

No Songs, No Packages

Cheryl A. Rice

-On Sylvia Plath's 68th Birth Anniversary

No cake, no candles, no flames to burst open
with the blow of a matronly sigh,
she has long been missing these affairs,
our jelly glass oracle,
frozen in the oily panic of youth
for almost forty winters now. Look,

she has done it again, and made it stick,
since fox let the secret out,
a stench no clove stab can cover. Look!
Even her husband, who bore the weight of
those cold candles, waxy tears stuck
in that moment, even he has gone where
no song is celebrated, skull moldering next to hers,
bright now with forty years grub fest, Daddy in fist, how

could you? After the roar has subsided, look!
No hats, no crepe paper carousel roofs,
the show is over, the exit is out, you can go
with your painted bricks, your sobbing crocodile slaves,
crow feathers pinned to your bosom in black recall.
The ending, unfit as it is, is theirs,
details of potatoes and bees and

babes, milk gone sour is
all we have, all we are allowed.
Let us close up the cottage on that fairy scene.
They are happy there, before the fall, hives full,
thatch tight with blue promise.
It is not for repair, for figuring.
It is to close, like a book of bad dreams,
leaving the dreamers to sleep at the last.