‘Havisham’

1. How does the poet convey the character’s (Havisham’s) conflicting emotions in line one?

2. What feelings are conveyed by the metaphor ‘dark green pebbles’ in stanza one?

3. How is a sense of decay created in stanza two?

4. Why does the character refer to her lover as a ‘lost body’ and a ‘male corpse’, and what is the effect of this?

5. What is the effect of the lack of punctuation in line 12?

6. Why does the poet use ‘b-b-b-breaks’ as the final word of the poem?

‘Homecoming’

1. ‘Model of a model of a mother’ and ‘in silhouette / a father figure’. What are the implications of these contrasting descriptions? What do they tell us about the relationships between the child and its parents in the poem?

2. The stanzas’ lengths are irregular, as are the lengths of the lines. The poem is in free verse, meaning there is no set rhyme scheme or rhythm. What effect does all this irregularity have on the poem, and does it add anything to its meaning?

3. What is the effect of using the present tense in the poem?

4. We aren’t told the gender of the child in the poem. Bearing in mind that the narrator of a poem (the voice) and the poet are not necessarily linked, decide whether you think the child is male or female, and give reasons.

Model for Answers

I think that <make your point>. This can be seen <give example>, because <explain your choice of example>.

For Example

I think that ‘Havisham’ is a poem about lost love. This can be seen in the line ‘love’s hate behind a white veil’, because we see that love is linked to hate and hurt, and we know that the love is romantic as it is linked to marriage by the white veil.