

Poetry

Read the poem below and answer the questions which follow it.

War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
5 a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
10 to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
faintly start to twist before his eyes,
15 a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
of this man's wife, how he sought approval
without words to do what someone must
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white
20 from which his editor will pick out five or six
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
with tears between bath and pre-lunch beers.
From aeroplane he stares impassively at where
he earns a living and they do not care.

Carol Ann Duffy

Answer the questions below. Remember to answer in full sentences and use quotations to support your understanding.

1. Look at line 2.
 - a) What are the “spools of suffering”? (1)
 - b) What is the effect of the sibilance used here? (2)

2. Why do you think Duffy chooses to list the names of places in line 6? (2)

3. What does the metaphor “All flesh is grass.” suggest about the impact of war? (2)

4. How does the poet present how the war has affected the photographer? (6)

5. Look at stanza 3.
How is the person in the photograph presented? Find two quotations and explain their effect. (4)

6. How does Duffy present England and the way that people who live there are engaged with wars in other countries? (6)

7. ‘*War Photographer* is an anti-war poem. To what extent do you agree with this statement? (2)