

# "love song, with two goldfish" by grace chua essay sample

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## **“ Love song, with two goldfish” by Grace Chua Essay Sample**

The poem, “ love song, with two goldfish” by Grace Chua is about a romantic relationship of two goldfish that unlike a lot of love stories does not result in a happy ending. It seems as though in this poem, humans have been replaced with two goldfish; a man and a woman with very different wants and needs which ends in the woman leaving the man for ‘ something more’, something that he cannot offer.

The title of the poem, ‘ love song...’ straightaway informs the reader that the theme of the poem will be revolving around love. The title is enclosed by brackets, which suggest that two goldfish are in a confined area like that of a fishbowl. It highlights the theme of being trapped and the lack of freedom. The poem consists of five paragraphs, each of which is in brackets, which constantly reminds the reader of the fact that the two goldfish are in a small confined space.

The very first paragraph of the poem establishes the attraction the male fish feels towards the female fish through words like “ always floating around her...” but at the same time talk of the fact that the male fish had nowhere else to go due to the fact that they live in a small fishbowl. Even though the male fish is said to be always floating around the female fish he is described a “ drifter”, as someone who cannot stay in one place, which is ironic because they live in a small fishbowl and cannot explore or move around past it. Grace Chua also uses several puns in this paragraph such as, “

drifter, always floating around her" and the fact that his lover gives him the "fish eye". The use of these puns adds to the humor of the poem.

The second paragraph of the poem highlights the development of the relationship between the two goldfish. Through phrases like, "she makes fish eyes and kissy lips at him..." the poet makes clear of the fact that the female fish has finally begun to notice the male fish. However there are two ways with which one can look at this phrase, one, that the female is reciprocating her feelings or the other could simply be that the "fish eyes" and the "kissy lips" are just a figment of his imagination since goldfish naturally have puckered lips. Along with this the poet once again talks of conformity by starting the paragraph with "bounded by round walls" which highlights the fact that the two goldfish have only been brought together by the boundaries in which they reside. That perhaps the only reason they are getting closer is because there is no other option.

The third paragraph shows us a more dreamy and idealistic side of the male goldfish as he talks about his future with the female goldfish. He says he will take her to the ocean so that they can break the monotony of their lives yet this paragraph too is in brackets reminding us of the fact that they are still in the fishbowl and that these dreams of breaking out in the big vast ocean might only stay as dreams and nothing else. There is also the use of alliteration in this paragraph "submarine silence", which indicates that even in their dreams of being in the vast ocean they want to be together in the conformity that is silence. They talk about the fact that they would dive for

the pearls which are at the bottom of the ocean which make it clear that they both want to explore the world in all its glory.

Their blooming love doesn't last long because in the fourth paragraph the poet uses the phrase, " belly-up" to describe the female goldfish's feelings which can be another pun used by the author because when fish die they float to the surface with their belly pointing upwards which literally translates to the fact that whatever affection she felt towards him no longer exists.

It is important to note that in the last paragraph, the poet uses three sets of brackets rather than just one for the whole paragraph. A different set of brackets is used for both of the goldfish giving the reader the clear impression that they are not together anymore. The phrase, " a life beyond the" is the only one in the entire poem that is not in brackets which might mean that it is something that the female goldfish desires and the fact that the male could not give it to her is why she might have let him go. She might feel that his love is just another conformity like many that is keeping her from pursuing the world.

The poem ends on a tragic note where in the end the male goldfish, doesn't get the female goldfish he loves. When one looks at the poem in the context of humans it is simply a story of two people with different desires. One can say it tells the story of a new relationship where the man and the woman's need to explore the world doesn't match up to their need for love and belonging to someone, even though they seemed to be happy in the beginning the girl realizes that there is a lot more to life and a lot more that

she would like to explore and experience on her own. This however does not mean that the female goldfish didn't love the male goldfish, this poem just shows us a tragic outcome of a love story where the two people who love each other have very different views on how to live the rest of their lives. That sometimes, love simply cannot overpower all.

Good work Vamika, and I am really happy to see that everything you've written is completely original, which is more than what I can say for many of the other drafts. Nevertheless, there are a couple of points that you need to relook at - the first thing while analyzing a poem is to look at the title which you have missed out entirely [look at the punctuation and parenthesis here]. Secondly, one of the most striking things about the poem are the brackets and that should have been spoken about at greater length. In the last stanza where the brackets are broken up, for the first time in the poem you have the " he" and the " she" in separate brackets which also needed to have been spoken about. You have brought up this point fleetingly and it needs to be looked at in greater depth. In addition, what about the only words in the poem that are not in brackets...what is their significance? And how do they add to the meaning of everything else, all of which is in parenthesis. Be careful while coming to conclusions - for example, is there any evidence to suggest that the male fish spoke to the female one about his plans?

Nevertheless, your answer had a lot of strengths. To begin it was entirely original which is of exceeding importance. I liked your overall framework and the development, and you made your points in an effective manner. You looked at each of the stanzas which is good, and were able to identify some

points of significance, even though they should have been more detailed and there should have a greater use of quotes. The length is inadequate since examiners prefer a word length of around 1500 for this paper.

Once again, good effort and am so glad you did your work by yourself and submitted it on time.