



## Three Poems

David Trinidad

### Underlined in Sylvia Plath's Copy of *Tender Is the Night*

cone of sunshine

redder than the very sun

dead white hours  
her face caught the room's last light  
very blonde hair  
miles and miles of rolling night

to feel blue

dark world

lost key to the silver closet  
stiff white collar  
sharp little gray eyes  
an emerald hill above

masses of color

suspension between the blues of two heavens

snowy-white transformations, black dresses  
lips of cherry red  
hair dashed with white like a piano keyboard  
"My God," he gasped, "You're fun to kiss."

her softly shining porcelain cheeks

glowing away, white and fresh and new

blue dawn  
a large, proud, rose-colored hotel  
purple Alp  
magic in her pink palms

hot light

brutal sunshine

raw whiteness  
blank iron masks  
ghostly moonshine  
cold blue eyes

ashen faces

white crackling glow of a stage

kaleidoscopic peonies massed in pink clouds, black and brown  
tulips and fragile mauve-stemmed roses, transparent like sugar  
flowers in a confectioner's window  
scherzo of color

a bowl of spicy pinks

white mirrors of her teeth

fireflies riding on the dark air  
a yellow evening bag  
single dull star  
suspended in the moonshine

erotic darkness

high, black shadow

the white caps of a great sea of graves  
the darkness of the night, the darkness of the world  
pink majesty  
white excitement

It was a windy four-o'clock night, with the leaves on the Champs-Élysées singing and  
failing, thin and wild.

white semi-circles of panic

the waves grew black  
Grief presented itself in its terrible, dark unfamiliar color  
the mad hand clutching the steering wheel  
Soaring and roaring into the blue

black shape of a tree



there was the eternal moonlight in it

bloody haze

violet darkness

blue paradise

roofless cavern of white moonlight

another little prison

a white sky

## Burnt Offerings

*(Court Green, 1962)*

The place was like a person,  
its walls pink-washed

flesh that responded  
to the slightest touch.

Though she thought  
differently—

stained glass lit up  
in the church next door

so pretty through  
silhouettes of trees—

the house was only happy  
when black words

oozed their muck  
out of the telephone

and she recoiled from  
the dark, airless room

off the kitchen  
as if it were a tomb

or closet of ghosts  
hooked like hung coats.

Her own personal Hill House,  
her private horrors made real.

At night he read  
*Heart of Darkness* to her

while she worked with her hands  
(they were never still)

in front of the fireplace,  
red carpet and drapes



flickering a furious pulse.  
Together they'd furnished

the house with her rage.  
It need wait but a short while

longer to speak what for too  
long had been mute, through her.

## The Sylvia Plath Cake Cookbook

*for Catherine Bowman*

Today I made a Devil's Food Cake for the first time.  
 Monday I baked a cake, vanilla, with lemon icing.  
 I had not made enough frosting to spread over the side of the cake to conceal the messy uneven edges, so I cut three pieces of the worst-looking part for our lunch.  
 Mrs. Watkins had taken my cakes carefully off the plate, washed and dried the plate, and handed it back to me.  
 There was a great frosted layer cake.  
 And a cabin boy who could decorate cakes in six-colored frosting.  
 I am a pig and have three hunks of cake.  
 With one finger I nudged a cake crumb into a drop of wet, brown tea.  
 I was thinking of the few times in my life I have felt I was all alive, tensed, using everything in me: mind and body, instead of giving away little crumbs, lest the audience be glutted with too much plum-cake.  
 "Who made all the cakes?"  
 Mrs. Mayo was pouring sliced peaches and juice over a great plate of little white cakes.  
 There was a startling number of cakes, all painstakingly decorated, some with cherries and nuts and some with sugar lace.

Millions of needly glass cakes!

\* \* \*

four kinds of fancy cake  
 a Schrafft's cake for her maiden aunt  
 a package of pink-frosted cakes  
 coffee cake  
 pound cake  
 apple cake  
 tomato soup cake  
 a beautiful little two-layer 8 inch cake, yellow with 3 egg-yolks, and a maple syrup frosting with walnuts  
 a Gargantuan fantastical pink palace of a cake  
 a chocolate cake with white frosting  
 a yellow-frosted banana cake with cherries  
 yellow-browned round cakes  
 a three-tiered square cake  
 a lemon layer cake  
 a chocolate cake with rich dark frosting  
 inedible cream-filled cakes  
 delicious carrot cakes  
 maccaroon cakes that soften and cling to the hungry mouth  
 a plate of fancy tea cakes, all sugar & frosting



a plate of absolutely indigestible "Black Walnut flavored" cupcakes from a Betty Crocker mix  
a glorious iced cake wrapped in her beautiful shawl

\* \* \*

Meanwhile Prudence licks some frosting off the cake.  
So I made and sugared some one-egg cupcakes.  
I saw she had a handsome fruit cake, with one quarter cut out, on the table, cleared of tea things.  
I had baked a big yellow sponge cake.  
They ate cake; ate cake and catted about the Saturday night date.  
All because of those revolting little cakes.  
The model daughter fancily posed before a traditional wedding cake.  
A wedding-cake face in a paper frill.  
While making a cake found she'd left out one ingredient.  
"Cake mix."  
I want to eat my cake abroad and come home and find it securely on the doorstep if I still choose to accept it for the rest of my life.  
What could frost my cake more?  
  
And then the tale of the twenty-four cakes will come.