

**Valentine by Duffy**

"Valentine" by Carol Ann Duffy is a modern, unconventional love poem that rejects traditional, idealized symbols of romance such as flowers or chocolates. Instead, the speaker offers an onion as a metaphor for love. The onion, with its layers and pungent smell, symbolizes the complexities, rawness, and sometimes painful truths of love.

The speaker emphasizes that the onion is a more honest and lasting symbol of love, as it can bring tears and has the potential to reveal deeper emotions. The poem suggests that love, like the onion, is multifaceted and may not always be sweet or easy but is genuine and enduring. The onion’s layers also imply that love has depth and complexity, and the poet urges the lover to embrace love in all its forms, even if it’s not always perfect or beautiful.

Through this metaphor, Duffy challenges conventional ideas of romance and presents a more realistic, mature perspective on love.

**Porphyria’s Lover by Browning**

"Porphyria's Lover" by Robert Browning is a dramatic monologue told from the perspective of a man who reflects on an evening he spent with his lover, Porphyria. The poem begins with Porphyria arriving at the speaker's home during a storm. She lovingly tends to him and expresses her affection, but the speaker notes that she is socially superior to him and seems conflicted about their relationship.

In a moment of passion, the speaker decides to "possess" Porphyria completely, believing that by killing her, he can preserve the moment of love and control over her. He strangles her with her own hair while she is unaware, and then lays her body next to him, feeling triumphant in having achieved an ideal, perfect love. The poem ends with the speaker calmly reflecting that, since no one will discover the murder, he has essentially secured their eternal connection.

The poem explores themes of obsessive love, control, and the darker side of human desire. It also reflects on power dynamics in relationships, as well as the blurred line between love and violence.

**Nettles by Vernon Scannell**

The poem "Nettles" by Vernon Scannell is a reflection on a father's love, protection, and the painful realities of life. The poem opens with the speaker recalling an incident when his young son fell into a patch of nettles and was stung. The father, feeling deeply for his child's pain, takes action by attacking the nettles, aiming to protect his son from further harm. Despite the father's efforts, the nettles continue to grow back, symbolizing the persistence of life's challenges and suffering.

The poem explores themes of love, the inevitability of pain, and the desire to protect loved ones. It highlights the cycle of life where wounds heal, but new difficulties inevitably arise. The imagery of the nettles as both a physical and metaphorical threat emphasizes the ongoing nature of life's struggles.

During Spring 2, we will be reading and analysing a range of poetry linked to love and relationships.

**Y8 – Love and Relationships Poetry**

**English**