

# Metaphors by sylvia plath



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The poem, "Metaphors" by Sylvia Plath, would be an example of this. Some may look at this poem and believe it is random metaphors put into nine lines. I believe this is a poem about Plath's idea of pregnancy as compared to traditionally unrelated objects. "Metaphors" has a clue in each line that would lead the reader to believe that it is depicting the process pregnancy. In the poem "Metaphors", Plath opens with the line, "I'm a riddle with nine syllables."

In this poem there are nine lines, and each line has nine syllables. This gives the reader a sense of importance revolving around the number nine. Also, people associate the number nine with the time span of pregnancy. There is a designed commonality in these, and the author intended for the reader to put these pieces together. The first part of this line, "I'm a riddle" describes the unknowns of pregnancy. "An elephant, a ponderous house," (2). If we were to break this line down into two parts, the author would first tell us she is an elephant.

Elephants are depicted as very large and heavyweight creatures. This could mean that the author thought of herself as that too. When you carry a baby, you begin to get larger, and so the author may have compared herself to the largest land mammals as a way of exaggerating her weight gain from the pregnancy. The second line states that she is a "ponderous house" (2). A house is something that people live in; when the author compares herself to a house, she merely states that something is living inside her. Tendrils are slender threadlike appendages of a climbing plant.

A melon strolling on two tendrils," (3), describes the mother's legs as compared to her pregnant body. This line creates imagery in the readers head. A melon is a larger object, which would not be able to stroll on two tendrils. The melon could resemble the baby, which is strolling on the mother's legs. Just as the melon looks too big to be strolling on the tendrils, a mother could have a stomach that appears too big to be carried on her two small legs. " O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers! " (4), as said in the fourth line is a biblical allusion to the fruit of thy womb.

A woman's fruit of thy womb is her baby, the fruit being the child she is bearing in her womb. Ivory and fine timbers refer to a house, or her womb in which her baby is kept. When this line is read, it is the first you read about the actual baby, the previous lines only depict her body shape, while this one depicts what is inside of her. When women are pregnant, their stomach grows and rises every day, just as the baby grows. " This loaf's big with its yeasty rising. " (5), is a metaphor describing the growth of a mother's stomach.

Just as bread gets larger as it cooks in an oven, the baby gets larger as it grows inside a mom. This analogy can also depict a relationship between the mother and the child. Just like bread needs the oven to grow, the child needs its mother to grow as well. " Money's new- minted in this fat purse. " (6), explains the importance and impact the baby is having on her. The process of minting something is making something better. This line is also referring to the growth of the baby, because she is making the baby better every day. The use of the words money and purse are also clues to depict pregnancy.

Money is a material thing, that has value and importance, the purse is just the carrier. She could be showing the reader that the baby has the meaning and the value, but she is just the carrier of the child, not the true value of the process. This is the point in the poem where she becomes scared, she is not going to be the center of attention, because the baby will have more worth and value than her. “ I’m a means, a stage, a cow in a calf” (7), is when Plath becomes saddened. She is starting to feel as though she will have no value after the baby is born.

She is just a means, or a way for the baby to come onto earth. She is a stage, a part of a production, musical or play, but she does not get as much praise as the production itself. She is a cow in a calf, the calf being the one who is praised after birth, not the cow itself. She is starting to feel more depressed about the outcomes of being a mom, because the most valuable thing is going to be her baby, not herself. Crazy cravings have always been a part of pregnancy. This line could refer to a crazy craving, as most people would think, but it could also refer to another biblical allusion. I’ve eaten a bag of green apples,” (8), could be a symbol of sin, and coming upon something too early in life. When Eve bites the apple in the Garden of Eden, she is condemned to a fate very painful, which could be referring to the painful process of delivering a child. This apple is also green, which could mean she is not ready for this pain, due the lack of ripeness the apple has.

The last line reads “ Boarded the train there’s no getting off. ” (9) This means that she is too far along in her pregnancy to give up. She as realized that her life will not be the same, but now she has to accept this new life. She cannot give up on her baby now, and she has to become the best

mother she can under whatever circumstances she has. This group of metaphors did tell a story, and I believe it was a story about pregnancy. Her struggles and her observations in a process all mothers have to go through in order to create a child. Although some of these metaphors could be interpreted differently, most of them seem to be drawing the same conclusion and have a common theme of pregnancy.