

# ARTS AND COMMERCE COLLEGE, ASHTA

- **Class: B.A. II**
- **Subject : Modern English Literature (Poetry)**

**A Presentation on**

**‘Mirror’ a Poem by Sylvia Plath**

**A Presentation By**

**Prof. Rajendra Ashok Pradhan**

# “MIRROR” BY SYLVIA PLATH

# PLATH'S LIFE

- Plath was born in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.
- In 1950 Plath received a scholarship to attend Smith College.
- Sylvia suffered from recurrent depression.
- Therapy was no help.
- August of 1953 Plath attempted suicide.



<http://www.poets.org/poets.org/poet/sylvia-plath>

# RELATIONS/FAMILY LIFE

- She met her future husband Ted Hughes.
- Plath began teaching at Smith, and while her husband's career began to take off, hers did not.
- In 1959 Plath and Hughes returned to England and had two children.
- In July, 1962, Plath learned of her husband's infidelities.



<http://www.brainpickings.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/plathhughesnicholas.jpg>

# PLATH'S INFLUENCES

- Sylvia's father's death eventually lead her to writing.
- Women started developing insecurities which also inspired Plath to write.
- Plath's writing is so unique because she illustrates the search for identity and independence of women.



# POEM

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.  
Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
I am not cruel, only truthful –  
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.  
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.  
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long  
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.  
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old  
woman  
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

# POETIC DEVICES (LINES 2-4)

- She depicts the mirror immediately swallowing all it comes into contact without the concerns of “love and dislike.” This is a form of personification.

“Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
I am not cruel, only truthful—  
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.”

- This section of the poem also seems to call into question the nature of God; when the mirror calls itself “the eye of a little god,” Plath seems to be using the cold and unemotional reflection of the mirror as a metaphor for a distant and uncaring God.

# POETIC DEVICES LINES 17 & 18

- The lake's imagery is developed, as the mirror becomes a grim reminder of the woman's own lost youth.

“In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me  
an old woman

Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.”

- Plath then employs a simile, comparing the woman's reflection to “like a terrible fish” rising from the depths of a lake: her face has been made grotesque by the passage of time.



# THEME

- Finding your true self and being comfortable with your faults is the key to existing and carrying on an balanced life and if you don't your insecurities won't let you move on or life.



# REFERENCE

"Mirror." *Poetry for Students*. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski and Mary Ruby. Vol. 1. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 115-131. Gale Virtual Reference Library. Web. 30 May 2014.