

The Eye-Mote

Blameless as daylight I stood looking
At a field of horses, necks bent, manes blown,
Tails streaming against the green
Backdrop of sycamores. Sun was striking
White chapel pinnacles over the roofs,
Holding the horses, the clouds, the leaves

Comment [CK1]: Light imagery suggests abundance of happiness/ easefulness of life

Comment [CK2]: The tone of the first stanza is relaxed and blissful.

Comment [CK3]: Wild, untamed, innocent. "White" further amplifies the idea of innocence. Nature imagery acts as a backdrop, providing color to the setting.

Steadily rooted though they were all flowing
Away to the left like reeds in a sea
When the splinter flew in and stuck my eye,
Needling it dark. Then I was seeing
A melding of shapes in a hot rain:
Horses warped on the altering green,

Comment [CK4]: The image of the horses is a still one. There is little movement.

Comment [CK5]: Splinter: direct, unstable pain

Comment [CK6]: Needling: control

Comment [CK7]: Hot rain: everything coming together, losing literal meaning.

Outlandish as double-humped camels or unicorns,
Grazing at the margins of a bad monochrome,
Beasts of oasis, a better time.
Abrading my lid, the small grain burns:
Red cinder around which I myself,
Horses, planets and spires revolve.

Comment [CK8]: Dark: confusion

Comment [CK9]: Outlandish thoughts caused by the shock of the splinter. Reality is distorted.

Comment [CK10]: Margins: inability to focus on center. Monochrome: lack of color. Contrasts with the first stanza (filled with nature imagery).

Comment [CK11]: Introduction of literal pain. Red cinder: blood. Pain due to stabbing of eye.

Neither tears nor the easing flush
Of eyebaths can unseat the speck:
It sticks, and it has stuck a week.
I wear the present itch for flesh,
Blind to what will be and what was.
I dream that I am Oedipus.

Comment [CK12]: Events spiral around the splinter. It is the thing that matters most

What I want back is what I was
Before the bed, before the knife,
Before the brooch-pin and the salve
Fixed me in this parenthesis;
Horses fluent in the wind,
A place, a time gone out of mind.

Comment [CK13]: Oedipus: allusion. Person with self inflicted eye injury. Killed his own father, made mother pregnant, pulls eye out to unsee.

Comment [CK14]: Speaker wishes to return to life. Escape current reality.

Sylvia Plath (1959)

Comment [CK15]: Key Ideas:

1. The innocent, life before the splinter:: natural, free, uninformed
2. The latter view: disfigured, warped reality
3. The latter view is permanent: speaker wishes to return to before, but cannot.