

Learner Resource 3 Figurative language and rhyme, with a focus on *Rapture* (AO1, AO2)

In the following version of *Rapture* much of the figurative language has been removed as have some of the end rhymes.

Thought of by you all day, I think of you.
 The birds sing in the shelter of a tree.
 Above the ____ of rain, unacred ____,
 not paradise, goes nowhere endlessly.
 How does it happen that our lives can drift
 far from our selves, while we stay ____ in time
 ____ for death? It seems nothing will ____
 the pattern of our days, alter the ____
 we make with loss to assonance with bliss.
 Then love comes, like a sudden flight of ____
 from earth to heaven after rain. Your ____,
 recalled, unstrings, like ____, this chain of words.
 Huge skies connect us, joining here to there.
 Desire and passion on the thinking air.

Your task is to complete the poem, adding in the missing words. In order to do this, you need to:

- think carefully about the lexical patterns that are evident within this poem (paradise, death, heaven, for example)
- aim for ten syllables in each line
- aim for an A,B,A,B,C,D,C,D,E,F,E,F,G,G rhyming scheme.

As a class, compare your choices, then return to the original poem and decide what qualities the words chosen by Duffy have.

For example:

- Why “prayer” of rain?
- Why “trapped” in time?
- Why “queuing” for death?
- The verbs “trapped” and “queuing” are followed by “shift”, “alter” and “make”, then “comes”, “recalled”, “connect”, “joining”. What does this indicate about the progression within the poem?
- The memory of the kiss is a catalyst for the poem: it prompts the speaker to compose the poem, but it is the words that are compared to pearls, rather than the kiss. Why?

Now take one of the following statements, and use it as a starting point for an introductory paragraph.

1. This poem focuses on the absence of the lover, and the way in which memory is reinvented and captured in words. The use of verbs is interesting, because they reveal...
2. This poem clearly shows a self-conscious awareness of the heritage of English poetry in the choice of subject (time as an enemy of love) and the choice of form (the sonnet). The use of rhyme and structure reveals that...
3. In the Browning epigraph to *Over* (the final poem in *Rapture*), the song thrush “sings each song twice over”, and many of Duffy’s poems are about the way that language succeeds or fails in capturing an experience. In writing about *Rapture* (itself an ecstatic, transformative emotional state), the poet uses figurative language retrospectively to approximate the emotion. The lexical groups evident in this poem reveal...
4. Duffy has talked about the way in which the “you” in her poems could be anyone. The love represented in this poem is an elemental love, set in a pastoral idyll that could be of any time. The choice of voice and narrative position illustrates....

