



A New Perspective on Sylvia Plath’s “The Rival” and its Themes, Subject, and Inspiration

Jessica (Tyner) Mehta

Abstract

Numerous critics have attributed Sylvia Plath’s “The Rival” to a variety of inspirations, often Ted Hughes and his mistress, but an unfortunately overlooked subject is a miscarried child. Coupled with the possibility of Plath also suffering from an eating disorder (ED), this creates a new approach to studying the poem through the lens of what we know of mental disorders in mid-century America as well as her personal struggles during the period in which she drafted the poem.

Keywords: Poetry, Eating Disorders, Sylvia Plath, Anorexia Nervosa.