

Sylvia Plath
Stillborn
More challenging questions!

Worksheet by:
Keith Tankard
Knowledge4Africa.com

1. Comment on the sustained image which the poet uses throughout this poem. (4)

2. They grew their toes and fingers well enough,
Their little foreheads bulged with concentration.
If they missed out on walking about like people
It wasn't for any lack of mother-love.
 - Explain carefully what point the poet is making in these rather graphic lines. (4)

3. O I cannot explain what happened to them!
They are proper in shape and number and every part.
They sit so nicely in the pickling fluid!
 - What point is the poet making here? (4)
 - Comment on the sarcasm in her words, "They sit so nicely in the pickling fluid!" (4)

4. And still the lungs won't fill and the heart won't start.
 - What on earth does Sylvia Plath mean by this? (4)

5. It would be better if they were alive, and that's what they were.
 - What does the poet mean? (4)

6. But they are dead, and their mother near dead with distraction,
And they stupidly stare and do not speak of her.
 - The poet makes a bitter comment about the reality of poetry with these words. What is this reality? (4)

7. Sylvia Plath has been described as adolescent and immature in writing this poem. Would you agree? (4)

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