

Love and Relationships (3)

Key Themes

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Romantic Love
 Familial Love
 Longing/ loss
 Obsession
 Nature
 Death/age

Summary of each poem's Key Themes

| Romantic Love | Familial Love | Longing/Loss | Obsession | Nature | Death/Age |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When we two parted •Neutral Tones •Winter Swans •Singh Song •Love's Philosophy •The Farmer's Bride •Porphyria's Lover •Sonnet 29: I think of thee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Walking Away •Follower •Mother, Any Distance •Climbing my Grandfather •Eden Rock •Before you were mine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When we two parted •Neutral Tones •Winter Swans •Love's Philosophy •Porphyria's Lover •Sonnet 29: I think of thee •Walking Away •Mother, Any Distance •Before you were mine •Letters from Yorkshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Singh Song •Love's Philosophy •The Farmer's Bride •Porphyria's Lover •Before you were mine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When we two parted •Neutral Tones •Winter Swans •Love's Philosophy •Sonnet 29: I think of thee •Walking Away •Follower •Climbing my Grandfather •Eden Rock •Letters from Yorkshire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •When we two parted •Neutral Tones •The Farmer's Bride •Porphyria's Lover •Walking Away •Follower •Mother, Any Distance •Climbing my Grandfather •Eden Rock •Before you were mine |

Mother, any distance

- **Familial love:** Unconditional love is presented as **synonymous** (closely linked) with familial love. The **adoration and fond** tone by the speaker about his mother shows that they are **inextricably** (impossible to separate) **bound irrespective** (regardless of) **of physical distance**.

- *“I space-walk through the empty bedrooms”*

- **Longing + age:** The conflict between independence and dependence underpins the poem. While the speaker longs for autonomy (independence), they remain reliant on their mother for support, highlighting the complexity between self-sufficiency and reliance within parent-child relationships.

- *“Anchor. Kite”*

Climbing my grandfather

- **Nature + familial love:** The **conceit** (extended metaphor) of paralleling the grandfather to a mountain introduces the **motif** (recurring theme) of exploration and discovery. This highlights the **metaphorical journey** of delving into their relationship – the speaker is uncovering layers of **understanding and connection along the way**.

- *“I decide to do it free, without a rope or net”*

- **Age:** The **inquisitive** (curious) exploration of the speaker reinforces the **interconnected** nature between generations. The speaker is climbing his grandfather, searching for the **knowledge and wisdom** he has culminated over his life.

- *“Then up over / the forehead, the wrinkles
well-spaced”*

Eden Rock

- **Familial love:** Familial love is portrayed as **transcendent** (beyond human), not **confined to the boundaries of life and death**. The speaker's reunion with his deceased parents emphasises the boundlessness of their bond – love persists even beyond physical existence.

- *“They beckon me from the other side of the bank”*

- **Nature:** The natural and **idyllic** (peaceful) setting of them being reunited in ‘Eden Rock’ signifies how, alike to nature, he and his parents are **sempiternally** (forever) **interconnected**.

- *“They are waiting for me somewhere beyond Eden Rock”*

- **Death/age:** The reunion at Eden Rock symbolises the cycle of life and death. The speaker's preservation of his parents in their youth reflects the timeless nature of love and memory, despite the passage of time.

- *“They beckon me from the other side of the bank”*

Before you were mine

- **Familial love + longing:** The speaker **idolises** her mother's past **vitality** (energy_ and longs for her to radiate that same energy again. However, she recognises that as her as **mother embraces societal expectations of womanhood, she loses some of this vitality.**

- *“Where you sparkle and waltz and laugh before you were mine”*

- **Obsession + age:** Her **meticulous** focus on details, combined with her **romanticised obsession** with her mother's pre-motherhood life, shows her desire to envision her **mother liberated from the responsibilities and burdens imposed by parenthood.**

- *“Your polka-dot dress blows around your legs. Marilyn.”*

Letters from Yorkshire

- **Longing:** The speaker longs for **emotional closeness** despite the vast **geographical separation** from Yorkshire. The letters are a method of **preserving an emotional tie to home**, maintaining a sense of connection despite the physical distance.

- *“Watching the same news in different houses”*

- **Nature:** The use of natural imagery in the poem illustrates that just as the seasons undergo constant change, the speaker will be constantly **inextricably** (impossible to separate) connected to her home.

- *“In February, digging his gardens, planting potatoes”*