Look we have coming to Dover!

Daljit Nagra

‘So various, so beautiful, so new…’

– Matthew Arnold, ‘Dover Beach’

Stowed in the sea to invade

the lash alfresco of a diesel-breeze

ratcheting speed into the tide, with brunt

gobfuls of surf phlegmed by cushy come-and-go

tourists prow’d on the cruisers, lording the ministered waves.

Seagull and shoal life

Vexin their blarnies upon our huddled

camouflage past the vast crumble of scummed

cliffs, scramming on mulch as thunder unbladders

yobbish rain and wind on our escape, hutched in a Bedford van.

Seasons or years we reap

inland, unclocked by the national eye

or stab in the back, teemed for breathing

sweeps of grass through the whistling asthma of parks,

burdened, ennobled, poling sparks across pylon and pylon.

Swarms of us, grafting in

the black within shot of the moon’s

spotlight, banking on the miracle of sun –

span its rainbow, passport us to life. Only then

can it be human to hoick ourselves, bare-faced for the clear.

Imagine my love and I,

our sundry others, Blair’d in the cash

of our beeswax’d cars, our crash clothes, free,

we raise our charged glasses over unparasol’d tables

East, babbling our lingoes, flecked by the chalk of Britannia!

Language techniques:

* Colloquial language such as “Lingoes” and “gobfuls”, mixing cultures together to create a hybrid. Fun effect, the narrator excited to explore a new culture.
* Lexical field of immigration, words used such as “invade” and “swarms” – by putting it into the mouth of an immigrant it highlights how others view them.
* Neologisms such as “gobful of surf phlegmed by cush come-and-go” – Both colloquialisms and neologisms appear here. Turning a noun into a verb provides a vivid image of what the reader is experiencing, it allows us to understand a negative connotation from the immigrants and that their experiences are not always positive when they arrive in a new environment.
* Infectious irreverence towards ‘real’ English.

Tone:

* One of hardship and poverty, compared with ‘cushy’ tourists, resentment yet infatuation and excitement towards new life and new world to explore – Blair (lots of money) wealth in a new place. Journey is felt as if it is difficult as they are ‘burdened’ and ‘hutched’. The narrator imagines the new life they are going to get by the time they leave, that keeps them going.

Imagery:

* Blair government, neologism ‘Blair’d’ meaning Blair brought economic prosperity, England is a land of wealth etc. Hope.
* Immigration seen as “invade” and “swarmed”, as if the immigrants are an army approaching or a disease. Negative connotations to the masses of bodies entering the country. Debate in modern context as to whether or not immigrants are a nuisance to this country.
* ‘Shot of the moons spotlight’ Searchlight looking for immigrants trying to get across the border.
* Nature, new country, new experiences ‘Thunder’ ‘Rain’ ‘Sun’.

Structure:

* Half rhyme – shows how the narrator is trying to fathom the language, something that many accuse immigrants of not attempting.
* Alternative rhyme – varied to show little knowledge of structure of English language.
* Dizzying around of sound effects in each stanza. Synesthetic.
* Loose structure.