Keeping its Feet: The Drama of "Nick and the Candlestick"—for the Fifth Anniversary of Plath Profiles

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Abstract

Published Jun 21, 2012


Essays

Old cave of calcium Icicles, old echoer. Even the newts are white, Those holy Joes. And the fish, the fish—Christ! Its first communion out of my live toes. The candle Gulps and recovers its small altitude, Its yellows hearten. O love, how did you get here? O embryo. Remembering, even in sleep, Your crossed position. The blood blooms clean. In you, ruby. The pain You wake to is not
yours. Love, love, I have hung our cave with roses, With soft rugs—. The last of Victoriana. Let the stars Plummet to their dark address In "Nick and the Candlestick", a poem written in the months before her death, Plath wrote of her infant son: "You are the one/Solid the spaces lean on, envious/You are the baby in the barn." Plath, who wrote the semi-autobiographical novel The Bell Jar, had separated from Hughes and was living with their two children when she committed suicide. Many blamed her death on Hughes, who had prompted the couple's separation by beginning an affair with Assia Wevill, the wife of fellow poet David Wevill. *The death of Nicholas Hughes is profoundly shocking because of the inevitable questions it raises. Are some families doomed to exhibit self-destructive urges down the generations? Can an inclination to suicide be passed on? Poetry Analysis on “Nick and the Candlestick” by Sylvia Plath Sylvia Plath’s “Nick and the Candlestick” ventures into a world where both pain and true innocence exist together. Through the use of vivid imagery, comparison of the speaker to a miner, and the symbolism of the candlestick, the poem expresses the idea that despite all the turmoil in the world nothing is more pure than the true bond between a parent and his or her child. “Nick and the Candlestick” is written in free verse. Just like a burning candlestick cannot control its drippings, it seems as though the speaker cannot control her tears. This is much like when parents keep marital stress or financial trouble from their children for as long as possible; the last thing a parent wants for a child is guilt.