Genetics

It is a Villanelle poem (19 lines, 5 tercets, ending with a quatrain, two refrains

First and third line of the first tercet is repeated alternately until the last stanza which includes both repeated lines.

Theme/ idea:
Togetherness and separation.
Even through the breakdown of a marriage or relationship, the children act as a permanent union or a reminder of what once was. “They may have been repelled to separate lands” “but in me they touch where fingers link to palms” “my body is their marriage register” suggesting that even though they have separated the narrative voice of the poem (child) will always symbolise their connection, holding them together.
Cyclic - finishes the same way as it begins, linking to the idea of eternity and continuity.

The complex structure of the poem reflects the complex structure of genetics and DNA

Imagery/ symbolism/ lexical fields:
Religion/church/ marriage: ‘I see a chapel where the steeple stands’ ‘priest reciting psalms’ ‘I re-enact their wedding with my hands’

Imagery of a mirror ‘mirroring in bodies of the future’ suggesting the reflection is similar though not quite the same as a mirror image can be distorted in reflection and is flipped the opposite way.

Geographical: ‘repelled to separate lands’ ‘to separate hemispheres’ (idea of magnets, two poles, two of the same repel but opposites and distance (north and south) attract suggesting the distance between parents works.
reference to a river - implies continuity (of the connection symbolised by child) movement and change suggesting the complexity of every day lives, relationships and the winding paths they take.