

SYLVIA PLATH: *Ariel*

- 2 **Either** (a) 'Among Plath's darker work, there is often a celebration of beauty.'

Discuss ways in which Plath presents beauty in **two** poems.

- Or** (b) Comment closely on the tone and language of the following poem, saying how far you find it characteristic of Plath's poetry.

*Cut**For Susan O'Neill Roe*

What a thrill —
My thumb instead of an onion.
The top quite gone
Except for a sort of a hinge

Of skin, 5
A flap like a hat,
Dead white.
Then that red plush.

Little pilgrim,
The Indian's axed your scalp. 10
Your turkey wattle
Carpet rolls

Straight from the heart.
I step on it,
Clutching my bottle 15
Of pink fizz.

A celebration, this is.
Out of a gap
A million soldiers run,
Redcoats, every one. 20

Whose side are they on?
O my
Homunculus, I am ill.
I have taken a pill to kill

The thin 25
Papery feeling.
Saboteur,
Kamikaze man —

The stain on your
Gauze Ku Klux Klan 30
Babushka
Darkens and tarnishes and when

5

The balled
Pulp of your heart
Confronts its small
Mill of silence

35

How you jump —
Trepanned veteran,
Dirty girl,
Thumb stump.

40

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Songs of Ourselves

- 3 **Either** (a) Compare ways in which poets present human relationships in **two** poems from the selection.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on ways in which the writer uses imagery in the following poem.

Amends

Nights like this: on the cold apple-bough
 a white star, then another
 exploding out of the bark:
 on the ground, moonlight picking at small stones

as it picks at greater stones, as it rises with the surf 5
 laying its cheek for moments on the sand
 as it licks the broken ledge, as it flows up the cliffs,
 as it flicks across the tracks

as it unavailing pours into the gash
 of the sand-and-gravel quarry 10
 as it leans across the hangared fuselage
 of the crop-dusting plane

as it soaks through cracks into the trailers
 tremulous with sleep
 as it dwells upon the eyelids of the sleepers 15
 as if to make amends

Adrienne Rich

Section B: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

HENRY JAMES: *Washington Square*

- 4 **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which James presents attitudes to money in the novel.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage, paying particular attention to ways in which it presents Morris Townsend and other characters' views of him.

After dinner Morris Townsend went and stood before Catherine, who was standing before the fire in her red satin gown.

'He doesn't like me – he doesn't like me at all,' said the young man.

'Who doesn't like you?' asked Catherine.

'Your father; extraordinary man!' 5

'I don't see how you know,' said Catherine, blushing.

'I feel; I am very quick to feel.'

'Perhaps you are mistaken.'

'Ah, well! you ask him, and you will see.'

'I would rather not ask him, if there is any danger of his saying what you think.' 10

Morris looked at her with an air of mock melancholy.

'It wouldn't give you any pleasure to contradict him?'

'I never contradict him,' said Catherine.

'Will you hear me abused without opening your lips in my defence?'

'My father won't abuse you. He doesn't know you enough.' 15

Morris Townsend gave a loud laugh, and Catherine began to blush again.

'I shall never mention you,' she said, to take refuge from her confusion.

'That is very well; but it is not quite what I should have liked you to say. I should have liked you to say, "If my father doesn't think well of you, what does it matter?"'

'Ah, but it would matter; I couldn't say that!' the girl exclaimed. 20

He looked at her for a moment, smiling a little; and the Doctor, if he had been watching him just then, would have seen a gleam of fine impatience in the sociable softness of his eye. But there was no impatience in his rejoinder – none, at least, save what was expressed in a little appealing sigh. 'Ah, well! then I must not give up the hope of bringing him round.' 25

He expressed it more frankly to Mrs Penniman later in the evening. But before that he sang two or three songs at Catherine's timid request; not that he flattered himself that this would help to bring her father round. He had a sweet, light tenor voice, and, when he had finished, everyone made some exclamation – everyone, that is, save Catherine, who remained intensely silent. Mrs Penniman declared that his manner of singing was 'most artistic', and Doctor Sloper said it was 'very taking – very taking, indeed'; speaking loudly and distinctly, but with a certain dryness. 30

'He doesn't like me – he doesn't like me at all,' said Morris Townsend, addressing the aunt in the same manner as he had done the niece. 'He thinks I am all wrong.'

Unlike her niece, Mrs Penniman asked for no explanation. She only smiled very sweetly, as if she understood everything; and, unlike Catherine too, she made no attempt to contradict him. 'Pray, what does it matter?' she murmured, softly. 35

'Ah, you say the right thing!' said Morris, greatly to the gratification of Mrs Penniman, who prided herself on always saying the right thing.

The Doctor, the next time he saw his sister Elizabeth, let her know that he had made the acquaintance of Lavinia's protégé. 40

'Physically,' he said, 'he's uncommonly well set up. As an anatomist, it is really a pleasure to me to see such a beautiful structure; although, if people were all like him, I suppose there would be very little need for doctors.'

'Don't you see anything in people but their bones?' Mrs Almond rejoined. 'What do you think of him, as a father?' 45

'As a father? Thank Heaven, I am not his father!'

'No; but you are Catherine's. Lavinia tells me she is in love.'

'She must get over it. He is not a gentleman.'

- 5 **Either** (a) What seems to you to be the significance of the title, *The Woman Warrior*?
- Or** (b) Comment closely on ways in which the following passage presents the difficulties maintaining cultural traditions.

Occasionally the rumour went about that the United States immigration authorities had set up headquarters in the San Francisco or Sacramento Chinatown to urge wetbacks and stowaways, anybody here on fake papers, to come to the city and get their files straightened out. The immigrants discussed whether or not to turn themselves in. 'We might as well,' somebody would say. 'Then we'd have our citizenship for real.' 5

'Don't be a fool,' somebody else would say. 'It's a trap. You go in there saying you want to straighten out your papers, they'll deport you.'

'No, they won't. They're promising that nobody is going to go to jail or get deported. They'll give you citizenship as a reward for turning yourself in, for your honesty.' 10

'Don't you believe it. So-and-so trusted them, and he was deported. They can deport his children too.'

'Where can they send us now? Hong Kong? Taiwan? I've never been to Hong Kong or Taiwan. The Big Six? Where?' We don't belong anywhere since the Revolution. The old China has disappeared while we've been away. 15

'Don't tell,' advised my parents. 'Don't go to San Francisco until they leave.'

Lie to Americans. Tell them you were born during the San Francisco earthquake. Tell them your birth certificate and your parents were burned up in the fire. Don't report crimes; tell them we have no crimes and no poverty. Give a new name every time you get arrested; the ghosts won't recognize you. Pay the new immigrants twenty-five cents an hour and say we have no unemployment. And, of course, tell them we're against Communism. Ghosts have no memory anyway and poor eyesight. And the Han people won't be pinned down. 20

Even the good things are unspeakable, so how could I ask about deformities? From the configurations of food my mother set out, we kids had to infer the holidays. She did not whip us up with holiday anticipation or explain. You only remembered that perhaps a year ago you had eaten monks' food, or that there was meat, and it was a meat holiday; or you had eaten moon cakes or long noodles for long life (which is a pun). In front of the whole chicken with its slit throat towards the ceiling, she'd lay out just so many pairs of chopsticks alternating with wine cups, which were not for us because there were a different number from the number in our family, and they were set too close together for us to sit at. To sit at one of those place settings a being would have to be about two inches wide, a tall wisp of an invisibility. Mother would pour Seagram's 7 into the cups and, after a while, pour it back into the bottle. Never explaining. How can Chinese keep any traditions at all? They don't even make you pay attention, slipping in a ceremony and clearing the table before the children notice specialness. The adults get mad, evasive, and shut you up if you ask. You get no warning that you shouldn't wear a white ribbon in your hair until they hit you and give you the sideways glare for the rest of the day. They hit you if you wave brooms around or drop chopsticks or drum them. They hit you if you wash your hair on certain days, or tap somebody with a ruler, or step over a brother whether it's during your menses or not. You figure out what you got hit for and don't do it again if you figured correctly. But I think that if you don't figure it out, it's all right. Then you can grow up bothered by 'neither ghost nor deities'. 'Gods you avoid won't hurt you.' I don't see how they kept up a continuous culture for five thousand years. Maybe they didn't; maybe everyone makes it up as they go along. If we had to depend on being told, we'd have no religion, no babies, no menstruation (sex, of course, unspeakable), no death. 25 30 35 40 45

- 6 **Either** (a) Compare ways in which **two** stories from the selection portray different disasters and their consequences.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the writing of the following passage, paying particular attention to its style and effects.

'Far away,' continued the statue in a low musical voice, 'far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move.'

'I am waited for in Egypt,' said the Swallow. 'My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad.'

'I don't think I like boys,' answered the Swallow. 'Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect.'

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. 'It is very cold here,' he said; 'but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger.'

'Thank you, little Swallow,' said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. 'How wonderful the stars are,' he said to her, 'and how wonderful is the power of love!'

'I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State-ball,' she answered; 'I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy.'

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. 'How cool I feel!' said the boy, 'I must be getting better': and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done.

'It is curious,' he remarked, 'but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold.'

'That is because you have done a good action,' said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

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