

Black Rook in Rainy Weather

- In this poem she is looking for inspiration
- She fears neutrality and longs for emotion – “a brief respite from fear of total neutrality”
- “a wet black rook arranging and rearranging its feathers in the rain” – a long, repetitive, unappealing structure, displaying the monotony of her life –euphony ‘a’ sound
- Alliteration used in ‘rare, random descent’
- Spiritual nature of inspiration is conveyed through the words “miracle”. “celestial” “angel”
- Flippant mood – “I can’t honestly complain” – “even this dull, ruinous landscape”
- Nature is explored in order to convey her lack of contentment

LINK [Elm](#)

Morning Song

- “love set you going like a fat gold watch” – unique simile to convey the beauty of birth
- Objectification of the infant – “took its place among the elements” “in a drafted museum”
- No rhyming scheme – the unpredictability of what’s in store for this new infant/free verse
- Self doubt is evident – “I am no more your mother than the cloud that distils a mirror”
- “in my Victorian nightgown” – conveys an old fashioned mother
- A very poetic description of a baby’s cry, signifying hope for the baby’s future – “Your handful of notes; the clear vowels rise like balloons”

Link [Child](#)

Poppies in July

- “little hell flames” – negative, calamitous imagery opens the poem
- The question “do you no harm?” – asking whether her relationship is self destructive
- “I put my hands among the flames. Nothing burns. ‘ no feeling, neutrality – this echoes ‘Black Rook’ “fear of total neutrality”

- “it exhausts me to watch you” – she is growing tired of her husband (he has just committed infidelity) and is exhausted through her personal depression
- “Fumes” – repetition of the “flame” idea
- “opiates” – the idea of drugs/narcotics – wonders if these may put her at ease
- If I could bleed or sleep – suicidal thoughts
- “if my mouth could marry a hurt like that” – thoughts of regret, especially of her marriage
- Repetition of the word “colorless” indicates her life is meaningless now
- The lack of rhyming scheme and the irregularity of the poem indicates a lack of self control and personal structure

The Arrival of the Beebox

- This explores the role of power in one’s life
- One of her most peculiar poems
- Style – uses many poetic techniques here
- In this poem, she explores the confinement of her own personal thoughts
- “the box is locked” – confinement “it is dangerous” – these explore the power and danger of her own negative thoughts
- “swarmy feeling of African hands” – lack of liberation
- “It is like a Roman mob”
- “a box of maniacs”
- “they can die, I need feed them nothing, I am the owner”
- “Funeral veil” – “the box is only temporary” – life will end – suicidal thoughts end the poem
- The structure of the poem indicates she is more mentally stable and is longing for control

Elm

- One of her bleakest poems
- Uses personification
- Uses the Elm Tree as a metaphor
- “I know the bottom” – depression
- Use of ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘she’ – lack of personal identity

- “love is a shadow” – not really there, unrealistic – “how you lie and cry after it” – “it has gone off, like a horse” – abandonment
- “I have suffered the atrocity of sunsets”- EST reference
- “The moon, also, is merciless” – alliteration
- Depression – “your bad dreams possess me”, “I am inhabited by a cry”, “I am terrified by this thing that sleeps in me”
- Weather used to convey emotions/pathetic fallacy – “clouds pass” “this is rain now” “a wind of such violence”
- “its snaky acid kiss”
- Ends with the line – “that kill, that kill, that kill”
- Very gloomy, complete lack of hope, feels abandoned

Child

- Similar to ‘Morning Song’ yet more anxiety driven.
- She admires the beauty and purity of the infant but simultaneously envies it
- Theme of anguish and depression is remarkably evident
- “troubled/wringing of hands
- Metaphor – “this dark ceiling without a star
- “April snowdrop, Indian pipe” – Snowdrop: beautiful: symbol for the purity of the infant. – Indian pipe is dark: symbol for Plath’s darkness and despair
- “Your clear eye”
- “I want to fill it with colour and ducks”
- Doesn’t end on a joyous note compared to “Morning Song”

Points for an introduction/conclusion

- Epigraph: “the worst enemy to creativity is self doubt”
- Her poetry is 1. Intense 2. Personal 3. Confessional 4. Disturbing
- Reading her poetry is almost like reading her diary

- Her unique style contributes to her poetry: honesty, use of assonance and repetition to convey things which are tedious, her remarkable use of striking metaphors and unusual metaphors in order to depict her personal anguish
- "is there no way out of the mind?"
- "let me live, love and say it well in good sentences"