Write a critical appreciation of the poem ‘Variations on the Word Love’ by Margaret Atwood, paying particular attention to imagery, diction, tone, structure and theme.

Variations on the Word Love

This is a word we use to plug holes with. It's the right size for those warm blanks in speech, for those red heart-shaped vacancies on the page that look nothing like real hearts. Add lace and you can sell it. We insert it also in the one empty space on the printed form that comes with no instructions. There are whole magazines with not much in them but the word love, you can rub it all over your body and you can cook with it too. How do we know it isn't what goes on at the cool debaucheries of slugs under damp pieces of cardboard? As for the weed-seedlings nosing their tough snouts up among the lettuces, they shout it. Love! Love! sing the soldiers, raising their glittering knives in salute.

Then there's the two of us. This word is far too short for us, it has only four letters, too sparse to fill those deep bare vacuums between the stars that press on us with their deafness. It's not love we don't wish to fall into, but that fear. this word is not enough but it will have to do. It's a single vowel in this metallic silence, a mouth that says O again and again in wonder and pain, a breath, a finger grip on a cliffside. You can hold on or let go.

Margaret Atwood