

1. Much of the world's literature is presented through a patriarchal frame.
2. 'Salome' is from the biblical story of Herod II.
3. Oscar Wilde wrote the play 'Salome'
4. Salome tries to seduce John the Baptist and fails (at the party).

### Farmer's Bride - from Bride's perspective.

14/3/25

Father married me off three winters ago,  
'For the better' he said, but I'll never know,  
What I would've done had my dreams prevailed,  
But three winters ago, that ship sailed.

The man was big, tall, scary and mean,  
Crushing my dreams of what could've been,  
Triple of my years at least,  
So, one night, I set off East.

Into their fields I ran and ran,  
Until they dragged me back again,  
They locked me up and from that day,  
I vowed not to speak a word to they.

The only understanding creatures around,  
Are not more than one foot from the ground,  
I play with bunnies and work the house,  
Cautiously, quietly, like a mouse.

I am safe with the birds; I am bigger than them,  
But if I hear a man's 'ahem',  
I stall like prey: sick with fear,  
Whenever men-folk come a-near.

She lures someone (men) to her bed and kills them. Cold lips - dead, sticky red sheets - blood. 'Lamb to the slaughter to Salome's bed.'

The reader used a confident attitude, could reflect Salome's mindset?

### CARAVAGGIO, OSCAR WILDE, SALOME...AND THE HEAD OF THE BAPTIST!

The collection of poems by Carol Ann Duffy entitled 'The World's Wife', was first published in 1999 and presents stories, myths, fairy tales and characters in Western culture from the point of view of women. Much of literature through the ages and even today is patriarchal, presenting the world from a male perspective. These poems were intended by Carol Ann Duffy to rectify that, to highlight the fact that women have long been ignored or silenced. The poems in the collection are witty, satirical, playful and complex.

In 'Salome' Duffy retells the biblical story of the stepdaughter of Herod II and daughter of his second wife Herodias. She is believed to have lived between AD 14 to approximately AD 62. She is infamous for having demanded the head of John the Baptist 'on a platter', according to the New Testament. The story appears in the Gospels; first appearing Mark 6:17-29 and Matthew 14:3-11. Also, in the 'The Dance of the Seven Veils' as well as in Oscar Wilde's play 'Salome'.

In the play by Oscar Wilde, originally in French, in 1891, Salome is the daughter of Herodias, wife of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea.

The prophet John the Baptist has been imprisoned by Herod for criticizing his marriage to Herodias, who had previously been Herod's brother's wife. John the Baptist claims the consortium is incestuous.

In Wilde's play, the action takes place during a party thrown by Herod probably in celebration of his own birthday.



Caravaggio's *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, 1607.

During the party, Salome tries to seduce the prisoner John the Baptist but does not succeed in her intent. A number of signs indicate that tragedy looms ahead: the moon looks strange and ominous; a soldier/servant has just committed suicide; Herod, coming out of the party, slips in a pool of the blood shed by the victim, and hears a sound like the one made by the flapping of giant wings...These are all bad omens.

Soon afterwards, Herod, drunk on wine, and somewhat infatuated by his stepdaughter Salome, begs her to dance for him. Herodias, her mother, does not think this is appropriate and tries to forbid her, but Salome acquiesces when Herod promises she can have anything she wishes in return.

Salome then dances the famous "dance of the seven veils", which mesmerizes Herod. Time has come now for her to ask for her reward: she wants it to come on a silver platter. Herod laughs: "sure, she can have it on a silver platter...but what is it that she wants?" Salome demands: "The head of the Baptist", catching Herod completely off guard. He is horrified by the request.

Her demand is fully appreciated by Herodias, who hates the prophet. She insists that her daughter should get what she wants. Herod tries to make Salome change her mind by offering her lots of alternative gifts, such as jewels and beautiful birds, but she is adamant: all she wants is the prophet's head on a silver platter.

Her wish is granted: John the Baptist is decapitated. Caravaggio painted in gory detail a gruesome scene based on the myth, almost 300 years before the play was written.