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**Evaluating window as a textual recurrence in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Louis Glück**

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**Abstract**

Textual recurrence is a phenomenon in discourse, both in speech and writing. It happens naturally in different forms, such as simile, metaphor, allusion, and motif. More alluring is the recurrence in literary texts. In poetry, such an art leads to multiple readerly interpretations. It has been a practice that some of the commonly available elements in our surroundings most often carry in-depth observation and philosophical interpretation. It may be natural objects, time, cultural constructs, animals and birds, human dealings, or maybe delicate communions. Textual recurrence can be interpreted as conceptual recurrence, which can be linear or nonlinear. The poetic phenomenon of recurrence can be interpreted in terms of context. Evidently, it can be synonymously termed as foregrounding, which leads to the defamiliarization of certain texts. What's more, such recurrence is linked to textuality having the components of cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, informativity, and intertextuality. It is worth saying that a close reading of both Sylvia Plath and Louis Glück shows that things such as shadows, windows, and seasons are mentioned recurrently in many of their poems. Sometimes, they reflect real-life details, whereas, at other times, they go to a maximum height of emotion, imagination, and plenty of literary perceptions. More appropriately, they transcend readerly perception to a philosophical height. Thus, this paper attempts to closely read the metaphorical presence of the window as a component that ventilates poetic emotions in Plath and Glück.

**Keywords:** recurrence, interpretations, shadow, window, seasons, readerly perceptions

### **1. Introducing Sylvia Plath and Louis Glück**

Among the scores of contemporary American poets, Sylvia Plath and Louis Glück emerge to be popular as they undertake tapestries of themes and contexts exceeding the limits of experiments and thus exhibit deeper feelings and emotions, blending both traditional and modern poetic insights appealing to the artistic domains of the readers.

Sylvia Plath (1932 – 1963) is an American poet, novelist, and short-story writer. She is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry and is best known for two of her published collections, *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1960) and *Ariel* (1965), as well as *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel published shortly before her death in 1963. The *Collected Poems* were published in 1981, which included previously unpublished works. For this collection, Plath was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in Poetry in 1982, making her the fourth to receive this honor posthumously.

### **2. Themes of Plath's Poetry**

Sylvia Plath is known for her confessional poetry, which focuses on relationships and, at times, expresses trauma and unitive urges admixed with feminine fear in some of her poems, myths, and fantasies. The recurrent focus on psychoanalysis through archetypal and typical representations of gender and identity happens to be the key feature of some of her poems. Even she is the architect of metapoetry, whereas some find the smell of suicide in the works of Sylvia Plath. She has contributed to the subgenre of poetry of resistance and emotional intelligence. As expected, a poet like her obviously focuses on existential issues, whereas her artistic value is embedded in the surreal evaluation of nature. She expresses deep consciousness and a narcissistic personality. Like Janis Joplin, Sylvia Plath also writes on universal values. The forms of pilgrimage in the poetry of Denise Levertov, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, and Adrienne Rich take turns very frequently. Domestic epic in the works of Gwendolyn Brooks and Sylvia Plath has often reflected themes whereas silencing in the poetry like that of Emily Dickinson and Yeats' influence and Bloom's Theory of Poetic Anxiety; masks of refusal para-femininity and the mythopoesis of Sylvia Plath like that of Cindy Sherman; the notions of resurrection and feminine mystique" to the heroine of feminist deconstruction; the reflections on the postwar American poets like W.D. Snodgrass and Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath focuses on performative and ritual poetry that fragments and reconstructs the personal experience manipulating the memory of the autobiographical body as a way to rehearse and restore subjectivity.

### **3. Examining the Outlets of Emotions and Feelings in Gluck's Poetry**

Louise Elisabeth Glück (1943-) is an American poet and essayist. She won the 2020 Nobel Prize in Literature, whose judges praised "her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal." Her other awards include the Pulitzer Prize, National Humanities Medal, National Book Award, National Book Critics Circle Award, and Bollingen Prize. From 2003 to 2004, she was the Poet Laureate of the United States. Glück was born in New York City and raised on Long Island. She began to suffer from anorexia nervosa while in high school and later overcame the illness. She attended Sarah Lawrence College and Columbia University but did not obtain a degree. In addition to being an author, she has taught poetry at several academic institutions.

Glück is often described as an autobiographical poet. Her works are known for their emotional intensity and for frequently drawing on mythology or nature imagery to meditate on personal experiences and modern life. Thematically, her poems have illuminated aspects of trauma, desire, and nature. In doing so, they have become known for frank expressions of sadness and isolation. Scholars have also focused on her construction of poetic personas and the relationship, in her poems, between autobiography and classical myth.

### **4. Themes of Glück's Poetry**

While Glück's work is thematically diverse, scholars and critics have identified several themes that are paramount. Morris argues that Glück's poems, which often adopt contradictory points of view, reflect "her own ambivalent relationship to status, power, morality, gender, and, most of all, language." One more of Glück's preoccupations is nature, the setting for many of her poems. Thus, in Glück's work, nature is both something to be regarded critically and embraced. As the author and critic Alan Williamson has pointed out, it can also sometimes suggest the divine.

### **5. Windowing Emotions in Plath and Gluck**

The window is a curiosity, a place of casual look that sometimes turns us into philosophers, and it becomes a means of looking ahead, sometimes beyond this life and this time. The window has served the aesthetics of vision and the pleasure of panoramic view all the way. The passage through which the blue sky, the bright moon, and the long-stretched road make one emotionally ignites the mind to become a deep thinker and a sensible visionary amidst the attempts of personalizing the natural wealth only through the passage called window.

**6. Window in the Winged Words of Sylvia Plath** Plath is quite impressed with what is happening in the Winter Landscapes. It leaves her in an awestruck condition, so she starts feeling the absence of green, which is veiled under the white snow.

“Last summer's reeds are all engraved in ice  
as is your image in my eye; dry frost  
glazes the **window** of my hurt; what solace  
can be struck from rock to make heart's waste  
grow green again?” (“Winter Landscapes, with Rocks,” p.22)

The window has become blinded by the steam, and therefore, it cannot work as a passage of light anymore. Symbolically, the home that is the inside of one's self remains unaffected by the external darkness. Thus, the window has been personified as if it works as the eye of the room. This continues to be a poetic passion in her as she says:

“... and the towel  
dryly disclaims that fierce troll faces lurk  
in its explicit folds? Or when the **window**,  
blind with steam, will not admit the dark  
which shrouds our prospects in ambiguous shadow?” (“Tale of Tub,” p.24)

In the misty day, the sentiments of the poet also get mystified. In daily life, coal fire burns at the bushes, and the little hedges with yellow leaves look blurred through the milk film of the empty bottles to the illusory effects. The sea always gives a passionate call to the lovers of nature. Thus, the poet looks at the sea waves from the sand yard near the beach. They dance along with the dancing sea creatures and weeds.

“Squall waves once danced  
Ship timbers in through the cellar **window**;  
A thresh-tailed, lanced  
Shark littered in the geranium bed —” ( “Point Shirley,” p.27)

In the late spring and early fall, snails make their entry, symbolizing beauty and patience. They move slowly, leaving a silvery track that looks like a map, leaving clues to find a way. She finds the typical French window slightly opened through the narrow crack, which makes her look at the rise of the earth as a mysterious experience.

“In a blue, unchanging light,  
The French **window** ajar  
Curtained with yellow lace.  
Through the narrow crack  
Odors of wet earth rise.” (“The Sleepers,” p.122)

The spring season heralds their appearance with the hue and color of the tulips. The poet feels as if the host of tulips look at her and she transcends her sense of being caught in the yellow world of the sunshine and the tulip blossoms, she feels

to be completely lost. The window makes her more experienced and her feelings get expanded.

“Nobody watched me before; now I am watched.

The tulips turn to me, and the **window** behind me

Where once a day the light slowly widens and slowly thins,

And I see myself, flat, ridiculous....” (“Tulips,” p.160)

While foregrounding the window as a source of inspiration, she also finds the bee box is closed from all sides, barring her to see what is in there. This leads her to a state of suspense. The pastoral temperament and the typical lifestyle still embed her thoughts.

“The box is locked, it is dangerous.

I have to live with it overnight

And I can't keep away from it.

There are no **windows**, so I can't see what is in there.

There is only a little grid, no exit.” (“The Arrival of the Bee Box,” p.213)

The experience of winter is unique as she plans to eat rancid jam and gin, an unusual combination for the winter night in a room without a window.

“Wintering in the dark without a **window**

At the heart of the house

Next to the last tenant's rancid jam

And the bottles of empty glitters

Sir So-and-so's gin. (“Wintering,” 218)

She keenly observes the illusory effects of the kitchen with fluorescent light. The stage curtains have a frizzy look, and her child also feels weird looking out of the window, whom she cannot hear. There is a reference to schizophrenic sense perceptions leading to delusions and hallucinations, which is noticed in the expressions as well. Thus, she writes:

“Viciousness in the kitchen!

The potatoes hiss.

It is all Hollywood, **windowless**,

The fluorescent light wincing on and off like a terrible migraine,

Coy paper strips for doors —

Stage curtains, a widow's frizz.

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Her face was red and white, a panic,

You have stuck her kittens outside your **window**

In a sort of cement well.” (“Lesbos,” 227)

She finds that the flavor of fire can be properly tested near the window, as she calls it, "holy gold," because it has the power to reform and bring social change.

"The Sunday lamb cracks in its fat.

The fat

Sacrifices its opacity. . . .

A **window**, holy gold.

The fire makes it precious" ("Mary's Song," 257)

Widows leave an impression of domesticity through which one can look at the activities as sometimes the objects lead to reminisce. But, they also bear the testimony of *weltanschauung* which makes the poetic delicacy more palatable philosophically.

"O the domesticity of these **windows**,

The baby lace, the green-leaved confectionery,

The thick Germans slumbering in their bottomless *Stolz*.

And the black phones on hooks." ("The Munich Mannequins," 262)

A unique setup essentially leads to unique imaginations, with a palace of velvet and windows of mirrors, giving an experience of a stylish life. The palace of velvet constitutes her dazzling sense of imagination. This makes her write:

"It is best to meet in a *cul-de-sac*,

A palace of velvet

With **windows** of mirrors.

There one is safe,

There are no family photographs,

No rings through the nose, no cries." ("Gigolo," p. 267)

The poet approaches the abstract notions of kindness showered on the lady. The jewels glitter and get an illusory effect, making the windows look like they are smiling. The feeling of the life of windows is manifested in the poet's creative imagination. The essence of creativity admixes both literal and cognitive illusions.

"Kindness glides about my house.

Dame Kindness, she is so nice!

The blue and red jewels of her rings smoke

In the **windows**, the mirrors

Are filling with smiles." ("Kindness," p.269)

For Sylvia Plath, window bears polysemous artistic testimonies. The window helps her express her love of nature—a way of looking at objects of the world from different emotional perspectives. At times, it gives her a transformational intuition, whereas at other times, the blend of mystic and mysterious feelings is replete with starry fays. Even at the crux of a meditative spirit, it makes her feel frizzy. The poet

metaphorically envisages the gripping emotions, making the eye the window of mind, thus turning her sights into insights and envisioning the life of seasons in the heart of seasons of life.

### **7. Window in Ventilating Poeticity of Glück**

The plight of barrenness owing to either natural calamity or epidemics makes both natural beings and human beings become victims of bad luck. As she says here:

“This is the barrenness  
Of harvest or pestilence  
And the wife leaning out the **window**  
With her hand extended, as in payment,  
And the seeds  
Distinct, gold, calling  
Come here  
Come here, little one.” (“All Hallows,” p.16)

In the allegorical piece of writing, the ‘Hallows’ takes the shape of hopes and dreams and allure the poet through the window extending a lot of possibilities. This tenet of open-endedness of interpretation is apparent in many of her writings.

The poet talks of the spirit that moves aloft softly feeling the beings fall asleep. It seems they are all tired at night and instantly fallen asleep near ‘an open window’ when the dawn has arrived.

“They've? just met, and now  
they're sleeping near an open **window**.  
Partly to wake them, to assure them  
that what they remember of the night is correct,  
now light needs to enter the room,.... (“Dawn,” p.30)

The description of the reality of a 'dirty mat' and 'a quilt decorated with green leaves' reflects the condition of their life but simultaneously makes us feel the magic of the removal of darkness with the entry of light hoping to bring about a change in the prospect of life.

Again, there is another instance of the 'ledge near a window' where a man and a woman are asleep. The setting of the surroundings is attractive as there is a white bed', 'the bedside table' with a 'vase of lilies.' She puts her poetic comments on it, saying:

“I watch him turn to her  
as though to speak her name  
but silently, deep in her mouth--  
At the **window** ledge,  
once, twice,

a bird calls.

And then she stirs; her body

fills with his breath.” (“Happiness,” p.38)

In the meantime, the entering of sunlight and the calling of a bird bring in the flow of life as if a miraculous transformation takes place with a touch of the sunlight through the window.

After the entry of the sunlight, ‘a little moonlight hits the broken window’ leading to a smooth feeling leaving a sweet memory. There is no time than the midnight to make her meditative and helps her recollect the reminisce of her childhood.

“A little moonlight hits

The broken **window**, a little summer moonlight,

Tender

Murmurs from the earth with its ready

Sweetnesses—” (“Midnight,” p.48)

In ‘Nostos,’ the poet slips into the past arena of natural beauty looking at ‘an apple tree in the yard’ making the backdrop of expanded meadows. The host of crocus spread across ‘in the damp grass’ along with ‘Spring flowers’ filled in the yard of the neighbor which ultimately turn the poet into a worshipper of the beauty of nature.

“Drifts of crocus in the damp grass.

I stood at that **window**:

Late April. Spring

flowers in the neighbor's yard.” (“Nostos,” p.55)

The window takes an intermediary role between the static elements of nature and the moving visual perception.

“It is a form

of suffering: then always the transparent page

raised to the **window** until its veins emerge

as words finally filled with ink. (“Poem,” p.67)

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“...it was summer

; it seemed everything had ripened

at once. And so hot we lay completely uncovered.

Sometimes, the wind rose; a willow brushed the **window**.” (“Summer,”p.74)

The unfulfilled wish of a mill worker is to live a peaceful and natural life enjoying the timely changes of a day that slowly goes on to become night through twilight and then evening. He has to go to bed because he is tired and thinks about going to work the next day. Only in mind, he feels that there are senses in the aroma of fruits and flowers, rustling of leaves, the smell of high grass, and of wood smoke.



“All day, he works at his cousin's mill,  
so when he gets home at night, he always sits at this one **window**,  
sees one time of day, twilight.

There should be more time like this to sit and dream.” (“Twilight,” p.4)

The window works as the gateway to release emotions and casually get entangled with a series of dreams.

Dusk is a momentous gift to every thinker and philosopher. Sitting by the window at dusk and watching the wide-open valley of natural objects makes one feel emotionally relished.

“At dusk, you sit by the **window**. Wherever you live,  
you can see the fields, the river, realities  
on which you cannot impose yourself—  
To me, it's safe. The sun rises; the mist  
dissipates to reveal.” (“Pastoral,”p.6)

The scenic beauty replete with nature's treasury brings about the moment of revelations in which the world around turns to be a beautiful sketch in hand of a painter. The unparalleled beauty of summer makes everything look clear and colorful.

The impetus and inherent force of the poet's passionate association with nature is immense. It is apparent in her delineation of the poetic craft through a series of images placed before the august readers. Her poem, “Tributaries,” bear the testimony of a harmonious effect by focusing on the Avenues and the fountain, where the pissing of angelic Cherub adds to the beauty of her presentation. It is a song of a noble and mature observation of a woman who believes in the age-old tradition and culture of family life attuned to the unison of natural objects.

The occasional melody of nature abounds in the loneliness of grooves and fields, giving a unique sense of the sport of nature. It is just like a painting on a tapestry. Although there is a threat of being washed away in the storm, its reminiscence is more colorful. The relationship between the prey and predator is there. But, the storm proves it to be incidental and prevails over it with all-pervasive power.

“Mice in the fields. Where the fox hunts,  
tomorrow, there'll be blood in the grass.  
But the storm—the storm will wash it away.  
In one **window**, there's a boy sitting.  
He's been sent to bed—too early,  
in his opinion. So, he sits at the **window**—” (“In the storm,” p.11)

An onlooker's views are full of pastoral inquisitiveness, looking for life in the midst of nature through the windows of the mind's eye.

“The night is an open book.

But the world beyond the night remains a mystery.” (“In the storm,”p.12)

It looks like the poet is getting exhilarated and thus goes on giving a running commentary as the night is clear in its darkness or light, nothing to exaggerate; it's all mystery of the creation that makes one bound to appreciate from the core of the heart.

“Compared to the sun, all the fires here

are short-lived, amateurish—

they end when the leaves are gone.” (“The Sunset,” p.13)

Praising the sun as the most sincere and powerful cosmic element furnishing its responsibilities on the earth.

The practical experiences of the poet in day-to-day life constitute a number of memorable incidents. This may be common to many, but they abound great moments of realizing the subtle sensibilities appealing in tone and emotion.

“In summer, you can smell the orange blossoms.

If there's wind, one tree will do it—you don't need the whole orchard.

I do what the hero does.

He opens the **window**. He has his reunion with earth.” (“Via Delle Ombre,”p.30)

When the window opens, the happiness and pleasant feelings are felt to be valued with the dark room, cool night, and smell of orange blossoms. Wind blows and trees swing in friendly sport in the orchard. This leads to the height of ‘reunion with the earth.’

"Hunters" is an ironic and symbolic poem that is represented by cats hunting rats on dark nights. A step-by-step narration of how devilish sport between the prey and predator goes on in this. Bats bear a number of potential symbolic meanings, such as community, longevity, balance, good fortune, evolution, and supernatural powers. Also, some take them as symbols of rebirth as they flood out of their caves, or even owing to their presence, most often in an alien form, they are treated as bad omen, too.

Similarly, in “Bats,” the poet reflects on the philosophical undertone, saying that becoming a visionary is not easy. Through the bat, the poet means to say that we have two options to envision the thing in our surrounding. One may use the tools of science or the other may other may go beyond the limits of the physical sense of vision to a higher state.

The poet here goes by whatever she sees in front of her and composes the lines. In the month of March, there is still a trace of winter. It seems as if there is a sense of reluctance to do any work and still doubt regarding the dead flowers, as they are supposed to be fresh and fine, too.

“March

The light stays longer in the sky, but it's a cold light;  
it brings no relief from winter.

My neighbor stares out the **window**,  
talking to her dog.” (“March,” p.40)

Talks of the harvesting of tomato, pumpkin, gourd but when the frost season comes,  
everything comes to a standstill position.

“The earth is white now; the fields shine when the moon rises.

I sit at the bedroom **window**, watching the snowfall.

The earth is like a mirror:

calm meeting calm, detachment meeting detachment.” (“Harvest,” p.23)

The miracle of nature is apparent here, as in Robert Frost's “Wood Pile.” The poet is absorbed in the profile of the dead of winter that he sees through the window of his house, which is but an allusion saying that the window of the poetic chamber is open to that ‘The earth is like a mirror,’ and there is harmony in the dealings of the elements of nature.

In his “Solitude,” she again exaggerates by giving an absolute statement that the torrential rain makes nothing visible. Only the witness is the window through which she philosophizes by saying that it has made all speechless and visionary by making all stand still in the utter darkness.

“The earth has vanished.

There’s nothing to see, only the rain  
gleaming against the dark **windows**.

This is the resting place, where nothing moves— (“Solitude,” p.51)

Thereby, she rejoices over the mystic feeling of solitude by having a sudden break owing to the incessant rain.

The countenance with the tenets of life of the poet undergoes the crosscurrents of the discord of life from bird to man and vice versa.

“When I was a bird, I believed I would be a man.

That's the flute.

And the secret it confides in me  
vanishes also.

In the **window**, the moon is hanging over the earth,  
meaningless but full of messages.” (“A Village Life,” p.68)

Ultimately, it accounts for her philosophical notions that the window makes her see the changes between the life of a bird with that of the life of a human being.

### **8. Concluding Comments**

Both Plath and Gluck have naturally been inclined to the epithet of the window as an outlet for multiple ideas, emotions, and poetic sensibilities. A textual 111 osee111111 of both poets' selected poems makes us feel that the window is an eye for them. It not only abounds the spirit of colorful tulips but also looks at the philosophy of snailly movements. The poets enjoy watching the sea waves, the snowfall in the 111 osee landscape, the illusions of fluorescent light at the distant place that winces on and off, and the beauty of the bee boxes in the garden. In 111 osee, the room without a window gives Plath a warm feeling, whereas the window leaves an 111 osee111111n of domesticity. Thus, the window becomes a metaphor for hope and a means of transformation. Windows is the witness of the daily movement of people around, which creates a crowded movement of images. The poets are able 111 osee the testimony of harmony as well as disharmony only through the passage of the window. It envisages the psychological perspectives representing the ventilation of ideas as they find that if the mind is the 111 osee111 chamber, the intellect of the mind acts as the window. For them, 111 osee111 smile, mirror the ideas and emotions, a passage to take you to the moon in the track of its protracted bright rays, and they help 111 osee things move suspiciously in the patchy dark lands. Window becomes increasingly a companion of loneliness, a means of emotional relish, and at a higher state, it represents the mind's eye. The profound poetic flavors are drawn upon when the blurred lines of the railings of the window make them see life in its multiple forms or become invisible in the torrential rain. Windows becomes the vehicle of the emotional outburst of the poems when they open and close.

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