

Relationship Poetry

Poem	Type of Relationship	Structure	Language and Imagery	Contextual Information/ Information About the Author
La Belle Dame Sans Merci John Keats	Powerful Love	Ballad. Simple language with one event and repetition of ideas. Ballad used to tell stories and therefore used by Keats to give a warning to men about the dangers of love. Rhyme Scheme ABCB gives it a simplistic nursery rhyme feel which makes the meaning easier to follow, but is in sharp contrast to the dangerous content of the poem.	Ominous tone: 'without mercy' in title points of the dangers of love. Contrasts with the ballad form which is more usually used for light-hearted content. Repetition: 'wild' used to stress the obsessive and dangerous aspects of the female.	ROMANTIC poem trying to speak clearly about complex issues. Keats knew he was dying when he wrote it and hints of the death with the knight being described as 'a fading rose'
A Child to his Sick Grandfather Joanna Baille	Family. Grandchild coming to terms with final days of grandfather.	Lyric Poem - personal emotions in 1 st person. 8 sestets - 6 line stanzas. Rhyming couplets, tetrameter (4 beats per line), followed by trimeter (3 beats). Strict structure reflects the regular life of a child where everything is clear and black and white - nicely ordered. The break in rhyme at the end of stanza 3, 7 and 8 show raw emotion as child comes to accept the coming death. Change in tense: present at the start, looking back to the past in stanza 2, to future in stanza 5. Reflect child coming to terms to the forthcoming death.	Semantic field of frailty: 'old', 'frail', 'stiffened', 'lank and thin' clearly illustrate grandfather's weakness.	Own father died in 1783 and book containing this poem published in 1790 could explain why the poem refers both to Grandfather in the title, but changes to 'dad' in the poem as she merges into her own grief. ROMANTIC period showing taking a childlike perspective on important issues to understand them clearly.
She Walks in Beauty Lord Byron	Admiring from afar.	3 regular stanzas: ABAB, iambic tetrameter (8 beats per line) show the controlled nature and desire to recreate the perfection of the subject of the poem. Each stanza moves closer as the poet studies her in more detail. Enjambment: reflects the reality that her beauty cannot be contained by individual lines and spills over to emphasise her perfection.	Sibilance: 'nameless grace/ which waves in every raven tress/ or softly lightens...' creates soft. Smooth feeling to the poem. Similes: 'like the night' She is spoken of in original ways emphasising that she is not like other women.	Byron seeing the wife of a friend and feeling compelled to write about her beauty. He stresses that his 'love is innocent' and he respects the married couple.
A Complaint William Wordsworth	Failed relationship	3 regular stanzas - ABABCC showing carefully considered words. The rhyming couplet at end hints at the past relationship and makes the negative emotions very clear. Rhyme breaks with 'dry / obscurity' to reflect end of relationship.	Extended Metaphor: water Fountain reflects friendship not controlled and flowing freely - change to 'comfortless and hidden well' of unreachable water.	Reflecting failed relationship between Wordsworth and Coleridge caused by Coleridge 'not taking heed' of Wordsworth and demanding too much help / attention.

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		Breaks and pauses: especially in final stanza show the emotion as he struggles to express himself.		
Neutral Tones Thomas Hardy	Bitterness resulting in failed relationship	4 quatrains - ABBA. Very controlled and lacking love. Middle rhyming couplet is trapped by lines 1 and 4 showing how emotions are now controlled. Past and present - stanzas 1-3 leading up to final stanza in present which shows the effect that the relationship had.	Imagery - lifeless 'lay on a starving sod', 'fallen ... and were gray', 'grayish leaves', 'sun was white.' Missing colour reflecting missing emotions. Semantic field of negativity: 'stood by', 'eyes that rove', 'tedious', smile...deadist thing' Relationship described in passive terms.	Hardy kept it private for 20 years after writing showing how much the relationship had affected him.
Sonnet 43 Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Powerful love. Wife to a husband	Sonnet: 14 lines, but breaks other rules. A sonnet is a traditional love poem, but this poem refuses to be constrained by rules as it shows that her love cannot be constrained. Punctuation: 'I love thee with the breath,/Smiles, tears, of all my life!' captures her excitement and passion as she breathlessly expresses her feelings.	Repetition: 'I love thee' to make clear her devotion and the fact that love is persistent. List of 'depth and breadth and height' to show power and size of her love. Capital letters: 'Being', 'Grace', 'Right', 'Praise' link love to important and religious ideas and concepts.	Written to her husband, Robert Browning, (who wrote My Last Duchess)
My Last Duchess Robert Browning	Failed relationship.	Dramatic Monologue: Only hear from Duke and written in first person. 'my' - shows controlling nature. Only one stanza as it is his uninterrupted opinions stressing his self-importance. Controlled: rhyming couplets and iambic pentameter showing his desire to control.	Personal Pronouns: Many of the words relate to his love of possessions such as 'My Last Duchess' and show the high opinion he has of himself and his lack of thought of others. Lack of imagery: a very flat poem in terms of the language and shows the Duke's lack of sensitivity.	Looking back at the death of the first wife of the Duke of Ferrara who dies in 1561 arguably because there had been no male child - questioning the purpose of marriage in the 1850s when it was written.
1st Date- She and 1st Date- He Wendy Cope	Start of a relationship. Awkward and nervous	Unequal stanzas: unclear over how to read reflect awkward date. He says more: reflecting traditional stereotypes of male in charge or his desperation to fill silences. Rhyme: ABCB. Some rhyme showing movement towards love, but stilted and awkward. Both rhyme the same showing they may be suited.	Repetition: both using same and similar phrases and echoing each other linking the couple as a pair. Semantic field of sight: 'glance', 'appear', 'picture', 'see', 'half-dark'. Reflecting the looks that pass between them and the importance of appearance.	Linked to ROMANTIC period as written to be understood by all and try to explain how people feel.
Valentine Carol Ann Duffy	Reality of love. Describing love of partner.	Free Verse: no pattern in poem as rejecting traditional views of love.	Extended Metaphor: an onion. Explaining how the onion and its layers represent love in its depth.	Linked to ROMANTIC period as written to be understood by all and try to explain how people feel.

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			Simple language: words often simple and monosyllabic and avoid the traditional use of imagery that we associate with love poems.	
One Flesh Elizabeth Jennings	End of a relationship. Child looking at relationship of parents.	3 6 line stanzas: very controlled and lacking excitement of love. Stanzas 1/2 end with rhyming couplets (suggesting traditional love, but words are of distance and lack of love) Rhyme: abcbaa monotonous sound make the poem sound repetitive like her relationship. Enjambment: (line 15-16) breaks the rhythm of poem and creates silences which show their relationship.	Semantic field of silence / distance: 'lying apart', 'separate bed', 'unread', 'eyes fixed', 'hardly ever touch' describe their relationship and lack of emotions. Juxtaposition: 'fire', 'cold': in final line illustrates the change in their relationship.	Jennings was religious and wrote about the loss of faith and religion in the 1960s reflected by the drifting apart in the relationship.
I wanna be yours John Cooper Clarke	Start of a relationship. Desperation.	3 stanzas with first two made up of 2 quatrains – 3 rd stanza loses this structure as desperation takes over. ABABCCCD The repeated C rhyme creates repetitive feeling and underlines desperation. No punctuation as desperate to get words out and convey passion they are feeling.	Everyday objects hint at a lack of depth in the love and an unwillingness to move towards a deeper understanding. One-sided: only one view of love and about 'me' and 'i'. Suggests an immaturity both in content and use of language.	Linked to ROMANTIC period as everyday objects and trying to reduce complex ideas to simple terms. Punk poet showing rejection of complex view of love – simple and straightforward.
Love's Dog Jen Hadfield	Reality of love showing a balanced view of love.	8 couplets: present objects and concepts not traditionally linked with love. The couplets are unpredictable and present little pattern reflecting the reality of love. Parallelism: structure of constant use of parallels to make the points. 'What I..' being either followed by 'love' or 'hate' gets across the message that love is both positive and negative and creates both emotions. This pattern is broken with alternative verbs such as 'loathe' which far with the reader and strengthen the effect.	Metaphor: uses everyday objects to explain views of love. Anaphora: deliberate repetition 'what I love about...'	Linked to ROMANTIC period as using everyday objects to explain complex emotions. Presenting the different side of love in contrast to most love poetry which presents an idealised view. The phrase 'love's dog' was taken by from another poem by Edwin Morgan entitled 'A View of Things'. In his poem, Morgan writes, 'what I hate about love is its dog'. Hadfield said: 'That phrase of Edwin Morgan's [...] stayed with me for a long time; it speaks to me of the effort and deliberation of love.'
Nettles Vernon Scannell	Family. Father's attempt to protect child but	One stanza made up of quatrains and all using iambic pentameter (10 beats) and ABAB showing desire of father to control his son	Semantic field of military words: 'spears', 'regiment', 'parade', 'stood upright', 'recruits', 'wounds.' Showing the	Fathers anger at son being killed in war and his realisation that he was not able to keep him safe.

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	knowledge that he can't.	and protect him. This is hidden by the enjambment and lack of stanzas which show the reality of life and the fact that he can't control everything. Break in iambic 'and went outside and slashed in fury with it' shows the raw emotion. Tense: Change in past to future tense 'would often feel' looking forward and underlining that father is unable to keep him safe.	constant battle in protecting child and concept that it is never-ending. Sibilance: 'curious', 'spears', 'spite', 'shed' underling the vindictive nature - the father feels his son harmed on purpose. Internal rhyme: 'took, 'hook' 'honed' underline the very deliberate retribution that the father exerts on the nettles showing his anger and frustration at not preventing it.	
The Manhunt Simon Armitage	Wife trying to reconnect with her husband - a soldier, who has been badly injured on a peace-keeping mission in Bosnia.	Rhyming couplets suggest a traditional love poem, but quickly move away to a series of shocking images taking parts of his body in isolation. Repetition: 'only then' slowly unpicking his pain in small stages.	Metaphor: 'the frozen river' to bring the scar to life. Water used to represent life and vitality, so the frozen water is still and unfeeling. Powerful images: 'blown hinge' describes broken body, but also unhinged mentally or can't open up.	Series looking at soldiers and their families and how they cope with problems. Based on Eddie Beddoes' life.
My Father Would Not Show Us Ingrid de Kok	Family: coming to terms with father's death.	Free verse: no regular line length or rhyme shows the feelings of confusion that the poet feels. Repetition: 'my father would not show us.' Does not make clear what he kept hidden which suggests that it was many things - his emotions and feelings in general. Developed into 'would not' and then 'could not' show us how to do underlines his lack of emotions.	Metaphor: 'It's cold in here' can refer both to the morgue but also the lack of a relationship with her father. Alliteration: 'My father's face five days dead.' Gets across the hard facts and deliberately shocks the reader to make her shock clear.	Addresses own childhood and the fact that her father died when she was young.

Powerful Love	Family	Failing / Failed	Start of relationship
La Belle Dame Sans Merci She Walks in Beauty Sonnet 43 My Last Duchess Valentine I wanna be yours Love's Dog Manhunt	A child to her sick Grandfather. One Flesh Nettles My Father would not like	A Complaint Neutral Tones My Last Duchess One Flesh	1st Date...2nd Date I wanna be

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