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'DADDY' by Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath(1932-1963) was an American poet, novelist, and short-story writer. She is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry and is best known for two of her published collections, *The Colossus and Other Poems* and *Ariel*, as well as *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel.

Plath has written hundreds of poems on different topics. However following three themes are obvious in most of her poems.

1. She used her poems to confess
2. She often wrote of overwhelming male (father/husband) figures
3. Birth is also a subject common to her works.

"Daddy" is a controversial poem written by Sylvia Plath. It has 16 stanzas, each with five lines, making a total of 80 lines.

It was published posthumously in 1965 as part of the collection 'Ariel'. It was originally written in



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October 1962, a month after Plath's separation from her husband, the poet Ted Hughes, and four months before her death by suicide.

is a deeply complex poem about the poet's relationship with her deceased father, Otto Plath. The word "daddy" stands for a "male". Here Silvia Plath presents her protest against male dominance in our society., The poem deals with the speaker's struggle to break free of her father's influence and dominance.

Major Themes in "Daddy": Love, hatred, and loss are the major themes in the poem. The tormented speaker describes her life with her father before his death. He never gave her love and support and forced her to live a life of sufferings, misery, and pain. The experience and torture took away her identity. Despite his cold behavior, she loved him dearly. Unfortunately, her husband, who resembled her father is compared to a vampire, must have abused her and her marriage lasted



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seven years. By the end of the poem, she gives up and stops running after the shadow of her father.

Here the Poet's personal experiences with two males in her life, her father and her husband, also symbolically express the subjugated condition of most women of the world. We are living in a male dominated society where women have always been oppressed in all walks of life. So this poem is a master piece of which exposes this male dominance and presents women's protest against the males.

Form of the Poem:

There are 80 lines in this poem with sixteen stanzas.

Quintin: A Quintin is a five lined stanza. Here, each stanza consists of five lines.

Rhyme Scheme: There is no specific rhyme scheme used in this poem.

End Rhyme: End Rhyme is used to make the



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stanza melodious. The examples of end rhymes are most lines that end with 'oo' sound. For example, "blue/you" and "true/Jew."

Poetic Devices:

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /m/ in "I made a model of you," and the sound of /h/ in "Daddy, I have had to kill you".

Assonance: Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line such as the sound of /a/ in "They are dancing and stamping on you" and the sound of /e/ in "I was ten when they buried you".

Metaphor: It is a figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between the different objects. The poet has compared her father, husband and most men, in general with, 'Black shoe'; 'Ghastly statue'; 'Panzer- man' and 'Vampire'.



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Enjambment: Enjambment refers to the continuation of a sentence without the pause beyond the end of a line, couplet or stanza. For example,

“There’s a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.”

Imagery: Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses. For example, “Any more, black shoe, In which I have lived like a foot” and “And your Aryan eye, bright blue”

Simile: It is a figure of speech used to compare two different objects. For example, the father’s toe is compared to a massive San Francisco’s seal. In the sixth stanza, “I began to talk like a Jew” the poet compares herself with the Jews.



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