

Learner Resource 1 Introduction and overview

(AO2, AO4)

In pairs, read the quotes below. Clearly, they all focus on love, and your task is to identify what type of love is represented.

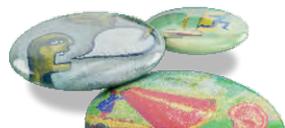
1. "love spins gold, gold, gold from straw." (*Hour*)
2. "falling in love//is glamorous hell; the crouched, parched heart//like a tiger ready to kill, a flame's fierce licks under the skin." (*You*)
3. "Then love comes, like a sudden flight of birds//from earth to heaven after rain." (*Rapture*)
4. "Love loved you best; lit you//with a flame, like talent, under your skin;" (*Elegy*)
5. "Love is talent, the world love's metaphor." (*Love*)
6. "This love we have, grief in reverse," (*New Year*)

You might start, for example, by identifying the comparison for love in each quote, and thinking of three connotations that the comparison offers. In *Hour*, for example: 1) spinning gold from straw might have the connotation of fairy tales (something based in fiction rather than reality); 2) gold: enduring value and wealth; 3) spinning: the activity of love personified as the manipulative, mischievous imp, in control and creating.

As a class, discuss your findings, then decide whether the love that is depicted in these six quotes is positive, or negative, or both.

Returning to your pairs, look at the quotes below. What links can you find between them? To make this task easier, you could cut them out so that you can move them around. To begin with, you might focus on the links in terms of:

- the imagery (fire, for example)
 - the voice (the first person narrator, for example)
 - lexis (choice of word: "thy", "thee", "you", for example).
1. Now I can break my fast, dine, sup, and sleep//Upon the very naked name of Love
 2. Uninvited, the thought of you stayed too late in my head
 3. Love's time's beggar, but even a single hour,//bright as a dropped coin makes love rich
 4. Then love comes, like a sudden flight of birds
 5. Love loved you best; lit you//with a flame, like talent, under your skin
 6. I will be yours, be yours//I'll walk on the moors//with my spade
 7. When morning comes, the sun, ardent,//covers the trees in gold, you walk//towards me,//out of the season, out of the light love reasons
 8. This love we have, grief in reverse, full rhyme, wrong place
 9. We've done again//that trick we have of turning love to pain
 10. Dawn mocks me with a gibberish of birds,//I hear your words,//they play inside my head like broken chords
 11. If you were fire, if you were made of fire, yes, yes
 12. Write your name on my lips//when I entered the dark church of the wood like a bride...
 13. Grief, your gift, unwrapped//my empty hands made heavy ...
 14. ...all hurt zeroed now//by the harm you could do with a word
 15. Not close my eyes to the light...//or live, when days, nights,//sightless of you, sightless of thee,//are hours with the dead
 16. Look in thy heart//and write -//love's light fading, darkening//black as ink on a page...
 17. That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over//Lest you should think he never could recapture//The first fine careless rapture!
 18. What do I have//to help me, without spells or prayer//endure this hour, endless, heartless, anonymous,//the death of love?



Learner Resource 1

These quotes are in the order in which they appear in *Rapture*. In your pairs, decide whether you can see any progression in terms of the love that is portrayed. Is the love that appears in the first few quotes similar to the love that appears in the last few quotes, for example? If not, in what way does the love seem to change?

Having compared your ideas as a class, each pair take one quote and annotate it for a wall display that shows an overview of this collection of Duffy's poems, making sure that you include at least three annotations relating to your own observations, or to something that someone else has said in the class.

You may have noticed that two of these quotes are not written by Duffy. As a class, identify which ones they are. How can you tell that they are not written by Duffy? Do the clues lie in the lexis? The imagery? The grammar? The portrayal of love? Or something else?

Extension activity:

Ask students to look up two different covers for this collection of poems on the web.

Discuss how the covers might change your expectations of what the poems might be about.