

\* elements of child's tone → child's experience; Skrzynecki is telling a story from his childhood  
 → Use of first person narration connects the immigrant story to the reader  
 → repeated use of similes suggest a seemingly simplistic approach which adds to the child-like tone

## Poem: Immigrants at Central Station, 1951

It was sad to hear  
 The train's whistle this morning  
 At the railway station,  
 All night it had rained.  
 The air was crowded  
 With a dampness that slowly  
 Sank into our thoughts -  
 But we ate it all:  
 The silence, the cold, the benevolence  
 Of empty streets.

dreary atmosphere  
 created throughout  
 first stanza

unhappy tone / mood created  
 → a foreboding journey

departure  
 → connotations of community + coming together

dreading the journey - foreboding  
 → packed, too many people; had to breathe - dangerous

depressed + upset environment  
 → the environment, and the negative experiences affect the mental health of the immigrants

accepted fate  
 kinder + more positive than where they're coming from  
 → what happened in Europe in WWII?

juxtapose the ship they came to Australia on + train where the "air was crowded" - yearning for peace...

Time waited anxiously with us  
 Behind upturned collars  
 And space hemmed us  
 Against each other

protecting from the new environment - the chilly world / sense of hiding

moment of stasis - nervous about what could come - made more nervous knowing about war

sticked together - the immigrants form a family, brought together in the struggle of a physically taxing journey

Like cattle bought for slaughter.

Families stood  
 With blankets and packed cases -  
 Keeping children by their sides,  
 Watching pigeons  
 That watched them.

emphasis on the family; juxtaposing "cattle" bought for slaughter  
 feel the cold; attempt to distract it

strong simile - strong connotations with holocaust + events of WWII

purchase - immigrants people or product up for sale/trade? objectification of immigrants  
 → insight into Skrzynecki's experience + the context of 1951

neither moving forward: watching. Passive in life. Stunted.

But it was sad to hear  
 The train's whistle so suddenly -  
 To the right of our shoulders  
 Like a word of command.

repetition → machine breaks up family unity - a forced journey

The signal at the platform's end  
 Turned red and dropped  
 Like a guillotine -  
 Cutting us off from the space of eyesight

personification of the train's whistle; its presence is clear and is given authority. Whistle in charge of their (immigrants) movements, their journey and their futures...

cut-off; death - loss of the known

simile: guillotine: good or bad end to the journey?

→ forgotten people

While time ran ahead  
 Along glistening tracks of steel.

life goes on, no choice about it, but moment of stasis has ended  
 personification of "time" → future lies in the journey that will be taken; the destination is the reason (as much as the point of departure).

positive connotations → juxtaposed with the emotionless mechanics of steel that guide the next step in the journey

Purpose of the journey: had to be leaving - sad to hear the train's whistle, however, the journey is necessary for a better life... the journey along the "glistening tracks"

-Peter Skrzynecki