

Jack Ryan
English 2XL
Section 4
PV Poem CM #2

“Valentine for Ernest Mann” by Naomi Shihab Nye

This poem has a few different parts to it, but the one with the most meaning is a story about a man who gives two skunks to his wife for Valentine’s Day because he thinks they have beautiful eyes. The wife doesn’t like the gift, and the man seriously does not understand why. He sees beauty in something that society does not. The theme of this poem is true and pure beauty, and not letting the biased views of society affect your personal views. Independence is key to discovering how to love and be wise.

I have had much personal experience with the message of this poem. I constantly see things in nature and in life that I think are beautiful or have great meaning, but nobody else seems to see it the same way I do. I think everyone has had these experiences, but they occur often for me. When I interviewed my grandparents, my grandma’s overall view of the word “poetic” specifically had to do with what applies to a person’s life, and poetic things were beautiful to the person judging something’s beauty. Her view of something poetic was something that person could relate to, and that is why it is important that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The man gave skunks to his wife because *he* thought they were beautiful, and that alone makes them a good gift. When Rutherford Calhoun realizes that Isadora is beautiful to him, he wants to be with her. She may not be beautiful to anyone else, but she is beautiful to him, and that’s all that matters.