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In '**The Pomegranate**', Boland happily uses a uniquely female myth. Evan compares her relationship with her daughter to winter, when Ceres was forlorn: '**It is winter, / and the stars are hidden**'. The image captures a bleak emotional time.

The hiding of stars evokes the underworld, dusk and the absence of light in an interesting way. Future light is '**veiled**' during adolescence, Persephone's sojourn in Hades. Boland writes with feeling that a mother's quest to understand and relate to her teenage daughter amounts to '**heart-broken searching**', with her daughter '**lost in hell**'. This is a foreboding image for the '**coke**', '**teen magazines**', a place of '**unshed tears**'.

Why '**unshed**'? Is it because the feelings are internal, no longer revealed in childish tears? Thus Boland writes sensitively about restrained feelings of love!



In the poem, Boland compares the hidden culture of adolescence to an underworld from which a mother is excluded. The underworld has its seductive lure, the seeds of the pomegranate, which probably stand for sexual attraction and the mysterious peer sub-culture. Boland's decision to end the poem with the sensual image '**lips**' hints at the sexual passions that may be about to awaken in her daughter as she explores adolescence, an '**inescapable**' event as time advances.

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Boland the passionate mother describes how she is tempted to extend her time as a protective nurturer. She longs to indulge in the delights of embracing her child in the place of '**honey-scented buddleias**'. However, Boland abstains for the sake of her child. She realises that the necessary emotional and cultural separation from her daughter will '**in time**' be a '**beautiful rift**'. This painful '**rift**' is part of a maturing process for herself as a mother, Ceres, and her daughter, Persephone, growing into Ceres. The myth analogy cleverly shows the cyclical nature of this '**rift**'.



Boland's imagery reveals the great prize: '**diamonds**'. This represents the mature, balanced and beautiful adult who will materialize from the teenage daughter. The emotional stress is captured in the image, '**unshed tears**'. The cleverness is that the underworld, a mythical place, doubles as the geological zone where diamonds form from pressurised carbon. The free experience of the teenager is the situation in which her maturing personality can compress into a precious gem. A wonderfully complex metaphor for the process of maturing!

After her daughter, similar to Eve in Judeo-Christian mythology, tastes '**the French word for apple**' she will experience a sense of '**exile**' from her mother, will perhaps even use '**blackmail**' to manipulate the mother. Boland resists her own temptation to control her daughter with '**blackmail**'. She remembers her own teenage alienation in London, that sense of the underworld. Her knowing and forbearing response can only be silence and so she abruptly shuts up at the end of the poem: '**I will say nothing**'.