

Valentine by carol anne duffy

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Valentine 'Valentine' is a controversial love poem written by Carol Ann Duffy. Throughout the poem the poetess compares love to an onion and she does that by using a variety of techniques such as imagery, symbolism, word choice and structure. All these techniques justify why Valentine is an unusual love-poem as they help the poet express her different point of view. Overall, the poem is unusual as its title mistakenly leads the reader into thinking that the poem will be typical. I felt deeply moved by the poem's ability to arise thoughtfulness and reflexion in the reader. Carol Ann Duffy gives a controversial outlook on love and from the very start, it is made clear that the poem is centered around its main key symbol : an onion. The poet makes some other key suggestions on how love makes one feel. Carol Ann Duffy conveys that love is not simple and not always pleasant. Throughout the poem, the poetess is comparing love to an onion. Onions provoke tears while love is meant to bring happiness and joy. Therefore, the main symbol makes this love-poem an unusual one: It will blind you with tears like a lover. Onions have a strong scent that makes us cry when we cut them. The poet refers to crying over somebody loved, like you would over an onion. Being blinded suggests not being able to see straight - usually when one is blinded from love, he does not see any faults in their lover and idealizes them. Normally tears are reaction to extreme happiness or sadness, and in love both are likely to occur at some point. This comparison makes the poem an unusual one, because when dealing with love we want to believe that it is perfect. My opinion is that lovers do not want to think of sadness or problems as often they are scared to face reality and the mortality of their relationship. In love, one can never be fully certain of the lovers feelings and this insecurity can

only be broken by eternal commitment which is the wedding. Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding-ring, if you like. On the inside, onions are layered into light rings each getting smaller. The word shrink describes how the layers of the onion get smaller whole loops are circles. Circles are eternal : they have no start nor end and represent how love should be : infinite. Wedding ring is a final promise lovers will make to one another when getting married and ring is the representation of their promised forever. However, the author suggests insecurity by giving the lover an option as if being unsure of one's feelings : if you like. Unusual to express insecurity. I get the feeling that love can bring surprises such as insecurity of lover's feelings, which in my opinion, makes this a very realistic love-poem. The poem has a unique free verse structure and lacks a fixed pattern. This reflects how love is unpredictable. The poetess was confident in applying stand alone sentences that had a lot of meaning to themselves. Carol Ann Duffy also used repetition of negative sentences to express her objection to outdated valentine-gifts : Not a red rose or a satin heart. Not a cute card or a kissogram. Repetition of the negative highlights how these gifts are not necessary once you think about the true meaning of love and makes the poetess objection easier to remember. Carol Ann Duffy applied a double alliteration to a red rose and cute card to achieve easier remembering. Common valentine-gifts such as these ones lack inner-meaning and by bringing them up, the poem proves to be an unusual one because it is not ideal. I consider an onion as the most down-to-earth reminder of how love really is and how its viewed differently in its different stages. The poem Valentine holds onto some strong imagery that makes the reader realize how

everybody perceives love in a different way : It will make your reflexion a wobbling photo of grief. Onions arise pain and tears by bringing discomfort when they are being cut. Their unpleasant scent causes tears and when crying, everything seems wobbly. Also, the grimace is reflected in the tears. This example of imagery makes the reader imagine as if one was crying of a cut onion and a pained reflexion of one's face could be seen in one's tears. The word photo represents a captured moment that would not last, wobbling explains that tears were spilt in which one's reflexion mirror image, could be seen. Grief has negative connotations and it is a word describing sadness, loss, pain or death. This poem is therefore unusual, as tears, grief and loss are things one would not want to read about in a love-poem. According to me, love should be the exact opposite of how the poetess views it, but I think she must have been through a negative experience. All the while, the unusual love-poem Valentine was bringing new meanings behind love to reflect upon. Carol Ann Duffy used negative words to achieve deliberation in the reader : Lethal. Love can become dangerous and insecure : it can never be justified whether the lover's feelings are equally strong. The word lethal is a negative word suggesting dangerous and devastating nature of love. This love-poem is an extraordinary one because the poet considers love to be deadly and fatal. Carol Ann Duffy makes a suggestion that love hits without warning and it is unexpected, just like an onions scent hits one. Love gives no warning that its coming : it is unpredictable. Again, Valentine is an unusual love-poem because in love, we want to feel as secure as possible, not wanting to expect any surprises. That is why, in my opinion, we are usually blind to the fact danger can come anytime, without warning.

Throughout the poem, a variety of techniques were used by the poetess to alienate it from other, common love-poems. Carol Ann Duffy has done that by supporting each verse with strong word choice : fierce. Stereotypically, love is viewed as something gentle and subtle which is the exact opposite of how the poetess sees it. The word fierce has negative connotations as it is associated with aggression and attack. In Valentine, a kiss of an onion is being described as fierce. This is because onions have a strong and a possessive scent that will stay with you for very long; hard to get rid off. An onion's scent attacks you, arising tears and pain. Fierceness is something least expected from love as a relationship should not be possessive nor aggressive. The poetess provokes the reader into considering this love poem an unusual one as the amount of negative words would not normally be associated with love. I believe that a fierce relationship brings no good : its filled with rage and tension which can mean a soon parting of ways, caused by the constant disputes. The love-poem, Valentine written by Carol Ann Duffy has been an unusual one to analyze as it expresses a diverse point to the usual representation of love. Throughout this romantic poem, I was constantly made to think twice over what I thought to be the real meaning behind love. This poem opposed all my previous beliefs on this matter, as no other love poem would give such a truthfully pessimistic outlook on it. I believe that Valentine is a solitary poem that manages to break love down into all its faults, providing demotivating precautions on what might happen if you forget that love is mortal. I found that Valentine has taught me that love is only a fragile feeling that might not last and that you can never be sure of your lover's equality of feelings. I felt deeply moved studying this

poem, because love is a matter that at some point will affect me, and Carol Ann Duffy prepared me for the worst, through the poem Valentine.