

# Personal Response to Literature



Levels 11-12

## Sample of a Reflective Response to Literature:

Mary-Anne Tartuffe

1 January 2006

Mrs. Elmire Orgon

### Six Likenesses: The Artistry of Simile and Metaphor in Egyptian Love Poetry

In the Egyptian poem “Love of you is mixed deep in my vitals,” I was pleased by the author’s artistic use of similes and metaphors, which I think he uses to enhance the reader’s understanding of his deep and single-minded love. Through his similes and metaphor I came to agree that romantic love can be like what he describes, and that he probably felt that way.

The author uses six similes (*Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology* 24, lines 2-4, 6-8, and 10-11) and one metaphor (*Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology* 24, line 12) to tell how love affects him, to tell his lady how she should behave, and to talk about what love is in general. At first I thought that some of them were strange, especially those in the first stanza. It is not usual in my time to compare love to bread, or a drug, or a pastry (*Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology* 24, lines 2-4). But as I thought about it, I began to see that in each of these things the combined elements are so mixed together that they cannot be taken apart again later. I was amazed to think that the poet’s love was like that, unable to be separated from himself and completely mixed into his vitals. The comparison of the lady hurrying to see her love like a horse charging into battle did not interest me because I have never seen a horse charging into battle, but I did like the comparison to a gardener, because I have a favorite rose bush in our back yard and every summer I wait for it to bloom. I also was able to feel with the poet’s comparison of lovelonging to “being too far from the light,” because whenever I am far from home and from my family it does seem like I am in the dark, away from sunlight (*Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology* 24, line 10).

When the poet uses all of these similes and the metaphor at the end, he helps me to understand what his love is like. I understand that it goes very deep inside him when I think about how it is mixed into his heart and his vitals in a way that keeps it from ever being taken out again. I feel his impatience to see the lady that he loves when he tells her to hurry to him the same way I hurry to look at my rose bush, and I know that he feels in the dark when he is away from her, just as I do when I am away from



the family and home that I love. The poet likens his love to things that I understand, and by making these connections he helps me to understand what he is feeling. I think that this is what he intends when he uses these similes and this metaphor. I think that he is trying to help me understand something unfamiliar by connecting it to something that is familiar.

I do think that I agree with the poet's description of his love by the end of the poem, because he has used simile and metaphor to let me see into his heart. If he had not made those connections for me, I might not have been able to understand his love or agree that love can be like that, but because he shows me how what he feels is like what I have felt, I am more ready to believe that love can be deeply mixed in a person's vitals, and that a person can be impatient to see the one they love, and that being away from that one is like being away from the light.

Although I do not feel exactly the same kind of love that this poet does, because he loves in the romantic way that my father loves my mother, I think that his poem has given me some new ways of expressing another kind of love that I do have for my family. The next time my mother or father comes home from a trip, I can tell them that when they come home it is like the sun comes out for me.

### **Sample of an Imaginative Response to Literature:**

Mary-Anne Tartuffe

16 March 2006

Mrs. Elmire Orgon

Imitation of repetition in Ecclesiastes 12

#### Before the Christmas Turkey is on the Table

Remember that when the Christmas Turkey comes to the table, the table should be ready to receive it. Before it comes to the table, the table must be wiped off with a sponge, and the white tablecloth must be ironed—when the tablecloth is starched and smoothed with the hot iron—and the napkins must be put into the napkin rings. In that hour the forks should not be dirty, nor should the knives be dirty in the dishwasher, nor should the plates be in the sink. Before the savory bird is brought in from the kitchen, before the white meat is sliced, before the sound of chewing is heard all around the table, the forks must be set on the left side of each place, and the knives and spoons on the right—and the



bone china plates in the middle, and the glasses to the right above them. All this must be accomplished before the Christmas Turkey comes, before the time when the family will gather around the table, and sit down in their places, and Father will smile at Mother and Mother will smile at Father, and Baby will bang her spoon. At that time Father will thank God for our Christmas Turkey, and we will all give thanks to God, who made us.