

SYLVIA PLATH

*Lady Lazarus*

*I have done it again.*

*One year in every ten*

*I manage it——*

*A sort of walking miracle, my skin*

*Bright as a Nazi lampshade,*

*My right foot*

*A paperweight,*

*My face a featureless, fine*

*Jew linen.*

*Peel off the napkin*

*O my enemy.*

*Do I terrify?——*

*The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?*

*The sour breath*

*Will vanish in a day.*

*Soon, soon the flesh*

*The grave cave ate will be*

*At home on me*

SYLVIA PLATH

*Lady Lazarus*

*And I a smiling woman.*

*I am only thirty.*

*And like the cat I have nine times to die.*

*This is Number Three.*

*What a trash*

*To annihilate each decade.*

*What a million filaments.*

*The peanut-crunching crowd*

*Shoves in to see*

*Them unwrap me hand and foot——*

*The big strip tease.*

*Gentlemen, ladies*

*These are my hands*

*My knees.*

*I may be skin and bone,*

*Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman.*

*The first time it happened I was ten.*

*It was an accident.*

SYLVIA PLATH

*Lady Lazarus*

*The second time I meant  
To last it out and not come back at all.*

*I rocked shut*

*As a seashell.*

*They had to call and call  
And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls.*

*Dying*

*Is an art, like everything else.*

*I do it exceptionally well.*

*I do it so it feels like hell.*

*I do it so it feels real.*

*I guess you could say I've a call.*

*It's easy enough to do it in a cell.*

*It's easy enough to do it and stay put.*

*It's the theatrical*

*Comeback in broad day*

*To the same place, the same face, the same brute*

*Amused shout:*

SYLVIA PLATH

*Lady Lazarus*

'A miracle!'

That knocks me out.

There is a charge

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge

For the hearing of my heart——

It really goes.

And there is a charge, a very large charge

For a word or a touch

Or a bit of blood

Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.

So, so, Herr Doktor.

So, Herr Enemy.

I am your opus,

I am your valuable,

The pure gold baby

That melts to a shriek.

I turn and burn.

Do not think I underestimate your great concern.

SYLVIA PLATH

*Lady Lazarus*

Ash, ash—  
You poke and stir.  
Flesh, bone, there is nothing there——

A cake of soap,  
A wedding ring,  
A gold filling.

Herr God, Herr Lucifer  
Beware  
Beware.

Out of the ash  
I rise with my red hair  
And I eat men like air.

Frank O'Hara

*Homosexuality*

So we are taking off our masks, are we, and keeping  
our mouths shut? as if we'd been pierced by a glance!

The song of an old cow is not more full of judgment  
than the vapors which escape one's soul when one is sick;

so I pull the shadows around me like a puff  
and crinkle my eyes as if at the most exquisite moment

of a very long opera, and then we are off!  
without reproach and without hope that our delicate feet

will touch the earth again, let alone "very soon."  
It is the law of my own voice I shall investigate.

I start like ice, my finger to my ear, my ear  
to my heart, that proud cur at the garbage can

Frank O'Hara

*Homosexuality*

in the rain. It's wonderful to admire oneself  
with complete candor, tallying up the merits of each  
of the latrines. 14th Street is drunken and credulous,  
53 rd tries to tremble but is too at rest. The good

love a park and the inept a railway station,  
and there are the divine ones who drag themselves up  
and down the lengthening shadow of an Abyssinian head  
in the dust, trailing their long elegant heels of hot air

crying to confuse the brave "It's a summer day,  
and I want to be wanted more than anything else in the world."

MEG DAY

*Batter My Heart,  
Transgender'd God*

Batter my heart, transgender'd god, for yours  
is the only ear that hears: place fear in my heart  
where faith has grown my senses dull & reassures  
my blood that it will never spill. Show every part  
to every stranger's anger, surprise them with my drawers  
full up of maps that lead to vacancies & chart  
the distance from my pride, my core. Terror, do not depart  
but nest in the hollows of my loins & keep me on all fours.  
My knees, bring me to them; force my head to bow again.  
Replay the murders of my kin until my mind's made new;  
let Adam's bite obstruct my breath 'til I respire men  
& press his rib against my throat until my lips turn blue.  
You, O duo, O twin, whose likeness is kind: unwind my confidence  
& noose it round your fist so I might know you in vivid impermanence.



# LANGSTON HUGHES

## I, TOO

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.