

## AQA Anthology – Relationships Section

### Sonnet 43 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

#### Context

- Elizabeth was a published poet by the age of 15 and was a celebrated poet in both the UK and USA.
- She was a celebrity in her life time and went on to marry a “fan” of hers, a man called Robert Browning who was also a famous poet.
- Very religious- Christian
- Was ill throughout her whole life both mentally and physically- was an invalid so usually indoors
- This Sonnet is one of a book of 44 private sonnets written by Elizabeth to her husband- to- be. Because of her religious beliefs these sonnets were about NON- SEXUAL love (no sex before marriage).
- The poems were so personal to Elizabeth that she didn’t want to publish them so when she did decide to release them she actually named the collection ‘Sonnets from the Portuguese’ and pretended that they were foreign sonnets she had “found” and translated so nobody would know they came from her!

#### Form

- Poem written in Sonnet form made popular by Petrarch in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century (Petrarch write 366 Sonnets to a woman he was in love with who rejected him- you know, like you do)
- The form has a very specific pattern- 14 lines broken up into sections: the first 8 lines usually pose a problem, the last 6 lines usually solve the problem and line 9 usually provides a twist in the poem’s story which helps to get to this solution (this is known as the ‘Volta’).

- In this poem the first 8 lines (called the Octave in case you are interested) presents the theme of the poem which is love and love compared to religion. Elizabeth sees love as a holy thing and compares her love for Robert to her love for God.
- The final 6 lines compare the intensity of her feelings for Robert now with her intense emotions during her childhood.

### Line by line explanation

1- Direct address to Robert Browning her husband to be. Tone: maybe she is replying to a question. Seems playful because of the question mark. She is explaining her love to Robert.

2, 3, 4, Complex- talks about trying to use measurement for something that can't be measured (love). She feels like the love she has for Robert brings all the parts of her together and is overwhelming! When she says "feeling out of sight" it is like she feels her love for him is reaching to somewhere beyond where her eye can see- maybe she is feeling anxious about marrying Robert because she has no idea what might happen in the future and they have never lived together or slept together because that would be against her religious beliefs. It's like she is overwhelmed by love.

5, 6- She says she loves him enough that she doesn't mind being a housewife for him and fulfilling all of those kinds of duties (bearing in mind she is a celebrity!). Even though she is more famous and more rich than Robert she will be happy to be beneath him and let him take control. "By sun and by candlelight"- this could mean that she will spend time with him in the morning and in the night time or it could be a metaphor and she could be saying she will love him when times are good (light) or bad (dark), or could symbolise youth and old age (they will be together forever). You decide!

7,8- Elizabeth feels that there is purity and goodness in their love. She uses words we associate with religion like "purely" and "praise" (there are others!). She feels like hers and Robert's love is blessed by God. She says she will love

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Robert “as men strive for right”- she means morally right and that she will choose to love Robert because it is a right and honourable thing to do.

9,10- “Old griefs”- refers to Elizabeth’s illnesses which affected her, her whole life for instance she had severe spinal pain and was addicted to drugs which she initially started taking to cope with it (morphine and laudanum). She is saying that all the intense emotions (and depressions) she went through in the past are now being channelled into her love for Robert. She uses a couple more religious references when she says “passion” (could refer to the last 24 hours of Jesus’ life and the suffering her went through on the cross) and “childhood’s faith”- this is a biblical reference to a saying in the Book of Matthew that people should have faith in God and trust in him without question in an innocent way (the same way children believe in things). Elizabeth was obsessed with religion!

11- 14 There is a simple ending “I love thee with the breath...” – shows the intensity of her feelings. She will love him until the very end of her life, and after death!

## Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare

### Context

- Shakespeare considered by many to be the greatest English writer who ever lived.
- Shakespeare 1564-1616.
- Despite being a married man and father, Shakespeare wrote a whole collection of Sonnets (including Sonnet 116) to his friend Henry Wriothesley who was a very wealthy man obsessed with the theatre, and Earl of Southampton. Henry and William were great friends and Henry gave William a large amount of money to support his work in theatre.
- Scholars cannot agree whether William and Henry were just friends, or lovers- some believe Shakespeare was bisexual. You can make your own mind up whether this is a romantic poem towards a person, a celebration of love, or a celebration of intense friendship. It is useful and interesting to consider multiple angles (especially if you quite fancy a nice A\*). Is it a sexual poem or simply one about friendship?

### Form/ Structure

- This is a classic Sonnet. These are short 14 line poems which originated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when a bloke called Petrarch fell in love with a married woman and after she rejected him, he sat down and wrote 266 Sonnets about unrequited love (hey, we've all been there).
- Sonnets are written with a rhythm called IAMBIC PENTAMETER and have a recognisable rhythm to them.
- Classic sonnets have a very particular structure:
  - First 8 lines pose a problem
  - Last 6 lines offer a solution to the problem
  - Line 9 usually has a twist called a 'volta' which steers all the issues in the poem towards their resolution at the end.

### Analysis of the poem

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments.

Nothing should get in the way of true minds getting together- could refer to two similar intellects who truly “get” each other, or could be describing a relationship. Impediments are obstacles.

Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:

If your love changes towards someone if they are changed in some way (appearance?) then it isn't real love. Love should always be as strong as it was at the start. It can't be given then taken back.

O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,

No- love is like a light house (ever= fixed mark) that stays strong in storms (tempests) and guides us like the lighthouse and the Pole star (star) guides ships (wandering barks)

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

You can never understand the pole star's value even though we know how high in the sky it is. This is like love- it is so valuable it can't be measured.

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Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;

Time cannot defeat love even though people's beauty (rosy lips and cheeks) fades as they get nearer to death (the grim reaper's sickle). Love is bigger than appearance.



Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

Love doesn't change over time, it stays constant until the end of the world, until Armageddon (edge of doom)

If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

If what I have written about love this poem is wrong and you prove it, then I have never written anything, and have never loved any man.

## Ghazal

### Context

- Poet born in 1944 in Tehran but grew up on the Isle of Wight
- Was an actor / director and became an award winning poet

### Structure

- Ghazal is not only the title of the poem but also the type of poetry it is.
- A Ghazal is an old type of Persian poetry- 5 to 10 couplets with a repeated word or phrase (refrain). The refrain in this one is the word 'me'.
- Each couplet is supposed to stand out in its own right.
- Ghazals are poems of love and are sometimes erotic (Sexual) in tone and content as this one is.
- Poem is about expressing love.
- She uses the traditional ghazal form.
- Rumi is mentioned in the poem- a 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet who wrote Ghazals.

### Analysis

- This poem is an invitation to a lover- it is full of desire. The narrator is longing for sex with her lover.
- The narrator speaks passively and wants to be seduced (she wants the other person to be in charge)
- Repetition of 'if' throughout- sense of anticipation/ anxiety but also perhaps possibility- she is open minded/ experimental
- A series of images are presents to describe their physical relationship
- Alliteration is used to give a soft lyrical quality to some of the stanzas
- There is a sense of passion throughout- the narrator is always thinking about her lover.

- Narrator describes different scenarios she would like to experience with her lover
- Lover always on her mind
- Stanza 2- the word 'cue' suggests that she needs to be told what to do
- Narrator wants lover to be both strong and gentle.
- Stanza 4- when she is angry (venomous tongue) he can relax her/ calm her down perhaps by taking charge.
- Natural imagery is used throughout to suggest their closeness and the timelessness of their love- it is as though their love is as old/ powerful as nature. For instance compared to "bark"- old trees.
- Stanza 5- arms that never knew me is an ambiguous phrase- perhaps the lover and narrator are not emotionally close.
- Last stanzas has a bit of wordplay on the writer's own name "Mimi" (twice the me). The final couplet of ghazals is meant to be a signature where the poet refers to them self so this is a play on that convention.

## Quickdraw

### Context

- Carol Ann Duffy- poet Laureate. See context notes for 'Hour' for more detailed information.
- In this poem a couple are having an intense argument which is going back and forth via text messages and phone calls between them.
- Extended metaphor throughout- shoot out (love is a battle)
- Poem has a contemporary modern feel (modern technology)

### Structure

- 16 lines of free verse in four stanzas
- Loose structure adds to the tension- the narrator of the poem doesn't know what will happen next and neither does the reader
- Throughout the poem there is a sense of tension and unpredictability because of the enjambment (no punctuation at the end of a line), assonance (repeated vowel sounds), and alliteration (when words next to or near each other begin with the same letter).
- The structure shows the emotion/ what is happening- the last stanza seems more stable.

### Analysis

#### Stanza 1

- Narrator is waiting for a call so has two phones on her which she compares to guns. Lover phones and upsets her with words (your voice a pellet). She is upset (groan).

#### Stanza 2

- She tries to say something to hurt the other person (squeeze the trigger of my tongue) but what she says misses her target and doesn't upset them (wide of the mark).

### **Stanza 3**

- Shot through the heart by cruel words
- Direct references to cowboy film (High Noon/ sheriff). Note: High Noon is a 1950's western film in which a lone sheriff gets into a gunfight.
- Drinking alcohol (one or both of them shown by phrase 'hard liquor')
- The relationship is at breaking point- (old Last Chance saloon)

### **Stanza 4**

- Both phones are texted at the same time by the lover- she 'reels' as though bracing herself for another attack.
- There is a suggestion that she has thrown the phones down on the floor before this happened because she has to get down on her knees to find them.
- The lover has texted a number of kisses.
- Calm atmosphere on last two lines through use of ellipsis (...)

## In Paris with You

### Context

- The speaker in the poem has had a recent break up and is now on a holiday/ city break in Paris with somebody else
- The narrator doesn't want to enjoy all of the traditional sights of Paris- he wants to stay in the hotel room with his lover.
- Supposed to be a light- hearted/ funny poem- an unromantic poem set in what is considered the romance 'capital' of the world.
- Love is discussed as if it is an everyday thing- it is not special, unique or romantic.

### Structure

- Stanzas 1 and 2 build up
- Stanza 3- acts like a chorus in a song and changes the tone of the poem
- Stanzas 4 and 5- the present moment (what the couple are experiencing together)

### Analysis

#### Stanza 1

- Strong opening and use of slang gives relaxed every day tone and makes poem seem realistic.
- Talks about getting drunk and uses slang again (downed) - probably feeling emotional/ vulnerable from a bad experience.
- Seems to be quite honest with new lover.
- *Talking wounded*. Pun on "walking wounded"- makes you think of war/ the battle he has had.
- *Feels trapped (hostage) and is marooned (stuck)* - uses made up 'marooned.'

#### Stanza 2

- Hurt and joking about it (bamboozled)

- Feels angry about what he has been through
- Very honest- tells new lover he is on the rebound
- Says he doesn't want to think about where they are going in terms of their relationship (I don't care where are we bound)

### Stanza 3

- Doesn't want to see the sights of Paris and seems sarcastic about them.
- Rejects the traditional 'romantic' sights of Paris
- They are in a "sleazy" "old" hotel- suggests a "dirty" weekend/ stay. Not romantic.
- "Doing this and that to what and whom"- sexual comment- cheap and tacky
- Learning WHAT I am – he feels like he has forgotten who he actually is.

### Stanza 4

- First line repeats phrase from the beginning.
- They are lying in bed looking at their "view" of Paris (inside their hotel room)
- Peeling walls could reflect damaged emotional state

### Stanza 5

- Narrator finally starts to notice new lover- they are in a room together so notice everything about one another (the slightest thing you do)
- He is looking over his lover's body.
- Quite tacky comment about certain part of her body- "all points south". Seems rather disrespectful.
- Suddenly aware of partner's feelings (am I embarrassing you? - rhetorical question- you are not sure if he actually cares about what her feelings are).

## **Brothers**

### Story of poem

This poem tells the story of 3 brothers walking to a bus stop. The two older brothers are chatting about Sheffield Wednesday as their younger brother skips alongside them talking about Rotherham United. The youngest brother has forgotten his bus money and they tell him he must go home to get it. They see a bus and run towards it. As they run the narrator looks back at his younger brother who is running behind with his money desperately trying to catch up but they don't wait for him.

This is about a platonic relationship between brothers- can be compared to Nettles.

### Structure

- Written in free verse- this is where there is no specific pattern of metre, rhythm or rhyme. Reads in a more conversational way. Supports the childlike language and age of narrator and his brothers. Poem seems authentic and real.
- This is an apologetic poem= it seems as though the narrator is apologising to his younger brother for this event. The last line suggests that Andrew feels that he did something this day which started a break in a relationship which would never mend.

### Analysis

- Saddled- suggests little brother is a burden
- Ambled- easy going, relaxed in each other's company
- Threadbare- suggests poverty/ inner city could also symbolise the wearing away of their relationship.
- Skipped- reveals little brother's immaturity and clumsy way of walking but also his innocence and excitement at being out with his two older brothers.

- Ridiculous- aggressive word to describe little brother's tank top. Suggests they might make fun of him.
- Spouting- he is so excited he can't control how he is speaking.
- Alliteration used skipped/ spouting/ six- seems hard- sounding and aggressive
- He "froze" gets across his absolute horror and upset at having forgotten his bus money. Sad.
- Narrator "sighs"- seems impatient as though this is expected/ has happened before. Clearly they don't really want him to tag along anyway.
- Wind milled- childish way of running with arms waving but also shows how desperate he is to move fast and get back quickly.
- Doing what grownups do- narrator being sarcastic in a sad way- he thought he was mature and clever but regrets it.

## Nettles

- **Vernon Scannell** was most famous as a **war poet**, having fought in World War Two. His other poetry also has echoes of his war experience, as in this poem *Nettles*.
- *Nettles* is about a child - Scannell had six children - falling into a patch of nettles and seeking comfort from his parents. The speaker in the poem, after attending to his son's injuries - sets about destroying the nettles, only for them to return with the passing of just "two weeks".

## Structure and language

### Structure

- The poem consists of a single *stanza* and has alternately rhyming lines. The poem is a **narrative** account, focused on the father's perspective of an accident involving his son.

### Language

- **Martial** (to do with war) imagery and language dominate this poem, which may appear strange at first given the domestic subject matter. By bringing the two ideas together, Scannell is offering his opinion on each.
- The nettles are personified as an opposing force. They are a "regiment of spite", and are described using the *metaphor* "spears". Within the first three lines the nettles are presented as a violent and aggressive group of soldiers to reflect the speaker's need to protect his child.
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- When the speaker is taking revenge on the nettles the writer again personifies them, describing them as a "fierce parade" as if they were soldiers standing to attention, cut down by his scythe. They are even given a "funeral pyre" (a wooden structure made for bodies to be burned on instead of being buried). Within "two weeks", "tall recruits" have been "called up" to replace the nettles, a reference to soldiers being conscripted (forced to join the army), but also communicating the idea of an enemy force that cannot be defeated.

- The child is presented using **emotive language**, reflective of the **compassion and sympathy** the speaker feels for his injured son: "White blisters beaded on his tender skin". The *alliteration* using the 'b' sounds suggests the swelling, painful injuries, and the child's skin is "tender", a strong contrast to the language used to describe the nettles. The "watery grin" is another emotive description, implying the child is being helped to get over his painful experience by loving parents.

- The father's reaction to the nettles is as violent as the nettles' stings. He explains the process of dealing with the nettles in a very careful, calculating manner: "I took my hook and honed the blade". First he selected his weapon (a scythe), then sharpened it; then he "slashed in fury" until "not a nettle ... / Stood upright any more". The father takes revenge in his strong desire to protect his son and punish those who injured him.

### **Attitudes, themes and ideas**

This poem explores the impulse for a parent to protect a child, using whatever means necessary. The emotive language used to present the child and the violence of the father's response suggests a powerful instinct has been provoked.

The poem is also about the inevitability of "wounds" being felt through life, whatever a parent may do to prevent it. The nettles grow back quickly and the speaker realises his son will feel pain again. The poem is about a parent realising that life will present children with hurtful situations, ones which cannot be avoided or prevented.

Martial imagery can at first seem out of place - after all, the events of the poem are very insignificant compared to the realities of war. However, the imagery and language is chosen to communicate the idea that such incidents are significant and important in the eyes of a parent. References to war might also suggest that the battle is futile. Whatever the father does the nettles will grow back and his son will probably be hurt again, just as wars will continue to occur, however violent the attempts to end them.

## Praise Song For My Mother

- Grace Nichols was born in the West Indies but moved to the UK aged 27 to pursue her writing.
- Nichols' poetry usually about the following themes: diversity/ cultural displacement/ nature/ West Indian religion and superstition.
- A praise song is actually a type of song created to celebrate somebody's life. Often used at a person's funeral.
- Poem about Grace's relationship with her mother and her mother's influence on her life.
- Structure of poem very striking- like a staircase.
- First line "you were"- mother could be dead or just far away physically and/ or emotionally. Perhaps there has been a break in the relationship and she no longer has the influence she once did.
- Deliberately compares her mother to different parts of nature- uses ambiguous language. For instance, compares her mother to water which can be cleansing, life giving, pure, positive but can also be dangerous, unpredictable, overbearing, terrifying. Suggests that Grace's emotions about her mother are not straight forward.
- Line 6- 'pull' attract/ move/ could be violent/ gravity.
- Line 6- 'mantling'- Earth's mantle is the part under the surface/ as a cloak- perhaps her mother smothers her.
- Compares her mother to 'Moon's Eye'- this is a sacred image and part of African American myth: the Yoruba religion which arrived in the Caribbean with the slaves entering from Africa during the slave trade. There is a goddess called Yemoja who represents the vastness of motherhood and control over all things and the link between the moon and the tide. This is a loaded metaphor rich with meaning and tells us so much about how Grace saw her mother. Could mean various things- her mother is a God/ powerful/ good/ overbearing/ all- knowing/ a guide?
- Poet has picked deliberately ambiguous words/ phrases to describe her mother (ambiguous means more than one meaning)

- Compares her mother to “fishes red gill”- could connote disease as fish show red gill when sick or could describe her mother as life- giving as gill gives oxygen.
- Flame trees are indigenous trees in the Caribbean- they have red leaves (connotations of red- love/ passion/ danger) could suggest her mother is overbearing like the overhanging branches or that she sheltered/ protected her.
- Mentions nourishing Caribbean food- celebration of her culture and acknowledgment of her mother a provider.
- Line 14 very interesting structurally- there is a large gap which could suggest the emotional distance and/ or physical distance between them. Perhaps suggests the point where Grace grows up and goes out on her own- moves to UK.

## Harmonium

### Context

- Poem about Simon Armitage's relationship with his dad. They go to a church to collect an old Harmonium (type of organ) which has been used in the church for centuries that Simon has bought for very little money to prevent it being thrown into a skip. The organ is a Farrand Chapelette- a very old organ from Detroit, USA.
- The harmonium is important to Simon because he and his father both used to sing in the choir at the church so it is part of his family history. Simon doesn't want to see part of his and his father's history destroyed unnecessarily.
- Simon Armitage is a well known modern poet who is known for making every day things abstract. His writing is often a dark observation of life and death.

### Stanza 1

- Soporific quality (use of many S sounds giving a sleepy feel) gives a sense of quietness appropriate for walking into a church.
- Pun- "for a song"- Simon will get the organ cheaply.
- Use of everyday language- ordinary, realistic poem.

### Stanza 2

- Description of the physical damage to the Harmonium caused by sunlight coming through the stained glass windows
- "Beatify" is a process after death where it is supposedly decided whether a Catholic becomes a saint.
- Harmonium's "softwood case"- metaphor for coffin.
- Harmonium itself personified (tongue, fingernails) - feeling of age and gradual decay.
- "Yellowed fingernails" suggests a heavy smoker- compared to his dad
- The organ has been used repeatedly and is tired and worn.

### Stanza 3

- “hummed harmonics” – alliteration gives a musical quality
- Both Simon and his father sang in the choir at different times and possibly together, accompanied by the Harmonium.
- Clever visual imagery to describe the choir singing- “gilded finches” (birds coated in gold)

### Stanza 4

- Description of Simon’s father.
- Colour blue- connotes age/ bruising/ decay
- He is surrounded by tobacco “smog”- very heavy smoker almost surrounded by dust and smoke
- Damaged hands and fingers
- As they are carrying the organ (‘flat on its back’- suggestive of body in coffin)- Simon’s father makes a flippant comment, meant as a joke, that the next thing Simon carries in this way will be his dead body in his coffin. Clearly his father has a dark sense of humour which Simon is aware of (‘he being him can’t help but say’) but the comment shocks Simon and he is actually so shocked and upset he can’t even reply properly (as described in the last 3 lines of the poem).
- Simon’s father is perhaps witty and sharp with a dark sense of humour whereas Simon (I being me) can’t help but be sensitive. Perhaps Simon has only just realised how close his father is to death- he has a sudden wakeup call that his dad is ill, perhaps suffering from cancer (suggested by repeated references to smoking).
- Perhaps his father doesn’t think before he speaks- possible tension.
- The last 2 lines of the poem are the only rhyming couplet of the poem- stands out. This was a moment that changed Simon emotionally.

## Manhunt

### Context

- Poem based on true story of soldier Eddie Beddoes who served as a peacekeeper in Bosnia and was discharged due to physical injury and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Poem describes the soldier returning home and being reunited with his wife. He is injured physically so has scars and damage to his body, but what she really wants to do is try to understand how he is feeling so that she can support him,

### Form

- Written in couplets
- Use of enjambment gives a sense of movement and development as she tries to understand and help (no punctuation so many lines just run on)

### Analysis

Title- think about what this implies. It could be associated with a crime or someone going missing therefore they need to be searched for (hunted) or could relate to him having lost the man he was; perhaps his wife is hunting to find out what has happened to him so that she can help him get back on track?

S= stanza (verse);

- 1- When he first returns home they have a passionate time together and seem very glad to be reunited (he has been away for a long time)
- 2- After the couple have been physical together “only then” does he let her touch the scar (frozen river) on his face. Think about the importance of this metaphor- obviously it reflects the physical appearance of the scar (shiny) but also could reflect him feeling like he is unable to function in the same way that a river can’t flow when it is frozen. Also, clearly shows that he has suffered hideously. His wife wants to heal him.
- 3- He allows his wife to touch a severe facial injury to his jaw. Metaphor “blown hinge” to describe the injury. Could refer to his mouth not being

able to function as it used to- perhaps it refers to his not being able to talk to her.

- 4- She handles and holds his injured collar bone. This is metaphorically referred to as “porcelain”- this is more expensive and delicate than China- it is also very pale; could relate to how valuable she thinks he is and could show how he is actually a sensitive person who has been damaged.
- 5- She touches his injured shoulder blade which is metaphorically compared to a fractured rudder. This is an interesting metaphor because a rudder is the part of a boat which gives it direction (steers it) so this could perhaps reflect the fact that since coming back he hasn’t got any direction and doesn’t know what to do with himself; maybe his trauma whilst in the forces has caused him to feel totally unbalanced and unsure of himself.
- 6- She touches the “parachute silk” on his chest (lung)- as before the silk symbolises the physical appearance of scars (shiny). Silk is a very valuable and delicate material (links to the porcelain metaphor). Also, perhaps the “parachute” could relate to military equipment or perhaps he had to do a parachute mission whilst in Bosnia.
- 7- She bandages him (binds) but it is unclear whether this is meant to be taken literally or metaphorically. Repetition of “only then” shows us that this is a gradual process of her trying to help and heal him. She wants to “climb the rungs” of his broken ribs- she is using the metaphor of someone moving up the rungs of a ladder- perhaps she is trying to get up to his head to discover what the crux of the issue is.
- 8- She can personally feel his pain- she has sympathy. “Grazed heart”- this could mean that he has had a chest injury, perhaps a bullet wound or it could refer to him feeling emotionally damaged (broken hearted). Soft, gentle words used in this stanza.
- 9- She is running her hands over his body and suddenly pictures an x ray (scan) of what is going on inside him.
- 10- A bullet (which is still stuck inside his chest) is metaphorically described as a foetus inside him. Interesting metaphor because a foetus

is continually growing- perhaps this could mean that the bullet is going to continue to cause him pain both physically and emotionally- it is a problem which is only going to get worse.

- 11- She “widens the search”- links to title and relates to the idea of a hunt for a missing person- perhaps she thinks that what has happened to him is a crime. She is still on a journey to try to get inside his head- she wants to understand the root of the problem (the “source”)
- 12- His emotions are a “mine” just waiting to explode. Clever metaphor as it reflects the pressure in his head and perhaps shows how temperamental he is since coming back. The root of the issue still needs to be discovered as it is buried deep. “Sweating”- could refer to sleeplessness/ physical panic.
- 13- Every part of his body is on guard and has tightened as though he is trying to make himself small and protect himself. First line could suggest that he is volatile (could explode). Last line is quite ambiguous- could imply that she has had to work hard to find out how he feels and has succeeded, or that she doesn’t manage at all. Could also suggest that she is vulnerable because of a possible explosion of anger.

## To His Coy Mistress

### Context

- Andrew Marvell 1621- 1678, born in North East England. Well travelled and educated and very cultured.
- Marvell was a metaphysical poet- this means he wrote about things like existence and knowledge and looked beyond the obvious. Metaphysical poets are often interested in love and religion.
- Marvell was writing at a time of immense change and discovery- Britain was colonising the world.
- Marvell lived during the English Civil War (quick History lesson in case you are interested but it is not essential- Oliver Cromwell decided to try to establish a monarchy- the entire war was based on whether English should be ruled by a king or Cromwell who described himself as ‘Lord Protector’). Marvell supported Cromwell.
- At this time, Marvell and other writers were experimenting with new ways of writing poetry.
- It is important to understand that at this time, it was considered fashionable for ladies to flirt by pretending to be shy- the narrator in the poem is saying “why waste time being shy?”
- The word coy means ‘shy’
- The narrator is trying to persuade a woman to sleep with him; he is trying to seduce the woman he is addressing so that he can get what he wants- he is manipulative and tries to play with her mind.

### Structure

- Three stanzas;
- Stanza 1: about immortality- a fantasy about what you would do if you had eternity to spend with the person that you love. If you were immortal

- Stanza 2: all about mortality/ the reality of death- the narrator is using this to try to manipulate this woman into sleeping with him and “seizing the day”.
- Stanza 3: the narrator offers a solution on how to live and die during the time we have, as mortals, on earth.

## Analysis

### Stanza 1

- Romantic, exotic imagery- if they were immortal they could explore the world together. She would find riches by the Ganges river whilst he moaned back in England (by the Humber river) - laughing at himself.
- The ‘flood’ referred to in line 8 is the flood just after the beginning of time according to the bible.
- Line 10—if she refuses he will love her till ‘the conversion of the Jews’ which is an event in the bible which takes place just before the end of the world.
- Line 11- vegetable love probably refers to his penis. Tacky sexual tone.
- Lines 13- 17 he talks about spending years looking at, and adoring each part other body finally spending “thirty thousand” looking at her...
- Line 18- in the “last age” he will get to know her heart- suggests that when they are young and passionate they should concentrate on their physical desires.

### Stanza 2

- Time is always catching up with them and life is short so should be enjoyed and lived in the moment.
- Lines 23/24- in front of them is only nothingness- they are just grains of sand in the face of the world/ eternity.
- Lines 25/26- he tells her he will not be singing love songs to her after she is dead. She won’t be beautiful as a corpse.

- Lines 27- 29- if she rejects him and dies a virgin worms will penetrate her anyway so it is pointless to refuse him.
- Line 29- refers to the idea of her keeping her honour (virginity) as being quite silly and outdated- makes fun of her for having this reluctance to have sex. He tells her this “honour” will turn to dust along with her body so it is pointless to deny herself sex.
- Line 30- her focus on virginity kills his desire.
- Lines 31/32- nobody will be there to embrace her when she is dead- she will be cold and alone.

### Stanza 3

- Tells her that while they are young, fit and passionate they should
- Hunting imagery used- they should hunt and devour each other.
- They should give in to physical pleasure.
- Last 2 lines- although they can't stop time (the sun from rising and setting) they can try to run from it and cram as much joy into their life as possible. They can chase time away with their happiness.

## Hour

### Context

- Written by Carol Ann Duffy who is the current Poet Laureate (Queen's poet)
- She is interested in themes of love from a woman's point of view, gender, darkness beneath the surface of things, and the effect of violence.
- The most likely meaning of Hour is that it is about two people having a relationship who find it hard to find time to spend together- possibly they are having an affair.
- Seems otherworldly and fairytale like.
- Time tries to stop love but love is indestructible.
- Lovers in the poem seem obsessed about their one hour together- could be trying to block out the reality of their lives.

### Structure

- Has some conventions of the sonnet form- 14 lines and ends with a rhyming couplet
- Most of poem in Iambic Pentameter- set rhythm which has 10 syllables per line.

### Analysis

#### Stanza 1

- In this poem time is a person and love has to beg from time. Love is allowed to have one hour per day.
- Line 3 the couple find one hour to spend together- they don't want to spend their time on typical romantic stereotypical things like 'flowers'. They see the time they have together as riches.

- Use of sibilance in line 4 gives a soft, romantic effect. Romantic imagery used to highlight their happiness together- 'summer sky'.
- They are in a grass 'ditch'- they are hidden away and also quite an unglamorous word/ place suggesting that they feel that it doesn't matter where they are as long as they are together.

### Stanza 2

- Line 5 interesting- recording seconds together to give a high number. They feel their time is valuable.
- 6- lover is valuable because their hair is described as being 'like treasure' and their body has a Midas light- Midas was a king but was cursed so that everything he touched turned to gold.
- 'limbs to gold'- shining, yellow image- a summer's day/ the gold of wealth
- Time slows when they are together and they feel as rich as millionaires but rich in time not money.
- They 'backhand' the night- they are keeping the night away either by metaphorically hitting it away with their hands, or by bribing it with money. It seems they can only meet in the day time which suggests a possible affair.

### Stanza 3

- Word 'dark'- suggests a possible threat.
- No jewel could hold a candle to the cuckoo spit- this could be the morning dew on the grass, or could refer to the cuckoo's crow and link to the time metaphor. That no object or amount of money could match their time together. The fact that the dew is "hung" from the lover's ear suggests that they are lying on the grass together.
- Line 11- maybe the real world doesn't give them the attention they feel they deserve.

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#### Stanza 4

- Two lines only so really stand out to emphasise the fairy tale theme.
- Repetition used- love never gives up, can't be stopped.
- Sentence structure emphasised how quickly time comes then goes away.
- Relates to tale of Rumpelstiltskin- Miller's daughter forced to turn straw into gold. Love makes everyday situations extra ordinary. Time hates love and tries to take it away/ destroy it- time versus love with time personified.



## Farmer's Bride

### Context

- Narrated by farmer- wife is scared of men and him.
- Farmer married his wife three years ago but do not have a physical relationship.
- Tone is honest and matter-of- fact but poem takes a very dark turn when there is an ambiguous ending suggesting the possibility that the farmer intends to possibly force her to have sex with him.
- Poem told entirely from Farmer's perspective- his wife does not have a voice. Suits poem.

### Stanza 1

- He 'chose' her- suggestion of arranged marriage. She didn't choose but was taken.
- She was 'too young' and there was a large age gap.
- Farmer says he was too busy with his work on the farm to get to know her properly or 'date' her- unromantic. He is too busy for romance (bide and woo)
- Line 4- 'us'- colloquial, rustic way of speaking- gives authentic tone to poem.
- As soon as they were married his wife became afraid of him and all people and this happened suddenly like winter days suddenly turn dark.
- Repetition of 'and' line 5- she is very scared and there are multiple things she is afraid of: the 'and' emphasises this.
- She wasn't a woman but was more like a frightened 'fay'- this is a fairy; she is small, delicate, fragile and mysterious. Clever metaphor. Also emphasises her physical weakness.

## Stanza 2

- The local people are clearly talking about her- that when she should be in bed at night with her husband she is out with the sheep. She is more comfortable with animals.
- Line 11- suggestion that local people feel she should be giving her husband what he needs.
- 'Wide brown stare'- she doesn't sleep. Also animal imagery- frightened.
- She runs away and the farmer, along with his neighbours, form a pack to chase and find her and bring her home. Pack mentality- she is hunted.
- She runs 'like a hare'- emphasises her speed and therefore her desperation to get away, and also likens her to another small, weak animal.
- She is shivering and scared like an animal.
- They take her home and lock her away- turning the key 'fast' before she can escape again.

## Stanza 3

- She does the housework as well as a wife should but is "like a mouse" as she does- small, delicate, and vulnerable. She wants to be left alone.
- She enjoys the company of animals and feels happy around them.
- When men go near her she is terrified and begs them not to come closer with her eyes- suggests that she has perhaps suffered abuse in the past (?)
- The women living near her talk about her behind her back and say that when she walks into a barn all of the animals look around at her like children- she communicates with the animals and loves them.
- The farmer is clearly angry and jealous that the attention he feels he should be getting is being lavished on animals. Shown by the italicization of the word 'I've'

#### Stanza 4

- He feels neglected- 'what of me?' meaning 'what about me?'
- The seasons change- lovely natural imagery as autumn changes to winter and Christmas time approached. The farmer feels that this should be a time for joy, and most of all family but there are no children in the house to be happy at Christmas time because his wife will not allow him to get her pregnant.

#### Stanza 5

- The wife is sleeping alone in the attic away from her husband. She is alone and a 'maid' (virgin) - he could be being sarcastic here, or could genuinely feel she is missing out by not having a physical relationship.
- He thinks about how she is still very close to him at night- they are only separated by a small staircase.
- He is sexually attracted to her and describes the lush softness of her young skin and hair- the use of exclamation marks suggests he is bowled over by how attractive she is.
- Short snappy sentences suggest a lack of control- perhaps he is finding it hard not to give in to his lust and his frustration is taking over.
- Ambiguous ending- we are unsure whether he goes up the stairs or not. Slightly sinister.

## Sister Maude

### Context

- Rossetti educated at home and had an education centred on classic works of literature and classical and religious texts along with novels and fairy tales.
- Rich background but father died and family had to go to work.
- Christina had a nervous breakdown at 14 years old- severe mental illness and also was physically weak and sickly.
- Christina volunteered at Mary Magdalene's 'Charity for Fallen Women' which probably inspired this poem.
- We never really know what the 'shame' is, or who the corpse is, but most readings agree that the dead body is that of the narrator's young male lover whom she has had an affair with, probably without being married.

### Analysis

- Title- the name Maude means 'powerful in battle'
- The narrator's father learns about the 'shame' through Sister Maude and the narrator is angry.

### Stanza 1

- Rhetorical question line 2- the narrator knows who did it- her sister.
- Maude is presented as a creepy spy, perhaps obsessed with the narrator and her life.

### Stanza 2

- Description of the dead body- probably the narrator's lover. Death imagery- he is cold with blood clotting his hair. Likely to have been a violent death possibly as the result of a fight.

- Line 7 deliberately shocking- the corpse is described as good looking (handsome) - a beautiful dead body.
- He is a king worthy of a queen.
- Sense of a wasted young life.

### Stanza 3

- Maude could have prevented this death and saved all of their souls had she not behaved in the way that she did.
- Perhaps Maude had wanted to break them up for a while- jealousy.
- The narrator addresses Maude directly and tells her that even if she had never been born; her lover would never have been interested in Maude anyway.

### Stanza 4

- The narrator states that her mother and father will probably go to heaven but Sister Maude will suffer- her soul is lost because her crime was so terrible.
- Sister Maude will never get a moment's rest – her life is over because of what she has done.
- Repeated 's' sounds- creates a hissing effect to reflect the narrator's anger.

### Stanza 5

- Her father and mother might go to heaven- religious imagery used.
- The narrator and her lover despite their 'sins' might be allowed into heaven if they knocked on the gate (maybe their souls aren't actually lost even though they might have done something wrong in the eyes of some people) but Maude will never be allowed into heaven now.
- Sister Maude has caused the unnecessary loss of a beautiful young life and should never go to heaven and should be cursed.