Section C: Poetry

The Moment

By 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.

Q27. In *The Moment*, how does Margaret Atwood present the speaker’s feelings about mankind’s relationship with nature?