

Lady Lazarus

Sylvia Plath

I have done it again. One year in every ten I manage it-----	3	This is Number Three. What a trash To annihilate each decade.	24
A sort of walking miracle, my skin Bright as a Nazi lampshade, My right foot	6	What a million filaments. The Peanut-crunching crowd Shoves in to see	28
A paperweight, My featureless, fine Jew linen.	9	Them unwrap me hand in foot The big strip tease. Gentleman , ladies	30
Peel off the napkin O my enemy. Do I terrify?	12	These are my hands My knees. I may be skin and bone,	33
The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth? The sour breath Will vanish in a day.	15	Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman. The first time it happened I was ten. It was an accident.	36
Soon, soon the flesh The grave cave ate will be At home on me	18	The second time I meant To last it out and not come back at all. I rocked shut	39
And I a smiling woman. I am only thirty. And like the cat I have nine times to die.	21	As a seashell. They had to call and call And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls.	42

Dying Is an art, like everything else. I do it exceptionally well.	45	Or a piece of my hair on my clothes. So, so, Herr Doktor. So, Herr Enemy.	66
I do it so it feels like hell. I do it so it feels real. I guess you could say I've a call.	48	I am your opus, I am your valuable, The pure gold baby	69
It's easy enough to do it in a cell. It's easy enough to do it and stay put. It's the theatrical	51	That melts to a shriek. I turn and burn. Do not think I underestimate your great concern.	72
Comeback in broad day To the same place, the same face, the same brute Amused shout:	54	Ash, ash— You poke and stir. Flesh, bone, there is nothing there—	75
'A miracle!' That knocks me out. There is a charge	57	A cake of soap, A wedding ring, A gold filling.	78
For the eyeing my scars, there is a charge For the hearing of my heart--- It really goes.	60	Herr God, Herr Lucifer Beware Beware.	81
And there is a charge, a very large charge For a word or a touch Or a bit of blood	63	Out of the ash I rise with my red hair And I eat men like air.	84

Black Coat

Ted Hughes

I remember going out there,
The tide far out, the North Shore ice-wind
Cutting me back
To the quick of the blood—that outer-edge nostalgia,
The good feeling. My sole memory
Of my black overcoat. Padding the wet sandspit.
I was staring at the sea, I suppose.
Trying to feel thoroughly alone,
Simply myself, with sharp edges—
Me and the sea one big tabula rasa,
As if my returning footprints
Out of that scrim of gleam, that horizon-wide wipe,
Might be a whole new start.

My shoe-sole shapes
My only sign.
My minimal but satisfying discussion
With the sea.
Putting my remarks down, for the thin tongue
Of the sea to interpret. Inaudibly.
A therapy,
Instructions too complicated for me
At the moment, but stowed in my black box for later.
Like feeding a wild deer
With potato crisps
As you do in that snapshot where you exclaim
Back towards me and my camera.

So I had no idea I had stepped
Into the telescopic sights
Of the paparazzo sniper
Nested in your brown iris.
Perhaps you had no idea either,
So far off, half a mile maybe,
Looking towards me. Watching me
Pin the sea's edge down.
No idea
How that double image,
Your eye's inbuilt double exposure
Which was the projection
Of your two-way heart's diplopic error,
The body of the ghost and me the blurred see-through
Came into single focus,
Sharp-edged, stark as a target,
Set up like a decoy
Against that freezing sea
From which your dead father had just crawled.

I did not feel
How, as your lenses tightened,
He slid into me.