We stood by a pond that winter day
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
Pond - water is still/ stagnant, like relationship.
It also has a reflection, mirroring his reflection on the past.
Winter day - lifeless season, rhymes with gray to emphasize bleakness
White - cold, monochromatic, connotations of sterile environment, drained of all vitality.
Pathetic fallacy, the sun matches the mood of the narrator.

And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.
Few leaves lay - reminder of the end of a natural cycle of life and death
Starving sod - personification and alliteration (sibilance) emphasizes soil's lack of nutrition and nourishment
Fallen - symbolises how narrator has fallen out of love
Leaves are 'gray' and from an 'ash' - these reinforce the gloominess of the scene, creating a dismal, dreary atmosphere

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles of years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On which lost the more by our love.
Eyes- repetition emphasizes her look of boredom = no life or interest
Words played- ironic because their words aren't playful (as they are arguing about who lost the most when they fell in love)

The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
Smile - normally associated with joy = reminder of bitterness of poem
Deadest thing - use of superlative highlights Hardy's pain. It is also a paradox (nothing can be more dead than something else) to show the ache of his emotions.
Alive enough... - it's alive enough to make it painful - 'die' suggests it was love fated to fail.

And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing....
Ominous bird a-wing - sign of bad luck to come, associated with fortune telling
Ominous - hints that lover is evil
Stanza 3 sustains dismal mood and increases feeling of menace, with uses of paradox, emjambment (creates anticipation), irony (words played)

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Love deceives - with hindsight the narrator can see that love is doomed and that he has now learnt his lessons = love deceived him
'wrings' suggests emotions are completely wrung out – exhausted all emotion.

Your face, and the God curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves
Curst- the sun is no longer just told off, he is cursed - Hardy is BITTER/ RESENTFUL/ SULLEN
Repetition at the beginning and end - same scenery, but at the end it is less poetic, symbolising how the narrator has learnt his lesson. Everything is clearer, more bare = "he understands now"

Form:
Four tetrameter quatrains: regularity conveys perpetual cycle of life and death, the passage of time, non-stop, eternal
Enclosed rhyme scheme (a b b a): repetitive, predictable like relationship. Middle lines are 'trapped' in the middle echoing how narrator felt in relationship?
Cyclic: Words 'gray' 'pond' + 'God' repeated at the end giving poem cyclic quality - reflects the continuous 'flow'/ fluidity of life