Sylvia Plath: Morning Song

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.
In a drafty museum, your nakedness Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

I'm no more your mother
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow Effacement at the wind's hand.

All night your moth-breath
Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:
A far sea moves in my ear.

One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral
In my Victorian nightgown. Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try
Your handful of notes; The clear vowels rise like balloons.

Organising Principle #1: The power of voices
Organising Principle #2: Duties of a mother
Organising Principle #3: Emotional process of a mother after childbirth

Comment [CK1]: Significance of title: a “song” may have connotations

Comment [CK2]: A loving mood is created in the introduction with the word “love”. Since this poem is about her child, the word she associates him with is “love”.

Comment [CK3]: Simile: refers to a “fat gold watch”, where gold symbolizes as something that is incredibly valuable, while fat may refer to the size of the newborn baby. This image is also associated with the concept of time, where Plath may express that time passes too fast as her new child was born.

Comment [CK4]: Auditory imagery, where the child was first born and cries “baldly”. The word bald emphasizes that the child is new to the world and inexperienced.

Comment [CK5]: “Arrival” of the child emphasizes that grandness and a majestic tone is conveyed. This reveals that Plath may be awaiting for this child to come to life for a long time.

Comment [CK6]: A statue is something to look and examine, and Plath incorporates this as an object to compare to her child. The statue in the museum is like her child in the hospital, where the child is new and

Comment [CK7]: Author’s intent: Plath compares her role as a mother to the distillation of a mirror. This shows how Plath feels about her baby, that she was merely a pathway for her baby to come to this earth. The words “no more” in the previous line emphasizes the worthlessness Plath feels as the creator of her own child.

Comment [CK8]: The word “Effacement” is enhanced through enjambment, and the action of effacing reflects Plath’s emotions regarding her emotional bond with her child.

Comment [CK9]: The description of the roses are rather mild, compared to the usual sharp pink roses. This associates with the mild and relaxed nature while the baby is sound asleep.

Comment [CK10]: A sense of relaxation and serenity is created.

Comment [CK11]: A traditional female clothing, reflecting traditional values or perception of female roles. This refers to the duties that Plath believes must be carried out by a mother.

Comment [CK12]: The sunlight outshines the night sky. Plath personifies the sunlight to emphasise on the importance it imposes while the child is awake.