

## Essay B

### Spring Pictures

The story of the famous New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield “Spring Pictures” is a short narrative which explores a tragedy of a lot of women during the World War I on the example of the one life. The name of the story creates a positive image of the full of love and joy season, but in fact it turns out to be the most tragic time for the protagonist - a young girl in the prime of her life who can't cope with challenges and kills herself. This spring, as a parallel to the girl's youth, draws pictures of the ruined life instead of the usual images of carelessness and prosperity.

The very first sentences help the reader feel a general mood of the whole story – sadness and despair. *Raining drops* is a metaphor standing for the girl's tears and the climax in the next sentence is an increasing the girl's anxiety from “big” till “immense”. Through the polysyndeton “...toy cannons *and* soldiers *and* Zeppelins *and* photograph frames...”, the epithet “toy” here, such simile as “baskets like pyramids of *pastry*”, repetition of geometrical figures (“pyramids”, “squares”) the author hints that the girl expects a child. The situation irony “blue ones [squares of mackintosh] for girls and pink ones for boys” stresses confusion of the principal character. Mansfield draws our attention to the situation through the quoted word ‘comic’ which points to seriousness of the situation for the girl. Using the figurative epithet “a balloon of a belly” as an allusion to the principal character as an expecting mother, includes the sounds [b], [l], [e], [u:] which are the onomatopoeia of baby coos.

Then “the lean man” at the doorway appears. This man's portrait contains the situational irony “The feather is magnificent” as if the author purposely ignores the holder of this thing. The sentence “He [the man] swaggers under it [the feather]” implies the feather is more significant than the man does. The author uses partial inversion “With what an air he wears it!” and repetition of the word “feather” and “air” as the contrast with the principal character's heavy heart. These cases seem to suggest the girl's rejection and even disdain for him. Such phrases as “Come up!”, “second to none”, “chance of a lifetime” and the epithets “broken” and “burst” give reason to believe that this man “entices” the girl, “broke” her life and then “disappears”. The symbol of doorway also implies the division of the girl's life before and after her meeting this man. The metaphor “dribble into quiet”, the personification of “the lace curtain” and the phrase “it is getting dusky” reveal the fact that the girl gives up. The reader traces the girl's mounting tension and finally the emergence of thought about death.

The first part is notable for parallelism “Here are roses! Here are lilies! Here are violets!”. We notice the repetition of this phrase through the whole part with the change of word order. According to “language of flowers”, *rose* is the symbol of passion and *lily* symbolizes purity and even was considered the flower of Virgin Mary. The paragraph, where the girl thinks about the child is marked with the image of a rose as if this baby is a result of passion. The next phrase appears before the

portrait of showman and opens with the image of a lily. It is a symbol of the girl before her meeting the man. The end of the part is marked with the image of violets which are the symbol of sadness, modesty and faithfulness. Doesn't the girl have to sale her "modesty" being faithful to somebody else?

In the second part the reader encounters the girl's impatience. We notice some allusions to a clock (the repetition of "swing", the mention of the ticking watch, the little pulse beats "in time"). The story was published in the first year of the World War I. The author also points us to wartime through the unusual list of toys (toy cannons, soldiers, Zeppelins) or the rhetorical question "Who is ever going to buy anything here ...?" and a sort of answer in the next sentence: "The sellers are women.". So, it's quite possible that the girl used to have a sweetheart fighting on the front now. We can trace the allusion to her heart being occupied through the girl's behavior in the third part when she imagines the tree as somebody dear. It is that "somebody" who is her only hope. That morning the girl is nervous and impatient, that is observed in her spontaneously elliptical speech, repetition of the interjection, convergence "But the postman – *he has called already?*". The reader understands that the girl waits for the letter. The oxymoron in the sentence: "I cry, *gaily* swinging..." reveals her despair to see the concierge instead of a postman. The crucial moment here is the concierge's answer "Nothing, mademoiselle" in response to the question about letters. It means that the girl herself has nothing to live for.

The repetition of "come up" and "wave" imply that the girl reflects on committing suicide. But the last part shows that in fact she doesn't want to. She "walks step or two" and the desperate gasp "No, too soon, too soon!" reveals her actual condition. The repetition of "up" and "down", parallelism "Now she has stopped. Now she has turned suddenly", using the phraseological unit and such phrases as "wringing her hands" draw our attention to her doubt. "A little grey shawl" is an allusion to the "rope around her neck" and the epithet "little" alludes us to her unborn child. But still she "is gone".

The framing composition of the story creates the impression of the whole life lived with the character. And still who was that girl? The portrait of the principal character, her lifestyle and her nature are totally implicit. Isn't there a lack of information about the girl and the place because the action could have happened in any place with any girl of that time? The ladies, whose dreams were shattered in one second and who didn't handle with the new reality of war, are portrayed in the image of this doomed unnamed girl the story is written about.