

# Oxford Revise | AQA GCSE English Literature: Love and Relationships Poetry Anthology | Answers

## Mark scheme

Behind each exam question is a set of assessment objectives (AOs). The examiner will use these AOs to help mark your answer. If you answer the question accurately, you will automatically cover all the AOs.

Level	Marks	Explanation
1	1–5	<p>A <i>simple</i> response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – simple comments relevant to comparison, reference to relevant detail(s)</li> <li>• AO2 – awareness of writer making choices, possible reference to subject terminology</li> <li>• AO3 – simple comment on explicit ideas/contextual factors</li> </ul>
2	6–10	<p>A <i>relevant</i> response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – supported comparison, comments on references</li> <li>• AO2 – identification of writers’ methods, some reference to subject terminology</li> <li>• AO3 – some awareness of implicit ideas/contextual factors</li> </ul>
3	11–15	<p>An <i>explained</i> response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – some explained comparison, references used to support a range of relevant comments</li> <li>• AO2 – explained/relevant comments on writer’s methods with some relevant use of subject terminology, identification of effects of writer’s methods to create meanings</li> <li>• AO3 – some understanding of implicit ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
4	16–20	<p>A <i>clear</i> response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – clear comparison, effective use of references to support explanation</li> <li>• AO2 – clear explanation of writer’s methods with appropriate use of relevant supporting subject terminology, understanding of effects of writer’s methods to create meanings</li> <li>• AO3 – clear understanding of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
5	21–25	<p>A <i>thoughtful</i> response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – thoughtful, developed comparison, apt references integrated into interpretation(s)</li> <li>• AO2 – examination of writer’s methods with some relevant use of supporting subject terminology, examination of effects of writer’s methods to create meanings</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO3 – thoughtful consideration of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by examination of detailed links between context/text/task</li> </ul>
6	26–30	<p>A <i>conceptual</i> response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AO1 – critical, exploratory, well-structured comparison, appropriate use of precise references to support interpretation(s)</li> <li>• AO2 – analysis of writer’s methods with subject terminology used appropriately, exploration of effects of writer’s methods to create meanings</li> <li>• AO3 – exploration of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific, detailed links between context/text/task</li> </ul>

## 2 'When We Two Parted' by Lord Byron

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of memories and relationship, e.g. 'Follower' or 'Neutral Tones'
- possible treatment of different attitudes and how these are affected by time, such as in 'Follower'
- possible comparison between how speakers view relationships at different points, such as 'Walking Away'
- any comparison between positive or negative views of the relationship, such as 'Before You Were Mine' and 'Neutral Tones'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of misery in 'When We Two Parted' with the more ambiguous tone of 'Follower'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as the use of nature in 'Follower'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of particular memories to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Neutral Tones'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. child's view in 'Before You Were Mine'

### AO3

- ideas about the passage of time and how it affects memories of relationships
- ideas about the experience of unhappiness in relationships, its causes and results
- possible ideas about love and its effects upon the individual
- ideas about how relationships impact upon sense of self/individual identity
- any ideas about attitudes towards parents and how these might change and develop with different perspectives

### 3 'Love's Philosophy' by Percy Bysshe Shelley

*Relevant content may include:*

#### **AO1**

- any valid comparison of love and its effects upon people, e.g. 'Neutral Tones' or 'When We Two Parted'
- possible treatment of different attitudes and how these are affected by experiences, such as in 'Walking Away' or 'Porphyria's Lover'
- possible comparison between how different speakers view the effects of love, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- ideas about misery and disappointment, such as 'Neutral Tones'
- any comparison between positive and negative views of love, such as 'Winter Swans'

#### **AO2**

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of the sense of happiness in 'Love's Philosophy' with the more downbeat tone of 'When We Two Parted'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as nature in 'Winter Swans'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of love to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Walking Away' or 'Singh Song!'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. lover's view in 'When We Two Parted'

#### **AO3**

- ideas about love and how it affects relationships and/or changing attitudes towards these relationships
- ideas about possession/ownership in unhappy relationships
- possible ideas about the impact of love in terms of emotional state
- ideas about how love impacts upon sense of self/individual identity
- any ideas about attitudes towards lovers and how these might change and develop

## 4 'Porphyria's Lover' by Robert Browning

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of attitudes towards loved ones, e.g. 'Follower' or 'Walking Away'
- possible treatment of different attitudes and their effects on loved ones, such as in 'Porphyria's Lover' or 'Before You Were Mine'
- possible comparison between how different speakers view loved ones, such as 'Walking Away' and 'The Farmer's Bride'
- ideas about joy or misery, such as 'Sonnet 29 – "I think of thee!"' or 'When We Two Parted'
- any comparison between positive and negative views of the relationship, such as 'Mother, any distance'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of the sense of admiration in 'Before You Were Mine' or more unhappy tone of 'Neutral Tones'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as flight in 'Mother, any distance' or metaphor in 'Sonnet 29 – "I think of thee!"'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of love to suggest wider ideas, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. child's view in 'Eden Rock'

### AO3

- ideas about change in attitudes over time and how it affects relationships
- ideas about difficulties in the parent–child relationship
- possible ideas about the impact of relationships in terms of freedom and responsibility
- ideas about how loved ones inform the speaker's view of the world
- any ideas about attitudes that result in happiness or despondency

## Example answer

*The answer given below is a full, high-mark answer.*

The unnamed narrator of 'Porphyria's Lover' is presented as someone with a disturbing attitude towards the object of his affections. The poem explores ideas about male control and ownership of women, with the narrator being shown as jealous and controlling to the point where he kills her by winding her own hair 'three times her little throat around'. The poem commences with a foreboding storm which 'tore the elm-tops down', an ominous foreboding of the turbulent passions explored in the subsequent narrative. The storm may also be read as a symbol of the disturbed attitudes of the narrator, whose murderous actions are central to the storyline.

The nub of the narrator's motivation for murder seems to be that he can't have her solely to himself. Browning places this information in the centre of the poem, drawing attention to the narrator's inability to set 'struggling passion free' and 'vainer ties dissever'. By choosing to narrate this poem in the voice of a murderer, Browning allows the reader a close insight into how love – or at least the narrator's perverted version of it – can result in tragedy. The attitude of the narrator is complicated in the middle section of the poem, where he realises that 'Porphyria worshipped me' and through the use of the tactile image 'made my heart swell', Browning shows that the narrator's attitude is coloured by his own sense of self-worth; he seems to only appreciate his lover for the emotions she stirs in him, rather than for her own qualities.

The voice of the poem is chilling, notably the section where he presents his plan in cold terms – he 'debated what to do' with little thought as to the effects of murder upon his supposed lover. In fact, he off-handedly assures himself that 'she felt no pain'. The attitude the narrator has towards his lover is simply about control – he desires to preserve Porphyria in the 'moment she was mine, mine, fair'. The macabre image where he 'oped her lids' makes him appear sociopathic; he seems a man without any love at all for Porphyria, just a desire to possess her, to the point where the horrific image of her head lolling on his shoulder where he assures himself that 'I, its love, am gained instead' reveals his true motivation – to own his lover.

By contrast, 'Singh Song!' features a much more upbeat and positive attitude towards a lover. The narrator of the poem clearly loves his new wife and is physically and emotionally besotted by her. There is a note of comedy in the voice, especially where the light-hearted description of the couple's lovemaking is related in the simile 'made luv like vee rowing through Putney'. This comic touch is reinforced by the use of Punglish to relate the story and the unconventional representation of the bride who is shown as 'effing at my mum' and 'stumble[s] like a drunk'. These snapshot images related in the voice of a loving husband reveal an important truth about love: that when people are besotted by each other, they are blind to flaws and faults.

The lovers in this poem are driven by their desire to be together. The narrator's attitude is such that he is willing to put aside his father's business to be with his wife. He tells us that 'ven nobody in, I do di lock' so he can 'tickle [...] my bride'. This shows an important aspect of love and desire – that its pull is so strong that humans are prepared to take risks and invite mockery and suspicion, as the narrator does when he says that his customers criticise his absence and tidiness of the shop. The poem concludes with a comic-romantic image of the lovers sat in the moonlight among the chocolate bars. The narrator's proclamation that his lover 'is priceless baby' concludes the narrative on a note of high positivity – a celebration of love and its power to inspire unflinching appreciation of a partner.

## 5 ‘Sonnet 29 – “I think of thee!”’ by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of love and its importance, e.g. ‘Love’s Philosophy’ or ‘Winter Swans’
- possible treatment of different feelings about love, such as in ‘Walking Away’
- possible comparison between how different speakers view love, such as ‘When We Two Parted’ or ‘The Farmer’s Bride’
- ideas about emotion and its effects, such as ‘Singh Song!’ or ‘Mother, any distance’
- any comparison between positive and negative views of love, such as ‘Neutral Tones’

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of the sense of despair in ‘Neutral Tones’ or the more celebratory tone of ‘Singh Song!’
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as constraint in ‘The Farmer’s Bride’ or cultural references in ‘Before You Were Mine’
- any relevant treatment of presentation of love’s importance to suggest wider ideas, such as ‘Winter Swans’ or ‘Love’s Philosophy’
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. parental view in ‘Walking Away’

### AO3

- ideas about love and how it affects relationships and/or changing attitudes towards these relationships
- ideas about possession/ownership in the love relationship
- possible ideas about the impact of love in terms of happiness
- ideas about how love impacts upon everyday experience
- any ideas about how love impacts parents and how it provokes complicated feelings

## 6 'Neutral Tones' by Thomas Hardy

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of unhappy relationships, e.g. 'When We Two Parted' or 'The Farmer's Bride'
- possible treatment of different levels of unhappiness and how these are affected by circumstance, such as in 'Walking Away' or 'When We Two Parted'
- possible comparison between how unhappiness can be rationalised, e.g. 'Walking Away'
- ideas about control, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- any comparison between different levels of negative views of relationships, such as 'Follower'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of admiration in 'Before You Were Mine' or more ambiguous tone of 'Follower' or 'Mother, any distance'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as funereal references in 'When We Two Parted'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of unhappy relationships to suggest wider ideas, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. murderer's view in 'Porphyria's Lover'

### AO3

- ideas about misery and how it affects relationships and people
- ideas about how emotional states impact speakers
- possible ideas about the impact of unhappiness over time
- ideas about how unhappy relationships have wide-ranging effects
- any ideas about how unhappy relationships can result in terrible outcomes



## Example answer

*The answer given below is a full, high-mark answer.*

Hardy's presents love in 'Neutral Tones' as a particularly unhappy experience. The poem centres on a lover's memory, one of a point at the end of a relationship. The memories of this moment and the lover are presented in a tone of bitterness, the voice of the poem laced with disdain. The poem commences with an image of the natural world, one devoid of joy. The time setting is that of a winter's day where the colours are drained from the scene – 'the sun was white' and the leaves were grey. This scene acts as a symbol of the dead relationship and the misery it creates; there is a sense of absence – 'few leaves lay on the starving sod'.

A set of negative images and references are used to convey the narrator's attitude to his former lover. Things which are conventionally associated with joy are given a downbeat edge – we learn that the 'smile on your mouth was the deadest thing'. A range of other dark images are deployed to reinforce the negative view of love and the lover, such as 'grin of bitterness' and the macabre 'ominous bird a-wing'. Taken together, these images suggest that, to the narrator, his former relationship is one that is associated with endings and deaths – there is a sense that rather than being something to be celebrated, love relationships are sources of great misery.

It's clear from the content of the poem that this unhappy relationship lives long in the memory of the narrator; it's an experience that he returns to. This suggests that when love goes wrong, it has a deep-seated and permanent effect upon the individual. It also shapes the way that people view love as a concept. The narrator tells us he learned 'keen lessons that love deceives', a depressing view of emotional relationships. The poem concludes by returning to the setting of the 'pond edged with greyish leaves'. This cyclical effect suggests that the narrator is almost trapped in an inescapable loop of misery – a memory he can't shake, which has shaped his life.

'When We Two Parted' also presents the aftermath of a relationship, one that similarly lives long in the narrator's mind. The opening stanza gives a brief account of the lovers' parting, one which will 'sever for years'. The parting is a deeply emotional one, marked by 'silence and tears', and a range of images connected with disruption and coldness are used to present this. We learn that 'pale grew thy cheek' and 'colder thy kiss'. These images have connotations of death – as if the parting is permanent and causes the narrator to feel something akin to grief.

The presentation of parting as a type of grief is furthered in the second stanza where the narrator associates his former lover's name with 'a knell in mine ear', which conjures up the image of a funeral bell. The poem therefore suggests that the parting of lovers can have a long-lasting and profound emotional impact. Not only that, but unhappy relationships also lead to bitterness. The narrator says 'long shall I rue thee'. Here, it seems that any residual feelings of love have transformed into something negative, as if there are no positive memories left, only regret and rancour. He has accused his lover thus: 'thy spirit deceive[s]'.

The end of 'When We Two Parted' echoes a line from the start of the poem – 'silence and tears'. This structural choice reinforces the idea that the narrator is trapped by his feelings – he has not moved on and is caught up in feelings that are holding him back. The poem shows how deep-seated and influential unhappy relationships can be. The poem offers no sense of resolution to these bitter feelings and concludes on a downbeat note, implying that the narrator will never escape the emotional scars of his experience.

## 7 'Letters from Yorkshire' by Maura Dooley

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of loving relationships, e.g. 'Sonnet 29 – "I think of thee!"' or 'Walking Away'
- possible treatment of different feelings and how these are affected by circumstance, such as in 'Singh Song!' or 'When We Two Parted'
- possible comparison between the enduring nature of feelings, e.g. 'Winter Swans'
- ideas about ownership, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- any comparison between different levels of feelings, such as 'Follower'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of joy in 'Singh Song!' or dislike in 'When We Two Parted'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as nature references in 'Winter Swans'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of feelings to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Porphyria's Lover'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. despairing lover's view in 'When We Two Parted'

### AO3

- ideas about contentment and how it affects relationships and people
- ideas about how joy or despair impact speakers
- possible ideas about how feelings mutate over time
- ideas about how unhappy feelings have wide-ranging effects
- any ideas about feelings can be particularly strong

## 8 'The Farmer's Bride' by Charlotte Mew

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of difficult relationships, e.g. 'When We Two Parted' or 'Neutral Tones'
- possible treatment of different levels of difficulty and how these are affected by circumstance, such as in 'Walking Away' or 'Winter Swans'
- possible comparison between how difficulties play out over time, e.g. 'Porphyria's Lover'
- ideas about temporary difficulties, such as 'Winter Swans'
- any comparison between different levels of difficulties in relationships, such as 'Follower'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of anger in 'When We Two Parted' or more philosophical tone of 'Walking Away'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as nature references in 'Neutral Tones'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of difficult relationships to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Follower'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. parental view in 'Walking Away'

### AO3

- ideas about emotional difficulties and how they affect relationships and people
- ideas about how speakers understand and handle difficult relationships
- possible ideas about the impact of difficult relationships over time
- ideas about how difficult relationships have wide-ranging effects
- any ideas about how difficult relationships can have tragic outcomes

## 9 'Walking Away' by Cecil Day-Lewis

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of changing relationships, e.g. 'Follower' or 'Mother, any distance'
- possible treatment of different types of change and how these are affected by circumstance, such as in 'Neutral Tones' or 'When We Two Parted'
- possible comparison between how change is explored, e.g. 'Eden Rock'
- ideas about time, such as 'Before You Were Mine'
- any comparison between positive or negative relationships, such as 'Porphyria's Lover'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of despair in 'When We Two Parted' or more ambiguous tone of 'Follower'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as storm references in 'Porphyria's Lover'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of change to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Follower'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. unhappy lover's view in 'Neutral Tones'

### AO3

- ideas about change and how it affects relationships and people
- ideas about how changing feelings affect speakers
- possible ideas about the reasons for changing relationships
- ideas about how change has lasting or temporary effects
- any ideas about growing up and changing relationships

## Example answer

*The answer given below is a full, high-mark answer.*

'Walking Away' explores ideas about the effects of relationships as they change over time. It is written in the voice of a parent contemplating how his son has changed over the years and how he rationalises the melancholy provoked when a child becomes an adult and no longer needs their parent in the same way. The poem is structured around the narrator's memories of his child's first football match, with the final stanza being a reflection on the nature of partings.

The main memory is set at a point in time with 'leaves just turning', which symbolise a moment of change, one where the boy no longer seeks the company of his father but instead goes 'drifting away' with his friends. The use of the simile 'like a satellite wrenched from its orbit' suggests that the process of growing up is about a break – a moment where the usual patterns of life are disrupted, and the closeness of parent and child breaks down. The father clearly feels the sadness of this moment, and this is accompanied by the worry that his son is not quite ready for his new life – the image of the son as a 'half-fledged thing set free' emphasises the father's fears about how the son will cope in his young adult life without his father as a permanent feature.

The nature of change clearly affects the father more than the child. A further simile is used to express the separation felt, where the boy is 'like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem'. Yet while this image of parting has a melancholy edge, it is also presented as a natural process – something which has to happen. By the end of the poem, the narrator rationalises his sense of loss, stating that 'love is proved in the letting go', even though the parting 'gnaws at my mind still'. The poem suggests that although change is a natural part of relationships, it can cause emotional turmoil. But it also offers a more hopeful note – that strong, loving relationships can find ways of accepting change and ironically, prove their permanence.

'Mother, any distance' also presents a parent–child relationship in a moment of change, except it is written in the voice of an adult child who is moving into a new house. The adult child is being assisted by his mother in the practical terms, and requires a 'second pair of hands', an image that suggests no matter how old people get, they often require the support and presence of their parents. One of the main metaphors in the poem concerns the business of measuring, with the mother presented at the 'base' of a tape measure while the narrator measures the house. This image brings to mind ideas of the umbilical cord – the link between mother and child which, although literally cut, remains as a metaphorical link.

This idea is developed further in the image of the two as 'Anchor. Kite', which implies that the mother is a steady influence, allowing the child to explore. The process of change and development in this relationship is therefore shown to depend upon strong foundations – successful growth into adulthood benefits from the support of a parent. The image of a tape measure is extended in the final stanza, where the spool is extended to 'breaking point' suggesting that change will ultimately result in separation. This idea is explored in the last line where the narrator opens the hatch in the attic, ready to explore, and by implication, leave his mother behind. The narrator's concerns about heading for the 'endless sky' are left unresolved but expressed through the metaphor of whether he will 'fall or fly'. This expresses the nature of change – that it is something potentially exciting but also risky, yet the underlying sense is that the strength of his relationship with his mother will allow this change to be a success, and, as the title implies, their relationship will last across 'any distance'.

## 10 'Eden Rock' by Charles Causley

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of family relationships, e.g. 'Climbing My Grandfather' or 'Before You Were Mine'
- possible treatment of different attitudes towards family relationships, such as in 'Walking Away' or 'Eden Rock'
- possible comparison between issues surrounding family life, e.g. 'Mother, any distance'
- ideas about children growing up, such as 'Walking Away'
- any comparison between different views of relationships, such as 'Follower'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as admiration in 'Before You Were Mine' or more varying tone of 'Follower'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as satellite references in 'Walking Away'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of family relationships to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Eden Rock'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. parent's view in 'Walking Away'

### AO3

- ideas about how family relationships affect people
- ideas about difficult or positive family relationships
- possible ideas about the impact of family relationships over time
- ideas about the long-term influence of parents
- any ideas about changing family relationships

## Example answer

*The answer given below is a full, high-mark answer.*

The representation of family in 'Eden Rock' revolves around what appears to be the narrator's imagined, nostalgic depiction of his parents. The scene is set in the place of the poem's title, which conjures up ideas about paradise and innocence – a kind of pastoral simplicity which suggests that the narrator is choosing to view family life as a place of solitude. The idea that the narrator's parents are 'waiting for me' may also suggest that they have passed away and, in the narrator's fantasy, are preserved as youthful figures in an afterlife.

The poem is sequenced in a way that we are first introduced to the narrator's father, who, in the poem, is 25-years old and depicted as a well-dressed, masculine presence. The family dog also is young, and the overall effect is one of stability and easefulness. The narrator's mother is introduced in the second stanza, and she is also young and feminine, being described with a 'ribbon in her straw hat'. She appears almost angelic, with her white dress and hair that 'takes on the light'. The depiction of the parents suggests that, in the narrator's mind, family life is a place of protection and simplicity, where the reassuring presence of parents is soothing.

The mother is presented as a strongly maternal figure who pours tea and sets out 'three plates', which provides an image of the family as a unit, one which seems harmonious and loving. It is clear that in this depiction of family life, the narrator takes much comfort from his family. The poem closes on an ambiguous moment, with the parents beckoning the narrator from 'the other bank' which may imply they are encouraging him in the path of life, explaining 'crossing is not as hard as you might think'. It is also possible that he is imagining them in the afterlife. Either way, the poem's final line sounds a downbeat note with the single standalone line 'I had not thought that it would be like this' that may be an admission that life without one's family is tough.

'Climbing My Grandfather' also offers a younger person's view of an older relative, using the slightly absurd extended metaphor of scaling a grandfather to learn and explore him. The poem is structured as a climb from the grandfather's 'old brogues, dusty and cracked' to the summit of his 'thick hair'. From the start, there is a sense that the narrator is keen to find out about his relative and is, in a way, taking a risk – doing it 'without rope or net'. This might suggest that really wanting to know a family member intimately has its risks, as one could find out secrets or aspects of character which are less appealing.

The business of climbing the grandfather is one in which the narrator relies upon the clothing of his family member to scale – he pushes 'into the weave, trying to get a grip' – suggesting that, as younger people, we rely on older relatives for support and assistance. This idea is furthered later in the poem where the narrator rests upon his 'firm shoulder', an image of reliance and stability provided by family. There is an aspect of discovery to this process, where the narrator discovers 'the glassy ridge of a scar', something that was previously unknown to the narrator, which implies that the business of exploring your relative's personality and history can throw up interesting and unknown stories.

There is a feeling that getting to know a family member is a tricky process, one that causes the narrator to be 'gasping for breath' by the time they reach the summit, but the process is also a rewarding and reassuring one, whereby the 'slow pulse of his good heart' acts as a steadying influence on the narrator. The poem's overall effect is to show how families offer interesting challenges in the process of really getting to know someone, but ultimately provide reassurance of their value and wholesomeness.

## 11 'Follower' by Seamus Heaney

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of feelings about parents, e.g. 'Eden Rock' or 'Mother, any distance'
- possible treatment of different feelings about parents and how these are influenced by situations, such as in 'Before You Were Mine'
- possible comparison between how relationships with parents change, e.g. 'Mother, any distance'
- ideas about ageing, such as 'Mother, any distance'
- any comparison between positive representations of parents, such as 'Before You Were Mine'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as admiration in 'Before You Were Mine' or more elliptical tone of 'Eden Rock'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as popular cultural references in 'Before You Were Mine'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of parents to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Mother, any distance'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. child's view in 'Mother, any distance'

### AO3

- ideas about parental manner and attitudes
- ideas about how views of parents are formed
- possible ideas about the impact of parental relationships
- ideas about how time alters feelings about parents
- any ideas about how feelings about parents can be profound



## Example answer

*The answer given below is a full, high-mark answer.*

'Follower' offers an ambiguous take on the nature of father and son relationships. By turns, it celebrates the importance and strength of a parent, yet also explores how these feelings become more complicated as time moves on. The poem suggests that there is an unbreakable link between parent and child, and on occasion, it seems that that can be a lasting and contradictory source of reassurance and irritation.

The poem is structured in a way that starts with a positive depiction of a father as 'an expert' farmer. This depiction is a recalled memory from the narrator's childhood, using a range of figurative language to exemplify the father's masculine qualities. We learn about his father's 'shoulders globed like a full sail strung' which emphasises the father's physical strength and presence in the eyes of the young narrator. He clearly has heroic qualities and expertise, as shown in the way the horses 'strained at his clicking tongue' and controlled them with 'a single pluck of reins'. The image of a father who has mastered his profession and provides a role model to his young son is created through words such as 'exactly' and 'expert' which plainly state the father's abilities.

The mood of the poem changes when the narrator explores his own self-image in the light of his father's skills. The narrator's unsuitability to farming life is carried in verbs that show clumsiness, such as 'stumbled' and 'fell'. The image of being carried upon his father's back takes on a wider meaning to do with reliance and lack of independence, which is supported by the double meaning of the title which suggests that not only does the narrator walk behind his father, but also wishes to follow in his footsteps, to be like him. And yet this seems impossible: the narrator tells us that 'all I ever did was follow'. In this sense, the father's presence is a negative thing for his son – a heroic figure that only serves to highlight the narrator's failings. Yet this is turned around in the final stanza, set in the present, where the narrator's father 'keeps stumbling behind me, and will not go away'. This may be read literally as a reference to the dependency and affliction of old age, but is more likely an acknowledgement that a parent's influence and shadow remain long in a child's life.

'Before You Were Mine' is a less ambiguous reflection on a parent, being a largely celebratory and admiring depiction of a mother by her daughter. The poem sees the narrator imagining a time before she was born, trying to recreate the youthful life of her mother. This leads to an upbeat imagining of a carefree and lively representation of a parent who is sociable, shown with laughing friends as they 'shriek at the pavement' in the joy of youth. The narrator also envisions her mother as a romantic character who has the appeal of 'Marilyn' Monroe, and the desires for love and the 'fizzy, movie tomorrows' that an unwritten future might hold. The narrator's imaginings are just that, but they reveal her feelings for her parent, which are loving and sentimental in the sense that she wishes to see her mother as a powerful, happy and attractive figure.

She also views her mother as a rebellious and sexually desirable figure who defies her own mother and allows her dress to blow 'round your legs', wears 'high-heeled red shoes', and has 'bites on your neck'. These imagined scenes then intertwine with real memories of her mother teaching her dance steps. There is a hint of jealousy in the way the narrator feels envious that she didn't know her mother as a vivacious young woman, but also a feeling that her character and spirit persist – it will 'sparkle and waltz'. The narrator also seems to see her mother as embodying what she considers to be positive qualities – liveliness, care, light-heartedness and physical attractiveness – things that the narrator likely wishes to have herself.

## 12 'Mother, any distance' by Simon Armitage

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of ideas about childhood, e.g. 'Follower' or 'Before You Were Mine'
- possible treatment of different experiences of childhood, such as in 'Follower' or 'Before You Were Mine'
- possible comparison between experiences of growing up, e.g. 'Walking Away'
- ideas about change, such as 'Follower'
- any comparison between different levels of memories of childhood, such as 'Follower'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as admiration in 'Before You Were Mine' or more varied tone of 'Follower'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as nature references in 'Follower'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of growing to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Walking Away'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. parent's view in 'Walking Away'

### AO3

- ideas about childhood and how it affects relationships and people
- ideas about the experiences of growing up
- possible ideas about the impact of childhood events and experiences
- ideas about how time influences judgements and views about childhood
- any ideas about parents' conduct and attitudes

## 13 'Before You Were Mine' by Carol Ann Duffy

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of positive relationships, e.g. 'Climbing My Grandfather' or 'Letters from Yorkshire'
- possible treatment of different types of positivity, such as in 'Singh Song!' or 'Sonnet 29 – "I think of thee!"'
- possible comparison between familial or romantic relationships, e.g. 'Climbing My Grandfather' or 'Singh Song!'
- ideas about heightened emotions, such as 'Singh Song!'
- any comparison between different levels of positivity in relationships, such as 'Walking Away'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of sexual joy in 'Singh Song!' or more respectful tone of 'Mother, any distance'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as nature references in 'Winter Swans'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of positive relationships to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Winter Swans'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. grandson's view in 'Climbing My Grandfather'

### AO3

- ideas about positive relationships and how they impact people
- ideas about how positive feelings cement relationships
- possible ideas about the impact of positive relationships over time
- ideas about how positive relationships are important to speakers
- any ideas about how positive relationships can sustain and nourish

## 14 'Winter Swans' by Owen Sheers

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of problematic relationships, e.g. 'When We Two Parted' or 'The Farmer's Bride'
- possible treatment of different types of problem and how these are affected by circumstance, such as in 'Follower' or 'Neutral Tones'
- possible comparison between how problems can be rationalised, e.g. 'Walking Away'
- ideas about freedom, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- any comparison between different levels of problems in relationships, such as 'Love's Philosophy'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as despondency in 'When We Two Parted' or more philosophical tone of 'Love's Philosophy'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as animal references in 'The Farmer's Bride'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of problems to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Porphyria's Lover'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. child's view in 'Follower'

### AO3

- ideas about problems and how they affect relationships and people
- ideas about how problems arise and persist
- possible ideas about the role of communication in problems
- ideas about how problems have wide-ranging effects
- any ideas about how problematic relationships can result in terrible outcomes

## 15 'Singh Song!' by Daljit Nagra

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of the effects of love, e.g. 'Love's Philosophy' or 'Winter Swans'
- possible treatment of different effects of love, such as in 'Walking Away' or 'When We Two Parted'
- possible comparison between how love has various effects and outcomes, e.g. 'Porphyria's Lover'
- ideas about familial love, such as 'Before You Were Mine'
- any comparison between negative effects of love, such as 'When We Two Parted'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of misery in 'Neutral Tones' or more positive tone of 'Winter Swans'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as animal references in 'The Farmer's Bride'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of platonic relationships to suggest wider ideas, such as 'Letters from Yorkshire'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. ex-lover's view in 'When We Two Parted'

### AO3

- ideas about joy and how it affects relationships and people
- ideas about various emotional states and how they impact speakers
- possible ideas about the impact of love over time
- ideas about how happy relationships have wide-ranging effects
- any ideas about how unhappy relationships can result in tragedy

## 16 'Climbing My Grandfather' by Andrew Waterhouse

*Relevant content may include:*

### AO1

- any valid comparison of relationships, e.g. 'When We Two Parted' or 'The Farmer's Bride'
- possible treatment of different types of relationships and how these are affected by circumstance, such as in 'Letters from Yorkshire' or 'When We Two Parted'
- possible comparison between how relationships can bring happiness, e.g. 'Singh Song!'
- ideas about twisted love, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- any comparison between different views of relationships, such as 'Follower'

### AO2

- possible comparison of tone, such as comparison of joy in 'Singh Song!' or more unsettling tone of 'Porphyria's Lover'
- any treatment of imagery used to present ideas, such as natural references in 'When We Two Parted'
- any relevant treatment of presentation of relationships to suggest wider ideas, such as 'The Farmer's Bride'
- possible comparison of perspective/point of view, e.g. murderer's view in 'Porphyria's Lover'

### AO3

- ideas about family relationships and how they affect people
- ideas about how joy impacts speakers
- possible ideas about the role of unhappy relationships over time
- ideas about how relationships have wide-ranging effects
- any ideas about how relationships can result in terrible outcomes