

SAARIAHO *From the Grammar of Dreams*

Sylvia Plath texts

From "Paralytic"

It happens. Will it go on? — My mind a rock,
No fingers to grip, no tongue, My god the iron
lung

That loves me, pumps My two
Dust bags in and out, Will not

Let me relapse
While the day outside glides by like ticker tape.
The night brings violets,
Tapestries of eyes,

Lights,
The soft anonymous
Talkers: 'You all right?'
The starched, inaccessible breast.

Dead egg, I lie
Whole
On a whole world I cannot touch, At the white,
tight

Drum of my sleeping couch Photographs visit
me-
My wife, dead and flat, in 1920 furs, Mouth full of
pearls,

Two girls
As flat as she, who whisper 'We're your
daughters.' The still waters
Wrap my lips,

Eyes, nose and ears,
A clear
Cellophane I cannot crack. On my bare back

I smile, a buddha, all Wants, desire
Falling from me like rings Hugging their lights.

The claw
Of the magnolia,
Drunk on its own scents, Asks nothing of life.

From *The Bell Jar*

"A bad dream.

I remembered everything.

I remembered the cadavers of Doreen
and the story of the fig tree

and Marco's diamond

and the sailor on the Common

and Doctor Gordon's wall-eyed nurse

and the broken thermometers
and the Negro with his two kinds of beans...
and the rock that bulged between sky and sea
like a gray skull.

Maybe forgetfulness, like a kind of snow, should
numb and cover them.
But they were part of me.
They were my landscape."

"I thought I would swim out until I was too tired
to swim back. As I paddled on, my heartbeat
boomed like a dull motor in my ears.
I am, I am, I am."

"I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag
of my heart.
I am, I am, I am."