

## Dream Themes of Sylvia Plath: Dead Babies and Father Symbolism

“Our passionate selves are our best selves: and a passionate life is only possible, by definition, if we can make our passions known: to ourselves...There can be no passion—without representation. ...Passion entails circulation and exchange” [*Andre Green: The Dead Mother* 166].

If nothing else, Sylvia Plath was passionate. Her writing throbs with what seems like an indomitable will. She struggles, tries, reads, writes in her journal and records her dreams—faithfully. She is energetic about her psyche, taking herself seriously. The dreams reveal her inner world and the conflicts plaguing her, both inwardly and personally and collectively. The perspective of Jungian analytical psychology is the method of interpretation used here. Plath recognized that the interior journey was a source of her recuperative powers. [Sharma, *Terrible Fish in Sylvia Plath's Mirrors*, 3] Yet, many dreams remained without commentary in her *Journals*.

### DREAM WORK

Dreams help liberate, clarifying the psyche as it reflects personal and collective issues, showing our complexes, strengths, values and life trajectory. As such, they portray a quest through life adding information and guidance. The perspective of Jungian analytical psychology represents a way of affirming the significance of the unconscious, its symbols and archetypes and the reality of the psyche. Jung comments on this saying: “Poets . . . create from the very depths of the collective unconscious, voicing aloud what others only dream” [Jung, *Psychological Types*, 191].

The dream shows the unknown hidden recesses of the psyche, the not yet visible but valuable holders of personal, emotional, psychological, physical issues as well as those of the collective. Dreams typically are expressed in the mytho-poetic language of the psyche. They offer insight into ourselves that we may otherwise be unaware of, or not have in a clear or correct perspective. Dreams are like crystals to be turned around, looked at from all sides to light up the facets of the personality. Dreams are one of the best and most natural ways of dealing with psychological problems and inner disconnections. They help us find inner wholeness, compensate and balance one-sided approaches in conscious life.

Sylvia Plath had many themes in her dreams. Here we look at two of them pertaining to dead babies and her father. Her dreams reflect similar themes of loss, rejections, sorrow, mourning and grief. They express anxiety and lack of security, a father and a stunting of development.

Granted this interpretation is without much of her input, but it is a way of understanding the psyche. Jung says: “We would do well, therefore, to think of the creative process as a living thing implanted in the human psyche” [*The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature*, 75]. Dreams, in different ways, expose the demons inside that would not allow her to succeed or be human, speaking in a murderous self-defeating voice that she tried again and again to both face and crush. Sylvia Plath's dreams demonstrate simultaneously destructive and creative reactions. She expresses emotions of fear and dread, integral to life and rebirth. Dreams are part of searching the inner reality of her experience in what she called the “forging of a soul” [Kulil, *The Unabridged Journals*, 230].

Dreams present the issues of getting the meaning of life, the experiences and what it feels like. They require daily work on oneself for gaining insight and awareness. Sylvia Plath's writings show her interest in the use of symbolism and the writings of Carl Jung, especially his concepts of dreams and the collective unconscious and archetypes. [Kulil, *The Unabridged Journals*, 514] Jung refers to the archetypal patterns as expressions of the process of psychological development, including rebirth, transformation and renewal that occur through the stages of separation, differentiation, dismemberment and unification. Sylvia Plath speaks to these themes through the death and rebirth in her poetry and dreams. Her dreams can be instructive to ours.

Dreams explore the search for self through the imagery, the archetypal patterns and symbols as timeless expressions of the psyche. We can say that dreams are symbolic expressions of our deep meaning, needs, and desires of the larger self. Understanding their images helps unlock the unconscious and its continual attempt at renewal. Their emotional intensity demonstrates the moves towards wholeness that includes reconciling inner and outer warring aspects.

The dream language is symbolic and unfolds into many more meanings than a narrow literal or sexual

interpretation. A symbol is deciphered through subjective and objective thoughts and feelings. Jung described the dream as a psychic fact, and as a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, mirroring the actual situation in the unconscious. In short, the dream is a natural and meaningful event, generated by psychically determined activity in the unconscious.

Jung observed that the psyche is a self-regulating system that maintains its own equilibrium just as the body does. That is, a process that goes too far inevitably calls forth compensation. As a basic law of psychological behavior, the theory of compensation remains at the heart of the Jungian approach to dream interpretation. One of the key questions raised when confronted by a dream is to find what conscious attitude it compensates. The dream is not an isolated event separate from daily life because it brings the unconscious into relation with consciousness to restore balance and wholeness.

Dreams with their unconscious underpinnings study the psychological processes and reveal the complexes that both help and hinder development. They show what has been lost and needs to be re-found. "The mind has the capacity to bring something back again which has been related to an object, without the object being there" [Green *The Tragic Effect*, 30].

Sylvia Plath's journal entries provide a background to the dreams commenting on the personal turmoil and conflicts she writes about. Her journal reveals thoughts and feelings about what was inside her personality, especially in reference to her time at Smith College. We might also remember that she was just leaving home and moving out into the world, a developmentally and emotionally tumultuous time. Her comment on Smith College: "Frustrated? Yes. Why? Because it is impossible for me to be God—or the universal woman-and-man—or anything much. I want to express my being as fully as I can because I somewhere picked up the idea that I could justify my being alive that way" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 45].

#### AS IF PERSONALITY

Many words of Sylvia Plath reveal what is called the personality dynamics of the "as if" personality, where achievement takes over an inadequately felt self [Solomon, *Self creation and the limitless void*, 638]. The "as if" personality forms a defense and dissociation that derives from early experiences of internalizing the presence of an absent object. The sense of an internal void at the core means self-creation is constructed around the emptiness.

The concept of the "as if" personality implies a grouping of elements that form a particular kind of defense of the self, identified with an exceptional capacity for creative engagement in the world that surpasses expectations, which includes physical breakdown and illness, as psychic suffering arising from an early emotional wounding. "The personality is rooted in lack, estrangement or disintegration of selfhood; the personal narrative organized around a lost moment of origin, which, though endlessly reconstructed, was not recovered" [Bristolakis, *Sylvia Plath and the Theatre of Mourning*, 40].

There is a nagging belief that Sylvia Plath feels she has not achieved enough; and, there is never enough to compensate for what she feels absent. The injured self, diminished at an early age, tries to get love and affection through achievement. Sylvia Plath says in her *Journal*: "for you are an inexplicable unity –this family group with its twisted tensions, unreasoning loves and solidarity and loyalty born and bred in blood. These people are the ones most basically responsible for what you are" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 65]. "I do not love; I do not love anybody except myself...I am capable of affection for those who reflect my own world. How much of my solicitude for other human beings is real and honest, how much is a feigned lacquer painted on by society. I do not know. I am afraid to face myself" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 98].

After this entry a dream is recorded: "Sogged with bad dreams: diabolically real: Haven House, the feet of Smith girls past the room which becomes a prison, always giving out on a public corridor, no private exits. The leer: the slow subtly faithless smile, and the horror of the worst, the dream of the worst, come at last into its own. Waking is heaven, with its certainties. Why these dreams? These last exorcisings of the horrors and fears beginning when my father died and the bottom fell out. I am just now restored. I have been restored for over a year, and still the dreams aren't quite sure of it. They aren't for I'm not. And I suppose never will be" [*Unabridged Journals* 283].

The dream reveals the situation of Sylvia Plath's psychological system experienced as de-stabilized or harmoniously disordered [Samuels, *The Father*, 223]. The dream occurred a year or so after her first suicide attempt. "The voice of the true self... her profound melancholy. The 'tortured and massacred' are never far from Plath's thoughts" [Malcolm, *The Silent Woman*, 65]. The dream expresses the fears of being at Smith, of others and the need to perform and come out the best. She suffers at the hands of an inner relentless critic, maybe portrayed by the methodical pounding feet of the Smith girls. The worry is that other Smith women will outdo her. This is a rather common anxiety dream and the question is what she does with it all. As Jung says: "This struggles have something to do with creation, with the unending battle between affirmation and negation" [Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 48].

## DEAD BABY DREAMS

Sylvia Plath writes: "Very bad dreams lately. One just after my period last week of losing my month-old baby: a transparent meaning. The baby formed just like a baby, only small as a hand, died in my stomach and fell forward: I looked down at my bare belly and saw the round bump of its head in my right side, bulging out like a burst appendix. It was delivered with little pain, dead. Then I saw two babies, a big nine-month one, and a little one-month one with a blind white-piggish face nuzzling against it; a transfer image, no doubt, from Rosalind's cat and kittens a few days before: the little baby was a funny shape, like a kitten with white skin instead of fur. But my baby was dead. I think a baby would make me forget myself in a good way. Yet I must find myself" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 458].

Dreams of babies can represent new growth and development. White is a color of purity and new beginnings. What does it mean that the baby is dead, small, not human looking but like an animal? And, the cat or pig is a symbol of the feminine. Is this part dead? Is the dream with the two babies a precursor to those two she eventually left? Does the dream recognize what cannot grow or develop? The dream draws one to ask questions as the dream leads us into her psyche. Her poems, "frequently perceive of death not as a suicidal ending but as the path to a transformed identity" [Rosenblatt, *Sylvia Plath: The Poetry of Initiation*, 27].

The dreams show the evolution of the psyche and reflect and repeat inner dialogue. Jung comments that "transformation processes announce themselves mainly in dreams" [Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 130]. Before this dream she writes: "What inner decision, what inner murder or prison break must I commit if I want to speak from my true deep voice in writing...and not feel this jam-up of feeling behind a lass-dam fancy-façade of numb dumb wordage. The day is an accusation" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 469].

The dream of the dead babies may show the ego structures previously in place are dissolved, causing a release of emotions and altering of experiences. Fears of the unknown arise, the masks to our true selves disappear and we are revealed for who we are, exposed and vulnerable. To this end, "Plath explored the oscillation between longing for extinction fantasies of transformation, of escape from constriction and engulfment, and of flight, where casting off outgrown selves and overused masks lead to a naked renewal" [Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject*, 64]. The babies could represent the lost or diminished hopes, the growing that has been stopped.

## MALE IMAGES IN THE PSYCHE

During life we are presented with literary, artistic, film and dramatic representations of the role of father. These, along with our deeply inbuilt expectations at an almost biological level, of what a father is or should be, form the internal male parent, and in synthesis form the father archetype.

"The fateful power of the father complex comes from the archetype, and is the real reason why the consensus gentium puts a divine or daemonic figure in place of the father. The personal father inevitably embodies the archetype, which is what endows his figure with its fascinating power" [Jung, *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, 339]. Here Jung recognized the father-ideal as a potentially dangerous object of a child's fantasy. When this is the case, the resulting attachment problems manifest themselves in a divorce from the body, a distorted self-image and a sense of emptiness and restlessness. A wedge develops between a loving and reparative self and a hating and persecutory self, assessing that the child feels either inferior or superior, an object fashioned for the adoration of others.

Here are more of what Sylvia Plath calls bad dreams. "Lousy dreams... The other night it was men in costume, bright cummerbunds, knickers and white blouses, having a penalty given them, and not carried out, and suddenly forty years later they were lined up, I saw them small in the distance, and a man with his back to me and a great sword in his hand went down the line hacking off their legs at the knees, whereupon the men fell down like ninepins with their leg stumps and lower legs scattered. I believe they were supposed to dig their own graves on their leg stumps. This is too much. The world is so big so big so big. I need to feel a meaning and productiveness in my life" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 470].

The men are left with legs hacked off, stumps remaining and this done by one man. He could be some male image taking the life away from those who one after the other represent her father, masculine energy in general and her own, anger and all that will last from now to forty years hence. They could also signify the horror, a lack of protection from an absent father, and a man whose death she had not deeply mourned. The dream image is gruesome but it arouses no feelings mentioned by Sylvia Plath as she goes on to associate the dream to her productivity.

The men could represent loss, feeling hacked away at with the rejections of her writing, one after the other. Legs represent strength and are what we stand upon in the world. She, like the dream men, might feel helpless, as her own masculine aspects are attacking and brutal. The dream brings up the question of meaning but one that derives not from productivity but from being. The oppressive, dangerous and dictatorial

authority in the dream is threatening and brings up the themes Sylvia Plath concentrates upon that include prison, concentration camps and oppression, most often at the hands of men.

In her *Journal* she writes: "I am jealous of men—a dangerous and subtle envy which can corrode, I imagine, any relationship. It is an envy born of the desire to be active and doing, not passive and listening... I can pretend to forget my envy; no matter it is there, insidious, malignant, latent" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 98]. In light of this we wonder how she forms a relationship to the masculine rather than to its shadowy existence. The lack of healthy connection can create anxiety and unease, draining her energy, keeping her body and her psyche dismembered.

In Jungian psychology the animus or the masculine parts of a woman appearing in dreams and in life can be wonderfully creative or powerfully destructive, depending upon her relationship with it. "When women succeed in maintaining themselves against the animus, instead of allowing themselves to be devoured by it, then it ceases to be only a danger and becomes a creative power. We women need this power, for, strange as it seems only when this masculine entity becomes an integrated part of the soul and carries on its proper function there is it possible for a woman to be truly a woman in the higher sense, and, at the same time, also being herself, to fulfill her individual human destiny" [Jung, E., *Animus and Anima*, 42].

The dream also revealed to Sylvia Plath that is passed onto her readers a complex of feelings about men, gained mostly from her relationship with – or lack of relationship with – her father. This is also a synthesis of her male contacts through images in our culture and religion, literature, film, and now videos, you tube, etc. So the realm of her experiences can be represented by the male images in her dreams.

The animus as any inner figure can be wonderfully creative or powerfully destructive, depending upon one's relationship with it. Emma Jung also says about the animus: "what we have to overcome...is lack of self-confidence and the resistance of inertia...In this we often fail for lack of will or strength of courage. It seems to us a presumption to oppose our own authoritative conviction to those judgments of the animus, or the man, which claim general validity" [Jung, E., *Animus and Anima*, 23-24]. The experiences with the father can help a daughter find her sense of being so that both love and aggression are expressed. But, with the personality of Otto Plath as distant and unemotional, strict and rigid, authoritarian, and combined with his illness and then death, it was difficult for Sylvia Plath when a young girl to find a close enough relationship with him. Her mother, by choosing to be with Otto Plath, modeled a certain submission to the male/father figure who acted like a ruler. Sylvia Plath grew up in a situation culturally, psychologically and emotionally typical of the 1950's, but complicated with dynamics out of the average.

#### MORE DEAD BABIES

The 1950s were a post-War, post-Hiroshima, post-atom bomb era of children killed and deformed by the war, atom bomb and radiation. At the same time, in the United States, the use of thalidomide became prevalent, a pill women took for anxiety, insomnia and tension. It was later associated with deformities during pregnancy affecting children's limbs. These all were aspects of the collective atmosphere of the post World War II era. Sylvia Plath's writings reflect how much she absorbed and emotionally reacted to it all. Jungian psychology describes dreams as providing insight to what is conscious, what was repressed and receded into the unconscious and into each person and humanity through what is called the collective unconscious.

Given this cultural overlay and its personal aspects, Sylvia Plath's dreams of birthing are like the following one. "Woke from a bad dream. Oh, I'm full of them. Keep them to myself or I'll drive the world morbid. I gave birth, with one large cramp, to a normal sized baby, only it was not quite a five months baby. I asked at the counter if it was all right if anything was wrong, and the nurse said: "Oh, it has nest of uterus in its nose, but nothing is wrong with the heart" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 508]. Sylvia Plath's associations or what she writes after the dream are as follows:

"How is that? Symbolic of smother in the womb? Image of mother dead with the Eye Bank having cut her eyes out. Not a dream but a vision. I feel self-repressed again. The old fall disease. I haven't done German since I came. Haven't studied art books. As if I needed a teacher's sanction for it." Later, in the same entry she writes: "The Idea of a life gets in the way of my life" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 507].

Again, the theme appears that something is wrong with the baby. It is not fully developed and she goes on to associate the feeling of being smothered with mother. Many questions arise. How is the nose stopped up with the uterus? The physiology is off. Does the mother smother the baby psychologically? Does the nose represent intuition and can she smell, or intuit the problems well enough to live? Beyond that, there emerges a confusion of being and a castigation of not getting enough, like the baby that is not correctly formed. Could this baby survive? Like her? The heart is good, but again, is that enough when there is a wish or need to get rid of the mother?

“And I lay in a morbid twilight till the hollow dark of the morning,—evil dreams of dying in childbirth in a strange hospital unable to see Ted, or having a blue baby, or a deformed baby, which they wouldn’t let me see” [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 530]. After the dream she writes: “My one salvation is to enter into other characters in stories: the only three stories I am prepared to see published are all told in first person. The thing is to develop other first persons” [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 530]. Her comment seems to imply a need to expand the personality, to have more than one vision and to broaden perspectives. Here Jung reflects on the suffering of the artist with their insights and discoveries of the conscious and unconscious. “The unborn work in the psyche of the artist is a force of nature that achieves its end... regardless of the personal fate” [Jung, *The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature*, 75].

“Dream, shards of which remain: My father come to life again. My mother having a little son my confusion: this son of mine is a twin to her son. The uncle of an age with his nephew. My brother of an age with my child. O the tangles of that old bed” [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 520]. For Sylvia Plath, part of the internal disconnection derived from a father who was unapproachable emotionally, surrounded by psychological silence, and who died when she was eight-years-old. She wrote in her *Journal* about the image of her father in childhood: “You remember that you were his favorite when you were little, and you used to make up dances to do for him as he lay on the living room couch after supper. You wonder if the absence of an older man in the house has anything to do with your intense craving for male company” [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 64].

Sylvia Plath writes: “read in Jung case history confirmations of certain images in my story. The child who dreamt of a loving, beautiful mother as a witch or animal: the mother [Unabridged Journals 319]. This refers to Jung’s concept of the un-lived life of the parents passed onto the next generation and the child inheriting the complexes of the parents. Jung refers to this when he contends that nothing exerts a stronger effect on children than the un-lived life of the parent. He says the unconscious repetition of the family pattern can be disastrous; likened to psychological original sin [Jung, *Mysterium Conjunctionus*, 232].

#### MALES AND FATHER IN DREAMS

In her *Journal* Sylvia Plath recounts a dream: “I dreamed the other night of running after Ted through a huge hospital, knowing he was with another woman, going into mad wards and looking for him everywhere: what makes you think it was Ted? It had his face but it was my father, my mother. I identify him with my father at certain times, and these times take on great importance: e.g., that one fight at the end of the school year when I found him not-there on the special day...Isn’t this an image of what I feel my father did to me?...Images of his [Ted’s] faithlessness with women echo my fear of my father’s relation with my mother and Lady Death” [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 447].

Showing a symbolic reinstatement of the absent father, the dream reflects Sylvia Plath’s psychology, focusing attention on a painful complex, personified by destructive and elusive inner male figures who also shape shift. Like the exit of Ted Hughes, her husband, from her life, when he chose to be with another woman, aroused earlier feelings of abandonment after her father’s death. She was left, bewildered and bereaved and the family struggled financially like when Ted was gone. The previous pain came flooding to the surface, psychologically and physically. The dream so aptly portrays the relationships missed and longed for, desires unmet and connections unable to be sustained. The dream ends with her father in union with her mother as well as Lady death, and she is excluded. The dream leaves an uneasy resolution to the Electra conflict referred to in other writings, like her poem, “Electra on Azealea Path” [Hughes, *Collected Poems: Sylvia Plath*, 116].

Internalized conflict with the father aroused from his emotional distance, absence, lack of understanding or relating can lead to feelings of not being loveable or capable of love. Father remains a dream but as an absence, not a presence, like breeze through a vacant home, vanished, a shadow. Glimpses of him seemingly there, but not. He eludes. Like in her dream, she cannot catch up with him. If she does, it is only to find him gone. The chronic missing of him is accompanied by anxiety. His fathering affects the ability to love or express and brings about reactions ranging from melancholy to self-destruction. She internalizes a persecutory father figure and develops a hostile inner world, feeling rage or numbness, obstructing inspiration and arrest self-integration. Acquiring such patterns and behaviors, she grows more and more lost. These are the incessant scenarios, night after night, year after year, dream after dream that occur when the father does not provide a clear or supportive psychological foundation.

The father’s distance appears in the psychic space filling with unconscious guilt, obsessive manifestations, tormenting feelings, unease with authority [Kohon, *Andre Green: The Dead Mother*, 42]. Mourning him is difficult, as he is not linked to memories, representation or perception. His reality is not there. The longing is for a father who did not exist. The absence of one who was not present is different from the absence of someone who was once there. How can a child relate to a father who was unknown?

From the beginning of this story, there was no father. In his absence, he controlled and she developed

a negative father complex, dominated by destructive masculine impulses, cut off from the instincts and engaged in a struggle to find freedom. Identified with the father and needing his love, sets up an inner lack and emptiness standing in the way of connection to an authentic self. There might evolve a sense of fraudulence as an adult that creates tension and inner dissatisfaction. She adopts a brittle, crystalline quality and an aura of aloofness behind which lies an untouchable inner domain. She is vulnerable, a terrified child for whom physical existence is a trial while bodily feelings are denied or ignored in order to avoid feeling and to protect herself from anything that is not part of a carefully controlled world.

In her writing, Sylvia Plath describes a dead father who remains psychologically alive within her. The protests she lodges against this psychological situation are shaped by how much she remained identified with him. From another perspective as Sylvia Plath notes: "If I really think I killed and castrated my father may all my dreams of deformed and tortured people be my guilty visions of him or fears of punishment for me? And how to lay them? To stop them operating through the rest of my life? I have a vision of the poems I would write, but do not. When will they come" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 476].

The deformed bodies might refer to her creations and writings that seem deformed or incomplete. Throughout her work Sylvia Plath strives to deal with the internalized anguish from being immersed in a death-dealing father complex. The father-complex became like "a demon holding her in its clutches" [Leonard, *Wounded Woman*, 88]. Internally, she formed attachment not to the missing father but to *the gap formed from his absence*.

The dreams point to the fact that she might need what is referred to in the I Ching, the ancient Chinese Book of Wisdom. Hexagram # 18 called, "Work on What has been Spoiled, Decay", which calls for "setting right what has been spoiled by the father." This refers to what is *inherited* and transmitted through the generations, sometimes through the whole culture, and typically through the family. This happens through the process of destruction and construction and entails facing reality, mucking in the decay, and gradually fashioning a more inclusive father-image. The hexagram #18, or "Corruption," demands that we engage with how things really are, especially the negative patterns.

She cannot be personally or lovingly touched when the father figure has been absent. She is betrayed, loses individual identity and is deprived of authority or voice. No guidance is imparted, but rather a vacuum and bewilderment forms, a void that fills with various adversities. And, as an extension of this, the father-figure can turn malicious and malignant as she internalized his sadomasochistic enactments [Kavaler-Adler, *Compulsion to Create*, 85]. So, when there has not been enough nurturance and too much guilt, sorrow or betrayal, the daughter is unable to feel safe or access her strength. The negative father-complex unconsciously dominates and she in turn acts unconsciously. She feels insecure and waylaid by the chaotic forces inside of her. An answer to this psychological problem comes in another dream: "Dreamed last night I was beginning my novel...to 'set' the scene: a girl's search for her dead father—for an outside authority which must be developed, instead, from the inside" [Kukil, *Unabridged Journals*, 416].

The death of her father and his previous emotional absence marks Sylvia Plath's life and her relationship to males and the masculine. Sylvia Plath recorded: "How many times in my dreams have I met my dark marauder on the stairs, at a turning of the street, waiting on my bright yellow bed, knocking at the door, sitting only in his coat and hat with a small smile on a park bench; already he has split into many men; even while we hope, the blind is drawn down and the people turned to shadows acting in a private room beyond our view" [*Unabridged Journals* 563].

#### SUMMARY

Two of Sylvia Plath's dream themes of dead, unformed babies and the father-figure are explored here. We find that each one carries many meanings, both personal and collective. They are examined from the viewpoint of Jungian analytical psychology, expanding their symbolism and demonstrating a psychological perspective that resonates with Sylvia Plath.

The male figures and father, the dead babies and desires for rebirth are commonly experienced by many people. Dreams are a way of gaining awareness of the longing for father, recognizing the masculine elements within, the desire for life and Sylvia Plath's searching to be freed for self-expression. Her dreams reveal a relentless pursuit of self-discovery as they simultaneously reveal the unresolved mystery at the essence of it all. ○

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