**The Famine Road**

- Famine Roads were unrequired roads that lead nowhere. If people are physically exhausted they can’t raise any resistance, they were a method of controlling people.
- Trevelyan- a senior overlooking this operation.

**Stanza 1**

- Opens with a significant simile “idle as trout” – lazy.
- Dominant power always attempt to dehumanise the subjugated (victims) - makes it easier to have total disregard and psychologically it gives you the right to do it - realistic representation of when a colonial power takes over.
- Trevelyan is supposed to be in charge of famine relief and in opening stanza he is completely without empathy.
- He is extremely harsh – “give them no coins at all”.
- Dehumanisation leads to emotional detachment.
- Jones introduces the building of roads matter of factly “give them roads, roads to force from nowhere, going nowhere of course” - No recognisable human emotions, a business like tone.

**Stanza 2**

- Doctor delivering terrible news – cold, matter fact, no empathy “one out of every 10”.
- Pain and horror can be a product of functional, ordinary language.
- Evil and tragedy can be born out of language devoid of drama

**Stanza 3**

- Description of physically deliberated people as a result of hunger.
- “directionless” these people were as irrelevant as the roads being built.
- Severity of conditions highlighted to engage our empathy.
- “iron” is cold and hard just like the environment they were expected to live in.
- Cannibalism introduced “as if at a corner butcher- the others buttock” reinforced idea that Irish were savages; subhuman.
Stanza 5

- “Dusk” how common death was…ending of another life as day ends.
- “Pariah” an outcast, even own family won’t touch or communicate with them.
- Lonely death, “death rattle” - final breath entirely on his own, peers forced to abandon him.
- Coldness of people reflected in coldness of winter described.

Stanza 6

- Doctors response is shocking - casual nature of speech, matter of fact.
  Dismissive nature, detached and demeaning - “grow your garden keep house”.
- His lack of understanding undermines the woman’s tragedy.
- His lack of sensitivity and patronisation is mirrored by the British towards Irish.

Stanza 7

- Poem comes full circle as Jones reports back to Trevelyan.
- Sinister language that doesn’t represent death is how we felt it.
- What he interpreted as a success, we shrunk from in horror “it’s gone better than you expected”. This was sanctioned right from the top “Lord”, “Colonel” protected by their rank.
- “from Parish to Parish, field to field” - reminded of scale of death.
- “we march the corn to the ships in peace” money valued over people.
- Last line is again matter fact by removing horror of a mass grave “I saw bones out of my carriage window. Your servant Jones”.
- Compares her body to a Famine Road “what is your body now if not a famine road”. What she saw as her purpose in life, to be a mother, has been taken away – Identity stripped.

Style

- Use of two narratives – one to highlight the other…two seemingly unrelated things to make a point about the human condition and our capabilities.
- Direct speech - examines every day nature of the worst kind of evil
The Black Lace Fan My Mother Gave Me

• Boland writing about youth of her mother.
• Inspired by an object – Similar to A Shadow Doll.

Stanza 1

• Balanced pictures…positives and negatives.
• **Title** - not negative even though the colour black is associated with darkness.
• Fan=Heirloom passed from mother to daughter.
• A sense of longevity, a marriage that has lasted.
• **Setting**-Paris, most romantic of cities, sophisticated, elegant, exotic and enticing at a time when people didn’t travel much.
• Opening line-this man and moment are important to her, she kept the fan… valued memory and relationship.
• “Pre-War” hint of trouble ahead in Paris during WW1, helps illustrate ups and downs. Pathetic fallacy of weather “stifling”, “stormy”- uncomfortable, humid.

Stanza 2

• 2nd and 3rd stanzas introduce element of fear.
• Sense of a regular occurrence, air of sophistication “cafés”.
• Short clipped sentences-suggestive of a mind working quickly.
• Female protagonists unease - Pragmatic analysis of early stages of a relationship. Her fears are baseless as he is concerned about being late “he looked at his watch”.

Stanza 3

• Increasing desperation -“ordered more coffee” and embarrassment “she stood up” - can’t relax - Fear that he has stood her up, not as committed as she is.
• Heat takes on a more ominous presence “killing” - self-doubt is what is killing her.
• She predicts sorrow in her future “she thought the distance smelled of rain and lightning”.

Stanza 4

• Focus turns to fan and what is has come to represent.
• “**wild roses” flower “silk” expensive quality fabric.
• “by hand” “tortoiseshell”-calming nature of sea.
“bullion” value - all suggest an object of worth.

- Tone is now calmer, intensity of emotion at beginning is not sustained.
- “Patience” and compromise are valuable to longevity of a relationship.
  To achieve this reticence trouble and pain had to be endured.
Looking at fan brings her back to moment, makes it alive, still has vitality.

**Stanza 5**

- Acknowledges she is putting herself in her mother’s shoes.
- Emotion and psychology she has put into poem are her own creative response to the facts.

**Stanza 6**

- Metaphor of the fan becomes “blackbird”.
  To link past with present, sees a bird alive present day.
  When is spreads wings it is a reminder of vitality of new fan and it’s “flirtatious” romance.
The Shadow Doll

- A Shadow Doll-used for wedding trials.
- Title-very negative for a poem about marriage.
- A Doll is a representation of a person - A voiceless image of a woman. A doll is also a plaything … Apply that to an adult woman = negative.
- Shadow-absence of light. Become a shadow of yourself, Hiding away what you really are.

Stanza 1

- Detailed and artistic object.
- Flooded with colour “Ivory and oyster gleam”- Hinting at glamour of actual wedding day. Quickly changes this bright tone.
- Feminine-“blooms”- all about the woman on wedding day.

Stanza 2

- Nearly every aspect is negative. “healthy sewn”- constricting, sealed fate
  “porcelain bride”- fragile
  “oyster gleam” will be chipped/shattered
- Act of getting married increases your vulnerability
- “airless glamour”- negative-living death?
- “Survives”- living beyond purpose - chosen definitely… Struggle, ordeal-negative connotations. Married life is difficult.

Stanza 3

- “Under glass, under wraps”- Repetition of under-highlighting importance. ‘Wraps’- hiding, secret, Anonymity…Women who married didn’t work.
  ‘Under’- buried
  ‘Glass’- display purposes only, trophy
- “even now”- long passage of time….. No separation/divorce in respectable society.
Stanza 4

- “she could see herself”-hindsight….Not what she expected.

Stanza 5

- “stephanotis”-tropical
- “never feeling”-no heat/passion left
- “satin rise and fall…”-no breathing lifelessness

Stanza 6

- “astray” lost, doubt
- “I kept repeatedly” trying to convince herself of vows.
- “coffee pots and clocks” didn’t live together until marriage, domestic nature.
- Contrast between seeming glamour and domesticity of marriage.
  Glamour of wedding day=fleeting.

Stanza 7

- Bleak final image-imprisonment.
- “locks” marriage and imprisonment.
- “pressing down” force and pressure on women to marry.
The War Horse

- Typical poetic work - Everyday thing (a horse) used to provide inspiration for something deeper.
- Take ordinary and mundane to reflect on something more profound…Antithesis of modern works.

- **Title** - Sets tone and Reveals conflict/tension.
- Writing about Ireland, a suburban neighbourhood.
  Things that apply in past can relate to modern world.

- “*clip clop casual*” alliteration, rhythm, lightness
- “*stamps death*” language intensifies, darkness, leaves permanent mark.
- “*like a mint*” force of impact on earth.
- “*innocent coinage*” violence inflicted on innocent.
- “*ambling*” casual nature of violence that frightens normalisation.
- “*loosed from its tether*” A comment metaphorically on the human condition - When violence is loosed form tether of normal civilisation.
  Innate party of us as humans to be self-destructive.

- “*hissing*” serpentine threatening.
- “*no great harm is done*” not to her as she is safe in house…A truisms of war-people not directly affected will look after themselves.

- Nature is damaged - war stops natural balance and flourishing.
- “*rose*” cut off in their prime, before prospering (like many soldiers).
- “*expendable*” normal value of life cast aside.
- “*scream less dead*” death was unforeseen, war can invade seemingly normal life.
- Contrast between “*we are safe*” with “*corpses, remote, crushed, mutilated*”… ordinary exists alongside horror.
  Shocking and graphic language = violence of war.
• Repetition of “Stumbles” is significant – awkwardness, clumsiness, lacks refinement and balance.
  Conflicts does not take into account individuality or decency ever.
  War is unthinking, that is what is “huge” and “threatening”.
• Passage of horse is symbolic of a war machine moving on with no consideration of destruction left behind in its wake.

• “illicit brand” frightening force.
• “hedge” and “countryside” rural aspect reinforced.
• “a world betrayed” conflict betrays our value; it is without decency, respect and the normal things that hold society together.
• “a cause ruined” ruined lack of resilience.