

Compare *Presents from my Aunts in Pakistan* with one other poem, showing how the poets reveal feelings and ideas about their identity. Write about:

- What the poets feel about identity
- The language they use
- The effect on the reader

Presents from my Aunts in Pakistan and *Hurricane hits England* are both poems about the importance of identity.

In *Presents...*, the poet is living in England which is not where she is really from. She can only remember her past from “fractured photographs” and the clothes that her aunts send to her in the post. This is also the case in *Hurricane* where the poet is reminded of her home by the storm that comes one night.

In both poems, the people feel that identity is very important. The girl in *Presents...* finds it hard to know who she really is. She says that when she tries on the beautiful clothes that her aunts send, she is “alien”. She feels like she doesn’t fit in with them because she is “half English”. In the other poem, she is angry and upset when the storm reminds her of home but then at the end of the poem she seems to realise that who she is doesn’t change just because of where she is because “the earth is the earth”

Moniza Alvi uses lots of bright colours when she talks about the presents. They are “peacock blue” and “glistening” but the girl “longed for denim and corduroy” which are not bright colours. They are opposites and help to show how she feels torn between the two places – England and Pakistan. At the end of the poem, she says that she is “of no fixed nationality” which also agrees with this point. She doesn’t really fit in anywhere. Other words that she uses that suggest that there is a problem include “the cruelty and the transformation” and “a conflict, a fractured land”. These words make me think that this is what her life is like because she feels torn between two places.

In *Hurricane ...*, the language is very negative. She uses words like “rage” and “spectre” which make it sound like the storm is a very bad thing. But she also says that the storm is “reassuring” which makes me think that it’s not all bad. I think that the language shows that she is in two minds about the storm. She is angry and upset that it has come and reminded her of what life used to be like, but she is also pleased that she can remember it.

I think both poems show the reader that identity is very important, but they both say that who we are isn’t just about where we live, but what is on the inside too.