

Sylvia Plath was an American poet. As a girl, she considered her father, a German instructor, to be emotionally abusive, she later married British poet Ted Hughes, but found him to be disturbingly similar to her father. She committed suicide a few years after writing "Daddy."

How does Plath create pathos in the poem below? What emotions result? What diction creates that effect? How would you characterize the speaker? What persona does she don when she talks? Is there an implied argument in the poem?

"Daddy"

(concluding stanzas)

.....

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,
In the picture I have of you,
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot
But no less a devil for that, no not
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.
I was ten when they buried you.
At twenty I tried to die
And get back, back, back to you.
I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,
And they stuck me together with glue.
And then I knew what to do.
I made a model of you,
A man in black with a *Meinkampf* look

And a love of the rack and the screw.
And I said I do, I do.
So daddy, I'm finally through.
The black telephone's off at the root,
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two--
The vampire who said he was you
And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always *knew* it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

--Sylvia Plath, 1965