

English 12 Poetry

Scale Point: 6

Comment

This paper was awarded a 6 because it is an accurate and thoughtful discussion of both the mother's feelings and her realizations. The sentence structure is varied and the language is clear and precise. The arguments are well-supported with specific references.

In Sharon Olds' "High School Senior", the speaker is a mother thinking about her life once her daughter goes away to college. She has very strong feelings of attachment to her daughter, considering they were around each other often: "I had the daily sight of her/like food or air she was there, like a mother" (lines 9 and 10). The speaker also feels unsure about her daughter leaving for college, and she is reluctant to part with her. She cannot picture what it would be like living at home without her daughter: " – I try to see this house without her... but I cant" (lines 13, 14 and 18). Then the speaker thinks back to when she was pregnant, and the feelings of uncertainty she felt about becoming a mother: "I could not imagine/my life with her" (lines 20 and 21). Finally, the speaker comes to the realization that she is lucky to have even had the pleasure of knowing her daughter. In lines 24-26 she talks about creatures whose children leave after childbirth, and she realizes how grateful she is that her daughter did not leave like that. Lastly, the speaker realizes that she will always be with her daughter: "My daughter/is free and she is in me – no, my love/of her is in me" (lines 26-28). Although physically, her daughter is leaving, emotionally, the speaker will always be with her daughter, because her love for her is everlasting. In conclusion, the speaker goes through all the natural feelings of uncertainty that all parents experience when their children leave home, but she also comes to the realization that she needs to let go of her daughter, and be grateful for all the time they were able to spend together while she grew up.