

Compare how poets present the theme of strong family bonds in 'Walking Away' and 'Mother, any Distance'. (30 marks)

Walking Away

It is eighteen years ago, almost to the day –
A sunny day with leaves just turning,
The touch-lines new-ruled – since I watched you play
Your first game of football, then, like a satellite

Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away
Behind a scatter of boys. I can see
You walking away from me towards the school
With the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free

Into a wilderness, the gait of one
Who finds no path where the path should be.
That hesitant figure, eddying away
Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem,

Has something I never quite grasp to convey
About nature's give-and-take – the small, the scorching
Ordeals which fire one's irresolute clay.
I have had worse partings, but none that so

Gnaws at my mind still. Perhaps it is roughly
Saying what God alone could perfectly show –
How selfhood begins with a walking away,
And love is proved in the letting go.

From *Book of Matches*, 'Mother, any distance'

Mother, any distance greater than a single span
requires a second pair of hands.
You come to help me measure windows, pelmets, doors,
the acres of the walls, the prairies of the floors.

You at the zero-end, me with the spool of tape, recording
length, reporting metres, centimetres back to base, then leaving
up the stairs, the line still feeding out, unreeling
years between us. Anchor. Kite.

I space-walk through the empty bedrooms, climb
the ladder to the loft, to breaking point, where something
has to give;
two floors below your fingertips still pinch
the last one-hundredth of an inch ... I reach
towards a hatch that opens on an endless sky
to fall or fly.

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