**‘Valentine’ Textual Analysis Practice**

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.

**Questions**

1. By referring to the title and lines 1—2, analyse how Duffy creates a dramatic opening to the poem. 2
2. Look at lines 3—17. Analyse how Duffy uses the extended image of “an onion” to suggest both the positive and negative aspects of love. 3
3. Look at lines 18—23. Analyse how Duffy creates a sinister mood in these lines. 3
4. Consider the text as a whole. By referring to the text evaluate how successful the poet has been in conveying the personality of the poem’s speaker. 2
5. By referring to this poem and at least one other poem by Duffy, discuss how the poet takes an interesting stance on the theme of love and relationships. 10

**20 marks**