**Explore the dramatic nature of Donne's poetry, by referring to Holy Sonnet X and one other poem.**

John Donne is known for the sense of drama that runs throughout his poetry. Coming from a time of great advancements in the theatrical world such as Shakespeare's plays and the building of the Globe theatre, it comes as no surprise that Donne uses these ideas throughout his poetry in much the same way he does with other new ideas of the time. As theatre was so popular among the people during Donne's time of writing, it may be that he used ideas of theatre within his poetry to create a wider appeal for his works. The sense of theatre that comes with "Holy sonnet X" could be due to its context as a sermon, meaning Donne would have preached it to many people, giving it the sense of Drama that can be incorporated into a poem by it being 'performed' by Donne at mass. Donne's use of dramatic features such as the dialogue of one and imperatives also give weight to the dramatic aspects of his poetry. Though not a sermon, "The Flea" also presents a clear sense of drama due to the story that Donne creates as he writes it. Whether fictional or not, Donne creates a vivid imagining of the context of the poem in the readers mind. He uses many of the same features in "The Flea", but manages to create an illusion of spontaneity and conversation within the poem.

One way that Donne creates drama within these two poems is through the use of dialogue and setting. Donne uses a single speaker in both poems, but seemingly manages to create the illusion of conversation and commanding in the poems. In "The Flea", Donne opens with the imperative "mark", immediately opening the poem with a command and setting this as a tone for the rest of the poem. Donne's use of imperatives create a sense of Drama because they add an element of direct address, aiding the reader in imagining the context in which the poems are set. This context, especially in "The Flea", mirror the stories told in theatres during Donne's time and creates a relationship between 'characters' in the poem that the reader can then relate to. Donne furthers this through his use of dialogue of one as, although only one voice is heard in the poem, his reaction creates the complexity of the relationship in the poem. When the unheard voice presumably kills the flea, the speaker exclaims that she is "cruel and sudden", informing the reader of her action but also creating drama in the use of hyperbole and melodrama. The techniques, dialogue of one and imperatives are also present in "Holy Sonnet X" as Donne opens the poem in a similarly commanding way stating "Death, be not proud". This mirrors "The Flea" in how Donne manipulates a single voice and uses imperatives to show that there is a form of dialogue occurring between two characters, Death and the speaker. Donne's use of the imperative "be not" is another example of the sense of command that Donne creates, aiding the illusion of drama as it creates the scene of one character ordering the other. This ordering in turn gives the illusion of a tense relationship between the two characters in the poem, adding to the sense of drama that Donne creates as he is, again, allowing the reader to imagine the complex background of the relationship between these two characters.

Another way in which Donne adds an element of drama to his poems is through turning points in the poems. In "Holy Sonnet X" Donne uses a dramatic twist to create drama and invoke surprise in the reader. Due to the form of the poem being a Sonnet, it has a couplet at the end, separate from the previous quatrains, that Donne uses to close with an impactful twist. Concluding the poem with "Death, thou shalt die" allows Donne to do this as he shockingly shifts from just arguing with Death, to telling Death that he will die. This unexpected argument of using death against Death encompasses the tension between the two characters in the poem and shocks the reader as it is such an unlikely argument to use on Death. This use of unlikely argument is present in lots of Donne's work and is often attributed to his studies in law as he would have had to argue on a regular basis, and knew that an unlikely argument is more effective. Furthermore, Donne's use of monosyllables in this line adds weight to his argument as it creates an illusion of finality, giving the reader the impression the argument is closed and won by the speaker. Donne uses a similarly unlikely argument in "The Flea" after the unheard woman has killed off the flea. This moment between the second and third stanzas is the clear volta of the poem as it would seem that by crushing the flea, the woman has crushed the speaker's argument. However, in turning this argument around, Donne further develops the story between the two characters in the poem and the illusion of spontaneity created by the shifting argument strengthens this. However, "The Flea" doesn't have the same closure as "Holy Sonnet X" as the final line leaves the fate of the relationship up to the unheard voice. This allows for the reader to speculate on how the story of the man and woman may end, further creating a sense of drama through the ideas of the unknown and the potential for countless different results of the attempted wooing.

In both poems, Donne combines ideas of the divine and the earthly to further create tension and drama. The constant referral to the "marriage bed and marriage temple" in "The Flea" is a very religious idea that Donne has used in a poem mainly about sexual desire. This contrast in itself sets an undertone of tension as Donne is using two countering ideas to compliment one argument. In a way, this contention is the basis of Donne's argument in the poem because the fear of the wrath of God, which would have been a true fear at the time, is what is driving the speaker's advances. Therefore, there is a high tension situation throughout the poem as Donne is giving the illusion that one side is right and religious even though it is also sexual and pleasure driven. This contention between the divine and the earthly isn't as clear in "Holy Sonnet X", however Donne still incorporates earthly ideas and images into his highly religious argument with Death. The fundamentals of the argument in this poem is more divinely centred, with the crux of Donne's argument being that all men live eternally in Heaven. Despite this Donne's use of ideas such as "fate, chance, kings, and desperate men" ground Death and make Death's power seem less daunting than how it would have been perceived. By tying death to the world of mortals, Donne strips away Death's illusion of immensity and thus bolsters his own argument against Death. This transferral of power from Death to the Donne creates an extreme tension, almost like a war, and Donne's use of listing hammers in each strike against his opponent. Therefore a clear image of the drama and contention between Donne and Death is created by the similar contention between the divine world and the mortal world.

Donne's use of drama in his poetry allows him to create vivid settings and relationships between characters for his readers to become invested in and watch unfold as though each individual poem is a story. This illusion of theatre that Donne creates through the complexity of his arguments and how each poem unexpectedly turns and shifts, keeps the reader on edge as they are following a story as it is happening, rather than a retelling. The way in which Donne creates stories that happen, seemingly in real-time may be the reason his poetry is still so pertinent today because, much like the playwrights if the time, Donne creates stories and characters that the reader can relate to and become emotionally invested in, allowing his poems to live on as plays do in the hearts and minds of those that read them.