

'Scaffolding' is one of Seamus Heaney's first ever poems, written around the time he married his wife of 48 years, Marie Devlin.

It is a confident, assured celebration of the solid bond that he and his wife will forge together. Using imagery of construction, he describes the ever-enduring "walls of sure and solid stone" that will withstand any challenges.

Heaney later joked that he had written the poem with the intention of "clearing up a row" with his wife. It has become one of his best-loved poems.

## **Scaffolding**

Masons, when they start upon a building,  
Are careful to test out the scaffolding;

Make sure that planks won't slip at busy points,  
Secure all ladders, tighten bolted joints.

And yet all this comes down when the job's done  
Showing off walls of sure and solid stone.

So if, my dear, there sometimes seem to be  
Old bridges breaking between you and me

Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall  
Confident that we have built our wall.

**Seamus Heaney**