

Ammarah Mahmud

December 8, 2008

6<sup>th</sup> period

### Poetry explication

The sonnet "Love Is Not All" by Edna St. Vincent Millay is about the practicality of love and reveals that love can be considered as a hopeful compromise when compared to the harsh reality which surrounds us daily.

The author begins this poem by defining love through opposition; encouraging that love is unimportant and is not a necessity when compared to food, water, shelter, air, and health. These constant descriptions lessen the value of love but are followed by a tonal shift in which love is given a chance to redeem itself. Even though love is not necessary to allow mankind to survive, the need for love can strengthen the will to live, as evident when Millay states "Yet man a man is making friends with death/ Even as I speak, for lack of love alone" (7-8). Millay's diction in this lengthy second sentence continues to use words in negative connotations such as "Pinned down by pain"(10), and "nagged by past"(11) yet the slightly hopeful tone encourages readers to grasp love for its positive intentions. Just as the first half of the poem refers love to necessity, this second half compares love to the actual essence of life.

Following two lengthy statements with the last line composed of two emphatic sentences, Millay summarizes her total attitude towards love while reflecting upon the two compromising views shared in this poem. It is with this line that Millay uses love as a representation of guidance in life, compromising with the idea of love being useless and seen as unnecessary.

**Comment [11]:** GRADE of 36/40

**Comment [12]:** Insightful theme to focus your explication!

**Comment [13]:** Clear organizing idea for paragraph

**Comment [14]:** Explain where and how. Show how the poet uses structure to enhance meaning.

**Comment [15]:** Quote line accurately: "nagged by pain past resolution's power".

**Comment [16]:** Textual detail would be effective here.