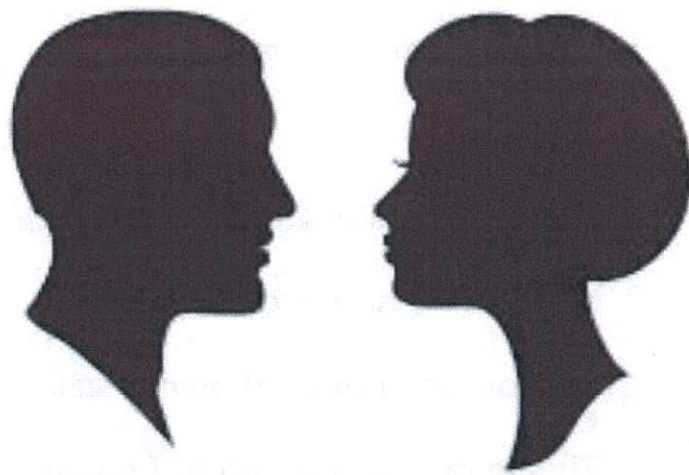


‘WOMAN TO MAN’

Judith Wright



By Alice Silvester

1. Could refer to either the child in the womb who has not yet developed eyes and is labouring in the darkness of the womb to grow OR the act of sexual intercourse.

2. The use of sibilants gives a smooth rhythm. Once again this line could be referring to the baby in the womb who has as of yet has not established an identity or true form OR the seed could be referring to the sperm.

4. Use of sibilants builds the excitement and keeps the readers attention. Describing the presence of the baby in her womb. The use of 'and' slows down the reader, perhaps like the slow labour.

3. 'Resurrection day,' although resurrection is defined as the act of rising from the dead, the reader is lead to believe it is the day of the child's birth, a moment that is build up physically and mentally for nine months, for both the man and woman, and the child. It also can be interrupted as the day of re-birth for the relationship of the woman and man. The hyphens provide a pause for the reader, emphasises the slow lead up to the birth.

1. **The eyeless labourer in the night,**
2. **the selfless, shapeless seed I hold,**
3. **builds for its resurrection day---**
4. **silent and swift and deep from sight**
5. **foresees the unimagined light.**

5. Imaginings of the world in has not yet seen.

6. **This is no child with a child's face;**
7. **this has no name to name it by;**
8. **yet you and I have known it well.**
9. **This is our hunter and our chase,**
10. **the third who lay in our embrace.**

8. It has a great presence within the relationship of the man and woman, having been with them for 9 months, and they find no need to name it as they both understand it's full impact without a title.

6/7. The child has no identity yet, it is a nameless to the man and woman as it is more than just a name. 'This' cannot be fully understood through language, as it is more than just a child, it is an emotional and physical connection between the couple and the mother and child.

9/10. The child is the target of the hunt and the chase, which the couples union hopes to capture and possess.

11. This could be a reference to the man's role in raising a child, to support the family.

12. This could represent the woman's role, the more physical challenge in the birth of a child.

13. The perfection that the woman and man see in child as. The target, product and answer to their love and lives.

15. The 'rose' links back to the 'seed' as it is advancement from the early stages of the child's development. The diction 'folded' represents this stage of growth, as the rose is just a bud and 'intricate' refers to the complexity of the child and the emotions that accompany it's birth.

18. 'Blind' could refer to the child's blindness which connects back to 'eyeless' in the first line, or the blindness of the mother as she cannot see the child within her. The 'dark' could refer to the darkness of the womb, or the mysteries of childbirth.

11. This is the strength that your arm knows,

12. the arc of flesh that is my breast,

13. the precise crystals of our eyes.

14. This is the blood's wild tree that grows

15. the intricate and folded rose.

16. This is the maker and the made;

17. this is the question and reply;

18. the blind head butting at the dark,

19. the blaze of light along the blade.

20. Oh hold me, for I am afraid.

19. 'Blade' is generally an image suggestive of fear, pain or threat which contrasts to 'light' that symbolises hope and love, which connects back to the use of the light earlier as the 'unimagined light,' the world outside the womb. This demonstrates the contrasting emotions of childbirth.

14. The physical passion and feelings of excitement, but 'wild' like love and life as it can not be controlled.

16. The connection between the man and woman to form the child and the product of their love and pursuit of perfection.

17. This could be referring to the questions posed in life and the strong desire for their answers, understanding and perfection.

20. This line breaks the rhythm of the poem, highlight the absence of the previous feelings of joy with the new vulnerability of the woman. This connects back to line 11 and the role of the man to support the woman and the safety and understanding that the woman seeks in her partner.

Central Concerns

New Life

The poem has a large focus on the contrasting joys and fears of creating new life. It often refers to the un-born child that the woman is bearing and the emotions that accompany the couple as they embark on this new journey. The child is described as 'eyeless' (line 1), 'the selfless, shapeless seed' (line 2) and 'no child with a child's face' (line 6) which might refer to the early stages of progression of the child in the womb as it has not yet developed eyes, a face or grown into its true form. The language Wright uses to describe the child, emphasises the unknown mysteries and independence of the life force within the womb of the mother.

The Pursuit of Perfection

The child can be interpreted as the product of the couple's love and their image of perfection. Through the imagery Wright uses such as 'the precise crystals of our eyes' (line 12), 'the intricate and folded rose' (line 15) and the 'blaze of light along the blade' (line 19), that all emphasise the perfection and possibility of achieving it through the birth of this child. The diction 'rose' (line 15) is used to symbolise the beauty and flawlessness of the unborn child. It can also be interpreted as the re-blooming of the relationship between the woman and man. The quote 'this is the question and reply' (line 17), this could be referring to the questions posed in life and the strong desire for their answers, understanding and perfection. The child, is the emblem of the promise of the future, it is the hope of creating and achieving perfection.

Love

From the tone and language used the reader is informed of the type of relationship that exists between the woman and man. The purpose of the poem is to observe the discussion between a woman and her man about her experiences of bearing a child and the emotions that accompany it. The poem is detailing the relationship between the couple and the birth of their child, but it also creates a metaphor for more general experiences of love and life. The diction 'rose' (line 15) is a symbol of love, both the gift of love and love itself. The use of language including 'the blood's wild tree' and 'oh hold me, for I am afraid,' (line 20) and the implementations of the deed of sexual intercourse, all gives the reader an insight into the intimacy of the relationship.

Poetic Techniques and Devices

- **Sibilants:** 'Selfless, shapeless seed,' (line 2) 'silent, 'swift' and 'sight,' (line 4) these sounds create a sense of smoothness.
- **Rhyming:** The last word of the first, fourth and fifth lines of each stanza all rhyme, giving the poem a rhythm and flow.
- **Repetition:** Six lines of the poem begin with the word 'this', which creates a focus on the subject of the poem, the unnamed child and how it is much more than just a name or figure and the journey the couple have gone on. The words 'child' and 'name' are also repeated to create a greater impact on the reader as it highlights their importance.
- **Link words:** Wright uses a number of link words throughout the poem including; 'hunter' and 'chase (line 9), 'maker' and 'made' (line 16), 'question' and 'reply' (line 17). These strike a logical balance and procession while also creating a rhythm in the poem.

Bibliography

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- 'In pursuit of perfection: Judith Wright's 'Woman to Man'- Rose Lucas
- A hymn to life: 'Woman to Man'- Gillian Barnett

① Natural Imagery
Australian Identity
Body Imagery
Relationship to Land