



## RESOURCE SHEET 9

### The right word

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#### The right word

by Imtiaz Dharker

Outside the door,  
lurking in the shadows,  
is a terrorist.

Is that the wrong description?  
Outside that door,  
taking shelter in the shadows,  
is a freedom-fighter.

I haven't got this right.  
Outside, waiting in the shadows,  
is a hostile militant.

Are words no more  
than waving, wavering flags?  
Outside your door,  
watchful in the shadows,  
is a guerrilla warrior.

God help me.  
Outside, defying every shadow,  
stands a martyr.  
I saw his face.

No words can help me now.  
Just outside the door,  
lost in shadows,  
is a child who looks like mine.

One word for you.  
Outside my door,  
his hand too steady,  
his eyes too hard  
is a boy who looks like your son, too.

I open the door.  
Come in, I say.  
Come in and eat with us.

The child steps in  
And carefully, at my door,  
Takes off his shoes.

© Imtiaz Dharker from *The terrorist at my table*  
(Bloodaxe Books, 2006)

A film of Imtiaz reading this poem is also available  
on BBC Bitesize [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/  
gcsebitesize/english\\_literature/poetryconflict/  
therightword1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/poetryconflict/therightword1.shtml)