Valentine

1 Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.

It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.

It promises light

5 like the careful undressing of love.

Here.

It will blind you with tears

like a lover.

It will make your reflection

10 a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or kissogram.

I give you an onion.

Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,

15 possessive and faithful

as we are,

for as long as we are.

Take it.

Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,

20 if you like.

Lethal.

Its scent will cling to your fingers,

cling to your knife.

1. By referring closely to lines 1-6, analyse the use of poetic technique to establish an assertive tone. (4 Marks)
2. With reference to at least two pieces of evidence from the poem, analyse how Duffy highlights the conflicting nature of love. (4 Marks)
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the final stanza as a conclusion to the poem. Your answer should deal with ideas and/or language. (2 Marks)
4. In many of her poems, Duffy explores the depth and complexity of love. With reference to this poem and one other by Duffy, discuss the importance of this theme in her work. (10 Marks)

**Marking Scheme**

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| **Question** | **Expected Answer** | **Max Marks** | **Additional Guidance** |
| **1** | Candidates should analyse how the poet’s language creates the use of poetic technique to establish an assertive tone 2 marks for detailed/insightful commentplus quotation/reference.1 mark for more basic comment plusquotation/reference.0 marks for quotation/reference alone.(Marks may be awarded 1+1+1) | **4** | Possible answers include:(“Not…”)* Use of negative to begin poem highlights firm rejection of traditional Valentine's Day gifts
* Of minor sentence – creates a more direct focus sentence
* Single line verse - makes the speaker’s idea very clear and determined
* use of simple statement “I give you an onion” - powerful no sense of wavering or uncertainty
* parallelism in sentence opening - factual and confident
* “here”minor sentence/ imperative command on single line also implies lack of choice, the determination of speaker
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| **2** | Candidates should analyse how the poet highlights the conflicting nature of love.2 marks for detailed/insightful commentplus quotation/reference.1 mark for more basic comment plusquotation/reference.0 marks for quotation/reference alone.(Marks may be awarded 2,or 1+1) | **4** | Possible answers include:* “It is a moon wrapped in brown paper” celestial connotations reflect the beauty and power of love while “brown paper” suggests practical and purposeful nature of relationships.
* “Careful undressing of love” versus “blind you with tears”. “undressing” hints at sexual/intimate aspect of love and equally the closeness/bond which grows as more is revealed. “blind” implies deception, weakness. Within this there is a contrast between “careful” and “blind” which could be commented on due to the delicacy and comfort versus the pain inflicted.
* Previous positive aspects could also be compared with “wobbling photo of grief” - reveals both the upset and the detachment that occurs when a relationship causes turmoil. The depth of emotion is revealed by grief commonly associated with loss.
* “Possessive and faithful” - contains both the suggestion of the intense overbearing love which can develop and simultaneously the support and enduring

nature of love.  |
| **3** | Candidates should analyseThe effectiveness of the final stanza as a conclusion to the poem. Your answer should deal with ideas and/or language. 2 marks for detailed/insightful commentplus quotation/reference.1 mark for more basic comment plusquotation/reference.0 marks for quotation/reference alone.(Marks may be awarded 2 or 1+1)  | **2** | Possible answers include:* Focuses on the central concept that love can bring pain and unhappiness as well as romance.
* “Lethal” suggesting that love can kill clearly reinforces the sense of pain and suffering hinted at earlier especially through the image “blind with tears”
* Final couplet strongly reflects the dual nature of love the scent could be the lingering trace of love and emotion that you cannot shake as well as giving a more literal reference to perfume.
* “knife” links to the pain and suffering caused by love.
* Repetition of “cling” highlights both the desperation that love can cause as well as its lingering impression.
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| **4** | Candidates should discussthe way Duffy explores the depth and complexity of love. With reference to this poem and one other by Duffy, discuss the importance of this theme in her work.0 marks for reference/quotation alone.Candidates can answer inbullet points in this final question, or write a number of linked statements. | **10** | Up to 2 marks can be achieved for identifying elements of commonality as identified inthe questionA further 2 marks can be achieved for reference to the extract given.6 additional marks can be awarded for discussion of similar references to at least one other poem by the poet.In practice this means:Identification of commonality (2) (e.g.: theme, characterisation, use of imagery, setting,or any other key element…)from the extract:1 x relevant reference to technique/idea/feature (1)1 x appropriate comment (1)(maximum of 2 marks only for discussion of extract) from at least one other text/part of the text:as above (x3) for up to 6 marksORmore detailed comment x2 for up to 6 marksThus, the final 6 marks can be gained by a combination of 3, 2 and 1 marks depending onthe level of depth/detail/insight.The aim would be to encourage quality of comment, rather than quantity of references.Reference could be made to thefollowing:* Valentine: the two sides of love: the superficial promising (“moon . . . promises light”; the kiss; the ring) and the harsh, brutal reality. Love can lead to extreme emotions from passionate and fulfilling to desperate and weak. The speaker wants to highlight the power of love the poem focuses on how love can become intoxicating and overbearing leading us to feel pain.
* Mrs Midas: uncertain feelings for husband: dislikes the greed and selfishness, despises his lack of thought for her, but still misses physical contact. The hope and desire the speaker feels for her husband is challenged by his ambition and selfishness leading to her disappointment and regret. However, despite the problems in their relationship, lasting love for her husband is evident reminding us that true love is very hard to forget.
* The Way My Mother Speaks: conflicting emotions as she looks back at what she is leaving and the uncertainty of the future. She is happy for the independence that leaving her mother will bring but she is homesick and will miss her presence.
* In Mrs Tilscher’s Class: Duffy's love for her teacher is evident although when she asks for support in the final stanza Mrs Tilscher turns away as her job is done.

Many other references are possible. |