

**Valentine** Carol Ann Duffy (1993)

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.

It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.

It promises light

like the careful undressing of love.

Here.

It will blind you with tears

like a lover.

It will make your reflection

a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.

Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,

possessive and faithful

as we are,

for as long as we are.

Take it.

Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding-ring,

if you like.

Lethal.

Its scent will cling to your fingers,

cling to your knife.

**Reading response:**

- What do you expect from the title of the poem?
- How does Duffy subvert the usual images of love?
- What do you notice about the language and imagery in the poem?
- What do you notice about the punctuation and layout of the lines and stanzas?
- Does the time in which it was written affect the reader's response?
- Choose one or two lines. Words. Images that particularly strike you and explain why.