

***Winter Swans*, by Owen Sheers (b. 1974)**

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.

Annotation and Analysis Toolkit

- **Form**

- ✓ Caesura
- ✓ Enjambment
- ✓ Stanza length

- **Structure**

- ✓ Contrast
- ✓ Shift in mood or tone

- **Imagery**

- ✓ Adjective
- ✓ Colour
- ✓ Image
- ✓ Metaphor
- ✓ Pathetic fallacy
- ✓ Simile
- ✓ Symbolism
- ✓ Verb

- **Sound**

- ✓ Alliteration
- ✓ Reported speech
- ✓ Sibilance
- ✓ Tone
- ✓ Voice

- **Analytical Verbs**

- ✓ Emphasises
- ✓ Implies
- ✓ Indicates
- ✓ Reveals
- ✓ Supports