


YANGTZE

BY SARAH HOWE

Sub : English literature in the 21st Century(PG 2)

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SARAH HOWE (born im 1938 in UK)

- Chinese-British poet ,editor and researcher in English literature (Father: British , Mother : Chinese)
- Lived in China till the age of 8 and then migrated to UK , Studied In both UK and US.
- Secluded as a child due to Chinese heritage. Faced more discrimination as an adult.
- First full poetic collection: *Loop of Jade* won the T.S. Eliot Prize , first time for a debut.
- Mother was born in Hong Kong then later migrated to China in 1949
- Migrated to UK in 1991
- Founded the Online poetry journal *Prac Crit.*
- *Post-Modern poet*



Formal Analysis of the poem

- Structure resembles that of Haiku. Haiku is a type of Japanese poem consisting of 3 lines.
- Free verse
- Avoidance of Symmetry
- Dense but simple, Descriptive mode, beautiful description of the river Yangtze.
- Poem imitates a travelling mode- flowing like a river.
- Diction : precise, transparent
- Rhythm : Slow but not too slow.
- Reminiscent and elegaic Tone.
- Language is foregrounded
- Quality of a memoir or a deep travelogue
- Asteric * after stanza 5 for pause
- Refrain:“ Journeying is Hard” : physical, mental and social journey.
- Grammatical connection slips away
- Luminous narrative
- Alliterative music

Poem Analysis

- Poem about the poet's return visits to mainland China .
- Concluding poem in the *Loop of Jade* (2015).
- Howe does not write as an outsider nor as an insider but she shares her experiences of exploring the country with the readers
- Our life's journey often runs against the current because we mostly lack the proper perspectives to see the world as one and not parts.
- Our way forward is really backwards , to recover an understanding of what was always been.
- Yearning for some kind of an understanding
- Crossing the bounds of race, time and space.
- Chinese landscape bursting with legend and half memories.



- Yangtze has suffered cataclysms of development through hydroelectric plant
- Hidden and inarticulate things remain
- There is a sense of the unsaid
- The water-haunted trees haunt their draught stricken roots
- Wizen fish- possibility of a failed livelihood
- Repetition at the end: loop
- Half built bridge: half chinese half british experience
- Inability to recall who said the refrain – result of duality- wandering from roots
- Shells of houses : migrated chinese, filled with emptiness
- Submerged tree: symbol of Chinese traditions ,essence and culture sinking , causing a dryness in the roots, inability to understand one self.
- Duality of heritage
- The glimmering moo at the end is there to guide, a sense of hope.



The End