

## **Sylvia Town (Marina)**

So I decided that it was just going to be about Sylvia Plath. Hey, she was suicidal and stuck her head in the oven - that's poetic! The reference to burning also seems to hint thatway, actually, starving and burning both can be easily related to a stove or oven or whathave you. "Came green April" was a confusing line... I recall the character in Bell Jar was called something Greenwood, or so I have heard, having not read the book myself... or I could go into Sylvia Plath's biography where it usually says that she had a break from writing and then began again in April of some year that I can not evoke at this time. Then there are the eyes, which could be a pun on the 'I' s, and definitely signify distortion or disconnection of some sort. I could be completely and totally off with my assumption of Sylvia Plath, but I can't really think of any other famed enough Sylvias. Another thing about April comes from The Wasteland - "April is the cruelest month of the year" I think it goes (pardon my misquoting if any)... it's the beginning of The Wasteland. April as a destroyer, not a creator is presented in The Wasteland, and same thing happens in Carson's poem, which is why I kind of made the connection... Other than all the ramblings above, I am slightly confused yet intrigued to the extreme...

### *Amendments*

Sylvia Town (craig)

So, I have to agree that at least on some level, Sylvia Plath is an important reference in the poem. That is to say, the "burners and starvers" does seem to reference the way in which she committed suicide, though I cannot help but wonder who the "burners and starvers" are; she killed herself, nobody did it to her persay. This makes me think that it is not simply a reference to Plath. Also, if she did indeed die with her head in an oven, it is difficult for me to imagine that she could "lay on the desk". I think I would need to know more about her work as a poet as well as the little I know about her life before I could even begin to understand the "eyes pulled up like roots" reference. It is an interesting concept to me to have Spring act as a destructive force rather than a life giving force, but I fail to see the connection to "The Wasteland". It may just be that I have not read "The Wasteland," but as I understand it, it was a poem made in regards to the WWII situation, and I do not see these references or any others to TS Elliot, though I can see your ties to Plath.

Sylvia Town (monte)

I don't know anything about Sylvia Plath, but I couldn't help but make the connection between a 'green' april and her eyes being pulled up like 'roots.' So if April is the cruel month of destruction, that would make more sense because this coming April is going to pull up her eyes like roots and lay them on the desk... whatever that means.

Sylvia Town (tiffany)

I brainstormed with Marina on this one a little bit so I definitely agree with the ties between "burning" and "starving" and Plath sticking her head in the oven. April is a time when I know Plath had a brain drought or what have you and stopped writing for a period of time. That being said, I think the last couple of lines of the poem could be

interpreted as such....

"Came green April. / Burning and starving her." These lines, if we take into account the writer's block of Plath during this month, work together rather well because it is April that is burning and starving Plath. When you can't write, can't indulge in your passion (burning), you feel like you're starving because your art is your sustenance. Continuing in that strain "Eyes pulled up like roots" denotes a loss of sight, the inability to see, and then translate that onto paper. Couldn't see the inspiration perhaps. "Lay on the desk" works in the sense that an author or poet would probably sit at a desk to write. But if you're lacking sight, your eyes are laying there useless, on the desk where words usually flow freely.

Sylvia Town (tom)

My knowledge of Sylvia Plath is elementary at best. I can however see the connection and understand why Ann Carson would look to Plath's life as inspiration for this poem and perhaps even identify in some ways with her. There is a darkness to this poem that I can't quite put my finger on. The feeling of darkness could perhaps be from the references to "burners" and "starvers" or "eyes pulled up like roots." There does seem to be some contrasting of life and death, the "green" and "April" representing life and just about everything else representing death.

Sylvia Town (Allison)

I think Sylvia Plath was a good direction to go in to analyze this poem, if for no other reason than when a lot of people hear the name Sylvia they think of Plath. I just read *Bell Jar*, which is semi-autobiographical, and yes, her character's name is Esther Greenwood. The character does starve herself for a large portion of the novel (she doesn't sleep for 20 some odd days either, which could be why her eyes are pulled up.) And Esther's only goal is to be a writer (like writing at a desk maybe?), and she ends up attempting suicide because she can't write. Plath tried to commit suicide many different times in her own life, and the burners to make me think of a stove and her sticking her head in the oven. So, yes, basically, I agree with this analysis on the whole in being connected to Sylvia Plath.

Sylvia Town: (courtney)

Definitely Sylvia Plath. Perhaps looking more closely at Sylvia's relationship to the month of April would help with that line. If she started writing again in April, that signals a renewal of something. The reference made to "April is the cruelest month of the year" seems more reasonable—good job finding that. Sylvia also had a child in April, and committed suicide in February—just before spring, which is most associated with April. "Eyes" could be the sound of "I's", but it could also be eyes, as in what you see with and what helps the mind to visualize the surrounding world. Sylvia saw a lot of things around her that she didn't like, close the end of her life, especially the "irresponsibility of men". "Eyes...lay on the desk" could have to do with seeing everything in front of you, laid out on a desk. Perhaps the burning has to do directly with Sylvia's head going into the oven, and starving to do either with death (and the absence of hunger, no food) or people starving because the oven was used in Sylvia's suicide and people certainly can't cook food in that oven.

Sylvia Town (casey)

I really don't know what burners and starvers refer to, but the poem has a definite feel for the plant cycle in it. April is obviously a green month that starts off the growing cycle with her spring rains. I think that the poem longs to be outdoors in the new spring weather but is trapped inside.

Sylvia Town (martin)

This is a really grisly poem. There's a hint of revenge in the poem from the burners and starvers burning and starving "her". "Her" is Sylvia I'm guessing. There is some definite irony in those first three lines of the poem also. Sylvia Plath and the Wasteland seem like allusions Carson could have definitely been toying with. I can't think of any famed enough Sylvias either. Carson has already articulated her dislike for Spring as a beautiful month in a town poem before this, *The Town of Spring Once Again*. "Came green April" confuses me too, but the Wasteland read of it could work. The eyes lying on the desk weren't discussed as much in this analysis. The desk may be an important symbol for working or writing, which could connect a little more with Sylvia Plath in that regard.

Sylvia Town Amendment: (matt)

It is difficult to pick out a specific reference from the name "Sylvia" and Sylvia Plath is a good bet. I know very little about her work or her biography, so I can't say much with that regard. I think that you have an interesting notion with the eyes, but I always see it as actual eyes being ripped out. It seems to go with the "burning" and the "starving."

Sylvia Town (mike)

I really don't know what burners and starvers refer to, but the poem has a definite feel for the plant cycle in it. April is obviously a green month that starts off the growing cycle with her spring rains. I think that the poem longs to be outdoors in the new spring weather but is trapped inside.

Sylvia Town (abby)

I agree with the Plath reference. Just to check, I looked up Shakespeare's Silvia, but apparently that has an "i" not a "y." The fact that Sylvia Plath stuck her head in an oven seems irrelevant—she did it for the asphyxiation rather than the burning of her face—sweet Jesus how painful. So I am pretty sure that's NOT the reference here. I agree with the April reference, that's a good connection. Also recall that when someone is depressed, and Sylvia Plath surely was, LIFE burns or starves. That ties to the April-not-being-a-new-beginning thing.