

Edexcel English Literature IGCSE

Anthology Poetry

Christina Rossetti: 'Remember'

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REMEMBER

Christina Rossetti

Brief Summary

In this poem, a speaker bids farewell to their lover, imploring them to remember them after they are gone, and urging them not to fall into **despair**. 'Remember' is a sorrowful parting note conveying the **hopes and wishes** of the speaker as they address their beloved in this classic **Victorian sonnet**.

Synopsis

- An **unnamed speaker** is fast approaching **death** and asks their beloved to remember them after they pass away.
- The poem is written from the perspective of the individual to be **mourned**, directly addressing the prospective mourner.
- The narrator repeatedly **begs** their lover to remember them, wishing them lasting **happiness and joy**.

Context

Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894)

Rossetti was educated at home in London by her parents, alongside her well-known and influential artist brother Dante Gabriel. Her father was also a poet, as well as a scholar of Italian literature, likely introducing the Rossetti children to the works of great **Italian poets**, such as Petrarch and Dante. This early influence may serve as an explanation for Rossetti's **penchant** for the **Petrarchan poetic form**.

Her family endured a prolonged period of **financial difficulty** mainly due to her father's ill health, forcing the children into work at an early age. Despite Rossetti also facing a series of **health issues**, she pursued poetry from a young age, writing 'Remember' when she was 19 years old, in **1842**. Remember was later published in Rossetti's first collection of poems, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*.

Rossetti was one of most **well-known poets of the 19th century** Victorian era, a time known for its enduring **customs of mourning**, which were exacerbated by **high mortality**

Summary

Context – daughter of Italian-English poet & scholar parents // exposed to illness & death from a young age; father suffered from suspected TB & poor mental health // Rossetti herself suffered a mental breakdown at age 14 // Deeply religious, allegedly never married due to her devotion to faith

Structure - Petrarchan sonnet // iambic pentameter

Language – metaphor // euphemism // alliteration // direct address // repetition

Key Points – from a dying narrator to their beloved // a reminder to remember following their passing // contemplative, accepting tone



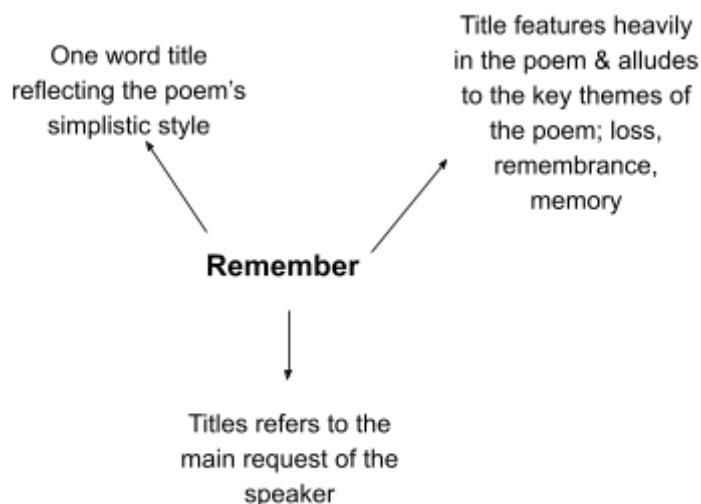
rates. Queen Victoria spent the last four decades of her life mourning her late husband Prince Albert, whose untimely death was said to have driven a noticeable **rise in poems about mourning and death**. Rossetti, unlike several classic poets, **enjoyed fame and popularity** during her lifetime, and was influenced by contemporaries such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, as well poets of the Romantic tradition such as Keats. Additionally, **Romantic poetry** has also been noted for its frequent **references to death and dying**, as exemplified in Remember.

Poetic form

'Remember' is a **sonnet** which explores the **relationship between two lovers** as one faces their **impending death**. The poem portrays the **final message and request** of a dying narrator to their loved one. The exact relationship between the narrator and the addressee is not explicitly stated, though presumably this poem is written **for a lover**, as suggested by the use of **intimate language**. The narrator's life **lies in balance**, as such, there is also a **palpable tone of finality** and **fear** throughout. The **lovers' relationship** is further revealed by the **poetic devices** throughout, indicating a **deep love** and communicating a great **sense of sorrow** at the speaker's death and the subsequent **end of their relationship**.

Analysis

The title "Remember"



Remember

Poem starts with seemingly simple request; speaker addresses lover with singular, straightforward request - to remember.

Repetition - of the central request - 'remember', indicates speaker's hope of everlasting love. Repetition also conveys the finality of poem's message - speaker will likely not be seen or heard from again.

The hesitation conveyed here suggests speaker's fear and uncertainty at their coming death, communicating a life very much in balance. Speaker does not want to die & leave their beloved.

Mentions a future that will never be realised. Anguish and acceptance in speaker's voice. Despite this fear, speaker ready to let lover go and face death.

A strong defeatist tone and sad resignation to imminent future. Speaker is powerless in face of inevitable death.

Speaker changes their mind and allows lover to forget her. A change of view & feeling, a transition, much like death.

A moving, touching moment between lovers. Speaker holds no resentment towards their beloved, should they forget them. A level of understanding and compassion that suggests a very close & intimate relationship.

'Only' - all that she asks of lover. Speaker later realises act of remembering can be more challenging than expected. A constant redefining and revising of what it means to remember, and to love.

Poem concludes on accepting note, the expression of a wish to 'forget and smile, rather than be sad'. End of relationship painful for speaker, however, in final lines, they appear certain & assured in their decision.

End like final farewell between lovers.

Remember me when I am gone away,

Gone far away into the silent land;

When you can no more hold me by the hand,

Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day

You tell me of our future that you plann'd:

Only remember me; you understand

It will be late to counsel then or pray.

Yet if you should forget me for a while

And afterwards remember, do not grieve:

For if the darkness and corruption leave

A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,

Better by far you should forget and smile

Than that you should remember and be sad.

Anadiplosis; repetition of a phrase in a line - the speaker will be 'gone away - gone far away' - at the start of the next. Speaker communicates the distant, unreachable place they are permanently headed, highlighting the permanent disconnection of death.

Euphemism - the 'silent land' that is death or the afterlife. Likely in line with Rossetti's religious beliefs, as well as reflecting her personal struggles with illness.

Alliteration - repetition of soft, fricative /h/ & /f/ sounds lends the poem a gentle, songlike feel. This subtle usage conjures images of intimacy, touch & affection, through action of holding & attempting to leave. Conveys the grounding, supportive influence of lover in speaker's life, their love a source of joy & comfort.

Death is described by what is no more; a loving companionship built on care & support. Adds to morose, bleak tone of the poem.

Enjambment - between lines 5 and 6 as well as 7 and 8.

Speaker stoically attempts self-control. This control of emotion reflected in poetic structure; no line break (caesura) or enjambment in first 6 lines as poem strictly follows Petrarchan sonnet form.

Direct address - a letter clearly intended for a loved one.

Repetition of 'you' 'I', but 'we' 'us' markedly absent, suggesting permanent end of relationship.

Love & care conveyed in command 'do not grieve'; narrator wants their lover to be happy, to not wallow in sadness at their loss.

Strict iambic pentameter structure, further reflecting speaker's strained speech.



Perspective

'Remember' is a poem about **love, death** and **remembrance**. The poem portrays a **speaker's hope** for an **enduring, ever-lasting love** and their **final request** to be remembered. 'Remember' is written from **the perspective of the dying**, who begins the poem imploring their beloved to always remember them. Little is known about the speaker or their lover, however the level of **intimacy** and **deep love** is made apparent through Rossetti's **use of language**.

The speaker repeatedly **begs their lover** to remember them at the beginning of the sonnet. However, there is a **change** in the **speaker's request** in the middle, lending Remember a degree of **sad realism** and **verisimilitude**, as well as ensuring it does **not** become **overly sentimental**. The speaker eventually allows their beloved to forget them, and this **permission to forget** is a different, **noteworthy development**, and by the poem's conclusion, it does not matter to the speaker whether their lover remembers them, only that they go on to live a **joyful life**. The speaker decides that a **permanent, lasting influence** on their lover is more important to them than an attempt at continued remembering. In fact, the speaker accepts and acknowledges that it is likely her beloved may in fact forget her, despite a concerted effort not to, and instead expresses a wish that their **love may survive in other ways**. Ultimately, the speaker feels it is better for their lover to **forget them** and be content than to remember them, if that makes them unhappy.

The notion of the **finality of death** and the persistence of a passionate but realistic love points to the major themes of Remember, and poses questions as to **what constitutes true love** and **remembrance**. Although the speaker wishes to be remembered by their lover, they also have a keen **understanding** on the **finite boundaries of human remembrance**, as well as the notions of mourning, grief and **human frailty**. Therefore, one of the key ideas presented by Remember is that individuals can have **deep and lasting influence** on each other, despite being forgotten or perhaps even long after they may have been forgotten.

There is a **curious, unique strength** in the **speaker's readiness to concede**, to accept and admit that she may in fact be forgotten by her lover despite her pleas. There is also a **level of frank selflessness**, putting their lover's happiness above their own wishes, thereby displaying a **profound, unselfish love**. By exploring the speaker's perspectives, Rossetti tackles the **complexities of love, grief, death**, in addition to the associated **complicated emotions**.



Themes

Love

In Remember, the speaker's **deep love** for their beloved causes a **marked change** in their request - they ask their lover to **remember**, however, they later grant them **permission to forget**. This is in the **hope** that their **love and relationship** has had some **profound influence** on the lover left behind. This speaks to the kind of **enduring love** the poem aims to communicate. What is of **utmost importance**, at least to the narrator, is their **surviving lover's long-term happiness**, which takes precedence over whether they remember them after their passing.

The various **push-pull forces of love** are depicted in Remember, in the way the speaker changes their mind and in turn, their **request to remember**, further indicating an **underlying fear** and **hesitancy**, as they **'half turn to go yet turning stay'** (line 4). Ideally, the speaker wishes for an **everlasting love**, a future with her love like they **'plann'd'** (line 6), however with this unlikely to manifest, they do not want their death to cause their beloved **needless pain and distress**.

In this way, the **transformative power of love** is conveyed through the speaker's amendment of their requests. Here, Remember conveys an **alternative view of love**, suggesting what truly matters is the ability to be a **subtle, yet constant presence** in another's life, in the way the speaker hopes by the end of the poem. The narrator imagines their lover **momentarily forgetting** her, **'for a while'** (line 9), yet portrays the **hope** that they remain a **permanent part** of their lover's life, whether by **strong influence** or **lasting memory**, and in turn, **overcoming death**.

Over the course of the sonnet, the speaker reconsiders their request and by extension, their **understanding of their love** and **devotion** to their beloved. Ultimately, the hope of the speaker permanently influencing their lover, remaining forever a part of them, is what spurs and **motivates this reconsideration**. The speaker believes and dreams that they can become a **subtle positive presence**, as opposed to a painfully **remembered absence**. They also do not wish any **suffering** on their beloved after they die. In this way, the speaker in Remember **redefines** what it means to **love**, as well as to **grieve, mourn and remember**. This is an **alternative presentation of love**, one that remains present, constant in other ways, not only through the **act of remembering**. As such, love is presented as a **powerful force that can live on after death**. These various manifestations and interpretations of love are conveyed throughout Remember as the speaker understands their **beloved's ultimate contentment** may cause them some pain.

By the sonnet's **final lines**, it is clear that the speaker's love for their lover greatly **overpowers** their **initial desire** to remain in their **memory eternally**. To the speaker, this is a clear expression of their **true love**, representing a different way of **demonstrating romantic love**.



Memory & death

In Remember, the **themes of memory and death are closely intertwined**. The first lines of the poem signify how the **speaker's death** puts an end to life as the lovers know it, with **memory** becoming the only place where traces of their loving relationship will remain. It is understandable then, why the speaker urges and **begs their lover to remember**, for precious, **shared memories** will soon be all they have left. The **repetition** of the word '**remember**' throughout the sonnet highlights this prominent theme of memory. As with the **theme of love**, Remember interrogates **conventional views of remembrance, mourning and grief**, questioning what it means to die if one can still **live on in another's mind**. Rossetti explores this notion using a range of **poetic devices** as she presents the speaker's **complicated thoughts and feelings**.

Remember not only portrays the **theme of death**, but also **meta emotions** relating to death, conveying the speaker's feelings towards their own **imminent death**, the **fear and sorrow** at this prospect. It could be argued that the speaker in Remember is **fearful**, not of death, but of being **forgotten** in time by her lover. The **speaker's tone** changes through the poem, faltering between **contemplative** as they comprehend their coming death, **anxious** at the notion of being forgotten by their beloved and ultimately **assured in their love** and its power to outlast even death.

Between lines 1 - 4, there is an underlying **feeling of urgency**, the speaker's **tone** is **controlled** but increasingly **anxious** as they repeat '**remember me**'. This **repetition** acts as a **refrain** throughout Remember, communicating the speaker's **loneliness** without her beloved, their **anxiety and fear** at their separation, perhaps a fear greater than fear of death itself. This would also be in line with **Pre-Raphaelite philosophical beliefs**, which **readily accepted death** and believed in **predestination**. The speaker is **unyielding**, adamant that they be remembered and Rossetti uses this to explore whether one can live on following death if they are remembered, and fundamentally whether death can be overcome in this way. The speaker bravely **accepts their death**, as well as the notion of existing only in her **beloved's memory**. Therefore, the idea of being **forgotten** by their beloved is a greater, more **frightening form of death** to the speaker than any physical death, the former a notion the speaker fears greatly and **struggles to accept**.

Rossetti employs **poetic devices** to convey the speaker's **slow realisation** and **acceptance of their being forgotten**, one of which is the **repetition** of the phrase '**remember me**'. The **power** of this plea appears to **diminish as it is repeated**, almost as though the speaker's **strength** is slowly **dissipating**. This could serve as a reflection of the speaker dying as well as their eventual acceptance of being forgotten. Initially, '**remember me**' begins the lines in which it appears, however in line 7, it is preceded by '**only**', expressing this **loss of strength and willpower**. Eventually, '**me**' is lost altogether, with the speaker urging their beloved only to '**remember**', **losing** its **personal, direct connection** with the speaker, flanked on either side by **clauses 'and afterwards'**



'better...you'. This could also be interpreted as the speaker **giving up hope** their beloved will remember them, and **settling on an alternative request**.

The narrator imagines their **death as a journey** to a remote, '**silent land**', a country from which there is **no return**, invoking the **worlds of the living and the dead**. This 'silent land' is a **separate, isolated world** where the lovers can **contact each other** only through **memory and thought**. There, the lovers can no longer communicate, hold each other by the hand, no intimacy, a silent land with **no hope for a future**. There is a **stark contrast** between the narrator's **understanding of death**; in many **religious interpretations**, the dead are envisaged as forever watching over their loved ones. However, Remember presents an **interpretation of death** where the **dead are forever disconnected** from the living, their loved ones. This not only explains the poem's overly **bleak tone**, but also provides explanation as to why remembrance holds so much weight in the speaker's mind; remembering is so important, because of the **totally isolating forces** of the silent land, which **threatens to forever keep the lovers apart**.

The speaker believes **death to be a distant place** where they are **permanently separated** from the living and their loved ones. This is conveyed through the phrase '**gone away / gone far away**' (lines 1-2), which **reinforces the distance** between the lovers as well as emphasising **the boundary between life and death**. Furthermore, there is no use '**counsel then or pray**' (line 8) after their death, again reinforcing the **finality of death** and **expressing regret** that their beloved will have to navigate the **burden of their loss** alone. Therefore, to the speaker, it is of paramount importance that following her passing, they permanently remain to their lover as a '**vestige of the thoughts that once they [!] had**' (line 12) - an **encompassing, influential strong presence**, perhaps without their beloved's knowledge, but still **alive in the beloved's mind**.

Death is another prominent theme in Remember, a '**darkness and corruption**' (line 11) that threatens the speaker and their beloved. This '**darkness and corruption**' could allude to the darkness of the **grave or afterlife** and the **physical decay** of their **earthly remains** or **corruption of the body**. Alternatively, it could be a reference to the **beloved's emotional state of grief**, the darkness of **mourning**. The speaker hopes that despite this darkness and corruption, the grief from their death, some vestige or **small remnant** of their being remains forever in their **lover's mind**. In this way, death can be overcome. Here, Rossetti explores how the **dead can outlive death**, be **kept alive** or be **restored to life** through **memory**. The speaker believes this '**vestige**' will allow them to live on, after their beloved has mourned their death, depicting this struggle against **permanent expiration** and the notion of **eternal life** through memory.



Structure

Petrarchan style & rhyme scheme

Remember is written in a special form known as the **Petrarchan sonnet**, with a **specific rhyme scheme: ABBAABBA CDD ECE**. This **sonnet form** is traditionally associated with **love poems**, and named after Petrarch, a 16th century Italian poet who invented and pioneered the form.

Petrarchan poems are composed of an **octave** (or octet), **eight lines**, followed by a **sestet**, six lines, to complete the **14 line sonnet**. They also contain a **volta**, or a 'turn', between the **eighth and ninth lines**, about halfway through the poem, used to indicate the point where the **octave ends** and the **sestet starts**. Generally, the octave is utilised by poets to **present a dilemma** or viewpoint, and often the following **sestet offers a solution**, or **alternative viewpoint**. In Remember, this **volta** is aptly marked by the word 'yet', where the speaker notably alters their request to remember. As a result, the speaker's **change of mind** is **mirrored** in the **changing structure** of the poem, where Rossetti strictly sticks to the Petrarchan rhyme scheme. Here, Rossetti uses the Petrarchan style to **mirror the changing thoughts and feelings** of the speaker, to effectively portray this internal back and forth.

In Remember, in the **octave**, the speaker continuously **pleads with her lover to remember her** after her death, while the **sestet has a noticeable change**. In the poem's sestet, the final 6 lines, Rossetti employs a **different rhyme scheme** just as the speaker's request takes a **different direction**. The speaker's request takes a more **selfless turn**, recognising that if remembering causes their lover pain, the speaker would rather their beloved forget. Here, the **volta** is used to **portray this shift in thought and emotion**, a **smooth transition** in the speaker's pleas, as the sonnet moves from the octave to sestet. The volta is therefore a **pivotal moment** in 'Remember', one of change and the **speaker's realisation** that remembrance could cause pain, followed by the subsequent **alterations in her requests**. At the volta, Rossetti subverts **conventional notions of eternal love** and alters the speaker's request. Furthermore, Rossetti uses poetic devices to show this **change of heart and mind**, the use of the word 'remember' again, referring back to the **original request**, but instead offers a more **gentle, tender version**, as speaker the tries to express their love differently and **protect their lover** from needless suffering after they are gone away. In doing so, Rossetti skillfully **inverts a command to remember**, and in turn, highlights the **complicated connection** between **memory and grief**.



Meter

Remember is written in **iambic pentameter**, the most common type of meter in English poetry, where each line is composed of **five iambs**. This creates a **metrical foot** which is arguably similar to a **heartbeat**, therefore appropriate to the contents of the love poem Remember. Rossetti writes in **strict iambic pentameter**, creating a **strained feel** to the speaker's words, as they tentatively address their lover. It also suggests a **level of restraint**; perhaps the speaker withholds some of their words as they attempt to discuss the difficult situation, or perhaps the speaker **struggles to correctly express their feelings**. Following the metre strictly could therefore have been important to Rossetti, used as a tool to convey the **speaker's complicated emotions**.

Rhyme scheme

Remember is a **Petrarchan sonnet** and therefore has the specific **rhyme scheme of ABBA ABBA CDD ECE**, and Rossetti goes further to utilise this unique rhyme scheme to **mirror the speaker's train of thought**. The balanced, **standard ABBA rhyme scheme** used in the octave is a reflection of the speaker's **measured, composed speech** as they begin the sonnet with their requests to be remembered. However, in the octave, Rossetti uses the more **complicated rhyme scheme** in the sestet to perfectly reflect the speaker's **complicated feelings**. Here, the rhyme scheme changes from relatively **simple and regular to more complex**, much like the speaker's feelings.

Furthermore, the **palindromic nature** of the **ABBAABBA rhyme scheme** can be argued to further reflect the **feelings of hesitancy**, the speaker 'turning to go' but finding themselves unable. This part of the rhyme scheme, ABBA, is somewhat **cyclical**, as it is the same **backwards**, and it could be argued that this reflects the **cyclical nature of life**, in particular the hopes of the speaker that they may live on through their partner, through **remembrance** or otherwise. This creates a sense of **life, then death**, and then, perhaps as the speaker hopes, life again. It could also be interpreted as signifying the cycle of life and death and that, if the speaker's beloved forgets the speaker, they will be in all senses, totally dead. The **use of the rhyme scheme** could indicate this, and serves as another example of Rossetti using both **form and content** to convey ideas in her poetry.

Language

The poem opens with the speaker's **coming death** and the **subsequent separation** of the couple in the poem. During the **octave**, the speaker addresses their lover, imploring them to **remember and cherish their shared memories**. The poem begins with the immediate introduction of one of the **central themes** of the poem; death. The speaker pleads with their beloved to remember them after they have '**gone far away**' into the '**silent land**' (line 2). The poem is directly addressed to their lover; the octave is a **call to remember**, which the speaker then clarifies in the following sestet.



Direct address

The poem 'Remember' itself is a **direct address**, and reads very much like an **intimate parting letter** to someone the speaker feels very closely connected to. Rossetti uses **personal pronouns** 'you', 'us' and 'me' throughout, creating the sense of a **private farewell**.

Poetic style and devices

Remember is written in a **plain and simple voice**, conveying the speaker **pleading** to her love with a level of intimate **simplicity and tenderness**. The final lines of the poem are especially compelling due to the **frankness and directness** of her speech. Additionally, the **simple language** is **juxtaposed** with the **precise, intricate structure, meter** and **rhyme scheme**.

There is also some **ambiguity** in Remember. In line 7, the speaker pleads '**only remember me**', and it could be that the speaker's **only wish** is for their lover to remember, or that they want them to **remember only them** and no one else, a **subtle addition** through which Rossetti **invites interpretation**.

Alliteration

Rossetti utilises **alliteration** to further portray the **tenderness** between lovers. It could also be argued the alliteration of /h/ in lines 3 & 4, '**hold me by the hand**' / '**half turn**' reflects the **desperate**, almost **pant-like pleading** of the speaker as they address their beloved, adding to the sense of **urgency**. The **plosive alliteration** of '**better by**' (line 13) also conveys the **intensity** of the speaker's emotions, and their pressing **need to be remembered**.

Euphemism

The speaker mentions a '**silent land**' (line 2), with Rossetti utilising a **euphemism** to describe **death**. This communicates the **distance between the lovers** and avoids explicitly using the word 'death', perhaps in an effort not to **distress the speaker's beloved**. This **metaphor** likens death to a journey, between the **worlds of the dead and the living**, to a **barren silent land**, from where no contact is made. The speaker's love will **survive only in memory**.

Caesura

There is **caesura** between lines 7 & 8, where the **semicolon separates** 'me' and 'you', arguably representing the **distance** between the **living and the dead**.



Repetition

The phrase ‘**remember me**’ is **repeated** throughout the poem, used **imperatively** in the first three instances in the octet, as a command from the speaker to their beloved. In lines 1 and 5, ‘**remember me**’ **opens each verse**, adding **strength and weight** to the speaker’s command. In **line 7**, however, ‘remember me’ **appears after ‘only’**, softening the **authoritative tone**. Finally, in the **sestet**, ‘**remember**’ is part of a **conditional**, an option, ‘**should remember**’, should the beloved forget. This **mirrors the speaker’s process of accepting** that their lover may forget them, momentarily and acknowledges this possibility.

Comparisons

Remember & La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Similarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common theme of death & weakness, both poems conjure images of dying process; repetition of ‘<i>pale</i>’, ‘<i>death pale</i>’, ‘<i>starved lips</i>’ in Keats, similar to dying speaker in <i>Remember</i>. Similar context; Keats wrote poem after his brother’s death from TB Another common theme is memory; the lady in <i>La Belle Dame Sans Merci</i> lingers in the memory and dreams of speaker. The ballad poem explores death & memory through a display of obsessive love.
Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure is different; the last line of each verse in Keats is the shortest, creating a sense of unfulfillment and unease <i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i> contains themes of obsession, an infatuation that alters the speaker’s understanding of reality, even visiting them in their dreams. <i>Remember</i> is written in a far more grounded and balanced voice.

Remember & To His Coy Mistress

Similarities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both poems invoke religious imagery, <i>Remember</i> with metaphor of ‘silent land’, <i>To His Coy Mistress</i> ‘<i>I would love you 10 years before the flood</i>’ ‘<i>the conversion of the Jews</i>’. Biblical references in both love poems. Both poems have a prominent theme of death; the speaker in <i>To His Coy Mistress</i> urges his mistress to act fast, before ‘<i>worms [shall] try her [thy] long preserved virginity</i>’. Poem also alludes to the grave, a ‘<i>marble vault</i>’ where mistress’ beauty ‘<i>shall nor more be found</i>’ where none ‘<i>embrace</i>’, much like ‘<i>silent land</i>’ in <i>Remember</i>. Speaker in <i>To His Coy Mistress</i> creates a sense of urgency similar to the narrator in <i>Remember</i>, both pleading to their loved ones before death. In <i>To His Coy Mistress</i>, death is personified as an inevitable, powerful force that will turn the mistress’ ‘<i>quaint honour to dust</i>’ and into ‘<i>ashes</i>’ their lust.
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	In <i>Remember</i> , death is fast approaching and will break apart a loving couple.
Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure of <i>To His Coy Mistress</i>: first flattery, threat, then urgency. <i>Remember</i> a plea to remember with 2 distinct verses, further supported by rhyme scheme and Petrarchan structure.

Remember & Whoso List to Hunt

Whoso List to Hunt is a **Petrarchan sonnet** so it has a very **similar structure** to Remember, with the **first octave** in the poem presenting the problem, and the following **sestet offering a conclusion**. Whoso List to Hunt also has the theme of **unattainable love**.

Remember & Sonnet 116

Both Remember & Sonnet 116 **allude** to the **theme of enduring love**, love which **transcends and overcomes time and death**. In Sonnet 116, **love** is described as an **'ever fix'd mark'** that **permanently changes people**. **'Love is not love which alters when it alterations find'**, here the speaker argues that **love** is not only permanent but also a force that can **overcome death** and **time**. This **personification of love** is not defeated by love, **'love's not time's fool'** and **'alters not with his brief hours and weeks'**. Furthermore, Shakespeare also **alludes to death** using **apocalyptic imagery** of a **'sickle's compass'**, but the speaker **remains confident** in **love's power** and ability to **'bear[s] it out even to the edge of doom'**.

Critical perspectives

Feminist interpretation

'Remember' can also be interpreted as an example of the **passive role of women** in **Victorian society**. Assuming the speaker is **female**, some of the poem could arguably be read as reflecting the **highly patriarchal society** in which Rossetti lived. The speaker's lover exerts **dominance over her**, **possessing her** and holding her by the hand, rather than them holding hands together as a couple. The speaker **mentions her (presumably) male lover** talking at her **'you tell me'** (line 6), perhaps patronising her, and a future which the male lover planned, not one they dreamed together. This presents a view of the relationship where the **man held power**, decided their future, and had **complete control** of the female speaker. Such an interpretation reflected the **conventional attitudes of gender roles** at the time where **male dominance** was the **norm** and further supported by **law**. Specifically, the **legal concept of coverture**, common law in England during this era, outlined that a woman's property, rights and obligations belonged to her husband. This



reinforced **patriarchal attitudes**, legalising male dominance over women and **stripping women of their autonomy**.

