

J. D. McClatchy on: "The Truth the Dead Know"

All My Pretty Ones opens on "The Truth the Dead Know," which is their absolute isolation, against which the poet fights to save both herself and her dead parents. Her father's death, three months after her mother's, intervened not only between the different concerns of these first two books but also between the completed realization of her inheritance: in the fine print of their wills, the poet fears to find her father's alcoholism and her mother's cancer, which would at the same time prove her their daughter and destroy her. The sins of the father are revisited in the title poem, which blends memories and objects like snapshots out of order to invoke the man's loss and, again, her guilty. . . .

From Anne Sexton: *The Artist and Her Critics*. Ed. J.D. McClatchy. Copyright © 1978 by J.D. McClatchy.

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[3] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/creator/j-d-mcclatchy-0>

[4] <http://modernamericanpoetry.org/poem/truth-dead-know>