

"Mirror"

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
What ever you see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful---
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Sylvia Plath
(1961)

Name: _____ * Sylvia Plath (1961)

"Mirror" → *personification*
* 1st person
* po v. I
* clues
I am silver and exact I have no preconceptions.

What ever you see I swallow immediately - enjoyment
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.

I am not cruel, only truthful---

The eye of a little god, four-cornered.

Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.

It is pink, with speckles, I have looked at it so long // *imagery*

I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.

Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

light/day dark/night → *Day vs. night / truth vs. lies = symbolic*

* *metaphor* → Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.

Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.

I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.

She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.

I am important to her. She comes and goes. > *validation*

Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.

In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman

Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

justification due to perception
* *metaphor*

No prejudice / no bias / no judgment
* *lit. allusion Plato's Republic cave-dwellers see shadows on opp. wall bec. of fire*

people don't want or like the truth

* *monotonous / essence of time (in both stanzas = theme)*

hide truth; flatter her w/ dim light

expl. both fish + woman searching for something outside of "the lake"

thankless
SATIRE?
Sarcasm = use of irony to mock or convey contempt
trapped by surface of water - to surface gaping e surface for air

* *clue to importance*
* *ages / time = theme*

simile = aged woman mourns over lost beauty

* *free verse (w/ ↓)*
- *rhythmic, not set, but meant to project emotions to evoke the reader*
* *5 stanzas (2) = 9-lines each not Spenserian stanza = bec. no fixed rhyme scheme (9-lines) ABABBCBCC*

- *poem is about aesthetics + vanity that the mirror can not understand*

- *Narcissistic quality of the self image:*
a) *grew in vanity @ beauty - or*
b) *disappointment @ imperfection or expectation*

* *Holistic interpre.*

* *Plath helped advance the subgenre of "confessional poetry" of the 1950s-1960s*
"I"