

Key ideas: - The beautiful landscape is the product of slow, dramatic change.
 - Scotland - the place, the idea - is tough and long-lasting.
 - Scotland is important. - Change is difficult and slow.

'Slate', by Edwin Morgan

Landscape is so ancient it's before records began / Scotland is unable to begin a new period with its own assembly.

1. There is no beginning. We saw Lewis
 All seeing narrators (if aliens/angels are watching Scotland, it must be important).
2. laid down, when there was not much but thunder
 violent beginnings show country is used to dramatic change
3. and volcanic fires; watched long seas plunder
4. faults; laughed as Staffa cooled. Drumlins blue as
 'laughed' gives a stronger sense of the speaker's presence & personality.
 SIMILE
5. bruises were grated off like nutmegs; bens,
 SIMILE simile shows violent formation of country; 'bruises' makes landscape seem living.

Extended metaphor - Scotland's landscape is a living body.

6. and a great glen, gave a rough back we like
7. to think the ages must streak, surely strike,
 weather hit
8. seldom stroke, but raised and shaken, with tens
 treat gently
9. of thousands of rains, blizzards, sea-poundings

The 's' sound connects the ideas which will mark, batter, and stroke the land and its people.

List emphasises the number of powers battering the country, but the country is tough (the landscape and its people).

10. shouldered off into night and memory. PERSONIFICATION
11. Memory of men! That was to come Great
12. in their empty hunger these surroundings PERSONIFICATION
13. threw walls to the sky, the sorry glory
14. of a rainbow. Their heels kicked flint, chalk, slate. PERSONIFICATION

to 'kick heels' means to wait impatiently -

Man/Kind is dealt with quickly. The landscape has been around much longer, and so gets longer in the poem.

List of non-dramatic details helps ground the big, epic ideas of the poem.

Rainbow's glory is 'sorry' because it's brief; the landscape endures for millions/billions.