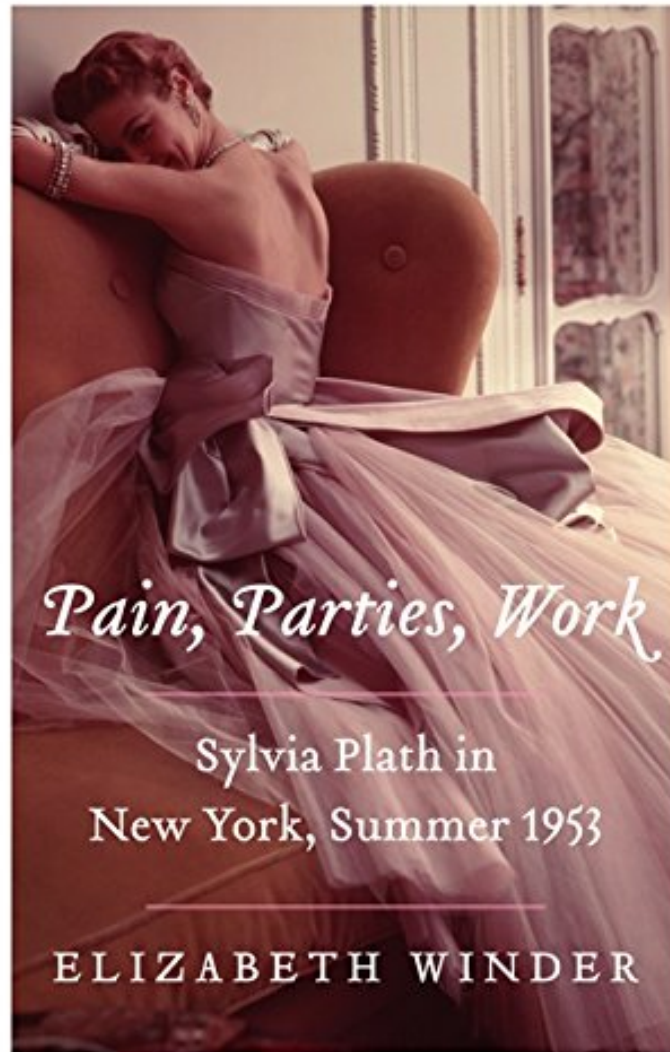


[Ebook free] Pain, Parties, Work: Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953

Pain, Parties, Work: Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953

Elizabeth Winder

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#699674 in Books 2013-04-16 2013-04-16 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .97 x 6.001, .95 #File Name: 0062085492288 pages | File size: 34.Mb

Elizabeth Winder : Pain, Parties, Work: Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pain, Parties, Work: Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953:

24 of 25 people found the following review helpful. "People are like boxes. You would like to open them up and see what's inside, but you can't." By Amelia Gremelspacher In this eminently readable book, Sylvia Plath is quoted as saying this to her startled friend Laurie after a day at the zoo. Her friend thought she might have been referring to the people watching they had done, but I think Sylvia meant herself. This book centers around the dream job of junior

editor at *Mademoiselle* given to Sylvia and nineteen other girls. Curiously, a covert hand writing expert had warned her staff that she was likely to suffer a breakdown, something she found out by accident. Her editor saw her to be all facade. "You might be there another day and find an entirely different personality." Interspersed within the discourse are a multitude of quotes and observations made by the people who interacted with this brilliant young woman. Her own journal is quoted where possible. And her works at *Mademoiselle* are cited. This technique should make for boxy and irritating flow to the prose, but in fact achieves just the opposite. And I believe this interspersing of stories emphasizes the inner contradictions suffered by Sylvia. If nothing else, she experienced the conflict of needing solitude to write while working in a deeply social setting. The "normalcy" of the bright and shining writer has long confounded readers. She adored fashion, ate to satiation, and enjoyed luxury. When not pulled back into herself, she could be entertaining and wryly funny. To me this work actually seems to complete a piece of the puzzle of the illness of the golden girl. Now, years later, psychiatry is well acquainted with the tragedy of the young person glinting with potential returning home from college and or work in complete breakdown. At the age of twenty, Sylvia was ripe for the breakthrough of genetic predisposition or for the expression of neurochemicals or for the appearance of whatever theorized function of this breakdown that can occur in early adulthood. While the stress of *Mademoiselle* probably hastened the process, it seems unlikely to have caused it. This interpretation of Plath's illness added a dimension to this novel for me. But one certainly can find contradictory meanings to mine and still feel tremendously fulfilled by the skill of this work. The author has taken a risk in format and I think it paid off well. The prose is deeply compelling and one can almost feel that you can put down your book and find yourself in the newly stylish New York of the middle of the century. I highly recommend that you read this book.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Kind of relished it. By Ada Ardor This is an account of both the era and the time in Sylvia Plath's life, when she spent the summer in NYC as a guest editor for *Mademoiselle*. The book was very well-researched, and the guest editors' stories were rendered in such a way as to make each of them fascinating. I just wish there were some photographs of them, and I also wanted to know what became of their lives. Also included were opinions and direct quotes about how the other guest editors felt about SP. Janet Wagner failed the third grade, was the nonfiction writer winner, was discovered by Eileen Ford, and she thought SP was an Ivy League snob. Carol LeVarn was from Sweet Briar with white-blond hair; she was the Doreen from *The Bell Jar*; she feels betrayed by the depiction of her in *The Bell Jar*. Ann Burnside thought SP rude for hogging the caviar. Margaret Affleck thought SP nice, very pretty, refined, and liked her immediately. For me, the best parts were the anecdotes about SP her feelings about her body and makeup; her embrace of hangovers; her adoration of Marilyn Monroe; her strange fear of bobby pins; her diverse crushes including a Japanese emperor, as well as writers and politicians; her food preferences, and so many other little bits not included in other biographies. I wish the author had just let the title be, *Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953* instead of the peculiar title *Pain, Parties, and Work*. Again, I mourn there were not more photographs. Even the star configuration of the guest editors should have at least been accompanied by their names. But I don't want to take away from Elizabeth Winders' thorough research, her presentation of the other guest editors, and the charming and bizarre habits of SP.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. DEFINING MOMENTS IN TIME By Laurel-Rain Snow In the summer of 1953, Sylvia Plath and several other college girls were chosen as guest editors for *Mademoiselle Magazine*, to work on the college issue. A month long frenzy of activities, from work in the bull pen, to photo shoots, to luncheons, and to a round of parties, would ultimately become a series of defining moments for the young women. Entering her senior year at Smith following that summer, Sylvia's plans to write her senior thesis on James Joyce came to a screeching halt when she found herself struggling with the readings, her comprehension seemingly gone. Self-confidence was at an all-time low when she attempted suicide, and subsequently spent time in a psychiatric hospital. But afterwards, in the Platinum Year of 1954, Sylvia seemed "golden" again, with her newly blonded hair and her revitalized attitude. In later years, Sylvia would plumb the depths to write about the "hottest summer of her life." Those experiences, fictionalized, would become the core of *The Bell Jar*. "Sylvia's experiences in the city that summer ignited her already harsh eye. *The Bell Jar* burns with a merciless bathing-suit-in-the-dressing-room fluorescent light. But this same garish illumination can be fresh, perversely flattering in a truthful/trashy way--like a snapshot where the skin has too much shine on it and there are too many dark shadows and everyone looks like a deer in the headlights, caught in the moment of reliving some recent humiliation." The 1950s in America were a time before the big changes that would come. Before Betty Friedan's book illuminating "the problem that has no name." Before the protests and fervor of a generation discovering freedoms previously unexplored. I remember these times well. And the fashions of that summer of 1953 were some that I recall with distaste. The fabrics, the styles...they spoke of a hobbling of a woman's self as well as her physical being. Unattractive and binding, the subsequent decades could not come soon enough for those of us living then. One of Sylvia's friends during that summer, Neva Nelson, summed up their experiences: "We were all immature adolescents--products of the middle 1950s, pre-Pill, pre-Feminine Mystique--expected to do something extraordinary, but left with the ambiguity of the female role, with its stress on home and family." *Pain, Parties, Work: Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953 (P.S.)* is a time-out-of-time series of experiences that revealed the girlish Sylvia Plath, still self-confident, for the most part...still golden. A portrait of the young woman, encapsulated in this moment in time, the story elicits sadness for the lost girl and the life cut short.

Pain, Parties, Work by Elizabeth Winder is a compelling look at a young Sylvia Plath and the life-changing month that would lay the groundwork for her seminal novel, *The Bell Jar*. In May of 1953, a twenty-one-year-old Plath arrived in New York City, the guest editor of *Mademoiselles* annual College Issue. She lived at the Barbizon Hotel, attended the ballet, went to a Yankee game, and danced at the West Side Tennis Club. She was supposed to be having the time of her life. But what would follow was, in Plath's words, twenty-six days of pain, parties, and work, that ultimately changed the course of her life. Thoughtful and illuminating, featuring line drawings and black-and-white photographs, *Pain, Parties, Work: Sylvia Plath in New York, Summer 1953* offers well-researched insights as it introduces us to Sylvia Plath before she became one of the greatest and most influential poets of the twentieth century.

An illuminating biography . . . which floods clarifying light on a chapter of the poet's early life that Plath painted in jaundiced tones in *The Bell Jar*. (New York Times, Sunday Styles Feature) The world of 50s NYC, in all its glamour, is irresistible reading. (Meg Wolitzer, author of *The Interestings*) Will recalibrate your mind and heart. . . . We knew about Plath's ambition - and angst - but her penchant for flaming-red lipstick and princess heels was a bit of a surprise. (More magazine) A pixilated gem of a book. . . . In prose as delightful and lively as the champagne Sylvia liked to sip at the St. Regis ball, Winder has made *Pain, Parties, Work* a prose poem of the senses, and a true account of *The Bell Jar*. (Sam Kashner and Nancy Schoenberger, New York Times bestselling authors of *Furious Love*) A lovingly detailed inventory, as Technicolor-vivid as a Douglas Sirk film, of the fashions and foods that filled Plath's summer. Winder convincingly shows that Plath should be recognized as much for her enjoyment of life and her enduring works as for her tragic death. (Publishers Weekly) Winder poignantly captures a snapshot of a time that directly inspired one of Plath's most famous works. She also captures Plath as bright, vivacious . . . For fans, particularly devotees of *The Bell Jar*. (Library Journal) Winder resuscitates a young woman who, while sick, is electrically alive to her first real adventure. . . . Captivating . . . [Winder] makes a compelling argument that in New York Plath moved closer to finding the voice that would define her writing. (Slate) Winder describes the aesthetics of the era beautifully. . . . Reading this book sparks feelings of impossible nostalgia for someone who didn't live through the fifties; in this way, it is an experience akin to watching *Mad Men*. (Bookslut) The book offers a new perspective on Plath's life courtesy of Winder's exhaustive research. (Women's Wear Daily) Winder has painstakingly sketched a fully fleshed out portrait of Plath's life during that hot, seminal summer, offering a glimpse into the raison d'être behind Plath's revered 1963 roman à clef, *The Bell Jar*. . . . Winder goes into the dizzying, delightful detail. (USA Today) [An] accessible, eye-opening new biography. (O Magazine) From the Back Cover "I dreamed of New York, I am going there." On May 31, 1953, twenty-year-old Sylvia Plath arrived in New York City for a one-month stint at "the intellectual fashion magazine" *Mademoiselle* to be a guest editor for its prestigious annual college issue. Over the next twenty-six days, the bright, blond New England collegian lived at the Barbizon Hotel, attended Balanchine ballets, watched a game at Yankee Stadium, and danced at the West Side Tennis Club. She typed rejection letters to writers from *The New Yorker* and ate an entire bowl of caviar at an advertising luncheon. She stalked Dylan Thomas and fought off an aggressive diamond-wielding delegate from the United Nations. She took hot baths, had her hair done, and discovered her signature drink (vodka, no ice). Young, beautiful, and on the cusp of an advantageous career, she was supposed to be having the time of her life. Drawing on in-depth interviews with fellow guest editors whose memories infuse these pages, Elizabeth Winder reveals how these twenty-six days indelibly altered how Plath saw herself, her mother, her friendships, and her romantic relationships, and how this period shaped her emerging identity as a woman and as a writer. *Pain, Parties, Work* the three words Plath used to describe that time shows how Manhattan's alien atmosphere unleashed an anxiety that would stay with her for the rest of her all-too-short life. Thoughtful and illuminating, this captivating portrait invites us to see Sylvia Plath before *The Bell Jar*, before she became an icon: a young woman with everything to live for. About the Author Elizabeth Winder is the author of a poetry collection. Her work has appeared in the *Chicago*, *Antioch*, *American Letters*, and other publications. She is a graduate of the College of William and Mary, and earned an MFA in creative writing from George Mason University.