

## Words

Axes

After whose stroke the wood rings,

And the echoes! — astonishment

Echoes traveling

Off from the center like horses.

metaphor; words are like axes; powerful and destructive. Imagery are carried on by powerful beasts.

The sap

Wells like tears, like the

Water striving

To re-establish its mirror

Over the rock

extended internal tree metaphor. Sap as healing → cathartic healing after a wound. — return to a preferred state of being, a mirror as reflection of a life past.

That drops and turns, — imagery

A white skull, —

Eaten by weedy greens.

Years later I —

Encounter them on the road —

— lifeless/brainless/without power and without words — first mention of narrative persona — metaphor for returning to her past words/works.

Words dry and riderless, —

The indefatigable hoof-taps, —

While

From the bottom of the pool, fixed stars

Govern a life.

— extension of horse comparison. Metaphor for emphasis and loss of control — surrender to the inevitable words / expectations of her work — looking from the bottom up, like the rock / rock bottom — Fate, this life is governed by fate, not her actions or her words.

1 February 1963

10 days before her successful suicide attempt.

## Main concerns

\* The free-form and abstract nature of this poem sets it aside from the other poems.

\* It is more fractured, and evidence that wrath was reaching the end.

\* Demonstrates her belief in the power of her words despite her own fragility.