**BRIGHT LIGHTS OF SARAJEVO ESSAY QUESTION:**

**HOW DOES THE WRITER PRESENT WAR IN THE POEM?**

KEY WORD IN QUESTION? **WAR**

1. Intro – answer question, what is the poem’s main message about WAR?

**War** is presented as a prominent feature of life in Sarajevo. Despite this, the poem suggests that **love and relationships** can not only survive but thrive in even the most difficult situations.

1. Title – Link it to the KWIQ

The ‘Bright lights’ in the title immediately suggest that S is a war zone, the bombs lighting up the sky. However, this could also suggest the allure of the city, a positive, vibrant place to be.

1. First stanza/beginning – what devices does Harrison use? What do these help to show about WAR?

In the first stanza Harrison emphasises the never ending threat of war. The use of enjambment and lack of full stops highlights that everyday life is very stressful because of the imminent threat of war. Everyday items such as bread and water are ‘rationed’, and everyone, including mothers with ‘prams’ have to get on with their life. The rhyme scheme and use of sibilance suggests the negativity that pervades everything people do.

1. What changes towards the end of the first stanza?

Towards the end of the first stanza, the mood shifts away from the threat of war towards human relationships. This Volta highlights how love can survive even in the dark. Harrison’s use of the lexicon of war ‘radar’, shows how the two opposites can co-exist. The tone is light-hearted, emphasising the normal aspects of new relationship.

1. How does the omniscient speaker start the second stanza – what does this suggest about WAR? Write about the imagery – what does is emphasise about WAR?

The omniscient speaker ‘I see’ begins stanza 2 with ‘and’, highlighting that love carries on. The use of imagery associated with light continues, from ‘lighter to a cigarette’, to ‘match-flare test’. Harrison is perhaps suggesting that there is hope – light always prevails. This romantic imagery is then shockingly juxtaposed with the horrific details of a ‘massacre’, made even more shocking that it happened doing an everyday, essential activity. The use of alliteration ‘mortars massacred’ and assonance ‘blood-dunked bread’, emphasises the horror of war.

1. There is a shift in tone back to hope – write about line 37 and the paradoxical change back to the x of WAR?

The tone shifts back towards hopefulness, the rain perhaps washing away the spilt blood. Line 37 is longer, the pathetic fallacy of the clouds clearing again, suggesting the hope that war may end. Paradoxically, this clear hopeful sky is also perfect for bombers to drop yet more tragedy.

1. As the poem ends – imagery? What is the final smaller stanza’s message? What message does Harrison leave us with overall about WAR?

As poem draws to an end the imagery of death and war is, once more, a destructive force, the hyphenated ‘death-deep’, ‘death-dark’ images emphasising how death and war are connected to everything in Sarajevo. The final, smaller stanza seems suggests that war affects everyone, the ‘shapes’ of the people could be anyone. The romantic and peaceful image of a ‘candlelit café’ is juxtaposed with the image of the ‘aid sacks’ a constant reminder that war is never far away. Harrison ends the poem suggesting that despite the horrors of war, love always seems to find a way to flourish, even in a war zone.