

PASM TUITION ACADEMY

LOVE'S DOG

Love's Dog

by Jen Hadfield

What I love about love is its diagnosis
What I hate about love is its prognosis

What I love about love is its petting zoo
What I hate about love is its bent cigarette

What I love about Love is its pirate
What I hate about love is its sick parrot

What I love about love is its truth serum
What I hate about love is its shrinking potion

What I love about love is its doubloons
What I hate about love is its stomach lining

What I love about love is its lion-roar
What I hate about love is it's boiling hot

What I love about love is its bird-bones
What I hate about love is its mean mouth

What I love about Love is its flower girl
What I hate about love is its grey hairs

Summary of "Love's Dog"

"**Love's Dog**" is a poem that explores the complexities of love by presenting both the positive and negative aspects of romantic relationships. The speaker lists contrasting things they "love" and "hate" about love, using surprising, whimsical imagery. By alternating between these contrasting feelings, the poem reveals that love is not purely joyful or purely painful but a mix of emotions and experiences. The title, "Love's Dog," suggests that love is like a companion—loyal and cherished but also capable of bringing frustrations and challenges. The poem's structure of alternating positive and negative attributes highlights the ambivalence people often feel about love.

Analysis of "Love's Dog"

1. Duality of Love:

- The poem is structured around a series of contrasting statements, presenting love as a complex and multifaceted experience. Each line pairs something positive (what the speaker "loves") with something negative (what the speaker "hates"), showing that love encompasses both joy and difficulty. This balance between love's positive and negative traits reflects how relationships are often both fulfilling and frustrating at the same time.
 - For example, "What I love about love is its diagnosis" suggests that love can provide clarity and insight, while "What I hate about love is its prognosis" reflects anxiety about the future of love, indicating the uncertainty of where love may lead.
2. **Use of Surreal and Playful Imagery:**
- Hadfield uses surreal, unexpected metaphors throughout the poem, such as "love is its pirate" and "love is its sick parrot." These whimsical images give the poem a playful tone, yet they also carry deeper meanings about the contradictions in love. The pirate could represent love as adventurous and daring, while the sick parrot could symbolize the weariness or burdens that love sometimes brings.
 - The poem's use of unexpected images like "its bent cigarette" and "its stomach lining" adds humour and vividness while also reflecting the real-life imperfections of love.
3. **Ambivalence Toward Love:**
- The alternating structure of what the speaker loves and hates about love captures the ambivalence many people feel about romantic relationships. Love is shown as both something wonderful and something difficult. This complexity reflects the idea that no relationship is perfect, and love often brings with it frustration, tension, and uncertainty.
 - The phrase "What I love about love is its petting zoo" presents love as something gentle, warm, and nurturing, while "What I hate about love is its mean mouth" reflects the possibility of cruelty or harshness in relationships.
4. **Tone and Structure:**
- The tone of the poem is **conversational and humorous**, yet reflective. By using playful and somewhat absurd imagery, Hadfield lightens the subject of love while still addressing the serious and often conflicting emotions that come with it.
 - The **free verse** structure gives the poem a loose, flowing rhythm, emphasizing the spontaneity and unpredictability of love. The repetition of the "what I love" and "what I hate" patterns creates a sense of balance, mirroring the dual nature of love.

Poetic Devices in "Love's Dog"

1. **Repetition:**
 - The poem repeatedly uses the phrases "What I love about love" and "What I hate about love," creating a structured rhythm and emphasizing the contrast between the positive and negative aspects of love. This repetition helps to build a sense of duality and tension in the poem, mirroring how love is experienced as a combination of highs and lows.
2. **Metaphor:**

- Throughout the poem, Hadfield uses **metaphors** to describe love in unconventional ways. For example, "love is its pirate" suggests that love can be thrilling and adventurous, while "love is its sick parrot" implies that love can sometimes feel burdened or ill. These metaphors are unusual and playful, giving the reader fresh ways to think about the contradictory nature of love.
3. **Juxtaposition:**
 - The key device in this poem is **juxtaposition**, where positive images of love are placed alongside negative ones. This technique creates a stark contrast, illustrating the complex and multifaceted nature of love. For example, the juxtaposition between "love is its diagnosis" (suggesting clarity) and "love is its prognosis" (suggesting uncertainty) reflects how love can bring both certainty and anxiety.
 4. **Imagery:**
 - Hadfield uses vivid and surreal imagery to make the abstract concept of love more concrete. The imagery is often playful and unexpected, such as "its petting zoo" or "its doubloons," which create unusual associations with love. These images emphasize the unpredictable, multifaceted nature of love, suggesting that it cannot be easily defined or pinned down.
 5. **Alliteration:**
 - In lines like "What I love about love is its lion-roar," Hadfield uses **alliteration** to create a pleasing sound and reinforce the energy and power associated with love. The repetition of the 'l' sound mimics the roaring effect, enhancing the image of love as something fierce and intense.
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Themes in "Love's Dog"

1. **Complexity of Love:**
 - The primary theme of the poem is the complexity of love. By contrasting what the speaker loves and hates about love, Hadfield demonstrates that love is not simple or straightforward. It is a mix of joy and frustration, affection and irritation, wonder and disappointment. The poem captures the paradoxical nature of love, where pleasure and pain are often intertwined.
 2. **Contradictions in Relationships:**
 - Another key theme is the **contradictory nature of relationships**. The speaker acknowledges that love brings both positive and negative experiences, highlighting the challenges that come with maintaining a relationship. This theme emphasizes that love is full of contradictions and that these contradictions are an inherent part of being in love.
 3. **Unpredictability of Love:**
 - The use of unusual and surreal imagery reflects the **unpredictability of love**. Love is shown as something that can't be fully controlled or understood, much like the strange and whimsical metaphors Hadfield uses to describe it. Love can be exciting and adventurous, but it can also be difficult and disappointing.
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Conclusion

"Love's Dog" by Jen Hadfield presents love as a multifaceted and contradictory experience. Through the use of repetition, juxtaposition, and playful metaphors, Hadfield explores both the positive and negative aspects of love. The poem highlights that love is not one-dimensional—it brings joy, frustration, comfort, and tension, often all at once. The poem's surreal and humorous tone makes it accessible and relatable while also offering a thoughtful meditation on the complexities of love and relationships. This analysis highlights the poem's depth and encourages readers to reflect on their own experiences of love's dualities.

COMPARISON WITH,

1-SONNET43

2-HOW DO I LOVE THEE

Themes

- **Idealized vs. Realistic Love:**
 - "Sonnet 43" expresses an **idealized and spiritual love**. Browning's speaker describes love as limitless, eternal, and pure, elevating it to a spiritual realm that transcends the physical world.
 - "I Wanna Be Yours" portrays love in a **more practical and down-to-earth** way. Clarke's speaker expresses their devotion by offering to be everyday objects like a vacuum cleaner or coffee pot, symbolizing how love can be expressed through small, practical gestures in everyday life.
 - "Love's Dog" takes a more **nuanced view**, presenting love as complex and contradictory. Hadfield's speaker balances what they love and hate about love, reflecting the dualities inherent in romantic relationships. Love is neither purely wonderful nor purely painful, but a mix of both.
- **Eternal vs. Imperfect Love:**
 - In "Sonnet 43," Browning emphasizes the **eternal, perfect nature** of her love, suggesting that it will continue "even better after death." Love is presented as a force that transcends time and space, unaffected by the imperfections of life.
 - In contrast, "Love's Dog" and "I Wanna Be Yours" both focus on the **imperfect, practical realities of love**. Hadfield acknowledges that love can be frustrating and flawed, while Clarke celebrates love through everyday actions and service, showing that love is about presence and care rather than perfection.

Tone

- **Romantic and Reverent vs. Playful and Reflective:**
 - "Sonnet 43" has a deeply **romantic and reverent tone**. Browning's speaker speaks with profound admiration, emphasizing the boundless and spiritual

nature of love. The repetition of "I love thee" gives the poem a sense of intensity and devotion.

- "**I Wanna Be Yours**" has a more **playful and light-hearted tone**. Clarke's speaker uses humour and quirky metaphors to express their devotion. The poem feels conversational and accessible, reflecting a modern, unpretentious view of love.
 - "**Love's Dog**" is more **ambivalent and reflective** in tone. The speaker alternates between love's joys and frustrations, creating a balanced tone that is both affectionate and critical. This mirrors the reality of love as both a source of pleasure and difficulty.
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Structure and Form

- **Sonnet Form vs. Free Verse:**
 - "**Sonnet 43**" follows the traditional **Petrarchan sonnet** form, with 14 lines of iambic pentameter and a set rhyme scheme (ABBA ABBA CDC DCD). This formal structure mirrors the idealized and ordered view of love that Browning expresses.
 - "**I Wanna Be Yours**" is written in **free verse**, with no set rhyme or meter. The free-flowing structure reflects the casual, playful tone of the poem, fitting Clarke's unconventional approach to love. The lack of structure also allows for a more spontaneous expression of affection.
 - "**Love's Dog**" is also written in **free verse**, using short, repetitive lines. The repetition of contrasting statements about love ("What I love about love" and "What I hate about love") creates a rhythm that mirrors the back-and-forth nature of the speaker's feelings about love.
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Poetic Devices

1. **Repetition:**
 - In "**Sonnet 43**," the repeated phrase "**I love thee**" builds a sense of growing intensity and commitment, reflecting the speaker's unbounded love.
 - "**I Wanna Be Yours**" uses the repeated phrase "**I wanna be yours**" to emphasize the speaker's desire to serve their partner in every way possible. The repetition creates a rhythmic, song-like quality to the poem, enhancing its simplicity and sincerity.
 - In "**Love's Dog**," Hadfield uses the repetition of "**What I love about love**" and "**What I hate about love**" to create a sense of balance and duality. This repetition reinforces the idea that love is made up of both positive and negative experiences.
2. **Metaphor:**
 - "**Sonnet 43**" uses abstract metaphors like "I love thee to the depth and breadth and height / My soul can reach," suggesting that love is infinite and transcendent. The metaphors are grand and idealized, elevating the speaker's feelings.

- **"I Wanna Be Yours"** uses everyday, quirky metaphors, comparing the speaker to objects like a vacuum cleaner, a raincoat, or a coffee pot. These metaphors suggest a love that is practical, constant, and rooted in the real world.
 - In **"Love's Dog,"** Hadfield uses surreal and unexpected metaphors, such as "love is its pirate" and "love is its sick parrot." These metaphors convey the contradictions and unpredictability of love, with images that are both whimsical and meaningful.
3. **Juxtaposition:**
- **"Love's Dog"** is built around **juxtaposition**, contrasting what the speaker loves about love with what they hate. This technique highlights the complexity of love, showing how joy and frustration can coexist in a relationship.
 - Neither **"Sonnet 43"** nor **"I Wanna Be Yours"** use this technique in the same way. Browning's poem is focused on the positive, idealized aspects of love, while Clarke's poem presents love in purely affectionate, playful terms without directly acknowledging its challenges.
4. **Imagery:**
- **"Sonnet 43"** uses grand, spiritual imagery, such as "I love thee with the breath, smiles, tears, of all my life," elevating love to a near-religious experience.
 - **"I Wanna Be Yours"** relies on everyday, domestic imagery, with objects like a vacuum cleaner or a coffee pot symbolizing the speaker's willingness to serve and care for their partner in practical ways.
 - **"Love's Dog"** uses surreal and playful imagery, such as "love is its lion-roar" or "love is its boiling hot." These images capture the intensity and contradictions of love, highlighting both its power and its ability to cause discomfort.

Perspective on Love

- **Perfect vs. Imperfect Love:**
 - **Browning's "Sonnet 43"** presents love as **perfect and eternal**, focusing on its idealized form. The speaker's love is portrayed as pure and limitless, free from any flaws or complications.
 - **Clarke's "I Wanna Be Yours"** presents a **more practical, everyday form of love**, where affection is demonstrated through small acts of service and devotion. Clarke suggests that love doesn't need to be grand or idealized; it can be expressed through simple, meaningful gestures.
 - **Hadfield's "Love's Dog"** offers a **realistic and ambivalent view of love**, acknowledging both its joys and frustrations. The speaker loves and hates different aspects of love, reflecting the complexity of relationships, where affection and irritation often coexist.
- **Spiritual Love vs. Everyday Love:**
 - **"Sonnet 43"** elevates love to a spiritual, almost religious level. The speaker's love is described in terms that transcend the physical world, suggesting that love can reach beyond earthly limitations.
 - **"I Wanna Be Yours"** and **"Love's Dog"** both bring love down to earth. Clarke focuses on the **everyday realities of love**, where the speaker expresses

affection through practical actions, while Hadfield acknowledges that love is a mix of **mundane joys and difficulties**, with both positive and negative aspects playing important roles in relationships.

Conclusion

When comparing "**Sonnet 43**," "**I Wanna Be Yours**," and "**Love's Dog**," we see three different approaches to the theme of love. **Browning's "Sonnet 43"** focuses on an idealized, spiritual love, portraying it as eternal and limitless. **Clarke's "I Wanna Be Yours"** presents a more practical, grounded view of love, celebrating the everyday ways in which affection is expressed. **Hadfield's "Love's Dog"** offers a nuanced and ambivalent perspective, acknowledging both the positive and negative aspects of love. Each poem highlights different facets of love, making them complementary in their exploration of this complex emotion.