

Candidate 6

Specimen Question Paper: 4

Plan

- Dear Norman, Correspondents, Warming her Pearls
- Universal experience of love, specifically longing or lust which features in all 3 poems.
- Warming Her Pearls - love for her mistress
- Correspondents secret and forbidden love
- Dear Norman, longing for love, fantasy scenario.

Question

A skilled and accomplished poet, Carol Ann Duffy is very successful at transforming her experience of the world into ~~various~~ various universal experiences, for example, love. Love is explored often in Duffy's poetry and is a specific feature of the three poems, 'Correspondents', 'Dear Norman' and 'Warming Her Pearls'. All three poems explore a different aspect of this 'universal experience' using a variety of poetic techniques and overall enhance the reader's understanding and appreciation of love as ~~an~~ a personal and universal experience.

One of Duffy's poems which ~~deals~~ most obviously deals with love is 'Correspondents'. The poem focuses on the secret and forbidden love affair of a man and woman both married. The relationship is full of desire and lust but from the poem the reader assumes it to be in no way physical as the two communicate via letters. ~~The poem~~

'Correspondents' is filled with metaphors and imagery, which Duffy skillfully uses to enrich the reader's understanding of the experience of love albeit slightly unusual and warped in this poem. "We don't have the language of bodies" is a particularly interesting image. For a relationship based purely on paper this ~~seems~~ ~~very appropriate~~ reference to language seems very appropriate and emphasizes how constrained and restricted the pair's love is. In addition the poet uses the image "dark words" which suggest how forbidden and even sinful the relationship is, with 'dark' having connotations of evil and wrong doing. However this image is a good presentation of the love featured in this poem which is more ~~sinful~~ lust and longing than any kind of ~~secret~~ intimacy. ~~in this poem~~

Like several other Duffy poems, 'Correspondents' makes use of contrast to emphasise the passion and love felt by the narrator. The poet describes a very civil and socially acceptable setting in the first stanza, talking of 'teacups' ~~and gossip and~~ ~~cake~~ and "thin spoons". "I shall inquire after your wife" Duffy writes, emphasizing the polite and correct nature of the conversation. However such outward pleasanties are soon shown to be a facade. "My skin burns at the sight of you" the narrator says, or "Beneath my ~~white~~ dress, my breasts swell for your lips." These descriptions of the narrator's secret lust for her lover are in stark contrast to the subdued and socially appropriate setting and high light again the dark nature of love within this poem. The contrast used by Duffy in "Correspondents"

is one way in which the poet presents the universal experience of love as a strong and dark emotion.

Another Duffy Poem ~~with~~ in which the poet effectively transforms her experience of the world in the universal experience of love (or perhaps in this case more of a longing) is "Warming Her Pearls". Although not made explicitly clear the poem appears to revolve around the ^{secret} longing a maid has for her mistress embodied in ^{the} her wearing of her mistress's pearls. Duffy's word choice in this poem is particularly interesting and is an effective presentation of the universal experience of love. The ~~word choice~~ word choice of "slow heat" is interesting as it suggests the long ~~and~~ standing love and desire the maid has for her mistress and perhaps also ~~her~~ how her feelings are growing more intense a universally relateable concept. In addition the poet's choice of the word "persistent" suggests that her love ~~is~~ or longing is undying she is not willing to give it up easily. It is also possible that this shows the narrator's inflated sense of involvement in her Lady's life, again an interesting presentation of love by Duffy. Lastly the narrator's lust is highlighted by the poet's use of the word 'naked', a detail most likely unknown by the narrator and perhaps a sign of her fantasy thinking.

"Warming her Pearls" also uses the theme of heat ~~is~~ as a means of presenting the universal

experience of love. Love is easily associated with heat and warmth and this image is explored several times in the poem. The idea of a man warming a mistress's pearls is not romantic but through the narrator's fantasies Duffy has managed to convey the idea as one filled with love and passion. "My mistress bids me wear them, warm them", "place them round her cool, white throat". This transfer of heat as it were is perhaps one way in which the narrator displays her love for Mrs mistress, sharing her warmth and therefore love with her lady.

In conclusion "Warming Her Pearls" is a poem in which Duffy is very successful at transforming her personal experiences into a relatable, universal experience of love, despite ~~how~~ how odd the particular example in the poem may be.

"Dear Norman" is also a Duffy poem in which the poet is effective at transforming ~~her~~ her own experiences into the universal experience of love, or again perhaps more of a lust. This rather strange poem explores the narrator's fantasy that her paper boy is in fact her pearl diver, Pablo. What is interesting about this poem is that it does not highlight the narrator's love for an individual but rather the lack of it. One might guess that in the absence of any kind of real lover the narrator is forced to create these glamorous scenarios to fill the void.

In a similar way to 'Correspondents' Duffy uses imagery as a means of presenting the universal experience of love, or perhaps in this case the lack of it. "I can do this. In my night there is no moon." is a suggestion of the absence of a lover in her life. She is able to create these fantasies as her own nights are empty and lonely perhaps. The narrator's passion and desire is also portrayed through Duffy's use of imagery, "he is equal with dolphins" suggests how beautiful and majestic she finds ~~him~~ the subject of her fantasy. Another revealing image used by Duffy is "translucent on his palm a pearl appears." This possibly highlights again the false nature or see-through nature of her fantasies suggesting to the reader the absence of love or intimacy in her life. "Translucent" has connotations of transparency ~~and~~ which is an indication to the lack of substance to her fantasies.

The unusual structure of this poem is also worthy of note although it does little to enhance the presentation of love within the poem. ~~The word~~ The word "reminded" is in a separate line from the rest of ~~the stanza~~ stanza ~~the~~ three, perhaps an indication of the ~~reminded~~ narrator's reminder of her loneliness and lack of lover. In addition the final stanza is very short ~~and~~ and to the point and is effective in emphasizing that the narrator finds these fantasies to be more of a chore, a necessity even than an

enjoyable activity. "Tomorrow I shall deal with the dustman" Duffy writes, again suggesting her lack of love that she must continue these habits on a day to day basis.

Overall Duffy is effective in presenting the universal experience of love to the reader in 'Dear Norman' although in this instance she focuses instead on the experience of lack of love or absence of love.

'Correspondents', 'Warning her Pearls' and 'Dear Norman' are all very different poems and explore different themes in their own right. However Duffy is highly effective at transforming her personal experiences into one universal experience in all the poems: love. Perhaps ~~many~~ love is considered from various different angles in all three poems, lust, longing, passion, reservation and even lack of love but ~~each poem~~ each poem uses various poetic techniques to strike resonance with the reader on this absolutely universal concept.

In conclusion Duffy's poems are not only reflections of her own experiences and feelings ~~but~~ on this ~~more~~ universal concept but the reflections of the reader's experiences and emotions as well.