**Mad Girl's Love Song By Sylvia Plath**

"I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead;

I lift my lids and all is born again.

(I think I made you up inside my head.)

The stars go waltzing out in blue and red,

And arbitrary blackness gallops in:

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

I dreamed that you bewitched me into bed

And sung me moon-struck, kissed me quite insane.

(I think I made you up inside my head.)

God topples from the sky, hell's fires fade:

Exit seraphim and Satan's men:

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

I fancied you'd return the way you said,

But I grow old and I forget your name.

(I think I made you up inside my head.)

I should have loved a thunderbird instead;

At least when spring comes they roar back again.

I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.

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**Morning Song By Sylvia Plath**

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.

The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry

Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.

In a drafty museum, your nakedness

Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

I’m no more your mother

Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow

Effacement at the wind’s hand.

All night your moth-breath

Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:

A far sea moves in my ear.

One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral

In my Victorian nightgown.

Your mouth opens clean as a cat’s. The window square

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try

Your handful of notes;

The clear vowels rise like balloons.

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**Edge by Sylvia Plath**

The woman is perfected.

Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment,

The illusion of a Greek necessity

Flows in the scrolls of her toga,

Her bare

Feet seem to be saying:

We have come so far, it is over.

Each dead child coiled, a white serpent,

One at each little

Pitcher of milk, now empty.

She has folded

Them back into her body as petals

Of a rose close when the garden

Stiffens and odors bleed

From the sweet, deep throats of the night flower.

The moon has nothing to be sad about,

Staring from her hood of bone.

She is used to this sort of thing.

Her blacks crackle and drag.

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**Poppies in October by Sylvia Plath**

Even the sun-clouds this morning cannot manage such skirts.

Nor the woman in the ambulance

Whose red heart blooms through her coat so astoundingly –

A gift, a love gift

Utterly unasked for

By a sky

Palely and flamily

Igniting its carbon monoxides, by eyes

Dulled to a halt under bowlers.

Oh my God, what am I

That these late mouths should cry open

In a forest of frosts, in a dawn of cornflowers.

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**Daddy By Sylvia Plath**

You do not do, you do not do

Any more, black shoe

In which I have lived like a foot

For thirty years, poor and white,

Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.

You died before I had time——

Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,

Ghastly statue with one gray toe

Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic

Where it pours bean green over blue

In the waters off beautiful Nauset.

I used to pray to recover you.

Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town

Scraped flat by the roller

Of wars, wars, wars.

But the name of the town is common.

My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.

So I never could tell where you

Put your foot, your root,

I never could talk to you.

The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

I could hardly speak.

I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna

Are not very pure or true.

With my gipsy ancestress and my weird luck

And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack

I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been scared of *you,*

With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.

And your neat mustache

And your Aryan eye, bright blue.

Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You——

Not God but a swastika

So black no sky could squeak through.

Every woman adores a Fascist,

The boot in the face, the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,

In the picture I have of you,

A cleft in your chin instead of your foot

But no less a devil for that, no not

Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.

I was ten when they buried you.

At twenty I tried to die

And get back, back, back to you.

I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,

And they stuck me together with glue.

And then I knew what to do.

I made a model of you,

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.

And I said I do, I do.

So daddy, I’m finally through.

The black telephone’s off at the root,

The voices just can’t worm through.

If I’ve killed one man, I’ve killed two——

The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year,

Seven years, if you want to know.

Daddy, you can lie back now.

There’s a stake in your fat black heart

And the villagers never liked you.

They are dancing and stamping on you.

They always *knew* it was you.

Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.

[**Morning Song**](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/morning-song)**’.** Although we haven’t arranged this selection of Sylvia Plath’s best poems in any kind of chronological (much less preferential) order, it seems fitting to follow ‘You’re’, a poem about pregnancy, with ‘Morning Song’, a poem about a mother tending to her new-born child. ‘Morning Song’ is about a mother waking in the night to tend to her crying baby, and so doesn’t celebrate the beauty of the sunrise or an aesthetically pleasing landscape as seen at dawn, like some of the poems on this list. Instead, we have Plath’s speaker (based on Plath, herself a mother to a small child when she penned this poem) stumbling out of bed ‘cow-heavy and floral’ in her Victorian nightgown.

**‘**[**Daddy**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48999)**’.**One of Sylvia Plath’s most famous poems, ‘Daddy’ controversially links the father in the poem to a Nazi officer, and references the Holocaust. Variously seen as a highly autobiographical ‘confessional’ poem and as an extremely loose fictionalised account of Plath’s own relationship to her father (an entomologist and bee-expert who died when Plath was just eight), ‘Daddy’ continues to generate much discussion amongst Plath’s readers and critics.

**‘**[**Edge**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/49009)**’.** This poem, written just six days before Plath committed suicide in February 1963, was probably the last poem she ever wrote. Fittingly – and eerily – it’s about a dead woman, whose body has been ‘perfected’ in death (and, presumably, suicide).