

Grade 9 Unseen Poetry Past Paper

Language+ structure:

- Repetition
- End stop
- Anaphora
- Simile

Theme: Protection /guidance

I Am Offering this Poem

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat
when winter comes to cover you,
5 or like a pair of thick socks
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,
so it is a pot full of yellow corn
10 to warm your belly in winter,
it is a scarf for your head, to wear
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would
if you were lost, needing direction,
15 in the wilderness life becomes when mature;
and in the corner of your drawer,
tucked away like a cabin or hogan*
in dense trees, come knocking,
20 and I will answer, give you directions,
and let you warm yourself by this fire,
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It's all I have to give,
25 and all anyone needs to live,
and to go on living inside,
when the world outside
no longer cares if you live or die;
remember,

30 I love you,

*hogan: wooden hut/shelter

Form+ rhyme:

- Irregular stanza length with regular one line stanza
- One rhyming couplet "give" and "live"

27.1 In 'I Am Offering this Poem', how does the poet present the speaker's feelings about love?

[24 marks]

Within "I Am Offering this Poem", Boca creates a theme of protection and guidance in order to convey the power of love and the tremendous effects one emotion can have. He explores that love can provide direction and protection even when the world "no longer cares". The alliterative phrase "cold cannot bite through" personifies the cold whilst making it appear relentless. Yet as Boca inverts this through saying that love can surpass this, he is showing that the love in this poem can conquer extreme weather and can blockade what physical items would normally do. Moreover, the repeated anaphora on "and" in stanza 5 and 7 explores how Boca is listing the endless amount of protection and guidance his love provides- it can give "answers", "warm" oneself and to "live". Thus, he conveys that all essential components to life can be simply found within this romantic poem, perhaps an idealistic perception of love, yet one that Boca relentlessly portrays. A reader may perceive Boca's presentation of love providing protection and guidance to be hyperbolic, perhaps a futile attempt to portray his love to a lover he has lost. Yet, Boca presents this love to be eternal and multi-purposeful through the theme of protection and guidance.

Moreover, Boca explores how love provides this safety and comfort emotionally, just a like to the same safety physical objects may provide. Boca uses similes such as "like a warm coat" and "like a pair of thick socks", both of which provide physical comfort and protection, in order to explore how his love, immortalised through this poem, does the same- he yearns for his lover to realise that his love will comfort them even though he has "nothing else to give". The repetition of this in stanza 1 and 3 reinforcing how he wants to emphasise that love surpasses physical objects and materialism, his unwavering sempiternal love is the most poignant as he will forever "love them". The end stop after each "I love you" conveying a sense of finality to his love, almost presenting it as factual and unchanging. Thus, Boca explores to his lover that his love both surpasses the physical realm, providing a source of comfort for his lover, and is unalterable- he will forever love them even though he has nothing "physically" left to give.

Lastly, Boca's irregular stanza lengths could convey a realistic depiction of how turbulent love can be; he explores how love is not linear yet is chaotic and unpredictable. Alternatively, the irregularity of the poem could explore how he cannot put love in a uniformed form as love is boundless and uncontainable, and although it may provide some sense of "directions", it is alike to being in the "wilderness" at times. Moreover, this chaotic unpredictability is compounded by the irregular rhyme, explored through the lonesome rhyming couplet of "give" and "live". Interestingly Boca has made these words rhyme to suggest that this poem is the last he has to "give" to his lover, and he wants to immortalise his love through it so it can continue to "live". The irregularity of the stanza lengths and rhyme is juxtaposed with the regularly repeated one line stanza of "I love you". This demonstrates that among all the chaos of life, the one thing that is unwavering and certain is his persistent and relentless love for his lover. As this is the last line in the poem, it demonstrates to the reader the finality of his love and how this 'offering' of his poem may be rejected, but he wants to reaffirm to his lover that his "love" is sempiternal.

Form:

Irregular
Stanzas

The sun has burst the sky

The sun has burst the sky
Because I love you
And the river its banks.

Theme:
Nature

Language/
structure

- Repetition
- Enjambment

The sea laps the great rocks
Because I love you
And takes no heed of the moon dragging it away
And saying coldly 'Constancy is not for you'.
The blackbird fills the air
Because I love you
With spring and lawns and shadows falling on lawns

The people walk in the street and laugh
I love you
And far down the river ships sound their hooters
Crazy with joy because I love you.

Jenny Joseph

27.2 In both 'The sun has burst the sky' and 'I Am Offering this Poem' the speakers describe their feelings about love.

What are the similarities **and/or** differences between the methods the poets use to present these feelings?

[8 marks]

Boca and Joseph use juxtaposing themes to convey their love. Boca utilises the theme of protection through utilising similes to compare his love, immortalised through the poem, to “fluffy socks”. This evoking a comforting and warming image, suggestive that this is what his love can provide. Despite similarly presenting love as a comforting idea, Joseph uses the theme of nature to convey how her love is so profound, it catalyses nature. The diction on “spring” and “sun” reinforcing how these iridescent and beautiful elements of nature can only commence due to her extreme love.

Alternatively, both poets utilise repetition to convey the extent and immensity of their unwavering love. Both repeat “I love you”, however Boca uses end stops after each repeated line, alluding to how he is wanting to place emphasis and a pause after each time repeating it- perhaps he doesn’t want it to get lost amid the poem. Similarly, Joseph uses repetition, however, employs enjambment after each “I love you”. This could symbolise the boundlessness of her love, akin to nature, her love is unable to be contained. Yet, both end with an end stop after “I love you” which shows they’re cementing and solidifying the reason for their poems.

Lastly, both show the chaos in love through the irregular stanza lengths. Boca utilises irregular stanza lengths, paired with the regular one lined stanza, to convey that although life may appear chaotic and unpredictable, his love is consistent and recurring. Alike to Boca, Joseph utilises irregular stanzas but juxtaposingly could be using it to convey how their love catalyses chaos and unpredictability within nature, as nature’s chaos and movement only is “because” she loves her lover. Thus, the irregularity of the stanzas mimics their love which nature emulates as a consequence.