

# Wife and floating maple leaf essay



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Rita Dove dramatizes the conflict between duty and need to escape through her use of imagery and metaphor. "Daystar" discusses a young mother and wife, who internally struggles with her burdensome daily duties. It is ironic that from birth to adulthood, the female population is told to feel fulfilled by simply becoming a wife and mother; however, this poem describes the monotony and sadness that can characterize this lifestyle.

As the poem opens, the speaker sees "diapers steaming on the line, a doll slumped behind the door" (2-3). Dove paints this image to serve as a metaphor of the speaker herself—slumped over from exhaustion. To regain her composure, she finds a relaxing place behind the garage and the littlest objects such as "the pinched armor of a vanished cricket" or "a floating maple leaf" (7-8) serve as a simple pleasure and peace. When she escapes her world of nothingness, she sees her "vivid blood" (11)—she feels alive for once.

During this hour of the day the woman can release the burdens placed on her and receive strength to continue meeting her family's needs. When her daughter Liza interrupts her peaceful reverie and demands to know what her mother is doing, the speaker's reply reflects her need for freedom: "building a palace" (16). This phrase indicates the woman treasures her break behind the garage and this sanctuary is her "palace" where she rules the kingdom, not anyone else.

At the conclusion of the poem, the speaker describes an intimate moment with her husband in which she lets her mind drift into nothingness and think of "the place that was hers" (19). This poem illustrates the importance of

escape, as it is crucial to survival in a difficult situation. " Life...With Books.  
" LifeWith Books. Yahoo! Voices, n. d. Web. 20 Apr. 2013. ; It; <http://www.lifewithbooks.com/2010/03/freeverse-daystar-by-rita-dove/>; gt;.