

The Moment

Margaret Atwood

The moment when, after many years
of hard work and a long voyage
you stand in the centre of your room,
house, half-acre, square mile, island, country,
knowing at last how you got there,
and say, I own this,

is the same moment when the trees unloose
their soft arms from around you,
the birds take back their language,
the cliffs fissure and collapse,
the air moves back from you like a wave
and you can't breathe.

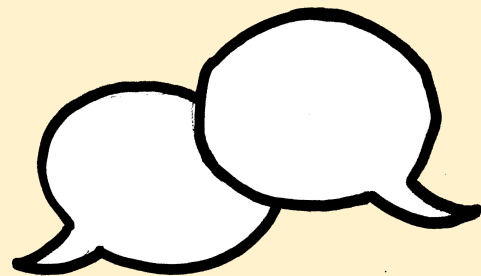
No, they whisper. You own nothing.
You were a visitor, time after time
climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming.
We never belonged to you.
You never found us.
It was always the other way round.

Vocabulary Check

- half-acre, square mile
- the cliffs fissure and collapse
- proclaiming, we never belonged to you

Now read the poem again

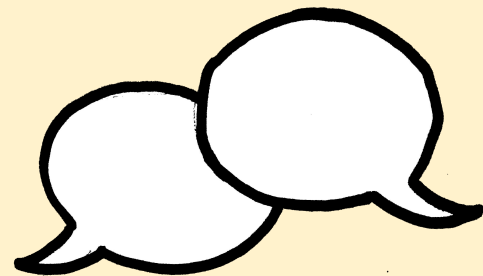
Partnered Talk



What do you think this poem is about?

What themes do you notice?

Partnered Talk



Can you ever own land?

What do you think is Margaret Atwood's opinion on this?

Individual Thinking



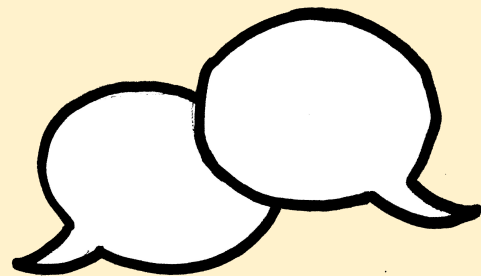
No, they whisper. You own nothing.

Why does Margaret Atwood use the word whisper here?

How might the meaning change if you changed 'whisper' to:

1. roared
2. wept
3. laughed

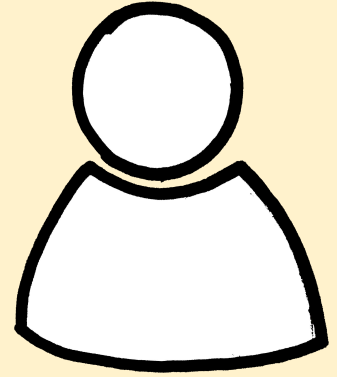
Partnered Talk



It was always the other way round.

What do you think this means?

Solo Work



Choose three lines of the poem and analyse their meaning.