

Hostel



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Migrant Hostel” HSC Belonging Peter Skrzynecki’s poem “Migrant Hostel” tells the story of thousands of migrants coming to Australia after World War II. His poem describes the displacement and alienation these migrants felt.

As a migrant himself Skrzynecki reflects on the feeling of being in a new country not knowing anyone, not speaking the language and not knowing what was going to happen next. He describes the alienation and the sense of not belonging that migrants feel when first coming to a new country.

Comings and goings/newcomers/busloads/sudden departures.

This list of vocabulary is associated with the transitory environments which thousands of migrants lived in after the Second World War. Skrzynecki uses this technique of a list to convey a sense of dislocation by the migrants. He uses words such as “comings and goings” to describe the uncertainty of their lives. These words are contrasting and suggest that there is no sense of permanence and that the hostel is a temporary environment. “like a homing pigeon/ circling to get its bearings” is a simile used by Skrzynecki to create the sense of disorientation migrants first experience upon arrival at the hostel.

As they get their bearings they find others of the same nationality so that they do not feel so isolated and dislocated. With the words “Years and place names/ recognised by accents” Skrzynecki conveys how the migrants affiliate themselves by identifying others from their own country. As soon as they form an association through shared nationality they were “partitioned off at night/ by memories of hunger and hate”. This metaphor

represents the way thousands of migrants shared living quarters, no matter what prejudices existed between the different nationalities. ??? Memories of hunger and hate??? is alliteration which describes the hostility between nationalities, though they are all ??? hungry??? for the one thing ??“ a new life in Australia where they hope they can live without fear.??? We lived like birds of passage – /Always sensing a change/ in the weather??? Skrzynecki uses this simile to convey the similarities between the migrants??™ situation and the pattern of migratory birds.

It also refers to the way migrants are still in transit as everything is changing and they are being constantly moved around. The word ??? barrier??? in stanza four has a negative connotation and conveys how the migrants were limited in what they could do. ??? Needing its sanction??? is metaphorical for assimilation and how migrants felt that they needed permission to live in Australia.

??? Sealed off the highway??? also gives a negative connotation as ??? sealed off??? refers to being excluded or locked up and in ??? Migrant Hostel??? the migrants are being excluded from society by the ??? barrier??? and the ??? highway??? of life is just out of reach. ??? As it rose and fell like a finger/ pointed in reprimand or shame??? is a simile for formal correction, and gives the sense that migrants did not have confidence because they spoke no English, which is also their ??? shame???. ??? To pass in and out of lives/That had only begun/Or were dying??? is an ambiguous statement.

There is a sense of hope and freedom being offered as ??? only begun??? refers to how life in this new country was only just starting, but their lives

were ??? dying??? because as migrants they were expected to drop their ??? cultural baggage??? and take up the ??? Australian way of life???, thus killing their old traditions, values, beliefs and culture.