

## Love and Relationships Poetry Anthology - Context Knowledge Organiser

<p><b>'When We Two Parted'</b> is thought to be based upon one of the many scandalous relationships Byron was involved in during his lifetime. He was notorious and labelled 'mad, bad and dangerous to know.' It is claimed that Byron falsely stated the poem was written in 1808 in order to protect the reputation of the lady it was written about, Lady Frances Webster, and was actually written in 1816. Lady Webster was also said to be involved in an affair with the Duke of Wellington. Byron was a leading Romantic poet.</p>	<p><b>'Winter Swans'</b> poet Owen Sheers is a Welsh poet born in 1974, so Winter Swans is a contemporary poem. Much of Sheers' poetry draws upon natural landscapes. This poem was taken from a collection called Skirrid Hill. This can be literally translated as 'shattered mountain'. The word Skirrid in Welsh can also be interpreted as 'divorce' or separate'.</p>	<p><b>'Singh Song!'</b> poet Nagra is the son of Indian parents who moved to the UK in the 1950's. His family opened a corner shop when they moved to Sheffield. He wanted to use the dialect of the Indian language as he felt it had often been made fun of and instead wanted to celebrate it. The poem 'Singh Song' highlights the merging of two cultures, as well as the love between a man and his new bride.</p>	<p><b>'Love's Philosophy'</b> A Romantic poet, who was a well known atheist in an age when many people engaged in religious practices – going to church, respect for religious beliefs etc. Shelley was expelled from Oxford for his views. He had scandalous relationships, and is best known for his marriage to Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein and friendship with Lord Byron. He drowned at the age of 29.</p>	<p><b>'Farmer's Bride'</b> poet Mew was a Victorian poet, who had a hard upbringing in poverty. Many of her family suffered mental health problems and she was terrified of experiencing the same difficulties. Her poems were often told using a male persona, who were social outcasts. She was recognised as a great talent by many poets in her day, including Thomas Hardy (Neutral Tones). The Farmer's Bride symbolises several different elements such as women in society in the Victorian age, the natural world vs industrialization and desire over fear.</p>
<p><b>'Porphyria's Lover'</b> poet Robert Browning was an important Victorian poet, who married Elizabeth Barrett Browning (Sonnet 29). The Victorian Era was known for its sense of morality, the line between public respectability and private behaviour, religious beliefs and attitudes to women. Browning admired the Romantic poets, but was most successful when he found his own unique style. He became known for dramatic monologues, often voiced by dark personas. Porphyria's Lover was part of a 2 poem collection called 'Madhouse Cells', with the second poem also about a disturbed man. Porphyria translates as purple (colour), which is often associated with royalty and could be a clue to the difficulties faced by the lovers.</p>	<p><b>'Sonnet 29 – I think of thee'</b> by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 – 1861) Elizabeth Barrett Browning was in ill health for much of her life. She had an overbearing father who refused permission for any of his daughters to marry. She was a very successful and famous poet in her lifetime. Elizabeth and another poet, Robert Browning (Porphyria's Lover) began writing letters to each other in secret and eventually married. She was disinherited by her father</p>	<p><b>'Walking Away'</b> poet Day Lewis' mother died when he was very young and he was brought up his father. His poetry is often romantic and uses nature to explore personal experiences. This poem is about his son Sean, from his first marriage. He became the Poet Laureate until his death in 1972.</p>	<p><b>'Follower'</b> poet Heaney was brought up in a simple, rural family and was the eldest of 8 children. He became an English teacher and began to write poetry. He became the Professor of Poetry at Oxford and in 1995 won the Nobel prize for literature. He was also offered the role of Poet Laureate, an honour given by the King/Queen to be the national Poet. Heaney turned this down because of his strong Irish roots and identity.</p>	<p><b>'Mother any Distance'</b> poet Simon Armitage was Born in Yorkshire. This poem comes from a collection of poems called the 'Book of Matches', named because Armitage intended each poem to be read in the time it takes for a match to burn. He often writes about complex emotions using everyday events. He was recently made the Oxford Professor of Poetry.</p>
<p><b>'Climbing my Grandfather'</b> poet Waterhouse was a teacher, environmentalist, poet and musician. He committed suicide, having suffered from depression throughout his life. He was described in his obituary as imagining a 'world...full of solid objects and hard edges, stones, wood and frozen ground'.</p>	<p><b>'Eden Rock'</b> poet Charles Causley was brought up in Cornwall. The poem can be considered partly autobiographical as his father died when he was around 7 years old, after returning from WWI and never recovered from injuries. Causley was private &amp; believed everything people needed to know about him was in his poems. The poem was published after his mother had died, when he was well into old age.</p>	<p><b>'Before you were Mine'</b> An autobiographical poem of the poet's mother, her youth and her mother (Duffy's Grandmother). It moves between the past (1950's) and the present. Duffy was raised in Scotland before moving to England as a child. The poem was published in 1993.</p>	<p><b>'Letters from Yorkshire'</b> Dooley was born in Cornwall and went to University in York. Now living in London, Dooley lived in Yorkshire for some years before moving to London. Letters from Yorkshire was published in 2002</p>	<p><b>'Neutral Tones'</b> poet Thomas Hardy was a Victorian novelist and poet. Much of his poetry is autobiographical, about his relationships and the failure of his relationships. He famously wrote a great deal of his poetry about his first wife, Emma, who he became estranged from, and mourned her death for the rest of his life. Neutral Tones, however, was written about a previous relationship that did not last. Hardy was influenced by the Romantic poets.</p>