

# Essay on critical analysis of the poem, my fathers love letters

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



" My Father's Love Letters" is a poem by Komunyakaa. The poem reveals a rich concoction of emotions that runs through the persona and the father. From the poem, it is evident that the persona is a child who is helping the father to portray his emotions to the mother. It is evident that the mother is not with them but probably gone away from the family. One of the reasons that emerge in the poem is that the father was brutal to the mother, which made her go away. The sex of the child does not emerge in the poem but the structure and choice of diction of the poet conveys enormous entity of information regarding the relationship at hand. This essay shall attempt to explicate the structure of the poem in totality with the diction and imagery. These factors shall help to determine the nature and overall effect of the poem.

As the poem progresses, it emerges that elements of domestic abuse appear. Possibly, this caused the drift between the mother and father necessitating the letters. The father, instructs the child to make promises on his behalf never to beat the mother again. " He would beg, Promising to never beat her again" (Line 5-6). The manner that the poet chooses his words dictate the emotional attachment that the persona cum child has for the words at hand. The manner of writing in short and crisp clauses convey a deep-seated impact the words are intended to have. Other words that reveal a state of domestic abuse include, " never made a swelling go downquiet brutality" (lines 12 -13). The usage of the phrase " can of Jax" (line 1) denote a trend of alcoholism that can explain the brutal nature of the father. It is however evident that the father is quite vulnerable to emotions like love. As the persona confesses that " Sometimes I was happy/She had gone" (Lines

7-8). It is evident that even the child did not like the hurt the mother experienced.

Further still, the poem explicates to reveal certain issues about the father. From the onset of the poem, it becomes clear that the father works in a mill. " coming home from the mill/ his carpenter apron always bulged" (lines 2&5). Actually, he does not know how to read or write but can relate the writing to what he knows best, masonry. " He'd look at the blueprints and say how many bricks formed each wall/laboring over a simple word/ concrete floor" (lines 18). These issues convey a state of manual labor and hard workmanship. The essential elements are in time to reveal an uncertain nature of the father. Probably, he drinks as a result of the frustrations of poverty and having no wife near him.

Lastly, the poem does not fail to release an emotional side of the father. The brutal man is actually capable of feeling some love for the wife. He mentions " roses and hyacinth" (line..) both flowers of which denote love and romantic atmospheres. The choice of words in usage of lexis like " love, baby, please, and honey" (lines 10, 11, &12) reveal the romantic nature of this father.

In conclusion, the poem is a perfect example of a double emotion. The poet has succeeded in portraying a two-sided phenomenon where the father, though brutal, alcoholic, and illiterate, has deep emotions of love and affection for the wife. The style of presentation in usage of image invoking lexis and oxymoron are perfect instances that convey these feelings. The oxymoron " quiet brutality" reveals this assertion. The poem is a great display of a social setting and a sign of concrete usage of meaning laden words to convey the right mood and emotions intended by the poet.

## **Work cited**

My Father's Love Letters. <http://theredroom.org/2012/03/20/tuesday-poem-my-fathers-love-letters-by-yusef-komunyakaa/> APA Division 15. Retrieved 20 May 2013