
Sylvia Plath's Daddy And Roethke's Daddy

In the two poems "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath and "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke the main subjects for both were their father. Both poems "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath and "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke have a comparison of trying to depict the relationship between a father and their child. Both poems have a negative mood but in different ways.

"My Papa's Waltz" was sort of amusing unlike "Daddy" which was all abhorrence and miserable. Sylvia Plath is letting her anger out towards her father. However, "My Papa's Waltz" was talking about his father abusing him. The little boy in 'My Papa's Waltz' does not resent his father in any way. He still loves his father even if the father beats him. While Sylvia Plath in 'Daddy' was never physically harmed but emotionally. In the poem, it always talked about how she felt towards her father, but she never said anything about her father physically touching her. Her father damaged her emotionally. "Daddy" is about a child remembering all the past and brutal images of her father. She states, "I never could talk to you. The tongue stuck in my jaw." She was very afraid of her father and if she didn't feel comfortable saying anything to him. By holding on to that she was letting her father continue to control her life. She then begins to quote "I thought every German was you." She was saying she thought that every German man was like her father. Someone who you are afraid to be or even speak around. That's why she referred to her father as a Nazi, but he wasn't in fact one. But he was the man of the household and wanted everything to be his way. He was in fact a Nazi to her. In the poem she also states, "I was ten when they buried you. At twenty I tried to die." She was saying her father died when she was ten, but she held on to it until the age of twenty where she then tries to commit suicide. Sylvia absolutely resented her father which caused her to almost take her life after another of ten years from holding on to it. She says "I made a model of you, A man in black with a Meinkampf look." She was saying she married a man just like her father. However, "My Papa's Waltz" was a totally different tone and poem. He didn't hate or resent his father like Sylvia resented hers. Theodore loved his father even though he beat him, but Sylvia hated her father. I found that the boy, no matter how much the father disappointed him, still hung on to his father and had trusted him. In his poem he states, "The whiskey on your breath Could make a small boy dizzy; But I hung on like death: Such waltzing was not easy." However, the boy was being physically and emotionally hurt by his father, he still had belief in his father. The boy's disgust in his father is revealing desire. He also states, "You beat time on my head. With a palm caked hard by dirt,". His father abused him so much. The boy loved his father even if he beat him but Sylvia hated her father.

Work Cited

1. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48999/daddy-56d22aafa45b2>
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3. Baird, Jim. "'My Papa's Waltz' by Theodore Roethke." Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature, 2019. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=98697015&site=eds-live&scope=site.