**“Morning Song” by Sylvia Plath**

*Love set you going like a fat gold watch.  
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry  
Took its place among the elements.*

*Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.  
In a drafty museum, your nakedness  
Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.*

*I’m no more your mother  
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow  
Effacement at the wind’s hand.*

*All night your moth-breath  
Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:  
A far sea moves in my ear.*

*One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral  
In my Victorian nightgown.  
Your mouth opens clean as a cat’s. The window square*

*Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try  
Your handful of notes;  
The clear vowels rise like balloons.*

**“Mirror” by Sylvia Plath**

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.  
Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
I am not cruel, only truthful ‚  
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.  
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.  
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long  
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.  
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.  
  
Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

**Build Vocabulary: Context**

**When you encounter a new word in text, look for context clues to its meaning. Context refers to the language surrounding a word that throws light on its meaning. Authors may provide specific clues, such as synonyms, or the gist of an entire paragraph may suggest the word’s meaning. Write the letter of the correct definition on the line next to the matching vocabulary word.**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. agitation

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. bittersweet

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. detachment

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. distill

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. effacement

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. midwife

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. preconception

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. reaches

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. reassuring

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. succumbed

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. turmoil

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. unmisted

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. Victorian

A. separation; withdrawal

B. continuous stretches or expanses

C. person who assists women in childbirth

D. yielded to an overpowering force or desire

E. irregular, rapid, or violent movement

F. prudish; characteristic of the age of Victoria

G. idea formed beforehand

H. state of extreme agitation or confusion

I. combining elements of pleasure and suffering

J. not misty; clear

K. to let fall in drops or a mist

L. restoring the confidence of

M. disappearance or fading as if by wearing away

**Analyze Literature: Figurative Language**

**Figurative language is writing or speech meant to be understood imaginatively instead of literally. Writers often use it in an attempt to help readers see things in new ways. Types of figurative language, known as figures of speech, include the following:**

**metaphor: a comparison in which one thing is said to be another**

**simile: comparison of seemingly unlike things using the word like or as**

**personification: comparison giving an animal, object, force of nature, or idea human qualities**

**Not all comparisons are figures of speech. For example, “that house is like your house” is not a simile, and “a cow is an ungulate” is not a metaphor. They are literal comparisons.**

**Part 1: Identify Figurative Language: Identify each excerpt as metaphor (M), simile (S), personification (P), or literal (L) in meaning.**

“Morning Song”

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_“Love set you going like a fat gold watch”

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “New statue / In a drafty museum”

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “We stand round blankly as walls”

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “your moth breath”

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “Your mouth opens clean as a cat’s”

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “The clear vowels rise like balloons”

“Mirror”

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “I am silver and exact.”

8. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “I am not cruel, only truthful”

9. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “I meditate on the opposite wall”

10. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “Now I am a lake”

11. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “Searching my reaches for what she really is”

12. \_\_\_\_\_\_ “she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon”

**Part 2: Analyze Use of Figurative Language**

**Answer the following questions to analyze Plath’s use of figurative language.**

13. What qualities in herself does the speaker in “Morning Song” suggest with figures of speech? For example, she stands “blankly as walls,” hears a “far sea” instead of her baby’s breathing, and feels “cow-heavy and floral.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

14. What qualities of the infant are suggested by figures of speech such as “fat gold watch,” “new statue,” “moth breath,” and “mouth opens clean as a cat’s”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

15. What qualities of itself does the mirror suggest in such figures of speech as “the eye of a little god,” “I meditate on the opposite wall,” and “I think it is a part of my heart”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

16. What qualities of the woman who looks in the mirror are suggested by such figures of speech as “searching my reaches for what she really is,” and “in me she has drowned a young girl”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the final figure of speech (“in me an old woman / Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish”) shed more light on the woman or on the mirror? Explain why. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

18. Write several sentences commenting on Plath’s use of figurative language in “Morning Song” or “Mirror.” Analyze the mood and concepts you think she wants to communicate with these figures of speech. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**True or False: Write T if the statement is true or F if the statement is false.**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. The speaker in “Morning Song” is a hospital bed.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. The speaker in “Mirror” is a mirror.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. In “Morning Song” a mother compares a child to part of her heart.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the final lines of “Morning Song,” an infant cries.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. In the final lines of “Mirror,” the mirror has become an ugly fish.

**Short Answer: Write your answer to each of the following questions in the space provided.**

6. To what does the speaker in “Morning Song” compare her baby’s breathing? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. On what does the mirror meditate in “Mirror”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Whom does the mirror refer to as “those liars”? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. What does the woman in “Mirror” search for in the mirror? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_