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## Sylvia plath poems free pdf

No matter how casual you had a relationship with 20th century American poetry, you've heard the name Sylvia Plath. Perhaps you've dared to experience your dark but compelling literary world, or perhaps you only know some of the basic elements of your life and career: your autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar*, your famous collection of Ariel poetry, your stormy marriage to British poet Ted Hughes, his death by his own hand at thirty. But what better day than today, the 83rd anniversary of Plath's birth, to get to know his work better? And what better way than to hear this work read in Plath's own voice? Sure, you could just take one of the many yellowish copies of Ariel's paper tablet that you see on bookshelves all over America and dive across America and dive across America, but you can first consider turning to our archives, which contain a 2013 post in which we present Plath reading fifteen poems that would appear in the Ariel collection that, published two years after his death (left sitting at the kitchen table to be found along with his body, noted Josh Jones), would elevate his poetic reputation to new heights. You can hear the first part of these readings, recorded in 1962, at the top of this post, and the rest in this original post. We may feel lucky that, in her short life, she left even those performances for posterity, but there is more: last year, we introduced Sylvia Plath reading her poetry, the 1977 album released by the pioneering pre-audiobook label Caedmon, which contains 23 poems Plath committed to record as early as 1959. Find all the readings here. If these two audio collections give you a taste for poet biographer Carl Rollyson called The Marilyn Monroe of modern literature, listen to Credo Records' album Sylvia Plath, which offers some material you've heard alongside some you won't have. Having heard all this, you would hardly associate celebratory adjective with Plath's work—but that doesn't mean that on what would have been his 83rd birthday, poetry lovers can't celebrate it. Looking for free poems and professionally read by Sylvia Plath from Audible.com, including particularly those read by Maggie Gyllenhaal? Here's a great deal without compromise. If you start a 30-day free trial Audible.com, you can download two free audio books of your choice. Get more details about the offer here. Related content: Listen to Sylvia Plath Read Fifteen Poems from her Final Collection, Ariel, in 1962 Recording The Art of Sylvia Plath: Revisit her sketches, self-portraits, drawings and illustrated letters Sylvia Plath reads her poetry: 23 poems from the last 6 years of her life Sylvia Plath, detective girl offers a hilarious cheery take the Poet's College Years Colin Marshall writes elsewhere about cities, language, Asia and male male working on a book about Los Angeles, A Los Angeles Primer, the video series The City in Cinema, and the crowdfunded journalism project Where Is the City of the Future? Follow him on Twitter on @colinmarshall or on Facebook. Sylvia was born on October 27, 1932 and in her short life became one of the most influential poets of the time. Plath published two collections of poetry, *The Colossus and Other Poems* and *Ariel*, and a novel called *The Bell Jar*. In 1982, she won a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for *The Collected Poems*. Many of his poems live on JSTOR. We selected ten of our favorites; you can download the PDFs and read them for free here: *Incommunicado*, *Morning in the Hospital Solarium*, *Black Pine in an Orange Light and Rhyme*, in the *American Poetry Review* *Metamorphosis*, in *Poetry* *The Snow Man in the Swamp*, in *Poetry Crown for a Bride*, in *Poetry Fever 103*, in *Poetry Stars on the Dordogne*, in *Poetry About the Difficulty of Conjuring a Dryad*, in *Poetry* *Want more poetry?* Check out seven favorite flower poems. Have any corrections or comments on this article? Please contact us. Sylvia PlathPoetryThe American Poetry Review JSTOR is a digital library for academics, researchers and students. JSTOR Daily readers can access the original search behind our articles for free on JSTOR. By: SYLVIA PLATH The American Poetry Review, Vol. 10, No. 5 (SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1981), p. 8 American Poetry Review By: Sylvia Plath Poetry, Vol. 121, No. 1, Sixtieth Anniversary Issue: 1912-1972 First Appearances (Oct., 1972), p. 25 Poetry Foundation By: Sylvia Plath Poetry, Vol. 89, no. 4 (Jan., 1957), p. 231 Poetry Foundation By: Sylvia Plath Poesia, Vol. 102, No. 5 (August., 1963), pp. 292-2 Poetry Foundation 94 The best poems of Sylvia Plath selected by Dr. Oliver Tearle Sylvia Plath (1932-63) was a prolific poet during the few years she was active before her untimely death, by her own hand, at the age of 30. But what are your greatest poems? Some titles come to mind, but it's not easy to reach a consensus on, say, Sylvia Plath's top ten poems. But we like a challenge here, so we suggest ten of Plath's best and most famous poems, along with a little bit about each of them. For a good edition of Plath's poems, we recommend the *Collected Images*. 1. *Lady Lazarus*. Lazarus is the man of the New Testament who is raised from the dead by Jesus. Plath gives the name a twist in this poem, one of Plath's best poems, linking him to his numerous suicide attempts. 'Lady Lazarus' contains the famous dying phrase is an art, among many other lines and scary and memorable images. Plath wrote *Lady Lazarus* in October 1962, a few months before her suicide. (Plath would kill herself in February 1963, in a London apartment that she had. B. Yeats once lived there. As she suggests in 'Lady Lazarus', she had previously attempted suicide at intervals of approximately ten years.) The poem is about resurrection – but implicit within its title, and Sylvia Plath's reference to the man Jesus brought from the dead, is the idea of annihilation or extinction, a theme that is never far from us with a poem by Plath. Another important aspect of 'Lady Lazarus' – which is alluded to Plath's reference to the peanut crowd – is the idea of suffering as a spectacle, a theater of cruelty that people could afford to see: what novelist J. G. Ballard, less than a decade later, would call an exhibition of atrocities. 2. *Daddy*. One of Sylvia Plath's most famous poems, 'Daddy' controversially links her father in the poem to a Nazi officer, and references the Holocaust. (There are also references to the Holocaust in 'Lady Lazarus'.) Several commonly seen as a highly autobiographical confessional poem and as an extremely phonic account of Plath's own relationship with his father (an entomologist and bee expert who died when Plath was just eight years old), 'Daddy' continues to generate much discussion among Plath's readers and critics. 3. *The Moon and the Yew Tree*. In this haunting poem, Plath uses the moon as a symbol for both his melancholy and his mother, with the moon tree taking on the male role of his father. The poem was written in Devon, at a time when Plath was trying to write a poem every day – when she was struggling for inspiration early in the morning, Hughes suggested that Plath write about the view from her bedroom window, which had a view of a nearby cemetery. The moon could be seen above the yew tree in the churchyard and the rest is history (literary). The poem is a meditation on these two objects, seen from Plath's bedroom window, and what they represent. The moon is often feminine in poetry, while the yew tree represents the masculine, the father figure and death. The yew is, after all, a tree often found in cemeteries, as was the case with what inspired the poem. But the question is: how much of what is being described in these cut sentences actually reflects what Plath is visually observing, and how much does his inner imagination represent? 4. *You are*. This poem makes much more sense when one realizes that its title, *You are*, also acts as the first word of each of the poem's statements. The meaning of the poem is also clearer when we realize that 'You're' is a poem about pregnancy and the son Plath is carrying (in this case, Frieda, Plath's daughter with Ted Hughes, born in 1960). The poem is among Plath's most floating and hopeful poems. 5. *Morning Song*. Although we have not arranged this selection of Sylvia Plath's best poems in type of chronological order (much less preferential), it seems appropriate to follow 'You're', a poem about pregnancy, with 'Morning Song', a poem about a mother caring for her newborn son. 'Morning Song' is about a mother waking up at night to take care of her crying baby, and so it doesn't celebrate the beauty of the sunrise or an aesthetically pleasing landscape as seen at dawn, like some of the poems on this list. Instead, we have Plath's orator (based on Plath, herself a mother of a small child when she wrote this poem) stumbling out of bed 'cow-heavy and floral' in her Victorian sweater. 6. *Poppies in October*. Although this poem gives a nod to Plath's own suicide attempts (the last of which, of course, tragically succeeded) in his reference to a woman in an ambulance whose heart is compared to blooming poppies, it is, first, a poem celebrating the bright red flowers. This poem is also a good example of how Plath can be seen as a late modernist as much as she is a confessional poet: the imaginary is elliptical, the expression tense, the poem almost imaginalist. 7th 'Ariel'. One of Sylvia Plath's most discussed poems, 'Ariel' describes a morning horse ride toward the sun, using images loaded with meaning and suggestiveness. As Plath rides Ariel through the light of dawn, it's as if she's spilling over her past self and reborn as something else: the experience of riding the horse is almost transcendent. I unstuck, she tells us, comparing herself to Lady Godiva, the 11th-century Saxon nobleman who defied her husband's harsh taxation of the people of Coventry and walked naked through the streets of the city, according to legend. Written in October 1962 (on its thirtieth anniversary), just four months before Plath committed suicide, 'Ariel' became the title poem in Plath's posthumous 1965 volume, which was overseen (controversially) by Plath's widower Ted Hughes. (We chose some of Ted Hughes' best poems here.) 8th 'Edge'. This poem, written just six days before Plath committed suicide in February 1963, was probably the last poem she wrote. Appropriately – and strangely – it is a dead woman whose body has been 'perfected' in death (and presumably suicide). Written in tense, terse, dull, terse, this poem is one of Plath's many that reflect his interest in the colors of white, red and black, which often suggest the three phases of the White Goddess, a concept invented by Robert Graves. In the structure of the triple goddess of Graves' theory, white symbolizes virgin, red mother and black witch or comparasa. All three are also related to the moon. In this poem, the white serpent gives way to the blood of the rose (red?) before culminating in the 'black' of the moon itself. In winter. This may sound like a poem describing a natural scene, but in fact 'Waking up in winter' is about a nuclear winter, although it also reflects Plath's time spent in various hospitals. Written in 1960 and infused with Cold War elements and environmentalists, 'Waking up in winter' offers a grim view of a post-nuclear winter where the sky doesn't just look like tin – the whole atmosphere tastes metallic, too. 'Waking up in winter' examines the desolation of a winter created by man and not by nature – of destruction, annihilation. This poem is one of the reasons why critics sometimes classified Plath as a Cold War modernist as well as a confessional poet. 10. *Crossing the Water*. This poem gave its title to a posthumous collection of Plath's poems published in 1971. The water being crossed in this poem is, first of all, the border between the United States and Canada – but this poem is also smothered with images of darkness and darkness that suggest that another frontier, between life and death, is also being summoned. Once again, we see the importance of color symbolism influenced by the White Goddess – here, the black color, which hangs large throughout the poem. The poem also demonstrates Plath's thin ear: the way the song of these 'sirens' turns silent in the final two lines is particularly good. Sylvia Plath also appears in our choice of the best birthday poems, our favorite poems about walking, and these classic poems about parenthood. Check out more classical poetry with our choice of H.D.'s greatest poems. He is the author, among others, of *The Secret Library: A Book-Lovers's Journey Through Curiosities of History and The Great War*, *The Waste Land* and the *Modernist Long Poem*. Image: via Wikimedia Commons. Commons.