

# Love and Relationship Last Minute Revision

**For your 5 key poems you should know:**

- 2 context
- 2 key quotes
- 2 form
- Comparisons

**For the other 10 poems know:**

- 2 context
- 2 form
- How it compares to 1 of your 5 main poems

# Love's philosophy – Shelley

## Context

- **Romantic poet** (capital R): focused on how nature is **awe - inspiring** and the **sublime**. Typically **anti-establishment** (church/government).
- Grew up in the **countryside** – learnt to fish and hunt in meadows and would often spend time with friend, Thomas Medwin

## “All things by a law divine/ In one spirit meet and mingle”

- **Divine (God) allusions:** subtly references a realm of **spiritual transcendence** (beyond human), suggesting that the coming together of these natural elements is what produces **a heavenly experience on earth** – even a **divine force advocates** for their union with their beloved.
- **Enjambment:** with "divine" flowing seamlessly into the next line, emphasising the **innate harmony of their love**, which seems **boundless** (no end) and perhaps even ordained by a higher power.

## “The fountains mingle with the river” “Nothing in the world is single

- **Rhyme:** "fountains" rhyme with "mountains" in stanza two. The connection between these elements across the poem (opposed to within two lines) demonstrates the **interconnection of all aspects of nature** and by them being "single" they **violate this universal law**.
- **Natural imagery:** **permeates** (spreads) throughout the poem, and is used as **philosophical manipulation**. He uses **grand philosophical ideas** of the meaning of life and nature to skilfully coerce his beloved to be together.

## Form:

### **iambic tetrameter**

- This regular form continues throughout the poem's entirety, placing emphasis of the **existence of the natural world as one, interconnected body**.
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- The ways in which elements of nature mingle with each other reflect the way that **humans coexist and depend** on each other to live a fulfilling life.

### **ABAB rhyme scheme**

- *"Single" "mingle" "divine" "thine"*
- This regular rhyme scheme along with the regular metre develops the notion that **human behaviour and nature's behaviour are one and the same**.

Romantic love & longing	Obsession	Nature
<b>Sonnet 29:</b> Long for the physical + emotional intimacy	<b>Porphyria's lover:</b> want ownership over their beloved	<b>Winter swans:</b> nature is used as a reason for their unity

# Porphyria's lover – Browning

## Context

- Browning has been labelled as a **forefather** (founder) for the **pre-Raphaelite art movement**, which was obsessed with the **female form** (body) and sexuality. Women like the Porphyria can be seen partially undressed with their long yellow /red hair in the paintings of **Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais and Gustav Klimt**.
- The Victorian were a **repressed** generation of people and that meant that their view of sex and sexuality was, at times, **dark and gothic**.

## “Her smooth white shoulder bare” “yellow hair displaced”

- Objectification:** Porphyria is **deconstructed and fragmented** into her physical features, portraying her as an **object of lust** and sexual longing. This is heightened as she evokes the imagery of the women depicted in **pre-Raphaelite paintings**.
- Connotations of “white”:** are innocence and virginity, but it also serves to underscore her **objectification and subjugation** (under control). She is portrayed merely as a **creation of male fantasy**, devoid of her own **autonomy** (freedom) and identity as a real person.

## “Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.”

- Diction on “stain”:** The absence of a “stain” symbolises Porphyria's **ongoing purity and untarnished** (unstained) nature in the speaker's perverted (twisted) perspective. Even in death, he **immortalises her** as an innocent figure, conforming to his **idealised perception** of her.
- End stop:** the jovial image of “laughte” juxtaposes the finality of the **end-stop**. There is this **bleak and sinister tone**, as the speaker's lighthearted portrayal of Porphyria conflicts with the **heinous** (evil) act of her murder

## Form:

### **Dramatic monologue:**

- Emphasises Porphyria's **subjugation** (under his control) and **objectification**, as her characterization is solely depicted through the lens of the speaker's mind.
- Her portrayal becomes **immortalised** through his perception and control, further emphasising **her lack of autonomy** (freedom) and **agency** in the poem

### **Rhyme:**

- The rhyme scheme is **unevenly weighted**, with an *ABABB, CDCDD, EFEFF* etc which makes the speaker sound **delirious** and **disjointed**.
- The unsettling regularity of the rhyme scheme may mirror the calculated and **disturbing nature** of the speaker. His murder of Porphyria could be seen as a deliberate, premeditated act, through which the speaker seeks to assert **permanent control and ownership over her**.

Romantic love & obsession	Longing	Death
<b>Farmer's bride:</b> Obsession of their beloved leads to their objectification and dehumanisation	<b>Farmer's bride:</b> longs to have eternal control over their beloved	<b>When we two parted =</b> death + love are closely linked

# Before you were mine

## – Duffy

### Context

- As the **eldest of seven**, it was likely that Duffy became very much aware of the **sacrifices** her mother had to make in order to care for her children.
- This poem refers to the experiences of a **woman living in the 1950s**, Duffy having been born in 1955. During this era, women were expected to live as housewives immediately after their marriage and entrance into motherhood.

### “Where you sparkle and waltz and laugh before you were mine”

- **Semantic field of brightness:** the **iridescent** (shimmering) image around her mother emphasises her **vitality** she once had that motherhood robbed her of. The vitality and brightness contrasts with a despairing tone that this was “before” she was her mother – she will never get to meet this **idealised and carefree** version of her.
- **Polysyndeton (use of ‘and’ rather than commas):** emphasises the **endless glamour and emancipation** (freedom) her mother once had – her **oozing vitality** now diminished by motherhood.

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

- **Symbolism:** Marilyn Monroe was a symbol of **sexual liberation and glamour**, suggesting both her mother’s youthful vitality but her being a representation of the emancipation (freedom) of women sexually and independently.
- **Short sentence:** The punctuation after “Marilyn” isolates the word, perhaps symbolising how the **idealised and inflated** (exaggerated) **image** of her mother before motherhood remains **elusive** (difficult to find) to the speaker – alike to Marilyn Monroe, she’ll never truly understand or know on a personal level.

## Form:

### Regular stanzas:

- Regularity of stanzas indicates the **succumbing** of the mother to the traditional societal path, leading from freedom to the **confines of domesticity** as a housewife and child-bearer, a role that was commonplace for many women in the 1950s.

### Lack of rhyme:

- Shows disjointed view of time as the speaker uses **analepsis** (flashbacks) not from her own personal experiences, but from other stories she has heard
- She is immersed into a past she is **reliving vicariously** (through imagination) through stories contributing to a sense of **disconnection from her own timeline and identity**.

Family love & longing	Obsession	Age
<b>Walking away:</b> distancing of relationships between parent and child	<b>Walking away:</b> Obsessed with reliving past memories to escape feelings of loss in the present	<b>Follower:</b> contemplating on parents as they age and change

# Winter Swans - Sheers

## Context

- '*Winter Swans*' belongs off of his **interpretation of the symbolism behind the Welsh mountain 'Skirrid Hill'**. The word '*Skirrid*' meaning '*divorced or separated*'
- Identity and relationships is a common **trope** (theme) in his work

## "The clouds had given their all" "waterlogged earth"

- **Pathetic fallacy (when the weather reflects the mood)**: The **sombre tone** is set from the offset, symbolising the **melancholy** (sadness) that is pervading their relationship, suggesting that their bond is weighed down by **emotional burdens** and unresolved issues.
- **Personification**: the weather, a symbol of their internal conflict, seems powerful and alike to a human force showing the **gravitas** (seriousness) of this conflict of the couple and reinforces that they **struggle to find unity amidst this gloom**.

## "A show of tipping in unison"

- **Lexis on "show"**: indicates a certain **effortless synchronicity within nature**, mirroring the natural synchronicity and interconnection within their own relationship. ALT - hints at an element of **pretence** (pretending) that their relationship might be superficial or performative.
- **Natural imagery**: highlights the **unity and interconnectedness** of nature, emphasising the naturalness of the couple's union despite their conflicts. Swans "*halving themselves*" embodies the elegance that can emerge when two individuals unite as one - despite their differences and struggles, the couple is ultimately drawn together by a **deeper, intrinsic connection**.



## Form:

### **Lack of rhyme**

- The **disjointedness** of the rhyme reflects a sense of **discord or disconnection** and may symbolise the **emotional challenges and misunderstandings** that exist between the couple

### **Tercets**

- This poem consists **of six stanzas of three lines** (tercets ) and **a couplet** as its final stanza.
- The tercets may symbolise the obstacles hindering the **full fulfilment** and unity of both individuals in the relationship, while the couplet signifies a **conclusive, harmonious acceptance** of these differences and a readiness to **confront or reconcile them**.

Romantic love	Nature	Longing/loss
<b>Neutral tones</b> - feelings of separation with a lover	<b>Neutral tones</b> - nature symbolises the relationship	<b>When we two parted</b> - longing for the reuniting of this emotional connection

# Walking away – Day-Lewis

## Context

- Day-Lewis was raised by a **single father** after his mother passed and thus has a particular interest in father son relationships, as seen in his poetry.
- The poem originally had the sub title "for Sean" who was his son who went to boarding school

## "Like a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit"

- **Spatial allusions:** evokes the **expansive abyss of the world**, in releasing his son, the father senses he is casting him into this **vast expanse** where his son becomes **otherworldly** (imaginary/ not real) – not within physical and emotional reach.
- **Aggressive connotation:** the father believes his son has been forcefully **snatched and stolen from him**. The **gravitational imagery** intensifies this sensation, suggesting a powerful, almost **extraterrestrial force** that has torn them apart

## "Sunny day with the leaves just turning"

- **Passage of time:** as this begins the poem, it sets the tone for the **never-ending cycle of life and passage of time**. The change of season also symbolic for the ever-changing relationship between a parent and child in **every season of life**.
- **Syntax:** "sunny" preceding "turning" illustrates that despite the changes and shifts in their relationship, the **joy and vibrancy** of their shared memories and evolving bond will **consistently overcome** the **sorrow of his son's youth slipping away**.

## Form:

### Rhyme

- The recurring **irregular ABACA rhyme scheme** mirrors his unsettled unease at his son's departure, yet as it is regular throughout it highlights the **universality** of this emotional journey shared by many parents.
- Despite the irregularity, there's a predictable rhythm to the discomfort, highlighting the **dual nature of feeling emotionally connected yet physically distant from one's child**.

### Quintain (5 line stanza)

- Despite the **emotional turbulence** of a child growing up, the **regularity** of the quintains reinforces the **inevitability of the passage of time**
- Regardless of the heartache of witnessing growth, the poem suggests that the **cycle of life persists**, with youth gradually giving way to age in an **unending continuum**.

Family love & longing	Nature	Age
<b>Before you were mine</b> - distancing of relationships between parent and child	<b>Eden rock</b> - nature is used as a backdrop for the natural separation and reunion of parent and child	<b>Mother, any distance</b> - complexities of how age changes a parent - child dynamic