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INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

TO LITERATURE

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[redacted]

REVISED EDITION

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But Achilles raised him aloft. He crouched on the wonderful shield, on heroes and burning cities, on vineyards graven in gold, on every dear passion, every joy, on the entire image of the Mountain that he had discovered, encircled, like it, with an everlasting stream.

E. M. FORSTER, *The Celestial Omnibus*

PREFACE



IN *Introduction to Literature,* as in its companion volume, *Toward Liberal Education,* we have attempted to make an anthology which will help college students understand what liberal education can mean to them. The very fact of a second volume devoted wholly to literature of the imagination indicates, perhaps, our bias as teachers of English in assigning to literature so important a role in liberal education. Plainly, we believe that literature is an efficient means to the self-examined life, and that no small part of its efficiency to this end lies in the unique pleasure which it affords its readers. It is not the keenest of the pleasures, as A. E. Housman has said, but it is yet the least perishable, "the least subject to external things, and the play of chance, and the wear of time."

In representing literature nationally and chronologically, we plead guilty to the prejudices of our own time and place; that is, the literature here collected is mostly English and American from the fourteenth century to the present. The inclusion, however, of Sophocles, Chekhov, Ibsen, Cocteau, and a few others may suggest to the student that literature is as old as history, and that other great continents lie within the realms of gold. "Macavity" and "The Purist" may at least hint as well that the republic of letters is a true democracy, with plenty of room in it for "the mystery cat" as well as for Oedipus.

The revised edition includes most of the literature that appeared formerly; but many new poems, stories, and plays appear that we hope will both strengthen and enhance the earlier selection. It will be apparent that we have discarded the categories of the original edition because they presented the material less advantageously than we had supposed they would.

Many teachers who used the original edition in their classes have generously made their experience and wisdom available to us, and we wish to make full acknowledgment to them. Particularly we should like to thank Professors Morris Bein, Wallace C. Brown, Alan S. Downer, Richard Eastman, J. Stuart Goodman, Hyatt H. Waggoner, Howard A. Wilson, and James L. Wortham; we also appreciate the assistance of Professors Frank Adams, E. W. Baughman, Samuel N. Bogorad, George C. Booth, Frederick Bracher, C. A. Brown, Irving L. Churchill, Fletcher Collins, Jr., J. Hal Connor, Ethel C. Cox, Norton B. Crowell, Grace Donaldson, Ethel A. Fleming, Signi Falk, Eleanor J. Gibson, James J. Gibson, L. P. Goggin, Robert M. Gorrell, Willis D. Jacobs, William R. Keast, John P. Kirby, Jane Kluckhohn, Arthur

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March, 1952

L. G. L.
W. M. G.
G. A.

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INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

I

POEMS



ANONYMOUS

SIR PATRICK SPENS

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get a guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

"Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne."
"O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

"Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone,
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens
Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, half owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

ON *SIR PATRICK SPENS* [1]

MARK VAN DOREN

SOME versions of this old Scottish ballad are longer than we have it here, and many of them differ in other respects. A popular ballad has no author as we know the term; it may have had one once, but time and repetition have obscured his identity and altered his text—altered it in most cases by shortening it until it contains only the essentials of the tale it originally told. It was a song to be sung, and singers have an immemorial tendency to forget, to improvise, and to improve. The great virtue of any ballad is brevity—assuming, of course, a subject with enough drama in it to invite intensification by abridgement and omission.

The history of the present ballad is not our business here, though it is well to remember that longer versions of it speak of a voyage to Norway to bring back the king's daughter; of Sir Patrick's safe arrival there; of a quarrel be-

1. From *Introduction to Poetry*, by Mark Van Doren (New York, 1951), pp. 127–129. With the permission of William Sloane Associates, Inc. Copyright, 1951, by William Sloane Associates, Inc.

tween his nobles and the nobles of Norway, who accuse the Scots of staying too long and wasting their host's food and drink; of Sir Patrick's resolution to sail for Scotland even though he is advised that the sea is unsafe; of his sailing nevertheless; and of the wreck with which every version ends. The shipwreck was the heart of the ballad, as calamity is likely to be the stuff of any popular narrative.

The present version is the classic one, and serves best to show how a ballad should be constructed, and why it is so difficult for a single author in sophisticated times to capture the secret of the art. Line 41 is the only residue of the return voyage; otherwise we should suppose that the ship was wrecked soon after it first set sail, and indeed most readers do naturally suppose this. We shall suppose it too, and forget everything except the lines before us. They constitute a masterpiece of the ballad art, which is both a lyric and a narrative art since its aim is to sing—briefly, without taking breath—a human action, and to make it as moving as the sweetest song can be.

This song of Sir Patrick Spens is a series of lyric scenes with every transitional or explanatory passage left out. All we are told is that the king asks for a sailor; that an elder knight recommends Sir Patrick; that the king sends him an order and he receives it; that he laughs at first, then weeps at the thought of certain death, and wonders who has brought it on him; that nevertheless he rouses his crew, saying they will sail tomorrow; that one of them protests, foreseeing a storm; that they sail as scheduled; that the ship sinks, leaving only their hats on top of the water; and that their ladies will wait a long time for their return, seeing that they lie fifty fathoms deep, halfway between somewhere and Aberdour. We are told, certainly, a great deal in eleven ballad stanzas; but that is the point. There could have been many more stanzas, and much more detail. As it is there seems to be nothing that we could do without; and everything we are given is musical and moving. Not merely is no mention made of the king's starting to talk as he drinks his blood-red wine, or of his decision to write a letter, or of Sir Patrick's resolution to overlook the danger he faces, or of who it is that has seen the old moon in the new moon's arms, or of the storm itself and the sinking of the ship. A hundred other items are equally ignored—everything, indeed, except that essence which cannot be ignored if the poem is to exist at all.

The genius responsible for our song wastes no time on things we cannot instantly and deeply feel. It is not the facts that matter, or the reasons for the facts; it is the feeling—the pity of it, seeing how well these men were aware that they would die. Twice only does the ballad develop anything at length, and both times it is something to that point: first, the premonition of the men, and last the sorrow of their wives. Out of the forty-four lines as many as sixteen (15–30) are devoted to the one and as many as twelve (33–44) to the other. More than half of the poem, that is to say, concentrates upon the tragedy; less than half provides us with its framework. We have the minimum of deed and the maximum of desolation.

The poet is thus left free to do with his words what words in narrative song can best do—namely, enchant us. The bluff king, the quiet and perhaps cunning old knight, and the courageous crew whose members speak their minds so clearly, create a heroic setting which magnifies the disaster, but it is the disaster that moves us as only things both terrible and beautiful are able to move men. All is beautiful here, but we may not be sure of this until the last three stanzas, whose rhythmical, sweet movement, suggestive of a gentle sea that will bring the king's ship smoothly in, helps also to create the ladies with their fans and their gold combs who wait prettily for what the fair wind and the bright waves have in store. We know, of course, that they will wait forever; and so they seem to be doing as the poem closes. The repetitions in lines 33, 37, and 41 have done their work; they have raised the music of this narrative poem to the lyric level where all poetry, as poetry, is felt. The narrative was necessary, and indeed if it had not been perfect we should not be feeling what we feel in "fiftie fadom deip."

The art of poetry is the art of narrative too; no great lyric but tells its story, regardless of how much action was left out; no poem studied in these pages but somewhere—often in a middle stanza—reveals its concern with humanity in motion. But the final success, as even Homer knew, is when the story sings. That of Sir Patrick Spens sings in the memory of every person who knows it, and sings in the words of the poem itself. This is why there is no greater ballad, and possibly—for its length—no greater poem.

THE THREE RAVENS

1. There were three ravens sat on a tree,
   Downe a downe, hay downe, hay downe
   There were three ravens sat on a tree,
   With a downe
   There were three ravens sat on a tree,
   They were as blacke as they might be.
   With a downe derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

2. The one of them said to his mate,
   "Where shall we our breakfast take?"

3. "Downe in yonder greene field,
   There lies a knight slain under his shield.

4. "His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
   So well they can their master keepe.

5. "His haukes they flie so eagerly,
There's no fowle dare him come nie."

6. Downe there comes a fallow doe,
As great with yong as she might goe.

7. She lift up his bloudy hed,
And kist his wounds that were so red.

8. She got him up upon her backe,
And carried him to earthen lake.

9. She buried him before the prime,
She was dead herselfe ere even-song time.

10. God send every gentleman,
Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman.

THE TWA CORBIES

As I was walking all alane,
I herd twa corbies making a mane;
The tane unto the t' other say,
"Where sall we gang and dine to-day?"

"In behint yon auld fail dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.

"Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;

Oer his white banes when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

ON *THE THREE RAVENS* AND *THE TWA CORBIES* [1]

EARL DANIELS

OPINION will differ on the merits of these two poems, which might almost be subtitled, "Version *A*: By an Optimist" and "Version *B*: By a Pessimist." I have always preferred the corbies over the ravens, for I can recall in literature no love story more sharply etched in bitterness. But it is important to recognize at the start that poles apart as they seem to be, both probably began at the same place, in the same original legend; time, and telling, and variant interests of possibly a long series of narrators have made the difference. The start may have been pure imagination, or an actual murder famous in local history, appropriately headlined, had there been newspapers then, "Knight's Body Found in Field." Crude violence like this is a source for innumerable ballads, most of them tragedies, since comedy seems to have had little interest, at least, little literary interest, for the peoples from whom the ballads came.

Very characteristic of a ballad is the way both of these begin only after almost everything has happened. They are like the fifth act of a five-act play, of which the four preceding acts have somehow been lost. The murder and all that led to it is done and over with. Death is a fact, as the curtain rises on the birds who wait to pick the dead knight's bones. Who he was, who killed him, why—none of that matters, none of a thousand other details of possible interest to a reader matters. We must not try to go behind what is given, except as the poem itself offers suggestion. The poem is not the murder; it is what happened next, presented in a tense last scene. Concentration like this makes for the stark, summary quality to be looked for in a majority of ballads. Attention is not to nonessentials. The result is drama reduced to lowest and, when understood, most moving terms. Nothing else in literature is so stripped as the ballad.

What, here, is the essential thing the ballad is trying to say? What is the story? With "The Thtee Ravens," true love; with "The Twa Corbies," false love: that and nothing else. True love in "The Three Ravens" is symbolized, made concrete by the hounds, the hawk, and the lady, who refuse to leave the body, the lady with her unborn child, dying herself before the close of day; false love in "The Twa Corbies" by the same hawk, hounds, and lady who have departed, the lady with a speed as indecent as that of Hamlet's mother hurrying to the arms of his uncle, when

The funeral baked-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

1. Earl Daniels, *The Art of Reading Poetry* (New York· Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1941), pp. 133–137. Copyright, 1941, by Earl Daniels.

She has already "ta'en another mate." This situation is sharpened by the succeeding lines, merely announcing that many mourn for the knight (except those who ought to grieve most); yet nobody knows what has become of him. Nobody, that is, *except* his hawk, his hound, and his wife—and again there seems to be an unpleasant implication.

Downrightness, where all is one thing or the other—love completely true or completely false, superlative heroism or superlative cowardice—blacks or whites without a mitigating gray, is another ballad characteristic. Ballads do not indulge in halfway measures, because the audience to whom they were originally addressed was a forthright, plain-speaking audience, unconcerned about soft nuances of light and shade; they liked directness in their poetry. The interests of that audience were simple. Love and courage were integral to their lives; a supernatural world of ghosts, and spirits of good and evil lay close about them. For these things they made important place in their poetry; because they were dominant in their lives, they are also dominant in their poems, so that all genuine ballads may roughly be classified as (1) ballads of love, (2) ballads of valor, and (3) ballads of the supernatural. There they are—the three great ballad motives, good, if for nothing else, in helping to emphasize the relative meagerness of ballad material, and then, as acquaintance with ballad literature grows, also to emphasize the infinite riches in a little room which these anonymous old poets could provide from what would seem so sparse a beginning. Naturally, more than one motive may appear in a single ballad: love, for example, may be an impulse to courage, or love and courage may together mingle in a supernatural ballad. Both "The Three Ravens" and "The Twa Corbies" are obviously love ballads. Only straining would introduce valor into the former by citing the conduct of the heroine; for the poet's emphasis is on her faithful love, faithful in her own death—a faithfulness which is made concrete in the little sharp details of her activities. He does not say in so many words, "She loved the man; she was true to him." Much more effectively, he *shows* us, and we must be indeed stupid if actions do not lead us to the conclusion he wants us to make.

What other ballad characteristics are illustrated in these two poems? With the regular emphasis on action and nothing else, there is likely to be, in ballads, only meager characterization. Men and women are little more than names; at the best, stock figures with a few elementary attributes like courage, cowardice, or love. And there is usually almost no description. When it is found, either for setting or people, it is in a few stock phrases, occurring over and over again. Heroes are "stout"; heroines are "bonnie," with "milk-white arms," small waists, and golden hair; they wear golden jewels, gowns of silk, with golden girdles. Nor is there psychology or analysis of motive. Stress on action, to the exclusion of almost everything else, is the more marked because of the almost complete objectivity with which ballad material is characteristically handled. The poet does not take sides; he does not comment or moralize. No matter how revolting the crime—and many of them are pretty bad—

he presents it as it was, unconcerned about the ethical implications. Ballads are not moral or immoral; they are simply without morals. Action exists for its own sake, and no one cares about the effect, good or bad, on the individual; social values are non-existent. One does not listen to ballads for education in "the good life." Almost at once "The Three Ravens" declares itself the everlasting exception to the rule, for that last stanza with its moral twist is a pious exhortation to the audience which might make even so earnest a poet as Wordsworth blush. But this kind of thing is rare in the genuine ballad, and when it does appear it justifies suspicion of being a late addition of a later poet. A "modern" has been tampering with the original! As a general thing, modern poets, modern writers of all sorts, cannot keep themselves and their points of view out of their writing. It is almost impossible for them to attain the complete objectivity of the genuine ballad, and this is one reason why the man who knows his ballads is seldom fooled by a modern imitation trying to masquerade as an original. For this telling objectivity "The Twa Corbies" is a vastly better poem, ending suddenly on the bleak forlornness of those last two lines, made even bleaker by the slowness of movement imposed upon them by the long vowels:

> Oer his white banes when they are bare,
> The wind sall blaw for evermair.

Read them again, aloud, with a distinct pause after *banes* and *blaw,* drawing out the sound of *bare* and *mair.*

Other ballad conventions will be illustrated by other ballads. . . . But the ravens and the corbies should not be left without some attention to qualities not at all peculiar to ballads, qualities which are part of the effectiveness of poems of all sorts. There is that frame of the gossiping birds. Talking animals are a favorite literary convention, at least as old as Aesop, popular enough to be frequently overworked and grossly misused. Have they any working validity in these poems? Do they serve any purpose other than that of providing a picturesque setting? I should call them highly important, even vital birds, for they establish and make poignant a central irony which the reader cannot miss without missing a good deal of the poems. Birds of prey of a mild sort, they perch there, ominously, at the opening of the poem, ready to pick the knight's bones for their breakfast, to plunder his body for the necessities of their housekeeping. They suggest the premonitory shudder a sensitive reader ought to feel. In one poem, the faithfulness of those associated with the knight is accentuated by the implied contrast; in the other, the desertion of the murdered warrior and the utter faithlessness of those about him is dramatized by the same foreboding contrast. Here, it seems to me, the effect is even more powerful, so that we almost believe the birds, gross as they are, preferable to the lady, who ought to be a symbol for loyalty, who ought to have remained on the scene. Observe, too, the force of "*new slain* knight," contributing in this connection its own little additional touch to our appalled sense of

the too hasty indecency of the knight's betrayal. The birds are, moreover, looking for breakfast, or for means to repair a roof that they may rear their young—domestic details which contribute to the final irony of the contrast. The corbies are loyal to their bird-nature; they are not nearly so rapacious as the hawk, the hound, and the lady. How they accentuate, as they sit there, the loneliness of the knight's situation. *Naebody kens,* and we are left in a wide field, with a desolate human body, and two black crows perching on a near-by tree.

For "The Twa Corbies," one final suggestion will not down, though I cannot be sure, mentioning it, that I am not guilty of reading in what is not part of the poem. But those implications for *new slain,* together with the sudden and complete abandonment of the knight, and the fact that

> . . . næbody kens that he lies there,
> But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair . . . .

—all these have a way with my imagination whenever I read the poem. *Is the lady as innocent as she may seem?* Love may have turned to more than indifference; we may be on the edge, here, of psychological depths in an ugly, involved human situation for which hasty marriage is a culminating touch of horror. Such deeps of tortured human nature are not foreign to the ballad. . . . But the ballad poet never lingers over them. For the sake of action, he is content to leave them in stark suggestion. Quite possibly, they are more powerful when handled in this way, for a sensitive reader, than when analyzed in detail, lingered over. In the ballad, in any good literature, for that matter, analytic minutiae of a clinical laboratory are never mistaken for the pleasures of poetry.

EDWARD

1. "Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward,
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O."

2. "Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,

My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

3. "Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule ye drie O."
"Oh I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

4. "And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,
Edward, Edward,
And whatten penance wul ye drie for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

5. "And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
Mither, mither,
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."

6. "And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

7. "And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward. Edward?

And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me O."



LORD RANDAL

"O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?"
"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome young man?"
"I dined wi' my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?"
"I gat eels boiled in broo; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my son?
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"
"O they swelld and they died; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"O I fear ye are poisoned, Lord Randal, my son!
O I fear ye are poisoned, my handsome young man!"
"O yes! I am poisoned; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down."



ON *THIRTY DAYS HATH SEPTEMBER* [1]

THEODORE SPENCER

I PROPOSE to examine the following poem:

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June and November:
> All the rest have thirty-one,
> Excepting February alone,
> Which has only eight and a score
> Till leap-year gives it one day more.

2

The previous critics who have studied this poem, Coleridge among them, have failed to explain what we may describe as its fundamental *dynamic*. This I now propose to do. The first thing to observe is the order in which the names (or verbal constructs) of the months are presented. According to the prose meaning—what I shall henceforth call the prose-*demand*—"September" should not precede, it should follow "April," as a glance at the calendar will show. Indeed "September" should follow not only "April," it should also follow "June" if the prose-demand is to be properly satisfied. The prose order of the first two lines should therefore read: "Thirty days hath April, June, September and November." That is the only sequence consonant with prose logic.

3

Why then, we ask ourselves, did the poet violate what educated readers know to be the facts? Was he ignorant of the calendar, believing that September preceded April in the progress of the seasons? It is difficult to imagine that such was the case. We must find another explanation. It is here that the principle of dynamic analysis comes to our aid.

4

Dynamic analysis proves that the most successful poetry achieves its effect by producing an *expectation* in the reader's mind before his sensibility is fully prepared to receive the full impact of the poem. The reader makes a *proto-response* which preconditions him to the total response toward which his fully equilibrized organs of appreciation subconsciously tend. It is this proto-response which the poet has here so sensitively manipulated. The ordinary reader, trained only to prose-demands, expects the usual order of the months. But the poet's sensibility knows that poetic truth is more immediately effective than the truth of literal chronology. He does not *state* the inevitable sequence;

1. Theodore Spencer, "How to Criticize a Poem (In the Manner of Certain Contemporary Critics)," *New Republic* (December 6, 1943). Reprinted by permission of *New Republic*.

he *prepares* us for it. In his profound analysis of the two varieties of mensual time, he puts the *gentlest* month first. (Notice how the harsh sound of "pt" in "September" is softened by the "e" sound on either side of it.) It is the month in which vegetation first begins to fade, but which does not as yet give us a sense of tragic fatality.

5

Hence the poet prepares us, dynamically, for what is to follow. By beginning his list of the months *in medias res,* he is enabled to return later to the beginning of the series of contrasts which is the subject of his poem. The analogy to the "Oedipus Rex" of Euripides and the "Iliad" of Dante at once becomes clear. Recent criticism has only too often failed to observe that these works also illustrate the dynamic method by beginning in the middle of things. It is a striking fact, hitherto (I believe) unnoticed, that a Latin poem called the "Aeneid" does much the same thing. We expect the author of that poem to begin with the departure of his hero from Troy, just as we expect the author of our poem to begin with "April." But in neither case is our expectation fulfilled. Cato, the author of the "Aeneid," creates dynamic suspense by beginning with Aeneas in Carthage; our anonymous poet treats his readers' sensibilities in a similar fashion by beginning with "September," and then *going back* to "April" and "June."

6

But the sensibility of the poet does not stop at this point. Having described what is true of *four* months, he disposes of *seven* more with masterly economy. In a series of pungent constructs his sensibility sums up their inexorable limitation: they *All* (the capitalization should be noted) "have thirty-one." The poet's sensibility communicates a feeling to the sensibility of the reader so that the sensibility of both, with reference to their previous but independent sensibilities, is fused into that momentary communion of sensibility which is the final sensibility that poetry can give both to the sensibility of the poet and the sensibility of the reader. The texture and structure of the poem have erupted into a major reaction. The ambiguity of equilibrium is achieved.

7

Against these two groups of spatial, temporal and numerical measurements —one consisting of four months, the other of seven—the tragic individual, the sole exception, "February," is dramatically placed. February is "alone," is cut off from communion with his fellows. The tragic note is struck the moment "February" is mentioned. For the initial sound of the word "excepting" is "X," and as that sound strikes the sensibility of the reader's ear a number of associations subconsciously accumulate. We think of the spot, the murderous and lonely spot, which "X" has so frequently marked; we remember the examinations of our childhood where the wrong answers were implacably signaled

with "X"; we think of ex-kings and exile, of lonely crossroads and executions, of the inexorable anonymity of those who cannot sign their names. . . .

8

And yet the poet gives us one ray of hope, though it eventually proves to be illusory. The lonely "February" (notice how the "alone" in line four is echoed by the "only" in line five), the solitary and maladjusted individual who is obviously the hero and crucial figure of the poem, is not condemned to the routine which his fellows, in their different ways, must forever obey. Like Hamlet, he has a capacity for change. He is a symbol of individualism, and the rhythm of the lines which are devoted to him signalizes a gayety, however desperate, which immediately wins our sympathy and reverberates profoundly in our sensibility.

9

But (and this is the illusion to which I have previously referred) in spite of all his variety, his capacity for change, "February" cannot quite accomplish (and in this his tragedy consists) the *quantitative* value of the society in which circumstances have put him. No matter how often he may alternate from twenty-eight to twenty-nine (the poet, with his exquisite sensibility, does not actually *mention* those humiliating numbers), he can never achieve the bourgeois, if anonymous, security of "thirty-one," nor equal the more modest and aristocratic assurance of "thirty." Decade after decade, century after century, millennium after millennium, he is eternally frustrated. The only symbol of change in a changeless society, he is continually beaten down. Once every four years he tries to rise, to achieve the high, if delusive, level of his dreams. But he fails. He is always one day short, and the three years before the recurrence of his next effort are a sad interval in which the remembrance of previous disappointment melts into the futility of hope, only to sink back once more into the frustration of despair. Like Tantalus he is forever stretched upon a wheel.

10

So far I have been concerned chiefly with the dynamic *analysis* of the poem. Further study should reveal the *synthesis* which can be made on the basis of the analysis which my thesis has tentatively attempted to bring to an emphasis. This, perhaps, the reader with a proper sensibility can achieve for himself.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

MERCILES BEAUTE, I

Your yen two wol slee me sodenly;
I may the beautee of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit thourghout my herte kene.

And but your word wol helen hastily
My hertes wounde, while that hit is grene,
Your yen two wol slee me sodenly;
I may the beautee of hem not sustene.

Upon my trouthe I sey you feithfully
That ye ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
For with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene.
Your yen two wol slee me sodenly;
I may the beautee of hem not sustene,
So woundeth it thourghout my herte kene.

LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE

Balade

Somtyme this world was so stedfast and stable,
That mannes word was obligacioun,
And now hit is so fals and deceivable,
That word and deed, as in conclusioun,
Ben no-thing lyk, for turned up so doun
Is all this world for mede and wilfulnesse,
That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable,
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
For among us now a man is holde unable,
But if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this but wilful wrecchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put doun, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun,
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable.
Through covetyse is blent discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun

Fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelnesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

Lenvoy to King Richard

O prince, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate extorcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be reprevable
To thyn estat don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

SIR THOMAS WYATT

THE LOVER COMPLAINETH THE UNKINDNESS OF HIS LOVE

My lute, awake, perform the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun.
And when this song is sung and past,
My lute, be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave in marble stone,
My song may pierce her heart as soon.
Should we then sigh, or sing, or moan?
No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually,
As she my suit and affection;
So that I am past remedy,
Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts through Lovës shot,
By whom unkind thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,
That makest but game of earnest pain;
Trow not alone under the sun
Unquit to cause thy lovers plain,
Although my lute and I have done.

May chance thee lie withered and old
In winter nights, that are so cold,
Plaining in vain unto the moon;
Thy wishes then dare not be told:
Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent
The time that thou hast lost and spent,
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon:
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wish and want, as I have done.

Now cease, my lute! This is the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste;
And ended is that we begun:
Now is thy song both sung and past;
My lute, be still, for I have done.

THE LOVER SHOWETH HOW HE IS FORSAKEN OF SUCH AS HE SOMETIME ENJOYED

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek,
With naked foot stalking within my chamber.
Once have I seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
That now are wild, and do not once remember
That sometime they have put themselves in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range,
Busily seeking in continual change.
Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise,
Twenty times better; but once especial,
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown did from her shoulders fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
And therewithal so sweetly did me kiss
And softly said, Dear heart, how like you this?
It was no dream, for I lay broad awaking.
But all is turned now, through my gentleness,
Into a bitter fashion of forsaking;

And I have leave to go, of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangleness.
But since that I unkindly so am served,
How like you this? what hath she now deserved?

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me, and be my love;
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd-swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

SIR WALTER RALEGH

THE NYMPH'S REPLY

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,—
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,
Had joys no date nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

EDMUND SPENSER

AMORETTI, LXXII

Oft when my spirit doth spred her bolder winges,
In mind to mount up to the purest sky,
It down is weighd with thoght of earthly things,
And clogd with burden of mortality:
Where, when that soverayne beauty it doth spy,

Resembling heavens glory in her light
Drawne with sweet pleasures bayt, it back doth fly,
And unto heaven forgets her former flight.
There my fraile fancy, fed with full delight,
Doth bath in blisse, and mantleth most at ease;
Ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might
Her harts desire with most contentment please.
Hart need not wish none other happinesse,
But here on earth to have such hevens blisse.

ON SPENSER'S *AMORETTI, LXXII* [1]

W.B.C. WATKINS

SPENSER, so counter to present taste, might appear in the stocks more often if he seemed to our critics important enough. Only Mr. William Van O'Connor has recently troubled to pillory him:

In the first four lines Spenser presents the theme. . . . In the next four lines the reader expects to find some exploration of the theme, but finds, instead, simply further statement. . . . In the well constructed lyric one would expect in the last lines to discover the intellectual resolution. Here, however, there is no dramatic emotional situation to be resolved. There is merely further explanation couched in terms of graceful tribute. . . . The difference between the poems of Herrick and Stevens and Spenser is the distinction between the poetry of exploration and the poetry of exposition. Herrick and Stevens present material for the reader to *work* through, Spenser presents an imagined experience unequivocally stated. There is in the first two poems an intellectual and emotional problem to be settled in terms of the materials presented. Spenser, as a Christian, represents and illustrates a Christian attitude; he does not *re-experience* it. He does not *earn* his attitude. ("Tension and Structure of Poetry," *Sewanee Review,* Autumn 1943.)

This does not arouse spirited defense of the *Amoretti,* of all Spenser's mature poems the least exciting, especially if one agrees that Herrick's *Mad Maid's Song* and Stevens' *Peter Quince at the Clavier* are finer poems than this particular sonnet. The sonnet, however, is in its way well constructed and contains more of the qualities which Mr. O'Connor demands than he seems to realize. It is not dramatic, yet there is more sinew in the convolutions of its neo-Platonic thought than casually appears; there is even more surprise and tension, since underlying the whole sonnet is the pull between heaven and earth. The first four lines express the soul's aspirations heavenward defeated by mortality; the next four are statement, but "exploratory statement" essential

1. Reprinted from *The Hudson Review,* II (Autumn, 1949), 343–344, by permission of the Editors and the Princeton University Press.

to particularize "mortality," showing the soul, snared by desire, accepting a substitute heaven. The octave leaves us with a sense of true heaven forgotten in earthly illusion. The opening lines of the sestet, expatiating on this earthly bliss, are the only part of the poem which can be dismissed as merely "further explanation," since the concluding couplet suddenly reverses the neo-Platonism and the *substitute* nature of earthly love, proclaiming the paradox of heaven on earth. In thus forcing a system of philosophy to bow to his mistress Spenser shows no intense spiritual conflict; he stays, as he intends to stay, within the bounds of graceful, playful tribute. Is there no room in poetry for this?

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

COME SLEEP, O SLEEP, THE CERTAIN KNOT OF PEACE

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw;
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

LEAVE ME, O LOVE

Leave me, O love which reachest but to dust;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust,
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell, world, thy uttermost I see;
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

ON SIDNEY'S *LEAVE ME, O LOVE*[1]

HAROLD S. WILSON

THOUGH the Christian feeling of the poem has often been noticed, the Christian thought and Biblical allusions have not, so far as I know, been made clear. The poem has been associated with Petrarch's "solemn and impressive renunciation of love's empire" (Lee, *Elizabethan Sonnets,* 1904, p. xlvi), and more often with Renaissance Platonism (Pearson, *Elizabethan Love Conventions,* 1933, pp. 99-100). But these associations are vague and conjectural, while the Biblical background of the sonnet is unmistakable and the Christian meaning paramount.

The contrast emphasized throughout the sonnet is between the brevity of the things of this world and the duration of things heavenly (cf. the thought and contrasting mood of *Astrophel and Stella*: sonnet 5). In lines 1-2, the renunciation of earthly love is sufficiently contrasted with the aspiration toward Heavenly Love, despite the generality of "higher things," by the phrase "which reachest but to dust." All the things of this world must pass and return to the dust of which God made man, even the love of a man for a woman (*Matthew,* XXII, 30). The allusion to *Matthew,* VI, 19-21 in line 3 is apparent. The image of "fading" in line 4 may be suggested by *Matthew,* VI, 22-24, where the idea of "darkness" is associated with self-seeking and worldliness, and "light" with the stedfast aspiration of the Christian soul toward eternal salvation. This thought is likewise suggested by the first quatrain of Sidney's poem.

"Draw in thy beams . . ." The association in lines 1-4 of worldly love and its objects with the lustrelessness of that "which moth and rust doth corrupt," of that which "fades" and brings "fading pleasures," may suggest that the mind of the worldly man bent upon worldly pleasures tries to emit its own light (dark though this be in comparison with the light of God), to live by this false light, competing, as it were, with God's light (cf. *John,* I, 4 ff.). The true penitent will want to forsake the feeble "light" of his own mind (which is really the darkness of willfulness and sin) and will submit himself in all humility to God's light (cf. *Acts,* IX, 3 ff.). The act of submission and the accompanying mood of humility are further enforced from two other texts.

1. From *The Explicator,* II (April, 1944), 47. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Editors of *The Explicator.*

Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (*Matthew,* XI, 29-30). And Jesus also said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (*John,* VIII, 12). The reason for associating "that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be" with the breaking forth of light "that doth both shine and give us sight to see" in lines 6-8 is now clear and indeed compelling. Sidney has brought into conjunction two of the most memorable texts in the Gospels, and they are beautifully consistent with each other. We may then paraphrase lines 5-8 somewhat as follows: Cease to follow the pitiful illumination of your own mind in its worldliness, for its light is but darkness. Submit humbly to the yoke that Jesus lays upon men; for He has promised that by assuming this yoke you will find the only lasting freedom, freedom to follow the path that leads to eternal life by the light of Jesus who is the light of the world.

"O take fast hold . . ." Of what? The answer is, of Christian faith and eternal life. The image is a favorite of St. Paul's, though it also occurs elsewhere in the Scriptures. The imagery and allusions of the first two quatrains are all related to the Gospels. In the third quatrain the mood and imagery become predominantly Pauline. The Pauline texts *I Timothy,* VI, 12 and *II Timothy,* IV, 7 suggest the image, in lines 9-10, of the Christian who takes fast hold upon his faith as running a course, the brief course of human life, which only God can light to a successful end. The image of "sliding" in lines 11-12 is not, I think, Pauline. A parallel may be found in the *Psalms,* XXXVI, 1; XXXVII, 31). The concluding couplet is a prayer, to the eternal God who is love (*I John,* IV, 8, 16); for it is by the grace of the Eternal Love that the Christian finds salvation (*John,* III, 16; *I John,* IV, 9-10).

The sonnet is thus a very careful and beautiful expression of Christian doctrine and Christian feeling. It is an important commentary upon Sidney's Christian experience and attitude.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

SINCE THERE'S NO HELP, COME LET US KISS AND PART

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part;
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me,
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows

That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,
Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

SONNET XXIX

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,—and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

SONNET LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

SONNET CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

SONNET CXXIX

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoy'd no sooner but despisèd straight;
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof—and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

O MISTRESS MINE

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear, your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

WHO IS SILVIA?

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

THOMAS CAMPION

WHEN THOU MUST HOME

When thou must home to shades of underground,
And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
White Iöpe, blithe Helen, and the rest,
To hear the stories of thy finished love
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;
Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,

And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me.

OF CORINNA'S SINGING

When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings,
And doth in highest notes appear
As any challenged echo clear;
But when she doth of mourning speak,
E'en with her sighs the strings do break.

And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passion, so must I:
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring;
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
E'en from my heart the strings do break.

ON CAMPION'S *OF CORINNA'S SINGING*[1]

ROSEMOND TUVE

ONE WOULD expect, despite Sidney's notorious defense even of the lyric on moral grounds, that songs would be most likely to show images used simply to assist the representation of a state of mind. This ought to fit love songs at least, which permit "the many moodes and pangs of lovers, throughly to be discovered" (Puttenham, I, xxii, [1589]). Suppose one reads through Bullen's *Lyrics from Elizabethan Song-Books,* for example, with this natural expectation. One finds few poems which can have been chiefly intended to show us just how their writers felt, and few images which fit in with modern notions of the function of sensuous imagery in lyrics. Interestingly enough, the examples which I believe would come nearest to modern expectations turn out to be Campion's.

They do not come very near. The climax of "When to her Lute Corrina Sings" is the announcement "And as her lute doth live or die,/Led by her passion, so must I," but Campion leaves to us all particular elucidation of that element of dependence in a lover's state of mind—nor does the poem lead us on to any such private pursuit. He confines himself to an image whose parallelisms can evoke only the most general notion of the speaker's feelings, as

1. From *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery,* by Rosemond Tuve (Chicago, 1947), pp. 14–16. Copyright, 1947, University of Chicago Press.

though he were interested rather in praise of Corinna neatly elucidated through the parallel he draws. The emotion is so little particularized that Corinna might indeed be the Elizabethan analogue of the latest Carnegie Hall concert sensation, if it were not that we know enough about the conventions of Elizabethan love poetry to deduce another state of mind in the speaker than musical enthusiasm. The images reveal a man moved, but writing what the rhetorics call "a praise" of the lady and the music, rather than examining the nature of his emotional experience. The ambiguity in "My thoughts enjoy a sudden *spring*," picking up the suggestions of "Her voice *revives* the leaden strings," the worn unparticularized image of heartstrings (its nature probably governed by the identity of the musical phrase to which lines 6 and 12 were sung), less metrically felicitous than its musical parallel, "Ev'n with her sighs the strings do break"—these do not describe; rather they invest with new interest a perceived analogy, cunningly patterned to make the most of the repeated musical pattern.

JOHN DONNE

SONG

Go and catch a falling star,
    Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
    Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
        And find
        What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
    Things invisible to see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights
    Till age snow white hairs on thee,
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee,
        And swear
        No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
    Such a pilgrimage were sweet.

Yet do not; I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

THE INDIFFERENT

I can love both fair and brown;
Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays;
Her who loves loneness best, and her who masks and plays;
Her whom the country formed, and whom the town;
Her who believes, and her who tries;
Her who still weeps with spongy eyes,
And her who is dry cork and never cries,
I can love her, and her, and you, and you;
I can love any, so she be not true.

Will no other vice content you?
Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
Oh, we are not; be not you so;
Let me, and do you, twenty know.
Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
Must I, who came to travail thorough you,
Grow your fixed subject because you are true?

Venus heard me sigh this song,
And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore
She heard not this till now, and that it should be so no more.
She went, examined, and returned ere long,
And said, "Alas! some two or three
Poor heretics in love there be,
Which think to 'stablish dangerous constancy.
But I have told them, 'Since you will be true,
You shall be true to them who are false to you.'"

DEATH

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow

Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From Rest and Sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!

THE ANNIVERSARY

All kings and all their favorites,
All glory of honors, beauties, wits,
The sun itself, which makes times as they pass,
Is elder by a year now than it was
When thou and I first one another saw;
All other things to their destruction draw;
Only our love hath no decay;
This no to-morrow hath, nor yesterday;
Running, it never runs from us away,
But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.

Two graves must hide thine and my corse;
If one might, death were no divorce.
Alas, as well as other princes, we,
Who prince enough in one another be,
Must leave at last in death these eyes and ears,
Oft fed with true oaths, and with sweet salt tears;
But souls where nothing dwells but love,
All other thoughts being inmates, then shall prove
This, or a love increased there above,
When bodies to their graves, souls from their graves, remove.

And then we shall be throughly blest,
But we no more than all the rest;
Here upon earth we are kings, and none but we
Can be such kings, nor of such subjects be.
Who is so safe as we, where none can do
Treason to us, except one of us two?
True and false fears let us refrain;
Let us love nobly, and live, and add again

Years and years unto years, till we attain
To write threescore; this is the second of our reign.

HYMN TO GOD, MY GOD, IN MY SICKNESS

Since I am coming to that holy room
    Where with thy choir of saints for evermore
I shall be made thy music, as I come
    I tune the instrument here at the door,
    And what I must do then, think here before.

Whilst my physicians by their love are grown
    Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown
    That this is my Southwest discovery
    Per fretum febris, by these straits to die,

I joy that in these straits I see my West.
    For though their currents yield return to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
    In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,
    So death doth touch the resurrection.

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are
    The Eastern riches? Is Jerusalem?
Anian and Magellan and Gibraltar,
    All straits, and none but straits, are ways to them,
    Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham or Shem.

We think that Paradise and Calvary,
    Christ's Cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place.
Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me;
    As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
    May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace.

So in his purple wrapp'd, receive me, Lord,
    By these his thorns give me his other crown;
And as to others' souls I preach'd thy word,
    Be this my text, my sermon to mine own:
    Therefore that he may raise, the Lord throws down.

ON DONNE'S *HYMN TO GOD, MY GOD, IN MY SICKNESS* [1]

HARRY M. CAMPBELL

THIS poem, which first appeared on March 23, 1631, eight days before the death of Donne, is one of his best, and one of the finest religious poems ever written.

The general plan of Donne's "Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness" advances logically, although there is a receding of the tension after the third stanza. The poet is approaching death in the opening stanza. In the second and third stanzas he is so close that he can see his "west" and discover joyfully that it is united to the "east." In the fourth stanza he glances back at the world he is leaving but, grand as it is, finds it less attractive than the one he is entering. In the next stanza he prays that, especially in this last journey, he may be protected by the blood of Christ, the Redeemer. Finally, his prayer answered, he is ready to depart. Absolutely no rhetorical repetitions or emotional outbursts retard this simple movement from idea to idea.

The first stanza is a metaphysical conceit "of kind." The dying man, who is, of course, Donne, is approaching the "holy room" of eternity, in which, as a musical instrument, he will be made part of the celestial music of God's saints. He is tuning the instrument at the door so that it will be ready for the touch of the Master Musician. It is interesting to note that here on earth, rather anti-Calvinistically, the sufferer does his own tuning and even plans for some further individual action which seems necessary in heaven before the rest can be with God.

The second and third stanzas form another, far more effective, metaphysical conceit "of kind." The physicians "by their love are grown cosmographers," and the poet, their patient, is a map lying flat on the bed. They show him that death on this map is his "southwest discovery." The selection of this phrase, I believe, was dictated by the romantic associations attached to the fabled Northwest Passage. For Donne's audience in the seventeenth century such a phrase in this powerful context would carry all the emotional impact of the geographical Renaissance intensified by extension to the spiritual realm—a device which Whitman in the nineteenth century was to try, less successfully, in his "Passage to India." But, to continue the conceit, this passage must be through straits; and sailing in straits, as the ancients knew, too often is endangered by both Scylla and Charybdis. There is an echo, too, of the biblical "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Specifically, in the conceit the straits are the fever, expressed in the Latin *per fretum febris*, which serves several purposes. In the first place, Donne, wishing to make his poem more concrete and at the same time as far as possible to avoid any suggestion of a plea for sympathy, reveals the nature of his malady as casu-

1. From *College English*, V (January, 1944), 192–196. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Editors of *College English*.

ally as if he were merely quoting learnedly from a classical author. The Latin *fretum* carries a double meaning here—both "Straits" and "raging," "swelling," "heat," "violence." Again, the use of *fretum* may serve to avoid overrepetition of the word "straits," which otherwise would appear three times in two lines.

The entire second stanza is a very involved compound dependent clause, the two main parts of which are. "Whilst my physicians . . . . are grown cosmographers" and "I [am grown] their map." The relative "who"-clause, of course, modifies "I" and, figuratively, "map." "That by them may be shown . . . . to die" may be considered a purpose clause but is more probably a result clause, modifying "are grown" and the verb understood before "map." "That this is my Southwest discovery" is a gerund clause used as a subject of "may be shown." The last line of the stanza is in apposition with "discovery."

The main clause on which the whole of the second stanza is grammatically dependent is the first line of the third: "I joy, that in these straits I see my West." "West" is, of course, death, the way to which must be the straits whose "currents yield return to none." The intensity of this passage is increased through its union with the childlike faith of "What shall my West hurt me?" The climax of the whole figure comes in an analogy dependent upon the metaphor:

> As West and East
> In all flat maps (and I am one) are one,
> So death doth touch the resurrection.

The analogy here is rather difficult because we must remember that east and west in a flat map are one only after the map is no longer flat but has been fitted over a globe so that the east and west edges touch each other. That Donne had this in mind is indicated by the word "touch" in the last line. In this stanza, again, we have very simple language, nothing even approaching rhetorical eloquence until "Death doth touch the resurrection," which sounds grand enough to have been thundered, as it probably was, from the pulpit of St. Paul's. Thus at white heat the whole figure has been welded together—a supreme example of wit made up of tough reasonableness joined to intense emotion. Such a fusion is more difficult than that defined by Eliot because there is a greater initial divergence between tough reasonableness and deep emotion than between tough reasonableness and slight lyric grace. This poem has as much emotion as "Crossing the Bar," but wit saves Donne from Tennyson's repetitions, rhetoric, and mixed figure.

In the next stanza the poet looks back to different parts of the world he is leaving and considers their attractiveness. When Donne mentions the "Pacific Sea" as a possible home, we must remember that he and his audience in the seventeenth century probably thought with more emotion than did Keats about the great discovery of the explorer who stood silent upon a peak in Darien. They were close enough, also, to the Renaissance and the Middle Ages to consider "Eastern riches" a product of the land of heart's desire. The

third alternative for a worldly home is Jerusalem, the center of a great civilization, as it was, Donne probably means, when Christ spoke of it in tears: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

In his usual manner of presenting the abstract through the concrete, the poet mentions three particular straits through which these three parts of the world had to be approached, according to the geography of his time. The Strait of Anian (later Bering) was the route to the "Eastern riches," the Magellan Strait led to the Pacific, and the Strait of Gibraltar to Jerusalem. We must remember that "Magellan" was another name that was far more than a geographical location to the seventeenth century, and the significance of these other names had been greatly enhanced by the Renaissance explorations. But the poet wishes also to emphasize the continuity of tradition associated with these parts of the world. He does so, again specifically, by mentioning the names of the traditional ancestors of the races inhabiting these parts of the world. Cham, or Ham, was the youngest son of Noah, whose descendants founded the first great empires of Assyria and Egypt and the republics of Tyre, Sidon, and Carthage. Cham would then be associated here with the land of "Eastern riches." Shem, the eldest son of Noah, was father of the race whose holy city is still Jerusalem. Japhet, or Japheth, another son of Noah, is traditionally credited with being the father of certain races part of whom moved eastward through Asia and on to what is now the Pacific Ocean; hence the association here with the "Pacific sea." This whole stanza, I believe, indicates that neither the world of ancient traditions nor the new world of the Renaissance explorers can tempt him to hold back from his own "Southwest discovery."

The fifth stanza is a specific development of what has already been implicit in the poem—the unity and beneficence of God's plan. Adam's tree made Christ's cross necessary, and they stood in one place, because Christ, on the human side, was descended from Adam, in fulfilment of the prophecy that Eve's seed should "bruise the head" of the serpent. The meeting of both Adams in the dying man is made possible only by the last Adam's death upon the cross. But even here, when the body is almost ready to yield completely to spirit, Donne cannot get away from a strong sense of the physical (characteristic of most of his poetry): "As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face," he says, describing the effect of the fever, "May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace."

The first line of the last stanza indicates that this prayer has been answered. Wrapped in Christ's purple, he is at last ready to be received into the presence of the Lord. "Purple" here is surely not the regal color of imperial Rome, which would not be appropriate for Christ even when he sits at the right hand of the Father, but the "purple" which is an incorrect translation of a color (probably crimson) admired by the ancient Hebrews. "In his purple wrapp'd," then,

would be similar to "washed in the blood." The suffering of the sick man is analogous also to Christ's crown of thorns, after enduring which he feels that he can plead for the other crown. The poem ends in simple, homely language, justifying the ways of God to man: "Therefore that he may raise, the Lord throws down."

Donne in this poem uses five-line stanzas of iambic pentameter, rhyming a b a b b. The rhymes are sometimes rather loose, as, for example, "lie" and "discovery." Trochees are frequently, and dactyls less often, substituted for iambs—trochees like "Whilst my" or "Is the"; dactyls like the last three syllables of "Cosmographers" or of "Jerusalem." Runover lines allow the pauses to fit the thought rather than the meter. These runover lines and the metrical variations within the iambic-pentameter pattern give the effect of a combination of unity with variety—one aspect (we have already discussed others) of the "reconcilement of discordant qualities," which Coleridge demanded of a poem.

Still another aspect of this *discordia concors* appears in the judicious mingling of simple, homely, short words like "What shall my West hurt me?" with long, sonorous words like "Cosmographers," "discovery," "Jerusalem," "evermore," and "resurrection," which in their context add an element of ecclesiastical dignity. More specifically antithetical collocation of words appears in "West and East," "Paradise and Calvary," "Christ's cross and Adam's tree," "first Adam" and "last Adam," "thorns" and "crown."

The serenity of Donne's "Hymn" has a different quality from that of other poems on the same subject. The conclusion to "Thanatopsis," for example, attains a certain kind of serenity, and yet Bryant's rhetoric seems almost to shout at us that we should die in a quiet way. Tennyson's limitations we have mentioned. Shakespeare, in a still different way, stresses the horrible aspects of "dusty death" or of flight "from this vile world with vilest worms to dwell." Even the followers of Donne wear the metaphysical shroud with a difference. Bishop King strikes the note of terror in his famous conceit:

> But hark! my pulse like a soft drum
> Beats my approach, tells thee I come.

Marvell must dwell on his mistress' death, when "worms shall try that long preserved virginity."

Donne, in his valedictory poems at least, certainly has a different emphasis. In view of these poems we can well believe that the picture of the saintly Donne given by Walton is really not inaccurate for one side of this strange poet-preacher—the side that became more and more uppermost as he grew older. Mr. Williamson says that Donne's having his picture painted while he wore his shroud in his last illness indicates morbidity. Perhaps so—but Mr. Williamson ought to make a distinction between this kind of morbidity and that which during the greater part of his life kept Donne from "allaying the fever of the bone." Such a fever has in this poem (written at the same time the shroud picture was painted) given way to a joyful contemplation of the cen-

traditional theme of Christian faith: that "death doth touch the resurrection." Such serenity, reached artistically through a combination of religious intensity with metaphysical wit, makes this one of the finest religious poems ever written.

BEN JONSON

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS[1]

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.
Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

SLOW, SLOW, FRESH FOUNT

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;
Yet slower yet, oh faintly, gentle springs;
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division when she sings.
Droop herbs and flowers,
Fall grief in showers;
Our beauties are not ours;
Oh, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

1. The title, from Horace, Book I, Ode 5, means "in simple elegance."

ROBERT HERRICK

DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness;
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction,
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthralls the crimson stomacher,
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribands to flow confusedly,
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat,
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility,
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.
Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free,
O how that glittering taketh me!

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

GEORGE HERBERT

THE PULLEY

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
Let us, said he, pour on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should, said he,
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in nature, not the God of nature;
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness.
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.

THE COLLAR

I struck the board, and cried, "No more; I will abroad!
What! shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn

To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted,
All wasted?
Not so, my heart, but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures; leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! take heed!
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there, tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load."
But as I raved, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child";
And I replied, "My Lord."

ON HERBERT'S *THE COLLAR* [1]

C. DAY LEWIS

THIS is not to say that poems have never been composed on lines of imagery laid down in advance. George Herbert surely did it time and again and his great poem, *The Collar*, shows how successful this method may be. It is an example of the strictly functional use of images; their use, that is, to point a theme already defined. The central image, the spiritual rope by which the Christian is tied to his God, would represent an idea so familiar to Herbert's contemporaries that the boldest exploration of it could hardly take them far

1. From *The Poetic Image*, by C. Day Lewis (New York, 1947), pp. 80–81. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

out of their depth. At first Herbert subtly hints at the tie, by seeming to deny its existence:

I struck the board, and cried, "No more; I will abroad.
What! shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free: free as the road
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?

After that delicate hint, a variation of the theme appears. The Tempter's voice within continues,

Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it: there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.

The images are still conventional, symbols only: but notice how cleverly the Tempter has used these Christian symbols, thorn and blood, bread and wine, for his own nefarious purpose. Next, the full theme appears: but the rope between Christ and Christian is diabolically contorted into

. . . leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not: forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw
And be thy law,
While thou did'st wink and would'st not see.

Then, with a master-stroke of cynicism, the Tempter gives one more twist to the rope:

Call in thy death's head there: tie up thy fears.

But Christ has the last word: and it is consonant with the remarkable dialectic skill and dramatic delicacy of the poem that this last word, for all the still, small voice in which it is spoken, should so strike us as a climax noble, thrilling, unanswerable:

But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child";
And I replied, "My Lord."

THOMAS CAREW

A SONG

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither doth stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters, and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixëd become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The phœnix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

EDMUND WALLER

ON A GIRDLE

That which her slender waist confined
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer.
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
Did all within this circle move!

A narrow compass, and yet there
Dwelt all that's good and all that's fair;
Give me but what this riband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round.

GO, LOVELY ROSE

Go, lovely rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

JOHN MILTON

LYCIDAS

In This Monody the Author Bewails a Learned Friend, Unfortunately Drowned in His Passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by Occasion, Foretells the Ruin of Our Corrupted Clergy, Then in Their Height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,

And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he well knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.

Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose, at evening, bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,

When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there"—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?

And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings;
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed,
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use

Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
    Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,

And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay;
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

ON MILTON'S *LYCIDAS* [1]

WAYNE SHUMAKER

More insistently, perhaps, than any other poem in English, *Lycidas* raises the purely aesthetic problem of how the emotions may be stirred by lines which at first are much less than perspicuous to the intellect and even after many readings remain obscure at two or three points. Johnson's attack to one side, *Lycidas* has received all but universal praise, couched often in language so high-pitched that it absorbs easily adjectives like "exquisite," "thrilling," "tremendous," and "supreme." Why is the emotional impact so powerful? A reply must be sought (I think) in the affective connotations of words, phrases, and images in formal combination; and it is worth finding because if in one of its aspects literature is history, in another, and not unimportant, aspect it is immediate experience.

In the present paper I shall attempt to make only a small contribution to the complete explanation. I propose, specifically, to extract two of a large number of formal strands and discuss them as musical themes which blend into a total emotional harmony both massive enough and piercing enough to be overpowering.

I must begin by discussing the place of the two strands in the large structure. Three movements are enclosed within a pastoral introduction and conclusion, each movement in turn depending to some extent on pastoral machinery for its organization. I cannot improve on a summary given by Arthur Barker.

The first movement laments Lycidas the poet-shepherd; its problem, the possible frustration of disciplined poetic ambition by early death, is resolved by the assurance, "Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed." The second laments Lycidas

1. *PMLA*, LXVI (June, 1951), 485–494. Reprinted with permission of the author and the Modern Language Association of America.

as priest-shepherd; its problem, the frustration of a sincere shepherd in a corrupt church, is resolved by St. Peter's reference to the "two-handed engine" of divine retribution. The third concludes with the apotheosis, a convention introduced by Virgil in *Eclogue* V but significantly handled by Milton. He sees the poet-priest-shepherd worshipping the Lamb with those saints "in solemn troops" who sing the "unexpressive nuptial song" of the fourteenth chapter of *Revelation*. The apotheosis thus not only provides the final reassurance but unites the themes of the preceding movements in the ultimate reward of the true poet-priest.

Barker is almost certainly right in assigning a large part of the poem's impressiveness to the "three successive and perfectly controlled crescendos," culminating in a second triumphal resolution of tensions already half-released in their appropriate sections. The two strands with which I am presently concerned—thematic strands, as will appear shortly—help prepare in the first and second movements for the final resolution in the third.

The third movement begins with the celebrated catalogue of flowers. One function of this passage is to modulate between St. Peter's angry speech about the corruption of the English Church and the exultant description of Edward King's reception into Paradise. The catalogue interposes a little ease, as Milton himself says, which is to lead ultimately into the fuller and less deceptive comfort accessible through the realization that in its largest implications the drowning has not been tragic. It cannot have been tragic, for earthly life is continuous with eternal, in which temporal misfortunes are recompensed. But the image of flowers banking a drowned man's hearse cannot develop immediately into ecstatic and thrilling joy. The notion is too pretty-pretty, too conventionally poetic to carry a heavy emotional weight. Moreover, in this context the thought of floral offerings is consciously and deliberately delusive. Accordingly the next mood is one of profound spiritual depression; and this, by a natural emotional rhythm, illustrated on the abnormal level by the familiar manic-depressive pattern, passes into the final rapture. The three parts of the final movement are thus organically related, the first being emotionally causal to the second, and the second, and through it the first, emotionally causal to the third. The structure is not logically but emotionally inductive. Much of the value of the first two of the three parts lies in their power to entail the third. The first two parts, however, in their turn have been implied by everything that has gone before. The catalogue of flowers that "sad embroidery" wear picks up and utilizes many preceding references to a blight that has been placed on vegetative nature by King's death, and the description of the sounding seas which hurl his body to and fro is the poetically inevitable culmination of many earlier references to water.

I do not know how many readers have noticed the remarkable consistency with which Milton has made every mention of vegetation in the first 132 lines of the elegy suggest a sympathetic frustration in nature to balance the human frustrations about which the poem is built. The technique goes far

beyond the use of simple pathetic fallacies. It extends to descriptions of objects which seem not to be conscious of any involvement in the death of the poet-priest-shepherd.

The theme appears at the very beginning and is resumed several times, usually quite briefly and often glancingly, before the climactic enumeration of mournful flowers. The laurels and myrtles invoked in lines 1–5 have berries which are *harsh* and *crude*. The leaves of both laurels and myrtles are to be *shattered* by Milton's singing before they have an opportunity to reach mature exuberance ("before the mellowing year"). The emphasis now shifts to other matters; but when in the fourth verse-paragraph vegetation again comes momentarily into focus, the connotations are similarly depressing. The woods and caves that lament the accident are overgrown with *wild* thyme and *gadding* vines, the adjectives implying, perhaps not quite rationally, a desperate and uncontrolled abandon to grief. The willows and hazel copses have ceased to react with joyous activity to pastoral songs; their leaves, having left off their "fanning," presumably droop in dejection. The rose is subject to canker; early flowers (Lycidas was a young man) succumb to frost. The tree-covered island of Mona mentioned a few lines later is not verdant but *shaggy*. The sixth paragraph offers a slight touch of relief: the *shade* in which the poet contemplates sporting with Amaryllis is thought of as a cool retreat. But Camus, when he appears, is described as wearing a bonnet of inelegant sedge variegated along the borders by figures which resemble "that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe," and no further relief is offered. The regularity with which natural growth is made to carry lugubrious associations in the introduction and first two movements is remarkable. So pervasive is the blight that as early as line 78, when Phoebus wishes to praise true fame, he is able to do so effectively by simply dissociating it from plants that grow on mortal soil.

All this would seem easily accountable if it were not for the fact that paragraph three recalls the happier times before King's death. Here one might expect attention to be diverted from gloom sufficiently to permit an avowal that for man's gayer hours (as Bryant said) nature has a voice of gladness and a smile and eloquence of beauty. The avowal is there, but it is phrased in terms of sunlight, the sounds of insects, stars, and other non-botanical phenomena. The only exception is in the mention of "high Lawns" in the first line of the description. For the rest, there is a studious avoidance of precisely those faces of nature which one would imagine to be most important to a shepherd. The comparative lightness of the paragraph depends not at all on images of energetic or brilliant growth. The opening eyelids of the morn carry the suggestion of an awakening, a stirring in preparation for the day's chores; the winding of the grayfly's sultry horn is associated with a genially warm air; the brightness of the evening star implies fine weather; the dancing of the satyrs and fauns is indicative of high spirits. The green of the pasturage, however, is hinted only by the single word "lawns," and nothing whatever is said at this point about shade trees or flowers. The flocks, which anywhere else would eat

grass, in this setting batten themselves on "the fresh dews of night." The association of plants with depression of the spirit is not compromised.

Against this background the catalogue of flowers takes on strong emotional meaning. It resumes and develops an established theme, which, however, is now partly inverted. Although the emotional connotations set up earlier are not exactly denied, they are subdued to provide a poignant contrast to the ease the poet has announced himself to be seeking. The primrose, we are reminded, dies forsaken; the cowslips hang their pensive heads, the daffodils fill their cups with tears. The floral offerings are in fact meant to include "every flower that sad embroidery wears." On the other hand, the coloring is no longer somber. The myrtles addressed in line 2 were *brown*, and throughout the first two of the three movements the visual imagery has been prevailingly dull. The whiteness of the thorn which blows in early spring and the redness of the sanguine flower have only deepened the general murkiness by contrast. Now, suddenly, we are asked to imagine bells and flowerets *of a thousand hues*. Certain colors are specified—the *purple* of enameled eyes, the *green* of the turf, the *paleness* of the jasmine, the *whiteness* of the pink, the *jet* of the pansy, the glowing *violet*—and others are evoked by the names of flowers like the daffodil, which can hardly be visualized in more than one way. The result is that the grief, while remaining grief, is lifted and brightened. For the moment it is made tolerable by association with beautiful objects. At the same time the reader feels relief of another kind. Up to the present he has been under a constraint to imagine nature in only one of its moods; he has been forced, as it were, to consent to a perversion of what he knows to be the full truth. His conscious mind, which is aware of Milton's elegiac purpose, has assented to the fiction that a human death has lessened the objective beauty of woods and fields. But there is a part of his mind which is not controlled by his will, and this part has perhaps been, hardly perceptibly, uncomfortable, like the part of a father's mind which feels guilty about the answers he has given to his child's questions about the wind and the moon. The injustice is now partly rectified. In the catalogue of flowers Milton says not only, "There is brilliance as well as dullness in nature," but also, more indirectly, "The flowers named here are those poetically associated with sadness. I have made a selection to suit my elegiac theme." He is not, then, unhinged by his grief. He does not really distort. The largeness of his mind permits him to acknowledge a partiality in his descriptions; and his reward is the conquest of a tiny but not wholly insignificant scruple.

The second theme is somewhat less peripheral than the first, though it also lies to one side of the poem's exact center. The description of King's body as it is washed far away by the sounding seas, whether northward, toward or beyond the Hebrides, or southward, toward Cornwall, has been even more elaborately prepared for in advance. The first visual image of the dead poet-priest-shepherd is that of a corpse rocked to and fro on ocean swells swept by a dry wind. From the beginning, accordingly, the sea is in the background of the

reader's consciousness. Images of water have considerably greater prominence than images of trees and plants and have frequently been noticed by critics. Sometimes the water moves forward into clear focus; again it flashes rapidly across the margin of attention, half-unnoticed and significant chiefly because the glimpses sustain a theme that must not be allowed to lose continuity.

Some of the references to water carry only a very indirect reminder of the sea, and, with it, the manner of King's death. For example, the invocation in the second paragraph calls up the image of a well: "Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well, / That from beneath the seat of *Jove* doth spring." The well is not, however, quiescent; the word "spring" suggests movement, and the movement of water, though now on a small scale, both carries on the visual motif and, by reducing the image's physical and emotional dimensions, modulates into the calmer passage which follows. A somewhat analogous technique is used at five other points: in the mention of Deva's wizard stream, in the apostrophe to the Fountain Arethuse and smooth-sliding Mincius, in the personification of the River Cam, in the description of St. Peter as pilot of the Galilean lake, and in the reassurance addressed to the River Alpheus. Each of these glancing evocations of water helps keep the theme alive by giving the reader's memory of it a little fillip. In a similar way the fountain, the three rivers, and the Sea of Galilee, by faintly echoing the water motif, prevent the reader from ever quite losing sight of the fact that King died by drowning.

I should like to dwell for a moment on a representative passage, that which contains—and surrounds—the laments of the University and the Church. At the beginning of the paragraph the University is represented, appropriately enough, by the personified figure of the leisurely, rush-lined Cam. I should not like to pretend that every reader has a momentary glimpse of a river sliding among reeds when he comes to these lines, nevertheless the complete dissociation of the river from the figure would be difficult. St. Peter next appears as the "Pilot of the *Galilean* lake," the description providing an ironic contrast to the reader's knowledge that King was *not* rescued from the sea. After this introduction comes a thunderous attack on the state of the English Church; but the attack has no sooner ended in the climactic prediction of the two-handed engine than the water theme is again stated: "Return *Alpheus*, the dread voice is past, / That shrunk thy streams." The transition could hardly be more apt. The hint of timidity in the stream lowers the key from indignation at the same time the words "dread voice" carry the last reverberations of anger. Moreover, the ideas of water and fright have been associated before and will be associated again. The relationship in the present passage is curious, however, for now it is the water that is frightened by the man. The effect is somewhat like that of an inverted musical phrase, which remains recognizable despite the fact that it has been turned upside down.

The address to the Fountain Arethuse and smooth-sliding Mincius performs a somewhat analogous function a little earlier. It too uses water imagery to reassert the pastoral medium just when the need for a reassertion is felt. The

mention of Deva's wizard stream is incidental to the fixing of a geographical location, but the motor quality of the verb "spread" adds vividness by making the movement seem the result of an act of will. The Dee spreads its waters as a housewife might spread a tablecloth or a bird its wings.

We have seen, then, that there are six muted statements of the water theme besides the more resonant ones to be noted presently. The sacred well, the River Cam, the Galilean lake, the River Alpheus, the Fountain Areuthuse and smooth-sliding Mincius (I count them as one because they occur in such close juxtaposition), and the River Dee prevent the Irish Sea from ever quite slipping out of the reader's consciousness. Milton's awareness of the manner in which King died is not wholly suppressed even in parts of the elegy in which he is mainly occupied in talking about something else. Formally, the six passages contribute to a massive harmony without themselves being very distinctly heard. It will be approximately accurate to say that their structural function is similar to that of the middle notes of triads struck on the piano. Only the analytic listener pays careful heed to them, but anyone would feel a slight decrease of tonal richness if they were omitted.

The more resonant statements of the theme begin in the description of Lycidas on his watery bier and continue at lines 50, 62, 89, and 154. At each of these points the drowning is specifically mentioned or water is in some other way made to appear menacing. There are also two later passages, at lines 167 and 183, which perform for the water theme the function performed for the flower theme by the catalogue.

The first statement, already once referred to, has evoked the image of a body rocking helplessly on ocean swells. The second is less grisly but in a way even more distressing, for it recreates briefly the exact instant at which a human life succumbed to an indifferent natural force: "Where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep / Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd *Lycidas*?" The visual image is that of a face sinking for the last time beneath water, the motor image that of a rejoining of fluid edges; and there is perhaps induced also a slight muscular strain, as of an effort to fight one's way upward toward air. To describe small things by large, the effect is now rather that of fright than of nausea. (I hope the reader will understand that the only way in which I can make some of my points at all is by overstating them.)

The third statement picks up the nausea and drops the fright—for I should suppose no one to feel personal danger in the sight of a severed and bleeding head being tumbled down a precipitous river bed by the current. The head is that of Orpheus, who, like Lycidas, was a singer.

> by the rout that made the hideous roar,
> His goary visage down the stream was sent,
> Down the swift *Hebrus* to the *Lesbian* shore.

The cold passivity of the second image has been replaced by the movement of the first; but there are in addition angry sound and the blood that is so fre-

quently an accompaniment of violence. The association of water and death, however, has remained constant.

The same association is present in the fourth statement, which recurs to the passivity of the second image and develops it in considerable detail. The herald of the sea

> ask'd the Waves, and ask'd the Fellon winds,
> What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain? . . .
> And sage *Hippotades* their answer brings,
> That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd,
> The Ayr was calm, and on the level brine,
> Sleek *Panope* with all her sisters play'd.

The drowning and its circumstances are again set in contrast; death is described as having occurred in a peaceful setting. On the other hand, the feeling appropriate to this statement is neither fright nor nausea but perplexity. Within limits, variations in the emotional demands made on the reader increase the affective pull by activating dormant parts of the psyche. At the same time continuity is provided by the maintenance of the association of water and death.

Up to this point the Irish Sea has been described once as weltering and twice—if I do not misread the connotations of lines 50–51—as tranquil. The tranquillity has been insisted on at greater length than the movement and is probably more vividly present in the reader's imagination. Yet the possibility of movement in the Sea has been strongly asserted by the verb "welter" and implied by the swift motion of the Hebrus. In the longest, and climactic, development of the water theme the vastness of the Sea is brought together with the swiftness of the river to produce an impression of great violence.

> Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding Seas
> Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurl'd,
> Whether beyond the stormy *Hebrides,*
> Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
> Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world . . .

The Irish Sea has become a resistless, unsympathetic force which deals with the body of the poet-priest-shepherd exactly as the Hebrus has dealt with the severed head of Orpheus, tossing it about with the indifference with which it would toss a plank broken from the hull of the wrecked ship. The effect is overwhelming (the word is suggested by the passage), and more than one critic has testified that for him this is the most powerful part of the elegy.

Relief, however, is at hand, for the depressing thought of a tossed and ruined body generates immediately, by contrast, that of a redeemed and joyous soul. The flower and water themes, in direct juxtaposition, thus lead directly into the apotheosis, in which all the tensions are finally resolved. Little more needs to be done with the flower theme. It has served its purpose and will

appear only once more, disguised almost beyond recognition, in the last line of all: "To-morrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new." The water theme, on the other hand, has carried a much heavier emotional weight and cannot be so easily dropped. Moreover, growing nature has already been adequately purged of blight, whereas the sea continues to hold a menace. It too must be purified. The mourners must be reconciled to the physical world as well as to the turnings of human destiny.

Accordingly the transition from despair to hope is made by images drawn from the very water that we have just been led to believe coldly and impersonally fearful:

> So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new spangled Ore,
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
> So *Lycidas* sunk low, but mounted high,
> Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves . . .

The sun is not harmed by the sea. Christ walked on its waves. Indeed, the very man who was killed by water on earth can seek out its Heavenly equivalent as a comfort: "other groves, and other streams along, / With *Nectar* pure his oozy Lock's he laves." Even this is not all. The element *water* has been purified, but the Irish Sea must be especially cleared of threat. Hence we are told that travelers on the Sea will gain composure by recalling the "large recompense" which we now realize to have followed the brief torment of drowning.

> Now *Lycidas* the Shepherds weep no more;
> Hence forth thou art the Genius of the shore,
> In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
> To all that wander in that perilous flood.

For myself—I do not pretend to speak for others—there is a slight dissatisfaction in the reading of these lines. If the source of composure is to be an understanding of the total meaning of King's death, the word *all* provokes resistance. Calmness of mind will be accessible only to voyagers who, having known King, have been led by reflections on his fate to an acceptance of death similar to that expressed in the poem. If, on the other hand, we are to imagine King's spirit as extending physical protection to voyagers on the Sea, the implication that death is to be avoided as significantly bad contradicts the whole drift and meaning of the elegy. The structural function of the passage, however, is clear. A *formal* means of escape from the last tension has been provided. Not only is the poet-priest-shepherd living after all; the mourners can again face nature courageously and take delight in its external beauty. Everything is as it should be, and daily activities can be taken up at the point where they were dropped.

The two minor themes, then, come into prominence at various places in the first and second movements and at other places are hinted in ways that have been described. In the third movement they are developed side by side in preparation for the apotheosis, in which sorrow is finally transcended and the mind restored to peace. There is a difference, however, both in their intrinsic importance and in their usefulness in preparing for the resolution. The flower theme shows a temporary effect of profound grief, the water theme is intimately related to the cause. The distortion of vision must wear off before adjustment to the irremedial cause becomes possible; hence it is altogether proper that the former of the two themes should be resolved a little in advance of the latter. Yet each has its function, and the emotional impact would be weakened if either were omitted from the third movement. The first paragraph of the final movement, unaccounted for by Barker's explanation of the structure, is thus only less necessary than the apotheosis. It fits not only into a design but also into an emotional pattern; not only into a form but also into a response.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near,
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

WHY SO PALE AND WAN?

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move,
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

THE CONSTANT LOVER

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me:

Love with me had made no stays,
  Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
  And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
  A dozen dozen in her place.

RICHARD LOVELACE

TO LUCASTA, GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
  That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
  To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
  The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
  A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
  As thou too shalt adore:
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
  Loved I not honor more.

ON LOVELACE'S *TO LUCASTA, GOING TO THE WARS*[1]

NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON

THAT Lovelace's lyric, "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars," has been attractive there can be no doubt. Its general popularity seems to rest on the epigrammatic quality of its last two lines, considered as a set-piece. Without attacking the absurdity of so confined a view of Lovelace's general achievement, it might be useful to indicate the integrated structure of this Lucasta poem, for something of the same benefit which has come from the realization that Donne's poems have more than brilliant opening lines.

Here the poet is presented with a situation, that of the departure from his

1. From *The Explicator*, VII (June, 1949), 58. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Editors of *The Explicator*.

mistress of a lover called to the wars. The problem of the lover is that of explaining the motivation of his departure and of anticipating the accusation from her that he is both cruel in so doing and inconstant to his earlier vows of fidelity. He wishes to ease the departure by avoiding sentimentality, that is the display of more emotion than the situation warrants. Faced, then, with a quandary, he offers as solution a paradox (a statement seemingly self-contradictory, though possibly well-founded or essentially true).

The interest of the poem comes from his procedure. He opens his address with an epithet of quality ("sweet"), and urges that she not think him "unkind" (i. e. lacking in natural goodness; contrary to nature, harsh). By his reference to the chaste and sanctified refuge which she provides, as though she herself were a nunnery, he establishes the basis on which the problem can be met not basically as a separation of divisible bodies but as one of indivisible spirit. The path of solution is commonplace in love poetry; the quality of Lovelace's poem arises out of his particular twist to it.

The ambiguity and paradox of the situation is affirmed by the twisted implications of "To war and arms I fly," which so obviously picks up the martial "*Arma virumque cano*" of Virgil. Foreseeing a potential misunderstanding that his true delight will lie in war, the poet proceeds to her expected implication of shifted allegiance, and maintains continuity in the role of lover, as one might with apparent inconstancy leave from a quarrel to pursue the first girl one saw. But any conflicting passion on the level of the flesh is, as he presents the case, subtly omitted, since he does not actually embrace this new mistress, but only his martial accoutrements; and this he does only with "faith," which is non-sensory. This may paradoxically still seem inconstant and inconsistent until we actually understand the nature of the other love. This we see lies in "Honor," a concept of the spirit and not of the body, therefore essentially sexless and genderless, in a situation mutually attractive ("as thou too shalt adore"). Their common adoration of "Honor" is a bond between them of ultimate timelessness, overcoming distance and decay, as "the marriage of true minds" does for Shakespeare, and lunary love (by extension to the compass) does for Donne. Since Lovelace now openly avows his love of Honor, by implication of affinity he pays his mistress the ultimate compliment of extending this inherent superiority to his relationship with her. Any unkindness in his departure can be said to exist only on the sub-lunary level of flesh. It cannot be unnatural except on that plane, and the inconsistency will be resolved by her recognition of the hierarchy of affections, on a higher level of which comes Honor. Perhaps the fullest value of the poem is indicated in the increased density which his final epithet of endearment bears over that of his initial one; for the progress from his opening address to her as "sweet" to that of "dear" cumulatively carries with it, under the circumstances, a final assessment not only of quality but also of value, and of flesh immortalized by ascending spirit.

If there is a question as to the actuality of a shift of tone from beginning to

end, one needs only to attempt a simple substitution to understand the incongruity of the alternative:

I could not love thee (sweet) so much,
Loved I not honor more.

ANDREW MARVELL

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

ON MARVELL'S *TO HIS COY MISTRESS* [1]

JOHN HAWLEY ROBERTS

THE central intention of the poem is to persuade the speaker's beloved to yield herself to him. His argument is that they have no time to wait. The constant consideration of the time problem gives unity to the whole.

The first twenty lines are in the conditional mode; their tone is ironically patient. The imagery here is developed consistently in terms of infinite time and space, suggesting the delights of endless leisure and deliberation, if such ample time were granted them. The pace of the lines is slow. All the temporal allusions imply a steady *adagio* movement toward a belated consummation of their love, a consummation that is not described physically, as it is to be at the end of the poem, but more reservedly as merely the delayed discovery of the lady's heart. This idea of leisure is stressed by such phrases as "long love's day," "ten years before the Flood," "refuse till the conversion of the Jews," "my vegetable love should grow . . . more slow" [than empires], and the hundreds and thousands of years used to indulge his adoration of her charms. This time element, furthermore, is underscored by references to space: the vast separation between the Ganges and the Humber, and the size of empires. Moreover, in the last couplet of this section (lines 19-20), the word "state" echoes "empires" and suggests size as well as a rich condition; likewise the word "rate" not only suggests the value of the speaker's love but also again emphasizes the tempo. These hyperboles of time and space, phrased conditionally, serve to reduce the lady's reluctance to absurdity. The ironic tone of this section is perhaps best expressed by the word "vegetable" in line 11. It suggests a placid way of love; it connotes a bloodless activity. (You can't get blood out of a turnip.)

1. From *The Explicator*, I (December, 1942), 17. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Editors of *The Explicator*.

But most of all it is an anticipatory contrast to the fierce actions of the "amorous birds of prey" of the last section.

At line 21 the tone becomes urgent. The pace of line 22 is faster than any earlier line. Time is hurrying them on to death, which is again described in terms of time and space as "deserts of vast eternity," but now such time and space are made meaningless by the images that describe the negations of death. There is a fine irony in the idea that in death only "worms shall try that long-preserved virginity." The syllables here fall together perfectly to make the line invoke the error of her chastity. The last four lines of this section complete the lover's warning. Here the word "quaint" is especially important. It means not only "fastidious" and "out-of-fashion," but in its medieval sense refers to the lady's private parts, with which her honor is so closely associated. This special reference to the "private parts" in the word "quaint" makes the final couplet in this section a superb example of Marvell's wit. The grave, too, is

> a fine and private place,
> But none, I think, do *there* embrace.

Note how the arrangement of words in this last line forces the emphasis on "there," in contrast to the "place" of her "quaint honor."

In the last section of the poem the argument is positive. Everything from here on is in sharp contrast with what has gone before. The movement of the lines grows broken and rugged. The imagery becomes violently sexual. Moreover, the images that follow must be taken separately by the reader and not allowed to run together. The urgent lover asks that he and the girl may, like "amorous birds of prey" (not like vegetable lovers), devour time (not be slowly munched by it); that they may embrace in the closest physical contact; and that they may fiercely break through the "iron gates of life." This last image for the womb not only repudiates the earlier "quaint honor" and the inactivity of the grave, but positively connotes the life-giving power of the sexual act. In the final couplet the lover argues that by thus seizing love vigorously, they will find the way to defy time: that they can at least make the sun hurry to keep up with their own creative energy.

JOHN DRYDEN

CAN LIFE BE A BLESSING?

1

Can life be a blessing,
Or worth the possessing,
Can life be a blessing if love were away?

Ah no! though our love all night keep us waking,
And though he torment us with cares all the day,
Yet he sweetens, he sweetens our pains in the taking,
There's an hour at the last, there's an hour to repay.

2

In ev'ry possessing,
The ravishing blessing,
In ev'ry possessing the fruit of our pain,
Poor lovers forget long ages of anguish,
What e're they have suffer'd and done to obtain;
'Tis a pleasure, a pleasure to sigh and to languish,
When we hope, when we hope to be happy again.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

1687

From harmony, from heav'nly harmony,
This universal frame began,
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
"Arise, ye more than dead."
Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's pow'r obey.
From harmony, from heav'nly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
When Jubal struck the corded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wond'ring, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell!

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double, double, double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries: "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared,
Mistaking earth for heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blessed above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,

The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.



EDWARD TAYLOR

MEDITATION EIGHT [1]

John, VI, 52: "I am the living bread."

I kenning through astronomy divine
The world's bright battlement, wherein I spy
A golden path my pencil cannot line
From that bright throne unto my threshold lie.
And while my puzzled thoughts about it pour
I find the bread of life in't at my door.

When that this bird of paradise put in
This wicker cage (my corpse) to tweedle praise
Had pecked the fruit forbid: and so did fling
Away its food: and lost its golden days,
It fell into celestial famine sore:
And never could attain a morsel more.

Alas! alas! poor bird, what wilt thou do?
This creature's field no food for souls e'er gave.
And if thou knock at angels' doors they show
An empty barrel: they no soul bread have.
Alas! poor bird, the world's white loaf is done.
And cannot yield thee here the smallest crumb.

In this sad state, God's tender bowels run
Out streams of grace: And he to end all strife
The purest wheat in heaven, his dear-dear Son
Grinds, and kneads up into this bread of life.
Which bread of life from heaven down came and stands
Dished on thy table up by angels' hands.

Did God mould up this bread in heaven, and bake,
Which from his table came, and to thine goeth?
Doth he bespeak thee thus, this soul bread take;
Come, eat thy fill of this, thy God's white loaf?

1. From *The Poetical Works of Edward Taylor*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Copyright, 1939, Rocklands Editions. Copyright, 1943, by Princeton University Press, publishers.

Its food too fine for angels, yet come, take
And eat thy fill. It's heaven's sugar cake.

What grace is this knead in this loaf? This thing
Souls are but petty things it to admire.
Ye angels, help. this fill would to the brim
Heav'ns whelm'd-down chrystal meal bowl, yea and higher.
This bread of life dropped in thy mouth doth cry:
Eat, eat me, soul, and thou shalt never die

ON TAYLOR'S *MEDITATION EIGHT* [1]

AUSTIN WARREN

A BETTER than average example of [Taylor's] lyrics is "Meditation Eight," from the Johannine hint, "I am the living bread." Taylor's curious coupling of "thing" and "brim," matched in other poems, shows not only that he did not sound terminal *g* but that he accounted nasals a satisfactory rhyme; and elsewhere he allows loose consonances and assonances to count as rhyme. These latitudes share with his Warwickshire provincialisms, his downright coinages, his inversions and other awkward, sometimes unconstruable constructions (like that in the opening stanza) in giving to this poem and his others a primitive vigor and naiveté irrelevant to the baroque aesthetic and unparalleled in other "metaphysical" verse of the period.

Donne's celebrated prosody in the Satires, like that of other free writers of pentameter iambic, provides its approximate pattern by offering, in a line, either five strong stresses, without calculation of weak syllables, or ten syllables without calculation of stresses, trusting that the two latitudes will balance to a conversational verse. But Taylor, though he had an iambic rhythm in his memory, seems chiefly to have counted the syllables; and his characteristic practice is to write a line slowed up by its extra stresses. "They no soul bread have" requires an equal weight to each syllable. The line of monosyllables, "What grace is this knead in this loaf? This thing," is best read as spondaic. Like other poets, ancient and contemporary, who reduce the flexible music of their rhythms, Taylor compensates by supplying rather copious alliteration—not as structure but as pure and simple phonetic pleasure.

The stiffness of Taylor's lines must not be attributed merely to prosodic awkwardness. Unquestionably he preferred a packed line; like greater poets—Donne, Hopkins, and Crane—he was impatient of space given to prepositions and articles and other poetic neutralities. Taylor's "Heav'ns whelm'd-down chrystal meal bowl" is less rare in kind for him than, for George Herbert, is the "Christ-side-piercing Spear" of "Prayer."

1. From *Rage for Order*, by Austin Warren (Chicago, 1948), pp. 12–16. Copyright, 1948, The University of Chicago Press.

The poem, which in spite of its inversions seems modern, has the force of its compression, its density. But its chief character is its metaphorism. Taylor is capable—one sees from "The Ebb and Flow" and "Huswifery"—of working out, neatly and precisely, a conceit: the latter poem tidily analogizes the Christian life to all the instruments and processes of cloth-making—the spinning wheel, the distaff, the reel, the loom, the web, the fulling mills, until the robes of salvation are ready for the pious wearing. Such poems, better called short allegories than extended conceits, are, however, less typical of Taylor and poetically less impressive than the poem before us, of which the method, more bold, is less surely prosecuted.

"Meditation Eight" has the advantage of ending with its two best stanzas. Taylor begins uncertain of direction and with trite locutions (like "golden path" and "bright throne"), locutions bad exactly in the wrong way for baroque poetry. Then the bird figure occurs to him: the soul is bird of Paradise in a double sense—child of heaven and heir of Eden's Adam, who was put in the "cage" of the Garden as the Soul has been put into that of the Body, to sing God's praises, but who (like his descendant soul) has instead eaten of the forbidden fruit. Taylor manages this equivalence neatly for three lines: the "wicker" cage can well stand for the tree-shaded garden; "peckt" properly modifies bird as well as man. But after that he has his difficulties: while, for a stanza more, evoking the soul as bird, he has really ceased thinking in terms of the figure, without knowing how to return to the narrative "I" of the first stanza; and, before he shapes the "I" into a "thou," he takes in transit a scriptural enough figure of God's running bowels which, however scriptural, is too strong a trope to be thrust, briefly and unsignificantly, into a poem with its own central boldness. "To end all strife" seems pure aid to the rhyme, since (though there is famine) no conflict has been mentioned.

Then, happily, Taylor finds his tone and theme, already sounded (under the accidental protection of the "bird") in the third stanza: the translation of Supersubstantial Bread, the *panis angelicus,* into domestic and animistic terms. Even in the last stanzas, the method is too libertine for Donne or Herbert; but the devices associate themselves, in baroque fashion, about surprises—surprises bearing down with a poet's literalness upon the proposition that Christ is the Bread (therefore subject to all the accidents and comparisons to which bread is subject). The total effect of the poem is amateurish but—by virtue of persistent episodic interest and a theme most efficiently defined as the poem nears its end—powerful.

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER

UPON HIS LEAVING HIS MISTRESS

I

'Tis not that I am weary grown
Of being yours, and yours alone:
But with what Face can I incline,
To damn you to be only mine?
You, who some kinder Pow'r did fashion,
By Merit, and by Inclination,
The Joy at least of a whole Nation.

II

Let meaner Spirits of your Sex,
With humble Aims their Thoughts perplex:
And boast, if, by their Arts they can
Contrive to make *one* happy Man.
While, mov'd by an impartial Sense,
Favours, like Nature, you dispence,
With universal Influence.

III

See the kind Seed-receiving Earth,
To every Grain affords a Birth:
On her no Show'rs unwelcome fall,
Her willing Womb retains 'em all.
And shall my *Caelia* be confin'd?
No, live up to thy mighty Mind;
And be the Mistress of Mankind.

LOVE AND LIFE, A SONG

All my past life is mine no more;
The flying hours are gone,
Like transitory dreams given o'er,
Whose images are kept in store
By memory alone.

The time that is to come is not;
How can it then be mine?
The present moment's all my lot;
And that, as fast as it is got,
Phillis, is only thine.

Then talk not of inconstancy,
False hearts, and broken vows;
If I by miracle can be
This live-long minute true to thee,
'Tis all that heaven allows.

JONATHAN SWIFT

STELLA'S BIRTH-DAY, 1720

All travellers at first incline
Where-e'er they see the fairest sign;
And, if they find the chambers neat,
And like the liquor and the meat,
Will call again, and recommend
The Angel-inn to ev'ry friend.
What though the painting grows decay'd?
The house will never lose its trade:
Nay, though the treach'rous tapster Thomas
Hangs a new angel two doors from us,
As fine as dauber's hands can make it,
In hopes that strangers may mistake it,
We think it both a shame and sin
To quit the true old Angel-inn.
Now this is Stella's case, in fact:
An *angel's* face, a little crack'd;
(Could poets, or could painters fix
How *angels* look at thirty-six:)
This drew us in at first to find
In such a form an *angel's* mind;
And ev'ry virtue now supplies
The fainting rays of Stella's eyes.
See at her levee crowding swains,
Whom Stella freely entertains
With breeding, humour, wit, and sense;
And puts them but to small expence;
Their mind so plentifully fills,
And makes such reasonable bills,
So little gets for what she gives,
We really wonder how she lives!
And, had her stock been less, no doubt
She must have long ago run out.
Then who can think we'll quit the place,

When Doll hangs out a newer face;
Or stop and light at Cloe's head,
With scraps and leavings to be fed?
Then, Cloe, still go on to prate
Of thirty-six, and thirty-eight;
Pursue your trade of scandal-picking,
Your hints, that Stella is no chicken;
Your innuendos, when you tell us
That Stella loves to talk with fellows:
And let me warn you to believe
A truth, for which your soul should grieve;
That, should you live to see the day
When Stella's locks must all be gray,
When age must print a furrow'd trace
On ev'ry feature of her face;
Though you, and all your senseless tribe,
Could art, or time, or nature bribe,
To make you look like beauty's queen,
And hold for ever at fifteen;
No bloom of youth can ever blind
The cracks and wrinkles of your mind;
All men of sense will pass your door,
And crowd to Stella's at fourscore.

ALEXANDER POPE

MORAL ESSAY, II

To a Lady, of the Characters of Women

Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
"Most Women have no Characters at all."
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair.
How many pictures of one Nymph we view,
All how unlike each other, all how true!
Arcadia's Countess, here, in ermined pride,
Is, there, Pastora by a fountain side.
Here Fannia, leering on her own good man,
And there, a naked Leda with a Swan.
Let then the Fair one beautifully cry,
In Magdalen's loose hair, and lifted eye,
Or drest in smiles of sweet Cecilia shine,
With simp'ring Angels, Palms, and Harps divine;

Whether the Charmer sinner it, or saint it,
If Folly grow romantic, I must paint it.
Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
Dip in the Rainbow, trick her off in Air;
Choose a firm Cloud, before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute.
Rufa, whose eye quick-glancing o'er the Park,
Attracts each light gay meteor of a Spark,
Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
With Sappho fragrant at an evening Masque:
So morning Insects that in muck begun,
Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting-sun.
How soft is Silia! fearful to offend;
The Frail one's advocate, the Weak one's friend:
To her, Calista proved her conduct nice;
And good Simplicius asks of her advice.
Sudden, she storms! she raves! You tip the wink,
But spare your censure, Silia does not drink.
All eyes may see from what the change arose,
All eyes may see—a Pimple on her nose.
Papillia, wedded to her am'rous spark,
Sighs for the shades—"How charming is a Park!"
A Park is purchased, but the Fair he sees
All bathed in tears—"Oh, odious, odious Trees!"
Ladies, like variegated Tulips, show;
'Tis to their Changes half their charms we owe;
Fine by defect, and delicately weak,
Their happy Spots the nice admirer take,
'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarmed,
Awed without Virtue, without Beauty charmed;
Her tongue bewitched as oddly as her Eyes,
Less Wit than Mimic, more a Wit than wise;
Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
Was just not ugly, and was just not mad;
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
As when she touched the brink of all we hate.
Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
To make a wash, would hardly stew a child;
Has even been proved to grant a Lover's prayer,
And paid a Tradesman once to make him stare;
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a Widow happy, for a whim.

Why then declare Good-nature is her scorn,
When 'tis by that alone she can be borne?
Why pique all mortals, yet affect a name?
A fool to Pleasure, yet a slave to Fame:
Now deep in Taylor and the Book of Martyrs,
Now drinking citron with his Grace and Chartres:
Now Conscience chills her, and now Passion burns;
And Atheism and Religion take their turns;
A very Heathen in the carnal part,
Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart.
See Sin in State, majestically drunk;
Proud as a Peeress, prouder as a Punk;
Chaste to her Husband, frank to all beside,
A teeming Mistress, but a barren Bride.
What then? let Blood and Body bear the fault,
Her Head's untouched, that noble Seat of Thought:
Such this day's doctrine—in another fit
She sins with Poets through pure Love of Wit.
What has not fired her bosom or her brain?
Cæsar and Tall-boy, Charles and Charlemagne.
As Helluo, late Dictator of the Feast,
The Nose of Hautgout, and the Tip of Taste,
Critiqued your wine, and analysed your meat,
Yet on plain Pudding deigned at home to eat;
So Philomedé, lect'ring all mankind
On the soft Passion, and the Taste refined,
Th' Address, the Delicacy—stoops at once,
And makes her hearty meal upon a Dunce.
Flavia's a Wit, has too much sense to Pray;
To Toast our wants and wishes, is her way;
Nor asks of God, but of her Stars, to give
The mighty blessing, "While we live, to live."
Then all for Death, that Opiate of the soul!
Lucretia's dagger, Rosamonda's bowl.
Say, what can cause such impotence of mind?
A spark too fickle, or a Spouse too kind.
Wise Wretch! with Pleasures too refined to please;
With too much Spirit to be e'er at ease;
With too much Quickness ever to be taught;
With too much Thinking to have common Thought:
You purchase Pain with all that Joy can give,
And die of nothing but a Rage to live.
Turn then from Wits; and look on Simo's Mate,
No Ass so meek, no Ass so obstinate.

Or her, that owns her Faults, but never mends,
Because she's honest, and the best of Friends.
Or her, whose life the Church and Scandal share,
For ever in a Passion, or a Prayer.
Or her, who laughs at Hell, but (like her Grace)
Cries, "Ah! how charming, if there's no such place!"
Or who in sweet vicissitude appears
Of Mirth and Opium, Ratafie and Tears,
The daily Anodyne, and nightly Draught,
To kill those foes to Fair ones, Time and Thought.
Woman and Fool are two hard things to hit;
For true No-meaning puzzles more than Wit.
But what are these to great Atossa's mind?
Scarce once herself, by turns all Womankind!
Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth:
Shines in exposing Knaves, and painting Fools,
Yet is, whate'er she hates and ridicules.
No Thought advances, but her Eddy Brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the World has been her Trade,
The wisest Fool much Time has ever made.
From loveless youth to unrespected age,
No passion gratified except her Rage.
So much the Fury still out-ran the Wit,
The Pleasure missed her, and the Scandal hit.
Who breaks with her, provokes Revenge from Hell,
But he's a bolder man who dares be well.
Her every turn with Violence pursued,
Nor more a storm her Hate than Gratitude:
To that each Passion turns, or soon or late;
Love, if it makes her yield, must make her hate:
Superiors? death! and Equals? what a curse!
But an Inferior not dependant? worse.
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she'll hate you while you live:
But die, and she'll adore you—Then the Bust
And Temple rise—then fall again to dust.
Last night, her Lord was all that's good and great;
A Knave this morning, and his Will a Cheat.
Strange! by the Means defeated of the Ends,
By Spirit robbed of Power, by Warmth of Friends,
By Wealth of Followers! without one distress
Sick of herself through very selfishness!

Atossa, cursed with every granted prayer,
Childless with all her Children, wants an Heir.
To Heirs unknown descends th' unguarded store,
Or wanders, Heaven-directed, to the Poor.

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wand'ring touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right:
For how should equal Colours do the knack?
Chameleons who can paint in white and black?

"Yet Chloe sure was formed without a spot"–
Nature in her then erred not, but forgot.
"With every pleasing, every prudent part,
Say, what can Chloe want?"—She wants a Heart.
She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought;
But never, never, reached one gen'rous Thought.
Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour,
Content to dwell in Decencies for ever.
So very reasonable, so unmoved,
As never yet to love, or to be loved.
She, while her Lover pants upon her breast,
Can mark the figures on an Indian chest;
And when she sees her Friend in deep despair,
Observes how much a Chintz exceeds Mohair.
Forbid it Heaven, a Favour or a Debt
She e'er should cancel—but she may forget.
Safe is your Secret still in Chloe's ear;
But none of Chloe's shall you ever hear.
Of all her Dears she never slandered one,
But cares not if a thousand are undone.
Would Chloe know if you're alive or dead?
She bids her Footman put it in her head.
Chloe is prudent—Would you too be wise?
Then never break your heart when Chloe dies.

One certain Portrait may (I grant) be seen,
Which Heaven has varnished out, and made a *Queen*:
THE SAME FOR EVER! and described by all
With Truth and Goodness, as with Crown and Ball.
Poets heap Virtues, Painters Gems at will,
And shew their zeal, and hide their want of skill.
'Tis well—but, Artists! who can paint or write,
To draw the Naked is your true delight.
That robe of Quality so struts and swells,
None see what Parts of Nature it conceals:

Th' exactest traits of Body or of Mind,
We owe to models of an humble kind.
If QUEENSBURY to strip there's no compelling,
'Tis from a Handmaid we must take a Helen,
From Peer or Bishop 'tis no easy thing
To draw the man who loves his God, or King:
Alas! I copy (or my draught would fail)
From honest Mah'met, or plain Parson Hale.
But grant, in Public Men sometimes are shown,
A Woman's seen in Private life alone:
Our bolder Talents in full light displayed;
Your virtues open fairest in the shade.
Bred to disguise, in Public 'tis you hide;
There, none distinguish 'twixt your Shame or Pride,
Weakness or Delicacy; all so nice,
That each may seem a Virtue, or a Vice.
In Men, we various Ruling Passions find;
In Women, two almost divide the kind;
Those, only fixed, they first or last obey,
The Love of Pleasure, and the Love of Sway.
That, Nature gives; and where the lesson taught
Is but to please, can Pleasure seem a fault?
Experience, this; by Man's oppression curst,
They seek the second not to lose the first.
Men, some to Business, some to Pleasure take;
But every Woman is at heart a Rake:
Men, some to Quiet, some to public Strife;
But every Lady would be Queen for life.
Yet mark the fate of a whole Sex of Queens!
Power all their end, but Beauty all the means:
In Youth they conquer, with so wild a rage,
As leaves them scarce a subject in their Age:
For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam;
No thought of peace or happiness at home.
But Wisdom's triumph is well-timed Retreat,
As hard a science to the Fair as Great!
Beauties, like Tyrants, old and friendless grown,
Yet hate repose, and dread to be alone,
Worn out in public, weary every eye,
Nor leave one sigh behind them when they die.
Pleasures the sex, as children Birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view;
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the Toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost:

At last, to follies Youth could scarce defend,
It grows their Age's prudence to pretend;
Ashamed to own they gave delight before,
Reduced to feign it, when they give no more:
As Hags hold Sabbaths, less for joy than spite,
So these their merry, miserable Night;
Still round and round the Ghosts of Beauty glide,
And haunt the places where their Honour died.
See how the World its Veterans rewards!
A Youth of Frolics, an old Age of Cards;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without Lovers, old without a Friend;
A Fop their Passion, but their Prize a Sot;
Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!
Ah! Friend! to dazzle let the Vain design;
To raise the Thought, and touch the Heart be thine!
That Charm shall grow, while what fatigues the Ring,
Flaunts and goes down, an unregarded thing:
So when the Sun's broad beam has tired the sight,
All mild ascends the Moon's more sober light,
Serene in Virgin Modesty she shines,
And unobserved the glaring Orb declines.
Oh! blest with Temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She, who can love a Sister's charms, or hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
She, who ne'er answers till a Husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shews she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys;
Let Fops or Fortune fly which way they will;
Disdains all loss of Tickets, or Codille:
Spleen, Vapours, or Small-pox, above them all,
And Mistress of herself, though China fall.
And yet, believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman's at best a Contradiction still.
Heaven, when it strives to polish all it can
Its last best work, but forms a softer Man;
Picks from each sex, to make the Fav'rite blest,
Your love of Pleasure, or desire of Rest:
Blends, in exception to all general rules,
Your Taste of Follies, with our Scorn of Fools:
Reserve with Frankness, Art with Truth allied,
Courage with Softness, Modesty with Pride;

Fixed Principles, with Fancy ever new;
Shakes all together, and produces—You.
Be this a Woman's Fame: with this unblest,
Toasts live a scorn, and Queens may die a jest.
This Phœbus promised (I forget the year)
When those blue eyes first opened on the sphere;
Ascendant Phœbus watched that hour with care,
Averted half your Parents' simple Prayer;
And gave you Beauty, but denied the Pelf
That buys your sex a Tyrant o'er itself.
The gen'rous God, who Wit and Gold refines,
And ripens Spirits as he ripens Mines,
Kept Dross for Duchesses, the world shall know it,
To you gave Sense, Good-humour, and a Poet.

ON POPE'S *MORAL ESSAY, II* [1]

HALLETT D. SMITH

THE SUBTITLE "Of the Characters of Women" describes generally Pope's poem, but the first five-sixths of the epistle is a satirical portrait gallery in verse, and the last part is an enthusiastic favorable portrait—a compliment to the Lady of the title, Martha Blount. Pope contrasts her character, manner, and disposition to an array of eighteenth-century court women. No one in the group is named except the Duchess of Queensbury (line 193), but they are given distinguishing classical names, some of which suggest particular features or qualities.

The poem develops as a series of illustrations of the truth of Martha Blount's remark, "Most women have no characters at all." What this means is that women, unlike men, are not controlled by a ruling passion or principle; they are changeable, self-contradictory, inconsistent. Any definite description you apply to a woman is immediately contradicted by something else in her behavior or temperament. This complaint, by no means original with Pope or Martha Blount, of course, is made fresh and vivid by the metaphor of painting portraits. Most society ladies, says Pope, have to be portrayed in a series of roles—as a countess in court costume and as a shepherdess; as a good and loving wife and as the naked pagan Leda with her swan-lover; as the immoral Magdalen and the pure St. Cecilia. How then is the poet to capture them in a single verse portrait apiece? This is the all but impossible task Pope sets himself, and the answer he gives to the question of how to do it develops the painting metaphor and incidentally characterizes his own style and manner:

1. Reprinted from *The Critical Reader*, edited by Wallace Douglas, Roy Lamson, and Hallett Smith (New York, 1949), pp. 25–31, by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Copyright, 1949, by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Come then, the colours and the ground prepare!
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;
Choose a firm cloud, before it fall, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of this minute. (17–20)

The idea that the material itself is evanescent is of course a phrasing of the main theme, but the suggestion that the treatment is to be all delicate and airy is in part a deliberate deception of the reader: he is all the more shocked when he finds that very frequently the ladies are sketched not with cloud-stuff and rainbow tints, but with acid, sharply and firmly etched. But Pope's model in this poem and others like it is Horace, and the epistles of Horace are satires which are never heavy-footed and violent, but witty, urbane, and smooth. The conventional "epistle" or letter gives an air of informality, and the poet is not setting himself up as the formal indignant castigator of the vices and follies of mankind. The instrument of this kind of satirist is the rapier and not the whip.

But neither "rapier" nor "paintbrush" adequately conveys an idea of Pope's technique. It is first of all a kind of thinking, and the intellectual power of the poem should not be underestimated. Take Calypso, for example, she who

once each heart alarm'd,
Awed without virtue, without beauty charm'd; (45–46)

what is the mysterious source of her attractiveness? If she is neither good nor beautiful, what is it that she has? Pope pretends that it is a mystery, but he shows by his manner of describing it that he knows that we are sometimes drawn or attracted by those things that are just this side of the repulsive:

Strange graces still, and stranger flights she had,
Was just not ugly, and was just not mad;
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
As when she touch'd the brink of all we hate. (49–52)

For all the emphasis on female vanity, on social foibles, on fashionable affectations, this epistle is fundamentally a Moral Essay; it probes deeply into the relationship between motives and deeds. Narcissa is not a "bad" woman; she wouldn't stew a child, in the fashion of witches making their broth, just to prepare a cosmetic "wash" for her face; she is even generous, if you recite some of her deeds—but what about the motives? She

Has ev'n been prov'd to grant a lover's pray'r,
And paid a tradesman once to make him stare;
Gave alms at Easter, in a Christian trim,
And made a widow happy, for a whim. (55–58)

As a matter of fact, she is another example of that combination of irreconcilable opposites which constitutes the female character:

Now conscience chills her, and now passion burns;
And atheism and religion take their turns;
A very heathen in the carnal part,
Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart. (65–68)

Pope's moral insight is exhibited even more impressively in the rhetoric and logical syntax of passages which appear on the surface to be mere wit:

See Sin in state, majestically drunk;
Proud as a peeress, prouder as a punk; (69–90)

Here the paradox in the phrase "majestically drunk" not only expresses contempt for the degradation of majestic qualities in drunkenness; it also prepares the reader's mind for some such phrase as "drunk as a lord." And the phrase follows, satisfyingly: "Proud as a peeress," but by a verbal trick Pope converts what seems like a superlative into a mere positive, and the comparative "prouder as a punk" explodes in a marvelous anticlimax. The rhetorical progression in the description of Flavia, the epicurean, reveals the same degree of profundity:

Wise wretch! with pleasures too refin'd to please;
With too much spirit to be e'er at ease;
With too much quickness ever to be taught;
With too much thinking to have common thought;
You purchase pain with all that joy can give,
And die of nothing but a rage to live. (95–100)

The thrice-repeated "with too much . . ." and the metaphor of purchasing develop a sense of opulence and wealth to give a terrible significance to the word "nothing" in the last line.

To temper this moral seriousness and to keep the poem on the level of the well-bred, cultivated letter from one friend to another, to suggest a tone of gallant frankness rather than zealous misogyny, Pope returns, after one hundred and fifty lines, to a comment on his technique:

Pictures like these, dear Madam, to design,
Asks no firm hand, and no unerring line;
Some wand'ring touches, some reflected light,
Some flying stroke alone can hit 'em right: (151–154)

Any analysis of Pope's style might take this passage as its point of departure. Is there really no firm hand or unerring line in these portraits? Are they really just flying strokes?

The versification of this poem is of course connected with its wit. But the iambic pentameter couplet which Pope so polished and developed, which he made so capable of variety and so fluent in a poem of almost three hundred lines, is not to be considered the source of the wit. It is the sharpening of some-

thing which already cuts. So many illustrations offer themselves to show Pope's skill in the technique of versification that it is hard to make a choice. Is he most remarkable for his variation of the normal iambic movement to make a sudden special effect, as in the second line of

> A very heathen in the carnal part,
> Yet still a sad, good Christian at her heart. (67–68)

or is he to be praised for the compactness of his summarizing couplets, when he conveys the matter of an epic in an epigram?

> From loveless youth to unrespected age,
> No passion gratified except her rage. (125–126)

One might point out the extraordinary precision in the choice of the specific detail to contrast with a general emotion:

> She, while her lover pants upon her breast,
> Can mark the figures on an Indian chest,
> And when she sees her friend in deep despair,
> Observes how much a chintz exceeds mohair. (167–170)

This is in reality a perfect realization of balance, intellectually and imaginatively, and the same poise is evident in Pope's prosody. The quotability of his general statements is often due to this balance:

> In men, we various ruling passions find;
> In women, two almost divide the kind;
> Those, only fix'd, they first or last obey,
> The love of pleasure, and the love of sway. (207–210)

Here the unbalance of the third line, in the placing of caesuras, prepares the ear for the satisfaction of the perfect balance of the fourth, and even the parallel structure of the first and second lines, with the early caesura, has its effect on the last line.

The end of the poem, progressing from the character of "Queensbury" through some general reflections on the female sex, leads up to the good advice and gallant compliment paid to Martha Blount. Yet in paying this compliment Pope does not retract his general contention about the contradictions in feminine character; he only makes it clear that one combination of disparate traits, the best from each sex, has resulted in the creation of an ideal woman and friend. As the poet makes his exit, he separates Martha Blount from the women of the world he has been describing. She has beauty but not wealth; hence she is unspoiled. And in the final lines, as he shows the compensations for lack of wealth, he produces the same retarding effect in the last line that we are accustomed to at the end of a piece of music:

> The gen'rous god, who wit and gold refines,
> And ripens spirits as he ripens mines,

Kept dross for duchesses, the world shall know it,
To you gave sense, good-humour, and a poet. (289–292)

Anyone who walks through an art gallery and looks at the portraits of eighteenth-century ladies by Lely, Kneller and Reynolds is not quite satisfied until he goes up to the pictures of the ladies, in their roles as the goddess Diana, the Tragic Muse, or St. Cecilia, to read on the little brass plates the names of the actual subjects of the pictures. So, in Pope's poem, it may be of some interest to know that Philomede is supposed to represent Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, in succession to her father, the first Duke; Atossa is traditionally supposed to be Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, widow of the first Duke; Chloe is thought to be the Countess of Suffolk (Mrs. Howard), a neighbor of Pope's at Twickenham and formerly mistress to King George II. There is some point to "dross for *duchesses*" in the next-to-last line.

WILLIAM COLLINS

ODE TO EVENING

If ought of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
    Like thy own solemn springs,
    Thy springs and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
    With brede ethereal wove,
    O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat,
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
    Or where the beetle winds
    His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum;
    Now teach me, maid composed,
    To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
    As, musing slow, I hail
    Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile
Or upland fallows gray
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve;
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

THOMAS WARTON, THE YOUNGER

SONNET III

Written in a blank leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon

Deem not devoid of elegance the sage,
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,
Of painful Pedantry the poring child;
Who turns, of these proud domes, the historic page,
Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage,
Thinkst thou the warbling Muses never smiled
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thought, on themes, unclassic falsely styled,
Intent. While cloistered Piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictured stores,
Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strown with flowers.

WILLIAM BLAKE

THE LAMB

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb,
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.

Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

AH SUNFLOWER

Ah Sunflower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveler's journey is done—

Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin, shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go!

THE TIGER

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

ON BLAKE'S *THE TIGER* [1]

C. M. BOWRA

THE poetry of this desire and of what it meant to Blake can be seen in "The Tiger." Here enraptured song conveys in essential vision some themes which Blake presents elsewhere in more detail. This is the pure poetry of his trust in cosmic forces. The images of "The Tiger" recur in the prophetic books, but in the poem, detached from any very specific context, they have a special strength and freedom. The tiger is Blake's symbol for the fierce forces in the soul which are needed to break the bonds of experience. The "forests of the night," in which the tiger lurks, are ignorance, repression, and superstition. It has been fashioned by unknown, supernatural spirits, like Blake's mythical heroes, Orc and Los, prodigious smiths who beat out living worlds with their hammers; and this happened when "the stars threw down their spears," that is, in some enormous cosmic crisis when the universe turned round in its course and began to move from light to darkness—as Urizen says in *The Four Zoas,* when he finds that passion and natural joy have withered under his rule and the power of the spirit has been weakened:

I went not forth: I hid myself in black clouds of my wrath;
I call'd the stars around my feet in the night of councils dark;
The stars threw down their spears and fled naked away.

If we wish to illustrate "The Tiger" from Blake's other works, it is easy to do so, and it adds much to our understanding of its background and its place in Blake's development. But it is first and last a poem. The images are so compelling that for most purposes they explain themselves, and we have an immediate, overwhelming impression of an awful power lurking in the darkness of being and forcing on us questions which pierce to the heart of life.

TO THE ACCUSER WHO IS THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

Truly, My Satan, thou art but a Dunce,
And dost not know the Garment from the Man.
Every Harlot was a Virgin once,
Nor can'st thou ever change Kate into Nan.

Tho' thou art Worship'd by the Names Divine
Of Jesus & Jehovah, thou art still

1. Reprinted by permission of the publishers from *The Romantic Imagination,* by C. M. Bowra, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949.

The Son of Morn in weary Night's decline,
The lost Traveller's Dream under the Hill.

STANZAS FROM MILTON

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountain green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

ROBERT BURNS

TAM O' SHANTER

A Tale

Of Brownyis and of Bogillis[1] *full is this buke.*
Gawin Douglas

When chapman billies[2] leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;[3]
While we sit bousing at the nappy,[4]

1. specters; hobgoblins.
2. huckster companions, who set up stalls on market days.
3. road (home).
4. drinking the strong ale.

An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,[5]
The mosses,[6] waters, slaps,[7] and styles
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam! had'st thou but been sae wise
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,[8]
A blethering,[9] blustering, drunken blellum;[10]
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder[11] wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,[12]
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean[13] till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drowned in Doon;
Or catched wi' warlocks[14] in the mirk[15]
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet[16]
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthened sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market-night
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,

---

5. formerly somewhat longer than English miles.
6. bogs. 7. gaps in walls or fences. 8. worthless fellow.
9. chattering. 10. idle talker.
11. grist-grinding. 12. every nag that was shod.
13. keeper of an alehouse near the kirk.
14. wizards. 15. dark. 16. makes me weep.

Wi' reaming swats[17] that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter[18] Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' secret favors, sweet and precious;
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus;
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himsel amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread;
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed·
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever:
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place:
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide:
The hour approaches Tam maun ride,—
That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed:
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

17. frothing ale.
18. Cobbler.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit on thro' dub[19] and mire,
Despising wind and rain and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles[20] catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets[21] nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoored;[22]
And past the birks[23] and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins,[24] and by the cairn,[25]
Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze,[26]
Thro' ilka bore[27] the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny[28] we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae[29] we'll face the devil!
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.[30]
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillion brent new[31] frae France,

19. clattered on through puddle. 20. ghosts. 21. owls. 22. smothered.
23. birches. 24. furze; thorny evergreen shrub common on heaths.
25. pile of stones. 26. blaze. 27. crevice. 28. twopenny ale.
29. whisky. 30. small copper coin. 31. brand new.

But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys,[32] and reels
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker[33] in the east,
There sat Auld Nick in shape o' beast;
A tousie tyke,[34] black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl[35]
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.[36]
Coffins stood round like open presses,[37]
That shawed the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantraip sleight,[38]
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table[39]
A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;[40]
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,[41]
Wi' his last gasp his gab[42] did gape;
Five tomahawks wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter which a babe had strangled;
A knife a father's throat had mangled—
Whom his ain son o' life bereft—
The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowered, amazed, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,[43]
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,[44]
And coost her duddies[45] to the wark,
And linket[46] at it in her sark![47]

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,[48]
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie[49] flannen,

32. like the others named in this line, a vigorous Scottish dance.
33. window seat. 34. shaggy dog. 35. made them scream. 36. vibrate.
37. cupboards. 38. trick of magic. 39. communion table; altar.
40. bones in gibbet irons. 41. rope. 42. mouth.
43. clutched. 44. till each old hag sweated and steamed.
45. threw off her clothes. 46. tripped. 47. shirt. 48. lasses.
49. greasy.

Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!—
Thir[50] breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies[51]
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But withered beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie[52] hags wad spean[53] a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,[54]
I wonder did na turn thy stomach!

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie:[55]
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,[56]
That night enlisted in the core,[57]
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perished monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,[58]
And kept the country-side in fear).
Her cutty sark,[59] o' Paisley harn,[60]
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.[61]
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft[62] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,[63]
Sic flights are far beyond her power:
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jad she was and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched;
Even Satan glowered, and fidged[64] fu' fain,
And hotched[65] and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint[66] his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"

---

50. these. 51. buttocks. 52. ancient. 53. wean (by disgust).
54. crooked staff. 55. finely. 56. well-built. 57. corps.
58. barley. 59. short smock. 60. coarse cloth. 61. proud.
62. bought. 63. stoop. 64. fidgeted. 65. hitched his arm.
66. lost.

And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,[67]
When plundering herds asssail their byke;[68]
As open pussie's[69] mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud:
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch[70] skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin![71]
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient[72] a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;[73]
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin[74] claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

67. fuss. 68. hive. 69. a hare's. 70. unearthly. 71. reward.
72. devil. 73. aim. 74. witch.

YE FLOWERY BANKS

Ye flowery banks o' bonie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care?

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true!

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate!

Aft hae I roved by bonie Doon
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Frae aff its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw my rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

ON BURNS' *YE FLOWERY BANKS*[1]

DONALD A. STAUFFER

THE instinctive singers have their own ways of compelling complex states of consciousness in short lyrics. As a final example we might choose a song by Burns. The worn word "little" of the third line suggests in its context a complex state of mind—an expectation of sympathy, a sense of tenderness and sentience in all nature. The fifth line is probably the finest poetically. Burns thought so, for he repeated it. If the poem had gone no further than

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonie bird,

its complexity would already have attained expression through suggestion and inference. The remainder merely keeps the emotion of heartbreak before us by giving in more detail its cause. Yet how this complexity is achieved is hard

1. Reprinted from *The Nature of Poetry*, by Donald A. Stauffer (New York, 1946), pp. 163–166, by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Copyright, 1946, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

to determine. One remembers another poet who expressed anguish, listening to the song of a bird, and who kept that anguish before his readers by dwelling upon its sources. Keats says "my heart aches"; Burns, "Thou'll break my heart." The difference between *ache* and *break* and the efficacy of each word in its respective poem are almost sufficient proofs of the complexity of poetry. Keats in the "Ode to a Nightingale" goes on:

> 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
> But being too happy in thy happiness.

The idea of the painful transiency of beauty and joy, filling so many of Keats's best poems, here explains his heartache.

Burns's heartbreak, on the other hand, rises not from passing ecstasy but from contrasting moods and times; and although he takes the rest of the poem for amplification, he has already made the antithesis in the first stanza between nature's freshness and his own heaviness (or the heaviness of the girl who perhaps is speaking the poem). Although Burns's lyric centers on a single emotion, that emotion is not simple; furthermore, it is held before the reader not by appealing directly to his emotions, but by presenting pictures and situations to the senses and assuming that their logical relations will be understood. The contrast in the first stanza is between the external joy of flowers and birds and the internal care of the poet. In the second and third stanzas, the joy of nature is associated with the past joy of the poet, so that the contrast develops into an opposition between past happiness and present unhappiness. The theme becomes:

> That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

The dominant emotion of the poem, therefore, depends upon the interplay between two other emotions—delight in love and anguish at betrayal. The heartbreak would not be so sharp if past joy had never been experienced. Stanza four extends the poet's (or the girl's) past happiness through time and nature and makes it more nearly universal, so that the painful emotion of the moment seems more nearly unbearable; the whole contrast is crystallized in the final stanza, no longer in terms of time, but of space, by the image of the rose and the thorn.

A rose is love; a thorn is betrayal, deceit, falsity, anguish. If one accepts for poetry the laws of concreteness and of significance, poetry is inevitably complex. That is to say, a poem will handle the visibles and tangibles of the world; it will be seeking general significances. At the very least, then, poetry is complex to the extent that it presents ideas in terms of things. The statements of poetry convey their deepest significance obliquely, indirectly. Such poetic thought—and it cannot be simple—is so much a part of us that we must consider closely before we realize that no bonny bird smaller than a vulture could literally break Burns's heart; that we are not supposed to take as an historical fact Burns's plucking a rose which later the false lover stole; that in find-

ing spiritual equivalents for the stealing of a rose and the leaving of the thorn experience almost forces us to think of the poem as spoken by a girl; and that dramatic imagination on Burns's part, rather than actual belief, leads him to suggest that flowers should cease to bloom and birds to sing when he is full of care.

MARY MORISON

1

O Mary, at thy window be!
It is the wished, the trysted hour.
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor.
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure—
The lovely Mary Morison!

2

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw.
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed and said amang them a': —
"Ye are na Mary Morison!"

3

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown:
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line

Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

ON WORDSWORTH'S *I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD* [1]

FREDERICK A. POTTLE

WHAT are we to make of Wordsworth's boast that he endeavored at all times to look steadily at his subject? I shall try to answer the question by tracing the steps he followed in writing one of his most famous poems, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," commonly (though with no authority from Wordsworth) called "Daffodils." The starting point is the entry in Dorothy's journal for April 15, 1802. That entry is fairly long, but it is all good reading; and I have my reasons for not eliminating any of it.

"It was a threatening, misty morning, but mild. We set off after dinner from Eusemere. Mrs. Clarkson went a short way with us, but turned back. The wind was furious, and we thought we must have returned. We first rested in the large boat-house, then under a furze bush opposite Mr. Clarkson's. Saw the plough going in the field. The wind seized our breath. The Lake was rough. There was a boat by itself floating in the middle of the bay below Water Millock. We rested again in the Water Millock Lane. The hawthorns are black and green, the birches here and there greenish, but there is yet more of purple to be seen on the twigs. We got over into a field to avoid some cows—people working. A few primroses by the roadside—woodsorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry, yellow flower which Mrs. C. calls pile wort. When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few

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daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the lake had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more; and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and about them; some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. This wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here and there a little knot, and a few stragglers a few yards higher up; but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway. We rested again and again. The bays were stormy, and we heard the waves at different distances, and in the middle of the water, like the sea. Rain came on—we were wet when we reached Luff's, but we called in. Luckily all was cheerless and gloomy, so we faced the storm—we *must* have been wet if we had waited—put on dry clothes at Dobson's. I was very kindly treated by a young woman, the landlady looked sour, but it is her way. She gave us a goodish supper, excellent ham and potatoes. We paid 7/– when we came away. William was sitting by a bright fire when I came downstairs. He soon made his way to the library, piled up in a corner of the window. He brought out a volume of Enfield's *Speaker,* another miscellany, and an odd volume of Congreve's plays. We had a glass of warm rum and water. We enjoyed ourselves, and wished for Mary. It rained and blew, when we went to bed. N.B. Deer in Gowbarrow Park like skeletons."

I said this was the starting point, for it is as near the raw matter of the poem as we can get. The true raw matter was certain perceptions—visual, auditory, tactile—which Wordsworth and his sister had on that windy April morning; and those we have no way of recovering. In Dorothy's entry this raw matter has already been grasped and shaped by a powerful imagination, and it has been verbalized. The entry is not a poem, because it contains a good deal of true but inconsequential statement (the rum and water, the volume of Congreve), but much of it is prefabricated material for a poem. And the fact is (though this is doctrine little heard of among men) that Wordsworth made grateful use of prefabricated material whenever he could get it of the right sort. As Professor Lane Cooper showed us long ago, he went regularly to books of travel for material of the right sort, but his best source was his sister's journal.

The function of the Imagination, as Wordsworth and Coleridge insisted, is, at the first level, to make sense out of the undifferentiated manifold of sensation by organizing it into individual objects or things; at the second, and specifically poetic, level, to reshape this world of common perception in the direction of a unity that shall be even more satisfactory and meaningful. Dorothy has made extensive use of the secondary or poetic imagination. Notice the de-

vices by which she has unified and made sense of the experience of the daffodils. First, and most important, she has endowed them with human qualities. They are a social group engaged in busy concerted activity. The notion of the social group, the crowd (she does not actually use the word) is reinforced by her further figure of stragglers. Secondly, besides being active, the crowd of daffodils is happy: they look gay, they toss and reel and dance (their very activity is sport) and seem verily to laugh. And thirdly, some of the crowd have danced so hard that they are tired: they rest their heads upon the stones as on pillows.

Wordsworth recollected the scene in tranquillity and wrote his poem a full two years afterwards. He fixes on Dorothy's fine central perception of "the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway," and condenses it into the one word "crowd." He takes over, too, her impression that the daffodils were "dancing," that they were "gay," that they were even "laughing." Ever since 1807, when Wordsworth published this poem, daffodils have danced and laughed, but there is nothing inevitable about it. The Greek myth of Narcissus is not exactly hilarious; and even Herrick, when he looked at a daffodil, saw something far from jocund:

> When a Daffadill I see
> Hanging down his head t'wards me,
> Guesse I may, what I must be:
> First, I shall decline my head;
> Secondly, I shall be dead;
> Lastly, safely buryed.

The literal, positivistic, "scientific" fact was that Wordsworth and his sister saw a large bed of wild daffodils beside a lake, agitated by a strong, cold spring wind. The rest is all the work of the imagination.

The mark of the poetic imagination is to simplify: to make the manifold of sensation more meaningful by reducing it to a number of objects which can actually be contemplated. Wordsworth continues Dorothy's process of simplification: he eliminates the bitterness of the wind, which is so prominent in her account; reduces the wind, in fact, to a breeze. It may appear here that he has simplified more than was necessary or wise. Shakespeare, in the most famous lines ever written about daffodils, kept the wind:

> Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty.

Admittedly, it is a higher mode. Wordsworth, on some occasions, would have kept the wind, too; but to have kept it here would have made a more complex —if you will, a more tragic—poem than he felt like writing. He felt this poem as something very simple and very pure; when he came to publish it, he put it in a group called "Moods of My Own Mind." But he is impartial; as he throws

out matter on the one hand because it is too serious, so he eliminates matter on the other because it is too playful. The prettiest thing in Dorothy's realization —her image of the daffodils pillowing their heads on the stones—drops out. He dispenses too with Dorothy's stragglers. He fastens on her central image of the dancing, laughing crowd, and lets everything else go.

But now the idea of the crowd calls for a modification, and a modification of a fundamental sort. The social glee of the crowd can be made more significant if it is set over against solitary joy; and so in the poem he makes himself solitary, which in literal fact he was not. He now has what for him is a promising situation. The solitariness of the poet and the sociability of the daffodils are set up as poles between which the poem discharges itself. I have said that the situation is for him a promising one. Everyone knows of Wordsworth's love of solitude, his conviction that the highest experiences came to him when he was alone. What we need constantly to remind ourselves of is that his theory assigned an only slightly lower value to the love of men in societies. (The subtitle of Book VIII of "The Prelude" is "Love of Nature Leading to Love of Mankind.") The trouble was that, though he had the best of intentions, he could never handle close-packed, present, human crowds in the mode of Imagination. If he were to grasp the life of a great city imaginatively, it had to be at night or early in the morning, while the streets were deserted; or at least in bad weather, when few people were abroad.

But in the figure of a bed of daffodils endowed with human characteristics, he can handle with feelings of approval and exhilaration the concept of a crowd, of ten thousand individuals packed close together. He begins and ends solitary: at the beginning, we may assume, filled with joy, but a joy somewhat solemn, somewhat cold and remote, as the symbol of the cloud indicates. He is surprised by the sensation of mere unmixed human gaiety and light-heartedness, yields to it, and finds it good; so good that ever after he can derive refreshment from the memory of the experience.

The progress towards explicit identification of the symbol is gradual. In the first stanza the flowers are "fluttering" (literal: the flowers are moved by the breeze); then "dancing" (the flowers are self-moved). By the end of the second stanza they are "tossing their heads in sprightly dance." (The flowers are self-moved and are having a wonderful time. "Dance" is the key-word: it occurs in either the last or the first line of each stanza.) Finally, but not till the third stanza is reached, we get the quite explicit series "glee," "gay," "jocund," "pleasure." Wordsworth is always (or almost always) explicit in this fashion: he tells you just how you are expected to take his figures. Of course it is the figures that do the work. No one can make us joyful by merely using the word "joy" or any of its synonyms. But there is impressive agreement among readers of all periods that by giving us a simple figure, reinforcing it by certain devices of varied iteration, and explicitly interpreting it, Wordsworth does evoke the emotion of joy.

We can now see what Wordsworth meant by looking steadily at his subject.

So far as his subject is expressed in imagery drawn from nature (and that means in all his best poetry), there is implied a lifelong habit of close, detailed, and accurate observation of the objects composing the external universe. By "accurate" I mean something the same thing as "naturalistic," but not entirely so. Wordsworth scorned the merely analytic vision of the naturalist ("One that would peep and botanize Upon his mother's grave"), because in his opinion that kind of apprehension empties the object of life and meaning by detaching it from its ground. "His theme is nature *in solido*," as Whitehead pointed out, "that is to say, he dwells on that mysterious presence of surrounding things, which imposes itself on any separate element that we set up as an individual for its own sake. He always grasps the whole of nature as involved in the tonality of the particular instance." But, except for those portions of the scientist's vision which require (let us say) dissection and magnification, there is little in the scientist's vision that Wordsworth misses. A *merely* matter-of-fact, an *exclusively* positivistic view of nature fills him with anger, but his own apprehension includes the matter-of-fact view without denying any of it. Dr. Leavis has perhaps put this more intelligibly when he remarks, as the chief virtue of Wordsworth's poetry, a "firm hold upon the world of common perception," though I myself should like to modify it, "in the mode of perception which has been common in Western civilization since some time in the late eighteenth century." In a literal, physiological sense, Wordsworth did look steadily at the natural objects that appear in his poetry.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE

KUBLA KHAN; OR, A VISION IN A DREAM

A Fragment

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me,
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

DON JUAN

Canto the Second

1

Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,
Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,
It mends their morals, never mind the pain:
The best of mothers and of educations
In Juan's case were but employ'd in vain,
Since, in a way that's rather of the oddest, he
Became divested of his native modesty.

2

Had he but been placed at a public school,
In the third form, or even in the fourth,
His daily task had kept his fancy cool,
At least, had he been nurtured in the north;
Spain may prove an exception to the rule,
But then exceptions always prove its worth—
A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
Puzzled his tutors very much, of course.

3

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,
If all things be consider'd; first, there was
His lady-mother, mathematical,
A——never mind;—his tutor, an old ass;
A pretty woman —(that's quite natural,
Or else the thing had hardly come to pass)
A husband rather old, not much in unity
With his young wife—a time, and opportunity.

4

Well—well; the world must turn upon its axis,
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
The priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust,—perhaps a name.

5

I said, that Juan had been sent to Cadiz—
A pretty town, I recollect it well—
'Tis there the mart of the colonial trade is,
(Or was, before Peru learn'd to rebel,)
And such sweet girls—I mean, such graceful ladies,
Their very walk would make your bosom swell;
I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
Nor liken it—I never saw the like:

6

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
New-broke, a cameleopard, a gazelle,
No—none of these will do—and then their garb,
Their veil and petticoat—Alas! to dwell
Upon such things would very near absorb
A canto—then their feet and ankles,—well,
Thank Heaven I've got no metaphor quite ready,
(And so, my sober Muse—come, let's be steady—

7

Chaste Muse!—well, if you must, you must)—the veil
Thrown back a moment with the glancing hand,
While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you pale,
Flashes into the heart:—All sunny land
Of love! when I forget you, may I fail
To——say my prayers—but never was there plann'd
A dress through which the eyes give such a volley,
Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.

8

But to our tale: the Donna Inez sent
Her son to Cadiz only to embark;
To stay there had not answer'd her intent,

But why?—we leave the reader in the dark—
'Twas for a voyage the young man was meant,
As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
And send him like a dove of promise forth.

9

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
According to direction, then received
A lecture and some money: for four springs
He was to travel; and though Inez grieved
(As every kind of parting has its stings),
She hoped he would improve—perhaps believed:
A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
Of good advice—and two or three of credit.

10

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
For naughty children, who would rather play
(Like truant rogues) the devil, or the fool;
Infants of three years old were taught that day,
Dunces were whipt, or set upon a stool:
The great success of Juan's education
Spurr'd her to teach another generation.

11

Juan embark'd—the ship got under way,
The wind was fair, the water passing rough;
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who've cross'd it oft, know well enough;
And, standing upon deck, the dashing spray
Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough:
And there he stood to take, and take again,
His first—perhaps his last—farewell of Spain.

12

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new:
I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
But almost every other country's blue,

When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
We enter on our nautical existence.

13

So Juan stood, bewilder'd on the deck:
The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and sailors swore,
And the ship creak'd, the town became a speck,
From which away so fair and fast they bore.
The best of remedies is a beef-steak
Against sea-sickness; try it, sir, before
You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
For I have found it answer—so may you.

14

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,
Beheld his native Spain receding far:
First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
Even nations feel this when they go to war;
There is a sort of unexprest concern,
A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.

15

But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
So that he had much better cause to grieve
Than many persons more advanced in life;
And if we now and then a sigh must heave
At quitting even those we quit in strife,
No doubt we weep for those the heart endears—
That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears.

16

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion:
I'd weep,—but mine is not a weeping Muse,
And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;
Young men should travel, if but to amuse
Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

17

And Juan wept, and much he sigh'd and thought,
While his salt tears dropp'd into the salt sea,
"Sweets to the sweet;" (I like so much to quote;
You must excuse this extract,—'t is where she,
The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia brought
Flowers to the grave;) and, sobbing often, he
Reflected on his present situation,
And seriously resolved on reformation.

18

"Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!" he cried,
"Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
Of its own thirst to see again thy shore:
Farewell, where Guadalquivir's waters glide!
Farewell, my mother! and, since all is o'er,
Farewell, too, dearest Julia!—(here he drew
Her letter out again, and read it through.)

19

"And oh! if e'er I should forget, I swear—
But that's impossible, and cannot be—
Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of anything, excepting thee;
A mind diseased no remedy can physic—
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick.)

20

"Sooner shall heaven kiss earth—(here he fell sicker)
Oh, Julia! what is every other woe?—
(For God's sake let me have a glass of liquor;
Pedro, Battista, help me down below.)
Julia, my love—(you rascal, Pedro, quicker)—
Oh, Julia!—(this curst vessel pitches so)—
Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!"
(Here he grew inarticulate with retching.)

21

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,
Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
Beyond the best apothecary's art,

The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
Or death of those we dote on, when a part
Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends:
No doubt he would have been much more pathetic,
But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

22

Love's a capricious power: I've known it hold
Out through a fever caused by its own heat,
But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
And find a quinsy very hard to treat;
Against all noble maladies he's bold,
But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
Nor inflammations redden his blind eye.

23

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
About the lower region of the bowels;
Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
Shrinks from the application of hot towels,
And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect, how else
Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

1

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

2

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

3

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

4

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need,
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

5

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows

In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a highborn maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures

That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

JOHN KEATS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

1

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

3

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu:
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for ever more
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou are desolate, can e'er return.

5

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Oh, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Oh, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sighed full sore,

And there I shut her wild, wild eyes,
With kisses four.

"And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill side.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all,
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide;
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing."

TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

BRIGHT STAR, WOULD I WERE STEDFAST AS THOU ART

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

DAYS

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,

Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleachèd garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

BRAHMA

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

SONNET FROM THE PORTUGUESE, XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

ON E. B. BROWNING'S *SONNET FROM THE PORTUGUESE, XLIII* [1]

ROBERT B. HEILMAN

"How DO I love thee?" is a theme on which both Elizabeth Barret Browning and Goneril, daughter of Lear, expressed themselves in pentameters—with certain recognizable similarities. Goneril says (*King Lear,* I, i, 56-62):

Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour . . . .

E.B.B. says (*Sonnets from the Portuguese,* XLIII):

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace . . . .
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

There is a notable insistence on spaciousness in each protestation; Goneril disdains even the rich and rare, and E.B.B. conspicuously selects intangibles to express degree; both find a measure in Grace; and presumably striving for Right and turning from Praise are the equivalent of honor. Health and beauty are perhaps a bit more pretentious than "the level of every day's/Most quiet need." But Goneril loves "As much as child e'er loved," and E.B.B., "with my childhood's faith." Goneril's love "makes breath poor and speech unable"; E.B.B. loves "with the breath,/ Smiles, tears of all my life!" and anticipates loving "better after death." Goneril likewise hyperbolizes; she loves "more than words can wield the matter" and "Beyond all matter of so much. . . ."

Goneril wished to give the unperceptive Lear an impression of sincerity; E.B.B., no doubt, looked in her heart and wrote. Yet, except for a detail or two added by E.B.B., both said much the same thing. What comes out of this is a lesson in verse-technique: the piling up of abstractions and generalizations

1. From *The Explicator,* IV (October, 1945), 3. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Editors of *The Explicator.*

not only does not carry conviction but gives a positive effect of insincerity. E.B.B.'s sonnet is as embarrassing as all platform rhetoric; she can find no images to realize, to prove, her experience. Ironically, she relies upon personal sincerity to give body to her words, whereas Goneril relies upon comparable words to suggest a body of sincerity. Shakespeare succeeded in his intention, for Goneril took in only Lear; in days of sharp awareness of poetic techniques, E.B.B. should not be taking in anybody. Shakespeare's method in Goneril's speech underlines a basic tenet of modern poetic criticism.

With the gusty protestations quoted above, compare Cordelia's single image and understatement (with the real emphasis ironically concealed in *bond,* a word which Lear fails entirely to understand):

> I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
> According to my bond . . . .

Shakespeare knew precisely what kind of language to use for each sister. E.B.B. could have learned from him.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

SNOW-FLAKES

Out of the bosom of the Air,
    Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,
Over the woodlands brown and bare,
    Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
        Silent, and soft, and slow
        Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take
    Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
Even as the troubled heart doth make
    In the white countenance confession,
        The troubled sky reveals
        The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the air,
    Slowly in silent syllables recorded;
This is the secret of despair,
    Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
        Now whispered and revealed
        To wood and field.

THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

The tide rises, the tide falls,
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;
Along the sea-sands damp and brown
The traveller hastens toward the town,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,
But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;
The little waves, with their soft, white hands,
Efface the footprints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;
The day returns, but nevermore
Returns the traveller to the shore,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

DOROTHY Q.

A Family Portrait

Grandmother's mother: her age, I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less;
Girlish bust, but womanly air;
Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair;
Lips that lover has never kissed;
Taper fingers and slender wrist;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view,—
Look! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust,—
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust!
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell,—
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn,—
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring,—
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?
Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES:
Not the light gossamer stirs with less;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long!
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover,—and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone,—
Edward's and Dorothy's—all their own,—
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago!—
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live ?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid!
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

THE PEAU DE CHAGRIN OF STATE STREET

How beauteous is the bond
In the manifold array
Of its promises to pay,
While the eight per cent it gives
And the rate at which one lives
Correspond!

But at last the bough is bare
Where the coupons one by one
Through their ripening days have run,
And the bond, a beggar now,
Seeks investment anyhow,
Anywhere!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,

Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvelous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.
There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jeweled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,

In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicèan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood

Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

ON POE'S *THE VALLEY OF UNREST* [1]

ROY P. BASLER

THE IMAGERY and music of the poem, as well as the definitive significance of the word "unrest" in the title, suggest symbolism of a psychic state or condition. The general emotional import of the poem has been recognized even by orthodox commentators who tend to identify the valley in supernatural terms as the "place of departed spirits" (Campbell). Although the symbolism is not as explicitly allegorical as in "The Haunted Palace," instructive comparison may be made of the contrasting psychic states symbolized in each: sanity and insanity on the conscious level in "The Haunted Palace," expression and repression on the unconscious level in "The Valley of Unrest."

In the first part (*"Once"*), the silent peaceful valley where the people did not dwell because they had gone into the outer world to war against their enemies, we have a symbol of the psychic state in which emotion, finding an objective, conscious activity under the approval of the superego, is *expressed.* The silent dell is the psyche's secret retreat, safe because unknown to the "enemy" in the outer world, but open to discovery by an "enemy" who defeats hate by turning it to love.

In the second part *("Now")*, the troubled and restless valley, haunted by revenants of its former inhabitants (*i. e.*, dream images), symbolized appropriately as motion without apparent cause, we have a symbol of the unconscious when emotion, denied objective play by the disapproval of the

1. From *The Explicator,* V (Dec., 1946), 25. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Editors of *The Explicator.* The above article also appears in the author's book *Sex, Symbolism, and Psychology in Literature,* published by Rutgers University Press, 1948.

superego, is *repressed.* In the symbol of fear (eternal watchfulness) presented in "the violets there that lie/ In myriad types of the human eye," and the symbol of sorrow in "the lilies there that wave/ And weep above a nameless grave," we have the dual reaction of the psyche to repression—eternal sorrow for the dead (repressed) emotion whose betrayal of the secret valley made a martyrdom necessary, and eternal fear that the valley may be discovered again. The grave is nameless, because as key symbol of the act of repression (to repress is simply to will the censored feeling out of existence so far as consciousness is concerned) it is not consciously recognized for what it is. Poe presents the mysterious valley and grave as seen by "each visitor" (*i.e.*, perceptions on the part of the conscious ego, which occasionally under emotional stress penetrate the realm of the id; note that in the 1831 version "each visitor" is merely "the unhappy," and that in "Ulalume" and other poems of the unconscious Poe presents similar transient, halfway glimpses of the meaning of dreamland under emotional stress). The valley is perceived, but not understood, by the stranger to the realm.

The final version of the poem has an almost purely psychological symbolism where the earlier versions convey a suggestion of traditional moralistic myth. The introductory lines of the 1831 version, which Poe abandoned, link the story of the valley to a hypothetical Syriac myth with suggestions of "Satan's dart" and a "broken heart" as more or less specific hints of guilt related not to a "nameless grave," but merely to "a grave" in the 1831 version, and to "the old forgotten grave" in the *Southern Literary Messenger* version. In the final version the sense of guilt underlying the symbolism is left entirely to the reader's inference, and the imagery conveys primarily the sense of repression and psychic unrest. This shift parallels in interesting fashion Poe's changes of "The Doomed City" to "The City of Sin" to "The City in the Sea," and I believe indicates a growing awareness on Poe's part of the primarily psychological import of his symbols.

The nameless grave contains buried love, and the haunting awareness of this truth, vaguely apprehended by almost any reader, is grounded in universal human experience that repression creates in the unconscious a psychic "place of departed spirits" troubled by an intolerably real though undefined unrest.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an agèd wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race
That hoard and sleep and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known—cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all—
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
    This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
    There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took

The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age has yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

ON TENNYSON'S *TEARS, IDLE TEARS*[1]

CLEANTH BROOKS

ANY account of the poem may very well begin with a consideration of the nature of the tears. Are they *idle* tears? Or are they not rather the most meaningful of tears? Does not the very fact that they are "idle" (that is, tears occasioned by no immediate grief) become in itself a guarantee of the fact that they spring from a deeper, more universal cause?

It would seem so, and that the poet is thus beginning his poem with a paradox. For the third line of the poem indicates that there is no doubt in the speaker's mind about the origin of the tears in some divine despair. They "rise in the heart"—for all that they have been first announced as "idle."

But the question of whether Tennyson is guilty of (or to be complimented upon) a use of paradox may well wait upon further discussion. At this point in our commentary, it is enough to observe that Tennyson has chosen to open his poem with some dramatic boldness—if not with the bold step of equating "idle" with "from the depth of some divine despair," then at least with a bold and violent reversal of the speaker's first characterization of his tears.

The tears "rise in the heart" as the speaker looks upon a scene of beauty and tranquillity. Does looking on the "happy Autumn-fields" bring to mind the days that are no more? The poet does not say so. The tears rise to the eyes in looking on the happy "Autumn-fields" *and* thinking on the days that are no more. The poet himself does not stand responsible for any closer linkage between these actions, though, as a matter of fact, most of us will want to make a closer linkage here. For, if we change "happy Autumn-fields," say, to "happy April-fields," the two terms tend to draw apart. The fact that the fields are autumn-fields which, though happy, point back to something which is over —which is finished—*does* connect them with the past and therefore properly suggests to the observer thoughts about that past.

To sum up: the first stanza has a unity, but it is not a unity which finds its sanctions in the ordinary logic of language. Its sanctions are to be found in the dramatic context, and, to my mind, there alone. Indeed, the stanza suggests the play of the speaker's mind as the tears unexpectedly start, tears for which there is no apparent occasion, and as he searches for an explanation of them. He calls them "idle," but, even as he says "I know not what they mean," he

1. From *The Well Wrought Urn*, copyright, 1947, by Cleanth Brooks. Reprinted by permission of the author and Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., publishers.

realizes that they must spring from the depths of his being—is willing, with his very next words, to associate them with "some divine despair." Moreover, the real occasion of the tears, though the speaker himself comes to realize it only as he approaches the end of the stanza, is the thought about the past. It is psychologically and dramatically right, therefore, that the real occasion should be stated explicitly only with the last line of the stanza.

This first stanza, then, recapitulates the surprise and bewilderment in the speaker's own mind, and sets the problem which the succeeding stanzas are to analyze. The dramatic effect may be described as follows: the stanza seems, not a meditated observation, but a speech begun impulsively—a statement which the speaker has begun before he knows how he will end it.

In the second stanza we are not surprised to have the poet characterize the days that are no more as "sad," but there is some shock in hearing him apply to them the adjective "fresh." Again, the speaker does not pause to explain: the word "fresh" actually begins the stanza. Yet the adjective justifies itself.

The past is fresh as with a dawn freshness—as fresh as the first beam glittering on the sail of an incoming ship. The ship is evidently expected; it brings friends, friends "up from the underworld." On the surface, the comparison is innocent: the "underworld" is merely the antipodes, the world which lies below the horizon—an underworld in the sense displayed in old-fashioned geographies with their sketches illustrating the effects of the curvature of the earth. The sails, which catch the light and glitter, will necessarily be the part first seen of any ship which is coming "up" over the curve of the earth.

But the word "underworld" will necessarily suggest the underworld of Greek mythology, the realm of the shades, the abode of the dead. The attempt to characterize the freshness of the days that are no more has, thus, developed, almost imperceptibly, into a further characterization of the days themselves as belonging, not to our daylight world, but to an "underworld." This suggestion is, of course, strengthened in the lines that follow in which the ship metaphor is reversed so as to give us a picture of sadness: evening, the last glint of sunset light on the sail of a ship

> That sinks with all we love below the verge. . . .

The conjunction of the qualities of sadness and freshness is reinforced by the fact that the same basic symbol—the light on the sails of a ship hull down—has been employed to suggest both qualities. With the third stanza, the process is carried one stage further: the two qualities (with the variant of "strange" for "fresh") are explicitly linked together:

> Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns . . . .

And here the poet is not content to suggest the qualities of sadness and strangeness by means of two different, even if closely related, figures. In this third stanza the special kind of sadness and strangeness is suggested by one and the same figure.

It is a figure developed in some detail. It, too, involves a dawn scene, though ironically so, for the beginning of the new day is to be the beginning of the long night for the dying man. The dying eyes, the poem suggests, have been for some time awake—long enough to have had time to watch the

> . . . casement slowly [grow] a glimmering square . . . .

The dying man, soon to sleep the lasting sleep, is more fully awake than the "half-awaken'd birds" whose earliest pipings come to his dying ears. We know why these pipings are sad; but why are they *strange?* Because to the person hearing a bird's song for the last time, it will seem that he has never before really heard one. The familiar sound will take on a quality of unreality—of strangeness.

If this poem were merely a gently melancholy reverie on the sweet sadness of the past, Stanzas II and III would have no place in the poem. But the poem is no such reverie: the images from the past rise up with a strange clarity and sharpness that shock the speaker. Their sharpness and freshness account for the sudden tears and for the psychological problem with which the speaker wrestles in the poem. If the past would only remain melancholy but dimmed, sad but worn and familiar, we should have no problem and no poem. At least, we should not have *this* poem; we should certainly not have the intensity of the last stanza.

That intensity, if justified, must grow out of a sense of the apparent nearness and intimate presence of what is irrevocably beyond reach: the days that are no more must be more than the conventional "dear, dead days beyond recall." They must be beyond recall, yet alive—tantalizingly vivid and near. It is only thus that we can feel the speaker justified in calling them

> Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
> And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
> On lips that are for others. . . .

It is only thus that we can accept the culminating paradox of

> O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

We have already observed, in the third stanza, how the speaker compares the strangeness and sadness of the past to the sadness of the birds' piping as it sounds to dying ears. There is a rather brilliant ironic contrast involved in the comparison. The speaker, a living man, in attempting to indicate how sad and strange to him are the days of the past, says that they are as sad and strange as is the natural activity of the awakening world to the man who is dying: the dead past seems to the living man as unfamiliar and fresh in its sadness as the living present seems to the dying man. There is more here, however, than a mere, ironic reversal of roles; in each case there is the sense of being irrevocably barred out from the known world.

This ironic contrast, too, accounts for the sense of desperation which runs

through the concluding lines of the poem. The kisses feigned by "hopeless fancy" are made the more precious because of the very hopelessness; but memory takes on the quality of fancy. It is equally hopeless—the kisses can as little be renewed as those "feign'd / On lips that are for others" can be obtained. The realized past has become as fabulous as the unrealizable future. The days that are no more are as dear as the one, as sweet as the other, the speaker says; and it does not matter whether we compare them to the one or to the other or to both: it comes to the same thing.

But the days that are no more are not merely "dear" and "sweet"; they are "deep" and "wild." Something has happened to the grammar here. How can the days be "deep as love" or "wild with all regret"? And what is the status of the exclamation "O Death in Life"? Is it merely a tortured cry like "O God! the days that are no more"? Or is it a loose appositive: "the days that are no more are a kind of death in life?"

The questions are not asked in a censorious spirit, as if there were no justification for Tennyson's license here. But it is important to see how much license the poem requires, and the terms on which the reader decides to accord it justification. What one finds on closer examination is not muddlement but richness. But it is a richness achieved through principles of organization which many an admirer of the poet has difficulty in allowing to the "obscure" modern poet.

For example, how can the days of the past be *deep*? Here, of course, the problem is not very difficult. The past is buried within one: the days that are no more constitute the deepest level of one's being, and the tears that arise from thinking on them may be said to come from the "depth of some divine despair." But how can the days be "wild with all regret"? The extension demanded here is more ambitious. In matter of fact, it is the speaker, the man, who is made wild with regret by thinking on the days.

One can, of course, justify the adjective as a transferred epithet on the model of Vergil's *maestum timorem;* and perhaps this was Tennyson's own conscious justification (if, indeed, the need to justify it ever occurred to him). But one can make a better case than a mere appeal to the authority of an established literary convention. There is a sense in which the man and the remembered days are one and the same. A man is the sum of his memories. The adjective which applies to the man made wild with regret can apply to those memories which make him wild with regret. For, does the man charge the memories with his own passion, or is it the memories that give the emotion to him? If we pursue the matter far enough, we come to a point where the distinction lapses. Perhaps I should say, more accurately, adopting the metaphor of the poem itself, we *descend* to a depth where the distinction lapses. The days that are no more are *deep* and *wild,* buried but not dead—below the surface and unthought of, yet at the deepest core of being, secretly alive.

The past *should* be tame, fettered, brought to heel; it is not. It is capable of breaking forth and coming to the surface. The word "wild" is bold, therefore,

but justified. It reasserts the line of development which has been maintained throughout the earlier stanzas: "fresh," "strange," and now "wild"—all adjectives which suggest passionate, irrational life. The word "wild," thus, not only pulls into focus the earlier paradoxes, but is the final stage in the preparation for the culminating paradox, "O Death in Life."

The last stanza evokes an intense emotional response from the reader. The claim could hardly be made good by the stanza taken in isolation. The stanza leans heavily upon the foregoing stanzas, and the final paradox draws heavily upon the great metaphors in stanzas II and III. This is as it should be. The justification for emphasizing the fact here is this: the poem, for all its illusion of impassioned speech—with the looseness and *apparent* confusion of unpremeditated speech—is very tightly organized. It represents an organic structure; and the intensity of the total effect is a reflection of the total structure.

The reader, I take it, will hardly be disposed to quarrel with the general statement of the theme of the poem as it is given in the foregoing account; and he will probably find himself in accord with this general estimate of the poem's value. But the reader may well find that the amount of attention given to the structure of the poem is irrelevant, if not positively bad. In particular, he may find the emphasis on paradox, ambiguity, and ironic contrast displeasing. He has not been taught to expect these in Tennyson, and he has had the general impression that the presence of these qualities represents the intrusion of alien, "unpoetic" matter.

I have no wish to intellectualize the poem—to make conscious and artful what was actually spontaneous and simple. Nevertheless, the qualities of ironic contrast and paradox *do* exist in the poem; and they *do* have a relation to the poem's dramatic power.

ROBERT BROWNING

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

Gr-r-r—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi! I must hear

Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop; scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt;
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs
—Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
(That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp—
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast! so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to hell, a Manichee?

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On gray paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe;
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in 't?

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine* . . .
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ,*
Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r—you swine!

MY LAST DUCHESS

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat": such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

Rome, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,

And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli,*
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!

For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mort-cloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests.
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a visor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

WALT WHITMAN

ONE'S-SELF I SING[1]

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse,
I say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D[1]

1

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

2

O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

1. From *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, copyright, 1924, by Doubleday & Company, Inc.

4

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.)

5

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground spotting the gray debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

6

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

7

(Nor for you, for one alone,
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring,
For fresh as the morning, thus would I chant a song for you, O sane and sacred death.

All over bouquets of roses,
O death, I cover you over with roses and early lilies,
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,
Copious I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes,
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,
For you and the coffins all of you, O death.)

8

O western orb sailing the heaven,
Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night,
As you droop'd from the sky low down as if to my side, (while the other stars all look'd on,)
As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for something I know not what kept me from sleep,)
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the west how full you were of woe,
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze in the cool transparent night,
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the netherward black of the night,
As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where yon sad orb,
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

9

Sing on there in the swamp,
O singer bashful and tender, I hear your notes, I hear your call,
I hear, I come presently, I understand you,
But a moment I linger, for the lustrous star has detain'd me,
The star my departing comrade holds and detains me.

10

O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Sea-winds blown from east and west,
Blown from the Eastern sea and blown from the Western sea, till there on the prairies meeting,
These and with these and the breath of my chant,
I'll perfume the grave of him I love.

11

O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

Pictures of growing spring and farms and homes,
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray smoke lucid and bright,
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air,
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale green leaves of the trees prolific,
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river, with a wind-dapple here and there,
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line against the sky, and shadows,
And the city at hand with dwellings so dense, and stacks of chimneys,
And all the scenes of life and the workshops, and the workmen homeward returning.

12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
The gentle soft-born measureless light,
The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on you gray-brown bird,
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.
O liquid and free and tender!
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!

You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,)
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,
The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still
Came the carol of the bird.
And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-pack'd cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

15

To the tally of my soul,
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,
With pure deliberate notes spreading filling the night.

Loud in the pines and cedars dim,
Clear in the freshness moist and the swamp-perfume,
And I with my comrades there in the night.
While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,
As to long panoramas of visions.
And I saw askant the armies,
I saw as in noiseless dreams hundreds of battle-flags,
Borne through the smoke of the battles and pierc'd with missiles I saw them,

And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and torn and bloody,
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all in silence,)
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,
And the white skeletons of young men, I saw them,
I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
The living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd,
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

16

Passing the visions, passing the night,
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands,
Passing the song of the hermit bird and the tallying song of my soul,
Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying ever-altering song,
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and falling, flooding the night,
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning, and yet again bursting with joy,
Covering the earth and filling the spread of the heaven,
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

ON WHITMAN'S *WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D* [1]

F. O. MATTHIESSEN

WHITMAN'S power of giving mythical proportions to his material was best sustained in his tribute to Lincoln. The controlling idea for his other poems about the Civil War, as he had outlined it in his letter to O'Connor only three months before the President's assassination, was the time's "large conflicting fluctuations of despair and hope," "the unprecedented anguish of wounded and suffering," and yet also, sounding through lulls in the chaos like the steady beat of a drum, the "clear notes of faith and triumph." That confidence was now put to its severest test, and the result was "When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloom'd." Like all of *Drum-Taps* this was written so much under the stress of a dominant emotion that it was not revised, except in the slightest details, after its first printing in 1865. In this period of his most intense feeling Whitman also reverted to the hackneyed cadences and imagery of his first newspaper verse in producing "O Captain! My Captain!" That this ballad, wholly untypical of his poems, should have been the only one to have found its way to the great world of grammar school readers is ample and ironic comment on how far Whitman's authentic idiom was from even the rudimentary means by which a wide audience is reached.

In his later reminiscent lecture about the President (1879), he said that "to the complete limning of this man's future portrait" there will be needed "the eyes and brains and finger-touch of Plutarch and Aeschylus and Michel Angelo, assisted by Rabelais." His poem enlisted no such powers, but was composed as an elegy "for the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands." Whitman was not concerned with the expression of merely personal emotion; he wanted to give it an objective existence as broad as the country over which the coffin passed on its journey to Illinois. We are able to glimpse in a different context some of the original impressions that lay behind his symbols here —a rare thing with Whitman's poems, since he kept no regular journal. He had written down, a month before, what he had experienced on the day of Lincoln's second inauguration. He noted that the President looked very worn and tired, the lines "of vast responsibilities . . . and demands of life and death, cut deeper than ever upon his dark brown face; yet all the old goodness, tenderness, sadness, and canny shrewdness, underneath the furrows. (I never see that man without feeling that he is one to become personally attach'd to, for his combination of purest, heartiest tenderness, and native western form of manliness.)"

In another paragraph Whitman wandered along about the weather, which he thought to have been unusually bad during the past several months, and

1. From *American Renaissance* by F. O. Matthiessen. Copyright, 1941, by Oxford University Press.

wondered whether there might not be some strange correspondence between its tempestuous violence and the upheaval of war. Then he noted that in the afternoon, just before the President had come out on the portico of the Capitol, the deluging rain of the morning had let up, leaving the air "so calm, so bathed with flooding splendor from heaven's most excellent sun, with atmosphere of sweetness; so clear, it show'd the stars, long, long before they were due." This led him on to remember that, in spells of sharpest contrast with the storms, "nor earth nor sky ever knew spectacles of superber beauty than some of the nights lately here. The western star, Venus, in the earlier hours of evening, has never been so large, so clear; it seems as if it told something, as if it held rapport indulgent with humanity, with us Americans." He ended his account of the day by saying that he had been looking up at the "dark blue, the transparent night" when he had heard a bugle sounding tattoo in one of the army hospitals, where the wounded were "lying in their cots, and many a sick boy come down to the war from Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and the rest."

There is no description of Lincoln in the poem itself, for it is entirely given up to "sane and sacred death." Yet Whitman asked, in lines whose rhythmical repetitions were all but Biblical,

> O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?
> And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the walls,
> To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

And the pictures that ensued, of "growing spring" on the farms with "the gray smoke lucid and bright," of the breast of a river with "a wind-dapple here and there," of Manhattan's spires and Ohio's shores, were crowned with the light of "the most excellent sun so calm and haughty . . . enveloping man and land," both South and North. The poet may there have been unconsciously repeating a phrase, the broad sound of which had appealed to him. But he made an explicit reference back to his feelings on the day of the inauguration in the section that began:

> O western orb sailing the heaven,
> Now I know what you must have meant as a month since I walk'd,
> As I walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,
> As I saw you had something to tell as you bent to me night after night.

Those lines may be adulterated with some of the least satisfactory elements of the poem, in the use of "orb," an orator's word, which seems always to have pleased Whitman as it rolled from his mouth; and particularly in the pathetic fallacy. But as he continued the passage, the poet freed himself from the stilted fancy of the star's bending to him, and saw it in its own motion:

> As my soul in its trouble dissatisfied sank, as where yon sad orb,
> Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

What has taken place through the fusion of Whitman's materials is that the planet whose radiance had so impressed him a month before has become for him now "O powerful western fallen star!" It has become the symbol, in its disappearance into the dark, for the President himself.

Whitman does not handle his subject primarily by objective descriptions, but by thematic use of three primary symbols—the lilac, the star, and the song of the thrush—which are repeated with the most subtle ordonnance that he ever managed. They are introduced in the brief opening section:

> When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
> And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
> I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.
>
> Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
> Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
> And thought of him I love.

They are then successively extended in the next three sections. The "black murk" that engulfed the star is immediately equated with the "harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul." The lilacs "fronting an old farm-house near the white-wash'd palings" are lent a special relevance by their "heart-shaped leaves of rich green." They have come to Whitman from his Long Island childhood, and their use in the poem may unconsciously have been suggested to him by his having been at home in Brooklyn on the day of the assassination, alone with his mother. (". . . we heard the news very early in the morning. Mother prepared breakfast—and other meals afterward—as usual, but not a mouthful was eaten all day by either of us. We each drank half a cup of coffee; that was all. Little was said. We got every newspaper morning and evening . . . and pass'd them silently to each other.") The delicately colored blossoms grew close to nearly every country home. The bush was right by the windows at Whitman's birthplace at West Hills, and its absence in Mount's Long Island scene is exceptional. In fact the lilac is almost as native a symbol as the common grass itself.

The "thought of him I love" is given symbolic concretion by being merged with song, with the note of the solitary hermit-thrush from the swamp-cedars, which had always meant so much to Whitman. Here its painful ecstasy becomes "death's outlet song of life,"

> for well dear brother I know,
> If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st surely die.

Thus it merges also with the poet's song of grief, through the release of which he finds his way back to acceptance and peace.

The fifth and sixth sections present the picture of the coffin in its night and day journey past depots and streets and over the breast of the land, met everywhere by solemn crowds. Standing among these in his imagination, as the

train slowly passes, the poet bestows his "sprig of lilac." But not "for you, for one alone," he says, as he again develops this symbol's theme. He would bring signs of the rebirth of the year to no one man but to all in his chant "for you O sane and sacred death." It is notable that, in deep fulfilment of his instinct for universality, Whitman nowhere in the poem mentions Lincoln by name, not even in the next section (the eighth) where, in the middle of his song, he introduces his reminiscence of the star a month ago. Then he completes his round of symbols for the second time by telling the thrush to sing on in the swamp, that he will come there presently, but that the star, "my departing comrade holds and detains me."

At this point he breaks off to ask,

> O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I loved?
> And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul that has gone?
> And what shall my perfume be for the grave of him I love?

Having bid the sea-winds from both east and west to meet on the prairies, he asks, in like form, his question about the pictures, and decks the burial house with them in the twenty lines of his eleventh and twelfth sections. He then turns once more to the thrush, to its "reedy song, loud human song." The poet's voice now matches that of the bird, as, in the longest section, he launches into his aria to "the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death," and urges, "When thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly." But before this, in addition to declaring his carol a brother to that of the thrush, he has felt all three of his symbols coalesce into an organic whole:

> O liquid and free and tender!
> O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
> You only I hear—yet the star holds me, (but will soon depart,)
> Yet the lilac with mastering odor holds me.

He has blended the impressions of his different senses, of hearing, sight, and smell, as they do blend in an individual's full impression of a moment. Moreover, in "liquid" he has suggested the kind of touch and movement that most appealed to him, just as in "wild and loose" he has characterized the kind of form he felt at home with, and in "free and tender" the emotional range he could encompass best. The symbolists were to carry much farther the merging of sensations, to the point of transference of one into another, as of color into sound or smell. But Whitman's greatest act of pioneering was in helping the modern sensibility feel at home in the natural world. He was able to suggest the interdependence of man and nature since his "trinity" of symbols sprang from the forces of earth, no matter what spiritual implications they could rise to in his hymn to rebirth through fertility. In the closing lines of the poem the three are resumed again, but it is the poet's "powerful psalm" of tribute that now emerges transcendent over the others:

Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

One other strain had been given development in the penultimate section. The "unprecedented anguish of wounded and suffering" that Whitman had declared to be central to the design of his war poems had found very little foreshadowing in the optimistic glow of the earlier *Leaves*. Among other war poets of the day, despite Lowell's set rhetorical piece in the Commemoration Ode for the Harvard dead, only Melville stressed the tragic purification through terror and pity that could be gained from the disaster of war. Whitman showed humanity as broad as Melville's in his concern for equal treatment for the South. He expressed it in "Reconciliation":

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost . . .
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead . . .

In his grief for Lincoln he understood where the real anguish lay:

I saw the debris and debris of all the slain soldiers of the war,
But I saw they were not as was thought,
They themselves were fully at rest, they suffer'd not,
But the living remain'd and suffer'd, the mother suffer'd,
And the wife and the child and the musing comrade suffer'd
And the armies that remained suffer'd.

TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER[1]

Thee for my recitative,
Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow, the winter-day declining,
Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing and thy beat convulsive,
Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery steel,
Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting rods, gyrating, shuttling at thy sides,
Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now tapering in the distance,
Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front,
Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged with delicate purple,
The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy smoke-stack,
Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the tremulous twinkle of thy wheels,
Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following,
Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet steadily careering;
Type of the modern—emblem of motion and power—pulse of the continent,
For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse, even as here I see thee,

1. From *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, copyright, 1924, by Doubleday & Company, Inc.

With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling snow,
By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes,
By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.

Fierce-throated beauty!
Roll through my chant with all thy lawless music, thy swinging lamps at night,
Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing, rumbling like an earthquake, rousing all,
Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding,
(No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine,)
Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills return'd,
Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the lakes,
To the free skies unpent and glad and strong.

GOOD-BYE MY FANCY![1]

Good-bye my Fancy!
Farewell dear mate, dear love!
I'm going away, I know not where,
Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,
So Good-bye my Fancy.

Now for my last—let me look back a moment;
The slower fainter ticking of the clock is in me,
Exit, nightfall, and soon the heart-thud stopping.

Long have we lived, joy'd, caress'd together;
Delightful!—now separation—Good-bye my Fancy.

Yet let me not be too hasty,
Long indeed have we lived, slept, filter'd, become really blended into one;
Then if we die we die together, (yes, we'll remain one,)
If we go anywhere we'll go together to meet what happens,
May-be we'll be better off and blither, and learn something,
May-be it is yourself now really ushering me to the true songs, (who knows?)
May-be it is you the mortal knob really undoing, turning—so now finally,
Good-bye—and hail! my Fancy.

1. From *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, copyright, 1924, by Doubleday & Company, Inc.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropped herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanched green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gypsy-lore,

And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deemed, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life inquired;
Whereat he answered that the gypsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learned, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and returned no more.—
But rumors hung about the country-side,
That the lost scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gypsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moored to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,

And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leafed, white anemone,
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves.
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
Where most the gypsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;

So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travelers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill,
And gained the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turned once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gypsy tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers,
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,

And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas! have not.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose tomorrow the ground won today—
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it!—but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most hast suffered, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipped patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair—
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,

Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gayly as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its head o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silvered branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest,
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,

Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery: we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

ON ARNOLD'S *DOVER BEACH* [1]

JOHN P. KIRBY

PROFESSORS TINKER AND LOWRY in *The Poetry of Matthew Arnold* (pp. 173–175) have pointed out the evidence that establishes the writing of the last nine lines as previous to the rest of the poem—the separate draft of the first 28 lines from the library of T. G. Wise, and the shift in metaphor from the sea and the tides to the "darkling plain."

As critics we accept these findings, however, without inferring that the commentators meant necessarily to suggest a serious lack of organic unity in the poem, or a lamentable lapse in the continuity of the theme in lines 29–30, sometimes deemed an inappropriate shift in emphasis.

It seems unnecessary to examine in detail the especially happy wedding of the imagery, rhythm, and alliteration to the theme in the first 28 lines (see, for example, Theodore Morrison's "Dover Beach Revisited"). The irony of the poem lies essentially in the contrast between the calm sea, the tranquil moonlight scene, and the restless incertitude of the speaker. If this contrast be kept in mind, it will be evident that the lines of the last stanza, "for the world,/Which lies before us like a land of dreams" refers to the moonlit cliffs of the first stanza. In line 33, the assertion that the world has "neither joy, nor love, nor light" closes significantly with a reference to *light*, a return not only upon the "land of dreams" and the earlier description of the moonlit cliffs, but even to the "bright girdle" of line 23. The "Ah, love" of line 29 may well be anticipated in the directive of line 6, "Come to the window."

The simile of the armies struggling confusedly is not really a discontinuity in image, for the "darkling plain" continues the contrast between the bright land- and seascape and the gloomy moral chaos of the world. Still more sig-

1. From *The Explicator*, I (April, 1943), 42. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Editors of *The Explicator*.

nificantly, it develops Arnold's imagery further: the "sea of faith" has *retreated,* its "bright girdle" has been dissipated, and only the "naked shingles of the world" are left in darkness; that is, a dark plain of detritus remains where "ignorant armies clash by night." It is even possible that Arnold had some geological phenomena in mind (his use of "shingles"). The more recurrent rhymes of the last stanza are the poetical device for focusing the reader's attention upon the "message" of the poem.

It may be worth noting that the last stanza illustrates a method Arnold uses in other poems: a conclusion which first states the theme explicitly (cf. lines 221–230 in "The Scholar-Gypsy") and then closes with a striking figure of speech, the "end note of relief." Surely no one would ever assert a lack of organic unity in "The Scholar-Gypsy" because Arnold shifts his figurative language from the Oxford countryside to the Mediterranean Sea; yet there the change may seem less justified than in "Dover Beach."

GEORGE MEREDITH

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT[1]

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their specter of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

1. Reprinted from *Poems* by George Meredith; copyright, 1897, by George Meredith, 1925 by W. M. Meredith; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

EMILY DICKINSON

A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK[1]

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,—
They looked like frightened beads, I thought
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim.

THE CHARIOT[1]

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;

1. From *Poems by Emily Dickinson,* edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company.

We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

ON DICKINSON'S *THE CHARIOT* [1]

ALLEN TATE

ONE of the perfect poems in English is *The Chariot,* and it exemplifies better than anything else [Emily Dickinson] wrote the special quality of her mind. I think it will illuminate the tendency of this discussion. If the word great means anything in poetry, this poem is one of the greatest in the English language; it is flawless to the last detail. The rhythm charges with movement the pattern of suspended action back of the poem. Every image is precise and, moreover, not merely beautiful, but inextricably fused with the central idea. Every image extends and intensifies every other. The third stanza especially shows Miss Dickinson's power to fuse, into a single order of perception, a heterogeneous series: the children, the grain, and the setting sun (time) have the same degree of credibility; the first subtly preparing for the last. The sharp *gazing* before *grain* instils into nature a kind of cold vitality of which the qualitative richness has infinite depth. The content of death in the poem eludes forever any explicit definition. He is a gentleman taking a lady out for a drive. But note the restraint that keeps the poet from carrying this so far that it is ludicrous and incredible, and note the subtly interfused erotic motive, which the idea of death has presented to every romantic poet, love being a symbol interchangeable with death. The terror of death is objectified through this figure of the genteel driver, who is made ironically to serve the end of Immortality. This is the heart of the poem: she has presented a typical Christian theme in all its final irresolution, without making any final statement about it. There is no solution to the problem; there can be only a statement of it in the full context of intellect and feeling. A construction of the human will, elaborated with all the abstracting powers of the mind, is put to the concrete test of experience: the idea of immortality is confronted with the

1. From *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas* by Allen Tate, pp. 13–16. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

fact of physical disintegration. We are not told what to think; we are told to look at the situation.

The framework of the poem is, in fact, the two abstractions, mortality and eternity, which are made to associate in perfect equality with the images: she sees the ideas, and thinks the perceptions. She did, of course, nothing of the sort; but we must use the logical distinctions, even to the extent of paradox, if we are to form any notion of this rare quality of mind. She could not in the proper sense think at all, and unless we prefer the feeble poetry of moral ideas that flourished in New England in the eighties, we must conclude that her intellectual deficiency contributed at least negatively to her great distinction. Miss Dickinson is probably the only Anglo-American poet of her century whose work exhibits the perfect literary situation—in which is possible the fusion of sensibility and thought. Unlike her contemporaries, she never succumbed to her ideas, to easy solutions, to her private desires.

INDIAN SUMMER[1]

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

1. From *Poems of Emily Dickinson,* edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company.

'TWAS LIKE A MAELSTROM[1]

'Twas like a maelstrom, with a notch
That nearer every day
Kept narrowing its boiling wheel
Until the agony

Toyed coolly with the final inch
Of your delirious hem,
And you dropped, lost, when something broke
And let you from a dream

As if a goblin with a gauge
Kept measuring the hours,
Until you felt your second weigh
Helpless in his paws,

And not a sinew, stirred, could help,
And sense was getting numb,
When God remembered, and the fiend
Let go then, overcome;

As if your sentence stood pronounced,
And you were frozen led
From dungeon's luxury of doubt
To gibbets and the dead;

And when the film had stitched your eyes,
A creature gasped "Reprieve!"
Which anguish was the utterest then,
To perish, or to live?

1. "'Twas Like a Maelstrom" from *Bolts of Melody* by Emily Dickinson. Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Millicent Todd Bingham. Copyright, 1945, by Millicent Todd Bingham. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers.

THOMAS HARDY

THE DARKLING THRUSH[1]

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was specter-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted night
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

1. From *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*. Copyright, 1925, by The Macmillan Company. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

THE WINDHOVER[1]

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin,
dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend. the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valor and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plow down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

PIED BEAUTY[1]

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plow;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow, sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

1. From *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* By permission of the Oxford University Press, London, publishers.

SPRING AND FALL: TO A YOUNG CHILD[1]

MÁRGARÉT, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leáves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Áh! ás the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sórrow's springs áre the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It ís the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

I WAKE AND FEEL THE FELL OF DARK[1]

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

1. From *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* By permission of the Oxford University Press, London, publishers.

A. E. HOUSMAN

BE STILL, MY SOUL, BE STILL[1]

Be still, my soul, be still; the arms you bear are brittle,
Earth and high heaven are fixt of old and founded strong.
Think rather,—call to thought, if now you grieve a little,
The days when we had rest, O soul, for they were long.

Men loved unkindness then, but lightless in the quarry
I slept and saw not; tears fell down, I did not mourn;
Sweat ran and blood sprang out and I was never sorry:
Then it was well with me, in days ere I was born.

Now, and I muse for why and never find the reason,
I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun.
Be still, be still, my soul; it is but for a season.
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done.

Ay, look: high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation;
All thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are vain.
Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation—
Oh why did I awake? when shall I sleep again?

LOVELIEST OF TREES[1]

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

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1. From *A Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc., and The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman, and Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., publishers of A. E. Housman's *Collected Poems.*

ON WENLOCK EDGE[1]

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood:
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare:
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet.
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:
To-day the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

TERENCE, THIS IS STUPID STUFF[1]

"Terence, this is stupid stuff.
You eat your victuals fast enough;
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,
To see the rate you drink your beer.
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,
It gives a chap the belly-ache.
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;
It sleeps well, the hornèd head:
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now
To hear such tunes as killed the cow.
Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme

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Your friends to death before their time
Moping melancholy mad:
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad."

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,
There's brisker pipes than poetry.
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,
Or why was Burton built on Trent?
Oh, many a peer of England brews
Livelier liquor than the Muse,
And malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think:
Look into the pewter pot
To see the world as the world's not.
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past:
The mischief is that 'twill not last.
Oh, I have been to Ludlow fair
And left my necktie God knows where,
And carried half-way home, or near,
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:
Then the world seemed none so bad,
And I myself a sterling lad;
And down in lovely muck I've lain,
Happy till I woke again.
Then I saw the morning sky:
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;
The world, it was the old world yet,
I was I, my things were wet,
And nothing now remained to do
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still
Much good, but much less good than ill,
And while the sun and moon endure
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
I'd face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good.
'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:
Out of a stem that scored the hand
I wrung it in a weary land.
But take it: if the smack is sour,

The better for the embittered hour;
It should do good to heart and head
When your soul is in my soul's stead;
And I will friend you, if I may,
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:
There, when kings will sit to feast,
They get their fill before they think
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.
He gathered all that springs to birth
From the many-venomed earth;
First a little, thence to more,
He sampled all her killing store;
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
Sate the king when healths went round.
They put arsenic in his meat
And stared aghast to watch him eat;
They poured strychnine in his cup
And shook to see him drink it up:
They shook, they stared as white's their shirt:
Them it was their poison hurt.
—I tell the tale that I heard told.
Mithridates, he died old.

1887[1]

From Clee to heaven the beacon burns,
The shires have seen it plain,
From north and south the sign returns,
And beacons burn again.

Look left, look right, the hills are bright,
The dales are light between,
Because 'tis fifty years tonight
That God has saved the Queen.

Now, when the flame they watch not towers
About the soil they trod,
Lads, we'll remember friends of ours
Who shared the work with God.

1. From *A Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman by permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., and The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman and Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., publishers of A. E. Housman's *Collected Poems*.

To skies that knit their heartstrings right,
To fields that bred them brave,
The saviors come not home tonight:
Themselves they could not save.

It dawns in Asia, tombstones show
And Shropshire names are read;
And the Nile spills his overflow
Beside the Severn's dead.

We pledge in peace by farm and town
The Queen they served in war,
And fire the beacons up and down
The land they perished for.

"God save the Queen" we living sing,
From height to height 'tis heard;
And with the rest your voices ring,
Lads of the Fifty-third.

Oh, God will save her, fear you not:
Be you the men you've been,
Get you the sons your fathers got,
And God will save the Queen.

ON HOUSMAN'S *1887* [1]

CHARLES CHILD WALCUTT

THE statement and experience of this poem are deceptively simple. The deception depends upon the fact that the obvious and accessible meaning satisfies the reader so completely that he may not feel an impulse to investigate further; or, to put it less subjectively, the various levels of meaning in "1887" do not come through with equal ease. Let us, then, first consider what I take to be the poem's most accessible meaning, from which we may turn to some of its less obvious aspects.

A dominant characteristic of "1887" is grandeur. "From Clee to heaven" opens land and sky out broadly. Later the flame "towers about the soil." We turn easily to Asia and the Nile and back with a stride to the Severn; and from Housman's country lads to the Queen. We conceive the British Empire, socially and spatially. Burners of bonfires in rural England are aware of their

1. Charles Child Walcutt, "Housman and the Empire: An Analysis of '1887.'" *College English*, V (February, 1944), 255–258. A paper read at The English Institute. Reprinted here by permission of the author and the Editors of *College English*.

broad Empire. The fiftieth year of Victoria's reign, which they are celebrating, expands with security and permanence.

With the third stanza, however, and just as the vigor and bright exuberance of the lines are reaching a climax, comes the first bitter dash of irony; it is introduced by an abrupt shift of tone and takes advantage of this feeling of spaciousness that has been established:

> Now, when the flame they watch not towers
> About the soil they trod,
> Lads, we'll remember friends of ours
> Who shared the work with God.

"Shared," of course, mocks the conception of God's saving the Queen: it does not mock the so casually mentioned "friends" who shared that work. But grief triumphs immediately; irony is abandoned, and the question of who should have credit is swept aside as the lads are praised without reserve in terms both homespun and heroic:

> To skies that knit their heartstrings right,
> To fields that bred them brave,

And now even the irony of the third stanza is obliterated by the brilliant, audacious stroke of identifying the soldiers who have died abroad with the Christ who as a part of the Trinity would rightfully "share the work with God." The irony, of course, is not forgotten, nor is the bitterness mitigated by the reference to the torment of the crucifixion; but the latter enormously magnifies the heroic proportions of the soldiers and their task.

> The saviors come not home tonight:
> Themselves they could not save.

We recall: "In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others, himself he cannot save" (Mark 15.18).

I have been emphasizing the grandeur which swells through this poem because I believe that Emerson's statement, "The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics," applies to poetry. Action is equaled by reaction. The power of the irony and bitterness corresponds to the magnitude of the situation. When Housman has sufficiently enlarged our perceptions, he achieves a countermovement of similar intensity. The scale is maintained now, as we are taken with giant strides across the world:

> It dawns in Asia, tombstones show
> And Shropshire names are read;
> And the Nile spills his overflow
> Beside the Severn's dead.

"Spills" suggests plenitude, opulence, the superabundance of the Empire's power. It also suggests an extravagance and lavishness of power. We are entirely in the realm of grandeur until we come to "overflow," which adds to the sense of abundant power a recognition of the attitude of, I presume, unspecified empire-builders. To them soldiers are extra men, common people, idle, hungry mouths—overflow legitimately to be spilled in Asia for the profits of empire. This conception of wanton plenitude arises from the whole poem; it does not compete with, but rather builds upon, the expansion of consciousness from Shropshire to the Nile. And the latter is needed to carry us on to the supreme and relieved bitterness of the final stanza:

> Oh, God will save her, fear you not:
> Be you the men you've been,
> Get you the sons your fathers got,
> And God will save the Queen.

This answers the hypocrisy of those who glibly thank God for what has consumed the lives of uncounted Shropshire lads—and the deeper hypocrisy of pretending that God has anything to do with such business.

So far I have presented "1887" as satire on the hypocrisy of empire. This is only one level. It is also complacent, heroic, elegiac, remorseful, sad, and pastoral. It is heroic, with something of the complacency inevitable to an Englishman writing in 1887. The protest is made from the vantage of peace, power, and security. If lads have died, they have not done so in vain. The grandeur which serves as a foil for the irony is also a rock in itself; its impression of national well-being remains unshaken. There are many living for a few dead. It is almost ungrateful to weigh the cost, for the Empire flourishes and brave lads now pursue the arts of peace. The historical past is always a part of the texture of life in the present, which it colors with many sorts of meanings. Traditions of valor are thus an essential part of Victoria's golden jubilee. Without them there would be no impulse to fire the beacons of celebration. What this all comes to is that Housman does not imply through his final bitterness against the hypocrisy that the entire process is intolerable. On the contrary, the historical process is an inevitable one, of which all the celebrants are a part. Britain's might is destined, like an aspect of nature. And so the complacency which I have defined shades off into the elegiac tone. What has happened must have happened, to be observed with pride and despair and resignation. The poet is sad and bitter, yes, but not indignant. He accepts the situation, sharply though he may wish to reinterpret it.

Close to these levels, yet distinct from them, is a sense of guilt. It appears first in the sharp antithesis of the sixth stanza. There has been a full stop and rest as the reader dwells upon the finality and opulence of

> And the Nile spills his overflow
> Beside the Severn's dead.

The word "dead" is the first direct statement of what had previously been given metaphorically or merely suggested. We resume after this pause on a lower key:

> We pledge in peace by farm and town
> The Queen they served in war.

The pronounced alliteration on "pledge in peace" underlines the deprecatory, almost apologetic, note: It is easy enough to pledge devotion in peace, by homely farm and town. The words suggest a comfortable littleness which in contrast to Asia and the Nile shrinks the moral stature of the home-stayers. With the next two lines the contrast is sharpened:

> And fire the beacons up and down
> The land they perished for.

Lighting bonfires is scarcely heroic; it makes a sad contrast with the deeds of the dead, and the futility of the celebration reflects a further irony on the futility of the sacrifice. The alliteration of "perished" with "pledge in peace" emphasizes the distance between the two. Bitterness here becomes self-condemning: the celebrants are shamefaced; and the idea is given again with contrasting words as we go from "perished" to the next stanza:

> "God save the Queen" we living sing;

The saviors have perished; we living sing "God save the Queen"; and we cringe from our own brisk hypocrisy. I believe some of this feeling is concentrated, with added meanings, in the rich ambiguity of "ring." In the first place, we cannot be sure whether its mood is indicative or imperative—a statement of fact or a derisive command. The statement would convey awareness of the folly of those surviving soldiers who do not realize how they have been duped; also the accusation that they participate morally in empire by lending it their support; also the indication that "with the rest" they are like the rest; also a tone of fatalistic, elegiac acceptance and pity for these "innocents"; and, finally, a thought for the dead lads of the Fifty-third Regiment, who speak through the situation. The derisive command conveys the same ideas with an ironical accent, adding to the texture of the situation by causing the reader to dwell upon the various possible meanings.

The meter contributes to the quality I have noticed in stanzas VI and VII. We resume, I said, with a lower key in VI, but, though muted, the movement of

> We pledge in peace by farm and town
> The Queen they served in war,

is also almost orotund in its firm regularity. It comes out too easily and emphasizes the complacency in security, the pomp and circumstance underlying the ceremony in which they are engaged. Thus its pronounced beat sounds hollow rather than stately because it comes so close after the grandeur of the two pre-

vious lines. In the next two lines the pace quickens with the thought, and the reader races from beacon to beacon; but, needing a heavy beat to confirm the pattern, he comes down hard on "perished," and the mock pomp of the first two lines is abruptly exposed.

We have, then, condemnation balanced by a sense of guilt; complacency in power balanced by hatred of hypocrisy; the elegiac recognition of the inevitability of historical processes balanced by contempt and pity for the folly of the participants. I must even raise the question here as to whether Housman's feeling for this final irony is not rendered—or enriched—by his use, in lines 15 and 16, of a myth of sacrifice which he probably did not accept any more literally than the pagan myths he knew so well. Perhaps the figure is not, in every respect, audacious.

These tensions are what maintain the psychic or aesthetic objectivity of "1887." It is not propaganda because, far from inciting the reader to action, it does not even suggest a solution to the "evil" upon which it turns. And yet, for all my weighing of these balancing tendencies, the poem does not, actually, balance. Folly and stupidity glow darkly through it and the further conviction that man is doomed ever to be his own worst enemy—that the inadequacy of life to great spirits is due to the inadequacy of most men, a failing which the great spirits share by virtue of their inability ever to change it. The poem ends with a bitterness so direct and intense as to be almost painful. An earnest Anglophobe might take it for a tract, but he would be mistaking Housman's dissatisfaction with mankind for an attack on Britain.

I should like, in closing, to consider some of the respects in which "1887" is a version of pastoral. It employs the convention of expressing the complex through the simple. It implies that these matters are too intricate for the simple man at the same time that it demonstrates his natural ability to cut through the verbiage and ceremony of the upper classes. It identifies the poet with the country soldier and yet makes us aware that this identification is the elaborate pretense of a man who is actually far above the moral level of the ruling caste. It employs the heroic-pastoral device of making the simple man seem absolutely right and good by associating natural rightness and goodness with the simple aspects of his being that are revealed in the poem. The simplicity of the language, likewise, while it suits the pastoral mode, has striking heroic qualities that depend upon the noble directness of the diction and the earthiness of the figures. Only the combined humility and impertinence of the pastoral swain, for example, could carry off the reference to the Savior, surmounting the initial distrust and incredulity that such an image excites and then building the tone up to unequivocal grandeur. (Again I raise the question of whether there is not also an element of mockery and cynicism in this figure.) This image is prepared for by reference to "skies that knit their heartstrings right." "Knit" suggests hardihood, homespun directness, essentially physical qualities, which are transferred to the moral sphere by the force of the common man's uncritical "right." We must feel that he has nature on his side and

that his simple "right" springs from his direct access to truth. The verse, finally, contributes here. The ballad stanza is by nature direct and unsophisticated, and its use establishes such a tone. Yet Housman employs it with an ease and flexibility that laugh at his pretense of humility. After the facile iambics of the first two stanzas we see an abrupt shift:

> Now, when the flame they watch not towers.

Here the accent on "now" is dramatic, thoughtful, and in a sense innocent in its obviousness. There is also in this line a lowering of the main vowels ("watch," "towers," "about," "trod") that complements the deepening of the tone. The bitterness of the final stanza is sharpened by the heavy initial accents on "Be" and "Get" in lines 2 and 3; and the brusque alliteration of "God" and "get" contributes powerfully to the idea which receives its most forceful statement here. Such expert metrical effects, in conjunction with the pretended naiveté of the ballad measure, are merely a further instance of the pastoral vein which so much enriches the ironic texture of "1887."

W. B. YEATS

IN MEMORY OF MAJOR ROBERT GREGORY[1]

I

Now that we're almost settled in our house
I'll name the friends that cannot sup with us
Beside a fire of turf in th' ancient tower,
And having talked to some late hour
Climb up the narrow winding stair to bed:
Discoverers of forgotten truth
Or mere companions of my youth,
All, all are in my thoughts to-night being dead.

II

Always we'd have the new friend meet the old
And we are hurt if either friend seem cold,
And there is salt to lengthen out the smart
In the affections of our heart,
And quarrels are blown up upon that head;
But not a friend that I would bring
This night can set us quarrelling,
For all that come into my mind are dead.

1. From *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York, 1933), pp. 150–154. Last copyright holder (1940), Bertha Georgie Yeats. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

III

Lionel Johnson comes the first to mind,
That loved his learning better than mankind,
Though courteous to the worst; much falling he
Brooded upon sanctity
Till all his Greek and Latin learning seemed
A long blast upon the horn that brought
A little nearer to his thought
A measureless consummation that he dreamed.

IV

And that enquiring man John Synge comes next,
That dying chose the living world for text
And never could have rested in the tomb
But that, long travelling, he had come
Towards nightfall upon certain set apart
In a most desolate stony place,
Towards nightfall upon a race
Passionate and simple like his heart.

V

And then I think of old George Pollexfen,
In muscular youth well known to Mayo men
For horsemanship at meets or at racecourses,
That could have shown how pure-bred horses
And solid men, for all their passion, live
But as the outrageous stars incline
By opposition, square and trine;
Having grown sluggish and contemplative.

VI

They were my close companions many a year,
A portion of my mind and life, as it were,
And now their breathless faces seem to look
Out of some old picture-book;
I am accustomed to their lack of breath,
But not that my dear friend's dear son,
Our Sidney and our perfect man,
Could share in that discourtesy of death.

VII

For all things the delighted eye now sees
Were loved by him; the old storm-broken trees
That cast their shadows upon road and bridge;

The tower set on the stream's edge;
The ford where drinking cattle make a stir
Nightly, and startled by that sound
The water-hen must change her ground;
He might have been your heartiest welcomer.

VIII

When with the Galway foxhounds he would ride
From Castle Taylor to the Roxborough side
Or Esserkelly plain, few kept his pace;
At Mooneen he had leaped a place
So perilous that half the astonished meet
Had shut their eyes; and where was it
He rode a race without a bit?
And yet his mind outran the horses' feet.

IX

We dreamed that a great painter had been born
To cold Clare rock and Galway rock and thorn,
To that stern colour and that delicate line
That are our secret discipline
Wherein the gazing heart doubles her might.
Soldier, scholar, horseman, he,
And yet he had the intensity
To have published all to be a world's delight.

X

What other could so well have counselled us
In all lovely intricacies of a house
As he that practised or that understood
All work in metal or in wood,
In moulded plaster or in carven stone?
Soldier, scholar, horseman, he,
And all he did done perfectly
As though he had but that one trade alone.

XI

Some burn damp faggots, others may consume
The entire combustible world in one small room
As though dried straw, and if we turn about
The bare chimney is gone black out
Because the work had finished in that flare.
Soldier, scholar, horseman, he,

As 'twere all life's epitome.
What made us dream that he could comb gray hair?

XII

I had thought, seeing how bitter is that wind
That shakes the shutter, to have brought to mind
All those that manhood tried, or childhood loved
Or boyish intellect approved,
With some appropriate commentary on each;
Until imagination brought
A fitter welcome; but a thought
Of that late death took all my heart for speech.

ON YEATS'S *IN MEMORY OF MAJOR ROBERT GREGORY* [1]

MARION WITT

WHEN Major Robert Gregory was killed leading his air squadron on January 23, 1918, Yeats was moved to write at once of the son of his old and dear friend. His note of appreciation was printed in the *Observer*, February 17, 1918, and reprinted in America in the *Little Review* in November of the same year. This almost unknown tribute, later to be concentrated into the praise of the dead soldier in the last six stanzas of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," shows Yeats in his frequent habit of writing first in prose and then transmuting his concept into poetry. The opening of the eulogy cites Gregory's many gifts, " painter, classical scholar, scholar in painting and in modern literature, boxer, horseman, airman"—a variety so great that, Yeats said, "his very accomplishment hid from many his genius."

To Yeats, Gregory was "a great painter in the immaturity of his youth," a genius the poet had first recognized in the young man's designs of costumes and scenery for the Abbey Theatre, "decorations which, obtaining their effect from the fewest possible lines and colours, had always the grave distinction of his own imagination." Gregory's paintings long perplexed Yeats by what seemed neglect of detail. "But," he wrote, "in a few years I came to care for his paintings of the Clare coast, with his cloud shadows upon blue-grey stony hills, . . . more than for any contemporary landscape painting." This admiration for Gregory's painting persisted, and in Yeats's home in his last years space was made between the books in his study for one of Gregory's landscapes. The climax of the tribute to the painter's art follows:

A man of letters may perhaps find in work such as this, or in old Chinese painting, in the woodcuts and etchings of Calvert and Palmer, in Blake's woodcuts to Thornton's Virgil, in the landscape background of Mr. Ricketts' "Wise and Foolish

1. From "The Making of an Elegy," *Modern Philology*, XLVIII (Nov., 1950), 112-121. Abridged by the author.

Virgins," something that he does not find in the great modern masters, and that he cares for deeply. Is it merely that these men share certain moods with great lyric poetry, with, let us say, the "Leach Gatherer" of Wordsworth; or that their moods, unlike those of men with more objective curiosity, are a part of the traditional expression of the soul?

In the final paragraph Yeats said that, though Gregory was often led away from his painting by some other gift, "his attitude to life and art never lost intensity," and concluded:

I have noticed that men whose lives are to be an ever-growing absorption in subjective beauty . . . seek through some lesser gift, or through mere excitement, to strengthen that self which unites them to ordinary men. It is as though they hesitated before they plunged into the abyss. Major Gregory told Mr. Bernard Shaw, who visited him in France, that the months since he joined the army had been the happiest of his life. I think they brought him peace of mind, an escape from that shrinking, which I sometimes saw upon his face, before the growing absorption of his dream, the loneliness of his dream, as from his constant struggle to resist those other gifts that brought him ease and friendship. Leading his squadron in France or in Italy, mind and hand were at one, will and desire.

John Butler Yeats put the final statement about Gregory's war experience more simply in a letter to his son in June, 1918: "The way to be happy is to forget yourself. That is why Robert Gregory was happy." And he added that ways of forgetting yourself are in war, "seeing nothing but its vastness," in social reform, "in games of violent self-exertion," or, best of all, in art and beauty. To Yeats himself perhaps Gregory became in his death a heroic, happy figure because, like the Irish hero, Cuchullain, "he was creative joy separated from fear." Certainly, this was to be a basic concept of the lyric, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death," in which the flyer (Gregory) is moved not by hate or love, anger or patriotism, but entirely by "a lonely impulse of delight."

A few months after Gregory's death the old Norman castle of Ballylee in the west of Ireland became Yeats's home. He had bought the building in 1917 after Gregory and an architect had advised that it might be made livable. This ancient building was thus closely associated with the dead artist, who had made a charming sepia drawing of the tower, the encircling river, the bridge, and the storm-twisted trees. The tower itself was in no way new to Yeats's experience. As early as 1899 he had described "the old square castle, Baile-laoi . . . and old ash trees throwing green shadows upon a little river and great stepping-stones." In this early work, tower and disappearing river form a mere romantic background for a touching love story; but when the tower, closely linked with Gregory, became, in the very year of the young man's death, what Yeats thought would be his permanent home, disparate material fused into a new complex, a highly personal symbol. Gregory's death

defeated one of Yeats's happiest expectations for his new home in the old tower: that the young man would be neighbor, counselor, friend. A tower had long been a symbol Yeats loved and used; but now an old tower stands in a new configuration. From this point in his experience, the tower—not any tower but his own—suggests, as had Shelley's, "the mind looking outward upon men and things," with its winding stair as the gyres of history on which the generations of men climb. Gregory's death may have crystallized these symbols in Yeats's mind. The objects themselves continued to stimulate him to creation, for in 1926 he wrote to a friend, "We are at our tower and I am writing poetry as I always do here. . . ." Though tower and winding stair are presented in the elegy as concrete setting for the experience, they fill it with overtones for the readers of Yeats's later work, where as dominant symbols they serve as titles for two of his greatest volumes.

Technically, the poem is flawless. Yeats always showed power in the use of old metrical forms and skill in creating new stanzas for special purposes. Here the style, even the devices of meter, prove, as the poet wished his technique to be, "sufficiently flexible for expression of the emotions of life as they arise." For this elegy he chose an eight-line stanza, which he was to use again in "A Prayer for my Daughter," in Part II of "The Tower," and with modifications in "Byzantium":

> Now that we're almost settled in our house
> I'll name the friends that cannot sup with us
> Beside a fire of turf in th' ancient tower,
> And having talked to some late hour
> Climb up the narrow winding stair to bed:
> Discoverers of forgotten truth
> Or mere companions of my youth,
> All, all are in my thoughts to-night being dead.

Though this opening stanza echoes "For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime," or "I weep for Adonais—he is dead!" the pattern is Yeats's own and combines the majesty of traditional elegy with the simplicity of personal conversation. Largely this dual effect comes from the swift, natural language of the poem. Dr. Gogarty noted in his elegy on Yeats that the dead poet preferred Burns's "straight lines" on Matthew Henderson, "For Matthew was a queer man," to "Adonais," "Shelley's cosmic sermon." The language of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" has Burns's direct honesty, the "great voice" that Yeats found in Burns's lines on Henderson. Meter serves well, too, as a "pattern so seeming old that it may seem all men's speech." The four beats of the fourth line break the heroic couplet just as it is to be established in the second couplet; tetrameters in lines six and seven give a gentle, conversational tone, while the pentameters slow the movement; and the enclosed *cddc* rhyme keeps structure and emotion taut. Throughout the poem Yeats used slant rhymes to put into minor key the ordinarily strong major chord of the

couplet. Thus in the opening couplets of several stanzas are such approximations as *house, us* (repeated); *he, sanctity; tomb, come; racecourses, horses; year, were; bridge, edge; line, discipline; wind, mind.* The stanza is by these various means exquisitely adjusted to the double effect of intimate personal talk and heroic elegy.

The dead friends summoned in the poem had been hinted at but not named in "Shepherd and Goatherd," an unsuccessful pastoral elegy about Gregory, which Yeats had shortly before completed. In the earlier poem the Goatherd (Yeats himself) said:

> You sing as always of the natural life,
> And I that made like music in my youth
> Hearing it now have sighed for that young man
> And certain lost companions of my own.

The lost companions become the subject of the first half of the new elegy, losses now paid as if not paid before. The originality in Yeats's use of this ancient element in elegies lies in the fact that each of the men he summons carries a facet or facets of Robert Gregory's personality and achievements. "Lionel Johnson comes the first to mind," classical scholar and dreamer, in Yeats's earlier phrase, possessed of "ecstatic stoicism." Of Gregory's painting Yeats had said, "One always understood by something in his selection of line and colour that he had read his Homer and his Virgil and his Dante; that they, while giving something of themselves, had freed him from easy tragedy and trivial comedy." Scholars, dreamers, "courteous to the worst," were Johnson and Gregory, too. "And that enquiring man John Synge comes next," who toward nightfall "in a most desolate stony place" came upon a people "passionate and simple like his heart." Gregory, too, loved all natural life, yet preferred the stony places and, Yeats said, "painted the Burren Hills, and thereby found what promised to grow into a great style." In his *Autobiography* Yeats tells how Synge wanted to combine "ecstasy, asceticism, and austerity," and Gregory's paintings he called "full of austerity and sweetness." George Pollexfen, horseman in youth, astrologist in age, is a man of action "grown sluggish and contemplative." "In muscular youth well known to Mayo men/For horsemanship," Pollexfen combined, as in a much subtler way Gregory did, great skill in sports, a love of natural things, a mind full of pictures, and a mystical concern for the inner life. At this point, with perfect simplicity and justice Yeats first mentions Gregory himself, in one line fusing in him all the qualities of older lost friends, "our perfect man," comparable in the twentieth century to the hero of a great elegy of the Renaissance, also warrior and artist, "Our Sidney":

> They were my close companions many a year,
> A portion of my mind and life, as it were,
> And now their breathless faces seem to look

Out of some old picture-book;
I am accustomed to their lack of breath,
But not that my dear friend's dear son,
Our Sidney and our perfect man,
Could share in that discourtesy of death.

The phrasing of the last line, Elizabethan in tone and magic, links the whole concept of Gregory as hero with the pattern of the Renaissance hero and the poem with the tradition.

The succeeding stanza lists natural beauties around Ballylee of which Gregory might have been the "heartiest welcomer." This scene, which Gregory had drawn, leads directly to a consideration in stanza nine of the great painter and the secret of art. The interpolation of stanza eight, with its adolescent praise of Gregory's foolhardy horsemanship, is, therefore, puzzling:

At Mooneen he had leaped a place
So perilous that half the astonished meet
Had shut their eyes; and where was it,
He rode a race without a bit?

These lines are an almost childish elaboration of the final member of the repeated triad, "Soldier, scholar, horseman." The reason Yeats used the stanza at all is made clear by his comment on an early manuscript of the elegy. "The following stanza was added in proof as Mrs. Gregory did not think I had said enough of Robert's courage." Fortunately, the emotional flow of the poem is so strong, what Joseph Hone called "the intricacy of its passion" so great, that the unhappy eighth stanza is only a ripple in the current.

The climactic ninth stanza considers Gregory's place among artists.

We dreamed that a great painter had been born
To cold Clare rock and Galway rock and thorn,
To that stern colour and that delicate line
That are our secret discipline
Wherein the gazing heart doubles her might.
Soldier, scholar, horseman, he,
And yet he had the intensity
To have published all to be a world's delight.

Every concept of art in these highly charged lines has an immediate source in the writings of Samuel Palmer and Edward Calvert, nineteenth-century disciples of Blake. During the month or so after Gregory's death, Yeats's table at the Bodleian was covered with the etchings and woodcuts of Palmer and Calvert, which had for years been the subject of his admiring study. He had long quoted Calvert and Palmer on art and was to do so to the end of his life; for only a few months before his death he wrote in "Under Ben Bulken":

Calvert and Wilson, Blake and Claude,
Prepared a rest for the people of God,
Palmer's phrase, but after that
Confusion fell upon our thought.

Both Calvert and Palmer emphasized, as had their master Blake, the expression of the soul rather than the realistic representation of the body or of the landscape. "Palmer's phrase" belongs to his praise of Blake, whose woodcuts for Thornton's *Virgil,* he found "like all that wonderful artist's works, the drawing aside of the fleshly curtain, and the glimpse which all the most holy, studious saints and sages have enjoyed, of that rest which remaineth to the people of God." Often as Yeats referred to Calvert and Palmer, to their concern for the expression in art of the visionary soul of man, the ninth stanza of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" forms what appears nowhere else in his work: a synthesis and intensification of what the two men said about painting and poetry.

Both Palmer and Calvert chose to paint or draw primitive landscapes, austere and delicate. In their painting and in their theories about their art, color is less important than line; and Yeats finds "stern colour" and "delicate line" the "secret discipline" of poets and painters alike. Power comes, these artists believed, in asceticism, and Yeats had long before written: "All art is, indeed, a monotony in external things for the sake of an interior variety, a sacrifice of gross effects to subtle effects, an asceticism of the imagination." Neither Calvert nor Palmer conceived of such art as pallid but rather as intense. Calvert wrote: "*Only paint what you love in what you see,* and discipline yourself to separate this essence from its dumb accompaniments, so that the accents fall upon the points of passion." The artist's self-discipline in accenting the points of passion becomes in Yeats's words "the secret discipline /Wherein the gazing heart doubles her might." Palmer found the full mystery and might of line in the tiny figures of Blake's woodcuts, which have, he said, "that intense, soul-evidencing attitude and action, and that elastic, nervous spring which belongs to uncaged immortal spirits." In Gregory, Yeats found this power, this mystery and might in an ascetic and delicate art, "the intensity/To have published all to be a world's delight." The final phrase suggests again that Gregory is "Our Sidney"; for Yeats could hardly have forgotten the line from one of the Astrophel poems, "Sidney is dead, dead is my friend, dead is the world's delight." Of such artistic power as the stanza both describes and exemplifies, Calvert wrote, "I know that there is a mastery and a music which shall command truth itself to look as we would have it, and to echo the pulses of the heart. Physical truth being translated into musical truth." If ever in his poetry, Yeats in this ninth stanza achieved the transmutation into musical truth of both the physical and the metaphysical.

In the last stanzas Yeats returns to Gregory's personality, his talents, the ter-

rible loss to his survivors. At the time of Synge's death in 1909, he had written:

> One does not feel that death is evil when one meets it,—evil, I mean, for the one who dies. . . . The wildest sorrow that comes at the thought of death is, I think, "Ages will pass over and no one ever again look on that nobleness or that beauty."

Nor was warfare repugnant to Yeats, for in 1910 he said:

> I think that all noble things are the result of warfare, great nations and classes, of warfare in the visible world, great poetry and philosophy, of invisible warfare, the division of a mind within itself, a victory, the sacrifice of a man to himself.

Yeats could understand the ecstasy of Gregory's life in war and even that, for the dead man, the end was happy. Because Gregory had epitomized both visible and invisible warfare, the division of his soul made his early death inevitable.

Always Yeats had envied the man of action and as poet had brooded for years on the possibility of one man's achieving unity of being, a state very difficult but, as he long believed, not impossible. Years earlier he had quoted Calvert's exultant cry, "I go inward to God, outward to the gods," Calvert's philosophy of myth, of divine truth in man's heart and the no less divine images created to embody it. Greek myths became to Calvert mysteries on which to ponder, impersonations of moral powers, of gods, of divine attributes, all embodied in the life we love in the natural world. Calvert's dichotomy, which he fused into unity, of subjective brooding on the One, objective concern with the many, Yeats felt as the basic division in Gregory between the absorbing inner dream and the easier external action. Unity of being, Yeats once thought, is perhaps most nearly possible in an age of complexity for a man of action who is also a man of loneliness and of dreams. Charles Stewart Parnell seemed to him such a man, and of Parnell he wrote: "Perhaps unmotivated self-immolation, were that possible, . . . were as great evidence as such a man could give of power over self and so of the expression of the self." Yeats saw Gregory's death as a kind of self-immolation, to which the young man moved as he increasingly realized that the disparate elements of his being could never form a final unity. "I joined up," he had said, "out of friendship." Leaving his absorption in subjective beauty behind him, he went for a few months from the artist's vision to battle. Solitary brooding fosters the "lonely impulse of delight" which made the Irish airman foresee his death and go to meet it, filled with "creative joy separated from fear." Thus for a moment only—and such a moment cannot endure—unity of being is achieved.

In the eleventh stanza of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" all this complex of thought and feeling is reduced to its simplest terms. Gregory's work was finished, his death certain:

Some burn damp faggots, others may consume
The entire combustible world in one small room
. . . . . .
Because the work had finished in that flare.
Soldier, scholar, horseman, he,
As 'twere all life's epitome.
What made us dream that he could comb grey hair?

The final stanza, with its unfulfilled wish to say more of

All those that manhood tried, or childhood loved
Or boyish intellect approved,

ends brokenly.

. . . But a thought
Of that late death took all my heart for speech.

Here none of Yeats's elaborate and unorthodox views of the life of the soul after death distracts the mind and feeling from human loss. The elemental simplicity of concept and expression in this final stanza forms a coda of pure tone to echo and reinforce the surface simplicity of the whole elegy. All complexities are dissolved in grief without comfort. Such a stanza, powerful as it is in its position, gains intensity from these very complexities, "the continuous indefinable symbolism" which pervades all that has gone before and which Yeats had declared to be "the substance of all style."

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM[1]

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unaging intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying

1. From *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats.* Copyright, 1933. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away, sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER[1]

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle
But Gregory's wood and one bare hill
Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind,
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
And under the arches of the bridge, and scream
In the elms above the flooded stream;
Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

1. From *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats.* Copyright, 1933. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-leggèd smith for man.
It's certain fine women eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise,
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound.
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Of every bellows burst, be happy still.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

E. A. ROBINSON

HOW ANNANDALE WENT OUT[1]

"They called it Annandale—and I was there
To flourish, to find words, and to attend.
Liar, physician, hypocrite, and friend,
I watched him; and the sight was not so fair
As one or two that I have seen elsewhere:
An apparatus not for me to mend—
A wreck, with hell between him and the end,
Remained of Annandale; and I was there.

1. Reprinted from *The Town Down the River* by Edwin Arlington Robinson; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons; 1938 by Ruth Niveson; used by permission of the publishers.

"I knew the ruin as I knew the man;
So put the two together, if you can,
Remembering the worst you know of me.
Now view yourself as I was, on the spot—
With a slight kind of engine. Do you see?
Like this . . . You wouldn't hang me? I thought not."

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY[1]

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
Over the hill between the town below
And the forsaken upland hermitage
That held as much as he should ever know
On earth again of home, paused warily.
The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break,
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

1. From *Avon's Harvest* by E. A. Robinson. Copyright, 1921, by The Macmillan Company. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come
To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"
Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,
The last word wavered; and the song being done,
He raised again the jug regretfully
And shook his head, and was again alone.
There was not much that was ahead of him,
And there was nothing in the town below—
Where strangers would have shut the many doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

STEPHEN CRANE

WAR IS KIND[1]

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,

1. Reprinted from *Collected Poems of Stephen Crane* by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1895, 1922 by W. H. Crane.

Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom—
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

SHOULD THE WIDE WORLD ROLL AWAY[1]

Should the wide world roll away,
Leaving black terror,
Limitless night,
Nor God, nor man, nor place to stand
Would be to me essential
If thou and thy white arms were there,
And the fall to doom a long way.

WELL, THEN, I HATE THEE[1]

"And the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the heads of the children, even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Well, then, I hate Thee, unrighteous picture;
Wicked image, I hate Thee;
So, strike with Thy vengeance
The heads of those little men
Who come blindly.
It will be a brave thing.

1. Reprinted from *Collected Poems of Stephen Crane* by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1895, 1922 by W. H. Crane.

ROBERT FROST

RELUCTANCE[1]

Out through the fields and the woods
And over the walls I have wended;
I have climbed the hills of view
And looked at the world, and descended;
I have come by the highway home,
And lo, it is ended.

The leaves are all dead on the ground,
Save those that the oak is keeping
To ravel them one by one
And let them go scraping and creeping
Out over the crusted snow,
When others are sleeping.

And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,
No longer blown hither and thither;
The last lone aster is gone;
The flowers of the witch-hazel wither;
The heart is still aching to seek,
But the feet question "Whither?"

Ah, when to the heart of man
Was it ever less than a treason
To go with the drift of things,
To yield with a grace to reason,
And bow and accept the end
Of a love or a season?

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN[1]

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

1. From *Collected Poems of Robert Frost.* Copyright, 1930, 1939, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Robert Frost.

Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence.
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

FIRE AND ICE[1]

Some say the world will end in fire;
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING[2]

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

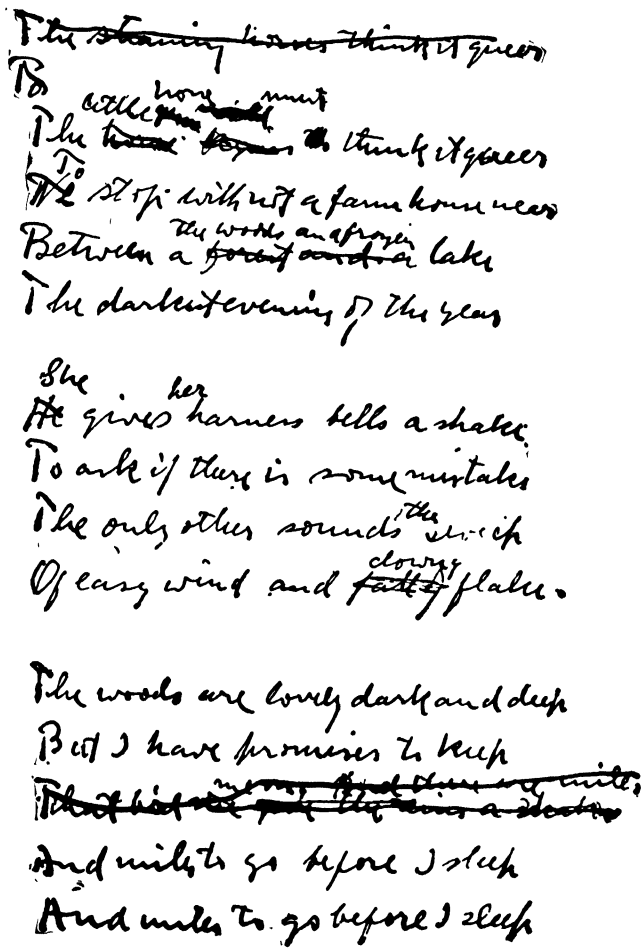
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.

1. From *Complete Poems of Robert Frost.* Copyright, 1930, 1949, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Used by permission of the publishers.
2. From *Collected Poems of Robert Frost.* Copyright, 1930, 1939, by Henry Holt and Company Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Robert Frost.

The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.



Facsimile of the last three stanzas of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost. By permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

ON FROST'S *STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING*[1]

JOHN HOLMES

THIS facsimile is a reproduction of the last three stanzas of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" as Robert Frost worked it out. We know from the poet that he had just written the long poem, "New Hampshire," in one all-night unbroken stretch of composition, and that he then turned a page of his workbook and wrote this short poem without stopping. This fact has interesting implications. "New Hampshire" is a discourse in the idiomatic blank verse that is so peculiarly Frost's own style—the rhythms of natural speech matched to the strict but inconspicuous iambic pentameter, the beat always discernible but never formal. It is reasonable to suppose that after the hours spent in writing the long poem, in its loosened but never loose manner, he was ready, unconsciously, for a poem in strict pattern. He had also obviously had in his head for some time the incident on which the short poem was to be based, as well as the use he wished to make of it. He committed himself, as he has said, to the four-stress iambic line and to the *aaba* rime-scheme, in the first stanza, which he wrote rapidly and did not revise. He knew what he had seen, and he knew how he wanted to write it.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

"That went off so easily I was tempted into the added difficulty of picking up my 3 for my 1–2–4 to go on with in the second stanza. I was amused and scared at what that got me into," Frost says. The facsimile shows what it got him into, how he got out of it, and how he achieved the poem as it meant itself to be written.

It began with what was the actual experience of stopping at night by some dark woods in winter, and the fact that there were two horses. He remembered what he saw then. "The steaming horses think it queer." But the poem needs truth more than fact, and he cancels the line, and begins again, "The horse begins to think it queer," but doesn't like the word "begins," needing in the allowed space a word that will particularize the horse, so writes "The little horse must think it queer." Now he runs into a grammatical difficulty, which must somehow be solved before he gets on into the poem he already feels sure of. "I launched into the construction 'My little horse must think it queer that we should stop.' I didn't like omitting the 'that' and I had no room for 'should.' I had the luck to get out of it with the

1. From *Preface to Poetry* by Charles W. Cooper and John Holmes, copyright, 1946, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

infinitive." This groping and warming-up has a kind of impatience, an urgency to get on with the poem, but not until all the parts are right. At this point the poet knew and did not know how the poem would end. He knew the feel, and the sense, and almost everything about the form—certainly enough to know when he got off the track.

Whether he revised the third line here or later we cannot know. But we can see in several places in this poem his changes toward particularization. The line "Between a forest and a lake" is a notation, and "Between the woods and frozen lake" is a finished line of poetry. "A forest" is too big, too vague, but "the woods" is definite, and bounded; you get lost in a forest, but you can walk through and out of the woods, and probably you know who owns it—Vermonters do, as he has said in the first stanza. "A lake" has not the specific condition or picture of "frozen lake." This sort of revision, or what Frost calls, "touching up," is what makes a poem—this, plus the first inspiration. Either one, without the other, is unlikely to make a good poem.

The next stanza comes easier, because the rime-scheme has been determined, and one unexpected obstacle has been overcome. But once more there is a delay, as the poet makes a decision as to the "he" or "she"—and the more important and more interesting about the falling snow. In writing "downy flake" for "fall of flake" the gain is great not only for accuracy of feeling and fact, but also for the music of the lines. The simple alliteration in "fall of flake" is canceled in favor of the word, one word, "downy," which blends with the vowel-chords a poet half-consciously makes and modulates as he goes. In this instance, it half-chimes with "sounds" and adds a rounder, fuller, and yet quieter tone.

Now the carry-over rime is "sweep," a fortunate one, really, and important to the final solution of the rime-scheme. It is not too much to assume, knowing all we know about the circumstances of the writing of this poem—the all-night composition of "New Hampshire," and the sudden urge to catch and shape still another saved idea—that the darker, more confident, more rapid strokes of the pen show the poet's growing excitement. The end is in sight. The thing he believed could happen will happen, surely now, and he must hurry to get it onto the page. This is the real moment of power, and any poet's greatest satisfaction.

"The woods are lovely dark and deep/But I have promises to keep." The first two lines of the last stanza come fast, and flow beautifully, the crest of the poem's emotion and its music. We cannot know whether he had held them in his head, or had swept up to and into them as he felt the destined pattern fulfilling itself.

Then, with success in sight, there comes an awkward and unexpected stumble. He writes, "That bid me give the reins a shake," which may have been the fact and the action. But the rime is wrong. Not only has the rime been used in the previous stanza, but so has the image of the horse shaking his head and reins. Things are moving fast now, no doubt impatiently, but

certainly with determination, shown in the heavy black lines of abrupt cancellation. He strikes out "me give the reins a shake," and writes above it, so the line will read, "That bid me on, and there are miles," and then the whole thing comes through! Of course! "Miles to go . . ."

That's what it was supposed to be—the feeling of silence and dark, almost overpowering the man, but the necessity of going on. "And miles to go before I sleep." Then the triumph in the whole thing, the only right and perfect last line, solving the problem of the carried-over rime, keeping the half-tranced state, and the dark, and the solitude, and man's great effort to be responsible man . . . the repetition of that line.

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" can be studied as perfected structure, with the photostat manuscript to show that art is not, though it must always appear to be, effortless. It can be thought of as a picture: the whites, grays, and blacks of the masses and areas of lake, field, and woods, with the tiny figure of the man in the sleigh, and the horse. And it can be thought of as a statement of man's everlasting responsibility to man; though the dark and nothingness tempt him to surrender, he will not give in. It is interesting to compare this poem with two later pieces of Frost's, in which he uses the same image, "Desert Places," and "Come In," none alike, all on the first level of his poetry, and all three built on the image of the pull of wildness and lawlessness against man's conscious will and the promises he has made to be kept.

CARL SANDBURG

PRAYERS OF STEEL[1]

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.

COOL TOMBS[1]

When Abraham Lincoln was shovelled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

1. From *Cornhuskers* by Carl Sandburg. Copyright, 1918, by Henry Holt and Company. Copyright, 1945, by Carl Sandburg. By permission of the publishers.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

WALLACE STEVENS

SUNDAY MORNING[1]

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug mingle to dissipate
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.
She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
As a calm darkens among water-lights.
The pungent oranges and bright, green wings
Seem things in some procession of the dead,
Winding across wide water, without sound.
The day is like wide water, without sound,
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
Dominion of the blood and sepulchre.

2

Why should she give her bounty to the dead?
What is divinity if it can come
Only in silent shadows and in dreams?
Shall she not find in comforts of the sun,
In pungent fruit and bright, green wings, or else
In any balm or beauty of the earth,
Things to be cherished like the thought of heaven?
Divinity must live within herself:

1. Reprinted from *Harmonium* by Wallace Stevens, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1923, 1931, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Passions of rain, or moods in falling snow;
Grieving in loneliness, or unsubdued
Elations when the forest blooms; gusty
Emotions on wet roads on autumn nights;
All pleasures and all pains, remembering
The bough of summer and the winter branch.
These are the measures destined for her soul.

3

Jove in the clouds had his inhuman birth.
No mother suckled him, no sweet land gave
Large-mannered motions to his mythy mind.
He moved among us, as a muttering king,
Magnificent, would move among his hinds,
Until our blood, commingling, virginal,
With heaven, brought such requital to desire
The very hinds discerned it, in a star.
Shall our blood fail? Or shall it come to be
The blood of paradise? And shall the earth
Seem all of paradise that we shall know?
The sky will be much friendlier then than now,
A part of labor and a part of pain,
And next in glory to enduring love,
Not this dividing and indifferent blue.

4

She says, "I am content when wakened birds,
Before they fly, test the reality
Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
Return no more, where, then; is paradise?"
There is not any haunt of prophecy,
Nor any old chimera of the grave,
Neither the golden underground, nor isle
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
Nor visionary south, nor cloudy palm
Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured
As April's green endures; or will endure
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
By the consummation of the swallow's wings.

5

She says, "But in contentment I still feel
The need of some imperishable bliss."
Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams
And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths,
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness,
She makes the willow shiver in the sun
For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
She causes boys to pile new plums and pears
On disregarded plate. The maidens taste
And stray impassioned in the littering leaves.

6

Is there no change of death in paradise?
Does ripe fruit never fall? Or do the boughs
Hang always heavy in that perfect sky,
Unchanging, yet so like our perishing earth,
With rivers like our own that seek for seas
They never find, the same receding shores
That never touch with inarticulate pang?
Why set the pear upon those river-banks
Or spice the shores with odors of the plum?
Alas, that they should wear our colors there,
The silken weavings of our afternoons,
And pick the strings of our insipid lutes!
Death is the mother of beauty, mystical,
Within whose burning bosom we devise
Our earthly mothers waiting, sleeplessly.

7

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun,
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source.
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,

The trees, like serafin, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward.
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
Of men that perish and of summer morn.
And whence they came and whither they shall go
The dew upon their feet shall manifest.

8

She hears, upon that water without sound,
A voice that cries, "The tomb in Palestine
Is not the porch of spirits lingering.
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay."
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable.
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

ON STEVENS' *SUNDAY MORNING* [1]

YVOR WINTERS

His fundamental ideas are stated in *Sunday Morning,* an early poem, and in some ways his greatest. The poem consists of eight stanzas in blank verse, each containing fifteen lines, and it presents a clear and fairly coherent argument.

The first stanza sets the stage and identifies the protagonist. We are given a woman, at home on a Sunday morning, meditating on the meaning of death. The second stanza asks the question which provides the subject of the poem; it asks what divinity this woman may be thought to possess as a recompense for her ultimate surrender to death; and having asked the question, it replies that her divinity, which must live within herself, consists wholly in her emotions—not in her understanding of the emotions, but in the emotions as a good in themselves. This answer is not quite the orthodox romantic answer, which would offer us in the emotions either a true guide to virtue or a more or less mystical experience leading to some kind of

1. From Yvor Winters, *The Anatomy of Nonsense.* Copyright, 1948, by New Directions, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York.

union with some kind of deity. Any philosophy which offers the cultivation of the emotions as an end in itself, I suppose, is a kind of hedonism. In any event, that is the kind of philosophy which we find here.

The third stanza, by means of the allegory of Jove and his human loves, through his union with whom he crossed the heavenly strain upon the human, implies that man has a capacity which may at least figuratively be termed divine; the stanza is a subordinate commentary on the one preceding; and does not really advance the argument.

In the fourth stanza, however, the argument moves forward. The protagonist objects to the concept which has been offered her; she states that the beauties of this life are transient and that she longs to believe in a Paradise beyond them. The remainder of the stanza, and the greater part of it, is the poet's reply: in a passage of great rhetorical power, he denies the possibility of Paradise, at the same time that he communicates through the feeling of his language a deep nostalgic longing to accept the ideas which he is rejecting. In the first two lines of the fifth stanza, the woman repeats her objection, and the poet then replies with an explanation of the function of death: it is our awareness of the imminence of death which heightens our emotions and sharpens our perceptions; our knowledge of life's transience stimulates our perception of life's beauty.

In the sixth stanza the poet considers an hypothetical paradise, and, since he can imagine it only in terms of a projection of the good life as the hedonist understands the good life, he deduces that paradise would become tedious and insipid: we have in this stanza the first sharp vision of the ennui which is to obsess the later work of the poet and which is ultimately to wreck his talent, an ennui arising from the fact that emotion is not a good in itself, but that if cultivated for itself alone is merely a pleasant diversion so long as the novelty of a given experience endures, at most as long as new experiences can give us the illusion of novel excitement, and then becomes a disease of the spirit, a state of indifferency in which there is neither novelty nor significance.

The seventh stanza presents a vision of a future race of men engaged in a religious ritual, the generating principle of which is their joy in the world as it is given them and their sense of brotherhood as "men that perish." The stanza contains suggestions of a pantheism which goes beyond the bounds of a strict hedonism, but they are merely suggestions and they appear nowhere else. The eighth and last stanza begins by denying the immortality of Jesus, and by implication, of man; and it places the protagonist finally and irretrievably on a small but beautiful planet, floating like a tropical island in boundless space, "in an old chaos of the sun."

This summary, even as summaries go, is extremely skeletalized. It has been my intention, here, merely to isolate the hedonistic theme for future consideration; the theme is not thus isolated in the poem, but is complicated by its inter-connections with other human problems from which not even a hedonist

can escape. Whatever the defects of the hedonistic theme, and with the possible but by no means certain exception of a few short poems by Stevens and of two or three poems by E. A. Robinson, *Sunday Morning* is probably the greatest American poem of the twentieth century and is certainly one of the greatest contemplative poems in English. In a blank verse which differs, in its firmness of structure and incalculable sensitivity of detail, from all other blank verse of our time save that of a few poems by Hart Crane which were in some measure modeled upon it, it renders the acute uncertainty of what we are inclined to consider the modern mind, but it does so with no uncertainty of method or of statement, it renders an acute consciousness of the imminence of death, of the sensory and emotional richness of life on this bewildering planet, and of the heroic magnificence of the religious myths which are lost to the poet and to many of the rest of us, except as memories of things long past. If Stevens' career had stopped with this poem, or a few years thereafter, it might seem an unnecessary unkindness to insist upon the limitations of understanding which the poem discloses; but those limitations appear very obviously in a few later poems, and they seem to me to be very clearly related to the rapid and tragic decay of the poet's style. As a poet in early maturity, Stevens brought to this subject a style which was the result of a fine native gift enriched by the study of English blank verse; the subject, once formulated, and accepted as a guide to life and to expression, destroyed the style in less than two decades. In *Sunday Morning* itself, we detect the limitations of the subject only by rational analysis; in the later work we see the effect of those limitations.

Some of the virtues of *Sunday Morning* I have indicated in very general terms, but one cannot turn from the poem that may be the greatest American work of our century without considering briefly some of its more haunting beauties, if it be only as an act of piety.

I have already quoted the final stanza of the poem, and its beauty should be obvious; yet as removed from its context, the stanza loses much of its complexity. The "water without sound," and "wide water inescapable," is not only an image representing infinite space; it is an image, established in the first stanza, representing a state of mind, a kind of bright and empty beatitude, over which the thought of death may darken suddenly and without warning:

> She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
> Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
> As a calm darkens among water-lights.

The language has the greatest possible dignity and subtlety, combined with perfect precision. The imminence of absolute tragedy is felt and recorded, but the integrity of the feeling mind is maintained. The mind perceives, as by a kind of metaphysical sense, the approach of invading impersonality, yet knowing the invasion to be inevitable and its own identity, while that iden-

tity lasts, the only source of any good whatever, maintains that identity in its full calm and clarity, that nothing may be sacrificed without need. This combination of calm and terror, in dealing with this particular theme, will be found in only one other poet in English, in Shakespeare as one finds him in a few of the more metaphysical sonnets. The calm clarity of tone enables the poet to deal with a variety of kinds of feeling which would be impossible were the terror emphasized for a moment at any point, were the complete and controlled unity of the experiencing mind for a moment disordered by its own perceptions. The same poem, for example, is able to contain the following lines, of a sweetness and of an illusory simplicity which again are scarcely less than Shakespearean:

> She says, "I am content when wakened birds,
> Before they fly, test the reality
> Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;
> But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
> Return no more, where, then, is paradise?"

And out of this passage proceeds the great lament for the lost myths, which I have already mentioned. This passage and others similar, though beautiful in themselves, are a preparation for the descriptive lines in the last stanza, and when we finally come to those lines, they are weighted with meaning and feeling accumulated from all that has gone before. It is difficult for this reason to quote from the poem for the purpose of illustrating its beauty.

One aspect of the poem may perhaps be mentioned, however, with some small profit, and it may best be indicated, I believe, through a brief comparison with Bryant's *Thanatopsis*. Bryant's poem is a great poem and is worthy of the comparison, and its resemblance to Stevens' poem in certain ways is both surprising and illuminating. Both poems are semididactic meditations on death, written in a firm but simplified Miltonic blank verse, the verse of Stevens, possibly, being somewhat smoothed and softened by the intervention of Tennyson. Both poems are pagan in their view: but that of Bryant, the New Englander of the early 19th century, is essentially stoical, whereas that of Stevens, the Pennsylvanian of the 20th century, is Epicurean. Both poems find man, a spiritual being, isolated in a physical universe: but for Bryant that universe is the Earth, hairy, vast, and almost against the eye; for Stevens it is the tropical Pacific of infinity, in which the earth appears as an infinitesimal floating island.

SEA SURFACE FULL OF CLOUDS[1]

I

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night
And in the morning summer hued the deck

And made one think of rosy chocolate
And gilt umbrellas. Paradisal green
Gave suavity to the perplexed machine

Of ocean, which like limpid water lay.
Who, then, in that ambrosial latitude
Out of the light evolved the moving blooms,

Who, then, evolved the sea-blooms from the clouds
Diffusing balm in that Pacific calm?
C'était mon enfant, mon bijou, mon âme.

The sea-clouds, whitened far below the calm
And moved, as blooms move, in the swimming green
And in its watery radiance, while the hue

Of heaven in an antique reflection rolled
Round those flotillas. And sometimes the sea
Poured brilliant iris on the glistening blue.

II

In that November off Tehuantepec
The slopping of the sea grew still one night.
At breakfast jelly yellow streaked the deck

And made one think of chop-house chocolate
And sham umbrellas. And a sham-like green
Capped summer-seeming on the tense machine

Of ocean, which in sinister flatness lay.
Who, then, beheld the rising of the clouds
That strode submerged in that malevolent sheen,

Who saw the mortal massives of the blooms
Of water moving on the water-floor?
C'était mon frère du ciel, ma vie, mon or.

1. Reprinted from *Harmonium* by Wallace Stevens, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1923, 1931, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

The gongs rang loudly as the windy blooms
Hoo-hooed it in the darkened ocean-blooms.
The gongs grew still. And then blue heaven spread

Its crystalline pendentives on the sea
And the macabre of the water-glooms,
In an enormous undulation fled.

III

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night,
And a pale silver patterned on the deck

Made one think of porcelain chocolate
And pied umbrellas. An uncertain green,
Piano-polished, held the tranced machine

Of ocean, as a prelude holds and holds.
Who, seeing silver petals of white blooms
Unfolding in the water, feeling sure

Of the milk within the saltiest spurge, heard, then,
The sea unfolding in the sunken clouds?
Oh! C' était mon extase et mon amour.

So deeply sunken were they that the shrouds,
The shrouding shadows, made the petals black
Until the rolling heaven made them blue,

A blue beyond the rainy hyacinth,
And smiting the crevasses of the leaves
Deluged the ocean with a sapphire hue.

IV

In that November off Tehuantepec
The night-long slopping of the sea grew still.
A mallow morning dozed upon the deck

And made one think of musky chocolate
And frail umbrellas. A too-fluent green
Suggested malice in the dry machine

Of ocean, pondering dank stratagem.
Who then beheld the figures of the clouds,
Like blooms secluded in the thick marine?

Like blooms? Like damasks that were shaken off
From the loosed girdles in the spangling must.
C'était ma foi, la nonchalance divine.

The nakedness would rise and suddenly turn
Salt masks of beard and mouths of bellowing,
Would— But more suddenly the heaven rolled

Its bluest sea-clouds in the thinking green
And the nakedness became the broadest blooms,
Mile-mallows that a mallow sun cajoled.

V

In that November off Tehuantepec
Night stilled the slopping of the sea. The day
Came, bowing and voluble, upon the deck,

Good clown. . . . One thought of Chinese chocolate
And large umbrellas. And a motley green
Followed the drift of the obese machine

Of ocean, perfected in indolence.
What pistache one, ingenious and droll,
Beheld the sovereign clouds as jugglery

And the sea as turquoise-turbaned Sambo, neat
At tossing saucers—cloudy-conjuring sea?
C'était mon esprit bâtard, l'ignominie.

The sovereign clouds came clustering. The conch
Of loyal conjuration trumped. The wind
Of green blooms turning crisped the motley hue

To clearing opalescence. Then the sea
And heaven rolled as one and from the two
Came fresh transfigurings of freshest blue.

THE EMPEROR OF ICE-CREAM[1]

Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.

1. Reprinted from *Harmonium* by Wallace Stevens, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1923, 1931, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Let the wenches dawdle in such dress
As they are used to wear, and let the boys
Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
Let be be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Take from the dresser of deal,
Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet
On which she embroidered fantails once
And spread it so as to cover her face.
If her horny feet protrude, they come
To show how cold she is, and dumb.
Let the lamp affix its beam.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

EZRA POUND

ENVOI (1919)[1]

Go, dumb-born book,
Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes:
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subjects known,
Then were there cause in thee that should condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie,
And build her glories their longevity.

Tell her that sheds
Such treasure in the air,
Recking naught else but that her graces give
Life to the moment,
I would bid them live
As roses might, in magic amber laid,
Red overwrought with orange and all made
One substance and one color
Braving time.

Tell her that goes
With song upon her lips
But sings not out the song, nor knows

1. From *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound,* copyright, 1926, by Boni & Liveright. Reprinted by permission of New Directions, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York.

The maker of it, some other mouth
May be as fair as hers,
Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be laid,
Siftings on siftings in oblivion,
Till change hath broken down
All things save Beauty alone.

T. S. ELIOT

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK[1]

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i' odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.[2]

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

1. From *Collected Poems 1909–1935* by T. S. Eliot, copyright, 1934, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

2. "If I thought my answer were to one who ever could return to the world, this flame should shake no more; but since none ever did return alive from this depth, if what I hear be true, without fear of infamy I answer thee."—*Inferno*, XXVII, 61–66.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.
And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
    And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
    And should I then presume?
    And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a
    platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball

To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
    Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
    That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
    "That is not it at all,
    That is not what I meant, at all."

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince, no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old. . . . I grow old. . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

COUSIN NANCY[1]

Miss Nancy Ellicott
Strode across the hills and broke them,
Rode across the hills and broke them—
The barren New England hills—
Riding to hounds
Over the cow-pasture.

Miss Nancy Ellicott smoked
And danced all the modern dances;
And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it,
But they knew that it was modern.

Upon the glazen shelves kept watch
Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith,
The army of unalterable law.

SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES[1]

ὤμοι, πεπληγμαι καιρίαν πληγὴν ἔσω.[2]

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the horned gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

1. From *Collected Poems 1909–1935* by T. S. Eliot, copyright, 1934, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.
2. "Woe's me, I'm stricken a mortal blow within."—*Agamemnon*, line 1341.

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,
Reorganised upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes.

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;
Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wisteria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

MACAVITY: THE MYSTERY CAT[1]

Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw—
For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.
He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:
For when they reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*

1. From *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, copyright, 1939, by T. S. Eliot. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no-one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.
His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*
You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air—
But I tell you once and once again, *Macavity's not there!*

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.
His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed;
His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.
He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;
And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no-one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.
You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square—
But when a crime's discovered, then *Macavity's not there!*

He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)
And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.
And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,
Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,
Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair—
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! *Macavity's not there!*

And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,
Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,
There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair—
But it's useless to investigate—*Macavity's not there!*
And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:
'It *must* have been Macavity!'—but he's a mile away.
You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumbs,
Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no-one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.
He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place—MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!
And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known
(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)
Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time
Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of Crime!

BURNT NORTON[1]

I

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.
But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.
Other echoes
Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
Round the corner. Through the first gate,
Into our first world, shall we follow
The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.
There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,
And the bird called, in response to
The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,
And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
Had the look of flowers that are looked at.
There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown-edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,

1. From *Four Quartets,* copyright, 1943, by T. S. Eliot. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

And they were behind us, reflected in the pool,
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden, excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird. human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

II

Garlic and sapphires in the mud
Clot the bedded axle-tree.
The trilling wire in the blood
Sings below inveterate scars
And reconciles forgotten wars.
The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars
Ascend to summer in the tree
We move above the moving tree
In light upon the figured leaf
And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,
Erhebung without motion, concentration
Without elimination, both a new world
And the old made explicit, understood
In the completion of its partial ecstasy,

The resolution of its partial horror.
Yet the enchainment of past and future
Woven in the weakness of the changing body,
Protects mankind from heaven and damnation
Which flesh cannot endure.
Time past and time future
Allow but a little consciousness.
To be conscious is not to be in time
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered.

III

Here is a place of disaffection
Time before and time after
In a dim light: neither daylight
Investing form with lucid stillness
Turning shadow into transient beauty
With slow rotation suggesting permanence
Nor darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the sensual with deprivation
Cleansing affection from the temporal.
Neither plenitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker
Over the strained time-ridden faces
Distracted from distraction by distraction
Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
Tumid apathy with no concentration
Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind
That blows before and after time,
Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs
Time before and time after.
Eructation of unhealthy souls
Into the faded air, the torpid
Driven on the wind that sweeps the gloomy hills of London,
Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney,
Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate. Not here
Not here the darkness, in this twittering world.

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation

And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,
Inoperancy of the world of spirit;
This is the one way, and the other
Is the same, not in movement
But abstention from movement; while the world moves
In appetency, on its metalled ways
Of time past and time future.

IV

Time and the bell have buried the day,
The black cloud carries the sun away.
Will the sunflower turn to us, will the clematis
Stray down, bend to us; tendril and spray
Clutch and cling?
Chill
Fingers of yew be curled
Down on us? After the kingfisher's wing
Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
At the still point of the turning world.

V

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now. Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them. The Word in the desert
Is most attacked by voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.

The detail of the pattern is movement,
As in the figure of the ten stairs.
Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.
Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
Even while the dust moves
There rises the hidden laughter
Of children in the foliage
Quick now, here, now, always—
Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after.

ON ELIOT'S *BURNT NORTON* [1]

ELIZABETH DREW

The poem opens with a passage of musing commentary on the nature of experience in time, with three self-contained propositions, and then a statement of what is really the substance and conclusion of all four poems [the *Four Quartets*]. First there is the usual concept of time as progression, and events as a sequence of cause and effect:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.

Then there is the concept of time as "eternally present," with the comment that if that is so, it makes time "unredeemable"; nothing can be altered, we can't bring back the past. This statement is left as it is for the moment: it is developed in the later poems and shown to be a half truth only. Finally there is a third category of experience "what might have been"—the potential. This is "perpetual," but exists only "in a world of speculation." The three aspects of time are then reduced to the central truth:

> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.

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1. Reprinted from *T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry* (New York, 1950), pp. 151–162, by Elizabeth Drew; copyright 1949 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers.

This is the first entrance of subtle ambiguity in the language, with its two-faced meanings of *point, end* and *present*. As a summing up of time as progression, it says that what has been (the past) and what might have been (the potentialities of the past) point to the present as their conclusion. that is what they have produced. As a summing up of the second idea of the eternal present as a "point," it says that what that points to is both that the present moment is the only actuality, and that what to do in the present is an *aim* or purpose which is always present with us.

Then the pure abstraction modulates into a transition passage. "What might have been" is translated into the sensuous embodiment of the echoing footfalls down the imaginary passage to the closed door into the rose-garden. "My words echo / Thus in your mind," says the poet. He may be addressing the reader and suggesting that such experiences are common to all; or the echoes may be in the mind of the woman in the imaginary scene. Then he returns to the symbolic presentation of the past as "dust on a bowl of rose-leaves." What *purpose* can such disturbing memories have, since the past is unredeemable, its pattern unalterable?

The rhythm quickens to a sense of breathless expectancy and creates the sense of the mind darting about, confusing the logic of temporal and spatial happenings in its own spontaneous flight into "the garden." The interpretation of the lovely scene in the rose-garden itself must depend on personal readings. Many people seem to feel it as a memory of childhood, taking "our first world" to mean that. I interpret the whole passage in the light of the line between the conclusion of the development of all the themes and the final recapitulation at the end of *Little Gidding:* "With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling." That transfigures the bird and the roses of *Burnt Norton* into the dove of *Little Gidding* and the rose of fire and light at the end of that poem: that is, nature becomes a symbol of a spiritual truth which transcends it. By the end of the poems "our first world" and the children in the leaves hold a suggestion of the age of innocence in the Garden of Eden, before the pattern of perfect relationship between God, man and nature was clouded and darkened. Here, in *Burnt Norton,* a transcendence of nature is brought about by the experience being "an airy nothing" given "a local habitation," and by its fusion of nature and man into perfect inter-relationship. But the experience itself—that of *this* love and *this* calling —seems to me to be that of love as a part of the natural world, the "first world" of our development as human beings, the first "gate" on the way. The voice of the thrush is "deception," partly because the whole thing is unseen and unheard by the outward senses, and partly because the experience, though it is one of the moments of "reality," contains only a partial revelation of it, since its centre is in the sense world.

The vision is created in flowing, free and melodious rhythms, its invisible and inaudible quality mysteriously carried by the clearest pictures and verse music. The actual setting in place and time is an autumn scene, but the

echoing footfalls of memory and might-have-been enter the deserted rose-garden and people it with life from an inner world. The voice of the bird calls in response to "unheard music" in the shrubbery; the unseen figures *must* be there "for the roses had the look of flowers that are looked at." The roses (the emblems of earthly love) and the dream figures from the past are blended into an inseparable union of giving and receiving, "accepted and accepting." With that the scene groups itself round a symbolic centre "in a formal pattern." The roses and the figures move, concentrating the "point" of vision from the garden to the evergreen "box circle" and thence to the pool and the lotos. The actual deserted drained pool, and its emotional counterpart in the hardness and dryness and neutral shades of the actuality of life, are suddenly transformed into the exquisite moment:

> And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
> And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
> The surface glittered out of heart of light,
> And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.

Here in natural terms, in the autumn "vibrant air" is the parallel with what in *Little Gidding* is the "mid-winter spring" of the pentecostal fire, which is "not in the scheme of generation." Here, nature and man seem part of an indestructible unity and harmony which *is* within the scheme of generation, the golden cup of the lotos and the surface of the pool receiving their glittering light from the physical sun; the human figures and the roses reflected in the water; the fading leaves full of children "hidden excitedly, containing laughter." The vision is that of an ecstasy of fulfilment at the human and natural level, which is a beautiful "reality," though not the ultimate one. It is blotted out by the cloud, the bird says "Go, go, go"—leave *that* garden—and we are brought back from the vision to the grave statement of the opening, that all things "point to one end, which is always present."

The lovely dancing lyric at the opening of the second movement is obviously based on the Heraclitean idea of the perpetual strife which resolves itself into beautiful harmony. The apparently conflicting and the apparently static are all part of an eternal moving pattern, existing simultaneously in all the elements in nature and linking them in a dynamic whole. The only inanimate thing is "the bedded axle-tree," maybe a relic of some chariot or gun-carriage in a "forgotten war," but reminding us of the symbol of the wheel. From the bright stones under it and the bright flowers around it, from under the "sodden floor" up to the stars, there streams up and down this uninterrupted energy of strife, forming itself into harmonious living patterns; singing, dancing, circulating, and having their final meaning in "the stars," the reflection of the Heraclitean "fire." Even the rather horrible strife of pursuer and pursued, the boarhound and the boar, is constellated (like the warring of the Olympian gods?) into an eternally subsisting order.

But then there is a complete change of rhythm. Heraclitus' system had no

still point, which makes his dance very different. His concept of reconciliation is that of perpetual sustaining tension between opposites and not of a centre of resolution. How then define this centre dispassionately, rationally? In place of the crowding, swift images creating the ever-changing configurations of natural forces, the rhythm becomes slow, the vocabulary abstract, the method analytical. But the poet finds the language of logic inadequate here. The still point can be approached only through paradox and negation. It is nothing that can be measured in terms of time, or of movement and fixity, of body or spirit, of ascent and descent. And yet it cannot be detached from these things, because though it is the point where there is no movement, it controls all the movement, and it is only through the measured movements that its presence can be known. It exists, but cannot be captured in a *where* or *when*.

Breaking off the effort at definition by negation and exclusion, the next sequence, continuing the analytical approach, describes in positive terms the *quality* of the experience, which has been given direct sensuous revelation in the vision in the rose-garden. It is a feeling of detachment from the ego and its conflicts, with a sense of grace and illumination and combined stillness and movement; a keeping of personal identity, and of the world of human experience, and yet an expansion beyond it and an elevation above it. Above all a sense of *wholeness,* in which the fragmentary nature of human experience, its partial ecstasy, and its partial horror, are completed and resolved and given *meaning*. Yet man, because he is human, cannot live at the level of the apprehension of wholeness. "Woven in the weakness of the changing body" are the inextricable strands which chain him to time and change. But the chains protect him too. They protect him from more than glimpses of absolute good or evil, ecstasy or agony, "which flesh cannot endure"—whose *duration* would cost man his humanity, since time and change are the laws of his being. He has these moments of ecstasy when he seems to transcend time and conquer it, but it is only within the pattern of time that they can be seen to be a part of a timeless pattern.

The third movement introduces the theme which is in absolute contrast to that of life as part of an ordered natural process, and of life as a pattern of inner relationships centred in the still point, and pointed towards it. It is that of life with no centre, no ordered direction, no organic relationships. Eliot creates these antitheses into a passage where images of them and the language in which they are described produce the most immediate and concrete sensations. On the one hand we feel the true emotional oppositions, by any of which the still point may be reached and which are as patterned as the natural images which symbolize them; on the other all the confusion and fragmentariness and negative neutrality of the dim "place of disaffection." That word itself at once condenses a complex of ideas of the cause and effect of the condition. It carries connotations of discontent; of the diminution and alienation of affection; and of disorder. The next lines contrast the opposi

tions which are rendered *lucid* by the sense of pattern, with the disaffection and dimness, which are

> neither daylight
> Investing form with lucid stillness
> Turning shadow into transient beauty
> With slow rotation suggesting permanence
> Nor darkness to purify the soul
> Emptying the sensual with deprivation
> Cleansing affection from the temporal.
> Neither plenitude nor vacancy.

The London scene which follows continues the parallels. Instead of creative tension there is *strain* on the "time-ridden faces / Distracted from distraction by distraction." Instead of light or dark, a *flicker* and *faded air* and *gloomy hills;* instead of plenitude or vacancy, the faces "filled with fancies and empty of meaning"; instead of wholeness, *unwholesome* lungs, *unhealthy* souls; instead of permanence and lucid stillness, the *tumid apathy* of the *torpid;* instead of measured movement the "men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind."

From all "this twittering world" of dim light and dim humanity, the poet turns to the creative "way down" into the inner darkness and isolation and silence, to the vacancy which is not "empty of meaning," but empty of self. It is "deprivation / And destitution of all property," the active forsaking of the ego, the way of withdrawal from the worlds of both sense and spirit, the disciplined "abstention from movement";

> while the world moves
> In appetency, on its metalled ways
> Of time past and time future.

Here again in *appetency* there is a great concentration of meaning. Not only the sense of conscious and unconscious compulsive drives, but the reminder of the Lamarckian doctrine that changes in the desires and needs of an organism result in adaptive modifications of its structure. So that the "metalled ways" on which the urban world now moves, suggest not only a picture of it as a vast network of roads and railways leading nowhere, but the whole quality of the mechanistic culture of today and its possible consequences for the future of the race.

After the formal declaration and loaded latinized language of the third movement, the short lyric of the fourth takes us back to the memory of the vision in the garden, but in a very different mood. There, there was the ecstatic assurance of lucid pattern uniting nature and man. This was reinforced by the lyric emphasizing the dynamic order of the natural world and the passages of analysis describing the order of the world of spirit. Against this was the disorder of the modern city. From this the poet turned to a disci-

pline of spiritual negation and a conquest of sense. But that is a voluntary darkness and emptiness; there is a return from it to the world which had been renounced. What of the involuntary defeat of the darkness and silence of death, which is the inevitable end of "the changing body"? With mingled horror and hope the poet questions its meaning.

> Time and the bell have buried the day,
> The black cloud carries the sun away.

The day and all that daylight brought, "investing form with lucid stillness" and the sense of permanent moving pattern, is "buried"; its lucid stillness destroyed by the black cloud and the death knell. The only sense of movement is the carrying away of the sun by the cloud, not only obscuring but *removing* the unmoving centre of the universe as we know it. This fact brings at one level sensations of pure terror. The words *bury, cloud, clutch, cling, curled fingers,* and the isolation of *chill* as a line in itself, suggest obliteration, dark cold extinction, strangulation by forces against which man is helpless. Will the only centre of life then be the nourishment our rotting bodies supply to the loveliness of flowers and trees? But there is another tone of gentler questioning. To pass into the pattern of nature expressed in the turning of the sunflower, in the tendrils and sprays of the clematis straying down, bending, clutching and clinging; in the curled fingers of the yew, has its own beauty. But will it be all? The tones of both horror and tender regret in the question are answered by the flashing image of the kingfisher in relation to the source of natural light, and its parallel in terms of the spirit.

> After the kingfisher's wing
> Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
> At the still point of the turning world.

The opposition of the movement of the kingfisher's wing and silence, in the last image, leads on to the next subject, the union of movement and stillness in a work of art and its parallel with the worlds of time and the still point. The poet shifts again to analytical discourse, this time in flowing speech rhythms. Again we have the two worlds of the temporal and the unchanging contrasted. The actuality of poetry and music to eye and ear is a series of progressions in a temporal sequence. But if they existed only in that dimension they would die like the flower and the kingfisher. Their "reality" is a matter of dynamic relationships, a structure where every part is involved with every other part to form an indivisible whole. The temporal sequence is co-existent with the unchanging pattern, all held together in a vital tension of sound and meaning. Carrying on the image of the whole as a system of tensions, he says:

> Words strain,
> Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
> Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,

Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them.

We shift almost imperceptibly from the abstract discussion of an intellectual aesthetic to the immediate reminder that this is by way of illustration of something else. The theme is not primarily a matter of aesthetics or physics. The *burden* is not only the weight on a word. The *imprecision* is linked with the concrete *decay*, the loss of tension with the concrete *slip, slide, perish*. The abstract stillness and movement of poetic "form" is invaded by the discordant, irrelevant "voices." In the last image the sense of *dis*order is suddenly intensified and its menace as the enemy of pattern and permanence is created in the word *assail*. Then "words" become the Word and we are translated from art to life.

The Word in the desert
Is most attacked by voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.

The temptation, the *attack* on creative order, becomes the wonderful complex imagery of the last two lines, where the harmonious dance is disturbed by "the funeral dance," and where noise, darkness, self-pity and self-deception invade the stillness. "The disconsolate chimera" is another of those strokes of genius where the words absorb and radiate implications. *Disconsolate*, recalling the earlier *disaffection*, carries the meaning of comfortless and melancholy, while *chimera* is both an empty, meaningless fancy and the incongruously composed monster slain by Bellerophon. Every aspect of the meanings fuse, and the *loud lament* and the *crying shadow* again enforce the sense of discord, pain and confused darkness of the temptation.

The recapitulation of the whole poem moves in a measure of short fluent lines, which is used again at the conclusion of *The Dry Salvages* and *Little Gidding*. The pattern of dynamic tensions sustaining life, which in the natural world was "figured in the drift of stars" and down to the garlic and the mud, is, in the world of spirit "the figure of the ten stairs." This is a reference to St. John of the Cross, who pictured the discipline of contemplation as a ladder of ten steps "which the soul is ascending and descending continually in ecstasy and humiliation until it has acquired perfect habits." The summit of the ladder and what it rests upon is God as Love, and for a moment we are taken outside of both the turning world and the pattern whose centre is the still point, to the unmoved mover who exists untouched by the temporal, by the "form of limitation" decreed by life. Love in its human aspect cannot rid itself entirely of the element of desire. It can reach only to the moment of "reality" in the rose-garden, when, for a brief instant, nature and spirit glit-

tered together "out of heart of light." Swiftly we are transported back to that ecstasy—

Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
Even while the dust moves
There rises the hidden laughter
Of children in the foliage
Quick now, here, now, always—

The "purpose" of the disturbance of the dust on the bowl of rose-leaves is now clear. It is a reminder that every moment of time can be transfigured by the apprehension of the timeless pattern and the sharing of its vitality. The release, the "grace of sense," the spontaneous, joyous illumination, comes like the "dancing arrow" of bird flight, flashes in the here and now—and is gone—leaving the sense of the combined unimportance and unworthiness and mockery of "the aspect of time."

Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

HERE LIES A LADY[1]

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three,
And of medicos marveling sweetly on her ills.

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads—
What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds.

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white and blown,
And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine.
The sixth of these states was her last; the cold settled down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and mourning,

1 Reprinted from *Chills and Fever* by John Crowe Ransom, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1924, 1945, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

In love and great honor we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

ON RANSOM'S *HERE LIES A LADY* [1]

FRED H. STOCKING

THE most controversial feature of this poem is the attitude of the speaker toward the aristocratic lady who has died. The tone of the opening line is detached and factual. As we read farther, however, we realize that this objectivity is owing not to a lack of feeling, but to the kind of feeling—or rather, to a blend of several feelings: (1) genuine sorrow induced by this lady's death, (2) respect for the values cherished by all ladies of high degree, and (3) at the same time an awareness that these values *can* be seen as superficial, even mildly comical.

Genuine grief is reflected in his tribute to the affection the lady inspired in her husband, aunts, and child, in the pathos of the image of the "thin stalk white and blown," in the rhetorical grimness of the words, "the cold settled down," and in his report that "in love and great honor we bade God rest her soul."

The poem's central focus, however, is on his appreciation of the values to which all aristocratic ladies adhere: their love of manners, ceremony, and behavior that is controlled, self-conscious, formally patterned. Such ladies put a great premium on lace and fine dress; they delight in symmetry and balance, neatness and precision. And what most impresses the speaker in the poem is the ceremonious way—the almost mannered way—in which she has died. The symmetrical pattern of her chills and fever is emphasized by the repetition, with inversion, in the second line, by the nicely balanced organization of the poem itself (with the second stanza devoted to her fevers and the third to her chills), and by the last line of the poem. In the fourth stanza the speaker says that he hopes sweet ladies will not die; but if they must die, he hopes their dying may be as appropriate as hers. The question in the second line of this stanza is not completely ironic. In one special sense the lady *was* lucky: not only because her friends and neighbors paid their respects in an elaborately ceremonious funeral (with flowers, lace, mourning, love, great honor, and prayer), but also because of the *way* in which she died, "after six little spaces of chill, and six of burning." Her illness, albeit tragic, was nevertheless symmetrical; and it was orderly, neat, and precise in form. Hence the lady's sickness is presented as a symbol of her whole set of values (her "art of living"); her way of death symbolizes her way of life.

There are two ways of reacting to this symbolical death: you can respect it, or you can find it rather silly. Evidence of the speaker's basic attitude—

1. From *The Explicator*, VIII (October, 1949), 1. Reprinted by permission of the authors and of the Editors of *The Explicator*.

genuine respect—has already been cited; but there is also evidence of his awareness that others might find all these goings on rather comical,—that others might, indeed, find the lady's death, like her life, mildly ridiculous. There is the jaunty rhythm of line 2, written as though the speaker, intrigued by the very sounds of "chills and fever, fever and chills," playfully makes the illness sound like a jig; there is a comic tumbling down the scale of importance from the husband in line 3 to the smiling, incompetent medicos of line 4; there is a touch of grim humor in the description of her fevers ("What was she making? Why nothing;"); and there is implied comedy in the very conception of her disease as a piece of complicated ritual. These occasional light touches in the speaker's manner or pose (as distinct from his basic feeling) do not satirize the lady, but they do enable the speaker to suggest that he knows there can be other attitudes than his own; he says, in effect: "Despite my genuine grief and my deep respect for the lady's values, I understand that it might be possible to regard the lady as an inconsequential creature whose death was as cluttered with pointless activity as her life had been."

ELLSWORTH MASON

Ransom's "Here Lies a Lady" reveals the modern fear of sentimentality in that the speaker covers up his really intense grief under layers of a detached, epitaphic manner and of qualifying irony. But the grief appears in his dwelling on the unsightly aspects of the lady's fatal disease and in his contrast of the richness of her life with her sudden death from a superficially trivial ailment.

Stanza 1 contrasts the lady's life with the triviality of her disease. The speaker's emotions are completely under control as he alternates the serious lines 1 and 3 with the jingling rhythm of line 2 and the semi-humorous criticism of the doctors in line 4.

Stanzas 2 and 3 contain the emotional center of the poem. In stanza 2 the speaker's real feelings begin to come to the surface in the emphasis he places on the deranged, uncontrollable actions of the fevered lady. But this emphasis is qualified in line 3. "Why nothing" has a semi-comic effect because it comes as a surprise, but the surprise itself indicates that we should have expected some purposeful action and points up the tragedy of the lady's derangement.

The emotion of stanza 3 is almost completely unqualified. The speaker's deep compassion is emphasized by the details and length of line 2, is intensified by the intimacy of the attempts to revive the lady in line 3, and is justified by the grim finality with which line 4 ends.

Having almost openly revealed his emotions in stanza 3, the speaker immediately covers them up in line 1 of stanza 4. He contrasts the endurance of the sweet ladies with the death of his lady, and the contrast reminds him so

deeply of his loss that he nearly falls over backwards in his use of archaic language to appear casual. The question in line 2 is completely ironic. The poem ends, as it began, with a contrast between the richness of the lady's life and the seeming triviality of her disease. The parallel of the details with stanza 1 is exact: "flowers"—"beauty," "lace"—"high degree," love of the mourners—love of her family. But now, the irony is deepened by presenting her life implicitly in the details of her funeral and by emphasizing the triviality of the disease in the added detail "little spaces."

BLUE GIRLS[1]

Twirling your blue skirts, traveling the sward
Under the towers of your seminary,
Go listen to your teachers old and contrary
Without believing a word.

Tie the white fillets then about your lustrous hair
And think no more of what will come to pass
Than bluebirds that go walking on the grass
And chattering on the air.

Practice your beauty, blue girls, before it fail;
And I will cry with my loud lips and publish
Beauty which all our power shall never establish,
It is so frail.

For I could tell you a story which is true:
I know a lady with a terrible tongue,
Blear eyes fallen from blue,
All her perfections tarnished—and yet it is not long
Since she was lovelier than any of you.

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

THE END OF THE WORLD[2]

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting

1. Reprinted from *Selected Poems* by John Crowe Ransom, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1924, 1945, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
2. From Archibald MacLeish, *Poems 1924–1933*. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark, the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness, the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL[1]

And here face down beneath the sun
And here upon earth's noonward height
To feel the always coming on
The always rising of the night

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever climbing shadow grow

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange
The flooding dark about their knees
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate
Dark empty and the withered grass
And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass
And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown

1. From Archibald MacLeish, *Poems 1924–1933*. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa the gilded sand
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea
And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift how secretly
The shadow of the night comes on . . .

E. E. CUMMINGS [1]

CHANSON INNOCENT, I

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame baloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old baloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

1. From *Collected Poems of E. E. Cummings,* published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. Copyright, 1923, by E. E. Cummings.

it's
spring
and
the

goat-footed

baloonMan whistles
far
and
wee

ON CUMMINGS' *CHANSON INNOCENT, I* [1]

ROBERT MAYO

Subject and the point of view. This is the first of three poems published by Cummings under the heading "Chansons Innocentes" in *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923). The title is an important clue to the poet's intention. *Innocent* in French means *simple* and *childlike,* and on its primary level the poem may be construed as a "song" in which the world is seen through a child's eyes at the moment when winter first gives way to spring—that is, *Just-spring.* The word is one which a child might invent, and the fact that it is capitalized (the only one, excepting *baloonMan*) may mean that *Just-spring* is the subject of the poem, although admittedly this is not Cummings' practice in other poems.

All detail in the poem is selected to create the feeling of a child's world—the *queer old baloonman, eddieandbill, marbles and piracies, bettyandisbel, hopscotch and jump-rope,* and so on.

The imagery likewise is expressive of a child's point of view. *Mud-luscious* suggests not only the season of frequent rains, but the sensuous pleasure which he takes in soft mud; and *puddle-wonderful,* the magic of a world reflected in reverse. Similarly the baloonman is first described as *little* and *lame,* next as *queer* and *old,* and last of all as *goat-footed.* Thus his infirmity is seen not as pathetic—as a sign of misfortune and suffering—but purely as an eccentricity, the twisted leg of the little man, with its built-up shoe (possibly), reminding the child of a goat's foot.

Organization. Some of Cummings' other poems are "abstract" in form—that is, they try to express feeling directly, without representing speech or thought in the conventional manner. But this poem can best be interpreted

1. From *English "A" Analyst,* No. 2 (May, 1947), Northwestern University. By permission of the author.

within a dramatic or psychological framework, as a kind of monologue or thought-stream. The movement is cyclic:

in Just-spring . . . world . . . baloonman . . . eddieandbill . . . . marbles . . .
and it's spring . . . world . . . baloonman . . . bettyandisbel . . . hopscotch . . .
and it's spring . . . . . baloonMan . . .

The "song" therefore, describes two whole turns and two arcs of a third before it ends abruptly. The organization suggests the rambling discourse or singsong of a child. The paean of *Just-spring* comes in unpremeditated spurts, and breaks off as suddenly as it begins. Perhaps the speaker's attention is diverted elsewhere, or his daydream ends as he falls asleep.

Typography. The unconventional typography—besides being designed, as in Cummings' other poems, to give freshness to the reading experience—seems also to serve more specific functions. In this poem, at least, it is used to enhance the feeling of childlike naiveté, to suggest sound effects, and to support the "action" of the poem in other ways.

1. Most obviously, *eddieandbill* and *bettyandisbel* are attempts to suggest a child's running of words together breathlessly (note the suggestive elision in *is(a)bel*). On the other hand the curious form *baloonMan* in line 21 shows the same process in reverse, the breaking up of a single word into its significant components. Here it may represent a naive qualification by the speaker. This queer, little being—he may wish to remind us—may be *goat-footed,* but he's a *Man* just the same.

2. At first sight the wide spacing and the line-breaks in the poem may seem to be pure freakishness, but with study one discovers a regularity in the irregularity which suggests some method in the poet's oddity. For example, there is after *Just-spring* or *spring* each time either a space or a line-break. These can be interpreted as dramatic pauses—suggestive of the speechless wonder of the child. Every time the subject recurs, he stops to take it in, as it were.

3. In the passages just cited the spacing seems to have been used for emphasis—as exclamation points *in absentia,* so to speak. Elsewhere quite the opposite effect may have been intended. For example, each time the baloonman whistles, the line is either broken or extended by wide spacing.

whistles far and wee	(line 5)
whistles / far and wee	(lines 12–13)
whistles / far / and / wee	(lines 21–24)

It may be that this is intended to convey to the eye the impression of distance, and attenuation. The whistle, that is, is heard by the children *far* off—faintly but sharply (*wee*)—whereupon they come running and skipping from their games.

4. Undoubtedly the most cryptic typographical feature of the poem is found in the last nine lines. The first fifteen are grouped for the eye in

"stanzas" of five lines each, consisting of a "quatrain" and a "refrain." The arrangement is quite arbitrary, it would seem, since the meter is free, the lines are irregular in length, and the grouping bears no observable relation to the sense. After three "regular stanzas," however, the sight pattern dwindles: ten words now occupy nine lines, the margin slips to the right, and the poem breaks off between the "quatrain" and the "refrain."

The disintegration after "stanza" 3, of course, can be interpreted simply as the diversion of the child's thoughts to something else—the poem "runs down," so to speak. But a close reading of the third "stanza" would seem to suggest a more specific cause. It is a striking fact, at any rate, that the *hop-scotch and jump-rope* of line 15 is followed by three hops forward in the verse, two diagonal, a double-hop, and three singles. The game breaks up the poem, just as the baloonman breaks up the game.

The second level of the poem. So much for Cummings' "child's song" on its primary level. The poem should be read, first of all, on the naturalistic plane, as an attempt to create the illusion of a children's world, and to express the joyous exuberance of the "singer" at the first coming of spring.

On the second level, which may be termed the *symbolic,* the poem has a further meaning for the reader which it does not have for the child. Briefly, the baloonman is identified with the god Pan, whose pipings from afar signal the first stirrings of spring and set all the creatures of nature to dancing. The discovery is not immediate, but gradual; the effect is cumulative. Paraphrasing, and underlining key words:

> In Just-*spring* . . . the *little* lame baloonman *whistles far* off and sets the children to *running,* and when it's *spring* the *queer old* baloonman *whistles* and the children come *dancing,* and when it's *spring* the *goat-footed* (!) baloonman *whistles far and wee.*

With the last epithet—*goat-footed*—comes the act of recognition on the part of the reader, at the precise moment when on the first level, as we have observed, the poem seems to be running down. Thus the two planes of meaning in the poem—the one descending, the other ascending, so to speak—intersect at line 20, where the modern child's world of marbles and hop-scotch is linked with the timeless spirit of the spring season, and acquires a kind of extra dimension.

The total meaning of the poem. The double level of meaning in "Just-spring" makes the search for the total meaning somewhat perplexing. In rising from the specific to the general in this poem, at just what point ought one to stop? What was Cummings' intention in overlaying the general detail of American life with the symbolism of pagan antiquity? Exactly how eternal is his *baloon Man?* Is he a primeval force, or just a pantheistic pun?

If we take into account the main body of Cummings' poetry, certainly, there would seem to be no mystical intention—no serious allegory. On the contrary, judging from the other poems in the group the title, the detail and

the imagery, the organization of the poem, its typographical oddities, the colloquial tone, and the general air of nostalgia which it breathes, "Just-spring" would seem to be more scintillation than anything else—a kind of witty reminder of the ageless qualities of awakening spring, and an amused glance at the unconscious paganism and animal spirits of childhood.

SPACE BEING CURVED[1]

Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved
(and that reminds me who said o yes Frost
Something there is which isn't fond of walls)
an electromagnetic(now I've lost
the)Einstein expanded Newton's law preserved
conTinuum(but we read that beFore)

of Course life being just a Reflex you
know since Everything is Relative or

to sum it All Up god being Dead(not to

mention inTerred)
LONG LIVE that Upwardlooking
Serene Illustrious and Beatific
Lord of Creation,MAN.
at a least crooking
of Whose compassionate digit,earth's most terrific

quadruped swoons into billiardBalls!

MR U[2]

mr u will not be missed
who as an anthologist
sold the many on the few
not excluding mr u

1 x 1[2]

if everything happens that can't be done
(and anything's righter
than books
could plan)
the stupidest teacher will almost guess
(with a run

1. From W(VIVA) in *Collected Poems,* published by Harcourt, Brace & Company. Copyright, 1931, by E. E. Cummings.
2. From *1 x 1,* published by Henry Holt and Company. Copyright, 1944, by E. E. Cummings.

skip
around we go yes)
there's nothing as something as one

one hasn't a why or because or although
(and buds know better
than books
don't grow)
one's anything old being everything new
(with a what
which
around we come who)
one's everyanything so

so world is a leaf so tree is a bough
(and birds sing sweeter
than books
tell how)
so here is away and so your is a my
(with a down
up
around again fly)
forever was never till now

now i love you and you love me
(and books are shuter
than books
can be)
and deep in the high that does nothing but fall
(with a shout
each
around we go all)
there's somebody calling who's we

we're anything brighter than even the sun
(we're everything greater
than books
might mean)
we're everyanything more than believe
(with a spin
leap
alive we're alive)
we're wonderful one times one

HART CRANE

AT MELVILLE'S TOMB[1]

Often beneath the wave, wide from this ledge
The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath
An embassy. Their numbers as he watched,
Beat on the dusty shore and were obscured.

And wrecks passed without sound of bells,
The calyx of death's bounty giving back
A scattered chapter, livid hieroglyph,
The portent wound in corridors of shells.

Then in the circuit calm of one vast coil,
Its lashings charmed and malice reconciled,
Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars;
And silent answers crept across the stars.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive
No farther tides . . . High in the azure steeps
Monody shall not wake the mariner.
This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.

ON CRANE'S *AT MELVILLE'S TOMB*[2]

HART CRANE AND HARRIET MONROE

APROPOS of the poem *At Melville's Tomb,* printed in the verse section of this number, the following correspondence between its author and the editor, printed with the consent of both, may be of interest to our readers.

From the editor to Mr. Crane:

Take me for a hard-boiled unimaginative unpoetic reader, and tell me how *dice* can *bequeath an embassy* (or anything else); and how a calyx (*of death's bounty* or anything else) can give back a *scattered chapter, livid hieroglyph;* and how, if it does, such a *portent* can be *wound in corridors* (of shells or anything else).

And so on. I find your image of *frosted eyes lifting altars* difficult to

1. From *The Collected Poems of Hart Crane,* published by the Liveright Publishing Corp., N. Y. Copyright, Liveright, Inc., 1933.

2. From *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* XXIX (Oct., 1926), 34–41. Whole article, "A Discussion with Hart Crane." Reprinted by permission of the authors and the publisher.

visualize. Nor do compass, quadrant and sextant *contrive* tides, they merely record them, I believe.

All this may seem impertinent, but is not so intended. Your ideas and rhythms interest me, and I am wondering by what process of reasoning you would justify this poem's succession of champion mixed metaphors, of which you must be conscious. The packed line should pack its phrases in orderly relation, it seems to me, in a manner tending to clear confusion instead of making it worse confounded.

But pardon me—you didn't ask for criticism. Of course, I should not venture upon these remarks if I were not much interested.

From Mr. Crane to the editor:

Your good nature and manifest interest in writing me about the obscurities apparent in my Melville poem certainly prompt a wish to clarify my intentions in that poem as much as possible. But I realize that my explanations will not be very convincing. For a paraphrase is generally a poor substitute for any organized conception that one has fancied he has put into the more essentialized form of the poem itself.

At any rate, and though I imagine us to have considerable differences of opinion regarding the relationship of poetic metaphor to ordinary logic (I judge this from the angle of approach you use toward portions of the poem), I hope my answers will not be taken as a defense of merely certain faulty lines. I am really much more interesting in certain theories of metaphor and technique involved generally in poetics, than I am concerned in vindicating any particular perpetrations of my own.

My poem may well be elliptical and actually obscure in the ordering of its content, but in your criticism of this very possible deficiency you have stated your objections in terms that allow me, at least for the moment, the privilege of claiming your ideas and ideals as theoretically, at least, quite outside the issues of my own aspirations. To put it more plainly, as a poet I may very possibly be more interested in the so-called illogical impingements of the connotations of words on the consciousness (and their combinations and interplay in metaphor on this basis) than I am interested in the preservation of their logically rigid significations at the cost of limiting my subject matter and perceptions involved in the poem.

This may sound as though I merely fancied juggling words and images until I found something novel, or esoteric; but the process is much more predetermined and objectified than that. The nuances of feeling and observation in a poem may well call for certain liberties which you claim the poet has no right to take. I am simply making the claim that the poet does have that authority, and that to deny it is to limit the scope of the medium so considerably as to outlaw some of the richest genius of the past.

This argument over the dynamics of metaphor promises as active a future as has been evinced in the past. Partaking so extensively as it does of the

issues involved in the propriety or non-propriety of certain attitudes toward subject matter, etc., it enters the critical distinctions usually made between "romantic," "classic" as an organic factor. It is a problem that would require many pages to state adequately—merely from my own limited standpoint on the issues. Even this limited statement may prove onerous reading, and I hope you will pardon me if my own interest in the matter carries me to the point of presumption.

Its paradox, of course, is that its apparent illogic operates so logically in conjunction with its context in the poem as to establish its claim to another logic, quite independent of the original definition of the word or phrase or image thus employed. It implies (this *inflection* of language) a previous or prepared receptivity to its stimulus on the part of the reader. The reader's sensibility simply responds by identifying this inflection of experience with some event in his own history or perceptions—or rejects it altogether. The logic of metaphor is so organically entrenched in pure sensibility that it can't be thoroughly traced or explained outside of historical sciences, like philology and anthropology. This "pseudo-statement," as I. A. Richards calls it in an admirable essay touching our contentions in last July's *Criterion*, demands completely other faculties of recognition than the pure rationalistic associations permit. Much fine poetry may be completely rationalistic in its use of symbols, but there is much great poetry of another order which will yield the reader very little when inspected under the limitation of such arbitrary concerns as are manifested in your judgment of the Melville poem, especially when you constitute such requirements of ordinary logical relationship between word and word as irreducible.

I don't wish to enter here defense of the particular symbols employed in my own poem, because, as I said, I may well have failed to supply the necessary emotional connectives to the content featured. But I would like to counter a question or so of yours with a similar question. Here the poem is less dubious in quality than my own, and as far as the abstract pertinacity of question and its immediate consequences are concerned the point I'm arguing about can be better demonstrated. Both quotations are familiar to you, I'm sure.

You ask me how a *portent* can possibly be wound in a *shell*. Without attempting to answer this for the moment, I ask you how Blake could possibly say that "a *sigh* is a *sword* of an Angel King." You ask me how *compass, quadrant and sextant "contrive"* tides. I ask you how Eliot can possibly believe that "Every street *lamp* that I pass *beats* like a fatalistic *drum!*" Both of my metaphors may fall down completely. I'm not defending their actual value in themselves; but your criticism of them in each case was leveled at an illogicality of relationship between symbols, which similar fault you must have either overlooked in case you have ever admired the Blake and Eliot lines, or have there condoned them on account of some more ultimate convictions pressed on you by the impact of the poems in their entirety.

It all comes to the recognition that emotional dynamics are not to be confused with any absolute order of rationalized definitions; ergo, in poetry the *rationale* of metaphor belongs to another order of experience than science, and is not to be limited by a scientific and arbitrary code of relationships either in verbal inflections or concepts.

There are plenty of people who have never accumulated a sufficient series of reflections (and these of a rather special nature) to perceive the relation between a *drum* and a *street lamp—via* the *unmentioned* throbbing of the heart and nerves in a distraught man which *tacitly* creates the reason and "logic" of the Eliot metaphor. They will always have a perfect justification for ignoring those lines and to claim them obscure, excessive, etc., until by some experience of their own the words accumulate the necessary connotations to complete their connection. It is the same with the "patient etherized upon a table," isn't it? Surely that line must lack all eloquence to many people who, for instance, would delight in agreeing that the sky was like a dome of many-colored glass.

If one can't count on some such bases in the reader now and then, I don't see how the poet has any chance to ever get beyond the simplest conceptions of emotion and thought, of sensation and lyrical sequence. If the poet is to be held completely to the already evolved and exploited sequences of imagery and logic—what field of added consciousness and increased perceptions (the actual province of poetry, if not lullabyes) can be expected when one has to relatively return to the alphabet every breath or so? In the minds of people who have sensitively read, seen and experienced a great deal, isn't there a terminology something like short-hand as compared to usual description and dialectics, which the artist ought to be right in trusting as a reasonable connective agent toward fresh concepts, more inclusive evaluations? The question is more important to me than it perhaps ought to be; but as long as poetry is written, an audience, however small, is implied, and there remains the question of an active or an inactive imagination as its characteristic.

It is of course understood that a street-lamp simply can't beat with a sound like a drum; but it oftens happens that images, themselves totally dissociated, when joined in the circuit of a particular emotion located with specific relation to both of them, conduce to great vividness and accuracy of statement in defining that emotion.

Not to rant on forever, I'll beg your indulgence and come at once to the explanations you requested on the Melville poem:

> The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath
> An embassy.

Dice bequeath an embassy, in the first place, by being ground (in this connection only, of course) in little cubes from the bones of drowned men by the action of the sea, and are finally thrown up on the sand, having "numbers" but no identification. These being the bones of dead men who

never completed their voyage, it seems legitimate to refer to them as the only surviving evidence of certain messages undelivered, mute evidence of certain things, experiences that the dead mariners might have had to deliver. Dice as a symbol of chance and circumstance is also implied.

The calyx of death's bounty giving back, etc.

This calyx refers in a double ironic sense both to a cornucopia and the vortex made by a sinking vessel. As soon as the water has closed over a ship this whirlpool sends up broken spars, wreckage, etc., which can be alluded to as *livid hieroglyphs,* making a *scattered chapter* so far as any complete record of the recent ship and her crew is concerned. In fact, about as much definite knowledge might come from all this as anyone might gain from the roar of his own veins, which is easily heard (haven't you ever done it?) by holding a shell close to one's ear.

Frosted eyes lift altars.

Refers simply to a conviction that a man, not knowing perhaps a definite god yet being endowed with a reverence for deity—such a man naturally postulates a deity somehow, and the altar of that deity by the very *action* of the eyes *lifted* in searching.

Compass, quadrant and sextant contrive no farther tides.

Hasn't it often occurred that instruments originally invented for record and computation have inadvertently so extended the concepts of the entity they were invented to measure (concepts of space, etc.) in the mind and imagination that employed them, that they may metaphorically be said to have extended the original boundaries of the entity measured? This little bit of "relativity" ought not to be discredited in poetry now that scientists are proceeding to measure the universe on principles of pure *ratio,* quite as metaphorical, so far as previous standards of scientific methods extended, as some of the axioms in *Job.*

I may have completely failed to provide any clear interpretation of these symbols in their context. And you will no doubt feel that I have rather heatedly explained them for anyone who professes no claims for their particular value. I hope, at any rate, that I have clarified them enough to suppress any suspicion that their obscurity derives from a lack of definite intentions in the subject-matter of the poem. The execution is another matter, and you must be accorded a superior judgment to mine in that regard.

From the editor to Mr. Crane:

No doubt our theories and ideals in the art differ more or less fundamentally, yet I would not deny to the poet the right to take certain of the liberties you claim. I think he can take as many as he succeeds with without mystifying his particular audience; for mystery is good, but not mystification.

I think that in your poem certain phrases carry to an excessive degree the "dynamics of metaphor"—they telescope three or four images together by mental leaps (I fear my own metaphors are getting mixed!) which the poet, knowing his ground, can take safely, but which the most sympathetic reader cannot take unless the poet leads him by the hand with some such explanation as I find in your letter. I refer to such phrases as my letter quoted, except that I think I was over-exacting in criticizing the "quadrant and sextant" line. Accepting as I do much of what you say about "the illogical impingements of the connotations of words on the consciousness, and their combinations and interplay in metaphor," I must admit that these phrases in your poem are for me too elliptical to produce any effect but mystification (this until you explained them).

I don't get this effect from Blake or Eliot in the lines you quote or others that I have read. I am not familiar with Blake's symbolic poems but now, opening Prof. Pierce's volume of selections from them, I find in their use of metaphor a singular simplicity and clarity. He deals with magnificent mysteries, but presents them in flaming images like

> what time I bound my sandals
> On to walk forward through eternity.

I find here no crowded and tortured lines.

My argument comes down, I suppose, rather to your practice than your theory. Or, more specifically, your practice strains your theory by carrying it, with relentless logic, to a remote and exaggerated extreme. You find me testing metaphors, and poetic concept in general, too much by logic, whereas I find you pushing logic to the limit in a painfully intellectual search for emotion, for poetic motive. Your poem reeks with brains—it is thought out, worked out, sweated out. And the beauty which it seems entitled to is tortured and lost.

In all this I may be entirely wrong, and I am aware that a number of poets and critics would think so. Yvor Winters, for example, in a recent letter, speaks of your *Marriage of Faustus and Helen* in *Secession* 7 as "one of the great poems of our time, as great as the best of Stevens or Pound or Eliot." Well, I cannot grant it such a rank.

The editor would rather not have the last word, but as Mr. Crane contributes no further to the discussion, we must pass it on to our readers.

VOYAGES: II[1]

> —And yet this great wink of eternity,
> Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,
> Samite sheeted and processioned where

1. From *The Collected Poems of Hart Crane*, published by the Liveright Publishing Corp., N. Y. Copyright, Liveright, Inc., 1933.

Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,
Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love;

Take this Sea, whose diapason knells
On scrolls of silver snowy sentences,
The sceptered terror of whose sessions rends
As her demeanors motion well or ill,
All but the pieties of lovers' hands.

And onward, as bells off San Salvador
Salute the crocus lusters of the stars,
In these poinsettia meadows of her tides,—
Adagios of islands, O my Prodigal,
Complete the dark confessions her veins spell.

Mark how her turning shoulders wind the hours,
And hasten while her penniless rich palms
Pass superscription of bent foam and wave,—
Hasten, while they are true,—sleep, death, desire,
Close round one instant in one floating flower.

Bind us in time, O seasons clear, and awe.
O minstrel galleons of Carib fire,
Bequeath us to no earthly shore until
Is answered in the vortex of our grave
The seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise.

THE AIR PLANT[1]

Grand Cayman, W. I.

This tuft that thrives on saline nothingness,
Inverted octopus with heavenward arms
Thrust parching from a palm-bole hard by the cove—
A bird almost—of almost bird alarms,

Is pulmonary to the wind that jars
Its tentacles, horrific in the lurch.
The lizard's throat, held bloated for a fly,
Balloons but warily from this throbbing perch.

1. From *The Collected Poems of Hart Crane,* published by the Liveright Publishing Corp., N. Y. Copyright: Liveright, Inc., 1933.

The needles and hacksaws of cactus bleed
A milk of earth when stricken off the stalk;
But this—defenseless, thornless, sheds no blood,
Scarce shadow even—but the air's thin talk.

Angelic Dynamo! Ventriloquist of the Blue!
While beachward creeps the shark-swept Spanish Main.
By what conjunctions do the winds appoint
Its apotheosis, at last—the hurricane!

ALLEN TATE

MR. POPE[1]

When Alexander Pope strolled in the city
Strict was the glint of pearl and gold sedans.
Ladies leaned out, more out of fear than pity;
For Pope's tight back was rather a goat's than man's.

One often thinks the urn should have more bones
Than skeletons provide for speedy dust;
The urn gets hollow, cobwebs brittle as stones
Weave to the funeral shell a frivolous rust.

And he who dribbled couplets like the snake
Coiled to a lithe precision in the sun,
Is missing. The jar is empty; you may break
It only to find that Mr. Pope is gone.

What requisitions of a verity
Prompted the wit and rage between his teeth
One cannot say: around a crooked tree
A mortal climbs whose name should be a wreath.

AGAIN THE NATIVE HOUR[2]

Again the native hour lets down the locks
Uncombed and black, but gray the bobbing beard;
Ten years ago His eyes, fierce shuttlecocks,

1. Reprinted from *Poems 1928–1931* by Allen Tate; copyright, 1931, 1932, by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers.
2. Reprinted from *Poems 1922–1947*, by Allen Tate; copyright 1932, 1948 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers.

Pierced the close net of what I failed: I feared
The belly-cold, the grave-clout, that betrayed
Me dithering in the rift of cordial seas;
Ten years is time enough to be dismayed
By mummy Christ, head crammed between his knees.

Suppose I take an arrogant bomber, stroke
By stroke, up to the frazzled sun to hear
Sun-ghostlings whisper: Yes, the capital yoke—
Remove it and there's not a ghost to fear
This crucial day, whose decapitate joke
Languidly winds into the inner ear.

ON TATE'S *AGAIN THE NATIVE HOUR*[1]

SAMUEL HOLT MONK

ALTHOUGH this complex sonnet should be read in relation to all of Tate's writings (which are remarkably unified and consistent) it can be considered separately, for it is a topical poem, commenting with characteristic irony on the observation of Christmas in 1942. Despite the traditionally personal sonnet form and the use of the pronoun "I," it is not necessary to assume that the speaker is the poet: he is the poet, but he is also any contemporary man of sensibility and intelligence brought up in the Christian tradition, who faced the implications of Christmas in war time. In fact, he is modern man, and the sonnet is thus a comment on the dilemma of the twentieth century, in which incapacity for belief in myth and subservience to abstraction and technological skills have brought the human race to the verge of self-destruction.

The first two lines establish an ironic contrast between the perennial and spontaneous emotions that center in the Christmas myth and the changes that time and events have brought about in the speaker's capacity to respond to that myth. The "native hour," of course, is the hour of the birth of Christ; the "locks Uncombed and black" suggest the eternal and unaging aspects of the Christmas myth, in contrast to the sphere of the temporal, in which the beard has turned gray and "bobs," because of the loss of muscular control that accompanies age. Moreover there is a vivid suggestion here of the general ebbing away of spiritual energy in our civilization.

This contrast is made explicit in the rest of the octave: ten years ago (a reference to *Sonnets at Christmas*) the gaze of Christ had been like shuttlecocks that the will of the speaker sought to "return" or to ward off, but that none the less pierced the net of his consciousness and even, perhaps, threat-

1. From *The Explicator*, VI (June, 1948), 58; VII (Dec., 1948), 23. Reprinted by permission of the authors and of the Editors of *The Explicator*.

ened to win the match. The effort to return the fierce shuttlecocks was due to fear, a fear that is given first a physical expression in "belly-cold" and then a psychological expression in "grave-clout." This fear is implicit in the acceptance of the Christian myth, for to accept the full implications of Christianity is to accept also the fact of death and its significance and to be betrayed to the "rift of cordial seas." Here the word "cordial" operates powerfully because it emphasizes the concept of the sea as the source of life (*cor*), because it has overtones of vitality and warmth, despite the fact that the surface meaning of "sea" conveys symbolically the vast impersonality of death and the consequent obliteration of the self. The last two lines of the octave refer to the interval between *Sonnets at Christmas* and *More Sonnets*: a decade of dismay because it had witnessed the disturbing influence of the grief-stricken Christ ("head crammed between his knees") and even of the dead and meaningless Christ ("mummy") on a mind that could neither accept nor reject the Christian tradition.

Irony is emphasized in the sharp contrast between the octave and the sestet: it is 1942, a year of war, a year of the denial of Christianity and of the freeing of man from the "capital yoke" of a now admittedly dead myth. The "arrogant bomber" is played off against the static and mummified image of Christ in the octave, for it is dynamic, purposeful, proud of its functional precision. Modern man, having rejected Christian civilization, fulfills himself in the application of science and technical skills to the work of destruction. The phrase "stroke By stroke" refers, of course, to the strokes of the aircraft's engines. "Frazzled" is both a visual and an intellectual image: the rays of the sun and the sense of dying energy are both realized. The ghostlings of the frazzled sun whisper that the work of this day (a bombing mission), of this "crucial" day (a pun on Cross), can be carried on without the sort of fear with which the octave dealt. The Christian revelation is irrelevant and meaningless in 1942: it is seen now as having been merely a "capital yoke" (a pun on the primary meaning of "capital"—*caput*), a matter of intellectual assent that can be laid aside as easily as it was assumed; it is now only a "decapitate joke"—a reference back to "capital yoke"; the head that believed abstractly is no longer in control, for man is committed to violence and the meanings of the old myth wind languidly (without conviction) into the inner ear. Without doubt the phrase "capital yoke" also points to Tate's antagonism to the financial industrial system that has enslaved modern man, and thus relates the poem at another level to his general view of the modern world.

AUGUST H. MASON

This sonnet, as Professor Monk has indicated, is one of a double group of Christmas sonnets, and is a topical poem, "commenting with characteristic irony on the observation of Christmas in 1942." All these sonnets argue the difficult case of an intelligent, sensitive man in our time who is anxiously

aware of disparity between the living Word and the mummified body of Christian ethics that is carefully preserved in modern capitalistic societies, and who on each recurring Christmas feels himself punished by the consciousness of his own crimes. And as Professor Monk has also capably said· "the sonnet is . . . a comment on the dilemma of the twentieth century, in which incapacity for belief in myth and subservience to abstraction and technological skills have brought the human race to the verge of self-destruction."

It is important to note what the image structure of this sonnet is, and to find out what, and possibly how, the metaphors composing it, both fundamental and subsidiary, contribute severally and reciprocally to the fulfillment of the writer's intention, which has been stated, already. The principal metaphor in the octave, elaborated, or extended by association to include smaller related metaphors, illuminates the humility of Christ, possibly the grief, in conjunction with his aspect of sternness. The metaphor of the sestet lights up the arrogance of a person and a nation. The locks, the beard (apparently older than the locks), the eyes, and the appurtenances are of the Christ, his image, dead as a mummy, yet living to pierce the conscience of the frivolous celebrant of his ancient rites. The bomber taken sunward represents martial progress as well as the personal desire for life, and the frazzled sun may represent the sun's photographic image and so be akin to the medieval portraiture of the Christ alluded to in the preceding sonnet: a painting with deteriorating surface, which has some correspondence to what is expressed in "the crackle of the Christ's deep gaze." Again, depth of gaze may be equivalent to intensity, the intensity of a burning glance, perhaps. A ghostling of the sun would be a little light phenomenon, a glance from the disintegrating sun, whose great energy is being dispersed in the forms of heat and light. Ghostling: glance: syllable from the source of life and light. Fierce shuttlecocks are glances fit to pierce the net that is necessary, and apparently protective, to the player of a well-known game: a game that corresponds in metaphor to strife with the consciousness of failure-guilt, that rests languidly with the player, or plays languidly, behind the veil of sense deficiency until some fiercenes penetrates the veil. "The rift of cordial seas" one dithers in is another representation of complacency roughened: warmth and comfort broken.

The play and interplay of words is notable throughout this sonnet. The word *native* is obvious in Nativity. The word *head* and the words *capital* and *decapitate* have related multiple meanings; the word *cordial* belongs to heart, and *crucial,* which is of the cross and crucifixion, has connotations of risk and crisis. Just how the continuous fabric of language which constitutes this poem is adequately woven out of the elements of vocabulary, syntax, rhetoric, rhyme, and the modulating effects of metrical arrangement is a matter too subtle to be made perfectly patent by the craft of explication. Then, of course, it may be questionable whether this difficult kind of poem

permits the reader to apprehend imaginatively, and readily enough, the experience it is intended to afford him.

To return to the first verse: The locks are down when the head is crammed between the knees. Think perhaps of the posture of the buried dead, as in Philip Freneau's poem. See also an illustration from Blake's *Jerusalem,* reproduced in Mark Schorer's *William Blake.*

YVOR WINTERS

AN ODE ON THE DESPOILERS OF LEARNING IN AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY 1947[1]

This was our heritage:
In Learning's monument
To study, and teach the young,
Until our days were spent,
To reembody mind
In age succeeding age,
That some few men might see,
Though, mostly, men were blind;
To hold what men had wrung
From struggle to atone
For man's stupidity,
In labor and alone.

But now the insensate, calm
Performers of the hour,
Cold, with cold eye and palm,
Desiring trivial power,
And terror-struck within
At their own emptiness,
Move in. As they move in,
Slow and invidious,
They pause and calculate,
Then, as such beings use,

1. *Poetry,* October 1947, LXXI, 12–13. Copyright, 1947, by Yvor Winters. Revised by author and reprinted by permission of author.

With long-perfected hate,
Strike the immortal Muse.

What art of prose or verse
Should bring their like to book?
What consecrated curse
And pious rhetoric?
Not one: we need but look.
For these have come too far:
They stand here, coarse and lined,
And permanent as stone,
In the final light of mind.
The body politic
Of Learning is its own
Inscrutable old Bar.

KENNETH FEARING

DIRGE[1]

1–2–3 was the number he played but today the number came 3–2–1; bought his Carbide at 30 and it went to 29; had the favorite at Bowie but the track was slow—

O, executive type, would you like to drive a floating power, knee-action, silk-upholstered six? Wed a Hollywood star? Shoot the course in 58? Draw to the ace, king, jack?

O, fellow with a will who won't take no, watch out for three cigarettes on the same, single match; O democratic voter born in August under Mars, beware of liquidated rails—

Denouement to denouement, he took a personal pride in the certain, certain way he lived his own, private life,

but nevertheless, they shut off his gas; nevertheless, the bank foreclosed; nevertheless, the landlord called; nevertheless the radio broke,

And twelve o'clock arrived just once too often,

just the same, he wore one grey tweed suit, bought one straw hat, drank one straight Scotch, walked one short step, took one long look, drew one deep breath,

just one too many

And wow he died as wow he lived,

1. From Kenneth Fearing, *Poems* (Dynamo Press, 1935). Reprinted by permission of the author.

going whop to the office and blooie home to sleep and biff got married
and bam had children and oof got fired,
zowie did he live and zowie did he die.
With who the hell are you at the corner of his casket
and where the hell are we going on the right hand
silver knob, and who the hell cares walking second
from the end with an American Beauty wreath
from why the hell not.
Very much missed by the circulation staff of the New York Evening Post;
deeply, deeply mourned by the B.M.T.,
Wham, Mr. Roosevelt; pow, Sears Roebuck; awk, big dipper; bop, summer rain;
bong, Mr., bong, Mr., bong, Mr., bong.

OGDEN NASH

VERY LIKE A WHALE[1]

One thing that literature would be greatly the better for
Would be a more restricted employment by authors of simile and metaphor.
Authors of all races, be they Greeks, Romans, Teutons or Celts,
Can't seem just to say that anything is the thing it is but have to go out of their way to say that it is like something else.
What does it mean when we are told
That the Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold?
In the first place, George Gordon Byron had had enough experience
To know that it probably wasn't just one Assyrian, it was a lot of Assyrians.
However, as too many arguments are apt to induce apoplexy and thus hinder longevity,
We'll let it pass as one Assyrian for the sake of brevity.
Now then, this particular Assyrian, the one whose cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold,
Just what does the poet mean when he says he came down like a wolf on the fold?
In heaven and earth more than is dreamed of in our philosophy there are a great many things,
But I don't imagine that among them there is a wolf with purple and gold cohorts or purple and gold anythings.
No, no, Lord Byron, before I'll believe that this Assyrian was actually like a wolf I must have some kind of proof;

1. From *Many Long Years Ago,* by Ogden Nash, by permission of Little, Brown & Co. Copyright, 1935, by Ogden Nash.

Did he run on all fours and did he have a hairy tail and a big red mouth and
big white teeth and did he say Woof woof woof?
Frankly I think it very unlikely, and all you were entitled to say, at the
very most,
Was that the Assyrian cohorts came down like a lot of Assyrian cohorts
about to destroy the Hebrew host.
But that wasn't fancy enough for Lord Byron, oh dear me no, he had to
invent a lot of figures of speech and then interpolate them.
With the result that whenever you mention Old Testament soldiers to
people they say Oh yes, they're the ones that a lot of wolves dressed
up in gold and purple ate them.
That's the kind of thing that's being done all the time by poets, from
Homer to Tennyson;
They're always comparing ladies to lilies and veal to venison,
And they always say things like that the snow is a white blanket after a
winter storm.
Oh it is, is it, all right then, you sleep under a six-inch blanket of snow
and I'll sleep under a half-inch blanket of unpoetical blanket
material and we'll see which one keeps warm,
And after that maybe you'll begin to comprehend dimly
What I mean by too much metaphor and simile.

THE PURIST[1]

I give you now Professor Twist,
A conscientious scientist.
Trustees exclaimed, "He never bungles!"
And sent him off to distant jungles.
Camped on a tropic riverside,
One day he missed his loving bride.
She had, the guide informed him later,
Been eaten by an alligator.
Professor Twist could not but smile.
"You mean," he said, "a crocodile."

1. From *I'm a Stranger Here Myself* by Ogden Nash. Copyright, 1938, by Ogden Nash. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company.

W. H. AUDEN

MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS[1]

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus,* for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

PETITION[2]

Sir, no man's enemy, forgiving all
But will his negative inversion, be prodigal:
Send to us power and light, a sovereign touch
Curing the intolerable neural itch,
The exhaustion of weaning, the liar's quinsy,
And the distortions of ingrown virginity.
Prohibit sharply the rehearsed response
And gradually correct the coward's stance;
Cover in time with beams those in retreat
That, spotted, they turn though the reverse were great;

1. From *Another Time.* Copyright, 1940, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.
2. From *Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden.* Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

Publish each healer that in city lives
Or country houses at the end of drives;
Harrow the house of the dead, look shining at
New styles of architecture, a change of heart.

IN MEMORY OF W. B. YEATS[1]

d. Jan. 1939

I

He disappeared in the dead of winter:
The brooks were frozen, the air-ports almost deserted,
And snow disfigured the public statues;
The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.
O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Far from his illness
The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;
By mourning tongues
The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

But for him it was his last afternoon as himself,
An afternoon of nurses and rumours;
The provinces of his body revolted,
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed: he became his admirers.

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections;
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.

But in the importance and noise of to-morrow
When the brokers are roaring like beasts on the floor of the Bourse,
And the poor have the sufferings to which they are fairly accustomed,
And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom;
A few thousand will think of this day
As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual.

1. Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

II

You were silly like us: your gift survived it all;
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself; mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper; it flows south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

III

Earth, receive an honoured guest;
William Yeats is laid to rest:
Let the Irish vessel lie
Emptied of its poetry.

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives;
Pardons cowardice, conceit,
Lays its honours at their feet.

Time that with this strange excuse
Pardoned Kipling and his views,
And will pardon Paul Claudel,
Pardons him for writing well.

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;

Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked and frozen in each eye.

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

UNDER WHICH LYRE[1]

A Reactionary Tract for the Times
Phi Beta Kappa Poem. Harvard. 1946

Ares at last has quit the field,
The bloodstains on the bushes yield
To seeping showers,
And in their convalescent state
The fractured towns associate
With summer flowers.

Encamped upon the college plain
Raw veterans already train
As freshman forces;
Instructors with sarcastic tongue
Shepherd the battle-weary young
Through basic courses.

Among bewildering appliances
For mastering the arts and sciences
They stroll or run,
And nerves that never flinched at slaughter
Are shot to pieces by the shorter
Poems of Donne.

1. From *Nones*. Copyright, 1946, by W. H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

Professors back from secret missions
Resume their proper eruditions,
Though some regret it;
They like their dictaphones a lot,
They met some big wheels, and do not
Let you forget it.

But Zeus' inscrutable decree
Permits the will-to-disagree
To be pandemic,
Ordains that vaudeville shall preach
And every commencement speech
Be a polemic.

Let Ares doze, that other war
Is instantly declared once more
'Twixt those who follow
Precocious Hermes all the way
And those who without qualms obey
Pompous Apollo.

Brutal like all Olympic games,
Though fought with smiles and Christian names
And less dramatic,
This dialectic strife between
The civil gods is just as mean,
And more fanatic.

What high immortals do in mirth
Is life and death on Middle Earth;
Their a-historic
Antipathy forever gripes
All ages and somatic types,
The sophomoric

Who face the future's darkest hints
With giggles or with prairie squints
As stout as Cortez,
And those who like myself turn pale
As we approach with ragged sail
The fattening forties.

The sons of Hermes love to play,
And only do their best when they
Are told they oughtn't;

Apollo's children never shrink
From boring jobs but have to think
Their work important.

Related by antithesis,
A compromise between us is
Impossible:
Respect perhaps but friendship never:
Falstaff the fool confronts forever
The prig Prince Hal.

If he would leave the self alone,
Apollo's welcome to the throne,
Fasces and falcons;
He loves to rule, has always done it;
The earth would soon, did Hermes run it,
Be like the Balkans.

But jealous of our god of dreams,
His common-sense in secret schemes
To rule the heart;
Unable to invent the lyre,
Creates with simulated fire
Official art.

And when he occupies a college,
Truth is replaced by Useful Knowledge;
He pays particular
Attention to Commercial Thought,
Public Relations, Hygiene, Sport,
In his curricula.

Athletic, extrovert and crude,
For him, to work in solitude
Is the offence,
The goal a populous Nirvana:
His shield bears this device: *Mens sana*
Qui mal y pense.

Today his arms, we must confess,
From Right to Left have met success,
His banners wave
From Yale to Princeton, and the news
From Broadway to the Book Reviews
Is very grave.

His radio Homers all day long
In over-Whitmanated song
That does not scan,
With adjectives laid end to end,
Extol the doughnut and commend
The Common Man.

His, too, each homely lyric thing
On sport or spousal love or spring
Or dogs or dusters,
Invented by some court-house bard
For recitation by the yard
In filibusters.

To him ascend the prize orations
And sets of fugal variations
On some folk-ballad,
While dietitians sacrifice
A glass of prune-juice or a nice
Marsh-mallow salad.

Charged with his compound of sensational
Sex plus some undenominational
Religious matter,
Enormous novels by co-eds
Rain down on our defenceless heads
Till our teeth chatter.

In fake Hermetic uniforms
Behind our battle-line, in swarms
That keep alighting,
His existentialists declare
That they are in complete despair,
Yet go on writing.

No matter; He shall be defied;
White Aphrodite is on our side:
What though his threat
To organize us grow more critical?
Zeus willing, we, the unpolitical,
Shall beat him yet.

Lone scholars, sniping from the walls
Of learned periodicals,
Our facts defend,

Our intellectual marines,
Landing in little magazines
Capture a trend.

By night our student Underground
At cocktail parties whisper round
From ear to ear;
Fat figures in the public eye
Collapse next morning, ambushed by
Some witty sneer.

In our morale must lie our strength:
So, that we may behold at length
Routed Apollo's
Battalions melt away like fog,
Keep well the Hermetic Decalogue,
Which runs as follows:—

Thou shalt not do as the dean pleases,
Thou shalt not write thy doctor's thesis
On education,
Thou shalt not worship projects nor
Shalt thou or thine bow down before
Administration.

Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
Or quizzes upon World-Affairs,
Nor with compliance
Take any test. Thou shalt not sit
With statisticians nor commit
A social science.

Thou shalt not be on friendly terms
With guys in advertising firms,
Nor speak with such
As read the Bible for its prose,
Nor, above all, make love to those
Who wash too much.

Thou shalt not live within thy means
Nor on plain water and raw greens.
If thou must choose

Between the chances, choose the odd;
Read *The New Yorker,* trust in God;
And take short views.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE EXPRESS[1]

After the first powerful plain manifesto
The black statement of pistons, without more fuss
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.
Without bowing and with restrained unconcern
She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,
The gasworks and at last the heavy page
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.
Beyond the town there lies the open country
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.
It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts.
And always light, aerial, underneath
Goes the elate metre of her wheels.
Streaming through metal landscape on her lines
She plunges new eras of wild happiness
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves
And parallels clean like the steel of guns.
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night
Where only a low streamline brightness
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white.
Ah, like a comet through flame she moves entranced
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.

THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AERODROME[1]

More beautiful and soft than any moth
With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path
Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines

1. Copyright, 1934, by Modern Library. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall
To point the wind. Gently, broadly, she falls,
Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air.

Lulled by descent, the travelers across sea
And across feminine land indulging its easy limbs
In miles of softness, now let their eyes trained by watching
Penetrate through dusk the outskirts of this town
Here where industry shows a fraying edge.
Here they may see what is being done.

Beyond the winking masthead light
And the landing-ground, they observe the outposts
Of work: chimneys like lank black fingers
Or figures frightening and mad: and squat buildings
With their strange air behind trees, like women's faces
Shattered by grief. Here where few houses
Moan with faint light behind their blinds
They remark the unhomely sense of complaint, like a dog
Shut out and shivering at the foreign moon.

In the last sweep of love, they pass over fields
Behind the aerodrome, where boys play all day
Hacking dead grass: whose cries, like wild birds,
Settle upon the nearest roofs
But soon are hid under the loud city.

Then, as they land, they hear the tolling bell
Reaching across the landscape of hysteria
To where, larger than all the charcoaled batteries
And imaged towers against the dying sky,
Religion stands, the church blocking the sun.

KARL SHAPIRO

UNIVERSITY[1]

To hurt the Negro and avoid the Jew
Is the curriculum. In mid-September
The entering boys, identified by hats,

1. Reprinted from *Person, Place and Thing,* copyright, 1942, by Karl Jay Shapiro. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc.

Wander in a maze of mannered brick
Where boxwood and magnolia brood
And columns with imperious stance
Like rows of ante-bellum girls
Eye them, outlanders.

In whited cells, on lawns equipped for peace,
Under the arch, and lofty banister,
Equals shake hands, unequals blankly pass;
The exemplary weather whispers, "Quiet, quiet"
And visitors on tiptoe leave
For the raw North, the unfinished West
As the young, detecting an advantage,
Practice a face.

Where, on their separate hill, the colleges,
Like manor houses of an older law,
Gaze down embankments on a land in fee,
The Deans, dry spinsters over family plate,
Ring out the English name like coin,
Humor the snob and lure the lout.
Within the precincts of this world
Poise is a club.

But on the neighboring range, misty and high,
The past is absolute; some luckless race
Dull with inbreeding and conformity
Wears out its heart, and comes barefoot and bad
For charity or jail. The scholar
Sanctions their obsolete disease;
The gentleman revolts with shame
At his ancestor.

And the true nobleman, once a democrat,
Sleeps on his private mountain. He was one
Whose thought was shapely and whose dream was broad;
This school he held his art and epitaph.
But now it takes from him his name,
Falls open like a dishonest look,
And shows us, rotted and endowed,
Its senile pleasure.

AUTO WRECK[1]

Its quick soft silver bell beating, beating,
And down the dark one ruby flare
Pulsing out red light like an artery,
The ambulance at top speed floating down
Past beacons and illuminated clocks
Wings in a heavy curve, dips down,
And brakes speed, entering the crowd.
The doors leap open, emptying light;
Stretchers are laid out, the mangled lifted
And stowed into the little hospital.
Then the bell, breaking the hush, tolls once,
And the ambulance with its terrible cargo
Rocking, slightly rocking, moves away,
As the doors, an afterthought, are closed.

We are deranged, walking among the cops
Who sweep glass and are large and composed.
One is still making notes under the light.
One with a bucket douches ponds of blood
Into the street and gutter.
One hangs lanterns on the wrecks that cling,
Empty husks of locusts, to iron poles.

Our throats were tight as tourniquets,
Our feet were bound with splints, but now
Like convalescents intimate and gauche,
We speak through sickly smiles and warn
With the stubborn saw of common sense,
The grim joke and the banal resolution.
The traffic moves around with care,
But we remain, touching a wound
That opens to our richest horror.

Already old, the question Who shall die?
Becomes unspoken Who is innocent?
For death in war is done by hands;
Suicide has cause and still birth, logic.
But this invites the occult mind,
Cancels our physics with a sneer,
And spatters all we knew of dénouement
Across the expedient and wicked stones.

1. From *Person, Place and Thing,* copyright, 1942, by Karl Jay Shapiro. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

CHRISTMAS EVE: AUSTRALIA[1]

The wind blows hot. English and foreign birds
And insects different as their fish excite
The would-be calm. The usual flocks and herds
Parade in permanent quiet out of sight,
And there one crystal like a grain of light
Sticks in the crucible of day and cools.
A cloud burnt to a crisp at some great height
Sips at the dark condensing in deep pools.

I smoke and read my Bible and chew gum,
Thinking of Christ and Christmas of last year,
And what those quizzical soldiers standing near
Ask of the war and Christmases to come,
And sick of causes and the tremendous blame
Curse lightly and pronounce your serious name.

ON SHAPIRO'S *CHRISTMAS EVE: AUSTRALIA*

DAVID DAICHES[2]

"CHRISTMAS EVE: AUSTRALIA," a sonnet with a most impressive manipulation of imagery, adroit and effective variation of pauses within the line, and that combination of classical gravity with irrepressible modernity that is one of Shapiro's most attractive characteristics, is a remarkable little poem. Rarely in modern poetry is the cadence handled as well as it is here, the rise and fall of the phrases matching and countering each other with self-concealing skill. It has to be read aloud before this quality is fully appreciated. The changes in tempo (not a modern virtue, nor one conspicuous in the run of Shapiro's work) are equally impressive. The following few lines may bear out some of my points:

> The wind blows hot. English and foreign birds
> And insects different as their fish excite
> The would-be calm. The usual flocks and herds
> Parade in permanent quiet out of sight . . .

The most attractive thing here is that "usual." The air almost of negligence which that adjective gives the sentence explains in part its poetic effectiveness. And then there is the ironic gravity of "parade," the institutional finality of "permanent," and the almost-humorous, almost paradoxical "out of

1. From *V-Letter and Other Poems*, copyright, 1944, Karl Shapiro. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

2. "The Poetry of Karl Shapiro," *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, LXVI (August, 1945), 267–269. Copyright, 1945, by David Daiches.

sight." And if the reader thinks that the pauses in these lines are as unvaried as they seem to the eye, I would ask him to read these lines aloud. He would then discover the important difference between

> And insects different as their fish excite
> The would-be calm

and

> Parade in permanent quiet out of sight

with its continuous movement, its stately motion in the first half and its sudden burst of speed, done, one might perhaps say, with a suppressed giggle, at "out of sight." The parade is of interest because you *don't* see it—but you are aware of its presence. The turn in the sestet is worth attention:

> I smoke and read my Bible and chew gum
> Thinking of Christ and Christmas of last year,
> And what those quizzical soldiers standing near
> Ask of the war and Christmases to come,
> And sick of causes and the tremendous blame
> Curse lightly and pronounce your serious name.

This is skillful stuff. One scarcely needs to point out the double effect of the last line, both drawing the poem to a personal resolution—in the best tradition of the sonnet form, which ought to stand balanced on its concluding line, or couplet, depending on the rhyme-scheme—and at the same time epitomizing the mood of the whole poem by juxtaposing in the one line the two poles of that mood: "curse lightly" and "*serious* name." The Bible and chewing gum and (ironically but significantly) "Christ and Christmas of last year" are earlier aspects of that contrast here resolved.

DYLAN THOMAS

LIGHT BREAKS WHERE NO SUN SHINES[1]

> Light breaks where no sun shines;
> Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart
> Push in their tides;
> And, broken ghosts with glowworms in their heads,
> The things of light
> File through the flesh where no flesh decks the bones.

1. From *Selected Writings*. Copyright, 1939, 1946, by New Directions, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York.

A candle in the thighs
Warms youth and seed and burns the seeds of age;
Where no seed stirs,
The fruit of man unwrinkles in the stars,
Bright as a fig;
Where no wax is, the candle shows its hairs.

Dawn breaks behind the eyes;
From poles of skull and toe the windy blood
Slides like a sea;
Nor fenced, nor staked, the gushers of the sky
Spout to the rod
Divining in a smile the oil of tears.

Night in the sockets rounds,
Like some pitch moon, the limit of the globes;
Day lights the bone;
Where no cold is, the skinning gales unpin
The winter's robes;
The film of spring is hanging from the lids.

Light breaks on secret lots,
On tips of thought where thoughts smell in the rain;
When logics die,
The secret of the soil grows through the eye,
And blood jumps in the sun;
Above the waste allotments the dawn halts.

THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER [1]

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

1. From *Selected Writings.* Copyright, 1939, 1946, by New Directions, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand, that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.
And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

ON THOMAS' *THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER* [1]

G. GIOVANNINI

THOMAS' POEM has a highly wrought and closely knit metaphorical surface carefully disguising meaning, and in such poetry what is extracted as basic meaning may be only another surface disguising a meaning felt rather than understood conceptually. The explication which follows attempts to uncover the meaning next to the metaphorical surface of Thomas' poem, and it leaves to one side the felt implications, largely Freudian, which commentators have found in his early verse.

The character speaking in the poem is a youth ("my green age") who discovers that life predicates death, and stands bewildered and inarticulate ("I am dumb") before man and nature informed by a paradoxical principle. The meaning is a variation on an old theme: life (and love) cankered by death (cf. Blake's "The Sick Rose"). The variation consists of the predication that life and death issue from the same cause—"The force" in the poem, a force in an obscure way associated with God; for in the first line of stanza 2 there is an oblique allusion to *Exodus*, XVII, 6, where God draws water out of a rock, and in the first line of stanza 3 an allusion to *John*, V, 4, where the angel of God stirs the water in the pool of Bethesda. The theme may be seen developed in the first three lines of each of the first three stanzas in a powerful manner by a statement immediately followed, after the semicolon, by a counterstatement. The life-giving force driving through the stem ("green fuse") of the flower and the youth's body also "blasts" the tree (the verb echoes "fuse" now understood in its literal sense) and kills the man. The

1. From *The Explicator*, VIII (June, 1950), 59–60. By permission of the authors and of the Editors of *The Explicator*.

syntactic pattern of the first three lines carries the paradoxical meaning; for the counterstatement (death) is grammatically a coordinate and integral part of the statement (life), a conjunction of a meaningful kind seen in small in the phrases (e.g., the oxymoron "wintry fever"). This same pattern and meaning are repeated exactly in the next two stanzas. The force driving the water, traditionally a symbol of life, and the blood also dries the streams at their source ("mouthing") and congeals in death the speaker's life-streams ("turns mine to wax"). In the third stanza the dynamism of the force, now "The hand," is in terms of rapid movement (whirlpool), and of swift time; for "The hand that whirls" seems to suggest a clock, and "quicksand" the swift passage of time as in an hourglass. But the same force checks ("ropes") the movement of the wind and kills ("Hauls my shroud sail"). In the fourth stanza the syntactic pattern is varied a little, and so is the meaning, the paradox of life-death being here translated as love-death. The theme is developed in its cosmic aspects: creation ("The lips of time") passionately sucks ("leech") its being from a source, and love "gathers," possibly in the sense in which Hopkins uses the verb in "God's Grandeur": "The world is charged with the grandeur of God . . . It gathers to a greatness." But with reference to the counterstatement, where death ("fallen blood") again appears, "gathers" has an appropriate medical sense: love is imaged as a swollen suppurating wound, from which the issue of blood signifies the stillness of death ("Shall calm her sores").

The refrain, "And I am dumb," functions as illustration everywhere except in the fourth stanza: the speaker carries death within him; for though he is young and avidly experiences life ("at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks"), his body bends toward death, it is attacked by the "crooked worm" and is the making of the quicklime of the grave ("hangman's lime"). The refrain in the fourth stanza refers not to death, but to the ecstasy of love ticking "a heaven round the stars"; but the meaning here is countered by death in the final refrain which immediately follows, and the poem ends effectively with the two sides of the thematic paradox formally and precisely juxtaposed. All the refrains have in common the sense of the speaker's isolation, of his inability to communicate and establish a sympathetic contact with an inexplicable universe. The isolation is intense; for in the second refrain the young man is unable to communicate even with himself ("dumb to mouth unto my veins"). The theme of this poem is more succinctly and abstractly stated in a passage from Thomas' "A Process in the Weather": "the womb Drives in a death as life leaks out"—a theme which can be glossed by Donne's sermon *Death's Duell* (cf. J. L. Sweeney, Intro., Thomas' *Selected Writings*): "wee celebrate our own funeralls with cries, even at our birth."

S. F. JOHNSON

Thomas' "force" is a generalized *élan vital,* the natural vitality that both creates and destroys us. Human change is but a small part of the great cycle of natural change and is effected by the same simple cause. The opening lines of each stanza present four variations on this implied theme; the two-line refrains stress the limits of human communication by detailing the senses in which even a poet is "dumb."

I. The force is an explosive. Stalks of plants are fuses through which the explosive power is driven; flowers and foliage are products of an explosion which creates on condition of mortality. The poet is "green" (young) and, unlike non-human organisms, is aware that birth is the beginning of death. The refrain emphasizes his humanity, his ability to communicate complex meanings only to other humans. Here the explosive image is translated into human terms (fever). Fever is wintry since it hastens human age and death just as the first frost hastens vegetative age and death.

II. The vitality of growing things is extended to inanimate nature, where again the same force drives and dries (the omission of a phoneme is the difference between life and death). The poet's streams are blood-streams; the pliability and stickiness of wax applies equally to the coagulation of the blood at death and to the drying-up of mud in a stream-bed. Refrain: the force is personified as a mouth (connecting with "leech" in stanza 4). "Mouth" is used in three ways here ("tell" is altered in this refrain alone in order to give scope to the play on words): streams "mouth" into larger streams, into the sea; the poet "mouths" (declaims) to those who can (will) hear him; the "mouth," adapted to giving out and taking in, symbolizes the elemental force that creates and destroys.

III. The force, here as the hand of God, keeps the elements in motion: water, earth, and air, connecting with fire in stanza 1. Of course it controls the poet, now a ship, consistent with the sea imagery of the stanza; the sail, the activated part, is the libido. Refrain: the poet can communicate only with the living, part of whose clay, in various excremental forms, has long since re-entered the natural cycle and helped compose its products.

IV. The force is time itself. The mouth symbol is developed in the verb "leech." The reduction of the life-force from anthropomorphic God to a voracious, blind mouth emphasizes the naturalistic attitude in the poem. Time's leeching lips are juxtaposed with love, the only emotion named in the poem. Love acts in such a way as to place it, with the life-force, at the very pulse of life; it drips and gathers, like blood at a leech wound, subject to the involuntary pulsation of all nature. The supposedly beneficial effects of blood-letting are paralleled with the calming effect of the sexual manifestation of love. The refrain contrasts chillingly with the warmth of love and emphasizes man's small place in the well-integrated, clockwork universe.

Refrain: The facts of death support the poet's consistent view of man's

place in nature. The refrain tightens the poem by drawing on the power of earlier elements (lover's tomb and hanging man, crooked worm and crooked rose, worm and leech, sheet and shroud sail) and by reiterating the central notion that everything is subject to decay.

The poem is saved from sentimentality, a risk it runs, by its tightly consistent attitude, which unifies images drawn from widely disparate spheres. The vocabulary, as in most of Thomas' poems, is largely restricted to common Anglo-Saxon words, predominantly monosyllabic, arranged in a pattern so slowly paced that the reader is forced to explore the range of meanings of these words, revitalized by their unusual contexts. The poet is not dumb to tell his readers what he is about: "from the first declension of the flesh I learnt man's tongue . . . To shade and knit anew the patch of words Left by the dead who . . . Need no word's warmth" (from "Love's First Fever"); "I write . . . Not for the towering dead . . . But for the lovers . . . Who pay no praise or wages Nor heed my craft or art" ("In My Craft").

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN

VIEWS OF THE FAVORITE COLLEGES[1]

Approaching by the gate, (Class of '79,
All dead) the unimpressed new scholars find
Halls of archaic brick and, if it is April
Three dazzling magnolias behind bars, like lions.

Unsettling winds among the pillars of wisdom
Assure them of harmonious extremes,
However academic. The bells, in key,
Covered with singing birds, ring on the hour.

Towering, but without aspiration, the campanile
Is known to sway an inch in a high wind;
But that, like the statue's changeable complexion,
Is natural. To find the unnatural,

Gradually absorb the industry
Of ten o'clock: the embryo pig slit through
With the proper instruments by embryos;
And Sophocles cut, for speed, with a blue pencil.

1. Reprinted from *No Arch, No Triumph,* by John Malcolm Brinnin; by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1945, by John Malcolm Brinnin.

Prehensile sophomores in the tree of learning
Stare at the exiled blossoming trees, vaguely puzzled,
The lecturer, especially if bearded,
Enhances those druidical undertones.

What is the terminus of books? sing the birds.
Tell us about Sophocles! cry the trees.
And a crazy child on roller-skates skates through
The campus like a one-man thunderstorm.

PETER VIERECK

BLINDMAN'S BUFF[1]

Night-watchmen think of dawn and things auroral.
Clerks wistful for Bermudas think of coral.
The poet in New York still thinks of laurel.
(But lovers think of death and touch each other
As if to prove that love is still alive.)

The Martian space-crew, in an Earthward dive,
Think of their sweet unearthly earth Up There,
Where darling monsters romp in airless air.
(Two lovers think of death and touch each other,
Fearing that day when only one's alive.)

We think of cash, but cash does not arrive.
We think of fun, but fate will not connive.
We never mention death. Do we survive?
(The lovers think of death and touch each other
To live their love while love is still alive.)

Prize-winners are so avid when they strive;
They race so far; they pile their toys so high
Only a cad would trip them. Yet they die.
(The lovers think of death and touch each other;
Of all who live, these are the most alive.)

When all the lemming-realists contrive
To swim—where to?—in life's enticing tide,
Only a fool would stop and wait outside.

1. Reprinted from *Terror and Decorum* by Peter Viereck; copyright, 1948, by Peter Viereck; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

(The lovers stop and wait and touch each other.
Who twinly think of death are twice alive.)

Plump creatures smack their lips and think they thrive;
The hibernating bear, but half alive,
Dreams of free honey in a stingless hive.
He thinks of life at every lifeless breath.
(The lovers think of death.)



ROBERT LOWELL

WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS[1]

I saw the sky descending, black and white,
Not blue, on Boston where the winters wore
The skulls to jack-o'-lanterns on the slates,
And Hunger's skin-and-bone retrievers tore
The chickadee and shrike. The thorn tree waits
Its victim and tonight
The worms will eat the deadwood to the foot
Of Ararat: the scythers, Time and Death,
Helmed locusts, move upon the tree of breath;
The wild ingrafted olive and the root

Are withered, and a winter drifts to where
The Pepperpot, ironic rainbow, spans
Charles River and its scales of scorched-earth miles
I saw my city in the Scales, the pans
Of judgment rising and descending. Piles
Of dead leaves char the air—
And I am a red arrow on this graph
Of Revelations. Every dove is sold.
The Chapel's sharp-shinned eagle shifts its hold
On serpent-Time, the rainbow's epitaph.

In Boston serpents whistle at the cold.
The victim climbs the altar steps and sings:
"Hosannah to the lion, lamb, and beast

1. From *Lord Weary's Castle*, copyright, 1944, 1946, by Robert Lowell. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

Who fans the furnace-face of IS with wings:
I breathe the ether of my marriage feast."
At the high altar, gold
And a fair cloth. I kneel and the wings beat
My cheek. What can the dove of Jesus give
You now but wisdom, exile? Stand and live,
The dove has brought an olive branch to eat.

ON LOWELL'S *WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS* [1]

RANDALL JARRELL

"Where the Rainbow Ends" describes in apocalyptic terms the wintry, Calvinist, capitalist—Mr. Lowell has Weber's belief in the connection of capitalism and Calvinism—dead end of God's covenant with man, a frozen Boston where even the cold-blooded serpents "whistle at the cold." (The poems often use cold as a plain and physically correct symbol for what is constricted or static.) There "the scythers, Time and Death, / Helmed locusts, move upon the tree of breath," of the spirit of man; a bridge curves over Charles River like an ironic parody of the rainbow's covenant; both "the wild ingrafted olive and its root / Are withered" [these are Paul's terms for the Judaism of the Old Law and the Gentile Christianity grafted upon it]; "every dove [the Holy Ghost, the bringer of the olive leaf to the Ark] is sold" for commercialized, legalized sacrifice. The whole system seems an abstract, rationalized "graph of Revelations," of the last accusation and judgment brought against man now that "the Chapel's sharp-shinned eagle shifts its hold / On serpent-Time, the rainbow's epitaph." This last line means what the last line in "The Quaker Graveyard"—"The Lord survives the rainbow of His will"—means; both are inexpressibly menacing, since they show the covenant as something that binds only us, as something abrogated merely by the passage of time, as a closed system opening not into liberation but into infinite and overwhelming possibility; they have something of the terror, but none of the pity, of Blake's "Time is the mercy of Eternity."

Then the worshipper, like a victim, climbs to the altar of the terrible I AM, to breathe there the rarefied and intolerable ether of his union with the divinity of the Apocalypse; he despairs even of the wings that beat against his cheek: "What can the dove of Jesus give / You now but wisdom, exile?" When the poem has reached this point of the most extreme closure, when the infinite grace that atones and liberates is seen as no more than the bitter and useless wisdom of the exile, it opens with a rush of acceptant joy into: "Stand and live, / The dove has brought an olive branch to eat." The

1. From *The Nation,* CLXIV (Jan. 18, 1947), 74–75. Reprinted by permission of Randall Jarrell.

dove of Jesus brings to the worshipper the olive branch that shows him that the flood has receded, opening the whole earth for him; it is the olive branch of peace and reconciliation, the olive branch that he is "to eat" as a symbol of the eaten flesh of Christ, of atonement, identification, and liberation. Both the old covenant and the new still hold, nothing has changed: here as they were and will be are life and salvation.

II

SHORT STORIES



A PASSION IN THE DESERT [1]

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

"THAT show is dreadful," she cried, coming out of the menagerie of M. Martin. She had just been looking at that daring speculator "working with his hyena"—to speak in the style of the program.

"By what means," she continued, "can he have tamed these animals to such a point as to be certain of their affection for——."

"What seems to you a problem," said I, interrupting, "is really quite natural."

"Oh!" she cried, letting an incredulous smile wander over her lips.

"You think that beasts are wholly deprived of passion?" I asked her. "Quite the reverse; we may attribute to them all the vices arising in our own state of civilization."

She looked at me with an air of astonishment.

"Nevertheless," I continued, "the first time I saw M. Martin, I admit, that I, like you, did give an exclamation of surprise. I found myself next to an old soldier whose right leg was amputated, who had come in with me. His face had struck me. He had one of those fearless heads, stamped with the seal of warfare, and on which the battles of Napoleon are written. He had that frank good-humored expression which always impresses me favorably. He was without doubt one of those troopers who are surprised at nothing, who find matter for laughter in the contortions of a dying comrade, who bury or plunder him quite light-heartedly, who stand without flinching in the way of bullets; in fact, one of those men who waste no time in deliberation, and would not hesitate to make friends with the devil himself. After looking very attentively at the proprietor of the menagerie getting out of his box, my companion pursed up his lips with an air of mockery and contempt, with that peculiar and expressive twist which superior people assume to show that they are not to be taken in. Then when I was expatiating on the courage of M. Martin, he smiled, shook his head knowingly, and said, 'That's an old story.'"

1. Translation revised by Marion E. Porter.

"What do you mean 'an old story'?" I said. "If you would explain to me the mystery I should be very obliged."

"After a few minutes, during which we got to know each other, we went to dine at the first *restaurateur's* whose shop caught our eye. At dessert a bottle of champagne completely refreshed and brightened up the memories of this odd old soldier. He told me his story, and I saw he had every reason to exclaim, 'That's an old story!' "

When she got home, she teased me to such an extent and made so many promises, that I consented to write up for her the old soldier's confidences. Next day she received the following episode of an epic which might be entitled "The French in Egypt."

During the expedition in Upper Egypt under General Desaix,[2] a Provençal soldier fell into the hands of the Moors, and was taken by these Arabs into the deserts beyond the falls of the Nile.

In order to place a comfortable distance between themselves and the French army, the Moors made forced marches, and stopped only at night. They camped round a well hidden by palm trees under which they had previously concealed a store of provisions. Never thinking that the notion of flight would occur to their prisoner, they contented themselves with binding his hands, and after eating a few dates, and giving provender to their horses, they went to sleep.

When the brave Provençal saw that his enemies were no longer watching him, he made use of his teeth to steal a scimitar, fixed the blade between his knees, and cut the cords which prevented use of his hands; in a moment he was free. He at once seized a rifle and dagger, then taking the precaution to provide himself with a supply of dried dates, barley, and powder and shot, he fastened a scimitar to his waist, leaped onto a horse, and spurred on vigorously in the direction where he thought to find the French army. Being impatient to see a bivouac again, he pressed on the already tired horse at such speed that at last the poor animal died, its flanks lacerated, leaving the Frenchman alone in the desert.

After walking some time in the sand with all the courage of an escaping convict, the soldier was obliged to stop, as the day had already ended. In spite of the beauty of an oriental sky at night, he felt he had not strength enough to go on. Fortunately he had been able to find a small hill, on the summit of which a few palm trees shot up into the air; it was their verdure seen from afar which had brought hope and consolation to his heart. His fatigue was so great that he lay down upon a rock of granite, cut out by a whim of nature like a camp-bed; there he fell asleep without taking any precaution to defend himself while he slept. He had made the sacrifice of his life. His last thought was one of regret. He repented having left the Moors, whose nomad life seemed agreeable to him now that he was far from them and without help. He was

2. Louis Charles Antoine Desaix de Noygoux (1768–1800) conquered Upper Egypt and saved the day for Napoleon at Marengo, where he lost his life.

awakened by the sun, whose pitiless rays fell straight down on the granite and produced an intolerable heat—for he had had the stupidity to place himself inversely to the shadow thrown by the green and majestic heads of the palm trees. He looked at the solitary trees and shuddered—they reminded him of the graceful shafts crowned with foliage which characterize the Saracen columns in the cathedral of Arles.

But when, after counting the palm trees, he cast his eye around him, the most horrible despair swooped down upon his soul. Before him stretched an ocean without limit. The dark sand of the desert spread farther than sight could reach in every direction, and glittered like a sword-blade of steel struck with a bright light. It might have been a sea of looking-glass, or lakes melted together like a mirror. A fiery vapor rising in sheets made a perpetual whirlwind over the quivering land. The sky was lighted with an oriental splendor of hopeless purity, leaving naught for the imagination to desire. Heaven and earth were on fire.

The silence was awful in its wild and terrible majesty. Infinity, immensity, closed in upon the soul from every side. Not a cloud in the sky, not a breath in the air, not a break in the bosom of the sand, ever moving in diminutive waves; the horizon ended as at sea on a clear day, with one line of light, as clear as the cut of a sword.

The Provençal threw his arms around the trunk of one of the palm trees, as though it were the body of a friend, and then in the shelter of the thin straight shadow that the palm cast upon the granite, he wept. Then sitting down he remained as he was, contemplating with profound sadness the implacable scene, which was all he had to look upon. He cried aloud, to measure the solitude. His voice, lost in the hollows of the hill, sounded faintly, and aroused no echo—the echo was in his own heart. The Provençal was twenty-two years old—he loaded his carbine.

"There'll be time enough," he said to himself, laying on the ground the weapon which alone could bring him deliverance.

Looking by turns at the black expanse and the blue expanse, the soldier dreamed of France—he smelt with delight the gutters of Paris—he remembered the towns through which he had passed, the faces of his fellow-soldiers, the most minute details of his life. In his southern fancy he caught a glimpse of the stones of his beloved Provence in the play of the heat which waved over the spread sheet of the desert. Fearing the danger of this cruel mirage, he went down the side of the hill opposite to that by which he had come up the day before. His joy was great when he discovered a sort of grotto carved by nature into the immense fragments of granite which made up the base of the hill. The remains of a rug showed that this place of refuge had at one time been inhabited; at a short distance he saw some palm trees full of dates. Then the instinct which binds us to life awoke again in his heart. He hoped to live long enough to await the passing of some Arabs, or perhaps he might hear the sound of cannon; for at this time Bonaparte was traversing Egypt.

This thought gave him new life. The palm tree seemed to bend with the weight of the ripe fruit. He shook some of it down. When he tasted this unhoped-for manna, he felt sure that the palms had been cultivated by a former inhabitant—the savory, fresh meat of the dates was proof of the care of his predecessor. He passed suddenly from dark despair to an almost insane joy. He went up again to the top of the hill, and spent the rest of the day in cutting down one of the sterile palm trees, which the night before had served him for shelter. A vague memory made him think of the animals of the desert; and in case they might come to drink at the spring, visible from the base of the rocks but lost farther down, he resolved to guard himself from their visits by placing a barrier at the entrance of his hermitage.

In spite of his diligence, and the strength which the fear of being devoured asleep gave him, he was unable to cut the palm in pieces, though he succeeded in cutting it down. When at eventide the king of the desert fell, the sound of its fall resounded far and wide, like a moan in the solitude; the soldier shuddered as though he had heard some voice predicting woe.

But like an heir who does not long bewail a deceased parent, he tore off from this beautiful tree the tall broad green leaves which are its poetic adornment, and used them to mend the mat on which he was to sleep.

Fatigued by the heat and his work, he fell asleep under the red curtains of his wet cave. In the middle of the night his sleep was troubled by an extraordinary noise. He sat up, and the deep silence around him allowed him to distinguish the alternative accents of a breathing whose savage energy could not belong to a human creature.

A profound terror, increased still further by the darkness, the silence, and his waking image, froze his heart within him. He felt his hair almost stand on end, when by straining his eyes to their utmost he perceived through the shadows two faint yellow lights. At first he attributed these lights to the reflection of his own pupils, but soon the vivid brilliance of the night aided him gradually to distinguish the objects around him in the cave, and he beheld a huge animal lying but two steps from him. Was it a lion, a tiger, or a crocodile?

The Provençal was not educated enough to know to what species his enemy belonged; but his fright was all the greater, as his ignorance led him to imagine all terrors at once. He endured a cruel torture, noting every variation of the breathing close to him without daring to make the slightest movement. An odor, pungent like that of a fox, but more penetrating, profounder—so to speak—filled the cave, and when the Provençal became aware of this, his terror reached its height, for he could not longer doubt the proximity of a terrible companion, whose royal dwelling served him for shelter.

Presently the reflection of the moon, descending on the horizon, lit up the den, rendering gradually visible and resplendent the spotted skin of a panther.

This lion of Egypt slept, curled up like a big dog, the peaceful possessor of a sumptuous niche at the gate of a hotel; its eyes opened for a moment and

closed again; its face was turned toward the man. A thousand confused thoughts passed through the mind of the panther's prisoner; first the thought of killing it with a bullet from his gun, but he saw there was not enough distance between them for him to take proper aim—the barrel of the gun extended beyond the animal. And if it were to wake!—the thought made his limbs rigid. He listened to his own heart beating in the midst of the silence, and cursed the too violent pulsations which the flow of blood brought on, fearing to disturb that sleep which allowed him time to think of some means of escape.

Twice he placed his hand on his scimitar, intending to cut off the head of his enemy; but the difficulty of cutting the stiff, short hair compelled him to abandon this daring project. To miss would be to die for certain, he thought; he preferred the chances of fair fight, and made up his mind to wait till morning, which was not far off.

The Frenchman could now examine the panther at ease; its muzzle was smeared with blood.

"She's had a good dinner," he thought, without troubling himself as to whether her feast might have been on human flesh. "She won't be hungry when she gets up."

It was a female. The fur on her belly and flanks was glistening white; many small marks like velvet formed beautiful bracelets round her feet; her sinuous tail was also white, ending with black rings; the overpart of her dress, yellow like old gold, very sleek and soft, had the characteristic blotches shading off from the center like roses, which distinguish the panther from every other feline species.

This tranquil and formidable hostess snored in an attitude as graceful as that of a cat lying on the cushion of an ottoman. Her bloodstained paws, nervous and well-armed, were stretched out before her face, which rested upon them, and from which radiated her straight, slender whiskers, like threads of silver.

If she had been like that in a cage, the Provençal would doubtless have admired the grace of the animal, and the vigorous contrasts of vivid color which gave her robe an imperial splendor, but just then his sight was troubled by her sinister appearance. The presence of the panther, even asleep, could not fail to produce the effect which the magnetic eyes of the serpent are said to have on the nightingale.

For a moment the courage of the soldier began to fail before this danger, though no doubt it would have risen at the mouth of a cannon vomiting forth grapeshot. Nevertheless, a bold thought brought daylight to his soul and dried up the source of the cold sweat which sprang forth on his brow. Like men who, driven to bay by misfortune, defy death and offer their body to its blows, so he, seeing in this merely a tragic episode, resolved to play his part with honor to the last.

"The day before yesterday the Arabs would have killed me perhaps," he said. So considering himself as good as dead already, he waited bravely, with excited curiosity, for his enemy's awakening.

When the sun appeared, the panther suddenly opened her eyes; then she put out her paws with energy, as if to stretch them and get rid of cramp. At last she yawned, showing the formidable apparatus of her teeth and forked tongue, rough as a file.

"A regular coquette," thought the Frenchman, seeing her roll herself about so softly and kittenishly. She licked off the blood which stained her paws and muzzle, and scratched her head with reiterated gestures full of prettiness. "All right, make yourself pretty," the Frenchman said to himself, beginning to recover his gaiety with his courage; "we'll say good morning to each other presently," and he seized the small, short dagger which he had taken from the Moors.

At this moment the panther turned her head toward the man and looked at him fixedly without moving. The rigidity of her metallic eyes and their insupportable luster made him shudder, especially when the animal walked toward him. But he looked at her caressingly, staring into her eyes in order to magnetize her, and let her come quite close to him; then with a movement both gentle and amorous, as though he were caressing the most beautiful of women, he passed his hand over her whole body, from the head to the tail, scratching the flexible vertebrae which divided the panther's yellow back. The animal waved her tail voluptuously, and her eyes grew gentle; and when for the third time the Frenchman accomplished this flattery in which there was a purpose, she gave forth one of those purrings by which our cats express their pleasure; but this murmur issued from a throat so powerful and so deep, that it resounded through the cave, like the last vibrations of an organ in a church. The man, understanding the importance of his caresses, redoubled them in such a way as to surprise and stupefy his imperious courtesan. When he felt sure of having extinguished the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had so fortunately been satisfied the day before, he got up to go out of the cave; the panther let him go out, but when he had reached the summit of the hill she sprang with the lightness of a sparrow hopping from twig to twig, and rubbed herself against his legs, arching her back after the manner of all the race of cats. Then regarding her guest with eyes whose glare had softened a little, she gave vent to that wild cry which naturalists compare to the grating of a saw.

"She is exacting," said the Frenchman, smilingly.

He was bold enough to play with her ears; he caressed her belly and scratched her head as hard as he could. When he saw that he was successful, he tickled her skull with the point of his dagger, watching for the right moment to kill her, but the hardness of her bones made him tremble for his success.

The sultana of the desert graciously manifested her acceptance of the atten-

tions of her slave by lifting her head, stretching out her neck, and showing her delight by the tranquility of her attitude. It suddenly occurred to the soldier that to kill this savage princess with one blow he must poignard her in the throat.

He was raising the blade, when the panther, satisfied no doubt, laid herself gracefully at his feet, and cast up at him glances in which, in spite of their natural fierceness, was mingled confusedly a kind of good-will. The poor Provençal ate his dates, leaning against one of the palm trees, and casting his eyes alternately on the desert in quest of some liberator and on his terrible companion to watch her uncertain clemency.

The panther watched the place where the date stones fell, and every time that he threw one down her eyes expressed an incredible mistrust. She examined the man with an almost commercial prudence. However, this examination was favorable to him, for when he had finished his meager meal she licked his boots with her powerful rough tongue, brushing off with marvellous skill the dust gathered in the creases.

"Ah, but when she's really hungry!" thought the Frenchman. In spite of the shudder this thought caused him, the soldier began to measure curiously the proportions of the panther, certainly one of the most splendid specimens of its race. She was three feet high and four feet long without counting her tail. This powerful weapon, rounded like a cudgel, was nearly three feet long. Her head, large as that of a lioness, was distinguished by a rare expression of refinement. The old cruelty of a tiger was dominant, it was true, but there was also a vague resemblance to the face of a coquettish woman. Indeed, the face of this solitary queen had something of the gaiety of a drunken Nero: she had satiated herself with blood, and she wanted to play.

The soldier tried to walk up and down; the panther left him free, contenting herself with following him with her eyes, less like a faithful dog than a big Angora cat, disturbed at everything, even at the movements of her master.

When he looked around, he saw, by the spring, the remains of his horse; the panther had dragged the carcass all that way. About two-thirds of it had been devoured already. The sight reassured him.

It was easy then to explain the panther's absence, and the respect she had had for him while he slept. This first piece of good luck emboldened him to try the future, and he conceived the wild hope of continuing on good terms with the panther during the entire day, neglecting no means of taming her, and of winning her good graces.

He returned to her, and had the indescribable joy of seeing her wag her tail with an almost imperceptible movement at his approach. He sat down then, without fear, by her side, and they began to play together; he took her paws and muzzle, played with her ears, rolled her over on her back, stroked her warm, silky flanks. She let him do whatever he liked, and when he began to stroke the hair on her feet she drew her claws in carefully.

The Frenchman, keeping one hand on his dagger, was still thinking about plunging it into the belly of the too-confiding panther, but he was afraid that he would be immediately strangled in her last conclusive struggle. Besides, he felt in his heart a sort of remorse which bade him respect a creature that had done him no harm. He seemed to have found a friend, in a boundless desert. Half unconsciously he thought of his first sweetheart, whom he had nicknamed "Mignonne" by way of contrast, because she was so atrociously jealous that all the time of their love he was in fear of the knife with which she had always threatened him.

This memory of his early days suggested to him the idea of making the young panther answer to this name, now that he began to admire with less terror her swiftness, suppleness, and softness. Toward the end of the day he had familiarized himself with his perilous position; he now almost liked the painfulness of it. At last his companion had got into the habit of looking up at him whenever he cried in a falsetto voice, "Mignonne."

At the setting of the sun Mignonne gave, several times running, a profound melancholy cry. "She's been well brought up," said the light-hearted soldier, "she says her prayers." But this mental joke only occurred to him when he noticed what a pacific attitude his companion remained in. "Come, *ma petite blonde*, I'll let you go to bed first," he said to her, counting on the activity of his own legs to run away as quickly as possible, directly she was asleep, and seek another shelter for the night.

The soldier waited with impatience the hour of his flight, and when it had arrived he walked vigorously in the direction of the Nile, but hardly had he done a quarter of a league in the sand when he heard the panther bounding after him, crying with that saw-like cry more dreadful even than the sound of her leaping.

"Ah!" he said, "then she's taken a fancy to me; she has never met any one before, and it is really quite flattering to have her first love." That instant the man fell into one of those movable quicksands so terrible to travellers and from which it is impossible to save oneself. Feeling himself caught, he gave a shriek of alarm; the panther seized him with her teeth by the collar, and, springing vigorously backward, drew him as if by magic out of the whirling sand.

"Ah, Mignonne!" cried the soldier, caressing her enthusiastically; "we're bound together for life and death—but no jokes, mind!" and he retraced his steps.

From that time the desert seemed inhabited. It contained a being to whom the Frenchman could talk, and whose ferocity was rendered gentle by him, though he could not explain to himself the reason for their strange friendship. Great as was the soldier's desire to stay upon guard, he slept.

On awakening he could not find Mignonne; he mounted the hill, and in the distance saw her springing toward him after the habit of these animals, who cannot run on account of the extreme flexibility of the vertebral col-

umn. Mignonne arrived, her jaws covered with blood; she received the wonted caress of her companion, showing with much purring how happy it made her. Her eyes, full of languor, turned still more gently than the day before toward the Provençal who talked to her as one would to a tame animal.

"Ah! Mademoiselle, you are a nice girl, aren't you? Just look at that! so we like to be made much of, don't we? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? So you have been eating some Arab or other, have you? that doesn't matter. They're animals just the same as you are; but don't you take to eating Frenchmen, or I shan't like you any longer."

She played like a dog with its master, letting herself be rolled over, knocked about, and stroked, alternately; sometimes she herself would provoke the soldier, putting up her paw with a soliciting gesture.

Some days passed in this manner. This companionship permitted the Provençal to appreciate the sublime beauty of the desert; now that he had a living thing to think about, alternations of fear and quiet, and plenty to eat, his mind became filled with contrast and his life began to be diversified.

Solitude revealed to him all her secrets, and enveloped him in her delights. He discovered in the rising and setting of the sun sights unknown to the world. He knew what it was to tremble when he heard over his head the hiss of a bird's wing, so rarely did they pass, or when he saw the changing clouds, many-colored travellers, one melting into another. He studied in the night time the effect of the moon upon the ocean of sand, where the simoon made waves swift of movement and rapid in their change. He lived the life of the Eastern day, marvelling at its wonderful pomp; then, after having revelled in the sight of a hurricane over the plain where the whirling sands made red, dry mists and death-bearing clouds, he would welcome the night with joy, for then fell the healthful freshness of the stars, and he listened to imaginary music in the skies. Then solitude taught him to unroll the treasures of dreams. He passed whole hours in remembering mere nothings and comparing his present life to his past.

At last he grew passionately fond of the panther; for some sort of affection was a necessity. Whether it was that his will powerfully projected had modified the character of his companion, or whether, because she found abundant food in her predatory excursions in the desert, she respected the man's life, he began to fear for it no longer, seeing her so well tamed.

He devoted the greater part of his time to sleep, but he was obliged to watch like a spider in its web that the moment of his deliverance might not escape him, if any one should pass the line marked by the horizon. He had sacrificed his shirt to make a flag with, which he hung at the top of a palm tree, whose foliage he had torn off. Taught by necessity, he found the means of keeping it spread out, by fastening it with little sticks; for the wind might not be blowing at the moment when the passing traveller was looking through the desert.

It was during the long hours, when he had abandoned hope, that he amused himself with the panther. He had come to learn the different inflections of her voice, the expressions of her eyes; he had studied the capricious patterns of all the rosettes which marked the gold of her robe. Mignonne was not even angry when he took hold of the tuft at the end of her tail to count her rings, those graceful ornaments which glittered in the sun like precious stones. It gave him pleasure to contemplate the supple, fine outlines of her form, the whiteness of her belly, the graceful pose of her head. But it was especially when she was playing that he felt most pleasure in looking at her; the agility and youthful lightness of her movements were a continual surprise to him; he wondered at the supple way in which she jumped and climbed, washed herself and arranged her fur, crouched down and prepared to spring. However rapid her spring might be, however slippery the stone she was on, she would always stop short at the word "Mignonne."

One day, in a bright mid-day sun, an enormous bird hovered above in the air. The man left his panther to look at this new guest; but after waiting a moment the deserted sultana growled deeply.

"My goodness! I do believe she's jealous," he cried, seeing her eyes become hard again; "the soul of Virginie must have passed into her body."

The eagle disappeared into the air, while the soldier admired the curved contour of the panther.

But there was such youth and grace in her form! she was beautiful as a woman! The blond fur of her robe mingled well with the delicate tints of dull white which marked her flanks.

The profuse light cast down by the sun made this living gold, these russet markings, to burn in a way to give them an indefinable attraction.

The man and the panther looked at one another with a look full of meaning; the coquette quivered when she felt her friend stroke her head; her eyes flashed like lightning—then she shut them tightly.

"She has a soul," he said, looking at the stillness of this queen of the sands, golden like them, white like them, solitary and burning like them.

"Well," she said, "I have read your plea in favor of beasts; but how did two so well adapted to understand each other end?"

"Ah, well! you see, they ended as all great passions do end—by a misunderstanding. For some reason one suspects the other of treason; because of pride they don't come to an explanation. They quarrel and part from sheer obstinancy."

"Yet sometimes at the best moments a single word or a look is enough—but anyhow go on with your story."

"It's horribly difficult, but you will understand, after what the old villain told me over his champagne. He said—'I don't know if I hurt her, but she turned round, as if enraged, and with her sharp teeth caught hold of my leg —gently, I daresay; but I, thinking she would devour me, plunged my dagger

into her throat. She rolled over, giving a cry that froze my heart; and I saw her dying, still looking at me without anger. I would have given all the world —my Legion of Honor cross even, which I had not got then—to have brought her to life again. It was as though I had murdered a real person. And the soldiers who had seen my flag, and had come to my assistance, found me in tears. 'Well sir,' he said, after a moment of silence, 'since then I have been in war in Germany, in Spain, in Russia, in France; I've certainly carried my carcass about a good deal, but never have I seen anything like the desert. Ah! yes, it is very beautiful!'

"'What did you feel there?'" I asked him.

"'Oh! that can't be described, young man. Besides, I am not always regretting my palm trees and my panther. I should have to be very melancholy for that. In the desert, you see, there is everything, and nothing.'"

"'Yes, but explain——'"

"'Well,' he said, with an impatient gesture, 'it is God without mankind.'"*

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN [1]

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

"Dearest heart," whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, "prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afeard of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year."

"My love and my Faith," replied young Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?"

"Then God bless you!" said Faith, with the pink ribbons; "and may you find all well when you come back."

"Amen!" cried Goodman Brown. "Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee."

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of

1. First printed in the *New-England Magazine,* 1835.

Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

"Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him. "What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night. But no, no; 'twould kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven."

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

"There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree," said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!"

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him.

"You are late, Goodman Brown," said he. "The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes agone."

"Faith kept me back a while," replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveler, "this is a dull place for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary."

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having

kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of."

"Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet."

"Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept—"

"Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake."

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too—But these are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff acutally seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman

Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall," said he. "But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow-traveller. "Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path."

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words —a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly it is, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhanged witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane—"

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

"Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of

our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of townspeople of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice, of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him. "Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you."

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

"A grave and dark-clad company," quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom

and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

"But where is Faith?" thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to the words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

"Bring forth the converts!" cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and

good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

"Welcome, my children," said the dark figure, "to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!"

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

"There," resumed the sable form, "are all whom ye have reverenced from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds: how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows' weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers' wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest, to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost—can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other."

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

"Lo, there ye stand, my children," said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. "Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race."

"Welcome," repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that

they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

"Faith! Faith!" cried the husband, "look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one."

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. "What God doth the wizard pray to?" quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession,

besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

ON HAWTHORNE'S *YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN* [1]

F. O MATTHIESSEN

WHEN young Goodman Brown leaves his wife Faith at home, and is deluded into attending a witch's sabbath in the forest, Hawthorne has the kind of situation where his moral perception and imaginative resources are able to coalesce. The conception of the dark and evil-haunted wilderness came to him from the days of Cotton Mather, who held that "the New Englanders are a people of God settled in those which were once the devil's territories." The fact that so many other strained religious minds had thus dramatized the heroic act of colonizing, had contributed to leave traces of awe in the presence of the lonely Maine woods even for a Pan-worshipper like Thoreau. Hawthorne's main concern with this material is to use it to develop the theme that mere doubt of the existence of good, the thought that all other men are evil, can become such a corrosive force as to eat out the life of the heart. In handling the question of what the young man really saw during his night in the forest, Hawthorne's imagination is at its most delicately masterful. In the sound of the rising wind it seemed to Brown that he heard the tune of a familiar hymn, sung to the most blasphemous words. Then, to his horrified gaze, four tall pines suddenly sprang into flame at the top, like candles at an evening meeting. "Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once."

But when he had turned his eyes upward just before, doubting whether there was a heaven above him, yet lifting his hands to pray, "there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it," except where a "black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward."

> Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. . . .
>
> "My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil, for to thee is this world given."

The intensity of the situation is sustained by all the devices Hawthorne had learned from the seventeenth century, for just as the heavens groaned in Milton's fall of the angels, the winds are made to whisper sadly at the loss of this man's faith. As long as what Brown saw is left wholly in the realm of hallucination, Hawthorne's created illusion is compelling. For the symbolical truth of

1. From *American Renaissance* by F. O. Matthiessen. Copyright, 1941, by Oxford University Press.

what the young man had conjured up in his bewildered vision is heightened by the fact that when he staggered against one of the burning trees, its twigs were cold with dew. The dramatization of his spiritual loss in the form of the agonized struggle and disappearance of his wife allows the description of the inner experience to become concrete, and also doubles its application. Only the literal insistence on that damaging pink ribbon obtrudes the labels of a confining allegory, and short-circuits the range of association.



THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH [1]

EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE "Red Death" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its avatar and its seal—the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body, and especially upon the face, of the victim were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure, progress, and termination of the disease were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and lighthearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the Prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers, and welded the bolts. They resolved to leave means neither of ingress or egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the meantime it was folly to grieve, or to think. The Prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death."

It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven—an imperial suite. In many palaces,

1. First printed in *Graham's Magazine*, 1842.

however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding-doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different, as might have been expected from the Prince's love of the bizarre. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass, whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it opened. That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue —and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange, the fifth with white, the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But, in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood-color. Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire, that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances. But in the western or black chamber the effect of the firelight that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused revery or meditation. But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly; the musicians looked at each

other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the Time that flies) there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

But, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the Prince were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colors and effects. He disregarded the *decora* of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric luster. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

He had directed, in great part, the movable embellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête*; and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm—much of what has been since seen in *Hernani*. There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these—the dreams—writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away—they have endured but an instant—and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart. And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away, and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-colored panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appalls; and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches *their* ears who indulge in the more remote gayeties of the other apartments.

But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations

of the thoughtful among those who reveled. And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumor of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth the masquerade license of the night was nearly unlimited; but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the Prince's indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revelers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbed in *blood*—and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment, with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

"Who dares?" he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him—"who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him—that we may know whom we have to hang at sunrise, from the battlements."

It was in the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly—for the Prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become hushed at the waving of his hand.

It was in the blue room where stood the Prince, with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none

who put forth hand to seize him; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the Prince's person; and while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centers of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple—through the purple to the green—through the green to the orange—through this again to the white—and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him. It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him, on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry—and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero. Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revelers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave cerements and corpse-like mask, which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

ON POE'S *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* [1]

WALTER BLAIR

POE's theories about incident and tone in the tale suggest a way of considering how, in his own stories, he achieved the kind of reconciliation he believed inevitable between theory and practice. Let us consider, for instance, in the light of these theories, one of his most famous tales, "The Masque of the Red Death."

A change of the sort typical of Poe—one in the feelings of the characters—occurs in this story. At the beginning the courtiers are "hale and light hearted," but they shortly manifest uneasiness by retiring to the secluded abbey and barring the door to "the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy."

1. From "Poe's Conception of Incident and Tone in the Tale," *Modern Philology*, XLI (May, 1944), 236–240. Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

In the final pages they are inspired by "nameless awe," and their only act is prompted by "the wild courage of despair." The prince is so characterized that his growing fright contributes to the graduation of this climactic development: he is "happy and dauntless," "bold and robust," capable of making "bold and fiery plans." Yet, near the end, even this courageous man suffers "momentary cowardice"; and, when he is overcome by the terrible Red Death, the courtiers are "grasped in unutterable horror."

Paralleling this development, characteristically enough, are a series of backgrounds and happenings so selected and arranged as to account for these mounting fears. The raging plague, though it is apparently shut out when the prince and his friends bar the doors of the abbey, nevertheless contributes its element of menace from the start. But the chief scene (in the theatrical sense of the word), beginning in the third paragraph, is the masque during which, by degrees, feverish gaiety gives way to abject terror. This part of the narrative falls into three divisions, in which are inspired, respectively, physical disquiet, fear of the aberrations of the mind, and, finally, horror aroused by the supernatural.

Poe tells first of the decorative scheme—the seven rooms, so arranged as to play upon any claustrophobia the reader may feel as he identifies himself with characters whose vision is limited by walls of single rooms which themselves are in an abbey shut off from the world by welded iron doors. Light and color in each of these rooms are abnormal and disquieting, and into the seventh room—most disquieting of all—"few of the company are bold enough to set foot." Hearing as well as sight is disturbed: the sound which issues from the ebony clock as its pendulum swings is a "dull, heavy, monotonous clang"; and, when the hour strikes, the "peculiar note and emphasis" of the chime stops the music and makes even the giddiest courtiers momentarily turn pale.

From such purely physical details, the account moves to the rumored madness of the prince by a neat transition: "It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not mad." Mad or not, when Prospero makes plans for the ball, mental as well as physical distortion is suggested. "Grotesque," "phantasm," "arabesque," "delirious fancies such as the madman fashions," "much of the *bizarre*, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust"—such words as these tell of the dream-like figures moving through the rooms. And, now, "there are none of the masquers who venture" into the seventh room.

For in this room, says the author, introducing the supernatural note to prevail until the end, "the night is waning. . . . and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-colored panes. . . . and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which reaches *their* ears who indulge in the more remote gayeties of the other apartments." The ruddier light can have only a supernatural explanation, since the time is not yet midnight; and there is no natural reason for the change in the sound of the clock. Now the clock strikes twelve,

and, during the time it strikes, many first see the strange figure who causes the company to feel and voice "disapprobation and surprise," then "terror. . . . horror. . . . disgust." Seeing this figure habited as the Red Death, the pale courtiers shrink back, and even the brave prince is paralyzed by momentary cowardice. Prospero in time, though, finds courage enough to follow the figure to the seventh room; and there he dies. "Summoning the wild courage of despair," the courtiers follow and seize the figure. Finding "the grave-cerements and corpse-like mask . . . untenanted by any tangible form," they "gasp in unutterable horror." But even this high mark in the depiction of the supernatural is surpassed by the final paragraph as it tells of the death not only of animate beings but of inanimate objects as well: "And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all."

Since this is a tale of mounting terror, it is so wrought, Poe probably would say, as to excite the heart. The selection and arrangement of incidents, as has been shown, is such as to achieve this effect. Variety in the tone helps make the concluding terror impressive. As in "The Raven," the author avails himself of the force of contrast: he does this by portraying the figures at the masque in terms of the grotesque, thus heightening the effect of the more serious tone at the conclusion. The tone, too, in portions of the story, is such as to present many details with appropriate "homeliness." Consider the particularized description of the mysterious figure:

> . . . . tall and gaunt and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask . . . . was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty detecting the cheat. . . . . His vesture was dabbled in *blood*—and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

Such vivid details, reminiscent in their particularity of lines in "The Wreck of the Hesperus," bring, to use Poe's words in his criticism of Longfellow, "if not positive disgust," "thrilling horror."

But elsewhere in most of the tale there is that indefiniteness, that suggestiveness—of image, of sensation, and of meaning—calculated to elevate the soul. The use in the tale, after the business-like diction of the opening paragraphs, of "the quaint in phraseology"—may be expected to have an effect similar to that of the archaic diction of the old English poets, which creates in admirers of such poets "a sense of dreamy, wild, indefinite, and . . . indefinable delight." And when the rooms in which the revel is held are described only in terms of color and light, their only mentioned furnishing being the ebony clock, the omission of so many details "stirs the spirit more pleasantly than the most elaborate picture." And often the author, like Margaret Fuller, describes rather by showing effect than by depicting directly, as in the portrayal

of the bizarre figures as "delirious fancies" and "a multitude of dreams," or in calling blood "the scarlet horror."

Such phrases serve also, of course, to portray sensations suggestively, since they are attached not to the courtiers but to what they see. Other devices are helpful to the achievement of the same end. The fear stirred by the clock is hinted in words which link human qualities with this inanimate thing: when it chimes, the hour is "stricken," and the "voice of the clock" comes from its "brazen lungs" in a "solemnly emphatic" fashion. Actions suggest emotions indirectly, as when the courtiers weld shut the iron door; when few, then none, of the masquers venture into the seventh chamber; when, after "a slight rushing movement" toward the intruder, none of the courtiers puts forth a hand to seize him. The resemblance of the seventh room to a coffin is simply hinted at in the first description and in subsequent references to the "most westerly" chamber, "the hall of velvet," "the velvet apartment," and "the black apartment." And, at the very end of the story, emotions are vaguely denoted—"a certain nameless awe" and "unutterable horror."

The soul will also be stirred, presumably, by the undercurrent of meaning which runs half-hidden through "The masque of the Red Death." An allegorical signification, suggested by the tone, may be articulated. In such a signification the seven chambers progressing from east to west—from blue to black—connote the seven ages of man from the blue of the dawn of life to the black of its night. The prince and the courtiers stand for the living, who vainly seek to bar out and forget death by being gay and carefree, imagining "it is folly to grieve or to think." But death walks the earth like a plague, certain, in the end, to conquer all, and the courtiers are deceived when they believe that "with such precautions they may bid defiance to contagion." Like all men, they cannot repeat the opening words of the old saw, "Eat, drink and be merry," without adding the conclusion.

The tone, then, implies analogies which are suggestive of hidden meanings. But to say, as one very discerning critic of Poe does, that the tale "reproduces in a synthetic vision the inevitable victory of Death over Humanity," is to formulate a meaning more definitely than Poe would consider proper in the tale itself. In accordance with Poe's demand for ambiguity, he allows such a "moral" to be nothing more than a generally hidden undercurrent, and the last paragraph ends on a note inconsistent with such a meaning—a note which Poe doubtless would hold is suggestive of implications which cannot be made explicit this side of eternity.

However, it is improper, in an important sense, thus to consider separately incident and tone, since in Poe's opinion, if a tale is well constructed, they will be so integrated as to co-operate from the beginning to carry the tale inevitably to its denouement. It should be noticed, therefore, that the opening paragraphs not only introduce the incidents by setting forth the initial situation: they also introduce the word-symbols which are to have cumulative

analogical significance—death and inexorable time, on the one hand, and life and the gaiety which seeks to kill time by forgetting it, on the other. The whole story which follows shows these two forces at grips and more and more definitely points forward to the inevitable and meaningful triumph of one of the forces.

The second paragraph shows Prospero and his party apparently successful in their escape from the plague: "buffoons, ... improvisatori, ... ballet-dancers, ... musicians, ... Beauty, ... wine. All these and security were within." But the last short sentence of the long paragraph again mentions the lurking enemy: "Without was the 'Red Death.'" Then, as the scene of the ball is described, the vague hint emerges that the escape is a wish rather than an actuality. The black velvet curtains, the blood-red light, and the clock which ticks the time in the seventh room, and the fear engendered in the hearts of the courtiers by the room, initiate the connotation by that room of the inescapable Red Death.

With such analogies ambiguously suggested, the incidents and tone operate simultaneously in a fashion comparable to that of a ballet. There are moments of gaiety, and then the clock strikes in the seventh room, and, inevitably, the courtiers are constrained to remember Death and Time, which are more and more definitely identified with that room:

> The musicians . . . . were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company, and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang . . . . the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused reverie and meditation.

When the chimes cease, the musicians vow that they will not allow the clock again to disturb them. However, "after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the Time that flies)," there comes another chiming of the clock, and "the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before." The parenthetical expression suggests more clearly than before an analogical significance for the clock, and the action and inaction of the dancers acquire accordant significance. The dance resumes, this time with the bizarre figures conjured up by Prospero moving through the rooms. But, when the clock chimes, even these do not bring forgetfulness. And the pause which now follows is, more clearly than in previous pauses, like an instant of death: "for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand." "And now again," continues the story, "the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever. . . . But . . . ." and again the story turns to the room of the clock. The coming of midnight, the hour associated with death and with the walking of the earth by uneasy spirits, is made to coincide with the discovery of the shrouded figure:

The music ceased . . . . ; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things. . . . . But now there were twelve strokes . . . . ; and thus . . . . more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who revelled. And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes . . . . had utterly sunk into silence, ... many . . . . had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure who had arrested the attention of no single individual before.

The figure, thus appearing during a pause in music and motion and unwillingly acknowledged as a presence by the courtiers, is the Red Death. He is first viewed in the room most remote from the velvet chamber—the blue room. At first the revelers who have sought to forget and avoid death, as well as the brave prince, shrink from this explicitly symbolical masked figure. Then, when he moves with "solemn and measured step" more appropriate for a funeral than for a dance—when he moves through the seven chambers, the prince and courtiers, as if drawn by fate, follow him to "the black apartment." They see the prince die "within the shadow of the ebony clock," and now is "acknowledged the presence of the Red Death." And "the life of the ebony clock goes out with that of the last of the gay." Thus incident and tone work together from the start of the tale to its inevitable conclusion to achieve a unified effect.

THE REAL THING [1]

HENRY JAMES

WHEN the porter's wife, who used to answer the house-bell, announced "A gentleman and a lady, sir," I had, as I often had in those days—the wish being father to the thought—an immediate vision of sitters. Sitters my visitors in this case proved to be; but not in the sense I should have preferred. There was nothing at first however to indicate that they mightn't have come for a portrait. The gentleman, a man of fifty, very high and very straight, with a moustache slightly grizzled and a dark grey walking-coat admirably fitted, both of which I noted professionally—I don't mean as a barber or yet as a tailor—would have struck me as a celebrity if celebrities often were striking. It was a truth of which I had for some time been conscious that a figure with a good deal of frontage was, as one might say, almost never a public institution. A glance at the lady helped to remind me of this paradoxical law: she also looked too distinguished to be a "personality." Moreover one would scarcely come across two variations together.

Neither of the pair immediately spoke—they only prolonged the prelimi-

1. From Henry James, *The Real Thing*. Copyright, 1893, by Macmillan and Co. Copyright, 1921, by Henry James. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

nary gaze suggesting that each wished to give the other a chance. They were visibly shy; they stood there letting me take them in—which, as I afterwards perceived, was the most practical thing they could have done. In this way their embarrassment served their cause. I had seen people painfully reluctant to mention that they desired anything so gross as to be represented on canvas; but the scruples of my new friends appeared almost insurmountable. Yet the gentleman might have said "I should like a portrait of my wife," and the lady might have said "I should like a portrait of my husband." Perhaps they weren't husband and wife—this naturally would make the matter more delicate. Perhaps they wished to be done together—in which case they ought to have brought a third person to break the news.

"We come from Mr. Rivet," the lady finally said with a dim smile that had the effect of a moist sponge passed over a "sunk" piece of painting, as well as of a vague allusion to vanished beauty. She was as tall and straight, in her degree, as her companion, and with ten years less to carry. She looked as sad as a woman could look whose face was not charged with expression; that is her tinted oval mask showed waste as an exposed surface shows friction. The hand of time had played over her freely, but to an effect of elimination. She was slim and stiff, and so well-dressed, in dark blue cloth, with lappets and pockets and buttons, that it was clear she employed the same tailor as her husband. The couple had in indefinable air of prosperous thrift—they evidently got a good deal of luxury for their money. If I was to be one of their luxuries it would behoove me to consider my terms.

"Ah Claude Rivet recommended me?" I echoed; and I added that it was very kind of him, though I could reflect that, as he only painted landscape, this wasn't a sacrifice.

The lady looked very hard at the gentleman, and the gentleman looked round the room. Then, staring at the floor a moment and stroking his moustache, he rested his pleasant eyes on me with the remark: "He said you were the right one."

"I try to be, when people want to sit."

"Yes, we should like to," said the lady anxiously.

"Do you mean together?"

My visitors exchanged a glance. "If you could do anything with *me* I suppose it would be double," the gentleman stammered.

"Oh yes, there's naturally a higher charge for two figures than for one."

"We should like to make it pay," the husband confessed.

"That's very good of you," I returned, appreciating so unwonted a sympathy —for I supposed he meant pay the artist.

A sense of strangeness seemed to dawn on the lady. "We mean for the illustrations—Mr. Rivet said you might put one in."

"Put in—an illustration?" I was equally confused.

"Sketch her off, you know," said the gentleman, colouring.

It was only then that I understood the service Claude Rivet had rendered

me; he had told them how I worked in black-and-white, for magazines, for storybooks, for sketches of contemporary life, and consequently had copious employment for models. These things were true, but it was not less true—I may confess it now; whether because the aspiration was to lead to everything or to nothing I leave the reader to guess—that I couldn't get the honours, to say nothing of the emoluments, of a great painter of portraits out of my head. My "illustrations" were my pot-boilers; I looked to a different branch of art—far and away the most interesting it had always seemed to me—to perpetuate my fame. There was no shame in looking to it also to make my fortune; but that fortune was by so much further from being made from the moment my visitors wished to be "done" for nothing. I was disappointed; for in the pictorial sense I had immediately *seen* them. I had seized their type —I had already settled what I would do with it. Something that wouldn't absolutely have pleased them, I afterwards reflected.

"Ah you're—you're—a—?" I began as soon as I had mastered my surprise. I couldn't bring out the dingy word "models": it seemed so little to fit the case.

"We haven't had much practice," said the lady.

"We've got to *do* something, and we've thought that an artist in your line might perhaps make something of us," her husband threw off. He further mentioned that they didn't know many artists and that they had gone first, on the off-chance—he painted views of course, but sometimes put in figures, perhaps I remembered—to Mr. Rivet, whom they had met a few years before at a place in Norfolk where he was sketching.

"We used to sketch a little ourselves," the lady hinted.

"It's very awkward, but we absolutely *must* do something," her husband went on.

"Of course we're not so *very* young," she admitted with a wan smile.

With the remark that I might as well know something more about them the husband had handed me a card extracted from a neat new pocket-book —their appurtenances were all of the freshest—and inscribed with the words "Major Monarch." Impressive as these words were they didn't carry my knowledge much further; but my visitor presently added: "I've left the army and we've had the misfortune to lose our money. In fact our means are dreadfully small."

"It's awfully trying—a regular strain," said Mrs. Monarch.

They evidently wished to be discreet—to take care not to swagger because they were gentlefolk. I felt them willing to recognize this as something of a drawback, at the same time that I guessed at an underlying sense—their consolation in adversity—that they *had* their points. They certainly had; but these advantages struck me as preponderantly social; such for instance as would help to make a drawing-room look well. However, a drawing-room was always, or ought to be, a picture.

In consequence of his wife's allusion to their age Major Monarch observed:

"Naturally it's more for the figure that we thought of going in. We can still hold ourselves up." On the instant I saw that the figure was indeed their strong point. His "naturally" didn't sound vain, but it lighted up the question. "*She* has the best one," he continued, nodding at his wife with a pleasant after-dinner absence of circumlocution. I could only reply, as if we were in fact sitting over our wine, that this didn't prevent his own from being very good; which led him in turn to make answer: "We thought that if you ever have to do people like us we might be something like it. *She* particularly—for a lady in a book, you know."

I was so amused by them that, to get more of it, I did my best to take their point of view, and though it was an embarrassment to find myself appraising physically, as if they were animals on hire or useful blacks, a pair whom I should have expected to meet only in one of the relations in which criticism is tacit, I looked at Mrs. Monarch judicially enough to be able to exclaim after a moment with conviction: "Oh yes, a lady in a book!" She was singularly like a bad illustration.

"We'll stand up, if you like," said the Major; and he raised himself before me with a really grand air.

I could take his measure at a glance—he was six feet two and a perfect gentleman. It would have paid any club in process of formation and in want of a stamp to engage him at a salary to stand in the principal window. What struck me at once was that in coming to me they had rather missed their vocation; they could surely have been turned to better account for advertising purposes. I couldn't of course see the thing in detail, but I could see them make somebody's fortune—I don't mean their own. There was something in them for a waistcoat-maker, an hotel-keeper or a soap-vendor. I could imagine "We always use it" pinned on their bosoms with the greatest effect; I had a vision of the brilliancy with which they would launch a table d'hôte.

Mrs. Monarch sat still, not from pride but from shyness, and presently her husband said to her: "Get up, my dear, and show how smart you are." She obeyed, but she had no need to get up to show it. She walked to the end of the studio and then came back blushing, her fluttered eyes on the partner of her appeal. I was reminded of an incident I had accidentally had a glimpse of in Paris—being with a friend there, a dramatist about to produce a play, when an actress came to him to ask to be entrusted with a part. She went through her paces before him, walked up and down as Mrs. Monarch was doing. Mrs. Monarch did it quite as well, but I abstained from applauding. It was very odd to see such people apply for such poor pay. She looked as if she had ten thousand a year. Her husband had used the word that described her: she was in the London current jargon essentially and typically "smart." Her figure was, in the same order of ideas, conspicuously and irreproachably "good." For a woman of her age her waist was surprisingly small; her elbow moreover had the orthodox crook. She held her head at the conventional angle, but why did she come to *me*? She ought to have tried on jackets at a

big shop. I feared my visitors were not only destitute but "artistic"—which would be a great complication. When she sat down again I thanked her, observing that what a draughtsman most valued in his model was the faculty of keeping quiet.

"Oh *she* can keep quiet," said Major Monarch. Then he added jocosely: "I've always kept her quiet."

"I'm not a nasty fidget, am I?" It was going to wring tears from me, I felt, the way she hid her head, ostrich-like, in the other broad bosom.

The owner of this expanse addressed his answer to me. "Perhaps it isn't out of place to mention—because we ought to be quite business-like, oughtn't we? —that when I married her she was known as the Beautiful Statue."

"Oh dear!" said Mrs. Monarch ruefully.

"Of course I should want a certain amount of expression," I rejoined.

"Of *course!*"—and I had never heard such unanimity.

"And then I suppose you know that you'll get awfully tired."

"Oh we *never* get tired!" they eagerly cried.

"Have you had any kind of practice?"

They hesitated—they looked at each other. "We've been photographed—*immensely*," said Mrs. Monarch.

"She means the fellows have asked us themselves," added the Major.

"I see—because you're so good-looking."

"I don't know what they thought, but they were always after us."

"We always got our photographs for nothing," smiled Mrs. Monarch.

"We might have brought some, my dear," her husband remarked.

"I'm not sure we have any left. We've given quantities away," she explained to me.

"With our autographs and that sort of thing," said the Major.

"Are they to be got in the shops?" I enquired as a harmless pleasantry.

"Oh yes, *hers*—they used to be."

"Not now," said Mrs. Monarch with her eyes on the floor.

II

I could fancy the "sort of thing" they put on the presentation copies of their photographs, and I was sure they wrote a beautiful hand. It was odd how quickly I was sure of everything that concerned them. If they were now so poor as to have to earn shillings and pence they could never have had much of a margin. Their good looks had been their capital, and they had good-humouredly made the most of the career that this resource marked out for them. It was in their faces, the blankness, the deep intellectual repose of the twenty years of country-house visiting that had given them pleasant intonations. I could see the sunny drawing-rooms, sprinkled with periodicals she didn't read, in which Mrs. Monarch had continuously sat; I could see the wet shrubberies in which she had walked, equipped to admiration for either exer-

cise. I could see the rich covers the Major had helped to shoot and the wonderful garments in which, late at night, he repaired to the smoking-room to talk about them. I could imagine their leggings and waterproofs, their knowing tweeds and rugs, their rolls of sticks and cases of tackle and neat umbrellas; and I could evoke the exact appearance of their servants and the compact variety of their luggage on the platforms of country stations.

They gave small tips, but they were liked; they didn't do anything themselves, but they were welcome. They looked so well everywhere; they gratified the general relish for stature, complexion and "form." They knew it without fatuity or vulgarity, and they respected themselves in consequence. They weren't superficial; they were thorough and kept themselves up—it had been their line. People with such a taste for activity had to have some line. I could feel how even in a dull house they could have been counted on for the joy of life. At present something had happened—it didn't matter what, their little income had grown less, it had grown least—and they had to do something for pocket-money. Their friends could like them, I made out, without liking to support them. There was something about them that represented credit—their clothes, their manners, their type; but if credit is a large empty pocket in which an occasional chink reverberates, the chink at least must be audible. What they wanted of me was help to make it so. Fortunately they had no children—I soon divined that. They would also perhaps wish our relations to be kept secret: this was why it was "for the figure"—the reproduction of the face would betray them.

I liked them—I felt, quite as their friends must have done—they were so simple; and I had no objection to them if they would suit. But somehow with all their perfections I didn't easily believe in them. After all they were amateurs, and the ruling passion of my life was the detestation of the amateur. Combined with this was another perversity—an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation. I like things that appeared; then one was sure. Whether they *were* or not was a subordinate and almost always a profitless question. There were other considerations, the first of which was that I already had two or three recruits in use, notably a young person with big feet, in alpaca, from Kilburn, who for a couple of years had come to me regularly for my illustrations and with whom I was still—perhaps ignobly—satisfied. I frankly explained to my visitors how the case stood, but they had taken more precautions than I supposed. They had reasoned out their opportunity, for Claude Rivet had told them of the projected *édition de luxe* of one of the writers of our day—the rarest of the novelists—who, long neglected by the multitudinous vulgar and dearly prized by the attentive (need I mention Philip Vincent?) had had the happy fortune of seeing, late in life, the dawn and then the full light of a higher criticism; an estimate in which on the part of the public there was something really of expiation. The edition preparing, planned by a publisher of taste, was practically an act of high reparation; the wood-cuts

with which it was to be enriched were the homage of English art to one of the most independent representatives of English letters. Major and Mrs. Monarch confessed to me they had hoped I might be able to work *them* into my branch of the enterprise. They knew I was to do the first of the books, "Rutland Ramsay," but I had to make clear to them that my participation in the rest of the affair—this first book was to be a test—must depend on the satisfaction I should give. If this should be limited my employers would drop me with scarce common forms. It was therefore a crisis for me, and naturally I was making special preparations, looking about for new people, should they be necessary, and securing the best types. I admitted however that I should like to settle down to two or three good models who would do for everything.

"Should we have often to—a—put on special clothes?" Mrs. Monarch timidly demanded.

"Dear yes—that's half the business."

"And should we be expected to supply our own costumes?"

"Oh no; I've got a lot of things. A painter's models put on—or put off—anything he likes."

"And you mean—a—the same?"

"The same?"

Mrs. Monarch looked at her husband again.

"Oh she was just wondering," he explained, "if the costumes are in *general* use." I had to confess that they were, and I mentioned further that some of them—I had a lot of genuine greasy last-century things—had served their time, a hundred years ago, on living world-stained men and women; on figures not perhaps so far removed, in that vanished world, from *their* type, the Monarchs', *quoi!* of a breeched and bewigged age. "We'll put on anything that *fits*," said the Major.

"Oh I arrange that—they fit in the pictures."

"I'm afraid I should do better for the modern books. I'd come as you like," said Mrs. Monarch.

"She has got a lot of clothes at home: they might do for contemporary life," her husband continued.

"Oh I can fancy scenes in which you'd be quite natural." And indeed I could see the slipshod rearrangements of stale properties—the stories I tried to produce pictures for without the exasperation of reading them—whose sandy tracts the good lady might help to people. But I had to return to the fact that for this sort of work—the daily mechanical grind—I was already equipped: the people I was working with were fully adequate.

"We only thought we might be more like *some* characters," said Mrs. Monarch mildly, getting up.

Her husband also rose; he stood looking at me with a dim wistfulness that was touching in so fine a man. "Wouldn't it be rather a pull sometimes to have—a—to have—?" He hung fire; he wanted me to help him by phrasing what he meant. But I couldn't—I didn't know. So he brought it out awkward-

ly: "The *real* thing; a gentleman, you know, or a lady." I was quite ready to give a general assent—I admitted that there was a great deal in that. This encouraged Major Monarch to say, following up his appeal with an unacted gulp: "It's awfully hard—we've tried everything." The gulp was communicative; it proved too much for his wife. Before I knew it Mrs. Monarch had dropped again upon a divan and burst into tears. Her husband sat down beside her, holding one of her hands; whereupon she quickly dried her eyes with the other, while I felt embarrassed as she looked up at me. "There isn't a confounded job I haven't applied for—waited for—prayed for. You can fancy we'd be pretty bad first. Secretaryships and that sort of thing? You might as well ask for a peerage. I'd be *anything*—I'm strong; a messenger or a coal-heaver. I'd put on a gold-laced cap and open carriage-doors in front of the haberdasher's; I'd hang about a station to carry portmanteaux; I'd be a postman. But they won't *look* at you; there are thousands as good as yourself already on the ground. *Gentlemen*, poor beggars, who've drunk their wine, who've kept their hunters!"

I was as reassuring as I knew how to be, and my visitors were presently on their feet again while, for the experiment, we agreed on an hour. We were discussing it when the door opened and Miss Churm came in with a wet umbrella. Miss Churm had to take the omnibus to Maida Vale and then walk half a mile. She looked a trifle blowsy and slightly splashed. I scarcely ever saw her come in without thinking afresh how odd it was that, being so little in herself, she should yet be so much in others. She was a meagre little Miss Churm, but was such an ample heroine of romance. She was only a freckled cockney, but she could represent everything, from a fine lady to a shepherdess; she had the faculty as she might have had a fine voice or long hair. She couldn't spell and she loved beer, but she had two or three "points," and practice, and a knack, and mother-wit, and a whimsical sensibility, and a love of the theatre, and seven sisters, and not an ounce of respect, especially for the *h*. The first thing my visitors saw was that her umbrella was wet, and in their spotless perfection they visibly winced at it. The rain had come on since their arrival.

"I'm all in a soak; there *was* a mess of people in the 'bus. I wish you lived near a stytion," said Miss Churm. I requested her to get ready as quickly as possible, and she passed into the room in which she always changed her dress. But before going out she asked me what she was to get into this time.

"It's the Russian princess, don't you know?" I answered; "the one with the 'golden eyes,' in black velvet, for the long thing in the *Cheapside*."

"Golden eyes? I *say!*" cried Miss Churm, while my companions watched her with intensity as she withdrew. She always arranged herself, when she was late, before I could turn round; and I kept my visitors a little on purpose, so that they might get an idea, from seeing her, what would be expected of themselves. I mentioned that she was quite my notion of an excellent model —she was really very clever.

"Do you think she looks like a Russian princess?" Major Monarch asked with lurking alarm.

"When I make her, yes."

"Oh if you have to *make* her—!" he reasoned, not without point.

"That's the most you can ask. There are so many who are not makeable."

"Well now, *here's* a lady"—and with a persuasive smile he passed his arm into his wife's—"who's already made!"

"Oh I'm not a Russian princess," Mrs. Monarch protested a little coldly. I could see she had known some and didn't like them. There at once was a complication of a kind I never had to fear with Miss Churm.

The young lady came back in black velvet—the gown was rather rusty and very low on her lean shoulders—and with a Japanese fan in her red hands. I reminded her that in the scene I was doing she had to look over some one's head. "I forget whose it is; but it doesn't matter. Just look over a head."

"I'd rather look over a stove," said Miss Churm; and she took her station near the fire. She fell into position, settled herself into a tall attitude, gave a certain backward inclination to her head and a certain forward droop to her fan, and looked, at least to my prejudiced sense, distinguished and charming, foreign and dangerous. We left her looking so while I went downstairs with Major and Mrs. Monarch.

"I believe I could come about as near it as that," said Mrs. Monarch.

"Oh, you think she's shabby, but you must allow for the alchemy of art."

However, they went off with an evident increase of comfort founded on their demonstrable advantage in being the real thing. I could fancy them shuddering over Miss Churm. She was very droll about them when I went back, for I told her what they wanted.

"Well, if *she* can sit I'll tyke to book-keeping," said my model.

"She's very ladylike," I replied as an innocent form of aggravation.

"So much the worse for *you*. That means she can't turn round."

"She'll do for the fashionable novels."

"Oh yes, she'll *do* for them!" my model humorously declared. "Ain't they bad enough without her?" I had often sociably denounced them to Miss Churm.

III

It was for the elucidation of a mystery in one of these works that I first tried Mrs. Monarch. Her husband came with her, to be useful if necessary—it was sufficiently clear that as a general thing he would prefer to come with her. At first I wondered if this were for "propriety's" sake—if he were going to be jealous and meddling. The idea was too tiresome, and if it had been confirmed it would speedily have brought our acquaintance to a close. But I soon saw there was nothing in it and that if he accompanied Mrs. Monarch it was—in addition to the chance of being wanted—simply because he had

nothing else to do. When they were separate his occupation was gone and they never *had* been separate. I judged rightly that in their awkward situation their close union was their main comfort and that this union had no weak spot. It was a real marriage, an encouragement to the hesitating, a nut for pessimists to crack. Their address was humble—I remember afterwards thinking it had been the only thing about them that was really professional —and I could fancy the lamentable lodgings in which the Major would have been left alone. He could sit there more or less grimly with his wife—he couldn't sit there anyhow without her.

He had too much tact to try and make himself agreeable when he couldn't be useful; so when I was too absorbed in my work to talk he simply sat and waited. But I liked to hear him talk—it made my work, when not interrupting it, less mechanical, less special. To listen to him was to combine the excitement of going out with the economy of staying at home. There was only one hindrance—that I seemed not to know any of the people this brilliant couple had known. I think he wondered extremely, during the term of our intercourse, whom the deuce I *did* know. He hadn't a stray sixpence of an idea to fumble for, so we didn't spin it very fine; we confined ourselves to questions of leather and even of liquor—saddlers and breeches-makers and how to get excellent claret cheap—and matters like "good trains" and the habits of small game. His lore on these last subjects was astonishing—he managed to interweave the station-master with the ornithologist. When he couldn't talk about greater things he could talk cheerfully about smaller, and since I couldn't accompany him into reminiscences of the fashionable world he could lower the conversation without a visible effort to my level.

So earnest a desire to please was touching in a man who could so easily have knocked one down. He looked after the fire and had an opinion on the draught of the stove without my asking him, and I could see that he thought many of my arrangements not half knowing. I remember telling him that if I were only rich I'd offer him a salary to come and teach me how to live. Sometimes he gave a random sigh of which the essence might have been: "Give me even such a bare old barrack as *this*, and I'd do something with it!" When I wanted to use him he came alone; which was an illustration of the superior courage of women. His wife could bear her solitary second floor, and she was in general more discreet; showing by various small reserves that she was alive to the propriety of keeping our relations markedly professional—not letting them slide into sociability. She wished it to remain clear that she and the Major were employed, not cultivated, and if she approved of me as a superior, who could be kept in his place, she never thought me quite good enough for an equal.

She sat with great intensity, giving the whole of her mind to it, and was capable of remaining for an hour almost as motionless as before a photographer's lens. I could see she had been photographed often, but somehow the very habit that made her good for that purpose unfitted her for mine. At first

I was extremely pleased with her ladylike air, and it was a satisfaction, on coming to follow her lines, to see how good they were and how far they could lead the pencil. But after a little skirmishing I began to find her too insurmountably stiff; do what I would with it my drawing looked like a photograph or a copy of a photograph. Her figure had no variety of expression —she herself had no sense of variety. You may say that this was my business and was only a question of placing her. Yet I placed her in every conceivable position and she managed to obliterate their differences. She was always a lady certainly, and into the bargain was always the same lady. She was the real thing, but always the same thing. There were moments when I rather writhed under the serenity of her confidence that she *was* the real thing. All her dealings with me and all her husband's were an implication that this was lucky for *me*. Meanwhile I found myself trying to invent types that approached her own, instead of making her own transform itself—in the clever way that was not impossible for instance to poor Miss Churm. Arrange as I would and take the precautions I would, she always came out, in my pictures, too tall—landing me in the dilemma of having represented a fascinating woman as seven feet high, which (out of respect perhaps to my own very much scantier inches) was far from my idea of such a personage.

The case was worse with the Major—nothing I could do would keep *him* down, so that he became useful only for the representation of brawny giants. I adored variety and range, I cherished human accidents, the illustrative note; I wanted to characterise closely, and the thing in the world I most hated was the danger of being ridden by a type. I had quarrelled with some of my friends about it; I had parted company with them for maintaining that one *had* to be, and that if the type was beautiful—witness Raphael and Leonardo—the servitude was only a gain. I was neither Leonardo nor Raphael—I might only be a presumptuous young modern searcher; but I held that everything was to be sacrificed sooner than character. When they claimed that the obsessional form could easily *be* character I retorted, perhaps superficially, "Whose?" It couldn't be everybody's—it might end in being nobody's.

After I had drawn Mrs. Monarch a dozen times I felt surer even than before that the value of such a model as Miss Churm resided precisely in the fact that she had no positive stamp, combined of course with the other fact that what she did have was a curious and inexplicable talent for imitation. Her usual appearance was like a curtain which she could draw up at request for a capital performance. This performance was simply suggestive; but it was a word to the wise—it was vivid and pretty. Sometimes even I thought it, though she was plain herself, too insipidly pretty; I made it a reproach to her that the figures drawn from her were monotonously (*bêtement,* as we used to say) graceful. Nothing made her more angry; it was so much her pride to feel she could sit for characters that had nothing in common with each other. She would accuse me at such moments of taking away her "reputytion."

It suffered a certain shrinkage, this queer quantity, from the repeated visits

of my new friends. Miss Churm was greatly in demand, never in want of employment, so I had no scruple in putting her off occasionally, to try them more at my ease. It was certainly amusing at first to do the real thing—it was amusing to do Major Monarch's trousers. They *were* the real thing, even if he did come out colossal. It was amusing to do his wife's back hair—it was so mathematically neat—and the particular "smart" tension of her tight stays. She lent herself especially to positions in which the face was somewhat averted or blurred; she abounded in ladylike back views and *profils perdus*. When she stood erect she took naturally one of the attitudes in which court-painters represent queens and princesses; so that I found myself wondering whether, to draw out this accomplishment, I couldn't get the editor of the *Cheapside* to publish a really royal romance, "A Tale of Buckingham Palace." Sometimes however the real thing and the make-believe came into contact; by which I mean that Miss Churm, keeping an appointment or coming to make one on days when I had much work in hand, encountered her invidious rivals. The encounter was not on their part, for they noticed her no more than if she had been the housemaid; not from intentional loftiness, but simply because as yet, professionally, they didn't know how to fraternise, as I could imagine they would have liked—or at least the Major would. They couldn't talk about the omnibus—they always walked; and they didn't know what else to try—she wasn't interested in good trains or cheap claret. Besides, they must have felt—in the air—that she was amused at them, secretly derisive of their ever knowing how. She wasn't a person to conceal the limits of her faith if she had had a chance to show them. On the other hand Mrs. Monarch didn't think her tidy; for why else did she take pains to say to me—it was going out of the way, for Mrs. Monarch—that she didn't like dirty women?

One day when my young lady happened to be present with my other sitters—she even dropped in, when it was convenient, for a chat—I asked her to be so good as to lend a hand in getting tea, a service with which she was familiar and which was one of a class that, living as I did in a small way, with slender domestic resources, I often appealed to my models to render. They liked to lay hands on my property, to break the sitting, and sometimes the china—it made them feel Bohemian. The next time I saw Miss Churm after this incident she surprised me greatly by making a scene about it—she accused me of having wished to humiliate her. She hadn't resented the outrage at the time, but had seemed obliging and amused, enjoying the comedy of asking Mrs. Monarch, who sat vague and silent, whether she would have cream and sugar, and putting an exaggerated simper into the question. She had tried intonations—as if she too wished to pass for the real thing—till I was afraid my other visitors would take offence.

Oh they were determined not to do this, and their touching patience was the measure of their great need. They would sit by the hour, uncomplaining, till I was ready to use them; they would come back on the chance of being wanted and would walk away cheerfully if it failed. I used to go to the door

with them to see in what magnificent order they retreated. I tried to find other employment for them—I introduced them to several artists. But they didn't "take," for reasons I could appreciate, and I became rather anxiously aware that after such disappointments they fell back upon me with a heavier weight. They did me the honour to think me most *their* form. They weren't romantic enough for the painters, and in those days there were few serious workers in black-and-white. Besides, they had an eye to the great job I had mentioned to them—they had secretly set their hearts on supplying the right essence for my pictorial vindication of our fine novelist. They knew that for this undertaking I should want no costume-effects, none of the frippery of past ages—that it was a case in which everything would be contemporary and satirical and presumably genteel. If I could work them into it their future would be assured, for the labour would of course be long and the occupation steady.

One day Mrs. Monarch came without her husband—she explained his absence by his having had to go to the City. While she sat there in her usual relaxed majesty there came at the door a knock which I immediately recognised as the subdued appeal of a model out of work. It was followed by the entrance of a young man whom I at once saw to be a foreigner and who proved in fact an Italian acquainted with no English word but my name, which he uttered in a way that made it seem to include all others. I hadn't then visited his country, nor was I proficient in his tongue; but as he was not so meanly constituted—what Italian is?—as to depend only on that member for expression he conveyed to me, in familiar but graceful mimicry, that he was in search of exactly the employment in which the lady before me was engaged. I was not struck with him at first, and while I continued to draw I dropped few signs of interest or encouragement. He stood his ground however—not importunately, but with a dumb dog-like fidelity in his eyes that amounted to innocent impudence, the manner of a devoted servant—he might have been in the house for years—unjustly suspected. Suddenly it struck me that this very attitude and expression made a picture; whereupon I told him to sit down and wait till I should be free. There was another picture in the way he obeyed me, and I observed as I worked that there were others still in the way he looked wonderingly, with his head thrown back, about the high studio. He might have been crossing himself in Saint Peter's. Before I finished I said to myself "The fellow's a bankrupt orange-monger, but a treasure."

When Mrs. Monarch withdrew he passed across the room like a flash to open the door for her, standing there with the rapt pure gaze of the young Dante spellbound by the young Beatrice. As I never insisted, in such situations, on the blankness of the British domestic, I reflected that he had the making of a servant—and I needed one, but couldn't pay him to be only that—as well as of a model; in short I resolved to adopt my bright adventurer if he would agree to officiate in the double capacity. He jumped at my offer, and in the event my rashness—for I had really known nothing about him—

wasn't brought home to me. He proved a sympathetic though a desultory ministrant, and had in a wonderful degree the *sentiment de la pose*. It was uncultivated, instinctive, a part of the happy instinct that had guided him to my door and helped him to spell out my name on the card nailed to it. He had had no other introduction to me than a guess, from the shape of my high north window, seen outside, that my place was a studio and that as a studio it would contain an artist. He had wandered to England in search of fortune, like other itinerants, and had embarked, with a partner and a small green handcart, on the sale of penny ices. The ices had melted away and the partner had dissolved in their train. My young man wore tight yellow trousers with reddish stripes and his name was Oronte. He was sallow but fair, and when I put him into some old clothes of my own he looked like an Englishman. He was as good as Miss Churm, who could look, when requested, like an Italian.

IV

I thought Mrs. Monarch's face slightly convulsed when, on her coming back with her husband, she found Oronte installed. It was strange to have to recognise in a scrap of a lazzarone a competitor to her magnificent Major. It was she who scented danger first, for the Major was anecdotically unconscious. But Oronte gave us tea, with a hundred eager confusions—he had never been concerned in so queer a process—and I think she thought better of me for having at last an "establishment." They saw a couple of drawings that I had made of the establishment, and Mrs. Monarch hinted that it never would have struck her he had sat for them. "Now the drawings you make from *us*, they look exactly like us," she reminded me, smiling in triumph; and I recognised that this was indeed just their defect. When I drew the Monarchs I couldn't anyhow get away from them—get into the character I wanted to represent; and I hadn't the least desire my model should be discoverable in my picture. Miss Churm never was, and Mrs. Monarch thought I hid her, very properly, because she was vulgar; whereas if she was lost it was only as the dead who go to heaven are lost—in the gain of an angel the more.

By this time I had got a certain start with "Rutland Ramsay," the first novel in the great projected series; that is I had produced a dozen drawings, several with the help of the Major and his wife, and I had sent them in for approval. My understanding with the publishers, as I have already hinted, had been that I was to be left to do my work, in this particular case, as I liked, with the whole book committed to me; but my connexion with the rest of the series was only contingent. There were moments when, frankly, it *was* a comfort to have the real thing under one's hand; for there were characters in "Rutland Ramsay" that were very much like it. There were people presumably as erect as the Major and women of as good a fashion as Mrs. Monarch. There was a great deal of country-house life—treated, it is true, in a fine fanciful ironical

generalised way—and there was a considerable implication of knickerbockers and kilts. There were certain things I had to settle at the outset; such things for instance as the exact appearance of the hero and the particular bloom and figure of the heroine. The author of course gave me a lead, but there was a margin for interpretation. I took the Monarchs into my confidence, I told them frankly what I was about, I mentioned my embarrassments and alternatives. "Oh take *him!*" Mrs. Monarch murmured sweetly, looking at her husband; and "What could you want better than my wife?" the Major enquired with the comfortable candour that now prevailed between us.

I wasn't obliged to answer these remarks—I was only obliged to place my sitters. I wasn't easy in mind, and I postponed a little timidly perhaps the solving of my question. The book was a large canvas, the other figures were numerous, and I worked off at first some of the episodes in which the hero and the heroine were not concerned. When once I had set *them* up I should have to stick to them—I couldn't make my young man seven feet high in one place and five feet nine in another. I inclined on the whole to the latter measurement, though the Major more than once reminded me that *he* looked about as young as any one. It was indeed quite possible to arrange him, for the figure, so that it would have been difficult to detect his age. After the spontaneous Oronte had been with me a month, and after I had given him to understand several times over that his native exuberance would presently constitute an insurmountable barrier to our further intercourse, I waked to a sense of his heroic capacity. He was only five feet seven, but the remaining inches were latent. I tried him almost secretly at first, for I was really rather afraid of the judgment my other models would pass on such a choice. If they regarded Miss Churm as little better than a snare what would they think of the representation by a person so little the real thing as an Italian streetvendor of a protagonist formed by a public school?

If I went a little in fear of them it wasn't because they bullied me, because they had got an oppressive foothold, but because in their really pathetic decorum and mysteriously permanent newness they counted on me so intensely. I was therefore very glad when Jack Hawley came home: he was always of such good counsel. He painted badly himself, but there was no one like him for putting his finger on the place. He had been absent from England for a year; he had been somewhere—I don't remember where—to get a fresh eye. I was in a good deal of dread of any such organ, but we were old friends; he had been away for months and a sense of emptiness was creeping into my life. I hadn't dodged a missile for a year.

He came back with a fresh eye, but with the same old black velvet blouse, and the first evening he spent in my studio we smoked cigarettes till the small hours. He had done no work himself, he had only got the eye; so the field was clear for the production of my little things. He wanted to see what I had produced for the *Cheapside*, but he was disappointed in the exhibition. That

at least seemed the meaning of two or three comprehensive groans which, as he lounged on my big divan, his leg folded under him, looking at my latest drawings, issued from his lips with the smoke of the cigarette.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked.

"What's the matter with *you?*"

"Nothing save that I'm mystified."

"You are indeed. You're quite off the hinge. What's the meaning of this new fad?" And he tossed me, with visible irreverence, a drawing in which I happened to have depicted both my elegant models. I asked if he didn't think it good, and he replied that it struck him as execrable, given the sort of thing I had always represented myself to him as wishing to arrive at; but I let that pass—I was so anxious to see exactly what he meant. The two figures in the picture looked colossal, but I supposed this was *not* what he meant, inasmuch as, for aught he knew to the contrary, I might have been trying for some such effect. I maintained that I was working exactly in the same way as when he last had done me the honour to tell me I might do something some day. "Well, there's a screw loose somewhere," he answered; "wait a bit and I'll discover it." I depended on him to do so: where else was the fresh eye? But he produced at last nothing more luminous than "I don't know—I don't like your types." This was lame for a critic who had never consented to discuss with me anything but the question of execution, the direction of strokes and the mystery of values.

"In the drawings you've been looking at I think my types are very handsome."

"Oh they won't do!"

"I've been working with new models."

"I see you have. *They* won't do."

"Are you very sure of that?"

"Absolutely—they're stupid."

"You mean *I* am—for I ought to get round that."

"You *can't*—with such people. Who are they?"

I told him, so far as was necessary, and he concluded heartlessly: "Ce sont des gens qu'il faut mettre à la porte."

"You've never seen them; they're awfully good"—I flew to their defence.

"Not seen them? Why all this recent work of yours drops to pieces with them. It's all I want to see of them."

"No one else has said anything against it—the *Cheapside* people are pleased."

"Every one else is an ass, and the *Cheapside* people the biggest asses of all. Come, don't pretend at this time of day to have pretty illusions about the public, especially about publishers and editors. It's not for *such* animals you work—it's for those who know, *coloro che sanno*; so keep straight for *me* if you can't keep straight for yourself. There was a certain sort of thing you used to try for—and a very good thing it was. But this twaddle isn't *in* it." When I

talked with Hawley later about "Rutland Ramsay" and its possible successors he declared that I must get back into my boat again or I should go to the bottom. His voice in short was the voice of warning.

I noted the warning, but I didn't turn my friends out of doors. They bored me a good deal; but the very fact that they bored me admonished me not to sacrifice them—if there was anything to be done with them—simply to irritation. As I look back at this phase they seem to me to have pervaded my life not a little. I have a vision of them as most of the time in my studio, seated against the wall on an old velvet bench to be out of the way, and resembling the while a pair of patient courtiers in a royal antechamber. I'm convinced that during the coldest weeks of the winter they held their ground because it saved them fire. Their newness was losing its gloss, and it was impossible not to feel them objects of charity. Whenever Miss Churm arrived they went away, and after I was fairly launched in "Rutland Ramsay" Miss Churm arrived pretty often. They managed to express to me tacitly that they supposed I wanted her for the low life of the book, and I let them suppose it, since they had attempted to study the work—it was lying about the studio—without discovering that it dealt only with the highest circles. They had dipped into the most brilliant of our novelists without deciphering many passages. I still took an hour from them, now and again, in spite of Jack Hawley's warning: it would be time enough to dismiss them, if dismissal should be necessary, when the rigour of the season was over. Hawley had made their acquaintance —he had met them at my fireside—and thought them a ridiculous pair. Learning that he was a painter they tried to approach him, to show him too that they were the real thing; but he looked at them, across the big room, as if they were miles away: they were a compendium of everything he most objected to in the social system of his country. Such people as that, all convention and patent-leather, with ejaculations that stopped conversation, had no business in a studio. A studio was a place to learn to see, and how could you see through a pair of feather-beds?

The main inconvenience I suffered at their hands was that at first I was shy of letting it break upon them that my artful little servant had begun to sit to me for "Rutland Ramsay." They knew I had been odd enough—they were prepared by this time to allow oddity to artists—to pick a foreign vagabond out of the streets when I might have had a person with whiskers and credentials; but it was some time before they learned how high I rated his accomplishments. They found him in an attitude more than once, but they never doubted I was doing him as an organ grinder. There were several things they never guessed, and one of them was that for a striking scene in the novel, in which a footman briefly figured, it occurred to me to make use of Major Monarch as the menial. I kept putting this off, I didn't like to ask him to don the livery—besides the difficulty of finding a livery to fit him. At last, one day late in the winter, when I was at work on the despised Oronte, who caught one's idea on the wing, and was in the glow of feeling myself go very straight,

they came in, the Major and his wife, with their society laugh about nothing (there was less and less to laugh at); came in like country-callers—they always reminded me of that—who have walked across the park after church and are presently persuaded to stay to luncheon. Luncheon was over, but they could stay to tea—I knew they wanted it. The fit was on me, however, and I couldn't let my ardour cool and my work wait, with the fading daylight, while my model prepared it. So I asked Mrs. Monarch if she would mind laying it out —a request which for an instant brought all the blood to her face. Her eyes were on her husband's for a second, and some mute telegraphy passed between them. Their folly was over the next instant; his cheerful shrewdness put an end to it. So far from pitying their wounded pride, I must add, I was moved to give it as complete a lesson as I could. They bustled about together and got out the cups and saucers and made the kettle boil. I knew they felt as if they were waiting on my servant, and when the tea was prepared I said: "He'll have a cup, please—he's tired." Mrs. Monarch brought him one where he stood, and he took it from her as if he had been a gentleman at a party squeezing a crush-hat with an elbow.

Then it came over me that she had made a great effort for me—made it with a kind of nobleness—and that I owed her a compensation. Each time I saw her after this I wondered what the compensation could be. I couldn't go on doing the wrong thing to oblige them. Oh it *was* the wrong thing, the stamp of the work for which they sat—Hawley was not the only person to say it now. I sent in a large number of the drawings I had made for "Rutland Ramsay," and I received a warning that was more to the point than Hawley's. The artistic adviser of the house for which I was working was of opinion that many of my illustrations were not what had been looked for. Most of these illustrations were the subjects in which the Monarchs had figured. Without going into the question of what *had* been looked for, I had to face the fact that at this rate I shouldn't get the other books to do. I hurled myself in despair on Miss Churm—I put her through all her paces. I not only adopted Oronte publicly as my hero, but one morning when the Major looked in to see if I didn't require him to finish a *Cheapside* figure for which he had begun to sit the week before, I told him I had changed my mind—I'd do the drawing from my man. At this my visitor turned pale and stood looking at me. "Is *he* your idea of an English gentleman?" he asked.

I was disappointed, I was nervous, I wanted to get on with my work; so I replied with irritation: "Oh my dear Major—I can't be ruined for *you*!"

It was a horrid speech, but he stood another moment—after which, without a word, he quitted the studio. I drew a long breath, for I said to myself that I shouldn't see him again. I hadn't told him definitely that I was in danger of having my work rejected, but I was vexed at his not having felt the catastrophe in the air, read with me the moral of our fruitless collaboration, the lesson that in the deceptive atmosphere of art even the highest respectability may fail of being plastic.

I didn't owe my friends money, but I did see them again. They reappeared together three days later, and, given all the other facts, there was something tragic in that one. It was a clear proof they could find nothing else in life to do. They had threshed the matter out in a dismal conference—they had digested the bad news that they were not in for the series. If they weren't useful to me even for the *Cheapside* their function seemed difficult to determine, and I could only judge at first that they had come, forgivingly, decorously, to take a last leave. This made me rejoice in secret that I had little leisure for scene; for I had placed both my other models in position together and I was pegging away at a drawing from which I hoped to derive glory. It had been suggested by the passage in which Rutland Ramsay, drawing up a chair to Artemisia's piano-stool, says extraordinary things to her while she ostensibly fingers out a difficult piece of music. I had done Miss Churm at the piano before—it was an attitude in which she knew how to take on an absolutely poetic grace. I wished the two figures to "compose" together with intensity, and my little Italian had entered perfectly into my conception. The pair were vividly before me, the piano had been pulled out; it was a charming show of blended youth and murmured love, which I had only to catch and keep. My visitors stood and looked at it, and I was friendly to them over my shoulder.

They made no response, but I was used to silent company and went on with my work, only a little disconcerted—even though exhilarated by the sense that *this* was at least the ideal thing—at not having got rid of them after all. Presently I heard Mrs. Monarch's sweet voice beside or rather above me: "I wish her hair were a little better done." I looked up and she was staring with a strange fixedness at Miss Churm, whose back was turned to her. "Do you mind my just touching it?" she went on—a question which made me spring up for an instant as with the instinctive fear that she might do the young lady a harm. But she quieted me with a glance I shall never forget—I confess I should like to have been able to paint *that*—and went for a moment to my model. She spoke to her softly, laying a hand on her shoulder and bending over her; and as the girl, understanding, gratefully assented, she disposed her rough curls, with a few quick passes, in such a way as to make Miss Churm's head twice as charming. It was one of the most heroic personal services I've ever seen rendered. Then Mrs. Monarch turned away with a low sigh and, looking about her as if for something to do, stooped to the floor with a noble humility and picked up a dirty rag that had dropped out of my paint-box.

The Major meanwhile had also been looking for something to do, and, wandering to the other end of the studio, saw before him my breakfast-things neglected, unremoved. "I say, can't I be useful *here?*" he called out to me with an irrepressible quaver. I assented with a laugh that I fear was awkward, and for the next ten minutes, while I worked, I heard the light clatter of china and the tinkle of spoons and glass. Mrs. Monarch assisted her husband

—they washed up my crockery, they put it away. They wandered off into my little scullery, and I afterwards found that they had cleaned my knives and that my slender stock of plate had an unprecedented surface. When it came over me, the latent eloquence of what they were doing, I confess that my drawing was blurred for a moment—the picture swam. They had accepted their failure, but they couldn't accept their fate. They had bowed their heads in bewilderment to the perverse and cruel law in virtue of which the real thing could be so much less precious than the unreal, but they didn't want to starve. If my servants were my models, then my models might be my servants. They would reverse the parts—the others would sit for the ladies and gentlemen and *they* would do the work. They would still be in the studio—it was an intense dumb appeal to me not to turn them out. "Take us on," they wanted to say—"we'll do *anything*."

My pencil dropped from my hand; my sitting was spoiled and I got rid of my sitters, who were also evidently rather mystified and awestruck. Then, alone with the Major and his wife I had a most uncomfortable moment. He put their prayer into a single sentence: "I say, you know—just let *us* do for you, can't you?" I couldn't—it was dreadful to see them emptying my slops; but I pretended I could, to oblige them, for about a week. Then I gave them a sum of money to go away, and I never saw them again. I obtained the remaining books, but my friend Hawley repeats that Major and Mrs. Monarch did me a permanent harm, got me into false ways. If it be true I'm content to have paid the price—for the memory.

ON JAMES' *THE REAL THING*[1]

CLIFTON FADIMAN

WITH "The Real Thing" we meet a James story concerned specifically with the dilemmas of the artist class. . . . "The Real Thing," though its key is that of light comedy, deals with the serious problem any artist can pose to himself: the nature of reality. James's conclusion is not in the least original. Every writer, painter, sculptor who has the root of the matter in him has come to it. Goethe expresses it with lucidity when he says something to the effect that Life and Art are two different things, and that is why we call one Life and the other Art. It is a truth which the journalists writing our modern novels deny.

James came to write "The Real Thing" very much as he came to write "The Liar." He was talking one day to George du Maurier (at that time "Punch" was du Maurier). The artist told him about a couple whose reduced circumstances had compelled them to propose themselves as models for his weekly illustrations of upper-class English life. They were impeccable in back-

1. "A Note," *The Short Stories of Henry James*, pp. 216–217. Copyright, 1945, by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

ground and appearance. They wouldn't have to pose to "make believe." They were "the real thing." But hiring them would have meant the dismissal of his two professional models. These had not a drop of blue blood in their veins but they nevertheless "had had, for dear life, to *know how* (which was to have learned how) to do something." "The question," James goes on to recall, "struck me as exquisite, and out of a momentary fond consideration of it 'The Real Thing' sprang at a bound."

The story, then, expresses amusingly (and no more than that) the old truth that art is a *transformation* of reality, not a mere reflection of the thing itself. Mrs. Monarch is a true lady, but for that very reason she cannot be a fine model of a true lady. "She was the real thing, but always the same thing." The vulgar Miss Churm, on the other hand, can represent anything, including the gentility she lacks. The Monarchs are amateurs; Miss Churm and the little Italian are professionals.

James's sympathy for his shabby-elegant pair precludes his making the point too explicitly, but it soon becomes apparent to the attentive reader, I think, that the real trouble with the Monarchs is that they are dead. They have not enough life in them to furnish a base on which the transforming power of art may work. James says it amiably enough, but he says it: "It was in their faces, the blankness, the deep intellectual repose of the twenty years of country-house visiting which had given them pleasant intonations." Whereas Miss Churm and the Italian, though social outsiders, obviously have the principle of life active in them. They cannot be lady and gentleman for twenty years, but it is within the scope of their talent to be lady and gentleman, if need be, for half an hour. It is not alone their faculty of mimesis the artist draws on; it is their vitality, their flexibility, their humor, their understanding, crude as it may be, of the sinuous, protean, evasive nature of human character.

Thus "The Real Thing" can be seen, like all of James's stories, to be a moral, as well as esthetic, comment. Or, as he would maintain, the two are one and the same.

THE JEWELS [1]

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

M. LANTIN met the girl at a party given by the assistant to the head of his office and fell in love with her.

She was the daughter of a provincial tax-collector who had died several years previously. After his death she had come to Paris with her mother, who often visited in several bourgeois families in her quarter in the hope of getting her daughter married off. They were poor and honorable, quiet and gentle.

1. Translated by Marion E. Porter and Louis G. Locke.

The girl seemed to be the perfect type of respectable young woman to whom every wise young man dreams of entrusting his future. Her unassuming beauty had a charm of angelic modesty, and the imperceptible smile which never left her lips seemed to be a reflection of the purity of her heart.

Everyone sang her praises. all of those who knew her kept repeating: "Happy will be the man who wins her. He could never find a better wife."

M. Lantin, at that time, was chief clerk in the Ministry of the Interior, with an annual salary of three thousand five hundred francs. He asked for her hand and married her.

He was unbelievably happy with her. She managed his household with such clever economy that they seemed to live in luxury. There were no attentions, no blandishments, no caresses which she did not lavish on her husband; and the attraction of her person was so great that, even six years after their first meeting, he loved her still more than he did in the first days.

He found only two faults with her: her love for the theatre and her great fondness for imitation jewelry.

Her friends (she was acquainted with the wives of several petty functionaries) always procured for her loges for the fashionable plays and sometimes even for the premières; and she dragged along her husband to these amusements whether he wanted to go or not. They tired him frightfully after his day of work at the office. Then he began to beg her to go to the theatre with some lady of her acquaintance who might be willing to accompany her home afterwards. It took a long time for her to give in, since she did not think that was the proper thing to do. Finally, to please her husband, she gave in, and he was infinitely grateful.

Now, her love for the theatre soon made her feel the need of adorning herself. Her gowns remained quite simple, it is true, and, though unpretentious, in good taste; and her gentle, irresistible grace, humble and smiling, seemed to be enhanced by the simplicity of these dresses. She, however, acquired the habit of wearing two large rhinestone ear-rings which simulated diamonds, and she wore necklaces of false pearls, bracelets of imitation gold, and combs set with various cut glasses designed to play the rôle of precious stones.

Her husband, who was somewhat shocked by this love for costume jewelry, often said: "My dear, when one does not have the means of paying for real jewels, one does not go in public ornamented with anything except one's own beauty and grace. Those are the rarest jewels."

But she smiled gently and said: "What does it matter? I like them. They are my vice. Of course, you are right; but one cannot remake oneself. I would have adored jewels!"

And she rolled over her fingers the pearl necklaces, flashed the facets of cut crystals in the light, repeating: "Just look how well made this is. You might swear that it is the real thing."

He smiled as he said: "You have Bohemian tastes."

Sometimes, in the evening when they were alone before the fire, she would bring to the table where they were having tea, the leather box in which she kept her "baubles," as M. Lantin called them; and she would examine the imitation jewelry with passionate attention as if she were tasting some secret and profound joy; and she would insist on putting a necklace around her husband's neck, after which she would laugh heartily and cry: "How funny you are!" Then she would throw herself into his arms and kiss him recklessly.

After going to the Opera one winter night, she returned home shivering with cold. The next morning she was coughing. A week later she died of pneumonia.

Lantin almost followed her into the tomb. His despair was so terrible that his hair turned white within a month. He wept from morning to evening, his soul rent by an intolerable suffering, haunted by the memory, by the smile, the voice, the charm of the dead woman.

Time did not soften his grief. Often during the hours at his office, when his colleagues came to chat about the affairs of the day, one might see his cheeks suddenly swell, his nose wrinkle up, and his eyes fill with tears; he would make a frightful face and begin to sob.

He had kept his wife's room intact and every day he would shut himself up in it to think about her; all the furniture, even her clothes, remained in their places as they had been on her last day.

But life was becoming hard for him. His pay, which, when managed by his wife, had been adequate for all the needs of his household, was now becoming insufficient for him alone. And he wondered with helpless amazement how she had always managed to provide him with excellent wines and delicate foods which he could no longer obtain with his modest resources.

He made a few debts and chased money in the manner of people who are reduced to living by their wits. Finding himself without a sou one morning an entire week before the end of the month, he thought of selling something, and all at once the thought came to him that he might dispose of his wife's "baubles," for he had kept in the bottom of his heart a kind of grudge against these "eye-deceivers" which used to irritate him so much. The very sight of them each day somewhat spoiled his memory of his beloved.

He sought a long time in the pile of tawdry jewelry which she had left behind, for she had obstinately kept on buying these things up to the last days of her life, bringing home some new piece almost every evening. Finally he decided on the great necklace which she seemed to prefer and which he thought might be worth, at least six or eight francs, for it was really very carefully made for artificial jewelry.

He put it in his pocket and left for the office, following the boulevards on which he hoped to find a jeweler's shop which he might feel confident enough to enter.

He finally saw one and went in, a bit ashamed at displaying his poverty by trying to sell a thing of so little value.

"Sir," he said to the merchant, "I would like to know at what you value this piece."

The man took the object, examined it, turned it over, tried its weight, looked at it through his glass, called his clerk, said something to him in a low voice, placed the necklace back on the counter and looked at it from a distance in order to judge its effect better.

M. Lantin, disturbed by all this ceremony, was about to open his mouth to declare: "Oh! I know it is of no value," when the jeweler delivered his pronouncement:

"Sir, that is worth between twelve and fifteen thousand francs; but I could buy it only upon the condition that you inform me as to exactly where it comes from."

The widower opened his eyes wide in amazement and gaped in astonishment, not understanding. He finally stammered: "You say . . . ? You are sure?" The other failed to understand the cause of his astonishment, and said drily: "You can try elsewhere to see if anyone will give you more. As far as I am concerned, that is worth fifteen thousand, at the most. You can come back to see me if you can not find anything better."

M. Lantin, completely stupefied, took up his necklace and left, obeying a confused need to be alone and to think.

But as soon as he was in the street, he was seized by a need to laugh, and he thought: "That fool! Oh, the fool! What if I had taken him at his word? There's a jeweler who can't distinguish between the false and the real."

And he went to another merchant at the entrance of the rue de la Paix. As soon as he saw the jewel, the goldsmith cried:

"Ah! indeed; I am well acquainted with that necklace; it comes from my shop."

Lantin, very disturbed, asked:

"How much is it worth?"

"Sir, I sold it for twenty-five thousand. I am ready to buy it back for eighteen thousand as soon as you have indicated to me just how it happens to be in your possession. I need that information in order to obey the law."

This time M. Lantin sat down paralyzed with amazement. He answered: "Why . . . . why, examine it carefully, sir. I had thought until now that it was . . . artificial."

The jeweler replied: "Will you tell me your name, sir?"

"Certainly. My name is Lantin, I am an employee at the Ministry of the Interior, and I live at 16, rue des Martyrs."

The merchant opened his registers, looked in them, and said: "This necklace was in fact sent to the address of Mme. Lantin at 16, rue des Martyrs, on the 20th of July 1876."

And the two men looked into each other's eyes, the government employee dumb with amazement and the jeweler sensing a thief.

The latter replied, "Will you leave this piece with me for just twenty-four hours? I will give you a receipt for it."

Lantin stammered: "Why yes, certainly." And he departed, folding the receipt which he placed in his pocket.

Then he crossed the street, went up it, saw that he had gone the wrong way, went back down to the Tuileries, crossed the Seine, recognized that he had made another error, returned to the Champs Elysées. His head was completely void of clear ideas. He tried to reason, to understand. His wife had not been able to buy an object of such value. No, certainly not. Why then it was a gift! A gift! A gift from whom? Why?

He had stopped in the middle of the avenue and stood there. A horrible doubt came over him. She? Why then all the other jewels were also gifts! It seemed to him that the earth was shaking; that a tree in front of him was falling; he stretched out his arms and collapsed, unconscious.

He regained consciousness in a pharmacist's shop where some passers-by had carried him. He got somebody to take him home and he shut himself up.

He wept desperately until night, biting a handkerchief to keep from crying out. Then he went to bed overwhelmed with fatigue and sorrow, and he slept soundly and dreamlessly.

A ray of sunlight awakened him and he got up slowly to go to the office. It was hard to work after such shattering experiences. He thought then that he might apologize to his chief; and he wrote to him. Then he thought that he must return to the jeweler's; and shame made him blush. He thought it over for a long time. He could not leave the necklace at that man's shop; he dressed and went out.

It was a beautiful day, the blue sky covering the city seemed to smile. Idlers were strolling about with their hands in their pockets.

Lantin said to himself as he watched them pass: "How happy a person must be who has money. With money one can even shake off grief; one can go where one wants; one can travel, have a good time. Oh! if I were only rich!"

He realized that he was hungry since he had not eaten for forty-eight hours. But his pockets were empty. "Eighteen thousand francs! *That* was a sum!"

He reached the rue de la Paix and began to pace back and forth on the sidewalk across from the shop. Eighteen thousand francs! Twenty times he tried to enter, but shame stopped him.

He was hungry, however, very hungry and did not have a *sou*. All of a sudden he made up his mind, crossed the street at a run, so as not to give himself time to think, and dashed into the jeweler's shop.

As soon as the merchant saw him he rushed forward, offered him a chair with a kind of smiling politeness. The clerks came forward, giving Lantin sidewise glances, with gaiety in their eyes and on their lips.

The jeweler declared: "I have made the necessary inquiries, sir, and if you

are still willing, I am prepared to pay you the sum which I proposed to you."

The government employee stammered: "Why certainly."

The jeweler took eighteen large banknotes from a drawer, counted them, handed them to Lantin who signed a receipt and tremblingly placed the money in his pocket.

Then, as he was about to leave, he turned toward the merchant, who was still smiling and, lowering his eyes, said: "I . . . . I have other jewels . . . . which came to me . . . . from the same source. Would you care to buy them also?"

The merchant bowed: "Why certainly, sir."

One of the clerks left the room in order to laugh more freely; another blew his nose loudly.

Lantin, impassive, blushing and serious, said: "I shall bring them to you."

And he took a cab in order to go and get the jewels.

When he came back to the merchant's an hour later, he had not yet had lunch. They began to examine the jewelry piece by piece, evaluating each one. Almost all of them came from that shop.

Lantin was now disposed to argue about the evaluation, he would become angry, he demanded that he be shown the ledgers, and spoke louder as the sum increased.

The large diamond earrings were worth twenty thousand francs, the bracelets thirty-five thousand, the brooches, rings and lockets sixteen thousand, an emerald and sapphire necklace fourteen thousand; a diamond solitaire on a gold chain forty thousand—the lot reached the figure of a hundred and ninety-six thousand francs.

The jeweler declared with bantering good humor: "All that comes from a person whose savings were put in jewels."

Lantin said seriously: "That is as good a way as any of investing money." And he left after deciding with the purchaser that another evaluation would be made the next day.

When he was in the street, he looked at the Colonne Vendôme with the desire to climb it in high good spirits. He felt that he was light enough to play leap frog with the statue of Napoleon which is on top of it.

He went to Voisin's for lunch and drank wine which cost twenty francs per bottle.

Then he took a cab and had a ride through the Bois de Boulogne. He looked at the other carriages somewhat scornfully, assailed with the desire to cry out to all whom he passed: "I, too, am rich. I have two hundred thousand francs!"

He remembered the office. He had the driver take him there, entered his chief's office deliberately, and announced:

"I come, sir, to hand you my resignation. I have inherited three hundred thousand francs." He shook hands with his former colleagues and told them confidentially of his plans for his new life; then he dined at the café Anglais.

Finding himself beside a gentleman who seemed distinguished, he could not resist the desire to confide in him, with a certain coquettishness, that he had just inherited four hundred thousand francs.

For the first time in his life he was not bored at the theater and he spent the night with some girls.

Six months later he remarried. His second wife was very respectable, but of a difficult disposition. She made him suffer a lot.



GOOSEBERRIES [1]

ANTON CHEKHOV

THE SKY had been overcast since early morning; it was a still day, not hot, but tedious, as it usually is when the weather is gray and dull, when clouds have been hanging over the fields for a long time, and you wait for the rain that does not come. Ivan Ivanych, a veterinary, and Burkin, a high school teacher, were already tired with walking, and the plain seemed endless to them. Far ahead were the scarcely visible windmills of the village of Mironositzkoe; to the right lay a range of hills that disappeared in the distance beyond the village, and both of them knew that over there were the river, and fields, green willows, homesteads, and if you stood on one of the hills, you could see from there another vast plain, telegraph poles, and a train that from afar looked like a caterpillar crawling, and in clear weather you could even see the town. Now, when it was still and when nature seemed mild and pensive, Ivan Ivanych and Burkin were filled with love for this plain, and both of them thought what a beautiful land it was.

"Last time when we were in Elder Prokofy's barn," said Burkin, "you were going to tell me a story."

"Yes; I wanted to tell you about my brother."

Ivan Ivanych heaved a slow sigh and lit his pipe before beginning his story, but just then it began to rain. And five minutes later there was a downpour, and it was hard to tell when it would be over. The two men halted, at a loss; the dogs, already wet, stood with their tails between their legs and looked at them feelingly.

"We must find shelter somewhere," said Burkin. "Let's go to Alyohin's; it's quite near."

"Let's."

They turned aside and walked across a mown meadow, now going straight ahead, now bearing to the right, until they reached the road. Soon poplars came into view, a garden, then the red roofs of barns; the river gleamed, and

1. From *The Portable Chekhov*, translated, selected, and edited by Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Copyright, 1947, by The Viking Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

the view opened on a broad expanse of water with a mill and a white bathing-cabin. That was Sofyino, Alyohin's place.

The mill was going, drowning out the sound of the rain; the dam was shaking. Wet horses stood near the carts, their heads drooping, and men were walking about, their heads covered with sacks. It was damp, muddy, dreary; and the water looked cold and unkind. Ivan Ivanych and Burkin felt cold and messy and uncomfortable through and through; their feet were heavy with mud and when, having crossed the dam, they climbed up to the barns, they were silent as though they were cross with each other.

The noise of a winnowing-machine came from one of the barns, the door was open, and clouds of dust were pouring from within. On the threshold stood Alyohin himself, a man of forty, tall and rotund, with long hair, looking more like a professor or an artist than a gentleman farmer. He was wearing a white blouse, badly in need of washing, that was belted with a rope, and drawers, and his high boots were plastered with mud and straw. His eyes and nose were black with dust. He recognized Ivan Ivanych and Burkin and was apparently very glad to see them.

"Please go up to the house, gentlemen," he said, smiling; "I'll be there directly, in a moment."

It was a large structure of two stories. Alyohin lived downstairs in what was formerly the stewards' quarters: two rooms that had arched ceilings and small windows; the furniture was plain, and the place smelled of rye bread, cheap vodka, and harness. He went into the showy rooms upstairs only rarely, when he had guests. Once in the house, the two visitors were met by a chambermaid, a young woman so beautiful that both of them stood still at the same moment and glanced at each other.

"You can't imagine how glad I am to see you, gentlemen," said Alyohin, joining them in the hall. "What a surprise! Pelageya," he said, turning to the chambermaid, "give the guests a change of clothes. And, come to think of it, I will change, too. But I must go and bathe first, I don't think I've had a wash since spring. Don't you want to go into the bathing-cabin? In the meanwhile things will be got ready here."

The beautiful Pelageya, with her soft, delicate air, brought them bath towels and soap, and Alyohin went to the bathing-cabin with his guests.

"Yes, it's a long time since I've bathed," he said, as he undressed. "I've an excellent bathing-cabin, as you see—it was put up by my father—but somehow I never find time to use it." He sat down on the steps and lathered his long hair and neck, and the water around him turned brown.

"I say—" observed Ivan Ivanych significantly, looking at his head.

"I haven't had a good wash for a long time," repeated Alyohin, embarrassed, and soaped himself once more; the water about him turned dark-blue, the color of ink.

Ivan Ivanych came out of the cabin, plunged into the water with a splash and swam in the rain, thrusting his arms out wide; he raised waves on which

white lilies swayed. He swam out to the middle of the river and dived and a minute later came up in another spot and swam on and kept diving, trying to touch bottom. "By God!" he kept repeating delightedly, "by God!" He swam to the mill, spoke to the peasants there, and turned back and in the middle of the river lay floating, exposing his face to the rain. Burkin and Alyohin were already dressed and ready to leave, but he kept on swimming and diving. "By God!" he kept exclaiming. "Lord, have mercy on me."

"You've had enough!" Burkin shouted to him.

They returned to the house. And only when the lamp was lit in the big drawing room upstairs, and the two guests, in silk dressing-gowns and warm slippers, were lounging in armchairs, and Alyohin himself, washed and combed, wearing a new jacket, was walking about the room, evidently savoring the warmth, the cleanliness, the dry clothes and light footwear, and when pretty Pelageya, stepping noiselessly across the carpet and smiling softly, brought in a tray with tea and jam, only then did Ivan Ivanych begin his story, and it was as though not only Burkin and Alyohin were listening, but also the ladies, old and young, and the military men who looked down upon them, calmly and severely, from their gold frames.

"We are two brothers," he began, "I, Ivan Ivanych, and my brother, Nikolay Ivanych, who is two years my junior. I went in for a learned profession and became a veterinary; Nikolay at nineteen began to clerk in a provincial branch of the Treasury. Our father was a *kantonist,*[1] but he rose to be an officer and so a nobleman, a rank that he bequeathed to us together with a small estate. After his death there was a lawsuit and we lost the estate to creditors, but be that as it may, we spent our childhood in the country. Just like peasant children we passed days and nights in the fields and the woods, herded horses, stripped bast from the trees, fished, and so on. And, you know, whoever even once in his life has caught a perch or seen thrushes migrate in the autumn, when on clear, cool days they sweep in flocks over the village, will never really be a townsman and to the day of his death will have a longing for the open. My brother was unhappy in the government office. Years passed, but he went on warming the same seat, scratching away at the same papers, and thinking of one and the same thing: how to get away to the country. And little by little this vague longing turned into a definite desire, into a dream of buying a little property somewhere on the banks of a river or a lake.

"He was a kind and gentle soul and I loved him, but I never sympathized with his desire to shut himself up for the rest of his life on a little property of his own. It is a common saying that a man needs only six feet of earth. But six feet is what a corpse needs, not a man. It is also asserted that if our educated class is drawn to the land and seeks to settle on farms, that's a good thing. But these farms amount to the same six feet of earth. To retire from the city, from the struggle, from the hubbub, to go off and hide on one's own farm—that's

1. The son of a private, registered at birth in the army and trained in a military school.

not life, it is selfishness, sloth, it is a kind of monasticism, but monasticism without works. Man needs not six feet of earth, not a farm, but the whole globe, all of Nature, where unhindered he can display all the capacities and peculiarities of his free spirit.

"My brother Nikolay, sitting in his office, dreamed of eating his own *shchi,* which would fill the whole farmyard with a delicious aroma, of picnicking on the green grass, of sleeping in the sun, of sitting for hours on the seat by the gate gazing at field and forest. Books on agriculture and the farming items in almanacs were his joy, the delight of his soul. He liked newspapers too, but the only things he read in them were advertisements of land for sale, so many acres of tillable land and pasture, with house, garden, river, mill, and millpond. And he pictured to himself garden paths, flowers, fruit, bird-houses with starlings in them, crucians in the pond, and all that sort of thing, you know. These imaginary pictures varied with the advertisements he came upon, but somehow gooseberry bushes figured in every one of them. He could not picture to himself a single country-house, a single rustic nook, without gooseberries.

"'Country life has its advantages,' he used to say. 'You sit on the veranda having tea, and your ducks swim in the pond, and everything smells delicious and—the gooseberries are ripening.'

"He would draw a plan of his estate and invariably it would contain the following features: a) the master's house; b) servants' quarters; c) kitchen-garden; d) a gooseberry patch. He lived meagerly: he deprived himself of food and drink; he dressed God knows how, like a beggar, but he kept on saving and salting money away in the bank. He was terribly stingy. It was painful for me to see it, and I used to give him small sums and send him something on holidays, but he would put that away too. Once a man is possessed by an idea, there is no doing anything with him.

"Years passed. He was transferred to another province, he was already past forty, yet he was still reading newspaper advertisements and saving up money. Then I heard that he was married. Still for the sake of buying a property with a gooseberry patch he married an elderly, homely widow, without a trace of affection for her, but simply because she had money. After marrying her, he went on living parsimoniously, keeping her half-starved, and he put her money in the bank in his own name. She had previously been the wife of a postmaster, who had got her used to pies and cordials. This second husband did not even give her enough black bread. She began to sicken, and some three years later gave up the ghost. And, of course, it never for a moment occurred to my brother that he was to blame for her death. Money, like vodka, can do queer things to a man. Once in our town a merchant lay on his deathbed; before he died, he ordered a plateful of honey and he ate up all his money and lottery tickets with the honey, so that no one should get it. One day when I was inspecting a drove of cattle at a railway station, a cattle dealer fell under a locomotive and it sliced off his leg. We carried him in to the

infirmary, the blood was gushing from the wound—a terrible business, but he kept begging us to find his leg and was very anxious about it: he had twenty rubles in the boot that was on that leg, and he was afraid they would be lost."

"That's a tune from another opera," said Burkin.

Ivan Ivanych paused a moment and then continued:

"After his wife's death, my brother began to look around for a property. Of course, you may scout about for five years and in the end make a mistake, and buy something quite different from what you have been dreaming of. Through an agent my brother bought a mortgaged estate of three hundred acres with a house, servants' quarters, a park, but with no orchard, no gooseberry patch, no duck-pond. There was a stream, but the water in it was the color of coffee, for on one of its banks there was a brickyard and on the other a glue factory. But my brother was not at all disconcerted: he ordered a score of gooseberry bushes, planted them, and settled down to the life of a country gentleman.

"Last year I paid him a visit. I thought I would go and see how things were with him. In his letter to me my brother called his estate 'Chumbaroklov Waste, or Himalaiskoe' (our surname was Chimsha-Himalaisky). I reached the place in the afternoon. It was hot. Everywhere there were ditches, fences, hedges, rows of fir trees, and I was at a loss as to how to get to the yard and where to leave my horse. I made my way to the house and was met by a fat dog with reddish hair that looked like a pig. It wanted to bark, but was too lazy. The cook, a fat, barelegged woman, who also looked like a pig, came out of the kitchen and said that the master was resting after dinner. I went in to see my brother, and found him sitting up in bed, with a quilt over his knees. He had grown older, stouter, flabby; his cheeks, his nose, his lips jutted out: it looked as though he might grunt into the quilt at any moment.

"We embraced and dropped tears of joy and also of sadness at the thought that the two of us had once been young, but were now gray and nearing death. He got dressed and took me out to show me his estate.

"'Well, how are you getting on here?' I asked.

"'Oh, all right, thank God. I am doing very well.'

"He was no longer the poor, timid clerk he used to be but a real landowner, a gentleman. He had already grown used to his new manner of living and developed a taste for it. He ate a great deal, steamed himself in the bathhouse, was growing stout, was already having a lawsuit with the village commune and the two factories and was very much offended when the peasants failed to address him as 'Your Honor.' And he concerned himself with his soul's welfare too in a substantial, upper-class manner, and performed good deeds not simply, but pompously. And what good works! He dosed the peasants with bicarbonate and castor oil for all their ailments and on his name day he had a thanksgiving service celebrated in the center of the village, and then treated the villagers to a gallon of vodka, which he thought was the thing to do. Oh, those horrible gallons of vodka! One day a fat landowner

hauls the peasants up before the rural police officer for trespassing, and the next, to mark a feast day, treats them to a gallon of vodka, and they drink and shout 'Hurrah' and when they are drunk bow down at his feet. A higher standard of living, overeating and idleness develop the most insolent self-conceit in a Russian. Nikolay Ivanych, who when he was a petty official was afraid to have opinions of his own even if he kept them to himself, now uttered nothing but incontrovertible truths and did so in the tone of a minister of state: 'Education is necessary, but the masses are not ready for it; corporal punishment is generally harmful, but in some cases it is useful and nothing else will serve.'

"'I know the common people, and I know how to deal with them,' he would say. 'They love me. I only have to raise my little finger, and they will do anything I want.'

"And all this, mark you, would be said with a smile that bespoke kindness and intelligence. Twenty times over he repeated: 'We, of the gentry,' 'I, as a member of the gentry.' Apparently he no longer remembered that our grandfather had been a peasant and our father just a private. Even our surname, 'Chimsha-Himalaisky,' which in reality is grotesque, seemed to him sonorous, distinguished, and delightful.

"But I am concerned now not with him, but with me. I want to tell you about the change that took place in me during the few hours that I spent on his estate. In the evening when we were having tea, the cook served a plateful of gooseberries. They were not bought, they were his own gooseberries, the first ones picked since the bushes were planted. My brother gave a laugh and for a minute looked at the gooseberries in silence, with tears in his eyes—he could not speak for excitement. Then he put the one berry in his mouth, glanced at me with the triumph of a child who has at last been given a toy he was longing for and said: 'How tasty!' And he ate the gooseberries greedily, and kept repeating: 'Ah, how delicious! Do taste them!'

"They were hard and sour, but as Pushkin has it,

> The falsehood that exalts we cherish more
> Than meaner truths that are a thousand strong.

I saw a happy man, one whose cherished dream had so obviously come true, who had attained his goal in life, who had got what he wanted, who was satisfied with his lot and with himself. For some reason an element of sadness had always mingled with my thoughts of human happiness, and now at the sight of a happy man I was assailed by an oppressive feeling bordering on despair. It weighed on me particularly at night. A bed was made up for me in a room next to my brother's bedroom, and I could hear that he was wakeful, and that he would get up again and again, go to the plate of gooseberries and eat one after another. I said to myself: how many contented, happy people there really are! What an overwhelming force they are! Look at life: the insolence and idleness

of the strong, the ignorance and brutishness of the weak, horrible poverty everywhere, overcrowding, degeneration, drunkenness, hypocrisy, lying— Yet in all the houses and on all the streets there is peace and quiet; of the fifty thousand people who live in our town there is not one who would cry out, who would vent his indignation aloud. We see the people who go to market, eat by day, sleep by night, who babble nonsense, marry, grow old, good-naturedly drag their dead to the cemetery, but we do not see or hear those who suffer, and what is terrible in life goes on somewhere behind the scenes. Everything is peaceful and quiet and only mute statistics protest: so many people gone out of their minds, so many gallons of vodka drunk, so many children dead from malnutrition—And such a state of things is evidently necessary; obviously the happy man is at ease only because the unhappy ones bear their burdens in silence, and if there were not this silence, happiness would be impossible. It is a general hypnosis. Behind the door of every contented, happy man there ought to be someone standing with a little hammer and continually reminding him with a knock that there are unhappy people, that however happy he may be, life will sooner or later show him its claws, and trouble will come to him—illness, poverty, losses, and then no one will see or hear him, just as now he neither sees nor hears others. But there is no man with a hammer. The happy man lives at his ease, faintly fluttered by small daily cares, like an aspen in the wind—and all is well."

"That night I came to understand that I too had been contented and happy," Ivan Ivanych continued, getting up. "I too over the dinner table or out hunting would hold forth on how to live, what to believe, the right way to govern the people. I too would say that learning was the enemy of darkness, that education was necessary but that for the common people the three R's were sufficient for the time being. Freedom is a boon, I used to say, it is as essential as air, but we must wait awhile. Yes, that's what I used to say, and now I ask: Why must we wait?" said Ivan Ivanych, looking wrathfully at Burkin. "Why must we wait, I ask you? For what reason? I am told that nothing can be done all at once, that every idea is realized gradually, in its own time. But who is it that says so? Where is the proof that it is just? You cite the natural order of things, the law governing all phenomena, but is there law, is there order in the fact that I, a living, thinking man, stand beside a ditch and wait for it to close up of itself or fill up with silt, when I could jump over it or throw a bridge across it? And again, why must we wait? Wait, until we have no strength to live, and yet we have to live and are eager to live!

"I left my brother's place early in the morning, and ever since then it has become intolerable for me to stay in town. I am oppressed by the peace and the quiet, I am afraid to look at the windows, for there is nothing that pains me more than the spectacle of a happy family sitting at table having tea. I am an old man now and unfit for combat, I am not even capable of hating. I can only grieve inwardly, get irritated, worked up, and at night my head is ablaze with the rush of ideas and I cannot sleep. Oh, if I were young!"

Ivan Ivanych paced up and down the room excitedly and repeated, "If I were young!"

He suddenly walked up to Alyohin and began to press now one of his hands, now the other.

"Pavel Konstantinych," he said imploringly, "don't quiet down, don't let yourself be lulled to sleep! as long as you are young, strong, alert, do not cease to do good! There is no happiness and there should be none, and if life has a meaning and a purpose, that meaning and purpose is not our happiness but something greater and more rational. Do good!"

All this Ivan Ivanych said with a pitiful, imploring smile, as though he were asking a personal favor.

Afterwards all three of them sat in armchairs in different corners of the drawing room and were silent. Ivan Ivanych's story satisfied neither Burkin nor Alyohin. With the ladies and generals looking down from the golden frames, seeming alive in the dim light, it was tedious to listen to the story of the poor devil of a clerk who ate gooseberries. One felt like talking about elegant people, about women. And the fact that they were sitting in a drawing room where everything—the chandelier under its cover, the armchairs, the carpets underfoot—testified that the very people who were now looking down from the frames had once moved about here, sat and had tea, and the fact that lovely Pelageya was noiselessly moving about—that was better than any story.

Alyohin was very sleepy; he had gotten up early, before three o'clock in the morning, to get some work done, and now he could hardly keep his eyes open, but he was afraid his visitors might tell an interesting story in his absence, and he would not leave. He did not trouble to ask himself if what Ivan Ivanych had just said was intelligent or right. The guests were not talking about groats, or hay, or tar, but about something that had no direct bearing on his life, and he was glad of it and wanted them to go on.

"However, it's bedtime," said Burkin, rising. "Allow me to wish you good night."

Alyohin took leave of his guests and went downstairs to his own quarters, while they remained upstairs. They were installed for the night in a big room in which stood two old wooden beds decorated with carvings and in the corner was an ivory crucifix. The wide cool beds which had been made by the lovely Pelageya gave off a pleasant smell of clean linen.

Ivan Ivanych undressed silently and got into bed.

"Lord forgive us sinners!" he murmured, and drew the bedclothes over his head.

His pipe, which lay on the table, smelled strongly of burnt tobacco, and Burkin, who could not sleep for a long time, kept wondering where the unpleasant odor came from.

The rain beat against the window panes all night.

❦

THE BRIDE COMES TO YELLOW SKY [1]

STEPHEN CRANE

I

THE GREAT Pullman was whirling onward with such dignity of motion that a glance from the window seemed simply to prove that the plains of Texas were pouring eastward. Vast flats of green grass, dull-hued spaces of mesquite and cactus, little groups of frame houses, woods of light and tender trees, all were sweeping into the east, sweeping over the horizon, a precipice.

A newly married pair had boarded this coach at San Antonio. The man's face was reddened from many days in the wind and sun, and a direct result of his new black clothes was that his brick-colored hands were constantly performing in a most conscious fashion. From time to time he looked down respectfully at his attire. He sat with a hand on each knee, like a man waiting in a barber's shop. The glances he devoted to other passengers were furtive and shy.

The bride was not pretty, nor was she very young. She wore a dress of blue cashmere, with small reservations of velvet here and there, and with steel buttons abounding. She continually twisted her head to regard her puff sleeves, very stiff, straight, and high. They embarrassed her. It was quite apparent that she had cooked, and that she expected to cook, dutifully. The blushes caused by the careless scrutiny of some passengers as she had entered the car were strange to see upon this plain, under-class countenance, which was drawn in placid, almost emotionless lines.

They were evidently very happy. "Ever been in a parlor-car before?" he asked, smiling with delight.

"No," she answered; "I never was. It's fine, ain't it?"

"Great! And then after a while we'll go forward to the diner, and get a big lay-out. Finest meal in the world. Charge a dollar."

"Oh, do they?" cried the bride. "Charge a dollar? Why, that's too much—for us—ain't it, Jack?"

"Not this trip, anyhow," he answered bravely. "We're going to go the whole thing."

Later he explained to her about the trains. "You see, it's a thousand miles from one end of Texas to the other; and this train runs right across it, and never stops but four times." He had the pride of an owner. He pointed out to her the dazzling fittings of the coach; and in truth her eyes opened wider as she contemplated the sea-green figured velvet, the shining brass, silver, and glass, the wood that gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a pool of oil.

1. Reprinted from *Twenty Stories* by Stephen Crane by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1925, by William H. Crane.

At one end a bronze figure sturdily held a support for a separated chamber, and at convenient places on the ceiling were frescos in olive and silver.

To the minds of the pair, their surroundings reflected the glory of their marriage that morning in San Antonio; this was the environment of their new estate; and the man's face in particular beamed with an elation that made him appear ridiculous to the negro porter. This individual at times surveyed them from afar with an amused and superior grin. On other occasions he bullied them with skill in ways that did not make it exactly plain to them that they were being bullied. He subtly used all the manners of the most unconquerable kind of snobbery. He oppressed them; but of this oppression they had small knowledge, and they speedily forgot that infrequently a number of travellers covered them with stares of derisive enjoyment. Historically there was supposed to be something infinitely humorous in their situation.

"We are due in Yellow Sky at 3:42," he said, looking tenderly into her eyes.

"Oh, are we?" she said, as if she had not been aware of it. To evince surprise at her husband's statement was part of her wifely amiability. She took from a pocket a little silver watch; and as she held it before her, and stared at it with a frown of attention, the new husband's face shone.

"I bought it in San Anton' from a friend of mine," he told her gleefully.

"It's seventeen minutes past twelve," she said, looking up at him with a kind of shy and clumsy coquetry. A passenger, noting this play, grew excessively sardonic, and winked at himself in one of the numerous mirrors.

At last they went to the dining-car. Two rows of negro waiters, in glowing white suits, surveyed their entrance with the interest, and also the equanimity, of men who had been forewarned. The pair fell to the lot of a waiter who happened to feel pleasure in steering them through their meal. He viewed them with the manner of a fatherly pilot, his countenance radiant with benevolence. The patronage, entwined with the ordinary deference, was not plain to them. And yet, as they returned to their coach, they showed in their faces a sense of escape.

To the left, miles down a long purple slope, was a little ribbon of mist where moved the keening Rio Grande. The train was approaching it at an angle, and the apex was Yellow Sky. Presently it was apparent that, as the distance from Yellow Sky grew shorter, the husband became commensurately restless. His brick-red hands were more insistent in their prominence. Occasionally he was even rather absent-minded and far-away when the bride leaned forward and addressed him.

As a matter of truth, Jack Potter was beginning to find the shadow of a deed weigh upon him like a leaden slab. He, the town marshal of Yellow Sky, a man known, liked, and feared in his corner, a prominent person, had gone to San Antonio to meet a girl he believed he loved, and there, after the usual prayers, had actually induced her to marry him, without consulting

Yellow Sky for any part of the transaction. He was now bringing his bride before an innocent and unsuspecting community.

Of course people in Yellow Sky married as it pleased them, in accordance with a general custom; but such was Potter's thought of his duty to his friends, or of their idea of his duty, or of an unspoken form which does not control men in these matters, that he felt he was heinous. He had committed an extraordinary crime. Face to face with this girl in San Antonio, and spurred by his sharp impulse, he had gone headlong over all the social hedges. At San Antonio he was like a man hidden in the dark. A knife to sever any friendly duty, any form, was easy to his hand in that remote city. But the hour of Yellow Sky—the hour of daylight—was approaching.

He knew full well that his marriage was an important thing to his town. It could only be exceeded by the burning of the new hotel. His friends could not forgive him. Frequently he had reflected on the advisability of telling them by telegraph, but a new cowardice had been upon him. He feared to do it. And now the train was hurrying him toward a scene of amazement, glee, and reproach. He glanced out of the window at the line of haze swinging slowly in toward the train.

Yellow Sky had a kind brass band, which played painfully, to the delight of the populace. He laughed without heart as he thought of it. If the citizens could dream of his prospective arrival with his bride, they would parade the band at the station and escort them, amid cheers and laughing congratulations, to his adobe home.

He resolved that he would use all the devices of speed and plains-craft in making the journey from the station to his house. Once within that safe citadel, he could issue some sort of vocal bulletin, and then not go among the citizens until they had time to wear off a little of their enthusiasm.

The bride looked anxiously at him. "What's worrying you, Jack?"

He laughed again. "I'm not worrying, girl; I'm only thinking of Yellow Sky."

She flushed in comprehension.

A sense of mutual guilt invaded their minds and developed a finer tenderness. They looked at each other with eyes softly aglow. But Potter often laughed the same nervous laugh; the flush upon the bride's face seemed quite permanent.

The traitor to the feelings of Yellow Sky narrowly watched the speeding landscape. "We're nearly there," he said.

Presently the porter came and announced the proximity of Potter's home. He held a brush in his hand, and, with all his airy superiority gone, he brushed Potter's new clothes as the latter slowly turned this way and that way. Potter fumbled out a coin and gave it to the porter, as he had seen others do. It was a heavy and muscle-bound business, as that of a man shoeing his first horse.

The porter took their bag, and as the train began to slow they moved forward

to the hooded platform of the car. Presently the two engines and their long string of coaches rushed into the station of Yellow Sky.

"They have to take water here," said Potter, from a constricted throat and in mournful cadence, as one announcing death. Before the train stopped his eye had swept the length of the platform, and he was glad and astonished to see there was none upon it but the station-agent, who, with a slightly hurried and anxious air, was walking toward the water-tanks. When the train had halted, the porter alighted first, and placed in position a little temporary step.

"Come on, girl," said Potter, hoarsely. As he helped her down they each laughed on a false note. He took the bag from the Negro, and bade his wife cling to his arm. As they slunk rapidly away, his hang-dog glance perceived that they were unloading the two trunks, and also that the station-agent, far ahead near the baggage-car, had turned and was running toward him, making gestures. He laughed, and groaned as he laughed, when he noted the first effect of his marital bliss upon Yellow Sky. He gripped his wife's arm firmly to his side, and they fled. Behind them the porter stood, chuckling fatuously.

II

The California express on the Southern Railway was due at Yellow Sky in twenty-one minutes. There were six men at the bar of the Weary Gentleman saloon. One was a drummer who talked a great deal and rapidly, three were Texans who did not care to talk at that time; and two were Mexican sheep-herders, who did not talk as a general practice in the Weary Gentleman saloon. The barkeeper's dog lay on the board walk that crossed in front of the door. His head was on his paws, and he glanced drowsily here and there with the constant vigilance of a dog that is kicked on occasion. Across the sandy street were some vivid green grass-plots, so wonderful in appearance, amid the sands that burned near them in a blazing sun, that they caused a doubt in the mind. They exactly resembled the grass mats used to represent lawns on the stage. At the cooler end of the railway station, a man without a coat sat in a tilted chair and smoked his pipe. The fresh-cut bank of the Rio Grande circled near the town, and there could be seen beyond it a great plum-colored plain of mesquite.

Save for the busy drummer and his companions in the saloon, Yellow Sky was dozing. The new-comer leaned gracefully upon the bar, and recited many tales with the confidence of a bard who has come upon a new field.

"—and at the moment that the old man fell downstairs with the bureau in his arms, the old woman was coming up with two scuttles of coal, and of course—"

The drummer's tale was interrupted by a young man who suddenly appeared in the open door. He cried: "Scratchy Wilson's drunk, and has turned loose with both hands." The two Mexicans at once set down their glasses and faded out of the rear entrance of the saloon.

The drummer, innocent and jocular, answered: "All right, old man. S'pose he has? Come in and have a drink, anyhow."

But the information had made such an obvious cleft in every skull in the room that the drummer was obliged to see its importance. All had become instantly solemn. "Say," said he, mystified, "what is this?" His three companions made the introductory gesture of eloquent speech; but the young man at the door forestalled them.

"It means, my friend," he answered, as he came into the saloon, "that for the next two hours this town won't be a health resort."

The barkeeper went to the door, and locked and barred it; reaching out of the window, he pulled in heavy wooden shutters, and barred them. Immediately a solemn, chapel-like gloom was upon the place. The drummer was looking from one to another.

"But say," he cried, "what is this, anyhow? You don't mean there is going to be a gun-fight?"

"Don't know whether there'll be a fight or not," answered one man, grimly; "but there'll be some shootin'—some good shootin'."

The young man who had warned them waved his hand. "Oh, there'll be a fight fast enough, if any one wants it. Anybody can get a fight out there in the street. There's a fight just waiting."

The drummer seemed to be swayed between the interest of a foreigner and a perception of personal danger.

"What did you say his name was?" he asked.

"Scratchy Wilson," they answered in chorus.

"And will he kill anybody? What are you going to do? Does this happen often? Does he rampage around like this once a week or so? Can he break in that door?"

"No; he can't break down that door," replied the barkeeper. "He's tried it three times. But when he comes you'd better lay down on the floor, stranger. He's dead sure to shoot at it, and a bullet may come through."

Thereafter the drummer kept a strict eye upon the door. The time had not yet been called for him to hug the floor, but, as a minor precaution, he sidled near to the wall. "Will he kill anybody?" he said again.

The men laughed low and scornfully at the question.

"He's out to shoot, and he's out for trouble. Don't see any good in experimentin' with him."

"But what do you do in a case like this? What do you do?"

A man responded: "Why, he and Jack Potter—"

"But," in chorus the other men interrupted, "Jack Potter's in San Anton'."

"Well, who is he? What's he got to do with it?"

"Oh, he's the town marshal. He goes out and fights Scratchy when he gets on one of these tears."

"Wow!" said the drummer, mopping his brow. "Nice job he's got."

The voices had toned away to mere whisperings. The drummer wished to

ask further questions, which were born of an increasing anxiety and bewilderment; but when he attempted them, the men merely looked at him in irritation and motioned him to remain silent. A tense waiting hush was upon them. In the deep shadows of the room their eyes shone as they listened for sounds from the street. One man made three gestures at the barkeeper; and the latter, moving like a ghost, handed him a glass and a bottle. The man poured a full glass of whisky, and set down the bottle noiselessly. He gulped the whisky in a swallow, and turned again toward the door in immovable silence. The drummer saw that the barkeeper, without a sound, had taken a Winchester from beneath the bar. Later he saw this individual beckoning to him, so he tiptoed across the room.

"You better come with me back of the bar."

"No, thanks," said the drummer, perspiring; "I'd rather be where I can make a break for the back door."

Whereupon the man of bottles made a kindly but peremptory gesture. The drummer obeyed it, and, finding himself seated on a box with his head below the level of the bar, balm was laid upon his soul at sight of various zinc and copper fittings that bore a resemblance to armor-plate. The barkeeper took a seat comfortably upon an adjacent box.

"You see," he whispered, "this here Scratchy Wilson is a wonder with a gun —a perfect wonder; and when he goes on the wartrail, we hunt our holes—naturally. He's about the last one of the old gang that used to hang out along the river here. He's a terror when he's drunk. When he's sober he's all right—kind of simple—wouldn't hurt a fly—nicest fellow in town. But when he's drunk—whoo!"

There were periods of stillness. "I wish Jack Potter was back from San Anton'," said the barkeeper. "He shot Wilson up once—in the leg—and he would sail in and pull out the kinks in this thing."

Presently they heard from a distance the sound of a shot, followed by three wild yowls. It instantly removed a bond from the men in the darkened saloon. There was a shuffling of feet. They looked at each other. "Here he comes," they said.

III

A man in a maroon-colored flannel shirt, which had been purchased for purposes of decoration, and made principally by some Jewish women on the East Side of New York, rounded a corner and walked into the middle of the main street of Yellow Sky. In either hand the man held a long, heavy, blue-black revolver. Often he yelled, and these cries rang through a semblance of a deserted village, shrilly flying over the roofs in a volume that seemed to have no relation to the ordinary vocal strength of a man. It was as if the surrounding stillness formed the arch of a tomb over him. These cries of ferocious challenge rang against walls of silence. And his boots had red tops with gilded imprints,

of the kind beloved in winter by little sledding boys on the hillsides of New England.

The man's face flamed in a rage begot of whiskey. His eyes, rolling, and yet keen for ambush, hunted the still doorways and windows. He walked with the creeping movement of the midnight cat. As it occurred to him, he roared menacing information. The long revolvers in his hands were as easy as straws; they were moved with an electric swiftness. The little fingers of each hand played sometimes in a musician's way. Plain from the low collar of the shirt, the cords of his neck straightened and sank, straightened and sank, as passion moved him. The only sounds were his terrible invitations. The calm adobes preserved their demeanor at the passing of this small thing in the middle of the street.

There was no offer of fight—no offer of fight. The man called to the sky. There were no attractions. He bellowed and fumed and swayed his revolvers here and everywhere.

The dog of the barkeeper of the Weary Gentleman saloon had not appreciated the advance of events. He yet lay dozing in front of his master's door. At sight of the dog, the man paused and raised his revolver humorously. At sight of the man, the dog sprang up and walked diagonally away, with a sullen head, and growling. The man yelled, and the dog broke into a gallop. As it was about to enter an alley, there was a loud noise, a whistling, and something spat the ground directly before it. The dog screamed, and, wheeling in terror, galloped headlong in a new direction. Again there was a noise, a whistling, and sand was kicked viciously before it. Fear-stricken, the dog turned and flurried like an animal in a pen. The man stood laughing, his weapons at his hips.

Ultimately the man was attracted by the closed door of the Weary Gentleman saloon. He went to it and, hammering with a revolver, demanded drink.

The door remaining imperturbable, he picked a bit of paper from the walk, and nailed it to the framework with a knife. He then turned. his back contemptuously upon this popular resort and, walking to the opposite side of the street and spinning there on his heel quickly and lithely, fired at the bit of paper. He missed it by a half-inch. He swore at himself, and went away. Later he comfortably fusilladed the windows of his most intimate friend. The man was playing with this town; it was a toy for him.

But still there was no offer of fight. The name of Jack Potter, his ancient antagonist, entered his mind, and he concluded that it would be a glad thing if he should go to Potter's house, and by bombardment induce him to come out and fight. He moved in the direction of his desire, chanting Apache scalp-music.

When he arrived at it, Potter's house presented the same still front as had the other adobes. Taking up a strategic position, the man howled a challenge. But this house regarded him as might a great stone god. It gave no

sign. After a decent wait, the man howled further challenges, mingling with them wonderful epithets.

Presently there came the spectacle of a man churning himself into deepest rage over the immobility of a house. He fumed at it as the winter wind attacks a prairie cabin in the North. To the distance there should have gone the sound of a tumult like the fighting of two hundred Mexicans. As necessity bade him, he paused for breath or to reload his revolvers.

IV

Potter and his bride walked sheepishly and with speed. Sometimes they laughed together shamefacedly and low.

"Next corner, dear," he said finally.

They put forth the efforts of a pair walking bowed against a strong wind. Potter was about to raise a finger to point the first appearance of the new home when, as they circled the corner, they came face to face with a man in a maroon-colored shirt, who was feverishly pushing cartridges into a large revolver. Upon the instant the man dropped his revolver to the ground and, like lightning, whipped another from its holster. The second weapon was aimed at the bridegroom's chest.

There was a silence. Potter's mouth seemed to be merely a grave for his tongue. He exhibited an instinct to at once loosen his arm from the woman's grip, and he dropped the bag to the sand. As for the bride, her face had gone as yellow as old cloth. She was a slave to hideous rites, gazing at the apparitional snake.

The two men faced each other at a distance of three paces. He of the revolver smiled with a new and quiet ferocity.

"Tried to sneak up on me," he said. "Tried to sneak up on me!" His eyes grew more baleful. As Potter made a slight movement, the man thrust his revolver venomously forward. "No; don't you do it, Jack Potter. Don't you move a finger toward a gun just yet. Don't you move an eyelash. The time has come for me to settle with you, and I'm goin' to do it my own way, and loaf along with no interferin'. So if you don't want a gun bent on you, just mind what I tell you."

Potter looked at his enemy. "I ain't got a gun on me, Scratchy," he said. "Honest, I ain't." He was stiffening and steadying, but yet somewhere at the back of his mind a vision of the Pullman floated: the sea-green figured velvet, the shining brass, silver, and glass, the wood that gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a pool of oil—all the glory of the marriage, the environment of the new estate. "You know I fight when it comes to fighting, Scratchy Wilson; but I ain't got a gun on me. You'll have to do all the shootin' yourself."

His enemy's face went livid. He stepped forward, and lashed his weapon to and fro before Potter's chest. "Don't you tell me you ain't got no gun on

you, you whelp. Don't tell me no lie like that. There ain't a man in Texas ever seen you without no gun. Don't take me for no kid." His eyes blazed with light, and his throat worked like a pump.

"I ain't takin' you for no kid," answered Potter. His heels had not moved an inch backward. "I'm takin' you for a damn fool. I tell you I ain't got a gun, and I ain't. If you're goin' to shoot me up, you better begin now; you'll never get a chance like this again."

So much enforced reasoning had told on Wilson's rage; he was calmer. "If you ain't got a gun, why ain't you got a gun?" he sneered. "Been to Sunday-school?"

"I ain't got a gun because I've just come from San Anton' with my wife. I'm married," said Potter. "And if I'd thought there was going to be any galoots like you prowling around when I brought my wife home, I'd had a gun, and don't you forget it."

"Married!" said Scratchy, not at all comprehending.

"Yes, married. I'm married," said Potter, distinctly.

"Married?" said Scratchy. Seemingly for the first time, he saw the drooping, drowning woman at the other man's side. "No!" he said. He was like a creature allowed a glimpse of another world. He moved a pace backward, and his arm, with the revolver, dropped to his side. "Is this the lady?" he asked.

"Yes; this is the lady," answered Potter.

There was another period of silence.

"Well," said Wilson at last, slowly, "I s'pose it's all off now."

"It's all off if you say so, Scratchy. You know I didn't make the trouble." Potter lifted his valise.

"Well, I 'low it's off, Jack," said Wilson. He was looking at the ground. "Married!" He was not a student of chivalry; it was merely that in the presence of this foreign condition he was a simple child of the earlier plains. He picked up his starboard revolver, and, placing both weapons in their holsters, he went away. His feet made funnel-shaped tracks in the heavy sand.

GLADIUS DEI[1]

THOMAS MANN

MUNICH was radiant. Above the gay squares and white columned temples, the classicistic monuments and the baroque churches, the leaping fountains, the palaces and parks of the Residence there stretched a sky of luminous

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blue silk. Well-arranged leafy vistas laced with sun and shade lay basking in the sunshine of a beautiful day in early June.

There was a twittering of birds and a blithe holiday spirit in all the little streets. And in the squares and past the rows of villas there swelled, rolled, and hummed the leisurely, entertaining traffic of that easy-going, charming town. Travellers of all nationalities drove about in the slow little droshkies, looking right and left in aimless curiosity at the house-fronts; they mounted and descended museum stairs. Many windows stood open and music was heard from within: practising on piano, cello, or violin—earnest and well-meant amateur efforts; while from the Odeon came the sound of serious work on several grand pianos.

Young people, the kind that can whistle the Nothung motif, who fill the pit of the Schauspielhaus every evening, wandered in and out of the University and Library with literary magazines in their coat pockets. A court carriage stood before the Academy, the home of the plastic arts, which spreads its white wings between the Turkenstrasse and the Siegestor. And colourful groups of models, picturesque old men, women and children in Albanian costume, stood or lounged at the top of the balustrade.

Indolent, unhurried sauntering was the mode in all the long streets of the northern quarter. There life is lived for pleasanter ends than the driving greed of gain. Young artists with little round hats on the backs of their heads, flowing cravats and no canes—carefree bachelors who paid for their lodgings with colour-sketches—were strolling up and down to let the clear blue morning play upon their mood, also to look at the little girls, the pretty, rather plump type, with the brunette bandeaux, the too large feet, and the unobjectionable morals. Every fifth house had studio windows blinking in the sun. Sometimes a fine piece of architecture stood out from a middle-class row, the work of some imaginative young architect; a wide front with shallow bays and decorations in a bizarre style very expressive and full of invention. Or the door to some monotonous facade would be framed in a bold improvisation of flowing lines and sunny colours, with bacchantes, naiads, and rosy-skinned nudes.

It was always a joy to linger before the windows of the cabinetmakers and the shops for modern articles *de luxe*. What a sense for luxurious nothings and amusing, significant line was displayed in the shape of everything! Little shops that sold picture-frames, sculptures, and antiques there were in endless number; in their windows you might see those busts of Florentine women of the Renaissance, so full of noble poise and poignant charm. And the owners of the smallest and meanest of these shops spoke of Mino da Fiesole and Donatello as though he had received the rights of reproduction from them personally.

But on the Odeonsplatz, in view of the mighty loggia with the spacious mosaic pavement before it, diagonally opposite to the Regent's palace, people were crowding round the large windows and glass show-cases of the big

art-shop owned by M. Blüthenzweig. What a glorious display! There were reproductions of the masterpieces of all the galleries in the world, in costly decorated and tinted frames, the good taste of which was precious in its very simplicity. There were copies of modern paintings, works of a joyously sensuous fantasy, in which the antiques seemed born again in humorous and realistic guise; bronze nudes and fragile ornamental glassware; tall, thin earthenware vases with an iridescent glaze produced by a bath in metal steam; *éditions de luxe* which were triumphs of modern binding and press-work, containing the works of the most modish poets, set out with every possible advantage of sumptuous elegance. Cheek by jowl with these, the portraits of artists, musicians, philosophers, actors, writers, displayed to gratify the public taste for personalities.—In the first window, next the book-shop, a large picture stood on an easel, with a crowd of people in front of it, a fine sepia photograph in a wide old-gold frame, a very striking reproduction of the sensation at this year's great international exhibition, to which public attention is always invited by means of effective and artistic posters stuck up everywhere on hoardings among concert programmes and clever advertisements of toilet preparations.

If you looked into the windows of the book-shop, your eye met such titles as *Interior Decoration Since the Renaissance, The Renaissance in Modern Decorative Art, The Book as Work of Art, The Decorative Arts, Hunger for Art,* and many more. And you would remember that these thought-provoking pamphlets were sold and read by the thousand and that discussions on these subjects were the preoccupation of all the salons.

You might be lucky enough to meet in person one of the famous fair ones whom less fortunate folk know only through the medium of art; one of those rich and beautiful women whose Titian-blond colouring Nature's most sweet and cunning hand did *not* lay on, but whose diamond parures and beguiling charms had received immortality from the hand of some portrait-painter of genius and whose love-affairs were the talk of the town. These were the queens of the artist balls at carnival-time. They were a little painted, a little made up, full of haughty caprices, worthy of adoration, avid of praise. You might see a carriage rolling up the Ludwigstrasse, with such a great painter and his mistress inside. People would be pointing out the sight, standing still to gaze after the pair. Some of them would curtsy. A little more and the very policemen would stand attention.

Art flourished, art swayed the destinies of the town, art stretched above it her rose-bound sceptre and smiled. On every hand obsequious interest was displayed in her prosperity, on every hand she was served with industry and devotion. There was a downright cult of line, decoration, form, significance, beauty. Munich was radiant.

A youth was coming down the Schellingstrasse. With the bells of cyclists ringing about him he strode across the wooden pavement towards the broad

facade of the Ludwigskirche. Looking at him it was as though a shadow passed across the sky, or cast over the spirit some memory of melancholy hours. Did he not love the sun which bathed the lovely city in its festal light? Why did he walk wrapped in his own thoughts, his eyes directed on the ground?

No one in that tolerant and variety-loving town would have taken offence at his wearing no hat, but why need the hood of his ample black cloak have been drawn over his head, shadowing his low, prominent, and peaked forehead, covering his ears and framing his haggard cheeks? What pangs of conscience, what scruples and self-tortures had so availed to hollow out these cheeks? It is frightful, on such a sunny day, to see care sitting in the hollows of the human face. His dark brows thickened at the narrow base of his hooked and prominent nose. His lips were unpleasantly full, his eyes brown and close-lying. When he lifted them, diagonal folds appeared on the peaked brow. His gaze expressed knowledge, limitation, and suffering. Seen in profile his face was strikingly like an old painting preserved at Florence in a narrow cloister cell whence once a frightful and shattering protest issued against life and her triumphs.

Hieronymus walked along the Schellingstrasse with a slow, firm stride, holding his wide cloak together with both hands from inside. Two little girls, two of those pretty, plump little creatures with the bandeaux, the big feet, and the unobjectionable morals, strolled towards him arm in arm, on pleasure bent. They poked each other and laughed, they bent double with laughter, they even broke into a run and ran away still laughing, at his hood and his face. But he paid them no heed. With bent head, looking neither to the right nor to the left, he crossed the Ludwigstrasse and mounted the church steps.

The great wings of the middle portal stood wide open. From somewhere within the consecrated twilight, cool, dank, incense-laden, there came a pale red glow. An old woman with inflamed eyes rose from a prayer-stool and slipped on crutches through the columns. Otherwise the church was empty.

Hieronymus sprinkled brow and breast at the stoup, bent the knee before the high altar, and then paused in the centre nave. Here in the church his stature seemed to have grown. He stood upright and immovable; his head was flung up and his great hooked nose jutted domineeringly above the thick lips. His eyes no longer sought the ground, but looked straight and boldly into the distance, at the crucifix on the high altar. Thus he stood awhile, then retreating he bent the knee again and left the church.

He strode up the Ludwigstrasse, slowly, firmly, with bent head, in the centre of the wide unpaved road, towards the mighty loggia with its statues. But arrived at the Odeonsplatz, he looked up, so that the folds came out on his peaked forehead, and checked his step, his attention being called to the crowd at the windows of the big art-shop of M. Blüthenzweig.

People moved from window to window, pointing out to each other the

treasures displayed and exchanging views as they looked over one another's shoulders. Hieronymus mingled among them and did as they did, taking in all these things with his eyes, one by one.

He saw the reproductions of masterpieces from all the galleries in the world, the priceless frames so precious in their simplicity, the Renaissance sculpture, the bronze nudes, the exquisitely bound volumes, the iridescent vases, the portraits of artists, musicians, philosophers, actors, writers; he looked at everything and turned a moment of his scrutiny upon each object. Holding his mantle closely together with both hands from inside, he moved his hood-covered head in short turns from one thing to the next, gazing at each awhile with a dull, inimical, and remotely surprised air, lifting the dark brows which grew so thick at the base of the nose. At length he stood in front of the last window, which contained the startling picture. For a while he looked over the shoulders of people before him and then in his turn reached a position directly in front of the window.

The large red-brown photograph in the choice old-gold frame stood on an easel in the centre. It was a Madonna, but an utterly unconventional one, a work of entirely modern feeling. The figure of the Holy Mother was revealed as enchantingly feminine and beautiful. Her great smouldering eyes were rimmed with darkness, and her delicate and strangely smiling lips were half-parted. Her slender fingers held in a somewhat nervous grasp the hips of the Child, a nude boy of pronounced, almost primitive leanness. He was playing with her breast and glancing aside at the beholder with a wise look in his eyes.

Two other youths stood near Hieronymus, talking about the picture. They were two young men with books under their arms, which they had fetched from the Library, or were taking thither. Humanistically educated people, that is, equipped with science and with art.

"The little chap is in luck, devil take me!" said one.

"He seems to be trying to make one envious," replied the other. "A bewildering female!"

"A female to drive a man crazy! Gives you funny ideas about the Immaculate Conception."

"No, she doesn't look exactly immaculate. Have you seen the original?"

"Of course; I was quite bowled over. She makes an even more aphrodisiac impression in colour. Especially the eyes."

"The likeness is pretty plain."

"How so?"

"Don't you know the model? Of course he used his little dressmaker. It is almost a portrait, only with a lot more emphasis on the corruptible. The girl is more innocent."

"I hope so. Life would be altogether too much of a strain if there were many like this *mater amata*."

"The Pinakothek has bought it."

"Really? Well, well! They knew what they were about, anyhow. The treatment of the flesh and the flow of the linen garment are really first-class."

"Yes, an incredibly gifted chap."

"Do you know him?"

"A little. He will have a career, that is certain. He has been invited twice by the Prince Regent."

This last was said as they were taking leave of each other.

"Shall I see you this evening at the theatre?" asked the first. "The Dramatic Club is giving Machiavelli's *Mandragola*."

"Oh, bravo! That will be great, of course. I had meant to go to the Variété, but I shall probably choose our stout Niccolò after all. Good-bye."

They parted, going off to right and left. New people took their places and looked at the famous picture. But Hieronymus stood where he was, motionless, with his head thrust out; his hands clutched convulsively at the mantle as they held it together from inside. His brows were no longer lifted with that cool and unpleasantly surprised expression; they were drawn and darkened; his cheeks, half-shrouded in the black hood, seemed more sunken than ever and his thick lips had gone pale. Slowly his head dropped lower and lower, so that finally his eyes stared upwards at the work of art, while the nostrils of his great nose dilated.

Thus he remained for perhaps a quarter of an hour. The crowd about him melted away, but he did not stir from the spot. At last he turned slowly on the balls of his feet and went hence.

But the picture of the Madonna went with him. Always and ever, whether in his hard and narrow little room or kneeling in the cool church, it stood before his outraged soul, with its smouldering, dark-rimmed eyes, its riddling smiling lips—stark and beautiful. And no prayer availed to exorcize it.

But the third night it happened that a command and summons from on high came to Hieronymus, to intercede and lift his voice against the frivolity, blasphemy, and arrogance of beauty. In vain like Moses he protested that he had not the gift of tongues. God's will remained unshaken; in a loud voice He demanded that the faint-hearted Hieronymus go forth to sacrifice amid the jeers of the foe.

And since God would have it so, he set forth one morning and wended his way to the great art-shop of M. Blüthenzweig. He wore his hood over his head and held his mantle together in front from inside with both hands as he went.

The air had grown heavy, the sky was livid and thunder threatened. Once more crowds were besieging the show-cases at the art-shop and especially the window where the photograph of the Madonna stood. Hieronymus cast one brief glance thither; then he pushed up the latch of the glass door hung

with placards and art magazines. "As God wills," said he, and entered the shop.

A young girl was somewhere at the desk writing in a big book. She was a pretty brunette thing with bandeaux of hair and big feet. She came up to him and asked pleasantly what he would like.

"Thank you," said Hieronymus in a low voice and looked her earnestly in the face, with diagonal wrinkles in his peaked brow. "I would speak not to you but to the owner of this shop, Herr Blüthenzweig."

She hesitated a little, turned away, and took up her work once more. He stood there in the middle of the shop.

Instead of the single specimens in the show-windows there was here a riot and a heaping-up of luxury, a fullness of colour, line, form, style, invention, good taste, and beauty. Hieronymus looked slowly round him, drawing his mantle close with both hands.

There were several people in the shop besides him. At one of the broad tables running across the room sat a man in a yellow suit, with a black goat's-beard, looking at a portfolio of French drawings, over which he now and then emitted a bleating laugh. He was being waited on by an undernourished and vegetarian young man, who kept on dragging up fresh portfolios. Diagonally opposite the bleating man sat an elegant old dame, examining art embroideries with a pattern of fabulous flowers in pale tones standing together on tall perpendicular stalks. An attendant hovered about her too. A leisurely Englishman in a travelling-cap, with his pipe in his mouth, sat at another table. Cold and smooth-shaven, of indefinite age, in his good English clothes, he sat examining bronzes brought to him by M. Bluthenzweig in person. He was holding up by the head the dainty figure of a nude young girl, immature and delicately articulated, her hands crossed in coquettish innocence upon her breast. He studied her thoroughly, turning her slowly about. M. Bluthenzweig, a man with a short, heavy brown beard and bright brown eyes of exactly the same colour, moved in a semicircle round him, rubbing his hands, praising the statuette with all the terms his vocabulary possessed.

"A hundred and fifty marks, sir," he said in English. "Munich art—very charming, in fact. Simply full of charm, you know. Grace itself. Really extremely pretty, good, admirable, in fact." Then he thought of some more and went on: "Highly attractive, fascinating." Then he began again from the beginning.

His nose lay a little flat on his upper lip, so that he breathed constantly with a slight sniff into his moustache. Sometimes he did this as he approached a customer, stooping over as though he were smelling at him. When Hieronymus entered, M. Blüthenzweig had examined him cursorily in this way, then devoted himself again to his Englishman.

The elegant old dame made her selection and left the shop. A man entered. M. Blüthenzweig sniffed briefly at him as though to scent out his

capacity to buy and left him to the young bookkeeper. The man purchased a faience bust of young Piero de' Medici, son of Lorenzo, and went out again. The Englishman began to depart. He had acquired the statuette of the young girl and left amid bowings from M. Bluthenzweig. Then the art-dealer turned to Hieronymus and came forward.

"You wanted something?" he said, without any particular courtesy.

Hieronymus held his cloak together with both hands and looked the other in the face almost without winking an eyelash. He parted his big lips slowly and said:

"I have come to you on account of the picture in the window there, the big photograph, the Madonna." His voice was thick and without modulation.

"Yes, quite right," said M. Bluthenzweig briskly and began rubbing his hands. "Seventy marks in the frame. It is unfadable—a first-class reproduction. Highly attractive and full of charm."

Hieronymus was silent. He nodded his head in the hood and shrank a little into himself as the dealer spoke. Then he drew himself up again and said:

"I would remark to you first of all that I am not in the position to purchase anything, nor have I the desire. I am sorry to have to disappoint your expectations. I regret if it upsets you. But in the first place I am poor and in the second I do not love the things you sell. No, I cannot buy anything."

"No? Well, then?" asked M. Bluthenzweig, sniffing a good deal. "Then may I ask—"

"I suppose," Hieronymus went on, "that being what you are you look down on me because I am not in a position to buy."

"Oh—er—not at all," said M. Bluthenzweig. "Not at all. Only—"

"And yet I beg you to hear me and give some consideration to my words."

"Consideration to your words. H'm—may I ask—"

"You may ask," said Hieronymus, "and I will answer you. I have come to beg you to remove that picture, the big photograph, the Madonna, out of your window and never display it again."

M. Bluthenzweig looked awhile dumbly into Hieronymus's face—as though he expected him to be abashed at the words he had just uttered. But as this did not happen he gave a violent sniff and spoke himself:

"Will you be so good as to tell me whether you are here in any official capacity which authorizes you to dictate to me, or what does bring you here?"

"Oh, no," replied Hieronymus, "I have neither office nor dignity from the state. I have no power on my side, sir. What brings me hither is my conscience alone."

M. Bluthenzweig, searching for words, snorted violently into his moustache. At length he said:

"Your conscience . . . well, you will kindly understand that I take not the faintest interest in your conscience." With which he turned round and

moved quickly to his desk at the back of the shop, where he began to write. Both attendants laughed heartily. The pretty Fräulein giggled over her account-book. As for the yellow gentleman with the goat's beard, he was evidently a foreigner, for he gave no sign of comprehension but went on studying the French drawings and emitting from time to time his bleating laugh.

"Just get rid of the man for me," said M. Bluthenzweig shortly over his shoulder to his assistant. He went on writing. The poorly paid young vegetarian approached Hieronymus, smothering his laughter, and the other salesman came up too.

"May we be of service to you in any other way?" the first asked mildly. Hieronymus fixed him with his glazed and suffering eyes.

"No," he said, "you cannot. I beg you to take the Madonna picture out of the window, at once and forever."

"But—why?"

"It is the Holy Mother of God," said Hieronymus in a subdued voice.

"Quite. But you have heard that Herr Blüthenzweig is not inclined to accede to your request."

"We must bear in mind that it is the Holy Mother of God," said Hieronymus again and his head trembled on his neck.

"So we must. But should we not be allowed to exhibit any Madonnas—or paint any?"

"It is not that," said Hieronymus, almost whispering. He drew himself up and shook his head energetically several times. His peaked brow under the hood was entirely furrowed with long, deep cross-folds. "You know very well that it is vice itself that is painted there—naked sensuality. I was standing near two simple young people and overheard with my own ears that it led them astray upon the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception."

"Oh, permit me—that is not the point," said the young salesman, smiling. In his leisure hours he was writing a brochure on the modern movement in art and was well qualified to conduct a cultured conversation. "The picture is a work of art," he went on, "and one must measure it by the appropriate standards as such. It has been very highly praised on all hands. The state has purchased it."

"I know that the state has purchased it," said Hieronymus. "I also know that the artist has twice dined with the Prince Regent. It is common talk—and God knows how people interpret the fact that a man can become famous by such work as this. What does such a fact bear witness to? To the blindness of the world, a blindness inconceivable, if not indeed shamelessly hypocritical. This picture has its origin in sensual lust and is enjoyed in the same—is that true or not? Answer me! And you too answer me, Herr Blüthenzweig!"

A pause ensued. Hieronymus seemed in all seriousness to demand an answer to his question, looking by turns at the staring attendants and the round

back M. Blüthenzweig turned upon him, with his own piercing and anguishing brown eyes. Silence reigned. Only the yellow man with the goat's beard, bending over the French drawings, broke it with his bleating laugh.

"It is true," Hieronymus went on in a hoarse voice that shook with his profound indignation. "You do not dare deny it. How then can honour be done to its creator, as though he had endowed mankind with a new ideal possession? How can one stand before it and surrender unthinkingly to the base enjoyment which it purveys, persuading oneself in all seriousness that one is yielding to a noble and elevated sentiment, highly creditable to the human race? Is this reckless ignorance or abandoned hypocrisy? My understanding falters, it is completely at a loss when confronted by the absurd fact that a man can achieve renown on this earth by the stupid and shameless exploitation of the animal instincts. Beauty? What is beauty? What forces are they which use beauty as their tool today—and upon what does it work? No one can fail to know this, Herr Blüthenzweig. But who, understanding it clearly, can fail to feel disgust and pain? It is criminal to play upon the ignorance of the immature, the lewd, the brazen, and the unscrupulous by elevating beauty into an idol to be worshipped, to give it even more power over those who know not affliction and have no knowledge of redemption. You are unknown to me, and you look at me with black looks —yet answer me! Knowledge, I tell you, is the profoundest torture in the world; but it is the purgatory without whose purifying pangs no soul can reach salvation. It is not infantile, blasphemous shallowness that can save us, Herr Blüthenzweig; only knowledge can avail, knowledge in which the passions of our loathsome flesh die away and are quenched."

Silence.—The yellow man with the goat's beard gave a sudden little bleat.

"I think you really must go now," said the underpaid assistant mildly.

But Hieronymus made no move to do so. Drawn up in his hooded cape, he stood with blazing eyes in the centre of the shop and his thick lips poured out condemnation in a voice that was harsh and rusty and clanking.

"Art, you cry; enjoyment, beauty! Enfold the world in beauty and endow all things with the noble grace of style!—Profligate, away! Do you think to wash over with lurid colours the misery of the world? Do you think with the sounds of feasting and music to drown out the voice of the tortured earth? Shameless one, you err! God lets not Himself be mocked, and your impudent deification of the glistering surface of things is an abomination in His eyes. You tell me that I blaspheme art. I say to you that you lie. I do not blaspheme art. Art is no conscienceless delusion, lending itself to reinforce the allurements of the fleshly. Art is the holy torch which turns its light upon all the frightful depths, all the shameful and woeful abysses of life; art is the godly fire laid to the world that, being redeemed by pity, it may flame up and dissolve altogether with its shames and torments.—Take it out, Herr Blüthenzweig, take away the work of that famous painter out of your

window—you would do well to burn it with a hot fire and strew its ashes to the four winds—yes, to all the four winds—"

His harsh voice broke off. He had taken a violent backwards step, snatched one arm from his black wrappings, and stretched it passionately forth, gesturing towards the window with a hand that shook as though palsied. And in this commanding attitude he paused. His great hooked nose seemed to jut more than ever, his dark brows were gathered so thick and high that folds crowded upon the peaked forehead shaded by the hood; a hectic flush mantled his hollow cheeks.

But at this point M. Blüthenzweig turned round. Perhaps he was outraged by the idea of burning his seventy-mark reproduction; perhaps Hieronymus's speech had completely exhausted his patience. In any case he was a picture of stern and righteous anger. He pointed with his pen to the door of the shop, gave several short, excited snorts into his moustache, struggled for words, and uttered with the maximum of energy those which he found:

"My fine fellow, if you don't get out at once I will have my packer help you—do you understand?"

"Oh, you cannot intimidate me, you cannot drive me away, you cannot silence my voice!" cried Hieronymus as he clutched his cloak over his chest with his fists and shook his head doughtily. "I know that I am single-handed and powerless, but yet I will not cease until you hear me, Herr Blüthenzweig! Take the picture out of your window and burn it even today! Ah, burn not it alone! Burn all these statues and busts, the sight of which plunges the beholder into sin! Burn these vases and ornaments, these shameles revivals of paganism, these elegantly bound volumes of erotic verse! Burn everything in your shop, Herr Bluthenzweig, for it is a filthiness in God's sight. Burn it, burn it!" he shrieked, beside himself, describing a wild, all-embracing circle with his arm. "The harvest is ripe for the reaper, the measure of the age's shamelessness is full—but I say unto you—"

"Krauthuber!" Herr Blüthenzweig raised his voice and shouted towards a door at the back of the shop. "Come in here at once!"

And in answer to the summons there appeared upon the scene a massive overpowering presence, a vast and awe-inspiring, swollen human bulk, whose limbs merged into each other like links of sausage—a gigantic son of the people, malt-nourished and immoderate, who weighed in, with puffings, bursting with energy, from the packing-room. His appearance in the upper reaches of his form was notable for a fringe of walrus beard; a hide apron fouled with paste covered his body from the waist down, and his yellow shirt-sleeves were rolled back from his heroic arms.

"Will you open the door for this gentleman, Krauthuber?" said M. Blüthenzweig; "and if he should not find the way to it, just help him into the street."

"Huh," said the man, looking from his enraged employer to Hieronymus

and back with his little elephant eyes. It was a heavy monosyllable, suggesting reserve force restrained with difficulty. The floor shook with his tread as he went to the door and opened it.

Hieronymus had grown very pale. "Burn—" he shouted once more. He was about to go on when he felt himself turned round by an irresistible power, by a physical preponderance to which no resistance was even thinkable. Slowly and inexorably he was propelled towards the door.

"I am weak," he managed to ejaculate. "My flesh cannot bear the force . . . it cannot hold its ground, no . . . but what does that prove? Burn—"

He stopped. He found himself outside the art-shop. M. Bluthenzweig's giant packer had let him go with one final shove, which set him down on the stone threshold of the shop, supporting himself with one hand. Behind him the door closed with a rattle of glass.

He picked himself up. He stood erect, breathing heavily, and pulled his cloak together with one fist over his breast, letting the other hang down inside. His hollow cheeks had a grey pallor; the nostrils of his great hooked nose opened and closed; his ugly lips were writhen in an expression of hatred and despair and his red-rimmed eyes wandered over the beautiful square like those of a man in a frenzy.

He did not see that people were looking at him with amusement and curiosity. For what he beheld upon the mosaic pavement before the great loggia were all the vanities of this world: the masked costumes of the artist balls, the decorations, vases and art objects, the nude statues, the female busts, the picturesque rebirths of the pagan age, the portraits of famous beauties by the hands of masters, the elegantly bound erotic verse, the art brochures—all these he saw heaped in a pyramid and going up in crackling flames amid loud exultations from the people enthralled by his own frightful words. A yellow background of cloud had drawn up over the Theatinerstrasse, and from it issued wild rumblings; but what he saw was a burning fiery sword, towering in sulphurous light above the joyous city.

"*Gladius Dei super terram . . .*"[2] his thick lips whispered; and drawing himself still higher in his hooded cloak while the hand hanging down inside it twitched convulsively, he murmured, quaking: "*cito et velociter!*"[2]

2. "O Sword of the Lord, [smite] the earth . . . swiftly and sharply!"

I'M A FOOL[1]

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

It was a hard jolt for me, one of the most bitterest I ever had to face. And it all came about through my own foolishness, too. Even yet sometimes, when I think of it, I want to cry or swear or kick myself. Perhaps, even now, after all this time, there will be a kind of satisfaction in making myself look cheap by telling of it.

It began at three o'clock one October afternoon as I sat in the grand stand at the fall trotting and pacing meet at Sandusky, Ohio.

To tell the truth, I felt a little foolish that I should be sitting in the grand stand at all. During the summer before I had left my home town with Harry Whitehead and, with a nigger named Burt, had taken a job as swipe with one of the two horses Harry was campaigning through the fall race meets that year. Mother cried and my sister Mildred, who wanted to get a job as a schoolteacher in our town that fall, stormed and scolded about the house all during the week before I left. They both thought it something disgraceful that one of our family should take a place as a swipe with race horses. I've an idea Mildred thought my taking the place would stand in the way of her getting the job she'd been working so long for.

But after all I had to work, and there was no other work to be got. A big lumbering fellow of nineteen couldn't just hang around the house and I had got too big to mow people's lawns and sell newspapers. Little chaps who could get next to people's sympathies by their sizes were always getting jobs away from me. There was one fellow who kept saying to every one who wanted a lawn mowed or a cistern cleaned that he was saving money to work his way through college, and I used to lay awake nights thinking up ways to injure him without being found out. I kept thinking of wagons running over him and bricks falling on his head as he walked along the street. But never mind him.

I got the place with Harry and I liked Burt fine. We got along splendid together. He was a big nigger with a lazy sprawling body and soft, kind eyes, and when it came to a fight he could hit like Jack Johnson. He had Bucephalus, a big black pacing stallion that could do 2.09 or 2.10 if he had to, and I had a little gelding named Doctor Fritz that never lost a race all fall when Harry wanted him to win.

We set out from home late in July, in a box car with the two horses and after that, until late November, we kept moving along to the race meets and the fairs. It was a peachy time for me, I'll say that. Sometimes now I think that boys who are raised regular in houses, and never have a fine nigger

1. From *Horses and Men*, The Viking Press, Inc. Copyright, 1932, by Eleanor Anderson. Reprinted by permission of Harold Ober.

like Burt for best friend, and go to high schools and college, and never steal anything, or get drunk a little, or learn to swear from fellows who know how, or come walking up in front of a grand stand in their shirt sleeves and with dirty horsy pants on when the races are going on and the grand stand is full of people all dressed up—What's the use of talking about it? Such fellows don't know nothing at all. They've never had no opportunity.

But I did. Burt taught me how to rub down a horse and put the bandages on after a race and steam a horse out and a lot of valuable things for any man to know. He could wrap a bandage on a horse's leg so smooth that if it had been the same color you would think it was his skin, and I guess he'd have been a big driver, too, and got to the top like Murphy and Walter Cox and the others if he hadn't been black.

Gee whizz, it was fun. You got to a county-seat town, maybe say on a Saturday or Sunday, and the fair began the next Tuesday and lasted until Friday afternoon. Doctor Fritz would be, say, in the 2.25 trot on Tuesday afternoon and on Thursday afternoon Bucephalus would knock 'em cold in the "free-for-all" pace. It left you a lot of time to hang around and listen to horse talk, and see Burt knock some yap cold that got too gay, and you'd find out about horses and men and pick up a lot of stuff you could use all the rest of your life, if you had some sense and salted down what you heard and felt and saw.

And then at the end of the week when the race meet was over, and Harry had run home to tend up to his livery-stable business, you and Burt hitched the two horses to carts and drove slow and steady across country, to the place for the next meeting, so as to not overheat the horses, etc., etc., you know.

Gee whizz, Gosh amighty, the nice hickory-nut and beechnut and oaks and other kinds of trees along the roads, all brown and red, and the good smells, and Burt singing a song called "Deep River," and the country girls at the windows of houses and everything. You can stick your colleges up your nose for all me. I guess I know where I got my education.

Why, one of those little burgs of towns you came to on the way, say now on a Saturday afternoon, and Burt says, "Let's lay up here." And you did.

And you took the horses to a livery stable and fed them, and you got your good clothes out of a box and put them on.

And the town was full of farmers gaping, because they could see you were racehorse people, and the kids maybe never see a nigger before and was afraid and run away when the two of us walked down their main street.

And that was before prohibition and all that foolishness, and so you went into a saloon, the two of you, and all the yaps come and stood around, and there was always some one pretended he was horsy and knew things and spoke up and began asking questions, and all you did was to lie and lie all you could about what horses you had, and I said I owned them, and then some fellow said, "Will you have a drink of whisky?" and Burt knocked his

eye out the way he could say, offhand like, "Oh, well, all right, I'm agreeable to a little nip. I'll split a quart with you." Gee whizz.

But that isn't what I want to tell my story about. We got home late in November and I promised mother I'd quit the race horses for good. There's a lot of things you've got to promise a mother because she don't know any better.

And so, there not being any work in our town any more than when I left there to go to the races, I went off to Sandusky and got a pretty good place taking care of horses for a man who owned a teaming and delivery and storage and coal and real-estate business there. It was a pretty good place with good eats, and a day off each week, and sleeping on a cot in a big barn, and mostly just shoveling in hay and oats to a lot of big good-enough skates of horses that couldn't have trotted a race with a toad. I wasn't dissatisfied and I could send money home.

And then, as I started to tell you, the fall races come to Sandusky and I got the day off and I went. I left the job at noon and had on my good clothes and my new brown derby hat I'd bought the Saturday before, and a stand-up collar.

First of all I went downtown and walked about with the dudes. I've always thought to myself, "Put up a good front," and so I did it. I had forty dollars in my pocket and so I went into the West House, a big hotel, and walked up to the cigar stand. "Give me three twenty-five-cent cigars," I said. There was a lot of horsemen and strangers and dressed-up people from other towns standing around in the lobby and in the bar, and I mingled amongst them. In the bar there was a fellow with a cane and a Windsor tie on, that it made me sick to look at him. I like a man to be a man and dress up, but not to go put on that kind of airs. So I pushed him aside, kind of rough, and had me a drink of whisky. And then he looked at me, as though he thought maybe he'd get gay, but he changed his mind and didn't say anything. And then I had another drink of whisky, just to show him something, and went out and had a hack out to the races, all to myself, and when I got there I bought myself the best seat I could get up in the grand stand, but didn't go in for any of these boxes. That's putting on too many airs.

And so there I was, sitting up in the grand stand as gay as you please and looking down on the swipes coming out with their horses, and with their dirty horsy pants on and the horseblankets swung over their shoulders, same as I had been doing all the year before. I liked one thing about the same as the other, sitting up there and feeling grand and being down there and looking up at the yaps and feeling grander and more important, too.

One thing's about as good as another, if you take it just right. I've often said that.

Well, right in front of me, in the grand stand that day, there was a fellow with a couple of girls and they was about my age. The young fellow was a

nice guy, all right. He was the kind maybe that goes to college and then comes to be a lawyer or maybe a newspaper editor or something like that, but he wasn't stuck on himself. There are some of that kind are all right and he was one of the ones.

He had his sister with him and another girl and the sister looked around over his shoulder, accidental at first, not intending to start anything—she wasn't that kind—and her eyes and mine happened to meet.

You know how it is. Gee, she was a peach! She had on a soft dress, kind of a blue stuff, and it looked carelessly made, but was well sewed and made and everything. I knew that much. I blushed when she looked right at me and so did she. She was the nicest girl I've ever seen in my life. She wasn't stuck on herself and she could talk proper grammar without being like a schoolteacher or something like that. What I mean is, she was O.K. I think maybe her father was well-to-do, but not rich to make her chesty because she was his daughter, as some are. Maybe he owned a drug store or a dry-goods store in their home town, or something like that. She never told me and I never asked.

My own people are all O.K. too, when you come to that. My grandfather was Welsh and over in the old country, in Wales he was—But never mind that.

The first heat of the first race come off and the young fellow setting there with the two girls left them and went down to make a bet. I knew what he was up to, but he didn't talk big and noisy and let everyone know he was a sport, as some do. He wasn't that kind. Well, he come back and I heard him tell the two girls what horse he'd bet on, and when the heat was trotted they all half got to their feet and acted in the excited, sweaty way people do when they've got money down on a race, and the horse they bet on is up there pretty close at the end, and they think maybe he'll come on with a rush, but he never does because he hasn't got the old juice in him, come right down to it.

And then, pretty soon, the horses came out for the 2.18 pace and there was a horse in it I knew. He was a horse Bob French had in his string but Bob didn't own him. He was a horse owned by a Mr. Mathers down at Marietta, Ohio.

This Mr. Mathers had a lot of money and owned some coal mines or something, and he had a swell place out in the country, and he was stuck on race horses, but was a Presbyterian or something, and I think more than likely his wife was one, too, maybe a stiffer one than himself. So he never raced his horses hisself, and the story round the Ohio race tracks was that when one of his horses got ready to go to the races he turned him over to Bob French and pretended to his wife he was sold.

So Bob had the horses and he did pretty much as he pleased and you can't blame Bob, at least I never did. Sometimes he was out to win and sometimes he wasn't. I never cared much about that when I was swiping a

horse. What I did want to know was that my horse had the speed and could go out in front, if you wanted him to.

And, as I'm telling you, there was Bob in this race with one of Mr. Mathers' horses, was named "About Ben Ahem" or something like that, and was fast as a streak. He was a gelding and had a mark of 2.21, but could step in .08 or .09.

Because when Burt and I were out, as I've told you, the year before, there was a nigger, Burt knew, worked for Mr. Mathers and we went out there one day when we didn't have no race on at the Marietta Fair and our boss Harry was gone home.

And so everyone was gone to the fair but just this one nigger and he took us all through Mr. Mathers' swell house and he and Burt tapped a bottle of wine Mr. Mathers had hid in his bedroom, back in a closet, without his wife knowing, and he showed us this Ahem horse. Burt was always stuck on being a driver but didn't have much chance to get to the top, being a nigger, and he and the other nigger gulped that whole bottle of wine and Burt got a little lit up.

So the nigger let Burt take this About Ben Ahem and step him a mile on a track Mr. Mathers had all to himself, right there on the farm. And Mr. Mathers had one child, a daughter, kinda sick and not very good looking, and she came home and we had to hustle and get About Ben Ahem stuck back in the barn.

I'm only telling you to get everything straight. At Sandusky, that afternoon I was at the fair, this young fellow with the two girls was fussed, being with the girls and losing his bet. You know how a fellow is that way. One of them was his girl and the other his sister. I had figured that out. "Gee whizz," I says to myself, "I'm going to give him the dope."

He was mighty nice when I touched him on the shoulder. He and the girls were nice to me right from the start and clear to the end. I'm not blaming them.

And so he leaned back and I gave him the dope on About Ben Ahem. "Don't bet a cent on his first heat because he'll go like an oxen hitched to a plow, but when the first heat is over go right down and lay on your pile." That's what I told him.

Well, I never saw a fellow treat any one sweller. There was a fat man sitting beside the little girl, that had looked at me twice by this time, and I at her, and both blushing, and what did he do but have the nerve to turn and ask the fat man to get up and change places with me so I could set with his crowd.

Gee whizz, craps amighty. There I was. What a chump I was to go and get gay up there in the West House bar, and just because that dude was standing there with a cane and that kind of a necktie on, to go and get all balled up and drink that whisky, just to show off.

Of course she would know, me setting right beside her and letting her

smell of my breath. I could have kicked myself right down out of that grand stand and all around that race track and made a faster record than most of the skates of horses they had there that year.

Because that girl wasn't any mutt of a girl. What wouldn't I have give right then for a stick of chewing gum to chew, or a lozenger, or some liquorice, or most anything. I was glad I had those twenty-five-cent cigars in my pocket and right away I give that fellow one and lit one myself. Then that fat man got up and we changed places and there I was, plunked right down beside her.

They introduced themselves and the fellow's best girl, he had with him, was named Miss Elinor Woodbury, and her father was a manufacturer of barrels from a place called Tiffin, Ohio. And the fellow himself was named Wilbur Wessen and his sister was Miss Lucy Wessen.

I suppose it was their having such swell names got me off my trolley. A fellow, just because he has been a swipe with a race horse, and works taking care of horses for a man in the teaming, delivery, and storage business, isn't any better or worse than any one else. I've often thought that, and said it, too.

But you know how a fellow is. There's something in that kind of nice clothes, and the kind of nice eyes she had, and the way she had looked at me, a while before, over her brother's shoulder, and me looking back at her, and both of us blushing.

I couldn't show her up for a boob, could I?

I made a fool of myself, that's what I did. I said my name was Walter Mathers from Marietta, Ohio, and then I told all three of them the smashingest lie you ever heard. What I said was that my father owned the horse About Ben Ahem and that he had let him out to this Bob French for racing purposes, because our family was proud and had never gone into racing that way—in our own name, I mean. Then I had got started and they were all leaning over and listening, and Miss Lucy Wessen's eyes were shining, and I went the whole hog.

I told about our place down at Marietta, and about the big stables and the grand brick house we had on a hill, up above the Ohio River, but I knew enough not to do it in no bragging way. What I did was to start things and then let them drag the rest out of me. I acted just as reluctant to tell as I could. Our family hasn't got any barrel factory, and, since I've known us, we've always been pretty poor, but not asking anything of any one at that, and my grandfather, over in Wales—But never mind that.

We set there talking like we had known each other for years and years, and I went and told them that my father had been expecting maybe this Bob French wasn't on the square, and had sent me up to Sandusky on the sly to find out what I could.

And I bluffed it through I had found out all about the 2.18 pace, in which About Ben Ahem was to start.

I said he would lose the first heat by pacing like a lame cow and then he would come back and skin 'em alive after that. And to back up what I said I took thirty dollars out of my pocket and handed it to Mr. Wilbur Wessen and asked him would he mind, after the first heat, to go down and place it on About Ben Ahem for whatever odds he could get. What I said was that I didn't want Bob French to see me, and none of the swipes.

Sure enough, the first heat came off and About Ben Ahem went off his stride, up the back stretch, and looked like a wooden horse or a sick one, and come in to be last. Then this Wilbur Wessen went down to the betting place under the grand stand and there I was with the two girls, and when that Miss Woodbury was looking the other way once, Lucy Wessen kinda, with her shoulder you know, kinda touched me. Not just tucking down, I don't mean. You know how a woman can do. They get close, but not getting gay, either. You know what they do. Gee whizz.

And then they give me a jolt. What they had done, when I didn't know, was to get together, and they had decided Wilbur Wessen would bet fifty dollars, and the two girls had gone and put in ten dollars each, of their own money, too. I was sick then, but I was sicker later.

About the gelding. About Ben Ahem, and their winning their money, I wasn't worried a lot about that. It come out O.K. Ahem stepped the next three heats like a bushel of spoiled eggs going to market before they could be found out, and Wilbur Wessen had got nine to two for the money. There was something else eating at me.

Because Wilbur come back, after he had bet the money, and after that he spent most of his time talking to that Miss Woodbury, and Lucy Wessen and I was left alone together like on a desert island. Gee, if I'd only been on the square or if there had been any way of getting myself on the square. There ain't any Walter Mathers, like I said to her and them, and there hasn't ever been one, but if there was, I bet I'd go to Marietta, Ohio, and shoot him tomorrow.

There I was, big boob that I am. Pretty soon the race was over, and Wilbur had gone down and collected our money, and we had a hack downtown, and he stood us a swell supper at the West House, and a bottle of champagne beside.

And I was with that girl and she wasn't saying much, and I wasn't saying much, either. One thing I know. She wasn't stuck on me because of the lie about my father being rich and all that. There's a way you know. . . . Craps amighty. There's a kind of a girl you see just once in your life, and if you don't get busy and make hay, then you're gone for good and all, and might as well go jump off a bridge. They give you a look from inside of them somewhere, and it ain't no vamping, and what it means is—you want that girl to be your wife, and you want nice things around her like flowers and swell clothes, and you want her to have the kids you're going to have, and you want good music played and no ragtime. Gee whizz.

There's a place over near Sandusky, across a kind of bay, and it's called Cedar Point. And after we had supper we went over to it in a launch, all by ourselves. Wilbur and Miss Lucy and that Miss Woodbury had to catch a ten-o'clock train back to Tiffin, Ohio, because when you're out with girls like that you can't get careless and miss any trains and stay out all night, like you can with some kind of Janes.

And Wilbur blowed himself to the launch and it cost him fifteen cold plunks, but I wouldn't never have knew if I hadn't listened. He wasn't no tin-horn kind of a sport.

Over at the Cedar Point place, we didn't stay around where there was a gang of common kind of cattle at all.

There was big dance halls and dining places for yaps, and there was a beach you could walk along and get where it was dark, and we went there.

She didn't talk hardly at all, and neither did I, and I was thinking how glad I was my mother was all right, and always made us kids learn to eat with a fork at table, and not swill soup, and not be noisy and rough like a gang you see around a race track that way.

Then Wilbur and his girl went away up the beach and Lucy and I sat down in a dark place, where there was some roots of old trees the water had washed up, and after that the time, till we had to go back in the launch and they had to catch their train, wasn't nothing at all. It went like winking your eye.

Here's how it was. The place we were setting in was dark, like I said, and there was the roots from that old stump sticking up like arms, and there was a watery smell, and then the night was like—as if you could put your hand out and feel it—so warm and soft and dark and sweet like an orange.

I most cried and I most swore and I most jumped up and danced, I was so mad and happy and sad.

When Wilbur came back from being alone with his girl, and she saw him coming, Lucy she says, "We got to go to the train now," and she was most crying, too, but she never knew nothing I knew, and she couldn't be so all busted up. And then, before Wilbur and Miss Woodbury got up to where we was, she put her face up and kissed me and she was all quivering and—Gee whizz.

Sometimes I hope I have cancer and die. I guess you know what I mean. We went in the launch across the bay to the train like that, and it was dark, too. She whispered and said it was like she and I could get out of the boat and walk on the water, and it sounded foolish, but I knew what she meant.

And then quick we were right at the depot, and there was a big gang of yaps, the kind that goes to the fairs, and crowded and milling around like cattle, and how could I tell her? "It won't be long because you'll write and I'll write to you." That's all she said.

I got a chance like a hay barn afire. A swell chance I got!

And maybe she would write me, down at Marietta that way, and the letter would come back, and stamped on the front of it by the U.S.A. "There ain't any such guy," or something like that, whatever they stamp on a letter that way.

And me trying to pass myself off for a bigbug and a swell—to her, as decent a little body as God ever made. Craps amighty—a swell chance I got!

And then the train come in, and she got on, and Wilbur Wessen he come shook hands with me, and that Miss Woodbury was nice too and bowed to me, and I at her, and the train went and I busted out and cried like a kid.

Gee, I could have run after that train and made Dan Patch look like a freight train after a wreck but, socks amighty, what was the use? Did you ever see such a fool?

I'll bet you what—if I had an arm broke right now or a train had run over my foot—I wouldn't go to no doctor at all. I'd go set down and let her hurt and hurt—that's what I'd do.

I'll bet you what—if I hadn't a drunk that booze I'd never been such a boob as to go tell such a lie—that couldn't never be made straight to a lady like her.

I wish I had that fellow right here that had on a Windsor tie and carried a cane. I'd smash him for fair. Gosh darn his eyes. He's a big fool—that's what he is.

And if I'm not another you just go find me one and I'll quit working and be a bum and give him my job. I don't care nothing for working, and earning money, and saving it for no such boob as myself.

THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS[1]

E. M. FORSTER

THE BOY who resided at Agathox Lodge, 28, Buckingham Park Road, Surbiton, had often been puzzled by the old sign-post that stood almost opposite. He asked his mother about it, and she replied that it was a joke, and not a very nice one, which had been made many years back by some naughty young men, and that the police ought to remove it. For there were two strange things about this sign-post; firstly, it pointed up a blank alley, and, secondly, it had painted on it, in faded characters, the words, "To Heaven."

"What kind of young men were they?" he asked.

"I think your father told me that one of them wrote verses, and was expelled from the University and came to grief in other ways. Still, it was a

1. Reprinted from *The Celestial Omnibus* by E. M. Forster, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and Sedgwick & Jackson Ltd., of London, England.

long time ago. You must ask your father about it. He will say the same as I do, that it was put up as a joke."

"So it doesn't mean anything at all?"

She sent him upstairs to put on his best things, for the Bonses were coming to tea, and he was to hand the cakestand.

It struck him, as he wrenched on his tightening trousers, that he might do worse than ask Mr. Bons about the sign-post. His father, though very kind, always laughed at him—shrieked with laughter whenever he or any other child asked a question or spoke. But Mr. Bons was serious as well as kind. He had a beautiful house and lent one books, he was a churchwarden, and a candidate for the County Council; he had donated to the Free Library enormously, he presided over the Literary Society, and had Members of Parliament to stop with him—in short, he was probably the wisest person alive.

Yet even Mr. Bons could only say that the sign-post was a joke—the joke of a person named Shelley.

"Of course!" cried the mother; "I told you so, dear. That was the name."

"Had you ever heard of Shelley?" asked Mr. Bons.

"No," said the boy, and hung his head.

"But is there no Shelley in the house?"

"Why, yes!" exclaimed the lady, in much agitation. "Dear Mr. Bons, we aren't such Philistines as that. Two at the least. One a wedding present, and the other, smaller print, in one of the spare rooms."

"I believe we have seven Shelleys," said Mr. Bons, with a slow smile. Then he brushed the cake crumbs off his stomach, and, together with his daughter, rose to go.

The boy, obeying a wink from his mother, saw them all the way to the garden gate, and when they had gone he did not at once return to the house, but gazed for a little up and down Buckingham Park Road.

His parents lived at the right end of it. After No. 39 the quality of the houses dropped very suddenly, and 64 had not even a separate servants' entrance. But at the present moment the whole road looked rather pretty, for the sun had just set in splendour, and the inequalities of rent were drowned in a saffron afterglow. Small birds twittered, and the breadwinners' train shrieked musically down through the cutting—that wonderful cutting which has drawn to itself the whole beauty out of Surbiton, and clad itself, like any Alpine valley, with the glory of the fir and the silver birch and the primrose. It was this cutting that had first stirred desires within the boy —desires for something just a little different, he knew not what, desires that would return whenever things were sunlit, as they were this evening, running up and down inside him, up and down, up and down, till he would feel quite unusual all over, and as likely as not would want to cry. This evening he was even sillier, for he slipped across the road towards the sign-post and began to run up the blank alley.

The alley runs between high walls—the walls of the gardens of "Ivanhoe" and "Bella Vista," respectively. It smells a little all the way, and is scarcely twenty yards long, including the turn at the end. So not unnaturally the boy soon came to a standstill. "I'd like to kick that Shelley," he exclaimed, and glanced idly at a piece of paper which was pasted on the wall. Rather an odd piece of paper, and he read it carefully before he turned back. This is what he read:

S. AND C.R.C.C.

ALTERATION IN SERVICE

Owing to lack of patronage the Company are regretfully compelled to suspend the hourly service, and to retain only the

Sunrise and Sunset Omnibuses,

which will run as usual. It is to be hoped that the public will patronize an arrangement which is intended for their convenience. As an extra inducement, the Company will, for the first time, now issue

Return Tickets!

(available one day only), which may be obtained of the driver. Passengers are again reminded that *no tickets are issued at the other end,* and that no complaints in this connection will receive consideration from the Company. Nor will the Company be responsible for any negligence or stupidity on the part of Passengers, nor for Hailstorms, Lightning, Loss of Tickets, nor any Act of God.

For the Direction.

Now he had never seen this notice before, nor could he imagine where the omnibus went to. S. of course was for Surbiton, and R.C.C. meant Road Car Company. But what was the meaning of the other C.? Coombe and Malden, perhaps, or possibly "City." Yet it could not hope to compete with the South-Western. The whole thing, the boy reflected, was run on hopelessly unbusiness-like lines. Why no tickets from the other end? And what an hour to start! Then he realized that unless the notice was a hoax, an omnibus must have been starting just as he was wishing the Bonses goodbye. He peered at the ground through the gathering dusk, and there he saw what might or might not be the marks of wheels. Yet nothing had come out of the alley. And he had never seen an omnibus at any time in the Buckingham Park Road. No: it must be a hoax, like the sign-post, like the fairy tales, like the dreams upon which he would wake suddenly in the night. And with a sigh he stepped from the alley—right into the arms of his father.

Oh, how his father laughed! "Poor, poor Popsey!" he cried. "Diddums! Diddums! Diddums think he'd walky-palky up to Evink!" And his mother, also convulsed with laughter, appeared on the steps of Agathox Lodge.

"Don't Bob!" she gasped. "Don't be so naughty! Oh, you'll kill me! Oh, leave the boy alone!"

But all that evening the joke was kept up. The father implored to be taken too. Was it a very tiring walk? Need one wipe one's shoes on the door-mat? And the boy went to bed feeling faint and sore, and thankful for only one thing—that he had not said a word about the omnibus. It was a hoax, yet through his dreams it grew more and more real, and the streets of Surbiton, through which he saw it driving, seemed instead to become hoaxes and shadows. And very early in the morning he woke with a cry, for he had had a glimpse of its destination.

He struck a match, and its light fell not only on his watch but also on his calendar, so that he knew it to be half-an-hour to sunrise. It was pitch dark, for the fog had come down from London in the night, and all Surbiton was wrapped in its embraces. Yet he sprang out and dressed himself, for he was determined to settle once for all which was real: the omnibus or the streets. "I shall be a fool one way or the other," he thought, "until I know." Soon he was shivering in the road under the gas lamp that guarded the entrance to the alley.

To enter the alley itself required some courage. Not only was it horribly dark, but he now realized that it was an impossible terminus for an omnibus. If it had not been for a policeman, whom he heard approaching through the fog, he would never have made the attempt. The next moment he had made the attempt and failed. Nothing. Nothing but a blank alley and a very silly boy gaping at its dirty floor. It *was* a hoax. "I'll tell papa and mamma," he decided. "I deserve it. I deserve that they should know. I am too silly to be alive." And he went back to the gate of Agathox Lodge.

There he remembered that his watch was fast. The sun was not risen; it would not rise for two minutes. "Give the bus every chance," he thought cynically, and returned into the alley.

But the omnibus was there.

II

It had two horses, whose sides were still smoking from their journey, and its two great lamps shone through the fog against the alley's walls, changing their cobwebs and moss into tissues of fairyland. The driver was huddled up in a cape. He faced the blank wall, and how he had managed to drive in so neatly and so silently was one of the many things that the boy never discovered. Nor could he imagine how ever he would drive out.

"Please," his voice quavered through the foul brown air, "please, is that an omnibus?"

"Omnibus est," said the driver, without turning round. There was a moment's silence. The policeman passed, coughing, by the entrance of the alley. The boy crouched in the shadow, for he did not want to be found out. He was pretty sure, too, that it was a Pirate; nothing else, he reasoned, would go from such odd places and at such odd hours.

"About when do you start?" He tried to sound nonchalant.

"At sunrise."

"How far do you go?"

"The whole way."

"And can I have a return ticket which will bring me all the way back?"

"You can."

"Do you know, I half think I'll come." The driver made no answer. The sun must have risen, for he unhitched the brake. And scarcely had the boy jumped in before the omnibus was off.

How? Did it turn? There was no room. Did it go forward? There was a blank wall. Yet it was moving—moving at a stately pace through the fog, which had turned from brown to yellow. The thought of warm bed and warmer breakfast made the boy feel faint. He wished he had not come. His parents would not have approved. He would have gone back to them if the weather had not made it impossible. The solitude was terrible; he was the only passenger. And the omnibus, though well-built, was cold and somewhat musty. He drew his coat round him, and in so doing chanced to feel his pocket. It was empty. He had forgotten his purse.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Stop!" And then, being of a polite disposition, he glanced up at the painted notice-board so that he might call the driver by name. "Mr. Browne! stop; oh, do please stop!"

Mr. Browne did not stop, but he opened a little window and looked in at the boy. His face was a surprise, so kind it was and modest.

"Mr. Browne, I've left my purse behind. I've not got a penny. I can't pay for the ticket. Will you take my watch, please? I am in the most awful hole."

"Tickets on this line," said the driver, "whether single or return, can be purchased by coinage from no terrene mint. And a chronometer, though it had solaced the vigils of Charlemagne, or measured the slumbers of Laura, can acquire by no mutation the double-cake that charms the fangless Cerberus of Heaven!" So saying, he handed in the necessary ticket, and, while the boy said "Thank you," continued, "Titular pretensions, I know it well, are vanity. Yet they merit no censure when uttered on a laughing lip, and in an homonymous world are in some sort useful, since they do serve to distinguish one Jack from his fellow. Remember me, therefore, as Sir Thomas Browne."

"Are you a Sir? Oh, sorry!" He had heard of these gentlemen drivers. "It *is* good of you about the ticket. But if you go on at this rate, however does your bus pay?"

"It does not pay. It was not intended to pay. Many are the faults of my equipage; it is compounded too curiously of foreign woods; its cushions tickle erudition rather than promote repose; and my horses are nourished not on the evergreen pastures of the moment, but on the dried bents and clovers

of Latinity. But that it pays!—that error at all events was never intended and never attained."

"Sorry again," said the boy rather hopelessly. Sir Thomas looked sad, fearing that, even for a moment, he had been the cause of sadness. He invited the boy to come up and sit beside him on the box, and together they journeyed on through the fog, which was now changing from yellow to white. There were no houses by the road; so it must be either Putney Heath or Wimbledon Common.

"Have you been a driver always?"

"I was a physician once."

"But why did you stop? Weren't you good?"

"As a healer of bodies I had scant success, and several score of my patients preceded me. But as the healer of the spirit I have succeeded beyond my hopes and my deserts. For though my draughts were not better nor subtler than those of other men, yet, by reason of the cunning goblets wherein I offered them, the queasy soul was ofttimes tempted to sip and be refreshed."

"The queasy soul," the boy murmured, "if the sun sets with trees in front of it, and you suddenly come strange all over, is that a queasy soul?"

"Have you felt that?"

"Why, yes."

After a pause he told the boy a little, a very little, about the journey's end. But they did not chatter much, for the boy, when he liked a person, would as soon sit silent in his company as speak, and this, he discovered, was also the mind of Sir Thomas Browne and of many others with whom he was to be acquainted. He heard, however, about the young man Shelley, who was now quite a famous person, with a carriage of his own, and about some of the other drivers who are in the service of the Company. Meanwhile the light grew stronger, though the fog did not disperse. It was now more like mist than fog, and at times would travel quickly across them, as if it was part of a cloud. They had been ascending, too, in a most puzzling way; for over two hours the horses had been pulling against the collar, and even if it were Richmond Hill they ought to have been at the top long ago. Perhaps it was Epsom, or even the North Downs; yet the air seemed keener than that which blows on either. And as to the name of their destination, Sir Thomas Browne was silent.

Crash!

"Thunder, by Jove!" said the boy, "and not so far off either. Listen to the echoes! It's more like mountains."

He thought, not very vividly, of his father and mother. He saw them sitting down to sausages and listening to the storm. He saw his own empty place. Then there would be questions, alarms, theories, jokes, consolations. They would expect him back at lunch. To lunch he would not come, nor to tea, but he would be in for dinner, and so his day's truancy would be

over. If he had had his purse he would have bought them presents—not that he should have known what to get them.

Crash!

The peal and the lightning came together. The cloud quivered as if it were alive, and torn streamers of mist rushed past. "Are you afraid?" asked Sir Thomas Browne.

"What is there to be afraid of? Is it much farther?"

The horses of the omnibus stopped just as a ball of fire burst up and exploded with a ringing noise that was deafening but clear, like the noise of a blacksmith's forge. All the cloud was shattered.

"Oh, listen, Sir Thomas Browne! No, I mean look; we shall get a view at last. No, I mean listen; that sounds like a rainbow!"

The noise had died into the faintest murmur, beneath which another murmur grew, spreading stealthily, steadily, in a curve that widened but did not vary. And in widening curves a rainbow was spreading from the horses' feet into the dissolving mists.

"But how beautiful! What colours! Where will it stop? It is more like the rainbows you can tread on. More like dreams."

The colour and the sound grew together. The rainbow spanned an enormous gulf. Clouds rushed under it and were pierced by it, and still it grew, reaching forward, conquering the darkness, until it touched something that seemed more solid than a cloud.

The boy stood up. "What is that out there?" he called. "What does it rest on, out at that other end?"

In the morning sunshine a precipice shone forth beyond the gulf. A precipice—or was it a castle? The horses moved. They set their feet upon the rainbow.

"Oh, look!" the boy shouted. "Oh, listen! Those caves—or are they gateways? Oh, look between those cliffs at those ledges. I see people! I see trees!"

"Look also below," whispered Sir Thomas. "Neglect not the diviner Acheron."

The boy looked below, past the flames of the rainbow that licked against their wheels. The gulf also had cleared, and in its depths there flowed an everlasting river. One sunbeam entered and struck a green pool, and as they passed over he saw three maidens rise to the surface of the pool, singing, and playing with something that glistened like a ring.

"You down in the water—" he called.

They answered, "You up on the bridge—" There was a burst of music. "You up on the bridge, good luck to you. Truth in the depth, truth on the height."

"You down in the water, what are you doing?"

Sir Thomas Browne replied: "They sport in the mancipiary possession of their gold"; and the omnibus arrived.

III

The boy was in disgrace. He sat locked up in the nursery of Agathox Lodge, learning poetry for a punishment. His father had said, "My boy! I can pardon anything but untruthfulness," and had caned him, saying at each stroke, "There is *no* omnibus, *no* driver, *no* bridge, *no* mountain; you are a *truant*, a *gutter snipe*, a *liar*." His father could be very stern at times. His mother had begged him to say he was sorry. But he could not say that. It was the greatest day of his life, in spite of the caning and the poetry at the end of it.

He had returned punctually at sunset—driven not by Sir Thomas Browne, but by a maiden lady who was full of quiet fun. They had talked of omnibuses and also of barouche landaus. How far away her gentle voice seemed now! Yet it was scarcely three hours since he had left her up the alley.

His mother called through the door. "Dear, you are to come down and to bring your poetry with you."

He came down, and found that Mr. Bons was in the smoking-room with his father. It had been a dinner party.

"Here is the great traveller!" said his father grimly. "Here is the young gentleman who drives in an omnibus over rainbows, while young ladies sing to him." Pleased with his wit, he laughed.

"After all," said Mr. Bons, smiling, "there is something a little like it in Wagner. It is odd how, in quite illiterate minds, you will find glimmers of Artistic Truth. The case interests me. Let me plead for the culprit. We have all romanced in our time, haven't we?"

"Hear how kind Mr. Bons is," said his mother, while his father said, "Very well. Let him say his Poem, and that will do. He is going away to my sister on Tuesday, and *she* will cure him of this alley-slopering." (Laughter.) "Say your Poem."

The boy began. "'Standing aloof in giant ignorance.'"

His father laughed again—roared. "One for you, my son! 'Standing aloof in giant ignorance!' I never knew these poets talked sense. Just describes you. Here, Bons, you go in for poetry. Put him through it, will you, while I fetch up the whisky?"

"Yes, give me the Keats," said Mr. Bons. "Let him say his Keats to me."

So for a few moments the wise man and the ignorant boy were left alone in the smoking-room.

"'Standing aloof in giant ignorance, of thee I dream and of the Cyclades, as one who sits ashore and longs perchance to visit—'"

"Quite right. To visit what?"

"'To visit dolphin coral in deep seas,'" said the boy, and burst into tears.

"Come, come! why do you cry?"

"Because—because all these words that only rhymed before, now that I've come back they're me."

Mr. Bons laid the Keats down. The case was more interesting than he had expected. "*You?*" he exclaimed. "This sonnet, *you?*"

"Yes—and look further on: 'Aye, on the shores of darkness there is light, and precipices show untrodden green.' It *is* so, sir. All these things are true."

"I never doubted it," said Mr. Bons, with closed eyes.

"You—then you believe me? You believe in the omnibus and the driver and the storm and that return ticket I got for nothing and—"

"Tut, tut! No more of your yarns, my boy. I meant that I never doubted the essential truth of Poetry. Some day, when you have read more, you will understand what I mean."

"But, Mr. Bons, it *is* so. There *is* light upon the shores of darkness. I have seen it coming. Light and a wind."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Bons.

"If I had stopped! They tempted me. They told me to give up my ticket —for you cannot come back if you lose your ticket. They called from the river for it, and indeed I was tempted, for I have never been so happy as among those precipices. But I thought of my mother and father, and that I must fetch them. Yet they will not come, though the road starts opposite our house. It has all happened as the people up there warned me, and Mr. Bons has disbelieved me like everyone else. I have been caned. I shall never see that mountain again."

"What's that about me?" said Mr. Bons, sitting up in his chair very suddenly.

"I told them about you, and how clever you were, and how many books you had and they said 'Mr. Bons will certainly disbelieve you.'"

"Stuff and nonsense, my young friend. You grow impertinent. I—well—I will settle the matter. Not a word to your father. I will cure you. Tomorrow evening I will myself call here to take you for a walk, and at sunset we will go up this alley opposite and hunt for your omnibus, you silly little boy."

His face grew serious, for the boy was not disconcerted, but leapt about the room singing, "Joy! joy! I told them you would believe me. We will drive together over the rainbow. I told them that you would come." After all, could there be anything in the story? Wagner? Keats? Shelley? Sir Thomas Browne? Certainly the case was interesting.

And on the morrow evening, though it was pouring with rain, Mr. Bons did not omit to call at Agathox Lodge.

The boy was ready, bubbling with excitement, and skipping about in a way that rather vexed the President of the Literary Society. They took a turn down Buckingham Park Road, and then—having seen that no one was watching them—slipped up the alley. Naturally enough (for the sun was setting) they ran straight against the omnibus.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Bons. "Good gracious heavens!"

It was not the omnibus in which the boy had driven first, nor yet that in

which he had returned. There were three horses—black, gray, and white, the gray being the finest. The driver, who turned round at the mention of goodness and of heaven, was a sallow man with terrifying jaws and sunken eyes. Mr. Bons, on seeing him, gave a cry as if of recognition, and began to tremble violently.

The boy jumped in.

"Is it possible?" cried Mr. Bons. "Is the impossible possible?"

"Sir; come in, sir. It is such a fine omnibus. Oh, here is his name—Dan someone."

Mr. Bons sprang in too. A blast of wind immediately slammed the omnibus door, and the shock jerked down all the omnibus blinds, which were very weak on their springs.

"Dan . . . Show me. Good gracious heavens! We're moving."

"Hooray!" said the boy.

Mr. Bons became flustered. He had not intended to be kidnapped. He could not find the door-handle nor push up the blinds. The ominbus was quite dark, and by the time he had struck a match, night had come on outside also. They were moving rapidly.

"A strange, a memorable adventure," he said, surveying the interior of the omnibus, which was large, roomy, and constructed with extreme regularity, every part exactly answering to every other part. Over the door (the handle of which was outside) was written "Lasciate ogni baldanza voi che entrate" —at least, that was what was written, but Mr. Bons said that it was Lashy arty something, and that baldanza was a mistake for speranza. His voice sounded as if he was in church. Meanwhile, the boy called to the cadaverous driver for two return tickets. They were handed in without a word. Mr. Bons covered his face with his hand and again trembled. "Do you know who that is!" he whispered, when the little window had shut upon them. "It is the impossible."

"Well, I don't like him as much as Sir Thomas Browne, though I shouldn't be surprised if he had even more in him."

"More in him?" He stamped irritably. "By accident you have made the greatest discovery of the century, and all you can say is that there is more in this man. Do you remember those vellum books in my library, stamped with red lilies? This—sit still, I bring you stupendous news!—*this is the man who wrote them.*"

The boy sat quite still. "I wonder if we shall see Mrs. Gamp?" he asked, after a civil pause.

"Mrs—?"

"Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Harris. I like Mrs. Harris. I came upon them quite suddenly. Mrs. Gamp's handboxes have moved over the rainbow so badly. All the bottoms have fallen out, and two of the pippins off her bedstead tumbled into the stream."

"Out there sits the man who wrote my vellum books!" thundered Mr. Bons, "and you talk to me of Dickens and of Mrs. Gamp?"

"I know Mrs. Gamp so well," he apologized. "I could not help being glad to see her. I recognized her voice. She was telling Mrs. Harris about Mrs. Prig."

"Did you spend the whole day in her elevating company?"

"Oh, no. I raced. I met a man who took me out beyond to a race-course. You run, and there are dolphins out at sea."

"Indeed. Do you remember the man's name?"

"Achilles. No; he was later. Tom Jones."

Mr. Bons sighed heavily. "Well, my lad, you have made a miserable mess of it. Think of a cultured person with your opportunities! A cultured person would have known all these characters and known what to have said to each. He would not have wasted his time with a Mrs. Gamp or a Tom Jones. The creations of Homer, of Shakespeare, and of Him who drives us now, would alone have contented him. He would not have raced. He would have asked intelligent questions."

"But, Mr. Bons," said the boy humbly, "you will be a cultured person. I told them so."

"True, true, and I beg you not to disgrace me when we arrive. No gossiping. No running. Keep close to my side, and never speak to these Immortals unless they speak to you. Yes, and give me the return tickets. You will be losing them."

The boy surrendered the tickets, but felt a little sore. After all, he had found the way to this place. It was hard first to be disbelieved and then to be lectured. Meanwhile, the rain had stopped, and moonlight crept into the omnibus through the cracks in the blinds.

"But how is there to be a rainbow?" cried the boy.

"You distract me," snapped Mr. Bons. "I wish to meditate on beauty. I wish to goodness I was with a reverent and sympathetic person."

The lad bit his lip. He made good resolutions. He would imitate Mr. Bons all the visit. He would not laugh, or run, or sing, or do any of the vulgar things that must have disgusted his new friends last time. He would be very careful to pronounce their names properly, and to remember who knew whom. Achilles did not know Tom Jones—at least, so Mr. Bons said. The Duchess of Malfi was older than Mrs. Gamp—at least, so Mr. Bons said. He would be self-conscious, reticent, and prim. He would never say he liked anyone. Yet, when the blind flew up at a chance touch of his head, all these good resolutions went to the winds, for the omnibus had reached the summit of a moonlit hill, and there was the chasm, and there, across it, stood the old precipices, dreaming, with their feet in the everlasting river. He exclaimed, "The mountain! Listen to the new tune in the water! Look at the camp fires in the ravines," and Mr. Bons, after a hasty glance, retorted, "Water?

Camp fires? Ridiculous rubbish. Hold your tongue. There is nothing at all."

Yet, under his eyes, a rainbow formed, compounded not of sunlight and storm, but of moonlight and the spray of the river. The three horses put their feet upon it. He thought it the finest rainbow he had seen, but did not dare to say so, since Mr. Bons said that nothing was there. He leant out—the window had opened—and sang the tune that rose from the sleeping waters.

"The prelude of Rhinegold?" said Mr. Bons suddenly. "Who taught you these *leit motifs?*" He, too, looked out of the window. Then he behaved very oddly. He gave a choking cry and fell back onto the omnibus floor. He writhed and kicked. His face was green.

"Does the bridge make you dizzy?" the boy asked.

"Dizzy!" gasped Mr. Bons. "I want to go back. Tell the driver."

But the driver shook his head.

"We are nearly there," said the boy. "They are asleep. Shall I call? They will be so pleased to see you, for I have prepared them."

Mr. Bons moaned. They moved over the lunar rainbow, which ever and ever broke away behind their wheels. How still the night was! Who would be sentry at the Gate?

"I am coming," he shouted, again forgetting the hundred resolutions. "I am returning—I, the boy."

"The boy is returning," cried a voice to other voices, who repeated, "The boy is returning."

"I am bringing Mr. Bons with me."

Silence.

"I should have said Mr. Bons is bringing me with him."

Profound silence.

"Who stands sentry?"

"Achilles."

And on the rocky causeway, close to the springing of the rainbow bridge, he saw a young man who carried a wonderful shield.

"Mr. Bons, it is Achilles, armed."

"I want to go back," said Mr. Bons.

The last fragment of the rainbow melted, the wheels sang upon the living rock, the door of the omnibus burst open. Out leapt the boy—he could not resist—and sprang to meet the warrior, who, stooping suddenly, caught him on his shield.

"Achilles!" he cried, "let me get down, for I am ignorant and vulgar, and I must wait for that Mr. Bons of whom I told you yesterday."

But Achilles raised him aloft. He crouched on the wonderful shield, on heroes and burning cities, on vineyards graven in gold, on every dear passion, every joy, on the entire image of the Mountain that he had discovered, encircled, like it, with an everlasting stream. "No, no," he protested, "I am not worthy. It is Mr. Bons who must be up here."

But Mr. Bons was whimpering, and Achilles trumpeted and cried, "Stand upright upon my shield!"

"Sir, I did not mean to stand! something made me stand. Sir, why do you delay? Here is only the great Achilles, whom you knew."

Mr. Bons screamed, "I see no one. I see nothing. I want to go back." Then he cried to the driver, "Save me! Let me stop in your chariot. I have honoured you. I have quoted you. I have bound you in vellum. Take me back to my world."

The driver replied, "I am the means and not the end. I am the food and not the life. Stand by yourself, as that boy has stood. I cannot save you. For poetry is a spirit; and they that would worship it must worship in spirit and in truth."

Mr. Bons—he could not resist—crawled out of the beautiful omnibus. His face appeared, gaping horribly. His hands followed, one gripping the step, the other beating the air. Now his shoulders emerged, his chest, his stomach. With a shriek of "I see London," he fell—fell against the hard, moonlit rock, fell into it as if it were water, fell through it, vanished, and was seen by the boy no more.

"Where have you fallen to, Mr. Bons? Here is a procession arriving to honour you with music and torches. Here come the men and women whose names you know. The mountain is awake, the river is awake, over the race-course the sea is awaking those dolphins, and it is all for you. They want you—"

There was the touch of fresh leaves on his forehead. Someone had crowned him.

ΤΕΛΟΣ[2]

From the *Kingston Gazette, Surbiton Times,* and *Raynes Park Observer.*

The body of Mr. Septimus Bons has been found in a shockingly mutilated condition in the vicinity of the Bermondsey gas-works. The deceased's pockets contained a sovereign-purse, a silver cigar-case, a bijou pronouncing dictionary, and a couple of omnibus tickets. The unfortunate gentleman had apparently been hurled from a considerable height. Foul play is suspected, and a thorough investigation is pending by the authorities.

2. End.

A LITTLE CLOUD[1]

JAMES JOYCE

EIGHT YEARS before he had seen his friend off at the North Wall and wished him godspeed. Gallaher had got on. You could tell that at once by his travelled air, his well-cut tweed suit, and fearless accent. Few fellows had talents like his and fewer still could remain unspoiled by such success. Gallaher's heart was in the right place and he had deserved to win. It was something to have a friend like that.

Little Chandler's thoughts ever since lunchtime had been of his meeting with Gallaher, of Gallaher's invitation and of the great city London where Gallaher lived. He was called Little Chandler because, though he was but slightly under the average stature, he gave one the idea of being a little man. His hands were white and small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair silken hair and moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The half-moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of childish white teeth.

As he sat at his desk in the King's Inns he thought what changes those eight years had brought. The friend whom he had known under a shabby and necessitous guise had become a brilliant figure on the London Press. He turned often from his tiresome writing to gaze out of the office window. The glow of a late autumn sunset covered the grass plots and walks. It cast a shower of kindly golden dust on the untidy nurses and decrepit old men who drowsed on the benches; it flickered upon all the moving figures—on the children who ran screaming along the gravel paths and on everyone who passed through the gardens. He watched the scene and thought of life; and (as always happened when he thought of life) he became sad. A gentle melancholy took possession of him. He felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this being the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him.

He remembered the books of poetry upon his shelves at home. He had bought them in his bachelor days and many an evening, as he sat in the little room off the hall, he had been tempted to take one down from the bookshelf and read out something to his wife. But shyness had always held him back; and so the books had remained on their shelves. At times he repeated lines to himself and this consoled him.

When his hour had struck he stood up and took leave of his desk and of his fellow-clerks punctiliously. He emerged from under the feudal arch of

1. From *Dubliners*, included in *The Portable James Joyce*. Copyright, 1946, 1947, by The Viking Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

the King's Inns, a neat modest figure, and walked swiftly down Henrietta Street. The golden sunset was waning and the air had grown sharp. A horde of grimy children populated the street. They stood or ran in the roadway or crawled up the steps before the gaping doors or squatted like mice upon the thresholds. Little Chandler gave them no thought. He picked his way deftly through all that minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roystered. No memory of the past touched him, for his mind was full of a present joy.

He had never been in Corless's but he knew the value of the name. He knew that people went there after the theatre to eat oysters and drink liqueurs; and he had heard that the waiters there spoke French and German. Walking swiftly by at night he had seen cabs drawn up before the door and richly dressed ladies, escorted by cavaliers, alight and enter quickly. They wore noisy dresses and many wraps. Their faces were powdered and they caught up their dresses, when they touched earth, like alarmed Atalantas. He had always passed without turning his head to look. It was his habit to walk swiftly in the street even by day and whenever he found himself in the city late at night he hurried on his way apprehensively and excitedly. Sometimes, however, he courted the causes of his fear. He chose the darkest and narrowest streets and, as he walked boldly forward, the silence that was spread about his footsteps troubled him, the wandering, silent figures troubled him; and at times a sound of low fugitive laughter made him tremble like a leaf.

He turned to the right towards Capel Street. Ignatius Gallaher on the London Press! Who would have thought it possible eight years before? Still, now that he reviewed the past, Little Chandler could remember many signs of future greatness in his friend. People used to say that Ignatius Gallaher was wild. Of course, he did mix with a rakish set of fellows at that time, drank freely and borrowed money on all sides. In the end he had got mixed up in some shady affair, some money transaction: at least, that was one version of his flight. But nobody denied him talent. There was always a certain . . . something in Ignatius Gallaher that impressed you in spite of yourself. Even when he was out at elbows and at his wits' end for money he kept up a bold face. Little Chandler remembered (and the remembrance brought a slight flush of pride to his cheek) one of Ignatius Gallaher's sayings when he was in a tight corner:

"Half time now, boys," he used to say lightheartedly. "Where's my considering cap?"

That was Ignatius Gallaher all out; and, damn it, you couldn't but admire him for it.

Little Chandler quickened his pace. For the first time in his life he felt himself superior to the people he passed. For the first time his soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dub-

lin. As he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the river-banks, their old coats covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset and waiting for the first chill of night to bid them arise, shake themselves and begone. He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea. Perhaps Gallaher might be able to get it into some London paper for him. Could he write something original? He was not sure what idea he wished to express but the thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life within him like an infant hope. He stepped onward bravely.

Every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own sober inartistic life. A light began to tremble on the horizon of his mind. He was not so old—thirty-two. His temperament might be said to be just at the point of maturity. There were so many different moods and impressions that he wished to express in verse. He felt them within him. He tried to weigh his soul to see if it was a poet's soul. Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy. If he could give expression to it in a book of poems perhaps men would listen. He would never be popular: he saw that. He could not sway the crowd but he might appeal to a little circle of kindred minds. The English critics, perhaps, would recognise him as one of the Celtic school by reason of the melancholy tone of his poems; besides that, he would put in allusions. He began to invent sentences and phrases from the notice which his book would get. *"Mr. Chandler has the gift of easy and graceful verse."* . . . *"A wistful sadness pervades these poems."* . . . *"The Celtic note."* It was a pity his name was not more Irish-looking. Perhaps it would be better to insert his mother's name before the surname: Thomas Malone Chandler, or better still: T. Malone Chandler. He would speak to Gallaher about it.

He pursued his revery so ardently that he passed his street and had to turn back. As he came near Corless's his former agitation began to overmaster him and he halted before the door in indecision. Finally he opened the door and entered.

The light and noise of the bar held him at the doorway for a few moments. He looked about him, but his sight was confused by the shining of many red and green wine-glasses. The bar seemed to him to be full of people and he felt that the people were observing him curiously. He glanced quickly to right and left (frowning slightly to make his errand appear serious), but when his sight cleared a little he saw that nobody had turned to look at him: and there, sure enough, was Ignatius Gallaher leaning with his back against the counter and his feet planted far apart.

"Hallo, Tommy, old hero, here you are! What is it to be? What will you have? I'm taking whisky: better stuff than we get across the water. Soda? Lithia? No mineral? I'm the same. Spoils the flavour. . . . Here, *garçon,*

bring us two halves of malt whisky, like a good fellow. . . . Well, and how have you been pulling along since I saw you last? Dear God, how old we're getting! Do you see any signs of aging in me—eh, what? A little grey and thin on the top—what?"

Ignatius Gallaher took off his hat and displayed a large closely cropped head. His face was heavy, pale and clean-shaven. His eyes, which were of bluish slate-colour, relieved his unhealthy pallor and shone out plainly above the vivid orange tie he wore. Between these rival features the lips appeared very long and shapeless and colourless. He bent his head and felt with two sympathetic fingers the thin hair at the crown. Little Chandler shook his head as a denial. Ignatius Gallaher put on his hat again.

"It pulls you down," he said, "press life. Always hurry and scurry, looking for copy and sometimes not finding it: and then, always to have something new in your stuff. Damn proofs and printers, I say, for a few days. I'm deuced glad, I can tell you, to get back to the old country. Does a fellow good, a bit of a holiday. I feel a ton better since I landed again in dear dirty Dublin. . . . Here you are, Tommy. Water? Say when."

Little Chandler allowed his whisky to be very much diluted.

"You don't know what's good for you, my boy," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I drink mine neat."

"I drink very little as a rule," said Little Chandler modestly. "An odd half-one or so when I meet any of the old crowd: that's all."

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, cheerfully, "here's to us and to old times and old acquaintance."

They clinked glasses and drank the toast.

"I met some of the old gang today," said Ignatius Gallaher. "O'Hara seems to be in a bad way. What's he doing?"

"Nothing," said Little Chandler. "He's gone to the dogs."

"But Hogan has a good sit, hasn't he?"

"Yes; he's in the Land Commission."

"I met him one night in London and he seemed to be very flush. . . . Poor O'Hara! Boose, I suppose?"

"Other things, too," said little Chandler shortly.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"Tommy," he said, "I see you haven't changed an atom. You're the very same serious person that used to lecture me on Sunday mornings when I had a sore head and a fur on my tongue. You'd want to knock about a bit in the world. Have you never been anywhere even for a trip?"

"I've been to the Isle of Man," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"The Isle of Man!" he said. "Go to London or Paris: Paris, for choice. That'd do you good."

"Have you seen Paris?"

"I should think I have! I've knocked about there a little."

"And is it really so beautiful as they say?" asked Little Chandler.

He sipped a little of his drink while Ignatius Gallaher finished his boldly.

"Beautiful?" said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on the flavour of his drink. "It's not so beautiful, you know. Of course, it is beautiful. . . . But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement. . . ."

Little Chandler finished his whisky and, after some trouble, succeeded in catching the barman's eye. He ordered the same again.

"I've been to the Moulin Rouge," Ignatius Gallaher continued when the barman had removed their glasses, "and I've been to all the Bohemian cafés. Hot stuff! Not for a pious chap like you, Tommy."

Little Chandler said nothing until the barman returned with two glasses: then he touched his friend's glass lightly and reciprocated the former toast. He was beginning to feel somewhat disillusioned. Gallaher's accent and way of expressing himself did not please him. There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not observed before. But perhaps it was only the result of living in London amid the bustle and competition of the Press. The old personal charm was still there under this new gaudy manner. And, after all, Gallaher had lived, he had seen the world. Little Chandler looked at his friend enviously.

"Everything in Paris is gay," said Ignatius Gallaher. "They believe in enjoying life—and don't you think they're right? If you want to enjoy yourself properly you must go to Paris. And, mind you, they've a great feeling for the Irish there. When they heard I was from Ireland they were ready to eat me, man."

Little Chandler took four or five sips from his glass.

"Tell me," he said, "is it true that Paris is so . . . immoral as they say?"

Ignatius Gallaher made a catholic gesture with his right arm.

"Every place is immoral," he said. "Of course you do find spicy bits in Paris. Go to one of the students' balls, for instance. That's lively, if you like, when the *cocottes* begin to let themselves loose. You know what they are, I suppose?"

"I've heard of them," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher drank off his whisky and shook his head.

"Ah," he said, "you may say what you like. There's no woman like the Parisienne—for style, for go."

"Then it is an immoral city," said Little Chandler, with timid insistence—"I mean, compared with London or Dublin?"

"London!" said Ignatius Gallaher. "It's six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. You ask Hogan, my boy. I showed him a bit about London when he was over there. He'd open your eye. . . . I say, Tommy, don't make punch of that whisky: liquor up."

"No, really. . . ."

"O, come on, another one won't do you any harm. What is it? The same again, I suppose?"

"Well . . . all right."

"*François,* the same again. . . . Will you smoke, Tommy?"

Ignatius Gallaher produced his cigar-case. The two friends lit their cigars and puffed at them in silence until their drinks were served.

"I'll tell you my opinion," said Ignatius Gallaher, emerging after some time from the clouds of smoke in which he had taken refuge, "it's a rum world. Talk of immorality! I've heard of cases—what am I saying?—I've known them: cases of . . . immorality. . . ."

Ignatius Gallaher puffed thoughtfully at his cigar and then, in a calm historian's tone, he proceeded to sketch for his friend some pictures of the corruption which was rife abroad. He summarised the vices of many capitals and seemed inclined to award the palm to Berlin. Some things he could not vouch for (his friends had told him), but of others he had had personal experience. He spared neither rank nor caste. He revealed many of the secrets of religious houses on the Continent and described some of the practices which were fashionable in high society and ended by telling, with details, a story about an English duchess—a story which he knew to be true. Little Chandler was astonished.

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "here we are in old jog-along Dublin where nothing is known of such things."

"How dull you must find it," said Little Chandler, "after all the other places you've seen!"

"Well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "it's a relaxation to come over here, you know. And, after all, it's the old country, as they say, isn't it? You can't help having a certain feeling for it. That's human nature. . . . But tell me something about yourself. Hogan told me you had . . . tasted the joys of connubial bliss. Two years ago, wasn't it?"

Little Chandler blushed and smiled.

"Yes," he said. "I was married last May twelve months."

"I hope it's not too late in the day to offer my best wishes," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I didn't know your address or I'd have done so at the time."

He extended his hand, which Little Chandler took.

"Well, Tommy," he said, "I wish you and yours every joy in life, old chap, and tons of money, and may you never die till I shoot you. And that's the wish of a sincere friend, an old friend. You know that?"

"I know that," said Little Chandler.

"Any youngsters?" said Ignatius Gallaher.

Little Chandler blushed again.

"We have one child," he said.

"Son or daughter?"

"A little boy."

Ignatius Gallaher slapped his friend sonorously on the back.

"Bravo," he said, "I wouldn't doubt you, Tommy."

Little Chandler smiled, looked confusedly at his glass and bit his lower lip with three childishly white front teeth.

"I hope you'll spend an evening with us," he said, "before you go back. My wife will be delighted to meet you. We can have a little music and—"

"Thanks awfully, old chap," said Ignatius Gallaher, "I'm sorry we didn't meet earlier. But I must leave tomorrow night."

"Tonight, perhaps . . . ?"

"I'm awfully sorry, old man. You see I'm over here with another fellow, clever young chap he is too, and we arranged to go to a little card-party. Only for that. . . ."

"O, in that case. . . ."

"But who knows?" said Ignatius Chandler considerately. "Next year I may take a little skip over here now that I've broken the ice. It's only a pleasure deferred."

"Very well," said Little Chandler, "the next time you come we must have an evening together. That's agreed now, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's agreed," said Ignatius Gallaher. "Next year if I come, *parole d'honneur.*"

"And to clinch the bargain," said Little Chandler, "we'll just have one more now."

Ignatius Gallaher took out a large gold watch and looked at it.

"Is it to be the last?" he said. "Because you know, I have an a.p."

"O, yes, positively," said Little Chandler.

"Very well, then," said Ignatius Gallaher, "let us have another one as a *deoc an doruis*—that's good vernacular for a small whisky, I believe."

Little Chandler ordered the drinks. The blush which had risen to his face a few moments before was establishing itself. A trifle made him blush at any time: and now he felt warm and excited. Three small whiskies had gone to his head and Gallaher's strong cigar had confused his mind, for he was a delicate and abstinent person. The adventure of meeting Gallaher after eight years, of finding himself with Gallaher in Corless's surrounded by lights and noise, of listening to Gallaher's stories and of sharing for a brief space Gallaher's vagrant and triumphant life, upset the equipoise of his sensitive nature. He felt acutely the contrast between his own life and his friend's, and it seemed to him unjust. Gallaher was his inferior in birth and education. He was sure that he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do, something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the chance. What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity! He wished to vindicate himself in some way, to assert his manhood. He saw behind Gallaher's refusal of his invitation. Gallaher was only patronising him by his friendliness just as he was patronising Ireland by his visit.

The barman brought their drinks. Little Chandler pushed one glass towards his friend and took up the other boldly.

"Who knows?" he said, as they lifted their glasses. "When you come next year I may have the pleasure of wishing long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Gallaher."

Ignatius Gallaher in the act of drinking closed one eye expressively over the rim of his glass. When he had drunk he smacked his lips decisively, set down his glass and said:

"No blooming fear of that, my boy. I'm going to have my fling first and see a bit of life and the world before I put my head in the sack—if I ever do."

"Some day you will," said Little Chandler calmly.

Ignatius Gallaher turned his orange tie and slate-blue eyes full upon his friend.

"You think so?" he said.

"You'll put your head in the sack," repeated Little Chandler stoutly, "like everyone else if you can find the girl."

He had slightly emphasised his tone and he was aware that he had betrayed himself; but, though the colour had heightened in his cheek, he did not flinch from his friend's gaze. Ignatius Gallaher watched him for a few moments and then said:

"If ever it occurs, you may bet your bottom dollar there'll be no mooning and spooning about it. I mean to marry money. She'll have a good fat account at the bank or she won't do for me."

Little Chandler shook his head.

"Why, man alive," said Ignatius Gallaher, vehemently, "do you know what it is? I've only to say the word and tomorrow I can have the woman and the cash. You don't believe it? Well, I know it. There are hundreds—what am I saying?—thousands of rich Germans and Jews, rotten with money, that'd only be too glad. . . . You wait a while, my boy. See if I don't play my cards properly. When I go about a thing I mean business, I tell you. You just wait."

He tossed his glass to his mouth, finished his drink and laughed loudly. Then he looked thoughtfully before him and said in a calmer tone:

"But I'm in no hurry. They can wait. I don't fancy tying myself up to one woman, you know."

He imitated with his mouth the act of tasting and made a wry face.

"Must get a bit stale, I should think," he said.

. . . . . .

Little Chandler sat in the room off the hall, holding a child in his arms. To save money they kept no servant but Annie's young sister Monica came for an hour or so in the morning and an hour or so in the evening to help. But Monica had gone home long ago. It was a quarter to nine. Little Chandler had come home late for tea and, moreover, he had forgotten to bring Annie home the parcel of coffee from Bewley's. Of course she was in

a bad humour and gave him short answers. She said she would do without any tea but when it came near the time at which the shop at the corner closed she decided to go out herself for a quarter of a pound of tea and two pounds of sugar. She put the sleeping child deftly in his arms and said:

"Here. Don't waken him."

A little lamp with a white china shade stood upon the table and its light fell over a photograph which was enclosed in a frame of crumpled horn. It was Annie's photograph. Little Chandler looked at it, pausing at the thin tight lips. She wore the pale blue summer blouse which he had brought her home as a present one Saturday. It had cost him ten and elevenpence; but what an agony of nervousness it had cost him! How he had suffered that day, waiting at the shop door until the shop was empty, standing at the counter and trying to appear at his ease while the girl piled ladies' blouses before him, paying at the desk and forgetting to take up the odd penny of his change, being called back by the cashier, and finally, striving to hide his blushes as he left the shop by examining the parcel to see if it was securely tied. When he brought the blouse home Annie kissed him and said it was very pretty and stylish; but when she heard the price she threw the blouse on the table and said it was a regular swindle to charge ten and elevenpence for it. At first she wanted to take it back but when she tried it on she was delighted with it, especially with the make of the sleeves, and kissed him and said he was very good to think of her.

Hm! . . .

He looked coldly into the eyes of the photograph and they answered coldly. Certainly they were pretty and the face itself was pretty. But he found something mean in it. Why was it so unconscious and ladylike? The composure of the eyes irritated him. They repelled him and defied him: there was no passion in them, no rapture. He thought of what Gallaher had said about rich Jewesses. Those dark Oriental eyes, he thought, how full they are of passion, of voluptuous longing! . . . Why had he married the eyes in the photograph?

He caught himself up at the question and glanced nervously round the room. He found something mean in the pretty furniture which he had bought for his house on the hire system. Annie had chosen it herself and it reminded him of her. It too was prim and pretty. A dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not escape from his little house? Was it too late for him to try to live bravely like Gallaher? Could he go to London? There was the furniture still to be paid for. If he could only write a book and get it published, that might open the way for him.

A volume of Byron's poems lay before him on the table. He opened it cautiously with his left hand lest he should waken the child and began to read the first poem in the book:

"Hushed are the winds and still the evening gloom,
Not e'en a Zephyr wanders through the grove,
Whilst I return to view my Margaret's tomb
And scatter flowers on the dust I love."

He paused. He felt the rhythm of the verse about him in the room. How melancholy it was! Could he, too, write like that, express the melancholy of his soul in verse? There were so many things he wanted to describe: his sensation of a few hours before on Grattan Bridge, for example. If he could get back again into that mood. . . .

The child awoke and began to cry. He turned from the page and tried to hush it: but it would not be hushed. He began to rock it to and fro in his arms but its wailing cry grew keener. He rocked it faster while his eyes began to read the second stanza:

"Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,
That clay where once . . ."

It was useless. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything. The wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life. His arms trembled with anger and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted:

"Stop!"

The child stopped for an instant, had a spasm of fright and began to scream. He jumped up from his chair and walked hastily up and down the room with the child in his arms. It began to sob piteously, losing its breath for four or five seconds, and then bursting out anew. The thin walls of the room echoed the sound. He tried to soothe it but it sobbed more convulsively. He looked at the contracted and quivering face of the child and began to be alarmed. He counted seven sobs without a break between them and caught the child to his breast in fright. If it died! . . .

The door was burst open and a young woman ran in, panting.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried.

The child, hearing its mother's voice, broke out into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"It's nothing, Annie . . . it's nothing. . . . He began to cry . . ."

She flung her parcels on the floor and snatched the child from him.

"What have you done to him?" she cried, glaring into his face.

Little Chandler sustained for one moment the gaze of her eyes and his heart closed together as he met the hatred in them. He began to stammer:

"It's nothing. . . . He . . . he began to cry. . . . I couldn't . . . I didn't do anything. . . . What?"

Giving no heed to him she began to walk up and down the room, clasping the child tightly in her arms and murmuring:

"My little man! My little mannie! Was 'ou frightened, love? . . . There now, love! There now! . . . Lambabaun! Mamma's little lamb of the world! . . . There now!"

Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame and he stood back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the child's sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to his eyes.



A COUNTRY DOCTOR[1]

FRANZ KAFKA

I WAS in great perplexity; I had to start on an urgent journey; a seriously ill patient was waiting for me in a village ten miles off; a thick blizzard of snow filled all the wide spaces between him and me; I had a gig, a light gig with big wheels, exactly right for our country roads; muffled in furs, my bag of instruments in my hand, I was in the courtyard all ready for the journey; but there was no horse to be had, no horse. My own horse had died in the night, worn out by the fatigues of this icy winter; my servant girl was now running round the village trying to borrow a horse; but it was hopeless, I knew it, and I stood there forlornly, with the snow gathering more and more thickly upon me, more and more unable to move. In the gateway the girl appeared, alone, and waved the lantern; of course, who would lend a horse at this time for such a journey? I strode through the courtway once more, I could see no way out; in my confused distress I kicked at the dilapidated door of the yearlong uninhabited pigsty. It flew open and flapped to and fro on its hinges. A steam and smell as of horses came out of it. A dim stable lantern was swinging inside from a rope. A man, crouching on his hams in that low space, showed an open blue-eyed face. "Shall I yoke up?" he asked, crawling out on all fours. I did not know what to say and merely stooped down to see what else was in the sty. The servant girl was standing beside me. "You never know what you're going to find in your own house," she said, and we both laughed. "Hey there, Brother, hey there, Sister!" called the groom, and two horses, enormous creatures with powerful flanks, one after the other, their legs tucked close to their bodies, each well-shaped head lowered like a camel's, by sheer strength of buttocking squeezed out through the door hole which they filled entirely. But at once they were standing up, with their long legs and their bodies steaming thickly. "Give him a hand," I said, and the willing girl hurried to help the groom with the harnessing. Yet hardly was she beside him when the groom clipped hold of her and pushed his face against hers. She screamed and fled back to me;

1. From *The Penal Colony* by Franz Kafka by permission of Schocken Books, New York. (Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir.) Copyright 1948 by Schocken Books, New York.

on her cheek stood out in red the marks of two rows of teeth. "You brute," I yelled in fury, "do you want a whipping?" but in the same moment reflected that the man was a stranger; that I did not know where he came from, and that of his own free will he was helping me out when everyone else had failed me. As if he knew my thoughts he took no offense at my threat but, still busied with the horses, only turned round once towards me. "Get in," he said then, and indeed: everything was ready. A magnificent pair of horses, I observed, such as I had never sat behind, and I climbed in happily. "But I'll drive, you don't know the way," I said. "Of course," said he, "I'm not coming with you anyway, I'm staying with Rose." "No," shrieked Rose, fleeing into the house with a justified presentiment that her fate was inescapable; I heard the door chain rattle as she put it up; I heard the key turn in the lock; I could see, moreover, how she put out the lights in the entrance hall and in further flight all through the rooms to keep herself from being discovered. "You're coming with me," I said to the groom, "or I won't go, urgent as my journey is. I'm not thinking of paying for it by handing the girl over to you." "Gee up!" he said; clapped his hands; the gig whirled off like a log in a freshet; I could just hear the door of my house splitting and bursting as the groom charged at it and then I was deafened and blinded by a storming rush that steadily buffeted all my senses. But this only for a moment, since, as if my patient's farmyard had opened out just before my courtyard gate, I was already there; the horses had come quietly to a standstill; the blizzard had stopped; the moonlight all around; my patient's parents hurried out of the house, his sister behind them; I was almost lifted out of the gig; from their confused ejaculations I gathered not a word; in the sick room the air was almost unbreathable; the neglected stove was smoking; I wanted to push open a window; but first I had to look at my patient. Gaunt, without any fever, not cold, not warm, with vacant eyes, without a shirt, the youngster heaved himself up from under the feather bedding, threw his arms around my neck, and whispered in my ear: "Doctor, let me die." I glanced round the room; no one had heard it; the parents were leaning forward in silence waiting for my verdict; the sister had set a chair for my handbag; I opened the bag and hunted among my instruments; the boy kept clutching at me from his bed to remind me of his entreaty; I picked up a pair of tweezers, examined them in the candlelight and laid them down again. "Yes," I thought blasphemously, "in cases like this the gods are helpful, send the missing horse, add to it a second because of the urgency, and to crown everything bestow even a groom—" And only now did I remember Rose again; what was I to do, how could I rescue her, how could I pull her away from under that groom at ten miles' distance, with a team of horses I couldn't control. These horses, now, they had somehow slipped the reins loose, pushed the window open from the outside, I did not know how; each of them had stuck a head in at a window and, quite unmoved by the startled cries of the family, stood eyeing the patient. "Better

go back at once," I thought, as if the horses were summoning me to the return journey, yet I permitted the patient's sister, who fancied that I was dazed by the heat, to take my fur coat from me. A glass of rum was poured out for me, the old man clapped me on the shoulder, a familiarity justified by this offer of his treasure. I shook my head; in the narrow confines of the old man's thoughts I felt ill; that was my only reason for refusing the drink. The mother stood by the bedside and cajoled me towards it; I yielded, and, while one of the horses whinnied loudly to the ceiling, laid my head to the boy's breast, which shivered under my wet beard. I confirmed what I already knew; the boy was quite sound, something a little wrong with his circulation, saturated with coffee by his solicitous mother, but sound and best turned out of bed with one shove. I am no world reformer and so I let him lie. I was the district doctor and I did my duty to the uttermost, to the point where it became almost too much. I was badly paid and yet generous and helpful to the poor. I had still to see that Rose was all right, and then the boy might have his way and I wanted to die too. What was I doing there in that endless winter! My horse was dead, and not a single person in the village would lend me another. I had to get my team out of the pigsty; if they hadn't chanced to be horses I should have had to travel with swine. That was how it was. And I nodded to the family. They knew nothing about it, and, had they known, would not have believed it. To write prescriptions is easy, but to come to an understanding with people is hard. Well, this should be the end of my visit, I had once more been called out needlessly, I was used to that, the whole district made my life a torment with my night bell, but that I should have to sacrifice Rose this time as well, the pretty girl who had lived in my house for years almost without my noticing her—that sacrifice was too much to ask, and I had somehow to get it reasoned out in my head with the help of what craft I could muster, in order not to let fly at this family, which with the best will in the world could not restore Rose to me. But as I shut my bag and put an arm out for my fur coat, the family meanwhile standing together, the father sniffing at the glass of rum in his hand, the mother, apparently disappointed in me—why, what do people expect?—biting her lips with tears in her eyes, the sister fluttering a blood-soaked towel, I was somehow ready to admit conditionally that the boy might be ill after all. I went towards him, he welcomed me smiling as if I were bringing him the most nourishing invalid broth—ah, now both horses were whinnying together; the noise, I suppose, was ordained by heaven to assist my examination of the patient—and this time I discovered that the boy was indeed ill. In his right side, near the hip, was an open wound as big as the palm of my hand. Rose-red, in many variations of shade, dark in the hollows, lighter at the edges, softly granulated, with irregular clots of blood, open as a surface mine to the daylight. That was how it looked from a distance. But on a closer inspection there was another complication. I could not help a low whistle of surprise. Worms, as thick and as long as my little

finger, themselves rose-red and blood-spotted as well, were wriggling from their fastness in the interior of the wound towards the light, with small white heads and many little legs. Poor boy, you were past helping. I had discovered your great wound; this blossom in your side was destroying you. The family was pleased; they saw me busying myself; the sister told the mother, the mother the father, the father told several guests who were coming in, through the moonlight at the open door, walking on tiptoe, keeping their balance with outstretched arms. "Will you save me?" whispered the boy with a sob, quite blinded by the life within his wound. That is what people are like in my district. Always expecting the impossible from the doctor. They have lost their ancient beliefs; the parson sits at home and unravels his vestments, one after another; but the doctor is supposed to be omnipotent with his merciful surgeon's hand. Well, as it pleases them; I have not thrust my services on them; if they misuse me for sacred ends, I let that happen to me too; what better do I want, old country doctor that I am, bereft of my servant girl! And so they came, the family and the village elders, and stripped my clothes off me; a school choir with the teacher at the head of it stood before the house and sang these words to an utterly simple tune:

Strip his clothes off, then he'll heal us,
If he doesn't, kill him dead!
Only a doctor, only a doctor.

Then my clothes were off and I looked at the people quietly, my fingers in my beard and my head cocked to one side. I was altogether composed and equal to the situation and remained so, although it was no help to me, since they now took me by the head and feet and carried me to the bed. They laid me down in it next to the wall, on the side of the wound. Then they all left the room; the door was shut; the singing stopped; clouds covered the moon; the bedding was warm around me; the horses' heads in the opened windows wavered like shadows. "Do you know," said a voice in my ear, "I have very little confidence in you. Why, you were only blown in here, you didn't come on your own feet. Instead of helping me, you're cramping me on my death bed. What I'd like best is to scratch your eyes out." "Right," I said, "it's a shame. And yet I am a doctor. What am I to do? Believe me, it is not too easy for me either." "Am I supposed to be content with this apology? Oh, I must be, I can't help it. I always have to put up with things. A fine wound is all I brought into the world; that was my sole endowment." "My young friend," said I, "your mistake is: you have not a wide enough view. I have been in all the sickrooms, far and wide, and I tell you: your wound is not so bad. Done in a tight corner with two strokes of the ax. Many a one proffers his side and can hardly hear the ax in the forest, far less that it is coming nearer to him." "Is that really so, or are you deluding me in my fever?" "It is really so, take the word of honor of an official

doctor." And he took it and lay still. But now it was time for me to think of escaping. The horses were still standing faithfully in their places. My clothes, my fur coat, my bag were quickly collected; I didn't want to waste time dressing; if the horses raced home as they had come, I should only be springing, as it were, out of this bed into my own. Obediently a horse backed away from the window; I threw my bundle into the gig; the fur coat missed its mark and was caught on a hook only by the sleeve. Good enough. I swung myself on to the horse. With the reins loosely trailing, one horse barely fastened to the other, the gig swaying behind, my fur coat last of all in the snow. "Geeup!" I said, but there was no galloping; slowly, like old men, we crawled through the snowy wastes; a long time echoed behind us the new but faulty song of the children:

O be joyful, all you patients,
The doctor's laid in bed beside you!

Never shall I reach home at this rate; my flourishing practice is done for; my successor is robbing me, but in vain, for he cannot take my place; in my house the disgusting groom is raging; Rose is the victim; I do not want to think about it any more. Naked, exposed to the frost of this most unhappy of ages, with an earthly vehicle, unearthly horses, old man that I am, I wander astray. My fur coat is hanging from the back of the gig, but I cannot reach it, and none of my limber pack of patients lifts a finger. Betrayed! Betrayed! A false alarm on the night bell once answered—it cannot be made good, not ever.

JEAN BEICKE[1]

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

DURING A TIME like this, they kid a lot among the doctors and nurses on the obstetrical floor because of the rushing business in new babies that's pretty nearly always going on up there. It's the Depression, they say, nobody has any money so they stay home nights. But one bad result of this is that in the children's ward, another floor up, you see a lot of unwanted children.

The parents get them into the place under all sorts of pretexts. For instance, we have two premature brats, Navarro and Cryschka, one a boy and one a girl; the mother died when Cryschka was born, I think. We got them within a few days of each other, one weighing four pounds and one a few ounces more. They dropped down below four pounds before we got

1. From *Make Light of It,* by William Carlos Williams. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. Copyright, 1933, by William Carlos Williams.

them going but there they are; we had a lot of fun betting on their daily gains in weight but we still have them. They're in pretty good shape though now. Most of the kids that are left that way get along swell. The nurses grow attached to them and get a real thrill when they begin to pick up. It's great to see. And the parents sometimes don't even come to visit them, afraid we'll grab them and make them take the kids out, I suppose.

A funny one is a little Hungarian Gypsy girl that's been up there for the past month. She was about eight weeks old maybe when they brought her in with something on her lower lip that looked like a chancre. Everyone was interested but the Wassermann was negative. It turned out finally to be nothing but a peculiarly situated birthmark. But that kid is still there too. Nobody can find the parents. Maybe they'll turn up some day.

Even when we do get rid of them, they often come back in a week or so—sometimes in terrible condition, full of impetigo, down in weight—everything we'd done for them to do over again. I think it's deliberate neglect in most cases. That's what happened to this little Gypsy. The nurse was funny after the mother had left the second time. I couldn't speak to her, she said. I just couldn't say a word I was so mad. I wanted to slap her.

We had a couple of Irish girls a while back named Cowley. One was a red head with beautiful wavy hair and the other a straight haired blonde. They really were good looking and not infants at all. I should say they must have been two and three years old approximately. I can't imagine how the parents could have abandoned them. But they did. I think they were habitual drunkards and may have had to beat it besides on short notice. No fault of theirs maybe.

But all these are, after all, not the kind of kids I have in mind. The ones I mean are those they bring in stinking dirty, and I mean stinking. The poor brats are almost dead sometimes, just living skeletons, almost, wrapped in rags, their heads caked with dirt, their eyes stuck together with pus and their legs all excoriated from the dirty diapers no one has had the interest to take off them regularly. One poor little pot we have now with a thin purplish skin and big veins standing out all over its head had a big sore place in the fold of its neck under the chin. The nurse told me that when she started to undress it it had on a shirt with a neckband that rubbed right into that place. Just dirt. The mother gave a story of having had it in some sort of home in Paterson. We couldn't get it straight. We never try. What the hell? We take 'em and try to make something out of them.

Sometimes, you'd be surprised, some doctor has given the parents a ride before they bring the child to the clinic. You wouldn't believe it. They clean 'em out, maybe for twenty-five dollars—they maybe had to borrow—and then tell 'em to move on. It happens. Men we all know too. Pretty bad. But what can you do?

And sometimes the kids are not only dirty and neglected but sick, ready to die. You ought to see those nurses work. You'd think it was the brat of

their best friend. They handle those kids as if they were worth a million dollars. Not that some nurses aren't better than others but in general they break their hearts over those kids, many times, when I, for one, wish they'd never get well.

I often kid the girls. Why not? I look at some miserable specimens they've dolled up for me when I make the rounds in the morning and I tell them: Give it an enema, maybe it will get well and grow up into a cheap prostitute or something. The country needs you, brat. I once proposed that we have a mock wedding between a born garbage hustler we'd saved and a little female with a fresh mug on her that would make anybody smile.

Poor kids! You really wonder sometimes if medicine isn't all wrong to try to do anything for them at all. You actually want to see them pass out, especially when they're deformed or—they're awful sometimes. Every one has rickets in an advanced form, scurvy too, flat chests, spindly arms and legs. They come in with pneumonia, a temperature of a hundred and six, maybe, and before you can do a thing, they're dead.

This little Jean Beicke was like that. She was about the worst you'd expect to find anywhere. Eleven months old. Lying on the examining table with a blanket half way up her body, stripped, lying there, you'd think it a five months baby, just about that long. But when the nurse took the blanket away, her legs kept on going for a good eight inches longer. I couldn't get used to it. I covered her up and asked two of the men to guess how long she was. Both guessed at least half a foot too short. One thing that helped the illusion besides her small face was her arms. They came about to her hips. I don't know what made that. They should come down to her thighs, you know.

She was just skin and bones but her eyes were good and she looked straight at you. Only if you touched her anywhere, she started to whine and then cry with a shrieking, distressing sort of cry that no one wanted to hear. We handled her as gently as we knew how but she had to cry just the same.

She was one of the damnedest looking kids I've ever seen. Her head was all up in front and flat behind, I suppose from lying on the back of her head so long the weight of it and the softness of the bones from the rickets had just flattened it out and pushed it up forward. And her legs and arms seemed loose on her like the arms and legs of some cheap dolls. You could bend her feet up on her shins absolutely flat—but there was no real deformity, just all loosened up. Nobody was with her when I saw her though her mother had brought her in.

It was about ten in the evening, the interne had asked me to see her because she had a stiff neck, and how! and there was some thought of meningitis—perhaps infantile paralysis. Anyhow, they didn't want her to go through the night without at least a lumbar puncture if she needed it. She had a fierce cough and a fairly high fever. I made it out to be a case of bron-

cho-pneumonia with meningismus but no true involvement of the central nervous system. Besides she had inflamed ear drums.

I wanted to incise the drums, especially the left, and would have done it only the night superintendent came along just then and made me call the ear man on service. You know. She also looked to see if we had an operative release from the parents. There was. So I went home, the ear man came in a while later and opened the ears—a little bloody serum from both sides and that was that.

Next day we did a lumbar puncture, tapped the spine that is, and found clear fluid with a few lymphocytes in it, nothing diagnostic. The X-ray of the chest clinched the diagnosis of broncho-pneumonia, there was an extensive involvement. She was pretty sick. We all expected her to die from exhaustion before she'd gone very far.

I had to laugh every time I looked at the brat after that, she was such a funny looking one but one thing that kept her from being a total loss was that she did eat. Boy! how that kid could eat! As sick as she was she took her grub right on time every three hours, a big eight ounce bottle of whole milk and digested it perfectly. In this depression you got to be such a hungry baby, I heard the nurse say to her once. It's a sign of intelligence, I told her. But anyway, we all got to be crazy about Jean. She'd just lie there and eat and sleep. Or she'd lie and look straight in front of her by the hour. Her eyes were blue, a pale sort of blue. But if you went to touch her, she'd begin to scream. We just didn't, that's all, unless we absolutely had to. And she began to gain in weight. Can you imagine that? I suppose she had been so terribly run down that food, real food, was an entirely new experience to her. Anyway she took her food and gained on it though her temperature continued to run steadily around between a hundred and three and a hundred and four for the first eight or ten days. We were surprised.

When we were expecting her to begin to show improvement, however, she didn't. We did another lumbar puncture and found fewer cells. That was fine and the second X-ray of the chest showed it somewhat improved also. That wasn't so good though, because the temperature still kept up and we had no way to account for it. I looked at the ears again and thought they ought to be opened once more. The ear man disagreed but I kept after him and next day he did it to please me. He didn't get anything but a drop of serum on either side.

Well, Jean didn't get well. We did everything we knew how to do except the right thing. She carried on for another two—no I think it was three—weeks longer. A couple of times her temperature shot up to a hundred and eight. Of course we knew then it was the end. We went over her six or eight times, three or four of us, one after the other, and nobody thought to take an X-ray of the mastoid regions. It was dumb, if you want to say it, but there wasn't a sign of anything but the history of the case to point to it.

The ears had been opened early, they had been watched carefully, there was no discharge to speak of at any time and from the external examination, the mastoid processes showed no change from the normal. But that's what she died of, acute purulent mastoiditis of the left side, going on to involvement of the left lateral sinus and finally the meninges. We might, however, have taken a culture of the pus when the ear was first opened and I shall always, after this, in suspicious cases. I have been told since that if you get a virulent bug like the streptococcus mucosus capsulatus it's wise at least to go in behind the ear for drainage if the temperature keeps up. Anyhow she died.

I went in when she was just lying there gasping. Somehow or other, I hated to see that kid go. Everybody felt rotten. She was such a scrawny, misshapen, worthless piece of humanity that I had said many times that somebody ought to chuck her in the garbage chute—but after a month watching her suck up her milk and thrive on it—and to see those alert blue eyes in that face—well, it wasn't pleasant. Her mother was sitting by the bed crying quietly when I came in, the morning of the last day. She was a young woman, didn't look more than a girl, she just sat there looking at the child and crying without a sound.

I expected her to begin to ask me questions with that look on her face all doctors hate—but she didn't. I put my hand on her shoulder and told her we had done everything we knew how to do for Jean but that we really didn't know what, finally, was killing her. The woman didn't make any sign of hearing me. Just sat there looking in between the bars of the crib. So after a moment watching the poor kid beside her, I turned to the infant in the next crib to go on with my rounds. There was an older woman there looking in at that baby also—no better off than Jean, surely. I spoke to her, thinking she was the mother of this one, but she wasn't.

Before I could say anything, she told me she was the older sister of Jean's mother and that she knew that Jean was dying and that it was a good thing. That gave me an idea—I hated to talk to Jean's mother herself—so I beckoned the woman to come out into the hall with me.

I'm glad she's going to die, she said. She's got two others home, older, and her husband has run off with another woman. It's better off dead—never was any good anyway. You know her husband came down from Canada about a year and a half ago. She seen him and asked him to come back and live with her and the children. He come back just long enough to get her pregnant with this one then he left her again and went back to the other woman. And I suppose knowing she was pregnant, and suffering, and having no money and nowhere to get it, she was worrying and this one never was formed right. I seen it as soon as it was born. I guess the condition she was in was the cause. She's got enough to worry about now without this one. The husband's gone to Canada again and we can't get a thing out of him. I been keeping them, but we can't do much more. She'd work if she

could find anything but what can you do with three kids in times like this? She's got a boy nine years old but her mother-in-law sneaked it away from her and now he's with his father in Canada. She worries about him too, but that don't do no good.

Listen, I said, I want to ask you something. Do you think she'd let us do an autopsy on Jean if she dies? I hate to speak to her of such a thing now but to tell you the truth, we've worked hard on that poor child and we don't exactly know what is the trouble. We know that she's had pneumonia but that's been getting well. Would you take it up with her for me, if—of course —she dies.

Oh, she's gonna die all right, said the woman. Sure, I will. If you can learn anything, it's only right. I'll see that you get the chance. She won't make any kick, I'll tell her.

Thanks, I said.

The infant died about five in the afternoon. The pathologist was dog-tired from a lot of extra work he'd had to do due to the absence of his assistant on her vacation so he put off the autopsy till next morning. They packed the body in ice in one of the service hoppers. It worked perfectly.

Next morning they did the postmortem. I couldn't get the nurse to go down to it. I may be a sap, she said, but I can't do it, that's all. I can't. Not when I've taken care of them. I feel as if they're my own.

I was amazed to see how completely the lungs had cleared up. They were almost normal except for a very small patch of residual pneumonia here and there which really amounted to nothing. Chest and abdomen were in excellent shape, otherwise, throughout—not a thing aside from the negligible pneumonia. Then he opened the head.

It seemed to me the poor kid's convolutions were unusually well developed. I kept thinking it's incredible that that complicated mechanism of the brain has come into being just for this. I never can quite get used to an autopsy.

The first evidence of the real trouble—for there had been no gross evidence of meningitis—was when the pathologist took the brain in his hand and made the long steady cut which opened up the left lateral ventricle. There was just a faint color of pus on the bulb of the choroid plexus there. Then the diagnosis all cleared up quickly. The left lateral sinus was completely thrombosed and on going into the left temporal bone from the inside the mastoid process was all broken down.

I called up the ear man and he came down at once. A clear miss, he said. I think if we'd gone in there earlier, we'd have saved her.

For what? said I. Vote the straight Communist ticket.

Would it make us any dumber? said the ear man.

THE FLY[1]

KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"Y'ARE very snug in here," piped old Mr. Woodifield, and he peered out of the great, green leather armchair by his friend, the boss's desk, as a baby peers out of its pram. His talk was over; it was time for him to be off. But he did not want to go. Since he had retired, since his . . . stroke, the wife and the girls kept him boxed up in the house every day of the week except Tuesday. On Tuesday he was dressed up and brushed and allowed to cut back to the City for the day. Though what he did there the wife and girls couldn't imagine. Made a nuisance of himself to his friends, they supposed. . . . Well, perhaps so. All the same, we cling to our last pleasures as the tree clings to its last leaves. So there sat old Woodifield, smoking a cigar and staring almost greedily at the boss, who rolled in his office chair, stout, rosy, five years older than he, and still going strong, still at the helm. It did one good to see him.

Wistfully, admiringly, the old voice added, "It's snug in here, upon my word!"

"Yes, it's comfortable enough," agreed the boss, and he flipped *The Financial Times* with a paper knife. As a matter of fact he was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by old Woodifield. It gave him a feeling of deep, solid satisfaction to be planted there in the midst of it in full view of that frail old figure in the muffler.

"I've had it done up lately," he explained, as he had explained for the past —how many?—weeks. "New carpet," and he pointed to the bright red carpet with a pattern of large white rings. "New furniture," and he nodded towards the massive bookcase and the table with legs like twisted treacle. "Electric heating!" He waved almost exultantly towards the five transparent, pearly sausages glowing so softly in the tilted copper pan.

But he did not draw old Woodifield's attention to the photograph over the table of a grave-looking boy in uniform standing in one of those spectral photographers' parks with photographers' storm clouds behind him. It was not new. It had been there for over six years.

"There was something I wanted to tell you," said old Woodifield, and his eyes grew dim remembering. "Now what was it? I had it in mind when I started out this morning." His hands began to tremble, and patches of red showed above his beard.

Poor old chap, he's on his last pins, thought the boss. And, feeling kindly, he winked at the old man, and said jokingly, "I tell you what. I've got a little drop of something here that'll do you good before you go out into the cold again. It's beautiful stuff. It wouldn't hurt a child." He took a key off his

1. Reprinted from *The Short Stories of Katherine Mansfield* by Katherine Mansfield, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1922, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

watch-chain, unlocked a cupboard below his desk, and drew forth a dark, squat bottle. "That's the medicine," said he. "And the man from whom I got it told me on the strict Q.T. it came from the cellars at Windsor Castle."

Old Woodifield's mouth fell open at the sight. He couldn't have looked more surprised if the boss had produced a rabbit.

"It's whisky, ain't it?" he piped, feebly.

The boss turned the bottle and lovingly showed him the label. Whisky it was.

"D'you know," said he, peering up at the boss wonderingly, "they won't let me touch it at home." And he looked as though he was going to cry.

"Ah, that's where we know a bit more than the ladies," cried the boss, swooping across for two tumblers that stood on the table with the water bottle, and pouring a generous finger into each. "Drink it down. It'll do you good. And don't put any water with it. It's sacrilege to tamper with stuff like this. Ah!" He tossed off his, pulled out his handkerchief, hastily wiped his mustaches, and cocked an eye at old Woodifield, who was rolling his in his chaps.

The old man swallowed, was silent a moment, and then said faintly, "It's nutty!"

But it warmed him; it crept into his chill old brain—he remembered.

"That was it," he said, heaving himself out of his chair. "I thought you'd like to know. The girls were in Belgium last week having a look at poor Reggie's grave, and they happened to come across your boy's. They are quite near each other, it seems."

Old Woodifield paused, but the boss made no reply. Only a quiver of his eyelids showed that he heard.

"The girls were delighted with the way the place is kept," piped the old voice. "Beautifully looked after. Couldn't be better if they were at home. You've not been across, have yer?"

"No, no!" For various reasons the boss had not been across.

"There's miles of it," quavered old Woodifield, "and it's all as neat as a garden. Flowers growing on all the graves. Nice broad paths." It was plain from his voice how much he like a nice broad path.

The pause came again. Then the old man brightened wonderfully.

"D'you know what the hotel made the girls pay for a pot of jam?" he piped. "Ten francs! Robbery, I call it. It was a little pot, so Gertrude says, no bigger than a half-crown. And she hadn't taken more than a spoonful when they charged her ten francs. Gertrude brought the pot away with her to teach 'em a lesson. Quite right, too; it's trading on our feelings. They think because we're over there having a look around we're ready to pay anything. That's what it is." And he turned towards the door.

"Quite right, quite right!" cried the boss, though what was quite right he hadn't the least idea. He came round by his desk, followed the shuffling footsteps to the door, and saw the old fellow out. Woodifield was gone.

For a long moment the boss stayed, staring at nothing, while the gray-

haired office messenger, watching him, dodged in and out of his cubbyhole like a dog that expects to be taken for a run: "I'll see nobody for half an hour, Macey," said the boss. "Understand? Nobody at all."

"Very good, sir."

The door shut, the firm, heavy steps recrossed the bright carpet, the fat body plumped down in the spring chair, and leaning forward, the boss covered his face with his hands. He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep. . . .

It had been a terrible shock to him when old Woodifield sprang that remark upon him about the boy's grave. It was exactly as though the earth had opened and he had seen the boy lying there with Woodifield's girls staring down at him. For it was strange. Although over six years had passed away, the boss never thought of the boy except as lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep for ever. "My son!" groaned the boss. But no tears came yet. In the past, in the first months and even years after the boy's death, he had only to say those words to be overcome by such grief that nothing short of a violent fit of weeping could relieve him. Time, he had declared then, he had told everybody, could make no difference. Other men perhaps might recover, might live their loss down, but not he. How was it possible? His boy was an only son. Ever since his birth the boss had worked at building up this business for him; it had no other meaning if it was not for the boy. Life itself had come to have no other meaning. How on earth could he have slaved, denied himself, kept going all these years without the promise for ever before him of the boy's stepping into his shoes and carrying on where he left off?

And that promise had been so near being fulfilled. The boy had been in the office learning the ropes for a year before the war. Every morning they had started off together; they had come back by the same train. And what congratulations he had received as the boy's father! No wonder, he had taken to it marvelously. As to his popularity with the staff, every man jack of them down to old Macey couldn't make enough of the boy. And he wasn't in the least spoiled. No, he was just his bright, natural self, with the right word for everybody, with that boyish look and his habit of saying, "Simply splendid!"

But all that was over and done with as though it never had been. The day had come when Macey had handed him the telegram that brought the whole place crashing about his head. "Deeply regret to inform you . . ." And he had left the office a broken man, with his life in ruins.

Six years ago, six years . . . How quickly time passed! It might have happened yesterday. The boss took his hands from his face; he was puzzled. Something seemed to be wrong with him. He wasn't feeling as he wanted to feel. He decided to get up and have a look at the boy's photograph. But it wasn't a favorite photograph of his; the expression was unnatural. It was cold, even stern-looking. The boy had never looked like that.

At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his broken inkpot, and was trying feebly but desperately to clamber out again. Help! help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it

fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it onto a piece of blotting paper. For a fraction of a second it lay still on the dark patch that oozed round it. Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small sodden body up it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. Over and under, over and under, went a leg along a wing, as the stone goes over and under the scythe. Then there was a pause, while the fly, seeming to stand on the tips of its toes, tried to expand first one wing and then the other. It succeeded at last, and, sitting down, it began, like a minute cat, to clean its face. Now one could imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.

But just then the boss had an idea. He plunged his pen back into the ink, leaned his thick wrist on the blotting paper, and as the fly tried its wings down came a great heavy blot. What would it make of that? What indeed! The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move because of what would happen next. But then, as if painfully, it dragged itself forward. The front legs waved, caught hold, and, more slowly this time, the task began from the beginning.

"He's a plucky little devil," thought the boss, and he felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die; it was only a question of . . . But the fly had again finished its laborious task, and the boss had just time to refill his pen, to shake fair and square on the new-cleaned body yet another dark drop. What about it this time? A painful moment of suspense followed. But behold, the front legs were again waving; the boss felt a rush of relief. He leaned over the fly and said to it tenderly, "You artful little b. . . ." And he actually had the brilliant notion of breathing on it to help the drying process. All the same, there was something timid and weak about its efforts now, and the boss decided that this time should be the last, as he dipped the pen into the inkpot.

It was. The last blot fell on the soaked blotting paper, and the draggled fly lay in it and did not stir. The back legs were stuck to the body; the front legs were not to be seen.

"Come on," said the boss. "Look sharp!" And he stirred it with his pen—in vain. Nothing happened or was likely to happen. The fly was dead.

The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper knife and flung it into the wastepaper basket, but such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened. He started forward and pressed the bell for Macey.

"Bring me some fresh blotting paper," he said, sternly, "and look sharp about it." And while the old dog padded away he fell to wondering what it was he had been thinking about before. What was it? It was . . . He took out his handkerchief and passed it inside his collar. For the life of him he could not remember.

ON KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S *THE FLY*[1]

ROBERT WOOSTER STALLMAN

THE experiment with the Fly by the Boss, so named because he appears to be the boss of his little world and of the little life of the Fly who has fallen into his inkpot, the boss as well over his employees Woodifield and Macey and over his dead son (all are as flies to him), dramatizes both the plot (the conflict between time and grief) and the theme (time conquers grief). At the first stage of the experiment the Boss is to be equated with the Fly. He is, ironically then, at once both boss and fly. How cleverly Mansfield inverts her symbol!

He is the boss of the fly Woodifield, whose wife keeps him "boxed up in the house [like a fly] every day of the week except Tuesday." On Tuesday he is brushed off (like a fly) "and allowed to cut back to the City for the day." On this Tuesday he visits the Boss, who is shocked (as a fly is shocked at a drop of ink) by old Woodifield's remark about the boy's grave. The remark —it causes the Boss "a quiver of his eyelids" (a quiver, so to speak, of his fly-wings)—reverses the relationship between the fly Woodifield and the Boss.

The Boss, like the Fly, conquers the first drop of ink—the grief he suffers "when Macey handed him the telegram that brought the whole place crashing about his head." Both survive, survive the danger of being drowned in grief. The "new-cleaned body" of the Fly, "ready for life again," compares with the new-furnished office of the Boss. . . . For the second time the Fly survives his grief. But the Fly and the Boss can no longer be equated. This second stage in the experiment reveals the disparity between them: the Fly survives his grief, but the Boss no longer has any grief to conquer—his sensibility for grief . . . has been blotted up by Time.

"He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep. . . ." But no tears came. Time's blotting-pad has soaked up the last tear he will ever shed. "Time, he had declared then [when first he lost his boy], he had told everybody, could make no difference. Other men perhaps might recover, might live their loss down, but not he. How was it possible?" Time makes it possible —inevitable—that man does not succumb to his grief but, to the contrary, recovers from it. "How quickly time passed! It might have happened yesterday." So short a time for grieving. "But all *that* [his grief] was over and done with as though it had never been." Now pride, not grief, is his only emotion. . . . For the Boss to survive his grief and for the Fly to succumb to his suffering, "it was only a question of . . ." [*time*]. The third and final drop of ink marks out the difference between them. The Fly dies—dies from too much grief. So the Boss, who in the beginning seemed to be a fly, is not a fly after all. . . . The discovery holds a double irony: he is neither fly nor boss. *Time*, in the form of the blotting-paper brought in by Macey, *is the boss.*

1. From *The Explicator*, III (April, 1945), 49; V (February, 1947), 32; V (May, 1947), 53. By permission of the authors and the Editors of *The Explicator*.

WILLIS D. JACOBS

The interpretation of Katherine Mansfield's *The Fly* by Professor Stallman is at once ingenious and recherché. That the surface theme of the story is the conquest of time over grief—that in time even a slight distraction can banish the truest emotion from the mind—is certain enough. But in its explanation of the fly itself that previous account violates a wise rule known as Morgan's Canon. Of a number of possibilities, declares this maxim of psychology, first choose the simplest. Once introduced into the story, the fly may well have become a symbol. But a symbol of what? Mr. Stallman rapidly affirms that the fly equates seriatim with the Boss, Woodifield, Macey, the dead son, and even the new-furnished office of the Boss; indeed with everything at all handy. Here indeed is God's plenty. The result surely is that the symbolism cancels itself out. At the end moreover we are told summarily that, after all, the fly is not the Boss. Well, then, just what is the fly?

The answer, I believe, is both different from such whirling alternatives and at once more significant and poignant. When the fly entered the story, it began to represent to Katherine Mansfield a true image of her own fate. The fly is Katherine Mansfield herself. During her last years of life K. M. struggled constantly, bravely, and vainly (like the fly) against the tuberculosis which was beating her, blow by blow, into the grave. In "The Fly" the Boss becomes a heavy-handed, unmeaning instrument which destroys the fly, fight for life as it may; he becomes, on K. M.'s level, the inexorable and equally unmeaning illness which is destroying her, fight for life as she may. Like the Boss, the tuberculosis which killed her is blind, callous, and persistent. As the Boss slays the fly, without malice, so does her illness slay her. Both fly and K. M. fight painfully for life. Both lose.

This explication is not visionary. It is supported by two witnesses. First is the evidence of Mrs. Thomas Moult, friend and confidante of K. M. (For the warmth of their friendship, see as an example *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield,* 1929, II, 428). On the basis of Mrs. Moult's contemporary correspondence and conversation with K. M., Mrs. Moult has stated to this writer that she considers *The Fly* a completely personal story. For K. M. herself, Mrs. Moult said, it had two facets: (1) K. M. is the fly, beaten in her struggle with tuberculosis by a careless, blind fate; (2) K. M. realized, as she wrote, that she too would soon be forgotten, slain by her disease.

Another witness establishes reasonable certainty of this view. *That* is the very circumstances surrounding the writing of *The Fly.* They are as follows: In the words of Frank Swinnerton, K. M. "had always been delicate . . . in 1917 she caught a chill which led to tuberculosis . . . the two constant features of her pilgrimages were increasing illness and unfailing bravery" (*The Georgian Scene,* 1934, p. 249). In late 1921 and early 1922 the disease became rapacious. On February 1, 1922, K. M. confided to her Journal:

"Here I try and fail, and the fact of consciousness makes each separate failure very important." Two weeks later, on February 13, she added: "Felt ill all day. Feeling of violent confusion in my body and head. I feel more ill now than ever, so it seems. . . . The worst of it is I have again lost hope. I don't, I can't believe this will change." (*Journal*, II, 229; 234.)

On February 14, K. M. wrote to Dorothy Brett: "I can do nothing but get up and lie down . . . I must begin work. Seven stories sit on the doorstep. One has a foot inside. It is called *The Fly*" (*Letters*, 1929, II, 446). Under such circumstances was this story written, for as she wrote to Miss Brett twelve days later: "I have just finished a queer story called *The Fly*. About a fly that falls into an inkpot and a Bank Manager" (*Letters*, II, 459). Significantly *The Fly* is the only one of those projected seven stories she wrote, and her writing career came to a complete halt within a few months. The fly struggled, but was killed; so too the spirit of K. M. She died in 1923.

These parallels are too immediate to be disregarded. So too is another. Lover of Shakespeare as she was, in this story of a fly K. M. must surely have had in mind his strikingly similar image. As flies to wanton boys—she is repeating with special meaning to herself—are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport.

THOMAS A. BLEDSOE

I believe that Katherine Mansfield's *The Fly* can be explained without recourse either to a devious symbolism, as by Professor Stallman, or to biographical reference, as by Professor Jacobs. Though the former was provocative and the latter cogent, both of the writers seem to me to have missed the woods for the trees. They agree that this is a story of the conquest of time over grief, which it is not; they are therefore inevitably led into irreconcilable conflicts of symbols and significances.

While the boss toys with the fly he escapes his grief. But it is not time that cures him, nor does time release the fly from its suffering. The boss murders the fly with wanton and amicable cruelty, the same tender cruelty he shows toward Woodifield, the cruelty with which an inexorable fate has already broken his own life and his son's.

The fly is Katherine Mansfield; but the boss, and Woodifield, and the son are also flies. The whole movement of the story explicates a central theme: "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport." The tragic irony of *The Fly* is the murderous finality with which other lives are wrecked by powers indifferent to any sorrows but their own. The boss's grief is important only because it absorbs him. To escape it he plays a game of benevolent cruelty, whose end is not to murder but to divert. His pleasure with old Woodifield is sadistic. The sick man's feebleness cheers him; to display the newly furnished office (another diversion) to this broken down hack

is comforting, and he gives him a drink, cheerfully indifferent to the old man's health. When the ritual of self-indulgent grief no longer suffices to lay the sorrow Woodifield has unwittingly aroused, he discovers the struggling fly. He accords it the same godlike malice. He admires the fly but he needs diversion; he murders it. The katharsis is a movement of subconscious revulsion, but it is quickly gone. Sport has been good. The boss has forgotten his grief.

Only so viewed is the story an organic whole. Now the long scene with old Woodifield is not merely an elaborate device to introduce the boss's grief, but an integral part of the development of the theme. The boss's bland callousness toward Woodifield is matched by the cheerful indifference with which the old man rambles on toward the boss's innermost grief; while he raises the specter of the boss's bereavement, Woodifield meditates pleasantly about the wide walks of the cemetery (safe for stumbling old feet), and cackles over his daughter's misadventures at the inn. Even the son, in whose last picture the boss sees a strange withdrawal, reflects this eternal selfishness. The game with the fly repeats it: the boss must kill the fly because only killing can show the wantonness of indifferent selfishness. In this brief act the horror which overhangs the whole story becomes explicit.

The world of *The Fly* is one of intermingled and unending cruelties. of monstrous and indifferent egotisms. It is filled with the sheer cruelty of existence, the inevitable savagery which the boss, Woodifield, the son, Katherine Mansfield, and we ourselves alike suffer under and practice. The symbolism of *The Fly* is elaborate but in no wise contradictory. Within the framework of a beautifully planned story, it proclaims the final selfishness of living.

THAT TREE[1]

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

HE HAD really wanted to be a cheerful bum lying under a tree in a good climate, writing poetry. He wrote bushel basketsful of poetry and it was all no good and he knew it, even while he was writing it. Knowing his poetry was no good did not take away much from his pleasure in it. He would have enjoyed just that kind of life: no respectability, no responsibility, no money to speak of, wearing worn-out sandals and a becoming, if probably ragged. blue shirt, lying under a tree writing poetry. That was why he had come to Mexico in the first place. He had felt in his bones that it was the country for him. Long after he had become quite an important journalist, an authority on Latin-American revolutions and a best seller, he confessed to any friends

1. From *Flowering Judas and Other Stories* by Katherine Anne Porter, copyright, 1930, 1935, by Katherine Anne Porter. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

and acquaintances who would listen to him—he enjoyed this confession, it gave him a chance to talk about the thing he believed he loved best, the idle free romantic life of a poet—that the day Miriam kicked him out was the luckiest day of his life. She had left him, really, packing up suddenly in a cold quiet fury, stabbing him with her elbows when he tried to get his arms around her, now and again cutting him to the bone with a short sentence expelled through her clenched teeth, but he felt that he had been, as he always explained, kicked out. She had kicked him out and it had served him right.

The shock had brought him to himself as if he had been surprised out of a long sleep. He had sat quite benumbed in the bare clean room, among the straw mats and the painted Indian chairs Miriam hated, in the sudden cold silence, his head in his hands, nearly all night. It hadn't even occurred to him to lie down. It must have been almost daylight when he got up stiff in every joint from sitting still so long, and though he could not say he had been thinking yet he had formed a new resolution. He had started out, you might almost say that very day, to make a career for himself in journalism. He couldn't say why he had hit on that, except that the word would impress his wife, the work was just intellectual enough to save his self-respect, such as it was, and even to him it seemed a suitable occupation for a man such as he had suddenly become, bent on getting on in the world of affairs. Nothing ever happens suddenly to anyone, he observed, as if the thought had just occurred to him; it had been coming on probably for a long time, sneaking up on him when he wasn't looking. His wife had called him "Parasite!" She had said "Ne'er-do-well!" and as she repeated these things for what proved to be the last time, it struck him she had said them often before, when he had not listened to her with the ear of his mind. He translated these relatively harmless epithets instantly into their proper synonyms of Loafer! and Bum! Miriam had been a schoolteacher, and no matter what her disappointments and provocations may have been, you could not expect her easily to forget such discipline. She had got into a professional habit of primness; besides, she was a properly brought-up girl, not a prissy bore, not at all, but a—well, there you are, a nicely brought-up Middle-Western girl, who took life seriously. And what can you do about that? She was sweet and gay and full of little crazy notions, but she never gave way to them honestly, or at least never at the moment when they might have meant something. She was never able to see the amusing side of a threatening situation which, taken solemnly, would ruin everything. No, her sense of humor never worked for salvation. It was just an extra frill on what would have been a good time anyhow.

He wondered if anybody had ever thought—oh, well, of course everybody else had, he was always making marvelous discoveries that other people had known all along—how impossible it is to explain or to make other eyes see the special qualities in the person you love. There was such a special kind of beauty in Miriam. In certain lights and moods he simply got a clutch in the pit of his stomach when he looked at her. It was something that could happen

at any hour of the day, in the midst of the most ordinary occupations. He thought there was something to be said for living with one person day and night the year round. It brings out the worst, but it brings out the best, too, and Miriam's best was pretty damn swell. He couldn't describe it. It was easy to talk about her faults. He remembered all of them, he could add them up against her like rows of figures in a vast unpaid debt. He had lived with her for four years, and even now sometimes he woke out of a sound sleep in a sweating rage with himself, asking himself again why he had ever wasted a minute on her. She wasn't beautiful in his style. He confessed to a weakness for the kind that knocks your eye out. Her notion of daytime dress was a tailored suit with a round-collared blouse and a little felt hat like a bent shovel pulled down over her eyes. In the evening she put on a black dinner dress, positively disappeared into it. But she did her hair well and had the most becoming nightgowns he ever saw. You could have put her mind in a peanut shell. She hadn't temperament of the kind he had got used to in the Mexican girls. She did not approve of his use of the word temperament, either. She thought it was a kind of occupational disease among artists, or a trick they practiced to make themselves interesting. In any case, she distrusted artists and she distrusted temperament. But there was something about her. In cold blood he could size her up to himself, but it made him furious if anyone even hinted a criticism against her. His second wife had made a point of being catty about Miriam. In the end he could almost be willing to say this had led to his second divorce. He could not bear hearing Miriam called a mousy little nitwit—at least not by *that* woman. . . .

They both jumped nervously at an explosion in the street, the backfire of an automobile.

"Another revolution," said the fat scarlet young man in the tight purplish suit, at the next table. He looked like a parboiled sausage ready to burst from its skin. It was the oldest joke since the Mexican Independence, but he was trying to look as if he had invented it. The journalist glanced back at him over a sloping shoulder. "Another of those smart-cracking newspaper guys," he said in a tough voice, too loudly on purpose, "sitting around the Hotel Regis lobby wearing out the spittoons."

The smart-cracker swelled visibly and turned a darker red. "Who do you think you're talking about, you banjo-eyed chinless wonder, you?" he asked explicitly, spreading his chest across the table.

"Somebody way up, no doubt," said the journalist, in his natural voice, "somebody in with the government, I'll bet."

"Dyuhwana fight?" asked the newspaper man, trying to unwedge himself from between the table and his chair, which sat against the wall.

"Oh, I don't mind," said the journalist, "if you don't."

The newspaper man's friends laid soothing paws all over him and held him down. "Don't start anything with that shrimp," said one of them, his wet pink eyes trying to look sober and responsible. "For crisesake, Joe, can't you see he's

about half your size and a feeb to boot? You wouldn't hit a feeb, now, Joe, would you?"

"I'll feeb him," said the newspaper man, wiggling faintly under restraint.

"*Señores'n, señores'n,*" urged the little Mexican waiter, "there are respectable ladies and gentlemen present. Please, a little silence and correct behavior, please."

"Who the hell are *you*, anyhow?" the newspaper man asked the journalist, from under his shelter of hands, around the thin form of the waiter.

"Nobody you'd wanta know, Joe," said another of his pawing friends. "Pipe down now before these greasers turn in a general alarm. You know how liable they are to go off when you least expect it. Pipe down, now, Joe, now you just remember what happened the last time, Joe. Whaddayah *care*, anyhow?"

"*Señores'n,*" said the little waiter, working his thin outspread mahogany-colored hands up and down alternately as if they were on sticks, "it is necessary it must cease or the *señores'n* must remove themselves."

It did cease. It seemed to evaporate. The four newspaper men at the next table subsided, cluttered in a circle with their heads together, muttering into their highballs. The journalist turned back, ordered another round of drinks, and went on talking, in a low voice.

He had never liked this café, never had any luck in it. Something always happened here to spoil his evening. If there was one brand of bum on earth he despised, it was a newspaper bum. Or anyhow the drunken illiterates the United Press and Associated Press seemed to think were good enough for Mexico and South America. They were always getting mixed up in affairs that were none of their business, and they spent their time trying to work up trouble somewhere so they could get a story out of it. They were always having to be thrown out on their ears by the government. He just happened to know that the bum at the next table was about due to be deported. It had been pretty safe to make that crack about how he was no doubt way up in Mexican official esteem. . . . He thought that would remind him of something, all right.

One evening he had come here with Miriam for dinner and dancing, and at the very next table sat four fat generals from the North, with oxhorn mustaches and big bellies and big belts full of cartridges and pistols. It was in the old days just after Obregón had taken the city, and the town was crawling with generals. They infested the steam baths, where they took off their soiled campaign harness and sweated away the fumes of tequila and fornication, and they infested the cafés to get drunk again on champagne, and pick up the French whores who had been imported for the festivities of the presidential inauguration. These four were having an argument very quietly, their mean little eyes boring into each other's faces. He and his wife were dancing within arm's length of the table when one of the generals got up suddenly, tugging at his pistol, which stuck, and the other three jumped and grabbed him, all without a word; everybody in the place saw it at once. So far there was nothing

unusual. The point was, every right-minded Mexican girl just seized her man firmly by the waist and spun him around until his back was to the generals, holding him before her like a shield, and there the whole roomful had stood frozen for a second, the music dead. His wife Miriam had broken from him and hidden under a table. He had to drag her out by the arm before everybody. "Let's have another drink," he said, and paused, looking around him as if he saw again the place as it had been on that night nearly ten years before. He blinked, and went on. It had been the most utterly humiliating moment of his whole blighted life. He had thought he couldn't survive to pick up their things and get her out of there. The generals had all sat down again and everybody went on dancing as though nothing had happened. . . . Indeed, nothing had happened to anyone except himself.

He tried, for hours that night and on and on for nearly a year, to explain to her how he felt about it. She could not understand at all. Sometimes she said it was all perfect nonsense. Or she remarked complacently that it had never occurred to her to save her life at his expense. She thought such tricks were all very well for the Mexican girls who had only one idea in their heads, and any excuse would do to hold a man closer than they should, but she could not, could *not*, see why he should expect her to imitate them. Besides, she had felt safer under the table. It was her first and only thought. He told her a bullet might very well have gone through the wood; a plank was no protection at all, a human torso was as good as a feather pillow to stop a bullet. She kept saying it simply had not occurred to her to do anything else, and that it really had nothing at all to do with him. He could never make her see his point of view for one moment. It should have had something to do with him. All those Mexican girls were born knowing what they should do and they did it instantly, and Miriam had merely proved once for all that her instincts were out of tune. When she tightened her mouth to bite her lip and say "Instincts!" she could make it sound like the most obscene word in any language. It was a shocking word. And she did not stop there. At last she said, she hadn't the faintest interest in what Mexican girls were born for, but she had no intention of wasting her life flattering male vanity. "Why should I trust you in anything?" she asked. "What reason have you given me to trust you?"

He was surprised at the change in her since he had first met her in Minneapolis. He chose to believe this change had been caused by her teaching school. He told her he thought it the most deadly occupation there was and a law should be passed prohibiting pretty women under thirty-five years of age from taking it up. She reminded him they were living on the money she had earned at it. They had been engaged for three years, a chaste long-distance engagement which he considered morbid and unnatural. Of course he had to do something to wear away the time, so while she was in Minneapolis saving her money and filling a huge trunk with household linen, he had been living in Mexico City with an Indian girl who posed for a set of painters he knew. He had a job teaching English in one of the technical schools—damned odd,

he had been a schoolteacher too, but he never thought of it just that way until this minute—and he lived very comfortably with the Indian girl on his wages, for naturally the painters did not pay her for posing. The Indian girl divided her time cheerfully between the painters, the cooking pot, and his bed, and she managed to have a baby without interrupting any of these occupations for more than a few days. Later on she was taken up by one of the more famous and successful painters, and grew very sophisticated and a "character," but at that time she was still simple and nice. She took, later on, to wearing native art-jewelry and doing native dances in costume, and learned to paint almost as well as a seven-year-old child; "you know," he said, "the primitive style." Well, by that time, he was having troubles of his own. When the time came for Miriam to come out and marry him—the whole delay, he realized afterward, was caused by Miriam's expansive notions of what a bride's outfit should be—the Indian girl had gone away very cheerfully, too cheerfully, in fact, with a new man. She had come back in three days to say she was at last going to get married honestly, and she felt he should give her the furniture for a dowry. He had helped her pile the stuff on the backs of two Indian carriers, and the girl had walked away with the baby's head dangling out of her shawl. For just a moment when he saw the baby's face, he had an odd feeling. "That's mine," he said to himself, and added at once, "perhaps." There was no way of knowing, and it certainly looked like any other little shock-haired Indian baby. Of course the girl had not got married; she had never even thought of it.

When Miriam arrived, the place was almost empty, because he had not been able to save a peso. He had a bed and a stove, and the walls were decorated with drawings and paintings by his Mexican friends, and there was a litter of painted gourds and carved wood and pottery in beautiful colors. It didn't seem so bad to him, but Miriam's face, when she stepped into the first room, was, he had to admit, pretty much of a study. She said very little, but she began to be unhappy about a number of things. She cried intermittently for the first few weeks, for the most mysterious and far-fetched causes. He would wake in the night and find her crying hopelessly. When she sat down to coffee in the morning she would lean her head on her hands and cry. "It's nothing, nothing really," she would tell him. "I don't know what is the matter. I just want to cry." He knew now what was the matter. She had come all that way to marry after three years' planning, and she couldn't see herself going back and facing the music at home. This mood had not lasted, but it made a fairly dreary failure of their honeymoon. She knew nothing about the Indian girl, and believed, or professed to believe, that he was virgin as she was at their marriage. She hadn't much curiosity and her moral standards were severe, so it was impossible for him ever to take her into his confidence about his past. She simply took it for granted in the most irritating way that he hadn't any past worth mentioning except the three years they were engaged, and that, of course, they shared already. He had believed that all virgins, however austere their behavior, were palpitating to learn about life, were you might say hang-

ing on an eyelash until they arrived safely at initiation within the secure yet libertine advantages of marriage. Miriam upset this theory as in time she upset most of his theories. His intention to play the rôle of a man of the world educating an innocent but interestingly teachable bride was nipped in the bud. She was not at all teachable and she took no trouble to make herself interesting. In their most intimate hours her mind seemed elsewhere, gone into some darkness of its own, as if a prior and greater shock of knowledge had forestalled her attention. She was not to be won, for reasons of her own which she would not or could not give. He could not even play the rôle of a poet. She was not interested in his poetry. She preferred Milton, and she let him know it. She let him know also that she believed their mutual sacrifice of virginity was the most important act of their marriage, and this sacred rite once achieved, the whole affair had descended to a pretty low plane. She had a terrible phrase about "walking the chalk line" which she applied to all sorts of situations. One walked, as never before, the chalk line in marriage; there seemed to be a chalk line drawn between them as they lay together. . . .

The thing that finally got him down was Miriam's devilish inconsistency. She spent three mortal years writing him how dull and dreadful and commonplace her life was, how sick and tired she was of petty little conventions and amusements, how narrow-minded everybody around her was, how she longed to live in a beautiful dangerous place among interesting people who painted and wrote poetry, and how his letters came into her stuffy little world like a breath of free mountain air, and all that. "For God's sake," he said to his guest, "let's have another drink." Well, he had something of a notion he was freeing a sweet bird from a cage. Once freed, she would perch gratefully on his hand. He wrote a poem about a caged bird set free, dedicated it to her and sent her a copy. She forgot to mention it in her next letter. Then she came out with a two-hundred-pound trunk of linen and enough silk underwear to last her a lifetime, you might have supposed, expecting to settle down in a modern steam-heated flat and have nice artistic young couples from the American colony in for dinner Wednesday evenings. No wonder her face had changed at the first glimpse of her new home. His Mexican friends had scattered flowers all over the place, tied bunches of carnations on the door knobs, almost carpeted the floor with red roses, pinned posies of small bright blooms on the sagging cotton curtains, spread a coverlet of gardenias on the lumpy bed, and had disappeared discreetly, leaving gay reassuring messages scribbled here and there, even on the white plastered walls. . . . She had walked through with a vague look of terror in her eyes, pushing back the wilting flowers with her advancing feet. She swept the gardenias aside to sit on the edge of the bed, and she had said not a word. Hail, Hymen! What next?

He had lost his teaching job almost immediately. The Minister of Education, who was a patron of the school superintendent, was put out of office suddenly, and naturally every soul in his party down to the school janitors went out with him, and there you were. After a while you learn to take such things

calmly. You wait until your man gets back in the saddle or you work up an alliance with the new one. . . . Whichever. . . . Meanwhile the change and movement made such a good show you almost forgot the effect it had on your food supply. Miriam was not interested in politics or the movements of local history. She could see nothing but that he had lost his job. They lived on Miriam's savings eked out with birthday checks and Christmas checks from her father, who threatened constantly to come for a visit, in spite of Miriam's desperate letters warning him that the country was appalling, and the climate would most certainly ruin his health. Miriam went on holding her nose when she went to the markets, trying to cook wholesome civilized American food over a charcoal brasier, and doing the washing in the patio over a stone tub with a cold water tap; and everything that had seemed so jolly and natural and inexpensive with the Indian girl was too damnifying and costly for words with Miriam. Her money melted away and they got nothing for it.

She would not have an Indian servant near her; they were dirty and besides how could she afford it? He could not see why she despised and resented housework so, especially since he offered to help. He had thought it rather a picnic to wash a lot of gayly colored Indian crockery outdoors in the sunshine, with the bougainvillea climbing up the wall and the heaven tree in full bloom. Not Miriam. She despised him for thinking it a picnic. He remembered for the first time his mother doing the housework when he was a child. There were half a dozen assorted children, her work was hard and endless, but she went about it with a quiet certainty, a happy absorbed look on her face, as if her hands were working automatically while her imagination was away playing somewhere. "Ah, your mother," said his wife, without any particular emphasis. He felt horribly injured, as if she were insulting his mother and calling down a curse on her head for bringing such a son into the world. No doubt about it, Miriam had force. She could make her personality, which no one need really respect, felt in a bitter, sinister way. She had a background, and solid earth under her feet, and a point of view and a strong spine: even when she danced with him he could feel her tense controlled hips and her locked knees, which gave her dancing a most attractive strength and lightness without any yielding at all. She had her points, all right, like a good horse, but she had missed being beautiful. It wasn't in her. He began to cringe when she reminded him that if he were an invalid she would cheerfully work for him and take care of him, but he appeared to be in the best of health, he was not even looking for a job, and he was still writing that poetry, which was the last straw. She called him a failure. She called him worthless and shiftless and trifling and faithless. She showed him her ruined hands and asked him what she had to look forward to, and told him again, and again, that she was not used to associating with the simply indescribably savage and awful persons who kept streaming through the place. Moreover, she had no intention of getting used to it. He tried to tell her that these persons were the best painters and poets and what-alls in Mexico, that she should try to appreciate them; these

were the artists he had told her about in his letters. She wanted to know why Carlos never changed his shirt. "I told her," said the journalist, "it was because probably he hadn't got any other shirt." And why was Jaime such a glutton, leaning over his plate and wolfing his food? Because he was famished, no doubt. It was precisely that she could not understand. Why didn't they go to work and make a living? It was no good trying to explain to her his Franciscan notions of holy Poverty as being the natural companion for the artist. She said, "So you think they're being poor on purpose? Nobody but you would be such a fool." Really, the things that girl said. And his general impression of her was that she was silent as a cat. He went on in his pawky way trying to make clear to her his mystical faith in these men who went ragged and hungry because they had chosen once for all between what he called in all seriousness their souls, and this world. Miriam knew better. She knew they were looking for the main chance. "She was abominably, obscenely right. How I hate that woman, I hate her as I hate no one else. She assured me they were not so stupid as I thought; and I lived to see Jaime take up with a rich old woman, and Ricardo decide to turn film actor, and Carlos sitting easy with a government job, painting revolutionary frescoes to order, and I asked myself, Why shouldn't a man survive in any way he can?" But some fixed point of feeling in him refused to be convinced, he had a sackful of romantic notions about artists and their destiny and he was left holding it. Miriam had seen through them with half an eye, and how he wished he might have thought of a trick to play on her that would have finished her for life. But he had not. They all in turn ran out on him and in the end he had run out too. "So you see, I don't feel any better about doing what I did finally do, but I can say I am not unusual. That I can say. The trouble was that Miriam was right, damn her. I am not a poet, my poetry is filthy, and I had notions about artists that I must have got out of books. . . . You know, a race apart, dedicated men much superior to common human needs and ambitions. . . . I mean I thought art was a religion. . . . I mean that when Miriam kept saying . . ."

What he meant was that all this conflict began to damage him seriously. Miriam had become an avenging fury, yet he could not condemn her. Hate her, yes, that was almost too simple. His old-fashioned respectable middle class hard-working American ancestry and training rose up in him and fought on Miriam's side. He felt he had broken about every bone in him to get away from them and live them down, and here he had been overtaken at last and beaten into resignation that had nothing to do with his mind or heart. It was as if his blood stream had betrayed him. The prospect of taking a job and being a decent little clerk with shiny pants and elbows—for he couldn't think of a job in any other terms—seemed like a kind of premature death which would not even compensate him with loss of memory. He didn't do anything about it at all. He did odd jobs and picked up a little money, but never enough. He could see her side of it, at least he tried hard to see it. When it came to a showdown, he hadn't a single argument in favor of his way of life that would

hold water. He had been trying to live and think in a way that he hoped would end by making a poet of him, but it hadn't worked. That was the long and short of it. So he might have just gone on to some unimaginably sordid end if Miriam, after four years: four years? yes, good God, four years and one month and eleven days, had not written home for money, packed up what was left of her belongings, called him a few farewell names, and left. She had been shabby and thin and wild-looking for so long he could not remember ever having seen her any other way, yet all at once her profile in the doorway was unrecognizable to him.

So she went, and she did him a great favor without knowing it. He had fallen into the cowardly habit of thinking their marriage was permanent, no matter how evil it might be, that they loved each other, and so it did not matter what cruelties they committed against each other, and he had developed a real deafness to her words. He was unable, towards the end, either to see her or hear her. He realized this afterward, when remembered phrases and expressions of her eyes and mouth began to eat into his marrow. He was grateful to her. If she had not gone, he might have loitered on, wasting his time trying to write poetry, hanging around dirty picturesque little cafés with a fresh set of clever talkative poverty-stricken young Mexicans who were painting or writing or talking about getting ready to paint or write. His faith had renewed itself; these fellows were pure artists—they would never sell out. They were not bums, either. They worked all the time at something to do with Art. "Sacred Art," he said, "our glasses are empty again."

But try telling anything of the kind to Miriam. Somehow he had never got to that tree he meant to lie down under. If he had, somebody would certainly have come around and collected rent for it, anyhow. He had spent a good deal of time lying under tables at Dinty Moore's or the Black Cat with a gang of Americans like himself who were living a free life and studying the native customs. He was rehearsing, he explained to Miriam, hoping for once she would take a joke, for lying under a tree later on. It didn't go over. She would have died with her boots on before she would have cracked a smile at that. So then. . . . He had gone in for a career in the hugest sort of way. It had been easy. He hardly could say now just what his first steps were, but it had been easy. Except for Miriam, he would have been a lousy failure, like those bums at Dinty Moore's, still rolling under the tables, studying the native customs. He had gone in for a career in journalism and he had made a good thing of it. He was a recognized authority on revolutions in twenty-odd Latin-American countries, and his sympathies happened to fall in exactly right with the high-priced magazines of a liberal humanitarian slant which paid him well for telling the world about the oppressed peoples. He could really write, too; if he did say so, he had a prose style of his own. He had made the kind of success you can clip out of newspapers and paste in a book, you can count it and put it in the bank, you can eat and drink and wear it, and you can see it in other people's eyes at tea and dinner parties. Fine, and now what? On the strength of all

this he had got married again. Twice, in fact, and divorced twice. That made three times, didn't it? That was plenty. He had spent a good deal of time and energy doing all sorts of things he didn't care for in the least to prove to his first wife, who had been a twenty-three-year-old schoolteacher in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that he was not just merely a bum, fit for nothing but lying under a tree—if he had ever been able to locate that ideal tree he had in his mind's eye—writing poetry and enjoying his life.

Now he had done it. He smoothed out the letter he had been turning in his hands and stroked it as if it were a cat. He said, "I've been working up to the climax all this time. You know, good old surprise technique. Now then, get ready."

Miriam had written to him, after these five years, asking him to take her back. And would you believe it, he was going to break down and do that very thing. Her father was dead, she was terribly lonely, she had had time to think everything over, she believed herself to blame for a great many things, she loved him truly and she always had, truly; she regretted, oh, everything, and hoped it was not too late for them to make a happy life together once more. . . . She had read everything she could find of his in print, and she loved all of it. He had that very morning sent by cable the money for her to travel on, and he was going to take her back. She was going to live again in a Mexican house without any conveniences and she was not going to have a modern flat. She was going to take whatever he chose to hand her, and like it. And he wasn't going to marry her again, either. Not he. If she wanted to live with him on these terms, well and good. If not, she could just go back once more to that school of hers in Minneapolis. If she stayed, she would walk a chalk line, all right, one she hadn't drawn for herself. He picked up a cheese knife and drew a long sharp line in the checkered tablecloth. She would, believe him, walk *that*.

The hands of the clock pointed half past two. The journalist swallowed the last of his drink and went on drawing more cross-patches on the table-cloth with a relaxed hand. His guest wished to say, "Don't forget to invite me to your wedding," but thought better of it. The journalist raised his twitching lids and swung his half-focused eyes upon the shadow opposite and said, "I suppose you think I don't know—"

His guest moved to the chair edge and watched the orchestra folding up for the night. The café was almost empty. The journalist paused, not for an answer, but to give weight to the important statement he was about to make.

"I don't know what's happening, this time," he said, "don't deceive yourself. This time, I know." He seemed to be admonishing himself before a mirror.

THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY[1]

JAMES THURBER

"We're going through!" The Commander's voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heavily braided white cap pulled down rakishly over one cold gray eye. "We can't make it, sir. It's spoiling for a hurricane, if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8,500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased; ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-*pocketa-pocketa.* The Commander stared at the ice forming on the pilot window. He walked over and twisted a row of complicated dials. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" he shouted. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" repeated Lieutenant Berg. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" shouted the Commander. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" The crew, bending to their various tasks in the huge, hurtling eight-engined Navy hydroplane, looked at each other and grinned. "The Old Man'll get us through," they said to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hmm?" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife, in the seat beside him, with shocked astonishment. She seemed grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in a crowd. "You were up to fifty-five," she said. "You know I don't like to go more than forty. You were up to fifty-five." Walter Mitty drove on toward Waterbury in silence, the roaring of the SN-202 through the worst storm in twenty years of Navy flying fading in the remote, intimate airways of his mind. "You're tensed up again," said Mrs. Mitty. "It's one of your days. I wish you'd let Dr. Renshaw look you over."

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the building where his wife went to have her hair done. "Remember to get those overshoes while I'm having my hair done," she said. "I don't need overshoes," said Mitty. She put her mirror back into her bag. "We've been all through that," she said, getting out of the car. "You're not a young man any longer." He raced the engine a little. "Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?" Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again. "Pick it up, brother!" snapped a cop as the light changed, and Mitty hastily pulled on his gloves and lurched ahead. He drove around the streets aimlessly for a time, and then he drove past the hospital on his way to the parking lot.

. . . "It's the millionaire banker, Wellington McMillan," said the pretty

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nurse. "Yes?" said Walter Mitty, removing his gloves slowly. "Who has the case?" "Dr. Renshaw and Dr. Benbow, but there are two specialists here, Dr. Remington from New York and Dr. Pritchard-Mitford from London. He flew over." A door opened down a long, cool corridor and Dr. Renshaw came out. He looked distraught and haggard. "Hello, Mitty," he said. "We're having the devil's own time with McMillan, the millionaire banker and close personal friend of Roosevelt. Obstreosis of the ductal tract. Tertiary. Wish you'd take a look at him." "Glad to," said Mitty.

In the operating room there were whispered introductions: "Dr. Remington, Dr. Mitty. Dr. Pritchard-Mitford, Dr. Mitty." "I've read your book on streptothricosis," said Pritchard-Mitford, shaking hands. "A brilliant performance, sir." "Thank you," said Walter Mitty. "Didn't know you were in the States, Mitty," grumbled Remington. "Coals to Newcastle, bringing Mitford and me up here for a tertiary." "You are very kind," said Mitty. A huge, complicated machine, connected to the operating table, with many tubes and wires, began at this moment to go pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. "The new anaesthetizer is giving away!" shouted an interne. "There is no one in the East who knows how to fix it!" "Quiet, man!" said Mitty, in a low, cool voice. He sprang to the machine, which was now going pocketa-pocketa-queep-pocketa-queep. He began fingering delicately a row of glistening dials. "Give me a fountain pen!" he snapped. Someone handed him a fountain pen. He pulled a faulty piston out of the machine and inserted the pen in its place. "That will hold for ten minutes," he said. "Get on with the operation." A nurse hurried over and whispered to Renshaw, and Mitty saw the man turn pale. "Coreopsis has set in," said Renshaw nervously. "If you would take over, Mitty?" Mitty looked at him and at the craven figure of Benbow, who drank, and at the grave, uncertain faces of the two great specialists. "If you wish," he said. They slipped a white gown on him; he adjusted a mask and drew on thin gloves; nurses handed him shining . . .

"Back it up, Mac! Look out for that Buick!" Walter Mitty jammed on the brakes. "Wrong lane, Mac," said the parking-lot attendant, looking at Mitty closely. "Gee. Yeh," muttered Mitty. He began cautiously to back out of the lane marked "Exit Only." "Leave her sit there," said the attendant. "I'll put her away." Mitty got out of the car. "Hey, better leave the key." "Oh," said Mitty, handing the man the ignition key. The attendant vaulted into the car, backed it up with insolent skill, and put it where it belonged.

They're so damn cocky, thought Walter Mitty, walking along Main Street; they think they know everything. Once he had tried to take his chains off, outside New Milford, and he had got them wound around the axles. A man had had to come out in a wrecking car and unwind them, a young, grinning garageman. Since then Mrs. Mitty always made him drive to a garage to have the chains taken off. The next time, he thought, I'll wear my right arm in a sling; they won't grin at me then. I'll have my right arm in a sling and they'll see I couldn't possibly take the chains off myself. He kicked at the slush on

the sidewalk. "Overshoes," he said to himself, and he began looking for a shoe store.

When he came out into the street again, with the overshoes in a box under his arm, Walter Mitty began to wonder what the other thing was his wife had told him to get. She had told him twice before they set out from their house for Waterbury. In a way he hated these weekly trips to town—he was always getting something wrong. Kleenex, he thought, Squibb's, razor blades? No. Toothpaste, toothbrush, bicarbonate, carborundum, initiative and referendum? He gave up. But she would remember it. "Where's that what's-its-name?" she would ask. "Don't tell me you forgot the what's-its-name." A newsboy went by shouting something about the Waterbury trial.

. . . "Perhaps this will refresh your memory." The District Attorney suddenly thrust a heavy automatic at the quiet figure on the witness stand. "Have you ever seen this before?" Walter Mitty took the gun and examined it expertly. "This is my Webley-Vickers 50.80," he said calmly. An excited buzz ran around the courtroom. The Judge rapped for order. "You are a crack shot with any sort of firearms, I believe?" said the District Attorney, insinuatingly. "Objection!" shouted Mitty's attorney. "We have shown that the defendant could not have fired the shot. We have shown that he wore his right arm in a sling on the night of the fourteenth of July." Walter Mitty raised his hand briefly and the bickering attorneys were stilled. "With any known make of gun," he said evenly, "I could have killed Gregory Fitzhurst at three hundred feet *with my left hand.*" Pandemonium broke loose in the courtroom. A woman's scream rose above the bedlam and suddenly a lovely, dark-haired girl was in Walter Mitty's arms. The District Attorney struck at her savagely. Without rising from his chair, Mitty let the man have it on the point of the chin. "You miserable cur!"

"Puppy biscuit," said Walter Mitty. He stopped walking and the buildings of Waterbury rose up out of the misty courtroom and surrounded him again. A woman who was passing laughed. "He said 'Puppy biscuit,'" she said to her companion. "That man said 'Puppy biscuit' to himself." Walter Mitty hurried on. He went into an A. & P., not the first one he came to but a smaller one farther up the street. "I want some biscuit for small, young dogs," he said to the clerk. "Any special brand, sir?" The greatest pistol shot in the world thought a moment. "It says 'Puppies Bark for It' on the box," said Walter Mitty.

His wife would be through at the hairdresser's in fifteen minutes, Mitty saw in looking at his watch, unless they had trouble drying it; sometimes they had trouble drying it. She didn't like to get to the hotel first; she would want him to be there waiting for her as usual. He found a big leather chair in the lobby, facing a window, and he put the overshoes and the puppy biscuit on the floor beside it. He picked up an old copy of *Liberty* and sank down into the chair. "Can Germany Conquer the World Through the Air?" Walter Mitty looked at the pictures of bombing planes and of ruined streets.

. . . "The cannonading has got the wind up in young Raleigh, sir," said the sergeant. Captain Mitty looked up at him through tousled hair. "Get him to bed," he said wearily, "with the others. I'll fly alone." "But you can't, sir," said the sergeant anxiously. "It takes two men to handle that bomber and the Archies are pounding hell out of the air. Von Richtman's circus is between here and Saulier." "Somebody's got to get the ammunition dump," said Mitty. "I'm going over. Spot of brandy?" He poured a drink for the sergeant and one for himself. War thundered and whined around the dugout and battered at the door. There was a rending of wood, and splinters flew through the room. "A bit of a near thing," said Captain Mitty carelessly. "The box barrage is closing in," said the sergeant. "We only live once, Sergeant," said Mitty, with his faint, fleeting smile. "Or do we?" He poured another brandy and tossed it off. "I never see a man could hold his brandy like you, sir," said the sergeant. "Begging your pardon, sir." Captain Mitty stood up and strapped on his huge Webley-Vickers automatic. "It's forty kilometers through hell, sir," said the sergeant. Mitty finished one last brandy. "After all," he said softly, "what isn't?" The pounding of the cannon increased; there was the rat-tat-tatting of machine guns, and from somewhere came the menacing pocketa-pocketa-pocketa of the new flame-throwers. Walter Mitty walked to the door of the dugout humming "Auprès de Ma Blonde." He turned and waved to the sergeant. "Cheerio!" he said. . . .

Something struck his shoulder. "I've been looking all over this hotel for you," said Mrs. Mitty. "Why do you have to hide in this old chair? How did you expect me to find you?" "Things close in," said Walter Mitty vaguely. "What?" Mrs. Mitty said. "Did you get the what's-its-name? The puppy biscuit? What's in that box?" "Overshoes," said Mitty. "Couldn't you have put them on in the store?" "I was thinking," said Walter Mitty. "Does it ever occur to you that I am sometimes thinking?" She looked at him. "I'm going to take your temperature when I get you home," she said.

They went out through the revolving doors that made a faintly derisive whistling sound when you pushed them. It was two blocks to the parking lot. At the drugstore on the corner she said, "Wait here for me. I forgot something. I won't be a minute." She was more than a minute. Walter Mitty lighted a cigarette. It began to rain, rain with sleet in it. He stood up against the wall of the drugstore, smoking. . . . He put his shoulders back and his heels together. "To hell with the handkerchief," said Walter Mitty scornfully. He took one last drag on his cigarette and snapped it away. Then, with that faint, fleeting smile playing about his lips, he faced the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful. Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last.

BABYLON REVISITED[1]

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

"And where's Mr. Campbell?" Charlie asked.

"Gone to Switzerland. Mr. Campbell's a pretty sick man, Mr. Wales."

"I'm sorry to hear that. And George Hardt?" Charlie inquired.

"Back in America, gone to work."

"And where is the Snow Bird?"

"He was in here last week. Anyway, his friend, Mr. Schaeffer, is in Paris."

Two familiar names from the long list of a year and a half ago. Charlie scribbled an address in his note book and tore out the page.

"If you see Mr. Schaeffer, give him this," he said. "It's my brother-in-law's address. I haven't settled on a hotel yet."

He was not really disappointed to find Paris was so empty. But the stillness in the Ritz bar was strange and portentous. It was not an American bar any more—he felt polite in it, and not as if he owned it. It had gone back into France. He felt the stillness from the moment he got out of the taxi and saw the doorman, usually in a frenzy of activity at this hour, gossiping with a *chasseur* by the servants' entrance.

Passing through the corridor, he heard only a single, bored voice in the once-clamorous women's room. When he turned into the bar he travelled the twenty feet of green carpet with his eyes fixed straight ahead by old habit; and then, with his foot firmly on the rail, he turned and surveyed the room, encountering only a single pair of eyes that fluttered up from a newspaper in the corner. Charlie asked for the head barman, Paul, who in the latter days of the bull market had come to work in his own custom-built car—disembarking, however, with due nicety at the nearest corner. But Paul was at his country house today and Alix giving him information.

"No, no more," Charlie said, "I'm going slow these days."

Alix congratulated him: "You were going pretty strong a couple of years ago."

"I'll stick to it all right," Charlie assured him. "I've stuck to it for over a year and a half now."

"How do you find conditions in America?"

"I haven't been to America for months. I'm in business in Prague, representing a couple of concerns there. They don't know about me down there."

Alix smiled.

"Remember the night of George Hardt's bachelor dinner here?" said Charlie. "By the way, what's become of Claude Fessenden?"

Alix lowered his voice confidentially: "He's in Paris, but he doesn't come

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here any more. Paul doesn't allow it. He ran up a bill of thirty thousand francs, charging all his drinks and his lunches, and usually his dinner, for more than a year. And when Paul finally told him he had to pay, he gave him a bad check."

Alix shook his head sadly.

"I don't understand it, such a dandy fellow. Now he's all bloated up—" He made a plump apple of his hands.

Charlie watched a group of strident queens installing themselves in a corner.

"Nothing affects them," he thought. "Stocks rise and fall, people loaf or work, but they go on forever." The place oppressed him. He called for the dice and shook with Alix for the drink.

"Here for long, Mr. Wales?"

"I'm here for four or five days to see my little girl."

"Oh-h! You have a little girl?"

Outside, the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green signs shone smokily through the tranquil rain. It was late afternoon and the streets were in movement; the *bistros* gleamed. At the corner of the Boulevard des Capucines he took a taxi. The Place de la Concorde moved by in pink majesty; they crossed the logical Seine, and Charlie felt the sudden provincial quality of the Left Bank.

Charlie directed his taxi to the Avenue de l'Opera, which was out of his way. But he wanted to see the blue hour spread over the magnificent façade, and imagine that the cab horns, playing endlessly the first few bars of *Le Plus que Lent,* were the trumpets of the Second Empire. They were closing the iron grill in front of Brentano's Book-store, and people were already at dinner behind the trim little bourgeois hedge of Duval's. He had never eaten at a really cheap restaurant in Paris. Five-course dinner, four francs fifty, eighteen cents, wine included. For some odd reason he wished that he had.

As they rolled on to the Left Bank and he felt its sudden provincialism, he thought, "I spoiled this city for myself. I didn't realize it, but the days came along one after another, and then two years were gone, and everything was gone, and I was gone."

He was thirty-five, and good to look at. The Irish mobility of his face was sobered by a deep wrinkle between his eyes. As he rang his brother-in-law's bell in the Rue Palatine, the wrinkle deepened till it pulled down his brows; he felt a cramping sensation in his belly. From behind the maid who opened the door darted a lovely little girl of nine who shrieked "Daddy!" and flew up, struggling like a fish, into his arms. She pulled his head around by one ear and set her cheek against his.

"My old pie," he said.

"Oh, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, dads, dads, dads!"

She drew him into the salon, where the family waited, a boy and girl his

daughter's age, his sister-in-law and her husband. He greeted Marion with his voice pitched carefully to avoid either feigned enthusiasm or dislike, but her response was more frankly tepid, though she minimized her expression of unalterable distrust by directing her regard toward his child. The two men clasped hands in a friendly way and Lincoln Peters rested his for a moment on Charlie's shoulder.

The room was warm and comfortably American. The three children moved intimately about, playing through the yellow oblongs that led to other rooms; the cheer of six o'clock spoke in the eager smacks of the fire and the sounds of French activity in the kitchen. But Charlie did not relax; his heart sat up rigidly in his body and he drew confidence from his daughter, who from time to time came close to him, holding in her arms the doll he had brought.

"Really extremely well," he declared in answer to Lincoln's question. "There's a lot of business there that isn't moving at all, but we're doing even better than ever. In fact, damn well. I'm bringing my sister over from America next month to keep house for me. My income last year was bigger than it was when I had money. You see, the Czechs——"

His boasting was for a specific purpose; but after a moment, seeing a faint restiveness in Lincoln's eye, he changed the subject:

"Those are fine children of yours, well brought up, good manners."

"We think Honoria's a great little girl too."

Marion Peters came back from the kitchen. She was a tall woman with worried eyes, who had once possessed a fresh American loveliness. Charlie had never been sensitive to it and was always surprised when people spoke of how pretty she had been. From the first there had been an instinctive antipathy between them.

"Well, how do you find Honoria?" she asked.

"Wonderful. I was astonished how much she's grown in ten months. All the children are looking well."

"We haven't had a doctor for a year. How do you like being back in Paris?"

"It seems very funny to see so few Americans around."

"I'm delighted," Marion said vehemently. "Now at least you can go into a store without their assuming you're a millionaire. We've suffered like everybody, but on the whole it's a good deal pleasanter."

"But it was nice while it lasted," Charlie said. "We were a sort of royalty, almost infallible, with a sort of magic around us. In the bar this afternoon" —he stumbled, seeing his mistake—"there wasn't a man I knew."

She looked at him keenly. "I should think you'd have had enough of bars."

"I only stayed a minute. I take one drink every afternoon, and no more.

"Don't you want a cocktail before dinner?" Lincoln asked.

"I take only one drink every afternoon, and I've had that."

"I hope you keep to it," said Marion.

Her dislike was evident in the coldness with which she spoke, but Charlie

only smiled; he had larger plans. Her very aggressiveness gave him an advantage, and he knew enough to wait. He wanted them to initiate the discussion of what they knew had brought him to Paris.

At dinner he couldn't decide whether Honoria was most like him or her mother. Fortunate if she didn't combine the traits of both that had brought them to disaster. A great wave of protectiveness went over him. He thought he knew what to do for her. He believed in character; he wanted to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element. Everything wore out.

He left soon after dinner, but not to go home. He was curious to see Paris by night with clearer and more judicious eyes than those of other days. He bought a *strapontin* for the Casino and watched Josephine Baker go through her chocolate arabesques.

After an hour he left and strolled toward Montmartre, up the Rue Pigalle into the Place Blanche. The rain had stopped and there were a few people in evening clothes disembarking from taxis in front of cabarets, and *cocottes* prowling singly or in pairs, and many Negroes. He passed a lighted door from which issued music, and stopped with the sense of familiarity; it was Bricktop's, where he had parted with so many hours and so much money. A few doors farther on he found another ancient rendezvous and incautiously put his head inside. Immediately an eager orchestra burst into sound, a pair of professional dancers leaped to their feet and a maître d'hôtel swooped toward him, crying, "Crowd just arriving, sir!" But he withdrew quickly.

"You have to be damn drunk," he thought.

Zelli's was closed, the bleak and sinister cheap hotels surrounding it were dark; up in the Rue Blanche there was more light and a local, colloquial French crowd. The Poet's Cave had disappeared, but the two great mouths of the Café of Heaven and the Café of Hell still yawned—even devoured, as he watched, the meagre contents of a tourist bus—a German, a Japanese, and an American couple who glanced at him with frightened eyes.

So much for the effort and ingenuity of Montmartre. All the catering to vice and waste was on an utterly childish scale, and he suddenly realized the meaning of the word "dissipate"—to dissipate into thin air; to make nothing out of something. In the little hours of the night every move from place to place was an enormous human jump, an increase of paying for the privilege of slower and slower motion.

He remembered thousand-franc notes given to an orchestra for playing a single number, hundred-franc notes tossed to a doorman for calling a cab.

But it hadn't been given for nothing.

It had been given, even the most wildly squandered sum, as an offering to destiny that he might not remember the things most worth remembering, the things that now he would always remember—his child taken from his control, his wife escaped to a grave in Vermont.

In the glare of a *brasserie* a woman spoke to him. He bought her some

eggs and coffee, and then, eluding her encouraging stare, gave her a twenty-franc note and took a taxi to his hotel.

II

He woke upon a fine fall day—football weather. The depression of yesterday was gone and he liked the people on the streets. At noon he sat opposite Honoria at Le Grand Vatel, the only restaurant he could think of not reminiscent of champagne dinners and long luncheons that began at two and ended in a blurred and vague twilight.

"Now, how about vegetables? Oughtn't you to have some vegetables?"

"Well, yes."

"Here's *épinards* and *chou-fleur* and carrots and *haricots.*"

"I'd like *chou-fleur.*"

"Wouldn't you like to have two vegetables?"

"I usually only have one at lunch."

The waiter was pretending to be inordinately fond of children. *"Qu'elle est mignonne la petite? Elle parle exactement comme une française."*

"How about dessert? Shall we wait and see?"

The waiter disappeared. Honoria looked at her father expectantly.

"What are we going to do?"

"First, we're going to that toy store in the Rue Saint-Honoré and buy you anything you like. And then we're going to the vaudeville at the Empire."

She hesitated. "I like it about the vaudeville, but not the toy store."

"Why not?"

"Well, you brought me this doll." She had it with her. "And I've got lots of things. And we're not rich any more, are we?"

"We never were. But today you are to have anything you want."

"All right," she agreed resignedly.

When there had been her mother and a French nurse he had been inclined to be strict; now he extended himself, reached out for a new tolerance; he must be both parents to her and not shut any of her out of communication.

"I want to get to know you," he said gravely. "First let me introduce myself. My name is Charles J. Wales, of Prague."

"Oh, daddy!" her voice cracked with laughter.

"And who are you, please?" he persisted, and she accepted a rôle immediately: "Honoria Wales, Rue Palatine, Paris."

"Married or single?"

"No, not married. Single."

He indicated the doll. "But I see you have a child, madame."

Unwilling to disinherit it, she took it to her heart and thought quickly: "Yes, I've been married, but I'm not married now. My husband is dead."

He went on quickly, "And the child's name?"

"Simone. That's after my best friend at school."

"I'm very pleased that you're doing so well at school."

"I'm third this month," she boasted. "Elsie"—that was her cousin—"is only about eighteenth, and Richard is about at the bottom."

"You like Richard and Elsie, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. I like Richard quite well and I like her all right."

Cautiously and casually he asked: "And Aunt Marion and Uncle Lincoln —which do you like best?"

"Oh, Uncle Lincoln, I guess."

He was increasingly aware of her presence. As they came in, a murmur of ". . . adorable" followed them, and now the people at the next table bent all their silences upon her, staring as if she were something no more conscious than a flower.

"Why don't I live with you?" she asked suddenly. "Because mamma's dead?"

"You must stay here and learn more French. It would have been hard for daddy to take care of you so well."

"I don't really need much taking care of any more. I do everything for myself."

Going out of the restaurant, a man and a woman unexpectedly hailed him!

"Well, the old Wales!"

"Hello there, Lorraine. . . . Dunc."

Sudden ghosts out of the past: Duncan Schaeffer, a friend from college. Lorraine Quarrles, a lovely, pale blonde of thirty; one of a crowd who had helped them make months into days in the lavish times of three years ago.

"My husband couldn't come this year," she said, in answer to his question. "We're poor as hell. So he gave me two hundred a month and told me I could do my worst on that. . . . This your little girl?"

"What about coming back and sitting down?" Duncan asked.

"Can't do it." He was glad for an excuse. As always, he felt Lorraine's passionate, provocative attraction, but his own rhythm was different now.

"Well, how about dinner?" she asked.

"I'm not free. Give me your address and let me call you."

"Charlie, I believe you're sober," she said judicially. "I honestly believe he's sober, Dunc. Pinch him and see if he's sober."

Charlie indicated Honoria with his head. They both laughed.

"What's your address?" said Duncan sceptically.

He hesitated, unwilling to give the name of his hotel.

"I'm not settled yet. I'd better call you. We're going to see the vaudeville at the Empire."

"There! That's what I want to do," Lorraine said. "I want to see some clowns and acrobats and jugglers. That's just what we'll do, Dunc."

"We've got to do an errand first," said Charlie. "Perhaps we'll see you there."

"All right, you snob. . . . Good-by, beautiful little girl."

"Good-by."

Honoria bobbed politely.

Somehow, an unwelcome encounter. They liked him because he was functioning, because he was serious; they wanted to see him, because he was stronger than they were now, because they wanted to draw a certain sustenance from his strength.

At the Empire, Honoria proudly refused to sit upon her father's folded coat. She was already an individual with a code of her own, and Charlie was more and more absorbed by the desire of putting a little of himself into her before she crystallized utterly. It was hopeless to try to know her in so short a time.

Between the acts they came upon Duncan and Lorraine in the lobby where the band was playing.

"Have a drink?"

"All right, but not up at the bar. We'll take a table."

"The perfect father."

Listening abstractedly to Lorraine, Charlie watched Honoria's eyes leave their table, and he followed them wistfully about the room, wondering what they saw. He met her glance and she smiled.

"I liked that lemonade," she said.

What had she said? What had he expected? Going home in a taxi afterward, he pulled her over until her head rested against his chest.

"Darling, do you ever think about your mother?"

"Yes, sometimes," she answered vaguely.

"I don't want you to forget her. Have you got a picture of her?"

"Yes, I think so. Anyhow, Aunt Marion has. Why don't you want me to forget her?"

"She loved you very much."

"I loved her too."

They were silent for a moment.

"Daddy, I want to come and live with you," she said suddenly.

His heart leaped; he had wanted it to come like this.

"Aren't you perfectly happy?"

"Yes, but I love you better than anybody. And you love me better than anybody, don't you, now that mummy's dead?"

"Of course I do. But you won't always like me best, honey. You'll grow up and meet somebody your own age and go marry him and forget you ever had a daddy."

"Yes, that's true," she agreed tranquilly.

He didn't go in. He was coming back at nine o'clock and he wanted to keep himself fresh and new for the thing he must say then.

"When you're safe inside, just show yourself in that window."

"All right. Good-bye, dads, dads, dads, dads."

He waited in the dark street until she appeared, all warm and glowing, in the window above and kissed her fingers out into the night.

III

They were waiting. Marion sat behind the coffee service in a dignified black dinner dress that just faintly suggested mourning. Lincoln was walking up and down with the animation of one who had already been talking. They were as anxious as he was to get into the question. He opened it almost immediately:

"I suppose you know what I want to see you about—why I really came to Paris."

Marion played with the black stars on her necklace and frowned.

"I'm awfully anxious to have a home," he continued. "And I'm awfully anxious to have Honoria in it. I appreciate your taking in Honoria for her mother's sake, but things have changed now"—he hesitated and then continued more forcibly—"changed radically with me, and I want to ask you to reconsider the matter. It would be silly for me to deny that about three years ago I was acting badly——"

Marion looked up at him with hard eyes.

"—but all that's over. As I told you, I haven't had more than a drink a day for over a year, and I take that drink deliberately, so that the idea of alcohol won't get too big in my imagination. You see the idea?"

"No," said Marion succinctly.

"It's a sort of stunt I set myself. It keeps the matter in proportion."

"I get you," said Lincoln. "You don't want to admit it's got any attraction for you."

"Something like that. Sometimes I forget and don't take it. But I try to take it. Anyhow, I couldn't afford to drink in my position. The people I represent are more than satisfied with what I've done, and I'm bringing my sister over from Burlington to keep house for me, and I want awfully to have Honoria too. You know that even when her mother and I weren't getting along well we never let anything that happened touch Honoria. I know she's fond of me and I know I'm able to take care of her and—well, there you are. How do you feel about it?"

He knew that now he would have to take a beating. It would last an hour or two hours, and it would be difficult, but if he modulated his inevitable resentment to the chastened attitude of the reformed sinner, he might win his point in the end.

Keep your temper, he told himself. You don't want to be justified. You want Honoria.

Lincoln spoke first: "We've been talking it over ever since we got your letter last month. We're happy to have Honoria here. She's a dear little thing, and we're glad to be able to help her, but of course that isn't the question——"

Marion interrupted suddenly. "How long are you going to stay sober, Charlie?" she asked.

"Permanently, I hope."

"How can anybody count on that?"

"You know I never did drink heavily until I gave up business and came over here with nothing to do. Then Helen and I began to run around with——"

"Please leave Helen out of it. I can't bear to hear you talk about her like that."

He stared at her grimly; he had never been certain how fond of each other the sisters were in life.

"My drinking only lasted about a year and a half—from the time we came over until I—collapsed."

"It was time enough."

"It was time enough," he agreed.

"My duty is entirely to Helen," she said. "I try to think what she would have wanted me to do. Frankly, from the night you did that terrible thing you haven't really existed for me. I can't help that. She was my sister."

"Yes."

"When she was dying, she asked me to look out for Honoria. If you hadn't been in a sanitarium then, it might have helped matters."

He had no answer.

"I'll never in my life be able to forget the morning when Helen knocked at my door, soaked to the skin and shivering, and said you'd locked her out."

Charlie gripped the sides of the chair. This was more difficult than he expected; he wanted to launch out into a long expostulation and explanation, but he only said: "The night I locked her out—" and she interrupted, "I don't feel up to going over that again."

After a moment's silence Lincoln said: "We're getting off the subject. You want Marion to set aside her legal guardianship and give you Honoria. I think the main point for her is whether she has confidence in you or not."

"I don't blame Marion," Charlie said slowly, "but I think she can have entire confidence in me. I had a good record up to three years ago. Of course, it's within human possibilities I might go wrong any time. But if we wait much longer I'll lose Honoria's childhood and my chance for a home." He shook his head, "I'll simply lose her, don't you see?"

"Yes, I see," said Lincoln.

"Why didn't you think of all this before?" Marion asked.

"I suppose I did, from time to time, but Helen and I were getting along badly. When I consented to the guardianship, I was flat on my back in a sanitarium and the market had cleaned me out. I knew I'd acted badly, and I thought if it would bring any peace to Helen, I'd agree to anything. But now it's different. I'm functioning, I'm behaving damn well, so far as——"

"Please don't swear at me," Marion said.

He looked at her, startled. With each remark the force of her dislike became more and more apparent. She had built up all her fear of life into one

wall and faced it toward him. This trivial reproof was possibly the result of some trouble with the cook several hours before. Charlie became increasingly alarmed at leaving Honoria in this atmosphere of hostility against himself; sooner or later it would come out, in a word here, a shake of the head there, and some of that distrust would be irrevocably implanted in Honoria. But he pulled his temper down out of his face and shut it up inside him; he had a point, for Lincoln realized the absurdity of Marion's remark and asked her lightly since when she had objected to the word "damn."

"Another thing," Charlie said: "I'm able to give her certain advantages now. I'm going to take a French governess to Prague with me. I've got a lease on a new apartment——"

He stopped, realizing that he was blundering. They couldn't be expected to accept with equanimity the fact that his income was again twice as large as their own.

"I suppose you can give her more luxuries than we can," said Marion. "When you were throwing away money we were living along watching every ten francs. . . . I suppose you'll start doing it again."

"Oh, no," he said. "I've learned. I worked hard for ten years, you know—until I got lucky in the market, like so many people. Terribly lucky. It didn't seem any use working any more, so I quit. It won't happen again."

There was a long silence. All of them felt their nerves straining, and for the first time in a year Charlie wanted a drink. He was sure now that Lincoln Peters wanted him to have his child.

Marion shuddered suddenly; part of her saw that Charlie's feet were planted on the earth now, and her own maternal feeling recognized the naturalness of his desire; but she had lived for a long time with a prejudice—a prejudice founded on a curious disbelief in her sister's happiness, and which, in the shock of one terrible night, had turned to hatred for him. It had all happened at a point in her life where the discouragement of ill health and adverse circumstances made it necessary for her to believe in tangible villainy and a tangible villain.

"I can't help what I think!" she cried out suddenly. "How much you were responsible for Helen's death, I don't know. It's something you'll have to square with your own conscience."

An electric current of agony surged through him; for a moment he was almost on his feet, an unuttered sound echoing in his throat. He hung on to himself for a moment, another moment.

"Hold on there," said Lincoln uncomfortably. "I never thought you were responsible for that."

"Helen died of heart trouble," Charlie said dully.

"Yes, heart trouble." Marion spoke as if the phrase had another meaning for her.

Then, in the flatness that followed her outburst, she saw him plainly and she knew he had somehow arrived at control over the situation. Glancing at

her husband, she found no help from him, and as abruptly as if it were a matter of no importance, she threw up the sponge.

"Do what you like!" she cried, springing up from her chair. "She's your child. I'm not the person to stand in your way. I think if it were my child I'd rather see her—" She managed to check herself. "You two decide it. I can't stand this. I'm sick. I'm going to bed."

She hurried from the room; after a moment Lincoln said:

"This has been a hard day for her. You know how strongly she feels—" His voice was almost apologetic: "When a woman gets an idea in her head."

"Of course."

"It's going to be all right. I think she sees now that you—can provide for the child, and so we can't very well stand in your way or Honoria's way."

"Thank you, Lincoln."

"I'd better go along and see how she is."

"I'm going."

He was still trembling when he reached the street, but a walk down the Rue Bonaparte to the quais set him up, and as he crossed the Seine, fresh and new by the quai lamps, he felt exultant. But back in his room he couldn't sleep. The image of Helen haunted him. Helen whom he had loved so until they had senselessly began to abuse each other's love, tear it into shreds. On that terrible February night that Marion remembered so vividly, a slow quarrel had gone on for hours. There was a scene at the Florida, and then he attempted to take her home, and then she kissed young Webb at a table; after that there was what she had hysterically said. When he arrived home alone he turned the key in the lock in wild anger. How could he know she would arrive an hour later alone, that there would be a snowstorm in which she wandered about in slippers, too confused to find a taxi? Then the aftermath, her escaping pneumonia by a miracle, and all the attendant horror. They were "reconciled," but that was the beginning of the end, and Marion, who had seen with her own eyes and who imagined it to be one of many scenes from her sister's martyrdom, never forgot.

Going over it again brought Helen nearer, and in the white, soft light that steals upon half sleep near morning he found himself talking to her again. She said that he was perfectly right about Honoria and that she wanted Honoria to be with him. She said she was glad he was being good and doing better. She said a lot of other things—very friendly things—but she was in a swing in a white dress, and swinging faster and faster all the time, so that at the end he could not hear clearly all that she said.

IV

He woke up feeling happy. The door of the world was open again. He made plans, vistas, futures for Honoria and himself, but suddenly he grew sad, remembering all the plans he and Helen had made. She had not planned

to die. The present was the thing—work to do and someone to love. But not to love too much, for he knew the injury that a father can do to a daughter or a mother to a son by attaching them too closely: afterward, out in the world, the child would seek in the marriage partner the same blind tenderness and, failing probably to find it, turn against love and life.

It was another bright, crisp day. He called Lincoln Peters at the bank where he worked and asked if he could count on taking Honoria when he left for Prague. Lincoln agreed that there was no reason for delay. One thing —the legal guardianship. Marion wanted to retain that a while longer. She was upset by the whole matter, and it would oil things if she felt that the situation was still in her control for another year. Charlie agreed, wanting only the tangible, visible child.

Then the question of a governess. Charlie sat in a gloomy agency and talked to a cross Bernaise and to a buxom Breton peasant, neither of whom he could have endured. There were others whom he would see tomorrow.

He lunched with Lincoln Peters at Griffons, trying to keep down his exultation.

"There's nothing quite like your own child," Lincoln said. "But you understand how Marion feels too."

"She's forgotten how hard I worked for seven years there," Charlie said. "She just remembers one night."

"There's another thing," Lincoln hesitated. "While you and Helen were tearing around Europe throwing money away, we were just getting along. I didn't touch any of the prosperity because I never got ahead enough to carry anything but my insurance. I think Marion felt there was some kind of injustice in it—you not even working toward the end, and getting richer and richer."

"It went just as quick as it came," said Charlie.

"Yes, a lot of it stayed in the hands of *chasseurs* and saxophone players and maîtres d'hôtel—well, the big party's over now. I just said that to explain Marion's feeling about those crazy years. If you drop in about six o'clock tonight before Marion's too tired, we'll settle the details on the spot."

Back at his hotel, Charlie found a *pneumatique* that had been redirected from the Ritz bar where Charlie had left his address for the purpose of finding a certain man.

DEAR CHARLIE: You were so strange when we saw you the other day that I wondered if I did something to offend you. If so, I'm not conscious of it. In fact, I have thought about you too much for the last year, and it's always been in the back of my mind that I might see you if I came over here. We *did* have such good times that crazy spring, like the night you and I stole the butcher's tricycle, and the time we tried to call on the president and you had the old derby rim and the wire cane. Everybody seems so old lately, but I don't feel old a bit. Couldn't we get together some time today for old time's sake?

I've got a vile hang-over for the moment, but will be feeling better this afternoon and will look for you about five in the sweat-shop at the Ritz.

Always devotedly,

LORRAINE.

His first feeling was one of awe that he had actually, in his mature years, stolen a tricycle and pedalled Lorraine all over the Etoile between the small hours and dawn. In retrospect it was a nightmare. Locking out Helen didn't fit in with any other act of his life, but the tricycle incident did—it was one of many. How many weeks or months of dissipation to arrive at that condition of utter irresponsibility?

He tried to picture how Lorraine had appeared to him then—very attractive; Helen was unhappy about it, though she said nothing. Yesterday, in the restaurant, Lorraine had seemed trite, blurred, worn away. He emphatically did not want to see her, and he was glad Alix had not given away his hotel address. It was a relief to think, instead, of Honoria, to think of Sundays spent with her and of saying good morning to her and of knowing she was there in his house at night, drawing her breath in the darkness.

At five he took a taxi and bought presents for all the Peters—a piquant cloth doll, a box of Roman soldiers, flowers for Marion, big linen handkerchiefs for Lincoln.

He saw, when he arrived in the apartment, that Marion had accepted the inevitable. She greeted him now as though he were a recalcitrant member of the family rather than a menacing outsider. Honoria had been told she was going; Charlie was glad to see that her tact made her conceal her excessive happiness. Only on his lap did she whisper her delight and the question "When?" before she slipped away with the other children.

He and Marion were alone for a minute in the room, and on an impulse he spoke out boldly:

"Family quarrels are bitter things. They don't go according to any rules. They're not like aches or wounds; they're more like splits in the skin that won't heal because there's not enough material. I wish you and I could be on better terms."

"Some things are hard to forget," she answered. "It's a question of confidence." There was no answer to this and presently she asked, "When do you propose to take her?"

"As soon as I can get a governess. I hoped the day after tomorrow."

"That's impossible. I've got to get her things in shape. Not before Saturday."

He yielded. Coming back into the room, Lincoln offered him a drink.

"I'll take my daily whisky," he said.

It was warm here, it was a home, people together by a fire. The children felt very safe and important; the mother and father were serious, watchful. They had things to do for the children more important than his visit here. A spoonful of medicine was, after all, more important than the strained relations

between Marion and himself. They were not dull people, but they were very much in the grip of life and circumstances. He wondered if he couldn't do something to get Lincoln out of his rut at the bank.

A long peal at the door-bell; the *bonne de toute faire* passed through and went down the corridor. The door opened upon another long ring, and then voices, and the three in the salon looked up expectantly; Richard moved to bring the corridor within his range of vision, and Marion rose. Then the maid came back along the corridor, closely followed by the voices, which developed under the light into Duncan Schaeffer and Lorraine Quarrles.

They were gay, they were hilarious, they were roaring with laughter. For a moment Charlie was astounded; unable to understand how they ferreted out the Peters' address.

"Ah-h-h!" Duncan wagged his finger roguishly at Charlie. "Ah-h-h!"

They both slid down another cascade of laughter. Anxious and at a loss, Charlie shook hands with them quickly and presented them to Lincoln and Marion. Marion nodded, scarcely speaking. She had drawn back a step toward the fire; her little girl stood beside her, and Marion put an arm about her shoulder.

With growing annoyance at the intrusion, Charlie waited for them to explain themselves. After some concentration Duncan said:

"We came to invite you out to dinner. Lorraine and I insist that all this shishi, cagy business 'bout your address got to stop."

Charlie came closer to them, as if to force them backward down the corridor.

"Sorry, but I can't. Tell me where you'll be and I'll phone you in half an hour."

This made no impression. Lorraine sat down suddenly on the side of a chair, and focusing her eyes on Richard, cried, "Oh, what a nice little boy! Come here, little boy." Richard glanced at his mother, but did not move. With a perceptible shrug of her shoulders, Lorraine turned back to Charlie:

"Come and dine. Sure your cousins won' mine. See you so sel'om. Or solemn."

"I can't," said Charlie sharply. "You two have dinner and I'll phone you."

Her voice became suddenly unpleasant. "All right, we'll go. But I remember once when you hammered on my door at four A.M. I was enough of a good sport to give you a drink. Come on, Dunc."

Still in slow motion, with blurred, angry faces, with uncertain feet, they retired along the corridor.

"Good night," Charlie said.

"Good night!" responded Lorraine emphatically.

When he went back into the salon Marion had not moved, only now her son was standing in the circle of her other arm. Lincoln was still swinging Honoria back and forth like a pendulum from side to side.

"What an outrage!" Charlie broke out. "What an absolute outrage!"

Neither of them answered. Charlie dropped into an arm chair, picked up his drink, set it down again and said:

"People I haven't seen for two years having the colossal nerve——"

He broke off. Marion had made the sound "Oh!" in one swift, furious breath, turned her body from him with a jerk and left the room.

Lincoln set down Honoria carefully.

"You children go in and start your soup," he said, and when they obeyed, he said to Charlie:

"Marion's not well and she can't stand shocks. That kind of people make her really physically sick."

"I didn't tell them to come here. They wormed your name out of somebody. They deliberately——"

"Well, it's too bad. It doesn't help matters. Excuse me a minute."

Left alone, Charlie sat tense in his chair. In the next room he could hear the children eating, talking in monosyllables, already oblivious to the scene between their elders. He heard a murmur of conversation from a farther room and then the ticking bell of a telephone receiver picked up, and in a panic he moved to the other side of the room and out of earshot.

In a minute Lincoln came back. "Look here, Charlie. I think we'd better call off dinner for tonight. Marion's in bad shape."

"Is she angry with me?"

"Sort of," he said, almost roughly. "She's not strong and——"

"You mean she's changed her mind about Honoria?"

"She's pretty bitter right now. I don't know. You phone me at the bank tomorrow."

"I wish you'd explain to her I never dreamed these people would come here. I'm just as sore as you are."

"I couldn't explain anything to her now."

Charlie got up. He took his coat and hat and started down the corridor. Then he opened the door of the dining room and said in a strange voice, "Good night, children."

Honoria rose and ran around the table to hug him.

"Good night, sweetheart," he said vaguely, and then trying to make his voice more tender, trying to conciliate something, "Good night, dear children."

V

Charlie went directly to the Ritz bar with the furious idea of finding Lorraine and Duncan, but they were not there, and he realized that in any case there was nothing he could do. He had not touched his drink at the Peters', and now he ordered a whisky-and-soda. Paul came over to say hello.

"It's a great change," he said sadly. "We do about half the business we did.

So many fellows I hear about back in the States lost everything, maybe not in the first crash, but then in the second. Your friend George Hardt lost every cent, I hear. Are you back in the States?"

"No, I'm in business in Prague."

"I heard that you lost a lot in the crash."

"I did," and he added grimly, "but I lost everything I wanted in the boom."

"Selling short."

"Something like that."

Again the memory of those days swept over him like a nightmare—the people they had met travelling; then people who couldn't add a row of figures or speak a coherent sentence. The little man Helen had consented to dance with at the ship's party, who had insulted her ten feet from the table; the women and girls carried screaming with drink or drugs out of public places——

—The men who locked their wives out in the snow, because the snow of twenty-nine wasn't real snow. If you didn't want it to be snow, you just paid some money.

He went to the phone and called the Peter's apartment; Lincoln answered.

"I called up because this thing is on my mind. Has Marion said anything definite?"

"Marion's sick," Lincoln answered shortly. "I know this thing isn't altogether your fault, but I can't have her go to pieces about it. I'm afraid we'll have to let it slide for six months; I can't take the chance of working her up to this state again."

"I see."

"I'm sorry, Charlie."

He went back to his table. His whisky glass was empty, but he shook his head when Alix looked at it questioningly. There wasn't much he could do now except send Honoria some things; he would send her a lot of things tomorrow. He thought rather angrily that this was just money—he had given so many people money. . . .

"No, no more," he said to another waiter. "What do I owe you?"

He would come back some day; they couldn't make him pay forever. But he wanted his child, and nothing was much good now, beside that fact. He wasn't young any more, with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have by himself. He was absolutely sure Helen wouldn't have wanted him to be so alone.

A ROSE FOR EMILY[1]

WILLIAM FAULKNER

WHEN Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old manservant—a combined gardener and cook—had seen in at least ten years.

It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps—an eyesore among eyesores. And now Miss Emily had gone to join the representatives of those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Jefferson.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor—he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron—remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Not that Miss Emily would have accepted charity. Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Miss Emily's father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of business, preferred this way of repaying. Only a man of Colonel Sartoris' generation and thought could have invented it, and only a woman could have believed it.

When the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction. On the first of the year they mailed her a tax notice. February came, and there was no reply. They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff's office at her convenience. A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. The tax notice was also enclosed, without comment.

They called a special meeting of the Board of Aldermen. A deputation waited upon her, knocked at the door through which no visitor had passed since she ceased giving china-painting lessons eight or ten years earlier. They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway

1. From *These Thirteen*. Copyright, 1931, by William Faulkner. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sunray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily's father.

They rose when she entered—a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough as they moved from one face to another while the visitors stated their errand.

She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.

Her voice was dry and cold. "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves."

"But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes," Miss Emily said. "Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff. . . . I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see. We must go by the—"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily—"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Tobe!" The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out."

II

So she vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell. That was two years after her father's death and a short time after her sweetheart—the one we believed would marry her—had deserted her. After her father's death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man—a young man then—going in and out with a market basket.

"Just as if a man—any man—could keep a kitchen properly," the ladies said;

so they were not surprised when the smell developed. It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons.

A neighbor, a woman, complained to the mayor, Judge Stevens, eighty years old.

"But what will you have me do about it, madam?" he said.

"Why send her word to stop it," the woman said. "Isn't there a law?"

"I'm sure that won't be necessary," Judge Stevens said. "It's probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I'll speak to him about it."

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. "We really must do something about it, Judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something." That night the Board of Aldermen met—three graybeards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

"It's simple enough," he said. "Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don't . . ."

"Dammit, sir," Judge Stevens said, "will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?"

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily's lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. After a week or two the smell went away.

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town, remembering how old lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, believed that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as a tableau; Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.

The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom. Miss Emily met them at the door,

dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days, with ministers calling on her, and the doctors, trying to persuade her to let them dispose of the body. Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her father quickly.

We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.

III

She was sick for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene.

The town had just let the contracts for paving the sidewalks, and in the summer after her father's death they began the work. The construction company came with niggers and mules and machinery, and a foreman named Homer Barron, a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. The little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the niggers, and the niggers singing in time to the rise and fall of picks. Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the square, Homer Barron would be in the center of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable.

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, "Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer." But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget *noblesse oblige*—without calling it *noblesse oblige*. They just said, "Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her." She had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them over the estate of old lady Wyatt, the crazy woman, and there was no communication between the two families. They had not even been represented at the funeral.

And as soon as the old people said, "Poor Emily," the whispering began. "Do you suppose it's really so?" they said to one another. "Of course it is. What else could . . ." This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: "Poor Emily."

She carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic.

That was over a year after they had begun to say "Poor Emily," and while the two female cousins were visiting her.

"I want some poison," she said to the druggist. She was over thirty then, still a slight woman, though thinner than usual, with cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eyesockets as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper's face ought to look. "I want some poison," she said.

"Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I'd recom—"

"I want the best you have. I don't care what kind."

The druggist named several. "They'll kill anything up to an elephant. But what you want is—"

"Arsenic," Miss Emily said. "Is that a good one?"

"Is . . . arsenic? Yes, ma'am. But what you want—"

"I want arsenic."

The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. "Why, of course," the druggist said. "If that's what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use it for."

Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. The Negro delivery boy brought her the package; the druggist didn't come back. When she opened the package at home there was written on the box, under the skull and bones: "For rats."

IV

So the next day we all said, "She will kill herself"; and we said it would be the best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, "She will marry him." Then we said, "She will persuade him yet," because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with younger men in the Elk's Club—that he was not a marrying man. Later we said, "Poor Emily," behind the jalousies as they passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove.

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister—Miss Emily's people were Episcopal—to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister's wife wrote to Miss Emily's relations in Alabama.

So she had blood-kin under her roof again and we sat back to watch developments. At first nothing happened. Then we were sure that they were to be married. We learned that Miss Emily had been to the jeweler's and

ordered a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H.B. on each piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men's clothing, including a nightshirt, and we said, "They are married." We were really glad. We were glad because the two female cousins were even more Grierson than Miss Emily had ever been.

So we were not surprised when Homer Barron—the streets had been finished some time since—was gone. We were a little disappointed that there was not a public blowing-off, but we believed that he had gone on to prepare for Miss Emily's coming, or to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins. (By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily's allies to help circumvent the cousins.) Sure enough, after another week they departed. And, as we had expected all along, within three days Homer Barron was back in town. A neighbor saw her Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening.

And that was the last we saw of Homer Barron. And of Miss Emily for some time. The Negro man went in and out with the market basket, but the front door remained closed. Now and then we would see her at a window for a moment, as the men did that night when they sprinkled the lime, but for almost six months she did not appear on the streets. Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman's life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die.

When we next saw Miss Emily, she had grown fat and her hair was turning gray. During the next few years it grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt iron-gray, when it ceased turning. Up to the day of her death at seventy-four it was still that vigorous iron-gray, like the hair of an active man.

From that time on her front door remained closed, save for a period of six or seven years, when she was about forty, during which she gave lessons in china-painting. She fitted up a studio in one of the downstairs rooms, where the daughters and granddaughters of Colonel Sartoris' contemporaries were sent to her with the same regularity and in the same spirit that they were sent on Sundays with a twenty-five cent piece for the collection plate. Meanwhile her taxes had been remitted.

Then the newer generation became the backbone and the spirit of the town, and the painting pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her with boxes of color and tedious brushes and pictures cut from the ladies' magazines. The front door closed upon the last one and remained closed for good. When the town got free postal delivery Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it. She would not listen to them.

Daily, monthly, yearly we watched the Negro grow grayer and more stooped, going in and out with the market basket. Each December we sent her a tax notice, which would be returned by the post office a week later,

unclaimed. Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carven torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.

And so she died. Fell ill in the house filled with dust and shadows, with only a doddering Negro man to wait on her. We did not even know she was sick; we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro. He talked to no one, probably not even to her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

V

The Negro met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men—some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road, but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottleneck of the most recent decade of years.

Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay a collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon the chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks.

The man himself lay in the bed.

For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and

fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust.

Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.

ON FAULKNER'S *A ROSE FOR EMILY*[1]

CLEANTH BROOKS AND ROBERT PENN WARREN

THIS story, like Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," is a story of horror. In both stories we have a decaying mansion in which the protagonist, shut away from the world, grows into something monstrous, and becomes as divorced from the human as some fungus growing in the dark on a damp wall. Roderick Usher and Miss Emily Grierson remain in voluntary isolation (or perhaps fettered by some inner compulsion) away from the bustle and dust and sunshine of the human world of normal affairs. As we have seen, Poe closes his story with a melodramatic gesture in which the house falls into the lake, carrying with it its dead master. The ending of Faulkner's story is not so spectacular, but what is found in the upstairs room gives perhaps a sense of more penetrating and gruesome horror than ever Poe has achieved.

It has been indicated that, in the case of Poe, the sense of horror had been conjured up for its own sake. Is this true of Faulkner's story? If it is not, then why has he contrived to insert so much of the monstrous into the story? In other words, does the horror contribute to the theme of Faulkner's story? Is the horror meaningful?

In order to answer this question, we shall have to examine rather carefully some of the items earlier in the story. In the first place, why does Miss Emily commit her monstrous act? Is she supplied with a proper motivation—a matter which we concluded was handled rather weakly in "The Fall of the House of Usher." Faulkner has been rather careful to prepare for his *dénouement.* Miss Emily, it becomes obvious fairly early in the story, is one of those persons for whom the distinction between reality and illusion has blurred out. For example, she refuses to admit that she owes any taxes. When the mayor protests, she does not recognize him as mayor. Instead, she refers the committee to Colonel Sartoris, who, as the reader is told, has been dead for nearly ten years. For Miss Emily apparently, Colonel Sartoris is still alive. Most specific preparation of all, when her father dies, she denies to the townspeople for

1. From *Understanding Fiction,* by Cleanth Brooks, Jr., and Robert Penn Warren. Copyright, 1943, by F. S. Crofts & Co., Inc. Published by F. S. Crofts & Co., Inc.

three days that he is dead: "Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her father quickly."

Miss Emily is obviously a pathological case. The narrator indicates plainly enough that people felt that she was crazy. All this explanation prepares us for what Miss Emily does in order to hold her lover—the dead lover is in one sense still alive for her—the realms of reality and appearance merge. But having said this, we have got no nearer to justifying the story: for, if Faulkner is merely interested in relating a case history of abnormal psychology, the story lacks meaning and justification as a story. His interest in this case is as "clinical" as is the interest of Poe in Roderick Usher. If the story is to be justified, there must be what may be called a moral significance, a meaning in moral terms—not merely psychological terms.

Incidentally, it is very easy to misread the story as merely a horrible case history, presented in order to titillate the reader. Faulkner has been frequently judged to be doing nothing more than this in his work.

The lapse of the distinction between illusion and reality, between life and death, is important, therefore, as helping supply the motivation for the story, but a definition of this in itself is not a complete definition of the author's intention. We shall have to go behind it if we are to understand what Faulkner is about.

Suppose we approach the motivation again in these terms: what is Miss Emily like? What are the mainsprings of her character? What causes the distinction between illusion and reality to blur out for her? She is obviously a woman of tremendous firmness of will. In the matter of the taxes, crazed though she is, she is never at a loss. She is utterly composed. She dominates the rather frightened committee of officers who sees her. In the matter of her purchase of the poison, she completely overawes the clerk. She makes no pretenses. She refuses to tell him what she wants the poison for. And yet this firmness of will and this iron pride have not kept her from being thwarted and hurt. Her father has run off the young men who came to call upon her, and for the man who tells the story, Miss Emily and her father form a tableau: "Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horse-whip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door." Whether the picture is a remembered scene, or merely a symbolical construct, this is the picture which remains in the storyteller's mind.

We have indicated that her pride is connected with her contempt for public opinion. This comes to the fore, of course, when she rides around about the town with the foreman who everybody believes is beneath her. And it is her proud refusal to admit an external set of codes, or conventions, or other wills which contradict her own will, which makes her capable at the end of keeping her lover from going away. Confronted with his jilting her, she tries to override not only his will and the opinion of other people, but the laws of death and decay themselves.

But this, still, hardly gives the meaning of the story. For in all that has been said thus far, we are still merely dealing with a case history in abnormal psychology. In order to make a case for the story as "meaningful," we shall have to tie Miss Emily's thoughts and actions back into the normal life of the community, and establish some sort of relationship between them. And just here one pervasive element in the narration suggests a clue. The story is told by one of the townspeople. And in it, as a constant factor, is the reference to what the community thought of Miss Emily. Continually through the story it is what "we" said, and then what "we" did, and what seemed true to "us," and so on. The narrator puts the matter even more sharply still. He says, in the course of the story, that to the community Miss Emily seemed "dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse." Each of the adjectives is important and meaningful. In a sense, Miss Emily because of her very fact of isolation and perversity belongs to the whole community. She is even something treasured by it. Ironically, because of Emily's perversion of an aristocratic independence of mores and because of her contempt for "what people say," her life is public, even communal. And various phrases used by the narrator underline this view of her position. For example, her face looks "as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper's face ought to look," like the face of a person who lives in the kind of isolation imposed on a lighthouse-keeper, who looks out into the blackness and whose light serves a public function. Or, again, after her father's death, she becomes very ill, and when she appears after the illness, she has "a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene." Whatever we make of these descriptions, certainly the author is trying to suggest a kind of calm and dignity which is supermundane, unearthly, or "over-earthly," such as an angel might possess.

Miss Emily, then, is a combination of idol and scapegoat for the community. On the one hand, the community feels admiration for Miss Emily—she represents something in the past of the community which the community is proud of. They feel a sort of awe of her, as is illustrated by the behavior of the mayor and the committee in her presence. On the other hand, her queerness, the fact that she cannot compete with them in their ordinary life, the fact that she is hopelessly out of touch with the modern world—all of these things make them feel superior to her, and also to that past which she represents. It is, then, Miss Emily's complete detachment which gives her actions their special meaning for the community.

Miss Emily, since she is the conscious aristocrat, since she is consciously "better" than other people, since she is above and outside their canons of behavior, can, at the same time, be worse than other people; and she *is* worse, horribly so. She is worse than other people, but at the same time, as the narrator implies, she remains somehow admirable. This raises a fundamental question: why is this true?

Perhaps the horrible and the admirable aspects of Miss Emily's final deed arise from the same basic fact of her character: she insists on meeting the

world on her own terms. She never cringes, she never begs for sympathy, she refuses to shrink into an amiable old maid, she never accepts the community's ordinary judgments or values. This independence of spirit and pride can, and does in her case, twist the individual into a sort of monster, but, at the same time, this refusal to accept the herd values carries with it a dignity and courage. The community senses this, as we gather from the fact that the community carries out the decencies of the funeral before breaking in the door of the upper room. There is, as it were, a kind of secret understanding that she has won her right of privacy, until she herself has entered history. Furthermore, despite the fact that, as the narrator says, "already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced," her funeral is something of a state occasion, with "the very old men—some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps . . ." In other words, the community accepts her into its honored history. All of this works as a kind of tacit recognition of Miss Emily's triumph of will. The community, we are told earlier, had wanted to pity Miss Emily when she had lost her money, just as they had wanted to commiserate over her when they believed that she had actually become a fallen woman, but she had triumphed over their pity and commiseration and condemnation, just as she had triumphed over all their other attitudes.

But, as we have indicated earlier, it may be said that Miss Emily is mad. This may be true, but there are two things to consider in this connection. First, one must consider the special terms which her "madness" takes. Her madness is simply a development of her pride and her refusal to submit to ordinary standards of behavior. So, because of this fact, her "madness" is meaningful after all. It involves issues which in themselves are really important and have to do with the world of conscious moral choice. Second, the community interprets her "madness" as meaningful. They admire her, even if they are disappointed by her refusals to let herself be pitied, and the narrator, who is a spokesman for the community, recognizes the last grim revelation as an instance of her having carried her own values to their ultimate conclusion. She would marry the common laborer, Homer Barron, let the community think what it would. She would not be jilted. And she would hold him as a lover. But it would all be on her own terms. She remains completely dominant, and contemptuous of the day-to-day world.

It has been suggested by many critics that tragedy implies a hero who is completely himself, who insists on meeting the world on his own terms, who wants something so intensely, or lives so intensely, that he cannot accept any compromise. It cannot be maintained that this story is comparable to any of the great tragedies, such as *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, but it can be pointed out that this story, in its own way, involves some of the same basic elements. Certainly, Miss Emily's pride, isolation, and independence remind one of factors

in the character of the typical tragic hero. And it can be pointed out that, just as the horror of her deed lies outside the ordinary life of the community, so the magnificence of her independence lies outside their ordinary virtues.



THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS MACOMBER[1]

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

IT WAS now lunch time and they were all sitting under the double green fly of the dining tent pretending that nothing had happened.

"Will you have lime juice or lemon squash?" Macomber asked.

"I'll have a gimlet," Robert Wilson told him.

"I'll have a gimlet too. I need something," Macomber's wife said.

"I suppose it's the thing to do," Macomber agreed. "Tell him to make three gimlets."

The mess boy had started them already, lifting the bottles out of the canvas cooling bags that sweated wet in the wind that blew through the trees that shaded the tents.

"What had I ought to give them?" Macomber asked.

"A quid would be plenty," Wilson told him. "You don't want to spoil them."

"Will the headman distribute it?"

"Absolutely."

Francis Macomber had, half an hour before, been carried to his tent from the edge of the camp in triumph on the arms and shoulders of the cook, the personal boys, the skinner and the porters. The gun-bearers had taken no part in the demonstration. When the native boys put him down at the door of his tent, he had shaken all their hands, received their congratulations, and then gone into the tent and sat on the bed until his wife came in. She did not speak to him when she came in and he left the tent at once to wash his face and hands in the portable wash basin outside and go over to the dining tent to sit in a comfortable canvas chair in the breeze and the shade.

"You've got your lion," Robert Wilson said to him, "and a damned fine one too."

Mrs. Macomber looked at Wilson quickly. She was an extremely handsome and well-kept woman of the beauty and social position which had, five years before, commanded five thousand dollars as the price of endorsing, with photographs, a beauty product which she had never used. She had been married to Francis Macomber for eleven years.

"He is a good lion, isn't he?" Macomber said. His wife looked at him now.

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She looked at both these men as though she had never seen them before.

One, Wilson, the white hunter, she knew she had never truly seen before. He was about middle height with sandy hair, a stubby mustache, a very red face and extremely cold blue eyes with faint white wrinkles at the corners that grooved merrily when he smiled. He smiled at her now and she looked away from his face at the way his shoulders sloped in the loose tunic he wore with the four big cartridges held in loops where the left breast pocket should have been, at his big brown hands, his old slacks, his very dirty boots and back to his red face again. She noticed where the baked red of his face stopped in a white line that marked the circle left by his Stetson hat that hung now from one of the pegs of the tent pole.

"Well, here's to the lion," Robert Wilson said. He smiled at her again and, not smiling, she looked curiously at her husband.

Francis Macomber was very tall, very well built if you did not mind that length of bone, dark, his hair cropped like an oarsman, rather thin-lipped, and was considered handsome. He was dressed in the same sort of safari clothes that Wilson wore except that his were new, he was thirty-five years old, kept himself very fit, was good at court games, had a number of big-game fishing records, and had just shown himself, very publicly, to be a coward.

"Here's to the lion," he said. "I can't ever thank you for what you did."

Margaret, his wife, looked away from him and back to Wilson.

"Let's not talk about the lion," she said.

Wilson looked over at her without smiling and now she smiled at him.

"It's been a very strange day," she said. "Hadn't you ought to put your hat on even under the canvas at noon? You told me that, you know."

"Might put it on," said Wilson.

"You know you have a very red face, Mr. Wilson," she told him and smiled again.

"Drink," said Wilson.

"I don't think so," she said. "Francis drinks a great deal, but his face is never red."

"It's red today," Macomber tried a joke.

"No," said Margaret. "It's mine that's red today. But Mr. Wilson's is always red."

"Must be racial," said Wilson. "I say, you wouldn't like to drop my beauty as a topic, would you?"

"I've just started on it."

"Let's chuck it," said Wilson.

"Conversation is going to be so difficult," Margaret said.

"Don't be silly, Margot," her husband said.

"No difficulty," Wilson said. "Got a damn fine lion."

Margot looked at them both and they both saw that she was going to cry. Wilson had seen it coming for a long time and he dreaded it. Macomber was past dreading it.

"I wish it hadn't happened. Oh, I wish it hadn't happened," she said and started for her tent. She made no noise of crying but they could see that her shoulders were shaking under the rose-colored, sun-proofed shirt she wore.

"Women upset," said Wilson to the tall man. "Amounts to nothing. Strain on the nerves and one thing'n another."

"No," said Macomber. "I suppose that I rate that for the rest of my life now."

"Nonsense. Let's have a spot of giant killer," said Wilson. "Forget the whole thing. Nothing to it anyway."

"We might try," said Macomber. "I won't forget what you did for me though."

"Nothing," said Wilson. "All nonsense."

So they sat there in the shade where the camp was pitched under some wide-topped acacia trees with a boulder-strewn cliff behind them, and a stretch of grass that ran to the bank of a boulder-filled stream in front with forest beyond it, and drank their just-cool lime drinks and avoided one another's eyes while the boys set the table for lunch. Wilson could tell that the boys all knew about it now and when he saw Macomber's personal boy looking curiously at his master while he was putting dishes on the table he snapped at him in Swahili. The boy turned away with his face blank.

"What were you telling him?" Macomber asked.

"Nothing. Told him to look alive or I'd see he got about fifteen of the best."

"What's that? Lashes?"

"It's quite illegal," Wilson said. "You're supposed to fine them."

"Do you still have them whipped?"

"Oh, yes. They could raise a row if they chose to complain. But they don't. They prefer it to the fines."

"How strange!" said Macomber.

"Not strange, really," Wilson said. "Which would you rather do? Take a good birching or lose your pay?"

Then he felt embarrassed at asking it and before Macomber could answer he went on, "We all take a beating every day, you know, one way or another."

This was no better. "Good God," he thought. "I am a diplomat, aren't I?"

"Yes, we take a beating," said Macomber, still not looking at him. "I'm awfully sorry about that lion business. It doesn't have to go any further, does it? I mean no one will hear about it, will they?"

"You mean will I tell it at the Mathaiga Club?" Wilson looked at him now coldly. He had not expected this. So he's a bloody four-letter man as well as a bloody coward, he thought. I rather liked him too until today. But how is one to know about an American?

"No," said Wilson. "I'm a professional hunter. We never talk about our clients. You can be quite easy on that. It's supposed to be bad form to ask us not to talk though."

He had decided now that to break would be much easier. He would eat,

then, by himself and could read a book with his meals. They would eat by themselves. He would see them through the safari on a very formal basis—what was it the French called it? Distinguished consideration—and it would be a damn sight easier than having to go through this emotional trash. He'd insult him and make a good clean break. Then he could read a book with his meals and he'd still be drinking their whisky. That was the phrase for it when a safari went bad. You ran into another white hunter and you asked, "How is everything going?" and he answered, "Oh, I'm still drinking their whisky," and you knew everything had gone to pot.

"I'm sorry," Macomber said and looked at him with his American face that would stay adolescent until it became middle-aged, and Wilson noted his crew-cropped hair, fine eyes only faintly shifty, good nose, thin lips and handsome jaw. "I'm sorry I didn't realize that. There are lots of things I don't know."

So what could he do, Wilson thought. He was all ready to break it off quickly and neatly and here the beggar was apologizing after he had just insulted him. He made one more attempt. "Don't worry about me talking," he said. "I have a living to make. You know in Africa no woman ever misses her lion and no white man ever bolts."

"I bolted like a rabbit," Macomber said.

Now what in hell were you going to do about a man who talked like that, Wilson wondered.

Wilson looked at Macomber with his flat, blue, machine-gunner's eyes and the other smiled back at him. He had a pleasant smile if you did not notice how his eyes showed when he was hurt.

"Maybe I can fix it up on buffalo," he said. "We're after them next, aren't we?"

"In the morning if you like," Wilson told him. Perhaps he had been wrong. This was certainly the way to take it. You most certainly could not tell a damned thing about an American. He was all for Macomber again. If you could forget the morning. But, of course, you couldn't. The morning had been about as bad as they come.

"Here comes the Memsahib," he said. She was walking over from her tent looking refreshed and cheerful and quite lovely. She had a very perfect oval face, so perfect that you expected her to be stupid. But she wasn't stupid, Wilson thought, no, not stupid.

"How is the beautiful red-faced Mr. Wilson? Are you feeling better, Francis, my pearl?"

"Oh, much," said Macomber.

"I've dropped the whole thing," she said, sitting down at the table. "What importance is there to whether Francis is any good at killing lions? That's not his trade. That's Mr. Wilson's trade. Mr. Wilson is really very impressive killing anything. You do kill anything, don't you?"

"Oh, anything," said Wilson. "Simply anything." They are, he thought, the hardest in the world; the hardest, the cruelest, the most predatory and the most attractive and their men have softened or gone to pieces nervously as they have hardened. Or is it that they pick men they can handle? They can't know that much at the age they marry, he thought. He was grateful that he had gone through his education on American women before now because this was a very attractive one.

"We're going after buff in the morning," he told her.

"I'm coming," she said.

"No, you're not."

"Oh, yes, I am. Mayn't I, Francis?"

"Why not stay in camp?"

"Not for anything," she said. "I wouldn't miss something like today for anything."

When she left, Wilson was thinking, when she went off to cry, she seemed a hell of a fine woman. She seemed to understand, to realize, to be hurt for him and for herself and to know how things really stood. She is away for twenty minutes and now she is back, simply enamelled in that American female cruelty. They are the damnedest women. Really the damnedest.

"We'll put on another show for you tomorrow," Francis Macomber said.

"You're not coming," Wilson said.

"You're very mistaken," she told him. "And I want *so* to see you perform again. You were lovely this morning. That is if blowing things' heads off is lovely."

"Here's the lunch," said Wilson. "You're very merry, aren't you?"

"Why not? I didn't come out here to be dull."

"Well, it hasn't been dull," Wilson said. He could see the boulders in the river and the high bank beyond with the trees and he remembered the morning.

"Oh, no," she said. "It's been charming. And tomorrow. You don't know how I look forward to tomorrow."

"That's eland he's offering you," Wilson said.

"They're the big cowy things that jump like hares, aren't they?"

"I suppose that describes them," Wilson said.

"It's very good meat," Macomber said.

"Did you shoot it, Francis?" she asked.

"Yes."

"They're not dangerous, are they?"

"Only if they fall on you," Wilson told her.

"I'm so glad."

"Why not let up on the bitchery just a little, Margot," Macomber said, cutting the eland steak and putting some mashed potato, gravy and carrot on the down-turned fork that tined through the piece of meat.

"I suppose I could," she said, "since you put it so prettily."

"Tonight we'll have champagne for the lion," Wilson said. "It's a bit too hot at noon."

"Oh, the lion," Margot said. "I'd forgotten the lion!"

So, Robert Wilson thought to himself, she *is* giving him a ride, isn't she? Or do you suppose that's her idea of putting up a good show? How should a woman act when she discovers her husband is a bloody coward? She's damn cruel but they're all cruel. They govern, of course, and to govern one has to be cruel sometimes. Still, I've seen enough of their damn terrorism.

"Have some more eland," he said to her politely.

That afternoon, late, Wilson and Macomber went out in the motor car with the native driver and the two gun-bearers. Mrs. Macomber stayed in the camp. It was too hot to go out, she said, and she was going with them in the early morning. As they drove off Wilson saw her standing under the big tree, looking pretty rather than beautiful in her faintly rosy khaki, her dark hair drawn back off her forehead and gathered in a knot low on her neck, her face as fresh, he thought, as though she were in England. She waved to them as the car went off through the swale of high grass and curved around through the trees into the small hills of orchard bush.

In the orchard bush they found a herd of impala, and leaving the car they stalked one old ram with long, wide-spread horns and Macomber killed it with a very creditable shot that knocked the buck down at a good two hundred yards and sent the herd off bounding wildly and leaping over one another's backs in long, leg-drawn-up leaps as unbelievable and as floating as those one makes sometimes in dreams.

"That was a good shot," Wilson said. "They're a small target."

"Is it a worth-while head?" Macomber asked.

"It's excellent," Wilson told him. "You shoot like that and you'll have no trouble."

"Do you think we'll find buffalo tomorrow?"

"There's a good chance of it. They feed out early in the morning and with luck we may catch them in the open."

"I'd like to clear away that lion business," Macomber said. "It's not very pleasant to have your wife see you do something like that."

I should think it would be even more unpleasant to do it, Wilson thought, wife or no wife, or to talk about it having done it. But he said, "I wouldn't think about that any more. Any one could be upset by his first lion. That's all over."

But that night after dinner and a whisky and soda by the fire before going to bed, as Francis Macomber lay on his cot with the mosquito bar over him and listened to the night noises it was not all over. It was neither all over nor was it beginning. It was there exactly as it happened with some parts of it indelibly emphasized and he was miserably ashamed at it. But more than shame he felt cold, hollow fear in him. The fear was still there like a cold slimy hol-

low in all the emptiness where once his confidence had been and it made him feel sick. It was still there with him now.

It had started the night before when he had wakened and heard the lion roaring somewhere up along the river. It was a deep sound and at the end there were sort of coughing grunts that made him seem just outside the tent, and when Francis Macomber woke in the night to hear it he was afraid. He could hear his wife breathing quietly, asleep. There was no one to tell he was afraid, nor to be afraid with him, and, lying alone, he did not know the Somali proverb that says a brave man is always frightened three times by a lion; when he first sees his track, when he first hears him roar and when he first confronts him. Then while they were eating breakfast by lantern light out in the dining tent, before the sun was up, the lion roared again and Francis thought he was just at the edge of camp.

"Sounds like an old-timer," Robert Wilson said, looking up from his kippers and coffee. "Listen to him cough."

"Is he very close?"

"A mile or so up the stream."

"Will we see him?"

"We'll have a look."

"Does his roaring carry that far? It sounds as though he were right in camp."

"Carries a hell of a long way," said Robert Wilson. "It's strange the way it carries. Hope he's a shootable cat. The boys said there was a very big one about here."

"If I get a shot, where should I hit him," Macomber asked, "to stop him?"

"In the shoulders," Wilson said. "In the neck if you can make it. Shoot for bone. Break him down."

"I hope I can place it properly," Macomber said.

"You shoot very well," Wilson told him. "Take your time. Make sure of him. The first one in is the one that counts."

"What range will it be?"

"Can't tell. Lion has something to say about that. Don't shoot unless it's close enough so you can make sure."

"At under a hundred yards?" Macomber asked.

Wilson looked at him quickly.

"Hundred's about right. Might have to take him a bit under. Shouldn't chance a shot at much over that. A hundred's a decent range. You can hit him wherever you want at that. Here comes the Memsahib."

"Good morning," she said. "Are we going after that lion?"

"As soon as you deal with your breakfast," Wilson said. "How are you feeling?"

"Marvellous," she said. "I'm very excited."

"I'll just go and see that everything is ready," Wilson went off. As he left the lion roared again.

"Noisy beggar," Wilson said. "We'll put a stop to that."

"What's the matter, Francis?" his wife asked him.

"Nothing," Macomber said.

"Yes, there is," she said. "What are you upset about?"

"Nothing," he said.

"Tell me," she looked at him. "Don't you feel well?"

"It's that damned roaring," he said. "It's been going on all night, you know."

"Why didn't you wake me," she said. "I'd love to have heard it."

"I've got to kill the damned thing," Macomber said, miserably.

"Well, that's what you're out here for, isn't it?"

"Yes. But I'm nervous. Hearing the thing roar gets on my nerves."

"Well then, as Wilson said, kill him and stop his roaring."

"Yes, darling," said Francis Macomber. "It sounds easy, doesn't it?"

"You're not afraid, are you?"

"Of course not. But I'm nervous from hearing him roar all night."

"You'll kill him marvellously," she said. "I know you will. I'm awfully anxious to see it."

"Finish your breakfast and we'll be starting."

"It's not light yet," she said. "This is a ridiculous hour."

Just then the lion roared in a deep-chested moaning, suddenly guttural, ascending vibration that seemed to shake the air and ended in a sigh and a heavy, deep-chested grunt.

"He sounds almost here," Macomber's wife said.

"My God," said Macomber. "I hate that damned noise."

"It's very impressive."

"Impressive. It's frightful."

Robert Wilson came up then carrying his short, ugly, shockingly big-bored .505 Gibbs and grinning.

"Come on," he said. "Your gun-bearer has your Springfield and the big gun. Everything's in the car. Have you solids?"

"Yes."

"I'm ready," Mrs. Macomber said.

"Must make him stop that racket," Wilson said. "You get in front. The Memsahib can sit back here with me."

They climbed into the motor car and, in the gray first daylight, moved off up the river through the trees. Macomber opened the breech of his rifle and saw he had metal-cased bullets, shut the bolt and put the rifle on safety. He saw his hand was trembling. He felt in his pocket for more cartridges and moved his fingers over the cartridges in the loops of his tunic front. He turned back to where Wilson sat in the rear seat of the doorless, box-bodied motor car beside his wife, them both grinning with excitement, and Wilson leaned forward and whispered.

"See the birds dropping. Means the old boy has left his kill."

On the far bank of the stream Macomber could see, above the trees, vultures circling and plummeting down.

"Chances are he'll come to drink along here," Wilson whispered. "Before he goes to lay up. Keep an eye out."

They were driving slowly along the high bank of the stream which here cut deeply to its boulder-filled bed, and they wound in and out through big trees as they drove. Macomber was watching the opposite bank when he felt Wilson take hold of his arm. The car stopped.

"There he is," he heard the whisper. "Ahead and to the right. Get out and take him. He's a marvellous lion."

Macomber saw the lion now. He was standing alone almost broadside, his great head up and turned toward them. The early morning breeze that blew toward them was just stirring his dark mane, and the lion looked huge, silhouetted on the rise of bank in the gray morning light, his shoulders heavy, his barrel of a body bulking smoothly.

"How far is he?" asked Macomber, raising his rifle.

"About seventy-five. Get out and take him."

"Why not shoot from where I am?"

"You don't shoot them from cars," he heard Wilson saying in his ear. "Get out. He's not going to stay there all day."

Macomber stepped out of the curved opening at the side of the front seat, onto the step and down onto the ground. The lion still stood looking majestically and coolly toward this object that his eyes showed only in silhouette, bulking like some super-rhino. There was no man smell carried toward him and he watched the object, moving his great head a little from side to side. Then watching the object, not afraid, but hesitating before going down the bank to drink with such a thing opposite him, he saw a man figure detach itself from it and he turned his heavy head and swung away toward the cover of the trees as he heard a cracking crash and felt the slam of a .30-06 220-grain solid bullet that bit his flank and ripped in sudden hot scalding nausea through his stomach. He trotted, heavy, big-footed, swinging wounded full-bellied, through the trees toward the tall grass and cover, and the crash came again to go past him ripping the air apart. Then it crashed again and he felt the blow as it hit his lower ribs and ripped on through, blood sudden hot and frothy in his mouth, and he galloped toward the high grass where he could crouch and not be seen and make them bring the crashing thing close enough so he could make a rush and get the man that held it.

Macomber had not thought how the lion felt as he got out of the car. He only knew his hands were shaking and as he walked away from the car it was almost impossible for him to make his legs move. They were stiff in the thighs, but he could feel the muscles fluttering. He raised the rifle, sighted on the junction of the lion's head and shoulders and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened though he pulled until he thought his finger would break. Then he knew he had the safety on and as he lowered the rifle to move the safety

over he moved another frozen pace forward, and the lion seeing his silhouette now clear of the silhouette of the car, turned and started off at a trot, and, as Macomber fired, he heard a whunk that meant that the bullet was home; but the lion kept on going. Macomber shot again and every one saw the bullet throw a spout of dirt beyond the trotting lion. He shot again, remembering to lower his aim, and they all heard the bullet hit, and the lion went into a gallop and was in the tall grass before he had the bolt pushed forward.

Macomber stood there feeling sick at his stomach, his hands that held the Springfield still cocked, shaking, and his wife and Robert Wilson were standing by him. Beside him too were the two gun-bearers chattering in Wakamba.

"I hit him," Macomber said. "I hit him twice."

"You gut-shot him and you hit him somewhere forward," Wilson said without enthusiasm. The gun-bearers looked very grave. They were silent now.

"You may have killed him," Wilson went on. "We'll have to wait a while before we go in to find out."

"What do you mean?"

"Let him get sick before we follow him up."

"Oh," said Macomber.

"He's a hell of a fine lion," Wilson said cheerfully. "He's gotten into a bad place though."

"Why is it bad?"

"Can't see him until you're on him."

"Oh," said Macomber.

"Come on," said Wilson. "The Memsahib can stay here in the car. We'll go to have a look at the blood spoor."

"Stay here, Margot," Macomber said to his wife. His mouth was very dry and it was hard for him to talk.

"Why?" she asked.

"Wilson says so."

"We're going to have a look," Wilson said. "You stay here. You can see even better from here."

"All right."

Wilson spoke in Swahili to the driver. He nodded and said, "Yes, Bweano."

Then they went down the steep bank and across the stream, climbing over and around the boulders and up the other bank, pulling up by some projecting roots, and along it until they found where the lion had been trotting when Macomber first shot. There was dark blood on the short grass that the gun-bearers pointed out with grass stems, and that ran away behind the river bank trees.

"What do we do?" asked Macomber.

"Not much choice," said Wilson. "We can't bring the car over. Bank's too steep. We'll let him stiffen up a bit and then you and I'll go in and have a look for him."

"Can't we set the grass on fire?" Macomber asked.

"Too green."

"Can't we send beaters?"

Wilson looked at him appraisingly. "Of course we can," he said. "But it's just a touch murderous. You see we know the lion's wounded. You can drive an unwounded lion—he'll move on ahead of a noise—but a wounded lion's going to charge. You can't see him until you're right on him. He'll make himself perfectly flat in cover you wouldn't think would hide a hare. You can't very well send boys in there to that sort of a show. Somebody bound to get mauled."

"What about the gun-bearers?"

"Oh, they'll go with us. It's their *shauri*. You see, they signed on for it. They don't look too happy though, do they?"

"I don't want to go in there," said Macomber. It was out before he knew he'd said it.

"Neither do I," said Wilson very cheerily. "Really no choice though." Then, as an afterthought, he glanced at Macomber and saw suddenly how he was trembling and the pitiful look on his face.

"You don't have to go in, of course," he said. "That's what I'm hired for, you know. That's why I'm so expensive."

"You mean, you'd go in by yourself? Why not leave him there?"

Robert Wilson, whose entire occupation had been with the lion and the problem he presented, and who had not been thinking about Macomber except to note that he was rather windy, suddenly felt as though he had opened the wrong door in a hotel and seen something shameful.

"What do you mean?"

"Why not just leave him?"

"You mean pretend to ourselves he hasn't been hit?"

"No. Just drop it."

"It isn't done."

"Why not?"

"For one thing, he's certain to be suffering. For another, some one else might run onto him."

"I see."

"But you don't have to have anything to do with it."

"I'd like to," Macomber said. "I'm just scared, you know."

"I'll go ahead when we go in," Wilson said, "with Kongoni tracking. You keep behind me and a little to one side. Chances are we'll hear him growl. If we see him we'll both shoot. Don't worry about anything. I'll keep you backed up. As a matter of fact, you know, perhaps you'd better not go. It might be much better. Why don't you go over and join the Memsahib while I just get it over with?"

"No, I want to go."

"All right," said Wilson. "But don't go in if you don't want to. This is my *shauri* now, you know."

"I want to go," said Macomber.

They sat under a tree and smoked.

"Want to go back and speak to the Memsahib while we're waiting?" Wilson asked.

"No."

"I'll just step back and tell her to be patient."

"Good," said Macomber. He sat there, sweating under his arms, his mouth dry, his stomach hollow feeling, wanting to find courage to tell Wilson to go on and finish off the lion without him. He could not know that Wilson was furious because he had not noticed the state he was in earlier and sent him back to his wife. While he sat there Wilson came up. "I have your big gun," he said. "Take it. We've given him time, I think. Come on."

Macomber took the big gun and Wilson said:

"Keep behind me and about five yards to the right and do exactly as I tell you." Then he spoke in Swahili to the two gun-bearers who looked the picture of gloom.

"Let's go," he said.

"Could I have a drink of water?" Macomber asked. Wilson spoke to the older gun-bearer, who wore a canteen on his belt, and the man unbuckled it, unscrewed the top and handed it to Macomber, who took it noticing how heavy it seemed and how hairy and shoddy the felt covering was in his hand. He raised it to drink and looked ahead at the high grass with the flat-topped trees behind it. A breeze was blowing toward them and the grass rippled gently in the wind. He looked at the gun-bearer and he could see the gun-bearer was suffering too with fear.

Thirty-five yards into the grass the big lion lay flattened out along the ground. His ears were back and his only movement was a slight twitching up and down of his long, black-tufted tail. He had turned at bay as soon as he had reached this cover and he was sick with the wound through his full belly, and weakening with the wound through his lungs that brought a thin foamy red to his mouth each time he breathed. His flanks were wet and hot and flies were on the little openings the solid bullets had made in his tawny hide, and his big yellow eyes, narrowed with hate, looked straight ahead, only blinking when the pain came as he breathed, and his claws dug in the soft baked earth. All of him, pain, sickness, hatred and all of his remaining strength, was tightening into an absolute concentration for a rush. He could hear the men talking and he waited, gathering all of himself into this preparation for a charge as soon as the men would come into the grass. As he heard their voices his tail stiffened to twitch up and down, and, as they came into the edge of the grass, he made a coughing grunt and charged.

Kongoni, the old gun-bearer, in the lead watching the blood spoor, Wilson watching the grass for any movement, his big gun ready, the second gun-bearer looking ahead and listening, Macomber close to Wilson, his rifle cocked, they had just moved into the grass when Macomber heard the blood-

choked coughing grunt, and saw the swishing rush in the grass. The next thing he knew he was running; running wildly, in panic in the open, running toward the stream.

He heard the *ca-ra-wong!* of Wilson's rifle, and again in a second crashing *carawong!* and turning saw the lion, horrible-looking now, with half his head seeming to be gone, crawling toward Wilson in the edge of the tall grass while the red-faced man worked the bolt on the short ugly rifle and aimed carefully as another blasting *carawong!* came from the muzzle, and the crawling, heavy, yellow bulk of the lion stiffened and the huge, mutilated head slid forward and Macomber, standing by himself in the clearing where he had run, holding a loaded rifle, while two black men and a white man looked back at him in contempt, knew the lion was dead. He came toward Wilson, his tallness all seeming a naked reproach, and Wilson looked at him and said:

"Want to take pictures?"

"No," he said.

That was all any one had said until they reached the motor car. Then Wilson had said:

"Hell of a fine lion. Boys will skin him out. We might as well stay here in the shade."

Macomber's wife had not looked at him nor he at her and he had sat by her in the back seat with Wilson sitting in the front seat. Once he had reached over and taken his wife's hand without looking at her and she had removed her hand from his. Looking across the stream to where the gun-bearers were skinning out the lion he could see that she had been able to see the whole thing. While they sat there his wife had reached forward and put her hand on Wilson's shoulder. He turned and she had leaned forward over the low seat and kissed him on the mouth.

"Oh, I say," said Wilson, going redder than his natural baked color.

"Mr. Robert Wilson," she said. "The beautiful red-faced Mr. Robert Wilson."

Then she sat down beside Macomber again and looked away across the stream to where the lion lay, with uplifted, white-muscled, tendon-marked naked forearms, and white bloating belly, as the black men fleshed away the skin. Finally the gun-bearers brought the skin over, wet and heavy, and climbed in behind with it, rolling it up before they got in, and the motor car started. No one had said anything more until they were back in camp.

That was the story of the lion. Macomber did not know how the lion had felt before he started his rush, nor during it when the unbelievable smash of the .505 with a muzzle velocity of two tons had hit him in the mouth, nor what kept him coming after that, when the second dripping crash had smashed his hind quarters and he had come crawling on toward the crashing, blasting thing that had destroyed him. Wilson knew something about it and only expressed it by saying, "Damned fine lion," but Macomber did not know how

Wilson felt about things either. He did not know how his wife felt except that she was through with him.

His wife had been through with him before but it never lasted. He was very wealthy, and would be much wealthier, and he knew she would not leave him ever now. That was one of the few things that he really knew. He knew about that, about motorcycles—that was earliest—about motor cars, about duck-shooting, about fishing, trout, salmon and big-sea, about sex in books, many books, too many books, about all court games, about dogs, not much about horses, about hanging on to his money, about most of the other things his world dealt in, and about his wife not leaving him. His wife had been a great beauty and she was still a great beauty in Africa, but she was not a great enough beauty any more at home to be able to leave him and better herself and she knew it and he knew it. She had missed the chance to leave him and he knew it. If he had been better with women she would probably have started to worry about him getting another new, beautiful wife; but she knew too much about him to worry about him either. Also, he had always had a great tolerance which seemed the nicest thing about him if it were not the most sinister.

All in all they were known as a comparatively happily married couple, one of those whose disruption is often rumored but never occurs, and as the society columnist put it, they were adding more than a spice of *adventure* to their much envied and ever-enduring *Romance* by a *Safari* in what was known as *Darkest Africa* until the Martin Johnsons lighted it on so many silver screens where they were pursuing *Old Simba* the lion, the buffalo, *Tembo* the elephant and as well collecting specimens for the Museum of Natural History. This same columnist had reported them *on the verge* at least three times in the past and they had been. But they always made it up. They had a sound basis of union. Margot was too beautiful for Macomber to divorce her and Macomber had too much money for Margot ever to leave him.

It was now about three o'clock in the morning and Francis Macomber, who had been asleep a little while after he had stopped thinking about the lion, wakened and then slept again, woke suddenly, frightened in a dream of the bloody-headed lion standing over him, and listening while his heart pounded, he realized that his wife was not in the other cot in the tent. He lay awake with that knowledge for two hours.

At the end of that time his wife came into the tent, lifted her mosquito bar and crawled cozily into bed.

"Where have you been?" Macomber asked in the darkness.

"Hello," she said. "Are you awake?"

"Where have you been?"

"I just went out to get a breath of air."

"You did, like hell."

"What do you want me to say, darling?"

"Where have you been?"

"Out to get a breath of air."

"That's a new name for it. You *are* a bitch."

"Well, you're a coward."

"All right," he said. "What of it?"

"Nothing as far as I'm concerned. But please let's not talk, darling, because I'm very sleepy."

"You think that I'll take anything."

"I know you will, sweet."

"Well, I won't."

"Please, darling, let's not talk. I'm so very sleepy."

"There wasn't going to be any of that. You promised there wouldn't be."

"Well, there is now," she said sweetly.

"You said if we made this trip that there would be none of that. You promised."

"Yes, darling. That's the way I meant it to be. But the trip was spoiled yesterday. We don't have to talk about it, do we?"

"You don't wait long when you have an advantage, do you?"

"Please let's not talk. I'm so sleepy, darling."

"I'm going to talk."

"Don't mind me then, because I'm going to sleep." And she did.

At breakfast they were all three at the table before daylight and Francis Macomber found that, of all the men that he had hated, he hated Robert Wilson the most.

"Sleep well?" Wilson asked in his throaty voice, filling a pipe.

"Did you?"

"Topping," the white hunter told him.

You bastard, thought Macomber, you insolent bastard.

So she woke him when she came in, Wilson thought, looking at them both with his flat, cold eyes. Well, why doesn't he keep his wife where she belongs? What does he think I am, a bloody plaster saint? Let him keep her where she belongs. It's his own fault.

"Do you think we'll find buffalo?" Margot asked, pushing away a dish of apricots.

"Chance of it," Wilson said and smiled at her. "Why don't you stay in camp?"

"Not for anything," she told him.

"Why not order her to stay in camp?" Wilson said to Macomber.

"You order her," said Macomber coldly.

"Let's not have any ordering, nor," turning to Macomber, "any silliness, Francis," Margot said quite pleasantly.

"Are you ready to start?" Macomber asked.

"Any time," Wilson told him. "Do you want the Memsahib to go?"

"Does it make any difference whether I do or not?"

The hell with it, thought Robert Wilson. The utter complete hell with it. So this is what it's going to be like. Well, this is what it's going to be like, then.

"Makes no difference," he said.

"You're sure you wouldn't like to stay in camp with her yourself and let me go out and hunt the buffalo?" Macomber asked.

"Can't do that," said Wilson. "Wouldn't talk rot if I were you."

"I'm not talking rot. I'm disgusted."

"Bad word, disgusted."

"Francis, will you please try to speak sensibly?" his wife asked.

"I speak too damned sensibly," Macomber said. "Did you ever eat such filthy food?"

"Something wrong with the food?" asked Wilson quietly.

"No more than with everything else."

"I'd pull yourself together, laddybuck," Wilson said very quietly. "There's a boy waits at table that understands a little English."

"The hell with him."

Wilson stood up and puffing on his pipe strolled away, speaking a few words in Swahili to one of the gun-bearers who was standing waiting for him. Macomber and his wife sat on at the table. He was staring at his coffee cup.

"If you make a scene I'll leave you, darling," Margot said quietly.

"No, you won't."

"You can try it and see."

"You won't leave me."

"No," she said. "I won't leave you and you'll behave yourself."

"Behave myself? That's a way to talk. Behave myself."

"Yes. Behave yourself."

"Why don't *you* try behaving?"

"I've tried it so long. So very long."

"I hate that red-faced swine," Macomber said. "I loathe the sight of him."

"He's really *very* nice."

"Oh, *shut up,*" Macomber almost shouted. Just then the car came up and stopped in front of the dining tent and the driver and the two gun-bearers got out. Wilson walked over and looked at the husband and wife sitting there at the table.

"Going shooting?" he asked.

"Yes," said Macomber, standing up. "Yes."

"Better bring a woolly. It will be cool in the car," Wilson said.

"I'll get my leather jacket," Margot said.

"The boy has it," Wilson told her. He climbed into the front with the driver and Francis Macomber and his wife sat, not speaking, in the back seat.

Hope the silly beggar doesn't take a notion to blow the back of my head off, Wilson thought to himself. Women *are* a nuisance on safari.

The car was grinding down to cross the river at a pebbly ford in the gray

daylight and then climbed, angling up the steep bank, where Wilson had ordered a way shovelled out the day before so they could reach the parklike wooded rolling country on the far side.

It was a good morning, Wilson thought. There was a heavy dew and as the wheels went through the grass and low bushes he could smell the odor of the crushed fronds. It was an odor like verbena and he liked this early morning smell of the dew, the crushed bracken and the look of the tree trunks showing black through the early morning mist, as the car made its way through the untracked, parklike country. He had put the two in the back seat out of his mind now and was thinking about buffalo. The buffalo that he was after stayed in the daytime in a thick swamp where it was impossible to get a shot, but in the night they fed out into an open stretch of country and if he could come between them and their swamp with the car, Macomber would have a good chance at them in the open. He did not want to hunt buff with Macomber in thick cover. He did not want to hunt buff or anything else with Macomber at all, but he was a professional hunter and he had hunted with some rare ones in his time. If they got buff today there would only be rhino to come and the poor man would have gone through his dangerous game and things might pick up. He'd have nothing more to do with the woman and Macomber would get over that too. He must have gone through plenty of that before by the look of things. Poor beggar. He must have a way of getting over it. Well, it was the poor sod's own bloody fault.

He, Robert Wilson, carried a double size cot on safari to accommodate any windfalls he might receive. He had hunted for a certain clientele, the international, fast, sporting set, where the women did not feel they were getting their money's worth unless they had shared that cot with the white hunter. He despised them when he was away from them although he liked some of them well enough at the time, but he made his living by them; and their standards were his standards as long as they were hiring him.

They were his standards in all except the shooting. He had his own standards about the killing and they could live up to them or get some one else to hunt them. He knew, too, that they all respected him for this. This Macomber was an odd one though. Damned if he wasn't. Now the wife. Well, the wife. Yes, the wife. Hm, the wife. Well he'd dropped all that. He looked around at them. Macomber sat grim and furious. Margot smiled at him. She looked younger today, more innocent and fresher and not so professionally beautiful. What's in her heart God knows, Wilson thought. She hadn't talked much last night. At that it was a pleasure to see her.

The motor car climbed up a slight rise and went on through the trees and then out into a grassy prairie-like opening and kept in the shelter of the trees along the edge, the driver going slowly and Wilson looking carefully out across the prairie and all along its far side. He stopped the car and studied the opening with his field glasses. Then he motioned to the driver to go on

and the car moved slowly along, the driver avoiding wart-hog holes and driving around the mud castles ants had built. Then, looking across the opening, Wilson suddenly turned and said,

"By God, there they are!"

And looking where he pointed, while the car jumped forward and Wilson spoke in rapid Swahili to the driver, Macomber saw three huge, black animals looking almost cylindrical in their long heaviness, like big black tank cars, moving at a gallop across the far edge of the open prairie. They moved at a stiff-necked, stiff bodied gallop and he could see the upswept wide black horns on their heads as they galloped heads out; the heads not moving.

"They're three old bulls," Wilson said. "We'll cut them off before they get to the swamp."

The car was going a wild forty-five miles an hour across the open and as Macomber watched, the buffalo got bigger and bigger until he could see the gray, hairless, scabby look of one huge bull and how his neck was a part of his shoulders and the shiny black of his horns as he galloped a little behind the others that were strung out in that steady plunging gait; and then, the car swaying as though it had just jumped a road, they drew up close and he could see the plunging hugeness of the bull, and the dust in his sparsely haired hide, the wide boss of horn and his outstretched, wide-nostrilled muzzle, and he was raising his rifle when Wilson shouted, "Not from the car, you fool!" and he had no fear, only hatred, of Wilson, while the brakes clamped on and the car skidded, plowing sideways to an almost stop and Wilson was out on one side and he on the other, stumbling as his feet hit the still speeding-by of the earth, and then he was shooting at the bull as he moved away, hearing the bullets whunk into him, emptying his rifle at him as he moved steadily away, finally remembering to get his shots forward into the shoulder, and as he fumbled to re-load, he saw the bull was down. Down on his knees, his big head tossing, and seeing the other two still galloping he shot at the leader and hit him. He shot again and missed and he heard the *carawonging* roar as Wilson shot and saw the leading bull slide forward onto his nose.

"Get that other," Wilson said. "Now you're shooting!"

But the other bull was moving steadily at the same gallop and he missed, throwing a spout of dirt, and Wilson missed and the dust rose in a cloud and Wilson shouted, "Come on. He's too far!" and grabbed his arm and they were in the car again, Macomber and Wilson hanging on the sides and rocketing swayingly over the uneven ground, drawing up on the steady, plunging, heavy-necked, straight-moving gallop of the bull.

They were behind him and Macomber was filling his rifle, dropping shells onto the ground, jamming it, clearing the jam, then they were almost up with the bull when Wilson yelled "Stop," and the car skidded so that it almost swung over and Macomber fell forward onto his feet, slammed his bolt forward and fired as far forward as he could aim into the galloping, rounded

black back, aimed and shot again, then again, then again and the bullets, all of them hitting, had no effect on the buffalo that he could see. Then Wilson shot, the roar deafening him, and he could see the bull stagger. Macomber shot again, aiming carefully, and down he came, onto his knees.

"All right," Wilson said. "Nice work. That's the three."

Macomber felt a drunken elation.

"How many times did you shoot?" he asked.

"Just three," Wilson said. "You killed the first bull. The biggest one. I helped you finish the other two. Afraid they might have got into cover. You had them killed. I was just mopping up a little. You shot damn well."

"Let's go to the car," said Macomber. "I want a drink."

"Got to finish off that buff first," Wilson told him. The buffalo was on his knees and he jerked his head furiously and bellowed in pig-eyed, roaring rage as they came toward him.

"Watch he doesn't get up," Wilson said. Then, "Get a little broadside and take him in the neck just behind the ear."

Macomber aimed carefully at the center of the huge, jerking, rage-driven neck and shot. At the shot the head dropped forward.

"That does it," said Wilson. "Got the spine. They're a hell of a looking thing, aren't they?"

"Let's get the drink," said Macomber. In his life he had never felt so good.

In the car Macomber's wife sat very white faced. "You were marvellous, darling," she said to Macomber. "What a ride."

"Was it rough?" Wilson asked.

"It was frightful. I've never been more frightened in my life."

"Let's all have a drink," Macomber said.

"By all means," said Wilson. "Give it to the Memsahib." She drank the neat whisky from the flask and shuddered a little when she swallowed. She handed the flask to Macomber who handed it to Wilson.

"It was frightfully exciting," she said. "It's given me a dreadful headache. I didn't know you were allowed to shoot them from cars though."

"No one shot from cars," said Wilson coldly.

"I mean chase them."

"Wouldn't ordinarily," Wilson said. "Seemed sporting enough to me while we were doing it. Taking more chance driving that way across the plain full of holes and one thing and another than hunting on foot. Buffalo could have charged us each time we shot if he liked. Gave him every chance. Wouldn't mention it to any one though. It's illegal if that's what you mean."

"It seemed very unfair to me," Margot said, "chasing those big helpless things in a motor car."

"Did it?" said Wilson.

"What would happen if they heard about it in Nairobi?"

"I'd lose my licence for one thing. Other unpleasantnesses," Wilson said, aking a drink from the flask. "I'd be out of business."

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

"Well," said Macomber, and he smiled for the first time all day. "Now she has something on you."

"You have such a pretty way of putting things, Francis," Margot Macomber said. Wilson looked at them both. If a four-letter man marries a five-letter woman, he was thinking, what number of letters would their children be? What he said was, "We lost a gun-bearer. Did you notice it?"

"My God, no," Macomber said.

"Here he comes," Wilson said. "He's all right. He must have fallen off when we left the first bull."

Approaching them was the middle-aged gun-bearer, limping along in his knitted cap, khaki tunic, shorts and rubber sandals, gloomy-faced and disgusted looking. As he came up he called out to Wilson in Swahili and they all saw the change in the white hunter's face.

"What does he say?" asked Margot.

"He says the first bull got up and went into the bush," Wilson said with no expression in his voice.

"Oh," said Macomber blankly.

"Then it's going to be just like the lion," said Margot, full of anticipation.

"It's not going to be a damned bit like the lion," Wilson told her. "Did you want another drink, Macomber?"

"Thanks, yes," Macomber said. He expected the feeling he had had about the lion to come back but it did not. For the first time in his life he really felt wholly without fear. Instead of fear he had a feeling of definite elation.

"We'll go and have a look at the second bull," Wilson said. "I'll tell the driver to put the car in the shade."

"What are you going to do?" asked Margot Macomber.

"Take a look at the buff," Wilson said.

"I'll come."

"Come along."

The three of them walked over to where the second buffalo bulked blackly in the open, head forward on the grass, the massive horns swung wide.

"He's a very good head," Wilson said. "That's close to a fifty-inch spread."

Macomber was looking at him with delight.

"He's hateful looking," said Margot. "Can't we go into the shade?"

"Of course," Wilson said. "Look," he said to Macomber, and pointed. "See that patch of bush?"

"Yes."

"That's where the first bull went in. The gun-bearer said when he fell off the bull was down. He was watching us helling along and the other two buff galloping. When he looked up there was the bull up and looking at him. Gun-bearer ran like hell and the bull went off slowly into that bush."

"Can we go in after him now?" asked Macomber eagerly.

Wilson looked at him appraisingly. Damned if this isn't a strange one, he thought. Yesterday he's scared sick and today he's a ruddy fire-eater.

"No, we'll give him a while."

"Let's please go into the shade," Margot said. Her face was white, and she looked ill.

They made their way to the car where it stood under a single, wide-spreading tree and all climbed in.

"Chances are he's dead in there," Wilson remarked. "After a little we'll have a look."

Macomber felt a wild unreasonable happiness that he had never known before.

"By God, that was a chase," he said. "I've never felt any such feeling. Wasn't it marvellous, Margot?"

"I hated it."

"Why?"

"I hated it," she said bitterly. "I loathed it."

"You know I don't think I'd ever be afraid of anything again," Macomber said to Wilson. "Something happened in me after we first saw the buff and started after him. Like a dam bursting. It was pure excitement."

"Cleans out your liver," said Wilson. "Damn funny things happen to people."

Macomber's face was shining. "You know something did happen to me," he said. "I feel absolutely different."

His wife said nothing and eyed him strangely. She was sitting far back in the seat and Macomber was sitting forward talking to Wilson who turned sideways talking over the back of the front seat.

"You know, I'd like to try another lion," Macomber said. "I'm really not afraid of them now. After all, what can they do to you?"

"That's it," said Wilson. "Worst one can do is kill you. How does it go? Shakespeare. Damned good. See if I can remember. Oh, damned good. Used to quote it to myself at one time. Let's see. 'By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next.' Damned fine, eh?"

He was very embarrassed, having brought out this thing he had lived by, but he had seen men come of age before and it always moved him. It was not a matter of their twenty-first birthday.

It had taken a strange chance of hunting, a sudden precipitation into action without opportunity for worrying beforehand, to bring this about with Macomber, but regardless of how it had happened it had most certainly happened. Look at the beggar now, Wilson thought. It's that some of them stay little boys so long, Wilson thought. Sometimes all their lives. Their figures stay boyish when they're fifty. The great American boy-men. Damned strange people. But he liked this Macomber now. Damned strange fellow. Probably meant the end of cuckoldry too. Well, that would be a damned good thing.

Damned good thing. Beggar had probably been afraid all his life. Don't know what started it. But over now. Hadn't had time to be afraid with the buff. That and being angry too. Motor car too. Motor cars made it familiar. Be a damn fire eater now. He'd seen it in the war work the same way. More of a change than any loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. Main thing a man had. Made him into a man. Women knew it too. No bloody fear.

From the far corner of the seat Margaret Macomber looked at the two of them. There was no change in Wilson. She saw Wilson as she had seen him the day before when she had first realized what his great talent was. But she saw the change in Francis Macomber now.

"Do you have that feeling of happiness about what's going to happen?" Macomber asked, still exploring his new wealth.

"You're not supposed to mention it," Wilson said, looking in the other's face. "Much more fashionable to say you're scared. Mind you, you'll be scared too, plenty of times."

"But you *have* a feeling of happiness about action to come?"

"Yes," said Wilson. "There's that. Doesn't do to talk too much about all this. Talk the whole thing away. No pleasure in anything if you mouth it up too much."

"You're both talking rot," said Margot. "Just because you've chased some helpless animals in a motor car you talk like heroes."

"Sorry," said Wilson. "I have been gassing too much." She's worried about it already, he thought.

"If you don't know what we're talking about why not keep out of it?" Macomber asked his wife.

"You've gotten awfully brave, awfully suddenly," his wife said contemptuously, but her contempt was not secure. She was very afraid of something.

Macomber laughed, a very natural hearty laugh. "You know I *have*," he said. "I really have."

"Isn't it sort of late?" Margot said bitterly. Because she had done the best she could for many years back and the way they were together now was no one person's fault.

"Not for me," said Macomber.

Margot said nothing but sat back in the corner of the seat.

"Do you think we've given him time enough?" Macomber asked Wilson cheerfully.

"We might have a look," Wilson said. "Have you any solids left?"

"The gun-bearer has some."

Wilson called in Swahili and the older gun-bearer, who was skinning out one of the heads, straightened up, pulled a box of solids out of his pocket and brought them over to Macomber, who filled his magazine and put the remaining shells in his pocket.

"You might as well shoot the Springfield," Wilson said. "You're used to it.

We'll leave the Mannlicher in the car with the Memsahib. Your gun-bearer can carry your heavy gun. I've this damned cannon. Now let me tell you about them." He had saved this until the last because he did not want to worry Macomber. "When a buff comes he comes with his head high and thrust straight out. The boss of the horns covers any sort of a brain shot. The only shot is straight into the nose. The only other shot is into his chest or, if you're to one side, into the neck or the shoulders. After they've been hit once they take a hell of a lot of killing. Don't try anything fancy. Take the easiest shot there is. They've finished skinning out that head now. Should we get started?"

He called to the gun-bearers, who came up wiping their hands, and the older one got into the back.

"I'll only take Kongoni," Wilson said. "The other can watch to keep the birds away."

As the car moved slowly across the open space toward the island of brushy trees that ran in a tongue of foliage along a dry water course that cut the open swale, Macomber felt his heart pounding and his mouth was dry again, but it was excitement, not fear.

"Here's where he went in," Wilson said. Then to the gun-bearer in Swahili, "Take the blood spoor."

The car was parallel to the patch of bush. Macomber, Wilson and the gun-bearer got down. Macomber, looking back, saw his wife, with the rifle by her side, looking at him. He waved to her and she did not wave back.

The brush was very thick ahead and the ground was dry. The middle-aged gun-bearer was sweating heavily and Wilson had his hat down over his eyes and his red neck showed just ahead of Macomber. Suddenly the gun-bearer said something in Swahili to Wilson and ran forward.

"He's dead in there," Wilson said. "Good work," and he turned to grip Macomber's hand and as they shook hands, grinning at each other, the gun-bearer shouted wildly and they saw him coming out of the bush sideways, fast as a crab, and the bull coming, nose out, mouth tight closed, blood dripping, massive head straight out, coming in a charge, his little pig eyes bloodshot as he looked at them. Wilson, who was ahead, was kneeling shooting, and Macomber, as he fired, unhearing his shot in the roaring of Wilson's gun, saw fragments like slate burst from the huge boss of the horns, and the head jerked, he shot again at the wide nostrils and saw the horn jolt again and fragments fly, and he did not see Wilson now and, aiming carefully, shot again with the buffalo's huge bulk almost on him and his rifle almost level with the on-coming head, nose out, and he could see the little wicked eyes and the head started to lower and he felt a sudden white-hot, blinding flash explode inside his head and that was all he ever felt.

Wilson had ducked to one side to get in a shoulder shot. Macomber had stood solid and shot for the nose, shooting a touch high each time and hitting the heavy horns, splintering and chipping them like hitting a slate roof, and

Mrs. Macomber, in the car, had shot at the buffalo with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to one side of the base of his skull.

Francis Macomber lay now, face down, not two yards from where the buffalo lay on his side and his wife knelt over him with Wilson beside her.

"I wouldn't turn him over," Wilson said.

The woman was crying hysterically.

"I'd get back in the car," Wilson said. "Where's the rifle?"

She shook her head, her face contorted. The gun-bearer picked up the rifle.

"Leave it as it is," said Wilson. Then, "Go get Abdulla so that he may witness the manner of the accident."

He knelt down, took a handkerchief from his pocket, and spread it over Francis Macomber's crew-cropped head where it lay. The blood sank into the dry, loose earth.

Wilson stood up and saw the buffalo on his side, his legs out, his thinly-haired belly crawling with ticks. "Hell of a good bull," his brain registered automatically. "A good fifty inches, or better. Better." He called to the driver and told him to spread a blanket over the body and stay by it. Then he walked over to the motor car where the woman sat crying in the corner.

"That was a pretty thing to do," he said in a toneless voice. "He *would* have left you too."

"Stop it," she said.

"Of course it's an accident," he said. "I know that."

"Stop it," she said.

"Don't worry," he said. "There will be a certain amount of unpleasantness but I will have some photographs taken that will be very useful at the inquest. There's the testimony of the gun-bearers and the driver too. You're perfectly all right."

"Stop it," she said.

"There's a hell of a lot to be done," he said. "And I'll have to send a truck off to the lake to wireless for a plane to take the three of us into Nairobi. Why didn't you poison him? That's what they do in England."

"Stop it. Stop it. Stop it," the woman cried.

Wilson looked at her with his flat blue eyes.

"I'm through now," he said. "I was a little angry. I'd begun to like your husband."

"Oh, please stop it," she said. "Please, please stop it."

"That's better," Wilson said. "Please is much better. Now I'll stop."

ON HEMINGWAY'S *THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS MACOMBER*[1]

RAY B. WEST, JR.

GERTRUDE STEIN called Ernest Hemingway the spokesman for the "lost generation," and critics have consistently pointed to his early novels as documents of despair and insisted that his early themes stressed the absence of all moral values except the isolated and subjective codes of the individual. "Morals are what you feel good after" is a famous statement from *Death in the Afternoon*. All general statements concerning morality are doubtful. As Frederic Henry says in *A Farewell to Arms;*

> I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain . . . and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it.

In the same novel, Frederic sees human life as comparable to ants on the log of a burning campfire. In an early essay, Hemingway wrote:

> The first thing you found out about the dead was that, hit badly enough, they died like animals. Some quickly from a little wound you would not think would kill a rabbit. . . . Others would die like cats; a skull broken in and iron in the brain, they lie alive two days like cats that crawl into the coal bin with a bullet in the brain and will not die until you cut their heads off. Maybe cats do not die then. They say they have nine lives. I do not know, but most men die like animals, not men.

Now a concern with how men die is a concern with human morality. In the image of the ants and in the statement above, it would seem that Ernest Hemingway denies any *human* value to the act of dying. All men die like animals. There is nothing glorious about death in war. Yet the themes of two of the best-known short stories, one early ("The Undefeated") and one late ("The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"), express almost the exact opposite. If we examine the latter, we discover that the death of Francis Macomber becomes the symbol of a final victory of Man over Death—a symbolic portrayal of the difference between the death of a man and the death of an animal, and that this concept is clothed in terms of the action through which the characters move.

The action is both simple and complex. It is complex in the sense that it does not begin at the actual beginning of the action but breaks into the middle, then flashes back to the earlier scenes, then picks up and continues to the end. It is simple in that the full course of events can be restated briefly,

1. From "Three Methods of Modern Fiction," *College English* (January, 1951), XII, 194–196. Reprinted by permission of the author and the editor of *College English*.

as follows: Francis Macomber, an American sportsman hunting with his wife in Africa, has earned the contempt of his wife through a display of cowardice on a lion hunt. The situation, however, brings the wife pleasure, because she is no longer in love with her husband, and his violation of the code of the hunter serves to justify her in her desire to violate their marriage contract; that is, it gives her a "moral" advantage over him by releasing her from the conventional obligation of marital fidelity. It also releases the guide, who becomes a party to her infidelity, from his obligation to his own code. When, however, Francis Macomber redeems himself by standing up to a charging water buffalo, the situation is reversed. Macomber regains his advantage over his wife; and she, in her frustration at losing and under the pretense of shooting at the animal, sends a bullet into his brain. Francis Macomber dies at the moment of his victory.

Retold thus, the story retains no remnant of its original power. It is the bare skeleton stripped of raiment. But it is with the skeleton that we are here primarily concerned. As in all successful stories, the framework (the action) is of the proper size and shape and density to fit the raiment (the tone, the style, and the characterization) which adorns it. Unsuccessful stories might be said to give the impression of bodies dressed in unsuitable garments —the sleeves and skirts too long or too short, of the wrong color or combination of colors, or patched with remnants or nonmatching materials to cover holes or to extend to proper lengths.

The details of "The Short Happy Life" fit like the parts of a pattern to form the whole. The action is, to use the term of Eliot, an "objective correlative." To state it another way, the theme is adequately embodied in the action, and it is properly intensified by the other elements. The dominant tone is ironic, and this includes, of course, the famous Hemingway style, by means of which the characters are given depth. The supreme irony appears in the facts of Macomber's death. It comes at the moment of his victory over his wife, as we have said, but this is depicted (expressed through the act itself)—not stated. We are not told that it represents a victory, but we know it as a result of the scene in which the man and the animal are seen lying together in death. For the buffalo, the combat was a mere gesture of self-preservation. For the man it was an attempt to prove his manhood, a conscious and deliberate subjecting of himself to danger, a rational disciplining of his urge to flee. As for Margot Macomber, her final act—the shooting of her husband—is an intuitive recognition of defeat. As a matter of fact, we are not told that she intended to shoot him when she raised the rifle or even that she did do it intentionally. The fine line between intuition and reason is drawn carefully. Our clue to the full meaning of the act is given by the guide, who, in a sense, shares her guilt because of his participation in her act of infidelity, but who, we can be sure, would have acknowledged his error if Francis had survived the hunt: " 'That was a pretty thing to do,' he said in a toneless voice. 'He would have left you too.' "

We can restate the action, then, in the following manner: The situation consists of a state of tension between two characters—husband and wife. At the moment when we are first introduced, the wife is shown in a position of dominance over her husband, and this condition is explained through a depiction of the unsuccessful lion hunt and the incident portraying the unfaithfulness of the wife. During the ensuing scenes the situation is reversed by the successful enactment of the buffalo hunt and the final act of murder. On the level of pure action, we might say that Margot Macomber is the victor: she is alive, her husband dead by her hand. The ironic method of the author has, however, made us increasingly aware of a separate and distinct set of values which are presented in ironic counterpoint to the level of actual combat. We are shown the emergence of a value which transcends that of simply existing on the animal level. The final clue is obtained from the title. "The Short Happy Life." Why "short" and why "happy"? The implication is clear—Francis Macomber never really lived until that final moment when he had overcome his own fear of death. Margot Macomber and the buffalo both acted instinctively, that is, like animals. Francis Macomber died the death of a Man.

THE PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH[1]

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK

THE RED SUNSET, with narrow, black cloud strips like threats across it, lay on the curved horizon of the prairie. The air was still and cold, and in it settled the mute darkness and greater cold of night. High in the air there was wind, for through the veil of the dusk the clouds could be seen gliding rapidly south and changing shapes. A queer sensation of torment, of two-sided, unpredictable nature, arose from the stillness of the earth air beneath the violence of the upper air. Out of the sunset, through the dead, matted grass and isolated weed stalks of the prairie, crept the narrow and deeply rutted remains of a road. In the road, in places, there were crusts of shallow, brittle ice. There were little islands of an old oiled pavement in the road too, but most of it was mud, now frozen rigid. The frozen mud still bore the toothed impress of great tanks, and a wanderer on the neighboring undulations might have stumbled, in this light, into large, partially filled-in and weed-grown cavities, their banks channelled and beginning to spread into badlands. These pits were such as might have been made by falling meteors, but they were not. They were the scars of gigantic bombs, their rawness already made a little natural by rain, seed, and time. Along the road, there

1. From *The Watchful Gods,* by Walter Van Tilburg Clark. Copyright, 1941, by Walter Van Tilburg Clark. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

were rakish remnants of fence. There was also, just visible, one portion of tangled and multiple barbed wire still erect, behind which was a shelving ditch with small caves, now very quiet and empty, at intervals in its back wall. Otherwise there was no structure or remnant of a structure visible over the dome of the darkling earth, but only, in sheltered hollows, the darker shadows of young trees trying again.

Under the wuthering arch of the high wind a V of wild geese fled south. The rush of their pinions sounded briefly, and the faint, plaintive notes of their expeditionary talk. Then they left a still greater vacancy. There was the smell and expectation of snow, as there is likely to be when the wild geese fly south. From the remote distance, towards the red sky, came faintly the protracted howl and quick yap-yap of a prairie wolf.

North of the road, perhaps a hundred yards, lay the parallel and deeply intrenched course of a small creek, lined with leafless alders and willows. The creek was already silent under ice. Into the bank above it was dug a sort of cell, with a single opening, like the mouth of a mine tunnel. Within the cell there was a little red of fire, which showed dully through the opening, like a reflection or a deception of the imagination. The light came from the chary burning of four blocks of poorly aged peat, which gave off a petty warmth and much acrid smoke. But the precious remnants of wood, old fence posts and timbers from the long-deserted dugouts, had to be saved for the real cold, for the time when a man's breath blew white, the moisture in his nostrils stiffened at once when he stepped out, and the expansive blizzards paraded for days over the vast open, swirling and settling and thickening, till the dawn of the cleared day when the sky was thin blue-green and the terrible cold, in which a man could not live for three hours unwarmed, lay over the uniformly drifted swell of the plain

Around the smoldering peat, four men were seated cross-legged. Behind them, traversed by their shadows, was the earth bench, with two old and dirty army blankets, where the owner of the cell slept. In a niche in the opposite wall were a few tin utensils which caught the glint of the coals. The host was rewrapping in a piece of daubed burlap four fine, leather-bound books. He worked slowly and very carefully, and at last tied the bundle securely with a piece of grass-woven cord. The other three looked intently upon the process, as if a great significance lay in it. As the host tied the cord, he spoke. He was an old man, his long, matted beard and hair gray to nearly white. The shadows made his brows and cheekbones appear gnarled, his eyes and cheeks deeply sunken. His big hands, rough with frost and swollen by rheumatism, were awkward but gentle at their task. He was like a prehistoric priest performing a fateful ceremonial rite. Also his voice had in it a suitable quality of deep, reverent despair, yet perhaps at the moment, a sharpness of selfish satisfaction.

"When I perceived what was happening," he said, "I told myself, 'It is the end. I cannot take much; I will take these.'"

"Perhaps I was impractical," he continued. "But for myself, I do not regret, and what do we know of those who will come after us? We are the doddering remnant of a race of mechanical fools. I have saved what I love; the soul of what was good in us is here, perhaps the new ones will make a strong enough beginning not to fall behind when they become clever."

He rose with slow pain and placed the wrapped volumes in the niche with his utensils. The others watched him with the same ritualistic gaze.

"Shakespeare, the Bible, *Moby Dick, The Divine Comedy,*" one of them said softly. "You might have done worse, much worse."

"You will have a little soul left until you die," said another harshly. "That is more than is true of us. My brain becomes thick, like my hands." He held the big, battered hands, with their black nails, in the glow to be seen.

"I want paper to write on," he said. "And there is none."

The fourth man said nothing. He sat in the shadow farthest from the fire, and sometimes his body jerked in its rags from the cold. Although he was still young, he was sick and coughed often. Writing implied a greater future than he now felt able to consider.

The old man seated himself laboriously, and reached out, groaning at the movement, to put another block of peat on the fire. With bowed heads and averted eyes, his three guests acknowledged his magnanimity.

"We thank you, Doctor Jenkins, for the reading," said the man who had named the books.

They seemed then to be waiting for something. Doctor Jenkins understood, but was loath to comply. In an ordinary moment he would have said nothing. But the words of *The Tempest,* which he had been reading, and the religious attention of the three made this an unusual occasion.

"You wish to hear the phonograph," he said grudgingly.

The two middle-aged men stared into the fire, unable to formulate and expose the enormity of their desire.

The young man, however, said anxiously, between suppressed coughs, "Oh, please," like an excited child.

The old man rose again in his difficult way, and went to the back of the cell. He returned and placed tenderly upon the packed floor, where the firelight might fall upon it, an old portable phonograph in a black case. He smoothed the top with his hand, and then opened it. The lovely green-felt-covered disk became visible.

"I have been using thorns as needles," he said. "But tonight, because we have a musician among us"—he bent his head to the young man, almost invisible in the shadow—"I will use a steel needle. There are only three left."

The two middle-aged men stared at him in speechless adoration. The one with the big hands, who wanted to write, moved his lips, but the whisper was not audible.

"Oh, don't!" cried the young man, as if he were hurt. "The thorns will do beautifully."

"No," the old man said. "I have become accustomed to the thorns, but they are not really good. For you, my young friend, we will have good music tonight."

"After all," he added generously, and beginning to wind the phonograph, which creaked, "they can't last forever."

"No, nor we," the man who needed to write said harshly. "The needle, by all means."

"Oh, thanks," said the young man. "Thanks," he said again in a low, excited voice, and then stifled his coughing with a bowed head.

"The records, though," said the old man when he had finished winding, "are a different matter. Already they are very worn. I do not play them more than once a week. One, once a week, that is what I allow myself.

"More than a week I cannot stand it; not to hear them," he apologized.

"No, how could you?" cried the young man. "And with them here like this."

"A man can stand anything," said the man who wanted to write, in his harsh, antagonistic voice.

"Please, the music," said the young man.

"Only the one," said the old man. "In the long run, we will remember more that way."

He had a dozen records with luxuriant gold and red seals. Even in that light the others could see that the threads of the records were becoming worn. Slowly he read out the titles and the tremendous dead names of the composers and the artists and the orchestras. The three worked upon the names in their minds, carefully. It was difficult to select from such a wealth what they would at once most like to remember. Finally, the man who wanted to write named Gershwin's "New York."

"Oh, no," cried the sick young man, and then could say nothing more because he had to cough. The others understood him, and the harsh man withdrew his selection and waited for the musician to choose.

The musician begged Doctor Jenkins to read the titles again, very slowly, so that he could remember the sounds. While they were read, he lay back against the wall, his eyes closed, his thin, horny hand pulling at his light beard, and listened to the voices and the orchestras and the single instruments in his mind.

When the reading was done he spoke despairingly. "I have forgotten," he complained; "I cannot hear them clearly.

"There are things missing," he explained.

"I know," said Doctor Jenkins. "I thought that I knew all of Shelley by heart. I should have brought Shelley."

"That's more soul than we can use," said the harsh man. "*Moby Dick* is better."

"By God, we can understand that," he emphasized.

The Doctor nodded.

"Still," said the man who had admired the books, "we need the absolute if we are to keep a grasp on anything.

"Anything but these sticks and peat clods and rabbit snares," he said bitterly.

"Shelley desired an ultimate absolute," said the harsh man. "It's too much," he said. "It's no good; no earthly good."

The musician selected a Debussy nocturne. The others considered and approved. They rose to their knees to watch the Doctor prepare for the playing, so that they appeared to be actually in an attitude of worship. The peat glow showed the thinness of their bearded faces, and the deep lines in them, and revealed the condition of their garments. The other two continued to kneel as the old man carefully lowered the needle onto the spinning disk, but the musician suddenly drew back against the wall again, with his knees up, and buried his face in his hands.

At the first notes of the piano the listeners were startled. They stared at each other. Even the musician lifted his head in amazement, but then quickly bowed it again, strainingly, as if he were suffering from a pain he might not be able to endure. They were all listening deeply, without movement. The wet, blue-green notes tinkled forth from the old machine, and were individual, delectable presences in the cell. The individual, delectable presences swept into a sudden tide of unbearably beautiful dissonance, and then continued fully the swelling and ebbing of that tide, the dissonant inpourings, and the resolutions, and the diminishments, and the little, quiet wavelets of interlude lapping between. Every sound was piercing and singularly sweet. In all the men except the musician, there occurred rapid sequences of tragically heightened recollection. He heard nothing but what was there. At the final, whispering disappearance, but moving quietly so that the others would not hear him and look at him, he let his head fall back in agony, as if it were drawn there by the hair, and clenched the fingers of one hand over his teeth. He sat that way while the others were silent, and until they began to breathe again normally. His drawn-up legs were trembling violently.

Quickly Doctor Jenkins lifted the needle off, to save it and not to spoil the recollection with scraping. When he had stopped the whirling of the sacred disk, he courteously left the phonograph open and by the fire, in sight.

The others, however, understood. The musician rose last, but then abruptly, and went quickly out at the door without saying anything. The others stopped at the door and gave their thanks in low voices. The Doctor nodded magnificently.

"Come again," he invited, "in a week. We will have the 'New York.'"

When the two had gone together, out towards the rimed road, he stood in the entrance, peering and listening. At first, there was only the resonant boom of the wind overhead, and then far over the dome of the dead, dark

plain, the wolf cry lamenting. In the rifts of clouds the Doctor saw four stars flying. It impressed the Doctor that one of them had just been obscured by the beginning of a flying cloud at the very moment he heard what he had been listening for, a sound of suppressed coughing. It was not near-by, however. He believed that down against the pale alders he could see the moving shadow.

With nervous hands he lowered the piece of canvas which served as his door, and pegged it at the bottom. Then quickly and quietly, looking at the piece of canvas frequently, he slipped the records into the case, snapped the lid shut, and carried the phonograph to his couch. There, pausing often to stare at the canvas and listen, he dug earth from the wall and disclosed a piece of board. Behind this there was a deep hole in the wall, into which he put the phonograph. After a moment's consideration, he went over and reached down his bundle of books and inserted it also. Then, guardedly, he once more sealed up the hole with the board and the earth. He also changed his blankets, and the grass-stuffed sack which served as a pillow, so that he could lie facing the entrance. After carefully placing two more blocks of peat upon the fire, he stood for a long time watching the stretched canvas, but it seemed to billow naturally with the first gusts of a lowering wind. At last he prayed, and got in under his blankets, and closed his smoke-smarting eyes. On the inside of the bed, next the wall, he could feel with his hand the comfortable piece of lead pipe.

ON CLARK'S *THE PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH*: THE GHOST OF AN APPREHENSION[1]

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK

SINCE the story took place in my mind somewhat as a play might, the intention producing the scene, the scene and the intention selecting the cast, and all three, by means of certain guiding principles which developed with them, dictating the action, and since its approach has occured often with me, in novels as well as in stories, it will help both to shape the discussion to follow and in a measure to widen its application, if we put the synopsis itself into something like dramatic form. To brief the brief, then (the story is only eight pages long):

THE SCENE. Interior of a dugout above a creek thinly lined with alders. A small, smoky, peat fire in the center. In one wall a niche containing a few battered cooking utensils. In the opposite wall an earth bunk with two old army blankets on it. Above the entrance, a rolled canvas, which is the door. Outside (the back-drop, so to speak) a desolate prairie, pitted by craters and

1. Reprinted from *The Pacific Spectator* by permission of the author.

grooved by the frozen ruts of huge wheels and caterpillar treads. Here and there a remnant of highway pavement, a spidery entanglement of barbed wire, and, in the depressions, a few small, shadowy trees. On the far horizon, a red sunset with bars of black cloud across it. Overhead, changing clouds gliding rapidly south before a high, booming wind. A single wedge of wild geese passes over, going southward more swiftly than the clouds and conversing faintly among themselves. A prairie wolf yaps in the distance. There is no other sound or motion. The air near the ground is still and full of the cold promise of winter.

THE CAST. Four men, all dirty, ragged, and bearded: Dr. Jenkins, a former professor and the host, and three visitors: a powerful, sardonic man, once a writer; a polite, conciliatory soul, whose past is not revealed; and a very thin, nervous young man with a bad cough, who has been a musician. The writer and the conciliatory soul have evidently been here before, though not often, but the musician is making his first call.

THE ACTION. Dr. Jenkins has just finished reading *The Tempest* aloud, and while he wraps up his library, Shakespeare, the Bible, *The Divine Comedy*, and *Moby Dick*, is discussing with the writer and the anonymous one, the present, and possibly future, worth of the books. When he has put the books into the niche with the pots, there is a brief, coercive silence, after which he reluctantly produces an old portable phonograph and twelve records. They may hear one record; one record, once a week, is his rule. He reads the titles. A Gershwin named by the writer is rejected as too sharp a reminder. The musician is given the choice, and after hearing the titles again, and complaining that there are parts he can't remember, he selects a Debussy nocturne. Dr. Jenkins, in a sudden, penitent gesture, takes out one of his three remaining steel needles, though he has been using thorns himself. The visitors rise to their knees in a reverent semicircle to watch him insert the needle and set the record on. At the first note of the piano, however, the musician shrinks back against the wall, where he struggles silently against his cough and the agony of hearing music again.

When the record is finished, the visitors rise. The musician is the last to rise, but then he goes out at once, without a word. The other two leave more slowly and formally. Dr. Jenkins lingers in the doorway, peering down into the dusk and listening. At last, just as a cloud erases one of four visible stars, he hears a faint cough from down among the alders. He lowers the canvas and pegs it down, and puts the phonograph and records, and then the books too, into a hole above the bunk and seals them in. After changing his blankets around so that he will lie facing the door, and putting more fuel on the fire, he stands watching the canvas again. Still only the wind, which has at last come down to earth, moves it. He prays and gets under his blankets, where, "On the inside of the bed, next the wall, he could feel with his hand the comfortable piece of lead pipe."

Even so brief a retelling, when we remember that the story first appeared in the fall of 1941, suggests fully enough all we need to know about the apprehension which was the source of the idea. It also brings us at once to the crux of the writing problem, for it was just the very universality of that apprehension which placed the severest strictures upon the design of the story, and so compelled me, in the first stage, to formulate the guiding principles already mentioned.

Clearly I could justify the use of such a theme only by bringing that universal apprehension into sharp focus, by so heightening the reader's reaction to what he already knew and feared as to make the vaguely possible into the concretely probable. Gradually it became evident that the means to such a concentration and heightening must be three. First, if I were to avoid the flavor of Wellsian prophecy, the great apprehension itself must be touched upon lightly and indirectly, must be little more than a taken-for-granted backdrop. Secondly, the incident played against that backdrop, and the characters engaged in it, had to be highly credible, not in terms of their situation, but in terms of an everyday American life. In short, it didn't seem to me that the desired tone could be achieved in the key of either the incident or the scene alone, but that it must arise out of the dissonant juxtaposition of the two. And finally, the manner of the story had to convey the same contrast, had to be fiddle light on the surface and bass viol deep beneath, which is to say, it had to be satirical. One cannot afford to speak seriously of the end of the world. All of these necessities, the minor and credible activity, presented against a background of doom, in a manner calculated to sustain the dissonance, added up, of course, to a very short story. One does not strain a joke about the end of the world, either.

I didn't, naturally, start with a notion of saying something about the finality of modern war, and out of that melancholy fog evolve a set of rules, and out of them a story. The process was not that orderly. First, I just began to write. I can't remember exactly what set me off. Probably it was some intensifying item of the day's news, stirring me when I had time to sit and brood on it until I had to get rid of the emotion it built up, and the first, suggestive images began to appear. Almost always, whatever may have been working up to it in my mind, recognized and unrecognized, it is some image suddenly coming alive and suggesting more to follow, or to precede, that makes me reach for a pencil. In this case it was the prairie, the vast, desolated backdrop of the dugout, which first appeared, accompanied by a feeling that such a scene implied in itself all that one could afford to say directly about a final war. In short, the critical process began with the creative, and by the time I had completed the introductory description (a slow procedure, involving much cutting, rewriting, and rearranging) the controlling principles, more or less as I have stated them, were already in full operation, the cast had appeared and been approved, and the incident had arisen out of their gathering. The story was finished, except for putting it down, which

meant little more than keeping an ear open for that desirable dissonance.

The prairie first appeared blackened by old fires, full of shell craters, deeply scored everywhere by the tracks of enormous tank battles and the vestiges of hopeless entrenchment, and devoid of all present signs of human life. There were no houses, or even shells of houses, no barns, no windmills, no fences, no recognizable fields or even stubs of groves or orchards. It was bare as the moon. It suggested a warfare of almost cosmic proportions (since Hiroshima, we can delete the "almost") which was what I wanted, and it suggested also, that a good deal of time had passed since the battle. That hint of time softening the edges of all detail, but unable to restore anything, made the destruction even more final, and sufficiently indicated, it seemed to me, that the survivors necessary to the story must be so few, and so far set back, as to be without hope or use. But then I saw that the mooniness was too complete, and could just as well mean a region that had always been desert as it could the ruin of a productive region. Yet it seemed wrong to name the place, and I still didn't want any skeletons of building against the sky. I preferred that tundralike emptiness stretching away to the western horizon. (I was looking west, perhaps because Americans have that habit, perhaps because the war we most dreaded was raging in Europe, and so, in the story, would have gone across America westward, but probably just because the scene had first appeared in an end-of-day light, and one would naturally be looking toward the sunset.) So there appeared the broken remnants of a highway as unobtrusive tokens of the past. Clearer signs of time elapsed since the fighting were also needed, yet signs which would not too much relieve the sterility of the earth, so there grew up the sparse lines of willows and alders in the trenches and creek beds, and the stunted, new trees in the craters.

Sometime during its first viewing, though I avoided the narrowing effect of a name (the nature of the land, and the fact that the four men were unquestionably American, seemed enough in the way of location) the region became definitely the American Middle West, because it spread the devastation over the whole world to show the heart of the most isolated major power swept over, and the grain lands gone in a warfare which concentrated on cities. It made the place not only a field of the final war, but the final field as well.

Late autumn became the necessary time of year, the last season before the complete death and the somehow healing secrecy of winter, just as sunset, the last hour of vision before the secrecy of night, was the proper time of day. To begin with, the sky had been cloudless, the sunset one of those infinitely penetrable, green-gold fadings that come with cold, but now such a horizon seemed too peaceful, and even suggestive of hope. There had to be some motion in that inert landscape, some threat in the sky. So that clouds formed, moving in a wintry wind, and the sunset turned red, and then, although that came as an afterthought, in part because the professor had to

hear that last faint cough down in the alders, the unmoving lower air settled in. The chief intent was that the dissonance of the two regions of air should furnish a physical lead into the moral dissonance of the action, and also that it should reinforce the threat of the black clouds across the sunset, suggest apprehension by ear and skin as well as by eye. Finally, for by now the story was fully in view, some touch of conscious life was needed, by which to move from the backdrop into the play. Hence, as also maintaining the mood, the far-off yapping of the wolf, unheard in those parts for generations, and the brief, almost invisible passage of the geese, unconcerned with the land except as a distance to get over.

The action of the story, prepared all during the arranging and rearranging of this backdrop, moved forward so swiftly, almost automatically, in its details, as to be now largely beyond recall. I do remember the vital factors of the preparation, however. I remember that the cast first appeared to me as three in number, the three who became the professor, the writer, and the musician; that they were all men because even one woman might imply a future; and that they became men of highly mental pasts because that rendered them more nearly helpless, increased their recession, and made it more likely that they would retain the necessary surface of polite conduct. I remember also that the three men first came together in the open, around a wood fire down by the creek, but that somehow nothing would happen among them there. The size and finality of the setting shrank them and paralyzed them with futility. I could not even seem to discover any reason for their bothering to get together, save an animal loneliness which had no dramatic potential except through a much longer development than I could afford. When at last it became clear that it was the scene which rendered them so unusable, the dugout, as in keeping with the tank tracks and the barbed wire, appeared in the bank behind me, and we moved into it. That was all it took. The men not only came alive, but swelled to more than life-size, filling the little cave enormously, assuming the importance for me that they had for each other, and setting the lifeless prairie away into its proper backdrop perspective. The vestigial touches of homemaking effort became possible: the few and battered utensils, kept in a niche, like a saint; the peat fire and the earthen bunk, hinting of a nearly woodless world, the army blankets and the canvas. Also, the home made necessary the host, and the professor, as likely to be the most provident and the most chairmanly, at once assumed that role, and with it his manner and his more numerous years. Indeed it was only then that he certainly became a professor, a kind of epitome of civilized man in his most familiar form, suggesting thereby a great deal through his mere presence in a cave.

When the fragments of possible conversation among the three men, the professor, the writer, and a third who was for a time alternately a painter and a musician, began to occur in the midst of the backdrop details, I shortly felt the need of a fourth man, not only because I sensed that the musician-

painter was going to be nearly inarticulate, and, for the sake of variety and interplay, three speakers were preferable to two, but also because the trio was a bit too patly symbolic, and so likely to resist the individualization without which they couldn't convince. (The writer was first seen as a sculptor—which has something to do with the physical characteristics he retained—but changed his profession, partly for the same reason, to break up the rigid one-two-three alignment by drawing nearer to the professor's interests, making a one-two grouping, and partly because it better suited the intent of the tale that he should be thwarted by an absence of that so-common commodity, paper. Of clay there would still be aplenty.) So the fourth man joined the group, the man with the unknown past, the representative of the great, departed audience whose need had produced the specialists. He was a real help, for not only did he relieve the stiffness of the allegory, but he also furnished a contrasting attitude, a second psychological level, being a trifle deferential in the presence of the more specific abilities of the others, but also more resigned because his individual needs were less acute. He was, in short, different in kind, whereas the other three, all upon one level of bolder individuality, were different only in particulars: the harsh cynicism of the frustrated writer; the advanced tuberculosis which makes time so important to the musician; the grave, reluctant, orderly air of the professor. Furthermore, I believe that I had found in him another sufficiently concealed means to irony, for his deference was, of course, wholly pointless in that place and time, a mere hang-over from an irrecoverable social pattern, and yet it was just that trace of deference, that touch of the conciliatory, that held together, by its remnant of drawing-room conduct, a group that otherwise would almost certainly have broken into an undesirable violence.

Once we were in the dugout, and the anonymous fourth had entered, there seemed to be only one thing lacking, that precipitating agent which would settle the whole narrative out in visible form, the reason for the gathering. I cannot remember how many reasons I fleetingly considered off the top of my mind while I completed the backdrop and caught unusable but suggestive glimpses of the civilized pasts of the men. (The professor, for instance, had taught English in a Midwestern college, specializing in Victorian Literature, but had a wide range of interests beyond that. He had lived in a small, white, frame house, with vines on the front porch, and a dark, somewhat stuffy study in it, with heavy rugs, too much furniture, and the walls lined with books, mostly old and worn, but here and there in bright, new bindings or dust jackets. He had two children, but both were grown and away from home, and he was rather lonely, because he had retired just a couple of years before the war, and his wife, a plump, bespectacled woman, although a fine mother and housekeeper, did not share any of his intellectual interests.) I remember very clearly, however, that the happiest moment of the whole preliminary came with the discovery of the portable phonograph. Beyond question it was the very object, the key symbol, for which I'd been

hunting ever since my first dusky glimpse of the prairie. It was portable, which was important. It would seem valuable enough to such a man as the professor, to be worth carrying off in a crisis. It was a universally familiar object, and so would derive its dramatic virtue entirely from its present rarity. In its combined material inconsequence—for certainly it was one of the lesser gadgets of our abundantly gadgeted civilization—and spiritual consequence, as the only remaining vehicle of perhaps the highest achievement of mind and emotion of that same civilization, it became the very centerpiece of the desired dissonance, the touchstone for action and language. The title arrived with it, of course. In its presence, the relationships of the cast were rapidly established. It became evident that the small, suppressed element of conflict that was needed must spring from it and from the music it produced. As a result, the musician at once assumed the brief future that would make him desperate, and became certainly a musician rather than a painter, and also the newcomer, the stranger in the group, the man in whom the restraint of association would play the smallest part and the hunger for music the greatest. At once, also, the professor, as the owner of the treasure, became the antagonist. To all intents the story was complete.

There remained only to discover a valid and contributory means of prolonging, though backwards, into the hours before the tale opens, a meeting which would otherwise be incredibly brief, and which could not, obviously, be extended by eating and drinking. Books were beyond question the means, and certainly, in this context, the reasons for selecting the four the professor had brought with him are equally clear, at least by the time the writer has spoken of *Moby Dick* as something they can all understand now (he might usefully have dropped a word about Ishmael's coffin-boat) and added that Shelley had too much soul, and was "no earthly good." Nor is there any mystery about his selecting *The Tempest* for the reading, once we realize that Caliban and Ariel are at it again over the portable phonograph. The act of reading and the reverence accorded the books serve also as a kind of induction to the high sacrament of the music, in which the professor becomes the priest of a doomed faith and the visitors literally assume kneeling positions around the phonograph.

It is intended that the conclusion should leave with the reader a sense of unity, of the opening dissonance resolved, though not into peace, but rather by means, gently, gently, of almost entirely reducing the professor to the cave man, blending him, as it were, into the terrible landscape. As he stands suspiciously in the doorway, after the guests have departed, he sees, at the very instant he hears the coughing down in the alders, one of four bright stars suddenly hidden by a cloud. It is a sufficient sign to the primitive credulity revived in him, and indirectly, we hope, in the reader. Then also, as he stands watching the canvas he has pegged down, it is moved by "the first gusts of a lowering wind." The opening dissonance between the wuthering upper air and the still ground air is also resolved, and again, as in the case of

the human dissonance, by suggesting an end, by bringing winter to the door. Yet, in the last line, as the professor lies on the earth bench, facing the billowing canvas, "On the inside of the bed, next the wall, he could feel with his hand the comfortable piece of lead pipe." His weapon still comes from that lost world of gadgets. He cannot bring even violence to the level of the new—the very old—world in which he now lives. And of course futility, in any but the meanest and most temporary sense, attends the defense for which he is prepared.

It seemed to me that sentence plucked the proper closing note, one that might linger for a time with a tenuous but moving reminder of the whole intention. If so, it was so, happily, by means of the very last phrase, and particularly by means of the one word "comfortable." Nothing in the phrase was considered, not "comfortable" any more than the rest, but even as it came, that "comfortable" tickled me, not so much because of its immediate implication, in which the paradox was clear enough, as for some more remote, redoubling connotation which I could not, at the moment, catch hold of. Then, a few seconds after I had poked home the final period, it came to me. I had done a bit of lucky thieving from Bill of Avon. (Perhaps the professor's volume of Shakespeare had put it out handy for the borrowing.) Remember how Juliet, waking in the tomb, and not yet aware that Romeo is dead, murmurs drowsily to the gentle Friar Lawrence, "Oh, comfortable Friar—"? Oh, poor professor, with only his lead pipe. And I was sure that at least the ghost of that old, warm, trusting "comfortable" would lurk to trouble the reader as it had troubled me. Nor could I feel, considering the grim little twist I had given it, that Bill would begrudge me his word. After all, he was no mean shakes of a borrower himself.

THE EIGHTY-YARD RUN[1]

IRWIN SHAW

THE PASS was high and wide and he jumped for it, feeling it slap flatly against his hands, as he shook his hips to throw off the halfback who was diving at him. The center floated by, his hands desperately brushing Darling's knee as Darling picked his feet up high and delicately ran over a blocker and an opposing linesman in a jumble on the ground near the scrimmage line. He had ten yards in the clear and picked up speed, breathing easily, feeling his thigh pads rising and falling against his legs, listening to the sound of cleats behind him, pulling away from them, watching the other backs heading him off toward the sideline, the whole picture, the men closing in

1. From *Welcome to the City* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1942). Copyright, 1938, by Irwin Shaw. Reprinted by permission of the author.

on him, the blockers fighting for position, the ground he had to cross, all suddenly clear in his head, for the first time in his life not a meaningless confusion of men, sounds, speed. He smiled a little to himself as he ran, holding the ball lightly in front of him with his two hands, his knees pumping high, his hips twisting in the almost-girlish run of a back in a broken field. The first halfback came at him and he fed him his leg, then swung at the last moment, took the shock of the man's shoulder without breaking stride, ran right through him, his cleats biting securely into the turf. There was only the safety man now, coming warily at him, his arms crooked, hands spread. Darling tucked the ball in, spurted at him, driving hard, hurling himself along, his legs pounding, knees high, all two hundred pounds bunched into controlled attack. He was sure he was going to get past the safety man. Without thought, his arms and legs working beautifully together, he headed right for the safety man, stiff-armed him, feeling blood spurt instantaneously from the man's nose onto his hand, seeing his face go awry, head turned, mouth pulled to one side. He pivoted away, keeping the arm locked, dropping the safety man as he ran easily toward the goal line, with the drumming of cleats diminishing behind him.

How long ago? It was autumn then and the ground was getting hard because the nights were cold and leaves from the maples around the stadium blew across the practice fields in gusts of wind and the girls were beginning to put polo coats over their sweaters when they came to watch practice in the afternoons . . . Fifteen years. Darling walked slowly over the same ground in the spring twilight, in his neat shoes, a man of thirty-five dressed in a double-breasted suit, ten pounds heavier in the fifteen years, but not fat, with the years between 1925 and 1940 showing in his face.

The coach was smiling quietly to himself and the assistant coaches were looking at each other with pleasure the way they always did when one of the second stringers suddenly did something fine, bringing credit to them, making their $2,000 a year a tiny bit more secure.

Darling trotted back, smiling, breathing deeply but easily, feeling wonderful, not tired, though this was the tail end of practice and he'd run eighty yards. The sweat poured off his face and soaked his jersey and he liked the feeling, the warm moistness lubricating his skin like oil. Off in a corner of the field some players were punting and the smack of leather against the ball came pleasantly through the afternoon air. The freshmen were running signals on the next field and the quarterback's sharp voice, the pound of the eleven pairs of cleats, the "Dig, now, *dig!*" of the coaches, the laughter of the players all somehow made him feel happy as he trotted back to midfield, listening to the applause and shouts of the students along the sidelines, knowing that after that run the coach would have to start him Saturday against Illinois.

Fifteen years, Darling thought, remembering the shower after the workout, the hot water steaming off his skin and the deep soapsuds and all the

young voices singing with the water streaming down and towels going and managers running in and out and the sharp sweet smell of oil of wintergreen and everybody clapping him on the back as he dressed and Packard, the captain, who took being captain very seriously, coming over to him and shaking his hand saying, "Darling, you're going to go places in the next two years."

The assistant manager fussed over him, wiping a cut on his leg with alcohol and iodine, the little sting making him realize suddenly how fresh and whole and solid his body felt. The manager slapped a piece of adhesive tape over the cut and Darling noticed the sharp clean white of the tape against the ruddiness of the skin, fresh from the shower.

He dressed slowly, the softness of his shirt and the soft warmth of his wool socks and his flannel trousers a reward against his skin after the harsh pressure of the shoulder harness and thigh and hip pads. He drank three glasses of cold water, the liquid reaching down coldly inside of him, soothing the harsh dry places in his throat and belly left by the sweat and running and shouting of practice.

Fifteen years.

The sun had gone down and the sky was green behind the stadium and he laughed quietly to himself as he looked at the stadium, rearing above the tree, and knew that on Saturday when the 70,000 voices roared as the team came running out onto the field, part of that enormous salute would be for him. He walked slowly, listening to the gravel crunch satisfactorily under his toes in the still twilight, feeling his clothes swing lightly against his skin, breathing the thin evening air, feeling the wind move softly in his damp hair, wonderfully cool behind his ears and at the nape of his neck.

Louise was waiting for him at the road, in her car. The top was down and he noticed all over again, as he always did when he saw her, how pretty she was, the rough blonde hair and the large, inquiring eyes and the bright mouth, smiling now.

She threw the door open. "Were you good today?" she asked.

"Pretty good," he said. He climbed in, sank luxuriously into the soft leather, stretched his legs far out. He smiled, thinking of the eighty yards. "Pretty damn good."

She looked at him seriously for a moment, then scrambled around, like a little girl, kneeling on the seat next to him, grabbed him, her hands along his ears, and kissed him as he sprawled, head back, on the seat cushion. She let go of him, but kept her head close to his, over his. Darling reached up slowly and rubbed the back of his hand against her cheek, lit softly by a street lamp a hundred feet away. They looked at each other, smiling.

Louise drove down to the lake and they sat there silently, watching the moon rise behind the hills on the other side. Finally he reached over, pulled her gently to him, kissed her. Her lips grew soft, her body sank into his, tears formed in her eyes. He knew, for the first time, that he could do whatever he wanted with her.

"Tonight," he said. "I'll call for you at seven-thirty. Can you get out?"

She looked at him. She was smiling, but the tears were still full in her eyes. "All right," she said. "I'll get out. How about you? Won't the coach raise hell?"

Darling grinned. "I got the coach in the palm of my hand," he said. "Can you wait till seven-thirty?"

She grinned back at him. "No," she said.

They kissed and she started the car and they went back to town for dinner. He sang on the way home.

Christian Darling, thirty-five years old, sat on the frail spring grass, greener now than it ever would be again on the practice field, looked thoughtfully up at the stadium, a deserted ruin in the twilight. He had started on the first team that Saturday and every Saturday after that for the next two years, but it had never been as satisfactory as it should have been. He never had broken away, the longest run he'd ever made was thirty-five yards, and that in a game that was already won, and then that kid had come up from the third team, Diederich, a blank-faced German kid from Wisconsin, who ran like a bull, ripping lines to pieces Saturday after Saturday, plowing through, never getting hurt, never changing his expression, scoring more points, gaining more ground than all the rest of the team put together, making everybody's All-American, carrying the ball three times out of four, keeping everybody else out of the headlines. Darling was a good blocker and he spent his Saturday afternoons working on the big Swedes and Polacks who played tackle and end for Michigan, Illinois, Purdue, hurling into huge pile-ups, bobbing his head wildly to elude the great raw hands swinging like meat-cleavers at him as he went charging in to open up holes for Diederich coming through like a locomotive behind him. Still, it wasn't so bad. Everybody liked him and he did his job and he was pointed out on the campus and boys always felt important when they introduced their girls to him at their proms, and Louise loved him and watched him faithfully in the games, even in the mud, when your own mother wouldn't know you, and drove him around in her car keeping the top down because she was proud of him and wanted to show everybody that she was Christian Darling's girl. She bought him crazy presents because her father was rich, watches, pipes, humidors, an icebox for beer for his room, curtains, wallets, a fifty-dollar dictionary.

"You'll spend every cent your old man owns," Darling protested once when she showed up at his room with seven different packages in her arms and tossed them onto the couch.

"Kiss me," Louise said, "and shut up."

"Do you want to break your poor old man?"

"I don't mind. I want to buy you presents."

"Why?"

"It makes me feel good. Kiss me. I don't know why. Did you know that you're an important figure?"

"Yes," Darling said gravely.

"When I was waiting for you at the library yesterday two girls saw you coming and one of them said to the other, 'That's Christian Darling. He's an important figure.'"

"You're a liar."

"I'm in love with an important figure."

"Still, why the hell did you have to give me a forty-pound dictionary?"

"I wanted to make sure," Louise said, "that you had a token of my esteem. I want to smother you in tokens of my esteem."

Fifteen years ago.

They'd married when they got out of college. There'd been other women for him, but all casual and secret, more for curiosity's sake, and vanity, women who'd thrown themselves at him and flattered him, a pretty mother at a summer camp for boys, an old girl from his home town who'd suddenly blossomed into a coquette, a friend of Louise's who had dogged him grimly for six months and had taken advantage of the two weeks when Louise went home when her mother died. Perhaps Louise had known, but she'd kept quiet, loving him completely, filling his rooms with presents, religiously watching him battling with the big Swedes and Polacks on the line of scrimmage on Saturday afternoons, making plans for marrying him and living with him in New York and going with him there to the nightclubs, the theatres, the good restaurants, being proud of him in advance, tall, white-teethed, smiling, large, yet moving lightly, with an athlete's grace, dressed in evening clothes, approvingly eyed by magnificently dressed and famous women in theatre lobbies, with Louise adoringly at his side.

Her father, who manufactured inks, set up a New York office for Darling to manage and presented him with three hundred accounts and they lived on Beekman Place with a view of the river with fifteen thousand dollars a year between them, because everybody was buying everything in those days, including ink. They saw all the shows and went to all the speakeasies and spent their fifteen thousand dollars a year and in the afternoons Louise went to the art galleries and the matinees of the more serious plays that Darling didn't like to sit through and Darling slept with a girl who danced in the chorus of *Rosalie* and with the wife of a man who owned three copper mines. Darling played squash three times a week and remained as solid as a stone barn and Louise never took her eyes off him when they were in the same room together, watching him with a secret, miser's smile, with a trick of coming over to him in the middle of a crowded room and saying gravely, in a low voice, "You're the handsomest man I've ever seen in my whole life. Want a drink?"

Nineteen twenty-nine came to Darling and to his wife and father-in-law, the maker of inks, just as it came to everyone else. The father-in-law waited

until 1933 and then blew his brains out and when Darling went to Chicago to see what the books of the firm looked like he found out all that was left were debts and three or four gallons of unbought ink.

"Please, Christian," Louise said, sitting in their neat Beekman Place apartment, with a view of the river and prints of paintings by Dufy and Braque and Picasso on the wall, "please, why do you want to start drinking at two o'clock in the afternoon?"

"I have nothing else to do," Darling said, putting down his glass, emptied of its fourth drink. "Please pass the whiskey."

Louise filled his glass. "Come take a walk with me," she said. "We'll walk along the river."

"I don't want to walk along the river," Darling said, squinting intensely at the prints of paintings by Dufy, Braque and Picasso.

"We'll walk along Fifth Avenue."

"I don't want to walk along Fifth Avenue."

"Maybe," Louise said gently, "you'd like to come with me to some art galleries. There's an exhibition by a man named Klee—"

"I don't want to go to any art galleries. I want to sit here and drink Scotch whiskey," Darling said. "Who the hell hung those goddam pictures on the wall?"

"I did," Louise said.

"I hate them."

"I'll take them down," Louise said.

"Leave them there. It gives me something to do in the afternoon. I can hate them." Darling took a swallow. "Is that the way people paint these days?"

"Yes, Christian. Please don't drink any more."

"Do you like painting like that?"

"Yes, dear."

"Really?"

"Really."

Darling looked carefully at the prints once more. "Little Louise Tucker. The middle-western beauty. I like pictures with horses in them. Why should you like pictures like that?"

"I just happen to have gone to a lot of galleries in the last few years . . ."

"Is that what you do in the afternoon?"

"That's what I do in the afternoon," Louise said.

"I drink in the afternoon."

Louise kissed him lightly on the top of his head as he sat there squinting at the pictures on the wall, the glass of whiskey held firmly in his hand. She put on her coat and went out without saying another word. When she came back in the evening, she had a job on a woman's fashion magazine.

They moved downtown and Louise went out to work every morning and

Darling sat home and drank and Louise paid the bills as they came up. She made believe she was going to quit work as soon as Darling found a job, even though she was taking over more responsibility day by day at the magazine, interviewing authors, picking painters for the illustrations and covers, getting actresses to pose for pictures, going out for drinks with the right people, making a thousand new friends whom she loyally introduced to Darling.

"I don't like your hat," Darling said once, when she came in in the evening and kissed him, her breath rich with Martinis.

"What's the matter with my hat, Baby?" she asked, running her fingers through his hair. "Everybody says it's very smart."

"It's too damned smart," he said. "It's not for you. It's for a rich, sophisticated woman of thirty-five with admirers."

Louise laughed. "I'm practicing to be a rich, sophisticated woman of thirty-five with admirers," she said. He stared soberly at her. "Now, don't look so grim, Baby. It's still the same simple little wife under the hat." She took the hat off, threw it into a corner, sat on his lap. "See? Homebody Number One."

"Your breath could run a train," Darling said, not wanting to be mean, but talking out of boredom, and sudden shock at seeing his wife curiously a stranger in a new hat, with a new expression in her eyes under the little brim, secret, confident, knowing.

Louise tucked her head under his chin so he couldn't smell her breath. "I had to take an author out for cocktails," she said. "He's a boy from the Ozark mountains and he drinks like a fish. He's a Communist."

"What the hell is a Communist from the Ozarks doing writing for a woman's fashion magazine?"

Louise chuckled. "The magazine business is getting all mixed up these days. The publishers want to have a foot in every camp. And anyway, you can't find an author under seventy these days who isn't a Communist."

"I don't think I like you to associate with all those people, Louise," Darling said. "Drinking with them."

"He's a very nice, gentle boy," Louise said. "He reads Ernest Dobson."

"Who's Ernest Dobson?"

Louise patted his arm, stood up, fixed her hair. "He's an English poet."

Darling felt that somehow he had disappointed her. "Am I supposed to know who Ernest Dobson is?"

"No, dear. I'd better go in and take a bath."

After she had gone, Darling went over to the corner where the hat was lying and picked it up. It was nothing, a scrap of straw, a red flower, a veil, meaningless on his big hand, but on his wife's head a signal of something . . . big city, smart and knowing women drinking and dining with men other than their husbands, conversation about things a normal man wouldn't

know much about, Frenchmen who painted as though they used their elbows instead of brushes, composers who wrote whole symphonies without a single melody in them, writers who knew all about politics and women who knew all about writers, the movement of the proletariat, Marx, somehow mixed up with five-dollar dinners and the best looking women in America and fairies who made them laugh and half-sentences immediately understood and secretly hilarious and wives who called their husbands "Baby." He put the hat down, a scrap of straw and a red flower, and a little veil. He drank some whiskey straight and went into the bathroom where his wife was lying deep in her bath, singing to herself and smiling from time to time like a little girl, paddling the water gently with her hands, sending up a slight spicy fragrance from the bath-salts she used.

He stood over her, looking down at her. She smiled up at him, her eyes half closed, her body pink and shimmering in the warm, scented water. All over again, with all the old suddenness, he was hit deep inside him with the knowledge of how beautiful she was, how much he needed her.

"I came in here," he said, "to tell you I wish you wouldn't call me 'Baby.'"

She looked up at him from the bath, her eyes quickly full of sorrow, half-understanding what he meant. He knelt and put his arms around her, his sleeves plunged heedlessly in the water, his shirt and jacket soaking wet as he clutched her wordlessly, holding her crazily tight, crushing her breath from her, kissing her desperately, searchingly, regretfully.

He got jobs after that, selling real estate and automobiles, but somehow, although he had a desk with his name on a wooden wedge on it, and he went to the office religiously at nine each morning, he never managed to sell anything and he never made any money.

Louise was made assistant editor and the house was always full of strange men and women who talked fast and got angry on abstract subjects like mural paintings, novelists, labor unions. Negro short-story writers drank Louise's liquor, and a lot of Jews, and big solemn men with scarred faces and knotted hands talked slowly but clearly about picket lines and battles with guns and leadpipe at mine shaft-heads and in front of factory gates. And Louise moved among them all, confidently, knowing what they were talking about, with opinions that they listened to and argued about just as though she were a man. She knew everybody, condescended to no one, devoured books that Darling had never heard of, walked along the streets of the city, excited, at home, soaking in all the million tides of New York without fear, with constant wonder.

Her friends liked Darling and sometimes he found a man who wanted to get off in the corner and talk about the new boy who played fullback for Princeton, and the decline of the double wing-back, or even the state of the stock market, but for the most part he sat on the edge of things, solid and quiet in the high storm of words. "The dialectics of the situation . . . the

theatre has been given over to expert jugglers . . . Picasso? What man has a right to paint old bones and collect ten thousand dollars for them? . . . I stand firmly behind Trotsky . . . Poe was the last American critic. When he died they put lilies on the grave of American criticism. I don't say this because they panned my last book, but . . ."

Once in a while he caught Louise looking soberly and consideringly at him through the cigarette smoke and the noise and he avoided her eyes and found an excuse to get up and go into the kitchen for more ice or to open another bottle.

"Come on," Cathal Flaherty was saying, standing at the door with a girl, "you've got to come down and see this. It's down on Fourteenth Street, in the old Civic Repertory, and you can only see it on Sunday nights and I guarantee you'll come out of the theatre singing." Flaherty was a big young Irishman with a broken nose who was the lawyer for a longshoreman's union, and he had been hanging around the house for six months on and off, roaring and shutting everybody else up when he got in an argument. "It's a new play, *Waiting for Lefty*, it's about taxi-drivers."

"Odets," the girl with Flaherty said. "It's by a guy named Odets."

"I never heard of him," Darling said.

"He's a new one," the girl said.

"It's like watching a bombardment," Flaherty said. "I saw it last Sunday night. You've got to see it."

"Come on, Baby," Louise said to Darling, excitement in her eyes already. "We've been sitting in the Sunday *Times* all day, this'll be a great change."

"I see enough taxi-drivers every day," Darling said, not because he meant that, but because he didn't like to be around Flaherty, who said things that made Louise laugh a lot and whose judgment she accepted on almost every subject. "Let's go to the movies."

"You've never seen anything like this before," Flaherty said. "He wrote this play with a baseball bat."

"Come on," Louise coaxed, "I bet it's wonderful."

"He has long hair," the girl with Flaherty said. "Odets. I met him at a party. He's an actor. He didn't say a goddam thing all night."

"I don't feel like going down to Fourteenth Street," Darling said, wishing Flaherty and his girl would get out. "It's gloomy."

"Oh, hell!" Louise said loudly. She looked coolly at Darling, as though she'd just been introduced to him and was making up her mind about him, and not very favorably. He saw her looking at him, knowing there was something new and dangerous in her face and he wanted to say something, but Flaherty was there and his damned girl, and anyway, he didn't know what to say.

"I'm going," Louise said, getting her coat. "I don't think Fourteenth Street is gloomy."

"I'm telling you," Flaherty was saying, helping her on with her coat, "it's the Battle of Gettysburg, in Brooklynese."

"Nobody could get a word out of him," Flaherty's girl was saying as they went through the door. "He just sat there all night."

The door closed. Louise hadn't said good-night to him. Darling walked around the room four times, then sprawled out on the sofa, on top of the Sunday *Times*. He lay there for five minutes looking at the ceiling, thinking of Flaherty walking down the street talking in that booming voice, between the girls, holding their arms.

Louise had looked wonderful. She'd washed her hair in the afternoon and it had been very soft and light and clung close to her head as she stood there angrily putting her coat on. Louise was getting prettier every year, partly because she knew by now how pretty she was, and made the most of it.

"Nuts," Darling said, standing up. "Oh, nuts."

He put on his coat and went down to the nearest bar and had five drinks off by himself in a corner before his money ran out.

The years since then had been foggy and downhill. Louise had been nice to him, and in a way, loving and kind, and they'd fought only once, when he said he was going to vote for Landon. ("Oh, Christ," she'd said, "doesn't *anything* happen inside your head? Don't you read the papers? The penniless Republican!") She'd been sorry later and apologized for hurting him, but apologized as she might to a child. He'd tried hard, had gone grimly to the art galleries, the concert halls, the book-shops, trying to gain on the trail of his wife, but it was no use. He was bored, and none of what he saw or heard or dutifully read made much sense to him and finally he gave it up. He had thought, many nights as he ate dinner alone, knowing Louise would come home late and drop silently into bed without explanation, of getting a divorce, but he knew the loneliness, the hopelessness, of not seeing her again would be too much to take. So he was good, completely devoted, ready at all times to go anyplace with her, do anything she wanted. He even got a small job, in a broker's office and paid his own way, bought his own liquor.

Then he'd been offered the job of going from college to college as a tailor's representative. "We want a man," Mr. Rosenberg had said, "who as soon as you look at him, you say 'There's a university man.'" Rosenberg had looked approvingly at Darling's broad shoulders and well-kept waist, at his carefully brushed hair and his honest, wrinkleless face. "Frankly, Mr. Darling, I am willing to make you a proposition. I have inquired about you, you are favorably known on your old campus. I understand you were in the backfield with Alfred Diederich."

Darling nodded. "What happened to him?"

"He is walking around in a cast for seven years now. An iron brace. He played professional football and they broke his neck for him."

Darling smiled. That, at least, had turned out well.

"Our suits are an easy product to sell, Mr. Darling," Mr. Rosenberg said. "We have a handsome, custom-made garment. What has Brooks Brothers got that we haven't got? A name. No more."

"I can make fifty, sixty dollars a week," Darling said to Louise that night. "And expenses. I can save some money and then come back to New York and really get started here."

"Yes, Baby," Louise said.

"As it is," Darling said carefully, "I can make it back here once a month, and holidays and the summer. We can see each other often."

"Yes, Baby." He looked at her face, lovelier now at thirty-five than it had ever been before, but fogged over now as it had been for five years with a kind of patient, kindly, remote boredom.

"What do you say?" he asked. "Should I take it?" Deep within him, he hoped fiercely, longingly, for her to say, "No, Baby, you stay right here," but she said, as he knew she'd say, "I think you'd better take it."

He nodded. He had to get up and stand with his back to her, looking out the window, because there were things plain on his face that she had never seen in the fifteen years she'd known him. "Fifty dollars is a lot of money," he said. "I never thought I'd ever see fifty dollars again." He laughed. Louise laughed, too.

Christian Darling sat on the frail green grass of the practice field. The shadow of the stadium had reached out and covered him. In the distance the lights of the university shone a little mistily in the light haze of evening. Fifteen years. Flaherty even now was calling for his wife, buying her a drink, filling whatever bar they were in with that voice of his and that easy laugh. Darling half-closed his eyes, almost saw the boy fifteen years ago reach for the pass, slip the halfback, go skittering lightly down the field, his knees high and fast and graceful, smiling to himself because he knew he was going to get past the safety man. That was the high point, Darling thought, fifteen years ago, on an autumn afternoon, twenty years old and far from death, with the air coming easily into his lungs, and a deep feeling inside him that he could do anything, knock over anybody, outrun whatever had to be outrun. And the shower after and the three glasses of water and the cool night air on his damp head and Louise sitting hatless in the open car with a smile and the first kiss she ever really meant. The high point, an eighty-yard run in the practice and a girl's kiss and everything after that a decline. Darling laughed. He had practiced the wrong thing, perhaps. He hadn't practiced for 1929 and New York City and a girl who would turn into a woman. Somewhere, he thought, there must have been a point where she moved up to me, was even with me for a moment, when I could have held her hand, if I'd known, held tight, gone with her. Well, he'd never known. Here he was on a playing field that was fifteen years away and his wife was in another city having dinner with another and better man, speaking with

him a different, new language, a language nobody had ever taught him.

Darling stood up, smiled a little, because if he didn't smile he knew the tears would come. He looked around him. This was the spot. O'Connor's pass had come sliding out just to here . . . the high point. Darling put up his hands, felt all over again the flat slap of the ball. He shook his hips to throw off the halfback, cut back inside the center, picked his knees high as he ran gracefully over two men jumbled on the ground at the line of scrimmage, ran easily, gaining speed, for ten yards, holding the ball lightly in his two hands, swung away from the halfback diving at him, ran, swinging his hips in the almost-girlish manner of a back in a broken field, tore into the safety man, his shoes drumming heavily on the turf, stiff-armed, elbow locked, pivoted, raced lightly and exultantly for the goal line.

It was only after he had sped over the goal line and slowed to a trot that he saw the boy and girl sitting together on the turf, looking at him wonderingly.

He stopped short, dropping his arms. "I . . ." he said, gasping a little though his condition was fine and the run hadn't winded him, ". . .Once I played here."

The boy and the girl said nothing. Darling laughed embarrassedly, looked hard at them sitting there, close to each other, shrugged, turned and went toward his hotel, the sweat breaking out on his face and running down into his collar.

III

PLAYS



OEDIPUS THE KING

SOPHOCLES

TRANSLATED BY DAVID GRENE[1]

Characters in the Play

OEDIPUS, *King of Thebes*
JOCASTA, *Queen of Thebes; wife of Oedipus; widow of Laius, the late King*
PRIEST OF ZEUS
CREON, *brother of Jocasta*
TEIRESIAS, *a blind prophet*
A MESSENGER, *from Corinth*
A HERDSMAN, *formerly in the service of Laius*
SECOND MESSENGER
CHORUS *of Theban elders*
A CROWD *of suppliants, men, women, and children*

(SCENE: *In front of the palace of* OEDIPUS *at Thebes. To the right of the stage near the altar stands the* PRIEST *with a crowd of suppliants of all ages.* OEDIPUS *emerges from the central door.*)

OEDIPUS. Children, young sons and daughters of old Cadmus,
why do you sit here with your suppliant crowns?
The town is heavy with a mingled burden
of sounds and smells, of groans and hymns and incense;
I did not think it fit that I should hear
of this from messengers but came myself,—
I Oedipus whom all men call the Great.

[*He turns to the* PRIEST.]

You're old and they are young; come, speak for them.
What do you fear or want, that you sit here

1. David Grene, *Three Greek Tragedies*. Copyright, 1942, by The University of Chicago Press. Used by permission.

suppliant? Indeed I'm willing to give all
that you may need; I would be very hard
should I not pity suppliants like these.

PRIEST. O ruler of my country, Oedipus,
you see our company around the altar;
you see our ages; some of us, like these,
who cannot yet fly far, and some of us
heavy with age; these children are the chosen
among the young, and I the priest of Zeus.
Within the market place sit others crowned
with suppliant garlands, at the double shrine
of Pallas and the temple where Ismenus
gives oracles by fire. King, you yourself
have seen our city reeling like a wreck
already; it can scarcely lift its prow
out of the depths, out of the bloody surf.
A blight is on the fruitful plants of the earth,
a blight is on the cattle in the fields,
a blight is on our women that no children
are born to them; a God that carries fire,
a deadly pestilence, is in our town,
strikes us and spares not, and the house of Cadmus
is emptied of its people while black Death
grows rich in groaning and in lamentation.
We have not come as suppliants to this altar
because we thought of you as of a God,
but rather judging you the first of men
in all the chances of this life and when
we mortals have to do with more than man.
You came and by your coming saved our city,
freed us from tribute which we paid of old
to the Sphinx, cruel singer. This you did
in virtue of no knowledge we could give you,
in virtue of no teaching; it was God
that aided you, men say, and you are held
with God's assistance to have saved our lives.
Now Oedipus, whom all men call the Greatest,
here falling at your feet we all entreat you,
find us some strength for rescue.
Perhaps you'll hear a wise word from some God,
perhaps you will learn something from a man
(for I have seen that for the skilled of practice
the outcome of their counsels live the most).
Noblest of men, go, and raise up our city,

go,—and give heed. For now this land of ours
calls you its savior since you saved it once.
So, let us never speak about your reign
as of a time when first our feet were set
secure on high, but later fell to ruin.
Raise up our city, save it and raise it up.
Once you have brought us luck with happy omen;
be no less now in fortune.
If you will rule this land, as now you rule it,
better to rule it full of men than empty.
For neither town nor ship is anything
when empty, and none live in it together.

OEDIPUS. Poor children! You have come to me entreating,
but I have known the story before you told it
only too well. I know you are all sick,
yet there is not one of you, sick though you are,
that is as sick as I myself.
Your several sorrows each have single scope
and touch but one of you. My spirit groans
for city and myself and you at once.
You have not roused me like a man from sleep;
know that I have given many tears to this,
gone many ways wandering in thought,
but as I thought I found only one remedy
and that I took. I sent Menoeceus' son
Creon, Jocasta's brother, to Apollo,
to his Pythian temple,
that he might learn there by what act or word
I could save this city. As I count the days,
it vexes me what ails him; he is gone
far longer than he needed for the journey.
But when he comes, then, may I prove a villain,
if I shall not do all the God commands.

PRIEST. Thanks for your gracious words. Your servants here
signal that Creon is this moment coming.

OEDIPUS. His face is bright. O holy Lord Apollo,
grant that his news too may be bright for us
and bring us safety.

PRIEST. It is happy news,
I think, for else his head would not be crowned
with sprigs of fruitful laurel.

OEDIPUS. We will know soon,
he's within hail. Lord Creon, my good brother,
what is the word you bring us from the God?

[CREON *enters.*]

CREON. A good word,—for things hard to bear themselves
if in the final issue all is well
I count complete good fortune.
OEDIPUS. What do you mean?
What you have said so far
leaves me uncertain whether to trust or fear.
CREON. If you will hear my news before these others
I am ready to speak, or else to go within.
OEDIPUS. Speak it to all;
the grief I bear, I bear it more for these
than for my own heart.
CREON. I will tell you, then,
what I heard from the God.
King Phoebus in plain words commanded us
to drive out a pollution from our land,
pollution grown ingrained within the land;
drive it out, said the God, not cherish it,
till it's past cure.
OEDIPUS. What is the rite
of purification? How shall it be done?
CREON. By banishing a man, or expiation
of blood by blood, since it is murder guilt
which holds our city in this storm of death.
OEDIPUS. Who is this man whose fate the God pronounces?
CREON. My Lord, before you piloted the state
we had a king called Laius.
OEDIPUS. I know of him by hearsay. I have not seen him.
CREON. The God commanded clearly: let some one
punish with force this dead man's murderers.
OEDIPUS. Where are they in the world? Where would a trace
of this old crime be found? It would be hard
to guess where.
CREON. The clue is in this land;
that which is sought is found;
the unheeded thing escapes:
so said the God.
OEDIPUS. Was it at home,
or in the country that death came upon him,
or in another country travelling?
CREON. He went, he said himself, upon an embassy,
but never returned when he set out from home.
OEDIPUS. Was there no messenger, no fellow traveller

who knew what happened? Such a one might tell
something of use.

CREON. They were all killed save one. He fled in terror
and he could tell us nothing in clear terms
of what he knew, nothing, but one thing only.

OEDIPUS. What was it?
If we could even find a slim beginning
in which to hope, we might discover much.

CREON. This man said that the robbers they encountered
were many and the hands that did the murder
were many; it was no man's single power.

OEDIPUS. How could a robber dare a deed like this
were he not helped with money from the city,
money and treachery?

CREON. That indeed was thought.
But Laius was dead and in our trouble
there was none to help.

OEDIPUS. What trouble was so great to hinder you
inquiring out the murder of your king?

CREON. The riddling Sphinx induced us to neglect
mysterious crimes and rather seek solution
of troubles at our feet.

OEDIPUS. I will bring this to light again. King Phoebus
fittingly took this care about the dead,
and you too fittingly.
And justly you will see in me an ally,
a champion of my country and the God.
For when I drive pollution from the land
I will not serve a distant friend's advantage,
but act in my own interest. Whoever
he was that killed the king may readily
wish to dispatch me with his murderous hand;
so helping the dead king I help myself.
Come children, take your suppliant boughs and go;
up from the altars now. Call the assembly
and let it meet upon the understanding
that I'll do everything. God will decide
whether we prosper or remain in sorrow.

PRIEST. Rise, children—it was this we came to seek,
which of himself the king now offers us.
May Phoebus who gave us the oracle
come to our rescue and stay the plague.

[*Exeunt. Enter* CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS.]

Strophe 1

CHORUS. What is the sweet spoken word of God from the shrine of Pytho rich in gold
that has come to glorious Thebes?
I am stretched on the rack of doubt, and terror and trembling hold
my heart, O Delian Healer, and I worship full of fears
for what doom you will bring to pass, new or renewed in the revolving years.
Speak to me, immortal voice,
child of golden Hope.

Antistrophe 1

First I call on you, Athene, deathless daughter of Zeus,
and Artemis, Earth Upholder,
who sits in the midst of the market place in the throne which men call Fame,
and Phoebus, the Far Shooter, three averters of Fate,
come to us now, if ever before, when ruin rushed upon the state,
you drove destruction's flame away
out of our land.

Strophe 2

Our sorrows defy number;
all the ship's timbers are rotten;
taking of thought is no spear for the driving away of the plague.
There are no growing children in this famous land;
there are no women staunchly bearing the pangs of childbirth.
You may see them one with another, like birds swift on the wing,
quicker than fire unmastered,
speeding away to the coast of the Western God.

Antistrophe 2

In the unnumbered deaths
of its people the city diès;
those children that are born lie dead on the naked earth
unpitied, spreading contagion of death; and grey haired mothers and wives
everywhere stand at the altar's edge, suppliant, moaning;
the hymn to the healing God rings out but with it the wailing voices are blended.
From these our sufferings grant us, O golden Daughter of Zeus,
glad-faced deliverance.

Strophe 3

There is no clash of brazen shields but our fight is with the War God,
a War God ringed with the cries of men, a savage God who burns us;
grant that he turn in racing course backwards out of our country's bounds

to the great palace of Amphitrite or where the waves of the Thracian sea
deny the stranger safe anchorage.
Whatsoever escapes the night
at last the light of day revisits;
so smite the War God, Father Zeus,
beneath your thunderbolt,
for you are the Lord of the lightning, the lightning that
carries fire.

Antistrophe 3

And your unconquered arrow shafts, winged by the golden corded bow,
Lycean King, I beg to be at our side for help;
and the gleaming torches of Artemis with which she scours the Lycean hills,
and I call on the God with the turban of gold, who gave his name to this country of ours,
the Bacchic God with the wine flushed face,
Evian One, who travel
with the Maenad company,
combat the God that burns us
with your torch of pine,
for the God that is our enemy is a God unhonoured among the Gods.

[OEDIPUS *returns.*]

OEDIPUS. For what you ask me—if you will hear my words,
and hearing welcome them and fight the plague,
you will find strength and lightening of your load.

Hark to me; what I say to you, I say
as one that is a stranger to the story
as stranger to the deed. For I would not
be far upon the track if I alone
were tracing it without a clue. But now,
since after all was finished, I became
a citizen among you, citizens—
now I proclaim to all the men of Thebes:
whoso among you knows the murderer
by whose hand Laius, son of Labdacus,
died—I command him to tell everything
to me,—yes, though he fears himself to take the blame
on his own head; for bitter punishment
he shall have none, but leave this land unharmed.
Or if he knows the murderer, another,
a foreigner, still let him speak the truth.
For I will pay him and be grateful, too.

But if you shall keep silence, if perhaps
some one of you, to shield a guilty friend,
or for his own sake shall reject my words—
hear what I shall do then:
I forbid that man, whoever he be, my land,
my land where I hold sovereignty and throne;
and I forbid any to welcome him
or cry him greeting or make him a sharer
in sacrifice or offering to the Gods,
or give him water for his hands to wash.
I command all to drive him from their homes,
since he is our pollution, as the oracle
of Pytho's God proclaimed him now to me.
So I stand forth a champion of the God
and of the man who died.
Upon the murderer I invoke this curse—
whether he is one man and all unknown,
or one of many—may he wear out his life
in misery to miserable doom!
If with my knowledge he lives at my hearth
I pray that I myself may feel my curse.

Even were this no matter of God's ordinance
it would not fit you so to leave it lie,
unpurified, since a good man is dead
and one that was a king. Search it out.
Since I am now the holder of his office,
and have his bed and wife that once was his,
and had his line not been unfortunate
we would have common children—(fortune leaped
upon his head)—because of all these things,
I fight in his defence as for my father,
and I shall try all means to take the murderer
of Laius the son of Labdacus
the son of Polydorus and before him
of Cadmus and before him of Agenor.
Those who do not obey me, may the Gods
grant no crops springing from the ground they plough
nor children to their women! May a fate
like this, or one still worse than this consume them!
For you whom these words please, the other Thebans,
may Justice as your ally and all the Gods
live with you, blessing you now and for ever!

CHORUS. As you have held me to my oath, I speak:

I neither killed the king nor can declare
the killer; but since Phoebus set the quest
it is his part to tell who the man is.

OEDIPUS. Right; but to put compulsion on the Gods
against their will—no man has strength for that.

CHORUS. May I then say what I think second best?

OEDIPUS. If there's a third best, too, spare not to tell it.

CHORUS. I know that what the Lord Teiresias
sees, is most often what the Lord Apollo
sees. If you should inquire of this from him
you might find out most clearly.

OEDIPUS. Even in this my actions have not been sluggard.
On Creon's word I have sent two messengers
and why the prophet is not here already
I have been wondering.

CHORUS. His skill apart
there is besides only an old faint story.

OEDIPUS. What is it?
I seize on every story.

CHORUS. It was said
that he was killed by certain wayfarers.

OEDIPUS. I heard that, too, but no one saw the killer.

CHORUS. Yet if he has a share of fear at all,
his courage will not stand firm, hearing your curse.

OEDIPUS. The man who in the doing did not shrink
will fear no word.

CHORUS. Here comes his prosecutor:
led by your men the godly prophet comes
in whom alone of mankind truth is native.

[*Enter* TEIRESIAS, *led by a little boy.*]

OEDIPUS. Teiresias, you are versed in everything,
things teachable and things not to be spoken,
things of the heaven and earth-creeping things.
You have no eyes but in your mind you know
with what a plague our city is afflicted.
My lord, in you alone we find a champion,
in you alone one that can rescue us.
Perhaps you have not heard the messengers,
but Phoebus sent in answer to our sending
an oracle declaring that our freedom
from this disease would only come when we
should learn the names of those who killed King Laius,
and kill them or expel from our country.

Do not begrudge us oracles from birds,
or any other way of prophecy
within your skill; save yourself and the city,
save me; redeem the debt of our pollution
that lies on us because of this dead man.
We are in your hands; it is the finest task
to help another when you have means and power.

TEIRESIAS. Alas, how terrible is wisdom when
it brings no profit to the man that's wise!
This I knew well, but had forgotten it,
else I would not have come here.

OEDIPUS. What is this?
How sad you are now you have come!

TEIRESIAS. Let me
go home. It will be easiest for us both
to bear our several destinies to the end
if you will follow my advice.

OEDIPUS. You'd rob us
of this your gift of prophecy? You talk
as one who had no care for law nor love
for Thebes who reared you.

TEIRESIAS. Yes, but I see that even your own words
miss the mark; therefore I must fear for mine.

OEDIPUS. For God's sake if you know of anything,
do not turn from us; all of us kneel to you,
all of us here, your suppliants.

TEIRESIAS. All of you here know nothing. I will not
bring to the light of day my troubles, mine—
rather than call them yours.

OEDIPUS. What do you mean?
You know of some thing but refuse to speak.
Would you betray us and destroy the city?

TEIRESIAS. I will not bring this pain upon us both,
neither on you nor on myself. Why is it
you question me and waste your labour? I
will tell you nothing.

OEDIPUS. You would provoke a stone! Tell us, you villain,
tell us, and do not stand there quietly
unmoved and balking at the final issue.

TEIRESIAS. You blame my temper but you do not see
your own that lives within you; it is me
you chide.

OEDIPUS. Who would not feel his temper rise
at words like these with which you shame our city?

TEIRESIAS. Of themselves things will come, although I hide them
and breathe no word of them.
OEDIPUS. Since they will come
tell them to me.
TEIRESIAS. I will say nothing further.
Against this answer let your temper rage
as wildly as you will.
OEDIPUS Indeed I am
so angry I shall not hold back a jot
of what I think. For I would have you know
I think you were complotter of the deed
and doer of the deed save in so far
as for the actual killing. Had you had eyes
I would have said alone you murdered him.
TEIRESIAS. Yes? Then I warn you faithfully to keep
the letter of your proclamation and
from this day forth to speak no word of greeting
to these nor me; you are the land's pollution.
OEDIPUS. How shamelessly you started up this taunt!
How do you think you will escape?
TEIRESIAS. I have
I have escaped; the truth is what I cherish
and that's my strength.
OEDIPUS. And who has taught you truth?
Not your profession surely!
TEIRESIAS. You have taught me,
for you have made me speak against my will.
OEDIPUS. Speak what? Tell me again that I may learn it better.
TEIRESIAS. Did you not understand before or would you
provoke me into speaking?
OEDIPUS. I did not grasp it,
not so to call it known. Say it again.
TEIRESIAS. I say you are the murderer of the king
whose murderer you seek.
OEDIPUS. Not twice you shall not
say calumnies like this and stay unpunished.
TEIRESIAS. Shall I say more to tempt your anger more?
OEDIPUS. As much as you desire, it will be said
in vain.
TEIRESIAS. I say that with those you love best
you live in foulest shame unconsciously
and do not see where you are in calamity.
OEDIPUS. Do you imagine you can always talk
like this, and live to laugh at it hereafter?

TEIRESIAS. Yes, if the truth has anything of strength.
OEDIPUS. It has, but not for you; it has no strength
for you because you are blind in mind and ears
as well as in your eyes.
TEIRESIAS. You are a poor wretch
to taunt me with the very insults which
everyone soon will heap upon yourself.
OEDIPUS. Your life is one long night so that you cannot
hurt me or any other who sees the light.
TEIRESIAS. It is not fate that I should be your ruin,
Apollo is enough; it is his care
to work this out.
OEDIPUS. Was this your own design
or Creon's?
TEIRESIAS. Creon is no hurt to you,
but you are to yourself.
OEDIPUS. Wealth, sovereignty and skill outmatching skill
for the contrivance of an envied life,
great store of jealousy fill your treasury chests,
if my friend Creon, friend from the first and loyal,
thus secretly attacks me, secretly
desires to drive me out and secretly
suborns this juggling, trick devising quack,
this wily beggar who has only eyes
for his own gains, but blindness in his skill.
For, tell me, where have you seen clear, Teiresias,
with your prophetic eyes? When the dark singer,
the Sphinx, was in your country, did you speak
word of deliverance to its citizens?
And yet the riddle's answer was not the province
of a chance comer. It was a prophet's task
and plainly you had no such gift of prophecy
from birds nor otherwise from any God
to glean a word of knowledge. But I came,
Oedipus, who knew nothing, and I stopped her.
I solved the riddle by my wit alone.
Mine was no knowledge got from birds. And now
you would expel me,
because you think that you will find a place
by Creon's throne. I think you will be sorry,
both you and your accomplice, for your plot
to drive me out. And did I not regard you
as an old man, some suffering would have taught you
that what was in your heart was treason.

CHORUS. We look at this man's words and yours, my king,
and we find both have spoken them in anger.
We need no angry words but only thought
how we may best hit the God's meaning for us.

TEIRESIAS. If you are king, at least I have the right
no less to speak in my defence against you.
Of that much I am master. I am no slave
of yours, but Loxias', and so I shall not
enroll myself with Creon for my patron.
Since you have taunted me with being blind,
here is my word for you.
You have your eyes but see not where you are
in sin, nor where you live, nor whom you live with.
Do you know who your parents are? Unknowing
you are an enemy to kith and kin
in death, beneath the earth, and in this life.
A deadly-footed, double-striking curse,
from father and mother both, shall drive you forth
out of this land, with darkness on your eyes,
that now have such straight vision. Shall there be
a place will not be harbour to your cries,
a corner of Cithaeron will not ring
in echo to your cries, soon, soon,—
when you shall learn the secret of your marriage,
which steered you to a haven in this house,—
haven no haven, after lucky voyage?
And of the multitude of other evils
establishing a grim equality
between you and your children, you know nothing.
So, muddy with contempt my words and Creon's!
there is no man shall perish as you shall.

OEDIPUS. Is it endurable that I should hear
such words from him? Go and a curse go with you!
Quick, home with you! Out of my house at once!

TEIRESIAS. I would not have come either had you not called me.

OEDIPUS. I did not know then you would talk like a fool—
or it would have been long before I called you.

TEIRESIAS. I am a fool then, as it seems to you—
but to the parents who have bred you, wise.

OEDIPUS. What parents? Stop! Who are they of all the world?

TEIRESIAS. This day will show your birth and bring your ruin.

OEDIPUS. How needlessly your riddles darken everything.

TEIRESIAS. But it's in riddle-answering you are strongest.

OEDIPUS. Yes. Taunt me where you will find me great.

TEIRESIAS. It is this very luck that has destroyed you.
OEDIPUS. I do not care, if it has served this city.
TEIRESIAS. Well, I will go. Come, boy, lead me away.
OEDIPUS. Yes, lead him off. So long as you are here,
you'll be a stumbling block and a vexation;
once gone, you will not trouble me again.
TEIRESIAS. I have said
what I came here to say not fearing your
countenance: there is no way you can hurt me.
I tell you, king, this man, this murderer
(whom you have long declared you are in search of,
indicting him in threatening proclamation
as murderer of Laius)—he is here.
In name he is a stranger among citizens
but soon he will be shown to be a citizen
true native Theban, and he'll have no joy
of the discovery: blindness for sight
and beggary for riches his exchange,
he shall go journeying to a foreign country
tapping his way before him with a stick.
He shall be proved father and brother both
to his own children in his house; to her
that gave him birth, a son and husband both;
a fellow sower in his father's bed
with that same father that he murdered.
Go within, reckon that out, and if you find me
mistaken, say I have no skill in prophecy.

[*Exeunt separately* TEIRESIAS *and* OEDIPUS.]

Strophe 1

CHORUS. Who is the man proclaimed
by Delphi's prophetic rock
as the bloody-handed murderer,
the doer of deeds that none dares name?
Now is the time for him to run
with a stronger foot
than Pegasus
for the child of Zeus leaps in arms upon him
with fire and the lightning bolt,
and terribly close on his heels
are the Fates that never miss.

Antistrophe 1

Lately from snowy Parnassus

clearly the voice flashed forth,
bidding each Theban track him down,
the unknown murderer.
In the savage forests he lurks and in
the caverns like
the mountain bull.
He is sad and lonely, and lonely his feet
that carry him far from the navel of earth;
but its prophecies, ever living,
flutter around his head.

Strophe 2

The augur has spread confusion
terrible confusion;
I do not approve what was said
nor can I deny it.
I do not know what to say;
I am in a flutter of foreboding;
I never heard in the present
nor past of a quarrel between
the sons of Labdacus and Polybus,
that I might bring as proof
in attacking the popular fame
of Oedipus, seeking
to take vengeance for undiscovered
death in the line of Labdacus.

Antistrophe 2

Truly Zeus and Apollo are wise
and in human things all-knowing;
but amongst men there is no
distinct judgment, between the prophet
and me—which of us is right.
One man may pass another in wisdom
but I would never agree
with those that find fault with the king
till I should see the word
proved right beyond doubt. For once
in visible form the Sphinx
came on him and all of us
saw his wisdom and in that test
he saved the city. So he will not be condemned by my mind.

[*Enter* CREON.]

CREON. Citizens, I have come because I heard
deadly words spread about me, that the king
accuses me. I cannot take that from him.
If he believes that in these present troubles
he has been wronged by me in word or deed
I do not want to live on with the burden
of such a scandal on me. The report
injures me doubly and most vitally—
for I'll be called a traitor to my city
and traitor also to my friends and you.

CHORUS. Perhaps it was a sudden gust of anger
that forced that insult from him, and no judgment.

CREON. But did he say that it was in compliance
with schemes of mine that the seer told him lies?

CHORUS. Yes, he said that, but why, I do not know.

CREON. Were his eyes straight in his head? Was his mind right
when he accused me in this fashion?

CHORUS. I do not know; I have no eyes to see
what princes do. Here comes the king himself.

[*Enter* OEDIPUS.]

OEDIPUS. You, sir, how is it you come here? Have you so much
brazen-faced daring that you venture in
my house although you are proved manifestly
the murderer of that man, and though you tried,
openly, highway robbery of my crown?
For God's sake, tell me what you saw in me,
what cowardice or what stupidity,
that made you lay a plot like this against me?
Did you imagine I should not observe
the crafty scheme that stole upon me or
seeing it, take no means to counter it?
Was it not stupid of you to make the attempt,
to try to hunt down royal power without
the people at your back or friends? For only
with the people at your back or money can
the hunt end in the capture of a crown.

CREON. Do you know what you're doing? Will you listen
to words to answer yours, and then pass judgment?

OEDIPUS. You're quick to speak, but I am slow to grasp you,
for I have found you dangerous,—and my foe.

CREON. First of all hear what I shall say to that.

OEDIPUS. At least don't tell me that you are not guilty.

CREON. If you believe you cherish something fine
in obstinacy without brains, you're wrong.
OEDIPUS. And you are wrong if you believe that one,
a criminal, will not be punished only
because he is my kinsman.
CREON. This is but just—
but tell me, then, of what offense I'm guilty?
OEDIPUS. Did you or did you not urge me to send
to this prophetic mumbler?
CREON. I did indeed,
and I shall stand by what I told you.
OEDIPUS. How long ago is it since Laius. . . .
CREON. What about Laius? I don't understand.
OEDIPUS. Vanished—died—was murdered?
CREON. It is long,
a long, long time to reckon.
OEDIPUS. Was this prophet
in the profession then?
CREON. He was, and honoured
as highly as he is today.
OEDIPUS. At that time did he say a word about me?
CREON. Never, at least when I was near him.
OEDIPUS. You never made a search for the dead man?
CREON. We searched, indeed, but never learned of anything.
OEDIPUS. Why did our wise old friend not say this then?
CREON. I don't know; and when I know nothing, I
usually hold my tongue.
OEDIPUS. You know this much,
and can declare this much if you are loyal.
CREON. What is it? If I know I'll not deny it.
OEDIPUS. That he would not have said that I killed Laius
had he not met you first.
CREON. You know yourself
whether he said this, but I demand that I
should hear as much from you as you from me.
OEDIPUS. Then hear,—I'll not be proved a murderer.
CREON. Well, then. You're married to my sister.
OEDIPUS. Yes,
that I am not disposed to deny.
CREON. You rule
this country giving her an equal share
in the government?
OEDIPUS. Yes, everything she wants
she has from me.

CREON. And I, as thirdsman to you,
am rated as the equal of you two?

OEDIPUS. Yes, and it's there you've proved yourself false friend.

CREON. Not if you will reflect on it as I do.
Consider, first, if you think anyone
would choose to rule and fear rather than rule
and sleep untroubled by a fear if power
were equal in both cases. I, at least,
I was not born with such a frantic yearning
to be a king—but to do what kings do.
And so it is with every one who has learned
wisdom and self-control. As it stands now,
the prizes are all mine—and without fear.
But if I were the king myself, I must
do much that went against the grain.
How should despotic rule seem sweeter to me
than painless power and an assured authority?
I am not so besotted yet that I
want other honours than those that come with profit.
Now every man's my pleasure; every man greets me;
now those who are your suitors fawn on me,—
success for them depends upon my favour.
Why should I let all this go to win that?
My mind would not be traitor if it's wise;
I am no treason-lover, of my nature,
nor would I ever dare to join a plot.
Prove what I say. Go to the oracle
at Pytho and inquire about the answers,
if they are as I told you. For the rest,
if you discover I laid any plot
together with the seer, kill me, I say,
not only by your vote but by my own.
But do not charge me on obscure opinion
without some proof to back it. It's not just
lightly to count your knaves as honest men,
nor honest men as knaves. To throw away
an honest friend is, as it were, to throw
your life away, which a man loves the best.
In time you will know all with certainty;
time is the only test of honest men,
one day is space enough to know a rogue.

CHORUS. His words are wise, king, if one fears to fall.
Those who are quick of temper are not safe.

OEDIPUS. When he that plots against me secretly
moves quickly, I must quickly counterplot.
If I wait taking no decisive measure
his business will be done, and mine be spoiled.
CREON. What do you want to do then? Banish me?
OEDIPUS. No, certainly; kill you, not banish you.
CREON. I do not think that you've your wits about you.
OEDIPUS. For my own interests, yes.
CREON. But for mine, too,
you should think equally.
OEDIPUS. You are a rogue.
CREON. Suppose you do not understand?
OEDIPUS. But yet
I must be ruler.
CREON. Not if you rule badly.
OEDIPUS. O, city, city!
CREON. I too have some share
in the city; it is not yours alone.
CHORUS. Stop, my lords! Here—and in the nick of time
I see Jocasta coming from the house;
with her help lay the quarrel that now stirs you.

[*Enter* JOCASTA.]

JOCASTA. For shame! Why have you raised this foolish squabbling
brawl? Are you not ashamed to air your private
griefs when the country's sick? Go in, you, Oedipus,
and you, too, Creon, into the house. Don't magnify
your nothing troubles.
CREON. Sister, Oedipus,
your husband, thinks he has the right to do
terrible wrongs—he has but to choose between
two terrors: banishing or killing me.
OEDIPUS. He's right, Jocasta; for I find him plotting
with knavish tricks against my person.
CREON. That God may never bless me! May I die
accursed, if I have been guilty of
one tittle of the charge you bring against me!
JOCASTA. I beg you, Oedipus, trust him in this,
spare him for the sake of this his oath to God,
for my sake, and the sake of those who stand here.
CHORUS. Be gracious, be merciful,
we beg of you.
OEDIPUS. In what would you have me yield?

CHORUS. He has been no silly child in the past.
He is strong in his oath now.
Spare him.

OEDIPUS. Do you know what you ask?

CHORUS. Yes.

OEDIPUS. Tell me then.

CHORUS. He has been your friend before all men's eyes; do not cast him away dishonoured on an obscure conjecture.

OEDIPUS. I would have you know that this request of yours really requests my death or banishment.

CHORUS. May the Sun God, king of Gods, forbid! May I die without God's blessing, without friends' help, if I had any such thought. But my spirit is broken by my unhappiness for my wasting country; and this would but add troubles amongst ourselves to the other troubles.

OEDIPUS. Well, let him go then—if I must die ten times for it, or be sent out dishonoured into exile.
It is your lips that prayed for him I pitied,
not his; wherever he is, I shall hate him.

CREON. I see you sulk in yielding and you're dangerous when you are out of temper, natures like yours are justly heaviest for themselves to bear.

OEDIPUS. Leave me alone! Take yourself off, I tell you.

CREON. I'll go, you have not known me, but they have, and they have known my innocence.

[*Exit*]

CHORUS. Won't you take him inside, lady?

JOCASTA. Yes, when I've found out what was the matter.

CHORUS. There was some misconceived suspicion of a story, and on the other side the sting of injustice.

JOCASTA. So, on both sides?

CHORUS. Yes.

JOCASTA. What was the story?

CHORUS. I think it best, in the interests of the country, to leave it where it ended.

OEDIPUS. You see where you have ended, straight of judgment although you are, by softening my anger.

CHORUS. Sir, I have said before and I say again—be sure that I would have been proved a madman, bankrupt in sane council, if I should put you away, you who steered the country I love safely when she was crazed with troubles. God grant that now, too, you may prove a fortunate guide for us.

JOCASTA. Tell me, my lord, I beg of you, what was it
that roused your anger so?
OEDIPUS. Yes, I will tell you.
I honour you more than I honour them.
It was Creon and the plots he laid against me.
JOCASTA. Tell me—if you can clearly tell the quarrel—
OEDIPUS. Creon says
that I'm the murderer of Laius.
JOCASTA. Of his own knowledge or on information?
OEDIPUS. He sent this rascal prophet to me, since
he keeps his own mouth clean of any guilt.
JOCASTA. Do not concern yourself about this matter;
listen to me and learn that human beings
have no part in the craft of prophecy.
Of that I'll show you a short proof.
There was an oracle once that came to Laius,—
I will not say that it was Phoebus' own,
but it was from his servants—and it told him
that it was fate that he should die a victim
at the hands of his own son, a son to be born
of Laius and me. But, see now, he,
the king, was killed by foreign highway robbers
at a place where three roads meet—so goes the story;
and for the son—before three days were out
after his birth King Laius pierced his ankles
and by the hands of others cast him forth
upon a pathless hillside. So Apollo
failed to fulfill his oracle to the son,
that he should kill his father, and to Laius
also proved false in that thing he feared,
death at his son's hands, never came to pass.
So clear in this case were the oracles,
so clear and false. Give them no heed, I say;
what God discovers need of, easily
he shows to us himself.
OEDIPUS. O dear Jocasta,
as I hear this from you, there comes upon me
a wandering of the soul—I could run mad.
JOCASTA. What trouble is it, that you turn again
and speak like this?
OEDIPUS. I thought I heard you say
that Laius was killed at a crossroads.
JOCASTA. Yes, that was how the story went and still
that word goes round.

OEDIPUS. Where is this place, Jocasta,
where he was murdered?
JOCASTA. Phocis is the country
and the road splits there, one of two roads from Delphi,
another comes from Daulia.
OEDIPUS. How long ago is this?
JOCASTA. The news came to the city just before
you became king and all men's eyes looked to you.
What is it, Oedipus, that's in your mind?
OEDIPUS. Don't ask me yet—tell me of Laius—
how did he look? How old or young was he?
JOCASTA. He was a tall man and his hair was grizzled
already—nearly white—and in his form
not unlike you.
OEDIPUS. O God, I think I have
called curses on myself in ignorance.
JOCASTA. What do you mean? I am terrified
when I look at you.
OEDIPUS. I have a deadly fear
that the old seer had eyes. You'll show me more
if you can tell me one more thing.
JOCASTA. I will.
I'm frightened,—but if I can understand,
I'll tell you all you ask.
OEDIPUS. How was his company?
Had he few with him when he went this journey,
or many servants, as would suit a prince?
JOCASTA. In all there were but five, and among them
a herald; and one carriage for the king.
OEDIPUS. It's plain—it's plain—who was it told you this?
JOCASTA. The only servant that escaped safe home.
OEDIPUS. Is he at home now?
JOCASTA. No, when he came home again
and saw you king and Laius was dead,
he came to me and touched my hand and begged
that I should send him to the fields to be
my shepherd and so he might see the city
as far off as he might. So I
sent him away. He was an honest man,
as slaves go, and was worthy of far more
than what he asked of me.
OEDIPUS. O, how I wish that he could come back quickly!
JOCASTA. He can. Why is your heart so set on this?
OEDIPUS. O dear Jocasta, I am full of fears

that I have spoken far too much; and therefore
I wish to see this shepherd.

JOCASTA. He will come;
but, Oedipus, I think I'm worthy too
to know what is it that disquiets you.

OEDIPUS. It shall not be kept from you, since my mind
has gone so far with its forebodings. Whom
should I confide in rather than you, who is there
of more importance to me who have passed
through such a fortune?
Polybus was my father, king of Corinth,
and Merope, the Dorian, my mother.
I was held greatest of the citizens
in Corinth till a curious chance befell me
as I shall tell you—curious, indeed,
but hardly worth the store I set upon it.
There was a dinner and at it a man,
a drunken man, accused me in his drink
of being bastard. I was furious
but held my temper under for that day.
Next day I went and taxed my parents with it;
they took the insult very ill from him,
the drunken fellow who had uttered it.
So I was comforted for their part, but
still this thing rankled always, for the story
crept about widely. And I went at last
to Pytho, though my parents did not know.
But Phoebus sent me home again unhonoured
in what I came to learn, but he foretold
other and desperate horrors to befall me,
that I was fated to lie with my mother,
and show to daylight an accursed breed
which men would not endure, and I was doomed
to be murderer of the father that begot me.
When I heard this I fled, and in the days
that followed I would measure from the stars
the whereabouts of Corinth—yes, I fled
to somewhere where I should not see fulfilled
the infamies told in that dreadful oracle.
And as I journeyed I came to the place
where, as you say, this king met with his death.
Jocasta, I will tell you the whole truth.
When I was near the branching of the crossroads,
going on foot, I was encountered by

a herald and a carriage with a man in it,
just as you tell me. He that led the way
and the old man himself wanted to thrust me
out of the road by force. I became angry
and struck the coachman who was pushing me.
When the old man saw this he watched his moment,
and as I passed he struck me from his carriage,
full on the head with his two pointed goad.
But he was paid in full and presently
my stick had struck him backwards from the car
and he rolled out of it. And then I killed them
all. If it happened there was any tie
of kinship twixt this man and Laius,
who is then now more miserable than I,
what man on earth so hated by the Gods,
since neither citizen nor foreigner
may welcome me at home or even greet me,
but drive me out of doors? And it is I,
I and no other have so cursed myself.
And I pollute the bed of him I killed
by the hands that killed him. Was I not born evil?
Am I not utterly unclean? I had to fly
and in my banishment not even see
my kindred nor set foot in my own country,
or otherwise my fate was to be yoked
in marriage with my mother and kill my father,
Polybus who begot me and had reared me.
Would not one rightly judge and say that on me
these things were sent by some malignant God?
O no, no, no—O holy majesty
of God on high, may I not see that day!
May I be gone out of men's sight before
I see the deadly taint of this disaster
come upon me.

CHORUS. Sir, we too fear these things. But until you see this man face to face and hear his story, hope.

OEDIPUS. Yes, I have just this much of hope—to wait until the herdsman comes.

JOCASTA. And when he comes, what do you want with him?

OEDIPUS. I'll tell you; if I find that his story is the same as yours, I at least will be clear of this guilt.

JOCASTA. Why what so particularly did you learn from my story?

OEDIPUS. You said that he spoke of highway *robbers* who killed Laius. Now if he uses the same number, it was not I who killed him. One man can-

not be the same as many. But if he speaks of a man travelling alone, then clearly the burden of the guilt inclines towards me.

JOCASTA. Be sure, at least, that this was how he told the story. He cannot unsay it now, for every one in the city heard it—not I alone. But, Oedipus, even if he diverges from what he said then, he shall never prove that the murder of Laius squares rightly with the prophecy—for Loxias declared that the king should be killed by his own son. And that poor creature did not kill him surely,—for he died himself first. So as far as prophecy goes, henceforward I shall not look to the right hand or the left.

OEDIPUS. Right. But yet, send some one for the peasant to bring him here; do not neglect it.

JOCASTA. I will send quickly. Now let me go indoors. I will do nothing except what pleases you.

[*Exeunt.*]

Strophe 1

CHORUS. May destiny ever find me
pious in word and deed
prescribed by the laws that live on high:
laws begotten in the clear air of heaven,
whose only father is Olympus;
no mortal nature brought them to birth,
no forgetfulness shall lull them to sleep;
for God is great in them and grows not old.

Antistrophe 1

Insolence breeds the tyrant, insolence
if it is glutted with a surfeit, unseasonable, unprofitable,
climbs to the roof-top and plunges
sheer down to the ruin that must be,
and there its feet are no service.
But I pray that the God may never
abolish the eager ambition that profits the state.
For I shall never cease to hold the God as our protector.

Strophe 2

If a man walks with haughtiness
of hand or word and gives no heed
to Justice and the shrines of Gods
despises—may an evil doom
smite him for his ill-starred pride of heart!—
if he reaps gains without justice
and will not hold from impiety

and his fingers itch for untouchable things.
When such things are done, what man shall contrive
to shield his soul from the shafts of the God?
When such deeds are held in honour,
why should I honour the Gods in the dance?

Antistrophe 2

No longer to the holy place,
to the navel of earth I'll go
to worship, nor to Abae
nor to Olympia,
unless the oracles are proved to fit,
for all men's hands to point at.
O Zeus, if you are rightly called
the sovereign lord, all-mastering,
let this not escape you nor your ever-living power!
The oracles concerning Laius
are old and dim and men regard them not.
Apollo is nowhere clear in honour; God's service perishes.

[*Enter* JOCASTA, *carrying garlands.*]

JOCASTA. Princes of the land, I have had the thought to go
to the Gods' temples, bringing in my hand
garlands and gifts of incense, as you see.
For Oedipus excites himself too much
at every sort of trouble, not conjecturing,
like a man of sense, what will be from what was,
but he is always at the speaker's mercy,
when he speaks terrors. I can do no good
by my advice, and so I came as suppliant
to you, Lycaean Apollo, who are nearest.
These are the symbols of my prayer and this
my prayer: grant us escape free of the curse.
Now when we look to him we are all afraid;
he's pilot of our ship and he is frightened.

[*Enter a* MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER. Might I learn from you, sirs, where is the house of Oedipus? Or best of all, if you know, where is the king himself?

CHORUS. This is his house and he is within doors. This lady is his wife and mother of his children.

MESSENGER. God bless you, lady, and God bless your household! God bless Oedipus' noble wife!

JOCASTA. God bless you, sir, for your kind greeting! What do you want of us that you have come here? What have you to tell us?

MESSENGER. Good news, lady. Good for your house and for your husband.

JOCASTA. What is your news? Who sent you to us?

MESSENGER. I come from Corinth and the news I bring will give you pleasure. Perhaps a little pain too.

JOCASTA. What is this news of double meaning?

MESSENGER. The people of the Isthmus will choose Oedipus to be their king. That is the rumour there.

JOCASTA. But isn't their king still old Polybus?

MESSENGER. No. He is in his grave. Death has got him.

JOCASTA. Is that the truth? Is Oedipus' father dead?

MESSENGER. May I die myself if it be otherwise!

JOCASTA (*to a servant*). Be quick and run to the King with the news! O oracles of the Gods, where are you now? It was from this man Oedipus fled, lest he should be his murderer! And now he is dead, in the course of nature, and not killed by Oedipus.

[*Enter* OEDIPUS.]

OEDIPUS. Dearest Jocasta, why have you sent for me?

JOCASTA. Listen to this man and when you hear reflect what is the outcome of the holy oracles of the Gods.

OEDIPUS. Who is he? What is his message for me?

JOCASTA. He is from Corinth and he tells us that your father Polybus is dead and gone.

OEDIPUS. What's this you say, sir? Tell me yourself.

MESSENGER. Since this is the first matter you want clearly told: Polybus has gone down to death. You may be sure of it.

OEDIPUS. By treachery or sickness?

MESSENGER. A small thing will put old bodies asleep.

OEDIPUS. So he died of sickness, it seems,—poor old man!

MESSENGER. Yes, and of age—the long years he had measured.

OEDIPUS. Ha! Ha! O dear Jocasta, why should one
look to the Pythian hearth? Why should one look
to the birds screaming overhead? They prophesied
that I should kill my father! But he's dead,
and hidden deep in earth, and I stand here
who never laid a hand on spear against him,—
unless perhaps he died of longing for me,
and thus I am his murderer. But they,
the oracles, as they stand—he's taken them
away with him, they're dead as he himself is,
and worthless.

JOCASTA. That I told you before now.

OEDIPUS. You did, but I was misled by my fear.
JOCASTA. Then lay no more of them to heart, not one.
OEDIPUS. But surely I must fear my mother's bed?
JOCASTA. Why should man fear since chance is all in all
for him, and he can clearly foreknow nothing?
Best to live lightly, as one can, unthinkingly.
As to your mother's marriage bed,—don't fear it.
Before this, in dreams too, as well as oracles,
many a man has lain with his own mother.
But he to whom such things are nothing bears
his life most easily.
OEDIPUS. All that you say would be said perfectly
if she were dead; but since she lives I must
still fear, although you talk so well, Jocasta.
JOCASTA. Still in your father's death there's light of comfort?
OEDIPUS. Great light of comfort; but I fear the living.
MESSENGER. Who is the woman that makes you afraid?
OEDIPUS. Merope, old man, Polybus' wife.
MESSENGER. What about her frightens the queen and you?
OEDIPUS. A terrible oracle, stranger, from the Gods.
MESSENGER. Can it be told? Or does the sacred law
forbid another to have knowledge of it?
OEDIPUS. O no! Once on a time Loxias said
that I should lie with my own mother and
take on my hands the blood of my own father.
And so for these long years I've lived away
from Corinth; it has been to my great happiness;
but yet it's sweet to see the face of parents.
MESSENGER. This was the fear which drove you out of Corinth?
OEDIPUS. Old man, I did not wish to kill my father.
MESSENGER. Why should I not free you from this fear, sir,
since I have come to you in all goodwill?
OEDIPUS. You would not find me thankless if you did.
MESSENGER. Why, it was just for this I brought the news,—
to earn your thanks when you had come safe home.
OEDIPUS. No, I will never come near my parents.
MESSENGER. Son,
it's very plain you don't know what you're doing.
OEDIPUS. What do you mean, old man? For God's sake, tell me.
MESSENGER. If your homecoming is checked by fears like these.
OEDIPUS. Yes, I'm afraid that Phoebus may prove right.
MESSENGER. The murder and the incest?
OEDIPUS. Yes, old man;
that is my constant terror.

MESSENGER. Do you know
that all your fears are empty?
OEDIPUS. How is that,
if they are father and mother and I their son?
MESSENGER. Because Polybus was no kin to you in blood.
OEDIPUS. What, was not Polybus my father?
MESSENGER. No more than I but just so much.
OEDIPUS. How can
my father be my father as much as one
that's nothing to me?
MESSENGER. Neither he nor I
begat you.
OEDIPUS. Why then did he call me son?
MESSENGER. A gift he took you from these hands of mine.
OEDIPUS. Did he love so much what he took from another's hand?
MESSENGER. His childlessness before persuaded him.
OEDIPUS. Was I a child you bought or found when I
was given to him?
MESSENGER. On Cithaeron's slopes
in the twisting thickets you were found.
OEDIPUS. And why
were you a traveller in those parts?
MESSENGER. I was
in charge of mountain flocks.
OEDIPUS. You were a shepherd?
A hireling vagrant?
MESSENGER. Yes, but at least at that time
the man that saved your life, son.
OEDIPUS. What ailed me when you took me in your arms?
MESSENGER. In that your ankles should be witnesses.
OEDIPUS. Why do you speak of that old pain?
MESSENGER. I loosed you;
the tendons of your feet were pierced and fettered,—
OEDIPUS. My swaddling clothes brought me a rare disgrace.
MESSENGER. So that from this you're called your present name.
OEDIPUS. Was this my father's doing or my mother's?
For God's sake, tell me.
MESSENGER. I don't know, but he
who gave you to me has more knowledge than I.
OEDIPUS. You yourself did not find me then? You took me
from someone else?
MESSENGER. Yes, from another shepherd.
OEDIPUS. Who was he? Do you know him well enough
to tell?

MESSENGER. He was called Laius' man.
OEDIPUS. You mean the king who reigned here in the old days?
MESSENGER. Yes, he was that man's shepherd.
OEDIPUS. Is he alive still, so that I could see him?
MESSENGER. You who live here would know that best.
OEDIPUS. Do any of you here know of this shepherd whom he speaks about in town or in the fields? Tell me. It's time that this was found out once for all.
CHORUS. I think he is none other than the peasant whom you have sought to see already; but Jocasta here can tell us best of that.
OEDIPUS. Jocasta, do you know about this man whom we have sent for? Is he the man he mentions?
JOCASTA. Why ask of whom he spoke? Don't give it heed; nor try to keep in mind what has been said. It will be wasted labour.
OEDIPUS. With such clues I could not fail to bring my birth to light.
JOCASTA. I beg you—do not hunt this out—I beg you, if you have any care for your own life. What I am suffering is enough.
OEDIPUS. Keep up your heart, Jocasta. Though I'm proved a slave, thrice slave, and though my mother is thrice slave, you'll not be shown to be of lowly lineage.
JOCASTA. O be persuaded by me, I entreat you; do not do this.
OEDIPUS. I will not be persuaded to let be the chance of finding out the whole thing clearly.
JOCASTA. It is because I wish you well that I give you this counsel—and it's the best counsel.
OEDIPUS. Then the best counsel vexes me, and has for some while since.
JOCASTA. O Oedipus, God help you! God keep you from the knowledge of who you are!
OEDIPUS. Here, some one, go and fetch the shepherd for me; and let her find her joy in her rich family!
JOCASTA. O Oedipus, unhappy Oedipus! that is all I can call you, and the last thing that I shall ever call you. [*Exit*]

CHORUS. Why has the queen gone, Oedipus, in wild
grief rushing from us? I am afraid that trouble
will break out of this silence.

OEDIPUS. Break out what will! I at least shall be
willing to see my ancestry, though humble.
Perhaps she is ashamed of my low birth,
for she has all a woman's high-flown pride.
But I account myself a child of Fortune,
beneficent Fortune, and I shall not be
dishonoured. She's the mother from whom I spring;
the months, my brothers, marked me, now as small,
and now again as mighty. Such is my breeding,
and I shall never prove so false to it,
as not to find the secret of my birth.

Strophe

CHORUS. If I am a prophet and wise of heart
you shall not fail, Cithaeron,
by the limitless sky, you shall not!—
to know at tomorrow's full moon that Oedipus honours you as native to him and mother and nurse at once,
and that you are honoured in dancing by us, as finding favour in sight of our king.
Apollo, to whom we cry, find these things pleasing!

Antistrophe

Who was it bore you, child? One of
the long-lived nymphs who lay with Pan—
the father who treads the hills?
Or was she a bride of Loxias, your mother? The grassy slopes
are all of them dear to him. Or perhaps Cyllene's king
or the Bacchants' God that lives on the tops
of the hills received you a gift from some
one of the Helicon Nymphs, with whom he mostly plays?

[*Enter an old man, led by* OEDIPUS' *servants.*]

OEDIPUS. If some one like myself who never met him
may make a guess,—I think this is the herdsman,
whom we were seeking. His old age is consonant
with the other. And besides, the men who bring him
I recognize as my own servants. You
perhaps may better me in knowledge since
you've seen the man before.

CHORUS. You can be sure
I recognize him. For if Laius
had ever an honest shepherd, this was he.
OEDIPUS. You, sir, from Corinth, I must ask you first,
is this the man you spoke of?
MESSENGER. This is he
before your eyes.
OEDIPUS. Old man, look here at me
and tell me what I ask you. Were you ever
a servant of King Laius?
HERDSMAN. I was,—
no slave he bought but reared in his own house.
OEDIPUS. What did you do as work? How did you live?
HERDSMAN. Most of my life was spent among the flocks.
OEDIPUS. In what part of the country did you live?
HERDSMAN. Cithaeron and the places near to it.
OEDIPUS. And somewhere there perhaps you knew this man?
HERDSMAN. What was his occupation? Who?
OEDIPUS. This man here,
have you had any dealings with him?
HERDSMAN. No—
not such that I can quickly call to mind.
MESSENGER. That is no wonder, master. But I'll make him remember what he does not know. For I know, that he well knows the country of Cithaeron, how he with two flocks, I with one kept company for three years—each year half a year—from spring till autumn time and then when winter came I drove my flocks to our fold home again and he to Laius' steadings. Well—am I right or not in what I said we did?
HERDSMAN. You're right—although it's a long time ago.
MESSENGER. Do you remember giving me a child
to bring up as my foster child?
HERDSMAN. What's this?
Why do you ask this question?
MESSENGER. Look, old man,
here he is—here's the man who was that child!
HERDSMAN. Death take you! Won't you hold your tongue?
OEDIPUS. No, no,
do not find fault with him, old man. Your words
are more at fault than his.
HERDSMAN. O best of masters,
how do I give offense?
OEDIPUS. When you refuse
to speak about the child of whom he asks you.

HERDSMAN. He speaks out of his ignorance, without meaning.
OEDIPUS. If you'll not talk to gratify me, you
will talk with pain to urge you.
HERDSMAN. O please, sir,
don't hurt an old man, sir.
OEDIPUS (*to the servants*). Here, one of you,
twist his hands behind him.
HERDSMAN. Why, God help me, why?
What do you want to know?
OEDIPUS. You gave a child
to him,—the child he asked you of?
HERDSMAN. I did.
I wish I'd died the day I did.
OEDIPUS. You will
unless you tell me truly.
HERDSMAN. And I'll die
far worse if I should tell you.
OEDIPUS. This fellow
is bent on more delays, as it would seem.
HERDSMAN. O no, no! I have told you that I gave it.
OEDIPUS. Where did you get this child from? Was it your own
or did you get it from another?
HERDSMAN. Not
my own at all; I had it from some one.
OEDIPUS. One of these citizens? or from what house?
HERDSMAN. O master, please—I beg you, master, please
don't ask me more.
OEDIPUS. You're a dead man if I
ask you again.
HERDSMAN. It was one of the children
of Laius.
OEDIPUS. A slave? Or born in wedlock?
HERDSMAN. O God, I am on the brink of frightful speech.
OEDIPUS. And I of frightful hearing. But I must hear.
HERDSMAN. The child was called his child; but she within,
your wife would tell you best how all this was.
OEDIPUS. *She* gave it to you?
HERDSMAN. Yes, she did, my lord.
OEDIPUS. To do what with it?
HERDSMAN. Make away with it.
OEDIPUS. She was so hard—its mother?
HERDSMAN. Aye, through fear
of evil oracles.

OEDIPUS. Which?
HERDSMAN. They said that he
should kill his parents.
OEDIPUS. How was it that you
gave it away to this old man?
HERDSMAN. O master,
I pitied it, and thought that I could send it
off to another country and this man
was from another country. But he saved it
for the most terrible troubles. If you are
the man he says you are, you're bred to misery.
OEDIPUS. O, O, O, they will all come,
all come out clearly! Light of the sun, let me
look upon you no more after today!
I who first saw the light bred of a match
accursed, and accursed in my living
with them I lived with, cursed in my killing.

[*Exeunt all but the* CHORUS.]

Strophe 1

CHORUS. O generations of men, how I
count you as equal with those who live
not at all!
what man, what man on earth wins more
of happiness than a seeming
and after that turning away?
Oedipus, you are my pattern of this,
Oedipus, you and your fate!
Luckless Oedipus, whom of all men
I envy not at all.

Antistrophe 1

Inasmuch as he shot his bolt
beyond the others and won the prize
of happiness complete—
O Zeus—and killed and reduced to nought
the hooked taloned maid of the riddling speech,
standing a tower against death for my land:
hence he was called my king and hence
was honoured the highest of all
honours; and hence he ruled
in the great city of Thebes.

Strophe 2

But now whose tale is more miserable?

Who is there lives with a savager fate?
Whose troubles so reverse his life as his?

O Oedipus, the famous prince
for whom a great haven
the same both as father and son
sufficed for generation,
how, O how, have the furrows ploughed
by your father endured to bear you, poor wretch,
and hold their peace so long?

Antistrophe 2

Time who sees all has found you out
against your will; judges your marriage accursed,
begetter and begot at one in it.

O child of Laius,
would I had never seen you,
I weep for you and cry
a dirge of lamentation.
To speak directly, I drew my breath
from you at the first and so now I lull
my mouth to sleep with your name.

[*Enter a* SECOND MESSENGER.]

SECOND MESSENGER. O Princes always honoured by our country,
what deeds you'll hear of and what horrors see
what grief you'll feel, if you as true born Thebans
care for the house of Labdacus's sons.
Phasis nor Ister cannot purge this house,
I think, with all their streams, such things
it hides, such evils shortly will bring forth
into the light, whether they will or not;
and troubles hurt the most
when they prove self-inflicted.

CHORUS. What we had known before did not fall short
of bitter groaning's worth; what's more to tell?

SECOND MESSENGER. Shortest to hear and tell—our glorious queen
Jocasta's dead.

CHORUS. Unhappy woman! How?

SECOND MESSENGER. By her own hand. The worst of what was done
you cannot know. You did not see the sight.
Yet in so far as I remember it
you'll hear the end of our unlucky queen.

When she came raging into the house she went
straight to her marriage bed, tearing her hair
with both her hands, and crying upon Laius
long dead—Do you remember, Laius,
that night long past which bred a child for us
to send you to your death and leave
a mother making children with her son?
And then she groaned and cursed the bed in which
she brought forth husband by her husband, children
by her own child, an infamous double bond.
How after that she died I do not know,—
for Oedipus distracted us from seeing.
He burst upon us shouting and we looked
to him as he paced frantically around,
begging us always: Give me a sword, I say,
to find this wife no wife, this mother's womb,
this field of double sowing whence I sprang
and where I sowed my children! As he raved
some god showed him the way—none of us there.
Bellowing terribly and led by some
invisible guide he rushed on the two doors,—
wrenching the hollow bolts out of their sockets,
he charged inside. There, there, we saw his wife
hanging, the twisted rope around her neck.
When he saw her, he cried out fearfully
and cut the dangling noose. Then, as she lay,
poor woman, on the ground, what happened after,
was terrible to see. He tore the brooches—
the gold chased brooches fastening her robe—
away from her and lifting them up high
dashed them on his own eyeballs, shrieking out
such things as: they will never see the crime
I have committed or had done upon me!
Dark eyes, now in the days to come look on
forbidden faces, do not recognize
those whom you long for—with such imprecations
he struck his eyes again and yet again
with the brooches. And the bleeding eyeballs gushed
and stained his beard—no sluggish oozing drops
but a black rain and bloody hail poured down.

So it has broken—and not on one head
but troubles mixed for husband and for wife.
The fortune of the days gone by was true

good fortune—but today groans and destruction
and death and shame—of all ills can be named
not one is missing.

CHORUS. Is he now in any ease from pain?

SECOND MESSENGER. He shouts
for some one to unbar the doors and show him
to all the men of Thebes, his father's killer,
his mother's—no I cannot say the word,
it is unholy—for he'll cast himself,
out of the land, he says, and not remain
to bring a curse upon his house, the curse
he called upon it in his proclamation. But
he wants for strength, aye, and some one to guide him;
his sickness is too great to bear. You, too,
will be shown that. The bolts are opening.
Soon you will see a sight to waken pity
even in the horror of it.

[*Enter the blinded* OEDIPUS.]

CHORUS. This is a terrible sight for men to see!
I never found a worse!
Poor wretch, what madness came upon you!
What evil spirit leaped upon your life
to your ill-luck—a leap beyond man's strength!
Indeed I pity you, but I cannot
look at you, though there's much I want to ask
and much to learn and much to see.
I shudder at the sight of you.

OEDIPUS. O, O,
where am I going? Where is my voice
borne on the wind to and fro?
Spirit, how far have you sprung?

CHORUS. To a terrible place whereof men's ears
may not hear, nor their eyes behold it.

OEDIPUS. Darkness!
Horror of darkness enfolding, resistless, unspeakable visitant sped by an ill wind in haste!
madness and stabbing pain and memory
of evil deeds I have done!

CHORUS. In such misfortunes it's no wonder
if double weighs the burden of your grief.

OEDIPUS. My friend,
you are the only one steadfast, the only one that attends on me;
you still stay nursing the blind man.

Your care is not unnoticed. I can know
your voice, although this darkness is my world.
CHORUS. Doer of dreadful deeds, how did you dare
so far to do despite to your own eyes?
what spirit urged you to it?
OEDIPUS. It was Apollo, friends, Apollo,
that brought this bitter bitterness, my sorrows to completion.
But the hand that struck me
was none but my own.
Why should I see
whose vision showed me nothing sweet to see?
CHORUS. These things are as you say.
OEDIPUS. What can I see to love?
What greeting can touch my ears with joy?
Take me away, and haste—to a place out of the way!
Take me away, my friends, the greatly miserable,
the most accursed, whom God too hates
above all men on earth!
CHORUS. Unhappy in your mind and your misfortune,
would I had never known you!
OEDIPUS. Curse on the man who took
the cruel bonds from off my legs, as I lay in the field.
He stole me from death and saved me,
no kindly service.
Had I died then
I would not be so burdensome to friends.
CHORUS. I, too, could have wished it had been so.
OEDIPUS. Then I would not have come
to kill my father and marry my mother infamously.
Now I am godless and child of impurity,
begetter in the same seed that created my wretched self.
If there is any ill worse than ill,
that is the lot of Oedipus.
CHORUS. I cannot say your remedy was good;
you would be better dead than blind and living.
OEDIPUS. What I have done here was best done—don't tell me
otherwise, do not give me further counsel.
I do not know with what eyes I could look
upon my father when I die and go
under the earth, nor yet my wretched mother—
those two to whom I have done things deserving
worse punishment than hanging. Would the sight
of children, bred as mine are, gladden me?
No, not these eyes, never. And my city,

its towers and sacred places of the Gods,
of these I robbed my miserable self
when I commanded all to drive *him* out,
the criminal since proved by God impure
and of the race of Laius.
To this guilt I bore witness against myself—
with what eyes shall I look upon my people?
No. If there were a means to choke the fountain
of hearing I would not have stayed my hand
from locking up my miserable carcase,
seeing and hearing nothing; it is sweet
to keep our thoughts out of the range of hurt.

Cithaeron, why did you receive me? why
having received me did you not kill me straight?
And so I had not shown to men my birth.

O Polybus and Corinth and the house,
the old house that I used to call my father's—
what fairness you were nurse to, and what foulness
festered beneath! Now I am found to be
a sinner and a son of sinners. Crossroads,
and hidden glade, oak and the narrow way
at the crossroads, that drank my father's blood
offered you by my hands, do you remember
still what I did as you looked on, and what
I did when I came here? O marriage, marriage!
you bred me and again when you had bred
bred children of your child and showed to men
brides, wives and mothers and the foulest deeds
that can be in this world of ours.

Come—it's unfit to say what is unfit
to do.—I beg of you in God's name hide me
somewhere outside your country, yes, or kill me,
or throw me into the sea, to be forever
out of your sight. Approach and deign to touch me
for all my wretchedness, and do not fear.
No man but I can bare my evil doom.

CHORUS. Here Creon comes in fit time to perform
or give advice in what you ask of us.
Creon is left sole ruler in your stead.

OEDIPUS. Creon! Creon! What shall I say to him?
How can I justly hope that he will trust me?

In what is past I have been proved towards him
an utter liar.

[*Enter* CREON.]

CREON. Oedipus, I've come
not so that I might laugh at you nor taunt you
with evil of the past. But if you still
are without shame before the face of men
reverence at least the flame that gives all life,
our Lord the Sun, and do not show unveiled
to him pollution such that neither land
nor holy rain nor light of day can welcome.

[*To a servant*]

Be quick and take him in. It is most decent
that only kin should see and hear the troubles
of kin.

OEDIPUS. I beg you, since you've torn me from
my dreadful expectations and have come
in a most noble spirit to a man
that has used you vilely—do a thing for me.
I shall speak for your own good, not for my own.

CREON. What do you need that you would ask of me?

OEDIPUS. Drive me from here with all the speed you can to where I may not hear a human voice.

CREON. Be sure, I would have done this had not I
wished first of all to learn from the God the course
of action I should follow.

OEDIPUS. But his word
has been quite clear to let the parricide,
the sinner, die.

CREON. Yes, that indeed was said.
But in the present need we had best discover
what we should do.

OEDIPUS. And will you ask about
a man so wretched?

CREON. Now even you will trust
the God.

OEDIPUS. So. I command you—and will beseech you—
to her that lies inside that house give burial
as you would have it; she is yours and rightly
you will perform the rites for her. For me—
never let this my father's city have me
living a dweller in it. Leave me live

in the mountains where Cithaeron is, that's called
my mountain, which my mother and my father
while they were living would have made my tomb.
So I may die by their decree who sought
indeed to kill me. Yet I know this much:
no sickness and no other thing will kill me.
I would not have been saved from death if not
for some strange evil fate. Well, let my fate
go where it will.
Creon, you need not care
about my sons; they're men and so wherever
they are, they will not lack a livelihood.
But my two girls—so sad and pitiful—
whose table never stood apart from mine,
and everything I touched they always shared—
O Creon, have a thought for them! And most
I wish that you might suffer me to touch them
and sorrow with them.

[*Enter* ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE, OEDIPUS' *two daughters.*]

O my lord! O true noble Creon! Can I
really be touching them, as when I saw?
What shall I say?
Yes, I can hear them sobbing—my two darlings!
and Creon has had pity and has sent me
what I loved most?
Am I right?

CREON. You're right: it was I gave you this
because I knew from old days how you loved them
as I see now.

OEDIPUS. God bless you for it, Creon,
and may God guard you better on your road
than he did me!
O children,
where are you? Come here, come to my hands,
a brother's hands which turned your father's eyes,
those bright eyes you knew once, to what you see,
a father seeing nothing, knowing nothing,
begetting you from his own source of life.
I weep for you—I cannot see your faces—
I weep when I think of the bitterness
there will be in your lives, how you must live
before the world. At what assemblages
of citizens will you make one? to what

gay company will you go and not come home
in tears instead of sharing in the holiday?
And when you're ripe for marriage, who will he be,
the man who'll risk to take such infamy
as shall cling to my children, to bring hurt
on them and those that marry with them? What
curse is not there? "Your father killed his father
and sowed the seed where he had sprung himself
and begot you out of the womb that held him."
These insults you will hear. Then who will marry you?
No one, my children; clearly you are doomed
to waste away in barrenness unmarried.
Son of Menoeceus, since you are all the father
left these two girls, and we, their parents, both
are dead to them—do not allow them wander
like beggars, poor and husbandless.
They are of your own blood.
And do not make them equal with myself
in wretchedness; for you can see them now
so young, so utterly alone, save for you only.
Touch my hand, noble Creon, and say yes.
If you were older, children, and were wiser,
there's much advice I'd give you. But as it is,
let this be what you pray: give me a life
wherever there is opportunity
to live, and better life than was my father's.

CREON. Your tears have had enough of scope; now go within the house.

OEDIPUS. I must obey, though bitter of heart.

CREON. In season, all is good.

OEDIPUS. Do you know on what conditions I obey?

CREON. You tell me them,
and I shall know them when I hear.

OEDIPUS. That you shall send me out
to live away from Thebes.

CREON. That gift you must ask of the God.

OEDIPUS. But I'm now hated by the Gods.

CREON. So quickly you'll obtain your prayer.

OEDIPUS. You consent then?

CREON. What I do not mean, I do not use to say.

OEDIPUS. Now lead me away from here.

CREON. Let go the children, then, and come.

OEDIPUS. Do not take them from me.

CREON. Do not seek to be master in everything,
for the things you mastered did not follow you throughout your life.

[*As* CREON *and* OEDIPUS *go out.*]

CHORUS. You that live in my ancestral Thebes, behold this Oedipus,—
him who knew the famous riddles and was a man most masterful;
not a citizen who did not look with envy on his lot—
See him now and see the breakers of misfortune swallow him!
Look upon that last day always. Count no mortal happy till
he has passed the final limit of his life secure from pain.

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Dramatis Personae

THE POPE
CARDINAL OF LORRAINE
CHARLES V, *Emperor of Germany*
DUKE OF VANHOLT
FAUSTUS
VALDES, CORNELIUS } *friends to Faustus*
WAGNER, *servant to Faustus*
CLOWN
ROBIN
RALPH
VINTNER
HORSE-COURSER[1]
KNIGHT
OLD MAN
SCHOLARS, FRIARS, AND ATTENDANTS
DUCHESS OF VANHOLT
LUCIFER
BELZEBUB
MEPHISTOPHILIS
GOOD ANGEL
EVIL ANGEL
THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
DEVILS
Spirits in the shape of ALEXANDER THE GREAT, *of his Paramour, and of* HELEN OF TROY
CHORUS

ACT I

[*Enter* CHORUS.]

CHORUS. Not marching now in fields of Thrasimene,
Where Mars did mate[2] the Carthaginians;
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love,
In courts of kings where state is overturn'd;
Nor in the pomp of proud, audacious deeds,
Intends our Muse to vaunt his heavenly verse:—
Only this, gentlemen: we must perform
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad.
To patient judgments we appeal our plaud,[3]
And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of stock,
In Germany, within a town call'd Rhodes;[4]

The text and footnotes are based on Hazelton Spencer, *Elizabethan Plays* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1933) modified by the textual readings of W. W. Greg, *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus* (Oxford University Press, 1950).

1. Horse trader.
2. Defeat. But Hannibal won this battle. The author may be confused; and the whole speech may be non-Marlovian.
3. For our applause. 4. Roda, in the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg.

Of riper years to Wittenberg he went,
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd,[5]
That shortly he was grac'd[6] with doctor's name,
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology;
Till, swol'n with cunning,[7] of a self-conceit,
His waxen[8] wings did mount above his reach,
And melting Heavens conspir'd his overthrow;
For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted more with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy.
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss.
And this the man that in his study sits. [*Exit.*]

ACT I: SCENE 1[9]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *in his Study.*]

FAUSTUS. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess.
Having commenc'd,[10] be a divine in show;
Yet level[11] at the end of every art,
And live and die in Aristotle's works.
Sweet Analytics,[12] 'tis thou hast ravish'd me,
Bene disserere est finis logices.
Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more; thou hast attain'd the end—
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit.
Bid ὂν καὶ μὴ ὄν[13] farewell, Galen come;
Seeing *Ubi desinit Philosophus, ibi incipit Medicus;*[14]
Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold,

---

5. Full of graces. (Cf. *Macbeth,* III, iv, 41.)
6. Punning on the official "grace" (at Cambridge) by virtue of which a candidate took his degree.
7. Puffed up with knowledge. 8. *I.e.,* insecure, like the wings of Icarus.
9 Wittenberg. Faustus is "discovered" on the inner stage.
10. Taken a degree. 11. Aim. 12. Aristotelian logic.
13. Aristotle's "being and not being"; emend. Bullen.
14. Where the philosopher leaves off, there the physician begins. (Adapted from Aristotle, as is the third line following.)

And be eterniz'd for some wondrous cure.
Summum bonum medicinae sanitas:
The end of physic is our body's health.
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attain'd that end?
Is not thy common talk sound Aphorisms? [15]
Are not thy bills[16] hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escap'd the plague,
And thousand desp'rate maladies been eas'd?
Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man.
Wouldst thou make men to live eternally,
Or, being dead, raise them to life again?
Then this profession were to be esteem'd.
Physic, farewell.—Where is Justinian? [*Reads.*]
Si una eademque res legatur duobus, alter rem, alter valorem rei, &c.[17]
A pretty case of paltry legacies! [*Reads.*]
Exhœreditare filium non potest pater nisi. . . .[18]
Such is the subject of the Institute
And universal body of the law.
His[19] study fits a mercenary drudge,
Who aims at nothing but external trash;[20]
Too servile and illiberal for me.
When all is done, divinity is best;
Jerome's Bible,[21] Faustus, view it well. [*Reads.*]
Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha! *Stipendium, &c.:*
The reward of sin is death. That's hard. [*Reads.*]
Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas:
If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us. Why then, belike we must sin and so consequently die.
Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
What doctrine call you this, *Che sera, sera:*
"What will be, shall be"? Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics of magicians
And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters,
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
O what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honor, of omnipotence
Is promis'd to the studious artisan!

15. Medical memoranda, so called from the Aphorisms of Hippocrates. (Ward.)
16. Prescriptions. (Wheeler).
17. If one and the same thing is bequeathed to two persons, one shall take the thing and the other its value. (An incorrect version of a rule in the *Institutes.*) (Boas.)
18. A father cannot disinherit his son, except . . . (Adapted from the *Institutes* of Justinian, codifier of the Roman law.)
19. Its. 20. *I.e.*, money. 21. The Vulgate.

All things that move between the quiet[22] poles
Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings
Are but obey'd in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds[23] in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man.
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity.

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

Wagner, commend me to my dearest friends,
The German Valdes and Cornelius;
Request them earnestly to visit me.

WAGNER. I will, sir. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. Their conference[24] will be a greater help to me
Than all my labors, plod I ne'er so fast.

[*Enter* GOOD ANGEL *and* EVIL ANGEL.]

GOOD ANGEL. O Faustus! lay that damned book aside,
And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head.
Read, read the Scriptures; that is blasphemy.

EVIL ANGEL. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,
Wherein all Nature's treasury is contain'd;
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements. [*Exeunt* ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS. How am I glutted with conceit of this![25]
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India[26] for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
I'll have them read me strange philosophy
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg;
I'll have them fill the public schools[27] with silk,[28]

22. *I e.,* fixed. 23. Excels. 24. Conversation.
25. How am I filled with this notion. 26. Probably, the West Indies, America.
27. University lecture-halls.
28. Emend. Dyce; old eds. *skill.* Brooke cites Cambridge regulations which forbade the wearing of silk by the students.

Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma[29] from our land,
And reign sole king of all our provinces;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war
Than was the fiery keel[30] at Antwerp's bridge,
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.
Come, German Valdes and Cornelius,
And make me blest with your sage conference.

[*Enter* VALDES *and* CORNELIUS.]

Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me at the last
To practise magic and concealed arts,
Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy,
That will receive no object;[31] for my head
But ruminates on necromantic skill.
Philosophy is odious and obscure;
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile:
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravish'd me.
Then, gentle friends, aid me in this attempt;
And I that have with concise syllogisms
Gravell'd the pastors of the German church,
And made the flow'ring pride of Wittenberg
Swarm to my problems,[32] as the infernal spirits
On sweet Musæus, when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
Whose shadows[33] made all Europe honor him.

VALDES. Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience
Shall make all nations to canonize us.
As Indian Moors[34] obey their Spanish lords,
So shall the subjects of every element
Be always serviceable to us three;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please;
Like Almain rutters[35] with their horsemen's staves,

29. The Spanish governor-general (1579–1592) of the Netherlands, nominally a part of the Empire.
30. A Dutch "devil-ship" (filled with explosives) which damaged Parma's bridge at the siege of Antwerp.
31. *I.e.*, my own fancy, which will entertain no regular academic subject—or anything else but necromancy.
32. Mathematical and logical lectures. (Ward.) 33. Shades raised from the dead.
34. American Indians. 35. German troopers.

Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;
Sometimes like women or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the queen of love:
From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury,
If learned Faustus will be resolute.

FAUSTUS. Valdes, as resolute am I in this
As thou to live; therefore object it not.

CORNELIUS. The miracles that magic will perform
Will make thee vow to study nothing else.
He that is grounded in astrology,
Enrich'd with tongues, well seen[36] in minerals,
Hath all the principles magic doth require.
Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renown'd,
And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian Oracle.
The spirits tell me they can dry the sea
And fetch the treasure of all foreign wracks,
Ay, all the wealth that our forefathers hid
Within the massy entrails of the earth;
Then tell me, Faustus, what shall we three want?

FAUSTUS. Nothing, Cornelius! O, this cheers my soul!
Come show me some demonstrations magical,
That I may conjure in some lusty grove,
And have these joys in full possession.

VALDES. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,
And bear wise Bacon's[37] and Albanus'[38] works,
The Hebrew Psalter and New Testament;
And whatsoever else is requisite
We will inform thee ere our conference cease.

CORNELIUS. Valdes, first let him know the words of art;
And then, all other ceremonies learn'd,
Faustus may try his cunning by himself.

VALDES. First I'll instruct thee in the rudiments,
And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.

FAUSTUS. Then come and dine with me, and after meat
We'll canvass every quiddity[39] thereof;
For ere I sleep I'll try what I can do:
This night I'll conjure though I die therefore. [*Exeunt.*]

36. Versed. 37. Roger Bacon's.
38. Possibly Pietro d'Albano, a thirteenth-century alchemist; or misprinted, Albertus Magnus, the German Dominican of the same century, supposed to be a magician.
39. Essential point.

ACT I: SCENE 2[40]

[*Enter two* SCHOLARS.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. I wonder what's become of Faustus, that was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo?*[41]

SECOND SCHOLAR. That shall we know, for see here comes his boy.

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. How now, sirrah! Where's thy master?

WAGNER. God in heaven knows!

SECOND SCHOLAR. Why, dost not thou know?

WAGNER. Yes, I know. But that follows not.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Go to, sirrah! Leave your jesting, and tell us where he is.

WAGNER. That follows not necessary by force of argument, that you, being licentiate,[42] should stand upon't, therefore acknowledge your error and be attentive.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Why, didst thou not say thou knew'st?

WAGNER. Have you any witness on't?

FIRST SCHOLAR. Yes, sirrah, I heard you.

WAGNER. Ask my fellow if I be a thief.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Well, you will not tell us?

WAGNER. Yes, sir, I will tell you, yet if you were not dunces, you would never ask me such a question; for is not he *corpus naturale?*[43] and is not that *mobile?* Then wherefore should you ask me such a question? But that I am by nature phlegmatic, slow to wrath, and prone to lechery (to love, I would say), it were not for you to come within forty foot of the place of execution, although I do not doubt to see you both hang'd the next sessions. Thus having triumph'd over you, I will set my countenance like a precisian,[44] and begin to speak thus:—Truly, my dear brethren, my master is within at dinner, with Valdes and Cornelius, as this wine, if it could speak, it would inform your worships; and so the Lord bless you, preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren. [*Exit.*]

FIRST SCHOLAR. Nay, then, I fear he has fall'n into that damned Art, for which they two are infamous through the world.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should I grieve for him. But come, let us go and inform the Rector, and see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim him.

FIRST SCHOLAR. O, I fear me nothing can reclaim him.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Yet let us try what we can do. [*Exeunt.*]

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40. Before Faustus' house. 41. Thus I prove (a scholastic formula).
42. Licensed to ascend to a Master's or Doctor's degree. (Boas.)
43. "'Corpus naturale seu mobile' is the current scholastic expression for the subject-matter of physics." (Ward.)
44. Puritan.

ACT I: SCENE 3[45]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *to conjure.*]

FAUSTUS. Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth
Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,
Leaps from th' antarctic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,
Faustus, begin thy incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy hest,
Seeing thou hast pray'd and sacrific'd to them.
Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
Forward and backward anagrammatiz'd,
The breviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct to[46] the Heavens,
And characters of signs and erring stars,[47]
By which the spirits are enforc'd to rise.
Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform.

Sint mihi Dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex Jehovæ! Ignei, ærii, aquatani spiritus, salvete! Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus vos, ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis. Quid tu moraris? Per Jehovam, Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis![48]

[*Enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS, *a* DEVIL.]

I charge thee to return and change thy shape;
Thou art too ugly to attend on me.
Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;
That holy shape becomes a devil best. [*Exit* DEVIL.]
I see there's virtue in my heavenly words;
Who would not be proficient in this art?
How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my spells.
Now, Faustus, thou art conjuror laureate;
Thou canst command great Mephistophilis:
Quin regis Mephistophilis fratris imagine.[49]

45. A grove. 46. Every star joined to. 47. Planets.

48. Unto me be the gods of Acheron propitious. May the triple name of Jehovah prevail. Spirits of fire, air, and water, hail! Belzebub, Prince of the East, Sovereign of burning Hell, and Demogorgon, we propitiate you, that Mephistophilis may appear and rise. Why delayest thou? By Jehovah, Gehenna, and the holy water which now I sprinkle, and the sign of the cross which now I make, and by our prayer, may Mephistophilis, by us summoned, now arise.

49. Indeed thou rulest Mephistophilis in his likeness of a friar.

[*Re-enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS, *like a Franciscan* FRIAR.]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Now, Faustus, what would'st thou have me do?
FAUSTUS. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave;
No more than he commands must we perform.
FAUSTUS. Did he not charge thee to appear to me?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. No, I came hither of mine own accord.
FAUSTUS. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. That was the cause, but yet per accident;
For when we hear one rack[50] the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Savior Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.
FAUSTUS. So Faustus hath
Already done, and holds this principle:
There is no chief but only Belzebub,
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word "damnation" terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium;[51]
His ghost be with the old philosophers!
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer, thy lord?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
FAUSTUS. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God.
FAUSTUS. How comes it then that he is prince of devils?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. O, by aspiring pride and insolence,
For which God threw him from the face of Heaven.
FAUSTUS. And what are you that live with Lucifer?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspir'd against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer.
FAUSTUS. Where are you damn'd?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. In hell.

50. Torture into anagrams.
51. Makes no distinction between hell and.

FAUSTUS. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it!
Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
O Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.
FAUSTUS. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate
For being deprived of the joys of Heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death
By desp'rate thoughts against Jove's[52] deity,
Say he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness,
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go, and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve me of thy master's mind.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I will, Faustus. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great Emp'ror of the world,
And make a bridge through the moving air,
To pass the ocean with a band of men;
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that country continent[53] to Spain,
And both contributory to my crown.
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany.
Now that I have obtain'd what I desire,
I'll live in speculation[54] of this art
Till Mephistophilis return again. [*Exit.*]

52. Common in Elizabethan literature for the Christian God.
53. Adjoining. 54. Contemplative study.

ACT I: SCENE 4[55]

[*Enter* WAGNER *and the* CLOWN.]

WAGNER. Sirrah, boy, come hither.

CLOWN. How, boy! Swowns,[56] boy! I hope you have seen many boys with such pickadevaunts[57] as I have. Boy, quotha!

WAGNER. Tell me, sirrah, hast thou any comings in?

CLOWN. Ay, and goings out too. You may see else.

WAGNER. Alas, poor slave! See how poverty jesteth in his nakedness! The villain is bare and out of service, and so hungry that I know he would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though it were blood-raw.

CLOWN. How? My soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twere blood-raw! Not so, good friend. By'r Lady, I had need have it well roasted and good sauce to it, if I pay so dear.

WAGNER. Well, wilt thou serve me, and I'll make thee go like *Qui mihi discipulus?*[58]

CLOWN. How, in verse?

WAGNER. No, sirrah; in beaten silk[59] and stavesacre.[60]

CLOWN. How, how, Knave's acre![61] Ay, I thought that was all the land his father left him. Do you hear? I would be sorry to rob you of your living.

WAGNER. Sirrah, I say in stavesacre.

CLOWN. Oho! Oho! Stavesacre! Why, then, belike, if I were your man I should be full of vermin.

WAGNER. So thou shalt, whether thou beest with me or no. But, sirrah, leave your jesting, and bind yourself presently unto me for seven years, or I'll turn all the lice about thee into familiars, and they shall tear thee in pieces.

CLOWN. Do you hear, sir? You may save that labor; they are too familiar with me already. Swowns! they are as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for my meat and drink.

WAGNER. Well, do you hear, sirrah? Hold, take these guilders.

[*Gives money.*]

CLOWN. Gridirons! what be they?

WAGNER. Why, French crowns.

CLOWN. Mass, but for the name of French crowns, a man were as good have as many English counters. And what should I do with these?

WAGNER. Why, now, sirrah, thou art at an hour's warning, whensoever or wheresoever the Devil shall fetch thee.

CLOWN. No, no. Here, take your gridirons again.

WAGNER. Truly, I'll none of them.

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55. Unlocated; perhaps a field or wood near Wittenburg.
56. Zounds, God's wounds.
57. Pointed beards.
58. You shall be my pupil.
59. Silk with metal embroidery hammered into it.
60. A kind of larkspur, used to kill lice.
61. Poultney Street, Soho, where junk-dealers were established.

CLOWN. Truly, but you shall.

WAGNER. Bear witness I gave them him.[62]

CLOWN. Bear witness I give them you again.

WAGNER. Well, I will cause two devils presently to fetch thee away—Baliol[63] and Belcher.

CLOWN. Let your Baliol and your Belcher come here, and I'll knock them, they were never so knockt since they were devils. Say I should kill one of them, what would folks say? "Do you see yonder tall fellow in the round slop?[64]—he has kill'd the devil." So I should be call'd Kill-devil all the parish over.

[*Enter two* DEVILS: *the* CLOWN *runs up and down crying.*]

WAGNER. Baliol and Belcher! Spirits, away! [*Exeunt* DEVILS.]

CLOWN. What, are they gone? A vengeance on them, they have vile long nails! There was a he-devil, and a she-devil! I'll tell you how you shall know them: all he-devils has horns, and all she-devils has clifts and cloven feet.

WAGNER. Well, sirrah, follow me.

CLOWN. But, do you hear—if I should serve you, would you teach me to raise up Banios and Belchcos?

WAGNER. I will teach thee to turn thyself to anything, to a dog, or a cat, or a mouse, or a rat, or anything.

CLOWN. How? a Christian fellow to a dog or a cat, a mouse or a rat? No, no, sir. If you turn me into anything, let it be in the likeness of a little pretty frisking flea, that I may be here and there and everywhere. Oh, I'll tickle the pretty wenches' plackets;[65] I'll be amongst them, i' faith.

WAGNER. Well, sirrah, come.

CLOWN. But, do you hear, Wagner?

WAGNER. How!—Baliol and Belcher!

CLOWN. O Lord! I pray, sir, let Banio and Belcher go sleep.

WAGNER. Villain—call me Master Wagner, and let thy left eye be diametarily fixt upon my right heel, with *quasi vestigias nostras insistere*.[66]

CLOWN. God forgive me, he speaks Dutch fustian. Well, I'll follow him, I'll serve him, that's flat. [*Exit.*]

ACT II: SCENE 1

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *in his study.*]

FAUSTUS. Now, Faustus, must
Thou needs be damn'd, and canst thou not be sav'd:
What boots it then to think of God or Heaven?
Away with such vain fancies, and despair:
Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub.

62. To the audience. 63. Belial. 64. Loose breeches.
65. Slits in skirts and petticoats. 66. As if to tread my tracks.

Now go not backward; no, Faustus, be resolute,
Why waverest thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears
"Abjure this magic; turn to God again!"
Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
To God?—He loves thee not—
The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub;
To him I'll build an altar and a church,
And offer lukewarm blood of new born babes.

[*Enter* GOOD ANGEL *and* EVIL ANGEL.]

GOOD ANGEL. Sweet Faustus, leave that execrable art.
EVIL ANGEL. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art.
FAUSTUS. Contrition, prayer, repentance! What of them?
GOOD ANGEL. O, they are means to bring thee unto Heaven.
EVIL ANGEL. Rather illusions, fruits of lunacy,
That makes men foolish that do trust them most.
GOOD ANGEL. Sweet Faustus, think of Heaven, and heavenly things.
EVIL ANGEL. No, Faustus, think of honor and of wealth.

[*Exeunt* ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS. Of wealth!
Why, the signiory of Emden[1] shall be mine.
When Mephistophilis shall stand by me,
What God can hurt thee, Faustus? Thou art safe;
Cast[2] no more doubts. Come, Mephistophilis,
And bring glad tidings from great Lucifer!—
Is't not midnight? Come, Mephistophilis:
Veni, veni, Mephistophile!

[*Enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

Now tell me, what says Lucifer thy lord?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. That I shall wait on Faustus whilst he lives,
So he will buy my service with his soul.
FAUSTUS. Already Faustus hath hazarded that for thee.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. But, Faustus, thou must bequeath it solemnly
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood,
For that security craves great Lucifer.
If thou deny it, I will back to hell.
FAUSTUS. Stay, Mephistophilis! and tell me what good
Will my soul do thy lord.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Enlarge his kingdom.
FAUSTUS. Is that the reason why he tempts us thus?

1. Then a great port. 2. Reckon up.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. *Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.*[3]
FAUSTUS. Why, have you any pain, that tortures others?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. As great as have the human souls of men.
But tell me, Faustus, shall I have thy soul?
And I will be thy slave, and wait on thee,
And give thee more than thou hast wit to ask.
FAUSTUS. Ay, Mephistophilis, I give it to thee.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Then Faustus, stab thine arm courageously,
And bind thy soul that at some certain day
Great Lucifer may claim it as his own;
And then be thou as great as Lucifer.
FAUSTUS. [*Stabbing his arm*] Lo, Mephistophilis, for love of thee,
I cut mine arm, and with my proper blood
Assure my soul to be great Lucifer's,
Chief lord and regent of perpetual night.
View here the blood that trickles from mine arm,
And let it be propitious for my wish.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. But, Faustus, thou must
Write it in manner of a deed of gift.
FAUSTUS. Ay, so I will. [*Writes.*] But, Mephistophilis,
My blood congeals, and I can write no more.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight. [*Exit.*]
FAUSTUS. What might the staying of my blood portend?
Is it unwilling I should write this bill?
Why streams it not that I may write afresh?
"Faustus gives to thee his soul." Ah, there it stay'd.
Why should'st thou not? Is not thy soul thine own?
Then write again, "Faustus gives to thee his soul."

[*Re-enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with a chafer of coals.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here's fire. Come, Faustus, set it[4] on.
FAUSTUS. So; now the blood begins to clear again;
Now will I make an end immediately. [*Writes.*]
MEPHISTOPHILIS. O what will not I do to obtain his soul! [*Aside.*]
FAUSTUS. *Consummatum est:* this bill is ended,
And Faustus hath bequeath'd his soul to Lucifer—
But what is this inscription on mine arm?
Homo, fuge! Whither should I fly?
If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.
My senses are deceiv'd; here's nothing writ:—
I see it plain; here in this place is writ
Homo, fuge! Yet shall not Faustus fly.

3. *I.e.*, misery loves company. 4. The dish of blood.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. [*Aside.*] I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind.

[*Exit.*]

[*Re-enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with* DEVILS, *giving crowns and rich apparel to* FAUSTUS, *and dance, and then depart.*]

FAUSTUS. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to show thee what magic can perform.

FAUSTUS. But may I raise up spirits when I please?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Ay, Faustus, and do greater things than these.

FAUSTUS. Then there's enough for a thousand souls.
Here, Mephistophilis, receive this scroll,
A deed of gift of body and of soul;
But yet conditionally that thou perform
All articles prescribed between us both.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Faustus, I swear by hell and Lucifer
To effect all promises between us made.

FAUSTUS. Then hear me read them: *On these conditions following. First, that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance. Secondly, that Mephistophilis shall be his servant, and at his command. Thirdly, that Mephistophilis shall do for him and bring him whatsoever. Fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible. Lastly, that he shall appear to the said John Faustus, at all times, in what form or shape soever he please. I, John Faustus, of Wittenberg, Doctor, by these presents do give both body and soul to Lucifer, Prince of the East, and his minister, Mephistophilis; and furthermore grant unto them, that twenty-four years being expired, the articles above written inviolate, full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their habitation wheresoever. By me, John Faustus.*

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Speak, Faustus, do you deliver this as your deed?

FAUSTUS. Ay, take it, and the Devil give thee good on't.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Now, Faustus, ask what thou wilt.

FAUSTUS. First will I question with thee about hell.
Tell me where is the place that men call hell?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Under the heavens.

FAUSTUS. Ay, so are all things else; but whereabouts?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Within the bowels of these elements,
Where we are tortur'd and remain for ever;
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
In one self place; for where we are is hell,
And where hell is there must we ever be;
And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that is not Heaven.

FAUSTUS. Come, I think hell's a fable.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind.
FAUSTUS. Why, think'st thou then that Faustus shall be damn'd?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Ay, of necessity; for here's the scroll
Wherein thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.
FAUSTUS. Ay, and body too; but what of that?
Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond[5] to imagine
That, after this life, there is any pain?
Tush; these are trifles, and mere old wives' tales!
MEPHISTOPHILIS. But, Faustus, I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I am damn'd, and am now in hell.
FAUSTUS. How! now in hell!
Nay, an this be hell, I'll willingly be damn'd here;
What, walking, disputing, &c.?
But, leaving off this, let me have a wife,
The fairest maid in Germany;
For I am wanton and lascivious,
And cannot live without a wife.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. How, a wife?
I prithee, Faustus, talk not of a wife.
FAUSTUS. Nay, sweet Mephistophilis, fetch me one, for I will have one.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Well, thou wilt have one. Sit there till I come;
I'll fetch thee a wife in the Devil's name. [*Exit.*]

[*Re-enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with a* DEVIL *dressed like a woman, with fireworks.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tell me, Faustus, how dost thou like thy wife?
FAUSTUS. A plague on her for a hot whore!
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tut, Faustus,
Marriage is but a ceremonial toy;
And if thou lovest me, think no more of it.
I'll cull thee out of the fairest courtesans,
And bring them ev'ry morning to thy bed;
She whom thine eye shall like, thy heart shall have,
Be she as chaste as was Penelope,
As wise as Saba, or as beautiful
As was bright Lucifer before his fall.
Hold, take this book, peruse it thoroughly: [*Gives a book.*]
The iterating of these lines brings gold;
The framing of this circle on the ground
Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder and lightning;
Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself,
And men in armor shall appear to thee,
Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

5. Foolish.

FAUSTUS. Thanks, Mephistophilis; yet fain would I have a book wherein I might behold all spells and incantations, that I might raise up spirits when I please.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here they are, in this book. [*Turns to them.*]

FAUSTUS. Now would I have a book where I might see all characters and planets of the Heavens, that I might know their motions and dispositions.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here they are too. [*Turns to them.*]

FAUSTUS. Nay, let me have one book more, and then I have done, wherein I might see all plants, herbs, and trees that grow upon the earth.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Here they be.

FAUSTUS. O, thou art deceived.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tut, I warrant thee. [*Turns to them. Exeunt.*]

ACT II: SCENE 2[6]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FAUSTUS. When I behold the Heavens, then I repent,
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast depriv'd me of those joys.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, Faustus,
Thinkest thou Heaven is such a glorious thing?
I tell thee 'tis not half so fair as thou,
Or any man that breathes on earth.

FAUSTUS. How provest thou that?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. It was made for man, therefore is man more excellent.

FAUSTUS. If it were made for man, 'twas made for me!
I will renounce this magic and repent.

[*Enter* GOOD ANGEL *and* EVIL ANGEL.]

GOOD ANGEL. Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee.

EVIL ANGEL. Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee.

FAUSTUS. Who buzzeth in mine ears I am a spirit?
Be I a devil, yet God may pity me;
Ay, God will pity me if I repent.

EVIL ANGEL. Ay, but Faustus never shall repent. [*Exeunt* ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS. My heart's so hard'ned I cannot repent.
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears
"Faustus, thou art damn'd!" Then swords and knives,
Poison, gun, halters, and envenom'd steel
Are laid before me to despatch myself,
And long ere this I should have slain myself,

6. The same.

Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.
Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephistophilis?
Why should I die then, or basely despair?
I am resolv'd: Faustus shall n'er repent.
Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,
And argue of divine astrology.
Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon?
Are all celestial bodies but one globe,
As is the substance of this centric earth?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. As are the elements, such are the spheres
Mutually folded in each other's orb,
And, Faustus,
All jointly move upon one axletree
Whose terminine is term'd the world's wide pole;
Nor are the names of Saturn, Mars, or Jupiter
Feign'd, but are erring stars.

FAUSTUS. But tell me, have they all one motion, both *situ et tempore?* [7]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. All jointly move from east to west in four and twenty hours upon the poles of the world, but differ in their motion upon the poles of the zodiac.

FAUSTUS. Tush! These slender trifles Wagner can decide;
Hath Mephistophilis no greater skill?
Who knows not the double motion of the planets?
The first is finish'd in a natural day;
The second thus: as Saturn in thirty years; Jupiter in twelve; Mars in four; the Sun, Venus, and Mercury in a year; the moon in twenty-eight days. Tush, these are freshmen's suppositions. But tell me, hath every sphere a dominion or *intelligentia?*

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Ay.

FAUSTUS. How many heavens, or spheres, are there?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nine: the seven planets, the firmament, and the empyreal heaven.

FAUSTUS. Well, resolve me in this question: Why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, in some less?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. *Per inœqualem motum respectu totius.* [8]

FAUSTUS. Well, I am answered. Tell me who made the world.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I will not.

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7. In both the direction and the duration of their revolutions.
8. On account of their unequal motion in relation to the whole.

FAUSTUS. Sweet Mephistophilis, tell me.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Move me not, for I will not tell thee.
FAUSTUS. Villain, have I not bound thee to tell me anything?
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Ay, that is not against our kingdom; but this is.
Think thou on hell, Faustus, for thou art damn'd.
FAUSTUS. Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world.
MEPHISTOPHILIS. Remember this. [*Exit.*]
FAUSTUS. Ay, go, accursed spirit, to ugly hell;
'Tis thou hast damn'd distressed Faustus' soul.
Is't not too late?

[*Re-enter* GOOD ANGEL *and* EVIL ANGEL.]

EVIL ANGEL. Too late.
GOOD ANGEL. Never too late, if Faustus can repent.
EVIL ANGEL. If thou repent, devils shall tear thee in pieces.
GOOD ANGEL. Repent, and they shall never raze thy skin.
[*Exeunt* ANGELS.]
FAUSTUS. Ah, Christ, my Savior,
Seek to save distressed Faustus' soul.

[*Enter* LUCIFER, BELZEBUB, *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

LUCIFER. Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just;
There's none but I have int'rest in the same.
FAUSTUS. O, who art thou that look'st so terrible?
LUCIFER. I am Lucifer,
And this is my companion prince in hell.
FAUSTUS. O Faustus, they are come to fetch away thy soul!
LUCIFER. We come to tell thee thou dost injure us;
Thou talk'st of Christ, contrary to thy promise;
Thou should'st not think of God: think of the Devil,
And of his dam, too.[9]
FAUSTUS. Nor will I henceforth: pardon me in this,
And Faustus vows never to look to Heaven,
Never to name God, or to pray to him,
To burn his Scriptures, slay his ministers,
And make my spirits pull his churches down.
LUCIFER. Do so, and we will highly gratify thee.
Faustus, we are come from hell to show thee some pastime. Sit down, and thou shalt see all the Seven Deadly Sins appear in their proper shapes.
FAUSTUS. That sight will be as pleasing unto me,
As Paradise was to Adam the first day
Of his creation.

9. Evidently an actor's gag.

LUCIFER. Talk not of Paradise nor creation, but mark this show: talk of the Devil, and nothing else.—Come away!

[*Enter the* SEVEN DEADLY SINS.]

Now, Faustus, examine them of their several names and dispositions.

FAUSTUS. What art thou—the first?

PRIDE. I am Pride. I disdain to have any parents. I am like to Ovid's flea: I can creep into every corner of a wench; sometimes, like a periwig, I sit upon her brow; or like a fan of feathers, I kiss her lips; indeed I do—what do I not? But, fie, what a scent is here! I'll not speak another word, except the ground were perfum'd, and covered with cloth of arras.

FAUSTUS. What art thou—the second?

COVETOUSNESS. I am Covetousness, begotten of an old churl in an old leathern bag; and might I have my wish I would desire that this house and all the people in it were turn'd to gold, that I might lock you up in my good chest. O, my sweet gold!

FAUSTUS. What art thou—the third?

WRATH. I am Wrath. I had neither father nor mother: I leapt out of a lion's mouth when I was scarce half an hour old, and ever since I have run up and down the world with this case[10] of rapiers wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal. I was born in hell, and look to it, for some of you shall be my father.[11]

FAUSTUS. What art thou—the fourth?

ENVY. I am Envy, begotten of a chimney sweeper and an oyster-wife. I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burnt. I am lean with seeing others eat. O that there would come a famine through all the world, that all might die, and I live alone! then thou should'st see how fat I would be. But must thou sit and I stand? Come down with a vengeance!

FAUSTUS. Away, envious rascal! What art thou—the fifth?

GLUTTONY. Who, I, sir? I am Gluttony. My parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me, but a bare pension, and that is thirty meals a day and ten bevers[12]—a small trifle to suffice nature. O, I come of a royal parentage! My grandfather was a Gammon of Bacon, my grandmother a Hogshead of Claret-wine; my godfathers were these, Peter Pickleherring, and Martin Martlemas-beef. O, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer. Now, Faustus, thou hast heard all my progeny,[13] wilt thou bid me to supper?

FAUSTUS. No, I'll see thee hanged; thou wilt eat up all my victuals.

GLUTTONY. Then the Devil choke thee!

FAUSTUS. Choke thyself, glutton! Who art thou—the sixth?

SLOTH. I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank, where I have lain

10. Pair. 11. One of you devils is doubtless.
12. Between-meal refreshments. 13. Lineage.

ever since, and you have done me great injury to bring me from thence: let me be carried thither again by Gluttony and Lechery. I'll not speak another word for a king's ransom.

FAUSTUS. What are you, Mistress Minx,—the seventh and last?

LECHERY. Who, I, sir? I am one that loves an inch of raw mutton[14] better than an ell of fried stockfish;[15] and the first letter of my name begins with Lechery.

LUCIFER. Away to hell, to hell! [*Exeunt the* SINS.]

—Now, Faustus, how dost thou like this?

FAUSTUS. O, this feeds my soul!

LUCIFER. Tut, Faustus, in hell is all manner of delight.

FAUSTUS. O might I see hell, and return again. How happy were I then!

LUCIFER. Thou shalt; I will send for thee at midnight. In meantime take this book; and peruse it thoroughly, and thou shalt turn thyself into what shape thou wilt.

FAUSTUS. Great thanks, mighty Lucifer!
This will I keep as chary as my life.

LUCIFER. Farewell, Faustus, and think on the Devil.

FAUSTUS. Farewell, great Lucifer! Come, Mephistophilis.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT II: SCENE 3[16]

[*Enter* ROBIN *the Ostler with a book in his hand.*]

ROBIN. O, this is admirable! Here I ha' stolen one of Dr. Faustus' conjuring books, and i' faith I mean to search some circles[17] for my own use. Now will I make all the maidens in our parish dance at my pleasure, stark naked before me; and so by that means I shall see more than e'er I felt or saw yet.

[*Enter* RALPH *calling* ROBIN.]

RALPH. Robin, prithee come away; there's a gentleman tarries to have his horse, and he would have his things rubb'd and made clean. He keeps such a chafing with my mistress about it; and she has sent me to look thee out. Prithee come away.

ROBIN. Keep out, keep out, or else you are blown up; you are dismemb'red, Ralph: keep out, for I am about a roaring piece of work.

RALPH. Come, what dost thou with that same book? Thou canst not read.

ROBIN. Yes, my master and mistress shall find that I can read, he for his forehead,[18] she for her private study; she's born to bear with me, or else my art fails.

14. Punning on "mutton" meaning wench, harlot. 15. Salted or dried fish.
16. An inn-yard. 17. Common with a double meaning in these plays.
18. Innumerable jests in the plays of this time allude to the horns which were supposed to grow in the brows of a deceived husband.

RALPH. Why, Robin, what book is that?

ROBIN. What book! Why, the most intolerable book for conjuring that e'er was invented by any brimstone devil.

RALPH. Canst thou conjure with it?

ROBIN. I can do all these things easily with it: first I can make thee drunk with ippocras[19] at any tavern in Europe for nothing; that's one of my conjuring works.

RALPH. Our Master Parson says that's nothing.

ROBIN. True, Ralph; and more, Ralph, if thou hast any mind to Nan Spit, our kitchen-maid, then turn her and wind her to thy own use as often as thou wilt, and at midnight.

RALPH. O brave Robin, shall I have Nan Spit, and to mine own use? On that condition I'll feed thy devil with horsebread as long as he lives, of free cost.

ROBIN. No more, sweet Ralph: let's go and make clean our boots, which lie foul upon our hands, and then to our conjuring in the Devil's name.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

WAGNER. Learned Faustus,
To know the secrets of astronomy
Graven in the book of Jove's high firmament,
Did mount himself to scale Olympus' top,
Being seated in a chariot burning bright,
Drawn by the strength of yoky dragons' necks.
He now is gone to prove cosmography,
And, as I guess, will first arrive at Rome,
To see the Pope and manner of his court,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
That to this day is highly solemniz'd. [*Exit.*]

ACT III: SCENE 1[1]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FAUSTUS. Having now, my good Mephistophilis,
Past with delight the stately town of Trier,[2]
Environ'd round with airy mountain-tops,
With walls of flint, and deep entrenched lakes,

19. Sugared and spiced wine.

1. Rome. The Pope's privy-chamber.

2. Treves.

Not to be won by any conquering prince;
From Paris next, coasting the realm of France,
We saw the river Maine fall into Rhine,
Whose banks are set with groves of fruitful vines;
Then up to Naples, rich Campania,
Whose buildings fair and gorgeous to the eye,
The streets straight forth, and pav'd with finest brick,
Quarter the town in four equivalents.
There saw we learned Maro's[3] golden tomb,
The way he cut, an English mile in length,
Thorough a rock of stone in one night's space;
From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest,
In one of which a sumptuous temple stands,[4]
That threats the stars with her aspiring top,
Thus hitherto has Faustus spent his time.
But tell me, now, what resting-place is this?
Hast thou, as erst I did command,
Conducted me within the walls of Rome?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Faustus, I have; and because we will not be unprovided, I have taken up his Holiness' privy-chamber for our use.

FAUSTUS. I hope his Holiness will bid us welcome.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Tut, 'tis no matter, man, we'll be bold with his good cheer.
And now, my Faustus, that thou may'st perceive
What Rome containeth to delight thee with,
Know that this city stands upon seven hills
That underprop the groundwork of the same.
Just through the midst runs flowing Tiber's stream,
With winding banks that cut it in two parts;
Over the which four stately bridges lean,
That make safe passage to each part of Rome:
Upon the bridge call'd Ponto Angelo
Erected is a castle passing strong,
Within whose walls such store of ordnance are,
And double cannons, fram'd of carved brass,
As match the days within one complete year;
Besides the gates and high pyramides,
Which Julius Caesar brought from Africa.

FAUSTUS. Now by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
Of Styx, of Acheron, and the fiery lake
Of ever-burning Phlegethon, I swear
That I do long to see the monuments

3. Virgil's. A tunnel near it was supposed to be the work of his magic.
4. St. Mark's, at Venice.

And situation of bright-splendent Rome:
Come therefore, let's away.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nay, Faustus, stay; I know you'd fain see the Pope,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
Where thou shalt see a troop of bald-pate friars,
Whose *summum bonum* is in belly-cheer.

FAUSTUS. Well, I'm content to compass then some sport,
And by their folly make us merriment.
Then charm me, Mephistophilis, that I
May be invisible, to do what I please
Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome. [MEPHISTOPHILIS *charms him.*]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. So, Faustus, now
Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discern'd.

[*Sound a sennet.*[5] *Enter the* POPE *and the* CARDINAL *of* LORRAINE *to the banquet, with* FRIARS *attending.*]

POPE. My Lord of Lorraine, wilt please you draw near?

FAUSTUS. Fall to, and the devil choke you an you spare!

POPE. How now! Who's that which spake?—Friars, look about.

FIRST FRIAR. Here's nobody, if it like your Holiness.

POPE. My lord, here is a dainty dish was sent me from the Bishop of Milan.

FAUSTUS. I thank you, sir. [*Snatches it.*]

POPE. How now! Who's that which snatch'd the meat from me? Will no man look? My Lord, this dish was sent me from the Cardinal of Florence.

FAUSTUS. You say true; I'll ha't. [*Snatches it.*]

POPE. What, again! My lord, I'll drink to your Grace.

FAUSTUS. I'll pledge your Grace. [*Snatches the cup.*]

CARDINAL. My lord, it may be some ghost newly crept out of purgatory, come to beg a pardon of your Holiness.

POPE. It may be so. Friars, prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost. Once again, my lord, fall to. [*The* POPE *crosses himself.*]

FAUSTUS. What, are you crossing of yourself?
Well, use that trick no more I would advise you. [*The* POPE *crosses himself again.*]
Well, there's the second time. Aware the third,
I give you fair warning.

[*The* POPE *crosses himself again, and* FAUSTUS *hits him a box of the ear; and they all run away.*]

Come on, Mephistophilis, what shall we do?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Nay, I know not. We shall be curs'd with bell, book, and candle.

FAUSTUS. How? bell, book, and candle,—candle, book, and bell,

5. Fanfare of trumpets.

Forward and backward to curse Faustus to hell!
Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray,
Because it is Saint Peter's holiday.

[*Re-enter all the* FRIARS *to sing the Dirge.*]

FIRST FRIAR. Come, brethren, let's about our business with good devotion.
[*They sing*]:
Cursed be he that stole away his Holiness' meat from the table! *Maledicat Dominus!*[6]
Cursed be he that struck his Holiness a blow on the face! *Maledicat Dominus!*
Cursed be he that took Friar Sandelo a blow on the pate! *Maledicat Dominus!*
Cursed be he that disturbeth our holy dirge! *Maledicat Dominus!*
Cursed be he that took away his Holiness' wine! *Maledicat Dominus! Et omnes sancti!*[7] *Amen!*

ACT III: SCENE 2[8]

[*Enter* ROBIN *and* RALPH *with a silver goblet.*]

ROBIN. Come, Ralph, did not I tell thee we were for ever made by this Doctor Faustus' book? *Ecce signum,* here's a simple purchase[9] for horse-keepers; our horses shall eat no hay as long as this lasts.

[*Enter the* VINTNER.]

RALPH. But, Robin, here comes the vintner.

ROBIN. Hush! I'll gull him supernaturally. Drawer, I hope all is paid: God be with you. Come, Ralph.

VINTNER. Soft, sir; a word with you. I must yet have a goblet paid from you, ere you go.

ROBIN. I, a goblet, Ralph; I, a goblet! I scorn you, and you are but a &c.[10] I, a goblet! Search me.

VINTNER. I mean so, sir, with your favor. [*Searches him.*]

ROBIN. How say you now?

VINTNER. I must say somewhat to your fellow. You, sir!

RALPH. Me, sir! me, sir! search your fill. [VINTNER *searches him.*] Now, sir, you may be ashamed to burden honest men with a matter of truth.[11]

VINTNER. Well, t' one of you hath this goblet about you.

ROBIN. [*Aside*]: You lie, drawer, 'tis afore me.—Sirrah you, I'll teach ye to impeach honest men; stand by;—I'll scour you for a goblet!—stand aside you had best, I charge you in the name of Belzebub. Look to the goblet, Ralph.

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6. May the Lord curse him. 7. And all the Saints. 8. An inn.
9. Piece of loot.
10. The low comedian was expected to supply a string of racy invective.
11. A question of honesty.

[*Aside to* RALPH.]

VINTNER. What mean you, sirrah?

ROBIN. I'll tell you what I mean. [*Reads from a book.*] *Sanctobulorum, Periphrasticon*—Nay, I'll tickle you, vintner. Look to the goblet, Ralph. [*Aside to* RALPH.] *Polypragmos Belseborams framanto pacostiphos tostu, Mephistophilis, &c.* [*Reads.*]

Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS. [*Sets squibs at their backs, and then exit. They run about.*]

VINTNER. *O nomine Domini!*[12] what meanest thou, Robin? Thou hast no goblet.

RALPH. *Peccatum peccatorum!*[13] Here's thy goblet, good vintner.

ROBIN. *Misericordia pro nobis!*[14] What shall I do? Good Devil, forgive me now, and I'll never rob thy library more.

[*Re-enter to them* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Vanish, villains!
Th' one like an ape, another like a bear, the third an ass, for doing this enterprise. [*Exit* VINTNER.]
Monarch of hell, under whose black survey
Great potentates do kneel with awful fear,
Upon whose altars thousand souls do lie,
How am I vexed with these villains' charms!
From Constantinople am I hither come
Only for pleasure of these damned slaves.

ROBIN. How, from Constantinople? You have had a great journey. Will you take sixpence in your purse to pay for your supper, and begone?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Well, villains, for your presumption, I transform thee into an ape, and thee into a dog; and so begone. [*Exit.*]

ROBIN. How, into an ape? That's brave! I'll have fine sport with the boys. I'll get nuts and apples enow.

RALPH. And I must be a dog.

ROBIN. I' faith thy head will never be out of the pottage pot. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

[*Enter* CHORUS.]

CHORUS. When Faustus had with pleasure ta'en the view
Of rarest things, and royal courts of kings,
He stay'd his course, and so returned home;
Where such as bear his absence but with grief,

12. The Vintner's imperfect Latin for "in the name of the Lord."
13. Sin of sins. 14. Mercy on us.

I mean his friends and near'st companions,
Did gratulate his safety with kind words,
And in their conference of what befell,
Touching his journey through the world and air,
They put forth questions of Astrology,
Which Faustus answer'd with such learned skill,
As they admir'd and wond'red at his wit.
Now is his fame spread forth in every land;
Amongst the rest the Emperor is one,
Carolus the Fifth, at whose palace now
Faustus is feasted 'mongst his noblemen.
What there he did in trial of his art,
I leave untold—your eyes shall see perform'd. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV. SCENE 1[1]

[*Enter* EMPEROR, FAUSTUS, MEPHISTOPHILIS, *and a* KNIGHT *with attendants.*]

EMPEROR. Master Doctor Faustus, I have heard strange report of thy knowledge in the black art, how that none in my empire nor in the whole world can compare with thee for the rare effects of magic; they say thou hast a familiar spirit, by whom thou canst accomplish what thou list. This, therefore, is my request, that thou let me see some proof of thy skill, that mine eyes may be witnesses to confirm what mine ears have heard reported; and here I swear to thee, by the honor of mine imperial crown, that, whatever thou doest, thou shalt be no ways prejudiced or endamaged.

KNIGHT. I' faith he looks much like a conjuror. [*Aside.*]

FAUSTUS. My gracious sovereign, though I must confess myself far inferior to the report men have published, and nothing answerable[2] to the honor of your imperial majesty, yet for that love and duty binds me thereunto, I am content to do whatsoever your majesty shall command me.

EMPEROR. Then, Doctor Faustus, mark what I shall say.
As I was sometime solitary set
Within my closet, sundry thoughts arose
About the honor of mine ancestors,
How they had won by prowess such exploits,
Got such riches, subdued so many kingdoms,
As we that do succeed, or they that shall
Hereafter possess our throne, shall
(I fear me) ne'er attain to that degree
Of high renown and great authority;
Amongst which kings is Alexander the Great,

1. A room in the imperial palace (at Innsbruck).
2. In no respect adequate.

Chief spectacle of the world's pre-eminence,
The bright shining of whose glorious acts
Lightens the world with his reflecting beams,
As, when I heard but motion[3] made of him,

It grieves my soul I never saw the man.
If, therefore, thou by cunning of thine art
Canst raise this man from hollow vaults below,
Where lies entomb'd this famous conqueror,
And bring with him his beauteous paramour,
Both in their right shapes, gestures, and attire
They us'd to wear during their time of life,
Thou shalt both satisfy my just desire,
And give me cause to praise thee whilst I live.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, I am ready to accomplish your request so far forth as by art, and power of my spirit, I am able to perform.

KNIGHT. I' faith that's just nothing at all. [*Aside.*]

FAUSTUS. But, if it like your Grace, it is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust.

KNIGHT. Ay, marry, Master Doctor, now there's a sign of grace in you, when you will confess the truth. [*Aside.*]

FAUSTUS. But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your Grace in that manner that they best liv'd in, in their most flourishing estate, which I doubt not shall sufficiently content your imperial majesty.

EMPEROR. Go to, Master Doctor, let me see them presently.[4]

KNIGHT. Do you hear, Master Doctor? You bring Alexander and his paramour before the Emperor!

FAUSTUS. How then, sir?

KNIGHT. I' faith that's as true as Diana turn'd me to a stag!

FAUSTUS. No, sir, but when Actæon died, he left the horns for you. Mephistophilis, begone. [*Exit* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

KNIGHT. Nay, an you go to conjuring, I'll be gone. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. I'll meet with you anon for interrupting me so. Here they are, my gracious lord.

[*Re-enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with* ALEXANDER *and his* PARAMOUR.]

EMPEROR. Master Doctor, I heard this lady while she liv'd had a wart or mole in her neck: how shall I know whether it be so or no?

FAUSTUS. Your Highness may boldly go and see. [*Exeunt Spirits.*]

EMPEROR. Sure these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes.

3. Mention.
4. At once.

FAUSTUS. Will't please your Highness now to send for the knight that was so pleasant with me here of late?

EMPEROR. One of you call him forth. [*Exit* ATTENDANT.]

[*Re-enter the* KNIGHT *with a pair of horns on his head.*]

How now, sir knight! why I had thought thou had'st been a bachelor; but now I see thou hast a wife, that not only gives thee horns, but makes thee wear them. Feel on thy head.

KNIGHT. Thou damned wretch and execrable dog,
Bred in the concave of some monstrous rock,
How darest thou thus abuse a gentleman?
Villain, I say, undo what thou hast done!

FAUSTUS. O, not so fast, sir, there's no haste; but, good, are you remember'red how you crossed me in my conference with the Emperor? I think I have met with you for it.

EMPEROR. Good Master Doctor, at my entreaty release him; he hath done penance sufficient.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, not so much for the injury he off'red me here in your presence, as to delight you with some mirth, hath Faustus worthily requited this injurious knight; which being all I desire, I am content to release him of his horns: and, sir knight, hereafter speak well of scholars. Mephistophilis, transform him straight. [MEPHISTOPHILIS *removes the horns.*] Now, my good lord, having done my duty I humbly take my leave.

EMPEROR. Farewell, Master Doctor; yet, ere you go,
Expect from me a bounteous reward. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV: SCENE 2

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FAUSTUS. Now, Mephistophilis, the restless course
That Time doth run with calm and silent foot,
Short'ning my days and thread of vital life,
Calls for the payment of my latest years;
Therefore, sweet Mephistophilis, let us
Make haste to Wittenberg.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. What, will you go on horseback or on foot?

FAUSTUS. Nay, till I'm past this fair and pleasant green,[5]
I'll walk on foot.

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5. A green; afterwards Faustus' house. The wreckage of several scenes probably confronts the reader here; most of this is rubbish, but note the Marlovian column still standing in the five lines which begin, "What art thou, Faustus . . ."

[*Enter a* HORSE-COURSER.]

HORSE-COURSER. I have been all this day seeking one Master Fustian: mass, see where he is! God save you, Master Doctor!

FAUSTUS. What, horse-courser! You are well met.

HORSE-COURSER. Do you hear, sir? I have brought you forty dollars for your horse.

FAUSTUS. I cannot sell him so; if thou likest him for fifty, take him.

HORSE-COURSER. Alas, sir, I have no more.—I pray you speak for me.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I pray you let him have him, he is an honest fellow, and he has a great charge, neither wife nor child.

FAUSTUS. Well, come, give me your money. [HORSE-COURSER *gives* FAUSTUS *the money.*] My boy will deliver him to you. But I must tell you one thing before you have him; ride him not into the water at any hand.

HORSE-COURSER. Why, sir, will he not drink of all waters?

FAUSTUS. O yes, he will drink of all waters, but ride him not into the water: ride him over hedge or ditch, or where thou wilt, but not into the water.

HORSE-COURSER. Well, sir.—Now am I made man for ever. I'll not leave my horse for forty. If he had but the quality of hey-ding-ding, hey-ding-ding, I'd make a brave living on him: he has a buttock as slick as an eel. [*Aside.*] Well, God b' wi' ye, sir, your boy will deliver him me: but hark ye, sir; if my horse be sick or ill at ease, if I bring his water to you, you'll tell me what it is? [*Exit* HORSE-COURSER.]

FAUSTUS. Away, you villain, what, dost think I am a horse-doctor?
What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemn'd to die?
Thy fatal time doth draw to final end,
Despair doth drive distrust unto my thoughts,
Confound these passions with a quiet sleep:
Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the cross;
Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit. [*Sleeps in his chair.*]

[*Re-enter* HORSE-COURSER, *all wet, crying.*]

HORSE-COURSER. Alas, alas! Doctor Fustian, quotha? Mass, Doctor Lopus[6] was never such a doctor. Has given me a purgation has purg'd me of forty dollars; I shall never see them more. But yet, like an ass as I was, I would not be ruled by him, for he bade me I should ride him into no water. Now I, thinking my horse had had some rare quality that he would not have had me known of, I, like a venturous youth, rid him into the deep pond at the town's end. I was no sooner in the middle of the pond, but my horse vanish'd away, and I sat upon a bottle[7] of hay, never so near drowning, in my life. But I'll

6. Queen Elizabeth's physician, Roderigo Lopez, a Spaniard, charged with conspiring to poison her and executed in 1594—nearly a year after Marlowe's death.
7. Bale.

seek out my Doctor, and have my forty dollars again, or I'll make it the dearest horse!—O, yonder is his snipper-snapper.[8]—Do you hear? You hey-pass,[9] where's your master?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, sir, what would you? You cannot speak with him.

HORSE-COURSER. But I will speak with him.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, he's fast asleep. Come some other time.

HORSE-COURSER. I'll speak with him now, or I'll break his glass windows about his ears.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. I tell thee he has not slept this eight nights.

HORSE-COURSER. An he have not slept this eight weeks, I'll speak with him.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. See where he is, fast asleep.

HORSE-COURSER. Ay, this is he. God save you, Master Doctor! Master Doctor, Master Doctor Fustian!—Forty dollars, forty dollars for a bottle of hay!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Why, thou seest he hears thee not.

HORSE-COURSER. So ho, ho!—so ho, ho! [*Hollas in his ear.*] No, will you not awake? I'll make you wake ere I go. [*Pulls* FAUSTUS *by the leg, and pulls it away.*] Alas, I am undone! What shall I do?

FAUSTUS. O my leg, my leg! Help, Mephistophilis! call the officers! My leg, my leg!

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Come, villain, to the constable!

HORSE-COURSER. O lord, sir, let me go, and I'll give you forty dollars more.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Where be they?

HORSE-COURSER. I have none about me. Come to my ostry[10] and I'll give them you.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Begone quickly. [HORSE-COURSER *runs away.*]

FAUSTUS. What, is he gone? Farewell he! Faustus has his leg again, and the horse-courser, I take it, a bottle of hay for his labor. Well, this trick shall cost him forty dollars more.

[*Enter* WAGNER.]

How now, Wagner, what's the news with thee?

WAGNER. Sir, the Duke of Vanholt doth earnestly entreat your company.

FAUSTUS. The Duke of Vanholt! an honorable gentleman, to whom I must be no niggard of my cunning. Come, Mephistophilis, let's away to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

8. Whippersnapper.
9. Juggler, since this was his cry. (Dyce, Ward.)
10. Hostelry, inn.

ACT IV: SCENE 3[11]

[*Enter the* DUKE *of* VANHOLT, *the* DUCHESS, FAUSTUS *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

DUKE. Believe me, Master Doctor, this merriment hath much pleased me.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, I am glad it contents you so well.—But it may be, madam, you take no delight in this. I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other. What is it, madam? Tell me, and you shall have it.

DUCHESS. Thanks, good Master Doctor; and for I see your courteous intent to pleasure me, I will not hide from you the thing my heart desires, and were it now summer, as it is January and the dead time of the winter, I would desire no better meat than a dish of ripe grapes.

FAUSTUS. Alas, madam, that's nothing! Mephistophilis, begone. [*Exit* MEPHISTOPHILIS.] Were it a greater thing than this, so it would content you, you should have it.

[*Re-enter* MEPHISTOPHILIS *with the grapes.*]

Here they be, madam; wilt please you taste on them?

DUKE. Believe me, Master Doctor, this makes me wonder above the rest, that being in the dead time of winter, and in the month of January, how you should come by these grapes.

FAUSTUS. If it like your Grace, the year is divided into two circles over the whole world, that, when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba, and farther countries in the East, and by means of a swift spirit that I have, I had them brought hither, as ye see.—How do you like them, madam; be they good?

DUCHESS. Believe me, Master Doctor, they be the best grapes that e'er I tasted in my life before.

FAUSTUS. I am glad they content you so, madam.

DUKE. Come, madam, let us in, where you must well reward this learned man for the great kindness he hath show'd to you.

DUCHESS. And so I will, my lord; and whilst I live, rest beholding for this courtesy.

FAUSTUS. I humbly thank your Grace.

DUKE. Come, Master Doctor, follow us and receive your reward.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V: SCENE 1[1]

[*Enter* WAGNER, *solus.*]

WAGNER. I think my master means to die shortly,
For he hath given to me all his goods;
And yet, methinks, if that death were near,

11. A residence of the Duke of Vanholt.

1. Wittenberg. A room in Faustus' house.

He would not banquet and carouse and swill
Amongst the students, as even now he doth,
Who are at supper with such belly-cheer
As Wagner ne'er beheld in all his life.
See where they come! Belike the feast is ended. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS, *with two or three* SCHOLARS *and* MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. Master Doctor Faustus, since our conference about fair ladies, which was the beautifullest in all the world,[2] we have determined with ourselves that Helen of Greece was the admirablest lady that ever lived: therefore, Master Doctor, if you will do us that favor, as to let us see that peerless dame of Greece, whom all the world admires for majesty, we should think ourselves much beholding unto you.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen,
For that I know your friendship is unfeigned,
And Faustus' custom is not to deny
The just requests of those that wish him well,
You shall behold that peerless dame of Greece,
No otherways for pomp and majesty
Than when Sir Paris cross'd the seas with her,
And brought the spoils to rich Dardania.
Be silent, then, for danger is in words.

[*Music sounds, and* HELEN *passeth over the stage.*]

SECOND SCHOLAR. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise,
Whom all the world admires for majesty.

THIRD SCHOLAR. No marvel though the angry Greeks pursu'd
With ten years' war the rape[3] of such a queen,
Whose heavenly beauty passeth all compare.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Since we have seen the pride of Nature's works,
And only paragon of excellence,

[*Enter an* OLD MAN.]

Let us depart; and for this glorious deed
Happy and blest be Faustus evermore.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell—the same I wish to you.

[*Exeunt* SCHOLARS *and* WAGNER.]

OLD MAN. Ah, Doctor Faustus, that I might prevail
To guide thy steps unto the way of life,
By which sweet path thou may'st attain the goal
That shall conduct thee to celestial rest!
Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears,

2. Simpson notes the survival of a Marlovian line, beginning "which" indicating that this prose is an adapter's work.
3. Capture.

Tears falling from repentant heaviness
Of thy most vile and loathsome filthiness,
The stench whereof corrupts the inward soul
With such flagitious crimes of heinous sins
As no commiseration may expel,
But mercy, Faustus, of thy Saviour sweet,
Whose blood alone must wash away thy guilt.

FAUSTUS. Where art thou, Faustus? Wretch, what hast thou done?
Damn'd art thou, Faustus, damn'd; despair and die!
Hell calls for right, and with a roaring voice
Says "Faustus! come! thine hour is almost come!"
And Faustus now will come to do thee right. [MEPHISTOPHILIS *gives him a dagger.*]

OLD MAN. Ah stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!
I see an angel hovers o'er thy head,
And, with a vial full of precious grace,
Offers to pour the same into thy soul:
Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.

FAUSTUS. Ah, my sweet friend, I feel
Thy words do comfort my distressed soul.
Leave me a while to ponder on my sins.

OLD MAN. I go, sweet Faustus, but with heavy cheer,
Fearing the ruin of thy hopeless soul. [*Exit.*]

FAUSTUS. Accursed Faustus, where is mercy now?
I do repent; and yet I do despair;
Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Thou traitor, Faustus, I arrest thy soul
For disobedience to my sovereign lord;
Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy flesh.

FAUSTUS. Sweet Mephistophilis, entreat thy lord
To pardon my unjust presumption,
And with my blood again I will confirm
My former vow I made to Lucifer.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Do it now then quickly, with unfeigned heart,
Lest danger do attend thy drift. [FAUSTUS *stabs his arm and writes on a paper with his blood.*]

FAUSTUS. Torment, sweet friend, that base and crooked age,[4]
That durst dissuade me from my Lucifer,
With greatest torments that our hell affords.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. His faith is great, I cannot touch his soul;
But what I may afflict his body with
I will attempt, which is but little worth.

4. Old man.

FAUSTUS. One thing, good servant, let me crave of thee,
To glut the longing of my heart's desire,
That I might have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen, which I saw of late,
Whose sweet embracings may extinguish clean
These thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,
And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer.

MEPHISTOPHILIS. Faustus, this or what else thou shalt desire
Shall be perform'd in twinkling of an eye.

[*Re-enter* HELEN.]

FAUSTUS. Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss. [*Kisses her.*]
Her lips suck forth my soul; see where it flies!—
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for Heaven be in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.

[*Enter* OLD MAN.]

I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colors on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele:
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms:
And none but thou shalt be my paramour. [*Exeunt.*]

OLD MAN. Accursed Faustus, miserable man,
That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of Heaven,
And fly'st the throne of his tribunal seat!

[*Enter* DEVILS.]

Satan begins to sift me with his pride:[5]
As in this furnace God shall try my faith,
My faith, vile hell, shall triumph over thee.
Ambitious fiends, see how the heavens smiles
At your repulse, and laughs your state to scorn!
Hence, hell! for hence I fly unto my God. [*Exeunt.*]

5. Display (of power).

ACT V: SCENE 2[6]

[*Enter* FAUSTUS *with the* SCHOLARS.]

FAUSTUS. Ah, gentlemen!

FIRST SCHOLAR. What ails Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee, then had I lived still! but now I die eternally. Look, comes he not? comes he not?

SECOND SCHOLAR. What means Faustus?

THIRD SCHOLAR. Belike he is grown into some sickness by being over solitary.

FIRST SCHOLAR. If it be so, we'll have physicians to cure him. 'Tis but a surfeit, never fear, man.

FAUSTUS. A surfeit of deadly sin that hath damn'd both body and soul.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Yet, Faustus, look up to Heaven; remember God's mercies are infinite.

FAUSTUS. But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be sav'd, but not Faustus. Ah, gentlemen, hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches! Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, oh, would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book! And what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world; for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea Heaven itself, Heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy; and must remain in hell for ever, hell, ah, hell, for ever! Sweet friends! what shall become of Faustus, being in hell for ever?

THIRD SCHOLAR. Yet, Faustus, call on God.

FAUSTUS. On God, whom Faustus hath abjur'd! on God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed! Ah, my God, I would weep, but the Devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears! Yea, life and soul, Oh, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them!

ALL. Who, Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Ah, gentlemen, I gave them my soul for my cunning!

ALL. God forbid!

FAUSTUS. God forbade it indeed; but Faustus hath done it. For vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity. I writ them a bill with mine own blood: the date is expired; the time will come, and he will fetch me.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Why did not Faustus tell us of this before, that divines might have prayed for thee?

FAUSTUS. Oft have I thought to have done so; but the Devil threat'ned to tear me in pieces if I nam'd God; to fetch both body and soul if I once gave

6. The same.

ear to divinity; and now 'tis too late. Gentlemen, away! lest you perish with me.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Oh, what shall we do to save Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Talk not of me, but save yourselves, and depart.

THIRD SCHOLAR. God will strengthen me. I will stay with Faustus.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Tempt not God, sweet friend; but let us into the next room, and there pray for him.

FAUSTUS. Ay, pray for me, pray for me! and what noise soever ye hear, come not unto me, for nothing can rescue me.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Pray thou, and we will pray that God may have mercy upon thee.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell! If I live till morning, I'll visit you: if not —Faustus is gone to hell.

ALL. Faustus, farewell. [*Exeunt* SCHOLARS. *The clock strikes eleven.*]

FAUSTUS. Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of Heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente, currite noctis equi! [7]
The stars move still,[8] time runs, the clock will strike,
The Devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul—half a drop: ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: O spare me, Lucifer!
Where is it now? 'Tis gone; and see where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountain and hills come, come and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No! no!
Then will I headlong run into the earth;
Earth gape! O no, it will not harbor me!
You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist

7. Run slowly, slowly, steeds of the night. (Ovid, *Amores*, I, xiii, 40.)
8. Unceasingly.

Into the entrails of yon laboring clouds,
That when you vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from their smoky mouths,
So[9] that my soul may but ascend to Heaven. [*The watch strikes the half hour.*]
Ah, half the hour is past! 'Twill all be past anon!
O God,
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Yet for Christ's sake whose blood hath ransom'd me,
Impose some end to my incessant pain,
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years—
A hundred thousand, and at last be sav'd!
O, no end is limited to damned souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis! were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be chang'd
Unto some brutish beast! All beasts are happy,
For, when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements;
But mine must live, still to be plagu'd in hell.
Curst be the parents that engend'red me!
No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer
That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of Heaven. [*The clock striketh twelve.*]
O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick[10] to hell. [*Thunder and lightning.*]
O soul, be changed into little water-drops,
And fall into the ocean—ne'er be found.
My God! my God! look not so fierce on me!

[*Enter* DEVILS.]

Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books!—Ah Mephistophilis![11] [*Exeunt* DEVILS *with* FAUSTUS.]

[*Enter* CHORUS.]

CHORUS. Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough,
That sometime grew within this learned man.
Faustus is gone; regard his hellish fall,

9. Provided that.
10. Alive.
11. The quarto of 1616 adds 18 lines, in which the scholars discover Faustus' dismembered body.

Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practise more than heavenly power permits. [*Exit.*]

Terminat hora diem, terminat author opus.[12]



12. The hour ends the day; the author ends his work.

HEDDA GABLER

HENRIK IBSEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY EDMUND GOSSE AND WILLIAM ARCHER

Characters

GEORGE TESMAN
HEDDA TESMAN, *his wife*
MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *his aunt*
MRS. ELVSTED
JUDGE BRACK
EILERT LOVBORG
BERTA, *servant at the Tesmans'*

SCENE: *The action is Tesman's villa, in the west end of Christiania.*

ACT I

SCENE: *A spacious, handsome and tastefully furnished drawing-room, decorated in dark colors. In the back, a wide doorway with curtains drawn back, leading into a smaller room decorated in the same style as the drawing-room. In the right-hand wall of the front room, a folding door leading out to the hall. In the opposite wall, on the left, a glass door, also with curtains drawn back. Through the panes can be seen part of a veranda outside, and trees covered with autumn foliage. An oval table, with a cover on it, and surrounded by chairs, stands well forward. In front, by the wall on the right, a wide stove of dark porcelain, a high-backed arm-chair, a cushioned foot-rest, and two footstools. A settee, with a small round table in front of it, fills the upper right-hand corner. In front, on the left, a little way from the wall, a sofa. Farther back than the glass door, a piano. On either side of the doorway at the back a whatnot with terra-cotta and majolica ornaments.—Against the back wall of the inner room a sofa, with a table, and one or two chairs. Over the sofa hangs the portrait of a handsome elderly man in a General's uniform. Over the table a hanging lamp, with an opal glass shade.—A number of bouquets are arranged about the drawing-room, in vases and glasses. Others lie upon the tables. The floors in both rooms are covered with thick carpets.—Morning light. The sun shines in through the glass door.*

MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *with her bonnet on and carrying a parasol, comes in from the hall, followed by* BERTA, *who carries a bouquet wrapped in paper.* MISS TESMAN *is a comely and pleasant-looking lady of about sixty-five. She is nicely but simply dressed in a gray walking-costume.* BERTA *is a middle-aged woman of plain and rather countrified appearance.*

MISS TESMAN. [*Stops close to the door, listens, and says softly.*] Upon my word, I don't believe they are stirring yet!

BERTA. [*Also softly.*] I told you so, Miss. Remember how late the steam-

boat got in last night. And then, when they got home!—good Lord, what a lot the young mistress had to unpack before she could get to bed.

MISS TESMAN. Well, well—let them have their sleep out. But let us see that they get a good breath of the fresh morning air when they do appear. [*She goes to the glass door and throws it open.*]

BERTA. [*Beside the table, at a loss what to do with the bouquet in her hand.*] I declare, there isn't a bit of room left. I think I'll put it down here, Miss. [*She places it on the piano.*]

MISS TESMAN. So you've got a new mistress now, my dear Berta. Heaven knows it was a wrench to me to part with you.

BERTA. [*On the point of weeping.*] And do you think it wasn't hard for me, too, Miss? After all the blessed years I've been with you and Miss Rina.

MISS TESMAN. We must make the best of it, Berta. There was nothing else to be done. George can't do without you, you see—he absolutely can't. He has had you to look after him ever since he was a little boy.

BERTA. Ah, but, Miss Julia, I can't help thinking of Miss Rina lying helpless at home there, poor thing. And with only that new girl, too! She'll never learn to take proper care of an invalid.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, I shall manage to train her. And, of course, you know I shall take most of it upon myself. You needn't be uneasy about my poor sister, my dear Berta.

BERTA. Well, but there's another thing, Miss. I'm so mortally afraid I shan't be able to suit the young mistress.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, well—just at first there may be one or two things——

BERTA. Most like she'll be terrible grand in her ways.

MISS TESMAN. Well, you can't wonder at that—General Gabler's daughter! Think of the sort of life she was accustomed to in her father's time. Don't you remember how we used to see her riding down the road along with the General? In that long black habit—and with feathers in her hat?

BERTA. Yes, indeed—I remember well enough!—But, good Lord, I should never have dreamt in those days that she and Master George would make a match of it.

MISS TESMAN. Nor I.—But by the by, Berta—while I think of it: in future you mustn't say Master George. You must say Dr. Tesman.

BERTA. Yes, the young mistress spoke of that, too—last night—the moment they set foot in the house. Is it true then, Miss?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, indeed it is. Only think, Berta—some foreign university has made him a doctor—while he has been abroad, you understand. I hadn't heard a word about it, until he told me himself upon the pier.

BERTA. Well, well, he's clever enough for anything, he is. But I didn't think he'd have gone in for doctoring people, too.

MISS TESMAN. No, no, it's not that sort of doctor he is. [*Nods significantly.*] But let me tell you, we may have to call him something still grander before long.

BERTA. You don't say so! What can that be, Miss?

MISS TESMAN. [*Smiling.*] H'm—wouldn't you like to know! [*With emotion.*] Ah, dear, dear—if my poor brother could only look up from his grave now, and see what his little boy has grown into! [*Looks around.*] But bless me, Berta—why have you done this? Taken the chintz covers off all the furniture?

BERTA. The mistress told me to. She can't abide covers on the chairs, she says.

MISS TESMAN. Are they going to make this their everyday sitting-room then?

BERTA. Yes, that's what I understood—from the mistress. Master George—the doctor—he said nothing.

[GEORGE TESMAN *comes from the right into the inner room, humming to himself, and carrying an unstrapped empty portmanteau. He is a middle-sized, young-looking man of thirty-three, rather stout, with a round, open, cheerful face, fair hair and beard. He wears spectacles, and is somewhat carelessly dressed in comfortable indoor clothes.*]

MISS TESMAN. Good morning, good morning, George.

TESMAN. [*In the doorway between the rooms.*] Aunt Julia! Dear Aunt Julia! [*Goes up to her and shakes hands warmly.*] Come all this way—so early! Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Why, of course I had to come and see how you were getting on.

TESMAN. In spite of your having had no proper night's rest?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, that makes no difference to me.

TESMAN. Well, I suppose you got home all right from the pier? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, quite safely, thank goodness. Judge Brack was good enough to see me right to my door.

TESMAN. We were so sorry we couldn't give you a seat in the carriage. But you saw what a pile of boxes Hedda had to bring with her.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, she had certainly plenty of boxes.

BERTA. [*To* TESMAN.] Shall I go in and see if there's anything I can do for the mistress?

TESMAN. No thank you, Berta—you needn't. She said she would ring if she wanted anything.

BERTA. [*Going towards the right.*] Very well.

TESMAN. But look here—take this portmanteau with you.

BERTA. [*Taking it.*] I'll put it in the attic.

[*She goes out by the hall door.*]

TESMAN. Fancy, Auntie—I had the whole of that portmanteau chock full of copies of documents. You wouldn't believe how much I have picked up from all the archives I have been examining—curious old details that no one has had any idea of——

MISS TESMAN. Yes, you don't seem to have wasted your time on your wedding trip, George.

TESMAN. No, that I haven't. But do take off your bonnet, Auntie. Look here! Let me untie the strings—eh?

MISS TESMAN. [*While he does so.*] Well, well—this is just as if you were still at home with us.

TESMAN. [*With the bonnet in his hand, looks at it from all sides.*] Why, what a gorgeous bonnet you've been investing in!

MISS TESMAN. I bought it on Hedda's account.

TESMAN. On Hedda's account? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, so that Hedda needn't be ashamed of me if we happened to go out together.

TESMAN. [*Patting her cheek.*] You always think of everything, Aunt Julia. [*Lays the bonnet on a chair beside the table.*] And now, look here—suppose we sit comfortably on the sofa and have a little chat, till Hedda comes. [*They seat themselves. She places her parasol in the corner of the sofa.*]

MISS TESMAN. [*Takes both his hands and looks at him.*] What a delight it is to have you again, as large as life, before my very eyes, George! My George—my poor brother's own boy!

TESMAN. And it's a delight for me, too, to see you again, Aunt Julia! You, who have been father and mother in one to me.

MISS TESMAN. Oh yes, I know you will always keep a place in your heart for your old aunts.

TESMAN. And what about Aunt Rina? No improvement—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh no—we can scacely look for any improvement in her case, poor thing. There she lies, helpless, as she has lain for all these years. But heaven grant I may not lose her yet awhile. For if I did, I don't know what I should make of my life, George—especially now that I haven't you to look after any more.

TESMAN. [*Patting her back.*] There, there, there——!

MISS TESMAN. [*Suddenly changing her tone.*] And to think that here you are a married man, George!—And that you should be the one to carry off Hedda Gabler—the beautiful Hedda Gabler! Only think of it—she, that was so beset with admirers!

TESMAN. [*Hums a little and smiles complacently.*] Yes, I fancy I have several good friends about town who would like to stand in my shoes—eh?

MISS TESMAN. And then this fine long wedding-tour you have had! More than five—nearly six months——

TESMAN. Well, for me it has been a sort of tour of research as well. I have had to do so much grubbing among old records—and to read no end of books too, Auntie.

MISS TESMAN. Oh yes, I suppose so. [*More confidentially, and lowering her voice a little.*] But listen now, George,—have you nothing—nothing special to tell me?

TESMAN. As to our journey?

MISS TESMAN. Yes.

TESMAN. No, I don't know of anything except what I have told you in my letters. I had a doctor's degree conferred on me—but that I told you yesterday.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, yes, you did. But what I mean is—haven't you any—any—expectations——?

TESMAN. Expectations?

MISS TESMAN. Why you know, George—I'm your old auntie!

TESMAN. Why, of course I have expectations.

MISS TESMAN. Ah!

TESMAN. I have every expectation of being a professor one of these days.

MISS TESMAN. Oh yes, a professor——

TESMAN. Indeed, I may say I am certain of it. But my dear Auntie—you know all about that already!

MISS TESMAN. [*Laughing to herself.*] Yes, of course I do. You are quite right there. [*Changing the subject.*] But we were talking about your journey It must have cost a great deal of money, George?

TESMAN. Well, you see—my handsome traveling-scholarship went a good way.

MISS TESMAN. But I can't understand how you can have made it go far enough for two.

TESMAN. No, that's not so easy to understand—eh?

MISS TESMAN. And especially travelling with a lady—they tell me that makes it ever so much more expensive.

TESMAN. Yes, of course—it makes it a little more expensive. But Hedda had to have this trip, Auntie! She really had to. Nothing else would have done.

MISS TESMAN. No, no, I suppose not. A wedding tour seems to be quite indispensable nowadays.—But tell me now—have you gone thoroughly over the house yet?

TESMAN. Yes, you may be sure I have. I have been afoot ever since daylight.

MISS TESMAN. And what do you think of it all?

TESMAN. I'm delighted! Quite delighted! Only I can't think what we are to do with the two empty rooms between this inner parlor and Hedda's bedroom.

MISS TESMAN. [*Laughing.*] Oh my dear George, I daresay you may find some use for them—in the course of time.

TESMAN. Why of course you are quite right, Aunt Julia! You mean as my library increases—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, quite so, my dear boy. It was your library I was thinking of.

TESMAN. I am specially pleased on Hedda's account. Often and often,

before we were engaged, she said that she would never care to live anywhere but in Secretary Falk's villa.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, it was lucky that this very house should come into the market, just after you had started.

TESMAN. Yes, Aunt Julia, the luck was on our side, wasn't it—eh?

MISS TESMAN. But the expense, my dear George! You will find it very expensive, all this.

TESMAN. [*Looks at her, a little cast down.*] Yes, I suppose I shall, Aunt!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, frightfully!

TESMAN. How much do you think? In round numbers?—Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, I can't even guess until all the accounts come in.

TESMAN. Well, fortunately, Judge Brack has secured the most favorable terms for me,—so he said in a letter to Hedda.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, don't be uneasy, my dear boy.—Besides, I have given security for the furniture and all the carpets.

TESMAN. Security? You? My dear Aunt Julia—what sort of security could you give?

MISS TESMAN. I have given a mortgage on our annuity.

TESMAN. [*Jumps up.*] What! On your—and Aunt Rina's annuity!

MISS TESMAN. Yes, I knew of no other plan, you see.

TESMAN. [*Placing himself before her.*] Have you gone out of your senses, Auntie! Your annuity—it's all that you and Aunt Rina have to live upon.

MISS TESMAN. Well, well—don't get so excited about it. It's only a matter of form you know—Judge Brack assured me of that. It was he that was kind enough to arrange the whole affair for me. A mere matter of form, he said.

TESMAN. Yes, that may be all very well. But nevertheless——

MISS TESMAN. You will have your own salary to depend upon now. And, good heavens, even if we did have to pay up a little——! To eke things out a bit at the start——! Why, it would be nothing but a pleasure to us.

TESMAN. Oh Auntie—will you never be tired of making sacrifices for me!

MISS TESMAN. [*Rises and lays her hands on his shoulders.*] Have I any other happiness in this world except to smooth your way for you, my dear boy? You, who have had neither father nor mother to depend on. And now we have reached the goal, George! Things have looked black enough for us, sometimes; but, thank heaven, now you have nothing to fear.

TESMAN. Yes, it is really marvelous how everything has turned out for the best.

MISS TESMAN. And the people who opposed you—who wanted to bar the way for you—now you have them at your feet. They have fallen, George. Your most dangerous rival—his fall was the worst.—And now he has to lie on the bed he has made for himself—poor misguided creature.

TESMAN. Have you heard anything of Eilert? Since I went away, I mean.

MISS TESMAN. Only that he is said to have published a new book.

TESMAN. What! Eilert Lovborg! Recently—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Yes, so they say. Heaven knows whether it can be worth anything! Ah, when your new book appears—that will be another story, George! What is it to be about?

TESMAN. It will deal with the domestic industries of Brabant during the Middle Ages.

MISS TESMAN. Fancy—to be able to write on such a subject as that!

TESMAN. However, it may be some time before the book is ready. I have all these collections to arrange first, you see.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, collecting and arranging—no one can beat you at that. There you are my poor brother's own son.

TESMAN. I am looking forward eagerly to setting to work at it; especially now that I have my own delightful home to work in.

MISS TESMAN. And, most of all, now that you have got a wife of your heart, my dear George.

TESMAN. [*Embracing her.*] Oh yes, yes, Aunt Julia. Hedda—she is the best part of it all! [*Looks towards the doorway.*] I believe I hear her coming—eh?

[HEDDA *enters from the left through the inner room. She is a woman of nine-and-twenty. Her face and figure show refinement and distinction. Her complexion is pale and opaque. Her steel-gray eyes express a cold, unruffled repose. Her hair is of an agreeable medium brown, but not particularly abundant. She is dressed in a tasteful, somewhat loose-fitting morning gown.*]

MISS TESMAN. [*Going to meet* HEDDA.] Good morning, my dear Hedda! Good morning, and a hearty welcome!

HEDDA. [*Holds out her hand.*] Good morning, dear Miss Tesman! So early a call! That is kind of you.

MISS TESMAN. [*With some embarrassment.*] Well—has the bride slept well in her new home?

HEDDA. Oh yes, thanks. Passably.

TESMAN. [*Laughing.*] Passably! Come, that's good, Hedda! You were sleeping like a stone when I got up.

HEDDA. Fortunately. Of course one has always to accustom one's self to new surroundings, Miss Tesman—little by little. [*Looking towards the left.*] Oh—there the servant has gone and opened the veranda door, and let in a whole flood of sunshine.

MISS TESMAN. [*Going towards the door.*] Well, then we will shut it.

HEDDA. No, no, not that! Tesman, please draw the curtains. That will give a softer light.

TESMAN. [*At the door.*] All right—all right.—There now, Hedda, now you have both shade and fresh air.

HEDDA. Yes, fresh air we certainly must have, with all these stacks of flowers——. But—won't you sit down, Miss Tesman?

MISS TESMAN. No, thank you. Now that I have seen that everything is

all right here—thank heaven!—I must be getting home again. My sister is lying longing for me, poor thing.

TESMAN. Give her my very best love, Auntie; and say I shall look in and see her later in the day.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, yes, I'll be sure to tell her. But by the by, George—[*Feeling in her dress pocket.*]—I had almost forgotten—I have something for you here.

TESMAN. What is it, Auntie? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. [*Produces a flat parcel wrapped in newspaper and hands it to him.*] Look here, my dear boy.

TESMAN. [*Opening the parcel.*] Well, I declare!—Have you really saved them for me, Aunt Julia! Hedda! isn't this touching—eh?

HEDDA. [*Beside the whatnot on the right.*] Well, what is it?

TESMAN. My old morning-shoes! My slippers.

HEDDA. Indeed. I remember you often spoke of them while we were abroad.

TESMAN. Yes, I missed them terribly. [*Goes up to her.*] Now you shall see them, Hedda!

HEDDA. [*Going towards the stove.*] Thanks, I really don't care about it.

TESMAN. [*Following her.*] Only think—ill as she was, Aunt Rina embroidered these for me. Oh you can't think how many associations cling to them.

HEDDA. [*At the table.*] Scarcely for me.

MISS TESMAN. Of course not for Hedda, George.

TESMAN Well, but now that she belongs to the family, I thought—

HEDDA. [*Interrupting.*] We shall never get on with this servant, Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. Not get on with Berta?

TESMAN Why, dear, what puts that in your head? Eh?

HEDDA. [*Pointing.*] Look there! She has left her old bonnet lying about on a chair.

TESMAN. [*In consternation, drops the slippers on the floor.*] Why, Hedda——

HEDDA. Just fancy, if any one should come in and see it!

TESMAN. But Hedda—that's Aunt Julia's bonnet.

HEDDA. Is it!

MISS TESMAN. [*Taking up the bonnet.*] Yes, indeed it's mine. And, what's more, it's not old, Madam Hedda.

HEDDA. I really did not look closely at it, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. [*Trying on the bonnet.*] Let me tell you it's the first time I have worn it—the very first time.

TESMAN. And a very nice bonnet it is too—quite a beauty!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, it's no such great thing, George. [*Looks around her.*] My parasol——? Ah, here. [*Takes it.*] For this is mine too—[*mutters*]—not Berta's.

TESMAN. A new bonnet and a new parasol! Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA. Very handsome indeed.

TESMAN. Yes, isn't it? Eh? But Auntie, take a good look at Hedda before you go! See how handsome she is!

MISS TESMAN. Oh, my dear boy, there's nothing new in that. Hedda was always lovely. [*She nods and goes towards the right.*]

TESMAN. [*Following.*] Yes, but have you noticed what splendid condition she is in? How she has filled out on the journey?

HEDDA. [*Crossing the room.*] Oh, do be quiet——!

MISS TESMAN. [*Who has stopped and turned.*] Filled out?

TESMAN. Of course you don't notice it so much now that she has that dress on. But I, who can see——

HEDDA. [*At the glass door, impatiently.*] Oh, you can't see anything.

TESMAN. It must be the mountain air in the Tyrol——

HEDDA. [*Curtly, interrupting.*] I am exactly as I was when I started.

TESMAN. So you insist; but I'm quite certain you are not. Don't you agree with me, Auntie?

MISS TESMAN. [*Who has been gazing at her with folded hands.*] Hedda is lovely—lovely—lovely. [*Goes up to her, takes her head between both hands, draws it downwards, and kisses her hair.*] God bless and preserve Hedda Tesman—for George's sake.

HEDDA. [*Gently freeing herself.*] Oh—! Let me go.

MISS TESMAN. [*In quiet emotion.*] I shall not let a day pass without coming to see you.

TESMAN. No you won't, will you, Auntie? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Good-bye—good-bye!

[*She goes out by the hall door.* TESMAN *accompanies her. The door remains half open.* TESMAN *can be heard repeating his message to* AUNT RINA *and his thanks for the slippers. In the meantime,* HEDDA *walks about the room, raising her arms and clenching her hands as if in desperation. Then she flings back the curtains from the glass door, and stands there looking out. Presently* TESMAN *returns and closes the door behind him.*]

TESMAN. [*Picks up the slippers from the floor.*] What are you looking at, Hedda?

HEDDA. [*Once more calm and mistress of herself.*] I am only looking at the leaves. They are so yellow—so withered.

TESMAN. [*Wraps up the slippers and lays them on the table.*] Well you see, we are well into September now.

HEDDA. [*Again restless.*] Yes, to think of it!—Already in—in September.

TESMAN. Don't you think Aunt Julia's manner was strange, dear? Almost solemn? Can you imagine what was the matter with her? Eh?

HEDDA. I scarcely know her, you see. Is she not often like that?

TESMAN. No, not as she was to-day.

HEDDA. [*Leaving the glass door.*] Do you think she was annoyed about the bonnet?

TESMAN. Oh, scarcely at all. Perhaps a little, just at the moment——

HEDDA. But what an idea, to pitch her bonnet about in the drawing-room! No one does that sort of thing.

TESMAN. Well you may be sure Aunt Julia won't do it again.

HEDDA. In any case, I shall manage to make my peace with her.

TESMAN. Yes, my dear, good Hedda, if you only would.

HEDDA. When you call this afternoon, you might invite her to spend the evening here.

TESMAN. Yes, that I will. And there's one thing more you could do that would delight her heart.

HEDDA. What is it?

TESMAN. If you could only prevail on yourself to say *du*[1] to her. For my sake, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, no, Tesman—you really mustn't ask that of me. I have told you so already. I shall try to call her "Aunt"; and you must be satisfied with that.

TESMAN. Well, well. Only I think now that you belong to the family, you——

HEDDA. H'm—I can't in the least see why——[*She goes up towards the middle doorway.*]

TESMAN. [*After a pause.*] Is there anything the matter with you, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. I'm only looking at my old piano. It doesn't go at all well with all the other things.

TESMAN. The first time I draw my salary, we'll see about exchanging it.

HEDDA. No, no—no exchanging. I don't want to part with it. Suppose we put it there in the inner room, and then get another here in its place. When it's convenient, I mean.

TESMAN. [*A little taken aback.*] Yes—of course we could do that.

HEDDA. [*Takes up the bouquet from the piano.*] These flowers were not here last night when we arrived.

TESMAN. Aunt Julia must have brought them for you.

HEDDA. [*Examining the bouquet.*] A visiting-card. [*Takes it out and reads.*] "Shall return later in the day." Can you guess whose card it is?

TESMAN. No. Whose? Eh?

HEDDA. The name is "Mrs. Elvsted."

TESMAN. Is it really? Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Miss Rysing that was.

HEDDA. Exactly. The girl with the irritating hair, that she was always showing off. An old flame of yours I've been told.

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1. The familiar form of the pronoun, used only between persons who are on a footing of intimacy; hence its significance here and later.

TESMAN. [*Laughing.*] Oh, that didn't last long; and it was before I knew you, Hedda. But fancy her being in town!

HEDDA. It's odd that she should call upon us. I have scarcely seen her since we left school.

TESMAN. I haven't seen her either for—heaven knows how long. I wonder how she can endure to live in such an out-of-the-way hole—eh?

HEDDA. [*After a moment's thought, says suddenly.*] Tell me, Tesman—isn't it somewhere near there that he—that—Eilert Lovborg is living?

TESMAN. Yes, he is somewhere in that part of the country.

[BERTA *enters by the hall door.*]

BERTA. That lady, ma'am, that brought some flowers a little while ago, is here again. [*Pointing.*] The flowers you have in your hand, ma'am.

HEDDA. Ah, is she? Well, please show her in.

[BERTA *opens the door for* MRS. ELVSTED, *and goes out herself.*—MRS. ELVSTED *is a woman of fragile figure, with pretty, soft features. Her eyes are light blue, large, round, and somewhat prominent, with a startled, inquiring expression. Her hair is remarkably light, almost flaxen, and unusually abundant and wavy. She is a couple of years younger than* HEDDA. *She wears a dark visiting dress, tasteful, but not quite in the latest fashion.*]

HEDDA. [*Receives her warmly.*] How do you do, my dear Mrs. Elvsted? It's delightful to see you again.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Nervously, struggling for self-control.*] Yes, it's a very long time since we met.

TESMAN. [*Gives her his hand.*] And we too—eh?

HEDDA. Thanks for your lovely flowers——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, not at all—— I would have come straight here yesterday afternoon; but I heard that you were away——

TESMAN. Have you just come to town? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. I arrived yesterday, about midday. Oh, I was quite in despair when I heard that you were not at home.

HEDDA. In despair! How so?

TESMAN. Why, my dear Mrs. Rysing—I mean Mrs. Elvsted——

HEDDA. I hope that you are not in any trouble?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I am. And I don't know another living creature here that I can turn to.

HEDDA. [*Laying the bouquet on the table.*] Come—let us sit here on the sofa——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I am too restless to sit down.

HEDDA. Oh no, you're not. Come here. [*She draws* MRS. ELVSTED *down upon the sofa and sits at her side.*]

TESMAN. Well? what is it, Mrs. Elvsted——?

HEDDA. Has anything particular happened to you at home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes—and no. Oh—I am so anxious you should not misunderstand me——

HEDDA. Then your best plan is to tell us the whole story, Mrs. Elvsted.

TESMAN. I suppose that's what you have come for—eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes—of course it is. Well then, I must tell you—if you don't already know—that Eilert Lovborg is in town, too.

HEDDA. Lovborg——!

TESMAN. What! Has Eilert Lovborg come back? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Well, well—I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED. He has been here a week already. Just fancy—a whole week! In this terrible town, alone! With so many temptations on all sides.

HEDDA. But, my dear Mrs. Elvsted—how does he concern you so much?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Looks at her with a startled air, and says rapidly.*] He was the children's tutor.

HEDDA. Your children's?

MRS. ELVSTED. My husband's. I have none.

HEDDA. Your step-children's, then?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes.

TESMAN. [*Somewhat hesitatingly.*] Then was he—I don't know how to express it—was he—regular enough in his habits to be fit for the post? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. For the last two years his conduct has been irreproachable.

TESMAN. Has it indeed? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. I hear it.

MRS. ELVSTED. Perfectly irreproachable, I assure you! In every respect. But all the same—now that I know he is here—in this great town—and with a large sum of money in his hands—I can't help being in mortal fear for him.

TESMAN. Why did he not remain where he was? With you and your husband? Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. After his book was published he was too restless and unsettled to remain with us.

TESMAN. Yes, by the by, Aunt Julia told me he had published a new book.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, a big book, dealing with the march of civilization—in broad outline, as it were. It came out about a fortnight ago. And since it has sold so well, and been so much read—and made such a sensation——

TESMAN. Has it indeed? It must be something he has had lying by since his better days.

MRS. ELVSTED. Long ago, you mean?

TESMAN. Yes.

MRS ELVSTED. No, he has written it all since he has been with us—within the last year.

TESMAN. Isn't that good news, Hedda? Think of that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Ah yes, if only it would last!

HEDDA. Have you seen him here in town?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, not yet. I have had the greatest difficulty in finding out his address. But this morning I discovered it at last.

HEDDA. [*Looks searchingly at her.*] Do you know, it seems to me a little odd of your husband—h'm——

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Starting nervously.*] Of my husband! What?

HEDDA. That he should send you to town on such an errand—that he does not come himself and look after his friend.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh no, no—my husband has no time. And besides, I—I had some shopping to do.

HEDDA. [*With a slight smile.*] Ah, that is a different matter.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Rising quickly and uneasily.*] And now I beg and implore you, Mr. Tesman—receive Eilert Lovborg kindly if he comes to you! And that he is sure to do. You see you were such great friends in the old days. And then you are interested in the same studies—the same branch of science—so far as I can understand.

TESMAN. We used to be, at any rate.

MRS. ELVSTED. That is why I beg so earnestly that you—you too—will keep a sharp eye upon him. Oh, you will promise me that, Mr. Tesman—won't you?

TESMAN. With the greatest of pleasure, Mrs. Rysing——

HEDDA. Elvsted.

TESMAN. I assure you I shall do all I possibly can for Eilert. You may rely upon me.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how very, very kind of you! [*Presses his hands.*] Thanks, thanks, thanks! [*Frightened.*] You see, my husband is so very fond of him!

HEDDA. [*Rising.*] You ought to write to him, Tesman. Perhaps he may not care to come to you of his own accord.

TESMAN. Well, perhaps it would be the right thing to do, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. And the sooner the better. Why not at once?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Imploringly.*] Oh, if you only would!

TESMAN. I'll write this moment. Have you his address, Mrs.—Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. [*Takes a slip of paper from her pocket, and hands it to him.*] Here it is.

TESMAN. Good, good. Then I'll go in—— [*Looks about him.*] By the by—my slippers? Oh, here. [*Takes the packet, and is about to go.*]

HEDDA. Be sure you write him a cordial, friendly letter. And a good long one too.

TESMAN. Yes, I will.

MRS. ELVSTED. But please, please don't say a word to show that I have suggested it.

TESMAN. No, how could you think I would? Eh? [*He goes out to the right, through the inner room.*]

HEDDA. [*Goes up to* MRS. ELVSTED, *smiles and says in a low voice.*] There! We have killed two birds with one stone.

MRS. ELVSTED. What do you mean?

HEDDA. Could you not see that I wanted him to go?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, to write the letter——

HEDDA. And that I might speak to you alone.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Confused.*] About the same thing?

HEDDA. Precisely.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Apprehensively.*] But there is nothing more, Mrs. Tesman! Absolutely nothing!

HEDDA. Oh yes, but there is. There is a great deal more—I can see that. Sit here—and we'll have a cosy, confidential chat. [*She forces* MRS. ELVSTED *to sit in the easy-chair beside the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools.*]

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Anxiously, looking at her watch.*] But, my dear Mrs. Tesman—I was really on the point of going.

HEDDA. Oh, you can't be in such a hurry.—Well? Now tell me something about your life at home.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, that is just what I care least to speak about.

HEDDA. But to me, dear——? Why, weren't we schoolfellows?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but you were in the class above me. Oh, how dreadfully afraid of you I was then!

HEDDA. Afraid of me?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, dreadfully. For when we met on the stairs you used always to pull my hair.

HEDDA. Did I, really?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, and once you said you would burn it off my head.

HEDDA. Oh, that was all nonsense, of course.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but I was so silly in those days.—And since then, too—we have drifted so far—far apart from each other. Our circles have been so entirely different.

HEDDA. Well then, we must try to drift together again. Now listen! At school we said *du*[2] to each other, and we called each other by our Christian names——

MRS. ELVSTED. No, I am sure you must be mistaken.

HEDDA. No, not at all! I can remember quite distinctly. So now we are going to renew our old friendship. [*Draws the footstool closer to* MRS. ELVSTED.] There now! [*Kisses her cheek.*] You must say *du* to me and call me Hedda.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Presses and pats her hands.*] Oh, how good and kind you are! I am not used to such kindness.

HEDDA. There, there, there! And I shall say *du* to you, as in the old days, and call you my dear Thora.

MRS. ELVSTED. My name is Thea.

2. See note, p. 596.

HEDDA. Why, of course! I meant Thea. [*Looks at her compassionately.*] So you are not accustomed to goodness and kindness, Thea? Not in your own home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if I only had a home! But I haven't any; I have never had a home.

HEDDA. [*Looks at her for a moment.*] I almost suspected as much.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Gazing helplessly before her.*] Yes—yes—yes.

HEDDA. I don't quite remember—was it not as housekeeper that you first went to Mr. Elvsted's?

MRS. ELVSTED. I really went as governess. But his wife—his late wife—was an invalid,—and rarely left her room. So I had to look after the housekeeping as well.

HEDDA. And then—at last—you became mistress of the house.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Sadly.*] Yes, I did.

HEDDA. Let me see—about how long ago was that?

MRS. ELVSTED. My marriage?

HEDDA. Yes.

MRS. ELVSTED. Five years ago.

HEDDA. To be sure, it must be that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh those five years——! Or at all events the last two or three of them! Oh, if you[3] could only imagine——

HEDDA. [*Giving her a little slap on the hand.*] *De?* Fie, Thea!

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I will try—— Well, if—you could only imagine and understand——

HEDDA. [*Lightly.*] Eilert Lövborg has been in your neighborhood about three years, hasn't he?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Looks at her doubtfully.*] Eilert Lovborg? Yes—he has.

HEDDA. Had you known him before, in town here?

MRS. ELVSTED. Scarcely at all. I mean—I knew him by name of course.

HEDDA. But you saw a good deal of him in the country?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, he came to us every day. You see, he gave the children lessons; for in the long run I couldn't manage it all myself.

HEDDA. No, that's clear.—And your husband——? I suppose he is often away from home?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. Being sheriff, you know, he has to travel about a good deal in his district.

HEDDA. [*Leaning against the arm of the chair.*] Thea—my poor, sweet Thea—now you must tell me everything—exactly as it stands.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well then, you must question me.

HEDDA. What sort of a man is your husband, Thea? I mean—you know—in everyday life. Is he kind to you?

3. Instead of *du*, Mrs. Elvsted uses *De*, the formal pronoun. After being rebuked, she says *du*.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Evasively.*] I am sure he means well in everything.

HEDDA. I should think he must be altogether too old for you. There is at least twenty years' difference between you, is there not?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Irritably.*] Yes, that is true, too. Everything about him is repellent to me! We have not a thought in common. We have no single point of sympathy—he and I.

HEDDA. But is he not fond of you all the same? In his own way?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh I really don't know. I think he regards me simply as a useful property. And then it doesn't cost much to keep me. I am not expensive.

HEDDA. That is stupid of you.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Shakes her head.*] It cannot be otherwise—not with him. I don't think he really cares for any one but himself—and perhaps a little for the children.

HEDDA. And for Eilert Lovborg, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Looking at her.*] For Eilert Lövborg? What puts that into your head?

HEDDA. Well, my dear—I should say, when he sends you after him all the way to town—— [*Smiling almost imperceptibly.*] And besides, you said so yourself, to Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*With a little nervous twitch.*] Did I? Yes, I suppose I did. [*Vehemently, but not loudly.*] No—I may just as well make a clean breast of it at once! For it must all come out in any case.

HEDDA. Why, my dear Thea——?

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, to make a long story short: My husband did not know that I was coming.

HEDDA. What! Your husband didn't know it!

MRS. ELVSTED. No, of course not. For that matter, he was away from home himself—he was traveling. Oh, I could bear it no longer, Hedda! I couldn't indeed—so utterly alone as I should have been in future.

HEDDA. Well? And then?

MRS. ELVSTED. So I put together some of my things—what I needed most—as quietly as possible. And then I left the house.

HEDDA. Without a word?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes—and took the train straight to town.

HEDDA. Why, my dear, good Thea—to think of you daring to do it!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Rises and moves about the room.*] What else could I possibly do?

HEDDA. But what do you think your husband will say when you go home again?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*At the table, looks at her.*] Back to him?

HEDDA. Of course.

MRS. ELVSTED. I shall never go back to him again.

HEDDA. [*Rising and going towards her.*] Then you have left your home—for good and all?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes. There was nothing else to be done.

HEDDA. But then—to take flight so openly.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, it's impossible to keep things of that sort secret.

HEDDA. But what do you think people will say of you, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. They may say what they like, for aught *I* care. [*Seats herself wearily and sadly on the sofa.*] I have done nothing but what I had to do.

HEDDA. [*After a short silence.*] And what are your plans now? What do you think of doing?

MRS. ELVSTED. I don't know yet. I only know this, that I must live here, where Eilert Lovborg is—if I am to live at all.

HEDDA. [*Takes a chair from the table, seats herself beside her, and strokes her hands.*] My dear Thea—how did this—this friendship—between you and Eilert Lovborg come about?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh it grew up gradually. I gained a sort of influence over him.

HEDDA. Indeed?

MRS. ELVSTED. He gave up his old habits. Not because I asked him to, for I never dared do that. But of course he saw how repulsive they were to me; and so he dropped them.

HEDDA. [*Concealing an involuntary smile of scorn.*] Then you have reclaimed him—as the saying goes—my little Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. So he says himself, at any rate. And he, on his side, has made a real human being of me—taught me to think, and to understand so many things.

HEDDA. Did he give you lessons too, then?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, not exactly lessons. But he talked to me—talked about such an infinity of things. And then came the lovely, happy time when I began to share in his work—when he allowed me to help him!

HEDDA. Oh he did, did he?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes! He never wrote anything without my assistance.

HEDDA. You were two good comrades, in fact?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Eagerly.*] Comrades! Yes, fancy, Hedda—that is the very word he used!—Oh, I ought to feel perfectly happy; and yet I cannot; for I don't know how long it will last.

HEDDA. Are you no surer of him than that?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Gloomily.*] A woman's shadow stands between Eilert Lövborg and me.

HEDDA. [*Looks at her anxiously.*] Who can that be?

MRS. ELVSTED. I don't know. Some one he knew in his—in his past. Some one he has never been able wholly to forget.

HEDDA. What has he told you—about this?

MRS. ELVSTED. He has only once—quite vaguely—alluded to it.

HEDDA. Well! And what did he say?

MRS. ELVSTED. He said that when they parted, she threatened to shoot him with a pistol.

HEDDA. [*With cold composure.*] Oh, nonsense! No one does that sort of thing here.

MRS. ELVSTED. No. And that is why I think it must have been that red-haired singing-woman whom he once——

HEDDA. Yes, very likely.

MRS. ELVSTED. For I remember they used to say of her that she carried loaded firearms.

HEDDA. Oh—then of course it must have been she.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Wringing her hands.*] And now just fancy, Hedda—I hear that this singing-woman—that she is in town again! Oh, I don't know what to do——

HEDDA. [*Glancing towards the inner room.*] Hush! Here comes Tesman. [*Rises and whispers.*] Thea—all this must remain between you and me.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Springing up.*] Oh yes—yes! For heaven's sake——!

[GEORGE TESMAN, *with a letter in his hand, comes from the right through the inner room.*]

TESMAN. There now—the epistle is finished.

HEDDA. That's right. And now Mrs. Elvsted is just going. Wait a moment —I'll go with you to the garden gate.

TESMAN. Do you think Berta could post the letter, Hedda dear?

HEDDA. [*Takes it.*] I will tell her to.

[BERTA *enters from the hall.*]

BERTA. Judge Brack wishes to know if Mrs. Tesman will receive him.

HEDDA. Yes, ask Judge Brack to come in. And look here—put this letter in the post.

BERTA. [*Taking the letter.*] Yes, ma'am.

[*She opens the door for* JUDGE BRACK *and goes out herself.* BRACK *is a man of forty-five; thick-set, but well-built and elastic in his movements. His face is roundish with an aristocratic profile. His hair is short, still almost black, and carefully dressed. His eyes are lively and sparkling. His eyebrows thick. His moustaches are also thick, with short-cut ends. He wears a well-cut walking-suit, a little too youthful for his age. He uses an eyeglass, which he now and then lets drop.*]

JUDGE BRACK. [*With his hat in his hand, bowing.*] May one venture to call so early in the day?

HEDDA. Of course one may.

TESMAN. [*Presses his hand.*] You are welcome at any time. [*Introducing him.*] Judge Brack—Miss Rysing——

HEDDA. Oh——!

BRACK. [*Bowing.*] Ah—delighted——

HEDDA. [*Looks at him and laughs.*] It's nice to have a look at you by daylight, Judge!

BRACK. Do you find me—altered?

HEDDA. A little younger, I think.

BRACK. Thank you so much.

TESMAN. But what do you think of Hedda—eh? Doesn't she look flourishing? She has actually——

HEDDA. Oh, do leave me alone. You haven't thanked Judge Brack for all the trouble he has taken——

BRACK. Oh, nonsense—it was a pleasure to me——

HEDDA. Yes, you are a friend indeed. But here stands Thea all impatience to be off—so *au revoir,* Judge. I shall be back again presently.

[*Mutual salutations.* MRS. ELVSTED *and* HEDDA *go out by the hall door.*]

BRACK. Well,—is your wife tolerably satisfied——

TESMAN. Yes, we can't thank you sufficiently. Of course she talks of a little rearrangement here and there; and one or two things are still wanting. We shall have to buy some additional trifles.

BRACK. Indeed!

TESMAN. But we won't trouble you about these things. Hedda says she herself will look after what is wanting.—Shan't we sit down? Eh?

BRACK. Thanks, for a moment. [*Seats himself beside the table.*] There is something I wanted to speak to you about, my dear Tesman.

TESMAN. Indeed? Ah, I understand! [*Seating himself.*] I suppose it's the serious part of the frolic that is coming now. Eh?

BRACK. Oh, the money question is not so very pressing, though, for that matter, I wish we had gone a little more economically to work.

TESMAN. But that would never have done, you know! Think of Hedda, my dear fellow! You, who know her so well——. I couldn't possibly ask her to put up with a shabby style of living!

BRACK. No, no—that is just the difficulty.

TESMAN. And then—fortunately—it can't be long before I receive my appointment.[4]

BRACK. Well, you see—such things are often apt to hang fire for a time.

TESMAN. Have you heard anything definite? Eh?

BRACK. Nothing exactly definite—— [*Interrupting himself.*] But by the by—I have one piece of news for you.

TESMAN. Well?

BRACK. Your old friend, Eilert Lovborg, has returned to town.

TESMAN. I know that already.

BRACK. Indeed! How did you learn it?

TESMAN. From that lady who went out with Hedda.

BRACK. Really? What was her name? I didn't quite catch it.

TESMAN. Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. Aha—Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Of course—he has been living up in their regions.

4. As professor.

TESMAN. And fancy—I'm delighted to hear that he is quite a reformed character!

BRACK. So they say.

TESMAN. And then he has published a new book—eh?

BRACK. Yes, indeed he has.

TESMAN. And I hear it has made some sensation!

BRACK. Quite an unusual sensation.

TESMAN. Fancy—isn't that good news! A man of such extraordinary talents——. I felt so grieved to think that he had gone irretrievably to ruin.

BRACK. That was what everybody thought.

TESMAN. But I cannot imagine what he will take to now! How in the world will he be able to make his living? Eh?

[*During the last words,* HEDDA *has entered by the hall door.*]

HEDDA. [*To* BRACK, *laughing with a touch of scorn.*] Tesman is for ever worrying about how people are to make their living.

TESMAN. Well you see, dear—we were talking about poor Eilert Lovborg.

HEDDA. [*Glancing at him rapidly.*] Oh, indeed? [*Seats herself in the arm-chair beside the stove and asks indifferently.*] What is the matter with him?

TESMAN. Well—no doubt he has run through all his property long ago; and he can scarcely write a new book every year—eh? So I really can't see what is to become of him.

BRACK. Perhaps I can give you some information on that point.

TESMAN. Indeed!

BRACK. You must remember that his relations have a good deal of influence.

TESMAN. Oh, his relations, unfortunately, have entirely washed their hands of him.

BRACK. At one time they called him the hope of the family.

TESMAN. At one time, yes! But he has put an end to all that.

HEDDA. Who knows? [*With a slight smile.*] I hear they have reclaimed him up at Sheriff Elvsted's——

BRACK. And then this book that he has published——

TESMAN. Well, well, I hope to goodness they may find something for him to do. I have just written to him. I asked him to come and see us this evening, Hedda dear.

BRACK. But my dear fellow, you are booked for my bachelors' party this evening. You promised on the pier last night.

HEDDA. Had you forgotten, Tesman?

TESMAN. Yes, I had utterly forgotten.

BRACK. But it doesn't matter, for you may be sure he won't come.

TESMAN. What makes you think that? Eh?

BRACK. [*With a little hesitation, rising and resting his hands on the back of his chair.*] My dear Tesman—and you too, Mrs. Tesman—I think I ought not to keep you in the dark about something that—that——

TESMAN. That concerns Eilert——?

BRACK. Both you and him.

TESMAN. Well, my dear Judge, out with it.

BRACK. You must be prepared to find your appointment deferred longer than you desired or expected.

TESMAN. [*Jumping up uneasily.*] Is there some hitch about it? Eh?

BRACK. The nomination may perhaps be made conditional on the result of a competition——

TESMAN. Competition! Think of that, Hedda!

HEDDA. [*Leans further back in the chair.*] Aha—aha!

TESMAN. But who can my competitor be? Surely not——?

BRACK. Yes, precisely—Eilert Lovborg.

TESMAN. [*Clasping his hands.*] No, no—it's quite inconceivable! Quite impossible! Eh?

BRACK. H'm—that is what it may come to, all the same.

TESMAN. Well but, Judge Brack—it would show the most incredible lack of consideration for me. [*Gesticulates with his arms.*] For—just think—I'm a married man! We have married on the strength of these prospects, Hedda and I; and run deep into debt; and borrowed money from Aunt Julia too. Good heavens, they had as good as promised me the appointment. Eh?

BRACK. Well, well, well—no doubt you will get it in the end, only after a contest.

HEDDA. [*Immovable in her arm-chair.*] Fancy, Tesman, there will be a sort of sporting interest in that.

TESMAN. Why, my dearest Hedda, how can you be so indifferent about it?

HEDDA. [*As before.*] I am not at all indifferent. I am most eager to see who wins.

BRACK. In any case, Mrs. Tesman, it is best that you should know how matters stand. I mean—before you set about the little purchases I hear you are threatening.

HEDDA. This can make no difference.

BRACK. Indeed! Then I have no more to say. Good-bye! [*To* TESMAN.] I shall look in on my way back from my afternoon walk, and take you home with me.

TESMAN. Oh yes, yes—your news has quite upset me.

HEDDA. [*Reclining, holds out her hand.*] Good-bye, Judge; and be sure you call in the afternoon.

BRACK. Many thanks. Good-bye, good-bye!

TESMAN. [*Accompanying him to the door.*] Good-bye, my dear Judge! You must really excuse me——

[JUDGE BRACK *goes out by the hall door.*]

TESMAN. [*Crosses the room.*] Oh Hedda—one should never rush into adventures. Eh?

HEDDA. [*Looks at him, smiling.*] Do you do that?

TESMAN. Yes, dear—there is no denying—it was adventurous to go and marry and set up house upon mere expectations.

HEDDA. Perhaps you are right there.

TESMAN. Well—at all events, we have our delightful home, Hedda! Fancy, the home we both dreamed of—the home we were in love with, I may almost say. Eh?

HEDDA. [*Rising slowly and wearily.*] It was part of our compact that we were to go into society—to keep open house.

TESMAN. Yes, if you only knew how I had been looking forward to it! Fancy—to see you as hostess—in a select circle! Eh? Well, well, well—for the present we shall have to get on without society, Hedda—only to invite Aunt Julia now and then.—Oh, I intended you to lead such an utterly different life, dear——!

HEDDA. Of course I cannot have my man in livery just yet.

TESMAN. Oh no, unfortunately. It would be out of the question for us to keep a footman, you know.

HEDDA. And the saddle-horse I was to have had——

TESMAN. [*Aghast.*] The saddle-horse!

HEDDA. ——I suppose I must not think of that now.

TESMAN. Good heavens, no!—that's as clear as daylight.

HEDDA. [*Goes up the room.*] Well, I shall have one thing at least to kill time with in the meanwhile.

TESMAN. [*Beaming.*] Oh thank heaven for that! What is it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. [*In the middle doorway, looks at him with covert scorn.*] My pistols, George.

TESMAN. [*In alarm.*] Your pistols!

HEDDA. [*With cold eyes.*] General Gabler's pistols. [*She goes out through the inner room, to the left.*]

TESMAN. [*Rushes up to the middle doorway and calls after her.*] No, for heaven's sake, Hedda darling—don't touch those dangerous things! For my sake, Hedda! Eh?

ACT II

SCENE: *The room at the* TESMANS' *as in the first act, except that the piano has been removed, and an elegant little writing-table with book-shelves put in its place. A smaller table stands near the sofa on the left. Most of the bouquets have been taken away.* MRS. ELVSTED'S *bouquet is upon the large table in front.—It is afternoon.* HEDDA, *dressed to receive callers, is alone in the room. She stands by the open glass door, loading a revolver. The fellow to it lies in an open pistol-case on the writing-table.*

HEDDA. [*Looks down the garden, and calls.*] So you are here again, Judge!

BRACK. [*Is heard calling from a distance.*] As you see, Mrs. Tesman!

HEDDA. [*Raises the pistol and points.*] Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack!

BRACK. [*Calling unseen.*] No, no, no! Don't stand aiming at me!

HEDDA. This is what comes of sneaking in by the back way. [*She fires.*]

BRACK. [*Nearer.*] Are you out of your senses!——

HEDDA. Dear me—did I happen to hit you?

BRACK. [*Still outside.*] I wish you would let these pranks alone!

HEDDA. Come in then, Judge.

[JUDGE BRACK, *dressed as though for a men's party, enters by the glass door. He carries a light overcoat over his arm.*]

BRACK. What the deuce—haven't you tired of that sport, yet? What are you shooting at?

HEDDA. Oh, I am only firing in the air.

BRACK. [*Gently takes the pistol out of her hand.*] Allow me, Madam! [*Looks at it.*] Ah—I know this pistol well! [*Looks around.*] Where is the case? Ah, here it is. [*Lays the pistol in it, and shuts it.*] Now we won't play at that game any more to-day.

HEDDA. Then what in heaven's name would you have me do with myself?

BRACK. Have you had no visitors?

HEDDA. [*Closing the glass door.*] Not one. I suppose all our set are still out of town.

BRACK. And is Tesman not at home either?

HEDDA. [*At the writing-table, putting the pistol-case in a drawer which she shuts.*] No. He rushed off to his aunt's directly after lunch; he didn't expect you so early.

BRACK. I I'm—how stupid of me not to have thought of that!

HEDDA. [*Turning her head to look at him.*] Why stupid?

BRACK. Because if I had thought of it I should have come a little—earlier.

HEDDA. [*Crossing the room.*] Then you would have found no one to receive you; for I have been in my room changing my dress ever since lunch.

BRACK. And is there no sort of little chink that we could hold a parley through?

HEDDA. You have forgotten to arrange one.

BRACK. That was another piece of stupidity.

HEDDA. Well, we must just settle down here—and wait. Tesman is not likely to be back for some time yet.

BRACK. Never mind; I shall not be impatient.

[HEDDA *seats herself in the corner of the sofa.* BRACK *lays his overcoat over the back of the nearest chair, and sits down, but keeps his hat in his hand. A short silence. They look at each other.*]

HEDDA. Well?

BRACK. [*In the same tone.*] Well?

HEDDA. I spoke first.

BRACK. [*Bending a little forward.*] Come, let us have a cosy little chat, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. [*Leaning further back in the sofa.*] Does it not seem like a whole eternity since our last talk? Of course I don't count those few words yesterday evening and this morning.

BRACK. You mean since our last confidential talk? Our last *tête-à-tête?*

HEDDA. Well, yes—since you put it so.

BRACK. Not a day has passed but I have wished that you were home again.

HEDDA. And I have done nothing but wish the same thing.

BRACK. You? Really, Mrs. Hedda? And I thought you had been enjoying your tour so much!

HEDDA. Oh, yes, you may be sure of that!

BRACK. But Tesman's letters spoke of nothing but happiness.

HEDDA. Oh, Tesman! You see, he thinks nothing so delightful as grubbing in libraries and making copies of old parchments, or whatever you call them.

BRACK. [*With a spice of malice.*] Well, that is his vocation in life—or part of it at any rate.

HEDDA. Yes, of course; and no doubt when it's your vocation——. But I! Oh, my dear Mr. Brack, how mortally bored I have been.

BRACK. [*Sympathetically.*] Do you really say so? In downright earnest?

HEDDA. Yes, you can surely understand it——! To go for six whole months without meeting a soul that knew anything of our circle, or could talk about the things we are interested in.

BRACK. Yes, yes—I, too, should feel that a deprivation.

HEDDA. And then, what I found most intolerable of all—

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. ——was being everlastingly in the company of—one and the same person——

BRACK. [*With a nod of assent.*] Morning, noon, and night, yes—at all possible times and seasons.

HEDDA. I said "everlastingly."

BRACK. Just so. But I should have thought, with our excellent Tesman, one could——

HEDDA. Tesman is—a specialist, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Undeniably.

HEDDA. And specialists are not at all amusing to travel with. Not in the long run at any rate.

BRACK. Not even—the specialist one happens to love?

HEDDA. Faugh—don't use that sickening word!

BRACK. [*Taken aback.*] What do you say, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. [*Half laughingly, half irritated.*] You should just try it! To hear of nothing but the history of civilization morning, noon, and night——

BRACK. Everlastingly.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, yes! And then all this about the domestic industry of the middle ages——! That's the most disgusting part of it!

BRACK. [*Looks searchingly at her.*] But tell me—in that case, how am I to understand your——? H'm——

HEDDA. My accepting George Tesman, you mean?

BRACK. Well, let us put it so.

HEDDA. Good heavens, do you see anything so wonderful in that?

BRACK. Yes and no—Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I had positively danced myself tired, my dear Judge. My day was done—— [*With a slight shudder.*] Oh, no—I won't say that; nor think it, either!

BRACK. You have assuredly no reason to.

HEDDA. Oh, reasons—— [*Watching him closely.*] And George Tesman—after all, you must admit that he is correctness itself.

BRACK. His correctness and respectability are beyond all question.

HEDDA. And I don't see anything absolutely ridiculous about him.—Do you?

BRACK. Ridiculous? N—no—I shouldn't exactly say so——

HEDDA. Well—and his powers of research, at all events, are untiring.—I see no reason why he should not one day come to the front, after all.

BRACK. [*Looks at her hesitatingly.*] I thought that you, like every one else, expected him to attain the highest distinction.

HEDDA. [*With an expression of fatigue.*] Yes, so I did—And then, since he was bent, at all hazards, on being allowed to provide for me—I really don't know why I should not have accepted his offer?

BRACK. No—if you look at it in that light——

HEDDA. It was more than my other adorers were prepared to do for me, my dear Judge.

BRACK. [*Laughing.*] Well, I can't answer for all the rest; but as for myself, you know quite well that I have always entertained a—a certain respect for the marriage tie—for marriage as an institution, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. [*Jestingly.*] Oh, I assure you I have never cherished any hopes with respect to you.

BRACK. All I require is a pleasant and intimate interior, where I can make myself useful in every way, and am free to come and go as—as a trusted friend——

HEDDA. Of the master of the house, do you mean?

BRACK. [*Bowing.*] Frankly—of the mistress first of all; but, of course, of the master, too, in the second place. Such a triangular friendship—if I may call it so—is really a great convenience for all parties, let me tell you.

HEDDA. Yes, I have many a time longed for some one to make a third on our travels. Oh—those railway-carriage *tête-à-têtes*——!

BRACK. Fortunately your wedding journey is over now.

HEDDA. [*Shaking her head.*] Not by a long—long way. I have only arrived at a station on the line.

BRACK. Well, then the passengers jump out and move about a little, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I never jump out.

BRACK. Really?

HEDDA. No—because there is always some one standing by to——

BRACK. [*Laughing.*] To look at your legs, do you mean?

HEDDA. Precisely.

BRACK. Well, but, dear me——

HEDDA. [*With a gesture of repulsion.*] I won't have it. I would rather keep my seat where I happen to be—and continue the *tête-à-tête.*

BRACK. But suppose a third person were to jump in and join the couple.

HEDDA. Ah—that is quite another matter!

BRACK. A trusted, sympathetic friend——

HEDDA. ——with a fund of conversation on all sorts of lively topics——

BRACK. ——and not the least bit of a specialist!

HEDDA. [*With an audible sigh.*] Yes, that would be a relief, indeed.

BRACK. [*Hears the front door open, and glances in that direction.*] The triangle is completed.

HEDDA. [*Half aloud.*] And on goes the train.

[GEORGE TESMAN, *in a gray walking-suit, with a soft felt hat, enters from the hall. He has a number of unbound books under his arm and in his pockets.*]

TESMAN. [*Goes up to the table beside the corner settee.*] Ouf—what a load for a warm day—all these books. [*Lays them on the table.*] I'm positively perspiring, Hedda. Hallo—are you there already, my dear Judge? Eh? Berta didn't tell me.

BRACK. [*Rising.*] I came in through the garden.

HEDDA. What books have you got there?

TESMAN. [*Stands looking them through.*] Some new books on my special subjects—quite indispensable to me.

HEDDA. Your special subjects?

BRACK. Yes, books on his special subjects, Mrs. Tesman.

[BRACK *and* HEDDA *exchange a confidential smile.*]

HEDDA. Do you need still more books on your special subjects?

TESMAN. Yes, my dear Hedda, one can never have too many of them. Of course, one must keep up with all that is written and published.

HEDDA. Yes, I suppose one must.

TESMAN. [*Searching among his books.*] And look here—I have got hold of Eilert Lovborg's new book, too. [*Offering it to her.*] Perhaps you would like to glance through it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, thank you. Or rather—afterwards perhaps.

TESMAN. I looked into it a little on the way home.

BRACK. Well, what do you think of it—as a specialist?

TESMAN. I think it shows quite remarkable soundness of judgment. He never wrote like that before. [*Putting the books together.*] Now I shall take all these into my study. I'm longing to cut the leaves——! And then I must change my clothes. [*To* BRACK.] I suppose we needn't start just yet? Eh?

BRACK. Oh, dear, no—there is not the slightest hurry.

TESMAN. Well, then, I will take my time. [*Is going with his books, but stops in the doorway and turns.*] By the by, Hedda—Aunt Julia is not coming this evening.

HEDDA. Not coming? Is it that affair of the bonnet that keeps her away?

TESMAN. Oh, not at all. How could you think such a thing of Aunt Julia? Just fancy——! The fact is, Aunt Rina is very ill.

HEDDA. She always is.

TESMAN. Yes, but to-day she is much worse than usual, poor dear.

HEDDA. Oh, then it's only natural that her sister should remain with her. I must bear my disappointment.

TESMAN. And you can't imagine, dear, how delighted Aunt Julia seemed to be—because you had come home looking so flourishing!

HEDDA. [*Half aloud, rising.*] Oh, those everlasting Aunts!

TESMAN. What?

HEDDA. [*Going to the glass door.*] Nothing.

TESMAN. Oh, all right. [*He goes through the inner room, out to the right.*]

BRACK. What bonnet were you talking about?

HEDDA. Oh, it was a little episode with Miss Tesman this morning. She had laid down her bonnet on the chair there—[*Looks at him and smiles.*]—and I pretended to think it was the servant's.

BRACK. [*Shaking his head.*] Now, my dear Mrs. Hedda, how could you do such a thing? To that excellent old lady, too!

HEDDA. [*Nervously crossing the room.*] Well, you see—these impulses come over me all of a sudden; and I cannot resist them. [*Throws herself down in the easy-chair by the stove.*] Oh, I don't know how to explain it.

BRACK. [*Behind the easy-chair.*] You are not really happy—that is at the bottom of it.

HEDDA. [*Looking straight before her.*] I know of no reason why I should be—happy. Perhaps you can give me one?

BRACK. Well—amongst other things, because you have got exactly the home you had set your heart on.

HEDDA. [*Looks up at him and laughs.*] Do you, too, believe in that legend?

BRACK. Is there nothing in it, then?

HEDDA. Oh, yes, there is something in it.

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. There is this in it, that I made use of Tesman to see me home from evening parties last summer——

BRACK. I, unfortunately, had to go quite a different way.

HEDDA. That's true. I know you were going a different way last summer.

BRACK. [*Laughing.*] Oh fie, Mrs. Hedda! Well, then—you and Tesman——?

HEDDA. Well, we happened to pass here one evening; Tesman, poor fellow, was writhing in the agony of having to find conversation; so I took pity on the learned man——

BRACK. [*Smiles doubtfully.*] You took pity? H'm——

HEDDA. Yes, I really did. And so—to help him out of his torment—I happened to say, in pure thoughtlessness, that I should like to live in this villa.

BRACK. No more than that?

HEDDA. Not that evening.

BRACK. But afterwards?

HEDDA. Yes, my thoughtlessness had consequences, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Unfortunately that too often happens, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Thanks! So you see it was this enthusiasm for Secretary Falk's villa that first constituted a bond of sympathy between George Tesman and me. From that came our engagement and our marriage, and our wedding journey, and all the rest of it. Well, well, my dear judge—as you make your bed so you must lie, I could almost say.

BRACK. This is exquisite! And you really cared not a rap about it all the time?

HEDDA. No, heaven knows I didn't.

BRACK. But now? Now that we have made it so homelike for you?

HEDDA. Ugh—the rooms all seem to smell of lavender and dried roseleaves. —But perhaps it's Aunt Julia that has brought that scent with her.

BRACK. [*Laughing.*] No, I think it must be a legacy from the late Mrs. Secretary Falk.

HEDDA. Yes, there is an odor of mortality about it. It reminds me of a bouquet—the day after the ball. [*Clasps her hands behind her head, leans back in her chair and looks at him.*] Oh, my dear Judge—you cannot imagine how horribly I shall bore myself here.

BRACK. Why should not you, too, find some sort of vocation in life, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. A vocation—that should attract me?

BRACK. If possible, of course.

HEDDA. Heaven knows what sort of a vocation that could be. I often wonder whether—— [*Breaking off.*] But that would never do, either.

BRACK. Who can tell? Let me hear what it is.

HEDDA. Whether I might not get Tesman to go into politics, I mean.

BRACK. [*Laughing.*] Tesman? No, really now, political life is not the thing for him—not at all in his line.

HEDDA. No, I daresay not.—But if I could get him into it all the same?

BRACK. Why—what satisfaction could you find in that? If he is not fitted for that sort of thing, why should you want to drive him into it?

HEDDA. Because I am bored, I tell you! [*After a pause.*] So you think it quite out of the question that Tesman should ever get into the ministry?

BRACK. H'm—you see, my dear Mrs. Hedda—to get into the ministry, he would have to be a tolerably rich man.

HEDDA. [*Rising impatiently.*] Yes, there we have it! It is this genteel poverty I have managed to drop into——! [*Crosses the room.*] That is what makes life so pitiable! So utterly ludicrous!—For that's what it is.

BRACK. Now *I* should say the fault lay elsewhere.

HEDDA. Where, then?

BRACK. You have never gone through any really stimulating experience.

HEDDA. Anything serious, you mean?

BRACK. Yes, you may call it so. But now you may perhaps have one in store.

HEDDA. [*Tossing her head.*] Oh, you're thinking of the annoyances about this wretched professorship! But that must be Tesman's own affair. I assure you I shall not waste a thought upon it.

BRACK. No, no, I daresay not. But suppose now that what people call—in elegant language—a solemn responsibility were to come upon you? [*Smiling.*] A new responsibility, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. [*Angrily.*] Be quiet! Nothing of that sort will ever happen!

BRACK. [*Warily.*] We will speak of this again a year hence—at the very outside.

HEDDA. [*Curtly.*] I have no turn for anything of the sort, Judge Brack. No responsibilities for me!

BRACK. Are you so unlike the generality of women as to have no turn for duties which——?

HEDDA. [*Beside the glass door.*] Oh, be quiet, I tell you!—I often think there is only one thing in the world I have any turn for.

BRACK. [*Drawing near to her.*] And what is that, if I may ask?

HEDDA. [*Stands looking out.*] Boring myself to death. Now you know it. [*Turns, looks towards the inner room, and laughs.*] Yes, as I thought! Here comes the Professor.

BRACK. [*Softly, in a tone of warning.*] Come, come, come, Mrs. Hedda!

[GEORGE TESMAN, *dressed for the party, with his gloves and hat in his hand, enters from the right through the inner room.*]

TESMAN. Hedda, has no message come from Eilert Lövborg? Eh?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Then you'll see he'll be here presently.

BRACK. Do you really think he will come?

TESMAN. Yes, I am almost sure of it. For what you were telling us this morning must have been a mere floating rumor.

BRACK. You think so?

TESMAN. At any rate, Aunt Julia said she did not believe for a moment that he would ever stand in my way again. Fancy that!

BRACK. Well, then, that's all right.

TESMAN. [*Placing his hat and gloves on a chair on the right.*] Yes, but you must really let me wait for him as long as possible.

BRACK. We have plenty of time yet. None of my guests will arrive before seven or half-past.

TESMAN. Then meanwhile we can keep Hedda company, and see what happens. Eh?

HEDDA. [*Placing* BRACK'S *hat and overcoat upon the corner settee.*] And at the worst Mr. Lovborg can remain here with me.

BRACK. [*Offering to take his things.*] Oh, allow me, Mrs. Tesman!—What do you mean by "at the worst"?

HEDDA. If he won't go with you and Tesman.

TESMAN. [*Looks dubiously at her.*] But, Hedda, dear—do you think it would quite do for him to remain with you? Eh? Remember, Aunt Julia can't come.

HEDDA. No, but Mrs. Elvsted is coming. We three can have a cup of tea together.

TESMAN. Oh, yes, that will be all right.

BRACK. [*Smiling.*] And that would perhaps be the safest plan for him.

HEDDA. Why so?

BRACK. Well, you know, Mrs. Tesman, how you used to gird at my little bachelor parties. You declared they were adapted only for men of the strictest principles.

HEDDA. But no doubt Mr. Lovborg's principles are strict enough now. A converted sinner——

[BERTA *appears at the hall door.*]

BERTA. There's a gentleman asking if you are at home, ma'am——

HEDDA. Well, show him in.

TESMAN. [*Softly.*] I'm sure it is he! Fancy that!

[EILERT LOVBORG *enters from the hall. He is slim and lean; of the same age as* TESMAN, *but looks older and somewhat worn-out. His hair and beard are of a blackish brown, his face long and pale, but with patches of color on the cheek-bones. He is dressed in a well-cut black visiting suit, quite new. He has dark gloves and a silk hat. He stops near the door, and makes a rapid bow, seeming somewhat embarrassed.*]

TESMAN. [*Goes up to him and shakes him warmly by the hand.*] Well, my dear Eilert—so at last we meet again!

EILERT LÖVBORG. [*Speaks in a subdued voice.*] Thanks for your letter, Tesman. [*Approaching* HEDDA.] Will you, too, shake hands with me, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA. [*Taking his hand.*] I am glad to see you, Mr. Lovborg. [*With a motion of her hand.*] I don't know whether you two gentlemen——?

LÖVBORG. [*Bowing slightly.*] Judge Brack, I think.

BRACK. [*Doing likewise.*] Oh, yes,—in the old days——

TESMAN. [*To* LÖVBORG, *with his hands on his shoulders.*] And now you must make yourself entirely at home, Eilert! Mustn't he, Hedda?—For I hear you are going to settle in town again? Eh?

LOVBORG. Yes, I am.

TESMAN. Quite right, quite right. Let me tell you, I have got hold of your new book; but I haven't had time to read it yet.

LOVBORG. You may spare yourself the trouble.

TESMAN. Why so?

LÖVBORG. Because there is very little in it.

TESMAN. Just fancy—how can you say so?

BRACK. But it has been very much praised, I hear.

LÖVBORG. That was what I wanted; so I put nothing into the book but what every one would agree with.

BRACK. Very wise of you.

TESMAN. Well, but, my dear Eilert——!

LÖVBORG. For now I mean to win myself a position again—to make a fresh start.

TESMAN. [*A little embarrassed.*] Ah, that is what you wish to do? Eh?

LÖVBORG. [*Smiling, lays down his hat, and draws a packet, wrapped in paper, from his coat pocket.*] But when this one appears, George Tesman, you will have to read it. For this is the real book—the book I have put my true self into.

TESMAN. Indeed? And what is it?

LOVBORG. It is the continuation.

TESMAN. The continuation? Of what?

LOVBORG. Of the book.

TESMAN. Of the new book?

LOVBORG. Of course.

TESMAN. Why, my dear Eilert—does it not come down to our own days?

LOVBORG. Yes, it does; and this one deals with the future.

TESMAN. With the future! But, good heavens, we know nothing of the future!

LÖVBORG. No; but there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same. [*Opens the packet.*] Look here——

TESMAN. Why, that's not your handwriting.

LOVBORG. I dictated it. [*Turning over the pages.*] It falls into two sections. The first deals with the civilizing forces of the future. And here is the second —[*Running through the pages towards the end.*]—forecasting the probable line of development.

TESMAN. How odd now! I should never have thought of writing anything of that sort.

HEDDA. [*At the glass door, drumming on the pane.*] H'm—— I daresay not.

LÖVBORG. [*Replacing the manuscript in its paper and laying the packet on*

the table.] I brought it, thinking I might read you a little of it this evening.

TESMAN. That was very good of you, Eilert. But this evening——? [*Looking at* BRACK.] I don't quite see how we can manage it——

LOVBORG. Well, then, some other time. There is no hurry.

BRACK. I must tell you, Mr. Lovborg—there is a little gathering at my house this evening—mainly in honor of Tesman, you know——

LOVBORG. [*Looking for his hat.*] Oh—then I won't detain you——

BRACK. No, but listen—will you not do me the favor of joining us?

LOVBORG. [*Curtly and decidedly.*] No, I can't—thank you very much.

BRACK. Oh, nonsense—do! We shall be quite a select little circle. And I assure you we shall have a "lively time," as Mrs. Hed—as Mrs. Tesman says.

LOVBORG. I have no doubt of it. But nevertheless——

BRACK. And then you might bring your manuscript with you, and read it to Tesman at my house. I could give you a room to yourselves.

TESMAN. Yes, think of that, Eilert,—why shouldn't you? Eh?

HEDDA. [*Interposing.*] But, Tesman, if Mr. Lovborg would really rather not! I am sure Mr. Lovborg is much more inclined to remain here and have supper with me.

LOVBORG. [*Looking at her.*] With you, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA. And with Mrs. Elvsted.

LOVBORG. Ah—— [*Lightly.*] I saw her for a moment this morning.

HEDDA. Did you? Well, she is coming this evening. So you see you are almost bound to remain, Mr. Lovborg, or she will have no one to see her home.

LOVBORG. That's true. Many thanks, Mrs. Tesman—in that case I will remain.

HEDDA. Then I have one or two orders to give the servant——

[*She goes to the hall door and rings.* BERTA *enters.* HEDDA *talks to her in a whisper, and points towards the inner room.* BERTA *nods and goes out again.*]

TESMAN. [*At the same time, to* LOVBORG.] Tell me, Eilert—is it this new subject—the future—that you are going to lecture about?

LOVBORG. Yes.

TESMAN. They told me at the bookseller's that you are going to deliver a course of lectures this autumn.

LOVBORG. That is my intention. I hope you won't take it ill, Tesman.

TESMAN. Oh no, not in the least! But——?

LOVBORG. I can quite understand that it must be disagreeable to you.

TESMAN. [*Cast down.*] Oh, I can't expect you, out of consideration for me, to——

LOVBORG. But I shall wait till you have received your appointment.

TESMAN. Will you wait? Yes, but—yes, but—are you not going to compete with me? Eh?

LOVBORG. No; it is only the moral victory I care for.

TESMAN. Why, bless me—then Aunt Julia was right after all! Oh, yes—I knew it! Hedda! Just fancy—Eilert Lövborg is not going to stand in our way!

HEDDA. [*Curtly.*] Our way? Pray leave me out of the question.

[*She goes up towards the inner room, where* BERTA *is placing a tray with decanters and glasses on the table.* HEDDA *nods approval, and comes forward again.* BERTA *goes out.*]

TESMAN. [*At the same time.*] And you, Judge Brack—what do you say to this? Eh?

BRACK. Well, I say that a moral victory—h'm—may be all very fine——

TESMAN. Yes, certainly. But all the same——

HEDDA. [*Looking at* TESMAN *with a cold smile.*] You stand there looking as if you were thunderstruck——

TESMAN. Yes—so I am—I almost think——

BRACK. Don't you see, Mrs. Tesman, a thunderstorm has just passed over?

HEDDA. [*Pointing towards the inner room.*] Will you not take a glass of cold punch, gentlemen?

BRACK. [*Looking at his watch.*] A stirrup-cup? Yes, it wouldn't come amiss.

TESMAN. A capital idea, Hedda! Just the thing! Now that the weight has been taken off my mind——

HEDDA. Will you not join them, Mr. Lövborg?

LOVBORG. [*With a gesture of refusal.*] No, thank you. Nothing for me.

BRACK. Why bless me—cold punch is surely not poison.

LOVBORG. Perhaps not for every one.

HEDDA. I will keep Mr. Lovborg company in the meantime.

TESMAN. Yes, yes, Hedda dear, do.

[*He and* BRACK *go into the inner room, seat themselves, drink punch, smoke cigarettes, and carry on a lively conversation during what follows.* EILERT LÖVBORG *remains standing beside the stove.* HEDDA *goes to the writing-table.*]

HEDDA. [*Raising her voice a little.*] Do you care to look at some photographs, Mr. Lovborg? You know Tesman and I made a tour in the Tyrol on our way home?

[*She takes up an album, and places it on the table beside the sofa, in the further corner of which she seats herself.* EILERT LÖVBORG *approaches, stops, and looks at her. Then he takes a chair and seats himself to her left, with his back towards the inner room.*]

HEDDA. [*Opening the album.*] Do you see this range of mountains, Mr. Lövborg? It's the Ortler group. Tesman has written the name underneath. Here it is: "The Ortler group near Meram."

LÖVBORG. [*Who has never taken his eyes off her, says softly and slowly.*] Hedda—Gabler!

HEDDA. [*Glancing hastily at him.*] Ah! Hush!

LÖVBORG. [*Repeats softly.*] Hedda Gabler!

HEDDA. [*Looking at the album.*] That was my name in the old days—when we two knew each other.

LOVBORG. And I must teach myself never to say Hedda Gabler again—never, as long as I live.

HEDDA. [*Still turning over the pages.*] Yes, you must. And I think you ought to practise in time. The sooner the better, I should say.

LÖVBORG. [*In a tone of indignation.*] Hedda Gabler married? And married to—George Tesman!

HEDDA. Yes—so the world goes.

LOVBORG. Oh, Hedda, Hedda—how could you[5] throw yourself away!

HEDDA. [*Looks sharply at him.*] What? I can't allow this!

LOVBORG. What do you mean?

[TESMAN *comes into the room and goes towards the sofa.*]

HEDDA. [*Hears him coming and says in an indifferent tone.*] And this is a view from the Val d'Ampezzo, Mr. Lovborg. Just look at these peaks! [*Looks affectionately up at* TESMAN.] What's the name of these curious peaks, dear?

TESMAN. Let me see. Oh, those are the Dolomites.

HEDDA. Yes, that's it!—Those are the Dolomites, Mr. Lovborg.

TESMAN. Hedda, dear,—I only wanted to ask whether I shouldn't bring you a little punch after all? For yourself, at any rate—eh?

HEDDA. Yes, do, please; and perhaps a few biscuits.

TESMAN. No cigarettes?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Very well.

[*He goes into the inner room and out to the right.* BRACK *sits in the inner room, and keeps an eye from time to time on* HEDDA *and* LOVBORG.]

LOVBORG. [*Softly, as before.*] Answer me, Hedda—how could you go and do this?

HEDDA. [*Apparently absorbed in the album.*] If you continue to say *du* to me I won't talk to you.

LÖVBORG. May I not say *du* even when we are alone?

HEDDA. No. You may think it; but you mustn't say it.

LOVBORG. Ah, I understand. It is an offence against George Tesman, whom you[6] love.

HEDDA. [*Glances at him and smiles.*] Love? What an idea!

LÖVBORG. You don't love him then!

HEDDA. But I won't hear of any sort of unfaithfulness! Remember that.

LOVBORG. Hedda—answer me one thing——

HEDDA. Hush!

[TESMAN *enters with a small tray from the inner room.*]

TESMAN. Here you are! Isn't this tempting?

[*He puts the tray on the table.*]

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5. Lovborg uses the familiar *du*.
6. From here on Lövborg uses the formal *De*.

HEDDA. Why do you bring it yourself?

TESMAN. [*Filling the glasses.*] Because I think it's such fun to wait upon you, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you have poured out two glasses. Mr. Lövborg said he wouldn't have any——

TESMAN. No, but Mrs. Elvsted will soon be here, won't she?

HEDDA. Yes, by the by—Mrs. Elvsted——

TESMAN. Had you forgotten her? Eh?

HEDDA. We were so absorbed in these photographs. [*Shows him a picture.*] Do you remember this little village?

TESMAN. Oh, it's that one just below the Brenner Pass. It was there we passed the night——

HEDDA. ——and met that lively party of tourists.

TESMAN. Yes, that was the place. Fancy—if we could only have had you with us, Eilert! Eh?

[*He returns to the inner room and sits beside* BRACK.]

LÖVBORG. Answer me this one thing, Hedda——

HEDDA. Well?

LOVBORG. Was there no love in your friendship for me, either? Not a spark—not a tinge of love in it?

HEDDA. I wonder if there was? To me it seems as though we were two good comrades—two thoroughly intimate friends. [*Smilingly.*] You especially were frankness itself.

LOVBORG. It was you that made me so.

HEDDA. As I look back upon it all, I think there was really something beautiful, something fascinating—something daring—in—in that secret intimacy —that comradeship which no living creature so much as dreamed of.

LÖVBORG. Yes, yes, Hedda! Was there not?—When I used to come to your father's in the afternoon—and the General sat over at the window reading his papers—with his back towards us——

HEDDA. And we two on the corner sofa——

LÖVBORG. Always with the same illustrated paper before us——

HEDDA. For want of an album, yes.

LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda, and when I made my confessions to you—told you about myself, things that at that time no one else knew! There I would sit and tell you of my escapades—my days and nights of devilment. Oh, Hedda—what was the power in you that forced me to confess these things?

HEDDA. Do you think it was any power in me?

LÖVBORG. How else can I explain it? And all those—those roundabout questions you used to put to me——

HEDDA. Which you understood so particularly well——

LOVBORG. How could you sit and question me like that? Question me quite frankly——

HEDDA In roundabout terms, please observe

LOVBORG Yes, but frankly nevertheless Cross question me about—all that sort of thing?

HEDDA And how could you answer, Mr Lovborg?

LOVBORG Yes, that is just what I can t understand—in looking back upon it But tell me now, Hedda—was there not love at the bottom of our friend ship? On your side, did you not feel as though you might purge my stains away—if I made you my confessor? Was it not so?

HEDDA No, not quite

LOVBORG What was your motive, then?

HEDDA Do you think it quite incomprehensible that a young girl—when it can be done—without any one knowing——

LOVBORG Well?

HEDDA ——should be glad to have a peep, now and then, into a world which——

LOVBORG Which——?

HEDDA ——which she is forbidden to know anything about?

LOVBORG So that was it?

HEDDA Partly Partly—I almost think

LOVBORG Comradeship is the thirst for life But why should not that, at any rate, have continued?

HEDDA The fault was yours

LOVBORG It was you that broke with me

HEDDA Yes, when our friendship threatened to develop into something more serious Shame upon you, Eilert Lovborg! How could you think of wronging your—your frank comrade?

LOVBORG [*Clenching his hands*] Oh, why did you not carry out your threat? Why did you not shoot me down?

HEDDA Because I have such a dread of scandal

LOVBORG Yes, Hedda, you are a coward at heart

HEDDA A terrible coward [*Changing her tone*] But it was a lucky thing for you And now you have found ample consolation at the Elvsteds'

LOVBORG I know what Thea has confided to you

HEDDA And perhaps you have confided to her something about us?

LOVBORG Not a word She is too stupid to understand anything of that sort

HEDDA Stupid?

LOVBORG She is stupid about matters of that sort

HEDDA. And I am cowardly [*Bends over towards him, without looking him in the face, and says more softly*] But now I will confide something to you

LOVBORG. [*Eagerly*] Well?

HEDDA The fact that I dared not shoot you down——

LOVBORG. Yes!

HEDDA. ——that was not my most arrant cowardice—that evening.

LÖVBORG. [*Looks at her a moment, understands, and whispers passionately.*] Oh, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I begin to see a hidden reason beneath our comradeship! You[7] and I——! After all, then, it was your craving for life——

HEDDA. [*Softly, with a sharp glance.*] Take care! Believe nothing of the sort!

[*Twilight has begun to fall. The hall door is opened from without by* BERTA.]

HEDDA. [*Closes the album with a bang and calls smilingly.*] Ah, at last! My darling Thea,—come along!

[MRS. ELVSTED *enters from the hall. She is in evening dress. The door is closed behind her.*]

HEDDA. [*On the sofa, stretches out her arms towards her.*] My sweet Thea —you can't think how I have been longing for you!

[MRS. ELVSTED, *in passing, exchanges slight salutations with the gentlemen in the inner room, then goes up to the table and gives* HEDDA *her hand.* EILERT LOVBORG *has risen. He and* MRS. ELVSTED *greet each other with a silent nod.*]

MRS. ELVSTED. Ought I to go in and talk to your husband for a moment?

HEDDA. Oh, not at all. Leave those two alone. They will soon be going.

MRS. ELVSTED. Are they going out?

HEDDA. Yes, to a supper-party.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Quickly, to* LOVBORG.] Not you?

LOVBORG. No.

HEDDA. Mr. Lovborg remains with us.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Takes a chair and is about to seat herself at his side.*] Oh, how nice it is here!

HEDDA. No, thank you, my little Thea! Not there! You'll be good enough to come over here to me. I will sit between you.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, just as you please.

[*She goes round the table and seats herself on the sofa on* HEDDA'S *right.* LÖVBORG *re-seats himself on his chair.*]

LOVBORG. [*After a short pause, to* HEDDA.] Is not she lovely to look at?

HEDDA. [*Lightly stroking her hair.*] Only to look at?

LOVBORG. Yes. For we two—she and I—we are two real comrades. We have absolute faith in each other; so we can sit and talk with perfect frankness——

HEDDA. Not round about, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖVBORG. Well——

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Softly clinging close to* HEDDA.] Oh, how happy I am, Hedda! For, only think, he says I have inspired him, too.

HEDDA. [*Looks at her with a smile.*] Ah! Does he say that, dear?

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7. *Du* once more. Hedda uses *De* consistently.

LÖVBORG. And then she is so brave, Mrs. Tesman!

MRS. ELVSTED. Good heavens—am I brave?

LÖVBORG. Exceedingly—where your comrade is concerned.

HEDDA. Ah, yes—courage! If one only had that!

LÖVBORG. What then? What do you mean?

HEDDA. Then life would perhaps be livable, after all. [*With a sudden change of tone.*] But now, my dearest Thea, you really must have a glass of cold punch.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, thanks—I never take anything of that kind.

HEDDA. Well, then, you, Mr. Lövborg.

LOVBORG. Nor I, thank you.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he doesn't, either.

HEDDA. [*Looks fixedly at him.*] But if I say you shall?

LOVBORG. It would be no use.

HEDDA. [*Laughing.*] Then I, poor creature, have no sort of power over you?

LOVBORG. Not in that respect.

HEDDA. But seriously, I think you ought to—for your own sake.

MRS. ELVSTED. Why, Hedda——!

LOVBORG. How so?

HEDDA. Or rather on account of other people.

LOVBORG. Indeed?

HEDDA. Otherwise people might be apt to suspect that—in your heart of hearts—you did not feel quite secure—quite confident in yourself.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Softly.*] Oh, please, Hedda——!

LOVBORG. People may suspect what they like—for the present.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Joyfully.*] Yes, let them!

HEDDA. I saw it plainly in Judge Brack's face a moment ago.

LOVBORG. What did you see?

HEDDA. His contemptuous smile, when you dared not go with them into the inner room.

LOVBORG. Dared not? Of course I preferred to stop here and talk to you.

MRS. ELVSTED. What could be more natural, Hedda?

HEDDA. But the Judge could not guess that. And I saw, too, the way he smiled and glanced at Tesman when you dared not accept his invitation to this wretched little supper-party of his.

LÖVBORG. Dared not? Do you say I dared not?

HEDDA. *I* don't say so. But that was how Judge Brack understood it.

LÖVBORG. Well, let him.

HEDDA. Then you are not going with them?

LÖVBORG. I will stay here with you and Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, Hedda—how can you doubt that?

HEDDA. [*Smiles and nods approvingly to* LÖVBORG.] Firm as a rock! Faithful to your principles, now and forever! Ah, that is how a man should be!

[*Turns to* MRS. ELVSTED *and caresses her.*] Well, now, what did I tell you, when you came to us this morning in such a state of distraction——

LÖVBORG. [*Surprised.*] Distraction!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Terrified.*] Hedda—oh, Hedda——!

HEDDA. You can see for yourself! You haven't the slightest reason to be in such mortal terror—— [*Interrupting herself.*] There! Now we can all three enjoy ourselves!

LOVBORG. [*Who has given a start.*] Ah—what is all this, Mrs. Tesman?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, my God, Hedda! What are you saying? What are you doing?

HEDDA. Don't get excited! That horrid Judge Brack is sitting watching you.

LOVBORG. So she was in mortal terror! On my account!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Softly and piteously.*] Oh, Hedda—now you have ruined everything!

LOVBORG. [*Looks fixedly at her for a moment. His face is distorted.*] So that was my comrade's frank confidence in me?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Imploringly.*] Oh, my dearest friend—only let me tell you——

LOVBORG. [*Takes one of the glasses of punch, raises it to his lips, and says in a low, husky voice.*] Your health, Thea!

[*He empties the glass, puts it down, and takes the second.*]

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Softly.*] Oh, Hedda, Hedda—how could you do this?

HEDDA. *I* do it? *I*? Are you crazy?

LOVBORG. Here's to your health, too, Mrs. Tesman. Thanks for the truth. Hurrah for the truth!

[*He empties the glass and is about to re-fill it.*]

HEDDA. [*Lays her hand on his arm.*] Come, come—no more for the present. Remember you are going out to supper.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, no!

HEDDA. Hush! They are sitting watching you.

LOVBORG. [*Putting down the glass.*] Now, Thea—tell me the truth——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes.

LOVBORG. Did your husband know that you had come after me?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh, Hedda—do you hear what he is asking?

LOVBORG. Was it arranged between you and him that you were to come to town and look after me? Perhaps it was the Sheriff himself that urged you to come? Aha, my dear—no doubt he wanted my help in his office. Or was it at the card-table that he missed me?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Softly, in agony.*] Oh, Lövborg, Lövborg——!

LÖVBORG. [*Seizes a glass and is on the point of filling it.*] Here's a glass for the old Sheriff, too!

HEDDA. [*Preventing him.*] No more just now. Remember, you have to read your manuscript to Tesman.

LOVBORG. [*Calmly, putting down the glass.*] It was stupid of me all this, Thea—to take it in this way, I mean. Don't be angry with me, my dear, dear comrade. You shall see—both you and the others—that if I was fallen once—now I have risen again! Thanks to you, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Radiant with joy.*] Oh, heaven be praised——!

[BRACK *has in the meantime looked at his watch. He and* TESMAN *rise and come into the drawing room.*]

BRACK. [*Takes his hat and overcoat.*] Well, Mrs. Tesman, our time has come.

HEDDA. I suppose it has.

LOVBORG. [*Rising.*] Mine too, Judge Brack.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Softly and imploringly.*] Oh, Lövborg, don't do it!

HEDDA. [*Pinching her arm.*] They can hear you!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*With a suppressed shriek.*] Ow!

LOVBORG. [*To* BRACK.] You were good enough to invite me.

BRACK. Well, are you coming after all?

LÖVBORG. Yes, many thanks.

BRACK. I'm delighted——

LÖVBORG. [*To* TESMAN, *putting the parcel of MS. in his pocket.*] I should like to show you one or two things before I send it to the printers.

TESMAN. Fancy—that will be delightful. But, Hedda dear, how is Mrs. Elvsted to get home? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, that can be managed somehow.

LOVBORG. [*Looking towards the ladies.*] Mrs. Elvsted? Of course, I'll come again and fetch her. [*Approaching.*] At ten or thereabouts, Mrs. Tesman? Will that do?

HEDDA. Certainly. That will do capitally.

TESMAN. Well, then, that's all right. But you must not expect me so early, Hedda.

HEDDA. Oh, you may stop as long—as long as ever you please.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Trying to conceal her anxiety.*] Well, then, Mr. Lövborg—I shall remain here until you come.

LÖVBORG. [*With his hat in his hand.*] Pray do, Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. And now off goes the excursion train, gentlemen! I hope we shall have a lively time, as a certain fair lady puts it.

HEDDA. Ah, if only the fair lady could be present unseen——!

BRACK. Why unseen?

HEDDA. In order to hear a little of your liveliness at first hand, Judge Brack.

BRACK. [*Laughing.*] I should not advise the fair lady to try it.

TESMAN. [*Also laughing.*] Come, you're a nice one, Hedda! Fancy that!

BRACK. Well, good-bye, good-bye, ladies.

LOVBORG. [*Bowing.*] About ten o'clock, then.

[BRACK, LOVBORG, *and* TESMAN *go out by the hall door. At the same time,* BERTA *enters from the inner room with a lighted lamp, which she places on*

the drawing-room table; she goes out by the way she came.]

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Who has risen and is wandering restlessly about the room.*] Hedda—Hedda—what will come of all this?

HEDDA. At ten o'clock—he will be here. I can see him already—with vine-leaves[8] in his hair—flushed and fearless——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I hope he may.

HEDDA. And then, you see—then he will have regained control over himself. Then he will be a free man for all his days.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, God!—if he would only come as you see him now!

HEDDA. He will come as I see him—so, and not otherwise! [*Rises and approaches* THEA.] You may doubt him as long as you please; *I* believe in him. And now we will try——

MRS. ELVSTED. You have some hidden motive in this, Hedda!

HEDDA. Yes, I have. I want for once in my life to have power to mould a human destiny.

MRS. ELVSTED. Have you not the power?

HEDDA. I have not—and have never had it.

MRS. ELVSTED. Not your husband's?

HEDDA. Do you think that is worth the trouble? Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am. And fate has made you so rich! [*Clasps her passionately in her arms.*] I think I must burn your hair off, after all.

MRS. ELVSTED. Let me go! Let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda!

BERTA. [*In the middle doorway.*] Tea is laid in the dining-room, ma'am.

HEDDA. Very well. We are coming.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, no! I would rather go home alone! At once!

HEDDA. Nonsense! First you shall have a cup of tea, you little stupid. And then—at ten o'clock—Eilert Lovborg will be here—with vine-leaves in his hair.

[*She drags* MRS. ELVSTED *almost by force towards the middle doorway.*]

ACT III

SCENE: *The room at the* TESMANS'. *The curtains are drawn over the middle doorway, and also over the glass door. The lamp, half turned down, and with a shade over it, is burning on the table. In the stove, the door of which stands open, there has been a fire, which is now nearly burnt out.* MRS. ELVSTED, *wrapped in a large shawl, and with her feet upon a foot-rest, sits close to the stove, sunk back in the armchair.* HEDDA, *fully dressed, lies sleeping upon the sofa, with a sofa-blanket over her.*

MRS. ELVSTED. [*After a pause, suddenly sits up in her chair, and listens eagerly. Then she sinks back again wearily, moaning to herself.*] Not yet! —Oh, God—oh, God—not yet!

8. Bacchus (Greek god of wine) wore vine-leaves in his hair. For Hedda, the vine-leaves symbolize triumphantly courageous unconventionality.

[BERTA *slips cautiously in by the hall door. She has a letter in her hand.*]

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Turns and whispers eagerly.*] Well—has any one come?

BERTA. [*Softly.*] Yes, a girl has just brought this letter.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Quickly, holding out her hand.*] A letter! Give it to me!

BERTA. No, it's for Dr. Tesman, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, indeed.

BERTA. It was Miss Tesman's servant that brought it. I'll lay it here on the table.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, do.

BERTA. [*Laying down the letter.*] I think I had better put out the lamp. It's smoking.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, put it out. It must soon be daylight now.

BERTA. [*Putting out the lamp.*] It is daylight already, ma'am.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, broad day! And no one come back yet——!

BERTA. Lord bless you, ma'am—I guessed how it would be.

MRS. ELVSTED. You guessed?

BERTA. Yes, when I saw that a certain person had come back to town—and that he went off with them. For we've heard enough about that gentleman before now.

MRS. ELVSTED. Don't speak so loud. You will waken Mrs. Tesman.

BERTA. [*Looks towards the sofa and sighs.*] No, no—let her sleep, poor thing. Shan't I put some wood on the fire?

MRS. ELVSTED. Thanks, not for me.

BERTA. Oh, very well.

[*She goes softly out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA. [*Is awakened by the shutting of the door, and looks up.*] What's that——?

MRS. ELVSTED. It was only the servant——

HEDDA. [*Looking about her.*] Oh, we're here——! Yes, now I remember. [*Sits erect upon the sofa, stretches herself, and rubs her eyes.*] What o'clock is it, Thea?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Looks at her watch.*] It's past seven.

HEDDA. When did Tesman come home?

MRS. ELVSTED. He has not come.

HEDDA. Not come home yet?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Rising.*] No one has come.

HEDDA. Think of our watching and waiting here till four in the morning——

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Wringing her hands.*] And how I watched and waited for him!

HEDDA. [*Yawns, and says with her hand before her mouth.*] Well, well—we might have spared ourselves the trouble.

MRS. ELVSTED. Did you get a little sleep?

HEDDA. Oh, yes; I believe I have slept pretty well. Have you not?

MRS. ELVSTED. Not for a moment. I couldn't, Hedda!—not to save my life.

HEDDA. [*Rises and goes towards her.*] There, there, there! There's nothing to be so alarmed about. I understand quite well what has happened.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, what do you think? Won't you tell me?

HEDDA. Why, of course, it has been a very late affair at Judge Brack's——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes—that is clear enough. But all the same——

HEDDA. And then, you see, Tesman hasn't cared to come home and ring us up in the middle of the night. [*Laughing.*] Perhaps he wasn't inclined to show himself either—immediately after a jollification.

MRS. ELVSTED. But in that case—where can he have gone?

HEDDA. Of course, he has gone to his aunts' and slept there. They have his old room ready for him.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, he can't be with them; for a letter has just come for him from Miss Tesman. There it lies.

HEDDA. Indeed? [*Looks at the address.*] Why, yes, it's addressed in Aunt Julia's own hand. Well, then, he has remained at Judge Brack's. And as for Eilert Lovborg—he is sitting, with vine-leaves in his hair, reading his manuscript.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, Hedda, you are just saying things you don't believe a bit.

HEDDA. You really are a little blockhead, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, yes, I suppose I am.

HEDDA. And how mortally tired you look.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I am mortally tired.

HEDDA. Well, then, you must do as I tell you. You must go into my room and lie down for a little while.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, no, no—I shouldn't be able to sleep.

HEDDA. I am sure you would.

MRS. ELVSTED. Well, but your husband is certain to come soon now; and then I want to know at once——

HEDDA. I shall take care to let you know when he comes.

MRS. ELVSTED. Do you promise me, Hedda?

HEDDA. Yes, rely upon me. Just you go in and have a sleep in the meantime.

MRS. ELVSTED. Thanks; then I'll try to.

[*She goes off through the inner room.* HEDDA *goes up to the glass door and draws back the curtains. The broad daylight streams into the room. Then she takes a little hand-glass from the writing-table, looks at herself in it and arranges her hair. Next she goes to the hall door and presses the bell-button.* BERTA *presently appears at the hall door.*]

BERTA. Did you want anything, ma'am?

HEDDA. Yes; you must put some more wood in the stove. I am shivering.

BERTA. Bless me—I'll make up the fire at once. [*She rakes the embers together and lays a piece of wood upon them; then stops and listens.*] That was a ring at the front door, ma'am.

HEDDA. Then go to the door. I will look after the fire.

BERTA. It'll soon burn up.

[*She goes out by the hall door.* HEDDA *kneels on the foot-rest and lays some more pieces of wood in the stove. After a short pause,* GEORGE TESMAN *enters from the hall. He looks tired and rather serious. He steals on tip-toe towards the middle doorway and is about to slip through the curtains.*]

HEDDA. [*At the stove, without looking up.*] Good morning.

TESMAN. [*Turns.*] Hedda! [*Approaching her.*] Good heavens—are you up so early? Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am up very early this morning.

TESMAN. And I never doubted you were still sound asleep! Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Don't speak so loud. Mrs. Elvsted is resting in my room.

TESMAN. Has Mrs. Elvsted been here all night?

HEDDA. Yes, since no one came to fetch her.

TESMAN. Ah, to be sure.

HEDDA. [*Closes the door of the stove and rises.*] Well, did you enjoy yourselves at Judge Brack's?

TESMAN. Have you been anxious about me? Eh?

HEDDA. No, I should never think of being anxious. But I asked if you had enjoyed yourself.

TESMAN. Oh, yes,—for once in a way. Especially the beginning of the evening; for then Eilert read me part of his book. We arrived more than an hour too early—fancy that! And Brack had all sorts of arrangements to make—so Eilert read to me.

HEDDA. [*Seating herself by the table on the right.*] Well? Tell me, then——

TESMAN. [*Sitting on a footstool near the stove.*] Oh, Hedda, you can't conceive what a book that is going to be! I believe it is one of the most remarkable things that have ever been written. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Yes, yes; I don't care about that—

TESMAN. I must make a confession to you, Hedda. When he had finished reading—a horrid feeling came over me.

HEDDA. A horrid feeling?

TESMAN. I felt jealous of Eilert for having had it in him to write such a book. Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I am thinking!

TESMAN. And then how pitiful to think that he—with all his gifts—should be irreclaimable, after all.

HEDDA. I suppose you mean that he has more courage than the rest?

TESMAN. No, not at all—I mean that he is incapable of taking his pleasures in moderation.

HEDDA. And what came of it all—in the end?

TESMAN. Well, to tell the truth, I think it might best be described as an orgy, Hedda.

HEDDA. Had he vine-leaves in his hair?

TESMAN. Vine-leaves? No, I saw nothing of the sort. But he made a long, rambling speech in honor of the woman who had inspired him in his work—that was the phrase he used.

HEDDA. Did he name her?

TESMAN. No, he didn't; but I can't help thinking he meant Mrs. Elvsted. You may be sure he did.

HEDDA. Well—where did you part from him?

TESMAN. On the way to town. We broke up—the last of us at any rate—all together; and Brack came with us to get a breath of fresh air. And then, you see, we agreed to take Eilert home; for he had had far more than was good for him.

HEDDA. I daresay.

TESMAN. But now comes the strange part of it, Hedda; or, I should rather say, the melancholy part of it. I declare I am almost ashamed—on Eilert's account—to tell you——

HEDDA. Oh, go on——!

TESMAN. Well, as we were getting near town, you see, I happened to drop a little behind the others. Only for a minute or two—fancy that!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, yes, but——?

TESMAN. And then, as I hurried after them—what do you think I found by the wayside? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, how should I know!

TESMAN. You mustn't speak of it to a soul, Hedda! Do you hear! Promise me, for Eilert's sake. [*Draws a parcel, wrapped in paper, from his coat pocket.*] Fancy, dear—I found this.

HEDDA. Is not that the parcel he had with him yesterday?

TESMAN. Yes, it is the whole of his precious, irreplaceable manuscript! And he had gone and lost it, and knew nothing about it. Only fancy, Hedda! So deplorably——

HEDDA. But why did you not give him back the parcel at once?

TESMAN. I didn't dare to—in the state he was then in——

HEDDA. Did you not tell any of the others that you had found it?

TESMAN. Oh, far from it! You can surely understand that, for Eilert's sake, I wouldn't do that.

HEDDA. So no one knows that Eilert Lovborg's manuscript is in your possession?

TESMAN. No. And no one must know it.

HEDDA. Then what did you say to him afterwards?

TESMAN. I didn't talk to him again at all; for when we got in among the streets, he and two or three of the others gave us the slip and disappeared. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Indeed! They must have taken him home then.

TESMAN. Yes, so it would appear. And Brack, too, left us.

HEDDA. And what have you been doing with yourself since?

TESMAN. Well, I and some of the others went home with one of the party, a jolly fellow, and took our morning coffee with him; or perhaps I should rather call it our night coffee—eh? But now, when I have rested a little, and given Eilert, poor fellow, time to have his sleep out, I must take this back to him.

HEDDA. [*Holds out her hand for the packet.*] No—don't give it to him! Not in such a hurry, I mean. Let me read it first.

TESMAN. No, my dearest Hedda, I mustn't, I really mustn't.

HEDDA. You must not?

TESMAN. No—for you can imagine what a state of despair he will be in when he wakens and misses the manuscript. He has no copy of it, you must know! He told me so.

HEDDA. [*Looking searchingly at him.*] Can such a thing not be reproduced? Written over again?

TESMAN. No, I don't think that would be possible. For the inspiration, you see——

HEDDA. Yes, yes—I suppose it depends on that—— [*Lightly.*] But, by the by—here is a letter for you.

TESMAN. Fancy——!

HEDDA. [*Handing it to him.*] It came early this morning.

TESMAN. It's from Aunt Julia! What can it be? [*He lays the packet on the other footstool, opens the letter, runs his eye through it, and jumps up.*] Oh, Hedda—she says that poor Aunt Rina is dying!

HEDDA. Well, we were prepared for that.

TESMAN. And that if I want to see her again, I must make haste. I'll run in to them at once.

HEDDA. [*Suppressing a smile.*] Will you run?

TESMAN. Oh, my dearest Hedda—if you could only make up your mind to come with me! Just think!

HEDDA. [*Rises and says wearily, repelling the idea.*] No, no, don't ask me. I will not look upon sickness and death. I loathe all sorts of ugliness.

TESMAN. Well, well, then——! [*Bustling around.*] My hat——? My overcoat——? Oh, in the hall——. I do hope I mayn't come too late, Hedda! Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, if you run——

[BERTA *appears at the hall door.*]

BERTA. Judge Brack is at the door, and wishes to know if he may come in.

TESMAN. At this time! No, I can't possibly see him.

HEDDA. But I can. [*To* BERTA.] Ask Judge Brack to come in.

[BERTA *goes out.*]

HEDDA. [*Quickly, whispering.*] The parcel, Tesman!

[*She snatches it up from the stool.*]

TESMAN. Yes, give it to me!

HEDDA. No, no, I will keep it till you come back.

[*She goes to the writing-table and places it in the bookcase.* TESMAN *stands in a flurry of haste, and cannot get his gloves on.* JUDGE BRACK *enters from the hall.*]

HEDDA. [*Nodding to him.*] You are an early bird, I must say.

BRACK. Yes, don't you think so? [*To* TESMAN.] Are you on the move, too?

TESMAN. Yes, I must rush off to my aunts'. Fancy—the invalid one is lying at death's door, poor creature.

BRACK. Dear me, is she indeed? Then on no account let me detain you. At such a critical moment——

TESMAN. Yes, I must really rush—— Good-bye! Good-bye!

[*He hastens out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA. [*Approaching.*] You seem to have made a particularly lively night of it at your rooms, Judge Brack.

BRACK. I assure you I have not had my clothes off, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Not you, either?

BRACK. No, as you may see But what has Tesman been telling you of the night's adventures?

HEDDA. Oh, some tiresome story. Only that they went and had coffee somewhere or other.

BRACK. I have heard about that coffee-party already. Eilert Lovborg was not with them, I fancy?

HEDDA. No, they had taken him home before that.

BRACK. Tesman too?

HEDDA. No, but some of the others, he said.

BRACK. [*Smiling.*] George Tesman is really an ingenuous creature, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Yes, heaven knows he is. Then is there something behind all this?

BRACK. Yes, perhaps there may be.

HEDDA. Well then, sit down, my dear Judge, and tell your story in comfort.

[*She seats herself to the left of the table.* BRACK *sits near her, at the long side of the table.*]

HEDDA. Now then?

BRACK. I had special reasons for keeping track of my guests—or rather of some of my guests—last night.

HEDDA. Of Eilert Lovborg among the rest, perhaps?

BRACK. Frankly—yes.

HEDDA. Now you make me really curious——

BRACK. Do you know where he and one or two of the others finished the night, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. If it is not quite unmentionable, tell me.

BRACK. Oh no, it's not at all unmentionable. Well, they put in an appearance at a particularly animated *soirée.*

HEDDA. Of the lively kind?

BRACK. Of the very liveliest——

HEDDA. Tell me more of this, Judge Brack——

BRACK. Lovborg, as well as the others, had been invited in advance. I knew all about it. But he had declined the invitation; for now, as you know, he has become a new man.

HEDDA. Up at the Elvsteds', yes. But he went after all, then?

BRACK. Well, you see, Mrs. Hedda—unhappily the spirit moved him at my rooms last evening——

HEDDA. Yes, I hear he found inspiration.

BRACK. Pretty violent inspiration. Well, I fancy that altered his purpose; for we menfolk are unfortunately not always so firm in our principles as we ought to be.

HEDDA. Oh, I am sure you are an exception, Judge Brack. But as to Lovborg——?

BRACK. To make a long story short—he landed at last in Mademoiselle Diana's rooms.

HEDDA. Mademoiselle Diana's?

BRACK. It was Mademoiselle Diana that was giving the *soirée,* to a select circle of her admirers and her lady friends.

HEDDA. Is she a red-haired woman?

BRACK. Precisely.

HEDDA. A sort of a—singer?

BRACK. Oh yes—in her leisure moments. And moreover a mighty huntress —of men—Mrs. Hedda. You have no doubt heard of her. Eilert Lövborg was one of her most enthusiastic protectors—in the days of his glory.

HEDDA. And how did all this end?

BRACK. Far from amicably, it appears. After a most tender meeting, they seem to have come to blows——

HEDDA. Lovborg and she?

BRACK. Yes. He accused her or her friends of having robbed him. He declared that his pocket-book had disappeared—and other things as well. In short, he seems to have made a furious disturbance.

HEDDA. And what came of it all?

BRACK. It came to a general scrimmage, in which the ladies as well as the gentlemen took part. Fortunately the police at last appeared on the scene.

HEDDA. The police too?

BRACK. Yes. I fancy it will prove a costly frolic for Eilert Lövborg, crazy being that he is.

HEDDA. How so?

BRACK. He seems to have made a violent resistance—to have hit one of the constables on the head and torn the coat off his back. So they had to march him off to the police-station with the rest.

HEDDA. How have you learnt all this?

BRACK. From the police themselves.

HEDDA. [*Gazing straight before her.*] So that is what happened. Then he had no vine-leaves in his hair.

BRACK. Vine-leaves, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. [*Changing her tone.*] But tell me now, Judge—what is your real reason for tracking out Eilert Lovborg's movements so carefully?

BRACK. In the first place, it could not be entirely indifferent to me if it should appear in the police-court that he came straight from my house.

HEDDA. Will the matter come into court then?

BRACK. Of course. However, I should scarcely have troubled so much about that. But I thought that, as a friend of the family, it was my duty to supply you and Tesman with a full account of his nocturnal exploits.

HEDDA. Why so, Judge Brack?

BRACK. Why, because I have a shrewd suspicion that he intends to use you as a sort of blind.

HEDDA. Oh, how can you think such a thing!

BRACK. Good heavens, Mrs. Hedda—we have eyes in our head. Mark my words! This Mrs. Elvsted will be in no hurry to leave town again.

HEDDA. Well, even if there should be anything between them, I suppose there are plenty of other places where they could meet.

BRACK. Not a single home. Henceforth, as before, every respectable house will be closed against Eilert Lovborg.

HEDDA. And so ought mine to be, you mean?

BRACK. Yes. I confess it would be more than painful to me if this personage were to be made free of your house. How superfluous, how intrusive, he would be, if he were to force his way into——

HEDDA. ——into the triangle?

BRACK. Precisely. It would simply mean that I should find myself homeless.

HEDDA. [*Looks at him with a smile.*] So you want to be the one cock in the basket[9]—that is your aim.

BRACK. [*Nods slowly and lowers his voice.*] Yes, that is my aim. And for that I will fight—with every weapon I can command.

HEDDA. [*Her smile vanishing.*] I see you are a dangerous person—when it comes to the point.

BRACK. Do you think so?

HEDDA. I am beginning to think so. And I am exceedingly glad to think —that you have no sort of hold over me.

9. A proverbial saying in Norway.

BRACK. [*Laughing equivocally.*] Well, well, Mrs. Hedda—perhaps you are right there. If I had, who knows what I might be capable of?

HEDDA. Come, come now, Judge Brack! That sounds almost like a threat.

BRACK. [*Rising.*] Oh, not at all! The triangle, you know, ought, if possible, to be spontaneously constructed.

HEDDA. There I agree with you.

BRACK. Well, now I have said all I had to say; and had better be getting back to town. Good-bye, Mrs. Hedda. [*He goes towards the glass door.*]

HEDDA. [*Rising.*] Are you going through the garden?

BRACK. Yes, it's a short cut for me.

HEDDA. And then it is a back way, too.

BRACK. Quite so. I have no objection to back ways. They may be piquant enough at times.

HEDDA. When there is shooting practice going on, you mean?

BRACK. [*In the doorway, laughing to her.*] Oh, people don't shoot their tame poultry, I fancy.

HEDDA. [*Also laughing.*] Oh no, when there is only one cock in the basket——

[*They exchange laughing nods of farewell. He goes. She closes the door behind him.* HEDDA, *who has become quite serious, stands for a moment looking out. Presently she goes and peeps through the curtain over the middle doorway. Then she goes to the writing-table, takes* LOVBORG'S *packet out of the bookcase, and is on the point of looking through its contents.* BERTA *is heard speaking loudly in the hall.* HEDDA *turns and listens. Then she hastily locks up the packet in the drawer, and lays the key on the inkstand.* EILERT LOVBORG, *with his greatcoat on and his hat in his hand, tears open the hall door. He looks somewhat confused and irritated.*]

LOVBORG. [*Looking towards the hall.*] And I tell you I must and will come in! There!

[*He closes the door, turns, sees* HEDDA, *at once regains his self-control, and bows.*]

HEDDA. [*At the writing-table.*] Well, Mr. Lovborg, this is rather a late hour to call for Thea.

LOVBORG. You mean rather an early hour to call on you. Pray pardon me.

HEDDA. How do you know that she is still here?

LÖVBORG. They told me at her lodgings that she had been out all night.

HEDDA. [*Going to the oval table.*] Did you notice anything about the people of the house when they said that?

LÖVBORG. [*Looks inquiringly at her.*] Notice anything about them?

HEDDA. I mean, did they seem to think it odd?

LOVBORG. [*Suddenly understanding.*] Oh yes, of course! I am dragging her down with me! However, I didn't notice anything.—I suppose Tesman is not up yet?

HEDDA. No—I think not——

LÖVBORG. When did he come home?

HEDDA. Very late.

LÖVBORG. Did he tell you anything?

HEDDA. Yes, I gathered that you had had an exceedingly jolly evening at Judge Brack's.

LOVBORG. Nothing more?

HEDDA. I don't think so. However, I was so dreadfully sleepy——

[MRS. ELVSTED *enters through the curtains of the middle doorway.*]

MRS. ELVSTED [*Going towards him.*] Ah, Lövborg! At last——!

LÖVBORG. Yes, at last. And too late!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Looks anxiously at him.*] What is too late?

LOVBORG. Everything is too late now. It is all over with me.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh no, no—don't say that!

LÖVBORG. You will say the same when you hear——

MRS. ELVSTED. I won't hear anything!

HEDDA. Perhaps you would prefer to talk to her alone? If so, I will leave you.

LÖVBORG. No, stay—you too. I beg you to stay

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, but I won't hear anything, I tell you

LOVBORG. It is not last night's adventures that I want to talk about.

MRS. ELVSTED. What is it then——?

LÖVBORG. I want to say that now our ways must part.

MRS. ELVSTED. Part!

HEDDA [*Involuntarily.*] I knew it!

LOVBORG. You can be of no more service to me, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. How can you stand there and say that! No more service to you! Am I not to help you now, as before? Are we not to go on working together?

LÖVBORG. Henceforward I shall do no work.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Despairingly.*] Then what am I to do with my life?

LÖVBORG. You must try to live your life as if you had never known me.

MRS. ELVSTED. But you know I cannot do that!

LÖVBORG. Try if you cannot, Thea. You must go home again——

MRS. ELVSTED. [*In vehement protest.*] Never in this world! Where you are, there will I be also! I will not let myself be driven away like this! I will remain here! I will be with you when the book appears.

HEDDA. [*Half aloud, in suspense.*] Ah yes—the book!

LÖVBORG. [*Looks at her.*] My book and Thea's; for that is what it is.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I feel that it is. And that is why I have a right to be with you when it appears! I will see with my own eyes how respect and honor pour in upon you afresh. And the happiness—the happiness—oh, I must share it with you!

LÖVBORG. Thea—our book will never appear.

HEDDA. Ah!

MRS. ELVSTED. Never appear!

LÖVBORG. Can never appear.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*In agonized foreboding.*] Lövborg—what have you done with the manuscript?

HEDDA. [*Looks anxiously at him.*] Yes, the manuscript——?

MRS. ELVSTED. Where is it?

LOVBORG. Oh Thea—don't ask me about it!

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I will know. I demand to be told at once.

LOVBORG. The manuscript——. Well then—I have torn the manuscript into a thousand pieces.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Shrieks.*] Oh no, no——!

HEDDA. [*Involuntarily.*] But that's not——

LOVBORG. [*Looks at her.*] Not true, you think?

HEDDA. [*Collecting herself.*] Oh well, of course—since you say so. But it sounded so improbable——

LOVBORG. It is true, all the same.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh God—oh God, Hedda—torn his own work to pieces!

LÖVBORG. I have torn my own life to pieces. So why should I not tear my life-work too——?

MRS. ELVSTED. And you did this last night?

LOVBORG. Yes, I tell you! Tore it into a thousand pieces—and scattered them on the fjord—far out. There there is cool sea-water at any rate—let them drift upon it—drift with the current and the wind. And then presently they will sink—deeper and deeper—as I shall, Thea.

MRS. ELVSTED. Do you know, Lovborg, that what you have done with the book—I shall think of it to my dying day as though you had killed a little child.

LOVBORG. Yes, you are right. It is a sort of child-murder.

MRS. ELVSTED. How could you, then——! Did not the child belong to me too?

HEDDA. [*Almost inaudibly.*] Ah, the child——

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Breathing heavily.*] It is all over then. Well, well, now I will go, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you are not going away from town?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I don't know what I shall do. I see nothing but darkness before me. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA. [*Stands waiting for a moment.*] So you are not going to see her home, Mr. Lovborg?

LOVBORG. I? Through the streets? Would you have people see her walking with me?

HEDDA. Of course I don't know what else may have happened last night. But is it so utterly irretrievable?

LÖVBORG. It will not end with last night—I know that perfectly well. And

the thing is that now I have no taste for that sort of life either. I won't begin it anew. She has broken my courage and my power of braving life out.

HEDDA. [*Looking straight before her.*] So that pretty little fool has had her fingers in a man's destiny. [*Looks at him.*] But all the same, how could you treat her so heartlessly?

LÖVBORG. Oh, don't say that it was heartless!

HEDDA. To go and destroy what has filled her whole soul for months and years! You do not call that heartless!

LOVBORG. To you I can tell the truth, Hedda.

HEDDA. The truth?

LÖVBORG. First promise me—give me your word—that what I now confide to you Thea shall never know.

HEDDA. I give you my word.

LOVBORG. Good. Then let me tell you that what I said just now was untrue.

HEDDA. About the manuscript?

LOVBORG. Yes. I have not torn it to pieces—nor thrown it into the fjord.

HEDDA. No, no——. But—where is it then?

LOVBORG. I have destroyed it none the less—utterly destroyed it, Hedda!

HEDDA. I don't understand.

LOVBORG. Thea said that what I had done seemed to her like a child-murder.

HEDDA. Yes, so she said.

LOVBORG. But to kill his child—that is not the worst thing a father can do to it.

HEDDA. Not the worst?

LOVBORG. No. I wanted to spare Thea from hearing the worst.

HEDDA. Then what is the worst?

LOVBORG. Suppose now, Hedda, that a man—in the small hours of the morning—came home to his child's mother after a night of riot and debauchery, and said: "Listen—I have been here and there—in this place and in that. And I have taken our child with me—to this place and to that. And I have lost the child—utterly lost it. The devil knows into what hands it may have fallen—who may have had their clutches on it."

HEDDA. Well—but when all is said and done, you know—this was only a book——

LÖVBORG. Thea's pure soul was in that book.

HEDDA. Yes, so I understand.

LOVBORG. And you can understand, too, that for her and me together no future is possible.

HEDDA. What path do you mean to take then?

LOVBORG. None. I will only try to make an end of it all—the sooner the better.

HEDDA. [*A step nearer him.*] Eilert Lövborg—listen to me.—Will you not try to—to do it beautifully?

LOVBORG. Beautifully? [*Smiling.*] With vine-leaves in my hair, as you used to dream in the old days——?

HEDDA. No, no. I have lost my faith in the vine-leaves. But beautifully nevertheless! For once in a way!—Good-bye! You must go now—and do not come here any more.

LOVBORG. Good-bye, Mrs. Tesman. And give George Tesman my love. [*He is on the point of going.*]

HEDDA. No, wait! I must give you a memento to take with you.

[*She goes to the writing-table and opens the drawer and the pistol-case; then returns to* LOVBORG *with one of the pistols.*]

LOVBORG. [*Looks at her.*] This? Is this the memento?

HEDDA. [*Nodding slowly.*] Do you recognize it? It was aimed at you once.

LOVBORG. You should have used it then.

HEDDA. Take it—and do you use it now.

LOVBORG. [*Puts the pistol in his breast pocket.*] Thanks!

HEDDA. And beautifully, Eilert Lovborg. Promise me that!

LOVBORG. Good-bye, Hedda Gabler.

[*He goes out by the hall door.* HEDDA *listens for a moment at the door. Then she goes up to the writing-table, takes out the packet of manuscript, peeps under the cover, draws a few of the sheets half out, and looks at them. Next she goes over and seats herself in the arm-chair beside the stove, with the packet in her lap. Presently she opens the stove door, and then the packet.*]

HEDDA. [*Throws one of the quires into the fire and whispers to herself.*] Now I am burning your child, Thea!—Burning it, curly-locks! [*Throwing one or two more quires into the stove.*] Your child and Eilert Lövborg's. [*Throws the rest in.*] I am burning—I am burning your child.

ACT IV

SCENE: *The same rooms at the* TESMANS'. *It is evening. The drawing-room is in darkness. The back room is lighted by the hanging lamp over the table. The curtains over the glass door are drawn close.* HEDDA, *dressed in black, walks to and fro in the dark room. Then she goes into the back room and disappears for a moment to the left. She is heard to strike a few chords on the piano. Presently she comes in sight again, and returns to the drawing-room.* BERTA *enters from the right, through the inner room, with a lighted lamp, which she places on the table in front of the corner settee in the drawing-room. Her eyes are red with weeping, and she has black ribbons in her cap. She goes quietly and circumspectly out to the right.* HEDDA *goes up to the glass door, lifts the curtain a little aside, and looks out into the darkness. Shortly afterwards,* MISS TESMAN, *in mourning, with a bonnet and veil on, comes in from the hall.* HEDDA *goes towards her and holds out her hand.*

MISS TESMAN. Yes, Hedda, here I am, in mourning and forlorn; for now my poor sister has at last found peace.

HEDDA. I have heard the news already, as you see. Tesman sent me a card.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, he promised me he would. But nevertheless I thought that to Hedda—here in the house of life—I ought myself to bring the tidings of death.

HEDDA. That was very kind of you.

MISS TESMAN. Ah, Rina ought not to have left us just now. This is not the time for Hedda's house to be a house of mourning.

HEDDA. [*Changing the subject.*] She died quite peacefully, did she not, Miss Tesman?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, her end was so calm, so beautiful. And then she had the unspeakable happiness of seeing George once more—and bidding him good-bye.—Has he not come home yet?

HEDDA. No. He wrote that he might be detained. But won't you sit down?

MISS TESMAN. No thank you, my dear, dear Hedda. I should like to, but I have so much to do. I must prepare my dear one for her rest as well as I can. She shall go to her grave looking her best.

HEDDA. Can I not help you in any way?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, you must not think of it! Hedda Tesman must have no hand in such mournful work. Nor let her thoughts dwell on it either—not at this time.

HEDDA. One is not always mistress of one's thoughts—

MISS TESMAN. [*Continuing.*] Ah yes, it is the way of the world. At home we shall be sewing a shroud; and here there will soon be sewing too, I suppose —but of another sort, thank God!

[GEORGE TESMAN *enters by the hall door.*]

HEDDA. Ah, you have come at last!

TESMAN. You here, Aunt Julia? With Hedda? Fancy that!

MISS TESMAN. I was just going, my dear boy. Well, have you done all you promised?

TESMAN. No; I'm really afraid I have forgotten half of it. I must come to you again to-morrow. To-day my brain is all in a whirl. I can't keep my thoughts together.

MISS TESMAN. Why, my dear George, you mustn't take it in this way.

TESMAN. Mustn't——? How do you mean?

MISS TESMAN. Even in your sorrow you must rejoice, as I do—rejoice that she is at rest.

TESMAN. Oh yes, yes—you are thinking of Aunt Rina.

HEDDA. You will feel lonely now, Miss Tesman.

MISS TESMAN. Just at first, yes. But that will not last very long, I hope. I daresay I shall soon find an occupant for poor Rina's little room.

TESMAN. Indeed? Who do you think will take it? Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, there's always some poor invalid or other in want of nursing, unfortunately.

HEDDA. Would you really take such a burden upon you again?

MISS TESMAN. A burden! Heaven forgive you, child—it has been no burden to me.

HEDDA. But suppose you had a total stranger on your hands——

MISS TESMAN. Oh, one soon makes friends with sick folk; and it's such an absolute necessity for me to have some one to live for. Well, heaven be praised, there may soon be something in *this* house, too, to keep on old aunt busy.

HEDDA. Oh, don't trouble about anything here.

TESMAN. Yes, just fancy what a nice time we three might have together, if——?

HEDDA. If——?

TESMAN. [*Uneasily.*] Oh, nothing. It will all come right. Let us hope so—eh?

MISS TESMAN. Well, well, I daresay you two want to talk to each other. [*Smiling.*] And perhaps Hedda may have something to tell you too, George. Good-bye! I must go home to Rina. [*Turning at the door.*] How strange it is to think that now Rina is with me and with my poor brother as well!

TESMAN. Yes, fancy that, Aunt Julia! Eh? [MISS TESMAN *goes out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA. [*Follows* TESMAN *coldly and searchingly with her eyes.*] I almost believe your Aunt Rina's death affects you more than it does your Aunt Julia.

TESMAN. Oh, it's not that alone. It's Eilert I am so terribly uneasy about.

HEDDA. [*Quickly.*] Is there anything new about him?

TESMAN. I looked in at his rooms this afternoon, intending to tell him the manuscript was in safe keeping.

HEDDA. Well, did you not find him?

TESMAN. No. He wasn't at home. But afterwards I met Mrs. Elvsted, and she told me that he had been here early this morning.

HEDDA. Yes, directly after you had gone.

TESMAN. And he said that he had torn his manuscript to pieces—eh?

HEDDA. Yes, so he declared.

TESMAN. Why, good heavens, he must have been completely out of his mind! And I suppose you thought it best not to give it back to him, Hedda?

HEDDA. No, he did not get it.

TESMAN. But of course you told him that we had it?

HEDDA. No. [*Quickly.*] Did you tell Mrs. Elvsted?

TESMAN. No; I thought I had better not. But you ought to have told him. Fancy, if, in desperation, he should go and do himself some injury! Let me have the manuscript, Hedda! I will take it to him at once. Where is it?

HEDDA. [*Cold and immovable, leaning on the arm-chair.*] I have not got it.

TESMAN. Have not got it? What in the world do you mean?

HEDDA. I have burnt it—every line of it.

TESMAN. [*With a violent movement of terror.*] Burnt! Burnt Eilert's manuscript!

HEDDA. Don't scream so. The servant might hear you.

TESMAN. Burnt! Why, good God——! No, no, no! It's impossible!

HEDDA. It is so, nevertheless.

TESMAN. Do you know what you have done, Hedda? It's unlawful appropriation of lost property. Fancy that! Just ask Judge Brack, and he'll tell you what it is.

HEDDA. I advise you not to speak of it—either to Judge Brack, or to any one else.

TESMAN. But how could you do anything so unheard-of? What put it into your head? What possessed you? Answer me that—eh?

HEDDA. [*Suppressing an almost imperceptible smile.*] I did it for your sake, George.

TESMAN. For my sake!

HEDDA. This morning, when you told me about what he had read to you——

TESMAN. Yes, yes—what then?

HEDDA. You acknowledged that you envied him his work.

TESMAN. Oh, of course I didn't mean that literally.

HEDDA. No matter—I could not bear the idea that any one should throw you into the shade.

TESMAN. [*In an outburst of mingled doubt and joy.*] Hedda! Oh, is this true? But—but—I never knew you show your love like that before. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Well, I may as well tell you that—just at this time—— [*Impatiently, breaking off.*] No, no; you can ask Aunt Julia. She will tell you, fast enough.

TESMAN. Oh, I almost think I understand you, Hedda! [*Clasps his hands together.*] Great heavens! do you really mean it? Eh?

HEDDA. Don't shout so. The servant might hear.

TESMAN. [*Laughing in irrepressible glee.*] The servant! Why, how absurd you are, Hedda. It's only my old Berta! Why, I'll tell Berta myself.

HEDDA. [*Clenching her hands together in desperation.*] Oh, it is killing me,—it is killing me, all this!

TESMAN. What is, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. [*Coldly, controlling herself.*] All this—absurdity—George.

TESMAN. Absurdity! Do you see anything absurd in my being overjoyed at the news! But after all—perhaps I had better not say anything to Berta.

HEDDA. Oh——why not that too?

TESMAN. No, no, not yet! But I must certainly tell Aunt Julia. And then

that you have begun to call me George too! Fancy that! Oh, Aunt Julia will be so happy—so happy!

HEDDA. When she hears that I have burnt Eilert Lovborg's manuscript—for your sake?

TESMAN. No, by the by—that affair of the manuscript—of course nobody must know about that. But that you love me so much, Hedda—Aunt Julia must really share my joy in that! I wonder, now, whether this sort of thing is usual in young wives? Eh?

HEDDA. I think you had better ask Aunt Julia that question too.

TESMAN. I will indeed, some time or other. [*Looks uneasy and downcast again.*] And yet the manuscript—the manuscript! Good God! It is terrible to think what will become of poor Eilert now.

[MRS. ELVSTED, *dressed as in the first act, with hat and cloak, enters by the hall door.*]

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Greets them hurriedly, and says in evident agitation.*] Oh, dear Hedda, forgive my coming again.

HEDDA. What is the matter with you, Thea?

TESMAN. Something about Eilert Lovborg again—eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes! I am dreadfully afraid some misfortune has happened to him.

HEDDA. [*Seizes her arm.*] Ah,—do you think so?

TESMAN. Why, good Lord—what makes you think that, Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVSTED. I heard them talking at my boarding-house—just as I came in. Oh, the most incredible rumors are afloat about him to-day.

TESMAN. Yes, fancy, so I heard too! And I can bear witness that he went straight home to bed last night. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Well, what did they say at the boarding-house?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I couldn't make out anything clearly. Either they knew nothing definite, or else——. They stopped talking when they saw me; and I did not dare to ask.

TESMAN. [*Moving about uneasily.*] We must hope—we must hope that you misunderstood them, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no; I am sure it was of him they were talking. And I heard something about the hospital or——

TESMAN. The hospital?

HEDDA. No—surely that cannot be!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I was in such mortal terror! I went to his lodgings and asked for him there.

HEDDA. You could make up your mind to that, Thea!

MRS. ELVSTED. What else could I do? I really could bear the suspense no longer.

TESMAN. But you didn't find him either—eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. No. And the people knew nothing about him. He hadn't been home since yesterday afternoon, they said.

TESMAN. Yesterday! Fancy, how could they say that?

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, I am sure something terrible must have happened to him.

TESMAN. Hedda dear—how would it be if I were to go and make inquiries——?

HEDDA. No, no—don't mix yourself up in this affair.

[JUDGE BRACK, *with his hat in his hand, enters by the hall door, which* BERTA *opens, and closes behind him. He looks grave and bows in silence.*]

TESMAN. Oh, is that you, my dear Judge? Eh?

BRACK. Yes. It was imperative I should see you this evening.

TESMAN. I can see you have heard the news about Aunt Rina?

BRACK. Yes, that among other things.

TESMAN. Isn't it sad—eh?

BRACK. Well, my dear Tesman, that depends on how you look at it.

TESMAN. [*Looks doubtfully at him.*] Has anything else happened?

BRACK. Yes.

HEDDA. [*In suspense.*] Anything sad, Judge Brack?

BRACK. That, too, depends on how you look at it, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Unable to restrain her anxiety.*] Oh! it is something about Eilert Lovborg!

BRACK. [*With a glance at her.*] What makes you think that, Madam? Perhaps you have already heard something——?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*In confusion.*] No, nothing at all, but——

TESMAN. Oh, for heaven's sake, tell us!

BRACK. [*Shrugging his shoulders.*] Well, I regret to say Eilert Lovborg has been taken to the hospital. He is lying at the point of death.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Shrieks.*] Oh God! oh God——!

TESMAN. To the hospital! And at the point of death!

HEDDA. [*Involuntarily.*] So soon then——

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Wailing.*] And we parted in anger, Hedda!

HEDDA. [*Whispers.*] Thea—Thea—be careful!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Not heeding her.*] I must go to him! I must see him alive!

BRACK. It is useless, Madam. No one will be admitted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, at least tell me what has happened to him? What is it?

TESMAN. You don't mean to say that he has himself—— Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am sure he has.

TESMAN. Hedda, how can you——?

BRACK. [*Keeping his eyes fixed upon her.*] Unfortunately you have guessed quite correctly, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how horrible!

TESMAN. Himself, then! Fancy that!

HEDDA. Shot himself!

BRACK. Rightly guessed again, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. [*With an effort at self-control.*] When did it happen, Mr. Brack?

BRACK. This afternoon—between three and four.

TESMAN. But, good Lord, where did he do it? Eh?

BRACK. [*With some hesitation.*] Where? Well—I suppose at his lodgings.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, that cannot be; for I was there between six and seven.

BRACK. Well then, somewhere else. I don't know exactly. I only know that he was found——. He had shot himself—in the breast.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how terrible! That he should die like that!

HEDDA. [*To* BRACK.] Was it in the breast?

BRACK. Yes—as I told you.

HEDDA. Not in the temple?

BRACK. In the breast, Mrs. Tesman.

HEDDA. Well, well—the breast is a good place, too.

BRACK. How do you mean, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA. [*Evasively.*] Oh, nothing—nothing.

TESMAN. And the wound is dangerous, you say—eh?

BRACK. Absolutely mortal. The end has probably come by this time.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, I feel it. The end! The end! Oh, Hedda——!

TESMAN. But tell me, how have you learnt all this?

BRACK. [*Curtly.*] Through one of the police. A man I had some business with.

HEDDA. [*In a clear voice.*] At last a deed worth doing!

TESMAN. [*Terrified.*] Good heavens, Hedda! what are you saying?

HEDDA. I say there is beauty in this.

BRACK. H'm, Mrs. Tesman——

TESMAN. Beauty! Fancy that!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, Hedda, how can you talk of beauty in such an act!

HEDDA. Eilert Lovborg has himself made up his account with life. He has had the courage to do—the one right thing.

MRS. ELVSTED. No, you must never think that was how it happened! It must have been in delirium that he did it.

TESMAN. In despair!

HEDDA. That he did not. I am certain of that.

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes! In delirium! Just as when he tore up our manuscript.

BRACK. [*Starting.*] The manuscript? Has he torn that up?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, last night.

TESMAN. [*Whispers softly.*] Oh, Hedda, we shall never get over this.

BRACK. H'm, very extraordinary.

TESMAN. [*Moving about the room.*] To think of Eilert going out of the world in this way! And not leaving behind him the book that would have immortalized his name——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if only it could be put together again!

TESMAN. Yes, if it only could! I don't know what I would not give——

MRS. ELVSTED. Perhaps it can, Mr. Tesman.

TESMAN. What do you mean?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Searches in the pocket of her dress.*] Look here. I have kept all the loose notes he used to dictate from.

HEDDA. [*A step forward.*] Ah——!

TESMAN. You have kept them, Mrs. Elvsted! Eh?

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, I have them here. I put them in my pocket when I left home. Here they still are——

TESMAN. Oh, do let me see them!

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Hands him a bundle of papers.*] But they are in such disorder—all mixed up.

TESMAN. Fancy, if we could make something out of them, after all! Perhaps if we two put our heads together——

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh yes, at least let us try——

TESMAN. We will manage it! We must! I will dedicate my life to this task.

HEDDA. You, George? Your life?

TESMAN. Yes, or rather all the time I can spare. My own collections must wait in the meantime. Hedda—you understand, eh? I owe this to Eilert's memory.

HEDDA. Perhaps.

TESMAN. And so, my dear Mrs. Elvsted, we will give our whole minds to it. There is no use in brooding over what can't be undone—eh? We must try to control our grief as much as possible, and——

MRS. ELVSTED. Yes, yes, Mr. Tesman, I will do the best I can.

TESMAN. Well then, come here. I can't rest until we have looked through the notes. Where shall we sit? Here? No, in there, in the back room. Excuse me, my dear Judge. Come with me, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, if only it were possible!

[TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *go into the back room. She takes off her hat and cloak. They both sit at the table under the hanging lamp, and are soon deep in an eager examination of the papers.* HEDDA *crosses to the stove and sits in the arm-chair. Presently* BRACK *goes up to her.*]

HEDDA. [*In a low voice.*] Oh, what a sense of freedom it gives one, this act of Eilert Lövborg's.

BRACK. Freedom, Mrs. Hedda? Well, of course, it is a release for him——

HEDDA. I mean for me. It gives me a sense of freedom to know that a deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world,—a deed of spontaneous beauty.

BRACK. [*Smiling.*] H'm—my dear Mrs. Hedda——

HEDDA. Oh, I know what you are going to say. For you are a kind of specialist, too, like—you know!

BRACK. [*Looking hard at her.*] Eilert Lövborg was more to you than perhaps you are willing to admit to yourself. Am I wrong?

HEDDA. I don't answer such questions. I only know that Eilert Lovborg has had the courage to live his life after his own fashion. And then—the last great act, with its beauty! Ah! that he should have the will and the strength to turn away from the banquet of life—so early.

BRACK. I am sorry, Mrs. Hedda,—but I fear I must dispel an amiable illusion.

HEDDA. Illusion?

BRACK. Which could not have lasted long in any case.

HEDDA. What do you mean?

BRACK. Eilert Lovborg did not shoot himself—voluntarily.

HEDDA. Not voluntarily!

BRACK. No. The thing did not happen exactly as I told it.

HEDDA. [*In suspense.*] Have you concealed something? What is it?

BRACK. For poor Mrs. Elvsted's sake I idealized the facts a little.

HEDDA. What are the facts?

BRACK. First, that he is already dead.

HEDDA. At the hospital?

BRACK. Yes—without regaining consciousness.

HEDDA. What more have you concealed?

BRACK. This—the event did not happen at his lodgings.

HEDDA. Oh, that can make no difference.

BRACK. Perhaps it may. For I must tell you—Eilert Lovborg was found shot in—in Mademoiselle Diana's boudoir.

HEDDA. [*Makes a motion as if to rise, but sinks back again.*] That is impossible, Judge Brack! He cannot have been there again to-day.

BRACK. He was there this afternoon. He went there, he said, to demand the return of something which they had taken from him. Talked wildly about a lost child——

HEDDA. Ah—so that was why——

BRACK. I thought probably he meant his manuscript; but now I hear he destroyed that himself. So I suppose it must have been his pocketbook.

HEDDA. Yes, no doubt. And there—there he was found?

BRACK. Yes, there. With a pistol in his breast-pocket, discharged. The ball had lodged in a vital part.

HEDDA. In the breast—yes.

BRACK. No—in the bowels.

HEDDA. [*Looks up at him with an expression of loathing.*] That, too! Oh, what curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?

BRACK. There is one point more, Mrs. Hedda—another disagreeable feature in the affair.

HEDDA. And what is that?

BRACK. The pistol he carried——

HEDDA. [*Breathless.*] Well? What of it?

BRACK. He must have stolen it.

HEDDA. [*Leaps up.*] Stolen it! That is not true! He did not steal it!

BRACK. No other explanation is possible. He must have stolen it—— Hush!

[TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *have risen from the table in the back room, and come into the drawing-room.*]

TESMAN. [*With the papers in both his hands.*] Hedda, dear, it is almost impossible to see under that lamp. Think of that!

HEDDA. Yes, I am thinking.

TESMAN. Would you mind our sitting at your writing-table—eh?

HEDDA. If you like. [*Quickly.*] No, wait! Let me clear it first!

TESMAN. Oh, you needn't trouble, Hedda. There is plenty of room.

HEDDA. No, no, let me clear it, I say! I will take these things in and put them on the piano. There!

[*She has drawn out an object, covered with sheet music, from under the bookcase, places several other pieces of music upon it, and carries the whole into the inner room, to the left.* TESMAN *lays the scraps of paper on the writing-table, and moves the lamp there from the corner table. He and* MRS. ELVSTED *sit down and proceed with their work.* HEDDA *returns.*]

HEDDA. [*Behind* MRS. ELVSTED'S *chair, gently ruffing her hair.*] Well, my sweet Thea,—how goes it with Eilert Lovborg's monument?

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Looks dispiritedly up at her.*] Oh, it will be terribly hard to put in order.

TESMAN. We must manage it. I am determined. And arranging other people's papers is just the work for me.

[HEDDA *goes over to the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools.* BRACK *stands over her, leaning on the arm-chair.*]

HEDDA. [*Whispers.*] What did you say about the pistol?

BRACK. [*Softly.*] That he must have stolen it.

HEDDA. Why stolen it?

BRACK. Because every other explanation ought to be impossible, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Indeed?

BRACK. [*Glances at her.*] Of course, Eilert Lövborg was here this morning. Was he not?

HEDDA. Yes.

BRACK. Were you alone with him?

HEDDA. Part of the time.

BRACK. Did you not leave the room whilst he was here?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Try to recollect. Were you not out of the room a moment?

HEDDA. Yes, perhaps just a moment—out in the hall.

BRACK. And where was your pistol-case during that time?

HEDDA. I had it locked up in——

BRACK. Well, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. The case stood there on the writing-table.

BRACK. Have you looked since, to see whether both the pistols are there?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Well, you need not. I saw the pistol found in Lovborg's pocket, and I knew it at once as the one I had seen yesterday—and before, too.

HEDDA. Have you it with you?

BRACK. No, the police have it.

HEDDA. What will the police do with it?

BRACK. Search till they find the owner.

HEDDA. Do you think they will succeed?

BRACK. [*Bends over her and whispers.*] No, Hedda Gabler—not so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA. [*Looks frightened at him.*] And if you do not say nothing,—what then?

BRACK. [*Shrugs his shoulders.*] There is always the possibility that pistol was stolen.

HEDDA. [*Firmly.*] Death rather than that.

BRACK. [*Smiling.*] People say such things—but they don't do them.

HEDDA. [*Without replying.*] And supposing the pistol was not stolen, and the owner is discovered? What then?

BRACK. Well, Hedda—then comes the scandal.

HEDDA. The scandal!

BRACK. Yes, the scandal—of which you are so mortally afraid. You will, of course, be brought before the court—both you and Mademoiselle Diana. She will have to explain how the thing happened—whether it was an accidental shot or murder. Did the pistol go off as he was trying to take it out of his pocket, to threaten her with? Or did she tear the pistol out of his hand, shoot him, and push it back into his pocket? That would be quite like her; for she is an able-bodied young person, this same Mademoiselle Diana.

HEDDA. But *I* have nothing to do with all this repulsive business.

BRACK. No. But you will have to answer the question: Why did you give Eilert Lovborg the pistol? And what conclusions will people draw from the fact that you did give it to him?

HEDDA. [*Lets her head sink.*] That is true. I did not think of that.

BRACK. Well, fortunately, there is no danger, so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA. [*Looks up at him.*] So I am in your power, Judge Brack. You have me at your beck and call, from this time forward.

BRACK. [*Whispers softly.*] Dearest Hedda—believe me—I shall not abuse my advantage.

HEDDA. I am in your power none the less. Subject to your will and your demands. A slave, a slave then! [*Rises impetuously.*] No, I cannot endure the thought of that! Never!

BRACK. [*Looks half-mockingly at her.*] People generally get used to the inevitable.

HEDDA. [*Returns his look.*] Yes, perhaps. [*She crosses to the writing-table. Suppressing an involuntary smile, she imitates* TESMAN'S *intonations.*] Well? Are you getting on, George? Eh?

TESMAN. Heaven knows, dear. In any case it will be the work of months.

HEDDA. [*As before.*] Fancy that! [*Passes her hands softly through* MRS. ELVSTED'S *hair.*] Doesn't it seem strange to you, Thea? Here are you sitting with Tesman—just as you used to sit with Eilert Lovborg?

MRS. ELVSTED. Ah, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way!

HEDDA. Oh, that will come, too—in time.

TESMAN. Yes, do you know, Hedda—I really think I begin to feel something of the sort. But won't you go and sit with Brack again?

HEDDA. Is there nothing I can do to help you two?

TESMAN. No, nothing in the world. [*Turning his head.*] I trust to you to keep Hedda company, my dear Brack.

BRACK. [*With a glance at* HEDDA.] With the very greatest of pleasure.

HEDDA. Thanks. But I am tired this evening. I will go in and lie down a little on the sofa.

TESMAN. Yes, do, dear—eh?

[HEDDA *goes into the back room and draws the curtains. A short pause. Suddenly she is heard playing a wild dance on the piano.*]

MRS. ELVSTED. [*Starts from her chair.*] Oh—what is that?

TESMAN. [*Runs to the doorway.*] Why, my dearest Hedda—don't play dance-music to-night! Just think of Aunt Rina! And of Eilert, too!

HEDDA. [*Puts her head out between the curtains.*] And of Aunt Julia. And of all the rest of them.—After this, I will be quiet. [*Closes the curtains again.*]

TESMAN. [*At the writing-table.*] It's not good for her to see us at this distressing work. I'll tell you what, Mrs. Elvsted,—you shall take the empty room at Aunt Julia's, and then I will come over in the evenings, and we can sit and work there—eh?

HEDDA. [*In the inner room.*] I hear what you are saying, Tesman. But how am *I* to get through the evenings out here?

TESMAN. [*Turning over the papers.*] Oh, I daresay Judge Brack will be so kind as to look in now and then, even though I am out.

BRACK. [*In the arm-chair, calls out gaily.*] Every blessed evening, with all the pleasure in life, Mrs. Tesman! We shall get on capitally together, we two!

HEDDA. [*Speaking loud and clear.*] Yes, don't you flatter yourself we will, Judge Brack? Now that you are the one cock in the basket——

[*A shot is heard within.* TESMAN, MRS. ELVSTED, *and* BRACK *leap to their feet.*]

TESMAN. Oh, now she is playing with those pistols again.

[*He throws back the curtains and runs in, followed by* MRS. ELVSTED. HEDDA

lies stretched on the sofa, lifeless. Confusion and cries. BERTA *enters in alarm from the right.*]

TESMAN. [*Shrieks to* BRACK.] Shot herself! Shot herself in the temple! Fancy that!

BRACK. [*Half-fainting in the arm-chair.*] Good God!—people don't do such things.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE[1]

JEAN COCTEAU

ENGLISH VERSION (REVISED FOR THIS EDITION) BY CARL WILDMAN

Characters (in order of appearance)

THE VOICE
THE YOUNG SOLDIER
THE SOLDIER
THE CAPTAIN
JOCASTA, *the queen, widow of Laïus*
TIRESIAS, *a soothsayer, nearly blind*
THE GHOST OF LAÏUS, *the dead king*
THE SPHINX
ANUBIS, *Egyptian God of the Dead*
THE THEBAN MATRON
A LITTLE BOY
A LITTLE GIRL
OEDIPUS, *son of Laïus*
CREON, *brother of Jocasta*
THE MESSENGER FROM CORINTH
THE SHEPHERD OF LAÏUS
ANTIGONE, *daughter of Oedipus*

ACT I

THE GHOST OF LAÏUS

THE VOICE: *'He will kill his father. He will marry his mother.'*

To thwart this oracle of Apollo, Jocasta, Queen of Thebes, leaves her son on the mountain side with his feet pierced and bound. A shepherd of Corinth finds the nursling and carries it to Polybius. Polybius and Merope, king and queen of Corinth, were bemoaning a sterile marriage. The child, Oedipus, or *Pierced-feet,* respected by bears and wolves, is to them a heaven-sent gift. They adopt him.

When a young man, Oedipus questions the oracle of Delphi.

The god speaks: *You will murder your father and marry your mother.* He must therefore fly from Polybius and Merope. The fear of parricide and incest drives him on towards his fate.

One evening, arriving at the cross-roads of Delphi and Daulis, he meets an escort. A horse jostles him; a quarrel starts; a servant threatens him; he replies with a blow from his stick. The blow misses the servant and kills the master. This dead man is Laïus, the old king of Thebes. Parricide!

The escort, fearing an ambush, took to its heels. Oedipus, unsuspecting,

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La Machine Infernale was first performed at the Comédie des Champs-Elysées (Théâtre Louis Jouvet) on 10th April 1934, with scenery and costumes by Christian Bérard.

passed on. Besides, he is young, enthusiastic; this accident is soon forgotten.

During one of his halts he learns of the scourge of the Sphinx. The Sphinx, 'the Winged Virgin,' 'the Singing Bitch,' is killing off the young men of Thebes. This monster asks a riddle and kills those who do not guess it. Queen Jocasta, widow of Laïus, offers her hand and her crown to the conqueror of the Sphinx.

Like the young Siegfried to come, Oedipus hurries on. He is consumed with curiosity and ambition. The meeting takes place. What was the nature of this meeting? Mystery. Be that as it may, Oedipus enters Thebes a conqueror, he marries the queen. Incest!

For the gods really to enjoy themselves, their victim must fall from a great height. Years come and go in prosperity. Two daughters and two sons complicate the monstrous union. The people love their king. But the plague suddenly descends upon them. The gods accuse an anonymous criminal of infecting the country and demand that he shall be driven out. Going from one discovery to another, and as if intoxicated by misfortune, Oedipus, in the end, finds himself cornered. The trap shuts. All becomes clear. With her red scarf Jocasta hangs herself. With the golden brooch of the hanging woman Oedipus puts out his eyes.

Spectator, this machine, you see here wound up to the full in such a way that the spring will slowly unwind the whole length of a human life, is one of the most perfect constructed by the infernal gods for the mathematical destruction of a mortal.

ACT I[1]

The Ghost

SCENE: *A patrol path round the ramparts of Thebes. High walls. A stormy night. Summer lightning. The din and bands of the popular district can be heard.*

YOUNG SOLDIER. They 're having a good time!

SOLDIER. Trying to.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Well, anyway, they dance all night.

SOLDIER. They can't sleep, so they dance.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Never mind, they 're getting tight and going with women, and spending their nights in all sorts of dives, while I am here tramping up and down with you. Well I, for one, can't stick it any longer! I can't stick it! I can't! That 's clear enough, isn't it? I 've had my bellyful!

1. The four scenes should be planted on a little platform in the centre of the stage, surrounded by nocturnal curtains. The slope of the platform varies according to the requirements of the scenes. Besides the lighting of details, the four acts should be flooded in the livid mythical light of quicksilver.

SOLDIER. Desert then.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Oh, no! I 've made up my mind. I 'm going to put my name down for the Sphinx.

SOLDIER. What for?

YOUNG SOLDIER. What for? Why, to do something, of course. To put an end to all this creepy business and ghastly hanging about.

SOLDIER. You wouldn't get scared, though?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Scared? How d' you mean?

SOLDIER. Oh, just scared, you know! I 've seen brighter and tougher lads than you who got the wind up. Unless this gent is going to kill the Sphinx and draw the first prize.

YOUNG SOLDIER. And why not? Oh, I know the only man who came back alive from the Sphinx had become a gibbering idiot. But supposing what he gibbers is true? What if it is a riddle? What if I guess the answer? What——

SOLDIER. Now listen here, you poor bastard. Don't you realize that hundreds upon hundreds of chaps who 've been to the stadium and college and everything have left their carcasses behind there, and you, a poor little private soldier like you wants to——

YOUNG SOLDIER. I shall go! I shall, because I can't bear any longer counting the stones of this wall, hearing that band, and seeing your rotten mug, and—— [*He stamps.*]

SOLDIER. That 's the stuff, my hero! I was waiting for this explosion. I like it better that way. Now . . . now . . . enough blubbering. . . . Take it easy . . . there, there, there . . .

YOUNG SOLDIER. To hell with you! [*The* SOLDIER *bangs his spear against the wall behind the* YOUNG SOLDIER *who becomes rigid.*]

SOLDIER. What 's up?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Didn't you hear anything?

SOLDIER. No . . . where?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Ah! . . . I seemed to . . . I thought for a moment——

SOLDIER. You 're like a sheet. . . . What 's the matter? Are you going to pass out?

YOUNG SOLDIER. It 's silly . . . I seemed to hear a knock. I thought it was him!

SOLDIER. The Sphinx?

YOUNG SOLDIER. No, him, the ghost, the phantom, you know!

SOLDIER. The ghost? Our dear old ghost of Laius? And is that what turns your stomach over? Really!

YOUNG SOLDIER. I 'm sorry.

SOLDIER. You 're sorry, mate? What are you talking about? To start with, there 's a good chance that our ghost will not appear again after last night's business. So that 's that. And besides, what are you sorry about? Look at things squarely. We can hardly say this ghost scared us. Oh, well . . . the first time perhaps! . . . But, after that, eh? . . . He was a decent old ghost, almost a

pal, a relief. Well, if the idea of this ghost makes you jumpy, it 's because you 're in a real state of nerves, like me, like everybody in Thebes, rich or poor alike, except a few big pots who make something out of everything. There 's not much fun in war, anyway, but we don't know a blind thing about the enemy we 're up against. We 're beginning to get fed up with oracles, happy deaths, and heroic mothers. Do you think I should pull your leg as I do if my nerves weren't on edge, and do you think you 'd start blubbering, and that lot over there 'd get tight and dance? No, they 'd be in bed and fast asleep, and we 'd be playing dice while waiting for friend phantom.

YOUNG SOLDIER. I say . . .

SOLDIER. Well? . . .

YOUNG SOLDIER. What d' you think it 's like . . . the Sphinx?

SOLDIER. Oh! give the Sphinx a rest. If I knew what it was like I shouldn't be here doing guard duty with you to-night.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Some make out it 's no bigger than a hare, and is timid, and has a tiny little face, like a woman's. But I think it has a woman's head and breasts, and sleeps with the young men.

SOLDIER. Oh, turn it up! Shut up and forget it!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Perhaps it doesn't ask anything and doesn't even touch you. You meet it, look at it, and die of love.

SOLDIER. All we needed was for you to go and fall in love with the public scourge. After all, public scourge . . . between ourselves, do you know what I think about this public scourge? . . . It 's a vampire! Yes, a common or garden vampire! Someone in hiding from the police, and who they can't lay their hands on.

YOUNG SOILDER. A vampire with a woman's head?

SOLDIER. Can't you turn it up? No, not him! A real old vampire with a beard and moustache, and a belly. He sucks your blood and that 's how it is they bring corpses back home, all with the same wound in the same place: the back of the neck! And now, go and see for yourself if you 're still keen.

YOUNG SOLDIER. You say that . . .

SOLDIER. I say that . . . I say that . . . Hi! . . . The captain. [*They stand up to attention. The* CAPTAIN *enters and folds his arms.*]

CAPTAIN. Easy! . . . Well, my lads. . . . Is this where we see ghosts?

SOLDIER. Sir——

CAPTAIN. Silence! You will speak when I ask you. Which of you two has dared——

YOUNG SOLDIER. I did, sir!

CAPTAIN. Good Lord! Whose turn to speak is it? Are you going to keep quiet? I was asking: which of you two has dared to make a report about a service matter, without it passing through the normal channels? Right over my head. Answer.

SOLDIER. It wasn't his fault, sir, he knew——

CAPTAIN. Was it you or him?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Both of us, but *I*——

CAPTAIN. Silence! I want to know how the high priest came to hear of what happens at night at this post, while I myself heard nothing.

YOUNG SOLDIER. It 's my fault, sir, my fault. My comrade here didn't want to say anything about it. But I thought I ought to speak and, as this incident didn't concern the service . . . and, well . . . I told his uncle everything; because his uncle's wife is sister to one of the queen's linen-maids, and his brother-in-law is in Tiresias's temple.

SOLDIER. That 's why I said it was my fault, sir.

CAPTAIN. All right! Don't burst my ear-drums. So . . . this incident doesn't concern the service. Very good, oh, very good! . . . And it seems . . . this famous incident which doesn't concern the service is a ghost story?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN. A ghost appeared to you one night when you were on guard duty, and this ghost said to you . . . Just what did this ghost say to you?

YOUNG SOLDIER. He told us, sir, he was the spectre of King Laius, and he had tried to appear several times since his murder, and he begged us to find some way of warning Queen Jocasta and Tiresias with all speed.

CAPTAIN. With all speed! Fancy that! What a nice old ghost he must be! And . . . didn't you ask him, say, why *you* had the honour of this visit and why he doesn't appear directly before the queen or Tiresias?

SOLDIER. Yes, sir, I asked him, I did. His answer was that he wasn't free to put in an appearance anywhere, and that the ramparts were the most favourable spot for people who had died violent deaths, because of the drains.

CAPTAIN. Drains?

SOLDIER. Yes, sir. He said drains, meaning because of the fumes which rise there.

CAPTAIN. Hoho! A very learned spectre, and he doesn't hide his light under a bushel. Did he scare you much? And what did he look like? What was his face like? What clothes did he wear? Where did he stand, and what language did he speak? Are his visits long or short? Have you seen him on different occasions? Although this business doesn't concern the service, I must say I am curious to learn from your lips a few details about the manners and customs of ghosts.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Well, he did scare us a bit the first night, I admit. You see, sir, he appeared very suddenly, like a lamp lighting up, there in the thickness of the wall.

SOLDIER. We both saw him.

YOUNG SOLDIER. It was hard to make out the face and the body; the mouth, when it was open, was clearer, and a white tuft of his beard, and a large red stain, bright red, near the right ear. He spoke with difficulty and couldn't somehow manage to get out more than one sentence at a time. But you 'd better ask my comrade here about that, sir. He explained to me how it was the poor fellow couldn't manage to get it over.

SOLDIER. Oh! you know, sir, there 's nothing very complicated about it! He spent all his energy in the effort to appear, that is, in leaving his new shape and taking on the old, so that we could see him. That 's the reason why each time he spoke a little better, he began to disappear, became transparent like, and you could see the wall through him.

YOUNG SOLDIER. And as soon as he spoke badly you could see him very well. But you saw him badly as soon as he spoke well, and began saying the same thing over again. 'Queen Jocasta. You must . . . you must . . . Queen . . . Queen . . . Queen Jocasta. . . . You must. . . . You must warn the queen. . . . You must warn Queen Jocasta. . . . I ask you, gentlemen, I ask you, I . . . I . . . Gentlemen . . . I ask . . . you must . . . you must . . . I ask you, gentlemen, to warn . . . I ask you . . . The queen . . . Queen Jocasta . . . to warn, gentlemen, to warn . . . Gentlemen . . . Gentlemen . . .' That 's how he went on.

SOLDIER. And you could see he was afraid of disappearing before he 'd said his piece right to the end.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Oh yes, and then, you know, remember, eh? Every time the same business. The red stain went last. Just like a ship's light on the wall, it was, sir.

SOLDIER. But the whole thing was over in a minute!

YOUNG SOLDIER. He has appeared in the same place five times, every night, a little before dawn.

SOLDIER. But last night it was different, we . . . well, we had a bit of a fight, and my comrade here decided to tell the royal house everything.

CAPTAIN. Well! Well! And how was this night 'different', which, if I 'm not mistaken, caused a dispute between you . . . ?

SOLDIER. It was like this, sir. . . . You know, guard duty isn't exactly all beer and skittles.

YOUNG SOLDIER. So really we were waiting for the ghost to turn up, like.

SOLDIER. And we laid the odds.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Will come . . .

SOLDIER. Won't . . .

YOUNG SOLDIER. Will come . . .

SOLDIER. Won't . . . and it may seem a funny thing to say, but it was a comfort to see him.

YOUNG SOLDIER. A habit, as you might say.

SOLDIER. We ended by imagining we saw him when he wasn't there. We 'd say to each other: 'It 's moving! The wall is lighting up. Don't you see anything? No. But you must do. Over there, I tell you. . . . The wall isn't the same. Don't you see, look, look!'

YOUNG SOLDIER. And we looked and stared our eyes out. We didn't dare move.

SOLDIER. We watched for the least change.

YOUNG SOLDIER. And when, at last, he turned up, we could breathe again, and weren't the least bit afraid.

SOLDIER. The other night we watched and watched and stared ourselves nearly blind; we thought he 'd never show up, but he appeared stealthily . . . not at all quickly like on the first nights. And once he was visible, he said new things and told us as well as he could that something fearful had happened, a thing of death which he couldn't explain to the living. He spoke of places where he could go and places where he couldn't go, and that he had been where he shouldn't and knew a secret which he shouldn't know, and that he would be discovered and punished, and afterwards he wouldn't be allowed to appear, he wouldn't be able to appear any more. [*Solemn voice.*] 'I shall die my last death,' he said, 'and it will be finished, finished. You see, gentlemen, there is not a moment to lose. Run! Warn the queen! Find Tiresias! Gentlemen! Gentlemen, have pity! . . .' He was begging away and day was breaking. And there he stuck!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Suddenly we thought he 'd go mad.

SOLDIER. We understood from sentences without beginning or end that he had left his post, as it were, . . . didn't know how to disappear, and was lost. We saw him going through the same performance to disappear as to appear, and he couldn't manage it. So then he asked us to swear at him, because, he said, swearing at ghosts is the way to make them go. The silliest thing about it was that we hadn't the guts to do it. The more he repeated 'Come on! young men, insult me! Let yourselves go, do your best. . . . Oh, come on!'—the softer we looked.

YOUNG SOLDIER. And the less we could lay our tongue to! . . .

SOLDIER. Yes, that was the limit! And yet, it 's not for lack of blackguarding our superiors.

CAPTAIN. Very nice of you, men, I 'm sure! Thank you on behalf of the superiors.

SOLDIER. Oh! I didn't mean that, sir. . . . I meant . . . I meant the princes, crowned heads, ministers, the government, what . . . the powers that be. In fact, we 'd often talked over wrongs which are done. . . . But he was such a decent sort, the ghost of poor old King Laius, the swear-words wouldn't come. There he was, urging us on and we kept dithering: 'Go on then! Buzz off, you old bastard!' In short, we gave him bouquets!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Because, you see, sir, 'you old bastard' is a kind of friendly way of speaking among soldiers.

CAPTAIN. It 's as well to know.

SOLDIER. Go on! Go on then! . . . you bleeding . . . you old . . . poor ghost. He hung there between life and death and he was beside himself with fear because of the cocks and the sun. When, all of a sudden, we saw the wall become the wall again, and the red stain go out. We were dog-tired.

YOUNG SOLDIER. It was after that night that I decided to speak to his uncle as he refused to speak himself.

CAPTAIN. Your ghost doesn't seem to be very punctual.

SOLDIER. Oh, you know, sir, he may not show himself again.

CAPTAIN. I am in his way, no doubt.

SOLDIER. No, sir, I mean after last night . . .

CAPTAIN. But I understand from what you say that your ghost is very polite. He will appear, I 'm quite sure. In the first place, the politeness of kings is punctuality, and the politeness of ghosts consists in taking on human form, according to your ingenious theory.

SOLDIER. Possibly, sir, but it 's also possible that with ghosts there are no more kings, and they may mistake a century for a minute. So if the ghost appears in a thousand years instead of this evening . . .

CAPTAIN. You 're a clever sort of chap, but patience has its limits. I tell you this ghost will appear. I tell you my presence is upsetting him, and I tell you that no one outside the service must come along this patrol path.

SOLDIER. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN. [*In an outburst.*] So, ghost or no ghost, you are to stop any one turning up here without the password. Those are orders. Is that clear?

SOLDIER. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN. And don't forget to patrol. Dismiss!

[*The two soldiers stand stiffly at the slope.*]

[*False exit.*] Don't try any clever tricks! I 've got my eye on you.

[*He disappears. Long silence.*]

SOLDIER. As you were!

YOUNG SOLDIER. He thought we were trying to pull his leg.

SOLDIER. Don't you believe it! He thought someone was trying to pull ours.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Ours?

SOLDIER. Yes, chum. I get to know lots of things, I do, through my uncle. The queen is nice, you know, but she isn't really liked; they think she 's . . . [*He taps his head.*] They say she is eccentric and has a foreign accent, and is under the influence of Tiresias. This Tiresias advises the queen to do everything that will harm her. Do this . . . and do that. . . . She tells him her dreams, and asks him if she ought to get up right foot or left foot first; he leads her by the nose and licks her brother's boots, and plots with him against his sister. They are a low lot there. I wouldn't mind betting the captain thought our ghost was out of the same bag as the Sphinx. A priest's trick to attract Jocasta and make her believe anything they want.

YOUNG SOLDIER. No?

SOLDIER. Shakes you, doesn't it? But that 's how it is. . . . [*In a very low voice.*] Listen, I believe in the ghost myself, take it from me. But, for that very reason, because I believe in him and they don't, I advise you to keep your mouth shut. You 've already succeeded in making a fine hash of things. Take down this report: 'Has given proof of an intelligence well above his rank. . . .'

YOUNG SOLDIER. Still, if our king . . .

SOLDIER. Our king! . . . Our king! . . . Steady on! . . . A dead king

isn't a living king. It's like this, if King Laius were living, well, between ourselves, he would manage on his own and wouldn't come looking for you to act as his A.D.C. [*They move off towards the right by the patrol path.*]

VOICE OF JOCASTA. [*At the bottom of the steps. She has a very strong accent: the international accent of royalty.*] Still another flight! I hate steps! Why all these steps? We can see nothing! Where are we?

VOICE OF TIRESIAS. But, Majesty, you know what I think of this escapade, and *I* didn't——

VOICE OF JOCASTA. Stop it, Zizi. You only open your mouth to say silly things. This is not the time for moral lessons.

VOICE OF TIRESIAS. You should have taken another guide. I am nearly blind.

VOICE OF JOCASTA. What is the use of being a soothsayer, I wonder! Why, you don't even know where the steps are. I shall break my leg! It will be your fault, Zizi, your fault, as usual.

VOICE OF TIRESIAS. My fleshly eyes have gone out to the advantage of an inner eye which has other uses than counting steps.

VOICE OF JOCASTA. And now he 's cross all over his eye! There, there! We love you, Zizi; but these flights of steps upset me so. We had to come, Zizi, we simply had to!

VOICE OF TIRESIAS. Majesty——

VOICE OF JOCASTA. Don't be obstinate. I had no idea there were all these wretched steps. I am going to go up backwards. You will steady me. Don't be afraid. *I* am leading you. But if I looked at the steps, I should fall. Take my hands. Forward! [*They appear on the set.*]

There . . . there . . . there . . . four, five, six, seven . . .

[JOCASTA *arrives on the platform and moves to the right.* TIRESIAS *treads on the end of her scarf. She utters a cry.*]

TIRESIAS. What is it?

JOCASTA. It 's your foot, Zizi! You 're walking on my scarf.

TIRESIAS. Forgive me . . .

JOCASTA. Ah! he 's cross! But it isn't you that I am annoyed with, it 's the scarf! I am surrounded by objects which hate me! All day long this scarf is strangling me. At one time it catches in the branches, at another it gets wound on to the hub of a carriage, another time you tread on it. It 's a positive fact. And I am afraid of it, but I dare not be separated from it! Awful! It will be the death of me.

TIRESIAS. Look what a state your nerves are in.

JOCASTA. And what is the use of your third eye, I should like to know? Have you found the Sphinx? Have you found the murderers of Laius? Have you calmed the people? Guards are stationed at my door and I am left with things that hate me, that want my death!

TIRESIAS. From mere hearsay——

JOCASTA. I feel things. I feel things better than all of you! [*She puts her*

hand on her belly.] I feel them there! Was every possible effort made to discover the murderers of Laius?

TIRESIAS. Majesty, you know very well the Sphinx made further searches impossible.

JOCASTA. Well, I for one don't care a jot about your fowls' entrails. . . . I feel, there . . . that Laius is suffering and wants to be heard. I am determined to get to the bottom of this story, and to hear this young guard for myself; and I *shall* hear him. I am your queen, Tiresias, don't you forget it.

TIRESIAS. My dear child, you must try and understand a poor blind man who adores you, watches over you, and wishes you were sleeping in your room instead of running after a shadow on the ramparts.

JOCASTA. [*With mystery.*] I do not sleep.

TIRESIAS. You don't sleep?

JOCASTA. No, Zizi, I don't sleep. The Sphinx and the murder of Laius have put my nerves all on edge. You were right there. And I am glad in a way, because if I fall asleep for so much as a minute I have a dream, always the same, and I am ill for the whole day.

TIRESIAS. Isn't it my business to interpret dreams? . . .

JOCASTA. The place of the dream is rather like this platform, so I 'll tell you. I am standing in the night, cradling a kind of nursling. Suddenly this nursling becomes a sticky paste which runs through my fingers. I shriek and try to throw this paste away, but . . . oh! Zizi . . . if only you knew, it 's foul. . . . This thing, this paste stays hanging on to me, and when I think I 'm free of it the paste flies back and strikes me across the face. And this paste is living. It has a kind of mouth which fixes itself on mine. And it creeps everywhere, it feels after my belly, and my thighs. Oh! Horrible!

TIRESIAS. Calm yourself.

JOCASTA. I don't want to sleep any more, Zizi . . . I don't want to sleep any more. Listen to that music. Where is it? They don't sleep either. It 's lucky for them that they have that music. They are afraid, Zizi . . . and rightly. They must dream horrible things, and they don't want to sleep. And while I think of it, why this music? Why is it allowed? Do I have music to keep me from sleeping? I didn't know these places stayed open all night. How is it there is this scandal, Zizi? Creon must send out orders! This music must be forbidden! This scandal must stop at once.

TIRESIAS. Majesty, I implore you to calm yourself and to give up this idea. You 're beside yourself for lack of sleep. We have authorized these bands so that the people don't become demoralized, to keep up their courage. There would be crimes . . . and worse than that if there were no dancing in the crowded parts of town.

JOCASTA. Do I dance?

TIRESIAS. That 's different. You are in mourning for Laïus.

JOCASTA. So are they all, Zizi. All of them! Every one! And yet they can dance and I can't. It 's too unfair . . . I shall——

TIRESIAS. Someone coming, madam.

JOCASTA. I say, Zizi, I 'm shaking. I have come out with all my jewels.

TIRESIAS. There 's nothing to fear. You won't meet prowlers on the patrol path. It must be the guards.

JOCASTA. Perhaps the soldier I am looking for?

TIRESIAS. Don't move. We 'll find out.

[*The* SOLDIERS *enter. They see* JOCASTA *and* TIRESIAS.]

YOUNG SOLDIER. Steady, looks like somebody.

SOLDIER. Where have they sprung from? [*Aloud.*] Who goes there?

TIRESIAS. [*To the* QUEEN.] This is going to be awkward. . . . [*Aloud.*] Listen, my good men . . .

YOUNG SOLDIER. Password.

TIRESIAS. You see, madam, we ought to have the password. You 're getting us into an awful mess.

JOCASTA. Password? Why? What password? How silly, Zizi. I shall go and speak to him myself.

TIRESIAS. Madam, I implore you. They have instructions. These guards might not recognize you, nor believe me. It 's very dangerous.

JOCASTA. How romantic you are! You see dramas everywhere.

SOLDIER. They 're whispering together. Perhaps they 're going to spring on us.

TIRESIAS. [*To the* SOLDIERS.] You have nothing to fear. I am old and nearly blind. Let me explain my presence on these ramparts, and the presence of the person who accompanies me.

SOLDIER. No speeches. The password!

TIRESIAS. One moment. Just a moment. Listen, my good men, have you seen any gold coins?

SOLDIER. Attempted bribery.

[*He goes towards the right to guard the patrol path and leaves the* YOUNG SOLDIER *opposite* TIRESIAS.]

TIRESIAS. You 're wrong. I meant: have you seen the queen's portrait on a gold coin?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Yes!

TIRESIAS. [*Stepping aside and showing the queen, who is counting the stars, in profile.*] And . . . don't you recognize . . . ?

YOUNG SOLDIER. If you 're trying to make out there 's a connection, I don't get it. The queen is so young, and this . . . er . . . lady . . . well! . . .

JOCASTA. What does he say?

TIRESIAS. He says he finds madam very young to be the queen. . . .

JOCASTA. How entertaining!

TIRESIAS. [*To the* SOLDIER.] Fetch your officer.

SOLDIER. No need. I have my orders. Clear off! Look sharp!

TIRESIAS. You 'll hear more of this!

JOCASTA. Zizi, what is it now? What does he say?

[*The* CAPTAIN *enters.*]

CAPTAIN. What 's going on here?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Two people without the password, sir.

CAPTAIN. [*Going towards* TIRESIAS.] Who are you? [*He suddenly recognizes* TIRESIAS.] My lord! [*He bows.*] My profoundest apologies.

TIRESIAS. Whew! Thanks, Captain. I thought this young warrior was going to run us through.

CAPTAIN. I am extremely sorry, my lord! [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] Idiot! Leave us.

[*The* YOUNG SOLDIER *goes to his comrade on the extreme right.*]

SOLDIER. [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] What a brick!

TIRESIAS. Don't scold him! He was obeying orders. . . .

CAPTAIN. Such a visit . . . in such a place! What can I do for your lordship?

TIRESIAS. [*Standing back to show the queen.*] Her Majesty!

[*The* CAPTAIN *starts back.*]

CAPTAIN. [*Bows at a respectful distance.*] Majesty! . . .

JOCASTA. No ceremony, please! I should like to know which guard saw the ghost.

CAPTAIN. Oh, the sorry young specimen who ill-used my lord Tiresias, and if Your Majesty . . .

JOCASTA. See, Zizi. What luck! I was right in coming. . . . [*To the* CAPTAIN.] Tell him to approach.

CAPTAIN. [*To* TIRESIAS.] My lord, I don't know if the queen fully realizes that this young soldier would explain himself better through his officer, and that, if he speaks for himself, Her Majesty will be in danger of——

JOCASTA. What now, Zizi? . . .

TIRESIAS. The Captain was pointing out that he is used to the men and he might serve as a kind of interpreter.

JOCASTA. Send the Captain away! Has the boy a tongue, or not? Let him come near.

TIRESIAS. [*Aside to the* CAPTAIN.] Don't insist, the queen is overwrought. . . .

CAPTAIN. Very well. . . . [*He goes to his* SOLDIERS. *To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] The queen wants to speak to you. And control your tongue. I 'll pay you out for this, young fellow-me-lad.

JOCASTA. Come here! [*The* CAPTAIN *pushes the* YOUNG SOLDIER *forward.*]

CAPTAIN. Go along then! Go on, booby, forward. You won't be eaten. Excuse him, Your Majesty. Our lads are scarcely familiar with court ways.

JOCASTA. Ask that man to leave us alone with the soldier.

TIRESIAS. But, Majesty——

JOCASTA. And no 'but Majestys.' . . . If this Captain stays a moment longer I shall kick him.

TIRESIAS. Listen, officer. [*He leads him aside.*] The queen wants to be

alone with the guard who has seen something. She has her whims. She might have your record blotted for you, you know, and I couldn't do anything about it.

CAPTAIN. Right. I 'll leave you. . . . If I stayed it was because . . . well . . . I don't mean to give you advice, my lord. . . . But, between you and me, be on your guard about this ghost story. [*He bows.*] My lord. . . . [*A long salute to the queen. He passes near the* SOLDIER.] Hi! The queen wishes to stay alone with your comrade.

JOCASTA. Who is the other soldier? Has he seen the ghost?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Yes, Your Majesty, we were on guard duty together.

JOCASTA. Then let him stop. Let him stay there! I 'll call him if I want him. Good evening, Captain, you are free.

CAPTAIN. [*To the* SOLDIER.] We 'll have this out later! [*He goes out.*]

TIRESIAS. [*To the* QUEEN.] You have mortally offended that officer.

JOCASTA. About time, too! Generally it 's the men who are mortally offended and never the officers. [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] How old are you?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Nineteen.

JOCASTA. Exactly his age! He would be his age. . . . He looks splendid! Come nearer. Look, Zizi, what muscles! I adore knees. You can tell the breed by the knees. He would look like that too. . . . Isn't he fine, Zizi. Feel these biceps, like iron. . . .

TIRESIAS. I am sorry, madam, but you know . . . I 'm no authority. I can scarcely see what they 're like.

JOCASTA. Then feel. . . . Test them. Thighs like a horse! He steps away! Don't be afraid. . . . The old grandpa is blind. Heaven knows what he 's imagining, poor lad. He 's quite red! He 's adorable! And nineteen!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Yes, Your Majesty!

JOCASTA. [*Mocking him.*] Yes, Your Majesty! Isn't he just too delicious! Ah! what a shame! Perhaps he doesn't even know he 's handsome. [*As one speaks to a child.*] Well . . . did you see the ghost?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Yes, Your Majesty!

JOCASTA. The ghost of King Laïus?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Yes, Your Majesty! The king told us he was the king.

JOCASTA. Zizi . . . what do you know with all your fowls and stars? Listen to this boy. . . . And what did the king say?

TIRESIAS. [*Leading the* QUEEN *away.*] Majesty! Be careful. These young people are hot-headed, credulous . . . pushful. . . . Be on your guard. Are you certain this boy has seen the ghost, and, even if he has seen it, was it really the ghost of your husband?

JOCASTA. Gods! How unbearable you are! Unbearable and a spoil-sport. Every time you come and break the spell you stop miracles with your intelligence and incredulity. Please let me question this boy on my own. You can preach afterwards. [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] Listen. . . .

YOUNG SOLDIER. Your Majesty! . . .

JOCASTA. [*To* TIRESIAS.] I 'll find out straight away whether he has seen Laius. [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] How did he speak?

YOUNG SOLDIER. He spoke quickly and a lot, Your Majesty, ever such a lot, and he got mixed up, and he didn't manage to say what he wanted to.

JOCASTA. That 's he! Poor dear! But why on these ramparts? The stench. . . .

YOUNG SOLDIER. That 's it, Your Majesty. . . . The ghost said it was because of the swamps and the rising fumes that he could appear.

JOCASTA. How interesting! Tiresias, you would never learn that from your birds. And what did he say?

TIRESIAS. Madam, madam, you must at least question him with some order. You 'll muddle this youngster's head completely.

JOCASTA. Quite right, Zizi, quite right. [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] What was he like? How did you see him?

YOUNG SOLDIER. In the wall, Your Majesty. A sort of transparent statue, as you might say. You could see the beard most clearly, and the black hole of the mouth as he spoke, and a red stain on the temple, bright red.

JOCASTA. That 's blood!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Fancy! We didn't think of that.

JOCASTA. It's a wound! How dreadful! [LAIUS *appears.*] And what did he say? Did you understand anything?

YOUNG SOLDIER. It wasn't easy, Your Majesty. My comrade noticed that he had to make a big effort to appear, and each time he made an effort to express himself clearly he disappeared; then he was puzzled as to how to set about it.

JOCASTA. Poor dear!

GHOST. Jocasta! Jocasta! My wife! Jocasta! [*They neither hear nor see him during the whole of the scene.*]

TIRESIAS. [*Addressing the* SOLDIER.] And were you not able to grasp anything intelligible?

GHOST. Jocasta!

SOLDIER. Well, yes, my lord. We understood he wanted to warn you of a danger, put you on your guard, both the queen and you, but that 's all. The last time he explained he knew some secrets he ought not to have known, and if he was discovered he would not be able to appear again.

GHOST. Jocasta! Tiresias! Can't you see me? Can't you hear me?

JOCASTA. And didn't he say anything else? Didn't he say anything particular?

SOLDIER. Ah, well, Your Majesty! Perhaps he didn't want to say anything particular in our presence. He was asking for you. That is why my comrade tried to let you know about it.

JOCASTA. Dear boys! And I have come. I knew it all the time. I felt it there! You see, Zizi, with all your doubts. And tell us, Young Soldier, where the ghost appeared. I want to touch the exact spot.

GHOST. Look at me! Listen to me, Jocasta! Guards, you always saw me before. Why not see me now? This is torture! Jocasta! Jocasta! [*While these words are being uttered the* SOLDIER *goes to the place where the* GHOST *is. He touches it with his hand.*]

SOLDIER. There. [*He strikes the wall.*] There, in the wall.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Or in front of the wall. It was difficult to make out.

JOCASTA. But why doesn't he appear to-night? Do you think he will still be able to appear?

GHOST. Jocasta! Jocasta! Jocasta!

SOLDIER. I am sorry, Your Majesty, I don't think so, after what happened last night. I 'm afraid there was a spot of bother and Her Majesty may be too late.

JOCASTA. What a shame! Always too late. Zizi, I am always the last person in the whole kingdom to be informed. Think of the time we have wasted with your fowls and oracles! We ought to have run, to have guessed. We shall learn absolutely nothing! And there will be disasters, terrible disasters. And it will be your fault, Zizi, your fault, as usual.

TIRESIAS. Madam, the queen is speaking in front of these men.

JOCASTA. Yes, I am speaking in front of these men! I suppose I ought to restrain myself? When King Laius, the dead King Laius, has spoken in front of these men. But he has not spoken to you, Zizi, nor to Creon. He hasn't been to the temple to show himself. He showed himself on the patrol path to these men, to this boy of nineteen who is so handsome and looks like——

TIRESIAS. I implore you——

JOCASTA. Yes, I am overwrought, you must try to understand. These dangers, this spectre, this music, this pestilential smell. . . . And there 's a storm about. I can feel it in my shoulder. I am stifling, Zizi, stifling.

GHOST. Jocasta! Jocasta!

JOCASTA. I think I hear my name. Didn't you hear anything?

TIRESIAS. My poor lamb. You 're worn out. Day is breaking. You are dreaming where you stand. Are you even sure this ghost business hasn't come from the fatigue of these young men on the watch who force themselves not to sleep and who live in this depressing, swampy atmosphere?

GHOST. Jocasta! For pity's sake, listen to me! Look at me! Gentlemen, you are kind. Keep the queen. Tiresias! Tiresias!

TIRESIAS. [*To the* YOUNG SOLDIER.] Step aside a moment, I want to speak to the queen. [*The* YOUNG SOLDIER *goes to his comrade.*]

SOLDIER. Well, old son! You 've clicked! She 's fallen for you! Petted by the queen, eh!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Look here! . . .

SOLDIER. You 're made for life. Don't forget your pals.

TIRESIAS. . . . Listen! Cockcrow. The ghost will not return. Let us go home.

JOCASTA. Did you see how handsome he is?

TIRESIAS. Don't recall those sad things, my lamb. If you had a son . . .

JOCASTA. If I had a son, he would be handsome, brave, he would guess the riddle and kill the Sphinx. He would return victor.

TIRESIAS. And you would go without a husband.

JOCASTA. Little boys always say: 'I want to become a man so that I can marry mother.' It 's not such a bad idea, you know, Tiresias. Is there a sweeter union, a union that is sweeter and more cruel, and prouder, than that couple: a son and a young mother? Listen, Zizi, just now, when I touched that young guard, heaven alone knows what he must have thought, the poor lad, and I myself nearly fainted. He would be nineteen, Tiresias, nineteen! The same age as this soldier. Can we be sure Laius did not appear to him because of his likeness?

[*Cock crows.*]

GHOST. Jocasta! Jocasta! Jocasta! Tiresias! Jocasta!

TIRESIAS. [*To the* SOLDIERS.] My friends, do you think it is any use waiting?

GHOST. For pity's sake!

SOLDIER. Frankly, no, my lord. The cocks are crowing. He will not appear now.

GHOST. Gentlemen! Mercy! Am I invisible? Can't you hear me?

JOCASTA. Come along! I will be obedient. But I am very glad I questioned the boy. You must find out his name and where he lives. [*She goes towards the steps.*] I had forgotten these steps, Zizi! . . . That band is making me ill. Listen, we can go back through the higher town by the side streets, and we can see the night life.

TIRESIAS. Madam, you don't mean it.

JOCASTA. Oh! now he 's beginning again! He 'll send me simply raving! Mad and off my head. I 've got my veils on, Zizi, how do you expect I should be recognized?

TIRESIAS. My child, you said yourself you have come out wearing all your jewels. Your brooch alone has pearls as large as an egg.

JOCASTA. I am a martyr! Others can laugh and dance and amuse themselves. Do you imagine I am going to leave this brooch at the palace where it 's simply asking to be taken? Call the guard. Tell him to help me down these steps. And you can follow us.

TIRESIAS. But, madam, since the presence of this young man affects you so strongly . . .

JOCASTA. He is young and strong. He will help me, and I shan't break my neck. Obey your queen for once, at least.

TIRESIAS. Hi! . . . No, he. . . . Yes, you. . . . Help the queen down the steps. . . .

SOLDIER. You see, old man!

YOUNG SOLDIER. [*Approaching.*] Yes, my lord.

GHOST. Jocasta! Jocasta! Jocasta!

JOCASTA. He 's shy! And flights of steps hate me. Steps, hooks, and scarves. Oh! yes, they do, they hate me! They 're after my death. [*A cry.*] Ho!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Has the queen hurt herself?

TIRESIAS. No, silly! Your foot! Your foot!

YOUNG SOLDIER. What foot?

TIRESIAS. Your foot on the end of the scarf. You nearly strangled the queen.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Ye gods!

JOCASTA. Zizi, you are utterly ridiculous. Poor darling. There you go calling him a murderer because he walks, as you did, on this scarf. Don't upset yourself, my boy. My lord is absurd. He never misses an opportunity of hurting people's feelings.

TIRESIAS. But, madam——

JOCASTA. You are the one who is clumsy. Come along. Thank you, my boy. Send your name and address to the temple. One, two, three, four. . . . Marvellous! Zizi! Do you see how well I 'm getting down. Eleven, twelve. . . . Zizi, are you following? Two more steps. [*To the* SOLDIER.] Thank you. I can manage now. Help grandpa! [JOCASTA *disappears left, with* TIRESIAS. *Cocks are heard.*]

VOICE OF JOCASTA. Through your fault I shall never know what my poor Laius wanted.

GHOST. Jocasta!

VOICE OF TIRESIAS. That story is all very vague.

VOICE OF JOCASTA. What? very vague? What do you mean, vague? It 's you who are vague with your third eye. That boy knows what he has seen, and he has seen the king. Have you seen the king?

VOICE OF TIRESIAS. But——

VOICE OF JOCASTA. Have you seen him? . . . No. . . . Well . . . It 's amazing . . . it 's like . . . [*The voices die away.*]

GHOST. Jocasta! Tiresias! Have pity!

[*The two* SOLDIERS *turn to each other and see the* GHOST.]

THE SOLDIERS. Oh! the Ghost!

GHOST. Gentlemen, at last! I am saved! I kept calling, begging. . . .

SOLDIER. You were there?

GHOST. During the whole of your talk with the queen and Tiresias. Then why was I invisible?

YOUNG SOLDIER. I 'll run and fetch them!

SOLDIER. Halt!

GHOST. What? You stop him?

YOUNG SOLDIER. Let me go . . .

SOLDIER. When the joiner comes the chair stops wobbling; when you get to the shoemender your sandal stops hurting you; when you get to the doctor

you no longer feel the pain. Fetch them! That would only make him disappear.

GHOST. Alas! Do these simple souls then know what the priests cannot divine?

YOUNG SOLDIER. I shall go.

GHOST. Too late. . . . Stay. It is too late. I am discovered. They are coming; they are going to take me. Ah! they 're here! Help! Help! Quick! Tell the queen a young man is approaching Thebes, and on no account . . . No! No! Mercy! Mercy! They 've got me! Help! Ended! I . . . I. . . . Mercy . . . I . . . I . . .

[*Long silence. The two* SOLDIERS, *back to the audience, contemplate endlessly the place in the wall where the* GHOST *disappeared.*]

SOLDIER. Good God!

YOUNG SOLDIER. Poor devil!

SOLDIER. These things are beyond us, old man.

YOUNG SOLDIER. But it 's clear that, in spite of death, that fellow wanted, at all costs, to warn his wife of a danger which is threatening her. My duty is to overtake the queen and the high priest and repeat to them word for word what we have just heard.

SOLDIER. You want the queen badly, don't you? [*The* YOUNG SOLDIER *shrugs his shoulders.*] Well . . . he only had to appear to them and talk to them, they were there. We saw him all right ourselves and they didn't. But, to crown all, they even prevented *us* from seeing him. So there you have it! Dead kings become ordinary people. Poor Laïus! Now he knows how easy it is to get into touch with the great of the earth.

YOUNG SOLDIER. But us?

SOLDIER. Oh, us! It 's easy enough to get into touch with men, you coon. . . . But, when it comes to officers, queens, and high priests . . . they always go before it happens, or come when it 's all over.

YOUNG SOLDIER. What 's 'it'?

SOLDIER. How should I know? . . . I understand myself, that 's the chief thing.

YOUNG SOLDIER. And you wouldn't go and warn the queen?

SOLDIER. A word of advice: let princes deal with princes, ghosts with ghosts, and soldiers with soldiers. [*Flourish.*]

ACT II

THE MEETING OF OEDIPUS AND THE SPHINX

THE VOICE: Spectators, let us imagine we can recall the minutes we have just lived through together and relive them elsewhere. For, while the Ghost of Laïus was trying to warn Jocasta on the ramparts of Thebes, the Sphinx and Oedipus met on a hill overlooking the town. The bugle-calls, moon, stars, and crowing cocks will be the same.

SCENE: *An unpeopled spot on a hill overlooking Thebes, by moonlight. The road to Thebes (from right to left) passes over the fore-stage. It gives the impression of rounding a high leaning stone whose base is fixed at the lower end of the platform and forms the support for the wings on the right. Behind the ruins of a little temple is a broken wall. In the middle of the wall stands a complete pedestal which used to indicate the entrance to the temple and bears the trace of a chimera: a wing, a foot, a haunch. Broken and overturned columns. For the Shades of Anubis and Nemesis at the end, a record by the actors can declaim the dialogue, whilst the actress mimes the part of the dead girl with the head of a jackal.*

ACT II

THE MEETING OF OEDIPUS AND THE SPHINX

SCENE: *When the curtain rises a girl in a white dress is seen sitting among the ruins. The head of a jackal lies in her lap, its body remaining hidden behind her. Distant bugle calls.*

SPHINX. Listen.

JACKAL. Well?

SPHINX. That 's the last call. We 're free.

[ANUBIS *gets up, and the* JACKAL'S *head is seen to belong to him.*]

JACKAL, ANUBIS. It 's the first. There 'll be two more before the gates are closed.

SPHINX. It 's the last. I 'm quite sure it 's the last.

ANUBIS. You 're sure because you want the gates closed, but I 'm sorry duty forces me to contradict you, we 're not free. That was the first bugle call. We 'll wait.

SPHINX. I may have been mistaken, but——

ANUBIS. May have been mistaken! You were. . . .

SPHINX. Anubis!

ANUBIS. Sphinx?

SPHINX. I 've had enough of killing, enough of dealing out death.

ANUBIS. We must obey. There are mysteries within mystery, gods above gods. We have our gods and they have theirs. That 's what is called infinity.

SPHINX. You see, Anubis, there is no second call. It 's you who are mistaken, let us go. . . .

ANUBIS. Do you mean you would like this night to pass without any deaths?

SPHINX. Yes! I do, indeed! Yes! Although it 's growing late, I tremble to think someone may still come by.

ANUBIS. You 're getting sensitive.

SPHINX. That 's my business.

ANUBIS. Don't get cross.

SPHINX. Why must we always be acting without aim, without end, without understanding? Why, for example, should you have a dog's head, Anubis? Why have the god of the dead in the shape given to him by credulous people? Why must we have an Egyptian god in Greece and why must he have a dog's head?

ANUBIS. It 's marvellous, how like a woman you look when it comes to asking questions.

SPHINX. That is no answer!

ANUBIS. Well, my answer is: that logic forces us to appear to men in the shape in which they imagine us; otherwise, they would see only emptiness. Moreover, neither Egypt nor Greece nor death, neither the past nor the future has any meaning for us. Further, you know only too well to what use I must put this jaw. And finally, our masters prove their wisdom by giving me a material form which is not human and so preventing me from losing my head, however beastly it may be; for I am your keeper, remember. I can see that if they had given you a mere watchdog we should already be in Thebes with me on a leash and you sitting in the middle of a band of young men.

SPHINX. How stupid you are!

ANUBIS. Then try and remember that these victims who touch the girl-figure you have assumed are no more than noughts wiped off a slate, even if each of these noughts were an open mouth calling for help.

SPHINX. That may be. But here the calculations of gods are hard to follow. . . . Here we kill. Here the dead really die. Here I do kill.

[*While the* SPHINX *was speaking with her eyes on the ground* ANUBIS *pricked up his ears, looked round, and moved silently off over the ruins where he disappears. When the* SPHINX *raises her eyes, she looks for* ANUBIS, *and finds herself face to face with a small group of people who enter down stage right, and whom* ANUBIS *had scented. The group is composed of a Theban* MATRON, *her little boy and girl. The* MATRON *is dragging her daughter along. The boy is walking ahead:*]

MATRON. Look where you 're going! Get along now! Don't look behind you! Leave your sister alone! Go on. . . . [*She sees the* SPHINX *as the little boy stumbles into her.*] Look out! I told you to look where you 're going! Oh! I 'm so sorry, miss. . . . He never looks where he 's going. . . . He hasn't hurt you, has he?

SPHINX. No! not at all.

MATRON. I didn't expect to meet any one on my path at such an hour.

SPHINX. I 'm new in these parts, I haven't been long in Thebes; I was on my way to a relative who lives in the country and got lost.

MATRON. Poor dear! And where does your relative live?

SPHINX. . . . Near the twelfth milestone.

MATRON. The very part I come from! I had lunch with my family, at my brother's place, you know. He made me stay to dinner. And then, you know,

you begin gossiping and don't notice the time, and so here I am going home after curfew with my brats half asleep already.

SPHINX. Good night.

MATRON. Good night. [*She makes to go.*] And . . . I say . . . don't linger on the way. I know the likes of you and me haven't much to fear . . . but I wouldn't be too bold, if I were you, till I was inside the walls.

SPHINX. Are you afraid of thieves?

MATRON. Thieves! Ye gods, what could they get out of me? Oh, no, my dear! Where *do* you come from? Any one can see you 're not from the town. Thieves! I should think so! I mean the Sphinx!

SPHINX. Do you really, honestly and truly, believe in that nonsense yourself?

MATRON. That nonsense indeed! How young you are. Young people are so disbelieving these days. Oh, yes, they are! That 's how disasters happen. Let alone the Sphinx, I 'll give you a case from my family. . . . My brother that I 've just left. . . . [*She sits down and lowers her voice.*] He married a beautiful tall blonde from the north. One night he wakes up and what does he find? His wife in bed without head or entrails. She was a vampire. When he 'd got over the first fright what does my brother do? without a moment's hesitation he finds an egg and lays it on the pillow in the place of his wife's head. That 's how you stop vampires getting back into their body. All at once he hears a moaning. It was the head and entrails flying wildly across the room and begging my brother to take away the egg. My brother wouldn't, and the head went from moans to anger, from anger to tears, from tears to kisses. To cut a long story short, my idiot brother takes away the egg and lets his wife get back into her body. Now he knows his wife is a vampire and my sons make fun of their uncle. They maintain that he made up this entire vampire story to disguise the fact that his wife really did go out, but with her body, and that he let her come back, and that he 's a coward and ashamed of himself. But *I* know very well my sister-in-law is a vampire. . . . And my sons are in danger of marrying fiends from the underworld, all because they are obstinate and *disbelieving.*

And the same with the Sphinx—I 'm sorry if I hurt your feelings, but it 's only the likes of my sons and you who don't believe in it.

SPHINX. Your sons . . . ?

MATRON. Not the little brat who just bumped into you. I mean my boy of seventeen. . . .

SPHINX. You have several sons, have you?

MATRON. I had four. Now I have three. Seven, sixteen, and seventeen. And I can tell you ever since that wicked beast appeared the house has been impossible.

SPHINX. Your sons quarrel . . . ?

MATRON. I mean, my dear, that it 's impossible to live under the same

roof. The one who 's sixteen is only interested in politics. According to him the Sphinx is a bugbear used to scare the poor and to impose on them. There may have been something like your old Sphinx at one time—that 's how my son speaks—but now the old Sphinx is dead; and he 's merely a priest's demon and an excuse for police jobbery. They fleece and loot and terrorize the masses, and then blame it all on the Sphinx. It 's a good thing the Sphinx has broad shoulders. Whose fault is it that we starve to death, that prices go up, and that bands of looters swarm over the countryside? Why, the Sphinx's, of course. And the Sphinx is to blame because business is bad, and the government 's weak and one crash follows another; because the temples are glutted with rich offerings whilst mothers and wives are losing the bare necessities of life, and because foreigners with money to spend are leaving town. . . . Ah, you should see him, miss, how he gets up on the table, shouting, waving his arms, and stamping his feet; and then he denounces those who are responsible for it all, preaches revolt, eggs on the anarchists, shouting at the top of his voice names that are enough to get us all hanged. And between ourselves, miss . . . I know . . . you can take it from me . . . the Sphinx exists all right, but they 're making the most of it. You can be sure of that. What we want is a man, a dictator!

SPHINX. And . . . what about the brother of your young dictator?

MATRON. Oh! he 's another kettle of fish. He despises his brother, he despises me, he despises the gods, he despises everything. He makes you wonder where he can get hold of all he comes out with. He says, if you please, that the Sphinx would interest him if it killed for killing's sake, but that this Sphinx of ours is in league with the oracles, and so it doesn't interest him.

SPHINX. And your fourth son? When was it . . . ?

MATRON. I lost him nearly a year ago. He was just nineteen.

SPHINX. Poor woman. . . . What did he die of?

MATRON. Sphinx.

SPHINX. [*Gloomily.*] Ah! . . .

MATRON. It 's all very well for his younger brother to maintain he was a victim of police intrigues. . . . Oh, no! There 's no mistake, he died through the Sphinx. Ah, my dear! . . . if I live to be a hundred I 'll never forget that scene. One morning (he hadn't been home that night) I thought I heard him knock; I opened the front door and saw the underneath of his poor feet and then there followed a long way off, ever so far away, his poor little face, and in the back of his neck—look, just here—a large wound from which the blood had already stopped flowing. They brought him to me on a stretcher. Then I went: Ho! and fell, all of a heap. . . . A blow like that, you know, you don't get over in a hurry. You may be thankful you don't come from Thebes, thankful if you have no brothers. . . . You 're lucky. . . . My other boy, the orator, wants to avenge him. What 's the good? But he hates the priests, and my poor son was one of a series of human offerings.

SPHINX. Human offerings?

MATRON. To be sure. During the first months of the Sphinx the soldiers were sent to avenge the fine young men who were found dead all over the place, and they returned empty-handed. The Sphinx couldn't be found. Then, as there was a rumour that the Sphinx asked riddles, young people from the schools were sacrificed; and then the priests stated that the Sphinx demanded human offerings. At that, the youngest and weakest and fairest were chosen.

SPHINX. Poor woman!

MATRON. I tell you, my dear, what we want is a man of action. Queen Jocasta is still young. At a distance you would say she was twenty-nine or thirty. What we want is a ruler to fall from the sky, marry her, and kill the beast; someone to make an end of corruption, lock up Creon and Tiresias, improve the state of finance and liven up the people, someone who would care for the people and save us, yes, that 's it, save us. . . .

SON. Mummy!

MATRON. Sh!

SON. Mummy . . . I say, mummy, what does the Sphinx look like?

MATRON. I don't know. [*To the* SPHINX.] And what d' you think is the latest? They 're asking us to contribute our last farthings for a monument to those killed by the Sphinx! Will that bring them back to us, I should like to know?

SON. Mummy . . . what is the Sphinx like?

SPHINX. Poor little chap! His sister 's asleep. Come along. . . .

[*The son clings to the skirt of the* SPHINX.]

MATRON. Now don't worry the lady.

SPHINX. He 's all right. [*She strokes his neck.*]

SON. I say, mummy, is this lady the Sphinx?

MATRON. Little silly. [*To the* SPHINX.] I hope you don't mind. At that age children don't know what they 're saying. . . . [*She gets up.*] Oh my! [*She takes the little girl who is asleep in her arms.*] Come along now! Off we go, lazy-bones!

SON. Mummy, is that lady the Sphinx? I say, mummy, is the Sphinx that lady? Is that the Sphinx, mummy?

MATRON. Sh! Don't be silly. [*To the* SPHINX.] Well, good evening. Excuse my gossiping to you. I was glad to stop for a breather. . . . And . . . take care. [*Fanfare.*] Quickly. There 's the second bugle. After the third we 'll be shut out.

SPHINX. Go along, quickly. I 'll hurry my way. You 've put me on my guard.

MATRON. Believe me, we 'll not feel safe until there comes a man who will rid us of this scourge. [*She goes out left.*]

SON'S VOICE. I say, mummy, what 's the Sphinx look like? Why wasn't it that lady? Then what 's he like?

SPHINX. A scourge!

ANUBIS. [*Coming from among the ruins.*] That woman *would* have to come along here just now.

SPHINX. I 've been unhappy for the past two days, for two days now I 've been carrying on in this miserable way in the hope that this massacre would come to an end.

ANUBIS. Don't worry. You 're all right.

SPHINX. Listen. This is my secret wish and these the circumstances which would allow me to mount my pedestal for a last time. A young man will climb the hill, I shall fall in love with him. He 'll have no fear. And when I ask my question he will answer as to an equal. He will give *the answer,* d' you hear, Anubis, and I shall fall dead.

ANUBIS. Make no mistake: only your mortal form will fall dead.

SPHINX. And isn't that the form I should want to live in to make him happy!

ANUBIS. It 's nice to see that human form doesn't make a great goddess become a little woman.

SPHINX. You see how right I was. That bugle we heard was the last after all!

ANUBIS. Daughter of men! One is never finished with you. I tell you no! No! [*He leaves her side and mounts an overturned column.*] That was the second. When I 've heard another one you can go. Oh!

SPHINX. What is it?

ANUBIS. Bad news.

SPHINX. Someone coming?

ANUBIS. Yes. [*The* SPHINX *gets up beside* ANUBIS *and looks into the wings, right.*]

SPHINX. I can't! I can't and I won't question this young man. You needn't ask me to.

ANUBIS. I should say, if you 're like a young mortal, he 's like a young god.

SPHINX. What grace, Anubis, and what shoulders! He 's coming.

ANUBIS. I 'll hide. Don't forget you are the Sphinx. I 'm keeping my eye on you. I 'll be with you at the first sign.

SPHINX. Anubis, listen . . . quickly. . . .

ANUBIS. Sh! . . . He 's here. [ANUBIS *hides.*]

[*Oedipus enters up stage right. He is walking along with his eyes on the ground. He starts.*]

OEDIPUS. Oh! I 'm sorry. . . .

SPHINX. I startled you.

OEDIPUS. Well . . . no . . . I was dreaming, I was miles away, and suddenly, before me——

SPHINX. You took me for an animal.

OEDIPUS. Almost.

SPHINX. Almost? Almost an animal, that 's the Sphinx.

OEDIPUS. Yes, I know.

SPHINX. You admit you took me for the Sphinx. Thank you.

OEDIPUS. Oh! I soon realized my mistake.

SPHINX. Too kind. The truth of the matter is it can't be so amusing to find yourself suddenly face to face with the Sphinx, if you 're a young man.

OEDIPUS. And . . . if you 're a girl?

SPHINX. He doesn't attack girls.

OEDIPUS. Because girls avoid his haunts and are not supposed to go out alone when the light is failing.

SPHINX. You 'd do well to mind your own business, young man, and let me go my way.

OEDIPUS. Which way?

SPHINX. You 're simply amazing. Must I give my reasons for being out to a complete stranger?

OEDIPUS. And suppose I guessed your reason?

SPHINX. You amuse me.

OEDIPUS. Aren't you moved by curiosity, the curiosity which is raging amongst all modern young women, the curiosity to know what the Sphinx looks like? If he has claws, or a beak, or wings, and whether he takes after the tiger or the vulture?

SPHINX. Oh, come, come!

OEDIPUS. The Sphinx is the criminal of the day. Who 's seen him? No one. Fabulous rewards are promised to the first person who discovers him. The faint of heart tremble. Young men die. . . . But a girl, couldn't she venture into the forbidden area, setting orders at defiance, and dare what no reasonable person would dare, to unearth the monster, surprise him in his lair, get a view of him?

SPHINX. You 're on the wrong track, I tell you. I'm going back to a relative who lives in the country, and as I had forgotten the very existence of a Sphinx and that the outskirts of Thebes are not safe, I was resting a moment on the stones of these old ruins. You see how far you 're out.

OEDIPUS. What a pity! For some time now I 've only run across people as dull as ditch water; so I hoped for something more unusual. Pardon me.

SPHINX. Good evening!

OEDIPUS. Good evening!

[*They pass each other. But* OEDIPUS *turns back.*]

I say! I may appear unpleasant, but I honestly can't bring myself to believe you. Your presence in these ruins still intrigues me enormously.

SPHINX. You 're simply incredible.

OEDIPUS. Because if you were like other girls you would already have made off as fast as your legs would carry you.

SPHINX. My dear boy, you 're quite absurd.

OEDIPUS. It seemed to me so marvellous to find in a girl a worthy competitor.

SPHINX. A competitor? Then you are looking for the Sphinx?

OEDIPUS. Looking for him? Let me tell you, I 've been on the march for a whole month. Probably that 's why I appeared ill-mannered just now. I was so wild with excitement as I drew near Thebes that I could have shouted my enthusiasm to the merest block of stone, when, instead of a block of stone, what stands in my path but a girl in white? So I couldn't help talking to her about what was uppermost in my mind and thinking she must have the same purpose as myself.

SPHINX. But surely, a moment ago, when you saw me spring out of the shadow, you didn't seem to me very much on the alert for a man who wants to measure his strength with the enemy.

OEDIPUS. That is true. I was dreaming of fame, and the beast would have caught me unawares. To-morrow in Thebes I shall equip myself and the hunt will begin.

SPHINX. You love fame?

OEDIPUS. I 'm not sure about that. I like trampling crowds, trumpet calls, flying banners, waving palm branches, the sun, gold and purple, happiness, luck—you know, to live!

SPHINX. Is that what you call living?

OEDIPUS. Don't you?

SPHINX. No, I must say I have quite a different idea of life.

OEDIPUS. What 's that?

SPHINX. To love. To be loved by the one you love.

OEDIPUS. I shall love my people and they me.

SPHINX. The public square is not a home.

OEDIPUS. The public square has nothing to do with it. The people of Thebes are looking for a man. If I kill the Sphinx I shall be that man. Queen Jocasta is a widow, I shall marry her. . . .

SPHINX. A woman who might be your mother!

OEDIPUS. The main thing is that she is not.

SPHINX. Do you imagine that a queen and her people would give themselves up to the first comer?

OEDIPUS. Would you call the vanquisher of the Sphinx a first comer? I know the promised reward is the queen. Don't laugh at me. Please listen. You must. I must prove that my dream isn't merely a dream. My father is King of Corinth. My father and mother were already old when I was born and I lived in a court of gloom. Too much fuss and comfort produced in me a feverish longing for adventure. I began to pine and waste away, when one evening a drunk shouted at me that I was a bastard and that I was usurping the place of a legitimate son. Blows and abuse followed, and the next day, despite the tears of Merope and Polybius, I decided to visit the sanctuaries and question

the gods. They all replied with the same oracle: You will murder your father and marry your mother.

SPHINX. What?

OEDIPUS. Yes, I mean it. At first this oracle fills you with horror, but I 'm not so easily imposed on! I soon saw how nonsensical the whole thing was. I took into account the ways of the gods and the priests, and I came to this conclusion: either the oracle hid a less serious meaning which had to be discovered, or the priests who communicate from temple to temple by means of birds found it perhaps to their advantage to put this oracle into the mouth of the gods and to weaken my chances of coming into power. Briefly, I soon forgot my fears, and, I may say, used this threat of parricide and incest as an excuse to flee the court and satisfy my thirst for the unknown.

SPHINX. Now it 's my turn to feel dazed. I 'm sorry I rather made fun of you. Will you forgive me, prince?

OEDIPUS. Give me your hand. May I ask your name? Mine is Oedipus; I 'm nineteen.

SPHINX. Oh, what does it matter about mine, Oedipus? You must like illustrious names. . . . That of a little girl of seventeen wouldn't interest you.

OEDIPUS. That 's unkind.

SPHINX. You adore fame. Yet I should have thought the surest way of foiling the oracle would be to marry a woman younger than yourself.

OEDIPUS. That doesn't sound like you. That 's more like a mother of Thebes where marriageable young men are few.

SPHINX. And that 's not like you either. That was a gross, common thing to say.

OEDIPUS. So, I shall have walked the roads past mountain and stream merely to take a wife who will quickly become a Sphinx, worse than that, a Sphinx with breasts and claws!

SPHINX. Oedipus. . . .

OEDIPUS. No, thank you! I prefer to try my luck. Take this belt: with that you will be able to get to me when I have killed the beast. [*Business.*]

SPHINX. Have you ever killed?

OEDIPUS. Yes, once. At the cross-roads of Delphi and Daulis. I was walking along like a moment ago. A carriage was approaching driven by an old man with an escort of four servants. When I was on a level with the horses one of them reared and knocked me into one of these servants. The fool tried to strike me, I aimed a blow at him with my stick, but he dodged down and I caught the old man on the temple. He fell and the horses bolted, dragging him along. I ran after them, the servants were terrified and fled; I found myself alone with the bleeding body of the old man and the horses who screamed as they rolled about entangled, and broke their legs. It was dreadful . . . dreadful. . . .

SPHINX. Yes, isn't it . . . it 's dreadful to kill.

OEDIPUS. Oh, well, it wasn't my fault and I think no more about it. The thing is to clear all obstacles, to wear blinkers, and not to give way to self-pity. Besides, there is my star.

SPHINX. Then farewell, Oedipus. I am of the sex which is disturbing to heroes. Let us go our ways, we can have little in common.

OEDIPUS. Disturbing to heroes, eh! You have a high opinion of your sex.

SPHINX. And . . . supposing the Sphinx killed you?

OEDIPUS. His death depends, if I 'm not mistaken, on questions which I must answer. If I guess right he won't even touch me, he 'll just die.

SPHINX. And if you do not guess right?

OEDIPUS. Thanks to my unhappy childhood I have pursued studies which give me a great start over the riff-raff of Thebes.

SPHINX. I 'm glad to hear it.

OEDIPUS. And I don't think this simple-minded monster is expecting to be confronted by a pupil of the best scholars of Corinth.

SPHINX. You have an answer to everything. A pity, for, I own, Oedipus, I have a soft spot for weak people, and I should like to have found you wanting.

OEDIPUS. Farewell.

[*The* SPHINX *makes one step as if to rush in pursuit of* OEDIPUS, *stops, but cannot resist the call. Until her* 'I' I" *the* SPHINX *does not take her eyes off those of* OEDIPUS; *she moves as it were round this immobile, steady, vast gaze from under eyelids which do not flicker.*]

SPHINX. Oedipus!

OEDIPUS. Did you call me?

SPHINX. One last word. For the moment does nothing else occupy your mind, nothing else fire your heart, nothing stir your spirit save the Sphinx?

OEDIPUS. Nothing else, for the moment.

SPHINX. And he . . . or she who brought you into his presence. . . . I mean who would help you. . . . I mean who may perhaps know something to help bring about this meeting . . . would he or she in your eyes assume such prestige that you would be touched and moved?

OEDIPUS. Naturally, but what does all this mean?

SPHINX. And supposing I, I myself, were to divulge a secret, a tremendous secret?

OEDIPUS. You 're joking!

SPHINX. A secret which would allow you to enter into contact with the enigma of enigmas, with the human beast, with the singing bitch, as it is called, with the Sphinx?

OEDIPUS. What! You? You? Did I guess aright, and has your curiosity led you to discover . . . ? No! How stupid of me. This is a woman's trick to make me turn back.

SPHINX. Good-bye.

OEDIPUS. Oh! Forgive me! . . .

SPHINX. Too late.

OEDIPUS. I 'm kneeling; a simple fool who begs forgiveness.

SPHINX. You 're a fatuous young man who is sorry to have lost his chance and is trying to get it back.

OEDIPUS. I am and I 'm ashamed. Look, I believe you, I 'll listen. But if you have played me a trick I shall drag you by the hair and grip you till the blood flows.

SPHINX. Come here. [*She leads him opposite the pedestal.*] Shut your eyes. Don't cheat. Count up to fifty.

OEDIPUS. [*With his eyes shut.*] Take care!

SPHINX. It 's your turn to do that.

[OEDIPUS *counts. One feels that something extraordinary is happening. The* SPHINX *bounds across the ruins, disappears behind a wall and reappears in the real pedestal, that is, she seems to be fastened on to the pedestal, the bust resting on the elbows and looking straight ahead, whereas the actress is really standing, and only lets her bust appear and her arms in spotted gloves with her hands grasping the edge; out of the broken wing suddenly grow two immense, pale, luminous wings and the fragment of statue completes her, prolonging her, and appearing to belong to her.* OEDIPUS *is heard counting:* 'Forty-seven, forty-eight, forty-nine,' *then he makes a pause and shouts:* 'Fifty.' *He turns round.*]

OEDIPUS. You!

SPHINX. [*In a high distant voice, joyous and terrible.*] Yes, I! I, the Sphinx!

OEDIPUS. I 'm dreaming!

SPHINX. You are no dreamer, Oedipus. You know what you want, and did want. Silence. Here I command. Approach.

[OEDIPUS, *with his arms held stiffly by his body as if paralysed, tries frantically to free himself.*]

Come forward. [OEDIPUS *falls on his knees.*] As your legs refuse their help, jump, hop. . . . It 's good for a hero to make himself ridiculous. Come along! Move yourself! Don't worry, there 's nobody to see you.

[OEDIPUS, *writhing with anger, moves forward on his knees.*]

That 's it. Stop! And now. . . .

OEDIPUS. And now, I 'm beginning to understand your methods, what moves you make to lure and slay.

SPHINX. . . . And now, I am going to give you a demonstration, I 'm going to show you what would happen in this place, Oedipus, if you were any ordinary handsome youth from Thebes, and if you hadn't the privilege of pleasing me.

OEDIPUS. I know what your pleasantries are worth.

[*He knits up all the muscles of his body. It is obvious he is struggling against a charm.*]

SPHINX. Yield! Don't try to screw up your muscles and resist. Relax! If you resist you will only make my task more delicate and I might hurt you.

OEDIPUS. I shall resist! [*He shuts his eyes and turns his head away.*]

SPHINX. You need not shut your eyes or turn away your head. For it is not by my look nor by my voice that I work. A blind man is not so dexterous, the net of a gladiator not so swift, nor lightning so fine, nor a coachman so stiff, nor a cow so weighty, nor a schoolboy working at his sums with his tongue out so good, nor a ship so hung with rigging, so spread with sails, secure and buoyant; a judge is not so incorruptible, insects so voracious, birds so bloodthirsty, the egg so nocturnal, Chinese executioners so ingenious, the heart so fitful, the trickster's hand so deft, the stars so fateful, the snake moistening its prey with saliva so attentive. I secrete, I spin, I pay out, I wind, I unwind, I rewind, in such a way that it is enough for me to desire these knots for them to be made, to think about them for them to be pulled tight or slackened. My thread is so fine it escapes the eye, so fluid you might think you were suffering from a poison, so hard a quiver on my part would break your limbs, so highly strung a bow stroked between us would make music in the air; curled like the sea, the column, and the rose, muscled like the octopus, contrived like the settings of our dreams, above all invisible, unseen, and majestic like the blood circulating in statues, my thread coils round you in fantastic patterns with the volubility of honey falling upon honey.

OEDIPUS. Let me go!

SPHINX. And I speak, I work, I wind, I unwind, I calculate, I meditate, I weave, I winnow, I knit, I plait, I cross, I go over it again and again, I tie and untie and tie again, retaining the smallest knots that I shall later on have to untie for you on pain of death; I pull tight, I loosen, I make mistakes and go back, I hesitate, I correct, entangle and disentangle, unlace, lace up and begin afresh; and I adjust, I agglutinate, I pinion, I strap, I shackle, I heap up my effects, till you feel that from the tip of your toes to the top of your head you are wrapped round by all the muscles of a reptile whose slightest breath constricts yours and makes you inert like the arm on which you fall asleep.

OEDIPUS. [*In a weak voice.*] Let me be! Mercy! . . .

SPHINX. And you will cry for mercy, and you won't have to be ashamed of that, for you won't be the first. I have heard prouder than you call for their mothers, and I have seen more insolent than you burst into tears; and the more silent are even weaker than the rest: they faint before the end and I have to minister to them after the fashion of embalmers in whose hands the dead are drunk men no longer able to stand on their feet!

OEDIPUS. Merope! . . . Mother!

SPHINX. Then I should command you to advance a little closer, and I should help you by loosening your limbs. So! And I should question you. I should ask you, for example: What animal is it that goes on four legs in the morning, in the afternoon on two, and in the evening on three? And you would cudgel your brains, till in the end your mind would settle on a little

medal you won as a child, or you would repeat a number, or count the stars between these two broken columns; and I should make you return to the point by revealing the enigma.

Man is the animal who walks on four legs when he is a child, on two when he is full-grown, and when he is old with the help of a stick as a third leg.

OEDIPUS. How idiotic!

SPHINX. You would shout: How idiotic! You all say that. Then, since that cry only confirms your failure, I should call my assistant, Anubis. Anubis!

[ANUBIS *appears and stands on the right of the pedestal with folded arms; and his head turned to one side.*]

OEDIPUS. Oh, miss! . . . Oh, Sphinx! . . . Oh, Sphinx, please don't! No! No!

SPHINX. And I should make you go down on your knees. Go on. . . . Go on . . . that 's right. . . . Do as you 're told. And you 'd bend your head . . . and Anubis would bound forward. He would open his wolf-like jaws! [OEDIPUS *utters a cry.*] I said: *would* bend, *would* bound forward, *would* open. . . . Haven't I always been careful to express myself in that mood? Why that cry? Why that horrified expression? It was a demonstration, Oedipus, simply a demonstration. You 're free.

OEDIPUS. Free!

[*He moves an arm, a leg. . . . He gets up, he reels, he puts his hand to his head.*]

ANUBIS. Pardon me, Sphinx, this man cannot leave here without undergoing the test.

SPHINX. But . . .

ANUBIS. Question him.

OEDIPUS. But . . .

ANUBIS. Silence! Question this man.

[*A silence.* OEDIPUS *turns his back and remains motionless.*]

SPHINX. I 'll question him. . . . All right. . . . I 'll question him. . . . [*With a last look of surprise at* ANUBIS.] What animal is it that walks on four legs in the morning, on two in the afternoon, and on three in the evening?

OEDIPUS. Why, man, of course! He crawls along on four legs when he 's little, and walks on two legs when he is big, and when he 's old he helps himself along with a stick as a third leg.

[*The* SPHINX *sways on her pedestal.*]

[*Making his way to the left.*] Victory!

[*He rushes out left. The* SPHINX *slips down into the column, disappears behind the wall, and reappears wingless.*]

SPHINX. Oedipus! Where is he? Where is he?

ANUBIS. Gone, flown. He is running breathlessly to proclaim his victory.

SPHINX. Without so much as a look my way, without a movement betraying feeling, without a sign of gratitude.

ANUBIS. Did you expect anything else?

SPHINX. Oh, you fool! Then he has not understood a single thing.

ANUBIS. Not a single thing.

SPHINX. Kss! Kss! Anubis. . . . Here, here, look, after him, quickly, bite him, Anubis, bite him!

ANUBIS. And now it 's all going to begin afresh. You 're a woman again and I 'm a dog.

SPHINX. I 'm sorry. I lost my head, I 'm mad. My hands are trembling. I 'm like fire. I wish I could catch him again in one bound, I 'd spit in his face, claw him with my nails, disfigure him, trample on him, castrate him, and flay him alive!

ANUBIS. That 's more like yourself.

SPHINX. Help me! Avenge me! Don't stand there idle!

ANUBIS. Do you really hate this man?

SPHINX. I do.

ANUBIS. The worst that could happen to him would seem too good to you?

SPHINX. It would.

ANUBIS. [*Holding up the* SPHINX's *dress.*] Look at the folds in this cloth. Crush them together. Now if you pierce this bundle with a pin, remove the pin, smooth the cloth till all trace of the old creases disappears, do you think a simple country loon would believe that the innumerable holes recurring at intervals result from a single thrust of a pin?

SPHINX. Certainly not.

ANUBIS. Human time is a fold of eternity. For us time does not exist. From his birth to his death the life of Oedipus is spread flat before my eyes, with its series of episodes.

SPHINX. Speak, speak, Anubis, I 'm burning to hear. What d' you see?

ANUBIS. In the past Jocasta and Laïus had a child. As the oracle gave out that this child would be a scourge. . . .

SPHINX. A scourge!

ANUBIS. A monster, an unclean beast. . . .

SPHINX. Quicker, quicker!

ANUBIS. Jocasta bound it up and sent it into the mountains to get lost. A shepherd of Polybius found it, took it away, and, as Polybius and Merope were lamenting a sterile marriage . . .

SPHINX. I can't contain myself for joy.

ANUBIS. They adopted it. Oedipus, son of Laïus, killed Laïus where the three roads cross.

SPHINX. The old man.

ANUBIS. Son of Jocasta, he will marry Jocasta.

SPHINX. And to think I said to him: 'She might be your mother.' And he replied: 'The main thing is that she is not.' Anubis! Anubis! It 's too good to be true. . . .

ANUBIS. He will have two sons who will kill each other, and two daughters, one of whom will hang herself. Jocasta will hang herself. . . .

SPHINX. Stop! What more could I hope for? Think, Anubis: the wedding of Jocasta and Oedipus! The union of mother and son. . . . And will he know soon?

ANUBIS. Soon enough.

SPHINX. What a moment to live! I have a foretaste of its delights. Oh, to be present!

ANUBIS. You will be.

SPHINX. Is that true? . . .

ANUBIS. I think the moment has come to remind you who you are and what a ridiculous distance separates you from this little body which is listening to me. You who have assumed the role of Sphinx! You, the Goddess of Goddesses! You, the greatest of the great! The implacable! Vengeance! Nemesis! [ANUBIS *prostrates himself.*]

SPHINX. Nemesis. . . . [*She turns her back to the audience and remains a while erect, making a cross with her arms. Suddenly she comes out of this hypnotic state and rushes up stage.*] Once more, if he is in sight, I should like to feed my hatred, I want to see him run from one trap to another like a stunned rat.

ANUBIS. Is that the cry of the awakening goddess or of the jealous woman?

SPHINX. Of the goddess, Anubis, of the goddess. Our gods have cast me for the part of the Sphinx, and I shall show myself worthy of it.

ANUBIS. At last!

[*The* SPHINX *looks down on the plain, leaning over to examine it. Suddenly she turns round. The last trace of the greatness and fury which had transformed her has disappeared.*]

Dog! you lied to me.

ANUBIS. I?

SPHINX. Yes, you! Liar! Liar! Look along the road. Oedipus is coming back, he 's running, he 's flying, he loves me, he has understood!

ANUBIS. You know very well of what goes with his success and why the Sphinx is not dead.

SPHINX. Look how he jumps from rock to rock, just as my heart leaps in my breast.

ANUBIS. Convinced of his triumphs and your death this young fool has just realized that in his haste he 's forgotten the most important thing.

SPHINX. Mean wretch! Do you mean to tell me he wants to find me dead?

ANUBIS. Not you, my little fury: the Sphinx. He thinks he 's killed the Sphinx; he will have to prove it. Thebes won't be satisfied with a fisherman's yarn.

SPHINX. You 're lying. I 'll tell him everything. I 'll warn him. I 'll save him. I 'll turn him away from Jocasta, from that miserable town. . . .

ANUBIS. Take care.

SPHINX. I shall speak.

ANUBIS. He 's coming. Let him speak first.

[OEDIPUS, *out of breath, comes in down stage left. He sees the* SPHINX *and* ANUBIS *standing side by side.*]

OEDIPUS. [*Saluting.*] I 'm glad to see what good health the immortals enjoy after their death.

SPHINX. What brings you back here?

OEDIPUS. The collecting of my due.

[*Angry movement on the part of* ANUBIS *towards* OEDIPUS, *who steps back.*]

SPHINX. Anubis! [*With a gesture she orders him to leave her alone. He goes behind the ruins. To* OEDIPUS.] You shall have it. Stay where you are. The loser is a woman. She asks one last favour of her master.

OEDIPUS. Excuse me for being on my guard, but you 've taught me to distrust your feminine wiles.

SPHINX. Ah! I was the Sphinx. No, Oedipus. . . . You will bear my mortal remains to Thebes and the future will reward you . . . according to your deserts. No . . . I ask you merely to let me disappear behind this wall so that I may take off this body in which, I must confess, I have, for some little while, felt rather . . . cramped.

OEDIPUS. Very well. But be quick. At the last bugles . . . [*The bugles are heard.*] You see, I speak of them and they are sounded. I must waste no time.

SPHINX. [*Hidden.*] Thebes will not leave a hero standing at her gates.

VOICE OF ANUBIS. [*From behind the ruins.*] Hurry, hurry. It looks as though you 're inventing excuses and dawdling on purpose.

SPHINX. [*Hidden.*] Am I the first, God of the Dead, whom you 've had to drag by the clothes?

OEDIPUS. You 're trying to gain time, Sphinx.

SPHINX. [*Hidden.*] So much the better for you, Oedipus. My haste might have served you ill. A serious difficulty occurs to me. If you bear into Thebes the body of a girl instead of the monster which the people expect, the crowd will stone you.

OEDIPUS. That 's true! Women are simply amazing; they think of everything.

SPHINX. [*Hidden.*] They call me: The virgin with the claws. . . . The singing bitch. . . . They will want to identify my fangs. Don't be alarmed. Anubis! My faithful dog! Listen, since our faces are only shadows, I want you to give me your jackal's head.

OEDIPUS. Splendid idea!

ANUBIS. [*Hidden.*] Do what you like, so long as this shameful play-acting may come to an end and you may become yourself once more.

SPHINX. [*Hidden.*] I shan't be long.

OEDIPUS. I shall count up to fifty as I did before. I 'll have my own back.

ANUBIS. [*Hidden.*] Sphinx, Sphinx, what are you waiting for?

SPHINX. Now I 'm ugly, Anubis. A monster! . . . Poor boy . . . supposing I frighten him. . . .

ANUBIS. Don't worry, he won't even see you.

SPHINX. Is he blind then?

ANUBIS. Many men are born blind and only realize it the day a home-truth hits them between the eyes.

OEDIPUS. Fifty.

ANUBIS. [*Hidden.*] Go on. . . . Go on. . . .

SPHINX. [*Hidden.*] Farewell, Sphinx.

[*From behind the wall comes the staggering figure of a girl with a jackal's head. She waves her arms in the air and falls.*]

OEDIPUS. About time too! [*He rushes forward, not stopping to look, lifts the body, and takes a stand down stage right. He carries the body before him on his outstretched arms.*] No, not like that! I should look like that tragedian I saw in Corinth playing the part of a king carrying the body of his son. The pose was pompous and moved no one. [*He tries holding the body under his left arm; behind the ruins on the mound appear two giants forms covered with rainbow veils: the gods.*] No! I should be ridiculous. Like a hunter going home empty-handed after killing his dog.

ANUBIS. [*The form on the right.*] To free your goddess's body of all human contamination, perhaps it might be as well for this Oedipus to disinfect you by bestowing on himself at least a title of demigod.

NEMESIS. [*The form on the left.*] He is so young. . . .

OEDIPUS. Hercules! Hercules threw the lion over his shoulder! . . . [*He puts the body over his shoulder.*] Yes, over my shoulder. Over my shoulder! Like a demigod!

ANUBIS. [*Veiled.*] Isn't he simply *incredible!*

OEDIPUS. [*Moving off towards the left, taking two steps after each of his thanksgivings.*] I have killed the unclean beast.

NEMESIS. [*Veiled.*] Anubis . . . I feel very ill at ease.

ANUBIS. We must go.

OEDIPUS. I have saved the town!

ANUBIS. Come along, mistress, let us go.

OEDIPUS. I shall marry Queen Jocasta!

NEMESIS. [*Veiled.*] Poor, poor, poor mankind! . . . I can stand no more, Anubis. . . . I can't breathe. Let us leave the earth.

OEDIPUS. I shall be king!

[*A murmur envelops the two huge forms. The veils fly round them. Day breaks. Cocks crow.*]

ACT III

THE WEDDING NIGHT

THE VOICE: The coronation and nuptial celebrations have been going on since dawn. The crowd has just acclaimed the queen and the conqueror of the Sphinx for the last time.

Every one goes home. In the little square of the royal palace now rises only the slight murmur of a fountain. Oedipus and Jocasta find privacy at last in the nuptial chamber. They are very tired and heavy with sleep. In spite of a few hints and civilities on the part of destiny, sleep will prevent them from seeing the trap which is closing on them for ever.

ACT III

The Wedding Night

SCENE: *The platform represents* JOCASTA'S *bedroom, which is as red as a little butcher's shop amid the town buildings. A broad bed covered with white furs. At the foot of the bed an animal's skin. On the right of the bed a cradle. On the right fore-stage a latticed bay window, looking on to the square of Thebes. On the left fore-stage a movable mirror of human size.* OEDIPUS *and* JOCASTA *are wearing their coronation costumes. From the moment the curtain rises they move about in the slow motion induced by extreme fatigue.*

JOCASTA. Phew! I 'm done! You are so full of life, dear! I am afraid, for you, this room will become a cage, a prison.

OEDIPUS. My dear love! A scented bedroom, a woman's room, yours! After this killing day, those processions, that ceremonial, that crowd which still clamoured for us under our very windows. . . .

JOCASTA. Not clamoured for us . . . for you, dear.

OEDIPUS. Same thing.

JOCASTA. You must be truthful, my young conqueror. They hate me. My dress annoys them, my accent annoys them, they are annoyed by my blackened eyelashes, my rouge, and my vivaciousness!

OEDIPUS. It 's Creon who annoys them! The cold, hard, inhuman Creon! I shall make your star rise again. Ah! Jocasta! What a magnificent programme!

JOCASTA. It was high time you came. I 'm exhausted.

OEDIPUS. Your room a prison! Your room, dear . . . and our bed.

JOCASTA. Do you want me to remove the cradle? After the death of the child I had to have it near me, I couldn't sleep. . . . I was too lonely. . . . But now . . .

OEDIPUS. [*In an indistinct voice.*] But now . . .

JOCASTA. What?

OEDIPUS. I said . . . I said . . . that it 's he . . . he . . . the dog . . . I mean . . . the dog who won't . . . the dog . . . the fountain dog. . . . [*His head droops.*]

JOCASTA. Oedipus! Oedipus!

OEDIPUS. [*Awakens, startled.*] What?

JOCASTA. You were falling asleep, dear!

OEDIPUS. Me? Never.

JOCASTA. Oh, yes, you were, dear. You were telling me about a dog who won't . . . a fountain dog. And I was listening.

[*She laughs and herself seems to be becoming vague.*]

OEDIPUS. Nonsense!

JOCASTA. I was asking you if you wanted me to remove the cradle, if it worries you.

OEDIPUS. Am I such a kid as to fear this pretty muslin ghost? On the contrary it will be the cradle of my luck. My luck will grow in it beside our love until it can be used for our first son. So you see! . . .

JOCASTA. My poor love. . . . You 're dropping with fatigue and here we stand . . . [*Same business as with* OEDIPUS.] . . . stand on this wall. . . .

OEDIPUS. What wall?

JOCASTA. This rampart wall. [*She starts.*] A wall. . . . What? I . . . I . . . [*Haggard.*] What 's happening?

OEDIPUS. [*Laughing.*] Well, this time it 's you dreaming. We 're tired out, my poor sweet.

JOCASTA. I was asleep? Did I talk?

OEDIPUS. We *are* a pretty pair! Here I go telling you about fountain-dogs, and you tell me about rampart walls: and this is our wedding night! Listen, Jocasta, if I happen to fall asleep again (Are you listening?), do please awaken me, shake me, and if you fall asleep I 'll do the same for you. This one night of all must not founder in sleep. That would be too sad.

JOCASTA. You crazy darling you, why? We have all our life before us.

OEDIPUS. Maybe, but I don't want sleep to spoil the miracle of passing this joyous night alone, unutterably alone with you. I suggest we remove these heavy clothes, and as we 're not expecting any one——

JOCASTA. Listen, my darling boy, you 'll be cross . . .

OEDIPUS. Jocasta, don't tell me there 's still some official duty on the programme!

JOCASTA. While my women are doing my hair, etiquette demands that you receive a visit.

OEDIPUS. A visit? At this hour?

JOCASTA. A visit . . . a visit . . . a purely formal visit.

OEDIPUS. In this room?

JOCASTA. In this room.

OEDIPUS. From whom?

JOCASTA. Now don't get cross. From Tiresias.

OEDIPUS. Tiresias? I refuse!

JOCASTA. Listen, dear. . . .

OEDIPUS. That 's the limit! Tiresias playing the part of the family pouring out their farewell advice. How comic! I shall refuse his visit.

JOCASTA. You crazy dear, *I* am asking you to. It 's an old custom in Thebes

that the high priest must in some way bless the royal marriage bonds. And besides, Tiresias is our old uncle, our watch-dog. I am very fond of him, Oedipus, and Laius adored him. He is nearly blind. It would be unfortunate if you hurt his feelings and set him against our love.

OEDIPUS. That 's all very well . . . in the middle of the night. . . .

JOCASTA. Do! Please, for our sake and the sake of the future. It 's essential. See him for five minutes, but see him and listen to him. I ask you to. [*She kisses him.*]

OEDIPUS. I warn you I shan't let him sit down.

JOCASTA. I love you, dear. [*Long kiss.*] I shall not be long. [*At the right-hand exit.*] I am going to let him know he can come. Be patient. Do it for my sake. Think of me. [*She goes out.*]

[OEDIPUS, *alone, looks at himself in the mirror and tries attitudes.* TIRESIAS *comes in left, unheard.* OEDIPUS *sees him in the middle of the room and turns about face.*]

OEDIPUS. I am listening.

TIRESIAS. Steady, my lord. Who told you I had saved up a sermon for your especial benefit?

OEDIPUS. No one, Tiresias, no one. But I don't suppose you find it pleasant acting as kill-joy. I suggest you are waiting for me to pretend I have heard your words of counsel. I shall bow, and you will give me the accolade. That would be enough for us in our tired state and at the same time custom would be satisfied. Have I guessed right?

TIRESIAS. It is perhaps correct that there is at the bottom of this procedure a sort of custom, but for that, it would be necessary to have a royal marriage with all the dynastic, mechanical, and, I admit, even irksome business which that entails. No, my lord. Unforeseen events bring us face to face with new problems and duties. And you will agree, I think, that your coronation, and your marriage, appear in a form which is difficult to classify, and does not fit into any code.

OEDIPUS. No one could say more graciously that I have crashed on Thebes like a tile from a roof.

TIRESIAS. My lord!

OEDIPUS. Let me tell you that things fitting neatly into categories reek of death. What we want, Tiresias, is not to fit, but to make a new departure. That 's the sign of masterpieces and heroes. And that 's the way to astonish and to rule.

TIRESIAS. Right! Then you will admit that I myself, by playing a part outside the ceremonial sphere, am also making a new departure.

OEDIPUS. To the point, Tiresias, to the point.

TIRESIAS. Very well. I shall come straight to the point and speak with all frankness. My lord, your auguries look black, very black. I must put you on your guard.

OEDIPUS. There! Just as I expected! Anything else would have surprised me. This is not the first time the oracles have been violently against me and my audacity has thwarted them.

TIRESIAS. Do you believe they can be thwarted?

OEDIPUS. I am the living proof of it. And even if my marriage upsets the gods, what about your promises, your freeing of the town, and the death of the Sphinx? And why should the gods have pushed me on as far as this room if this marriage displeases them?

TIRESIAS. Do you think you can solve the problem of free will in a minute! Ah, power, I fear, is going to your head!

OEDIPUS. You mean, power is slipping from your hands.

TIRESIAS. Take care! You are speaking to a high priest.

OEDIPUS. Take care yourself, high priest. Must I remind you that you are speaking to your king?

TIRESIAS. To the husband of my queen, my lord.

OEDIPUS. Jocasta notified me a little while ago that her power is to pass into my hands, in full. Run and tell that to your master.

TIRESIAS. I serve only the gods.

OEDIPUS. Well, if you prefer that way of putting it, say that to the person who is awaiting your return.

TIRESIAS. Headstrong youth! You don't understand me.

OEDIPUS. I understand perfectly well: an adventurer is in your way. I expect you hope I found the Sphinx dead on my path. The real conqueror must have sold it to me, like those hunters who buy the hare from a poacher. And supposing I have paid for the mortal remains, whom will you find ultimately as the conqueror of the Sphinx? The same type of person who has been threatening you every minute and preventing Creon from sleeping: a poor private soldier whom the crowd will bear in triumph and who will claim his due . . . [*Shouting.*] *his due!*

TIRESIAS. He would not dare.

OEDIPUS. Ah, you see! I have made you say it. That 's the secret of the intrigue. There go your beautiful promises. That is what you were counting on.

TIRESIAS. The queen is more to me than my own daughter. I must watch over her and defend her. She is weak, credulous, romantic. . . .

OEDIPUS. You are insulting her.

TIRESIAS. I love her.

OEDIPUS. She is in need of no one's love but mine.

TIRESIAS. About this love, Oedipus, I demand an explanation. Do you love the queen?

OEDIPUS. With all my being.

TIRESIAS. I mean: do you love to take her in your arms?

OEDIPUS. I love most of all to be taken in her arms.

TIRESIAS. I appreciate that delicate distinction. You are young, Oedipus, very young. Jocasta might be your mother. I know, oh, I know, you are going to reply——

OEDIPUS. I am going to reply that I have always dreamed of such a love, an almost motherly love.

TIRESIAS. Oedipus, aren't you confusing love and love of glory? Would you love Jocasta if she were not on a throne?

OEDIPUS. A stupid question which is always being asked. Would Jocasta love me if I was old, ugly, and had not appeared out of the unknown? Do you fancy you cannot be infected by love through touching purple and gold? Are not the privileges of which you speak of the very substance of Jocasta, an organic part of her? We have been each other's from all eternity. Within her body lie fold after fold of a purple mantle which is much more regal than the one she fastens on her shoulders. I love and adore her, Tiresias. At her side I seem to occupy at last my proper place. She is my wife, she is my queen. I possess her, I shall keep her, I shall find her again, and neither by prayers nor threats can you drag from me obedience to orders from heaven knows where.

TIRESIAS. Think it over again, Oedipus. The omens and my own wisdom give me every reason to fear this wild marriage. Think it over.

OEDIPUS. Rather late, don't you think?

TIRESIAS. Have you had experience of women?

OEDIPUS. Not the slightest. And to complete your astonishment and cover myself with ridicule in your eyes, I am a virgin.

TIRESIAS. You!

OEDIPUS. The high priest of a capital is astonished that a country boy should put all his pride in keeping himself pure for a single offering. You would, no doubt, have preferred a degenerate prince, a puppet, so that Creon and the priests could work the strings.

TIRESIAS. You are going too far!

OEDIPUS. Must I order you again? . . .

TIRESIAS. Order? Has pride sent you mad?

OEDIPUS. Don't put me into a rage! My patience is at an end, my temper is ungovernable, and I am capable of any unpremeditated act.

TIRESIAS. What arrogance! . . . Weak and arrogant!

OEDIPUS. You will have brought it on yourself.

[*He throws himself upon* TIRESIAS, *seizing him by the neck.*]

TIRESIAS. Let me go. . . . Have you no shame? . . .

OEDIPUS. You are afraid that I could, from your face, there, there, close up, and in your blind man's eyes, read the real truth about your behaviour.

TIRESIAS. Murderer! Sacrilege!

OEDIPUS. Murderer! I ought to be. . . . One day I shall probably have to repent for this foolish respect, and if I dared . . . Oh, oh! Why! Gods, look here . . . here . . . in his blind man's eyes, I had no idea it was possible.

TIRESIAS. Let me go! Brute!

OEDIPUS. The future! My future, as in a crystal bowl.

TIRESIAS. You will repent. . . .

OEDIPUS. I see, I see. . . . Soothsayer, you have lied! I shall marry Jocasta. . . . A happy life, rich, prosperous, two sons . . . daughters . . . and Jocasta still as beautiful, still the same, in love, a mother in a palace of happiness. . . . Now it 's not so clear, not clear. I want to see! It 's your fault, soothsayer. . . . I want to see! [*He shakes him.*]

TIRESIAS. Accursed!

OEDIPUS. [*Suddenly recoiling, letting* TIRESIAS *go, and putting his hands over his eyes.*] Oh, filthy wretch! I am blind. He 's thrown pepper at me. Jocasta! Help! Help! . . .

TIRESIAS. I threw nothing, I swear. You are punished for your sacrilege.

OEDIPUS. [*Writhing on the ground.*] You lie!

TIRESIAS. You wanted to read by force the secrets my diseased eyes hold and that I myself have not yet interpreted; and you are punished.

OEDIPUS. Water, water, quickly, it 's burning me. . . .

TIRESIAS. [*Laying his hands over* OEDIPUS's *face.*] There, there. . . . Keep quiet. . . . I forgive you. Your nerves are on edge. Come, keep still. Your sight will return, I swear. I expect you got to the point which the gods wish to keep in darkness, or they may be punishing you for your impudence.

OEDIPUS. I can see a little . . . I think.

TIRESIAS. Are you in pain?

OEDIPUS. Less . . . the pain is going. Ah! . . . it was like fire, red pepper, a thousand pinpoints, a cat's paw scrabbling in my eye. Thank you. . . .

TIRESIAS. Can you see?

OEDIPUS. Not clearly, but I can see, I can see. Phew! I really thought I was blind for good and that it was one of your kind of tricks. In any case, I deserved it.

TIRESIAS. We like to believe in miracles when miracles suit us, and when they don't we like to believe in them no longer, but say it is a trick on the part of the soothsayer.

OEDIPUS. Forgive me. I am of a violent and vindictive disposition. I love Jocasta. I was waiting for her, impatiently, and this extraordinary phenomenon, all those images of the future in the pupil of your eyes bewitched me, fuddled me, as it were, and made me mad.

TIRESIAS. Can you see better now? It is an almost blind man asking you.

OEDIPUS. Quite, and I have no more pain. I 'm really ashamed of my conduct towards you, a blind man and a priest. Will you accept my apologies?

TIRESIAS. I was only speaking for your own good and Jocasta's.

OEDIPUS. Tiresias, in a way I owe you something in return, a confession that is difficult to make, and which I had promised myself I would make to no one.

TIRESIAS. A confession?

OEDIPUS. I noticed during the coronation ceremony that you and Creon

had some understanding between you. Do not deny it. Well, I wished to keep my identity secret; but I give it up. Listen carefully, Tiresias. I am not a wanderer. I come from Corinth. I am the only child of King Polybius and Queen Merope. A nobody will not soil this marriage bed. I am a king and son of a king.

TIRESIAS. My lord. [*He bows.*] A word from you would have cleared the atmosphere of the uneasiness created by your incognito. My little girl will be so glad. . . .

OEDIPUS. But wait! I ask you as a favour to safeguard at least this last night. Jocasta still loves in me the wanderer dropped out of the clouds, the young man stepping suddenly out of the shadows. It will unfortunately be only too easy to destroy this mirage to-morrow. In the meantime, I hope the queen will become sufficiently submissive for her to learn without disgust that Oedipus is not a prince fallen from the sky, but merely a prince.

I wish you good evening, Tiresias. Jocasta will be on her way back. I am dropping with fatigue . . . and we want to remain alone together. That is our desire.

TIRESIAS. My lord, excuse me.

[OEDIPUS *makes a sign to him with his hand.* TIRESIAS *stops at the left-hand exit.*]

One last word.

OEDIPUS. [*Loftily.*] What is it?

TIRESIAS. Forgive my boldness. This evening, after the closing of the temple, a beautiful young girl came into the private chapel where I work and, without a word of excuse, handed me this belt and said: 'Give it to Lord Oedipus and repeat word for word this sentence: Take this belt: with that you will be able to get to me when I have killed the beast.' I had scarcely tucked away the belt when the girl burst out laughing and disappeared, I don't know how.

OEDIPUS. [*Snatching away the belt.*] And that 's your trump card. You have already built up a whole system in order to destroy my hold on the queen's head and heart. How should I know? A previous promise of marriage. . . . A girl takes her revenge. . . . The temple scandal. . . . Tell-tale find. . . .

TIRESIAS. I was fulfilling my commission. That 's all.

OEDIPUS. Miscalculation and bad policy. Go . . . and carry this bad news with all speed to Prince Creon. [TIRESIAS *stays on the threshold.*] He reckoned he was going to scare me! But in point of fact, it is I who scare you, Tiresias, *I* scare you. I can see it written in large letters on your face. It wasn't so easy to terrorize the child. Confess that the child terrifies you, grandpa! Confess, grandpa! Confess I terrify you! Confess at least I make you afraid! [OEDIPUS *is lying face down on the animal skin.* TIRESIAS *is standing like a bronze statue. Silence. Then thunder.*]

TIRESIAS. Yes. Very afraid. [*He leaves, walking backwards. His prophetic*

voice can be heard.] Oedipus! Oedipus, listen to me! You are pursuing classic glory. There is another kind: obscure glory, the last resource of the arrogant person who persists in opposing the stars.

[OEDIPUS *remains looking at the belt. When* JOCASTA *comes in, in her nightdress, he quickly hides the belt under the animal skin.*]

JOCASTA. Well now? What did the old ogre say? Did he torment you?

OEDIPUS. Yes . . . no. . . .

JOCASTA. He 's a monster. Did he prove to you that you are too young for me?

OEDIPUS. You are beautiful, Jocasta! . . .

JOCASTA. That I am old?

OEDIPUS. He rather gave me to understand that I loved your pearls, and your diadem.

JOCASTA. Always spoiling everything! Ruining everything! Doing harm!

OEDIPUS. But you can take it from me, he didn't manage to scare me. On the contrary, I scared him. He admitted that.

JOCASTA. Well done! My love! You, dear, after my pearls and diadem!

OEDIPUS. I am happy to see you again without any pomp, without your jewels and orders, white, young, and beautiful, in our own room.

JOCASTA. Young! Oedipus! . . . You mustn't tell lies. . . .

OEDIPUS. Again! . . .

JOCASTA. Don't scold me.

OEDIPUS. Yes, I shall scold you! I shall scold you because a woman like you ought to be above such nonsense. A young girl's face is as boring as a white page on which my eyes can read nothing moving; whereas your face! . . . I must have the scars, the tattooing of destiny, a beauty which has weathered tempests. Why should you be afraid of crows' feet, Jocasta? What would a silly schoolgirl's look or smile be worth beside the remarkable sacred beauty of your face; slapped by fate, branded by the executioner, and tender, tender and . . . [*He notices that* JOCASTA *is weeping.*] Jocasta! my dear little girl, you 're crying! What ever 's the matter? . . . All right, then. . . . What have I done now? Jocasta! . . .

JOCASTA. Am I so old . . . so very old?

OEDIPUS. My dear crazy girl! It 's you who persist in——

JOCASTA. Women say things to be contradicted. They always hope it isn't true.

OEDIPUS. My dear Jocasta! . . . What a fool I am! What a great brute! . . . Darling. . . . Don't cry. Kiss me. . . . I meant——

JOCASTA. Never mind. . . . I am being ridiculous. [*She dries her eyes.*]

OEDIPUS. It 's all my fault.

JOCASTA. It isn't. . . . There . . . the black is running into my eye now. [OEDIPUS *coaxes her.*] It 's all over.

OEDIPUS. Quick, a smile. [*Slight rumbling of thunder.*] Listen.

JOCASTA. My nerves are bad because of the storm.

OEDIPUS. But look at the sky! It is full of stars, and clear.

JOCASTA. Yes, but there is a storm brewing somewhere. When the fountain makes a still murmur like silence, and my shoulder aches, there is always a storm about and summer lightning. [*She leans against the bay window. Summer lightning.*]

OEDIPUS. Come here, quickly. . . .

JOCASTA. Oedipus! . . . come here a moment.

OEDIPUS. What is it? . . .

JOCASTA. The sentry . . . look, lean out. On the bench on the right, he 's asleep. Don't you think he 's handsome, that boy? with his mouth wide open.

OEDIPUS. I 'll throw some water in it! I 'll teach him to sleep!

JOCASTA. Oedipus!

OEDIPUS. How dare he sleep when guarding the queen!

JOCASTA. The Sphinx is dead and you 're alive. Let him sleep in peace! May all the town sleep in peace! May they all sleep every one!

OEDIPUS. Lucky sentry!

JOCASTA. Oedipus! Oedipus! I should like to make you jealous, but it isn't that. . . . This young guard——

OEDIPUS. What is so extraordinary about this young guard then?

JOCASTA. During that famous night, the night of the Sphinx, while you were encountering the beast, I had an escapade on the ramparts with Tiresias. I had heard that a young soldier had seen the ghost of Laius, and that Laius was calling for me to warn me of a threatening danger. Well . . . that soldier was the very sentry who is guarding us.

OEDIPUS. Who is guarding us! . . . Anyway . . . Let him sleep in peace, my kind Jocasta. I can guard you all right on my own. Of course, not the slightest sign of the ghost of Laius?

JOCASTA. Not the slightest, I 'm sorry to say. . . . Poor lad! I touched his shoulders and legs, and kept saying to Zizi, 'Touch, touch,' and I was in a state . . . because he was like you. And it 's true, you know, Oedipus, he was like you.

OEDIPUS. You say: 'This guard was like you.' But, Jocasta, you didn't know me then; it was impossible for you to know or to guess. . . .

JOCASTA. Yes, indeed, that 's true. I expect I meant to say my son would be about his age. [*Silence.*] Yes . . . I am getting muddled. It 's only now that this likeness strikes me. [*She shakes off this uneasy feeling.*] You 're a dear, you 're good-looking, I love you. [*After a pause.*] Oedipus!

OEDIPUS. My goddess!

JOCASTA. I approve of your not telling the story of your victory to Creon or to Tiresias, or to everybody [*With her arms round his neck.*], but to me . . . to me!

OEDIPUS. [*Freeing himself.*] I had your promise! . . . And but for that boy——

JOCASTA. Is the Jocasta of yesterday the Jocasta of now? Haven't I a right to share your memories without anybody else knowing anything about it?

OEDIPUS. Of course.

JOCASTA. And do you remember you kept saying: 'No, no, Jocasta, later, later when we are in our own room.' Well, aren't we in our own room? . . .

OEDIPUS. Persistent monkey! Charmer! She always ends by getting what she wants. Now lie still. . . . I am beginning.

JOCASTA. Oh, Oedipus! Oedipus! What fun! What fun! I 'm quite still. [JOCASTA *lies down, shuts her eyes, and keeps still.* OEDIPUS *begins lying, hesitating, inventing, accompanied by the storm.*]

OEDIPUS. Now. I was nearing Thebes. I was following the goat track which rounds the hill to the south of the town. I was thinking of the future, of you whom I imagined less beautiful than you are in reality, but still, very beautiful, painted, and sitting on a throne in the centre of a group of ladies-in-waiting. Supposing you do kill it, I said to myself, would you, Oedipus, dare to ask for the promised reward? Should I dare to go near the queen? . . . And I kept walking and worrying. All of a sudden I stopped dead. My heart was beating hard. I had just heard a sort of song. The voice that sang it was not of this world. Was it the Sphinx? My haversack contained a knife. I slipped the knife under my tunic and crept along. Do you know those ruins of a little temple on the hill, with a pedestal and the hind quarters of a chimera? [*Silence.*] Jocasta . . . Jocasta. . . . Are you asleep?

JOCASTA. [*Awaking with a start.*] What? Oedipus. . . .

OEDIPUS. You were asleep.

JOCASTA. I wasn't.

OEDIPUS. Oh, yes, you were. There 's a fickle little girl for you! She wants me to tell her a story and then goes and falls asleep in the middle of it, instead of listening.

JOCASTA. I heard it all. You 're mistaken. You were speaking of a goat track.

OEDIPUS. I 'd got a long way past the goat track! . . .

JOCASTA. Don't be angry, darling. Are you cross with me? . . .

OEDIPUS. Me?

JOCASTA. Yes, you are cross with me, and rightly. What a stupid silly I am! That 's what age does for you.

OEDIPUS. Don't be sad. I 'll start the story again, I promise you, but first of all you and I must lie down and sleep a little, side by side. After that, we shall be clear of this sticky paste, this struggle against sleep which is spoiling everything. The first one to wake up will wake the other. Promise.

JOCASTA. Promised. Poor queens know how to snatch a moment's sleep where they sit, between two audiences. But give me your hand. I am too old. Tiresias was right.

OEDIPUS. Perhaps so for Thebes, where girls are marriageable at thirteen.

But what about me? Am I an old man? My head keeps dropping and my chin hitting my chest wakes me up.

JOCASTA. You? That 's quite different, it 's the dustman, as children say! But as for me . . . You begin to tell me the most marvellous story in the world, and I go and doze away like a grandma beside the fire. And you will punish me by never beginning it over again, and finding excuses. . . . Did I talk in my sleep?

OEDIPUS. Talk? No. I thought you were being very attentive. You naughty girl, have you some secrets you are afraid you might give away?

JOCASTA. No, only those foolish things we sometimes say when sleeping.

OEDIPUS. You were lying as good as gold. Till soon, my little queen.

JOCASTA. Very soon, my king, my love.

[*Hand in hand, side by side, they shut their eyes and fall into the heavy sleep of people who struggle against sleep. A pause. The fountain soliloquizes. Slight thunder. Suddenly the lighting becomes the lighting of dreams. The dream of* OEDIPUS. *The animal skin is pushed up. It is lifted by the head of* ANUBIS. *He shows the belt at the end of his outstretched arm.* OEDIPUS *tosses about and turns over.*]

ANUBIS. [*In a slow mocking voice.*] Thanks to my unhappy childhood, I have pursued studies which give me a great start over the riff-raff of Thebes, and I don't think this simple-minded monster is expecting to be confronted by a pupil of the best scholars of Corinth. But if you have played a trick on me I shall drag you by the hair. [*Up to a howl.*] I shall drag you by the hair, I shall drag you by the hair, I shall grip you till the blood flows! . . . I shall grip you till the blood flows! . . .

JOCASTA. [*Dreaming.*] No, not that paste, not that foul paste! . . .

OEDIPUS. [*In a distant, muffled voice.*] I shall count up to fifty: one, two, three, four, eight, seven, nine, ten, ten, eleven, fourteen, five, two, four, seven, fifteen, fifteen, fifteen, fifteen, three, four. . . .

ANUBIS. And Anubis would bound forward. He would open his wolf-like jaws!

[*He disappears under the platform. The animal skin resumes its normal appearance.*]

OEDIPUS. Help! Help! I 'm here! Help me! Everybody! Come here!

JOCASTA. What? What is it? Oedipus, my darling! I was in a dead sleep! Wake up! [*She shakes him.*]

OEDIPUS. [*Struggling and talking to the* SPHINX.] Oh, miss! No! No, miss! Please don't! No! Let me go, miss! No! No! No!

JOCASTA. My pet, don't scare me so. It 's a dream. This is me, me, Jocasta, your wife, Jocasta.

OEDIPUS. No, no! [*He awakens.*] Where was I? How ghastly! Jocasta, is that you? . . . What a nightmare, what a horrible nightmare!

JOCASTA. There, there, it 's all over, you are in our room, dear, in my arms. . . .

OEDIPUS. Didn't you see anything? Of course, how silly of me, it was that animal skin. . . . Phew! I must have talked. What did I say?

JOCASTA. Now it 's your turn. You were shouting: 'Oh no, miss! Please don't, miss! Let me go, miss!' Who was that wicked woman?

OEDIPUS. I don't remember. What a night!

JOCASTA. How about me? Your shouts saved me from an unspeakable nightmare. Look! You're soaked through, swimming in perspiration It's my fault. I let you go to sleep in all those heavy clothes, golden chains, clasps, and those sandals which cut your heel. . . . [*She lifts him up. He falls back.*] Come along! What a big baby! I can't possibly leave you in this state. Don't make yourself so heavy, help me. . . .

[*She lifts him up, takes off his tunic, and rubs him down.*]

OEDIPUS. [*Still in a vague state.*] Yes, my little darling mother. . . .

JOCASTA. [*Mocking him.*] 'Yes, my little darling mother. . . .' What a child! Now he 's taking me for his mother.

OEDIPUS. [*Awake.*] Oh, forgive me, Jocasta, my love, I am being so silly. You see I 'm half asleep, I mix up everything. I was thousands of miles away with my mother who always thinks I am too cold or too hot. You 're not cross?

JOCASTA. Silly boy! Let me see to you, and sleep away. All the time he's excusing himself and asking forgiveness. My word! What a polite young man! He must have been taken care of by a very kind mother, very kind, and then he goes and leaves her, yes. But I mustn't complain of that. I love with all the warmth of a woman in love, that mother who petted you and kept you and brought you up for me, for us.

OEDIPUS. Sweet.

JOCASTA. I should say so! Your sandals. Raise your left leg. [*She takes off his sandals.*] And now the right.

[*Same business; suddenly she utters a terrible cry.*]

OEDIPUS. Hurt yourself?

JOCASTA. No . . . no. . . .

[*She recoils, and stares like a mad creature at* OEDIPUS's *feet.*]

OEDIPUS. Ah, my scars! . . . I didn't know they were so ugly. My poor darling, did they upset you?

JOCASTA. Those holes . . . how did you get them? . . . They must come from such serious injuries. . . .

OEDIPUS. From the hunt, it seems. I was in the woods; my nurse was carrying me. Suddenly from a clump of trees a wild boar broke cover and charged her. She lost her head and let me go. I fell and a woodcutter killed the animal while it was belabouring me with its tusks. . . . But she is really as pale as a ghost! My darling! I ought to have warned you. I 'm so used to them myself, those awful holes. I didn't know you were so sensitive. . . .

JOCASTA. It 's nothing. . . .

OEDIPUS. Weariness and sleepiness put us into this state of vague terror . . . you had just come out of a bad dream. . . .

JOCASTA. No, Oedipus. No. As a matter of fact, those scars remind me of something I am always trying to forget.

OEDIPUS. I always strike unlucky.

JOCASTA. You couldn't possibly know. It 's to do with a woman, my foster-sister and linen-maid. She was with child at the same age as myself, at eighteen. She worshipped her husband despite the difference of age and wanted a son. But the oracles predicted so fearful a future for the child, that, after giving birth to a son, she had not the courage to let it live.

OEDIPUS. What?

JOCASTA. Wait. . . . Imagine what strength of mind a poor woman must have to do away with the life of her life . . . the son from her womb, her ideal on earth and love of loves.

OEDIPUS. And what did this . . . woman do?

JOCASTA. With death in her heart, she bored holes in the feet of the nursling, tied them, carried it secretly to a mountain-side, and left it to the mercy of the wolves and bears.

[*She hides her face.*]

OEDIPUS. And the husband?

JOCASTA. Every one thought the child had died a natural death, and that the mother had buried it with her own hands.

OEDIPUS. And . . . this woman . . . still lives?

JOCASTA. She is dead.

OEDIPUS. So much the better for her, for my first example of royal authority would have been to inflict on her, publicly, the worst tortures, and afterwards, to have her put to death.

JOCASTA. The oracles were clear and matter-of-fact. Before those things a woman always feels so stupid and helpless.

OEDIPUS. To kill! [*Recalling* LAIUS.] Of course, it isn't infamous to kill when carried away by the instinct of self-defence, and when bad luck is involved. But basely to kill in cold blood the flesh of one's flesh, to break the chain . . . to cheat in the game!

JOCASTA. Oedipus, let 's talk about something else . . . your furious little face upsets me too much.

OEDIPUS. Yes, let us talk about something else. I should be in danger of loving you less if you tried to defend this miserable wretch.

JOCASTA. You 're a man, my love, a free man and a chief! Try and put yourself in the place of a child-mother who is credulous about the oracles, worn out, disgusted, confined, and terrified by the priests. . . .

OEDIPUS. A linen-maid! That 's her only excuse. Would you have done it?

JOCASTA. [*With a gesture.*] No, of course not.

OEDIPUS. And don't run away with the idea that to fight the oracles requires a herculean determination. I could boast and pose as a wonder; I should be lying. You know, to thwart the oracles I only had to turn my back on my family, my longings, and my country. But the farther I got from my

native town, and the nearer I came to yours, the more I felt I was returning home.

JOCASTA. Oedipus, Oedipus, that little mouth of yours which chatters away, that little wagging tongue, those frowning eyebrows and fiery eyes! Couldn't the eyebrows relax a little, Oedipus, and the eyes close gently for once, and that mouth be used for softer caresses than words?

OEDIPUS. I tell you, I 'm just a brute! A wretched, clumsy brute!

JOCASTA. You are a child.

OEDIPUS. I 'm not a child!

JOCASTA. Now he 's off again! There, there, be a good boy.

OEDIPUS. You 're right. I 'm behaving very badly. Calm this talkative mouth with yours, and these feverish eyes with your fingers.

JOCASTA. One moment. I 'll close the grille gate. I don't like that gate being open at night.

OEDIPUS. I 'll go.

JOCASTA. You stay lying down. . . . I 'll take a look in the mirror at the same time. Do you want to embrace a fright? After all this excitement the gods alone know what I look like. Don't make me nervous. Don't look at me. Turn the other way, Oedipus.

OEDIPUS. I 'm turning over. [*He lies across the bed with his head on the edge of the cradle.*] There, I 'm shutting my eyes. I 'm not here.

[JOCASTA *goes to the window.*]

JOCASTA. [*To* OEDIPUS.] The little soldier is still asleep, he 's half-naked . . . and it isn't warm to-night . . . poor lad!

[*She goes to the movable mirror; suddenly she stops, listening in the direction of the square. A drunk is talking very loud with long pauses between his reflections.*]

VOICE OF THE DRUNK. Politics! . . . Pol—i—tics! What a mess! They just tickle me to death! . . . Ho! Look, a dead 'un! . . . Sorry, a mistake: 's a soldier asleep. . . . Salute! Salute the sleeping army!

[*Silence.* JOCASTA *stands on her toes, and tries to see outside.*] Politics! . . . [*Long silence.*] It 's a disgrace . . . a disgrace. . . .

JOCASTA. Oedipus, my dear!

OEDIPUS. [*In his sleep.*] H'm!

JOCASTA. Oedipus! Oedipus. There's a drunk and the sentry doesn't hear him. I hate drunks. I want him sent away, and the soldier woken up. Oedipus! Oedipus! Please!

[*She shakes him.*]

OEDIPUS. I wind, I unwind, I calculate, I meditate, I weave, I winnow, I knit, I plait, I cross . . .

JOCASTA. What 's he saying? How soundly he sleeps! I might die, he wouldn't notice it.

DRUNK. Politics!

[*He sings. As soon as the first lines are sung* JOCASTA *leaves* OEDIPUS, *putting*

his head back on the edge of the cradle, and goes to the middle of the room. She listens.]

'Majesty, what ever are you at?
Majesty, what ever are you at?
Your husband's much too young,
Much too young for you, that 's flat! . . . Flat. . . .'

Et cetera. . . .

JOCASTA. Oh! The beasts . . .

DRUNK. 'Majesty, what ever are you at
With this holy marriage?'

[*During what follows* JOCASTA, *bewildered, goes to the window on tiptoe. Then she returns to the bed, and leaning over* OEDIPUS, *watches his face, but still looking from time to time in the direction of the window, where the voice of the* DRUNK *alternates with the murmur of the fountain and the cock-crows. She lulls the sleep of* OEDIPUS *by gently rocking the cradle.*]

Now, if I were in politics . . . I 'd say to the queen: Majesty! . . . a minor can't be your man. . . . Take a husband who 's serious, sober, and strong . . . a husband like me. . . .

VOICE OF THE GUARD. [*Who has just awakened. He gradually recovers his self-assurance.*] Get along, there!

VOICE OF THE DRUNK. Salute the waking army! . . .

GUARD. Get a move on!

DRUNK. You might at least be polite. . . .

[*As soon as the* GUARD *is heard* JOCASTA *leaves the cradle, having first muffled* OEDIPUS's *head in the muslin.*]

GUARD. D' you want a taste of the cooler?

DRUNK. 'Always politics! What a mess!
Majesty, what ever are you at? . . .'

GUARD. Come on, hop it! Clear off! . . . .

DRUNK. I 'm clearing off, I 'm clearing off, but you might be polite about it.

[*During these remarks* JOCASTA *goes to the mirror. She cannot see herself owing to the moonlight conflicting with the dawn. She takes the mirror by its supports and moves it away from the wall. The mirror itself stays fastened to the scenery.* JOCASTA *drags the frame along, trying to get some light, glancing at* OEDIPUS *who sleeps on. She brings the piece of furniture carefully into the foreground, opposite the prompter's box, so that the public becomes her mirror and* JOCASTA *looks at herself in full view of all.*]

DRUNK. [*Very distant.*]

'Your husband 's much too young,
Much too young for you, that 's flat! . . . Flat! . . .'

[*Sound of the sentry's footsteps, bugle-calls, cock-crows, a kind of snoring noise from the rhythmic, youthful breathing of* OEDIPUS. JOCASTA, *with her face up against the empty mirror, lifts her cheeks by handfuls.*]

ACT IV

OEDIPUS REX

(Seventeen years later)

THE VOICE: Seventeen years soon pass. The great plague in Thebes seems to be the first set-back to that renowned good luck of Oedipus. For their infernal machine to work properly the gods wanted all ill luck to appear in the guise of good luck. After delusive good fortune the king is to know true misfortune, the supreme consecration, which, in the hands of the cruel gods, makes of this playing-card king, in the end, a man.

ACT IV

OEDIPUS REX

(Seventeen years later)

SCENE: *Cleared of the bedroom, the red hangings of which are pulled away into the flies, the platform seems to be surrounded by walls which grow in size. It finally represents an inner courtyard. By a balcony high up* JOCASTA'S *room is made to communicate with this court. One gets to it through an open door below, in the centre. When the curtain rises* OEDIPUS, *aged, and wearing a little beard, stands near to the door.* TIRESIAS *and* CREON *are standing on the right and left of the court. Centre right, a young boy rests one knee on the ground: he is the* MESSENGER *from Corinth.*

OEDIPUS. What have I done to shock people now, Tiresias?

TIRESIAS. You are enlarging on things, as usual. I think, and I 'll say again, it might be more decent to learn of a father's death with less joy.

OEDIPUS. Indeed. [*To the* MESSENGER.] Don't be afraid, boy. Tell me, what was the cause of Polybius's death? Is Merope so very terribly unhappy?

MESSENGER. King Polybius died of old age, my lord, and . . . the queen, his wife, is barely conscious. She is so old she can't fully realize even her misfortune.

OEDIPUS. [*His hand to his mouth.*] Jocasta! Jocasta!

[JOCASTA *appears on the balcony; she parts the curtain. She is wearing her red scarf.*]

JOCASTA. What is it?

OEDIPUS. How pale you are! Don't you feel well?

JOCASTA. Oh, you know, the plague, the heat, and visits to hospitals—I 'm absolutely exhausted. I was resting on my bed.

OEDIPUS. This messenger has brought me great news, worth disturbing you for.

JOCASTA. [*Astonished.*] Good news? . . .

OEDIPUS. Tiresias blames me for finding it good: My father is dead.

JOCASTA. Oedipus!

OEDIPUS. The oracle told me I should be his murderer, and that I should be the husband of my mother. Poor Merope! she is very old, and my father, Polybius, has died a good natural death!

JOCASTA. I never knew the death of a father was a subject for rejoicing!

OEDIPUS. I hate play-acting and conventional tears. To tell the truth, I was so young when I left my father and mother that I no longer have any particular feelings for them.

MESSENGER. Lord Oedipus, if I may . .

OEDIPUS. You may, my boy.

MESSENGER. Your indifference is not really indifference. I can explain it to you.

OEDIPUS. Something new.

MESSENGER. I ought to have begun at the end of the story. On his deathbed the King of Corinth asked me to tell you that you are only his adopted son.

OEDIPUS. What?

MESSENGER. My father, one of Polybius's shepherds, found you on a hill, at the mercy of wild beasts. He was a poor man, he carried his find to the queen who used to weep because she had no children. This is how the honour of performing such an extraordinary mission at the Theban court has fallen to me.

TIRESIAS. This young man must be exhausted after his journey, and he has crossed our town which is full of noxious vapours. Perhaps it would be better if he took some refreshment and rested before being questioned.

OEDIPUS. No doubt, Tiresias, you would like the torture to last. You think my world is tottering. You don't know me well enough. Don't you rejoice too soon. Perhaps I am happy to be a child of fortune.

TIRESIAS. I was only putting you on your guard against your sinister habit of questioning, seeking to know and understand everything.

OEDIPUS. Whether I am a child of the muses or of a common tramp, I shall question without fear; I will know things.

JOCASTA. Oedipus, my love, he is right. You get excited. . . . You get excited . . . and you believe everything you 're told, and then afterwards——

OEDIPUS. What! That 's the last straw! Unflinchingly I withstand the hardest knocks, and you all plot to make me put up with these things and not try to find out where I come from.

JOCASTA. Nobody is plotting . . . my love . . . but I know you. . . .

OEDIPUS. You 're wrong, Jocasta. Nobody knows me at present, neither you, nor I, nor any one else. [*To the* MESSENGER.] Don't tremble, my lad. Speak up. Tell us more.

MESSENGER. That 's all I know, Lord Oedipus, except that my father untied you when you were half dead, hanging by your wounded feet from a short branch.

OEDIPUS. Oh, so that 's how we come by those fine scars!

JOCASTA. Oedipus, Oedipus, dear . . . come up here. . . . Anybody would think you enjoy opening old wounds.

OEDIPUS. And so those were my swaddling clothes! . . . My story of the hunt is . . . false, like so many others. Well, if that 's the way things are . . . I may come of a god of the woods and a dryad, and have been nourished by wolves. Don't you rejoice too soon, Tiresias!

TIRESIAS. You do me an injustice. . . .

OEDIPUS. At any rate I haven't killed Polybius, but . . . now I come to think of it . . . I have killed a man.

JOCASTA. You!

OEDIPUS. Yes! I! Oh, you needn't be alarmed! It was accidental, and sheer bad luck! Yes, I have killed, soothsayer, but as for parricide, you 'd better officially give it up. During a brawl with the serving-men I killed an old man at the cross-roads of Delphi and Daulis.

JOCASTA. At the cross-roads of Delphi and Daulis! . . .

[*She disappears as if drowning.*]

OEDIPUS. There 's marvellous material for you to build up a really fine catastrophe. That traveller must have been my father. 'Heavens, my father!' But incest won't be so easy, gentlemen. What do *you* think, Jocasta? . . . [*He turns round and sees* JOCASTA *has disappeared.*] Splendid! Seventeen years of happiness, and a perfect reign, two sons, two daughters, and then this noble lady only has to learn that I am the stranger whom, by the way, she first loved, and she turns her back on me. Let her sulk! Let her sulk! I shall be left alone with my fate.

CREON. Your wife, Oedipus, is ill. The plague is demoralizing us all. The gods are punishing the town and desire a victim. A monster is hiding in our midst. They demand he shall be found and driven out. Day after day the police have failed and the streets are littered with corpses. Do you realize what an effort you are asking of Jocasta? Do you realize that you are a man and she is a woman, an ageing woman at that, and a mother who is worried about the plague? Instead of blaming Jocasta for a movement of impatience, you might have found some excuse for her.

OEDIPUS. I see what you are getting at, brother-in-law. The ideal victim, the monster in hiding. . . . From one coincidence to another . . . wouldn't it be a pretty job, with the help of the priests and the police, to succeed in muddling the people of Thebes and make them believe *I* am that monster!

CREON. Don't be absurd!

OEDIPUS. I think you 're capable of anything, my friend. But Jocasta, that 's another matter. . . . I am astonished at her attitude. [*He calls her.*] Jocasta! Jocasta! Where are you?

TIRESIAS. She looked all to pieces. She is resting . . . let her be.

OEDIPUS. I am going. . . . [*He goes toward the* MESSENGER.] Now, let us come to the point. . . .

MESSENGER. My lord!

OEDIPUS. Holes in my feet . . . bound . . . on the mountainside. . . . How did I fail to understand at once? . . . And then I wondered why Jocasta . . .

It's very hard to give up enigmas. . . . Gentlemen, I was not the son of a dryad. Allow me to introduce you to the son of a linen-maid, a child of the people, a native product.

CREON. What 's this all about?

OEDIPUS. Poor Jocasta! One day I unwittingly told her what I thought of my mother. . . . I understand everything now. She must be terrified, and utterly desperate. In short . . . wait for me. I must question her at all costs. Nothing must be left in the dark. This horrible farce must come to an end.

[*He leaves by the middle door.* CREON *immediately rushes to the* MESSENGER, *whom he pushes out through the door on the right.*]

CREON. He is mad. What does all this mean?

TIRESIAS. Don't move. A storm is approaching from out of the ages. A thunderbolt is aimed at this man, and I ask you, Creon, to let this thunderbolt follow its capricious course, to wait motionless and not to interfere in the slightest.

[*Suddenly,* OEDIPUS *is seen on the balcony, stranded and aghast. He leans on the wall with one hand.*]

OEDIPUS. You have killed her for me.

CREON. What do you mean, killed?

OEDIPUS. You have killed her for me. . . . There she is, hanging . . . hanging by her scarf. . . . She is dead . . . gentlemen, she is dead. . . . It's all over . . . all over.

CREON. Dead? I 'm coming. . . .

TIRESIAS. Stay here. . . . As a priest I order you to. It 's inhuman, I know; but the circle is closing; we must keep silent and remain here. . . .

CREON. You wouldn't stop a brother from——

TIRESIAS. I would! Let the story be. Don't interfere.

OEDIPUS. [*At the door.*] You have killed her for me . . . she was romantic . . . weak . . . ill . . . you forced me to say I was a murderer. . . .Whom did I murder, gentlemen, I ask you? . . . through clumsiness, mere clumsiness . . . just an old man on the road . . . a stranger.

TIRESIAS. Oedipus: through mere clumsiness you have murdered Jocasta's husband, King Laius.

OEDIPUS. You scoundrels! . . . I can see it now! You are carrying on your plot! . . . It was even worse than I thought. . . . You have made my poor Jocasta believe that I was the murderer of Laïus . . . that I killed the king to set her free and so that I could marry her.

TIRESIAS. Oedipus, you have murdered Jocasta's husband, King Laïus. I have known it for a long time, and you are telling lies. I haven't said a word about it either to you or to her or to Creon or to anyone else. This is how you reward me for my silence.

OEDIPUS. Laïus! . . . So that 's it. . . . I am the son of Laïus and of the linen-maid. The son of Jocasta's foster-sister and Laïus.

TIRESIAS. [*To* CREON.] If you want to act, now 's the time. Quickly. There are limits even to harshness.

CREON. Oedipus, through you, my sister is dead. I kept silence only to protect Jocasta. I think it is useless to prolong unduly the false mystery and the unravelling of a sordid drama whose intrigue I have finally succeeded in discovering.

OEDIPUS. Intrigue?

CREON. The most secret of secrets are betrayed one day or another to the determined seeker. The honest man, sworn to silence, talks to his wife, who talks to an intimate friend, and so on. [*Into the wings.*] Come in, shepherd.

[*An old* SHEPHERD *comes in, trembling.*]

OEDIPUS. Who is this man?

CREON. The man who carried you bleeding and bound on to the mountainside, in obedience to your mother's orders. Let him confess.

SHEPHERD. To speak means death to me. Princes, why haven't I died before so as not to live through this minute?

OEDIPUS. Whose son am I, old man? Strike, strike quickly!

SHEPHERD. Alas!

OEDIPUS. I am near to the sound of something that should not be heard.

SHEPHERD. And I . . . to the saying of something that should not be said.

CREON. You must say it. I wish you to.

SHEPHERD. You are the son of Jocasta, your wife, and of Laïus, killed by you where the three roads cross. Incest and parricide, may the gods forgive you!

OEDIPUS. I have killed whom I should not. I have married whom I should not. I have perpetuated what I should not. All is clear. . . .

[*He goes out.* CREON *drives out the* SHEPHERD.]

CREON. Who was the linen-maid and foster-sister he was talking about?

TIRESIAS. Women cannot hold their tongues. Jocasta must have made out that her crime had been committed by a servant to see what effect it had on Oedipus.

[*He holds his arm and listens with bent head. Forbidding murmur. The little Antigone, with hair dishevelled, appears on the balcony.*]

ANTIGONE. Uncle! Tiresias! Come up, quickly! Hurry, it 's horrible! I heard shrieks inside; mother, my darling mother, doesn't move any more, she has fallen like a log, and my dear, dear father is writhing over her body and stabbing at his eyes with her big golden brooch. There 's blood everywhere. I 'm frightened! I 'm too frightened, come up . . . come up, quickly. . . . [*She goes in.*]

CREON. This time nothing shall prevent me. . . .

TIRESIAS. Yes, I shall. I tell you, Creon, the finishing touches are being

put to a masterpiece of horror. Not a word, not a gesture. It would be improper for us to cast over it so much as a shadow of ourselves.

CREON. Sheer insanity!

TIRESIAS. Sheer wisdom. . . . You must admit——

CREON. No! Besides, power falls once more into my hands.

[*He frees himself, and at the very moment when he bounds forward the door opens.* OEDIPUS *appears, blind.* ANTIGONE *is clinging to his clothes.*]

TIRESIAS. Stop!

CREON. I shall go mad! Why, but why has he done that? Better have killed himself.

TIRESIAS. His pride does not desert him. He wanted to be the happiest of men, now he wants to be the most unhappy.

OEDIPUS. Let them drive me out, let them finish me off, stone me, strike down the foul beast!

ANTIGONE. Father!

TIRESIAS. Antigone! My soothsaying staff! Offer it to him from me. It will bring him some luck.

[ANTIGONE *kisses the hand of* TIRESIAS *and carries the staff to* OEDIPUS.]

ANTIGONE. Tiresias offers you his staff.

OEDIPUS. Is he there? . . . I accept it, Tiresias. . . . I accept it. . . . Do you remember, seventeen years ago, I saw in your eyes that I should become blind, and I couldn't understand it? I see it all clearly now, Tiresias, but I am in pain. . . . I suffer. . . . The journey will be hard.

CREON. We must not let him cross the town, it would cause an awful scandal.

TIRESIAS. [*In a low voice.*] In a town of plague? And besides, you know, they saw the king Oedipus wished to be; they won't see the king he is now.

CREON. Do you mean he will be invisible because he is blind?

TIRESIAS. Almost.

CREON. Well, I can tell you I have had enough of your riddles and symbols. *My* head is firmly fixed on my shoulders and my feet planted firmly on the ground. I shall give my orders.

TIRESIAS. Your police may be well organized, Creon; but where this man goes they will not have the slightest power.

CREON. I——

[TIRESIAS *seizes his arm and puts his hand over his mouth. . . . For* JOCASTA *appears in the doorway.* JOCASTA, *dead, white, beautiful, with closed eyes. Her long scarf is wound round her neck.*]

OEDIPUS. Jocasta! You, dear! You alive!

JOCASTA. No, Oedipus. I am dead. You can see me because you are blind; the others cannot see me.

OEDIPUS. Tiresias is blind. . . .

JOCASTA. Perhaps he can see me faintly . . . but he loves me, he won't say anything. . . .

OEDIPUS. Wife, do not touch me! . . .

JOCASTA. Your wife is dead, hanged, Oedipus. I am your mother. It 's your mother who is coming to help you. . . . How would you even get down these steps alone, my poor child?

OEDIPUS. Mother!

JOCASTA. Yes, my child, my little boy. . . . Things which appear abominable to human beings, if only you knew, from the place where I live, if only you knew how unimportant they are!

OEDIPUS. I am still on this earth.

JOCASTA. Only just. . . .

CREON. He is talking with phantoms, he 's delirious. I shall not allow that little girl——

TIRESIAS. They are in good care.

CREON. Antigone! Antigone! I am calling you. . . .

ANTIGONE. I don't want to stay with my uncle! I don't want to, I don't want to stay in the house. Dear father, dear father, don't leave me! I will show you the way, I will lead you. . . .

CREON. Thankless creature.

OEDIPUS. Impossible, Antigone. You must be a good girl. . . . I cannot take you with me.

ANTIGONE. Yes, you can!

OEDIPUS. Are you going to desert your sister Ismene?

ANTIGONE. She must stay with Eteocles and Polynices. Take me away, please! Please! Don't leave me alone! Don't leave me with uncle! Don't leave me at home!

JOCASTA. The child is so pleased with herself. She imagines she is your guide. Let her think she is. Take her. Leave everything to me.

OEDIPUS. Oh! . . . [*He puts his hand to his head.*]

JOCASTA. Are you in pain, dear?

OEDIPUS. Yes, my head, my neck and arms. . . . It 's fearful.

JOCASTA. I 'll give you a dressing at the fountain.

OEDIPUS. [*Breaking down.*] Mother . . .

JOCASTA. Who would have believed it? That wicked old scarf and that terrible brooch. Didn't I say so time and again?

CREON. It 's utterly impossible. I shall not allow a madman to go out free with Antigone. It is my duty to——

TIRESIAS. Duty! They no longer belong to you; they no longer come under your authority.

CREON. And pray whom should they belong to?

TIRESIAS. To the people, poets, and unspoiled souls.

JOCASTA. Forward! Grip my dress firmly . . . don't be afraid.

[*They start off.*]

ANTIGONE. Come along, father dear . . . let 's go. . . .

OEDIPUS. Where do the steps begin?

JOCASTA AND ANTIGONE. There is the whole of the platform yet. . . . [*They disappear . . .* JOCASTA *and* ANTIGONE *speak in perfect unison.*] Careful . . . count the steps. . . . One, two, three, four, five. . . .

CREON. And even supposing they leave the town, who will look after them, who will admit them?

TIRESIAS. Glory.

CREON. You mean rather dishonour, shame. . . .

TIRESIAS. Who knows?

ON COCTEAU'S *INFERNAL MACHINE*[1]

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

THE QUESTION of poetic drama—its possibility in our time—is perhaps *the* question of the contemporary theatre. There is no better way to see into the nature and the limitations of the theatre as we know it, than to ask the perennial question, Why don't we have a living poetic drama?

But this question has occupied some of the best minds of our time and has received a vast variety of answers. It would take a book, at the very least, to handle the matter at all adequately. In a brief paper one can do no more than suggest one approach—expound a sample, more or less arbitrarily chosen from among many—of the attempt to make a modern poetic drama. I have chosen Cocteau's *Infernal Machine* for this purpose. But first of all, I should give a word of explanation of this choice—why Cocteau, who did not even write his play in verse?

When we talk about modern poetic drama in English we think of the long line of poets, beginning with Shelley and Coleridge, and continuing right up to Yeats and Eliot, who have aspired more or less in vain to the stage. But on the continent the picture is quite different. Ibsen and Wagner, Chekhov and Pirandello, Cocteau and Stravinski and Lorca—one can think of many writers who worked directly for the stage and who produced works, whether in verse or not, which could in some sense be called poetic drama and which are certainly "poetic" in the widest meaning of the term. There is no question that they produced viable theatrical pieces, while the work of poets writing in English for the stage is all too likely to be unstageable. The fact is that on the continent the idea of the theatre is even yet not quite lost. The state-supported theatres, the repertory theatres and art theatres, have kept the ancient art of drama alive and provided the means which poets of the theatre would require. But in English-speaking countries the idea of a theatre has succumbed, except for a few undernourished little theatres, to the stereotypes and the mass-production methods of the entertainment industry. In the shallow medium of our commercialized entertainment the poet is lost, however true his inspiration or authentic his dramatic talent.

1. Alan S. Downer, ed., *English Institute Essays, 1949* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 55–72. Reprinted by permission of publisher.

It is for this reason, I think, that contemporary poets in English who wish to write for the stage so often look to the continent for their models of dramatic form—and especially they look to Paris in the twenties, Paris between the Wars; and above all to Jean Cocteau who was one of the leaders of that Paris Theatre. I am thinking of Eliot, from *Sweeney Agonistes* to *Murder in the Cathedral;* of the later Yeats—the Yeats of *Plays for Dancers;* of Thornton Wilder, E. E. Cummings, the Virgil Thompson-Gertrude Stein operas, of the ballet. It is probable that the theatrical dexterity of these more or less poetic theatre-works is largely due to the influence of the Paris Theatre, and, as I say, especially to Cocteau. In other words it is certain that Cocteau is one of the chief sources of contemporary theatre poetry, or poetry in the theatre, even in English.

COCTEAU'S GROWTH; HIS NOTION OF THEATRE POETRY

When Cocteau started to write in Paris just after World War I, he found artists from all over Europe gathered there; and he found a theatrical life nourished from Russia, Italy, Germany, Sweden, as well as a fairly lively native theatre. Copeau's Théâtre du Vieux Colombier for instance, had been in existence since 1912. Paris in the twenties still looks fabulous to us: Bergson and Valéry, Joyce and Picasso and Stravinski, Pirandello and the Moscow Art Theatre, Milhaud and Gide and Maritain and Ezra Pound—if we think over some of the names associated with that time and place, we can see very clearly what an impressive effort was being made, in the center of Europe, to focus and revive the culture which had been so shaken by the war. If there was to be a favorable opportunity in our time to build a poetic drama, it should have been there and then, where the most enlightened audience and greatest talent were concentrated.

When Cocteau began to work, his immediate allies were the young French musicians who were to be called *les six,* a few painters, and the Swedish and Russian Ballets. The collection of his early critical writings, *The Call to Order,* throws a great deal of light upon his labors in this period. He was trying to sort out the extremely rich influences which bore upon him; and to select the elements of a contemporary, and *French,* theatre poetry.

In very general terms, I think one may say that he was trying to fuse two different traditions, one ancient, the other modern. What I call the ancient tradition was that of myth, of ritual, and of primitive or folk art. What I call the modern tradition was French—the classical spirit of intelligence, wit, measure and proportion, which the French are supposed to have at their best —especially the French since Racine and Molière. The formula which Cocteau invented to describe the fusion of these two strands was *une poésie de tous les jours*—an everyday poetry. He was looking for a dramatic or theatrical art which should be poetic as myth, ritual, and the inspired clowning of the Fratellinis is poetic—and yet at the same time acceptable to the shrewd and skeptical Parisians in their most alert moments and as part of their daily lives,

like red wine, for instance, as an indispensable part of the diet. He wanted to acclimatize mythopoeia in the most up-to-date, rational, and disillusioned of modern commercial cities.

You will I am sure remember that during this period many other artists were trying to nourish themselves upon myth, upon ritual, and upon primitive and popular forms of art. The painters were studying African and South Pacific sculpture; Stravinski was doing *Petrouchka, Les Noces,* and *Sacre de Printemps;* Eliot was writing *The Wasteland;* Joyce was between *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake.* When Cocteau and his friends began, most of this work was still to come; Cocteau himself was one of the pioneers in the movement. When he looked around for clues to the ancient and perennial theatre art he was seeking, forms which he might imitate or adapt, he found, not the works I have just mentioned, but Wagner and the all-pervasive Wagnerian influence.

Wagner was in a sense a forerunner of this whole movement. He had made use of myth in his operas, elaborated a whole theory of mythic drama, and worked out a singularly potent poetic theatrical form in the very heyday of bourgeois positivism. Cocteau remembered that Baudelaire had greeted Wagner as an ally against the Parisian Philistines of his day. Baudelaire's studies of Wagner remain one of the fundamental documents for any modern theory of poetic drama. Nevertheless Cocteau and his friends found Wagner extremely unsympathetic. The Parisians in Cocteau's day, like the rest of the world, had learned to accept and even to depend on Wagner, as an indulgence whether hypnosis or drug. They had the bad habit of swooning when they heard that kind of music, and this prevented them from listening to the young French composers who were trying to speak to them in their alert, critical, and wakeful moments. Thus for Cocteau and his friends, the Wagnerian taste or habit of mind became the great enemy, in spite of their respect for Wagner's achievement. They saw Wagnerianism as an alien mode of awareness which was impeding the development of native French forms of art. The Wagnerian tradition, Cocteau says in *The Call to Order,* is like "a long funeral procession which prevents me from crossing the street to get home." Probably he felt in Wagner's magic the potent elements which the Nazis were so soon to use for their own purposes—drowning not only the French spirit but the physical life of France also.

However that may be, Cocteau developed his own conception of poetic drama, as it were, in answer to Wagner's. He too wanted to tap the ancient sources of myth and ritual, but without resorting to religiosity, hypnosis, or morose daydreaming. He wanted to bring mythopoeia and some of the ancient myths themselves into the center of the faithless, nimble, modern city—but he sought to establish them there by the clarity and integrity of art.

The Call to Order is a collection of working notes and critical *obiter dicta* from the very beginning of Cocteau's career, between 1918 and 1926. *The Infernal Machine* was published in 1934; and yet that play seems to be exactly the poetic drama which he had planned and foreseen fifteen years earlier. It

presents a very ancient myth, the myth of Oedipus, not as a joke, but as a perennial source of insight into human destiny. Yet at the same time the play is addressed to the most advanced, cynical, and even *fashionable* mind of contemporary Paris. It is at one and the same time chic and timeless—rather like the paintings of Picasso's classic period, or his illustrations for Ovid. If one were to try to describe it briefly, one might say it shows the myth behind the modern city: both the mysterious fate of Oedipus and the bright metropolitan intrigues for pleasure and power which go on forever. To have achieved such a fusion of contradictory elements is, of course, an extraordinary feat of virtuosity. And therefore this play illustrates, from one point of view at least, *the* problem of modern poetic drama: that of presentation on the public stage, at a time when poetry has lost almost all public status.

After this prolonged introduction, I wish to look briefly at the play itself, in order to illustrate more concretely what I mean.

THE PLAY: THE MYTH BEHIND THE MODERN CITY

The story of *The Infernal Machine* is the same as that of Sophocles' tragedy, *Oedipus the King*. Before the curtain goes up, a voice reminds us of the main facts.

Jocasta, Queen of Thebes, was told by the oracle of Apollo that her infant son Oedipus would grow up to murder his father and marry his mother. To avoid this terrible fatality she has the infant exposed on Mt. Kitharon with his feet pierced. But a shepherd finds him on the mountain and saves him, and eventually the young Oedipus makes his way to Corinth, where the childless king and queen adopt him as their son. He is brought up to think he is really their son; but in due time he hears the oracle, and to escape his fate he leaves Corinth. At a place where three roads cross, he meets an old man with an escort; gets into a dispute, and kills him. The old man is, of course, his own father Laius. Oedipus continues his journey, and reaches Thebes, where he finds the Sphinx preying on the city. He solves the riddle of the Sphinx and like other young men who make good, marries the boss's daughter, the widowed Queen Jocasta, his own mother. They rule prosperously for years and raise a family; but at last, when Thebes is suffering under the plague, the fate of Oedipus overtakes him. The oracle reports that the plague is sent by the gods, who are angry because Laius' slayer was never found and punished. Oedipus discovers his own identity and his own guilt—but thereby becomes once more, and in a new way, the savior of the city.

Such are the facts, in Cocteau as in Sophocles. But the question is how Cocteau presents them. What attitudes, what dramatic and theatrical forms does he find to bring the ancient tale alive in our time? His dramaturgy is utterly unlike Sophocles'; he presents *both* the mythic tale, and, as it were, the feel, or texture, of contemporary life, in which no myth is supposed to have any meaning.

When the curtain goes up we see the stage hung with nocturnal drapes, as

Cocteau calls them; in the center of the stage there is a lighted platform, set to represent the city wall of Thebes. The play is in four acts, and each act is set upon that lighted platform. Everything that occurs in the set on the lighted platform is in the easy, agile style of the best sophisticated modern comedy—Giraudoux's *Amphitryon,* or the acting of Guitry. In other words Cocteau tells the story in the foreground in a way that his blasé boulevard audience will accept. Thus he achieves the "everyday" part of his formula for "everyday poetry." But the tinkling modern intrigue is itself placed in a wider and darker setting represented by the nocturnal curtains—and in this vaster surrounding area the cruel machine of the gods, Oedipus's fate, is slowly unrolled, almost without the main actors being aware of it at all. Thus the "poetry" part of the formula is ironically hidden; it is to be found in the background, and in the mysterious relation between the hidden shape of the myth and the visible shape of Oedipus's ambitious career.

The first scene on the lighted platform represents the city wall of Thebes. It is the night when Oedipus is approaching the city. Two young soldiers are on guard. They have seen Laius' ghost, who is trying to warn Jocasta not to receive Oedipus when he comes. Queen Jocasta herself has heard rumors of this ghost, and arrives with the high priest Tiresias to investigate. But the ghost cannot appear to Jocasta; he can appear only to the naive, "the innocent, the pure in heart," such as the young soldiers; and Jocasta departs none the wiser.

The second scene shows the suburbs of Thebes, where the Sphinx lies in wait for her prey. Occurring at the same time as the first act, it discloses Oedipus's interview with the Sphinx. The Sphinx is not only a goddess but a very mortal woman, who falls in love with Oedipus and lets him guess her riddle in the hope that he will fall in love with her. But he is more interested in his career than in love; he takes her mortal remains to town as a proof of his victory, while she departs to the realm of the gods, thoroughly disgusted with mortals. She is willing to let him get away with his heroic pretenses because she sees the terrible fate in store for him.

In both of these scenes the most important characters—Jocasta in the first and Oedipus in the second—are unaware of their fate. It is separated from them as by a very thin curtain; they *almost* see what they are doing, but not quite. Moreover, in both scenes the characters and the dialogue are felt as modern, like the scandals in the morning paper.

In the first scene, for instance, Cocteau gives us the atmosphere of Thebes by means of the slangy gossip of the two soldiers. The soldiers, exactly like any GI's, are fed up with military service and especially with the brass hat who commands them. We hear the music, hot or blue, from the cafés and cheap night clubs of the popular quarter, where the people are trying to forget the rising prices, the falling employment, and the threats of war or revolution. We gather that the authorities do not know how to deal with the Sphinx. To explain their failure there are rumors of bribery, corruption and scandal in

high places. In other words, Thebes is wholly familiar and acceptable to our worldly understanding—it might be any demoralized modern Mediterranean city of our time or any time. In this atmosphere even the Sphinx and the ghost of Laius are scarcely more surprising or significant than our more commonplace public nightmares. When Jocasta arrives with Tiresias to find out what all this talk of a ghost is about, she, too, is sharply modern: she speaks, Cocteau tells us, with the insolent accent of international royalty. He might have been thinking of Queen Marie of Roumania, or any other Elsa Maxwell character from café society. Jocasta is full of forebodings; she is nervous and overwrought; she complains about everything—but she does not have the naïveté or the "purity of heart" to grasp her real situation, or to see the ghost which appeared to the soldiers.

In the second act the young Oedipus is also a modern portrait, almost a candid-camera picture in the style of Guitry or Noel Coward. He is an ambitious and worldly young Latin—he might be the winner of a bicycle marathon or a politician who managed to stabilize the franc for a day. It is inevitable that he and Jocasta should get together—two shallow careerists, seekers after pleasure and power. The third scene shows their wedding night. It is set in the royal bedroom, and beside the royal bed is the crib which Jocasta kept as a memento of her lost son. In this scene the tenuous curtain of blindness which keeps them from seeing what they are doing is at its thinnest. But they are tired after the ceremonies of the coronation and the marriage; and they proceed sleepwalking toward the fated consummation.

In these first three acts of his play, Cocteau keeps completely separate the mythic fate of Oedipus and the literal story of his undoing, in so far as Oedipus and Jocasta themselves are concerned. The audience is aware of the fact that the terrible machine of the gods is slowly unwinding in the surrounding darkness; but the audience also sees that the victims are winning their victories and building their careers in total ignorance of it. In this respect the plan of *The Infernal Machine* resembles that of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce also shows the lives of the people of a modern city in the form of an ancient legend which they are quite unaware of. Bloom wanders through his Dublin life according to an abstract scheme like that of the *Odyssey;* the reader sees this, but Bloom does not. The audience of *The Infernal Machine* sees Oedipus both as a contemporary politician and as the character in the myth. But at this point the resemblance between Cocteau's play and Joyce's novel ends. For Cocteau proposes to bring the two levels sharply together—to confront the city with the myth, and the myth with the city. This he proceeds to do in the fourth and last act.

We have been prepared all along for the sudden shift in point of view—for the peripety and epiphany of the last act. The naive soldiers saw Laius' ghost, though Jocasta did not. In the second scene the Sphinx saw what was happening to Oedipus, though he did not. And on the wedding night, Tiresias almost guessed who Oedipus was, though the bride and groom themselves

could not quite make it out. Moreover, at the beginning of the play, and at the beginning of each of the first three acts, a Voice bids us relish the perfection of the machine which the gods have devised to destroy a mortal. The emphasis is on mortal stupidity and upon the cruelty of the gods. But before the last act, the Voice reminds us of a different meaning in these events; the Voice makes the following proclamation. "After false happiness, the king will learn real unhappiness: the true ritual, which will make out of this playing-card king in the hands of the cruel gods, at long last, a man."

The fourth act, unlike the other three, follows fairly closely the order of events in Sophocles' tragedy. Oedipus feels, like an unsuccessful bluffer in poker, that the jig is up; he receives the evidence of the messenger and the old shepherd which unmistakably reveals him as his mother's husband and his father's killer. Tiresias, who had half-guessed the truth all along, watches this terrible dénouement and explains it to Creon and for the audience. When Oedipus gets the final piece of evidence which convicts him, he runs off to find Jocasta. Tiresias tells Creon, "Do not budge. A storm is coming up from the bottom of time. The lightning will strike this man; and I ask you, Creon, let it follow its whim; wait without moving; interfere with nothing." As in the Sophoclean tragedy, Jocasta kills herself and Oedipus puts out his eyes, while their bewildered child Antigone tries to understand. Cocteau, like Sophocles, imagines these horrors with great intimacy, sparing nothing. But Cocteau brings the play to an end on a different note. In Sophocles the final pathos and enlightenment of Oedipus is presented in a series of steps, and by the time we finally see him blind at the end, the chorus has pretty well digested, or at least accepted, the tragic and purgatorial meaning of it all. But Cocteau ends the play with a *coup de théâtre,* a spectacular effect, a piece of theatrical sleight-of-hand, which visibly presents the tragic paradox on which the whole play is based.

The dead Jocasta appears to Oedipus, who is blind and can therefore see—but she appears not as the corrupt queen and dishonored wife of the sordid tale, but as a sort of timeless mother. "Yes, my child," she says to Oedipus, "my little son. . . . Things which seem abominable to human beings—if you only knew how unimportant they are in the realm where I am dwelling." The blind Oedipus, the child Antigone, and the ghostly Jocasta depart on their endless journey. Creon can see Oedipus and Antigone, if not Jocasta, and he asks Tiresias, "To whom do they belong now?" to which Tiresias replies, "To the people, to the poets, to the pure in heart." "But who," asks Creon, "will take care of them?" To which Tiresias replies, "La Gloire"—glory, or renown.

The effect is to remind us, all of a sudden, that Oedipus, Jocasta, Antigone, are not only literal people as we know people, but legends, figures in a timeless myth. We had in a sense known this all along; but during the first three acts we forgot it—we laughed at Oedipus's youthful vanity, grinned with cynical understanding when we saw his shallow ambition, his bounder-like opportunism. Now he and Jocasta are safe from our irony—as poetry and myth

are safe—both more human and less human than the intriguing puppets which we found so familiar in the first three acts.

Cocteau, I think, must have learned a great deal from Pirandello before he wrote this play. The final effect, when Oedipus and Jocasta are suddenly taken up into the legend, like saints receiving the stigmata, is very much like the effect Pirandello contrives for his six characters in search of an author. When the six characters first appear on the stage they have some of the quality of masks, of the achieved and quiet work of art; when they fight with each other about their story, they are all too sharply human; and when they leave at the end, their tragic procession is like the procession of Oedipus, Jocasta, and Antigone—a steady image in the mind's eye, and in the light of the stage, of the tragic human condition in general: they have the eternity, if not of heaven, at least of the poetic image.

Moreover the paradox on which the tragedy is based is very much like Pirandello's favorite paradox—the contradiction between myth or poetry on one side, and the meaningless disorder of contemporary lives on the other. We live in two incommensurable worlds, neither of which we can do without—that of myth-making, and that of literal, unrelated, and therefore meaningless facts.

I do not mean to say that this is the only way to understand tragedy. On the contrary, Pirandello and Cocteau write a particular *kind* of tragedy, which is much more closely akin to the Baroque than it is either to Sophoclean or Shakespearean tragedy. Both of these authors may seem to us artificial; certainly they are Latin, rationalistic, deflated; they work with brilliant images, clear and distinct ideas, sharp contrasts, strong chiaroscuro. If we are used to Shakespeare, the plays of Cocteau like those of Pirandello may seem arbitrary and invented to us,

> Music and philosophy, curiosity,
> The purple bullfinch in the lilac tree,

as Eliot's Thomas of Canterbury says rather scornfully of the refined pleasures of the mind. I do not say that we could ever succeed in making that kind of modernized Baroque tragedy in English—I don't think it fits the genius of our language, or our peculiar habits of mind.

Nevertheless, as I said at the beginning of this paper, many fine playwrights and poets, writing in English, have learned from Cocteau; and I believe that there is much more still to be learned from him, short of direct imitation, about poetic drama in our time. I wish to conclude these remarks with two observations on the dramaturgy of *The Infernal Machine,* which bear upon the problem which concerns us.

The first observation is this: The whole play of *The Infernal Machine,* if properly understood, may be read as a discussion of the most general problem of dramatic poetry in our time: how are we to place upon the public stage, which is formed to reflect only literal snapshots, slogans, and sensationalism,

a poetic image of human life? The play, as we have seen, answers this question in its own wonderful way, which cannot be exactly our way in English; but the general question is the same as Wagner answered according to his taste, and Yeats and Eliot according to theirs. *The Infernal Machine* thus takes an important place in the long line of attempts which have been made, for over a hundred years, to build a modern poetic drama.

The other observation has to do with the *nature* of Cocteau's poetry from which, I think, much technical lore is to be learned. The play is not in verse; and though the language is beautifully formed, the poetry is not to be found in the first instance in the language at all. The play is *theatre*-poetry, as Cocteau defines it in his preface to *Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel:*

> The action of my play is in images, while the text is not. I attempt to substitute a poetry *of* the theatre for poetry *in* the theatre. Poetry *in* the theatre is a piece of lace which it is impossible to see at a distance. Poetry *of* the theatre would be coarse lace; a lace of ropes, a ship at sea. *Les Mariés* should have the frightening look of a drop of poetry under the microscope. The *scenes* are integrated like the *words* of a poem.

Though the language in *The Infernal Machine* is of course more important than it is in *Les Mariés* (essentially a dance pantomime), Cocteau's description of the underlying structure applies also very accurately to *The Infernal Machine*. The poetry is to be found in the relationships of all the main elements: the relationship between the lighted platform in the center of the stage with the darker and vaster area around it; between Oedipus's conscious career with the unseen fatality that governs it; between the first scene and the second, which ironically occurs at the same time; and between the first three acts, when we see Oedipus as a contemporary snapshot, and the last act, when we see him as a legend. In other words, the basic structure, or plot—the primary form of the play as a whole—embodies a poetic idea; and once that is established the language need only realize the poetic vision in detail.

If Cocteau, more than any other contemporary playwright, is thus a master of poetic-dramatic form, it is partly because he has learned from the neighboring arts of music, painting, and ballet, and partly because he found his way back to a root notion of drama itself, that which Aristotle expressed when he said the dramatic poet should be a maker of plots rather than of verses. If Auden and MacNeice do not succeed in making poetic drama, it is because they do not understand the poetry of the theatre—they take an unpoetic well-made plot from the commercial theatre and add, here and there, a pastiche of verses.

This concludes what I have to say about *The Infernal Machine* as a poetic drama. If there is a moral to the tale, it is this: poetic drama, real poetic drama, comparable to the landmarks of the tradition, when the ancient art has really flourished—cannot be invented by an individual or even a small group. If it is to perform its true function it must spring from the whole culture and be

nourished by sources which we may perhaps recognize, but can hardly understand. Will such a drama ever reappear? We do not know. In the meantime, all we can do is pick together the pieces, save and cultivate such lesser successes as have been achieved. *The Infernal Machine* is one of these successes —one of the clues, so to say—to the nature and the possibility of poetic drama in our time.

THE LONG VOYAGE HOME[1]

EUGENE O'NEILL

Characters

FAT JOE, *proprietor of a dive*
NICK, *a crimp*
MAG, *a barmaid*
KATE
FREDA
TWO ROUGHS
OLSON
DRISCOLL
COCKY
IVAN
} *Seamen of the British tramp steamer, Glencairn*

SCENE: *The bar of a low dive on the London water front—a squalid, dingy room dimly lighted by kerosene lamps placed in brackets on the walls. On the left, the bar. In front of it, a door leading to a side room. On the right, tables with chairs around them. In the rear, a door leading to the street.*

A slovenly barmaid with a stupid face sodden with drink is mopping off the bar. Her arm moves back and forth mechanically and her eyes are half shut as if she were dozing on her feet. At the far end of the bar stands FAT JOE, *the proprietor, a gross bulk of a man with an enormous stomach. His face is red and bloated, his little piggish eyes being almost concealed by rolls of fat. The thick fingers of his big hands are loaded with cheap rings and a gold watch chain of cable-like proportions stretches across his waistcoat.*

At one of the tables, front, a round-shouldered young fellow is sitting, smoking a cigarette. His face is pasty, his mouth weak, his eyes shifting and cruel. He is dressed in a shabby suit, which must have once been cheaply flashy, and wears a muffler and cap.

It is about nine o'clock in the evening.

JOE. [*Yawning.*] Blimey if bizness ain't 'arf slow to-night. I donnow wot's 'appened. The place is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the sailor men, I'd like to know? [*Raising his voice.*] Ho, you Nick! [NICK *turns around listlessly.*] Wot's the name o' that wessel put in at the dock below jest arter noon?

NICK. [*Laconically.*] Glencairn—from Bewnezerry. (Buenos Aires).

JOE. Ain't the crew been paid orf yet?

NICK. Paid orf this arternoon, they tole me. I 'opped on board of 'er an' seen 'em. 'Anded 'em some o' yer cards, I did. They promised faithful they'd 'appen in to-night—them as whose time was done.

JOE. Any two-year men to be paid orf?

NICK. Four—three Britishers an' a square-'ead.

JOE. [*Indignantly.*] An' yer popped orf an' left 'em? An' me a-payin' yer to 'elp an' bring 'em in 'ere!

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NICK. [*Grumblingly.*] Much you pays me! An' I ain't slingin' me 'ook abaht the 'ole bleedin' town fur now man. See?

JOE. I ain't speakin' on'y fur meself. Down't I always give yer yer share, fair an' square, as man to man?

NICK. [*With a sneer.*] Yus—b'cause you 'as to.

JOE. 'As to? Listen to 'im! There's many'd be 'appy to 'ave your berth, me man!

NICK. Yus? Wot wiv the peelers li'ble to put me away in the bloody jail fur crimpin', an' all?

JOE. [*Indignantly.*] We down't do no crimpin'.

NICK. [*Sarcastically.*] Ho, now! Not arf!

JOE. [*A bit embarrassed.*] Well, on'y a bit now an' agen when there ain't no reg'lar trade. [*To hide his confusion he turns to the barmaid angrily. She is still mopping off the bar, her chin on her breast, half-asleep.*] 'Ere, me gel, we've 'ad enough o' that. You been a-moppin', an' a-moppin', an' a-moppin' the blarsted bar fur a 'ole 'our. 'Op it aht o' this! You'd fair guv a bloke the shakes a-watchin' yer.

MAG. [*Beginning to sniffle.*] Ow, you do frighten me when you 'oller at me, Joe. I ain't a bad gel, I ain't. Gawd knows I tries to do me best fur you. [*She bursts into a tempest of sobs.*]

JOE. [*Roughly.*] Stop yer grizzlin'! An' 'op it aht of 'ere!

NICK. [*Chuckling.*] She's drunk, Joe. Been 'ittin' the gin, eh, Mag?

MAG. [*Ceases crying at once and turns on him furiously.*] You little crab, you! Orter wear a muzzle, you ort! A-openin' of your ugly mouth to a 'onest woman what ain't never done you no 'arm. [*Commencing to sob again.*] H'abusin' me like a dawg cos I'm sick an' orf me oats, an' all.

JOE. Orf yer go, me gel! Go hupstairs and 'ave a sleep. I'll wake yer if I wants yer. An' wake the two gels when yer goes hup. It's 'arpas' nine an' time as some one was a-comin' in, tell 'em. D'yer 'ear me?

MAG. [*Stumbling around the bar to the door on left—sobbing.*] Yus, yus, I 'ears you. Gawd knows wot's goin' to 'appen to me, I'm that sick. Much you cares if I dies, down't you? [*She goes out.*]

JOE. [*Still brooding over* NICK's *lack of diligence—after a pause.*] Four two-year men paid orf wiv their bloody pockets full o' sovereigns—an' yer lorst 'em. [*He shakes his head sorrowfully.*]

NICK. [*Impatiently.*] Stow it! They promised faithful they'd come, I tells yer. They'll be walkin' in in 'arf a mo'. There's lots o' time yet. [*In a low voice.*] 'Ave yer got the drops? We might wanter use 'em.

JOE. [*Taking a small bottle from behind the bar.*] Yus; 'ere it is.

NICK. [*With satisfaction.*] Righto! [*His shifty eyes peer about the room searchingly. Then he beckons to* JOE, *who comes over to the table and sits down.*] Reason I arst yer about the drops was 'cause I seen the capt'n of the Amindra this arternoon.

JOE. The Amindra? Wot ship is that?

NICK. Bloody windjammer—skys'l yarder—full rigged—painted white—been layin' at the dock above 'ere fur a month. You knows 'er.

JOE. Ho, yus. I knows now.

NICK. The capt'n says as 'e wants a man special bad—ter-night. They sails at daybreak termorrer.

JOE. There's plenty o' 'ands lyin' abaht waitin' fur ships, I should fink.

NICK. Not fur this ship, ole buck. The capt'n an' mate are bloody slave-drivers, an' they're bound down round the 'Orn. They 'arf starved the 'ands on the larst trip 'ere, an' no one'll dare ship on 'er. [*After a pause.*] I promised the capt'n faithful I'd get 'im one, and ter-night.

JOE. [*Doubtfully.*] An' 'ow are yer goin' to git 'im?

NICK. [*With a wink.*] I was thinkin' as one of 'em from the Glencairn'd do —them as was paid orf an' is comin' 'ere.

JOE. [*With a grin.*] It'd be a good 'aul, that's the troof. [*Frowning.*] If they comes 'ere.

NICK. They'll come, an' they'll all be rotten drunk, wait an' see. [*There is the noise of loud, boisterous singing from the street.*] Sounds like 'em, now. [*He opens the street door and looks out.*] Gawd blimey if it ain't the four of 'em! [*Turning to Joe in triumph.*] Naw, what d'yer say? They're lookin' for the place. I'll go aht an' tell 'em. [*He goes out.* JOE *gets into position behind the bar, assuming his most oily smile. A moment later the door is opened, admitting* DRISCOLL, COCKY, IVAN *and* OLSON. DRISCOLL *is a tall, powerful Irishman;* COCKY, *a wizened runt of a man with a straggling gray mustache;* IVAN, *a hulking oaf of a peasant;* OLSON, *a stocky, middle-aged Swede with round, childish blue eyes. The first three are all very drunk, especially* IVAN, *who is managing his legs with difficulty.* OLSON *is perfectly sober. All are dressed in their ill-fitting shore clothes and look very uncomfortable.* DRISCOLL *has unbuttoned his stiff collar and its ends stick out sideways. He has lost his tie.* NICK *slinks into the room after them and sits down at a table in rear. The seamen come to the table, front.*]

JOE. [*With affected heartiness.*] Ship ahoy, mates! 'Appy to see yer 'ome safe an' sound.

DRISCOLL. [*Turns round, swaying a bit, and peers at him across the bar.*] So ut's you, is ut? [*He looks about the place with an air of recognition.*] 'An the same damn rat's-hole, sure enough. I remimber foive or six years back 'twas here I was sthripped av me last shillin' whin I was aslape. [*With sudden fury.*] God stiffen ye, come none av your dog's thricks on me this trip or I'll—— [*He shakes his fist at* JOE.]

JOE. [*Hastily interrupting.*] Yer must be mistaiken. This is a 'onest place, this is.

COCKY. [*Derisively.*] Ho, yus! An' you're a bleedin' angel, I s'pose?

IVAN. [*Vaguely taking off his derby hat and putting it on again—plaintively.*] I don' li-ike dis place.

DRISCOLL. [*Going over to the bar—as genial as he was furious a moment be-*

fore.] Well, no matther, 'tis all past an' gone an' forgot. I'm not the man to be holdin' harrd feelin's on me first night ashore, an' me dhrunk as a lord. [*He holds out his hand, which* JOE *takes very gingerly.*] We'll all be havin' a dhrink, I'm thinkin'. Whiskey for the three av us—*Irish* whiskey!

COCKY. [*Mockingly.*] An' a glarse o' ginger beer fur our blarsted love-child 'ere. [*He jerks his thumb at* OLSON.]

OLSON. [*With a good-natured grin.*] I bane a good boy dis night, for one time.

DRISCOLL. [*Bellowing, and pointing to* NICK *as* JOE *brings the drinks to the table.*] An' see what that crimpin' son av a crimp'll be wantin'—an' have your own pleasure. [*He pulls a sovereign out of his pocket and slams it on the bar.*]

NICK. Guv me a pint o' beer, Joe. [JOE *draws the beer and takes it down to the far end of the bar.* NICK *comes over to get it and* JOE *gives him a significant wink and nods toward the door on the left.* NICK *signals back that he understands.*]

COCKY. [*Drink in hand—impatiently.*] I'm that bloody dry! [*Lifting his glass to* DRISCOLL.] Cheero, ole dear, cheero!

DRISCOLL. [*Pocketing his change without looking at it.*] A toast for ye: Hell roast that divil av a bo'sun! [*He drinks.*]

COCKY. Righto! Gawd strike 'im blind! [*He drains his glass.*]

IVAN. [*Half-asleep.*] Dot's gude. [*He tosses down his drink in one gulp.* OLSON *sips his ginger ale.* NICK *takes a swallow of his beer and then comes round the bar and goes out the door on left.*]

COCKY. [*Producing a sovereign.*] Ho there, you Fatty! Guv us another!

JOE. The saime, mates?

COCKY. Yus.

DRISCOLL. No, ye scut! I'll be havin' a pint av beer. I'm dhry as a loime kiln.

IVAN. [*Suddenly getting to his feet in a befuddled manner and nearly upsetting the table.*] I don' li-ike dis place! I wan' see girls—plenty girls. [*Pathetically.*] I don't li-ike dis place. I wan' dance with girl.

DRISCOLL. [*Pushing him back on his chair with a thud.*] Shut up, ye Rooshan baboon! A foine Romeo you'd make in your condishun. [IVAN *blubbers some incoherent protest—then suddenly falls asleep.*]

JOE. [*Bringing the drinks—looks at* OLSON.] An' you, matey?

OLSON. [*Shaking his head.*] Noting dis time, thank you.

COCKY. [*Mockingly.*] A-saivin' of 'is money, 'e is! Goin' back to 'ome an' mother. Goin' to buy a bloomin' farm an' punch the blarsted dirt, that's wot 'e is! [*Spitting disgustedly.*] There's a funny bird of a sailor man for yer, Gawd blimey!

OLSON. [*Wearing the same good-natured grin.*] Yust what I like, Cocky. I wus on farm long time when I wus kid.

DRISCOLL. Lave him alone, ye bloody insect! 'Tis a foine sight to see a man

wid some sense in his head instead av a damn fool the loike av us. I only wisht I'd a mother alive to call me own. I'd not be dhrunk in this divil's hole this minute, maybe.

COCKY. [*Commencing to weep dolorously.*] Ow, down't talk, Drisc! I can't bear to 'ear you. I ain't never 'ad no mother, I ain't——

DRISCOLL. Shut up, ye ape, an' don't be makin' that squealin'. If ye cud see your ugly face, wid the big red nose av ye all screwed up in a knot, ye'd never shed a tear the rist av your loife. [*Roaring into song.*] We ar-re the byes av We-e-exford who fought wid hearrt an' hand! [*Speaking.*] To hell wid Ulster! [*He drinks and the others follow his example.*] An' I'll strip to any man in the city av London won't dhrink to that toast. [*He glares truculently at* JOE, *who immediately downs his beer.* NICK *enters again from the door on the left and comes up to* JOE *and whispers in his ear. The latter nods with satisfaction.*]

DRISCOLL. [*Glowering at them.*] What divil's thrick are ye up to now, the two av ye? [*He flourishes a brawny fist.*] Play fair wid us or ye deal wid me!

JOE. [*Hastily.*] No trick, shipmate! May Gawd kill me if that ain't troof!

NICK. [*Indicating* IVAN, *who is snoring.*] On'y your mate there was arskin' fur gels an' I thorght as 'ow yer'd like 'em to come dawhn and 'ave a wet wiv yer.

JOE. [*With a smirking wink.*] Pretty, 'olesome gels they be, ain't they, Nick?"

NICK. Yus.

COCKY. Aar! I knows the gels you 'as, not 'arf! They'd fair blind yer, they're that 'omely. None of yer bloomin' gels fur me, ole Fatty. Me an' Drisc knows a place, down't we, Drisc?"

DRISCOLL. Divil a lie, we do. An' we'll be afther goin' there in a minute. There's music there an' a bit av a dance to liven a man.

JOE. Nick, 'ere, can play yer a tune, can't yer, Nick?

NICK. Yus.

JOE. An' yer can 'ave a dance in the side room 'ere.

DRISCOLL. Hurroo! Now you're talkin'. [*The two women,* FREDA *and* KATE, *enter from the left.* FREDA *is a little, sallow-faced blonde.* KATE *is stout and dark.*]

COCKY. [*In a loud aside to* DRISCOLL.] Gawd blimey, look at 'em! Ain't they 'orrible? [*The women come forward to the table, wearing their best set smiles.*]

FREDA. [*In a raspy voice.*] 'Ullo, mates.

KATE. 'Ad a good voyage?

DRISCOLL. Rotten; but no matther. Welcome, as the sayin' is, an' sit down, an' what'll ye be takin' for your thirst? [*To* KATE.] You'll be sittin' by me, darlin'—what's your name?

KATE. [*With a stupid grin.*] Kate. [*She stands by his chair.*]

DRISCOLL. [*Putting his arm around her.*] A good Irish name, but you're

English by the trim av ye, an' be damned to you. But no matther. Ut's fat ye are, Katy dear, an' I never cud endure skinny wimin. [FREDA *favors him with a viperish glance and sits down by* OLSON.] What'll ye have?

OLSON. No, Drisc. Dis one bane on me. [*He takes out a roll of notes from his inside pocket and lays one on the table.* JOE, NICK, *and the women look at the money with greedy eyes.* IVAN *gives a particularly violent snore.*]

FREDA. Waike up your fren'. Gawd, 'ow I 'ates to 'ear snorin'.

DRISCOLL. [*Springing to action, smashes* IVAN'S *derby over his ears.*] D'you hear the lady talkin' to ye, ye Rooshan swab? [*The only reply to this is a snore.* DRISCOLL *pulls the battered remains of the derby off* IVAN'S *head and smashes it back again.*] Arise an' shine, ye dhrunken swine! [*Another snore. The women giggle.* DRISCOLL *throws the beer left in his glass into* IVAN'S *face. The Russian comes to in a flash, spluttering. There is a roar of laughter.*]

IVAN. [*Indignantly.*] I tell you—dot's someting I don' li-ike!

COCKY. Down't waste good beer, Drisc.

IVAN. [*Grumblingly.*] I tell you—dot is not ri-ight.

DRISCOLL. Ut's your own doin', Ivan. Ye was moanin' for girrls an' whin they come you sit gruntin' loike a pig in a sty. Have ye no manners? [IVAN *seems to see the women for the first time and grins foolishly.*]

KATE. [*Laughing at him.*] Cheero, ole chum, 'ows Russha?

IVAN. [*Greatly pleased—putting his hand in his pocket.*] I buy a drink.

OLSON. No; dis one bane on me. [*To* JOE.] Hey, you faller!

JOE. Wot'll it be, Kate?"

KATE. Gin.

FREDA. Brandy.

DRISCOLL. An' Irish whiskey for the rist av us—wid the excipshun av our timperance friend, God pity him!

FREDA. [*To* OLSON.] You ain't drinkin'?

OLSON. [*Half-ashamed.*] No.

FREDA. [*With a seductive smile.*] I down't blame yer. You got sense, you 'ave. I on'y tike a nip o' brandy now an' agen fur my 'ealth. [JOE *brings the drinks and* OLSON'S *change.* COCKY *gets unsteadily to his feet and raises his glass in the air.*]

COCKY. 'Ere's a toff toast for yer: The ladies, Gawd— [*He hesitates—then adds in a grudging tone.*]—bless 'em.

KATE. [*With a silly giggle.*] Oo-er! That wasn't what you was goin' to say, you bad Cocky, you! [*They all drink.*]

DRISCOLL. [*To* NICK.] Where's the tune ye was promisin' to give us?

NICK. Come ahn in the side 'ere an' you'll 'ear it.

DRISCOLL. [*Getting up.*] Come on, all av ye. We'll have a tune an' a dance if I'm not too dhrunk to dance, God help me. [COCKY *and* IVAN *stagger to their feet.* IVAN *can hardly stand. He is leering at* KATE *and snickering to himself in a maudlin fashion. The three, led by* NICK, *go out the door on the left.* KATE *follows them.* OLSON *and* FREDA *remain seated.*]

COCKY. [*Calling over his shoulder.*] Come on an' dance, Ollie.

OLSON. Yes, I come. [*He starts to get up. From the side room comes the sound of an accordion and a boisterous whoop from* DRISCOLL, *followed by a heavy stamping of feet.*]

FREDA. Ow, down't go in there. Stay 'ere an' 'ave a talk wiv me. They're all drunk an' you ain't drinkin'. [*With a smile up into his face.*] I'll think yer don't like me if yer goes in there.

OLSON. [*Confused.*] You wus wrong, Miss Freda. I don't—I mean I do like you.

FREDA. [*Smiling—puts her hand over his on the table.*] An' I likes you. Yer a genelman. You don't get drunk an' hinsult poor gels wot 'as a 'ard an' uneppy life.

OLSON. [*Pleased but still more confused—wriggling his feet.*] I bane drunk many time, Miss Freda.

FREDA. Then why ain't yer drinkin' now? [*She exchanges a quick, questioning glance with* JOE, *who nods back at her—then she continues persuasively.*] Tell me somethin' abaht yeself.

OLSON. [*With a grin.*] There ain't noting to say, Miss Freda. I bane poor devil sailor man, dat's all.

FREDA. Where was you born—Norway? [OLSON *shakes his head.*] Denmark?

OLSON. No. You guess once more.

FREDA. Then it must be Sweden.

OLSON. Yes. I wus born in Stockholm.

FREDA. [*Pretending great delight.*] Ow, ain't that funny! I was born there, too—in Stockholm.

OLSON. [*Astonished.*] You wus born in Sweden?

FREDA. Yes; you wouldn't think it, but it's Gawd's troof. [*She claps her hands delightedly.*]

OLSON. [*Beaming all over.*] You speak Swedish?

FREDA. [*Trying to smile sadly.*] Now. Y'see my ole man an' woman come 'ere to England when I' was on'y a baby an' they was speakin' English b'fore I was old enough to learn. Sow I never knew Swedish. [*Sadly.*] Wisht I 'ad! [*With a smile.*] We'd 'ave a bloomin' lark of it if I 'ad, wouldn't we?

OLSON. It sound nice to hear the old talk yust once in a time.

FREDA. Righto! No place like yer 'ome, I says. Are yer goin' up to—to Stockholm b'fore yer ships away agen?

OLSON. Yes. I go home from here to Stockholm. [*Proudly.*] As passenger!

FREDA. An' you'll git another ship up there arter you've 'ad a vacation?

OLSON. No. I don't never ship on sea no more. I got all sea I want for my life—too much hard work for little money. Yust work, work, work on ship. I don't want more.

FREDA. Ow, I see. That's why you give up drinkin'.

OLSON. Yes. [*With a grin.*] If I drink I yust get drunk and spend all money.

FREDA. But if you ain't gointer be a sailor no more, what'll yer do? You been a sailor all yer life, ain't yer?

OLSON. No. I work on farm till I am eighteen. I like it, too—it's nice—work on farm.

FREDA. But ain't Stockholm a city same's London? Ain't no farms there, is there?

OLSON. We live—my brother and mother live—my father iss dead—on farm yust a little way from Stockholm. I have plenty money, now. I go back with two years' pay and buy more land yet; work on farm. [*Grinning.*] No more sea, no more bum grub, no more storms—yust nice work.

FREDA. Ow, ain't that luv'ly! I s'pose you'll be gittin' married, too?

OLSON. [*Very much confused.*] I don't know. I like to, if I find nice girl, maybe.

FREDA. Ain't yer got some gel back in Stockholm? I bet yer 'as.

OLSON. No. I got nice girl once before I go on sea. But I go on ship, and I don't come back, and she marry other faller. [*He grins sheepishly.*]

FREDA. Well, it's nice for yer to be goin' 'ome, anyway.

OLSON. Yes. I tank so. [*There is a crash from the room on left and the music abruptly stops. A moment later* COCKY *and* DRISCOLL *appear, supporting the inert form of* IVAN *between them. He is in the last stage of intoxication, unable to move a muscle.* NICK *follows them and sits down at the table in rear.*]

DRISCOLL. [*As they zigzag up to the bar.*] Ut's dead he is, I'm thinkin', for he's as limp as a blarsted corpse.

COCKY. [*Puffing.*] Gawd, 'e ain't 'arf 'eavy!

DRISCOLL. [*Slapping* IVAN'S *face with his free hand.*] Wake up, ye divil, ye. Ut's no use. Gabriel's trumpet itself cudn't rouse him. [*To* JOE.] Give us a dhrink for I'm perishing wid the thirst. 'Tis harrd worrk, this.

JOE. Whiskey?

DRISCOLL. *Irish* whiskey, ye swab. [*He puts down a coin on the bar.* JOE *serves* COCKY *and* DRISCOLL. *They drink and then swerve over to* OLSON'S *table.*]

OLSON. Sit down and rest for time, Drisc.

DRISCOLL. No, Ollie, we'll be takin' this lad home to his bed. Ut's late for wan so young to be out in the night. An' I'd not trust him in this hole as dhrunk as he is, an' him wid a full pay day on him. [*Shaking his fist at* JOE.] Oho, I know your games, me sonny bye!

JOE. [*With an air of grievance.*] There yer goes again—hinsultin' a 'onest man!

COCKY. Ho, listen to 'im! Guv 'im a shove in the marf, Drisc.

OLSON. [*Anxious to avoid a fight—getting up.*] I help you take Ivan to boarding house.

FREDA. [*Protestingly.*] Ow, you ain't gointer leave me, are yer? An' we 'avin' sech a nice talk, an' all.

DRISCOLL. [*With a wink.*] Ye hear what the lady says, Ollie. Ye'd best stay here, me timperance lady's man. An' we need no help. 'Tis only a bit av a way and we're two strong men if we are dhrunk. Ut's no hard shift to take the remains home. But ye can open the door for us, Ollie. [OLSON *goes to the door and opens it.*] Come on, Cocky, an' don't be fallin' aslape yourself. [*They lurch toward the door. As they go out* DRISCOLL *shouts back over his shoulder.*] We'll be comin' back in a short time, surely. So wait here for us, Ollie.

OLSON. All right. I wait here, Drisc. [*He stands in the doorway uncertainly.* JOE *makes violent signs to* FREDA *to bring him back. She goes over and puts her arm around* OLSON'S *shoulder.* JOE *motions to* NICK *to come to the bar. They whisper together excitedly.*]

FREDA. [*Coaxingly.*] You ain't gointer leave me, are yer, dearie? [*Then irritably.*] Fur Gawd's sake, shet that door! I'm fair freezin' to death wiv the fog. [OLSON *comes to himself with a start and shuts the door.*]

OLSON. [*Humbly.*] Excuse me, Miss Freda.

FREDA. [*Leading him back to the table—coughing.*] Buy me a drink o' brandy, will yer? I'm sow cold.

OLSON. All you want, Miss Freda, all you want. [*To* JOE, *who is still whispering instructions to* NICK.] Hey, Yoe! Brandy for Miss Freda. [*He lays a coin on the table.*]

JOE. Righto! [*He pours out her drink and brings it to the table.*] 'Avin' somethink yeself, shipmate?

OLSON. No. I don't tank so. [*He points to his glass with a grin.*] Dis iss only belly-wash, no? [*He laughs.*]

JOE. [*Hopefully.*] 'Ave a man's drink.

OLSON. I would like to—but no. If I drink one I want drink one tousand. [*He laughs again.*]

FREDA. [*Responding to a vicious nudge from* JOE'S *elbow.*] Ow, tike somethin'. I ain't gointer drink all be meself.

OLSON. Den give me a little yinger beer—small one. [JOE *goes back of the bar, making a sign to* NICK *to go to their table.* NICK *does so and stands so that the sailor cannot see what* JOE *is doing.*]

NICK. [*To make talk.*] Where's yer mates popped orf ter? [JOE *pours the contents of the little bottle into* OLSON'S *glass of ginger beer.*]

OLSON. Dey take Ivan, dat drunk faller, to bed. They come back. [JOE *brings* OLSON'S *drink to the table and sets it before him.*]

JOE. [*To* NICK—*angrily.*] 'Op it, will yer? There ain't no time to be dawdlin'. See? 'Urry!

NICK. Down't worry, ole bird, I'm orf. [*He hurries out the door.* JOE *returns to his place behind the bar.*]

OLSON. [*After a pause—worriedly.*] I tank I should go after dem. Cocky iss very drunk, too, and Drisc——

FREDA. Aar! The big Irish is all right. Don't yer 'ear 'im say as 'ow they'd surely come back 'ere, an' fur you to wait fur 'em?

OLSON. Yes; but if dey don't come soon I tank I go see if dey are in boarding house all right.

FREDA. Where is the boardin' 'ouse?

OLSON. Yust little way back from street here.

FREDA. You stayin' there, too?

OLSON. Yes—until steamer sail for Stockholm—in two day.

FREDA. [*She is alternately looking at* JOE *and feverishly trying to keep* OLSON *talking so he will forget about going away after the others.*] Yer mother won't be arf glad to see yer agen, will she? [OLSON *smiles.*] Does she know yer comin'?

OLSON. No. I tought I would yust give her surprise. I write to her from Bonos Eres but I don't tell her I come home.

FREDA. Must be old, ain't she, yer old lady?

OLSON. She iss eighty-two. [*He smiles reminiscently.*] You know, Miss Freda, I don't see my mother or my brother in—let me tank— [*He counts laboriously on his fingers.*] must be more than ten year. I write once in while and she write many time; and my brother he write me, too. My mother say in all letter I should come home right away. My brother he write same ting, too. He want me to help him on farm. I write back always I come soon; and I mean all time to go back home at end of voyage. But I come ashore, I take one drink, I take many drinks, I get drunk, I spend all money, I have to ship away for other voyage. So dis time I say to myself: Don't drink one drink, Ollie, or, sure, you don't get home. And I want go home dis time. I feel homesick for farm and to see my people again. [*He smiles.*] Yust like little boy, I feel homesick. Dat's why I don't drink noting to-night but dis—belly-wash! [*He roars with childish laughter, then suddenly becomes serious.*] You know, Miss Freda, my mother get very old, and I want see her. She might die and I would never——

FREDA. [*Moved a lot in spite of herself.*] Ow, don't talk like that! I jest 'ates to 'ear any one speakin' abaht dyin'. [*The door to the street is opened and* NICK *enters, followed by two rough-looking, shabbily-dressed men, wearing mufflers, with caps pulled down over their eyes. They sit at the table nearest to the door.* JOE *brings them three beers, and there is a whispered consultation, with many glances in the direction of* OLSON.]

OLSON. [*Starting to get up—worriedly.*] I tank I go round to boarding house. I tank someting go wrong with Drisc and Cocky.

FREDA. Ow, down't go. They kin take care of theyselves. They ain't babies. Wait 'arf a mo'. You ain't 'ad yer drink yet.

JOE. [*Coming hastily over to the table, indicates the men in the rear with a jerk of his thumb.*] One of them blokes wants yer to 'ave a wet wiv 'im.

FREDA. Righto! [*To* OLSON.] Let's drink this. [*She raises her glass. He does the same.*] 'Ere's a toast fur yer: Success to yer bloomin' farm an' may yer live

long an' 'appy on it. Skoal! [*She tosses down her brandy. He swallows half his glass of ginger beer and makes a wry face.*]

OLSON. Skoal! [*He puts down his glass.*]

FREDA. [*With feigned indignation.*] Down't yer like my toast?

OLSON. [*Grinning.*] Yes. It iss very kind, Miss Freda.

FREDA. Then drink it all like I done.

OLSON. Well—— [*He gulps down the rest.*] Dere! [*He laughs.*]

FREDA. Done like a sport!

ONE OF THE ROUGHS. [*With a laugh.*] Amindra, ahoy!

NICK. [*Warningly.*] Sssshh!

OLSON. [*Turns around in his chair.*] Amindra? Iss she in port? I sail on her once long time ago—three mast, full rig, skys'l yarder? Iss dat ship you mean?

THE ROUGH. [*Grinning.*] Yus; right you are.

OLSON. [*Angrily.*] I know dat damn ship—worst ship dat sail to sea. Rotten grub and dey make you work all time—and the Captain and Mate wus Bluenose devils. No sailor who know anyting ever ship on her. Where iss she bound from here?

THE ROUGH. Round Cape 'Orn—sails at daybreak.

OLSON. Py yingo, I pity poor fallers make dat trip round Cape Stiff dis time year. I bet you some of dem never see port once again. [*He passes his hand over his eyes in a dazed way. His voice grows weaker.*] Py golly, I feel dizzy. All the room go round and round like I wus drunk. [*He gets weakly to his feet.*] Good night, Miss Freda. I bane feeling sick. Tell Drisc—I go home. [*He takes a step forward and suddenly collapses over a chair, rolls to the floor, and lies there unconscious.*]

JOE. [*From behind the bar.*] Quick, nawh! [NICK *darts forward with* JOE *following.* FREDA *is already beside the unconscious man and has taken the roll of money from his inside pocket. She strips off a note furtively and shoves it into her bosom, trying to conceal her action, but* JOE *sees her. She hands the roll to* JOE, *who pockets it.* NICK *goes through all the other pockets and lays a handful of change on the table.*]

JOE. [*Impatiently.*] 'Urry, 'urry, can't yer? The other blokes'll be 'ere in 'arf a mo'. [*The two roughs come forward.*] 'Ere, you two, tike 'im in under the arms like 'e was drunk. [*They do so.*] Tike 'im to the Amindra—yer knows that, don't yer?—two docks above. Nick'll show yer. An' you, Nick, down't yer leave the bleedin' ship till the capt'n guvs yer this bloke's advance—full month's pay—five quid, d'yer 'ear?

NICK. I knows me bizness, ole bird. [*They support* OLSON *to the door.*]

THE ROUGH. [*As they are going out.*] This silly bloke'll 'ave the s'prise of 'is life when 'e wakes up on board of 'er. [*They laugh. The door closes behind them.* FREDA *moves quickly for the door on the left but* JOE *gets in her way and stops her.*]

JOE. [*Threateningly.*] Guv us what yer took!

FREDA. Took? I guv yer all 'e 'ad.

JOE. Yer a liar! I seen yer a-playin' yer sneakin' tricks, but yer can't fool Joe. I'm too old a 'and. [*Furiously.*] Guv it to me, yer bloody cow! [*He grabs her by the arm.*]

FREDA. Lemme alone! I ain't got no——

JOE. [*Hits her viciously on the side of the jaw. She crumples up on the floor.*] That'll learn yer! [*He stoops down and fumbles in her bosom and pulls out the banknote, which he stuffs into his pocket with a grunt of satisfaction.* KATE *opens the door on the left and looks in—then rushes to* FREDA *and lifts her head up in her arms.*]

KATE. [*Gently.*] Pore dearie! [*Looking at* JOE *angrily.*] Been 'ittin' 'er agen, 'ave yer, yer cowardly swine!

JOE. Yus; an' I'll 'it you, too, if yer don't keep yer marf shut. Tike 'er aht of 'ere! [KATE *carries* FREDA *into the next room.* JOE *goes behind the bar. A moment later the outer door is opened and* DRISCOLL *and* COCKY *come in.*]

DRISCOLL. Come on, Ollie. [*He suddenly sees that* OLSON *is not there, and turns to* JOE.] Where is ut he's gone to?

JOE. [*With a meaning wink.*] 'E an' Freda went aht t'gether 'bout five minutes past. 'E's fair gone on 'er, 'e is.

DRISCOLL. [*With a grin.*] Oho, so that's ut, is ut? Who'd think Ollie'd be sich a divil wid the wimin? 'Tis lucky he's sober or she'd have him stripped to his last ha'penny. [*Turning to* COCKY, *who is blinking sleepily.*] What'll ye have, ye little scut? [*To* JOE.] Give me whiskey, *Irish* whiskey!

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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CLEANTH BROOKS (1906–) now teaches English at Yale. Probably he has been the most influential of the "New Critics" in contemporary letters. From 1935 to 1942 he edited the *Southern Review*. In addition to collaborating on a group of distinguished college textbooks, he has written *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* and *The Well Wrought Urn*.

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HART CRANE (1899–1932) began his literary career in 1916, and by the time of his death sixteen years later had achieved wide recognition as a poet. *White Buildings* and *The Bridge* were published during his lifetime. *The Collected Poems* appeared in 1933.

DAVID DAICHES (1912–) is professor of English at Cambridge University in England. English by birth and educated in England and Scotland, he has published many studies of literature and literary figures.

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HARRIET MONROE (1860–1936) founded *Poetry A Magazine of Verse* in 1912, and remained its editor until her death Her autobiography, *A Poet s Life,* is an important document in the history of twentieth century poetry

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