Read the poem *Lament* and answer the question that follows.

**Question 5**
What do you think the poet is saying about the person in this poem? How does he present his ideas?

**Lament: A Modern Sonnet**

First glance, I see your beautiful brown eyes.
I fall immediately under your spell.
Slipping into a dream, I hear love’s sighs
The dream turns out to be a living Hell.
When you said you loved me, did you mean it?
Your lie is poisonous as blackened sin.
Your beauty cannot hide your soul, the pit.
Release the demon that has lain within.
I've looked into your eyes to find your soul
Wherever it has gone, I do not know.
Your mind controls the 'shell' it plays the role.
Your love is ice, as you know how to show.
Though you have proved the demon, played the role
I find all beauty in your broken soul.

S. Alan Burgess
Analysis: Copy sophisticated vocabulary used by the candidate into this box

Securing Analysis: With your highlighter, identify the close textual details and analysis used by the candidate – do you agree with their comments?

Ext: Copy the different layers of meaning found by the candidate into this box

Extract from a Grade A response on ‘Lament’ that shows insight

Burgess uses many metaphors in this poem to give the idea of the woman as some kind of demon. Even when he hasn’t found out about the true her, he ‘falls immediately under [her] spell’, with strong connotations of witches, and placing curses on people. Burgess also uses the old idea of the eyes being the mirror of the soul. Firstly the man sees ‘your beautiful brown eyes’, however later on in the poem he looks into her eyes ‘to find your soul/ Wherever it has gone’ – he’s wondering how such beautiful eyes could mask such a demon.

The actual poem is a sonnet. Burgess used a sonnet because they are traditionally love poems and this poem definitely starts out as a love poem in the first quatrain. By the second quatrain it rapidly disintegrates into a rant at the woman as he questions whether she ‘meant it’ when she said she loved him. However, in the end he recognises she is flawed, but still loves her despite this as summarised in the rhyming couplet at the end. The use of the sonnet places emphasis on this fact – instead of an entire poem devoted to telling someone how much you love them, Burgess has laid out all their flaws and faults, and come to the same conclusion; that he still loves the woman.
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.

Carol Ann Duffy