

English 12 Poetry

Scale Point: 5

Comment

This paper was awarded a 5 because it is a clear example of proficient writing; furthermore, it demonstrates an understanding of both the question and the poem and supports that understanding with well-chosen references.

In Sharon Olds' "High School Senior," she feels she needs her daughter and is afraid to lose her. However, she soon realizes that she is lucky to have had what she did with her daughter, and that her leaving isn't necessarily bad. At first, she needs her daughter "like food or air." Because of this intense need, she is terrified of losing her daughter. This is evident when she says, "I feel as if I cannot tell the difference between her leaving for college and our parting forever." Yet, towards the end she realizes just how lucky she actually is. "There are creatures whose children float away at birth, and those who throat feed their young for weeks and never see them again." She knows that some lose their children at all stages of life, and that she is not one of them. She is happy that her "daughter is free." She feels good that she is able to give her daughter this freedom. Her love for her daughter is in her heart "changing chambers," so while she still loves her daughter, she will have to love her from a distance. Her realization is an improvement on her early feelings of need and fear. In the end, she knows it's for the best.