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Philosophy



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Peter Skrzynecki's *10 Mary Street* is a poem portraying a family's process of integrating into the Australian community. The concept of belonging is explored, particularly belonging within the family and culture, and through this, Skrzynecki exemplifies the importance of establishing connections to attain the security and stability essential to people's lives. Skrzynecki establishes the notion of belonging within the family through his portrayal of the family routine and the nurturing nature of the parents.

The family's daily routine is described as "like a well-oiled lock" and emphasised through the use of enjambment. The simile suggests a functional family comfortable and established in their nineteen-year settlement in the community. The nurturing nature of the parents is characterised by the "tended roses and camellias/ Like adopted children." This simile suggests that the garden is personified as family member and indicates the tenderness of the parents. The poem's persona is rather thoughtless in his treatment of the garden, highlighted by his ravages "like a hungry bird".

The notion of cultural belonging is portrayed through the image of the house and its memories. The house symbolises the cultural identity of the family and the personification of "its china-blue coat..." suggests the family's pride in maintaining their home, similar to caring for a family member. The memories are described as "heated discussions/ And embracing gestures/...". This use of sensory imagery and cultural allusions "Kielbasa, salt herrings,..." suggests the cultural connections kept by the family despite immigrating to Australia.

These connections are undermined by the demolition of the house, described as “ inheritors of a key/ That’ll open no house/...”. This indicates the loss of cultural identity kept in their house and suggests that belonging is an intangible and important concept. The “ key” ironically represents Australian citizenship, however instead of acceptance in society, the family feels anxious and insecure as a result of their lack of belonging, indicated by the negative connotations of “ pulled down”.