The title *punts* on the idea of the 'manhunt', meaning literally a hunt to capture a man, often a criminal. Here the wife's search is for the husband she knew so well but who seems lost to her, metaphorically, after his experiences at war.

The use of the metaphor 'porcelain collar – bone' implies that he is fragile and delicate and that he needs to be handled with care. 'Porcelain' is often hard, but can also chip easily and is cold to the touch. Perhaps it is a reminder of the 'frozen river which ran through his face.'

The metaphor of "a sweating, unexploded mine buried deep in his mind" implies that the source of the problem is not physical but mental, and threatens to cause problems at any time. Perhaps the wife is trying to diffuse him. The importance of the wife's care and delicacy is highlighted by her discovery of this problem, she has to tread carefully as to not trigger PTSD.

The use of the metaphor suggests that the jaw is physically and metaphorically broken. This may suggest that he is no longer open with her, perhaps unable to talk of his feelings and experiences.

The man has a "grazed heart", perhaps literally from an injury caused by "the metal beneath his chest", but also metaphorically. He is unable to connect with his wife, unwilling to speak of his experiences, and so their loving relationship is affected.

The verbs reflect the activities of the wife as she conducts her "search", suggesting careful treatment of her husband's injured body and mind. It may also imply that he is no longer familiar to her.

The image of the metal bullet still inside him as a "foetus" suggests that, like having a baby, the couple's relationship will be forever changed by what he has gone through. It may also suggest that the 'foetus' feeds off him and takes his energy – perhaps reinforcing the idea that his injuries are life changing.

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The final line of the poem emphasises the impact that war has on relationships. This is made clear in the line "Then, and only then, did I come close". Her search is not fully successful, she only comes "close", and only after she realises that her husband's problems lie as much in memories of his experiences as they do in his physical scars.

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The Manhunt by Simon Armitage

- The title ‘The Manhunt’ suggests a chase or searching for something or that he is lost
- Images of delicate materials “porcelain” and “silk” suggests beauty and vulnerability
- Images of broken body parts “grazed heart”, “broken ribs” suggests human casualties of war and the vulnerability of mind and body
- Pain still growing mentally and physically “foetus of metal” and “unexploded mine” suggests potential to still explode or permanent scarring
- Final words – “only then did I come close” suggests it is a journey through his pain and healing and their reconciliation as a couple. She is finally closer to ‘catching’ him.

Context

- Told from the perspective of a soldier’s wife – deals with the idea of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and its impact on the soldier and those around him/her.

Possible Themes and Links

- War and its lasting effects – *Mametz Wood* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*
- Relationships and love – *Cozy Apologia* and *A Wife in London*
- Suffering (mental and physical) - *Mametz Wood* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*