict +
defiance/identity/
freedom

Honour
Killing

She was nineteen-years-old then
and when she stood in her garden
she could hear the cries of the people
stranded in the Ahmedabad railway station..

Conflict +
suffering/youth

Partition

But she felt afraid,
felt she could not go with her aunt –
So she stood in the garden
listening. Even the birds sounded different –
and the shadows cast by the neem trees
brought no consolation.

Conflict +
nature/isolation

Partition

And then she asks me:
'How could they
have let a man
who knew nothing
about geography
divide a country?'

Conflict +
futility/isolation/silence
/regret/abandonment

Partition