

Love is a common theme in Duffy's poetry. By referring to this poem and to at least one other by her, discuss how she explores the theme of love.

Area of commonality

In Havisham the theme of love is conveyed by Duffy. The poem explores the damaging effect of lost love by describing the case study of Miss Havisham who is jilted at the altar by her fiancé.

In Anne Hathaway a different aspect of love is explored. Duffy explores the passionate side of love by using the persona of Anne Hathaway remembering her intimate relationship with Shakespeare.

Havisham

"dark green pebbles for eyes"

Imagery

Literally pebbles are hard, small and cold.

Metaphorically Duffy is saying Havisham's eyes are hard and cold due to the fact she has been left. The colour green also symbolises jealousy and greed suggesting a bitterness to the persona of Havisham. The use of imagery conveys the damaging effect the lost love has had on the woman.

"ropes on the back of my hand I could strangle with"

Imagery

Literally Havisham is referring to the veins on the back of her hands - they are aged

Metaphorically Havisham's veins have become like ropes in which to murder someone with. This suggests that Havisham is so bitter about her lost love that she would want to kill him. The fact Havisham has aged since she has been left further emphasises the damaging effect of the incident.

Anne Hathaway

"My lovers words were shooting stars"

Imagery

Literally shooting stars are perceived to be magical, something which inspires awe or brings luck.

Metaphorically it shows how enchanted that Anne was by her husband, their relationship is almost out of this world. The passion and intimate nature of their love is conveyed through this imagery.

"casket of my widow's head"

Imagery

Literally a casket is where a precious object is kept.

Metaphorically she treasures the memories that they had together emphasising the intimate nature of their love.

"the bed we loved in was a spinning world"

Imagery

Literally a spinning world suggests that it's out of control, make you dizzy, crazy

Metaphorically this is describing their sex life - it is extremely passionate, the love is intoxicating - she is addicted to the thrill of the relationship.