

"the broken heart" by john donne and varied imagery essay sample

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“ The Broken Heart” by John Donne and Varied Imagery Essay Sample

The Broken Heart, by John Donne, sets a despairing mood about heartbreak and clearly states his adverse opinion about falling in love. It is obvious that the author has been a victim of terrible remorse and through this writing, expresses his feelings about how love is a negative thing. Using varied imagery, Donne portrays this discouraging tone through diction, personification, and metaphors. A melancholy tone is set just through the name of the poem, “ Broken Heart”. Donne begins the poem through negative words such as decaying, devouring, and plague to describe the effects of love. These words adequately create unpleasant images of mold taking over food, a lion attacking a gazelle, and a disease killing a village. Not exactly how one would imagine the feelings of love. In the first stanza the idea that “ love cannot wane quickly even though it can be sparked quickly” (Gradesaver. com) helps describe how fast one can fall in love and how long one can suffer after heartache.

Through personification, Donne explains how fast love is by describing love as a “ he”, calling it a monster that “ swallows” the heart and as a warlike destroyer that uses a chain of cannons that, metaphorically, take out whole ranks. Both methods happen fast and in a sinister way (lines 14 and 15).

Love is also personified as a “ tyrant pike” that devours our hearts like small fish, yet another negative image (line 16). Overall in the second stanza, love is described as “ a predator ready and willing to devour the defenseless human heart.” (AP Central) The poem becomes more personal as Donne

describes how his heart was stolen. " I brought a heart into the room/ but from the room I carried none with me" (Line 19-20) describes how he loved a girl greatly and gave her his all but realizes she didn't have the same feelings as he. John Donne continues throughout the poem to explain how the heart can only handle the first love and then after that first " hit", the heart shatters like glass. Broken glass is nearly impossible to put back together, so through Donne's negative views, the broken pieces of the heart will " not unite" (line 28). Love is seen as something that tares the heart apart.

He describes the heart as being " rags", meaning it is not completely destroyed; there are pieces that still remain, like the broken glass. The word rags makes one imagine a torn up towel; it can still do its job of drying something, but it may not be as affective. The torn heart, though in rags, is still able to " like, wish, and adore", but can never love the same again. To create the negative and unpleasant imagery throughout The Broken Heart, John Donne uses diction, such as decaying and plaque, personification, calling love a monster that devours the heart, and lastly metaphors such as the heart being shattered glass after the first hit of love. With the use of varied imagery, Donne creates a despairing mood that clearly portrays his negative views on love and the effects it has on the heart.