

# Benjamin zephaniah and wb yeats essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



**ASSIGN  
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Benjamin Zephaniah's poem 'No problem' is about how he was subjected to racism when he was in England it's about his experience in school and how the teachers and everyone else treated him a certain way just because of the colour of his skin. He talks in Caribbean English and not in Standard English so that it appeals to black people and not put them off. It also sounds natural because it's the way he speaks.

However the poem by WB Yeats- 'An Irishman Foresees his death' is a poem in the memory of one of his friends, a pilot who he admired, when reading this poem it's almost like WB Yeats is the pilot and he's writing about himself or that he has experienced this sense of feeling of being free when flying and happy.

The poem 'No problem' by Zephaniah, tells us about how he has experienced racism but he hold no grudge "I have no chips on me shoulders" line 20, he was always the butt of the joke "But I bear de brunt". There is alliteration with the b sounds, but, bear and brunt. Taunts and Stunts are both hard sounds and suggests bullying.

On line 5 he repeats the first verse of the poem- 'I am not de problem', this kind of repetition emphasises his point. Academic and 'branded athletic' are half rhymes and also harsh sounds. The rhythm of the poem reinforces his way of talking in a firm manor. Harsh sounds and soft sounds- make it much easier for the reader to read.

'I can teach yu of Timbuktu'- Timbuktu is a place in Islamic culture.

The fact that he knows about other cultures shows that he is intelligent.

It also shows that he had talents that weren't recognised in school.

' I can do more dan dance'- do, dan and dance are alliteration, it repeats the consonant sounds. He is stereotyped as a dancer because many black people are good at dancing, so he is presumed to be as well.

' Yu put me in a pigeon hole' - is a comparison because he describes that he was put in the pigeon hole (not literally).

' But I am versatile'- versatile is a 3 syllable and rhymes with smile this shows that he is able to rhyme as it is much more easier to rhyme with a 2 syllable word.

' Black is not de problem'- the pattern of ' I am not de problem' has been broken and this makes the word ' black' stand out.

' Mother country get it right'-this is a command rather than a request.

The Mother country is England and when Zephaniah and his family came from the Caribbean they thought they would be welcomed after keeping their end of the bargain by responding to the empire to fight along side England, but they weren't.

' An juss fe de record,

Sum of me best friends are white.'- here is trying to be humorous because usually when a someone has just made a racist comment they usually go ' sum of me friends are black' so he has reversed what is usually said.

But it can also be argued that in this whole poem he has generalised all white people to be racist to black people.

The poem 'An Irishman Foresees his death' is an acknowledgement to the memory of Major Robert Gregory, the son of his close friend Lady Augusta Gregory. I think the way Yeats writes the poem is that Gregory knew that he would not return from the war. It is even possible that before he left, he may have voiced it to Yeats: hence the poem.

The first two lines prepare the reader for what lies ahead. The pilot will die:

"I know that I shall meet my fate

Somewhere among the clouds above"- The pilot knew that he would die while flying his plane.

The lines "Those that I fight I do not hate

Those that I guard I do not love"- is reflect the irony of an Irishman dying for oppressors England It was but a "lonely impulse of delight", a rush of blood that drove him to this faith.

He does not feel any loyalty towards England, as he hasn't got a reason to hate the Germans. He fights because of the feeling he gets when flying.

"My country is Kiltartan Cross,

My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,

No likely end could bring them loss

Or leave them happier than before”- It is a very powerful poem and seems to show some bitterness towards the English for making the Irish fight in a war they didn’t agree with, for a country they didn’t love, and against a country they had no anger against. “ My country men Kiltartan’s poor”- In this sense he is not only just remembering Gregory, but all the Irishmen that lost their lives in the war, or because of the war. These are the people he cares about and identifies himself with. There is alliteration in “ likely” and “ leave” and the short o sound, nearing the end of the poem. It is almost like he is asking himself why? Why has he joined in fight for a cause so pointless to him?

“ I balanced all, brought all to mind,

The years to come seemed waste of breath,

A waste of breath the years behind

In balance with this life, this death.”

To me the pilot is saying that he looked back at his life and into his future and what he saw seemed empty hopeless ” a waste of breath”. So why not do something that he really enjoyed (“ a lonely impulse of delight”).

The poem I liked was by WB Yeats ‘ An Irishman foresees his death’, I just felt more pulled by it, it stands out more as Major Gregory didn’t actually write it, like poems are written by the poet. It was in memory of him and written by his friend. Major Gregory died in the air war against Germany in the world war one. And this poem is about home he enjoyed flying, and you

can really feel the atmosphere of this. It is a thoughtful poem because he explores his thoughts about dying in the war and is aware of this.