

***TWO SISTERS OF PERSEPHONE* Poem Assignment**

Mr. Platt

AP Language and Composition

Read and re-read the following poem. Then, annotate the poem as thoroughly as you can. Finally, answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper (typed, please).

Two Sisters of Persephone

Sylvia Plath

Two girls there are: within the house
One sits; the other, without
Daylong a duet of shade and light
Plays between these

In her dark wainscoted room
The first works problems on
A mathematical machine.
Dry ticks mark time

As she calculates each sum.
At this barren enterprise
Rat-shrewd go her squinted eyes,
Root-pale her meager frame.

Bronzed as earth, the second lies,
Hearing ticks brown gold
Like pollen on bright air. Lulled
Near a bed of poppies

She sees how their red silk flare
Of petaled blood
Burns open to sun's blade
On that green altar

Freely become sun's bride, the latter
Grows quick with seed.
Grass-couched in her labor's pride,
She bears a king. Turned bitter

And sallow as any lemon,
The other, wry virgin to the last,
Goes graveward with flesh laid waste,
Worm-husbanded, yet no woman.

Questions:

1. What is the significance of the title?
2. What can you note about the structure (number of stanzas, line breaks, punctuation, etc.) about the poem?
3. What is interesting about the language the poet uses in the poem? What references to the natural world, colors, feminine imagery, sexual imagery, etc. can you identify? What is the poet's purpose in using these elements? Are there any predominant motifs of diction present? Is there some pattern/logic/structure to the presentation of images/motifs (progression or placement)?
4. Is there anything interesting about syntax (sentence structure and/or grammatical arrangement of words, phrases, etc) in the poem?
5. What tone or mood has the poet created? How?
6. What sorts of duality does the author address in the poem?
7. What might poet the poet be saying about feminine identity in this poem?