

# 10 mary st essay

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10 Mary St Essay In Peter Skrzynecki's '10 Mary St', the poet expresses a strong sense of belonging towards his family home and garden. The use of the first person perspective, enjambment, simile, metaphor and alliteration in describing everyday routines create vivid imagery of the family's activities and reinforces the concept of belonging. The recount poem utilises effective images of the family's daily routines, such as securing the house "each morning... like a well-oiled lock".

The concept of time runs throughout the poem, such as the repetition of the term "nineteen years"; highlighting the period of time spent at '10 Mary St' and establishing a long connection to the house. The poet states that "we departed" from the house each morning, signifying a break from a much loved place. The garden is an important aspect of their lives, where the poet's parents "watered plants – grew potatoes... like adopted children", stressing their strong connection to their home.

To Peter, a child himself, the garden is a source of nourishment, and he ravages it "like a hungry bird", eating from its fruit until he is "bursting at the seams"; a colloquial term that reinforces the sense of change and assimilation. Skrzynecki creates a contrast between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of the family home and garden; where the 'inside' demonstrates warmth and security, particularly through the use of positive natural descriptions of the garden. The house, with "its china-blue coat", represents a refuge for them, contrasting with the images from the industrial district within which they live. The 'outside', however, represents an unwelcoming and alien wider culture into which the family must go, but do not really belong. Once again there was the barrier, the "still too-narrow bridge" that

separated the two worlds. The fourth stanza becomes representational of the post-war Australian migrant experience, where the family “ kept pre-war Europe alive” with photographs, letters, food, drink and visitors; emphasising their belonging to a small world before having to migrate from their homeland, to a society where they feel isolated. With time, the family becomes “ naturalized”, both literally and figuratively, becoming “ citizens of the soil that was feeding [them]”, illustrating acceptance, inclusion and citizenship.

The final lines, “ Inheritors of a key that’ll open no house when his one is pulled down” restate that the house is a symbol of warmth and connection, as well as suggesting the possibility of a future and new sense of belonging.