

Task for The Garret: Charlotte Wood

Activity Two: Playing with figurative language (similes)

Read the similes below. Although you may not know the context of the particular simile, identify those you believe to be effective and those you believe to be risks taken by the writer. In so doing try to describe the particular physical or emotional context in which the simile might have been used.

- ‘...clouds like little farts...’ From [Amnesia](#) (p. 212) by [Peter Carey](#)
- ‘They were like fog, these people, blended into the grey rain and the concrete.’ From [When the Night Comes](#) (p. 2) by [Favel Parrett](#)
- ‘The rain smacked my japara hard and it sounded like being inside a tent.’ From [When the Night Comes](#) (p. 2) by [Favel Parrett](#)
- ‘It was a small house, simple as a child’s drawing and older than his own nation.’ From [The Riders](#) (p. 4) by [Tim Winton](#)
- ‘The sea is caramelising in the heat of the afternoon.’ From [Dirt Music](#) (p. 138) by [Tim Winton](#)
- ‘Cigarettes were like a malignant lover to him.’ From [The Slap](#) (p. 7) by [Christos Tsiolkas](#)
- ‘I hated Judy’s first boyfriend, as expected. He was shaped like a sweet potato.’ From [Six Bedrooms](#) (p. 59) by [Tegan Bennett Daylight](#)
- ‘...Verla can see the smudge edge of a tattoo on her shoulder: gaudy pink, a sickly orange, a thick dark outline like stained glass.’ From [The Natural Way of Things](#) (pp. 36 – 37) by [Charlotte Wood](#).

As an amusing exercise with your class group, read [these examples of failed figurative language](#). Select your favourite bad simile. Try to write some bad similes of your own.

Despite the assertion that these similes were compiled by students in exams, they were in fact [made-up by teachers as examples of failed writing](#). Here are some of those listed:

- ‘The plan was simple, like my brother-in-law Pete. But unlike Pete, this plan just might work.’
- ‘She has a deep throaty, genuine laugh like that sound a dog makes just before it throws up.’
- ‘The horizon swallowed the setting sun like a dog sucking an egg, but not quite.’
- ‘McNeish fell twelve stories, hitting the pavement like a garbage bag filled with vegetable soup.’
- ‘Her hair glistened in the rain like a nose hair after a sneeze.’
- ‘She caught your eye like one of those pointy hook latches that used to dangle from screen doors and would fly up whenever you banged the door open.’
- ‘The little boat gently drifted across the pond exactly the way a bowling ball wouldn’t.’
- ‘The red brick wall was the colour of a brick-red Crayola crayon.’