**National 5**

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**Duffy Set Text**

Mrs Midas

Valentine

War Photographer

Originally

In Mrs Tilsher’s Class

The Way My Mother Speaks

**Mrs Midas**

It was late September. I’d just poured a glass of wine, begun

to unwind, while the vegetables cooked. The kitchen

filled with the smell of itself, relaxed, its steamy breath

gently blanching the windows. So I opened one,

then with my fingers wiped the other’s glass like a brow.

He was standing under the pear tree snapping a twig.

Now the garden was long and the visibility poor, the way

the dark of the ground seems to drink the light of the sky,

but that twig in his hand was gold. And then he plucked

a pear from a branch. – we grew Fondante d’Automne –

and it sat in his palm, like a lightbulb. On.

I thought to myself, Is he putting fairy lights in the tree?

He came into the house. The doorknobs gleamed.

He drew the blinds. You know the mind; I thought of

the Field of the Cloth of Gold and of Miss Macready.

He sat in that chair like a king on a burnished throne.

The look on his face was strange, wild, vain. I said,

What in the name of God is going on? He started to laugh.

I served up the meal. For starters, corn on the cob.

Within seconds he was spitting out the teeth of the rich.

He toyed with his spoon, then mine, then with the knives, the forks.

He asked where was the wine. I poured with a shaking hand,

a fragrant, bone-dry white from Italy, then watched

as he picked up the glass, goblet, golden chalice, drank.

It was then that I started to scream. He sank to his knees.

After we’d both calmed down, I finished the wine

on my own, hearing him out. I made him sit

on the other side of the room and keep his hands to himself.

I locked the cat in the cellar. I moved the phone.

The toilet I didn’t mind. I couldn’t believe my ears:

how he’d had a wish. Look, we all have wishes; granted.

But who has wishes granted? Him. Do you know about gold?

It feeds no one; aurum, soft, untarnishable; slakes

no thirst. He tried to light a cigarette; I gazed, entranced,

as the blue flame played on its luteous stem. At least,

I said, you’ll be able to give up smoking for good.

Separate beds. In fact, I put a chair against my door,

near petrified. He was below, turning the spare room

into the tomb of Tutankhamun. You see, we were passionate then,

in those halcyon days; unwrapping each other, rapidly,

like presents, fast food. But now I feared his honeyed embrace,

the kiss that would turn my lips to a work of art.

And who, when it comes to the crunch, can live

with a heart of gold? That night, I dreamt I bore

his child, its perfect ore limbs, its little tongue

like a precious latch, its amber eyes

holding their pupils like flies. My dream milk

burned in my breasts. I woke to the streaming sun.

So he had to move out. We’d a caravan

in the wilds, in a glade of its own. I drove him up

under the cover of dark. He sat in the back.

And then I came home, the woman who married the fool

who wished for gold. At first, I visited, odd times,

parking the car a good way off, then walking.

You knew you were getting close. Golden trout

on the grass. One day, a hare hung from a larch,

a beautiful lemon mistake. And then his footprints,

glistening next to the river’s path. He was thin,

delirious; hearing, he said, the music of Pan

from the woods. Listen. That was the last straw.

What gets me now is not the idiocy or greed

but lack of thought for me. Pure selfishness. I sold

the contents of the house and came down here.

I think of him in certain lights, dawn, late afternoon,

and once a bowl of apples stopped me dead. I miss most,

even now, his hands, his warm hands on my skin, his touch.

**‘Mrs Midas’ (Part 1 Stanzas 1 – 4) Set Text Questions 1**

1. Referring to stanza one, show how the poet’s language depicts a typical domestic scene. (2)

2a. Describe Mrs Midas’ reaction to first seeing Mr Midas turning everything into gold in stanza 2. (1 mark)

2b. Show how one example of the poet’s use of language in stanza 2 helps to show Mrs Midas’ reaction. (2 marks)

3. Explain how, in lines 13-24, the poet conveys the strangeness of the husband’s behaviour. (4 marks)

4a. What is the atmosphere depicted in stanza 4? (1 Mark)

b. How does the writer’s language depict this atmosphere? (2 marks)

5. By referring to this poem and at least one other by Carol Ann Duffy, show how effectively she explores the joys and sorrows of a close relationship. (8)

**‘Mrs Midas’ (Part 2 Stanzas 5 – 8) Set Text Questions 2**

1a. Look at stanzas five and six. What tone is established in these lines? (1)

b. How does the writer’s language depict this tone? (2)

2. Look at stanza 7. How does the writer’s language highlight the damage done to Mr and Mrs Midas’ relationship? (4)

3. Look at the remaining lines in stanza 7. How does the writer use language to create a contrast between the past and present. (4)

4. Look at stanza 8. Analyse the image ‘its amber eyes holding their pupils like flies’ (1)

5. By referring to this and at least one other poem by Carol Ann Duffy, show how the poet explores the idea of changing emotions. (8)

**‘Mrs Midas’ (Part 3 Stanzas 9 – 11) Set Text Questions 3**

1. Analyse how the poet’s use of language in stanza 9 creates a dull matter of fact mood. (2)

2. Analyse how the poet’s use of language in stanza 10 creates a vivid impression of the scene. (4)

3. Analyse how the poet’s use of language in stanza 11 reveals Mrs Midas’ conflicting feelings in this stanza? (4)

4. State two main ideas highlighted in the final stanza of the poem (2)

5. By referring to this poem and to at least one other poem by Carol Ann Duffy, discuss how she examines the idea of solitude and loneliness. (8)

**Valentine**

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.

**‘Valentine’ Set Text Questions 1**

1.Identify Duffy’s attitude towards Valentine’s Day in the opening line and show how her language helps to convey this attitude. (2)

2.In lines 2-10, comment fully on how effectively you think the poet conveys the onion as a more appropriate symbol of love than the traditional gifts mentioned in line 1. (4)

3.By referring to two examples of the poet’s language in lines 13 - 17 show how Duffy conveys the negative aspect of love. (4)

4.Show how the poet’s techniques in the final stanza highlight her views on love. (2)

5.Choose another poem that explores the idea of passion. Show how the poet explores this idea both in this and at least one other poem. (8).

**‘Valentine’ Set Text Questions 2**

1. In the opening two lines of the poem some of the main ideas and concerns of the poem come across clearly. Identify two of these main ideas or concerns.

2. In lines 3—5, show how two examples of the poet’s use of language suggest a positive side to love.

3. In lines 7—17, show how two examples of the poet’s use of language suggest a negative side to love.

4. How effective do you find lines 18—23 as a conclusion to the poem? Justify your answer with close reference to the text.

5. By referring to ‘Valentine’ and at least one other Duffy poem, show how Duffy creates a dark/sinister mood.

**‘Valentine’ Set Text Questions 3**

1a) What tone is established in the poem? (1)

b) How does the writer’s language covey this tone (2)

2) Comment fully on the line ‘It will make your reflection a wobbling photo of grief’ (2)

3) Look at the final two stanzas. How does the poet’s use of language create a sinister mood? (6)

6. By referring to this poem and at least one other by Duffy, discuss her ability to use effective imagery to explore theme.

**War Photographer**

In his dark room he is finally alone

with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.

The only light is red and softly glows,

as though this were a church and he

a priest preparing to intone a Mass.

Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays

beneath his hands, which did not tremble then

though seem to now. Rural England. Home again

to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,

to fields which don’t explode beneath the feet

of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger’s features

faintly start to twist before his eyes,

a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries

of this man’s wife, how he sought approval

without words to do what someone must

and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black and white

from which his editor will pick out five or six

for Sunday’s supplement. The reader’s eyeballs prick

with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.

From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where

he earns his living and they do not care.

**‘War Photographer’ Set Text Questions 1**

1a) Many of the main ideas or concerns of the poem come across clearly in the first

stanza. Identify two of these main ideas or concerns from stanza one. (2)

(b) Show how two examples of the poet’s use of language in stanza one help to clarify or illustrate his meaning. You should refer to two of word choice, sentence structure or imagery (4)

2. Show how any two examples of the poet’s use of language in stanza two effectively contribute to the main ideas or concerns of the poem. You should make reference to imagery, word choice or any other technique. (4)

3. With reference to word choice or imagery, explain how the poet conveys their ideas in stanza 3 of the poem. (2)

4. How effective do you find any aspect of the final stanza as a conclusion to the poem? Your answer should deal with ideas and and/or language. (2)

5. With close textual reference, show how the ideas and/or language of this poem are similar OR different to another poem or poems by Duffy which you have read. (8)

**‘War Photographer’ Set Text Questions 2**

1) As the photographer prepares to develop the film we learn important things about him. What does the writer’s language reveal about the war photographer? (4)

2) Show how the poet’s use of language highlights the contrast between war and home in stanza 2 (4)

3) Show how two examples of the poet’s language contributes to the dramatic effect of stanza 3 (4)

4) By referring to this and at least one other poem, show how Duffy explores the idea of identity in her poems. (8)

**War Photographer’ Set Text Questions 3**

1)Religious imagery is developed throughout the first stanza. Discuss these images and show what they reveal about the War Photographer. (4)

2)In stanza 3, show how the poet manages to convey the horror that the photographer has to face when at war. (2)

3)Explore the contrasting attitude of the poet, the reader and the editor in the final stanza. Justify your response (6)

4)‘War Photographer’ encourages readers to feel sympathetic towards the photographer and what he has to endure on a daily basis in his job. Choose one other poem that evokes the same feeling in the reader. (8)

**Originally**

We came from our own country in a red room

which fell through the fields, our mother singing

our father’s name to the turn of the wheels.

My brothers cried, one of them bawling, Home,

Home, as the miles rushed back to the city,

the street, the house, the vacant rooms

where we didn’t live any more. I stared

at the eyes of a blind toy, holding its paw.

All childhood is an emigration. Some are slow,

leaving you standing, resigned, up an avenue

where no one you know stays. Others are sudden.

Your accent wrong. Corners, which seem familiar,

leading to unimagined pebble-dashed estates, big boys

eating worms and shouting words you don’t understand.

My parents’ anxiety stirred like a loose tooth

in my head. I want our own country, I said.

But then you forget, or don’t recall, or change,

and, seeing your brother swallow a slug, feel only

a skelf of shame. I remember my tongue

shedding its skin like a snake, my voice

in the classroom sounding just like the rest. Do I only think

I lost a river, culture, speech, sense of first space

and the right place? Now, Where do you come from?

strangers ask. Originally? And I hesitate.

**‘Originally' Set Text Questions 1**

1. By referring closely to stanza 1 analyse the use of poetic technique to emphasise the dramatic impact moving to another country had on each of the family (Mother, Brothers and Duffy). (6)

2. Look at stanza 2. “All childhood is an emigration” Explain fully what the poet means by this. (2)

3. In lines 12—16 analyse the use of poetic technique to convey the distress of the family members caused by their “sudden” emigration to a new environment. (4)

4. By referring to this and at least one other Duffy poem, show how the poet coveys a difficult experience for the character. (8)

‘**Originally’ Set Text Questions 2**

1. (a) The poet seems to be moving to a different part of the country. What do you think is the mood in the first three lines of the poem? Justify your answer. (2)

(b) Explain in detail how a contrast is created between the poet and her brothers in the rest of verse one (lines 4-8). (3)

2. (a) “All childhood is an emigration.” What do you think this line means? (2)

(b) “Some are slow,” (line 9) “Others are sudden” (line 11). Show how the poet highlights features of each emigration in lines 9-14. You should refer two of the following in your answer: word choice, sentence structure, sound. (4)

3. Explain how the language used in the first five lines of stanza 3 helps you to appreciate the change introduced by the word “But”. (2)

4. By referring to ‘Originally’ and at least one other Duffy poem, show how Duffy explores the idea of pain and suffering within her poems.

**Originally Set Text Questions 3**

1a) Explain the contrast in mood between Carol Ann Duffy and her mother in lines 1 – 3 of the poem (2).

1b) Explain in detail how language helps to convey the feelings of Carol Ann Duffy and her brothers in the rest of the stanza. (4)

2) ‘All childhood is an emigration’. Explain what the poet means by this. (2)

3) Show how the poet conveys a sense of not belonging in the remainder of the stanza. (2)

4) Explain the change introduced by the word ‘but’ and show how the language used in the first five lines of stanza 3 helps you to appreciate this change. (2)

5) ‘Originally’ explores the idea of home’ Choose another poem that explores the idea in a similar way. (8).

**In Mrs Tilscher's class**

You could travel up the Blue Nile

with your finger, tracing the route

while Mrs Tilscher chanted the scenery.

"Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswan."

That for an hour, then a skittle of milk

and the chalky Pyramids rubbed into dust.

A window opened with a long pole.

The laugh of a bell swung by a running child.

This was better than home. Enthralling books.

The classroom glowed like a sweetshop.

Sugar paper. Coloured shapes. Brady and Hindley

faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake.

Mrs Tilscher loved you. Some mornings, you found

she'd left a gold star by your name.

The scent of a pencil slowly, carefully, shaved.

A xylophone's nonsense heard from another form.

Over the Easter term the inky tadpoles changed

from commas into exclamation marks. Three frogs

hopped in the playground, freed by a dunce

followed by a line of kids, jumping and croaking

away from the lunch queue. A rough boy

told you how you were born. You kicked him, but stared

at your parents, appalled, when you got back home

That feverish July, the air tasted of electricity.

A tangible alarm made you always untidy, hot,

fractious under the heavy, sexy sky. You asked her

how you were born and Mrs Tilscher smiled

then turned away. Reports were handed out.

You ran through the gates, impatient to be grown

the sky split open into a thunderstorm.

**In Mrs Tilsher’s Class Set Text Questions 1**

1) Show how the word choice in lines 1 - 4 highlights how Mrs Tilscher teaches her subject. (2 marks)

2) Choose three of the details in lines 6-8 and explain what each one suggests about the scene. (6 marks)

3) Explain how the speaker shows her attitude to school in lines 9-11. You should consider one example of word choice and one example of imagery. (4 marks)

4) By referring to this and at least one other poem, show how Duffy explores the idea of growing up (8)

**In Mrs Tilsher’s Class Set Text Questions 2**

1) How do the senses (sight, sound etc.) evoke memories of these early school days in lines 14-16. You should refer to at least three senses. (6)

2) Changes take place over the Easter term (lines 17-23). How does the speaker show this change in these lines? You should consider one example of word choice and one of imagery. (4)

3) What do the final two lines of the poem suggest to you about the future of the speaker? You should comment on word choice or imagery in these lines. (2)

4)By referring to this and at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the poet uses imagery to explore the poems main ideas. (8)

**In Mrs Tilsher’s Class Set Text Questions 3**

1) Look at lines 1 – 8. Explain using your own words as far as possible what the poet remembers about her primary school class and teacher. (2)

2) Look at the following image in lines 13 – 14. ‘Brady and Hindley faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake’. Fully analyse this image in the context of the poem. (2)

3) Look at lines 18 – 15. How does the poet’s language explore the idea of danger in these lines? (4)

4) Look at lines 26 -32. How does the writer’s language explore the idea of the change from childhood to adolescence in these lines? (2)

5) Look at the line ‘Reports were handed out’. Comment fully on the effect of this line.

5) By referring to this and at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the poet explores the idea of contrast. (8)

**THE WAY MY MOTHER SPEAKS**

I say her phrases to myself

in my head

or under the shallows of my breath,

restful shapes moving.

*The day and ever. The day and ever*.

The train this slow evening

goes down England

browsing for the right sky,

too blue swapped for a cool grey.

For miles I have been saying

What like is it

the way I say things when 1 think.

Nothing is silent. Nothing is not silent.

What like is it.

Only tonight

I am happy and sad

like a child

who stood at the end of summer

and dipped a net

in a green, erotic pond. The day

and ever. The day and ever.

I am homesick, free, in love

with the way my mother speaks.

**The Way My Mother Speaks Questions 1**

1) State two of the main ideas explored throughout this poem. (2)

2) Look at lines 1 – 4. How does the poet’s language highlight her feelings at this time? (4)

3) In line 9 ‘too blue swapped for a cool grey’ analyse the use of contrast in this line (2)

4) Look at lines 15 – 23. How does the language convey a sense of excitement? (4)

5) By referring to this poem and at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the poet explores the idea of change. (8)

**The Way My Mother Speaks Questions 2**

1) Give two reasons why the final line in stanza 1 ‘*The day and ever. The day and ever’* is in italics (2)

2) What is unusual about the phrase ‘restful shapes moving’? (2)

3) How does the poet use sentence structure and sound in lines 6 – 9 to draw attention to the length or tedium of the journey? (2)

4) Show how the poet uses three of the following techniques in stanza two to draw attention to the persona’s state of mind: (6)

* Repetition
* Word Choice
* Contrast
* Contradiction

5) By referring to this and at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the poet develops setting. (8)

**The Way My Mother Speaks Questions 3**

1) How does the poet explore the idea of a journey in stanza 1? (4)

2) The poet uses a series of images in lines 15 – 20. Explain fully the implications of these images. (4)

4) By referring to the poem as a whole, explain clearly how the poet’s language creates an atmosphere or mood in the poem. (4)

4) By referring to this poem and at least one other by Duffy, show how the poet explores an important theme. (8)

**Practise 8 Mark Questions**

1. By referring to this poem (Mrs Midas) and to at least one other poem by Duffy, discuss her ability to surprise the reader with unexpected ideas and/or language.

2. By referring to ‘In Mrs Tilsher’s Class’ and at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the writer creates a happy/positive mood.

3. By referring to War Photographer and at least one other pome by Duffy, show you the poet establishes setting.

4. By referring to this poem (Mrs Midas), show how the presentation of character of is similar or different to the presentation of character in another poem.

5. By referring to this poem (Mrs Midas) and at least one other poem by Duffy show how the theme of loss is explored.

6. By referring to this poem (Mrs Midas) and at least one other by Duffy show how she creates a disturbing or unsettling mood/ atmosphere.

7. By referring to ‘Originally’ and at least one other by Duffy show how she explores the idea of characters coping with life-changing circumstances.

8. By referring to this poem (War Photographer) and at least one other by Duffy, discuss how she explores the theme of destruction.

9.By referring to ‘Valentine’ and at least one other by Duffy show how she explores the dark side of love.

10. By referring to this poem (Mrs Midas) and at least one other by Duffy show how she creates interesting characters

11.By referring to this poem ‘Valentine’ and at least one other by Duffy show how she explores the theme of relationships.

12.By referring to ‘Originally’ and at least one other by Duffy discuss how she explores the theme of isolation.

13. By referring to this poem ‘War Photographer’ and at least one other by Duffy show how she explores the influence the past has on the present.

14. By referring to ‘War Photographer’ and at least one other Duffy poem, show how Duffy explores the idea of pain and suffering within her poems.

15. By referring to ‘The Way My Mother Speaks’ and at least one other poem show how Duffy makes you feel sympathy for characters in the poem.

16. By referring to ‘The Way My Mother Speaks’ and at least one other poem by Duffy, show how the poet explores the idea of a journey from childhood to adulthood.