

Love should grow up
like a wild iris in the
fields



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Susan Griffin's poem "Love Should Grow Up Like a Wild Iris in the Fields", gives the ideal meaning of what love should be vs. the reality of what love is. Griffin uses the metaphor of an iris to describe how both an iris and love can flourish into something beautiful and how quickly this can be broken with the everyday burdens that take over our lives. Imagery is also used to differentiate between the natural growth of an iris and the way love should blossom. Although love should evolve without difficulty, it is clear that it does not. That true genuine love is anything but genuine. That love shouldn't be neglected, but should be cultivated like the wild iris.

Susan Griffin gives the impression that she is attracted to nature. Although the poem is depressing, the setting seems lively. The poem is depressing because it touches a very deep subject "love". While Griffin attempts to tell her version of how love should be, her voice seems grievous. The poem's lines are profound and touching. Almost as if she wanted to magically become a wild iris herself. And forget all about the turmoil that is attached with love.

Griffin chose to compare love to a wild iris. Wild irises are colorful and delicate, they are anything but depressing. Giving the impression that Griffin enjoys and appreciates her surroundings. She probably wrote the poem outdoors looking at wild irises herself, while daydreaming about her own love life.

The poem doesn't specify in regard to the type of love that Susan Griffin is talking about. She doesn't focus on love between two beings but instead talks about general love for all things. She seems feminist in that she mostly

talks about the role of a woman's daily life. Like the line " gets taken to cleaners every fall" (561). I find this feminist because its most customary for girls to learn how to do laundry, than it is boys. This line also brings melancholy to mind, having to go to the cleaners every fall is anticipated and fixed, that nobody is looking forward to doing the same repetitive chore. She also mentions other womanly traits such as; while the cook is probably angry/ingredients of the meals are budgeted/while a child cries feed me now and mother not quite hysterical says over and over wait just a bit, just a bit"(561). These lines are obviously about a female/ mother who is overwhelmed with duties. Not being able to multitask the load that is deposited on her shoulders. Wanting to accomplish the " conventional" woman role at any cost. Clearly, the love that should be present is overshadowed by the day-to-day routine.

Griffin introduces the poem by contrasting the wild iris to the development of love. In the first stanza " Love should grow up like a wild iris in the fields, unexpected, after a terrible storm" (560). The wild iris symbolizes growth, from a seed in the ground to an angelic piece of art. The same goes for love. Love should also turn into something beautiful. Nothing should come nor interfere with the love that can arise. Griffin in turn contradicts her perception of love by using the word " should". This shows that love does not grow up like a wild iris. Griffin confirms that by using the line at the end of her first stanza" Love should grow like a wild iris but does not"(561). The message Griffin is trying to convey is that love doesn't always overcome the " terrible storms". In contrary, the wild iris is victorious when the " terrible

storms" emerge. The wild iris is capable of nourishing itself with the same storm and implant it with love.

Terrible storms are common in most life events. However, in order to maintain love, you should be willing to set those storms aside and instead value the moment. Griffin gives a vivid example of this by illustrating the moments where love is usually acquired. " Love more often is to be found in kitchens at the dinner hour, tired out and hungry, lingers over tables in houses where the walls record movements"(561). Here we see how love is being pushed to the side carelessly. Most of us gather at the dinner table tired from a long day of work. All we want to do is eat and go to bed. Even if one wants to adhere to love, the stressful lives don't allow such feelings to be expressed nor absorbed. While love may be present, hectic lifestyles intervene and take over the moment. This shows the eagerness of people to fulfill their petty schedules while relegating love to the back seat. Just like the walls record movements, the wild iris records its movements too. Moving from side to side, as the wind hits its stalks. Moving worry free, assuming its position. Just like love should be, always nurturing and persevering even in the toughest of moments.

Griffin re-emphasizes how love is not what it should be, by reinstating in the second stanza " Love should grow up in the fields like wild iris but never does" (561) . This line has become a critical highlight in the poem. Because Griffin continues to mention " That love should grow like a wild iris but does not" she clarifies her beliefs by making it firm that love should spring out of nowhere but it never does. That love should grow out of the hearts of people. Independent of any nourishment but it does not, but it does not. It seems as
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if its growth must be triggered or fed by outside sources. Impossible because love should come from within.

One of Griffin's most captivating line is "If love wished the world to be well, it would be well"(561). Here Griffin is giving an entity to love. Sort of saying if this entity called love wished well on the world then the world would be well loved. Only then would love grow unexpectedly, just like the wild iris in the fields or the iris of the eye which expands at the sight of love.

Interestingly, Griffin goes from comparing the iris of a flower to the iris of a human eye. "Sees like the iris of an eye, when the light is right.(561)"

Indicating that only when the time is right, the eye will see love.

Nonetheless, Griffin touches back to the wild iris "Feels in blindness and when there is nothing else is tender, blinks, and opens face up to the skies"(561). Implying that when and only when the wild iris senses light, the iris will open facing up to the skies. Love is similar to this concept, that one will allow love to follow only if the senses are in accordance.

Although we all seek love, it is evident that no love can be established nor conserved without going through "terrible storms" that even if love were to be spontaneous, troubles will appear. One can only be hopeful for love to grow like a wild iris. All in all, only the individual self has the power to make the best out of love. If one puts aside the petty things that continuously intervene with the importance of love, then love will grow up like a wild iris in the fields.

Susan Griffin's poem has a great message. The poem touches on the deep emotion of love and the need for humanity to express it freely. Griffin

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transmits to the reader, to show love at all times, not be selective when showing love. In the end, the title of the poem speaks for itself “ Love Should Grow Up Like a Wild Iris in the Fields”. And I too will consider applying Susan Griffins suggestions on how to love.