**Brothers**

1. What do we learn of Duffy’s relationship with her brothers
   a) when she was a child
   b) now that she is an adult?

2. What is revealed of Duffy’s mother in this poem?

3. What interests you about the last sentence?

4. Comment on the following phrases:
   ‘What was possible retreats and shrinks’
   ‘like a new sound flailing for a shape’
   ‘I hear her life in the words’
   ‘the breeding words, the word that broke her heart’
   ‘time owns us’

**Before You Were Mine**

1. First try to work out the 5 Ws in this poem. Time is a little confusing in the poem and you may find it helpful to mark the different times Duffy is describing on your poem.

2. How does Duffy communicate her feelings for her mother? Consider:
   • what those feelings are and how they are developed through the poem
   • how the poet uses language to bring the description of her mother to life

3. Find the following phrases in the poem. Comment on the poet’s choice of language.
   • ‘and shriek at the pavement’
   • ‘the ballroom with the thousand eyes’
   • ‘the fizzy, movie tomorrows’
   • ‘my loud possessive yell’
   • ‘your ghost clatters towards me’
   • ‘clear as scent’
   • ‘stamping stars’

Compare and contrast the two poems above. How does Duffy present her thoughts and feelings about her family?