

On Mona's Smile –Winona Baker

I know what brought
that expression to her face.
During one of her sittings
Leo said to her, “You know, Mona
you're very intelligent
for a woman.”

allusion: a brief, undeveloped and unexplained reference to a place, event, or figure from history, literature, or mythology. For an allusion to be effective, the reader must recognize, first, that an allusion is being made and, second, what the allusion means.

unacknowledged reference and quotation. Authors assume that readers will recognize the original source, and relate their meaning to the new context

satire: the use of wit, humour, or ridicule to criticize and provoke change.

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1. Explain the allusions in Winona Baker's "On Mona's Smile".
 2. Explain how this poem may be considered a satire.

Possible Answers:

1. The reference, or allusion, being made in this poem is to the famous painting by Leonardo Da Vinci, called The Mona Lisa. When the poet mentions “that expression” she is talking about Mona Lisa’s mysterious half-smile/half-frown. She tells us, the reader, what might have made her smile in such a way.
2. It is a satire because the poem points out that men often have the attitude that they are superior to women. This attitude is reflected in Leo’s comment “for a woman”.