

Biblical allusion to the children of Israel - a journey from slavery to freedom
+ child's perspective of adults' behaviour - he's imagining it as a prison camp.

Crossing the Red Sea

1 - description of immigrants on board the ship.

Many slept on deck
Because of the day's heat
Or to watch a sunset
They would never see again -
Stretched out on blankets and pillows
Against cabins and rails:
- Shirtless, in shorts, barefooted,
Themselves a landscape
Of milk-white flesh
On a scoured and polished deck.

free
verb

them begins
mid-journey

urgency - no
coming back;
some loss...

seeking
comfort
some level -
finding comfort

hared + common
grief caused
them to speak
they had not
one in Europe
winning the war

Voices left their caves - metaphor
And silence fell from its shackles,
Memories strayed
From behind sunken eyes
To look for shorelines -
Peaks of mountains and green rivers
That shared their secrets
With storms and exiles.

state of
imbo -

easing oppression
not an uncertain
future...

2 - reason - catalyst for the journey
1949 and the war WWII
Now four years dead -
Neither masters nor slaves
As we crossed a sea
And looked at red banners
That one was hoisting
In mock salute.

repeated ref. to
communism
personification -
capital 'IT'

3 - sense of what is being left behind
Patches and shreds
Of dialogue
Hung from fingertips
And unshaven faces -
Offering themselves
As a respite
From the interruption
Of passing waves.

different
perspectives
quoting
adults.

'I remember a field
Of red poppies, once behind the forest
When the full moon rose.'
'Blood
Leaves similar dark stains -
When it runs for a long time
On stones or rusted iron.'

symbolism of death
at war + the blood
shed

(And the sea's breath
Touched the eyes
Of another Lazarus - biblical allusion
→ escapee of war from
Europe.

Who was saying a prayer
In thanksgiving } thankful to escape rather than angry
For miracles } for what has happened.

4 - recovering from experiences, letting go of secrets.

All night
The kindness } personification of the sea
Of the sea continued -

Breaking into
Walled-up griefs } deep + personal secrets are
That men had sworn } shared on the journey
Would never be disclosed, } physical journey gives
Accepting outflung denunciations } way to inner journey +
personal development

With a calmness
That brought a reminder
Of people listening to requiems,
Pine trees whispering
Against a stone wall in the breeze;
Or a trembling voice
That sang at the rails
When the ship first sailed
From the sorrow
Of northern wars.

sailing south, away from
the sorrow of Europe
prison camps.

5 - reality sinks in
uncertain future
Daybreak took away } reality of the situation is clear
The magic of dreams, } once day breaks.

Fragments of apparitions } avoid talking of ultimate
That became } ends - i.e. death

More tangible than words -
Echoes and reflections
Of the trust } Trust others to not talk
That men had bartered } about death.
For silence.

Had we talked
Of death
Perhaps something
More than time
Would have been lost.

But the gestures } old world + new
Of darkness and starlight }
Kept our minds } surrendering to the
Away from the finalities } past or the future.

Of surrender -
As they beckoned towards
A blood-rimmed horizon } the journey is incomplete
Beyond whose waters } the future is uncertain
The Equator
Was still to be crossed.

at night their freedom is apparent.

* repeated image of red, blood
+ continued biblical allusions... idea of the
birth of the immigrants.