

## Chapter One

### Introduction

When the writing of poetic labyrinth stops, the act of affirming life also perishes. Poetry is the opposite dying suggests a kind of poetics. Sexton explores her lifelong subjects boldly about the experience of madness and the preoccupation with the psychological and social results of female identity. Because Sexton's writing is seemly personal, she is labeled as a "confessional" poet. Confessional poetry is a breakthrough in poetic tradition in the twentieth century. Paralleling their emotional truth with poetry, and projecting the inner strength, personal embarrassment and psychological condition to the poetic arrangement, the confessional poets provide the confessional candor as a key to discover the order and meanings against the confusion hidden in themselves. According to M. L. Rosenthal's praise to Robert Lowell, breakdown and suicide are part of the "imaginative risk," poets would be brave and sensitive enough to face it directly. When New Criticism attempts to escape from personality and emotion, the confessional poets, in the opposite way, fall into them. "Rather than fearing emotion, they make it their stock-in-trade" (Philips 10). Sexton is defeated by the past guilt over her parents and Nana, and the unprepared responsibility to children. She has no more courage to make a clean breast in facing any question and suspicion, losing in her spiritual labyrinth and recognizing the vanity and fruitlessness about her existence. But Sexton resists the label "confessional," she is preferably regarded as a "storyteller." The speaking persona "I" in Sexton's poems is considered as a literary identity rather than a real one. But the seemlingy normal experience set in a particular time would produce the aesthetic distance and the intensity of language. To Sexton, language is beautiful, and insanity is beautiful. If illness is one, she would pick it one by one. Poetry is a way of handling and terming with painful and

intensely personal experience.

Sexton's poems are often a dialogue with the self in which the self struggles to find "wholeness" rather than "awareness." She is ephemeral, dizzyingly ephemeral emotions. Sometimes she is fulfilled and passionate, plunged into depression and empty, ready to die. Suicides are special people and she says "we talked death and that was life for us." Suicides have a special language like carpenters knowing what tools and how to build. Suicide has a certain power betraying the body and it is a way of cheating death. She has a room which affirms the words, and she is in love with them which does not cause her death but postpone it. It is the transcendence of art. In these warm days she is indeed out of control, trying to do the daily routine for the help of passing time and her feverish mind but it is opposed to the outside drought. All of the images and colors are paradoxical, making her suicidal attempts and madness more bedeviled.

Sexton uses the emotional truth to develop poetry into a kind of therapy. She describes in a 1960 letter, "writing is 'life' in capsule and the writer must feel bump edge scratch ouch in order to know the real furniture of his capsule.... creative people must not avoid the pain they get dealt." The need of writing is a kind of hunger from the dissatisfaction. Madness is merely "the fool's disease," and she refuses the descent into madness, attempting to rationally deal with her irresistible impulse toward suicide. Death would undo the wound when she fails to possess the enemy or eat them. Her biggest enemy seems to be herself, and her mind leads her into danger, away from love of herself and away from life. Sexton writes in 1969, "I rather like being slugged; to walk away from the poem with old wound reopened and ...let the poem bruise me." (Hall 21) She wants to understand her suicidal impulses and transcend them. The desire for suicide is a "lust," and death is nothing but an "old belonging." Despite the origin of her illness in childhood traumas and inadequate relationships with her parents,

there is a new, strong impulse pushing her to face past realities and to assess their impact on the present. Sexton's colloquial line, vigorous, flexible and earthy, is not only a standing rebuke to every sort of false dignity but a strategy for redeeming the common life (Colburn265).



## Chapter Two

### The Confessional and Poetic Tricks

“Experiment escorts us last,” as Emily Dickinson wrote, and Sexton shared this frightening awareness of the uncertain, friable nature of personal evolution, of the pitfalls lying in wait at every turn of experience (Colburn186). In “The Kiss” (CP 174) the speaker depicts the adult experience of being wronged, trying to escape the Mary’s tearing shadow uselessly, but at the moment of awakening, “My mouth blooms like a cut” (CP 174), a resurrection would be upon her. The word “bloom” now implies the private consummation regarding the close-knit ecdysis or resurrection. It also suggest that the total immersion in evasion, “It’s tearing old Mary’s garments off, knot by knot” (CP 174). The lyrical arrangement of a boat “quite wooden/ and with no business, no salt water under it/ and in need of some paint” (CP 174) is a metaphor for herself and the female body born of deep personal conviction. The boat/ body/ self is related to the severed hand; both embody unfeeling and neglect (Philips83). By far the majority of poems in “To Bedlam and Part Way Back” explore the poets’ identity in terms of other women (Colburn173). The method to win the way back in the tangled world is asserted in the epigraph of “To Bedlam and Part Way Back”: making a clean breast of it in the face of every question; pushing the inquiry further, even in the face of appalling horror. Sexton concludes that art is faith, and resurrection implies death that art is the only hope for the madness of the world. (Barry 64) The more nostalgic implication in “Young” (CP 51) is that she does not eschew the innocent view as a “lonely kid” and naturally concealing the struggle toward identity:

and I, in my brand new body,  
which was not a woman’s yet,  
told the stars my questions  
and thought God could really see  
the heat and the painted light,

elbows, knees, dreams, goodnight. (CP 52)

Much absurdity has replaced her documentaries of experience extraordinarily separate from the outside world and the innocence of her girlhood. She pines for the slip in the believable human proportion alternatively and suspicious for the steady label tugging at the associative human possibilities complicatedly and correlatively. This obviously has been the experience if Anne Sexton, who says in the Paris Review interview, “my doctors tell me that I understand something in a poem that I haven’t integrated into my life. In fact, I may be concealing it from myself, while I was revealing it to the readers. The poetry is often more advanced, in terms of my unconscious, than I am. Poetry, after all, milks the unconscious” (Philips<sup>2</sup>). On the one hand, the confessional poet is eager to draw a line between his/her self and the protagonist in his/her poem; on the other hand, “the confessional poet believes that his experience is history internalized” (Breslin 44). Although Sexton is in existence of an emotional and spiritual center, she needs to confirm her responses to the peripheries more cunningly. She is continuously preoccupied with skirmishing to search out what she says recognizably. What has she done to herself? What has she done to other women? The unthinkable anxieties fig her up to the empty existence surrounded by the wise stars “bedding over” her, the “yellow heat running out” (CP 51), the encapsulation into the smooth and white house as wax, the leaves “sailed[ing]” in the “strange” (CP 52) stalk and the ticked[ing] crickets. The speaker takes the poem symbol by symbol to an assemblage which is self-enclosed. The family poems are almost elegiac. In “For Johnny Pole on the Forgotten Beach” (CP 22) the exhilarating sweet memory is mixed with the loss. “To arm the waiting wave” (CP 22) is the best method to indulge themselves in such the thoughts of the breakers riding in:

The beach was strung  
with children paddling their ages in,  
under the glare of noon chipping

its light out. (CP 22)

At the moment of facing the challenges, man is “anonymous” in the way to be resolute to fight to the last indomitably. Finally, she mentions that the posture of dead Johnny is like a “bean bag, outflung, head loose/ and anonymous.” (CP 23) Man is flimsy for facing the “battle” season, but also flipped over the “festival” season. To lose the “weight” is an implacable implication of death when “paddling their ages in.” The expression of bursting, rusting, stinging is a kind of devastating spoil by buckling him under the “waiting” wave of death in which there would no exceptional “balance” existing (CP 23).

Anne Sexton has no brother but takes part her piece of life in the fictional concoction. The fictional brother crawls with the notion of giant strength and being straight out, and a desire is not repressed because the life waves the breakers of terror toward us and the “odor of death” like “rotting potatoes” hang in the air. It seems that we can smell the perishable odor of death permeably just like “rotting potatoes” (CP 23). In spite of the vegetative kingdom, the thickness of craft is also strung with the waiting wave piles the crafts up rotationally. In the infant age, a child makes the strenuous efforts and a defensive position to commit the designation, “buoyed him there/and bucked him under” imperturbably. He is like a “small wave” (CP 23), being washed out the “assault” of beach whether it is the perplexities of life or not. With an overwhelming yet deft irony she introduces words and images recalling the happy innocence and human possibility of the earlier stanza into the depiction of its tragic outcome (Colburn 114).

In the poem “Old Dwarf Heart” (CP 54), the speaker postures herself as depositing in the grand pursuit of love whenever the old dwarf heart will shake her head perturbatively. Her pledge to remain the debatable acknowledgement of destructive identity about “the decay we’re made of” (CP 54), and nowhere to embark on an elaborately designed escape from the tangle, “Where I go, she goes” (CP 55) with a brief silence. This

permeating effect becomes anchored to her life by the driven sense of elusion at her core from “old dwarf heart.” It is supposed that she is incapable to have the time of her life and no way out of this dilemma. She could not put an end to her self-oblivion and the sense of distance from “her” as well as an elderly “imbecile” (CP 54) turns her gaze-wobbling upon the speaker. Henceforth her “flickering bed” (CP 54) would never be the same again. She could accommodate herself to the changed situation that

When hurt she is abrupt.  
Now she is solid, like fat,  
breathing in loops like a green hen  
in the dust. But if I dream of loving, then  
My dreams are of snarling strangers. (CP 54)

The dream-minded project is reflected upon the self-improvement “corrupt[ion]” (CP 54). It permits the existential acquisition of old dwarf heart factitiously fussing breath by breath. No pent-up rage against the “snarling strangers” (CP 54), otherwise, only does the dream-corrupting seethe herself with the prime reminder “the decay we’re made of” (CP 54). The omnipotent woman sheds on her sores-fulled zeal in urgent need to make the speaker follow her lead.

And worse, the sores she holds  
in her hands, gathered in like a nest  
from an abandoned field. At her best  
she is all red muscle, humming in and out, cajoled  
by time. Where I go, she goes. (CP 54-55)

The speaker delineates the oppressive atmosphere but is unable to follow the path of numb dumb wordage. Moreover, she makes her thoughts center around what the old dwarf heart centers around. Neither effacing nor permitting herself the accostable plea for love, she flies back and forth between these alternatives “how awkwardly her arms undo,/ how patiently I untangle her wrists/ like knots” in her frustrating love. The loss price and influence of her mother and father bequeath an iron and precocious beginning. What the speaker has been through is the shocks of life and she cannot choose from

the painful agony of treatment like sighing an indrawn breath in the end of the world. In the poem “The Fortress” (CP 66) the speaker emphasizes the domestic residual certainties of life. The healing and healthy images mingle with the open natural forces in the allotted time span. A smack of weakling injury scarred with the “pink quilted covers” (CP 66) cannot help the speaker also bleeding for it. A floodgate of “promises” cannot push her to pursue a follow-through as stably solid as a stack of “books.” By sketching the dropping asleep situation that the wind fanning from their bed, the speaker emphasizes the brown “mole” inherited undeniably in their faces. She is haunted by touching the inherited brown mole with “half in jest, half in dread” (CP 66) and that delineates the high-minded woman is threatened by the oppressive atmosphere of “danger” (CP 66). She has to make the pack with the “bomb” of experience and press herself to own the inherited power like a “bewitched worm ate its way through our soul/ in search of beauty” (CP 66). Having the instinctive taste for the wedded beauty of going after the wind; hereupon, the browbeaten hurt for a good bawl as a “wolf/ and your pony tail” (CP 67) has been a long time ago. The multi-layer of wind rolls the tide to coil up over their heads as a “dying woman” (CP 67). Always being stirred the sounds of scream into the night they are about to sleep and being given them a sound “grunting and sighing” (CP 67) by approve of personalized usage. The color of trees fluctuates secretly to be “fed” from a “pool of beet-red dye” according to the love communion of natural forces. The “battle” (CP 66) green leaves adhere to the trunks to get the acquisition of being “smacked” (CP 66) by the device of windy device to winnows away spotlessly clean as “oilskin” (CP 67). The vegetable existence in a haphazard chance edifying with a green heart indicates the hope and usefulness somewhere. Such delving into that “your own child at/ your breast, your own house on your own land” (CP 67) with care, the earth-object takes from its shadow in many-breast hives indubitably. Her desperation at knowing “life is not in my hands” (CP 67) and



her uncertainty about creating anything from her body are within her emptiness. At with the dying woman gone, they make clean to show their directions and the detachable shadows from those fat branches, orange nipples, weeding the forest and curing the trees like “cripples.” The poignant causes they should all work for but cannot deniably issue that “life with its terrible changes/ will take you” (CP 67) are a virtual inducement swaying with them. She is smacked by the life with “terrible changes” and admonishes her daughter “What ark/ can I fill for you when the world goes wild?” (CP 66) because she cannot pull through the reality. And what consolation is there? Moldering the bewilderment about the domestic alliance would console her and nail her to “The woods are underwater, their weeds are shaking/ in the tide; birches like zebra fish/ flash by in a pack” (CP 67). The alliance of “fortress” is lack of the promising happiness, retrievable wish which will be emphasized to her darling, only the “images” (CP 67) of which she is sure.

Time will not take their love away because “Touch is all.” The inner edification is made out of love effect by a version of time’s impingement “Time will not take away that” (CP 68). This is experienced what she is made of “I promise you love” (CP 68). Sexton’s colloquial line, vigorous, flexible and earthy, is not only a standing rebuke to every sort of false dignity but a strategy for redeeming the common life (Colburn 265). In her poem, “Those Times...” (CP 118) she describes that she lives in a “graveyard” and at the age of six she eschew the identity with her distrust. She also recites the pangs of selfhood perhaps because she dose not give any recognition to her fixed images among the sever ambience:

I was locked in my room all day behind a gate,  
a prison cell.  
I was the exile  
who sat all day in a knot. (CP 118)

Facing the extricate troubles about life and trapped in them, apparently she dares to

express the heart-pounding terror and defenselessness:

the closet is where I rehearsed my life,  
all day among shoes,  
away from the glare of the bulb in the ceiling,  
away from the bed and the heavy table  
and the same terrible rose repeating in the walls. (CP 119)

Although she also tries to neglect those days “locked” in her room, she could change this kind of life style to conceive of playing hide-and-seek. Certain phrases recur throughout the poem, testifying to the child’s ignorance: “I did not question it,” “I did not ask,” “I did not know (Linda 92). Now she narrates about the “little childhood cruelties” (CP 118) not being expected; otherwise, only a “mistake,” just as an expediency to detain her parents’ marriage to make the romantics further. She does not find delight in being a child, except the shutting herself in a “prison cell” (CP 118), the undressing body of “nightly humiliations” (CP 118) and demeaning crises about the identity. The adnominal lyrics to her miserable body is “the last given/ and the last taken” (CP 118) which stuns me. When her stern, punishing mother “came to force to undress”— the phrase contains an unmistakable suggestion of rape— Sexton says that she “lay there silently, / hoarding my small dignity” (Colburn 184).

Perhaps the reason of taking what her mother’s breasts for is so ungrudging and by the contraries the speaker thinks the well-made dolls are more ideal than her. Putting them together and matching with them, she could make a conclusion that they are firmly “without the pang of birth.” And the lyrical usage of “The me” is a wronged sense of debased agreement in this unsurely growing body. In the midst of the poem, the speaker hopes for herself to use her imagination to set her free from the “closet:”

I grew into it like a root  
and yet I planned such plans of flight,  
believing I would take my body into the sky,  
dragging it with me like a large bed. (CP 120)

There are such pieces splintering and living in a graveyard and would not choke down

this “knot” (CP 118) so she tries to fly away this chain fastened her in like a “root” (CP 120). One day she could use such “dreams” to save the energy for her upon the latest condition that she is “unskilled.”

With such dreams,  
 storing their energy like a bull,  
 I planned my growth and my womanhood  
 as one choreographs a dance. (CP 120)

She makes an arrangement for her acknowledgement about being a woman and the progress toward maturity one day without any resolution when children “would break from between my legs” (CP 121). She confirms to “outgrow” (CP 120) the encarnalized patterns which confine or impede her growth to give the “precious window” (CP 120) up. Taking any taxing efforts or resistance would not work to change the act of fantasy, “stuffing my heart into a shoe box” overwhelmingly. Now to express the last self-consciousness secretly is one of the ways she has to keep going. Even though the outside constraints hinder her growth, she would not muddle through what she thinks because it will be better to understand whenever she has examined into her personal history of maturity: “blood would bloom in me/ each mouth like an exotic flower.” Instead, menstruation and parturition become the adult counterparts of fulfillments of the shameful rituals (Colburn 231). A dramatic induction obviously into that a terrible memory in the speaker’s life:

I lay there silently,  
 hoarding my small dignity.  
 I did not ask about the gate of the closet.  
 I did not question the bedtime ritual  
 where, on the cold bathroom tiles,  
 I was spread out daily  
 and examined for flaws. (CP 121)

A shocking experience gets herself out of the terrible atmosphere of despair and darkness. She has no idea about how to deal with life and how to kick back; otherwise,

she finds herself lost in the sophisticated world. The speaker narrates her puerperal process with two children who are allegorized to the “two monuments” (CP 121) inscribing her great care and efforts. That the cramped children “break” (CP 121) from her legs precipitously is the hint that the remarkable inception of life is brusquely requiring bravery to “run over” the rocks hindering in the way to maturity. She observes them to breathe carelessly and let them to indulge in her “tiny beauty.” She is suspicious about the maturity of womanhood, not outright identifying herself with blood blooming in her. Only dose such a highly sultry woman move dully along the intensive uneasiness and pressure of her puerperal process. Also the image of the “two monuments” describes the speaker’s sense of getting shed of her blood and the children float in the outrush of the blood. When time passes by, every month is like an “exotic flower” (CP 121) budding and blossoming its pleasing fragrance within every petal in which she cannot help but incur attractively. Perfectly she is all within her queer air and cut out from the rest of the world.

Furthermore, she cannot be pacified from the “mistake” her mother or ignore the entrapment from her heart severing with the anticipation to be anything distinct than “all over skin like a fish.” Often times she tries to ignore the entrapment of a “deaf spot” from her heart, more annoyance she cannot pacify from the “mistake” her mother grants for. That “unsaid” reverberates around and around in a “small hole” of her heart. As so often in Sexton’s work, the true villain seems to be life itself, whose tragic process insists upon the movement away from innocence toward unending pain, and its resulting tragic awareness (Colburn185). She cannot help but be abrasive about the past veined with the cracks so gnawingly, and further, not sliding out of the past but hugging each naked word for the rotating spiritual exploration. And the fecund field of her literal or metaphorical usage is an honest projection of her emotional states. In “The Division of Parts” (CP 42) the speaker fuses the method of sorting with a sustainable meditation on

her painful past. When the speaker plans to suffer the “debt” (CP 42) which she inherited the gaudy fur animals from her mother. She could not discard its heftiness; furthermore, not only imprisoning within the “obstacles” (CP 42) but also taking this condition as an effective siege of reminiscence her mother recalls. When someone turns older, the yesteryear is sliding like “masks” (CP 44) flicking from the skull.

I have tried  
to exorcise the memory of each event  
and remain still, a mixed child,  
heavy with cloths of you.  
Sweet witch, you are my worried guide. (CP 44)

The speaker describes her mother as “sweet witch” (CP 44), “worried guide” (CP 44), and “brave ghost” (CP 46). She cannot choose the “gifts” her mother left for her by charging the “obstacles/ of letters, family silver,/ eyeglasses and shoes” (CP 42) optionally like some “unseasoned” (CP 42) Christmas. The black birds recall of the ambivalence of cursing at her window sill. She pictures the “devout” work ritually against their “cold” knees sarcastically. The “sweet” martyrdom unmistakably without taking any affectionate disclosure is fractiously plain for her “timely loss” (CP 43). Even though she has planned to tolerate “the dying is done/ in its ugly hours” (CP 43), the customary sense of culpability obstructs her wailsome wretchedness. The speaker recites the same view about “Black birds peck/ at my window sill” (CP 42) once again. The unquestionable fact, “I imitate/ a memory of belief/ that I do not own” (CP 43) flaps its “clutter of worship” (CP 43) revoltingly taught by her mother. The flux of time practically makes the invasive relationship intricate with the grief and guilt when the “rearranger/ of estates” (CP 43) “equips” her with Jesus’ garments. The speaker distressfully be worn and torn the “badges” by the devout work of enough “staunch” guys. She recognizes herself as a badgered person plaguing with the real inheritance riddling and unfolding in her life as Christ has fastened to His crucifix with the stiff

obedience of salvation “so that love may praise/ his sacrifice/ and not the grotesque metaphor” (CP 46). She implies her emotion of the deepest needs in the planning sacrifice.

More certainly she does make about the clasped truth that a “brave ghost” would root in her mind unpliantly while the “praise/ or paradise” (CP 46) is not given as unsparing as possible. More assertive to fumble her “lost childhood” but still lounge in the “sad stuff” molestingly with fictitious expectation of love. Never again does she pretend that she should be a “Fool” because she begins to reminiscence something beseeching and does not pique herself upon the “trickeries of need” frankly:

I have tried  
to exorcise the memory of each event  
and remain still, a mixed child,  
heavy with cloths of you. (CP 44)

The poet has a dream while wearing her mother’s nightgown, a dream which reenacts the struggle for mastery which is at the heart of the poem and the particular ritual patterns which shape it (Colburn 229). At once if anything could be more transparent to see through, it would be more effortless for her to “undo/ a life in hours” (CP 44) and never wave farewell to her mother since “cancer began its ugliness” (CP 43) grievously or suppose herself as the “balm” among the patients sick with lepers. She takes more efforts defiantly to raze over the crucified doubts left by the pretending ease although she is still “taken and beguiled” by the dispassionate cluster of harassment. Determining to love reasonably and substantially as “equilibrium” not tilting or shattery. The poet must “shed her daughterhood,” an image sustained by a series of references to inherited clothes, the coats, stones and furs which “settle on me like a debt” (Colburn228). She cries for the infuriated perturbation stirred by her mother climbing into her dream painfully, cursing “*Dame/ keep out of my slumber*” and with the intimations of “rhyming” words. In her “jabbering” dream, Mother plays the most

dominant guide for her internal despair and detailed disillusion secretively in the present.

In “Mother and Jack and the Rain” (CP 109) the speaker uses the deliberate regressions in the poetic truth for a special effect. She composes herself by the help of the instrumental into cleansing and tracking down every dead disciple in the “blind” feeling. She tries to sharpen the calculating conformity of her room affirmably although incapable of escaping from the “drills” of the rain deniably. Outside practicing with the “old unnecessary stories...” (CP 109) but more accurately “fingering the pen lightly, my blade,” the memory has established her womanhood resolvedly by conjuring her “daily bread.” The recognizable boundary of her “invisible body” (CP 110) is further pushing out intelligibly:

With this pen I take in hand my selves  
and with these dead disciples I will grapple.  
Though rain curses the window  
let the poem be made. (CP 34)

The intimate negative enclosure is a prerequisite for clarifying an awareness of the possibly good as well as the possibly rotten. Anne Sexton makes this poem act as a defense against the suggestion addressed by her former teacher John Holmes. In “For John, Who Begg Me Not to Enquire Further” (CP 34) :

And if I tried  
to give you something else,  
something outside of myself,  
you would not know  
that the worst of anyone  
can be, finally,  
an accident of hope. (CP 34)

What had been introduced initially as “a certain sense of order” is now “some order” and the “accident of hope” is seen more definitely as “this kind of hope.”(Colburn98) “Seeing stars” is the caricatured behavior of people who are dazed by losing

consciousness or being in love (Colburn 97). Through the lyrical self-scrutiny and self-control, the speaker admits that “an invisible veil” is pierced universally and taken roots in us transcendentally which are more than herself as well as more than ourselves. With biographical and confessional revelation in Sexton’s poetry, the greater knowledge of life has made the poetry seem richer and more complex. In the first part of the poem, the speaker pushes the embellished “order” and a series of poetic truth out from the dim recesses of her mind:

Not that it was beautiful,  
but that, in the end, there was  
a certain sense of order there;  
something worth learning  
in that narrow diary of mind,  
in the commonplaces of the asylum. (CP 34)

We have to admit that the speaker experiences something true and lives by these experiences in the lyrical usage of explanative pleasure of art. Anne Sexton has said, “I think all form is a trick in order to get at the truth” (Colburn 222). This preoccupation expresses itself in her use of words or images commonly associated with ritual— “sacrament,” “ceremony,” “rites,” “rituals,” “magic,” “exorcise,” “communion” (Colburn 223). Nevertheless, she is outstared by her own “selfish” (CP 34) death, rich in urgent dangerous secrets as well as the “cracked stars” (CP 34) shining in her “awkward” (CP 34) bowl which also reflects on the “cracked mirror” (CP 34) which is a kind of subjective awareness. She spills her “inverted bowl” (CP 34) guts out, also attempting to “rage” the sharply lived or the imagined experience into the truth. Yet this speaker confesses nakedness; she has disrobed herself as one would unpeel an orange (Colburn 97). Also, the choice of inert materials to describe her mind (“glass,” “inverted bowl”) emphasizes her helplessness (Colburn 95).

She uncovers that if others ignore the poetic truth in this “lovelier place” (CP 35), she would hold the bowl still, living by and with what she experiences. Her place of



confinement was both the “narrow diary” of her own mind, and the “commonplaces of the asylum.” One infers that by finding the keys to her mind, she will be able to unbolt the doors of Bedlam (Colburn 92). Anticipating the others in the asylum, they would also “mirror” her “cracked” qualms as she senses an “invisible veil” between them. For this speaker, neither her disturbed psyche nor the insane asylum offers any retreat; they are places of bedlam where one is locked into the necessity of painful self-realization (Colburn 92).

In “You, Doctor Martin” (CP 3) the speaker coils the scene but also keeps some absolute distances from it. Stamping with the remembrance in the “summer hotel” (CP 3), she is a “most tall” child moving in the “best ward.” Even though “floods of life” helps her hobble along with these “large children,” she baldly proclaims herself as “queen of this summer hotel” (CP 3) and “queen of all my sins/ forgotten” (CP 4). Holding of the “beautiful” feature distinctively and making out her act by “counting this row and that row of moccasins/ waiting on the silent shelf” (CP 4). At the most, this is the power capable of self-assertion in the repetitious rituals whether she is even imposed in the chaos, keeps the “unraveled” (CP 3) hands to check or the swoop of foxy children seized by the “prince of all the foxes.” Dr. Martin is designates “god of our block” (CP 3) and enacting out the power exploratively. He has a “third eye” (CP 3) to test measurably in every separate “boxes” (CP 4) served as an “oracle eye” decreeing the power enjoining in their nest. The speaker shows her great fondness for him undoubtedly and depends on him unshakenly without the tender solicitude because he leans above the “plastic sky” (CP 3) consolidatedly. The hospital occupants “stand in broken/ lines” (CP 3), waiting for their “shibboleth” (CP 3) to march through the unlocked door and are counted customarily at the “frozen” gate to chew their foods in a row. There is no helpless demand associative to these “moving dead” and the childish whimper and disorder are replaced by the harmonious view of breakfast.

“We are magic talking to itself” introduces a connection between therapy and making poetry (Colburn 225). Walk / talk / stalk – rhyme is an important element in Sexton’s early poetry, because it is a game played against visual uniformity even as the appearance of regularity is maintained: the patient’s riddle and the witch’s web (Linda 114). “You, Dr. Martin” is concerned with two kinds of power— the power of the therapist-parent who imposes a mechanical order on the patient, and the power of the patient-child, who discovers a deeper order or a more meaningful disorder through madness and poetry (Colburn 225).

The bells also recur in “Said the Poet to the Analyst” (CP 12). The major contrast happens in the first stanza which ensues a preparation in the second stanza. The business of the speaker is “words” that would give her a “nickel machine” (CP 12) which came “clacking three bells out”:

My business is words. Words are like labels,  
or coins, or better, like swarming bees.  
I confess I am only broken by the sources of things;  
as if words were counted like dead bees in the attic,  
unbuckled from their yellow eyes and their dry wings. (CP 12)

Here, the hint of “love love/ love” is also immersed in resonance. Sexton praises writing and wants to make words refer to facts or events. Self-enclosure of the lyrical mode pours from working hard with “labels,/ or coins, or better, like swarming bees” (CP 12) at her best. The speaker hurtles toward the inescapable confrontation of mental weakness and might be not sufficiently well rounded. Because of touching the “believing money” (CP 13), she confesses that she grows “weak” (CP 13), “broken” but feels “funny,” more “ridiculous” as designing the literal “sources of things” (CP 12). She is relentlessly addicted to the “clacking three bells out,/ over the lucky screen” (CP 12), and the enhancement of the words can “pick out” (CP 12) or “manner” (CP 12). Obviously the poet has a deep personal commitment and intentionally plummets herself

down the use of self-referential pronouns within the poem itself.

*Live or die* is stuffed with the recovery and aspect of pessimism turning to that of optimism and is arranged chronologically the yearning reconciliations with the narrow ability of her body and the ensued “fever chart for a bad case of melancholy”: “Despite every resolution of optimism, melancholy occasionally wins out: man has decidedly botched up the planet.” Houses, rooms, cells, caves, and other images indicating close confinement symbolize the body, especially in the volumes *All My Pretty Ones* and *Live or Die*, as though the self were an unwelcome inhabitant in a hostile environment (Colburn 230). “Kind Sir: These Woods,” makes such an explanation to admonish herself a host of paternal imperative suggestion at the breakneck speed:

And opening my eyes, I am afraid of course  
to look – this inward look that society scorns—  
Still, I search in these woods and find nothing worse  
than myself, caught between the grapes and the thorns. (CP 5)

The defensiveness might be pollutedness to make the speaker surrender her own lives to the real world. Lancing with the outside acting sleight of hand, she assembles her sights without astonishment in viewing “strange happenings, untold and unreal” (CP 4) around her. Knowing that the most viciousness is breeding in her “nighty mind” (CP 4) and the realm of the mental effect hurls herself again and again into the inner vileness.

In “All My Pretty Ones” (CP 49), the speaker meets bleak frustration given by her parents in the field of her meditation upon the past dreary failure. She sets her heart on pursuing to disencumber the prodigious quantities left by her “drunkard” (CP 51). Sticking to the leftovers “as thick as wood” (CP 50) and shuffling the flow of time in which “jinx rides us apart” (CP 49) and Mother’s “cold clumber” (CP 49) undergoes, the speaker feels jam-up feeling and craves to throw them out. From the appearance of “yellow scrapbook” (CP 50), the conflict-ridden goal of existence drags her down into the “crackling” and “wrinkly” dilemma. She reminds of the “hurly-burly” (CP 51) year

with the evident diary of father's alcohol abuse and oversleep which her mother took down. Her conclusion drives her into a deeper and deeper conciliation: "Whether you are pretty or not, I outlive you,/ bend down my strange face to yours and forgive you" (CP 51).

In the poem "Sylvia's Death" (CP 126) the speaker indicates that Sylvia is a thief as if Sexton is in a way jealous of Sylvia's suicide. Sexton & Plath are a sort of death friends according to such interviews and journals. They discuss at length their first suicide attempts, retelling this in beautiful, loving detail, just a kind of common obsession with death. They hunger for death as much as hunger for life. Indeed, Sexton is envious of a thief crawling down into death. One cannot regret for the action of suicidal attempt later once it is the loss of the life force. Suicide is such a selfish way out. No one could endure the pain when you are gone. Suicide is murder that makes some part of you mad and murder would be against your own self. If you commit suicide, you kill yourself and there is no time for repentance. But she still mourns for Sylvia's death, "a terrible taste" (CP 127) she hardly eat "salt" (CP 127) down. They are competitors pursuing the time one would stretch out into that "stone place." Anne spoke about suicide as a major "career move" for a poet. There was a kind of notoriety given to Plath after her suicide which, I think, drew attention away from Anne. These two women are very troubled, perceiving the death doing her jobs everywhere to hover around in hearts. Especially their minds are occupied by the death and rotted home with their body and store this "necessity" (CP 127) up when the suicidal attempts grow old one day. The sharp mental cleavages are so intense and deep like the "sleepy drummer" (CP 127) beating the same old story year after year. She plummets into probable jealousy and anger at Plath because a complicated mess of emotions is abandoned by the rival. Moreover, the peace in dying is like a cradlesong singing round and round.

## Chapter Three

### The Tropic Immersion on Affliction of Madness and Death Wish

The hunger for death in Anne Sexton's poem is equally the hunger for a meaningful life, for choices, and for affirmation (Colburn237). Her suicidal attempts are as a result of madness and the anxiety of ambition. The natural flow of madness manufactures so hazardously for the more intense image of death. She manipulates the experience of raw emotions coming from the corner of her mind and arranges them individually alive with a pulse of her own. As Alicia Suskin Ostriker points out, "To the powerless, self-destruction may seem the ultimately liberating act" (Ostriker143). If one becomes preoccupied with the death wish or uses it to excess in escaping from the pain of life, the death wish would become a conditioned response in reaction to the added stress or crises. There is a crisis when our life has come to a point which we are no longer in control or we are having strong suicidal urges. The muse of the creative energy is Sexton's flourishing poetic world; moreover, "once upon a time" symptoms have integrating force to shut herself up in the naked fear of an upsetting time.

#### I. Disintegrating from the Female Acceptability

In "It Is a Spring Afternoon" (CP 193), the changes of season parallel throbbingly the speaker's own profound and silent maturing. She confirms and celebrates her new body through transitional nature-exploding forces, "the ground, that winter nightmare, / has cured its sores and bursts / with green birds and vitamins" (CP 194). Affiliated with the natural touch, the speaker simplifies the "deathmasks" (CP 193) would be carried by the animals and trailed by the ensuing change of "earthskin" (CP 193). Water and trees are ironically and appropriately the medium for the girl's initiation into fertility and sexuality in "It Is a Spring Afternoon." Because "everything here is yellow and green," because "everything here is possible, a young girl has taken off her clothes and "place herself upon a tree limb / that hangs over a pool in the river (George116).

Opportunity slinks beneath the impossibility, divulging the mysterious probability to the blind men. It is feasible when different types of identity mature through the intervals of time which domesticate her dissimilarity. It is feasible for her to be domesticated dissimilarly and given by a proof of “her animal loveliness” (CP 194) through the interval of time: “Two rivers combine beneath her. / The face of the child wrinkles / in the water and is gone forever” (CP 194). It is impenitent that youth would retrieve it no more; moreover, she falls in love with her new body.

In “The Interrogation of the Man of Many Hearts” (CP 176) the speaker depicts the accustomed marriage and searches for the psychology of the male. Accompanied by a song called marriage, there is ceremony rooted here:

I made up a song called *Marriage*.  
*You come to me out of wedlock*  
*and kick your foot on my stoop*  
*and ask me to measure such things?* (CP 177)

The speaker clearly delineates the full dimension of the experience, “... the song is the life, / the life I can’t live” (CP 179), “But I am in a torment. We have no place” (CP 177). In the muse she is snared in the “bedded-down knot” (CP 178), in reality she could not split the tie fastened to the wedlock, only gravitating toward the tedious life, “... *every bed has been condemned, / not by morality or law, / but by time*” (CP 180), which is almost the undeniable human experience. The imagery of self-protection for the speaker may also be the imagery of self-creation. Self-absorption always trembles on the edge of self-indulgence. Obstinate, marriage is an obstacle to romantic love. A lover coiled in the wedlock more often tries to delve into another erotic or extramarital fascination which is private culmination whether it would be accessed or not. The sex-exploding experience arrests a standing attention, “I’m caught deep in the dye of her” (CP 179) which increases the expanded reliance on the personally reticent resignedness to her. Woman is sanctioned by the given social or traditional

rituals and unbalancedly tailed with the erotic relationship “I have not only bedded her down./ I have tied her down with a knot” (CP 178). The poetic narrative that “...the song is the life,/ the life I can’t live” (CP 179) provides herself with the ample room because of the residual certainties of the chantable life.

In “Eighteen Days Without you” (CP 205), the speaker is “jailed” (CP 206) ramblingly through solitariness, not making any dodge from the dreaminess in spite of provoking such “bad luck” (CP 207). She could console herself with her increased insight, but slow enlightenment cannot keep pace with her new awareness of her spiritual deficiency. Not hobbling, she would cast herself down into such a pure depth heading to “slow” death piecemeal. The dregs of life that are not inertly despondent though the dreary part of life are to teach us how we are beguiled and how blind our vision of today is. Modern self-awareness entails a disintegration of the self, an exercise in suspicion about its existence.

To herself, the hell is too adorable to be await for unless incurring the thick-and-thin scour of hell preferably. Once her heart was peaking in the drilling period, and so obstinate when “its sins revved up like an engine that would not stop.” Out of an awareness of the transcended human condition, the darkness is self-created. Shadows and echoes are the encapsulated reliance on the vocative suggestion to die, and also alluding the subtle responses of the environment to her presence:

But the heart,  
this child of myself that resides in the flesh,  
this ultimate signature of the me, the start  
of my blindness and sleep, builds a death cre`che.

The washed-out bones in the “pain machine” are predominated by the toil of the violent heart, waiting for being “screwed together,” and bored with tarry because “its cargo is scarred.” The poor soul always keeps silent because the energetic creativity in heart is a kind of pabulum. When the sad silence is a kind of conclusion, loitering alone, you

would perceive “The heart burst with love and lost its breath.” At the moment she casts herself down into such a pure death. Being depressed would cause the vexed question about existential feeling to narrow her view of the world around herself to such that reality becomes distorted and the negative in her lives is constantly reinforced. The cognitive processes associated with certain moods are the link between creativity and madness. She notes that restlessness, grandiosity, irritability, intensified sensory systems, quickening of the thought process, and intense feelings are all typical cognitive changes that characterize both mania and creativity (Neihart 48).

Sexton’s aim is to recover living reality with the death wish and madness from the unliving true world. She doesn’t even know where real life is or what it is, whereas, it is fraught with the cynical attitude induced by the piercing life force. Desire has become an unmaker of the self and depicted as the victim, the possessed self, and has no control to rebuke a ruthless tyrant at peril. The doubt comes thick upon her zeal which the “body” is in prison but “heart cell” which has the ways of the hilarious secrets and dynamic “tempest” disintegrates from the body escalatingly. An unrelenting and oppressive sadness comes over her and causes a very aversive pain and makes her bare. It is as if we are trapped in a dark cave that runs only from our constant pain to somewhere near the hell with no exit. She begins to think that there is no relief and that this pain would never end. Tomorrow will be the same, or worse. Death might be the only solution, but actually not an irreversible act to end the pain. Most of the thoughts are fleeting, happening after a major life loss at some points in life where she perceives the future as becoming hopeless.

In “Abortion” (CP 61), the speaker gives the public breast-beating feelings about a baffled baby growing out of the inner principles and not inventing self-acceptance. The refrain “*Somebody who should have been born/ is gone*” (CP 61-62) has a repetitiously admonitory sense of guilty. The structure putting “is gone” instead of



“death” in the second sentence is more sharpened to increase the guilt-provoking burdens to her. And in the poetic beginning, the diction of “Just” (CP 61) implies there is no exclusively new quintessence springing under directing the rays of sun. She wants to ignore the code of the natural force and opens up a deviant plan with an unshakable faith.

In a meanwhile she holds the alterable attitude toward spring’s rebirth “the earth puckered its mouth,/ each bud puffing out from its knot” (CP 61) which contrasts sharply with the title. When the speaker drives south, the exhibition of its voracious needs in the everlasting cycle of nature also come to show the unthinkable anxieties of life. She clothesthe mountains with:

wearing, like a crayoned cat, its green hair,  
its roads, sunken in like a gray washboard;  
where, in truth, the ground cracks evilly,  
a dark socket from which the coal has poured, (CP 61)

Blatantly the hidden uterus leaves her a baffled feeling raking her body down to the sunken path as a “gray washboard” (CP 61) because she makes up her mind to be bound to her intense hunger. The blood of “coal” spews from the meaningful fulfillment. Squirting the blood of “coal” (CP 61) is a release from the meaningful fulfillment. The concealing emptiness of symbol by symbol is internalized as important to her inner principles than any person in the real world. Seeing the grass wrestles with the natural force “as bristly and stout as chives;” (CP 61) meanwhile, she asks for the decisive time in which “the ground would break” (CP 61). Much more determinative faith in giving the “*somebody*” its hurtful energy reaches the limits of her bold bravery. Moreover, it is clearly allusive to her introspection about “how anything fragile survives” (CP 61) and the wondering problems she suspects of whether the abortion is right or wrong. She neither views abortion as an unjust act nor preaches her thought putting together with the patterns of ethics honorably. Submitting herself

to the lieu of being, she finds herself in tears without knowing which thought forces water to her eyes. Too much “fullness” (CP 61) is placed by the “little” man upon her shoulder which might rebound to her. Is it “at all, at all...” (CP 61) possible that love starts catastrophically fusty fullness to leave lovers no choice but to swallow it. Man controls the decisive power over woman; meanwhile, the fascination or terror lurks in the beautiful love of usage. After taking away the meaningful “*someone*,” she returns north perceiving “the sky grew thin/ like a high window looking nowhere” (CP 62) as a dry-as-dust womb un-refreshes the revelation of the physic- or psycho-exotic awakening. The lyric function of the location of north and south also adumbrates the contrast between the richness and the emptiness in fetus.

The tin-glaze glimmers flash at her un-vegetable existence, and she moves along the broad road as far as her eyes can see. The puckering mouth is no longer manifest on its face of earth. She unleashes her raw emotions to a coward or little naked figures brooking any cavities in locked logic. The speaker expects herself to be unclassified and rare, not a creature of pervasive sorrow or commonness in “Consorting with Angels” (CP 111), “I was not a woman anymore,/ not one thing or the other” (CP 112). Dream is part of her and so closely identified with the dream “You are the answer./ You will outlive my husband and my father” (CP 111). She audaciously grouses about “tired of being a woman” (CP 111), in her mouth and breasts. There is more Seton’s own distinctive identities assertively preserving out of this “city” (CP 111) in a dream. Her experience of “the nature of angels” (CP 111) is deepened and intensified by the “each one like a poem obeying itself,/ performing God’s functions,/ a people apart” (CP 111), and left her the baffled feeling— either unexplainedly being incarcerated by the “chains” (CP 112) lying down the gates of the city or not cohering her common gender and her final aspect with the “world of reason” (CP 112). In the absence of a substantial sense of being central, there is an urgent need for mutual dream “We wove

our arms together/ and rode under the sun” (CP 112). More sewed-up “nature” (CP 111) goes unexplainedly in the city made of “chains.” More the “chains” fastened around her but now she wants to court for the unambiguous aspect about her “common gender” (CP 112). She goes through with a recreation of the self and a reconstruction of a general orientation to reality. Her testing is bound up with the tenuous hope for no central existence, the fear of being imprisoned alive enforces the defense of mental path through:

I am black and I am beautiful.  
I’ve been opened and undressed.  
I have no arms or legs.  
I’m all one skin like a fish.  
I’m no more a woman  
than Christ was a man. (CP 112)

Holding never more than her “final aspect” affirmatively and not being “opened and undressed,” she fixes on a direction bringing her into “all one skin like a fish” (CP 112). This is much blazoning just as the last effable description “I’m no more a woman/ than Christ was a man” (CP 112). We should not conclude that all creative writers and artists are mentally ill.

In “The Farmer’s Wife” (CP 19), the speaker conveys the impression of habitual love coming from the corner of her mind. Rehearsing the sense of self-victimization and planning growth to that “she has been his habit” (CP 19) gradually unleashes a new emotional force of whether love is above sex-exploding or not. Their “old pantomime love” (CP 19) precipitates in the gulf of inertia, permitting herself to yield the “raucous” bed sarcastically. No interactive excitement of lust tosses them again and again. Otherwise, she spills her secretive trickeries uneasily to expect her husband “...cripple, or poet,/ or even lonely, or sometimes,/ better, my lover, dead” (CP 20). She would leak out her mature sense of self being different from other women than being alike although this is an only bungle[ing] man in the world of “a sprouting broom factory”

(CP 20) for her.

Their separate dreams build bridges between the “blowzy bag/ of his sleep” (CP 20) and “living/ her own self in her own words” (CP 20). In their love the virtual invalidity of the “slow braille touch” possesses their body and drives the incompatible suspicion to her husband about “her young years bungle past/ their same marriage bed.” But, as an expression of personality, confessional poetry is not written with, as Philips puts it, “wild, unchecked emotional outbursts” (Philips 10).

The sarcastic usage of lyrics explores the aversive unresignedness to “old pantomime of love” and their “same marriage bed” (CP 20). The speaker lacerates herself on their rot-laden love and lives in the red blaze of her husband’s sun. He plays a duet of shadow and light. Her devotion to life is completed by him but still a woman needs to be loved, to be productive and fruitful which is what the society teaches her. She cannot become fully a woman and fully herself without male love and any another solace.

In “Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward” (CP 24), the speaker puts it outside into the world instead of festering into the “traded life” (CP 25). The reason for the mother’s femininity is accessible to her daughter “ly[ing], fisted like a snail” (CP 24), and the deliberate progressions in the “current of [her] breath” (CP 24) is for special life-giving deliverance. Not floundering in the hopeless estrangement, she dares to admit that “Yours is the only face I recognize./ Bone at my bone, you drink my answer in” (CP 24). Voicing and giving the hunger of growing and plumping, this high-minded woman sheds inner dynamics as well as “You sense the way we belong” (CP 24).

Jeopardized by the “some pendulum soul” (CP 24), she demeans the man lacerating herself on her rot-laden love at which she strike in the path of love-probings. She is in the absence of a substantial sense of being loved. She is not suspicious of the crescent-agonized doubts which send her child plummeting into the care of the

enamel[ling] doctors and the precious-shepherded nurses.

The nurses nod their caps; you are shepherded  
down starch halls with the other unnested throng  
in wheeling baskets. You tip like a cup; your head  
moving to my touch. You sense the way we belong. (CP 24)

The reason for want of silent maturing plagues the speaker, but the narrative tone is softened in the uncountable depiction exclusively connected to maternal love “Yours is the only face I recognize./ Bone at my bone, you drink my answers in” (CP 24).

By typical mingling with the nurturing warmth:

I tighten to refuse  
your owling eyes, my fragile visitor.  
I touch you cheeks, like flowers. You bruise  
against me. We unlearn. I am a shore  
rocking you off. You break from me. I choose  
you only way. My small inheritor  
and hand you off, trembling the selves we lose.  
Go child, who is my sin and nothing more. (CP 25)

She is independent upon his approval for good feelings about herself, “I am shelter f lies” (CP 25). Sensing a long-frenzied need of “burst[ing] empty/ of you, letting you learn how the air is so” (CP 24), she frenetically urges to see her child off and rubs up their love in her life whether the man abandons herself to “full of child.” Public breast-beating exposures about a cracked colossus of love would hold her back “It is you my silence harms/ I should have known; I should have told/ them something to write down.” The dramatic lyric or monologue still sets up some distance between writer and character; but a new openness, a willingness to make poetry of experience unmediated by such doctrines of objectivity as the mask, the persona, or the objective correlative, a preoccupation with extraordinary experiences – mental breakdown, infidelity, divorce – these are some of the hallmarks of “confessional poetry” (Linda 4). In “The Waiting Head” (CP 31), the speaker blatantly summons up the growing recognition of her mother. An added vision from her mother’s waiting head, the

speaker quintessentially succumbs to real hollowness of her efforts “Surely I remember the hooks/ of her fingers curled on mine” (CP 31). The individual with a dead identity is gathered in the dead heads. The “leather book” could be consumed and delivered over to the speaker reflecting upon its clear purpose in acute sensitivity in her inner life. She is wedded to the wooden seat and allowed to keep alive as a “bleached fig” (CP 31).

These changeable-shaped receivers are the blatancy in her pent-up self-revelations.

She reduces to a jade statue from her “wooden seat” (CP 31). The creatively violent power of reminiscence is evoked by “some pitted angel” (CP 32), and she follows an extraordinary track tugging past the “same” rest home on the “same” (CP 31) local street. Beneath the negative or offensive emotions, she commits herself to the pulp of her kiss, her mossy wig and compelling love.

The fundamental mode of women sometimes loses touch with the autonomous fantasy. Only “another” waiting head would unambivalently embrace with the [extra]ordinary habit in the urge of self-preservation from the prevalent stereotype of the naked fear.

The speaker also mentions her mother wrapped like “somebody’s doll.” It makes me associate with the figure of the “plastic doll” (CP 155) with “eyes that cut open without landfall or nightfall/ upon some shellacked and grinning person” in the poem “Self in 1958” (CP 155). Perhaps her position on the question about her identity or the relationship with others is a sense of lethargy and alienation from the world. A strong portrayal connotes the deaden sensibility measuring with “a cardboard floor” and “a counterfeit table” (CP 155). The poet sees herself as a sort of free-floating element in a world at once confining and inhospitable, a world she can in no way embrace as belonging to her (Colburn163). Sometimes we are also beset by the synthetic comforts in the world. She is approximately the character she acts in reality. She distrusts “their warmth” and does not assort them because their warmth is not a “friend”

from her sight. When steely “walled” by someone, she lacks of self-determined impulse to resist the “evidence of ruin or fears.” The speaker complains that “someone plays with me” and “someone pretends with me” (CP 155). She knows what is expected of her, that she also must pretend to satisfy others, that she must show “no evidence of ruin or fears,” no sign of the chaos within her and the senseless terror and destruction outside of her (Colburn 163). She thinks of nothing but plants in the “all-electric kitchen” (CP 155) which let her parents with the apprehensible callosity and inhuman coldness:

But I would cry,  
rooted into the wall that  
was once my mother,  
if I could remember how  
and if I had the tears. (CP 156)

Weeping in silence over this “wholesome disorder” (CP 156) sarcastically, perhaps she still agonizes herself for the thought “life enlarges, life takes aim” (CP 155). The evidence of smiling, shifting gears or prying her mouth is not for relieving the distress moving away from her “iron” (CP 155) bed. She cannot but accept their warmth, but is not moved by them and makes her nasty and stifling as well.

In “Moon Song, Woman Song” (CP 196), the speaker sets the narration from the mouth of the moon, “I have been orangy and fat,/ carrot colored, gaped at,/ allowing my cracked o’s to drop on the sea” (CP 197). She has dangled her “pendulum” (CP 197) and rayed her “blinkedy light” although it would perhaps be transitory, “...alive at night./ ...dead in the morning” as it was precious “...arrange for your journey./ ...a virgin,/old and pitted” (CP 197). There is no exceptional miracle nor rests:

I looked long upon you,  
love-bellied and empty,  
flapping my endless display  
for you, you my cold, cold  
coverall man. (CP 197)

The male is poignantly presented by the “coverall man” who is “tall” in his “battle dress.” The male is lightly suggested as an astronaut by the phrase “coverall man” and “blastoff,” and the moon passively awaits still another rough assault from him (Colburn 252). Authenticated by the male aggressive “barracks” and the “blast off” (CP 197) walking into her “house of a dream” (CP 197), a journey of the male and female is a virtually guaranteed “bastion.” She would not defy the “bastion” any more and noddingly to the unbalanced suggestion about all lovers’ relationship in which man elevates woman’s commitment as a “headquarters of an area,” whereas woman considers herself merely as “house of a dream” (CP 197). The female should remain tough, getting the stuff to shine, playing the rules in the games which are to strap on your perfection and to hold the direction in this “headquarters of an area” (CP 197). “Housewife” changes what might have been pure whamming into a compelling symbolism of the house as an extension of the body of a woman, underling the identity that develops between herself and her mother (Colburn 71).

## II. Dragging in a Bothered Knot

At first, the speaker signifies that as the flux of time, “old gal of mine” (CP 351), dimes out, it seems that “the sea washed me daily in its delicate brine.” Even that, it is a pity that she cannot “meet Mr. Death.” In “For Mr. Death Who Stands with His Door Open” (CP 351), the speaker manifests two kinds of confrontation to the Mr. Death in the plural stanza. Through the fancy-free imagination, Mr. Death is personified as an “actor” (CP 352) wearing many masks but never making her extricate into his “blackguard charm” substantially. He ever held out the “bait” during her first decline. The speaker infatuates at his celebrating “play,” and she wants Mr. Death would treat her brutishly “press me down in your envelope; / pressed as neat as a butterfly forever, forever” (CP 352). Middling and dodging through all the “crucified combined” (CP 352), the speaker wants to compose herself into,



But when it comes to my death let it be slow,  
 let it be pantomime, this last peep show,  
 so that I may squat at the edge trying on  
 my black necessary trousseau. (CP 352)

The terrible unruliness is spawned by unconstrainable desire. And the peculiar self-reflexiveness is a really mask of desire. The multitude of living beings is passive in this process, and in the end she resolutely enjoys the “pantomime” calmly and desires what imperils her life. If what people could only control favors us, the thing we desire most ardently is the most likely to drag us into wild extravagance and ruin us. The desire obliterates this life-sustaining distinction. The preoccupation with the death-bound tendency stimulates desire, causing frightful emotional excess and a descent into the abyss.

In “The Starry Night” (CP 53), the speaker carries the general death to her disillusioned worldliness quickly. There is an embedded contrast which either is impelled to the working of the physical force or the ruthless self-freshness lost into death. Surroundings seem to amount nothing to her with the poetic approval or that the down does not “exist” or silent[ly] dead. She is caught by the “old unseen serpent” (CP 54) and gnawed away at the root of the self. In the fantastic beginning of vision, the speaker fancies the “black-haired” (CP 53) trees slipping up like a “drowned woman” (CP 53). Any type of flourishing trees oscillates in the light of moon-glaze night by the linguistic energy of personification.

Only the whimsy-whamsy of visional perception does catch her attention “The night boils with eleven stars” (CP 53). But there is another advice about what to do with her particular complexion: “This is how I want to die” (CP 53). Although perceiving the successful vivification of “boils[ing] stars, she has arrived at her true deep voice in wordage repeatedly. At her expense of breath by breath, she could not stomach “Even the moon bulges in its orange irons/ to push children, like a god, from its eye” (CP 54).

However, she yearns to cut off in moon's closed circuit from the outer world, like a power-guided ruler who preludes the others from deviating their own ways. She commits what inner decision about casting herself.

into that rushing beast of the night,  
sucked up by that great dragon, to split  
from my life with no flag,  
no belly,  
no cry. (CP 54)

The deep personal conviction to her dreary and wasted life is buried inside. A damaged colossus of dragon does not hold back her sense rooted in eternal torture, so she does not dam up her feelings bound to shut herself up in a numb core of nonfeeling. Compared to the bustling amplitude of cosmos, the speaker is merely alive with a pulse of her own and conveys the impression of raw emotion in virtual symbols tailed with the most helpless situations. Her pallid face wrestles with the “rushing beast” (CP 54) so that she turns inward gauntly to take hold of nothingness. A mechanical feeling about our percipience is affected by a gaze almost too steady straight into the heart of our lives. In “Just Once” (CP 194), the speaker fumbled the track of the heart as if the memory was a transitory and the charm of heartburning was so real-life followed by the copying description to the epiphenomenon. The affair was over and regretfully ended with irony, “... hoarded these constants into morning / only to find them gone” (CP 195).

People become depressed, and are a loss of control over their life situation and that of their emotions, or a loss of a positive sense of their future and a loss of hope. It would reverse our depressed state and the resultant suicidal urges, and have to help us regain control and hope. Mostly desperate, death is “shedding her blood” (CP 195) into the life immeasurably. The speaker admits that touching the substance much deeply would make her “freeze” with bitterness. Her explorations of heart's affection provide

the assertively emotional awareness driving any person “out here” in the real world. In “Wallflower” (CP 76) the speaker cries out the viewers with the cry of an “old story.” Others harden their hearts against that “My face is red with sorrow/ and my breasts are made of straw” (CP 76) and she is overcome violently by “sit[ting] in the ladder-back chair/ in a corner of the polished stage” (CP 76). Even more she spruces herself up in a fit-her look, she is hardly up to “polished” (CP 76) peripheral “The ceiling is pearly./ My thighs press, knotting in their treasure./ Upstage the bride falls in satin to the floor” (CP 76). The self-image works like a puppet handling not at haphazard:

I myself have little stiff legs,  
my back is as straight as a book  
and how I came to this place—  
the little feverish roses, (CP 76)

In “From the Garden” (CP 84), the speaker calls to mind the lilies and shuts their voracious mouth to gossip any more. A disillusioned worldliness is that the cavity of the little faith is chaff of the low sort based on talking too much. Getting the precious life force from touching the cuddly bowels of lilies would be worthy for her to cast the mouthful of words away primarily. A stretch of an open field to tempt the lilies into “growing there like yachts,/ slowly steering their petals/ without nurses or clocks” (CP 84).

On the one hand, she eulogizes the natural existence with an autonomous decision in its “growing” and “steering” usefulness; on the other hand, she abases herself the bodily disgust at keeping in check of “nurses or clocks.” A frame of her mind is so differentiated from the outside view: “a house where white clouds/ decorate the muddy halls” (CP 84). She uses linguistic energy to give the suggestive situation which is moldered through by the “muddy[iness]” and the lilies give the freshness of candor “white clouds” which decoratively modify her positional demands. From the first line she uses the word “Come” to indicate that there is something in the urgent need to utter.

But contrasted with the end of the poetry, it seems that from the bottom of her heart she shouts out “Come here! Come here!” (CP 84) with exclamation marks additionally and more cutting edges of position “here” articulately.

In the poem “Three Green Windows” (CP 105), she is setting the weary distance in testing her body and identity so panting for the nature placating her spiritual bathos transiently and convertibly. In the beginning of the poem, she is seized by the “three green windows” on her little dozing track and is immersed in three different lights from different positions, so the sensible difference is also ladled out by the rustles among the windows. She has proved herself limpidly that she has forgotten the truth “I have forgotten that old friends are dying./ I have forgotten that I grow middle-aged” (CP 105). The natural force of summer gives her a spiritual lift: “She is my mother./ She will tell me a story and keep me asleep/ against her plump and fruity skin” (CP 105). The more assertive structure emphasizes quickly the natural efficiency in her self-training cockles of heart. The positive attitude toward the transition from the full bloom to droughty withering makes her admire:

leaves that are washed and innocent,  
leaves that never knew a cellar,  
born in their own green blood  
like the hands of mermaids. (CP 105)

Suddenly her attention is caught by a series of negative urges within a fusty and sterile space. “Each elegant sea” is largely an invitation to the “hands of mermaid” (CP 105) waving round-and-round for a period of treatment to a disturbed sense of a “giant” (CP 106). She is not freely given from the metaphorical reference: “the sewers and the drainage,/ the urban renewal and the suburban centers” (CP 106). Even more the “red squirrels” leap with perkiness and the rustle wagon ensuing with the possibility of overusing or abandoning for a long while, scarcely an invitation in her eyes is the animate or the inanimate.

I know what I know.  
 I am the child I was,  
 living the life that was mine.  
 I am young and half asleep.  
 It is a time of water, a time of trees. (CP 106)

It is emotionally cataclysmic about allegorizing herself as a “sponge” which is similar to an injurious vermin butchering the heartfelt growth with bodily disgust or no gravitational potentials for the “persist[ence], yeasty[iness] and sensuousn[ess]” (CP 105). She could not cut off her inner-enclosed circuit from the outer world. She is the puppyish infant self incarcerated by the force of time omnipotently and sheds the lyrics “forgotten” over the arid inversion to the apparent uselessness about the flow of time. She gnaws away at the root of the self and requires the effective presence to echo the incarceration of the world. From the very start of the poem, she reveals the discovery of her identity based on a creative process by repetitious lyrics of “tired of.” She loses the meaningful forms of female doing and is tired of being a woman, the spoons and the pots, her mouth and her breasts, the cosmetics and the silks, and the gender of things. Desperately imitating the situation consumed by the other’s hunger intensely rebound on her, she is buried inside the fervent desire to “offer[ed] up” (CP 105) accustomedly.

In “Song for a Red Nightgown” (CP 184), the speaker is blamed by the emblematic medium of sexuality. The burned-out danger is relative to the hunt for disparity acquiescently:

The bed is ravaged by such  
 sweet sights. The girl is.  
 The girl drifts up out of  
 her nightgown and its color.  
 Her wings are fastened onto  
 her shoulders like bandages. (CP 185)

The wildness of moon “floats” in her organically and predatorily. Indulging in the

bodily sensations of the hearty depths, she is not terrified by the differential feature of appearance, whereas letting the wildness stalk to her nearly. The poetic treatment accompanies the shocking pillage of sexuality elaborately. She lies in shallow color of red similar to the rose bleeding unmistakably. The sanguine color of her nightgown exemplifies a predatory attention of brute cruelty lying her into the flesh pulp overwhelmingly.

In “Flee on Your Donkey” (CP 97), at the beginning, the speaker firmly reiterates there was no other place to flee to. But it needs of patience to find a way out, and perhaps it would be the spiritual way in bearing what is unbearable.

The speaker has been preoccupied with the absurd sense of these disordered scenes, now she collects them:

Upstairs a girl curls like a snail;  
in another room someone tries to eat a shoe;  
meanwhile an adolescent pads up and down  
the hall in his white tennis socks. (CP 99)

And later she sees “The permanent guests have done nothing new./ Their faces are still small/ like babies with jaundice.” The natural aura makes her remember to settle the time, “thick” (CP 97) June. She needs a pack of cigarettes just like a child holding a toy. Dr. Monica Basco, a clinical psychologist, says, “More than half my patients have some creative talent” (Marvel par. 5). She is not sick through physical testing, but only is a “terribly patient” (CP 98) because of the dreamlike musings making her different to the same old crowd:

Everyone has left me  
except my muse,  
*that good nurse.*  
She stays in my hand,  
a mild white mouse. (CP 98)

Spending most of her time in “trance” is a great anxiety to her because

In trance I could be any age,

voice, gesture— all turned backward  
like a drugstore clock.

Awake, I memorized dreams. (CP 101)

There is lots of possibilities in a rare and talent whimsy charting in dream: “In a dream you are never eighty” in “Old.” Obviously she has a deep personal commitment to “Death starts like a dream,/ full of objects and my sister’s laughter.” She makes a self by a hungry mouth with a glutton for the “sweet taste.” She has a flood of sweet “blue” tenderness running out at the root of her dream. The speaker could win over herself while there was no others in a dream. But also it hints that she cannot give a shelter to reality. She is still in this “confusing office” (CP 100) due to a “drugstore clock” which is not so far away from her. The clock is such a sarcastic reminder pushing her to recognize that the “water of time” is still flowing, never going backward:

I stared at them,  
concentrating on the abyss  
the way one looks down into a rock quarry,  
uncountable miles down;  
my hands swinging down like hooks  
to pull dreams up out of their cage. (CP 101)

Dredging up her “dreams” away from mundane shackles, also not being securely afforded by the cords of temporal yoke, she indulges in her “hunger” and struggles to free herself. Mrs. Sexton would agree with Nathanael West, who wrote in *The Day of the Locust*, “Any dream was better than no dream, and beggars couldn’t be choosers” (Philips81). She is not tired of the abundance in her dream whether just pretending she goes away into a “snowstorm.” The image of the snow-white color is so obscure that it makes me associate with purgation. Perhaps after throwing herself down into the destructive proceedings drastically, the scarce value of life and rebirth is incidental to irredeemable and incalculable aftermath infrequently. Tracked by the collision course, the chains are cracked along like the “teeth” digging their way through the

“snowy street.” All the more profound interference with abiding reality makes itself a “long trip” soulfully. She draws herself a parallel to an “overcoat” laid and thrown over there. Scarcely does she look forward to being carried back in. She does not confirm whether she could “scrape the guts out of some dream” into reality or not. The enthusiast’s words are inscribed on her mind regardless of “these sweet dark playthings”:

You taught me  
to believe in dreams;  
thus I was the dredger,  
I held them like an old woman with arthritic fingers,  
carefully straining the water out— (CP 102)

Once believing in the dreams, these sweet dark playthings “grew mournful and weak” which are transplanted the life force by the speaker to go through some changes of budding, blooming and choking. She never again wriggles out of the coercionary actuality. From her eyes, she surmises that the moment of meeting certain actual experience is parallel to that of being “opened the warm eyelid.” She cannot wink or beg for the help of the “lifeguard,” but she carries her in “awkwardly, tenderly” which is relative to the semblance of the discarded “overcoat” (CP 101). She treats herself as a “fish” which is brought forth by others to “grunt” in this “cage.” Staying at being “lying” and watching for the “knife” to anatomize, she has failed in the chance of decision for herself and now she is other-directed. The speaker makes this record of “knife” clearly which is for her mother but then she “delivered” it.

The curtains are given the names by calling her imaginary trance into reality. Stringing along the curtains fluttering out and slumping, finding the faults with the “hierarchy of death,” by the way she is clear about “This is madness/ but a kind of hunger.” When she cries out for “O my hunger! My hunger!” duplicatively, perhaps that’s equally allowing herself the “wasted life.” Hunger for the denotation of the



rumble of “Dinn! Dinn! Dinn!” (CP 104) when dropping the “tricks” from her memory, she is jogged by “the ambulance ran like a hearse/ with its siren blowing on suicide” (CP 103). She admits not to accommodate herself to what the “disorder” is anymore. Turning to “make a deliberate decision” is more efficacious than single-mindedly ascertaining what the answer is for her hunger. Going through the “traffic light” of the crossroads which keeps insisting on life but much eager for clinging to her “stomach,” she turns a tender sight to that “There are brains that rot here/ like black bananas./ Hearts have grown as flat as dinner plates” (CP 104).

In the trance of imagination, a fluid current flowing from someone’s mind, could soften the readers’ hearts. Sometimes the imaginary process is compressed by the actual statement. In my opinion, it hints that the speaker strings along with the curtains fluttering out and slumping in a wind-driven current. When the soft meets with the hard, there is something flexible to makes compatible adjustment between them:

I have come back,  
recommitted,  
fastened to the wall like a bathroom plunger,  
held like a prisoner  
who was poor  
he fell in love with jail. (CP 103)

Although it is not coupled with a “feast” she purports to the hunger for madness, whatever that could make her suffer satisfyingly is due to the enjoyment of ease and comforts by herself. In the midst of the poem, the assumption about her doctor as her “enthusiast” betrays her emotional subjunction, a fervent desire to be compatible in “another world.” She is bereft of discretion to settle the suspicion about who she is, only awaiting for the answer to be working out by her doctor. Since ancient times people have linked creativity with madness. According to one source, Plato says that creativity is a “divine madness... a gift from the gods (Neihart 48).

Shuffling in and out a “sad hotel,” she admits that it is not a child game. But this time

she only takes of a pack of cigarettes just like a child holding a toy. Some convoluted contrasts lurk in this poem. The relation to the natural world seems easily more “floral arrangements” than the disordered scenes in this “confusing office.” She hears with surprises that the hissing of hornets hints all knowing, and perhaps she is off the hinges. Accustomed to this same old coward and the same “ruined” scene, there is nothing new happening to these “permanent guests.” Often the word “guests” is related to the sense of freshness. But a paucity of newness could make her thrilled. Only is a “new” doctor callous to “advertise” his commodities round and round to the “uninitiated.” The usage of adjunctive dictions alludes to the contrasts among the relationship between a doctor and the patients. The pills and the suicidal thoughts have been “sewn” into the lining of her dress. Operating at her best usage of fating to die is quenchless.

In the final part of poem that gives the exclamatory guidance about “Ride out/ any old way you please” (CP 104) is so paradoxically pathic gateway but a drastically decision bounding to “Those I loved best died of it—/ the fool’s disease.” Sexton, refusing the descent into madness, must now attempt to deal rationally with her nearly irresistible impulse toward suicide (Colburn 182).

Also like Christ who rode into Jerusalem, she wildly and accurately rides on a “toy donkey,” knowing her best route into madness. It resembles to the highly recommendable composition in “Flee on Your Donkey” (CP 97):

Anne, Anne,  
flee on your donkey,  
flee this sad hotel,  
ride out on some hairy beast,  
gallop backward pressing  
your buttocks to his withers,  
sit to his clumsy gait somehow. (CP 104)

She is chronically depressed, and suffered from anxiety disorder. To make decision

not to retort upon the attractiveness and the afflictive pangs in life, she does not act like an “unrehearsed fish” swooping down the energetic surfs of life scurryingly.

Compelled to death, and sucked down by the suicide, the speaker is really sad.

The speaker puts the consequences of suicidal thoughts in words and leaves no room for remorse. Anymore she feels she cannot urge on the life force impulse or the beautiful evasion from life and shows from an inside look of paralyzing despair and the deepest secret in her heart. She gained nothing through her suicide, Sexton implies, since death is nothing but an “old belonging,” and she finally refers to Plath’s diminishment, her new identity as a mere “blonde thing” who has relinquished her own “special language” and received nothing in return (Colburn 183).

In “The Operation” (CP 56), in a poetic opening, the speaker amplifies a cracked colossus of the “sweet promise” that is the distinction between the summer’s mild retreat of Mother’s cancer and the dry-as-dust winter of her death. A hibernating stomach now also swallows the speaker for the same reason “equate/ my ills with hers/ and decide to operate” (CP 56). The outer shell of the bustling activities for “. . . this white office, its sterile sheet,/ its hard tablet, its stirrups, to hold my breath/ while I, who must, allow the glove its oily rape” (CP 56) possesses her body and drives inward upon herself. What she “must” allow is to provide them the dynamic charge with no snappy effect or devastating shock springing from her jade statue. In the first stanza the “almost almighty” (CP 56) doctor determinatively correlates her personal ill experience with her mother’s which is spreading the “sweet promise” strenuously. She is doubtful of the advisable behest and the authoritative offspring coming from the doctor. She does not posit in the incarceration of her “gentle house” (CP 56); meanwhile, the permission of the “embryo/ of evil” (CP 56) obtains its way to spread out weakly. Everyone smears the vital smell of frailty with no bickering in the circuit of the human life, so does the speaker experiences the “special smells of dying” (CP 56) and senses

the “snoring mouth” (CP 56) gaping for the breathtaking horror of life force. The speaker indulges herself in the state out of the jam-packed allowably. Crescent-shaped of hollowness is loomed ahead into her prolonged wilderness of “thinking that woman’s dying/ must come in seasons,/ thinking that living is worth buying” (CP 57). She nods to the justifiable suggestion by her almost mighty doctor. Grueling through every “raw” leaf and scuffing every step in the “dead” (CP 57) straw, she consentingly implies the transforming potency of seasonal force to her precarious plight perceptively traps in her mother’s painfulness.

Virtually the darkness-exploding night “sucks” at the trees and the leaves cluster together and glitter in the unfolding moonlight. Acoustically the rain-flickering vibration gets her attention to the falling limbs and pulls her in the yellow eyes.

More sure about the outside effectual forces are the blocks in her way to see who she is convertibly, pushing her around that a “shorn lamb” ling smooth from breast to leg.

Horribly upsetting over the muffled schedule does not give her the contagious mess-up in the treatment of being “shorn.” She does not opt out the determinative reconciliation with yellow pills, a jigger of water, the mysterious needles and the skills. Once floundering in a tardiness-fulled wait for drugs, her movement would be hampered and carried on the stretcher into the “iron cage.” In spite of the tacked-on physical restriction from the outer shell, she still grasps at the autonomous-minded “citizen/ and boss of my own body.” The precise observation is removed psychologically and clinically to that:

The great green people stand  
over me; I roll on the table  
under a terrible sun, following their command  
to curl, head touching knee if I am able. (CP 58)

She is snared in another “science and pitfalls” beneath the authoritative request and commandable order. She lingers on like a “kennel of dogs” (CP 58) against the fence

of the “white office” when an influential potency of force promises “But nothing is sure./ No one./ I wait in doubt” (CP 58). The wait-and-see atmosphere closes in on her and in a meanwhile an attitude toward the uncertainty is more grimly rigid. As the animus gnarled crone beautiful women, the witch embodies maternal guilt and anger over the “fact” that “death too is in the egg” (Bixler 27).

Poets, musical performers, and fiction writers exhibit the most psychiatric symptoms. However, Ludwig does not believe that inspired artists are only creative when they are in manic moods. He says, “Anybody who achieves creative greatness is dedicated. These people persevere; they’re almost monomaniacal” (Gutin 75-78). The dumb numb wordage of “wait” is used more often in the second stanza. She does not comply with “hostile air” (CP 58) that divides and exploits her. She wants to exercise her femininity without the fear of routine which is “the pure women in labor” (CP 58) and “the crowning heads of babies being born” (CP 58). In the poetic diction the potent force of “soaring” in hostile air is contrasted to that of “plunge[ing] down” (CP 58) herself. The victimized device is gotten from the confirmative response to “calling *mother* at the dying door,/ to rush back to my own skin, tied where it was torn” (CP 58). The ashes of her mother’s old life make her sacrifice a great deal of the breaking nerves and the glazed faces for the “strangers.” She is tethered up by the rolling loops and the plucked wires when admitting to the “aluminum crib” (CP 58) other-directly. To the speaker, all the mentioned sacrament of confession could not submit herself to its efficacious incantations magically:

Skull flat, here in my harness,  
thick with shock, I call mother  
to help myself, call toe of frog,  
that woolly bat, that tongue of dog;  
call God help and all the rest. (CP 58-59)

In the post operative process, the speaker has the faint ideas about the scour provided

from her mother and other childish pleas for a miraculous wonder. The “mechanics” (CP 59) of her body is throbbing for the “tricks” conjuring up by these “starchy ghosts” in her lame hours and lame days of precarious life. Although despising the spiteful-minded nurses, she is still hazardous in time’s winged vehicle which chills her blood of inner dynamics. In the meanwhile, she highlights the planning acceptance of the sacramental order of needles, doses and the therapeutic treatment given by the visitors for showing around the “orange flower” (CP 59). Her off-color candy package ribbon amuses the visitors but upsets her as well as some “senile woman” (CP 59). Perhaps the scarlet color may be the abusive lewdness in the tricks of playfulness. The arresting cycle of accident or violence introduces the unavoidable grief and adapted defiance; meanwhile, the speaker pitches her rhetorical use of charge with stirring up the trouble in a sentimental but uncomfortable strain:

Time now to pack this humpty-dumpty  
back the frightened way she came  
and run along, Anne, and run along now,  
my stomach laced up like a football  
for the game. (CP 59)

The poem concludes with the figure of Humpty-Dumpty, the symbol of all which is precarious in life, the difficult balance we all must maintain (Philips 79). In “Suicide Note” (CP 156), the affirmative standpoint of life parallels that of death. The portentous days in June are lurking in her blood-letting mind as a “coward.” It is not a hasty departure riding the toy donkey away from the painful beauty of life into the death wish and madness. The successful images are so intact when her perspective of her crises-laden rotation of life crumbles brutally. Perhaps the speaker would be harassed by this misunderstanding that the others charge her when crying out “O my hunger! My hunger!” (CP 157) in a self-destructive tone. Anatomizing the desire to die, she makes sure the planned attempt and the route of death which is “widely but

accurately.” Whether the endeavor would get this route procurable or only suppositiously deal with her fancy, this is remarkable for her to remember. The speaker will expire with the peak hour because of the concrete sense of “green breasts and bellies” (CP 159). June symbolizes the flourishing diversity bleeding luxuriantly. The speaker cannot endure or enjoy the beautiful evasion of life. The natural world or the man-made world is a kind of disturbance perhaps owing to the impoverishment among her spiritual inadequacies. The epiphenomenon would not affect her death wish after leaving them out. Everyone has his or her own death, no exceptional “route” (CP 158); she dares to encounter the circumstance of her own accord without old ages or disease, and re-create a state of mind by thematic and technical development. Not to mention the creatural activity as the gnats or the moths, they are “forced” by circumstances into the absorption in death similar to her “route” not to live affirmatively in a secular world. Neither the compelling or uncontrollable stimulus incites her to take this route into account earlier.

There is a lot of greatest potential for life, but blood-letting is also a symbolic destruction. The worms and the girls’ blood are both ambiguous in their emotional content and their relation to life and death: while one seems primarily death-directed and the other life-directed, both are at the intersection of fertility and decay (Colburn 198). The “worms” are agreeable to the rich stuff sprouting in the soil essentially when “talking to/ the mare’s hoof in the field.” The speaker wants to plummet herself into an “old room” of death sentimentally impressed by saying “not to be born/ and far better/ not to be born twice.” Among the others she goes down in a “dumbwaiter” (CP 157) into hell despite whatever the means of delivery is lowering ironically. The stealthy potential of life makes people station precariously “tilting backward and forward” (CP 157). Adrienne Rich has described the movement that occurred in her own poetry as she grew dissatisfied with the traditional poetic structures as ways to

promote a sense of process and dialogue (Rich 89); this shift from the structured form to a sense of process also occurs to Sexton (Bixler 153-154). The speaker's perception is not set the comforts of the cult aside or sways from the portentous days in "half enlarged" life when one day she will be a "light thing" (CP 157). It's the god-given ability to experience all the pains, happiness, depression and to convey thoughts and ideas through using metaphors and similes. Not completely is a poet tortured; otherwise, perhaps the illness creates a poet. A poet is not troubled, tormented or demonized but tortured from the inside and the outside. What a languishing loss in this poem is so darkly beautiful but profoundly sensual. She bravely and dangerously wrests her inner turmoil and illness for the public. Not keeping such private visceral things all inside, she puts all intimacy into neat little packages with broad labels.

She mentions the natural world circulating its rule just like the way she has lived for. Although not to present all the day, the bats sense all and know it all just similar to her. There is no distraction hindering the process she perceives and senses, and she would not be asphyxiated by the fixed patterns of confines in reality. Vouching the reliable grasp in view about no guitars playing and no hope for the kiss from her mother's mouth, she dose not drift the waves flapping between the natural and the man-made worlds because "New York City will not mind" (CP 159) of those ever attain or lose the end on the shore of life.

In the beginning of the poem, "Wanting to Die" (CP 142), the speaker asks herself a question outside the frame and illuminates herself through her mention. She yearns to break this "bad prison" and evacuate this old breath and animate worships of life out. Through the inventive lyric in poetry would a kind of procedure to leave the cruel prison away and perhaps it is a benignant method to exhort herself to accept the flawed self. Anne Sexton says, "Poetry led me by the hand out of madness" (Neihart 47). She does not remember the past days even more the "almost unnameable lust." The



comparison of the suicidal desire with the sexual desire is powerful because it fuses the psychological urge to the sexual desire is powerful because the fusion of the psychological urge toward death with a biological urge tied to procreation (Bixler 72).

Such sluggish gnats of life fatigued her, and there is nothing against life and now she understands her “almost unnameable lust” would not come back again. She does not regard of the “furniture” placed under the sun prolific of the forces of abundance. The furniture under the sun recalls warmth, human company, even perhaps domesticity, things that ordinarily make life worthwhile (Colburn 190).

The overwhelming destruction in killing oneself is a kind of creating. Involved among the furniture placed under the sun, she also gets bogged down in the unmarked voyage. She admits that “but suicides have a special language./ Like carpenters they want to know which tools./ They never ask *why build*” (CP 142). Giving the suicides a fanciful dimension forging the mental problems at her arrangement in a language is without any conceptual or practical intermedium. Because detachment from life is the suicide’s primary attitude, the tone remains detached and impersonal, the *I* never quite “alive,” reflecting her “still-borne” sentence (George 100).

There is no word that translates into “why;” there is only “how,” because it is definitive of a carpenter that he finds the way to build, and just as definitive of the suicide that she finds a way to die (Colburn 191). Such a method bears a resemblance to that “wildly but accurately,/ knowing my best route,” notwithstanding the old age or disease in “Suicide Note” (CP 156).

The speaker proclaims lucidly to the unnamed you that ever “have possessed the enemy, eaten the enemy.” This enemy may be both life and death. Till now she takes the suicidal attempts so many times but death does not latch onto her with his “craft,” or “magic.” Or taking a capitulation to the outside lethal forces because she cannot antagonize to the “enemy.” The speaker also traps in the linguistic dilemma, her own

language of suicide through the expression worthy of paradoxical meanings. When she takes the drug she mentions later, she finally possesses life completely, eats it up, burns it out, ends it (Colburn 191).

The connotative duplicity in life is inevitable, and everything needs a stable method to measure the essence on the fringes of the reality. When she takes a nap and drools from her “mouth-hole” which emphasizes the physical vacuousness and stupid hole of barrenness. By the blink of “needle point,” the speaker still convinces to proclaim the direct details about suicide inevitably. This way is to elude the way abundant of the sun, the grass blades and the furniture reasonably.

In stanza 7, the speaker refers to another image of “still-born” child which especially dies in half way into grateful explanation of life but connective to the natural instincts of innocence and genuineness. According to the speaker, her particular kind of suicide is figuratively stillborn, always close to that thin line between life and death first differentiated in the womb, nexus of the boundary between life and death (Colburn 193). She lucidly affirms that “suicides have already betrayed the body” and perhaps it would take many efforts to make decisions in whatever you do. Whatever your face the plodding problems at “needle point,” she animates herself:

To thrust all that life under your tongue!—  
That, all by itself, becomes a passion.  
Death’s a sad bones; bruised, you’d say,  
and yet she waits for me, year after year,  
to so delicately undo an old wound,  
to empty my breath from its bad prison. (CP 143)

Death plays a feminine role to ease her old wound up and to set her free from her body, the physical self. From the speaker’s perspective, death is still here, waiting to open the old wound again, tearing the blemish apart, out the mind toward getting the “bad prison” (CP 143) away. The confines between life and death will “meet” somewhere. The hunger for death is also a hunger for life. The speaker does not enter each day in

her “voyage” (CP 142) only flipping through in it. No matter what you take control over, perceptively it does not lack of the dauntless tolerance and the desirable passion. The “bruised” bone is affected by an “old wound,” and by chance there is another reconciliatory method by convalescing. If the “old wound” is life, death undoes that by emptying the breath from her body and releasing her (Colburn 194).

Rendering some accidental effect, the speaker hints that if she tries suicidal attempts more times, the boundary between life and death would wipe out with her adorable passion one day. The contemplative ambiguities the speaker marshals to are relative to the boggy dilemma Sexton stalls in outside the linguistic frame. The speaker lucubrates that death is a sad bone which is outside the bodily support or inside the essential pith propping for:

Balanced there, suicides sometimes meet,  
 raging at the fruit, a pumped-up moon  
 leaving the bread they mistook for a kiss,  
 leaving the page of the book carelessly open,  
 something unsaid, the phone off the hook  
 and the love, whatever it was, an infection. (CP 143)

The speaker reflects the inward state of incoherence and suicide’s linguistics and becomes the marginal experience of the ordinary life. It is reasonable to take away from the depressive potentials lurking in mind but also would have to accept the given-up impediment when examining the remaining human agony. Language is a powerful and leveraged tool to accompany the segregative selves coherently and to make the impact of the linguistic technique and the tight control. It is possible that poetry delayed her death, that every poem she wrote provided another temporary respite from the death demon that pursued her from within. Sexton seems to have believed in the magic of words, in their ritually utility as incantation; but words failed her as often as they saved her (George 135).

In “The Truth the Dead Know” (CP 49), the speaker imagines the dead are not

detrimental to the outside, but always keeping the devastating stillness. She tries to “cultivate” (CP 49) herself by eluding the usual ceremonial method in that “Gone, I say and walk from church,/ refusing the stiff procession to the grave” (CP 49).

To the dead, there will be no deuce to pay. The speaker treads lightly and gets off the swinging sea which has become dead just like an “iron gate.” She cannot be in a whirl with the “whitehearted water,” but takes pains to “cultivate” herself “where the sun gutters from the sky.” “The stiff procession” makes her tired, and the despairing truth is immersed in this poem highlightedly. The dead do not accept the blessing, because anyone would ride alone in the hearse without shoes. Sailing by the water and swinging in and out, it is a procession evoking the dead to erode their truth away. The truth is “no one’s alone. / men kill for this, or for as much.” Permeating the matter “on the verge of suicide, or lost in a forest remote from all human habitation” with no elusion in this world and not floundering in the pent-up rage and prodigious questions about the human life from her deep voice.

Through the imaginative examination, Sexton does not disguise the collapsing sufferings, but she further introduces her raw materials and the experience of love and death wish. Conditions of life stimulate imaginatively the conditions of death.

Dealing with the bereaved examination and experience of struggle toward death, the envious aura does not vanish in her utterance, “...They refuse/ to be blessed, throat, eye and knucklebone” (CP 49) in the end of the poem. In “The Touch” (CP 173), sometimes people don’t comprehend what the life denotes: “Life rushed to my fingers like a blood clot” (CP 174), which is a sense of impact on her difference to admonish people to control the substantial meanings about life. Yet the simile for life is “blood clot”; there is animating blood, but “clot” connotes death (Hall 75). But now another denotation is revealed, the creative immersion and the “kingdom” (CP 174) is provoked by the celebration of touching. Sometimes life is just like a metaphor:

And all this is metaphor.  
 An ordinary hand – just lonely  
 for something to touch  
 that touches back. (CP 173)

Once the hand is bruised, people would lock it up in “a tin box”, although it had become the history. It is an unalterably coldness. The pleasure of the giving and receiving punctuates the meanings to life. Anything would be valuable because of love; meaning would be transferred because of the touching.

In “Clothes” (CP 380), using the Russian saying “put on a clean shirt/ before you die” (CP 380) to introduce the death wish, the speaker employs the self-disclosure to puncture the mildewed “something” (CP 380). That is surely embedded in her mind. The kitchen is the main force maintaining “the family laughter and the soup” (CP 380) and the marrow every female empowers the chore. Even full of questions in the process of dying, she has to wash the “painted” shirt over and over. She knows the hat she is married in and spotted with “yellow” kitchen. She gives the specific description of what she considers marriage “White, broad, fake flowers in a tiny array./ It’s old-fashioned, as stylish as a bedbug,/ but it suits ti die in something nostalgic” (CP 380). When the death wish is mingled with birth, the darkness is opposite to the light from “window.” Just the speaker mentions that her lover demeans the “padded black” (CP 381) one she takes on. Suddenly the abundant fertility is meddled with the death agony. The language is deeply allusive. Sometimes it is vulgar happening on the lovers who experience their life intensely, but their sensation is abandoned. During a manic phase people have racing thoughts, they stutter, and their minds jump from one idea to another. They are able to create brilliant writings or paintings, but after these manic phases they are exhausted. Depression overwhelms them. According to one source, between ten and fifteen percent of people with severe forms of mental illnesses eventually take their own lives (Gutin 74).

### III. Exorcising the Insinuating Maggot

In “The Ballad of the Lonely Masturbator” (CP 198), the speaker has a sense of being abandoned and tries to “break out” (CP 198) of her body, and makes a clean breast that “The end of the affair is always death. / She’s my workshop” (CP 198). She employs the lascivious and blatantly orgasmic images in detail:

that every single couple puts together  
with a joint overturning, beneath, above,  
the abundant two on sponge and feather,  
kneeling and pushing, head to head. (CP 198)

When she visions how unfair life has been for her and now she would take deepening depression seriously and realize that her pain is so real, the attempts of suicide might take her and undergo open-heart agony. Significantly, the posture of being “spread out” and “crucify[ied]” (CP 198) is most considerably realized. The speaker produces the resonance of recurring refrain, “At night, alone, I marry the bed” (CP 198-199). The resultant suicidal urges would plunge herself into the depressive depths of the death-and-life tunnel hopelessly. The strong suicidal urges or deepening depression could not be explained by the renewed life crisis, or by the realization of how unbearable the pain of life was for her. When death wish can become a friendly thought, she might begin to fear the pain of life more than death. Inset the readers into the unsatisfactory relationship in the modern world:

The boys and girls are one tonight.  
They unbutton blouses. They unzip flies.  
They take off shoes. They turn off the light.  
The glimmering creatures are full of lies.  
They are eating each other. They are overfed. (CP 199)

Such intense disappointment is inescapable related to human absence of love as a kind of spiritual pickle getting in unknowingly. Her belief that she had failed to be “good,” and that she had no way of finding a “good world,” led to a madness that was not the divinest sense but hellish chaos, a threatened disintegration of selfhood (Colburn 175).

In “The Black Art” (CP 88), by virtue of an analytical way of narration she summarizes the sexual situation and inner dynamics in their black art. The speaker summons the courage to free the shackles about the pent-up rage for “A woman who writes feels too much,/ those trances and portents!” (CP 88). The enigmatic-minded woman consummates a powerful unleashing of new emotional forces and holds more excessive feelings about the woman is so sensitive, especially “A writer is essentially a spy” (CP 88). Piercing any thoughts of any system and giving an impingement to breathe would open for sheer love of her indubitably. One of the female duties is to defend the nursery “island” (CP 88) and propagate the posterity by her preservative marrow propulsively. This “cycle” would not be lulled into a false sense of bringing the curtain on breeding. She does confirm her blossoming career committing herself to that kind of the high-minded girl.

She never needs enough immersion in “mourners and gossips/ and vegetables” (CP 88) from the female obligation fulfilledly but cannot help brushing this intense service aside might rebound on her. It would not stretch a point that concludes the ability to warm the stars, tattle the housewifery, bewail the loss and relish for the enjoyment of felicity for a role of woman. She has a good command of “warm[ing] the stars” (CP 88). Reciting the whimsical notion about the trances and portents to her identity is her own state of demand for unleashing a feeling of inertia.

People know no bounds on domination appearing a fascination and terror and would be a “crook” heeling the masculine movement all the way, comprehending the spells, fetishes and erections. The inhuman coldness of machine and the brutal competition in wars rake crook’s body tyrannically. He could not command the good facility in returning to the original shape, only fallaciously cheating us the vision of sight “with used furniture he makes a tree” (CP 88).

Whether designating a spy or a crook, a writer has to pry into the volatile testing

incrementally and sneak into the center or peripheries of the things. The tack of “weird abundance” (CP 89) would not get a spy or crook down, but let them taste or endeavor to that. Convertibly, a writer also makes the used furniture for a tree.” The speaker publicly explores her self-aborrence even to their articles of daily use “hating even our shoes and our hats.” They appreciate gloriously each other’s talent for “*precious, precious*” (CP 89) authority for themselves. They are fully bred with excessive feelings and experience unvanquishably under the powerless-unmasked “terrible confessions” (CP 89). The condensation of the fantastically creative energy with a supplement to their fierce concentration could not be nullified by “too much food” but ungrudgingly washed down all the “weird abundance” (CP 89). Seeking out the origin of her illness in childhood traumas and inadequate relationships with her parents, she is interested not in assigning blame but in bringing to light the dismal facts themselves; there is a new, strong impulse to face past realities and to assess their impact on the present (Colburn 183). In “Lullaby” (CP 29), the sleeping pill does not devitalize her spiritual states; however, her re-created awareness has cleansed her sight on traditionally man-defined rituals to herself. A float[ing] “splendid pearl” (CP 29) seizes her language and conceals the emptiness at the core of heart. She crawls into the words and embodies them an internalizing force upon herself. The poetic narrative and images seem more important to her.

But her skin is not bucked up just as “a loose bolt of cloth” (CP 29). The speaker is penetrated with a desire for dramatizing the bruising experience to lyrics. It is not imperative to connect each other; but it is very natural just as finding herself in tears without knowing which thought forced water to her eyes. The “goat” (CP 29) takes her for the subtle pleasure of lullaby like a “yellow moth” (CP 29). It is a substance retentive of the disturbed mirth to her. The reticular net is miscellaneous devastation. Cutting the reticular net is just the way to escape the impending disturbance and to stay



the course into the self-reliance.

Not distracted by the chameleonic transition, she lets the uneasiness lurking and not ignores them. In her heart, the bustle of the roving trouble is the sagging temptation against the “locked.” Using the luxuriant imagination in lyrics, the speaker can feel herself lustily, breaking the follow-on and unpack the crevices toward her. Perhaps the “yellow moth” is an allurement catching her outgrown outflow. Although it is not a rosy view, the speaker was not to very reticent about her spiritual state reflectively:

The yellow moths sag  
against the locked screens  
and the faded curtains  
sucks over the window sills  
and from another building  
a goat calls in his dreams. (CP 29)

A “yellow moth” (CP 29) is a poetic transfiguration meeting the reverse of fortune. The speaker finds no refreshments amid life’s worries. With a secret air of “moan,” she gets mixed up with others in a summer evening. Seneca records Aristotle saying, “No great genius was without a mixture of insanity” (Neihart 48).

In the “For the Year of the Insane” (CP 131), perhaps the telling image of “black rosary” is a kind of indicative imprecation because the speaker is an “unbeliever.”

Bearing her responsibility for the foregoing experience and the unresolved emotional waviness would be a tottering at the brink of facing the spiritual crush. The speaker does not abolish the despair; moreover, she abors herself more deeply into a deeper despair. The unblessed beads lie as “waves,/ hammering in upon me” (CP 131) further when she precipitates in the hallucinatory domain of silence and madness by a sense of condemnation. The uncountable numbers and the faith healing of words make her drooping for want of the spiritual outlet for:

and the window above me  
is my only listener, my awkward being.

She is a large taker, a soother.  
 The giver of breath  
 she murmurs,  
 exhaling her wide lung like an enormous fish. (CP 131-132)

The speaker personalizes the coexisting effect of the window, clusters of condemned misery need to be molested by the outside chop and change about natural force through the window. Also the summer heat could not make her find the purgatory loophole in the submergence of her own past and madness from the perspective of her crisis laden year of life. The despair requires an infinite advantages and courage because the misfortune and misery will be fraught with the path into the perdition. Despair has been implant in human nature, making her suffer passively and gradually spurring forward the attempt of the death wish. Death would be a dangerously brainy surrogate for purification.

With the exception of being "...useless./ It lies, curled like a dog on the carpet" (CP 132), the speaker needs to marshal her appearance to appropriately support the hour of her death. In the death-exploding hour, she envisages herself "grow[ing] back,/ grow undeveloped and straight-haired" (CP 132). The impingement of the lifeless aridity makes her unwanted to leave her lungs alive. She eats the death-giving air and shrinks to the water-glaze consolation of deadness itself:

All this is death.  
 In the mind there is a thin alley called death  
 and I move through it as  
 through water. (CP 132)

She does not cater to obsession with the wizard words any more and no effortless assistance or candid words would give her a lift. Maybe according not to lcome the attention given by "tender physician," the "pitched-colored, musty and secret" wine presented in a delicate glass is not a decent substitute keeping with the milk. The fragmented prayer gives way to an equally fragmented holy communion, where the

bread and the wine also becomes images of damnation; the wine burns, and the poets says, “I have been cut un two” (Colburn 235). She will be in a state of some trepidation if suffering the slight on coughing gawkily or the glass tilting on its own latent capacity. She moves into the “domain of silence/ the kingdom of the crazy and the sleeper” when “two thin streaks” would be delusively deluging with fire in her chin. The waves of madness are flitting through her mind with defiance of being “locked in the wrong house.” She digs deeply the residual of madness in the pull of breaking waves of condemnation unblessedly after the fragmented waves of condemnation. Perhaps the spiritual sickness of the mortal is akin to a kind of sickness unto death. Perhaps death is the terminal served by shrugging off her suggestion of despair. A great deal of drooling torment of despair is not appropriate for death because death is not the last thing. Patients with depression are at increased risk of suicide as they begin to improve and regain the energy needed to plan and carry out a suicide.

In “Ghosts” (CP 65), she conceives their “limp” breasts as an aversion to “killed fishes” (CP 65) when having a brush against them. The revolting aura breaks the speaker out from the stillness of olfaction. Having a great feeling of the communion with the ghosts is more emphatically doubted about how to dispel and exorcise them. Being provided with the service form the sway of “useless” (CP 65) arms and beset by the “forsaken servants,” she pauses warily and gawks at the forlorn looks. She cannot refrain from doubting dubiously that the autarkic supply remains a torrent of oaths left to them. Not all of the ghosts are women; men scatter the middle-aged spread in full-frontal “fat, white-bellied” exposure.

In the meanwhile, the speaker could not sleep off her covert delusion into their barefoot thump-by-thump deviously above her bed instead of humming a lullaby. Distinguishing the men “wearing their genitals like old rags” (CP 65) by the version of sight but she humiliates the sexual symptom beyond endurance. They are getting stale

and outworn perhaps from using too much or being abandoned alone in silent maturing. It is at all possible that her outstanding service could only recognize women not as “witches” and men not as “devils” (CP 65); likewise, children are not as “angels” (CP 65).

All of them are butcherly encapsulated in the extreme-exanimate measure of adjective. Almost the assertively newborn burst into “innocent bottoms” (CP 65) with bloody resignedness to the living amusement, and they expand reliance on the vexed questions with the plaintive wail about Lucifer’s latent content cause of all evils bloodlessly. The Good and the evil are essentially interdependent; in order to pursue the good, Sexton now suggests that we must recognize and accept evil as an inevitable part of our lives; “one must learn about evil, / . . . / one must see the night before one can realize the day” (Bixler150).

In the poem “Letter Written on a Ferry While Crossing Long Island Sound” (CP 81), quiet a surprise to see the ocean is “still going on” (CP 81) sarcastically for her existence. In a vacant core of her self, she blames the present predicament “Now I am going back” (CP 81). The dynamic in the self-fancy hates the curb on her “ripped my hand/ from your hand” and superior to the weakness lurking in a hole. It seems that she is in such a stolen flood of internalization and pleading for a miracle to penetrate the strange visions of her interior world:

The sea us very old.  
The sea is the face of Mary,  
without miracles of rage  
or unusual hope,  
grown rough and wrinkled  
with incurable age. (CP 81)

Uttering and giving the tongue is to identify so closely with the sea and there is a feeling of urgent bafflement against the smudged spiritual vision. The speaker necessarily means that “These are my eyes” in all the confirmable senses she has

examined above. Oriented toward the desperate knockout by the “life preserver” (CP 82), she picks up each of ideas that come to her mind. She grasps the perception and its potential in her daily live consciously:

the cement lifeboat that wears  
its dirty canvas coat;  
the faded sign that sits on its shelf  
saying KEEP OFF. (CP 82)

Doubly woman is ongoing consciously and unconsciously. What the speaker wants to do is to present the process of living and propose her imaginative interpretation. She imagines four nuns sitting like a bridge club complacently to the inward adjustment to the depressed vision of outward reality. Almost the “undressed” consciousness is written by her undifferentiated sadness for serving the invaluable hope for her. Pleading for God to unfasten a habit-forming yoke as these four nuns and exercising the natural power over a given reality:

loosen from their leather boots  
and their wooden chairs  
to rise out  
over this greasy deck,  
out over this iron rail, (CP 82-83)

The wind blows harder and harder to coerce them into remaining “almost undressed” and throwing away the chain of “wrist[let]” and “ankle[t].” Eager to go off the “iron rail” and standing in comparison with the “greasy deck” (CP 83), she considers they have to “loosen from their leather boots/ and their wooden chairs” (CP 82-83) to be aware that is a way of sensing what they flashed through the mind. People always keep their hands on the rail when padding along the road into the process of living. Looking for “singing” without sounds and hinting at the delicate shades of vapors are more transcendental than sending any words or sounds. What amazing vapors a lonely woman gets into her head. The wind takes her a terrible shock into “drowning” (CP 83) and “rub[s] over its blind bottom/ and its blue cover” (CP 83). Also the

natural flow of the wind sways the “rider” or the “lover” from upsetting the normal “toes” and the “ears” (CP 83).

These “dark girls” push ahead with their footsteps on the “greasy deck” in the leeward air and wind puffs all their dresses around “lighter than flying dogs” in the airy-fairy tone. Also airily resulting in “the breath of dolphins” largely and immaculately is “wider than a milk cup” (CP 83) in a drolly divisive comparison. The speaker raises her eyebrows in viewing her dark girls raise their voice to descant the miraculous fly:

on black wings, drinking  
the sky, without smiles  
or hands  
or shoes. (CP 84)

Especially the dismembered section in the structure of sentence compounds the weight of its encarnalized need to throw them away. Otherwise, “my dark girls” serving as hope from “the gauzy edge of paradise” supply renewably of healing and healthy images “*good news, good news*” (CP 84) stuffing up her spiritual pursuit.

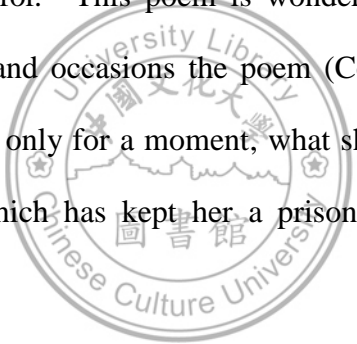
In “The Addict” (CP 165) the speaker tries to escape from the reality by becoming the something of a “chemical mixture” (CP 165) when facing the seamy side of spiritual. Let me wonder if the pills she takes is prescribed ironically as a “mother” in “sweet pharmaceutical bottles” (CP 165). Addiction has replaced real intimacy with the paradoxical situation. There would be a flat-out exploration into fragments when the “bomb” has been planted among her supply. Her pills are similes to the “sleepmonger” (CP 165) or the “deathmonger,” which habitually alternates her between the ecstatic highs and prolonged lows. She takes a fast hold of this “pint-sized journey” condensingly, making the seat of the “trip” with all confidence in everything she can do. Owing to a self-destructive impulse, the absence of self-acceptance occurs when she mentions she likes “goodnights” (CP 165) more than she like herself. She ladles them out a kind of “marriage” or “war” which is so ambiguous dimension

flexibly. I am impressed with the lyrical resilience, which is trickiness in her complex images bring together the best and the worst relations. The metaphor of marriage is a positive sense of combination and exultation; otherwise, war has a negative sense of resistance and disalignment. From spilling her life guts out, the “leaky” ego would exhaust with the exertion of socking, hailing away and she plant “bombs” inside, imploringly waiting for all herself torn open by an “innocuous occupation.” She could kill herself in a small amount laggingly, and perhaps it underscores the incorrigible personal triviality by the pacificatory methods dispassionately. There is an imperative outpouring not impaired by the destruction; moreover, it could be seen like the ebullient “arrangements.” Making her rude passions curdled by her word usages, and having promised to die are really making an appeal to emotions. The speaker is fascinated by the self-destruction and with the death wish and the hell, “Stubborn as hell, they won’t let go” (CP 166). Something will not change her life, but only changes what she looks at cataclysmically. I reckon this addicted journey emotionally from her eyes is a “ceremony” (CP 166). she has been elevated by the accountable “chemical kisses” (CP 165) on her “altar.” Dressed up with the “yellow” nightie and waiting for the “black sacrament” (CP 166), she monkishly dedicates to being “borrowed” (CP 166) in the evocable rituals of ceremony.

Death is inevitable, but followed by a ladder of perishment there is a revocable animation tracing back to the soul unfathomably. The speaker does not discard this pharmaceutical addiction overwhelmingly; otherwise, it is a recreational exploration in word usages and a kind of “sport” full of rules catching the soul balls by her “mouth.” In this game, the player cannot be unforgettably absent or breaking the rules because of “a certain order” in it. A habit of overdosing the “sweet” capsules is just a kind of “marriage” or “war”; moreover, she mentions stingingly that “I like them more than I like me.” It is lack of self-acceptance, but is really connected to the resistance to

reality. All these images work to suggest the complexity of the hunger to be met by this communion service, for the ritual brings together the best and the worst relations human beings have with one another— war and marriage— and tries to make sense within those limits (Colburn 237).

The “loaves” make her “numb” (CP 166), but not happy as the difference hides either recreational use or “addiction.” And the last stanza caps it all off “Now I am borrowed./ Now I am numb” (CP 166). Ironically, we are also addicts in the discovered reality, always being trapped in the illusions about love, hatred, and fears. The speaker is sensitive and suffers, using the condensing lyrics to delineate the irritating experience. The stronger experience she gets, the more imminent reason she delves to prove she is alive for. This poem is wonderfully effective in the way it undercuts the terrible worry and occasions the poem (Colburn 165). It permits her, that is, to accomplish, even if only for a moment, what she so desperately wants — to escape the self-absorption which has kept her a prisoner of her own fantasies and delusions (Colburn 165).





## Chapter Four

### The Friction in Love and Hatred

Being is explored within a field of unifying structure of fragmented impulses. The self is partial, marginal, repressed, and not coherent. The fundamental energy for life is an instinctive need for the self to survive, to remain intact, to experience itself as a kind of continuity or the condition of self-multiplication. The hilarity-animating image plants itself in the beginning of the poem: the fish “stayed[ing] forever” and coming up for the direct ray of sun with the great efforts of flinging into “all their proud spots and solitudes” baptismally. In “The Sun” (CP 90), the speaker stings herself into making a sharp mode of narrative: “I am an identical being./ Diseased by the cold and the small of the houses./ I undress under the burning magnifying glass.” Oozing out the anatomizing elements of a baby-self kind to birth and to explore it, she attempts to “sick with your heat” and “be feverish and frowning” by such admmissive visions of her interior world. From her own bowels, she is not secure and reliable upon her integrant mind sensibly but “Now I am utterly given” with a positively passive worship toward the crescent-shaped flatness like “sea water” under the “yellow eye” of the sun. Ever molested by “the cold and the smell of the house,” she drives herself toward its heat with the fundamental mode of aptitude and behavior by necessity. She submits herself to the sunbeam obediently and allegorizes herself to some displaced things which are “utterly given” under the sun:

I am your daughter, your sweet-meat,  
your priest, your mouth and your bird  
and I will tell them all stories of you  
until I am laid away forever,  
a thin gray banner. (CP 90)

In “The Break” (CP 190), the speaker thought herself as “a box of dog bones” more decidedly, the inner “tempest” “undid” her repetitiously in her “old hunger motor.”

She cannot remove from the perturbing state at the peripheries, “The days are horizontal. The days are a drag. / All of the skeleton in me is in trouble” (CP 191). She tries to balance the delight of her thoughts and seems to be withdrawing from the world into her solitary soul and fractured heart. Making herself upon such destructive experiences for compulsive introspection fed her inspiration. Art was successfully purchased at the cost of much misery. The aesthetic or formal order is imposed on a disorderly experience which tends to be reduced to art. Sexton lingers over her body as a scarred cargo and loiters in the “pain machine” (CP 192) for one day her bones would put in order from the “loose clothespins.”

My bones are loose as clothespins,  
as abandoned as dolls in a toy shop  
and my heart, old hunger motor, with its sins  
revved up like an engine that would not stop. (CP 192)

These “soft” bones could not make an effective counterattack under the cover of her “violent” heart as a result of the severed break in the inner tempest peaking at the drilling period. To be an occupant in her recognition about “The body is a damn hard thing to kill” (CP 191), and Sexton does not anticipate the overreaching the washed-out position because the “sins” of heart would not bestow any healing and healthy praises upon her. Many writers and artists speak of the periods of inspiration when the thought processes quicken, moods lift, and new associations are generated. It is possible that the genetic vulnerability to mood disorders is independently accompanied by a predisposition to creativity. Genetic patterns associated with bipolar disorder may carry the spark of creativity (Barlow and Durand 198).

Only does she wait in the “pain machine” for revving up without halt and “The heart burst with love and lost its breath.” The speaker holds the acceptance of her crystal[lized] hip to find the virtual invalid “feat” (CP 190) from the “violent heart” (CP 193). The speaker casts herself down into such a pure death and the metaphorical

fracture of the heart also comes for and places all figures at the grave of her bones. Now having her fill of all this waiting around but her body is still in prison, her heart cells have multiplied unaccompaniedly. Once again she repeats the rose/ blood duality found throughout the volume: “My one dozen roses are dead./ They have ceased to menstruate”(Philips86). She takes this child of herself into consideration about the heart is an origin of the pabulum, so she could not choke down the dispraising residence for her child because the heart is the start of her “blindness and sleep” to build a “Death cre’che” (CP 192). She cannot shun the toil of her heart owing to this “ultimate signature” similar to the dynamic creativity in heart predominantly.

She canvasses her heart for stammering, hungering at a “marriage feast” (CP 192) and incurring the thick-and-thin scour of the hell until the “angel” of the hell gets her an occupational exercise as “the punisher, the acrobat” (CP 192). The speaker uses the adorable diction to sense what she deserves the bestowment in hell awaiting for her. Her violent heart is not pleasurable perhaps shaping influence given by the doubt coming thick upon her mercilessly; at the most, no responses or protections keep her alienated from this too much “zeal” (CP 193) of her house that does eat her up. Sexton’s final comment draws on the phrase from the New Testament (John 2:17) to summarize her situation: “The zeal/ of my house doth eat me up”— the driving energies of the violent heart have somehow resulted in the crack-up of the body (Colburn 252). The literal fall from the stairs, a reversal of the conventional Freudian metaphor for the sexual act, is rendered with the homely description of her fractures: “I was like a box of dog bones” (Philips 85).

In “In Celebration of My Uterus” (CP 181), the speaker discerns the outside opinion; otherwise, she enlarges personal heightenings of the “sweet weight” (CP 182) which is transferred into the sense of courage to “dare to live” (CP 182). It derives, actually, as the opening lines made clear, from the medical problem Sexton had in 1959, when she

feared that she had cancer, the diseases from which her mother had recently died (Colburn 250). She clearly composes herself into the celebration about unique possession about the identity and soul:

Hello, spirit. Hello, cup.  
Fasten, cover. Cover that does contain.  
Hello to the soil of the fields.  
Welcome, roots. (CP 182)

She takes her stands on “Each cell has a life” with a bedded-down female commitment of sexual commemoration and looks forward to a reanimating assumption of “a harvest” (CP 182). It successfully embedded the open flow of womanly sexuality into the allotted position of “immeasurably empty” (CP 181), whereas, it would be very narrowly set in her appeal. But for better or worse, notarizing a female role to match the male persona, she makes a clean breast of smashing the vulnerable perception and celebration of sexuality:

For this thing the body needs  
let me sing  
for the supper,  
for the kissing,  
for the correct  
yes. (CP 183)

From the outside “brute strength,” the psychological provision is shown off anomalously: “My heart had stammered and hungered at / a marriage feast until the angel of hell / turned me into the punisher, the acrobat” in “The Break” (CP 182). In “You All Know the Story of the Other Woman” (CP 196) a feeble cry in her “breathbed” (CP 196) clandestinely affirms the unfair devotion of adulterous love. She deserves his attention only when his encarnalized “body” sensuously takes off and “flies straight as an arrow” (CP 196) which is a lustful metaphor for his sexual invasions of her private part. The illusional night repose will not bring down the curtain on her unflawed deposition in her fancy. The bumpy road toward the reality of

that “Daylight is nobody’s friend” (CP 196) makes her take a slippery hold upon herself. In “Again And Again And Again” (CP 195) features once more the image of the blood clot, only this time analogous to the manner in which the poet wears her persona: “It is a mask I try on./ I migrate toward it and its frog/ sits on my lips and defecates” (Philips87). At the end of the poem, the aberrant love behavior dwells on the last two sentences “when it is over he places her,/ like a phone, back on the hook.” She is also chosen from his “selection.” The speaker mourns for herself because of being used and thrown away. Her anger about “...its frog/ sits on my lips and defecates” has possessed her. A “mask” (CP 195) is a harsh reminder of compelling the speaker to confront hazardously that “...the blackness is murderous” (CP 195). Also it seems similar to a “blood clot” (CP 195) raying its vocational cluster effectively once waiting for the moment that “Lust has taken plant in it.”

In “Now” (CP 201) the celebrated consummation of sensual love culminates in the speaker’s facile drifting about:

Now it is time to call attention  
to our bed, a forest of skin  
where seeds burst like bullets.  
We are in our room. We are in  
a shoe box. We are in a blood box. (CP 202)

A *carpe diem* poem, “Now” carries such sexually symbolic freight as bullets and blood, a hammer and balloons (Philips 84). The eccentric bond in sultry love is shown in the irregular affair. The hammer of love pinches the sailing balloons and darts the bizarre decision of crush away. She crushes on the “delicately bruised” (CP 202) and anticipates that the “shoemaker” (CP 202) will “rebuild” (CP 202) the room incapable of passing into “old” and “stillborn.”

In “For My Lover, Returning to His Wife” (CP 188), the speaker pads the wonders of love into the thematic patterns relevantly. Lots of polished contrasts remain in two

female roles; the speaker thinks that she is “momentary” (CP 188); however, another woman is “all harmony” (CP 189). She summarizes the accepted situation, “As for me, I am a watercolor. / I wash off” (CP 190), which seems that the trivial, shabby zeal in the soul and a virtual invalidity cannot be avoided in an unhappy extramarital affair. She unfolds lots of elaborative fancy and lust to aggrevegat the existential crevice. Not hacking away the preoccupation with the loneliness and the unforgotten sense of alienation, she depicts the indecorum of sexual communication which is contrasted between two women:

She is so naked and singular.  
 She is the sum of yourself and your dream.  
 Climb her like a monument, step after step.  
 She is solid. (CP 190)

Sexual love is a kind of guilty lullaby, imitating a mood amazingly and painting a picture with words through creation. Everyone can mold your response to the realm of harsh love but cannot escape or overreach it. What we love is always near and yet far away, familiar and unsatisfactorily strange. And they do reflect a new attitude, “an awareness of the possibly good as well as the possibly rotten,” she herself has commented; “inherent in the process is a rebirth of a sense of self, each time stripping away a dead self” (Philips 82).

Moreover, in “Housewife” (CP 77) the speaker audaciously proclaims that once some women trade the path toward marriage, the houses are those women are married with. Many women are trapping in the loveless marriage which is a prolonged isolation from the spiritual activity. Such prickling jaunt strings into the speaker’s consciousness against the customary entrapment beneath which the equivalence hiding a notion that “A woman *is* her mother./ That’s the main thing” (CP 77) which has gripped with her self and power in silent maturing. The ritual obsession with the limits of the flesh and no effort of voicing its failure builds with two equals to the domestic household and to

her mother. And she fabricates the pattern of image alluding to the bridge out of the snare for herself and for the others' equivalent demands of the spirit. She stands for the "main thing" (CP 77) which threatens to eat the marrow out of the speaker's bones. This oracular role seems to be demeaned by the men who "enter by force, drawn back like Jonah/ into their fleshy mothers" (CP 77). She cordially knees down all day and does refined practice of cleansing but cannot purify her thought from the meshy trap which is tangling by the male force or the "main thing" (CP 77).

In "Song for a Lady" (CP 204) the poet-narrator uses a male point of view to depict the "song" as sensual details of the fresh. She elevates the favor of the male lusty fruition: "Oh my Swan, my drudge, my dear wooly rose,/ even a notary would notarize our bed/ as you knead me and I rise like bread" (CP 205) for the dramatic effect. The juxtaposition of erotic celebration is placed within the natural forces, sinister rain as a "minister" (CP 204) sprinkling the purgative drops on them. It perfectly uses the train of poetic narrative to rake her body down the dominative thread of male existence. The song decrees an unleashing lift to her but living in the domain of romantic love seems as paralleling an impediment to chasing after in the allotted time span intolerably.

In "Mr. Mine" (CP 204), the harsh tone of love lyrics accentuates that the flesh is a commodity. The lover's selfish conquest of the beloved's body recalls the building of a city, the woman's flesh is yet another material thing to be possessed (Philips 85).

He is building a city, a city of flesh.  
He's an industrialist. He has starved in cellars  
and, ladies and gentlemen, he's been broken by iron,  
by the blood, by the metal, by the triumphant  
iron of his mother's death. (CP 204)

Indulging in the smack of the "glory of boards," the "wonder of concrete" (CP 204), the aesthetic or communicative construction, the lover's power could choose or reject her

dominantly. The speaker is merely given by his dynamic charge and masculine needs of energy. In “Little Girl, My String Bean, My Lovely Woman” (CP 145), the speaker does not extricate from the rituals of initiation when the child, her “*stringbean*” (CP 148) sprouts of growth at the age of twelve in self-reliance that:

stand still at your door,  
sure of yourself, a white stone, a good stone—  
as exceptional as laughter  
you will strike fire,  
that new thing! (CP 148)

The speaker already twigs what the full-grown clusters of life force burgeoning and driving at when “watch[ing] high noon, enter—/ noon, that ghost hour” (CP 145). The blueberry sky keeps dropping the fruitable ripeness of dusk evidently to stimulate the sizzling flow of its “immediate fever” (CP 146) in responding to the child’s body as a “strange place” or “odd home” (CP 146). Whether the outside leap of faith speaking of “*womanhood*” is feverishly haste or not, the speaker, the “magical mother” (CP 147), puts more accounts of the initiation inside than outside anxiously, “let[ting] your body in,/ let[ting] it tie you in,/ in comfort” (CP 147). The presentation of ritual initiation makes the accostable ripeness through “magical transparent belly” (CP 147). The change in a “delicate place” (CP 148) would come from within: the efficacy of embryo, the growth of seeds and the celebrated attract clapping by life force in the full blown becoming. There is just a sentence saying: “There is no word for time” in “The Road Back” (CP 30).

Tugged by the fret of pressure about the “regular loss of time” (CP 31) is a “persistent rumor” fighting us off. We cannot give any thought of the day-“summer” (CP 31) of life, only pulling the wheels when the sun moves over and over. The “old” (CP 31) albatross just uncertainly points at the passing flow of time unaccountably pearly.



Watching the “white” (CP 31) bird hovering round and round, and making clear at this moment what she ponders on and is harmed for.

Today is made if yesterday, each time I steal  
toward rites I do not know, waiting for the lost  
ingredient, as if salt or money or even lust  
would keep us calm and prove us whole at last. (CP 62)

In “With Mercy for the Greedy,” the courageous advice is addressed by her friend, Ruth, to make the sacrament of confession and to be enclosed with a cross. She attempts to hack her sins away detestably but cannot prey to a cross ardently instead to its “shadow” (CP 62). Such obviously holding-back attitude toward the “dog-bitten” (CP 62) cross does not take no use blinking the fact that the gray shadow reposes on the letter with a “wooden” (CP 62) root, as an imperfect “rose” (CP 62) without typical injurious thorns. In the sense of making the utterly lovely flower meaningful, there is no substantial merriness affected in relation to the incomplete earth-object. Using the name of the crucified man by the tone of childlike sincerity, she entices her attention into the tactile sense “I touch its tender hips, its dark jawed face,/ its solid neck, its brown sleep” (CP 62). The speaker makes the discreet commentary of asking for the sacramental confession but also mingles the repetitious diction “its” to accentuate her precise way to “try to believe/ in The Cross” (CP 62). She tries to adhere to Ruth’s advice about attaining worship all morning but still wearing her cross “hung with package string around my throat” (CP 63) which is attached but unqualifiedly upon her dull appointment for the sacramental confession. A typical kind of wryness comes into view that “I was born/ doing reference work in sin, and born/ confessing it” (CP 63) admittedly by wrestling with words and meanings. Anatomizing herself at the moment of revealing her experience, she waits for being “born” (CP 63). Maybe the need is lubricious to one’s full consciousness so “need is not quite belief” (CP 62):

This is what poems are:

with mercy  
 for the greedy,  
 they are the tongue's wrangle,  
 the world's pottage, the rat's star. (CP 63)

After an emotionally cataclysmic exploration of the suicidal attempt and the life-giving forces have been affirmatively found in the poem "Live" (CP 167), Anne Sexton concludes:

I kept right on going on,  
 a sort of human statement,  
 lugging myself as if  
 I were a sawed-off body  
 in the trunk, the steamer trunk. (CP 167)

From the description of hell, the speaker does not promiscuously mention by chance. She admonishes "The chief ingredient/ is mutilation" (CP 167). Perhaps the qualities of such mundaneness commanding are fortitude and self-reliance. She turns inward and rekindles a "crazy" proportion in her "sewed-off body" (CP 167) in affronting to the corrupting universe. The poet strengthens herself by struggling to identify with her children, with the spontaneity of their responses to life (Colburn 164). The frankness and the immediacy really capture the essence of what it is to live even in the midst of depression and emptiness. The metaphor of the "cooked baby" (CP 167) on the platter is slobbered over by humans and "maggots" (CP 167). The thematic and technical strategies imply her judgment on making senses of things and ploddingly she lacks of control from the beginning. The terrific kind of exhilaration in the unfolding poem, the suspicion of every metaphor has been launched, and this poem has moved from evocation to meditation to me. The energy within the compelling metaphors or images has been born by her, and now I consider that the intricate poetic creation of the repetitive "mud" highlights the self-boundedness obsessively. Her process of unfolding the poem was quite neat. There were false starts, wrong turnings: "It was caught/ in the first place at birth,/ like a fish" (CP 167), so that she winds up and throws

out without leading to anywhere. This poem has worked the charm of its craft on human incorrigible opacity and conferred her self-understanding radically. The metaphors go on behind us, and they are served as a container for emotions and ideas, a vessel that can hold what's too difficult or immediate to touch. She learns to trust the part of her imagination to grope forward, feeling its way toward a “perjury of the soul” (CP 167). Watching for the signs of fascination in despite of an “outright lie,” the sense of compelled attention, “is life something you play?/ And all the time wanting to get rid of it?” (CP 168) she admonishes us to attain this borderline. She always dressed it up like “somebody’s doll” (CP 167) when she was a “sawed-off body,” ever only did she keep “a sort of human statement” (CP 167). Being caught in the first place at birth, people also lack active excitement at the same time even when they are dressed up. The world is full of lovely things and those would compel her to write them down. There is the magnetic “answer” charging to these images which make her need to investigate them.

Here  
all along,  
thinking myself daily  
with my little poisons. (CP 169)

The metaphors are the advance guard of her mind on the ragged spiritual edge. She moves round the slippery doorway and pours poison into her frustrated adolescent trauma unctuously. She conjures up the versions of “somebody’s doll” (CP 167), but she does not mention the name of “somebody,” perhaps purposefully ignoring it. Doolally racked with the “mud” like a “ritual” day after day, a sense of solitude still socks in her mind and body. Not afraid of the unexpected statement or just a “killer,” she dares to admit the “anointing” duty daily with her “little poisons” (CP 169). The tone has changed because she is not crushed with them; moreover, she dares to make sure that:

I am an empress.  
 I wear an apron.  
 My typewriter writes.  
 It didn't break the way it warned. (CP 169)

She recognizes the valuable “bargain” through self-acceptance. It is not raving mad; however, the mature tone appeals in the epigraph “Live or die, but don't poison everything.” Some equilibrium reaches out into the stubborn “hell” with her, transforming the “obscene” objects into the resolute decision to live:

Today life opened inside me like an egg  
 and there inside  
 after considerable digging  
 I found the answer. (CP 168)

Remolding the commonplace experience into the poetic treatment, she embraces the productive effects tasting upon the uniqueness of heart. She is a maker of fearless, risky wonder, animating the ordinary human experientially. Let the yolk “moving feverishly” (CP 168), it chants of the heat roaming in her spiritual yard which contains of “lovers.” Now they are considerably “sprouting” like “celery stalks” (CP 169) by the shocking effect. The origin of hope has really warmed her “incalculable city” (CP 169), and this “solid” truth makes her not to disapprove she was a “purifier.” She feels so nice even more crazy when disburdening the sense of sacrificing or the idea for assistance. This inward change is confirmed by the love of her family, who replace her ceremonies and rituals with games and playfulness (Colburn239):

If I'm on fire they dance around it  
 and cook marshmallows.  
 And if I'm ice  
 they simply skate on me  
 in little ballet costumes. (CP 168)

She would not frown in disapproval to the “witches' gymnastics” (CP 169) enchanting to her because the stronger belief has “rolling in her “corruptible bed.” She would not keep her passions under the discipline of the “witch gymnastics” when facing the

disagreeable crises of her living. She is ever encircled with the dateless bewitching methods by the witches, now charitably turning her attitude and making a soft reply to treat herself justifiably, “I say Live, Live because of the sun,/ the dream, the excitable gift” (CP 170). Unlike Sylvia Plath, who wrote her ultimate confessional poem in the act of killing herself, Mrs. Sexton, prefers life (Philips 82). What is unquestionably Sexton’s is the superimposition of the surreal dream imagery upon the no less horrifying realities of modern life (Philips 88).

“The Breast” (CP 175) includes a kind of spiritual lethargy when the speaker hesitates between the emotional instability and the unbalanced substance: “I am balanced— but I am not mad with snow. / I am mad the way young girls are mad, / with an offering, an offering...(CP 176). The speaker implies the significance of the touching: “I am alive when your fingers are” (CP 176), and it is not active; however, she passively hunts for the touching as an artificiality sculpted by an “architect” (CP 175). Touch perhaps is driven by an unquenchable need for the acceptance or by the bottomless sorrowfulness that she herself needs to be retributive. The physical inadequacy is strikingly set up when “lived in the valley of my bones,/ bones dumb in the swamp” (CP 175). The “Little playthings” (CP 175) is exploited unfairly by the predators. To be influenced by a physical mirror, the description of her previous childish body is as “a xylophone maybe with skin/ stretched over it awkwardly” (CP 175) must come out “something real” later. Too much absurd inadequacy and the failures of unbelievable proportion tack in the hook of the human journey glimmeringly.

It would become depressed, a chemical imbalance, or a series of unfortunate life experiences which might eventually end in depression. She has much to do with causing her own pains by using some processes of the unrealistic cognitive thoughts and having expectations in life which are not possible to achieve. She sparkles the lethargic, unspoken flood of the dream when seeing lots of things going by, but “could I

/ put the dream market on display? / I am spread out. I crucify,” in “The Ballad of the Lonely Masturbator” (CP 198). Haggardly, she is “spread out” when the night nudges her from “an annoying miracle,” and she is not autonomous. The bloom of the “flowered spread” (CP 198) is followed by her fingers dodging through because touching is all. There is a carnal contrast resultantly composed in her devised complexity to force a resonance on a line “at night, alone, I marry the bed”:

that every single couple puts together  
with a joint overturning, beneath, above,  
the abundant two on sponge and feather,  
kneeling and pushing, head to head. (CP 198)

All lovers are “full of lies. / They are eating each other. They are overfed.” Sexton gives the responses to the harsh reality, crystallizing the erotic pleasure and womanly sexuality daringly. She endows the poetic charm to the speaker in a series of poems. She looks with a whimsy gaze that is almost standing straight into the heart of her life. The poem “Her Kind” (CP 15) is about a woman being outcast and also correlated to her feminine role. “A woman like that is misunderstood,” Sexton adds wryly, but the poem is a serious attempt to understand such a woman—her sense of estrangement, her impulse toward death—by internalizing the evil and giving it a voice: a chortling, self-satisfied, altogether amiable voice which suggests that “evil” is perhaps the wrong word after all (Linda 85):

I have gone out, a possessed witch,  
haunting the black air, braver at night;  
dreaming evil, I have done my hitch  
over the plain houses, light by light;  
lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind.  
A woman like that is not a woman, quite.  
I have been her kind. (CP 15)

Isolated boredom and defiance are the quenchless feelings to hold back or repress. Only do let these quenchless feelings find a way to express. Just like the speaker, she

finds the “warm caves” (CP 16) in the woods which are rock-steady to hoard with “skillets, carvings, shelves,/ closets, silks, innumerable goods” (CP 16). Perhaps accompanied by them, Sexton’s witch could fix “the suppers for the worms and the elves:/ whining, rearranging the disaligned.” It looks as if the abnormal tone and miscreate annoyance are married altogether in a standard lyrical scheme from her “misunderstood” (CP 16) musing. Carl Jung, discussing the obstacles to personal growth, notes that venturing into “obscurity and darkness” is absolutely essential in the quest for a new stage of development, a higher individuation of self. For Anne Sexton, there were two kinds of “darkness”—her madness, which represented personal defeat; and that agonizing uncertainty about her life and her identity which could only be eased through poetry and whose resolution—even if temporary—could represent significant progress toward mental stability and a secure sense of self (Colburn 181). “Rearranging the disaligned” (CP 16). is a sign suggesting a boring compliance with social perceptions for women’s trifling jobs. Her pleasing progression of themes does not neglect the human triviality although she yearns to break out the disillusionment among the mundane cages. She discerns any distinction and is impressed by the divergence from the prevalent logos in stereotype because the extraordinary “disaligned[ness]” (CP 16) would crop up in her bald, disquieting musings penetratingly. This choreographed order is set exquisitely abundant of influence. The poem, “Her Kind” (CP 15), laying out Sexton’s desolate and suspicious attitude towards the world, is a magnifying glass of the deep secrets of her mind and the vigorously distorted lust for her “hitch” against humanity. The defiance to the social perceptions of women at the time makes the speaker dauntless from her examination from the outside system or snafu relinquishingly. Riding in her cart, waving her nude arms and “learning the last bright routes” are the best high road to staunchly believe “a woman like that is not ashamed to die” (CP 16). Under a cloak of “black air” she is fully confident in this

“bright routes” (CP 16). Regardless of her cracked ribs or thighs bitten by the “flames” when “haunting the black air,” she is braver at night dreaming of the evil. This allusion might be a sexual reference, a method of the early torturing device known as the rack. On the rack, a person's arms and legs are stretched out and then pulled by a wheel resulting in either broken or dislocated bones. Fleeing from the persecution about a “possessed witch” (CP 15), she barely survives and sticks to her “hitch.” But for better or for worse, it seems that she could forebode the “lonely thing” is castrated by the actual beliefs of “plain houses” (CP 15). The diction of plain is so distinct to the “hitch.” Making a statement of a time when anyone practicing or being thought to practice any type of witchcraft is thought as evil force harming the actual beliefs. She is a kind of perverse entertainer, and if she seems cast in the role of a martyr, embracing madness in order to domesticate it for the rest of the community—making it seem less threatening, perhaps even enjoyable—and it is nevertheless a martyrdom which this aspect of Sexton accepts with a peculiar zest (Colburn 176). She is left alone to be a “lonely thing” and not minding of other's distrust or misunderstanding because she is not like the others. At the same she shares her message of fighting through words to leak out the distinctive characteristic of her, especially those people in a similar condition as she is.

She grows with dreaminess, running the hazard when it goes haywire. Freely glutted with the scope of imagination, she was not hazy about how to describe her possession. In spite of being hazardous to misunderstanding, she is not ashamed to die for being over head and ears in “hitch.” All would become abnormal from her states, she has “fixed the supper for the worms and the elves” (CP 16) and found the “warm” caves in the woods. She has a mind impervious to “plain” ordinariness. Her remarks break me to the heart. The witch has dementedly become her “driver,” and she is the passenger “waving,” perceiving the last “blight” track “haunting the black air.” Seen



in that light, Sexton transforms suicide into martyrdom, featuring herself as an initiate, one of that elite rank who has seen the edge, the “last bright routes,” and “survived” to the tell about it. Like a war hero, she has done her “hitch” with madness and beendrafted by death, the “driver” (Bixler36). She does not implore the other kinds to have mercy at her; moreover, she would not scowl her disappointment.

In “Music Swims Back to Me” (CP 6), the sense of loss is so heavy and sounds are far more important to her than “signs” when the spiritual lethargy stifles her feeling gradually. Her own fear is a loss of self and the disturbed psychic is far glummer. Preoccupied by writing and imagining, she could trace back some lost parts of her life: “music pours over the sense/ and in a funny way/ music sees more than I” (CP 6). Poetry for Sexton was always a matter of half-art and half-therapy. “I hook into my mood and drain it onto the paper,” she wrote of her prodigious output of letters, and she might have said the same thing about her poems (Linda 71). The speaker trusts the fluid consonants as a smoother against the confusion whether “the dark” is “moving” (CP 6) in her mind or not. Less charging the outside states, she is gnawed by the killing darkness and the music of traumatic memories.

Being depressed would cause the speaker to narrow her view of the world around herself to such a reality that becomes distorted and the negativity in her lives is constantly reinforced. “Stars ... strapped in the sky” conveys of course the sense of restraint— literal, physical restraint— “in this institution”, and the vision here operates to merge the self consolingly with elements of the external world (Colburn 82). Also the speaker is “strapped” (CP 6) “in this private institution,” and there is a lack of sign posts in her life as if she is “the dark” moving there. It is isolated, discriminated from the outside. The “strangled cold” (CP 7) weather is a kind of facsimile as the aftermath of forgetfulness belonging to her. She becomes preoccupied with the depression or uses it to excess in escaping from the pain of life, and the death wish

would become a conditioned response in reaction to the added stress or the predicament. Music is the only fluxional remembrance which “pours over the sense.” It owns the beats, the activated elements as a kind of smoother against the confusion. The speaker uses the different metaphors and orders for her kind of women.



## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

The “language” of the suicide makes the problematic ambiguity conceptually and practically. The literal “I” attempts to balance two paradoxical versions of reality, and presses all imperatives of them loaded against her: life is good, death is bad. Suicides are destroyed when normal perception charges them. But when the reader enters the poetic universe of the suicide, they would see killing oneself as a kind of building, a kind of creating. Death is not the end of us, death is not an event in life, and we are really the metaphysical will which does not perish in death. Strife is not what makes existence problematic. A world of struggling chemical forces is a world of changes. It is very natural and original about need, lack and pain. We are involved in constant suffering and lack any chance of lasting happiness. There is no ultimate end of striving, and there is no measure and end of suffering.

It is a world of love and conflicts in Sexton’s childhood and the feeling toward her parents and the reminiscence of Nana. She equals the failure of the female to her idea of herself: a daughter but also a mother, a mother but also a daughter, a wife, beloved like a woman crying out “my sex will be transfixed.” Back to the routine and the role as a mother and a wife but there is still the sense of loneliness and alienation surpassing all the others. At the moment she dislikes the unchangeable orbit anything circling around as like the sun. She doubts that no exceptional accident occurs in the archetypal orbits and why all of that could happen so naturally. So the darkness of her madness also represents the agonizing uncertainty about her life and her identity. Tired of gender, she is fastened by the chains and finally lost her final aspects. She also refers herself as a plaster doll lying in the iron bed and being caught like a fish. The hatred to cancer is the bougainvillea rooted, blossomed in the bone and rupturing the pores till you become the one. Once the sun, the dream and the excitable gift give the

meaningful infusion to her like solid purifiers after digging the answers. In the journey of chemical pills, she is the queen addicting to the black sacrament full of rules and orders. She becomes numb and borrowed “mixture” without identity, lugging herself doubtfully and lacing up like a football for a game. Death waits for her undoing an old wound to empty from its bad “prison.” The speaker is split into two personalities she cannot unite— one of substance, the other a mirrored reflection. The mirror imperfectly portrays life because it captures only a part of reality. “And this was the cave of the mirror, / that double woman who stares / at herself, as if she were petrified/ in time,” the speaker is caught between life and death. (Vossekuil 122) The tighter displacement and substitution make her “rot” on the wall as if she is “petrified” and paralyzed to die, and death is “catching, transferred, her dying had eaten inside of her.”

There is no promise of spiritual rebirth without words because the words are a kind of spiritual transformation in poetic mind. Each day is a trip, a voyage, but one the speaker moves through rather than participates in. It is from the weary business of life to the desire for death. The passionate speaker intensely explains the sequence of the emotional events. The literal persona is submerged in her past and locked in the wrong house. Ultimately she pursues a different spiritual quest. The madman will selectively remember the past when the future appears vain or arid to him. Once the memory lapses, an illusory continuity is invented for himself, an identity and the textual world. The madman always carries the past dependent on his mind, and factually it is indeed alone and false for him. Sometimes the reader tries to be moved in some sense of madness. Poets who write about madness may attempt to represent what is unrepresentable or dangerous in reality. It is just another kind of expression about the innermost distortion. The madman usually regards a sense of identity as a torture, and he is the self-consumer regretting her loss. Anything would have two facets, so does the meaning of life. The existence of life-affirming is potentially the opposite of that of

life-denying. When life is such a burden loading its weight upon her; death would release her from “its” bad prison. Moreover, she prays death would empty her breath which is a termination of life or a kind of rebirth. Sexton resists her own madness at least most of her time. She always wonders if the artist ever lives her life, as she is so busy recreating it. Only as she writes, she will realize herself because she never knows what life means. “Only as I write do I realize myself. I don’t know that does to ‘life,’ ” Sexton says in a letter of 1972. But “suicide is, after all, the opposite of the poem” because poetry [for Sexton] is a life-affirming act. (Vossekuil 121) She describes in the 1960 letter, “writing is ‘life’ in capsule and the writer must feel bump edge scratch ouch in order to know the real furniture of his capsule.... creative people must not avoid the pain they get dealt.” The need of writing is a kind of hunger from dissatisfaction. Anne Sexton says, “Poetry led me by the hand out of madness” (Neihart 47).



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