

## Love and Relationships Poetry – Practice Exam Question

Compare the way poets present relationships as changeable in 'Winter Swans' and in one other poem from 'Love and Relationships'.

[30 marks]

### Winter Swans by Owen Sheers

The clouds had given their all -  
two days of rain and then a break  
in which we walked,

the **waterlogged** earth  
gulping for breath at our feet  
as we skirted the lake, silent and apart,

until the swans came and stopped us  
with a show of tipping **in unison**.  
As if rolling weights down their bodies to their heads

they halved themselves in the dark water,  
icebergs of white feather, paused before returning again  
like boats righting in rough weather.

'They mate for life' you said as they left,  
porcelain over the stilling water. I didn't reply  
but as we moved on through the afternoon light,

slow-stepping in the lake's shingle and sand,  
I **noticed** our hands, that had, somehow,  
swum the distance between us

and folded, one over the other,  
like a pair of wings settling after flight.