

Excerpt from *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath

I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story. From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee [the author's benefactor], the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was Constantin [a fictional rich and powerful tycoon] and Socrates [the philosopher and seeker of truth] and Attila [the aggressor and adventurer] and a pack of other lovers with queer names and offbeat professions, and another fig was an Olympic lady crew champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out. I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet.

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Sylvia Plath ( October 27, 1932 - February 11, 1963) was an American poet and author. She is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry and is best known for *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1960), *Ariel* (1965), and *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel published shortly before her suicide in 1963. *The Collected Poems* was published in 1981, which included previously unpublished works. For this collection, Plath was posthumously awarded a Pulitzer Prize in Poetry in 1982.