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The  
CREATIVE  
READER

An Anthology of  
Fiction, Drama, and Poetry

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## Preface

THE CREATIVE READER is an anthology designed for courses introducing literature to first- and second-year college students. It not only contains a rich representation of the short story, drama, and poetry, but it is distinguished from other anthologies by providing materials for studying literary works in relation to the creative process by which they came into being and in relation to the process by which they are understood and appreciated.

Here is, first, an unusually large and varied gathering of readable short stories, plays, and poems, generally arranged as progressing from the simpler to the more difficult and complex. There are twenty-six stories of wide range in period, subject, and technique—together with an entire short novel (Melville's *Billy Budd*). There are five full-length plays. There are more than one hundred and fifty poems, English and American, classified under broad headings according to dominant characteristics, but representing poetic achievement from early ballads to the lyrics of the past decade, a collection capable of appealing to all tastes from the less experienced to the more sophisticated. And finally, there are more than twenty essays, some brief, some of moderate length—all focused upon general or specific literary issues raised by selections within the anthology itself.

In each of the three parts—fiction, drama, and poetry—there are sections devoted to the processes of creation and interpretation. The student is shown something of the origin and growth of different kinds of literary works and the transformation of material from one medium to another—since often the best way of understanding the nature of something is to study the processes by which it becomes what it is. He is also introduced to essays of critical or interpretative opinion in which he may observe the process of literary comprehension and evaluation; in this way he may be assisted in developing his own insights and refining his own judgment.

In sum, the literary work here may be studied individually, as a thing in itself. It may be studied in relation to other works with which it shows points of comparison and contrast—a short story that has its parallel in another in substance or method, or a group of poems interrelated by the use of the same symbol, tone, or theme. It may be studied, furthermore, in relation to critical appraisal by some experienced reader. Or, finally, it may be studied in relation to its source, composition, and revision. Variant representations of the same subject are illustrated, for example, by Stephen Crane's story "The Open Boat" and newspaper reports of the sinking of the *Commodore*, or again by the play *Billy Budd* and the short novel by Melville from which it derives.

The purpose of our "Notes and Questions" is solely to help the student prepare himself to participate intelligently in class discussions. They aim to elicit close reading of the texts, the weighing of an occasional suggestion about some detail or generalization, and the discovery of interrelationships between poem and poem, story and poem, or story and play.

Storrs, Conn.  
Vancouver, B.C.  
February, 1954

R. W. STALLMAN  
R. E. WATTERS





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# Part One

## FICTION

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### *I: The Short Story*

*A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction.*

—EDGAR ALLAN POE





## THE CATBIRD SEAT \*

JAMES THURBER (1894- )

Mr. Martin bought the pack of Camels on Monday night in the most crowded cigar store on Broadway. It was theatre time and seven or eight men were buying cigarettes. The clerk didn't even glance at Mr. Martin, who put the pack in his overcoat pocket and went out. If any of the staff at F & S had seen him buy the cigarettes, they would have been astonished, for it was generally known that Mr. Martin did not smoke, and never had. No one saw him.

It was just a week to the day since Mr. Martin had decided to rub out Mrs. Ulgine Barrows. The term "rub out" pleased him because it suggested nothing more than the correction of an error—in this case an error of Mr. Fitweiler. Mr. Martin had spent each night of the past week working out his plan and examining it. As he walked home now he went over it again. For the hundredth time he resented the element of imprecision, the margin of guesswork that entered into the business. The project as he had worked it out was casual and bold, the risks were considerable. Something might go wrong anywhere along the line. And therein lay the cunning of his scheme. No one would ever see in it the cautious, painstaking hand of Erwin Martin, head of the filing department at F & S, of whom Mr. Fitweiler had once said, "Man is fallible but Martin isn't." No one would see his hand, that is, unless it were caught in the act.

Sitting in his apartment, drinking a glass of milk, Mr. Martin reviewed his case against Mrs. Ulgine Barrows, as he had every night for seven nights. He began at the beginning. Her quacking voice and braying laugh had first profaned the halls of F & S on March 7, 1941 (Mr. Martin had a head for dates). Old Roberts, the personnel chief, had introduced her as the newly appointed special adviser to the president of the firm, Mr. Fitweiler. The woman had appalled Mr. Martin instantly, but he hadn't shown it. He had given her his dry hand, a look of studious concentration, and a faint smile. "Well," she had said, looking at the papers on his desk, "are you lifting the oxcart out of the ditch?" As Mr. Martin recalled that moment, over his milk, he squirmed slightly. He must keep his mind on her crimes as a special adviser, not on her peccadillos as a personality. This he found difficult to do, in spite of entering an objection and sustaining it. The faults of the woman as a woman kept chattering on in his mind like an unruly witness. She had, for almost two years now, baited him. In the halls, in the elevator, even in his own office, into which she romped now and then like a circus horse, she was constantly shouting these silly questions at him. "Are you lifting the oxcart out of the ditch? Are you tearing up the pea patch? Are you hollering down the rain barrel? Are you scraping around the bottom of the pickle barrel? Are you sitting in the catbird seat?"

It was Joey Hart, one of Mr. Martin's two assistants, who had explained what the gibberish meant. "She must be a Dodger fan," he had said. "Red Barber announces the Dodger games over the radio and he uses those expressions---picked 'em up down South." Joey had gone on to explain one or two. "Tearing up the pea patch" meant going on a rampage; "sitting in the catbird seat" meant sitting pretty, like a batter with

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three balls and no strikes on him. Mr. Martin dismissed all this with an effort. It had been annoying, it had driven him near to distraction, but he was too solid a man to be moved to murder by anything so childish. It was fortunate, he reflected as he passed on to the important charges against Mrs. Barrows, that he had stood up under it so well. He had maintained always an outward appearance of polite tolerance. "Why, I even believe you like the woman," Miss Paired, his other assistant, had once said to him. He had simply smiled.

A gavel rapped in Mr. Martin's mind and the case proper was resumed. Mrs. Ulguine Barrows stood charged with willful, blatant, and persistent attempts to destroy the efficiency and system of F & S. It was competent, material, and relevant to review her advent and rise to power. Mr. Martin had got the story from Miss Paired, who seemed always able to find things out. According to her, Mrs. Barrows had met Mr. Fitweiler at a party, where she had rescued him from the embraces of a powerfully built drunken man who had mistaken the president of F & S for a famous retired Middle Western football coach. She had led him to a sofa and somehow worked upon him a monstrous magic. The aging gentleman had jumped to the conclusion there and then that this was a woman of singular attainments, equipped to bring out the best in him and in the firm. A week later he had introduced her into F & S as his special adviser. On that day confusion got its foot in the door. After Miss Tyson, Mr. Brundage, and Mr. Bartlett had been fired and Mr. Munson had taken his hat and stalked out, mailing in his resignation later, old Roberts had been emboldened to speak to Mr. Fitweiler. He mentioned that Mr. Munson's department had been "a little disrupted" and hadn't they perhaps better resume the old system there? Mr. Fitweiler had said certainly not. He had the greatest faith in Mrs. Barrows' ideas. "They require a little seasoning, a little seasoning, is all," he had added. Mr. Roberts had given it up. Mr. Martin reviewed in detail all the changes wrought by Mrs. Barrows. She had begun chipping at the cornices of the firm's edifice and now she was swinging at the foundation stones with a pickaxe.

Mr. Martin came now, in his summing up, to the afternoon of Monday, November 2, 1942—just one week ago. On that day, at 3 P.M., Mrs. Barrows had bounced into his office. "Boo!" she had yelled. "Are you scraping around the bottom of the pickle barrel?" Mr. Martin had looked at her from under his green eyeshade, saying nothing. She had begun to wander about the office, taking it in with her great, popping eyes. "Do you really need *all* these filing cabinets?" she had demanded suddenly. Mr. Martin's heart had jumped. "Each of these files," he had said, keeping his voice even, "plays an indispensable part in the system of F & S." She had brayed at him, "Well, don't tear up the pea patch!" and gone to the door. From there she had bawled, "But you sure have got a lot of fine scrap in here!" Mr. Martin could no longer doubt that the finger was on his beloved department. Her pickaxe was on the upswing, poised for the first blow. It had not come yet; he had received no blue memo from the enchanted Mr. Fitweiler bearing nonsensical instructions deriving from the obscene woman. But there was no doubt in Mr. Martin's mind that one would be forthcoming. He must act quickly. Already a precious week had gone by. Mr. Martin stood up in his living room, still holding his milk glass. "Gentlemen of the jury," he said to himself, "I demand the death penalty for this horrible person."

The next day Mr. Martin followed his routine, as usual. He polished his glasses more often and once sharpened an already sharp pencil, but not even Miss Paired noticed. Only once did he catch sight of his victim; she swept past him in the hall with a patronizing "Hi!" At five-thirty he walked home, as usual, and had a glass of

milk, as usual. He had never drunk anything stronger in his life--unless you could count ginger ale. The late Sam Schlosser, the S of F & S, had praised Mr. Martin at a staff meeting several years before for his temperate habits. "Our most efficient worker neither drinks nor smokes," he had said. "The results speak for themselves." Mr. Fitweiler had sat by, nodding approval.

Mr. Martin was still thinking about that red-letter day as he walked over to the Schrafft's on Fifth Avenue near Forty-sixth Street. He got there, as he always did, at eight o'clock. He finished his dinner and the financial page of the *Sun* at a quarter to nine, as he always did. It was his custom after dinner to take a walk. This time he walked down Fifth Avenue at a casual pace. His gloved hands felt moist and warm, his forehead cold. He transferred the Camels from his overcoat to a jacket pocket. He wondered, as he did so, if they did not represent an unnecessary note of strain. Mrs. Barrows smoked only Luckies. It was his idea to puff a few puffs on a Camel (after the rubbing-out), stub it out in the ashtray holding her lipstick-stained Luckies, and thus drag a small red herring across the trail. Perhaps it was not a good idea. It would take time. He might even choke, too loudly.

Mr. Martin had never seen the house on West Twelfth Street where Mrs. Barrows lived, but he had a clear enough picture of it. Fortunately, she had bragged to everybody about her ducky first-floor apartment in the perfectly darling three-story red-brick. There would be no doorman or other attendants; just the tenants of the second and third floors. As he walked along, Mr. Martin realized that he would get there before nine-thirty. He had considered walking north on Fifth Avenue from Schrafft's to a point from which it would take him until ten o'clock to reach the house. At that hour people were less likely to be coming in or going out. But the procedure would have made an awkward loop in the straight thread of his casualness, and he had abandoned it. It was impossible to figure when people would be entering or leaving the house, anyway. There was a great risk at any hour. If he ran into anybody, he would simply have to place the rubbing-out of Ulgine Barrows in the inactive file forever. The same thing would hold true if there were someone in her apartment. In that case he would just say that he had been passing by, recognized her charming house, and thought to drop in.

It was eighteen minutes after nine when Mr. Martin turned into Twelfth Street. A man passed him, and a man and a woman, talking. There was no one within fifty paces when he came to the house, halfway down the block. He was up the steps and in the small vestibule in no time, pressing the bell under the card that said "Mrs. Ulgine Barrows." When the clicking in the lock started, he jumped forward against the door. He got inside fast, closing the door behind him. A bulb in a lantern hung from the hall ceiling on a chain seemed to give a monstrously bright light. There was nobody on the stair, which went up ahead of him along the left wall. A door opened down the hall in the wall on the right. He went toward it swiftly, on tiptoe.

"Well, for God's sake, look who's here!" bawled Mrs. Barrows, and her braying laugh rang out like the report of a shotgun. He rushed past her like a football tackle, bumping her. "Hey, quit shoving!" she said, closing the door behind them. They were in her living room, which seemed to Mr. Martin to be lighted by a hundred lamps. "What's after you?" she said. "You're as jumpy as a goat." He found he was unable to speak. His heart was wheezing in his throat. "I--yes," he finally brought out. She was jabbering and laughing as she started to help him off with his coat. "No, no," he said. "I'll put it here." He took it off and put it on a chair near the door. "Your hat and gloves, too," she said. "You're in a lady's house." He put his hat on

top of the coat. Mrs. Barrows seemed larger than he had thought. He kept his gloves on. "I was passing by," he said. "I recognized—is there anyone here?" She laughed louder than ever. "No," she said, "we're all alone. You're as white as a sheet, you funny man. Whatever *has* come over you? I'll mix you a toddy." She started toward a door across the room. "Scotch-and-soda be all right? But say, you don't drink, do you?" She turned and gave him her amused look. Mr. Martin pulled himself together. "Scotch-and-soda will be all right," he heard himself say. He could hear her laughing in the kitchen.

Mr. Martin looked quickly around the living room for the weapon. He had counted on finding one there. There were andirons and a poker and something in a corner that looked like an Indian club. None of them would do. It couldn't be that way. He began to pace around. He came to a desk. On it lay a metal paper knife with an ornate handle. Would it be sharp enough? He reached for it and knocked over a small brass jar. Stamps spilled out of it and it fell to the floor with a clatter. "Hey," Mrs. Barrows yelled from the kitchen, "are you tearing up the pea patch?" Mr. Martin gave a strange laugh. Picking up the knife, he tried its point against his left wrist. It was blunt. It wouldn't do.

When Mrs. Barrows reappeared, carrying two highballs, Mr. Martin, standing there with his gloves on, became acutely conscious of the fantasy he had wrought. Cigarettes in his pocket, a drink prepared for him—it was all too grossly improbable. It was more than that; it was impossible. Somewhere in the back of his mind a vague idea stirred, sprouted. "For heaven's sake, take off those gloves," said Mrs. Barrows. "I always wear them in the house," said Mr. Martin. The idea began to bloom, strange and wonderful. She put the glasses on a coffee table in front of a sofa and sat on the sofa. "Come over here, you odd little man," she said. Mr. Martin went over and sat beside her. It was difficult getting a cigarette out of the pack of Camels, but he managed it. She held a match for him, laughing. "Well," she said, handing him his drink, "this is perfectly marvellous. You with a drink and a cigarette."

Mr. Martin puffed, not too awkwardly, and took a gulp of the highball. "I drink and smoke all the time," he said. He clinked his glass against hers. "Here's nuts to that old windbag, Fitweiler," he said, and gulped again. The stuff tasted awful, but he made no grimace. "Really, Mr. Martin," she said, her voice and posture changing, "you are insulting our employer." Mrs. Barrows was now all special adviser to the president. "I am preparing a bomb," said Mr. Martin, "which will blow the old goat higher than hell." He had only had a little of the drink, which was not strong. It couldn't be that. "Do you take dope or something?" Mrs. Barrows asked coldly. "Heroin," said Mr. Martin. "I'll be coked to the gills when I bump that old buzzard off." "Mr. Martin!" she shouted, getting to her feet. "That will be all of that. You must go at once." Mr. Martin took another swallow of his drink. He tapped his cigarette out in the ashtray and put the pack of Camels on the coffee table. Then he got up. She stood glaring at him. He walked over and put on his hat and coat. "Not a word about this," he said, and laid an index finger against his lips. All Mrs. Barrows could bring out was "Really!" Mr. Martin put his hand on the doorknob. "I'm sitting in the catbird seat," he said. He stuck his tongue out at her and left. Nobody saw him go.

Mr. Martin got to his apartment, walking, well before eleven. No one saw him go in. He had two glasses of milk after brushing his teeth, and he felt elated. It wasn't tipsiness, because he hadn't been tipsy. Anyway, the walk had worn off all effects of

the whiskey. He got in bed and read a magazine for a while. He was asleep before midnight.

Mr. Martin got to the office at eight-thirty the next morning, as usual. At a quarter to nine, Ulgine Barrows, who had never before arrived at work before ten, swept into his office. "I'm reporting to Mr. Fitweiler now!" she shouted. "If he turns you over to the police, it's no more than you deserve!" Mr. Martin gave her a look of shocked surprise. "I beg your pardon?" he said. Mrs. Barrows snorted and bounced out of the room, leaving Miss Paired and Joey Hart staring after her. "What's the matter with that old devil now?" asked Miss Paired. "I have no idea," said Mr. Martin, resuming his work. The other two looked at him and then at each other. Miss Paired got up and went out. She walked slowly past the closed door of Mr. Fitweiler's office. Mrs. Barrows was yelling inside, but she was not braying. Miss Paired could not hear what the woman was saying. She went back to her desk.

Forty-five minutes later, Mrs. Barrows left the president's office and went into her own, shutting the door. It wasn't until half an hour later that Mr. Fitweiler sent for Mr. Martin. The head of the filing department, neat, quiet, attentive, stood in front of the old man's desk. Mr. Fitweiler was pale and nervous. He took his glasses off and twiddled them. He made a small, bruffing sound in his throat. "Martin," he said, "you have been with us more than twenty years." "Twenty-two, sir," said Mr. Martin. "In that time," pursued the president, "your work and your—uh—manner have been exemplary." "I trust so, sir," said Mr. Martin. "I have understood, Martin," said Mr. Fitweiler, "that you have never taken a drink or smoked." "That is correct, sir," said Mr. Martin. "Ah, yes." Mr. Fitweiler polished his glasses. "You may describe what you did after leaving the office yesterday, Martin," he said. Mr. Martin allowed less than a second for his bewildered pause. "Certainly, sir," he said. "I walked home. Then I went to Schrafft's for dinner. Afterward I walked home again. I went to bed early, sir, and read a magazine for a while. I was asleep before eleven." "Ah, yes," said Mr. Fitweiler again. He was silent for a moment, searching for the proper words to say to the head of the filing department. "Mrs. Barrows," he said finally, "Mrs. Barrows has worked hard, Martin, very hard. It grieves me to report that she has suffered a severe breakdown. It has taken the form of a persecution complex accompanied by distressing hallucinations." "I am very sorry, sir," said Mr. Martin. "Mrs. Barrows is under the delusion," continued Mr. Fitweiler, "that you visited her last evening and behaved yourself in an—uh—unseemly manner." He raised his hand to silence Mr. Martin's little pained outcry. "It is the nature of these psychological diseases," Mr. Fitweiler said, "to fix upon the least likely and most innocent party as the—uh—source of persecution. These matters are not for the lay mind to grasp, Martin. I've just had my psychiatrist, Dr. Fitch, on the phone. He would not, of course, commit himself, but he made enough generalizations to substantiate my suspicions. I suggested to Mrs. Barrows, when she had completed her—uh—story to me this morning, that she visit Dr. Fitch, for I suspected a condition at once. She flew, I regret to say, into a rage, and demanded—uh—requested that I call you on the carpet. You may not know, Martin, but Mrs. Barrows had planned a reorganization of your department—subject to my approval, of course, subject to my approval. This brought you, rather than anyone else, to her mind—but again that is a phenomenon for Dr. Fitch and not for us. So, Martin, I am afraid Mrs. Barrows' usefulness here is at an end." "I am dreadfully sorry, sir," said Mr. Martin.

It was at this point that the door to the office blew open with the suddenness of a gas-main explosion and Mrs. Barrows catapulted through it. "Is the little rat denying

it?" she screamed. "He can't get away with that!" Mr. Martin got up and moved discreetly to a point beside Mr. Fitweiler's chair. "You drank and smoked at my apartment," she bawled at Mr. Martin, "and you know it! You called Mr. Fitweiler an old windbag and said you were going to blow him up when you got coked to the gills on your heroin!" She stopped yelling to catch her breath and a new glint came into her popping eyes. "If you weren't such a drab, ordinary little man," she said, "I'd think you'd planned it all. Sticking your tongue out, saying you were sitting in the catbird seat, because you thought no one would believe me when I told it! My God, it's really too perfect!" She brayed loudly and hysterically, and the fury was on her again. She glared at Mr. Fitweiler. "Can't you see how he has tricked us, you old fool? Can't you see his little game?" But Mr. Fitweiler had been surreptitiously pressing all the buttons under the top of his desk and employees of F & S began pouring into the room. "Stockton," said Mr. Fitweiler, "you and Fishbein will take Mrs. Barrows to her home. Mrs. Powell, you will go with them." Stockton, who had played a little football in high school, blocked Mrs. Barrows as she made for Mr. Martin. It took him and Fishbein together to force her out of the door into the hall, crowded with stenographers and office boys. She was still screaming imprecations at Mr. Martin, tangled and contradictory imprecations. The hubbub finally died out down the corridor.

"I regret that this has happened," said Mr. Fitweiler. "I shall ask you to dismiss it from your mind, Martin." "Ycs, sir," said Mr. Martin, anticipating his chief's "That will be all" by moving to the door. "I will dismiss it." He went out and shut the door, and his step was light and quick in the hall. When he entered his department he had slowed down to his customary gait, and he walked quietly across the room to the W20 file, wearing a look of studious concentration.

## A TRIP TO CZARDIS

EDWIN GRANBERRY (1897- )

It was still dark in the pine woods when the two brothers awoke. But it was plain that day had come, and in a little while there would be no more stars. Day itself would be in the sky and they would be getting along the road. Jim waked first, coming quickly out of sleep and sitting up in the bed to take fresh hold of the things in his head, starting them up again out of the corners of his mind where sleep had tucked them. Then he waked Daniel and they sat up together in the bed. Jim put his arm around his young brother, for the night had been dewy and cool with the swamp wind. Daniel shivered a little and whimpered, it being dark in the room and his baby concerns still on him somewhat, making sleep heavy on his mind and slow to give understanding its way.

"Hit's the day, Dan'l. This day that's right here now, we are goen. You'll recollect it all in a minute."

"I recollect. We are goen in the wagon to see papa—"

"Then hush and don't whine."

"I were dreamen, Jim."

"What dreamen did you have?"

"I can't tell. But it were fearful what I dreamt."

"All the way we are goen this time. We won't stop at any places, but we will go all the way to Czardis to see papa. I never see such a place as Czardis."

"I recollect the water tower—"

"Not in your own right, Dan'l. Hit's by my tellen it you see it in your mind."

"And lemonade with ice in it I saw—"

"That too I seen and told to you."

"Then I never seen it at all?"

"Hit's me were there, Dan'l. I let you play like, but hit's me who went to Czardis. Yet I never till this day told half how much I see. There's sights I never told."

They stopped talking, listening for their mother's stir in the kitchen. But the night stillness was unlifted. Daniel began to shiver again.

"Hit's dark," he said.

"Hit's your eyes stuck," Jim said. "Would you want me to drip a little water on your eyes?"

"Oh!" cried the young one, pressing his face into his brother's side, "don't douse me, Jim, no more. The cold aches me."

The other soothed him, holding him around the body.

"You won't have e're chill or malarie ache today, Dan'l. Hit's a fair day—"

"I won't be cold?"

"Hit's a bright day. I hear mournen doves starten a'ready. The sun will bake you warm. . . . Uncle Holly might buy us somethen new to eat in Czardis."

"What would it be?"

"Hit ain't decided yet. . . . He hasn't spoke. Hit might be somethen sweet. Maybe a candy ball fixed on to a rubber string."

"A candy ball!" Daniel showed a stir of happiness. "Oh, Jim!" But it was deceit of the imagination, making his eyes shine wistfully; the grain of his flesh was against it. He settled into a stillness by himself.

"My stomach would retch it up, Jim. . . . I guess I couldn't eat it."

"You might could keep a little down."

"No. . . . I would bring it home and keep it. . . ."

Their mother when they went to bed had laid a clean pair of pants and a waist for each on the chair. Jim crept out of bed and put on his clothes, then aided his brother on with his. They could not hear any noise in the kitchen, but hickory firewood burning in the kitchen stove worked a smell through the house, and in the forest guinea fowls were sailing down from the trees and poking their way along the half-dark ground toward the kitchen steps, making it known the door was open and that within someone was stirring about at the getting of food.

Jim led his brother by the hand down the dark way of yellow-pine stairs that went narrowly and without banisters to the rooms below. The young brother went huddling in his clothes, ague-like, knowing warmth was near, hungering for his place by the stove, to sit in peace on the bricks in the floor by the stove's side and watch the eating, it being his nature to have a sickness against food.

They came in silence to the kitchen, Jim leading and holding his brother by the hand. The floor was lately strewn with fresh bright sand and that would sparkle when the day-break got above the forest, though now it lay dull as hoarfrost and cold to the unshod feet of the brothers. The door to the firebox of the stove was open and in front of it their mother sat in a chair speaking low as they entered, muttering under her breath. The two boys went near and stood still, thinking she was blessing the food,

there being mush dipped up and steaming in two bowls. And they stood cast down until she lifted her eyes to them and spoke.

"Your clothes on already," she said. "You look right neat." She did not rise, but kept her chair, looking cold and stiff, with the cloth of her black dress sagging between her knees. The sons stood in front of her and she laid her hand on first one head and then the other and spoke a little about the day, charging them to be sober and, of few words, as she had raised them.

Jim sat on the bench by the table and began to eat, mixing dark molasses sugar through his bowl of mush. But a nausea began in Daniel's stomach at the sight of the sweet and he lagged by the stove, gazing at the food as it passed into his brother's mouth.

Suddenly a shadow filled the back doorway and Holly, their uncle, stood there looking in. He was lean and big and dark from wind and weather, working in the timber as their father had done. He had no wife and children and would roam far off with the timber gangs in the Everglades. This latter year he did not go far, but stayed near them. Their mother stopped and looked at the man and he looked at her in silence. Then he looked at Jim and Daniel.

"You're goen to take them after all?"

She waited a minute, seeming to get the words straight in her mind before bringing them out, making them say what was set there.

"He asked to see them. Nobody but God-Almighty ought to tell a soul hit can or can't have."

Having delivered her mind, she went out into the yard with the man and they spoke more words in an undertone, pausing in their speech.

In the silence of the kitchen, Daniel began to speak out and name what thing among his possessions he would take to Czardis to give his father. But the older boy belittled this and that and everything that was called up, saying one thing was of too little consequence for a man, and that another was of no account because it was food. But when the older boy had abolished the idea and silence had regained, he worked back to the thought, coming to it roundabout and making it new as his own, letting it be decided that each of them would take their father a pomegranate from the tree in the yard.

They went to the kitchen door. The swamp fog had risen suddenly. They saw their mother standing in the lot while their uncle hitched the horse to the wagon. Leaving the steps, Jim climbed to the first crotch of the pomegranate tree. The reddest fruits were on the top branches. He worked his way higher. The fog was now curling up out of the swamp, making gray mountains and rivers in the air and strange ghost shapes. Landmarks disappeared in the billows, or half-seen, they bewildered the sight and an eye could so little mark the known or strange that a befuddlement took hold of the mind, like the visitations sailors beheld in the fogs of Okeechobee. Jim could not find the ground. He seemed to have climbed into the mountains. The light was unnatural and dark and the pines were blue and dark over the mountains.

A voice cried out of the fog:

"Are worms gnawen you that you skin up a pomegranate tree at this hour? Don't I feed you enough?"

The boy worked his way down. At the foot of the tree he met his mother. She squatted and put her arm around him, her voice tight and quivering, and he felt tears on her face.

"We ain't come to the shame yet of you and Dan'l huntin your food off trees and



grass. People seein' you gnawen on the road will say Jim Cameron's sons are starved, foragen like cattle of the field."

"I were getten the pomegranates for papa," said the boy, resigned to his mother's concern. She stood up when he said this, holding him in front of her skirts. In a while she said:

"I guess we won't take any, Jim. . . . But I'm proud it come to you to take your papa somethen."

And after a silence, the boy said:

"Hit were Dan'l it come to, Mamma."

Then she took his hand, not looking down, and in her throat, as if in her bosom, she repeated:

"Hit were a fine thought and I'm right proud . . . though to-day we won't take anything. . . ."

"I guess there's better pomegranates in Czardis where we are goen—"

"There's no better pomegranates in Czardis than right here over your head," she said grimly. "If pomegranates were needed, we would take him his own. . . . You are older'n Dan'l, Jim. When we get to the place we are goen, you won't know your papa after so long. He will be pale, and he won't be as bright as you recollect. So don't labor him with questions but speak when it behooves you and let him see you are upright."

When the horse was harnessed and all was ready for the departure, the sons were seated on the shallow bed of hay in the back of the wagon and the mother took the driver's seat alone. The uncle had argued for having the top up over the seat, but she refused the shelter, remarking that she had always driven under the sky and would still do it today. He gave in silently and got upon the seat of his own wagon, which took the road first, their wagon following. This was strange and the sons asked:

"Why don't we all ride in Uncle Holly's wagon?"

But their mother made no reply.

For several miles they traveled in silence through their own part of the woods, meeting no one. The boys whispered a little to themselves, but their mother and their uncle sat without speaking, nor did they turn their heads to look back. At last the narrow road they were following left the woods and came out to the highway and it was seen that other wagons besides their own were going to Czardis. And as they got farther along, they began to meet many other people going to town, and the boys asked their mother what day it was. It was Wednesday. And then they asked her why so many wagons were going along the road if it wasn't Saturday and a market day. When she told them to be quiet, they settled down to watching the people go by. Some of them were faces that were strange and some of them were neighbors who lived in other parts of the woods. Some who passed them stared in silence and some went by looking straight to the front. But there were none of them who spoke, for their mother turned her eyes neither right nor left, but drove the horse on like a woman in her sleep. All was silent as the wagons passed, except the squeaking of the wheels and the thud of the horses' hoofs on the dry, packed sand.

At the edge of the town, the crowds increased and their wagon got lost in the press of people. All were moving in one direction.

Finally they were going along by a high brick wall on top of which ran a barbed-wire fence. Farther along the way in the middle of the wall was a tall, stone building with many people in front. There were trees along the outside of the wall and in the branches of one of the trees Daniel saw a man. He was looking over the brick wall

down into the courtyard. All the wagons were stopping here and hitching through the grove in front of the building. But their Uncle Holly's wagon and their own drove on, making way slowly as through a crowd at a fair, for under the trees knots of men were gathered, talking in undertone. Daniel pulled at his mother's skirts and whispered:

"What made that man climb up that tree?"

Again she told him to be quiet.

"We're not to talk today," said Jim. "Papa is sick and we're not to make him worse." But his high, thin voice made his mother turn cold. She looked back and saw he had grown pale and still, staring at the iron-barred windows of the building. When he caught her gaze, his chin began to quiver and she turned back front to dodge the knowledge of his eyes.

For the two wagons had stopped now and the uncle gotten down and left them sitting alone while he went to the door of the building and talked with a man standing there. The crowd fell silent, staring at their mother.

"See, Jim, all the men up the trees!" Daniel whispered once more, leaning close in to his brother's side.

"Hush, Dan'l. Be still."

The young boy obeyed this time, falling into a bewildered stare at all the things about him he did not understand, for in all the trees along the brick wall men began to appear perched high in the branches, and on the roof of a building across the way stood other men, all gaping at something in the yard back of the wall.

Their uncle returned and hitched his horse to a ring in one of the trees. Then he hitched their mother's horse and all of them got out and stood on the ground in a huddle. The walls of the building rose before them. Strange faces at the barred windows laughed aloud and called down curses at the men below.

Now they were moving, with a wall of faces on either side of them, their uncle going first, followed by their mother who held to each of them by a hand. They went up the steps of the building. The door opened and their uncle stepped inside. He came back in a moment and all of them went in and followed a man down a corridor and into a bare room with two chairs and a wooden bench. A man in a black robe sat on one of the chairs, and in front of him on the bench, leaning forward looking down between his arms, sat their father. His face was lean and gray, which made him look very tall. But his hair was black, and his eyes were blue and mild and strange as he stood up and held his two sons against his body while he stooped his head to kiss their mother. The man in black left the room and walked up and down outside in the corridor. A second stranger stood in the doorway with his back to the room. The father picked up one of the sons and then the other in his arms and looked at them and leaned their faces on his own. Then he sat down on the bench and held them against him. Their mother sat down beside them and they were all together.

A few low words were spoken and then a silence fell over them all. And in a little while the parents spoke a little more and touched one another. But the bare stone floor and the stone walls and the unaccustomed arms of their father hushed the sons with the new and strange. And when the time had passed, the father took his watch from his pocket:

"I'm goen to give you my watch, Jim. You are the oldest. I want you to keep it till you are a grown man. . . . And I want you to always do what mamma tells you. . . . I'm goen to give you the chain, Dan'l. . . ."

The young brother took the chain, slipped out of his father's arms, and went to his

mother with it. He spread it out on her knee and began to talk to her in a whisper. She bent over him, and again all of them in the room grew silent.

A sudden sound of marching was heard in the corridor. The man rose up and took his sons in his arms, holding them abruptly. But their uncle, who had been standing with the man in the doorway, came suddenly and took them and went out and down through the big doorway by which they had entered the building. As the doors opened to let them pass, the crowd gathered round the steps pressed forward to look inside. The older boy cringed in his uncle's arms. His uncle turned and stood with his back to the crowd. Their mother came through the doors. The crowd fell back. Again through a passageway of gazing eyes, they reached the wagons. This time they sat on the seat beside their mother. Leaving their uncle and his wagon behind, they started off on the road that led out of town.

"Is papa coming home with Uncle Holly?" Jim asked in a still voice.

His mother nodded her head.

Reaching the woods once more and the silence he knew, Daniel whispered to his brother:

"We got a watch and chain instead, Jim."

But Jim neither answered nor turned his eyes.

## TWO FRIENDS \*

GUY DE MAUPASSANT (1850-1893)

Paris was besieged, famished, in its death agony. Sparrows had become scarcer and scarcer on the roof-tops and the sewers were being depopulated. People ate anything they could get.

As he was strolling sadly along the outer boulevard one bright January morning, his hands in his pockets and his stomach empty, M. Morissot, watchmaker by trade but militiaman through circumstances, stopped short before a brother-in-arms whom he recognized as a friend. It was M. Sauvage, a riverside acquaintance.

Every Sunday, before the war, Morissot would set out at dawn with a bamboo rod in his hand and a tin box at his back. He would take the Argenteuil train, get off at Colombes, and make his way to Marante Island. The moment he reached this place of his dreams he would start fishing; and he would keep on fishing until nightfall.

Every Sunday he would meet there a stout, jovial little man, M. Sauvage, a haberdasher in Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, another devout fisherman. They often spent half a day side by side, line in hand and feet dangling above the stream; and they had taken a liking for each other.

Some days they never spoke. Sometimes they would chat; but they understood each other perfectly without saying a word, for their tastes were similar and their feelings identical.

On spring mornings towards ten o'clock, when the early sun was drawing up from the quiet river those wisps of haze which glide downstream above the water, and was pouring down its spring warmth on the backs of the two fanatical anglers, Morissot

\* Translation by R. E. Watters.

would sometimes say to his neighbor, "Nice, isn't it?" and M. Sauvage would answer, "I know nothing better." And that was enough for them to understand and value each other.

In autumn, towards evening, when the sky, blood red from the setting sun, would cast reflections of its scarlet clouds on the water, empurpling the whole river, enflaming the horizon, making the two friends look as red as fire, and gilding the trees which were already crimsoned and beginning to shiver with a wintry chill, M. Sauvage would look at Morissot with a smile and say, "There's a sight for you!" And Morissot, lost in astonishment, would answer, "Better than the boulevard, isn't it?" without lifting his eyes from his float.

On this morning, as soon as they had recognized each other, they shook hands vigorously, very much moved at meeting under such changed circumstances. M. Sauvage, with a sigh, muttered, "What goings-on!" Morissot groaned dismally: "And such weather! Today's the first fine day of the year."

The sky was, indeed, blue and brilliant.

They began to walk on side by side, two sorrowful dreamers. Morissot spoke again. "And fishing! Ah! Nothing but a beautiful memory."

"When'll we get back to it?" asked M. Sauvage.

They went into a little café and had an absinthe together, then resumed their stroll along the sidewalks.

Suddenly Morissot stopped. "Another one, eh?" M. Sauvage agreed: "If you wish." And they entered another wine-shop.

On leaving they felt giddy, muddled, as a man does after drinking on an empty stomach. The day was mild. A caressing breeze touched their faces.

M. Sauvage, whom the warm air had made quite tipsy, stopped short. "What if we go?"

"Go where?"

"Fishing, of course."

"But where?"

"Why, to our island. The French outposts are near Colombes. I know Colonel Dumoulin. They'll let us through without any difficulty."

Morissot shivered in his eagerness: "It's a go! I'm with you." And they separated, to get their tackle.

An hour later they were walking side by side along the highway. In a little while they reached the villa occupied by the Colonel. He smiled at their request and agreed to their whim. They started off again armed with a pass.

Soon they passed the outposts, went through the deserted village of Colombes, and found themselves on the edge of the little vineyards which slope towards the Seine. It was about eleven o'clock.

In front of them, the village of Argenteuil seemed dead. The heights of Orgemont and Sannois dominated the whole countryside. The great plain which stretches as far as Nanterre was empty, absolutely empty, with its leafless cherry trees and its gray soil.

Pointing up to the heights, M. Sauvage murmured, "The Prussians are up there!" And a feeling of uneasiness paralyzed the two friends as they beheld this deserted countryside.

"The Prussians!" They had never seen any, but for months they had felt their presence, around Paris, ruining France, plundering, massacring, starving the country, invisible and all-powerful. And a kind of superstitious terror was now added to the hatred they felt for these unknown and victorious people.

Morissot stammered, "Say, suppose we meet some of them?"

M. Sauvage answered with that Parisian jauntiness which nothing can entirely quench: "We'll offer them some fried fish."

But they hesitated to venture into the open, frightened by the silence all about them.

Finally M. Sauvage came to a decision: "Come on! Let's go! But cautiously." And they made their way down into a vineyard, bent double, crawling, taking advantage of thickets to screen themselves, eyes alert, ears straining.

A strip of bare ground had to be crossed to reach the river's edge. They took it on the run, and when they gained the bank they sank down among the dry reeds.

Morissot put his ear to the ground to listen for sounds of anyone walking in the vicinity. He heard nothing. They were alone, utterly alone.

Reassured, they set about fishing.

Across from them Marante Island, deserted, concealed them from the other bank. The little building which had been a restaurant was shut up and looked as if it had been abandoned for years.

M. Sauvage caught the first gudgeon, Morissot got the second, and, from then on, every minute or two they pulled in their lines with a silvery little creature writhing on the end. It was a truly miraculous catch of fish.

Gently they slipped the fish into a sack made of fine net which they hung in the water at their feet. And a delightful happiness pervaded their whole being, the happiness which takes hold of you when you rediscover a cherished pleasure of which you have been deprived for a long time.

The good sun was pouring down its warmth on their shoulders. They no longer listened for anything; they no longer thought about anything; they dismissed the rest of the world.—They were fishing!

But suddenly a heavy noise which seemed to come from underground made the earth tremble. The cannon were beginning to thunder.

Morissot turned his head, and above the bank to the left he saw the great silhouette of Mount Valerien wearing a white plume on its brow—powder-smoke which it had just spat out.

And at once a second puff of smoke rose from the summit of the fortress, and a few moments later a new explosion rumbled.

Then others followed, and time after time the mountain belched forth its death-dealing breath, exhaling milky-white vapor which rose slowly into the calm sky and formed a cloud above the summit.

M. Sauvage shrugged his shoulders. "There they go again," he said.

Morissot, who was anxiously watching his feathered float bob up and down, was suddenly seized by the wrath of a peace-loving man against madmen who fight. He growled, "What crazy fools to kill one another like that."

M. Sauvage answered, "They're worse than animals."

And Morissot, who had just pulled in a young herring, went on, "And to think that it will always be like this as long as there are governments."

M. Sauvage stopped him. "The Republic wouldn't have declared war—"

Morissot interrupted. "Under kings you have war abroad; under the Republic you have war at home."

And placidly they started talking, clearing up great political problems with the healthy good sense of easy-going, limited individuals, and coming to agreement on this point—that men would never be free. And Mount Valerien thundered on, demolishing French homes with its cannon, crushing out lives, putting an end to many

a dream, to many a long-awaited joy, to many a hoped-for happiness, planting in the hearts of wives, of girls, of mothers, over there in other lands, suffering that would never end.

"That's life for you," asserted M. Sauvage.

"You'd better say 'That's death for you,' " replied Morissot with a laugh.

But an instant later they were shuddering with fright, for they suddenly sensed that someone had come up behind them. Looking around, they saw, standing almost at their elbows, four men, four big men, armed and bearded, dressed like liveried servants, with flat caps on their heads. They held four rifles at the ready.

The two fishing lines dropped from their hands and started to float away down stream.

In a few seconds they were seized, tied up, carried off, tossed into a boat, and taken over to the island.

And behind the building which they had thought abandoned they saw a score of German soldiers.

A kind of hairy giant, seated astride a chair and smoking a huge porcelain pipe, asked them in excellent French, "Well, gentlemen, was the fishing good?"

Just then a soldier put down at the officer's feet the sack full of fish which he had carefully brought along. The Prussian smiled. "Aha! I see that it wasn't too bad. But we have other matters to think of. Listen to me and don't get upset.

"As far as I know, you are two spies sent to keep an eye on me. I catch you and I shoot you. You have fallen into my hands—so much the worse for you. War's like that.

"But—since you came through the outposts you have, of course, the password in order to return. Give me that password and I will let you off."

The two friends, side by side and dead-white, kept silent, but a slight nervous trembling shook their hands.

The officer continued: "No one will ever know. You will go back in peace. The secret will vanish with you. If you refuse, it is immediate death. Take your choice."

They stood motionless, mouths shut.

The Prussian, waving his hand towards the river, went on, still calmly: "Remember that within five minutes you will be at the bottom of that river. Within five minutes! I suppose you have relatives?"

Mount Valerien was still thundering.

The two fishermen stood erect and silent. The German gave some orders in his own language. Then he moved his chair so as not to be too near the prisoners, and twelve men took their stand, twenty paces distant, rifles at rest.

The officer resumed: "I give you one minute, but not two seconds longer."

Then he rose suddenly, approached the two Frenchmen, took Morissot by the arm, drew him aside and said in a low voice, "Quick, the password? Your friend won't know. I'll pretend to relent."

Morissot answered not a word.

The Prussian drew M. Sauvage aside and put the same question.

M. Sauvage did not answer.

They found themselves side by side again.

And the officer began to give commands. The soldiers raised their rifles.

Then Morissot's glance happened to fall on the sack full of gudgeons which was lying on the grass a few steps away.

A ray of sunlight was gleaming on the little pile of still quivering fish. And weakness filled him. In spite of his efforts his eyes flooded with tears.

He stammered, "Good-bye, Monsieur Sauvage."

M. Sauvage answered, "Good-bye, Monsieur Morissot."

They shook hands, shaken from head to foot with a trembling they could not control.

The officer shouted "Fire!"

The twelve shots rang as one.

M. Sauvage fell on his face, like a log. Morissot, who was taller, swayed, turned about, and fell across his comrade, his face to the sky, while the blood gushed from the breast of his riddled tunic.

The German gave further orders.

His men scattered, then returned with ropes and stones which they tied to the feet of the dead men. Then they carried them to the bank.

Mount Valerien continued to roar, its summit now crowned with a mountainous cloud of smoke.

Two soldiers took Morissot by the head and legs, two others seized M. Sauvage the same way. The two bodies, swung powerfully to and fro for a moment, were hurled far out; they described an arc and plunged upright into the river, for the stones pulled them in feet first.

The water splashed, boiled, trembled, then grew calm, while tiny wavelets widened to both banks.

A little blood floated on the surface.

The officer, unruffled as ever, spoke half aloud: "Now the fish will get their turn."

Then he went back towards the house.

All at once he caught sight of the sack of gudgeons in the grass. He picked it up, looked at it, smiled, shouted "Wilhelm!"

A soldier in a white apron ran out. And the Prussian, tossing him the catch of the two dead men, issued a command: "Fry these little creatures right away while they're still alive. They'll be delicious."

Then he resumed his smoking.

## A LITTLE CLOUD

JAMES JOYCE (1882-1941)

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 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 rostered. 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 transac-



tion: 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 Dublin. 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 reverie 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, 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 childish 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 Gallaher considerably. "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 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 *deot 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.

## THE GLOVES \*

COLETTE AUDRY

The hand was superbly gloved—brownish back, fawn-colored palm, and the thumb half and half. The lovely, thick glacé leather was like custard, with the seams so beautifully hand-sewn that it made you want to count the stitches. Though snuggling comfortably, the hand was still nimble in them . . . ideal gloves for riding under the oaks on an autumn day.

The young woman watched her hand as it picked up bits of merchandise on display here and there. As it flexed, the glove stretched lightly over the graceful depressions of the knuckles, then, as the fingers stretched out farther, a completely different network of wrinkles sank across the gloves. They were really too pretty for her overly long hair, and for the tweedy tailored suit which showed signs of wear. From time to time a sales girl would break in: "You wanted something, Madam?"

And the lady would reply, "Thanks, just looking." She had the right to look, the right to touch things, for the movements of her gloves proclaimed a sort of royalty over these shining objects: the perfume bottles, the jars of cosmetics wrapped in cellophane. Even the nonchalance of her well-cut, old tailored suit confirmed her familiarity with luxury, her right to enjoy it carelessly.

But the gloves were just too pretty; irresistibly they drew attention to these hands which presumed to have a life of their own, completely divorced from hers. As if enchanted, they were unaccountable and alarming. Better, perhaps, to try nothing difficult with hands such as these over which you are never sure of mastery.

On a shelf for smokers' needs there was quite a selection of ceramic ash trays. She weighed a large, thick one of gentian blue in her hand; the running enamel had left a little caramel-colored spot on it.

The sales girl was busy . . . "But it's for a gift," the customer was saying, "I can't carry it away in my bare hands."

"Sorry, sir, but we have no more wrapping paper in stock."

Their voices echoed like voices of people in the next room when you're sick in bed.

With the blue ash tray still in her hand, the young woman kept walking between the counters, without slowing up until she came to the revolving door. On the threshold a great gust of fresh air helped her to catch her breath. The November fog had begun to burn off and a milky sunlight bathed the street. She reached her bicycle at the curb and slipped the ash tray into her saddlebag.

Just then, someone above her head said. "Are you quite sure, Madam, that you have paid for what you have there?"

A tall, thin fellow was standing there in front of her with sharp, squinting eyes, wearing a sea-blue sweater and a beret; he seemed a nasty customer. She felt rather stupid answering "No." But that's the way you answer questions sometimes. She said "no" shaking her head and smiling haughtily. The fellow didn't seem to mind a bit. "Come along with me to the manager's," he said.

\* Translation by J. Robert Loy.



Crossing the store seemed much longer to her this time than when she had left, and yet, they crossed only about halfway. The man turned to the left, knocked on a door, opened without waiting, and they went in. Behind the desk was a fat, little man about fifty years old. Over the pince-nez the face appeared florid and fastidious, with crescent-like eyes.

"Madam was taking this ash tray along with her without paying for it."

"How's that?" cried the little man. "But there's a name for that sort of thing, Madam."

The same old sentence! At first he had tried to change it from time to time because it bothered him to keep saying the same thing all the time with the police inspector standing there. But now he paid no more attention to his words than he did when he stopped in front of some counter to show a new sales girl how to make a sale. And then, this morning, he was in a peaceful frame of mind, a little sleepy from the heat of the furnace they had just lit; he would have found it difficult to adjust himself to the proper pitch. He seemed to be listening to his own voice as he spoke.

"It's a pretty mess," said the detective, "and it could take you mighty far; you know that, don't you?"

They're trying to scare me, she thought. But they don't arrest you the first time. She had put the ash tray on the desk.

"I'm sorry," she replied.

"Why did you do it?" asked the old fellow.

"He asked you why you did it," shouted the detective. She felt the flush of his eyes like a gash in her skin; he was really furious. "It's a little late to be sorry," he added, lowering his voice. "The high-class women, who think they can get away with anything and think they ought to get thanked for being sorry."

"I made a bet," she said.

The old chap was really bowled over. "A bet?" he asked. "What kind of a bet?"

"Well, I bet I could steal something."

The detective thrust his hands into his pockets so violently that she felt she must explain further—further than she would have believed it possible to go. It was really quite messy, completely unforeseen. "And as you can see," she added sadly, "I couldn't even do it."

But nobody seemed to hear this last confession.

The detective paced the floor. "A bet," he said, "but you don't bet about things like that, you bet about things that might happen."

"But you can," she said abashed. "Why not? I don't see why you can't."

If she had to explain that any further, she wouldn't be up to it. She wiped her forehead with her hand, realizing immediately that that was exactly what everyone does in such a fix. The detective was staring at the well-gloved hand, the dilating nostrils, the half-opened mouth. She felt herself under male scrutiny, which only helped make the situation worse.

The assistant manager caught this cruel stare and felt uneasy about it. To be forced to employ people like that! After all, she was only a poor little woman, and a lady. He decided to hurry things up, then they could give her some peace.

"Do you have any identification on you?" he asked. She rummaged in her handbag slowly, on purpose. She would say what she had to, yes, but tremble in front of that crude person . . . she would rather die. The detective went around behind the desk and without apology looked over the old man's shoulder at the identity card. The manager, annoyed, closed it. But the detective had already seen what he wanted.

"You're the wife of M. Franchet, the manufacturer, aren't you?"

"Yes," she said, remembering that on the identification photo she was wearing a sport blouse and a flowing scarf which gave her a triumphant expression.

"That's the last straw!" said the detective.

"Whatever got into you, Madam?" cried the manager. "What's your husband going to say?—because he's going to know. Every day we arrest some of his women workers who plead to us that they have no more clothing ration-points and must have something to wear. Where does that put us if you set them such an example yourself?"

She didn't answer; she was picturing herself as she had come out of the garden in the fog that morning. The bicycle moved by itself, the tires hummed on the hot asphalt. And to have come to the point now where some old employee was preaching a sermon to her! Did he suppose that she played the patronizing great lady with the little working girls?

"Are you going to telephone the police station?" asked the detective.

"Oh, you wouldn't do that!" she begged. She didn't think they would for a minute.

"But I have to, Madam," said the old man. "It's not because we want to, you understand . . ."

"And so we'll likely end up not doing it, huh?" broke in the detective. "That would be too easy."

"But you can't really mean it."

"You'll see about that," he said, going to the telephone without taking his eyes off her. If only that stupid assistant manager weren't there. . . . But he always was, naturally. The same thing every time; you could never go the whole way. If he could only put one hand on the phone and the other . . . she wouldn't dare cry out; she would damned well have understood, she would, with her black market silk stockings. And then, afterwards?—well, telephone all the same. Except with that kind of a woman, she might lodge a complaint. No, no matter how you looked at it, you could never go the whole way.

All of a sudden, she was afraid. That guy with his cutting eyes was capable of phoning just to make an example of her. He was too wound up. And now the old fellow, with his bluish eyes, a little globular like soft-boiled eggs. . . . She felt her eyes shift from one to the other; each time the black eyes cut her, she took refuge in the clear blue-eyes, plunged into their cloudy lustre, but then she was caught there.

"This is the first time this has ever happened to me," she said.

"And how should we know that?" snapped the detective.

She recoiled toward the wall and leaned with her right hand on some shelves. "Careful," said the manager, "they've just painted; it's still wet."

She withdrew her hand madly; there were two little spots on the tawny leather. She began to wipe them with the index finger of her other hand. Then she gave it up, but she did feel grateful that the old man had warned her about the paint just as if she had been anybody else.

"It's my first time," she repeated, "and you can be sure I'm not about to do it again." She was talking to the old fellow now. To him she would say whatever he wanted, for she could appeal to him.

He felt lucky to be chosen. However painful the whole event, things were working out respectably for him. It was between the two of them now, between two cultured people and over the head of the other one, that they would discuss the matter. She had recognized her own class, and was asking his help. Only he must seem firm; the detective made himself so at home there.

"You don't realize the seriousness of your action, Madam," he said, "but it's my duty to call the police."

At that, she spoke of her husband's anger, of her two little children, told him he couldn't do such a thing. And, finally, he was touched. She had been so terse at the beginning, so calm that she seemed hardened, but now, it was all right. He guessed, however, that the detective wasn't cooling off—voracious, great, evil bird that he was. So what! Who was the assistant manager around here, anyhow?

"Please don't do that, sir. I promise you'll see no more of me." In her excitement, she leaned once again on the shelf, then pulled back her hand murmuring sadly, "That's right; I had forgotten—paint."

He was completely awakened now, felt himself becoming well-disposed toward her. "Why did you do it?" he asked.

"I told you it was a bet."

"You don't make bets like that," said the detective.

She closed her eyes, overcome. "With whom did you make this bet?"

"I won't tell you," she cried violently. "You want me to incriminate someone else, is that it? Arrest me if you want to."

At last, she was able to get mad! She hadn't bet with anyone, unless it was with herself. But she was sure that he believed this bet story. Even the other one believed it, and the angrier she got, the more they would believe it. "Go on, arrest me; I'd prefer that."

He thought he may have been a little indelicate; enough was enough. "Well, then, Madam, I'll try to trust you, but you must realize that you can't just walk off like that. This unfortunate event should at least benefit the more unfortunate. You will donate 500 francs to our orphanage."

"Yes," she said, opening her bag.

"In addition to the price of the ash tray which you will pay."

"But I don't want it," she retorted. "I just up and took it! I didn't want it."

"Of all the nerve!" he cried, suddenly furious. "You're going to pay for that ash tray and you're going to take it with you."

He was crimson; she looked at him, stupefied, realized that she had committed some mysterious offense and said hurriedly, "All right, all right."

She opened her wallet. The detective sniggered. The old man pulled out a large ledger. "Write there—500 francs, sign your name." And, when she hesitated, he added, "You can sign illegibly and be sure of our discretion."

She took off her right glove, then, mechanically, the left one and wrote in the ledger. He closed the book. "Now it's about over," she thought. But the old fellow re-opened the identity folder which had remained on the desk and drew out a filing card.

"I'm going to take your name and address."

"Oh no!" she cried, "but you just said. . . ."

"Madam," he continued, "it is absolutely necessary and I can't let you leave without doing so. We always do it. Anyhow this card will be shown to nobody, I give you my word of honor."

In the silence which followed while he recopied the information, she slid to the depths of shame . . . shame for having been caught, but particularly shame for being ashamed in front of these people. She didn't give a damn for what they thought of her. And yet, she had been ashamed because they were grilling her and wanting to punish her. Her cheeks were burning. Oh, how she hated the detective! Just to

be able to kill him, wipe him off the face of the earth! Well, she was punished for feeling so proud of herself this morning, punished in the worst possible way.

"There you are," said the old man, giving back her card, "and rest assured that the matter is finished."

"You may leave alone," said the detective. He had been determined to have the last word. She heard *alone* as if he had said *naked*. And so did he.

It was over. But when would thinking about it be over . . . ?

When she had left, the assistant manager pretended to be filing papers. But the detective didn't leave. Hands in his pockets, his thin abdomen protruding, he stood fast in front of a diagram of the store which hung on the wall, absorbed in a contemplation which there was no reason to cut short.

The manager gave in first. "The funny thing," he said distractedly, while examining the bottom of a drawer, "is that it must have been true, that bet story."

"Possible," said the other, turning his head and shoulders slightly. "Anyhow it did her a lot of good."

"What do you mean?" asked the old man drily. Now that she was no longer here, that he no longer had to battle with her, he felt personally affronted by the policeman's attitude. . . . If only the detective hadn't aroused such uneasiness in him!

"Women like that," explained the inspector, "always think that police are not for them. They take us for dogs. Well, she saw. Aha! look there! she forgot her gloves."

They had remained there, side by side, on the table. The detective felt them instinctively, approved with a grimace, took them and drew them part-way onto his fingers while examining the paint spots. Then he shoved them into his pocket.

"What's the idea?" asked the old man, astonished.

"Oh, I can promise you she won't be back looking for them," replied the other walking toward the door.

Someone knocked at the door. "Come in," said the manager. And the young woman appeared.

"Excuse me," she said. "Didn't I leave my gloves here?"

Going through the store again; all those echoes of lost steps; that bluish, glistening atmosphere which was intolerable from now on—she had never done anything so courageous in her life. There was a silence that the detective did not break; he had lost himself again in the diagram.

"Your gloves?" said the old man, finally, absent-mindedly.

"Yes, gloves of two-toned leather, beige and brown. I put them on the table to write and I can't find them."

"I don't see them," said the manager. "Look for yourself."

She swept the table slowly with her eyes, as if a glance were not enough. You could see her pupils moving to and fro. The nakedness of the polished table hid something strange and accusing, like hands held behind the back.

"I put them on the table to sign the book," she said again, "and I don't remember having picked them up again."

"Maybe you dropped them somewhere in the store," said the manager. "Go ask at Lost and Found; it's in Office 4, near the entrance." He felt his hands grow wet and didn't dare wipe them. Here he was, the accomplice of the unscrupulous policeman. He had to protect him and lie without hope of being understood—would perhaps be taken for the thief himself. The detective stopped dead in front of the lady.

"If I were you, I'd go look a little more in my saddlebag," he said. "Or perhaps Madam finds she hasn't seen enough of us."

"You can come see for yourself, and search me," she replied.

She spoke slowly, in low tones. She experienced such relief, such a lightening of heart that everything functioned in her with extreme slowness, like life coming back into the heart of a drowned man. She looked for a moment at the toes of her shoes, then she added, obstinately, "Since I don't remember taking them, I don't see why I wouldn't come back to look for them."

"So all right, then; they're not here," shouted the policeman harshly. "Now, get out!"

She tossed her head back and covered him with a sombre stare. Under her half-closed eyelids her pupils seemed a heavy paste in suspension. If she stayed five more minutes, he would again threaten her with telephoning headquarters. But for the moment, he was powerless against her; she held him under her stare. As for the old fellow, she had forgotten him.

She backed away, easily, put her hand behind her back to open the door, then left, still facing them.

After she had gone, silence fell over the room again. But the assistant manager could no longer stand the presence of that man; he had to show his authority.

"You may go now," he said.

"Right," replied the other, and he left, dragging his feet.

The old man sank back a little in his armchair. There were noises in the pipes of the radiator . . . nearby popping followed by a plaintive ringing in the distance. And behind the door, the shuffling commotion of the store. Again he felt sleepy; his knees were tingling pleasantly. He pulled his file case toward him, looked for the card he had slipped in a few minutes before, and, when he had found it, tore it up, slowly, into very small pieces.

## ✓ THE BLACK GODMOTHER

JOHN GALSWORTHY (1867-1933)

Sitting out on the lawn at tea with our friend and his retriever, we had been discussing those massacres of the helpless which had of late occurred, and wondering that they should have been committed by the soldiery of so civilized a State, when, in a momentary pause of our astonishment, our friend, who had been listening in silence, crumpling the drooping soft ear of his dog, looked up and said, "The cause of atrocities is generally the violence of Fear. Panic's at the back of most crimes and follies."

Knowing that his philosophical statements were always the result of concrete instance, and that he would not tell us what that instance was if we asked him—such being his nature—we were careful not to agree.

He gave us a look out of those eyes of his, so like the eyes of a mild eagle, and said abruptly: "What do you say to this, then? . . . I was out in the dog-days last

year with this fellow of mine, looking for Osmunda, and stayed some days in a village—never mind the name. Coming back one evening from my tramp, I saw some boys stoning a mealy-coloured dog. I went up and told the young devils to stop it. They only looked at me in the injured way boys do, and one of them called out, 'It's mad, guv'ner!' I told them to clear off, and they took to their heels. The dog followed me. It was a young, leggy, mild-looking mongrel, cross—I should say—between a brown retriever and an Irish terrier. There was froth about its lips, and its eyes were watery; it looked indeed as if it might be in distemper. I was afraid of infection for this fellow of mine, and whenever it came too close shooed it away, till at last it slunk off altogether. Well, about nine o'clock, when I was settling down to write by the open window of my sitting-room—still daylight, and very quiet and warm—there began that most maddening sound, the barking of an unhappy dog. I could do nothing with that continual 'Yap—yap!' going on, and it was too hot to shut the window; so I went out to see if I could stop it. The men were all at the pub, and the women just finished with their gossip; there was no sound at all but the continual barking of this dog, somewhere away out in the fields. I travelled by ear across three meadows, till I came on a haystack by a pool of water. There was the dog sure enough—the same mealy-coloured mongrel, tied to a stake, yapping, and making frantic little runs on a bit of a rusty chain; whirling round and round the stake, then standing quite still, and shivering. I went up and spoke to it, but it backed into the hay-stack, and there it stayed shrinking away from me, with its tongue hanging out. It had been heavily struck by something on the head; the cheek was cut, one eye half-closed, and an ear badly swollen. I tried to get hold of it, but the poor thing was beside itself with fear. It snapped and flew round so that I had to give it up and sit down with this fellow here beside me to try and quiet it—a strange dog, you know, will generally form his estimate of you from the way it sees you treat another dog. I had to sit there quite half an hour before it would let me go up to it, pull the stake out, and lead it away. The poor beast, though it was so feeble from the blows it had received, was still half-frantic, and I didn't dare to touch it; and all the time I took good care that this fellow here didn't come too near. Then came the question what was to be done. There was no vet, of course, and I'd no place to put it except my sitting-room, which didn't belong to me. But, looking at its battered head, and its half-mad eyes, I thought: 'No trusting you with these bumpkins; you'll have to come in here for the night!' Well, I got it in, and heaped two or three of those hairy little red rugs landladies are so fond of, up in a corner, and got it on to them, and put down my bread and milk. But it wouldn't eat—its sense of proportion was all gone, fairly destroyed by terror. It lay there moaning, and every now and then it raised its head with a 'yap' of sheer fright, dreadful to hear, and bit the air, as if its enemies were on it again; and this fellow of mine lay in the opposite corner, with his head on his paw, watching it. I sat up for a long time with that poor beast, sick enough, and wondering how it had come to be stoned and kicked and battered into this state; and next day I made it my business to find out." Our friend paused, scanned us a little angrily, and then went on: "It had made its first appearance, it seems, following a bicyclist. There are men, you know—save the mark—who, when their beasts get ill or too expensive, jump on their bicycles and take them for a quick run, taking care never to look behind them. When they get back home they say: 'Hullo! Where's Fido?' Fido is nowhere, and that's the end! Well, this poor puppy gave up just as it got to our village; and, roaming about in search of water, attached itself to a farm

labourer. The man—with excellent intentions, as he told me himself—tried to take hold of it, but too abruptly, so that it was startled, and snapped at him. Whereon he kicked it for a dangerous cur, and it went drifting back towards the village, and fell in with the boys coming home from school. It thought, no doubt, that they were going to kick it too, and nipped one of them who took it by the collar. Thereupon they hullabalooed and stoned it down the road to where I found them. Then I put in my little bit of torture, and drove it away, through fear of infection to my own dog. After that it seems to have fallen in with a man who told me: "Well, you see, he came sneakin' round my house, with the children playin', and snapped at them when they went to stroke him, so that they came running in to their mother, an' she called to me in a fine takin' about a mad dog. I ran out with a shovel and gave 'im one, and drove him out. I'm sorry if he wasn't mad; he looked it right enough. You can't be too careful with strange dogs.' Its next acquaintance was an old stone-breaker, a very decent sort. 'Well! you see,' the old man explained to me, 'the dog come smellin' round my stones, an' it wouldn't come near, an' it wouldn't go away; it was all froth and blood about the jaw, and its eyes glared green at me. I thought to meself, bein' the dog-days—I don't like the look o' you, you look funny! So I took a stone, an' got it here, just on the ear; an' it fell over. And I thought to meself: Well, you've got to finish it, or it'll go bitin' somebody, for sure! But when I come to it with my hammer, the dog it got up—an' you know how it is when there's somethin' you've 'alf killed, and you feel sorry, and yet you feel you must finish it, an' you hit at it blind, you hit at it agen an' agen. The poor thing, it wriggled and snapped, an' I was terrified it'd bit me, an' some'ow it got away.'" Again our friend paused, and this time we dared not look at him.

"The next hospitality it was shown," he went on presently, "was by a farmer, who, seeing it all bloody, drove it off, thinking it had been digging up a lamb that he's just buried. The poor harmless beast came sneaking back, so he told his men to get rid of it. Well, they got hold of it somehow—there was a hole in its neck that looked as if they'd used a pitchfork—and, mortally afraid of its biting them, but not liking, as they told me, to drown it, for fear the owner might come on them, they got a stake and a chain, and fastened it up, and left it in the water by the hay-stack where I found it. I had some conversation with that farmer. 'That's right,' he said, 'but who was to know? I couldn't have my sheep worried. The brute had blood on his muzzle. These curs do a lot of harm when they've once been blooded. You can't run risks.'" Our friend cut viciously at a dandelion with his stick. "Run risks!" he broke out suddenly. "That was it—from beginning to end of that poor beast's sufferings, fear! From that fellow on the bicycle, afraid of the worry and expense, as soon as it showed signs of distemper, to myself and the man with the pitchfork—not one of us, I daresay, would have gone out of our way to do it a harm. But we felt fear, and so—by the law of self-preservation, or whatever you like—it all began, till there the poor thing was, with a battered head and a hole in its neck, ravenous with hunger, and too distraught even to lap my bread and milk. Yes, there's something uncanny about a suffering animal—we sat watching it, and again we were afraid, looking at its eyes and the way it bit the air. Fear! It's the black godmother of all damnable things!"

Our friend bent down, crumpling and crumpling at his dog's ears. We, too, gazed at the ground, thinking of that poor lost puppy, and the horrible inevitability of all that happens, seeing men are what they are; thinking of all the foul doings in the world, whose black godmother is Fear.

"And what became of the poor dog?" one of us asked at last.

"When," said our friend slowly, "I'd had my fill of watching, I covered it with a rug, took this fellow away with me, and went to bed. There was nothing else to do. At dawn I was awakened by three dreadful cries—not like a dog's at all. I hurried down. There was the poor beast—wriggled out from under the rug—stretched on its side, dead. This fellow of mine had followed me in, and he went and sat down by the body. When I spoke to him he just looked round, and wagged his tail along the ground, but would not come away; and there he sat till it was buried, very interested but not sorry at all."

Our friend was silent, looking angrily at something in the distance.

And we, too, were silent, seeing in spirit that vigil of early morning: The thin, lifeless, sandy-coloured body, stretched on those red mats; and this black creature—now lying at our feet—propped on its haunches like the dog in "The Death of Procris", patient, curious, ungrieved, staring down at it with his bright, interested eyes.

## AMY FOSTER

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857-1924)

Kennedy is a country doctor, and lives in Colebrook, on the shores of Eastbay. The high ground rising abruptly behind the red roofs of the little town crowds the quaint High Street against the wall which defends it from the sea. Beyond the sea-wall there curves for miles in a vast and regular sweep the barren beach of shingle, with the village of Brenzett standing out darkly across the water, a spire in a clump of trees; and still further out the perpendicular column of a lighthouse, looking in the distance no bigger than a lead-pencil, marks the vanishing-point of the land. The country at the back of Brenzett is low and flat; but the bay is fairly well sheltered from the seas, and occasionally a big ship, windbound or through stress of weather, makes use of the anchoring ground a mile and a half due north from you as you stand at the back door of the "Ship Inn" in Brenzett. A dilapidated windmill near by lifting its shattered arms from a mound no loftier than a rubbish-heap, and a Martello tower squatting at the water's edge half a mile to the south of the Coastguard cottages, are familiar to the skippers of small craft. These are the official sea-marks for the patch of trustworthy bottom represented on the Admiralty charts by an irregular oval of dots enclosing several figures six, with a tiny anchor engraved among them, and the legend "mud and shells" over all.

The brow of the upland overtops the square tower of the Colebrook Church. The slope is green and looped by a white road. Ascending along this road, you open a valley broad and shallow, a wide green trough of pastures and hedges merging inland into a vista of purple tints and flowing lines closing the view.

In this valley down to Brenzett and Colebrook and up to Darnford, the market town fourteen miles away, lies the practice of my friend Kennedy. He had begun life as surgeon in the Navy, and afterwards had been the companion of a famous traveller, in the days when there were continents with unexplored interiors. His papers on the fauna and flora made him known to scientific societies. And now he had come



to a country practice—from choice. The penetrating power of his mind, acting like a corrosive fluid, had destroyed his ambition, I fancy. His intelligence is of a scientific order, of an investigating habit, and of that unappeasable curiosity which believes that there is a particle of a general truth in every mystery.

A good many years ago now, on my return from abroad, he invited me to stay with him. I came readily enough, and as he could not neglect his patients to keep me company, he took me on his rounds—thirty miles or so of an afternoon, sometimes. I waited for him on the roads; the horse reached after the leafy twigs, and, sitting high in the dogcart, I could hear Kennedy's laugh through the half-open door of some cottage. He had a big, hearty laugh that would have fitted a man twice his size, a brisk manner, a bronzed face, and a pair of grey, profoundly attentive eyes. He had the talent of making people talk to him freely, and an inexhaustible patience in listening to their tales.

One day, as we trotted out of a large village into a shady bit of road, I saw on our left hand a low, black cottage, with diamond panes in the windows, a creeper on the end wall, a roof of shingle, and some roses climbing on the rickety trellis-work of the tiny porch. Kennedy pulled up to a walk. A woman, in full sunlight, was throwing a dripping blanket over a line stretched between two old apple-trees. And as the bob-tailed, long-necked chestnut, trying to get his head, jerked the left hand, covered by a thick dogskin glove, the doctor raised his voice over the hedge: "How's your child, Amy?"

I had the time to see her dull face, red, not with a mantling blush, but as if her flat cheeks had been vigorously slapped, and to take in the squat figure, the scanty, dusty brown hair drawn into a tight knot at the back of the head. She looked quite young. With a distinct catch in her breath, her voice sounded low and timid.

"He's well, thank you."

We trotted again. "A young patient of yours?" I said; and the doctor, flicking the chestnut absently, muttered, "Her husband used to be."

"She seems a dull creature," I remarked listlessly.

"Precisely," said Kennedy. "She is very passive. It's enough to look at the red hands hanging at the end of those short arms, at those slow, prominent brown eyes to know the inertness of her mind—an inertness that one would think made it everlastingly safe from all the surprises of imagination. And yet which of us is safe? At any rate, such as you see her, she had enough imagination to fall in love. She's the daughter of one Isaac Foster, who from a small farmer has sunk into a shepherd; the beginning of his misfortunes dating from his runaway marriage with the cook of his widowed father—a well-to-do, apoplectic grazier, who passionately struck his name off his will, and had been heard to utter threats against his life. But this old affair, scandalous enough to serve as a motive for a Greek tragedy, arose from the similarity of their characters. There are other tragedies, less scandalous and of a subtler poignancy, arising from irreconcilable differences and from that fear of the Incomprehensible that hangs over all our heads—over all our heads. . . ."

The tired chestnut dropped into a walk; and the rim of the sun, all red in a speckless sky, touched familiarly the smooth top of a ploughed rise near the road as I had seen it times innumerable touch the distant horizon of the sea. The uniform brownness of the harrowed field glowed with a rosy tinge, as though the powdered clods had sweated out in minute pearls of blood the toil of uncounted ploughmen. From the edge of a copse a waggon with two horses was rolling gently along the ridge. Raised above our heads upon the sky-line, it loomed up against the red sun, trium-

phantly big, enormous, like a chariot of giants drawn by two slow-stepping steeds of legendary proportions. And the clumsy figure of the man plodding at the head of the leading horse projected itself on the background of the Infinite with a heroic uncouthness. The end of his carter's whip quivered high up in the blue. Kennedy discoursed.

"She's the eldest of a large family. At the age of fifteen they put her out to service at the New Barns Farm. I attended Mrs. Smith, the tenant's wife, and saw that girl there for the first time. Mrs. Smith, a genteel person with a sharp nose, made her put on a black dress every afternoon. I don't know what induced me to notice her at all. There are faces that call your attention by a curious want of definiteness in their whole aspect, as, walking in a mist, you peer attentively at a vague shape which, after all, may be nothing more curious or strange than a signpost. The only peculiarity I perceived in her was a slight hesitation in her utterance, a sort of preliminary stammer which passes away with the first word. When sharply spoken to, she was apt to lose her head at once; but her heart was of the kindest. She had never been heard to express a dislike for a single human being, and she was tender to every living creature. She was devoted to Mrs. Smith, to Mr. Smith, to their dogs, cats, canaries; and as to Mrs. Smith's grey parrot, its peculiarities exercised upon her a positive fascination. Nevertheless, when that outlandish bird, attacked by the cat, shrieked for help in human accents, she ran out into the yard stopping her ears, and did not prevent the crime. For Mrs. Smith this was another evidence of her stupidity; on the other hand, her want of charm, in view of Smith's well-known frivolousness, was a great recommendation. Her short-sighted eyes would swim with pity for a poor mouse in a trap, and she had been seen once by some boys on her knees in the wet grass helping a toad in difficulties. If it's true, as some German fellow has said, that without phosphorous there is no thought, it is still more true that there is no kindness of heart without a certain amount of imagination. She had some. She had even more than is necessary to understand suffering and to be moved by pity. She fell in love under circumstances that leave no room for doubt in the matter; for you need imagination to form a notion of beauty at all, and still more to discover your ideal in an unfamiliar shape.

"How this aptitude came to her, what it did feed upon, is an inscrutable mystery. She was born in the village, and had never been further away from it than Colebrook or perhaps Darnford. She lived for four years with the Smiths. New Barns is an isolated farmhouse a mile away from the road, and she was content to look day after day at the same fields, hollows, rises; at the trees and the hedgerows; at the faces of the four men about the farm, always the same—day after day, month after month, year after year. She never showed a desire for conversation, and, as it seemed to me, she did not know how to smile. Sometimes of a fine Sunday afternoon she would put on her best dress, a pair of stout boots, a large grey hat trimmed with a black feather (I've seen her in that finery), seize an absurdly slender parasol, climb over two stiles, tramp over three fields and along two hundred yards of road—never further. There stood Foster's cottage. She would help her mother to give their tea to the younger children, wash up the crockery, kiss the little ones, and go back to the farm. That was all. All the rest, all the change, all the relaxation. She never seemed to wish for anything more. And then she fell in love. She fell in love silently, obstinately—perhaps helplessly. It came slowly, but when it came it worked like a powerful spell; it was love as the Ancients understood it: an irresistible and fateful impulse—a possession! Yes, it was in her to become haunted and possessed by a face, by a presence, fatally, as though she had been a pagan worshipper of form under a joyous sky—and

to be awakened at last from that mysterious forgetfulness of self, from that enchantment, from that transport, by a fear resembling the unaccountable terror of a brute. . . ."

With the sun hanging low on its western limit, the expanse of the grass-lands framed in the counterscarps of the rising ground took on a gorgeous and sombre aspect. A sense of penetrating sadness, like that inspired by a grave strain of music, disengaged itself from the silence of the fields. The men we met walked past, slow, unsmiling, with downcast eyes, as if the melancholy of an over-burdened earth had weighted their feet, bowed their shoulders, borne down their glances.

"Yes," said the doctor to my remark, "one would think the earth is under a curse, since of all her children these that cling to her the closest are uncouth in body and as leaden of gait as if their very hearts were loaded with chains. But here on this same road you might have seen amongst these heavy men a being lithe, supple and long-limbed, straight like a pine, with something striving upwards in his appearance as though the heart within him had been buoyant. Perhaps it was only the force of the contrast, but when he was passing one of these villagers here, the soles of his feet did not seem to me to touch the dust of the road. He vaulted over the stiles, paced these slopes with a long elastic stride that made him noticeable at a great distance, and had lustrous black eyes. He was so different from the mankind around that, with his freedom of movement, his soft—a little startled—glance, his olive complexion and graceful bearing, his humanity suggested to me the nature of a woodland creature. He came from there."

The doctor pointed with his whip, and from the summit of the descent seen over the rolling tops of the trees in a park by the side of the road, appeared the level sea far below us, like the floor of an immense edifice inlaid with bands of dark ripple, with still trails of glitter, ending in a belt of glassy water at the foot of the sky. The light blurr of smoke, from an invisible steamer, faded on the great clearness of the horizon like the mist of a breath on a mirror; and, inshore, the white sails of a coaster, with the appearance of disentangling themselves slowly from under the branches, floated clear of the foliage of the trees.

"Shipwrecked in the bay?" I said.

"Yes; he was a castaway. A poor emigrant from Central Europe bound to America and washed ashore here in a storm. And for him, who knew nothing of the earth, England was an undiscovered country. It was some time before he learned its name; and for all I know he might have expected to find wild beasts or wild men here, when, crawling in the dark over the sea-wall, he rolled down the other side into a dyke, where it was another miracle he didn't get drowned. But he struggled instinctively like an animal under a net, and this blind struggle threw him out into a field. He must have been, indeed, of a tougher fibre than he looked to withstand without expiring such buffetings, the violence of his exertions, and so much fear. Later on, in his broken English that resembled curiously the speech of a young child, he told me himself that he put his trust in God, believing he was no longer in this world. And truly—he would add—how was he to know? He fought his way against the rain and the gale on all fours, and crawled at last among some sheep huddled close under the lee of a hedge. They ran off in all directions, bleating in the darkness, and he welcomed the first familiar sound he heard on these shores. It must have been two in the morning then. And this is all we know of the manner of his landing, though he did not arrive unattended by any means. Only his grisly company did not begin to come ashore till much later in the day. . . ."

*The doctor gathered the reins, clicked his tongue; we trotted down the hill. Then turning, almost directly, a sharp corner into the High Street, we rattled over the stones and were home.*

Late in the evening, Kennedy, breaking a spell of moodiness that had come over him, returned to the story. Smoking his pipe, he paced the long room from end to end. A reading-lamp concentrated all its light upon the papers on his desk; and, sitting by the open window, I saw, after the windless, scorching day, the frigid splendour of a hazy sea lying motionless under the moon. Not a whisper, not a splash, not a stir of the shingle, not a footstep, not a sigh came up from the earth below—never a sign of life but the scent of climbing jasmine: and Kennedy's voice, speaking behind me, passed through the wide casement, to vanish outside in a chill and sumptuous stillness.

"... The relations of shipwrecks in the olden time tell us of much suffering. Often the castaways were only saved from drowning to die miserably from starvation on a barren coast; others suffered violent death or else slavery, passing through years of precarious existence with people to whom their strangeness was an object of suspicion, dislike or fear. We read about these things, and they are very pitiful. It is indeed hard upon a man to find himself a lost stranger, helpless, incomprehensible, and of a mysterious origin, in some obscure corner of the earth. Yet amongst all the adventurers shipwrecked in all the wild parts of the world, there is not one, it seems to me, that ever had to suffer a fate so simply tragic as the man I am speaking of, the most innocent of adventurers cast out by the sea in the bight of this bay, almost within sight from this very window.

"He did not know the name of his ship. Indeed, in the course of time we discovered he did not even know that ships had names—'like Christian people'; and when, one day, from the top of the Talfourd Hill, he beheld the sea lying open to his view, his eyes roamed afar, lost in an air of wild surprise, as though he had never seen such a sight before. And probably he had not. As far as I could make out, he had been hustled together with many others on board an emigrant-ship lying at the mouth of the Elbe, too bewildered to take note of his surroundings, too weary to see anything, too anxious to care. They were driven below into the 'tween-deck and battened down from the very start. It was a low timber dwelling—he would say—with wooden beams overhead, like the houses in his country, but you went into it down a ladder. It was very large, very cold, damp and sombre, with places in the manner of wooden boxes where people had to sleep one above another, and it kept on rocking all ways at once all the time. He crept into one of these boxes and lay down there in the clothes in which he had left his home many days before, keeping his bundle and his stick by his side. People groaned, children cried, water dripped, the lights went out, the walls of the place creaked, and everything was being shaken so that in one's little box one dared not lift one's head. He had lost touch with his only companion (a young man from the same valley, he said), and all the time a great noise of wind went on outside and heavy blows fell—boom! boom! An awful sickness overcame him, even to the point of making him neglect his prayers. Besides, one could not tell whether it was morning or evening. It seemed always to be night in that place.

"Before that he had been travelling a long, long time on the iron track. He looked out of the window, which had a wonderfully clear glass in it, and the trees, the houses, the fields, and the long roads seemed to fly round and round about him till his head swam. He gave me to understand that he had on his passage beheld uncounted multitudes of people—whole nations—all dressed in such clothes as the

rich wear. Once he was made to get out of the carriage, and slept through a night on a bench in a house of bricks with his bundle under his head; and once for many hours he had to sit on a floor of flat stones dozing, with his knees up and with his bundle between his feet. There was a roof over him, which seemed made of glass, and was so high that the tallest mountain-pine he has ever seen would have had room to grow under it. Steam-machines rolled in at one end and out at the other. People swarmed more than you can see on a feast-day round the miraculous Holy Image in the yard of the Carmelite Convent down in the plains where, before he left his home, he drove his mother in a wooden cart:—a pious old woman who wanted to offer prayers and make a vow for his safety. He could not give me an idea of how large and lofty and full of noise and smoke and gloom, and clang of iron, the place was, but some one had told him it was called Berlin. Then they rang a bell, and another steam-machine came in, and again he was taken on and on through a land that wearied his eyes by its flatness without a single bit of a hill to be seen anywhere. One more night he spent shut up in a building like a good stable with a litter of straw on the floor, guarding his bundle amongst a lot of men, of whom not one could understand a single word he said. In the morning they were all led down to the stony shores of an extremely broad muddy river, flowing not between hills but between houses that seemed immense. There was a steam-machine that went on the water and they all stood upon it packed tight, only now there were with them many women and children who made much noise. A cold rain fell, the wind blew in his face; he was wet through, and his teeth chattered. He and the young man from the same valley took each other by the hand.

"They thought they were being taken to America straight away, but suddenly the steam-machine bumped against the side of a thing like a great house on the water. The walls were smooth and black, and there uprose, growing from the roof as it were, bare trees in the shape of crosses, extremely high. That's how it appeared to him then, for he had never seen a ship before. This was the ship that was going to swim all the way to America. Voices shouted, everything swayed; there was a ladder dipping up and down. He went up on his hands and knees in mortal fear of falling into the water below, which made a great splashing. He got separated from his companion, and when he descended into the bottom of that ship his heart seemed to melt suddenly within him.

"It was then also, as he told me, that he lost contact for good and all with one of those three men who the summer before had been going about through all the little towns in the foothills of his country. They would arrive on market-days driving in a peasant's cart, and would set up an office in an inn or some other Jew's house. There were three of them, of whom one with a long beard looked venerable; and they had red cloth collars round their necks and gold lace on their sleeves like Government officials. They sat proudly behind a long table; and in the next room, so that the common people shouldn't hear, they kept a cunning telegraph machine, through which they could talk to the Emperor of America. The fathers hung about the door, but the young men of the mountains would crowd up to the table asking many questions, for there was work to be got all the year round at three dollars a day in America, and no military service to do.

"But the American Kaiser would not take everybody. Oh no! He himself had a great difficulty in getting accepted, and the venerable man in uniform had to go out of the room several times to work the telegraph on his behalf. The American Kaiser engaged him at last at three dollars, he being young and strong. However, many able

young men backed out, afraid of the great distance; besides, those only who had some money could be taken. *There were some who sold their huts and their land because it cost a lot of money to get to America; but then, once there, you had three dollars a day, and if you were clever you could find places where true gold could be picked up on the ground.* His father's house was getting over full. Two of his brothers were married and had children. He promised to send money home from America by post twice a year. His father sold an old cow, a pair of pie-bald mountain ponies of his own raising, and a cleared plot of fair pasture land on the sunny slope of a pine-clad pass to a Jew inn-keeper, in order to pay the people of the ship that took men to America to get rich in a short time.

"He must have been a real adventurer at heart, for how many of the greatest enterprises in the conquest of the earth had for their beginning just such a bargaining away of the paternal cow for the mirage of true gold far away! I have been telling you more or less in my own words what I learned fragmentarily in the course of two or three years, during which I seldom missed an opportunity of a friendly chat with him. He told me this story of his adventure with many flashes of white teeth and lively glances of black eyes, at first in a sort of anxious baby-talk, then, as he acquired the language, with great fluency, but always with that singing, soft, and at the same time vibrating intonation that instilled a strangely penetrating power into the sound of the most familiar English words, as if they had been the words of an unearthly language. And he always would come to an end, with many emphatic shakes of his head, upon that awful sensation of his heart melting within him directly he set foot on board that ship. Afterwards there seemed to come for him a period of blank ignorance, at any rate as to facts. No doubt he must have been abominably seasick and abominably unhappy—this soft and passionate adventurer, taken thus out of his knowledge, and feeling bitterly as he lay in his emigrant bunk his utter loneliness; for his was a highly sensitive nature. The next thing we know of him for certain is that he had been hiding in Hammond's pig-pound by the side of the road to Norton, six miles, as the crow flies, from the sea. Of these experiences he was unwilling to speak: they seemed to have seared into his soul a sombre sort of wonder and indignation. Through the rumours of the country-side, which lasted for a good many days after his arrival, we know that the fisherman of West Colcbrook had been disturbed and startled by heavy knocks against the walls of weatherboard cottages, and by a voice crying piercingly strange words in the night. Several of them turned out even, but, no doubt, he had fled in sudden alarm at their rough angry tones hailing each other in the darkness. A sort of frenzy must have helped him up the steep Norton hill. It was he, no doubt, who early the following morning had been seen lying (in a swoon, I should say) on the roadside grass by the Brenzett carrier, who actually got down to have a nearer look, but drew back, intimidated by the perfect immobility, and by something queer in the aspect of that tramp, sleeping so still under the showers. As the day advanced, some children came dashing into school at Norton in such a fright that the schoolmistress went out and spoke indignantly to a 'horrid-looking man' on the road. He edged away, hanging his head, for a few steps, and then suddenly ran off with extraordinary fleetness. The driver of Mr. Bradley's milk-cart made no secret of it that he had lashed with his whip at a hairy sort of gipsy fellow who, jumping up at a turn of the road by the Vents, made a snatch at the pony's bridle. And he caught him a good one too, right over the face, he said, that made him drop down in the mud a jolly sight quicker than he had jumped up; but it was a good half a mile before he could stop the pony. Maybe that

in his desperate endeavours to get help, and in need to get in touch with some one, the poor devil had tried to stop the cart. Also three boys confessed afterwards to throwing stones at a funny tramp, knocking about all wet and muddy, and, it seemed, very drunk, in the narrow deep lane by the limekilns. All this was the talk of three villages for days; but we have Mrs. Finn's (the wife of Smith's waggoner) unimpeachable testimony that she saw him get over the low wall of Hammond's pig-pound and lurch straight at her, babbling aloud in a voice that was enough to make one die of fright. Having the baby with her in a perambulator, Mrs. Finn called out to him to go away, and as he persisted in coming nearer, she hit him courageously with her umbrella over the head, and, without once looking back, ran like the wind with the perambulator as far as the first house in the village. She stopped then, out of breath, and spoke to old Lewis, hammering there at a heap of stones; and the old chap, taking off his immense black wire goggles, got up on his shaky legs to look where she pointed. Together they followed with their eyes the figure of the man running over a field; they saw him fall down, pick himself up, and run on again, staggering and waving his long arms above his head, in the direction of the New Barns Farm. From that moment he is plainly in the toils of his obscure and touching destiny. There is no doubt after this of what happened to him. All is certain now: Mrs. Smith's intense terror; Amy Foster's stolid conviction held against the other's nervous attack, that the man 'meant no harm'; Smith's exasperation (on his return from Darnford Market) at finding the dog barking himself into a fit, the back-door locked, his wife in hysterics; and all for an unfortunate dirty tramp, supposed to be even then lurking in his stackyard. Was he? He would teach him to frighten women.

"Smith is notoriously hot-tempered, but the sight of some nondescript and miry creature sitting cross-legged amongst a lot of loose straw, and swinging itself to and fro like a bear in a cage, made him pause. Then this tramp stood up silently before him, one mass of mud and filth from head to foot. Smith, alone amongst his stacks with this apparition, in the stormy twilight ringing with the infuriated barking of the dog, felt the dread of an inexplicable strangeness. But when that being, parting with his black hands the long matted locks that hung before his face, as you part the two halves of a curtain, looked out at him with glistening, wild, black-and-white eyes, the weirdness of this silent encounter fairly staggered him. He has admitted since (for the story has been a legitimate subject of conversation about here for years) that he made more than one step backwards. Then a sudden burst of rapid, senseless speech persuaded him at once that he had to do with an escaped lunatic. In fact, that impression never wore off completely. Smith has not in his heart given up his secret conviction of the man's essential insanity to this very day.

"As the creature approached him, jabbering in a most discomposing manner, Smith (unaware that he was being addressed as 'gracious lord,' and adjured in God's name to afford food and shelter) kept on speaking firmly but gently to it, and retreating all the time into the other yard. At last, watching his chance, by a sudden charge he bundled him headlong into the wood-lodge, and instantly shot the bolt. Thereupon he wiped his brow, though the day was cold. He had done his duty to the community by shutting up a wandering and probably dangerous maniac. Smith isn't a hard man at all, but he had room in his brain only for that one idea of lunacy. He was not imaginative enough to ask himself whether the man might not be perishing with cold and hunger. Meantime, at first, the maniac made a great deal of noise in the lodge. Mrs. Smith was screaming upstairs, where she had locked herself in her bedroom; but Amy Foster sobbed piteously at the kitchen-door, wringing her hands and muttering,

'Don't! don't!' I daresay Smith had a rough time of it that evening with one noise and another, and this insane, disturbing voice crying obstinately through the door only added to his irritation. He couldn't possibly have connected this troublesome lunatic with the sinking of a ship in Eastbay, of which there had been a rumour in the Darnford market-place. And I daresay the man inside had been very near to insanity on that night. Before his excitement collapsed and he became unconscious he was throwing himself violently about in the dark, rolling on some dirty sacks, and biting his fists with rage, cold, hunger, amazement, and despair.

"He was a mountaineer of the eastern range of the Carpathians, and the vessel sunk the night before in Eastbay was the Hamburg emigrant-ship *Herzogin Sophia-Dorothea*, of appalling memory.

"A few months later we could read in the paper the accounts of the bogus 'Emigration Agencies' among the Sclavonian peasantry in the more remote provinces of Austria. The object of these scoundrels was to get hold of the poor ignorant people's homesteads, and they were in league with the local usurers. They exported their victims through Hamburg mostly. As to the ship, I had watched her out of this very window, reaching close-hauled under short canvas into the bay on a dark, threatening afternoon. She came to an anchor, correctly by the chart, off the Brenzett Coastguard station. I remember before the night fell looking out again at the outlines of her spars and rigging that stood out dark and pointed on a background of ragged, slaty clouds like another and a slighter spire to the left of the Brenzett church-tower. In the evening the wind rose. At midnight I could hear in my bed the terrific gusts and the sounds of a driving deluge.

"About that time the Coastguardmen thought they saw the lights of a steamer over the anchoring-ground. In a moment they vanished; but it is clear that another vessel of some sort had tried for shelter in the bay on that awful, blind night, had rammed the German ship amidships (a breach—as one of the divers told me afterwards—'that you could sail a Thames barge through'), and then had gone out either scathless or damaged, who shall say; but had gone out, unknown, unseen, and fatal, to perish mysteriously at sea. Of her nothing ever came to light, and yet the hue and cry that was raised all over the world would have found her out if she had been in existence anywhere on the face of the waters.

"A completeness without a clue, and a stealthy silence as of a neatly executed crime, characterize this murderous disaster, which, as you may remember, had its gruesome celebrity. The wind would have prevented the loudest outcries from reaching the shore; there had been evidently no time for signals of distress. It was death without any sort of fuss. The Hamburg ship, filling all at once, capsized as she sank, and at daylight there was not even the end of a spar to be seen above water. She was missed, of course, and at first the Coastguardmen surmised that she had either dragged her anchor or parted her cable some time during the night, and had been blown out to sea. Then, after the tide turned, the wreck must have shifted a little and released some of the bodies, because a child—a little fair-haired child in a red frock—came ashore abreast of the Martello tower. By the afternoon you could see along three miles of beach dark figures with bare legs dashing in and out of the tumbling foam, and rough-looking men, women with hard faces, children, mostly fair-haired, were being carried, stiff and dripping, on stretchers, on wattles, on ladders, in a long procession past the door of the 'Ship Inn,' to be laid out in a row under the north wall of the Brenzett Church.



"Officially, the body of the little girl in the red frock is the first thing that came ashore from that ship. But I have patients amongst the seafaring population of West Colebrook, and, unofficially, I am informed that very early that morning two brothers, who went down to look after their cobble hauled up on the beach, found, a good way from Brenzett, an ordinary ship's hencoop lying high and dry on the shore, with eleven drowned ducks inside. Their families ate the birds, and the hencoop was split into firewood with a hatchet. It is possible that a man (supposing he happened to be on the deck at the time of the accident) might have floated ashore on that hencoop. He might. I admit it is improbable, but there was the man—and for days, nay, for weeks—it didn't enter our heads that we had amongst us the only living soul that had escaped from that disaster. The man himself, even when he learned to speak intelligibly, could tell us very little. He remembered he had felt better (after the ship had anchored, I suppose), and that the darkness, the wind, and the rain took his breath away. This looks as if he had been on deck some time during that night. But we mustn't forget he had been taken out of his knowledge, that he had been sea-sick and battened down below for four days, that he had no general notion of a ship or of the sea, and therefore could have no definite idea of what was happening to him. The rain, the wind, the darkness he knew: he understood the bleating of the sheep, and he remembered the pain of his wretchedness and misery, his heartbroken astonishment that it was neither seen nor understood, his dismay at finding all the men angry and all the women fierce. He had approached them as a beggar, it is true, he said; but in his country, even if they gave nothing, they spoke gently to beggars. The children in his country were not taught to throw stones at those who asked for compassion. Smith's strategy overcame him completely. The wood-lodge presented the horrible aspect of a dungeon. What would be done to him next? . . . No wonder that Amy Foster appeared to his eyes with the aureole of an angel of light. The girl had not been able to sleep for thinking of the poor man, and in the morning, before the Smiths were up, she slipped out across the back yard. Holding the door of the wood-lodge ajar, she looked in and extended to him half a loaf of white bread—'such bread as the rich eat in my country,' he used to say.

"At this he got up slowly from amongst all sorts of rubbish, stiff, hungry, trembling, miserable, and doubtful. 'Can you eat this?' she asked in her soft and timid voice. He must have taken her for a 'gracious lady.' He devoured ferociously, and tears were falling on the crust. Suddenly he dropped the bread, seized her wrist, and imprinted a kiss on her hand. She was not frightened. Through his forlorn condition she had observed that he was good-looking. She shut the door and walked back slowly to the kitchen. Much later on, she told Mrs. Smith, who shuddered at the bare idea of being touched by that creature.

"Through this act of impulsive pity he was brought back again within the pale of human relations with his new surroundings. He never forgot it—never.

"That very same morning old Mr. Swaffer (Smith's nearest neighbour) came over to give his advice, and ended by carrying him off. He stood, unsteady on his legs, meek, and caked over in half-dried mud, while the two men talked around him in an incomprehensible tongue. Mrs. Smith had refused to come downstairs till the mad-man was off the premises; Amy Foster, from far within the dark kitchen, watched through the open back door; and he obeyed the signs that were made to him to the best of his ability. But Smith was full of mistrust. 'Mind, sir! It may be all his cunning,' he cried repeatedly in a tone of warning. When Mr. Swaffer started the

mare, the deplorable being sitting humbly by his side, through weakness, nearly fell out over the back of the high two-wheeled cart. Swaffer took him straight home. And it is then that I come upon the scene.

"I was called in by the simple process of the old man beckoning to me with his forefinger over the gate of his house as I happened to be driving past. I got down, of course.

" 'I've got something here,' he mumbled, leading the way to an outhouse at a little distance from his other farm-buildings.

"It was there that I saw him first, in a long low room taken upon the space of that sort of coach-house. It was bare and whitewashed, with a small square aperture glazed with one cracked, dusty pane at its further end. He was lying on his back upon a straw pallet; they had given him a couple of horse-blankets, and he seemed to have spent the remainder of his strength in the exertion of cleaning himself. He was almost speechless; his quick breathing under the blankets pulled up to his chin, his glittering, restless black eyes reminded me of a wild bird caught in a snare. While I was examining him, old Swaffer stood silently by the door, passing the tips of his fingers along his shaven upper lip. I gave some directions, promised to send a bottle of medicine, and naturally made some inquiries.

" 'Smith caught him in the stackyard at New Barns,' said the old chap in his deliberate, unmoved manner, and as if the other had been indeed a sort of wild animal, 'That's how I came by him. Quite a curiosity, isn't it? Now tell me, doctor—you've been all over the world—don't you think that's a bit of a Hindoo we've got hold of here?'

"I was greatly surprised. His long black hair scattered over the straw bolster contrasted with the olive pallor of his face. It occurred to me he might be a Basque. It didn't necessarily follow that he should understand Spanish; but I tried him with the few words I know, and also with some French. The whispered sounds I caught by bending my ear to his lips puzzled me utterly. That afternoon the young ladies from the rectory (one of them read Goethe with a dictionary, and the other had struggled with Dante for years), coming to see Miss Swaffer, tried their German and Italian on him from the doorway. They retreated, just the least bit scared by the flood of passionate speech which, turning on his pallet, he let out at them. They admitted that the sound was pleasant, soft, musical—but, in conjunction with his looks perhaps, it was startling—so excitable, so utterly unlike anything one had ever heard. The village boys climbed up the bank to have a peep through the little square aperture. Everybody was wondering what Mr. Swaffer would do with him.

"He simply kept him.

"Swaffer would be called eccentric were he not so much respected. They will tell you that Mr. Swaffer sits up as late as ten o'clock at night to read books, and they will tell you also that he can write a cheque for two hundred pounds without thinking twice about it. He himself would tell you that the Swaffers had owned land between this and Darnford for these three hundred years. He must be eighty-five to-day, but he does not look a bit older than when I first came here. He is a great breeder of sheep, and deals extensively in cattle. He attends market days for miles around in every sort of weather, and drives sitting bowed low over the reins, his lank grey hair curling over the collar of his warm coat, and with a green plaid rug round his legs. The calmness of advanced age gives a solemnity to his manner. He is clean-shaved; his lips are thin and sensitive; something rigid and monarchical in the set of his features lends a certain elevation to the character of his face. He has been known to drive miles in

the rain to see a new kind of rose in somebody's garden, or a monstrous cabbage grown by a cottager. He loves to hear tell of or to be shown something what he calls 'outlandish.' Perhaps it was just that outlandishness of the man which influenced old Swaffer. Perhaps it was only an inexplicable caprice. All I know is that at the end of three weeks I caught sight of Smith's lunatic digging in Swaffer's kitchen garden. They had found out he could use a spade. He dug barefooted.

"His black hair flowed over his shoulders. I suppose it was Swaffer who had given him the striped old cotton shirt; but he wore still the national brown cloth trousers (in which he had been washed ashore) fitting to the leg almost like tights; was belted with a broad leathern belt studded with little brass discs; and had never yet ventured into the village. The land he looked upon seemed to him kept neatly, like the grounds round a landowner's house; the size of the cart-horses struck him with astonishment; the roads resembled garden walks, and the aspect of the people, especially on Sundays, spoke of opulence. He wondered what made them so hardhearted and their children so bold. He got his food at the back door, carried it in both hands, carefully, to his outhouse, and, sitting alone on his pallet, would make the sign of the cross before he began. Beside the same pallet, kneeling in the early darkness of the short days, he recited aloud the Lord's Prayer before he slept. Whenever he saw old Swaffer he would bow with veneration from the waist, and stand erect while the old man, with his fingers over his upper lip, surveyed him silently. He bowed also to Miss Swaffer, who kept house frugally for her father—a broad-shouldered, big-boned woman of forty-five, with the pocket of her dress full of keys, and a grey, steady eye. She was Church—as people said (while her father was one of the trustees of the Baptist Chapel)—and wore a little steel cross at her waist. She dressed severely in black, in memory of one of the innumerable Bradleys of the neighbourhood, to whom she had been engaged some twenty-five years ago—a young farmer who broke his neck out hunting on the eve of the wedding-day. She had the unmoved countenance of the deaf, spoke very seldom, and her lips, thin like her father's, astonished one sometimes by a mysteriously ironic curl.

"These were the people to whom he owed allegiance, and an overwhelming loneliness seemed to fall from the leaden sky of that winter without sunshine. All the faces were sad. He could talk to no one, and had no hope of ever understanding anybody. It was as if these had been the faces of people from the other world—dead people—he used to tell me years afterwards. Upon my word, I wonder he did not go mad. He didn't know where he was. Somewhere very far from his mountains—somewhere over the water. Was this America? he wondered.

"If it hadn't been for the steel cross at Miss Swaffer's belt he would not, he confessed, have known whether he was in a Christian country at all. He used to cast stealthy glances at it, and feel comforted. There was nothing here the same as in his country! The earth and the water were different; there were no images of the Redeemer by the roadside. The very grass was different, and the trees. All the trees but the three old Norway pines on the bit of lawn before Swaffer's house, and these reminded him of his country. He had been detected once, after dusk, with his forehead against the trunk of one of them, sobbing, and talking to himself. They had been like brothers to him at that time, he affirmed. Everything else was strange. Conceive you the kind of an existence over-shadowed, oppressed, by the everyday material appearances, as if by the visions of a nightmare. At night, when he could not sleep, he kept on thinking of the girl who gave him the first piece of bread he had eaten in this foreign land. She had been neither fierce nor angry, nor frightened. Her face he re-

membered as the only comprehensible face amongst all these faces that were as closed, as mysterious, and as mute as the faces of the dead who are possessed of a knowledge beyond the comprehension of the living. I wonder whether the memory of her compassion prevented him from cutting his throat. But there! I suppose I am an old sentimentalist, and forget the instinctive love of life which it takes all the strength of an uncommon despair to overcome.

"He did the work which was given him with an intelligence which surprised old Swaffer. By-and-by it was discovered that he could help at the ploughing, could milk the cows, feed the bullocks in the cattle-yard, and was of some use with the sheep. He began to pick up words, too, very fast; and suddenly, one fine morning in spring, he rescued from an untimely death a grand-child of old Swaffer.

"Swaffer's younger daughter is married to Willcox, a solicitor and the Town Clerk of Colebrook. Regularly twice a year they come to stay with the old man for a few days. Their only child, a little girl not ~~three~~ years old at the time, ran out of the house alone in her little white pinafore, and, toddling across the grass of a terraced garden, pitched herself over a low wall head first into the horsepond in the yard below.

"Our man was out with the waggoner and the plough in the field nearest to the house, and as he was leading the team round to begin a fresh furrow, he saw, through the gap of a gate, what for anybody else would have been a mere flutter of something white. But he had straight-glancing, quick, far-reaching eyes, that only seemed to flinch and lose their amazing power before the immensity of the sea. He was bare-footed, and looking as outlandish as the heart of Swaffer could desire. Leaving the horses on the turn, to the inexpressible disgust of the waggoner he bounded off, going over the ploughed ground in long leaps, and suddenly appeared before the mother, thrust the child into her arms, and strode away.

"The pond was not very deep; but still, if he had not had such good eyes, the child would have perished—miserably suffocated in the foot or so of sticky mud at the bottom. Old Swaffer walked out slowly into the field, waited till the plough came over to his side, had a good look at him, and without saying a word went back to the house. But from that time they laid out his meals on the kitchen table; and at first, Miss Swaffer, all in black and with an inscrutable face, would come and stand in the doorway of the living-room to see him make a big sign of the cross before he fell to. I believe that from that day, too, Swaffer began to pay him regular wages.

"I can't follow step by step his development. He cut his hair short, was seen in the village and along the road going to and fro to his work like any other man. Children ceased to shout after him. He became aware of social differences, but remained for a long time surprised at the bare poverty of the churches among so much wealth. He couldn't understand either why they were kept shut up on week-days. There was nothing to steal in them. Was it to keep people from praying too often? The rectory took much notice of him about that time, and I believe the young ladies attempted to prepare the ground for his conversion. They could not, however, break him of his habit of crossing himself, but he went so far as to take off the string with a couple of brass medals the size of a sixpence, a tiny metal cross, and a square sort of scapulary which he wore round his neck. He hung them on the wall by the side of his bed, and he was still to be heard every evening reciting the Lord's Prayer, in incomprehensible words and in a slow, fervent tone, as he had heard his old father do at the head of all the kneeling family, big and little, on every evening of his life. And though he wore corduroys at work, and a slop-made pepper-and-salt suit on Sundays, strangers would turn round to look after him on the road. His foreignness had a peculiar and

indelible stamp. At last people became used to seeing him. But they never became used to him. His rapid, skimming walk; his swarthy complexion; his hat cocked on the left ear; his habit, on warm evenings, of wearing his coat over one shoulder, like a hussar's dolman; his manner of leaping over the stiles, not as a feat of agility, but in the ordinary course of progression—all these peculiarities were, as one may say, so many causes of scorn and offence to the inhabitants of the village. *They* wouldn't in their dinner hour lie flat on their backs on the grass to stare at the sky. Neither did they go about the fields screaming dismal tunes. Many times have I heard his high-pitched voice from behind the ridge of some sloping sheep-walk, a voice light and soaring, like a lark's, but with a melancholy human note, over our fields that hear only the song of birds. And I would be startled myself. Ah! He was different: innocent of heart, and full of good will, which nobody wanted, this castaway, that, like a man transplanted into another planet, was separated by an immense space from his past and by an immense ignorance from his future. His quick, fervent utterance positively shocked everybody. 'An excitable devil,' they called him. One evening, in the tap-room of the Coach and Horses (having drunk some whisky), he upset them all by singing a love-song of his country. They hooted him down, and he was pained, but Preble, the lame wheelwright, and Vincent, the fat blacksmith, and the other notables too, wanted to drink their evening beer in peace. On another occasion he tried to show them how to dance. The dust rose in clouds from the sanded floor; he leaped straight up amongst the deal tables, struck his heels together, squatted on one heel in front of old Preble, shooting out the other leg, uttered wild and exulting cries, jumped up to whirl one foot, snapping his fingers above his head—and a strange carter who was having a drink in there began to swear, and cleared out with his half-pint in his hand into the bar. But when suddenly he sprang upon a table and continued to dance among the glasses, the landlord interfered. He didn't want any 'acrobat tricks in the tap-room.' They laid their hands on him. Having had a glass or two, Mr. Swaffer's foreigner tried to expostulate: was ejected forcibly: got a black eye.

'I believe he felt the hostility of his human surroundings. But he was tough—tough in spirit, too, as well as in body. Only the memory of the sea frightened him, with that vague terror that is left by a bad dream. His home was far away; and he did not want now to go to America. I had often explained to him that there is no place on earth where true gold can be found lying ready and to be got for the trouble of the picking up. How then, he asked, could he ever return home with empty hands when there had been sold a cow, two ponies, and a bit of land to pay for his going? His eyes would fill with tears, and, averting them from the immense shimmer of the sea, he would throw himself face down on the grass. But sometimes, coking his hat with a little conquering air, he would defy my wisdom. He had found his bit of true gold. That was Amy Foster's heart; which was 'a golden heart, and soft to people's misery,' he would say in the accents of overwhelming conviction

"He was called Yanko. He had explained that this meant Little John; but as he would also repeat very often that he was a mountaineer (some word sounding in the dialect of his country like Goorall) he got it for his surname. And this is the only trace of him that the succeeding ages may find in the marriage register of the parish. There it stands—Yanko Goorall—in the rector's handwriting. The crooked cross made by the castaway, a cross whose tracing no doubt seemed to him the most solemn part of the whole ceremony, is all that remains now to perpetuate the memory of his name.

"His courtship had lasted some time—ever since he got his precarious footing in the community. It began by his buying for Amy Foster a green satin ribbon in Darnford. This was what you did in his country. You bought a ribbon at a Jew's stall on a fair-day. I don't suppose the girl knew what to do with it, but he seemed to think that his honourable intentions could not be mistaken.

"It was only when he declared his purpose to get married that I fully understood how, for a hundred futile and inappreciable reasons, how—shall I say odious?—he was to all the countryside. Every old woman in the village was up in arms. Smith, coming upon him near the farm, promised to break his head for him if he found him about again. But he twisted his little black moustache with such a bellicose air and rolled such big, black fierce eyes at Smith that this promise came to nothing. Smith, however, told the girl that she must be mad to take up with a man who was surely wrong in his head. All the same, when she heard him in the gloaming whistle from beyond the orchard a couple of bars of a weird and mournful tune, she would drop whatever she had in her hand—she would leave Mrs. Smith in the middle of a sentence—and she would run out to his call. Mrs. Smith called her a shameless hussy. She answered nothing. She said nothing at all to anybody, and went on her way as if she had been deaf. She and I alone in all the land, I fancy, could see his very real beauty. He was very good-looking, and most graceful in his bearing, with that something wild as of a woodland creature in his aspect. Her mother moaned over her dismally whenever the girl came to see her on her day out. The father was surly, but pretended not to know; and Mrs. Finn once told her plainly that 'this man, my dear, will do you some harm some day yet.' And so it went on. They could be seen on the roads, she tramping stolidly in her finery—grey dress, black feather, stout boots, prominent white cotton gloves that caught your eye a hundred yards away; and he, his coat slung picturesquely over one shoulder, pacing by her side, gallant of bearing and casting tender glances upon the girl with the golden heart. I wonder whether he saw how plain she was. Perhaps among types so different from what he had seen, he had not the power to judge; or perhaps he was seduced by the divine quality of her pity.

"Yanko was in great trouble meantime. In his country you get an old man for an ambassador in marriage affairs. He did not know how to proceed. However, one day in the midst of sheep in a field (he was now Swaffer's under-shepherd with Foster) he took off his hat to the father and declared himself humbly. 'I daresay she's fool enough to marry you,' was all Foster said. 'And then,' he used to relate, 'he puts his hat on his head, looks black at me as if he wanted to cut my throat, whistles the dog, and off he goes, leaving me to do the work.' The Fosters, of course, didn't like to lose the wages the girl earned: Amy used to give all her money to her mother. But there was in Foster a very genuine aversion to that match. He contended that the fellow was very good with sheep, but was not fit for any girl to marry. For one thing, he used to go along the hedges muttering to himself like a dam' fool; and then, these foreigners behave very queerly to women sometimes. And perhaps he would want to carry her off somewhere—or run off himself. It was not safe. He preached it to his daughter that the fellow might ill-use her in some way. She made no answer. It was, they said in the village, as if the man had done something to her. People discussed the matter. It was quite an excitement, and the two went on 'walking out' together in the face of opposition. Then something unexpected happened.

"I don't know whether old Swaffer ever understood how much he was regarded in the light of a father by his foreign retainer. Anyway the relation was curiously feudal.

So when Yanko asked formally for an interview—'and the Miss too' (he called the severe, deaf Miss Swaffer simply *Miss*)—it was to obtain their permission to marry. Swaffer heard him unmoved, dismissed him by a nod, and then shouted the intelligence into Miss Swaffer's best ear. She showed no surprise, and only remarked grimly, in a veiled blank voice, 'He certainly won't get any other girl to marry him.'

'It is Miss Swaffer who has all the credit of the munificence: but in a very few days it came out that Mr. Swaffer had presented Yanko with a cottage (the cottage you've seen this morning) and something like an acre of ground—had made it over to him in absolute property. Willcox expedited the deed, and I remember him telling me he had a great pleasure in making it ready. It recited: 'In consideration of saving the life of my beloved grandchild Bertha Willcox.'

'Of course, after that no power on earth could prevent them from getting married.

'Her infatuation endured. People saw her going out to meet him in the evening. She stared with unblinking, fascinated eyes up the road where he was expected to appear, walking freely, with a swing from the hip, and humming one of the love-tunes of his country. When the boy was born, he got elevated at the 'Coach and Horses,' essayed again a song and a dance, and was again ejected. People expressed their commiseration for a woman married to that Jack-in-the-box. He didn't care. There was a man now (he told me boastfully) to whom he could sing and talk in the language of his country, and show how to dance by-and-by.

'But I don't know. To me he appeared to have grown less springy of step, heavier in body, less keen of eye. Imagination, no doubt; but it seems to me now as if the net of fate had been drawn closer round him already.

'One day I met him on the footpath over the Talfourd Hill. He told me that 'women were funny.' I had heard already of domestic differences. People were saying that Amy Foster was beginning to find out what sort of man she had married. He looked upon the sea with indifferent, unseeing eyes. His wife had snatched the child out of his arms one day as he sat on the doorstep crooning to it a song such as the mothers sing to babies in his mountains. She seemed to think he was doing it some harm. Women are funny. And she had objected to him praying aloud in the evening. Why? He expected the boy to repeat the prayer aloud after him by-and-by, as he used to do after his old father when he was a child—in his own country. And I discovered he longed for their boy to grow up so that he could have a man to talk with in that language that to our ears sounded so disturbing, so passionate, and so bizarre. Why his wife should dislike the idea he couldn't tell. But that would pass, he said. And tilting his head knowingly, he tapped his breastbone to indicate that she had a good heart: not hard, not fierce, open to compassion, charitable to the poor!

'I walked away thoughtfully; I wondered whether his difference, his strangeness, were not penetrating with repulsion that dull nature they had begun by irresistibly attracting. I wondered. . . .'

The doctor came to the window and looked out at the frigid splendour of the sea, immense in the haze, as if enclosing all the earth with all the hearts lost among the passions of love and fear.

'Physiologically now,' he said, turning away abruptly, 'it was possible. It was possible.'

He remained silent. Then went on—

'At all events, the next time I saw him he was ill—lung trouble. He was tough, but I daresay he was not acclimatized as well as I had supposed. It was a bad winter; and,

of course, these mountaineers do get fits of homesickness; and a state of depression would make him vulnerable. He was lying half dressed on a couch downstairs.

"A table covered with a dark oilcloth took up all the middle of the little room. There was a wicker cradle on the floor, a kettle spouting steam on the hob, and some child's linen lay drying on the fender. The room was warm, but the door opens right into the garden, as you noticed, perhaps.

"He was very feverish, and kept on muttering to himself. She sat on a chair and looked at him fixedly across the table with her brown, blurred eyes. 'Why don't you have him upstairs?' I asked. With a start and a confused stammer she said, 'Oh! ah! I couldn't sit with him upstairs, sir.'

"I gave her certain directions; and going outside, I said again that he ought to be in bed upstairs. She wrung her hands. 'I couldn't. I couldn't. He keeps on saying something—I don't know what.' With the memory of all the talk against the man that had been dinned into her ears, I looked at her narrowly. I looked into her short-sighted eyes, at her dumb eyes that once in her life had seen an enticing shape, but seemed, staring at me, to see nothing at all now. But I saw she was uneasy.

"'What's the matter with him?' she asked in a sort of vacant trepidation. 'He doesn't look very ill. I never did see anybody look like this before. . . .'

"'Do you think,' I asked indignantly, 'he is shamming?'

"'I can't help it, sir,' she said stolidly. And suddenly she clasped her hands and looked right and left. 'And there's the baby. I am so frightened. He wanted me just now to give him the baby. I can't understand what he says to it.'

"'Can't you ask a neighbour to come in to-night?' I asked.

"'Please, sir, nobody seems to care to come,' she muttered, dully resigned all at once.

"I impressed upon her the necessity of the greatest care, and then had to go. There was a good deal of sickness that winter. 'Oh, I hope he won't talk!' she exclaimed softly just as I was going away.

"I don't know how it is I did not see—but I didn't. And yet, turning in my trap, I saw her lingering before the door, very still, and as if meditating a flight up the miry road.

"Towards the night his fever increased.

"He tossed, moaned, and now and then muttered a complaint. And she sat with the table between her and the couch, watching every movement and every sound, with the terror, the unreasonable terror, of that man she could not understand creeping over her. She had drawn the wicker cradle close to her feet. There was nothing in her now but the maternal instinct and that unaccountable fear.

"Suddenly coming to himself, parched, he demanded a drink of water. She did not move. She had not understood, though he may have thought he was speaking in English. He waited, looking at her, burning with fever, amazed at her silence and immobility, and then he shouted impatiently, 'Water! Give me water!'

"She jumped to her feet, snatched up the child, and stood still. He spoke to her, and his passionate remonstrances only increased her fear of that strange man. I believe he spoke to her for a long time, entreating, wondering, pleading, ordering I suppose. She says she bore it as long as she could. And then a gust of rage came over him.

"He sat up and called out terribly one word—some word. Then he got up as though he hadn't been ill at all, she says. And as in fevered dismay, indignation, and wonder he tried to get to her round the table, she simply opened the door and ran out with the child in her arms. She heard him call twice after her down the road in a terrible



voice—and fled. . . . Ah! but you should have seen stirring behind the dull, blurred glance of those eyes the spectre of the fear which had hunted her on that night three miles and a half to the door of Foster's cottage! I did the next day.

"And it was I who found him lying face down and his body in a puddle just outside the little wicker-gate.

"I had been called out that night to an urgent case in the village, and on my way home at daybreak passed by the cottage. The door stood open. My man helped me to carry him in. We laid him on the couch. The lamp smoked, the fire was out, the chill of the stormy night oozed from the cheerless yellow paper on the wall. 'Amy!' I called aloud, and my voice seemed to lose itself in the emptiness of this tiny house as if I had cried in a desert. He opened his eyes. 'Gone!' he said distinctly. 'I had only asked for water—only for a little water. . . .'

"He was muddled. I covered him up and stood waiting in silence, catching a painfully gasped word now and then. They were no longer in his own language. The fever had left him, taking with it the heat of life. And with his panting breast and lustrous eyes he reminded me again of a wild creature under the net; of a bird caught in a snare. She had left him. She had left him—sick—helpless—thirsty. The spear of the hunter had entered his very soul. 'Why?' he cried in the penetrating and indignant voice of a man calling to a responsible Maker. A gust of wind and a swish of rain answered.

"And as I turned away to shut the door he pronounced the word 'Merciful!' and expired.

"Eventually I certified heart-failure as the immediate cause of death. His heart must have indeed failed him, or else he might have stood this night of storm and exposure, too. I closed his eyes and drove away. Not very far from the cottage I met Foster walking sturdily between the dripping hedges with his collie at his heels.

"'Do you know where your daughter is?' I asked.

"'Don't I!' he cried. 'I am going to talk to him a bit. Frightening a poor woman like this.'

"'He won't frighten her any more,' I said. 'He is dead.'

"'He struck with his stick at the mud.

"'And there's the child.'

"'Then, after thinking deeply for a while—

"'I don't know that it isn't for the best.'

"That's what he said. And she says nothing at all now. Not a word of him. Never. Is his image as utterly gone from her mind as his lithe and striding figure, his caroling voice are gone from our fields? He is no longer before her eyes to excite her imagination into a passion of love or fear; and his memory seems to have vanished from her dull brain as a shadow passes away upon a white screen. She lives in the cottage and works for Miss Swaffer. She is Amy Foster for everybody, and the child is 'Amy Foster's boy.' She calls him Johnny—which means Little John.

"It is impossible to say whether this name recalls anything to her. Does she ever think of the past? I have seen her hanging over the boy's cot in a very passion of maternal tenderness. The little fellow was lying on his back, a little frightened at me, but very still, with his big black eyes, with his fluttered air of a bird in a snare. And looking at him I seemed to see again the other one—the father, cast out mysteriously by the sea to perish in the supreme disaster of loneliness and despair."

## THE UPTURNED FACE

STEPHEN CRANE (1871-1900)

"What will we do now?" said the adjutant, troubled and excited.

"Bury him," said Timothy Lean.

The two officers looked down close to their toes where lay the body of their comrade. The face was chalk-blue; gleaming eyes stared at the sky. Over the two upright figures was a windy sound of bullets, and on the top of the hill Lean's prostrate company of Spitzbergen infantry was firing measured volleys.

"Don't you think it would be better—" began the adjutant. "We might leave him until to-morrow."

"No," said Lean. "I can't hold that post an hour longer. I've got to fall back, and we've got to bury old Bill."

"Of course," said the adjutant, at once. "Your men got entrenching tools?"

Lean shouted back to his little line, and two men came slowly, one with a pick, one with a shovel. They started in the direction of the Rostina sharp-shooters. Bullets cracked near their ears. "Dig here," said Lean gruffly. The men, thus caused to lower their glances to the turf, became hurried and frightened merely because they could not look to see whence the bullets came. The dull beat of the pick striking the earth sounded amid the swift snap of close bullets. Presently the other private began to shovel.

"I suppose," said the adjutant, slowly, "we'd better search his clothes for—things."

Lean nodded. Together in curious abstraction they looked at the body. Then Lean stirred his shoulders suddenly, arousing himself.

"Yes," he said, "we'd better see what he's got." He dropped to his knees, and his hands approached the body of the dead officer. But his hands wavered over the buttons of the tunic. The first button was brick-red with drying blood, and he did not seem to dare touch it.

"Go on," said the adjutant, hoarsely.

Lean stretched his wooden hand, and his fingers fumbled the blood-stained buttons. At last he rose with ghastly face. He had gathered a watch, a whistle, a pipe, a tobacco-pouch, a handkerchief, a little case of cards and papers. He looked at the adjutant. There was a silence. The adjutant was feeling that he had been a coward to make Lean do all the grisly business.

"Well," said Lean, "that's all, I think. You have his sword and revolver?"

"Yes," said the adjutant, his face working, and then he burst out in a sudden strange fury at the two privates. "Why don't you hurry up with that grave? What are you doing, anyhow? Hurry, do you hear? I never saw such stupid—"

Even as he cried out in his passion the two men were laboring for their lives. Ever overhead the bullets were spitting.

The grave was finished. It was not a masterpiece—a poor little shallow thing. Lean and the adjutant again looked at each other in a curious silent communication.

Suddenly the adjutant croaked out a weird laugh. It was a terrible laugh, which had its origin in that part of the mind which is first moved by the singing of the nerves. "Well," he said, humorously to Lean, "I suppose we had best tumble him in."

"Yes," said Lean. The two privates stood waiting, bent over their implements. "I suppose," said Lean, "it would be better if we laid him in ourselves."

"Yes," said the adjutant. Then apparently remembering that he had made Lean search the body, he stooped with great fortitude and took hold of the dead officer's clothing. Lean joined him. Both were particular that their fingers should not feel the corpse. They tugged away; the corpse lifted, heaved, toppled, flopped into the grave, and the two officers, straightening, looked again at each other—they were always looking at each other. They sighed with relief.

The adjutant said, "I suppose we should—we should say something. Do you know the service, Tim?"

"They don't read the service until the grave is filled in," said Lean, pressing his lips to an academic expression.

"Don't they?" said the adjutant, shocked that he had made the mistake.

"Oh well," he cried, suddenly, "let us—let us say something—while he can hear us."

"All right," said Lean. "Do you know the service?"

"I can't remember a line of it," said the adjutant.

Lean was extremely dubious. "I can repeat two lines, but—"

"Well, do it," said the adjutant. "Go as far as you can. That's better than nothing. And the beasts have got our range exactly."

Lean looked to his two men. "Attention," he barked. The privates came to attention with a click, looking much aggrieved. The adjutant lowered his helmet to his knee. Lean, bareheaded, stood over the grave. The Rostina sharpshooters fired briskly.

"O Father, our friend has sunk in the deep waters of death, but his spirit has leaped toward Thee as the bubble arises from the lips of the drowning. Perceive, we beseech, O Father, the little flying bubble, and—"

Lean, although husky and ashamed, had suffered no hesitation up to this point, but he stopped with a hopeless feeling and looked at the corpse.

The adjutant moved uneasily. "And from Thy superb heights—" he began, and then he too came to an end.

"And from Thy superb heights," said Lean.

The adjutant suddenly remembered a phrase in the back part of the Spitzbergen burial service, and he exploited it with the triumphant manner of a man who has recalled everything and can go on.

"O God, have mercy—"

"O God, have mercy—" said Lean.

"Mercy," repeated the adjutant, in quick failure.

"Mercy," said Lean. And then he was moved by some violence of feeling, for he turned suddenly upon his two men and tigerishly said, "Throw the dirt in."

The fire of the Rostina sharpshooters was accurate and continuous.

. . . . .

One of the aggrieved privates came forward with his shovel. He lifted his first shovel-load of earth, and for a moment of inexplicable hesitation it was held above

this corpse, which from its chalk-blue face looked keenly out of the grave. Then the soldier emptied his shovel on—on the feet.

Timothy Lean felt as if tons had been swiftly lifted off his forehead. He had felt that perhaps the private might empty the shovel on—on the face. It had been emptied on the feet. There was a great point gained there—ha, ha!—the first shovel-ful had been emptied on the feet. How satisfactory!

The adjutant began to babble. "Well, of course—a man we've messed with all these years—impossible—you can't, you know, leave your intimate friends rotting on the field. Go on, for God's sake, and shovel, you!"

The man with the shovel suddenly ducked, grabbed his left arm with his right hand, and looked at his officer for orders. Lean picked the shovel from the ground. "Go to the rear," he said to the wounded man. He also addressed the other private. "You get under cover, too; I'll finish this business."

The wounded man scrambled hard still for the top of the ridge without devoting any glances to the direction whence the bullets came, and the other man followed at an equal pace; but he was different, in that he looked back anxiously three times.

This is merely the way—often—of the hit and unhit.

Timothy Lean filled the shovel, hesitated, and then in a movement which was like a gesture of abhorrence he flung the dirt into the grave, and as it landed it made a sound—plop. Lean suddenly stopped and mopped his brow—a tired laborer.

"Perhaps we have been wrong," said the adjutant. His glance wavered stupidly. "It might have been better if we hadn't buried him just at this time. Of course, if we advance to-morrow the body would have been—"

"Damn you," said Lean, "shut your mouth!" He was not the senior officer.

He again filled the shovel and flung the earth. Always the earth made that sound—plop. For a space Lean worked frantically, like a man digging himself out of danger.

Soon there was nothing to be seen but the chalk-blue face. Lean filled the shovel. "Good God," he cried to the adjutant. "Why didn't you turn him somehow when you put him in? This—" Then Lean began to stutter.

The adjutant understood. He was pale to the lips. "Go on, man," he cried, beseechingly, almost in a shout.

Lean swung back the shovel. It went forward in a pendulum curve. When the earth landed it made a sound—plop.

## A CLEAN, WELL-LIGHTED PLACE ✓

ERNEST HEMINGWAY (1898— )

It was late and every one had left the café except an old man who sat in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light. In the day time the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference. The two waiters inside the café knew that the old man was a little drunk, and while he was a good client they knew that if he became too drunk he would leave without paying, so they kept watch on him.

"Last week he tried to commit suicide," one waiter said.

"Why?"

"He was in despair."

"What about?"

"Nothing."

"How do you know it was nothing?"

"He has plenty of money."

They sat together at a table that was close against the wall near the door of the café and looked at the terrace where the tables were all empty except where the old man sat in the shadow of the leaves of the tree that moved slightly in the wind. A girl and a soldier went by in the street. The street light shone on the brass number on his collar. The girl wore no head covering and hurried beside him.

"The guard will pick him up," one waiter said.

"What does it matter if he gets what he's after?"

"He had better get off the street now. The guard will get him. They went by five minutes ago."

The old man sitting in the shadow rapped on his saucer with his glass. The younger waiter went over to him.

"What do you want?"

The old man looked at him. "Another brandy," he said.

"You'll be drunk," the waiter said. The old man looked at him. The waiter went away.

"He'll stay all night," he said to his colleague. "I'm sleepy now. I never get into bed before three o'clock. He should have killed himself last week."

The waiter took the brandy bottle and another saucer from the counter inside the café and marched out to the old man's table. He put down the saucer and poured the glass full of brandy.

"You should have killed yourself last week," he said to the deaf man. The old man motioned with his finger. "A little more," he said. The waiter poured on into the glass so that the brandy slopped over and ran down the stem into the top saucer of the pile. "Thank you," the old man said. The waiter took the bottle back inside the café. He sat down at the table with his colleague again.

"He's drunk now," he said.

"He's drunk every night."

"What did he want to kill himself for?"

"How should I know."

"How did he do it?"

"He hung himself with a rope."

"Who cut him down?"

"His niece."

"Why did they do it?"

"Fear for his soul."

"How much money has he got?"

"He's got plenty."

"He must be eighty years old."

"Anyway I should say he was eighty."

"I wish he would go home. I never get to bed before three o'clock. What kind of hour is that to go to bed?"

"He stays up because he likes it."

"He's lonely. I'm not lonely. I have a wife waiting in bed for me."

"He had a wife once too."

"A wife would be no good to him now."

"You can't tell. He might be better with a wife."

*"His niece looks after him."*

*"I know. You said she cut him down."*

*"I wouldn't want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing."*

*"Not always. This old man is clean. He drinks without spilling. Even now, drunk."*

Look at him."

"I don't want to look at him. I wish he would go home. He has no regard for those who must work."

The old man looked from his glass across the square, then over at the waiters.

"Another brandy," he said, pointing to his glass. The waiter who was in a hurry came over.

"Finished," he said, speaking with that omission of syntax stupid people employ when talking to drunken people or foreigners. "No more tonight. Close now."

"Another," said the old man.

"No. Finished." The waiter wiped the edge of the table with a towel and shook his head.

The old man stood up, slowly counted the saucers, took a leather coin purse from his pocket and paid for the drinks, leaving half a peseta tip.

The waiter watched him go down the street, a very old man walking unsteadily but with dignity.

"Why didn't you let him stay and drink?" the unhurried waiter asked. They were putting up the shutters. "It is not half-past two."

"I want to go home to bed."

"What is an hour?"

"More to me than to him."

"An hour is the same."

"You talk like an old man yourself. He can buy a bottle and drink at home."

"It's not the same."

"No, it is not," agreed the waiter with a wife. He did not wish to be unjust. He was only in a hurry.

"And you? You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?"

"Are you trying to insult me?"

"No, hombre, only to make a joke."

"No," the waiter who was in a hurry said, rising from pulling down the metal shutters. "I have confidence. I am all confidence."

"You have youth, confidence, and a job," the old waiter said. "You have everything."

"And what do you lack?"

"Everything but work."

"You have everything I have."

"No. I have never had confidence and I am not young."

"Come on. Stop talking nonsense and lock up."

"I am of those who like to stay late at the café," the older waiter said. "With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night."

"I want to go home and into bed."

"We are of two different kinds," the older waiter said. He was now dressed to go home. "It is not only a question of youth and confidence although those things are very beautiful. Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be some one who needs the café."

"Hombre, there are bodegas open all night long."

"You do not understand. This is a clean and pleasant café. It is well lighted. The light is very good and also, now, there are shadows of the leaves."

"Good night," said the younger waiter.

"Good night," the other said. Turning off the electric light he continued the conversation with himself. It is the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant. You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music. Nor can you stand before a bar with dignity although that is all that is provided for these hours. What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. It was only that and light was all it needed and a certain cleanness and order. Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee. He smiled and stood before a bar with a shining steam pressure coffee machine.

"What's yours?" asked the barman.

"Nada."

"Otro loco mas," said the barman and turned away.

"A little cup," said the waiter.

The barman poured it for him.

"The light is very bright and pleasant but the bar is unpolished," the waiter said.

The barman looked at him but did not answer. It was too late at night for conversation.

"You want another copita?" the barman asked.

"No, thank you," said the waiter and went out. He disliked bars and bodegas. A clean, well-lighted café was a very different thing. Now, without thinking further, he would go home to his room. He would lie in the bed and finally, with daylight, he would go to sleep. After all, he said to himself, it is probably only insomnia. Many must have it.

## ✓ GEESSE FLYING SOUTH

AUGUST DERLETH (1909- )

Neither my grandfather nor my grandmother would go to bed that night. They sat looking at each other and all the time my Aunt Cella was getting more nervous. I suspected from the start that the old folks might guess what it was all about. Anyway, I knew from the way he looked that my grandfather didn't think it was natural for the family to be gathered around looking so uneasy.

Aunt Cella had said that something would have to be done about grandmother, who was losing her faculties, losing her mind, Aunt Cella said candidly. We were surprised to hear it, but we thought Aunt Cella ought to know since she lived with the old folks. There we were, every part of the family represented, my grandparents, Aunt Cella, Uncle Burdace, Uncle Frank, and I. My father could not come and sent me instead.

My grandfather sat across the table from my grandmother, one hand resting laxly on his knee, palm upward, the other grasping his cane, fondling the handle gently from time to time. My grandmother sat with her hands clasped in her lap, her dimming eyes fixed on my grandfather, her thin, sharp face slightly pale. Aunt Cella, whose gaunt, hollow eyes seemed to be everywhere at once, kept moving around the room, fidgeting here and there with little things, and my uncles talked to one another and to my grandparents. I sat back and waited for them to do something, or to hint to my grandparents to go to bed. Several times I wished Aunt Cella would stop braiding her hands together and do something else with them.

Uncle Burdace was saying something about blacksmithing in the old days when suddenly my grandmother said, "There's a big flock of geese flying around the house. They're lost. I can hear them."

For a moment no one said anything.

Then Aunt Cella nodded significantly and said, "Now, Ma, if you hear anything, it's probably a dog barking somewhere."

My grandmother looked at Aunt Cella and smiled. Then she said with a very detached air, "No, they're geese. I've heard them often enough before. I can't imagine any one mistaking a dog's barking for the honking of geese." Then she settled together a little and looked back at my grandfather.

"I can remember," he said, "how we heard them that night at your brother's place in Eau Claire. All night long. It was a night like this. Dark and rainy."

"Yes," said my grandmother. "I remember that very well."

For a few moments everyone was quiet. Aunt Cella kept nodding dolefully and let her fingers push nervously at her hair, which was straggling down one side of her head.

Then my grandmother said, "There must be near five hundred of them."

Aunt Cella trembled and got up and went out of the room. I followed her. We went outside and stood on the porch, and there, sure enough, were the geese, hundreds of them, flying in circles against the gray sky, so low that we could see them clearly despite the murky night. They were honking confusedly, loudly. Aunt Cella pressed her thin body against the porch rail and looked up at them. She stood there for a while, her face gray in the mist, her eyes dark and lost. She jerked nervously around and looked at me. She didn't say anything.

When we came back to the front room, my grandmother was talking. "Most likely the streetlights are confusing them," she was saying.

"Or perhaps they lost their leader," my grandfather said.

The old folks were talking just to each other; they were ignoring the rest of us as if we weren't there at all. I wondered whether they were doing it on purpose.

"I remember that night in Eau Claire," my grandmother went on, "how low they were that night. Almost right up against the streetlights. And what a noise they made. Pretty near all night, too. My, but that was a sight and a thing to remember."

My grandfather smiled and nodded at her.



"There *are* wild geese," said Aunt Cella with the helpless air of giving the point to grandmother.

"Yes, of course, there are," said my grandmother, very detached.

Aunt Cella looked uncertainly from Uncle Burdace to Uncle Frank. She began to twist her fingers nervously, and a worried look grew on her face.

Uncle Burdace pulled out his watch and looked at it. "Nine-thirty," he said slowly. "A little after, already." He looked irritated.

Uncle Frank said something about watches, and Aunt Cella said that nobody could beat grandfather's old watch for accuracy. "What does your watch say, Pa?" she asked.

My grandfather took out his watch and said, "Nine twenty-nine." Then he put it back into his pocket and looked speculatively out of the window into the glow shed by the streetlight beyond.

"Likely that honking will go on all night," said my grandmother.

My grandfather smiled at her. "I guess it will," he said.

"They don't seem to be flying any too well," my grandmother went on. "Must be they lost their leader. Likely shot. Seems they're making pretty small circles."

"Now, Ma," protested Aunt Cella. "You can't tell that by sitting here. You know you can't. You shouldn't put on that way."

My grandmother looked at her. Her eyes were tired, but she took in Aunt Cella and smiled at her as if she were a little child. "Pa and I have heard them lost at night."

"But you can't tell that, Ma," continued Aunt Cella, looking toward my uncles for support. "You can't tell it just by sitting here like this."

"When you've heard wild geese before," continued my grandmother, patiently, "you learn their cries, yes, you do, and the sounds they make, and what they mean. Your Pa and I have heard them often enough before. It's knowing what they say to each other."

Aunt Cella looked from Uncle Burdace to Uncle Frank. Neither of them said anything. She looked at me and sighed. She made as if to get up but changed her mind.

"I guess I'll go out and watch them," I said.

I went out on the porch and watched the geese wavering around against the dark sky. Sometimes I couldn't see them at all, and sometimes they were whitish against the black clouds, and sometimes dark against light fleece-like clouds behind which the moon was shining somewhere. They were flying in widening circles, but every little while some of the geese would break the circle and it would have to be started all over again. They had been following the river down, and they were only about a third of a mile from the river, but they couldn't see it because of the lights, which blinded them. They were still honking loudly when I turned and went back into the front room.

My grandmother said, "Well, August, they were flying in circles, weren't they?"

"Ja," I said. "Small circles."

She nodded, smiling. Aunt Cella didn't know what to make of it. I thought of my grandmother's guessing like that and pretty soon it came to me that if the geese had been flying in a straight line in any direction except west, or even in a large circle, they would have got to see the river because the river went around east of the town from the northwest to the southwest.

I began to smile, too, and my grandmother looked at me and her eyes twinkled.

Aunt Cella got up and began to move nervously about; she went into an adjoining room and stood there for a while in the dark. Uncle Burdace said something under

his breath and went to the telephone and called up my Aunt Josephine to say that he would be home pretty soon, but if he was delayed, she shouldn't worry about it. Uncle Frank pulled out his watch and said, "After ten already. My, but you two are keeping late hours." He said this jokingly, but he sounded anxious.

My grandmother said, "I remember once your Pa and I stayed up for two nights in a row and weren't tired enough to speak of, the third night. That was at the World's Fair in Chicago, I guess."

My grandfather nodded.

Uncle Frank's face fell, and he looked at Uncle Burdace, and together the two of them looked at Aunt Cella.

"It isn't always," my grandmother went on, "that we can have our children around us like this, is it, Pa?"

"No, I guess not," my grandfather said.

I had the feeling that they were laughing behind their faces.

"My, how these geese do honk," my grandmother said suddenly. "I remember one night before we were married, Pa, when we got caught in a shower at Grell's Mill, how we heard the geese go honking by over us, and how they honked and honked. I remember that we sat in the buggy under that old elm tree right near the bridge, remember that, Pa?"

"I remember it well," said my grandfather.

"And how the rain let up after a while," my grandmother went on. "I remember after I was home that night how I heard the geese flying over all night long. Cold weather came right after—a long spell."

My grandfather nodded and smiled and my grandmother nodded and smiled, and they looked at each other, saying nothing. I began to feel rather foolish.

"I'm going outside for a cigarette," I said.

I went out on the porch again. The geese were still flying endlessly around. If there were five hundred of them before, there were over a thousand now. They were flying this way and that, around and across, hopelessly mixed up. Their honking came louder because there were more of them. The rain had stopped and the leaves on the ground smelled richly. There was a faint smell of burning leaves, of smudging smoke, in the air, too. The moon was coming a little clearer behind the thinning clouds. If it came out, the geese might be able to find the river again. I went back into the front room after I had finished the cigarette.

"What a noise they make!" I said into the silent room.

"There'll be no sleep for most of us tonight," said my grandmother. "I've been woke up every year now by the geese flying south in fall. I got so I expect them."

Suddenly Uncle Frank pulled out his watch again and said, "I guess I'll make that ten-forty train."

Aunt Cella jumped and said, "But, Frank!" She looked hopelessly at my grandparents.

Uncle Frank looked at her irritably and said, "I got business to attend to. Anyway, I promised Ella and the kids I'd be home tonight."

My grandfather said, "You hardly come but you go. I kind of thought you might take Cella with you for a week or so. She needs a rest, running her legs off for us all the time. A week in Milwaukee would do her good."

Aunt Cella looked at my grandfather as if she had not heard right.

"That's right," said Uncle Frank. "You ought to go out more, Cella."

"Why, you know I can't," said Aunt Cella indignantly.

My grandparents looked at each other.

Uncle Burdace got up and went into the kitchen. Aunt Cella went after him, closing the door behind her. They began to talk heatedly. "Pa's right," said Uncle Burdace. "What you need's a rest, Cella."

Uncle Frank got up and opened the door and went into the kitchen. I heard Uncle Burdace say, "I'll drive you down to the station, Frank."

My grandparents looked at each other and smiled.

"Well, I guess we can go to bed, mother," my grandfather said. My grandmother turned to me and said, "August, open the window a little."

I got up and opened the window.

"My, but I like to hear those geese honking," she said.

## PASTE

HENRY JAMES (1843-1916)

"I've found a lot more things," her cousin said to her the day after the second funeral; "they're up in her room—but they're things I wish *you'd* look at."

The pair of mourners, sufficiently stricken, were in the garden of the vicarage together, before luncheon, waiting to be summoned to that meal, and Arthur Prime had still in his face the intention, she was moved to call it rather than the expression, of feeling something or other. Some such appearance was in itself of course natural within a week of his stepmother's death, within three of his father's; but what was most present to the girl, herself sensitive and shrewd, was that he seemed somehow to brood without sorrow, to suffer without what she in her own case would have called pain. He turned away from her after this last speech—it was a good deal his habit to drop an observation and leave her to pick it up without assistance. If the vicar's widow, now in her turn finally translated, had not really belonged to him it was not for want of her giving herself, so far as he ever would take her; and she had lain for three days all alone at the end of the passage, in the great cold chamber of hospitality, the dampish, greenish room where visitors slept and where several of the ladies of the parish had, without effect, offered, in pairs and successions, piously to watch with her. His personal connection with the parish was now slighter than ever, and he had really not waited for this opportunity to show the ladies what he thought of them. She felt that she herself had, during her doleful month's leave from Bleet, where she was governess, rather taken her place in the same snubbed order; but it was presently, none the less, with a better little hope of coming in for some remembrance, some relic, that she went up to look at the things he had spoken of, the identity of which, as a confused cluster of bright objects on a table in the darkened room, shimmered at her as soon as she had opened the door.

They met her eyes for the first time, but in a moment, before touching them, she knew them as things of the theatre, as very much too fine to have been, with any verisimilitude, things of the vicarage. They were too dreadfully good to be true, for her aunt had had no jewels to speak of, and these were coronets and girdles, diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. Flagrant tinsel and glass, they looked strangely vulgar, but if, after the first queer shock of them, she found herself taking them up,

it was for the very proof, never yet so distinct to her, of a far-off faded story. An honest widowed cleric with a small son and a large sense of Shakespeare had, on a brave latitude of habit as well as of taste—since it implied his having in very fact dropped deep into the "pit"—conceived for an obscure actress, several years older than himself, an admiration of which the prompt offer of his reverend name and hortatory hand was the sufficiently candid sign. The response had perhaps, in those dim years, in the way of eccentricity, even bettered the proposal, and Charlotte, turning the tale over, had long since drawn from it a measure of the career renounced by the undistinguished *comédienne*—doubtless also tragic, or perhaps pantomimic, at a pinch—of her late uncle's dreams. This career couldn't have been eminent and must much more probably have been comfortless.

"You see what it is—old stuff of the time she never liked to mention."

Our young woman gave a start; her companion had, after all, rejoined her and had apparently watched a moment her slightly scared recognition. "So I said to myself," she replied. Then, to show intelligence, yet keep clear of twaddle: "How peculiar they look!"

"They look awful," said Arthur Prime. "Cheap gilt, diamonds as big as potatoes. These are trappings of a ruder age than ours. Actors do themselves better now."

"Oh, now," said Charlotte, not to be less knowing, "actresses have real diamonds."

"Some of them." Arthur spoke dryly.

"I mean the bad ones—the nobodies too."

"Oh, some of the nobodies have the biggest. But mamma wasn't of that sort."

"A nobody?" Charlotte risked.

"Not a nobody to whom somebody—well, not a nobody with diamonds. It isn't all worth, this trash, five pounds."

There was something in the old gewgaws that spoke to her, and she continued to turn them over. "They're relics. I think they have their melancholy and even their dignity."

Arthur observed another pause. "Do you care for them?" he then asked. "I mean," he promptly added, "as a souvenir."

"Of you?" Charlotte threw off.

"Of me? What have I to do with it? Of your poor dead aunt who was so kind to you," he said with virtuous sternness.

"Well, I would rather have them than nothing."

"Then please take them," he returned in a tone of relief which expressed somehow more of the eager than of the gracious.

"Thank you." Charlotte lifted two or three objects up and set them down again. Though they were lighter than the materials they imitated they were so much more extravagant that they struck her in truth as rather an awkward heritage, to which she might have preferred even a matchbox or a pen-wiper. They were indeed shameless pinchbeck. "Had you any idea she had kept them?"

"I don't at all believe she *had* kept them or knew they were there, and I'm very sure my father didn't. They had quite equally worked off any tenderness for the connection. These odds and ends, which she thought had been given away or destroyed, had simply got thrust into a dark corner and been forgotten."

Charlotte wondered. "Where then did you find them?"

"In that old tin box"—and the young man pointed to the receptacle from which he had dislodged them and which stood on a neighbouring chair. "It's rather a good box still, but I'm afraid I can't give you *that*."

The girl took no heed of the box; she continued only to look at the trinkets. "What corner had she found?"

"She hadn't 'found' it," her companion sharply insisted; "she had simply lost it. The whole thing had passed from her mind. The box was on the top shelf of the old schoolroom closet, which, until one put one's head into it from a step-ladder, looked, from below, quite cleared out. The door's narrow and the part of the closet to the left goes well into the wall. The box had stuck there for years."

Charlotte was conscious of a mind divided and a vision vaguely troubled, and once more she took up two or three of the subjects of this revelation: a big bracelet in the form of a gilt serpent with many twists and beady eyes, a brazen belt studded with emeralds and rubies, a chain, of flamboyant architecture, to which, at the Theatre Royal, Little Peddlington, Hamlet's mother must have been concerned to attach the portrait of the successor to Hamlet's father. "Are you very sure they're not really worth something? Their mere weight alone—!" she vaguely observed, balancing a moment a royal diadem that might have crowned one of the creations of the famous Mrs. Jarley.

But Arthur Prime, it was clear, had already thought the question over and found the answer easy. "If they had been worth anything to speak of she would long ago have sold them. My father and she had unfortunately never been in a position to keep any considerable value locked up." And while his companion took in the obvious force of this he went on with a flourish just marked enough not to escape her: "If they're worth anything at all—why, you're only the more welcome to them."

Charlotte had now in her hand a small bag of faded figured silk—one of those antique conveniences that speak to us, in the terms of evaporated camphor and lavender, of the part they have played in some personal history; but, though she had for the first time drawn the string, she looked much more at the young man than at the questionable treasure it appeared to contain. "I shall like them. They're all I have."

"All you have—?"

"That belonged to her."

He swelled a little, then looked about him as if to appeal—as against her avidity—to the whole poor place. "Well, what else do you want?"

"Nothing. Thank you very much." With which she bent her eyes on the article wrapped, and now only exposed, in her superannuated satchel—a string of large pearls, such a shining circle as might once have graced the neck of a provincial Ophelia and borne company to a flaxen wig. "This perhaps *is* worth something. Feel it." And she passed him the necklace, the weight of which she had gathered for a moment into her hand.

He measured it in the same way with his own, but remained quite detached. "Worth at most thirty shillings."

"Not more?"

"Surely not if it's paste?"

"But *is* it paste?"

He gave a small sniff of impatience. "Pearls nearly as big as filberts?"

"But they're heavy," Charlotte declared.

"No heavier than anything else." And he gave them back with an allowance for her simplicity. "Do you imagine for a moment they're real?"

She studied them a little, feeling them, turning them round. "Mightn't they possibly be?"

"Of that size—stuck away with that trash?"

"I admit it isn't likely," Charlotte presently said. "And pearls are so easily imitated."

"That's just what—to a person who knows—they're not. These have no lustre, no play."

"No—they *are* dull. They're opaque."

"Besides," he lucidly inquired, "how could she ever have come by them?"

"Mightn't they have been a present?"

Arthur stared at the question as if it were almost improper.

"Because actresses are exposed—?" He pulled up, however, not saying to what, and before she could supply the deficiency had, with the sharp ejaculation of "No, they mightn't!" turned his back on her and walked away. His manner made her feel that she had probably been wanting in tact, and before he returned to the subject, the last thing that evening, she had satisfied herself of the ground of his resentment. They had been talking of her departure the next morning, the hour of her train and the fly that would come for her, and it was precisely these things that gave him his effective chance. "I really can't allow you to leave the house under the impression that my stepmother was at *any* time of her life the sort of person to allow herself to be approached—"

"With pearl necklaces and that sort of thing?" Arthur had made for her somehow the difficulty that she couldn't show him she understood him without seeming pert.

It at any rate only added to his own gravity. "That sort of thing, exactly."

"I didn't think when I spoke this morning—but I see what you mean."

"I mean that she was beyond reproach," said Arthur Prime.

"A hundred times yes."

"Therefore if she couldn't, out of her slender gains, ever have paid for a row of pearls—"

"She couldn't, in that atmosphere, ever properly have had one? Of course she couldn't. I've seen perfectly since our talk," Charlotte went on, "that that string of beads isn't even, as an imitation, very good. The little clasp itself doesn't seem even gold. With false pearls, I suppose," the girl mused, "it naturally wouldn't be."

"The whole thing's rotten paste," her companion returned as if to have done with it. "If it were *not*, and she had kept it all these years hidden—"

"Yes?" Charlotte sounded as he paused.

"Why, I shouldn't know what to think!"

"Oh, I see." She had met him with a certain blankness, but adequately enough, it seemed, for him to regard the subject as dismissed; and there was no reversion to it between them before, on the morrow, when she had with difficulty made a place for them in her trunk, she carried off these florid survivals.

At Bleet she found small occasion to revert to them and, in an air charged with such quite other references, even felt, after she had laid them away, much enshrouded, beneath various piles of clothing, as if they formed a collection not wholly without its note of the ridiculous. Yet she was never, for the joke, tempted to show them to her pupils, though Gwendolen and Blanche, in particular, always wanted, on her return, to know what she had brought back; so that without an accident by which the case was quite changed they might have appeared to enter on a new phase of interment. The essence of the accident was the sudden illness, at the last moment, of Lady Bobby, whose advent had been so much counted on to spice the five days'

feast laid out for the coming of age of the eldest son of the house; and its equally marked effect was the despatch of a pressing message, in quite another direction, to Mrs. Guy, who, could she by a miracle be secured—she was always engaged ten parties deep—might be trusted to supply, it was believed, an element of exuberance scarcely less active. Mrs. Guy was already known to several of the visitors already on the scene, but she wasn't yet known to our young lady, who found her, after many wires and counterwires had at last determined the triumph of her arrival, a strange, charming little red-haired, black-dressed woman, with the face of a baby and the authority of a commodore. She took on the spot the discreet, the exceptional young governess into the confidence of her designs and, still more, of her doubts; intimating that it was a policy she almost always promptly pursued.

"Tomorrow and Thursday are all right," she said frankly to Charlotte on the second day, "but I'm not half-satisfied with Friday."

"What improvement then do you suggest?"

"Well, my strong point, you know, is *tableaux vivants*."

"Charming. And what is your favourite character?"

"Boss!" said Mrs. Guy with decision; and it was very markedly under that ensign that she had, within a few hours, completely planned her campaign and recruited her troop. Every word she uttered was to the point, but none more so than, after a general survey of their equipment, her final inquiry of Charlotte. She had been looking about, but half appeased, at the muster of decoration and drapery. "We shall be dull. We shall want more colour. You've nothing else?"

Charlotte had a thought. "No—I've *some* things."

"Then why don't you bring them?"

The girl weighed it. "Would you come to my room?"

"No," said Mrs. Guy—"bring them tonight to mine." So Charlotte, at the evening's end, after candlesticks had flickered through brown old passages bedward, arrived at her friend's door with the burden of her aunt's relics. But she promptly expressed a fear. "Are they too garish?"

When she had poured them out on the sofa Mrs. Guy was but a minute, before the glass, in clapping on the diadem. "Awfully jolly—we can do *Ivanhoe*!"

"But they're only glass and tin."

"Larger than life they are, *rather*!"—which is exactly what's wanted for *tableaux*. *Our* jewels, for historic scenes, don't tell—the real thing falls short. Rowena must have rubies as big as eggs. Leave them with me," Mrs. Guy continued—"they'll inspire me. Good-night."

The next morning she was in fact—yet very strangely—inspired. "Yes, *I'll* do Rowena. But I don't, my dear, understand."

"Understand what?"

Mrs. Guy gave a very lighted stare. "How you come to have such things."

Poor Charlotte smiled. "By inheritance."

"Family jewels?"

"They belonged to my aunt, who died some months ago. She was on the stage a few years in early life, and these are a part of her trappings."

"She left them to you?"

"No; my cousin, her stepson, who naturally has no use for them, gave them to me for remembrance of her. She was a dear kind thing, always so nice to me, and I was fond of her."

Mrs. Guy had listened with frank interest. "But it's *he* who must be a dear kind thing!"

Charlotte wondered. "You think so?"

"Is *he*," her friend went on, "also 'always so nice' to you?"

The girl, at this, face to face there with the brilliant visitor in the deserted breakfast-room, took a deeper sounding. "What is it?"

"Don't you know?"

Something came over her. "The pearls—?" But the question fainted on her lips. "Doesn't *he* know?"

Charlotte found herself flushing. "They're *not* paste?"

"Haven't you looked at them?"

She was conscious of two kinds of embarrassment. "*You* have?"

"Very carefully."

"And they're real?"

Mrs. Guy became slightly mystifying and returned for all answer: "Come again, when you've done with the children, to my room."

Our young woman found she had done with the children that morning so promptly as to reveal to them a new joy, and when she reappeared before Mrs. Guy this lady had already encircled a plump white throat with the only ornament, surely, in all the late Mrs. Prime's—the effaced Miss Bradshaw's—collection, in the least qualified to raise a question. If Charlotte had never yet once, before the glass, tied the string of pearls about her own neck, this was because she had been capable of no such condescension to approved "imitation"; but she had now only to look at Mrs. Guy to see that, so disposed, the ambiguous objects might have passed for frank originals. "What in the world have you done to them?"

"Only handled them, understood them, admired them, and put them on. That's what pearls want; they want to be worn—it wakes them up. They're alive, don't you see? How *have* these been treated? They must have been buried, ignored, despised. They were half-dead. Don't you *know* about pearls?" Mrs. Guy threw off as she fondly fingered the necklace.

"How *should* I? Do *you*?"

"Everything. These were simply asleep, and from the moment I really touched them—well," said their wearer lovingly, "it only took one's eye!"

"It took more than mine—though I did just wonder; and then Arthur's," Charlotte brooded. She found herself almost panting. "Then their value—?"

"Oh, their value's excellent."

The girl, for a deep moment, took another plunge into the wonder, the beauty and mystery, of them. "Are you *sure*?"

Her companion wheeled round for impatience. "Sure? For what kind of an idiot, my dear, do you take me?"

It was beyond Charlotte Prime to say. "For the same kind as Arthur—and as myself," she could only suggest. "But my cousin didn't know. He thinks they're worthless."

"Because of the rest of the lot? Then your cousin's an ass. But what—if, as I understand you, he gave them to you—has he to do with it?"

"Why, if he gave them to me as worthless and they turn out precious—"

"You must give them back? I don't see that—if he was such a noodle. He took the risk."



Charlotte fed, in fancy, on the pearls, which, decidedly, were exquisite, but which at the present moment somehow presented themselves much more as Mrs. Guy's than either as Arthur's or as her own. "Yes—he did take it; even after I had distinctly hinted to him that they looked to me different from the other pieces."

"Well, then!" said Mrs. Guy with something more than triumph—with a positive odd relief.

But it had the effect of making our young woman think with more intensity. "Ah, you see he thought they couldn't be different, because—so peculiarly—they shouldn't be."

"Shouldn't? I don't understand."

"Why, how would she have got them?"—so Charlotte candidly put it.

"She? Who?" There was a capacity in Mrs. Guy's tone for a sinking of persons—!

"Why, the person I told you of: his stepmother, my uncle's wife—among whose poor old things, extraordinarily thrust away and out of sight, he happened to find them."

Mrs. Guy came a step nearer to the effaced Miss Bradshaw. "Do you mean she may have stolen them?"

"No. But she had been an actress."

"Oh, well then," cried Mrs. Guy, "wouldn't that be just how?"

"Yes, except that she wasn't at all a brilliant one, nor in receipt of large pay." The girl even threw off a nervous joke. "I'm afraid she couldn't have been our Rowena."

Mrs. Guy took it up. "Was she very ugly?"

"No. She may very well, when young, have looked rather nice."

"Well, then!" was Mrs. Guy's sharp comment and fresh triumph.

"You mean it was a present? That's just what he so dislikes the idea of her having received—a present from an admirer capable of going such lengths."

"Because she wouldn't have taken it for nothing? *Speriamo*—that she wasn't a brute. The 'length' her admirer went was the length of a whole row. Let us hope she was just a little kind!"

"Well," Charlotte went on, "that she was 'kind' might seem to be shown by the fact that neither her husband, nor his son, nor I, his niece, knew or dreamed of her possessing anything so precious; by her having kept the gift all the rest of her life beyond discovery—out of sight and protected from suspicion."

"As if, you mean"—Mrs. Guy was quick—"she had been wedded to it and yet was ashamed of it? Fancy," she laughed while she manipulated the rare beads, "being ashamed of *these*!"

"But you see she had married a clergyman."

"Yes, she must have been 'rum.' But at any rate he had married *her*. What did he suppose?"

"Why, that she had never been the sort by whom such offerings are encouraged."

"Ah, my dear, the sort by whom they are *not*—!" But Mrs. Guy caught herself up. "And her stepson thought the same?"

"Overwhelmingly."

"Was he, then, if only her stepson—"

"So fond of her as that comes to? Yes; he had never known, consciously, his real mother, and, without children of her own, she was very patient and nice with him. And *I* liked her so," the girl pursued, "that at the end of ten years, in so strange a manner, to 'give her away'—"

"Is impossible to you? Then don't!" said Mrs. Guy with decision.

"Ah, but if they're real I can't keep them!" Charlotte, with her eyes on them, moaned in her impatience. "It's too difficult."

"Where's the difficulty, if he has such sentiments that he would rather sacrifice the necklace than admit it, with the presumption it carries with it, to be genuine? You've only to be silent."

"And keep it? How can I ever wear it?"

"You'd have to hide it, like your aunt?" Mrs. Guy was amused. "You can easily sell it."

Her companion walked round her for a look at the affair from behind. The clasp was certainly, doubtless intentionally, misleading, but everything else was indeed lovely. "Well, I must think. Why didn't *she* sell them?" Charlotte broke out in her trouble.

Mrs. Guy had an instant answer. "Doesn't that prove what they secretly recalled to her? You've only to be silent!" she ardently repeated.

"I must think—I must think!"

Mrs. Guy stood with her hands attached but motionless.

"Then you want them back?"

As if with the dread of touching them Charlotte retreated to the door. "I'll tell you tonight."

"But may I wear them?"

"Meanwhile?"

"This evening—at dinner."

It was the sharp, selfish pressure of this that really, on the spot, determined the girl; but for the moment, before closing the door on the question, she only said: "As you like!"

They were busy much of the day with preparation and rehearsal, and at dinner, that evening, the concourse of guests was such that a place among them for Miss Prime failed to find itself marked. At the time the company rose she was therefore alone in the schoolroom, where, towards eleven o'clock, she received a visit from Mrs. Guy. This lady's white shoulders heaved, under the pearls, with an emotion that the very red lips which formed, as if for the full effect, the happiest opposition of colour, were not slow to translate. "My dear, you should have seen the sensation—they've had a success!"

Charlotte, dumb a moment, took it all in. "It *is* as if they knew it—they're more and more alive. But so much the worse for both of us! I can't," she brought out with an effort, "be silent."

"You mean to return them?"

"If I don't I'm a thief."

Mrs. Guy gave her a long, hard look: what was decidedly not of the baby in Mrs. Guy's face was a certain air of established habit in the eyes. Then, with a sharp little jerk of her head and a backward reach of her bare beautiful arms, she undid the clasp and, taking off the necklace, laid it on the table. "If you do, you're a goose."

"Well, of the two—!" said our young lady, gathering it up with a sigh. And as if to get it, for the pang it gave, out of sight as soon as possible, she shut it up, clicking the lock, in the drawer of her own little table; after which, when she turned again, her companion looked naked and plain without it. "But what will you say?" it then occurred to her to demand.

"Downstairs—to explain?" Mrs. Guy was, after all, trying at least to keep her temper. "Oh, I'll put on something else and say that the clasp is broken. And you won't of course name *me* to him," she added.

"As having undeceived me? No—I'll say that, looking at the thing more carefully, it's my own private idea."

"And does he know how little you really know?"

"As an expert—surely. And he has always much the conceit of his own opinion."

"Then he won't believe you—as he so hates to. He'll stick to his judgment and maintain his gift, and we shall have the darlings back!" With which reviving assurance Mrs. Guy kissed her young friend for good-night.

She was not, however, to be gratified or justified by any prompt event, for, whether or no paste entered into the composition of the ornament in question, Charlotte shrank from the temerity of despatching it to town by post. Mrs. Guy was thus disappointed of the hope of seeing the business settled—"by return," she had seemed to expect—before the end of the revels. The revels, moreover, rising to a frantic pitch, pressed for all her attention, and it was at last only in the general confusion of leave-taking that she made, parenthetically, a dash at the person in the whole company with whom her contact had been most interesting.

"Come, what will you take for them?"

"The pearls? Ah, you'll have to treat with my cousin."

Mrs. Guy, with quick intensity, lent herself. "Where then does he live?"

"In chambers in the Temple. You can find him."

"But what's the use, if *you* do neither one thing nor the other?"

"Oh, I *shall* do the 'other,' " Charlotte said; "I'm only waiting till I go up. You want them so awfully?" She curiously, solemnly again, sounded her.

"I'm dying for them. There's a special charm in them—I don't know what it is: they tell so their history."

"But what do you know of that?"

"Just what they themselves say. It's all *in* them—and it comes out. They breathe a tenderness—they have the white glow of it. My dear," hissed Mrs. Guy in supreme confidence and as she buttoned her glove—"they're things of love!"

"Oh!" our young woman vaguely exclaimed.

"They're things of passion!"

"Mercy!" she gasped, turning short off. But these words remained, though indeed their help was scarce needed, Charlotte being in private face to face with a new light, as she by this time felt she must call it, on the dear dead kind colourless lady whose career had turned so sharp a corner in the middle. The pearls had quite taken their place as a revelation. She might have received them for nothing—admit that; but she couldn't have kept them so long and so unprofitably hidden, couldn't have enjoyed them only in secret, for nothing; and she had mixed them in her reliquary with false things, in order to put curiosity and detection off the scent. Over this strange fact poor Charlotte interminably mused: it became more touching, more attaching for her than she could now confide to any ear. How bad or how happy—in the sophisticated sense of Mrs. Guy and the young man at the Temple—the effaced Miss Bradshaw must have been to have had to be so mute! The little governess at Bleet put on the necklace now in secret sessions; she wore it sometimes under her dress; she came to feel verily a haunting passion for it. Yet in her penniless state she would have parted with it for money; she gave herself also to dreams of what

in this direction it would do for her. The sophistry of her so often saying to herself that Arthur had after all definitely pronounced her welcome to any gain from his gift that might accrue—this trick remained innocent, as she perfectly knew it for what it was. Then there was always the possibility of his—as she could only picture it—rising to the occasion. Mightn't he have a grand magnanimous moment?—mightn't he just say: "Oh, of course I couldn't have afforded to let you have it if I had known; but since you *have* got it, and have made out the truth by your own wit, I really can't screw myself down to the shabbiness of taking it back"?

She had, as it proved, to wait a long time—to wait till, at the end of several months, the great house of Bleet had, with due deliberation, for the season, transferred itself to town; after which, however, she fairly snatched at her first freedom to knock, dressed in her best and armed with her disclosure, at the door of her doubting kinsman. It was still with doubt and not quite with the face she had hoped that he listened to her story. He had turned pale, she thought, as she produced the necklace, and he appeared, above all, disagreeably affected. Well, perhaps there was reason, she more than ever remembered; but what on earth was one, in close touch with the fact, to do? She had laid the pearls on his table, where, without his having at first put so much as a finger to them, they met his hard, cold stare.

"I don't believe in them," he simply said at last.

"That's exactly, then," she returned with some spirit, "what I wanted to hear!"

She fancied that at this his colour changed; it was indeed vivid to her afterwards—for she was to have a long recall of the scene—that she had made him quite angrily flush. "'It's a beastly unpleasant imputation, you know!'"—and he walked away from her as he had always walked at the vicarage.

"It's none of *my* making, I'm sure," said Charlotte Prime. "If you're afraid to believe they're real—"

"Well?"—and he turned, across the room, sharp round at her.

"Why, it's not my fault."

He said nothing more, for a moment, on this; he only came back to the table. "They're what I originally said they were. They're rotten paste."

"Then I may keep them?"

"No. I want a better opinion."

"Than your own?"

"Than *your* own." He dropped on the pearls another queer stare, then, after a moment, bringing himself to touch them, did exactly what she had herself done in the presence of Mrs. Guy at Bleet—gathered them together, marched off with them to a drawer, put them in and clicked the key. "You say I'm afraid," he went on as he again met her; "but I shan't be afraid to take them to Bond Street."

"And if the people say they're real—?"

He had a pause and then his strangest manner. "They won't say it! They shan't!"

There was something in the way he brought it out that deprived poor Charlotte, as she was perfectly aware, of any manner at all. "Oh!" she simply sounded, as she had sounded for her last word to Mrs. Guy; and, within a minute, without more conversation, she had taken her departure.

A fortnight later she received a communication from him, and towards the end of the season one of the entertainments in Eaton Square was graced by the presence of Mrs. Guy. Charlotte was not at dinner, but she came down afterwards, and this guest, on seeing her, abandoned a very beautiful young man on purpose to cross and

speak to her. The guest displayed a lovely necklace and had apparently not lost her habit of overflowing with the pride of such ornaments.

"Do you see?" She was in high joy.

They were indeed splendid pearls—so far as poor Charlotte could feel that she knew, after what had come and gone, about such mysteries. The poor girl had a sickly smile. "They're almost as fine as Arthur's."

"Almost? Where, my dear, are your eyes? They *are* 'Arthur's'!" After which, to meet the flood of crimson that accompanied her young friend's start: "I tracked them—after your folly, and, by miraculous luck, recognised them in the Bond Street window to which he had disposed of them."

"*Disposed* of them?" the girl gasped. "He wrote me that I had insulted his mother and that the people had shown him he was right—had pronounced them utter paste."

Mrs. Guy gave a stare. "Ah, I told you he wouldn't bear it! No. But I had, I assure you," she wound up, "to drive my bargain!"

Charlotte scarce heard or saw; she was full of her private wrong. "He wrote me," she panted, "that he had smashed them."

Mrs. Guy could only wonder and pity. "He's really morbid!" But it wasn't quite clear which of the pair she pitied; though the young person felt really morbid too after they had separated and she found herself full of thought. She even went the length of asking herself what sort of a bargain Mrs. Guy had driven and whether the marvel of the recognition in Bond Street had been a veracious account of the matter. Hadn't she perhaps in truth dealt with Arthur directly? It came back to Charlotte almost luridly that she had had his address.

## AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE

AMBROSE BIERCE (1842-1914?)

A man stood upon a railroad bridge in northern Alabama, looking down into the swift water twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as "support," that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the center of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it.

Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was

an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle acclivity topped with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loopholed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway of the slope between the bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in line, at "parade rest," the butts of the rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the center of the bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who when he comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference.

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well-fitting frock coat. He wore a mustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the sergeant. At a signal from the former the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgment as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his "unsteadfast footing," then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish stream!

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift—all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by—it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds

increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. "If I could free my hands," he thought, "I might throw off the nose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance."

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than evolved from it the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

Peyton Farquhar was a well-to-do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a slave owner and like other slave owners a politician, he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with the gallant army that had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in war time. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.

One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was fetching the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

"The Yanks are repairing the railroads," said the man, "and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in order and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order."

"How far is it to the Owl Creek bridge?" Farquhar asked.

"About thirty miles."

"Is there no force on this side the creek?"

"Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge."

"Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel," said Farquhar, smiling, "what could he accomplish?"

The soldier reflected. "I was there a month ago," he replied. "I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tow."

The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he re-passed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as one already dead. From this state he was awakened—ages later, it seemed to him—by the pain of a sharp pressure up in his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fiber of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well-defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fullness—of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum. Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the noise of a loud plash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken and he had fallen into the stream. There was no additional strangulation; the noose about his neck was already suffocating him and kept the water from his lungs. To die of hanging at the bottom of a river!—the idea seemed to him ludicrous. He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw above him a gleam of light, but how distant, how inaccessible! He was still sinking, for the light became fainter and fainter until it was a mere glimmer. Then it began to grow and brighten, and he knew that he was rising toward the surface—knew it with reluctance, for he was now very comfortable. "To be hanged and drowned," he thought, "that is not so bad; but I do not wish to be shot. No; I will not be shot; that is not fair."

He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrist apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. What splendid effort! What magnificent, what superhuman strength! Ah, that was a fine endeavor! Bravo! The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water snake. "Put it back, put it back!" He thought he shouted these words to his hands, for the undoing of the noose had been succeeded by the direst pang that he had yet experienced. His neck ached horribly; his brain was on fire; his heart, which had been fluttering faintly, gave a great leap, trying to force itself out at his mouth. His whole body was racked and wrenched with an insupportable anguish! But his disobedient hands gave no heed to the command. They beat the water vigorously with quick, downward strokes, forcing him to the surface. He felt his head emerge; his eyes were blinded by the sunlight; his chest expanded convulsively, and with a supreme and crowning agony his lungs engulfed a great draught of air, which instantly he expelled in a shriek!

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf—saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant-bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass.



The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragonflies' wings, the strokes of the water spiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat—all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to wheel slowly round, himself the pivotal point, and he saw the bridge, the fort, the soldiers upon the bridge, the captain, the sergeant, the two privates, his executioners. They were in silhouette against the blue sky. They shouted and gesticulated, pointing at him. The captain had drawn his pistol, but did not fire; the others were unarmed. Their movements were grotesque and horrible, their forms gigantic.

Suddenly he heard a sharp report and something struck the water smartly within a few inches of his head, spattering his face with spray. He heard a second report, and saw one of the sentinels with his rifle at his shoulder, a light cloud of blue smoke rising from the muzzle. The man in the water saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle. He observed that it was a gray eye and remembered having read that gray eyes were keenest, and that all famous marksmen had them. Nevertheless, this one had missed.

A counter-swirl had caught Farquhar and turned him half round; he was again looking into the forest on the bank opposite the fort. The sound of a clear, high voice in a monotonous singsong now rang out behind him and came across the water with distinctness that pierced and subdued all other sounds, even the beating of the ripples in his ears. Although no soldier, he had frequented camps enough to know the dread significance of that deliberate, drawling, aspirated chant; the lieutenant on shore was taking a part in the morning's work. How coldly and pitilessly—with what an even, calm intonation, presaging, and enforcing tranquillity in the men—with what accurately measured intervals fell those cruel words:

"Attention, company! . . . Shoulder arms! . . . Ready! . . . Aim! . . . Fire!"

Farquhar dived—dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears like the voice of Niagara, yet he heard the dulled thunder of the volley and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, singularly flattened, oscillating slowly downward. Some of them touched him on the face and hands, then fell away, continuing their descent. One lodged between his collar and neck; it was uncomfortably warm and he snatched it out.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he had been a long time under water; he was perceptibly farther down stream—nearer to safety. The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets. The two sentinels fired again, independently and ineffectually.

The hunted man saw all this over his shoulder; he was now swimming vigorously with the current. His brain was as energetic as his arms and legs; he thought with the rapidity of lightning.

"The officer," he reasoned, "will not make that martinet's error a second time. It is as easy to dodge a volley as a single shot. He has probably already given the command to fire at will. God help me, I cannot dodge them all!"

An appalling splash within two yards of him was followed by a loud, rushing sound, *diminuendo*, which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its deeps! A rising sheet of water curved over him, fell down upon him, blinded him, strangled him! The cannon had taken a hand in the game. As he shook his head free from the commotion of the

smitten water he heard the deflected shot humming through the air ahead, and in an instant it was cracking and smashing the branches in the forest beyond.

"They will not do that again," he thought; "the next time they will use a charge of grape. I must keep my eye upon the gun; the smoke will apprise me—the report arrives too late; it lags behind the missile. That is a good gun."

Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round—spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forests, the now distant bridge, fort and men—all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color—that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration that made him giddy and sick. In a few moments he was flung upon the gravel at the foot of the left bank of the stream—the southern bank—and behind a projecting point which concealed him from his enemies. The sudden arrest of his motion, the abrasion of one of his hands on the gravel, restored him, and he wept with delight. He dug his fingers into the sand, threw it over himself in handfuls and audibly blessed it. It looked like diamonds, rubies, emeralds; he could think of nothing beautiful which it did not resemble. The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants; he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange, roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their branches the music of Aeolian harps. He had no wish to perfect his escape—was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken.

A whiz and rattle of grapeshot among the branches high above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoner had fired him a random farewell. He sprang to his feet, rushed up the sloping bank, and plunged into the forest.

All that day he traveled, laying his course by the rounding sun. The forest seemed interminable; nowhere did he discover a break in it, not even a woodman's road. He had not known that he lived in so wild a region. There was something uncanny in the revelation.

By nightfall he was fatigued, footsore, famishing. The thought of his wife and children urged him on. At last he found a road which led him in what he knew to be the right direction. It was as wide and straight as a city street, yet it seemed untraveled. No fields bordered it, no dwelling anywhere. Not so much as the barking of a dog suggested human habitation. The black bodies of the trees formed a straight wall on both sides, terminating on the horizon in a point, like a diagram in a lesson in perspective. Overhead, as he looked up through this rift in the wood, shone great golden stars looking unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations. He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance. The wood on either side was full of singular noises, among which—once, twice, and again—he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue.

His neck was in pain and lifting his hand to it he found it horribly swollen. He knew that it had a circle of black where the rope had bruised it. His eyes felt congested; he could no longer close them. His tongue was swollen with thirst; he relieved its fever by thrusting it forward from between his teeth into the cold air. How softly the turf had carpeted the untraveled avenue—he could no longer feel the roadway beneath his feet!

Doubtless, despite his suffering, he had fallen asleep while walking, for now he sees another scene—perhaps he has merely recovered from a delirium. He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire night. As he pushes open

the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife, looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting, with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how beautiful she is! He springs forward with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon—then all is darkness and silence!

Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge.

## MR. ARCULARIS

CONRAD AIKEN (1889- )

Mr. Arcularis stood at the window of his room in the hospital and looked down at the street. There had been a light shower, which had patterned the sidewalks with large drops, but now again the sun was out, blue sky was showing here and there between the swift white clouds, a cold wind was blowing the poplar trees. An itinerant band had stopped before the building and was playing, with violin, harp, and flute, the finale of "Cavalleria Rusticana." Leaning against the window-sill—for he felt extraordinarily weak after his operation—Mr. Arcularis suddenly, listening to the wretched music, felt like crying. He rested the palm of one hand against a cold window pane and stared down at the old man who was blowing the flute, and blinked his eyes. It seemed absurd that he should be so weak, so emotional, so like a child—and especially now that everything was over at last. In spite of all their predictions, in spite, too, of his own dreadful certainty that he was going to die, here he was, as fit as a fiddle—but what a fiddle it was, so out of tune!—with a long life before him. And to begin with, a voyage to England ordered by the doctor. What could be more delightful? Why should he feel sad about it and want to cry like a baby? In a few minutes Harry would arrive with his car to take him to the wharf; in an hour he would be on the sea, in two hours he would see the sunset behind him, where Boston had been, and his new life would be opening before him. It was many years since he had been abroad. June, the best of the year to come—England, France, the Rhine—how ridiculous that he should already be homesick!

There was a light footstep outside the door, a knock, the door opened, and Harry came in.

"Well, old man, I've come to get you. The old bus actually got here. Are you ready? Here, let me take your arm. You're tottering like an octogenarian!"

Mr. Arcularis submitted gratefully, laughing, and they made the journey slowly along the bleak corridor and down the stairs to the entrance hall. Miss Hoyle, his nurse, was there, and the Matron, and the charming little assistant with freckles who had helped to prepare him for the operation. Miss Hoyle put out her hand.

"Good-by, Mr. Arcularis," she said, "and *bon voyage*."

"Good-by, Miss Hoyle, and thank you for everything. You were very kind to me. And I fear I was a nuisance."

*The girl with the freckles, too, gave him her hand, smiling. She was very pretty, and it would have been easy to fall in love with her. She reminded him of someone. Who was it? He tried in vain to remember while he said good-by to her and turned to the Matron.*

"And not too many latitudes with the young ladies, Mr. Arcularis!" she was saying.

Mr. Arcularis was pleased, flattered, by all this attention to a middle-aged invalid, and felt a joke taking shape in his mind, and no sooner in his mind than on his tongue.

"Oh, no latitudes," he said, laughing. "I'll leave the latitudes to the ship!"

"Oh, come now," said the Matron, "we don't seem to have hurt him much, do we?"

"I think we'll have to operate on him again and *really* cure him," said Miss Hoyle.

He was going down the front steps, between the potted palmettoes, and they all laughed and waved. The wind was cold, very cold for June, and he was glad he had put on his coat. He shivered.

"Damned cold for June!" he said. "Why should it be so cold?"

"East wind," Harry said, arranging the rug over his knees. "Sorry it's an open car, but I believe in fresh air and all that sort of thing. I'll drive slowly. We've got plenty of time."

They coasted gently down the long hill towards Beacon Street, but the road was badly surfaced, and despite Harry's care Mr. Arcularis felt his pain again. He found that he could alleviate it a little by leaning to the right, against the arm-rest, and not breathing too deeply. But how glorious to be out again! How strange and vivid the world looked! The trees had innumerable green fresh leaves—they were all blowing and shifting and turning and flashing in the wind; drops of rainwater fell downward sparkling; the robins were singing their absurd, delicious little four-noted songs; even the street cars looked unusually bright and beautiful, just as they used to look when he was a child and had wanted above all things to be a motorman. He found himself smiling foolishly at everything, foolishly and weakly, and wanted to say something about it to Harry. It was no use, though—he had no strength, and the mere finding of words would be almost more than he could manage. And even if he should succeed in saying it, he would then most likely burst into tears. He shook his head slowly from side to side.

"Ain't it grand?" he said.

"I'll bet it looks good," said Harry.

"Words fail me."

"You wait till you get out to sea. You'll have a swell time."

"Oh, swell! . . . I hope not. I hope it'll be calm."

"Tut tut."

When they passed the Harvard Club Mr. Arcularis made a slow and somewhat painful effort to turn in his seat and look at it. It might be the last chance to see it for a long time. Why this sentimental longing to stare at it, though? There it was, with the great flag blowing in the wind, the Harvard seal now concealed by the swift folds and now revealed, and there were the windows in the library, where he had spent so many delightful hours reading—Plato, and Kipling, and the Lord knows what—and the balconies from which for so many years he had watched the finish of the Marathon. Old Talbot might be in there now, sleeping with a book on his knee, hoping forlornly to be interrupted by anyone, for anything.

"Good-by to the old club," he said.

"The bar will miss you," said Harry, smiling with friendly irony and looking straight ahead.

"But let there be no moaning," said Mr. Arcularis.

"What's *that* a quotation from?"

"The *Odyssey*."

In spite of the cold, he was glad of the wind on his face, for it helped to dissipate the feeling of vagueness and dizziness that came over him in a sickening wave from time to time. All of a sudden everything would begin to swim and dissolve, the houses would lean their heads together, he had to close his eyes, and there would be a curious and dreadful humming noise, which at regular intervals rose to a crescendo and then drawlingly subsided again. It was disconcerting. Perhaps he still had a trace of fever. When he got on the ship he would have a glass of whisky. . . . From one of these spells he opened his eyes and found that they were on the ferry, crossing to East Boston. It must have been the ferry's engines that he had heard. From another spell he woke to find himself on the wharf, the car at a standstill beside a pile of yellow packing-cases.

"We're here because we're here because we're here," said Harry.

"Because we're here," added Mr. Arcularis.

He dozed in the car while Harry—and what a good friend Harry was!—attended to all the details. He went and came with tickets and passports and baggage checks and porters. And at last he unwrapped Mr. Arcularis from the rugs and led him up the steep gangplank to the deck, and thence by devious windings to a small cold state-room with a solitary porthole like the eye of a cyclops.

"Here you are," he said, "and now I've got to go. Did you hear the whistle?"

"No."

"Well, you're half asleep. It's sounded the all-ashore. Good-by, old fellow, and take care of yourself. Bring me back a spray of edelweiss. And send me a picture post card from the Absolute."

"Will you have it finite or infinite?"

"Oh, infinite. But with your signature on it. Now you'd better turn in for a while and have a nap. Cheerio!"

Mr. Arcularis took his hand and pressed it hard, and once more felt like crying. Absurd! Had he become a child again?

"Good-by," he said.

He sat down in the little wicker chair, with his overcoat still on, closed his eyes, and listened to the humming of the air in the ventilator. Hurried footsteps ran up and down the corridor. The chair was not too comfortable, and his pain began to bother him again, so he moved, with his coat still on, to the narrow berth and fell asleep. When he woke up, it was dark, and the porthole had been partly opened. He groped for the switch and turned on the light. Then he rang for the steward.

"It's cold in here," he said. "Would you mind closing the port?"

The girl who sat opposite him at dinner was charming. Who was it she reminded him of? Why, of course, the girl at the hospital, the girl with the freckles. Her hair was beautiful, not quite red, not quite gold, nor had it been bobbed; arranged with a sort of graceful untidiness, it made him think of a Melozzo da Forlì angel. Her face was freckled, she had a mouth which was both humorous and voluptuous. And she seemed to be alone.

He frowned at the bill of fare and ordered the thick soup.

"No hors d'oeuvres?" asked the steward.

"I think not," said Mr. Arcularis. "They might kill me."

The steward permitted himself to be amused and deposited the menu card on the table against the water-bottle. His eyebrows were lifted. As he moved away, the girl followed him with her eyes and smiled.

"I'm afraid you shocked him," she said.

"Impossible," said Mr. Arcularis. "These stewards, they're dead souls. How could they be stewards otherwise? And they think they've seen and known everything. They suffer terribly from the *déjà vu*. Personally, I don't blame them."

"It must be a dreadful sort of life."

"It's because they're dead that they accept it."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure of it. I'm enough of a dead soul myself to know the signs!"

"Well, I don't know what you mean by that!"

"But nothing mysterious! I'm just out of hospital, after an operation. I was given up for dead. For six months I had given *myself* up for dead. If you've ever been seriously ill you know the feeling. You have a posthumous feeling—a mild, cynical tolerance for everything and everyone. What is there you haven't seen or done or understood? Nothing."

Mr. Arcularis waved his hands and smiled.

"I wish I could understand you," said the girl, "but I've never been ill in my life."

"Never?"

"Never."

"Good God!"

The torrent of the unexpressed and inexpressible paralyzed him and rendered him speechless. He stared at the girl, wondering who she was and then, realizing that he had perhaps stared too fixedly, averted his gaze, gave a little laugh, rolled a pill of bread between his fingers. After a second or two he allowed himself to look at her again and found her smiling.

"Never pay any attention to invalids," he said, "or they'll drag you to the hospital."

She examined him critically, with her head tilted a little to one side, but with friendliness.

"You don't *look* like an invalid," she said.

Mr. Arcularis thought her charming. His pain ceased to bother him, the disagreeable humming disappeared, or rather, it was dissociated from himself and became merely, as it should be, the sound of the ship's engines, and he began to think the voyage was going to be really delightful. The parson on his right passed him the salt.

"I fear you will need this in your soup," he said.

"Thank you. Is it as bad as that?"

The steward, overhearing, was immediately apologetic and solicitous. He explained that on the first day everything was at sixes and sevens. The girl looked up at him and asked him a question.

"Do you think we'll have a good voyage?" she said.

He was passing the hot rolls to the parson, removing the napkins from them with a deprecatory finger.

"Well, madam, I don't like to be a Jeremiah, but—"

"Oh, come," said the parson, "I hope we have no Jeremiahs."

"What do you mean?" said the girl.

Mr. Arcularis ate his soup with gusto—it was nice and hot.

"Well, maybe I shouldn't say it, but there's a corpse on board, going to Ireland; and I never yet knew a voyage with a corpse on board that we didn't have bad weather."

"Why, steward, you're just superstitious! What nonsense."

"That's a very ancient superstition," said Mr. Arcularis. "I've heard it many times. Maybe it's true. Maybe we'll be wrecked. And what does it matter, after all?" He was very bland.

"Then let's be wrecked," said the parson coldly.

Nevertheless, Mr. Arcularis felt a shudder go through him on hearing the steward's remark. A corpse in the hold—a coffin? Perhaps it was true. Perhaps some disaster would befall them. There might be fogs. There might be icebergs. He thought of all the wrecks of which he had read. There was the *Titanic*, which he had read about in the warm newspaper room at the Harvard Club—it had seemed dreadfully real, even there. That band, playing "Nearer My God to Thee" on the after-deck while the ship sank! It was one of the darkest of his memories. And the *Empress of Ireland*—all those poor people trapped in the smoking-room, with only one door between them and life, and that door locked for the night by the deck-steward, and the deck-steward nowhere to be found! He shivered, feeling a draft, and turned to the parson.

"How do these strange delusions arise?" he said.

The parson looked at him searchingly, appraisingly—from chin to forehead, from forehead to chin—and Mr. Arcularis, feeling uncomfortable, straightened his tie.

"From nothing but fear," said the parson. "Nothing on earth but fear."

"How strange!" said the girl.

Mr. Arcularis again looked at her—she had lowered her face—and again tried to think of whom she reminded him. It wasn't only the little freckle-faced girl at the hospital—both of them had reminded him of someone else. Someone far back in his life: remote, beautiful, lovely. But he couldn't think. The meal came to an end, they all rose, the ship's orchestra played a feeble fox-trot, and Mr. Arcularis, once more alone, went to the bar to have his whisky. The room was stuffy, and the ship's engines were both audible and palpable. The humming and throbbing oppressed him, the rhythm seemed to be the rhythm of his own pain, and after a short time he found his way, with slow steps, holding on to the walls in his moments of weakness and dizziness, to his forlorn and white little room. The port had been—thank God!—closed for the night: it was cold enough anyway. The white and blue ribbons fluttered from the ventilator, the bottle and glasses clicked and clucked as the ship swayed gently to the long, slow motion of the sea. It was all very peculiar—it was all like something he had experienced somewhere before. What was it? Where was it? . . . He untied his tie, looking at his face in the glass, and wondered, and from time to time put his hand to his side to hold in the pain. It wasn't at Portsmouth, in his childhood, nor at Salem, nor in the rose-garden at his Aunt Julia's, nor in the schoolroom at Cambridge. It was something very queer, very intimate, very precious. The jackstones, the Sunday-School cards which he had loved when he was a child . . . He fell asleep.

The sense of time was already hopelessly confused. One hour was like another, the sea looked always the same, morning was indistinguishable from afternoon—and was it Tuesday or Wednesday? Mr. Arcularis was sitting in the smoking-room, in his favorite corner, watching the parson teach Miss Dean to play chess. On the deck outside he could see the people passing and repassing in their restless round of the ship. The red jacket went by, then the black hat with the white feather, then the purple scarf, the brown tweed coat, the Bulgarian mustache, the monocle, the Scotch cap with fluttering ribbons, and in no time at all the red jacket again, dipping past the windows with its own peculiar rhythm, followed once more by the black hat and the purple

scarf. How odd to reflect on the fixed little orbits of these things—as definite and profound, perhaps, as the orbits of the stars, and as important to God or the Absolute. There was a kind of tyranny in this fixedness, too—to think of it too much made one uncomfortable. He closed his eyes for a moment, to avoid seeing for the fortieth time the Bulgarian mustache and the pursuing monocle. The parson was explaining the movements of knights. Two forward and one to the side. Eight possible moves, always to the opposite color from that on which the piece stands. Two forward and one to the side: Miss Dean repeated the words several times with reflective emphasis. Here, too, was the terrifying fixed curve of the infinite, the creeping curve of logic which at last must become the final signpost at the edge of nothing. After that—the deluge. The great white light of annihilation. The bright flash of death. . . . Was it merely the sea which made these abstractions so insistent, so intrusive? The mere notion of *orbit* had somehow become extraordinarily naked; and to rid himself of the discomfort and also to forget a little the pain which bothered his side whenever he sat down, he walked slowly and carefully into the writing-room, and examined a pile of superannuated magazines and catalogues of travel. The bright colors amused him, the photographs of remote islands and mountains, savages in sampans or sarongs or both—it was all very far off and delightful, like something in a dream or a fever. But he found that he was too tired to read and was incapable of concentration. Dreams! Yes, that reminded him. That rather alarming business—sleep-walking!

Later in the evening—at what hour he didn't know—he was telling Miss Dean about it, as he had intended to do. They were sitting in deck-chairs on the sheltered side. The sea was black, and there was a cold wind. He wished they had chosen to sit in the lounge.

Miss Dean was extremely pretty—no, beautiful. She looked at him, too, in a very strange and lovely way, with something of inquiry, something of sympathy, something of affection. It seemed as if, between the question and the answer, they had sat thus for a very long time, exchanging an unspoken secret, simply looking at each other quietly and kindly. Had an hour or two passed? And was it at all necessary to speak?

"No," she said, "I never have."

She breathed into the low words a note of interrogation and gave him a slow smile.

"That's the funny part of it. I never had either until last night. Never in my life. I hardly ever even dream. And it really rather frightens me."

"Tell me about it, Mr. Arcularis."

"I dreamed at first that I was walking, alone, in a wide plain covered with snow. It was growing dark, I was very cold, my feet were frozen and numb, and I was lost. I came then to a signpost—at first it seemed to me there was nothing on it. Nothing but ice. Just before it grew finally dark, however, I made out on it the one word 'Polaris.'"

"The Pole Star."

"Yes—and you see, I didn't myself know that. I looked it up only this morning. I suppose I must have seen it somewhere? And of course it rhymes with my name."

"Why, so it does!"

"Anyway, it gave me—in the dream—an awful feeling of despair, and the dream changed. This time, I dreamed I was standing *outside* my stateroom in the little dark corridor, or *cul-de-sac*, and trying to find the door-handle to let myself in. I was in my pajamas, and again I was very cold. And at this point I woke up. . . . The extraordinary thing is that's exactly where I was!"

"Good heavens. How strange!"



"Yes. And now the question is, *where had I been?* I was frightened, when I came to—not unnaturally. For among other things I *did* have, quite definitely, the feeling that I *had been* somewhere. Somewhere where it was very cold. It doesn't sound very proper. Suppose I had been seen!"

"That might have been awkward," said Miss Dean.

"Awkward! It might indeed. It's very singular. I've never done such a thing before. It's this sort of thing that reminds one—rather wholesomely, perhaps, don't you think?"—and Mr. Arcularis gave a nervous little laugh—"how extraordinarily little we know about the workings of our own minds or souls. After all, what *do* we know?"

"Nothing—nothing—nothing—nothing," said Miss Dean slowly.

"*Absolutely* nothing."

Their voices had dropped, and again they were silent; and again they looked at each other gently and sympathetically, as if for the exchange of something unspoken and perhaps unspeakable. Time ceased. The orbit—so it seemed to Mr. Arcularis—once more became pure, became absolute. And once more he found himself wondering who it was that Miss Dean—Clarice Dean—reminded him of. Long ago and far away. Like those pictures of the islands and mountains. The little freckle-faced girl at the hospital was merely, as it were, the stepping-stone, the signpost, or, as in algebra, the "equals" sign. But what was it they both "equalled"? The jackstones came again into his mind and his Aunt Julia's rose-garden—at sunset; but this was ridiculous. It couldn't be simply that they reminded him of his childhood! And yet why not?

They went into the lounge. The ship's orchestra, in the oval-shaped balcony among faded palms, was playing the finale of "Cavalleria Rusticana," playing it badly.

"Good God!" said Mr. Arcularis, "can't I ever escape from that damned sentimental tune? It's the last thing I heard in America, and the last thing I *want* to hear."

"But don't you like it?"

"As music? No! It moves me too much, but in the wrong way."

"What, exactly, do you mean?"

"Exactly? Nothing. When I heard it at the hospital—when was it?—it made me feel like crying. Three old Italians tootling it in the rain. I suppose, like most people, I'm afraid of my feelings."

"Are they so dangerous?"

"Now then, young woman! Are you pulling my leg?"

The stewards had rolled away the carpets, and the passengers were beginning to dance. Miss Dean accepted the invitation of a young officer, and Mr. Arcularis watched them with envy. Odd, that last exchange of remarks—very odd; in fact, everything was odd. Was it possible that they were falling in love? Was that what it was all about—all these concealed references and recollections? He had read of such things. But at his age! And with a girl of twenty-two!

After an amused look at his old friend Polaris from the open door on the sheltered side, he went to bed.

The rhythm of the ship's engines was positively a persecution. It gave one no rest, it followed one like the Hound of Heaven, it drove one out into space and across the Milky Way and then back home by way of Betelgeuse: It was cold there, too. Mr. Arcularis, making the round trip by way of Betelgeuse and Polaris, sparkled with frost. He felt like a Christmas tree. Icicles on his fingers and icicles on his toes. He tinkled and spangled in the void, hallooed to the waste echoes, rounded the buoy on the verge of the Unknown, and tacked glitteringly homeward. The wind whistled. He was

barefooted. Snowflakes and tinsel blew past him. Next time, by George, he would go farther still—for altogether it was rather a lark. Forward into the untrodden! as somebody said. Some intrepid explorer of his own backyard, probably, some middle-aged professor with an umbrella: those were the fellows for courage! But give us time, thought Mr. Arcularis, give us time, and we will bring back with us the nightmare of the Absolute. Or was it Absolute? If only there weren't this perpetual throbbing, this iteration of sound, like a pain, these circles and repetitions of light—the feeling as of everything coiling inward to a center of misery . . .

Suddenly it was dark, and he was lost. He was groping, he touched the cold, white, slippery woodwork with his fingernails, looking for an electric switch. The throbbing, of course, was the throbbing of the ship. But he was almost home—almost home. Another corner to round, a door to be opened, and there he would be. Safe and sound. Safe in his father's home.

It was at this point that he woke up: in the corridor that led to the dining saloon. Such pure terror, such horror, seized him as he had never known. His heart felt as if it would stop beating. His back was towards the dining saloon; apparently he had just come from it. He was in his pajamas. The corridor was dim, all but two lights having been turned out for the night, and—thank God!—deserted. Not a soul, not a sound. He was perhaps fifty yards from his room. With luck he could get to it unseen. Holding tremulously to the rail that ran along the wall, a brown, greasy rail, he began to creep his way forward. He felt very weak, very dizzy, and his thoughts refused to concentrate. Vaguely he remembered Miss Dean—Clarice—and the freckled girl, as if they were one and the same person. But he wasn't in the hospital, he was on the ship. Of course. How absurd. The Great Circle. Here we are, old fellow . . . steady round the corner . . . hold hard to your umbrella . . .

In his room, with the door safely shut behind him, Mr. Arcularis broke into a cold sweat. He had no sooner got into his bunk, shivering, than he heard the night watchman pass.

"But where—" he thought, closing his eyes in agony—"have I been? . . ."

A dreadful idea had occurred to him.

"It's nothing serious—how could it be anything serious? Of course it's nothing serious," said Mr. Arcularis.

"No, it's nothing serious," said the ship's doctor urbanely.

"I knew you'd think so. But just the same—"

"Such a condition is the result of worry," said the doctor. "Are you worried—do you mind telling me—about something? Just try to think."

"Worried?"

Mr. Arcularis knitted his brows. *Was* there something? Some little mosquito of a cloud disappearing into the southwest, the northeast? Some little gnat-song of despair? But no, that was all over. All over.

"Nothing," he said, "nothing whatever."

"It's very strange," said the doctor.

"Strange! I should say so. I've come to sea for a rest, not for a nightmare! What about a bromide?"

"Well, I can give you a bromide, Mr. Arcularis—"

"Then, please, if you don't mind, give me a bromide."

He carried the little phial hopefully to his stateroom, and took a dose at once. He could see the sun through his porthole. It looked northern and pale and small, like

a little peppermint, which was only natural enough, for the latitude was changing with every hour. But why was it that doctors were all alike? and all, for that matter, like his father, or that other fellow at the hospital? Smythe, his name was. Doctor Smythe. A nice, dry little fellow, and they said he was a writer. Wrote poetry, or something like that. Poor fellow—disappointed. Like everybody else. Crouched in there, in his cabin, night after night, writing blank verse or something—all about the stars and flowers and love and death; ice and the sea and the infinite; time and tide—well, every man to his own taste.

"But it's nothing serious," said Mr. Arcularis, later, to the parson. "How could it be?"

"Why, of course not, my dear fellow," said the parson, patting his back. "How could it be?"

"I know it isn't and yet I worry about it."

"It would be ridiculous to think it serious," said the parson.

Mr. Arcularis shivered: it was colder than ever. It was said that they were near icebergs. For a few hours in the morning there had been a fog, and the siren had blown—devastatingly—at three-minute intervals. Icebergs caused fog—he knew that.

"These things always come," said the parson, "from a sense of guilt. You feel guilty about something. I won't be so rude as to inquire what it is. But if you could rid yourself of the sense of guilt—"

And later still, when the sky was pink:

"But is it anything to worry about?" said Miss Dean. "Really?"

"No, I suppose not."

"Then don't worry. We aren't children any longer!"

"Aren't we? I wonder!"

They leaned, shoulders touching, on the deck-rail, and looked at the sea, which was multitudinously incarnadined. Mr. Arcularis scanned the horizon in vain for an iceberg.

"Anyway," he said, "the colder we are the less we feel!"

"I hope that's no reflection on *you*," said Miss Dean.

"Here . . . feel my hand," said Mr. Arcularis.

"Heaven knows it's cold!"

"It's been to Polaris and back! No wonder."

"Poor thing, poor thing!"

"Warm it."

"May I?"

"You can."

"I'll try."

Laughing, she took his hand between both of hers, one palm under and one palm over, and began rubbing it briskly. The decks were deserted, no one was near them, everyone was dressing for dinner. The sea grew darker, the wind blew colder.

"I wish I could remember who you are," he said.

"And you—who are you?"

"Myself."

"Then perhaps *I* am yourself."

"Don't be metaphysical!"

"But I *am* metaphysical!"

She laughed, withdrew, pulled the light coat about her shoulders.

The bugle blew the summons for dinner—"The Roast Beef of Old England"—and they walked together along the darkening deck toward the door, from which a shaft of soft light fell across the deck-rail. As they stepped over the brass door-sill Mr. Arcularis felt the throb of the engines again; he put his hand quickly to his side.

"*Auf wiedersehen*," he said. "*Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.*"

Mr. Arcularis was finding it impossible, absolutely impossible, to keep warm. A cold fog surrounded the ship, had done so, it seemed, for days. The sun had all but disappeared, the transition from day to night was almost unnoticeable. The ship, too, seemed scarcely to be moving—it was as if anchored among walls of ice and rime. Monstrous, that merely because it was June, and supposed, therefore, to be warm, the ship's authorities should consider it unnecessary to turn on the heat! By day, he wore his heavy coat and sat shivering in the corner of the smoking-room. His teeth chattered, his hands were blue. By night, he heaped blankets on his bed, closed the port-hole's black eye against the sea, and drew the yellow curtains across it, but in vain. Somehow, despite everything, the fog crept in, and the icy fingers touched his throat. The steward, questioned about it, merely said, "Icebergs." Of course—any fool knew that. But how long, in God's name, was it going to last? They surely ought to be past the Grand Banks by this time! And surely it wasn't necessary to sail to England by way of Greenland and Iceland!

Miss Dean—Clarice—was sympathetic.

"It's simply because," she said, "your vitality has been lowered by your illness. You can't expect to be your normal self so soon after an operation! When *was* your operation, by the way?"

Mr. Arcularis considered. Strange—he couldn't be quite sure. It was all a little vague—his sense of time had disappeared.

"Heaven knows!" he said. "Centuries ago. When I was a tadpole and you were a fish. I should think it must have been at about the time of the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. Or perhaps when I was a Neanderthal man with a club!"

"Are you sure it wasn't farther back still?"

What did she mean by that?

"Not at all. Obviously, we've been on this damned ship for ages—for eras—for aeons. And even on this ship, you must remember, I've had plenty of time, in my nocturnal wanderings, to go several times to Orion and back. I'm thinking, by the way, of going farther still. There's a nice little star off to the left, as you round Betelgeuse, which looks as if it might be right at the edge. The last outpost of the finite. I think I'll have a look at it and bring you back a frozen rime-feather."

"It would melt when you got it back."

"Oh, no, it wouldn't—not on *this* ship!"

Clarice laughed.

"I wish I could go with you," she said.

"If only you would! If only—"

He broke off his sentence and looked hard at her—how lovely she was, and how desirable! No such woman had ever before come into his life; there had been no one with whom he had at once felt so profound a sympathy and understanding. It was a miracle, simply—a miracle. No need to put his arm around her or to kiss her—delightful as such small vulgarities would be. He had only to look at her, and to feel, gazing into those extraordinary eyes, that she knew him, had always known him. It was as if, indeed, she might be his own soul.

But as he looked thus at her, reflecting, he noticed that she was frowning.

"What is it?" he said.

She shook her head, slowly.

"I don't know."

"Tell me."

"Nothing. It just occurred to me that perhaps you weren't looking quite so well."

Mr. Arcularis was startled. He straightened himself up.

"What nonsense! Of course this pain bothers me—and I feel astonishingly weak—"

"It's more than that—much more than that. Something is worrying you horribly." She paused, and then with an air of challenging him, added, "Tell me, did you?"

Her eyes were suddenly asking him blazingly the question he had been afraid of. He flinched, caught his breath, looked away. But it was no use, as he knew: he would have to tell her. He had known all along that he would have to tell her.

"Clarice," he said—and his voice broke in spite of his effort to control it—"it's killing me, it's ghastly! Yes, I did."

His eyes filled with tears, he saw that her own had done so also. She put her hand on his arm.

"I knew," she said. "I knew. But tell me."

"It's happened twice again—*twice*—and each time I was farther away. The same dream of going round a star, the same terrible coldness and helplessness. That awful whistling curve . . ." He shuddered.

"And when you woke up—" she spoke quietly—"where were you when you woke up? Don't be afraid!"

"The first time I was at the farther end of the dining saloon. I had my hand on the door that leads into the pantry."

"I see. Yes. And the next time?"

Mr. Arcularis wanted to close his eyes in terror—he felt as if he were going mad. His lips moved before he could speak, and when at last he did speak it was in a voice so low as to be almost a whisper.

"I was at the bottom of the stairway that leads down from the pantry to the hold, past the refrigerating-plant. It was dark, and I was crawling on my hands and knees . . . *Crawling on my hands and knees!* . . ."

"Oh!" she said, and again, "Oh!"

He began to tremble violently; he felt the hand on his arm trembling also. And then he watched a look of unmistakable horror come slowly into Clarice's eyes, and a look of understanding, as if she saw . . . She tightened her hold on his arm.

"Do you think . . ." she whispered.

They stared at each other.

"I know," he said. "And so do you . . . Twice more—three times—and I'll be looking down into an empty . . ."

It was then that they first embraced—then, at the edge of the infinite, at the last signpost of the finite. They clung together desperately, forlornly, weeping as they kissed each other, staring hard one moment and closing their eyes the next. Passionately, passionately, she kissed him, as if she were indeed trying to give him her warmth, her life.

"But what nonsense!" she cried, leaning back and holding his face between her hands, her hands which were wet with his tears. "What nonsense! It can't be!"

"It is," said Mr. Arcularis slowly.

"But how do you know? . . . How do you know where the—"

For the first time Mr. Arcularis smiled.

"Don't be afraid, darling—you mean the coffin?"

"How could you know where it is?"

"I don't need to," said Mr. Arcularis . . . "I'm already almost there."

Before they separated for the night, in the smoking-room, they had several whisky cocktails.

"We must make it gay!" Mr. Arcularis said. "Above all, we must make it gay. Perhaps even now it will turn out to be nothing but a nightmare from which both of us will wake! And even at the worst, at my present rate of travel, I ought to need two more nights! It's a long way, still, to that little star."

The parson passed them at the door.

"What! turning in so soon?" he said. "I was hoping for a game of chess."

"Yes, both turning in. But tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow, then, Miss Dean! And good-night!"

"Good-night."

They walked once round the deck, then leaned on the railing and stared into the fog. It was thicker and whiter than ever. The ship was moving barely perceptibly, the rhythm of the engines was slower, more subdued and remote, and at regular intervals, mournfully, came the long reverberating cry of the foghorn. The sea was calm, and lapped only very tenderly against the side of the ship, the sound coming up to them clearly, however, because of the profound stillness.

"'On such a night as this—'" quoted Mr. Arcularis grimly.

"'On such a night as this—'"

Their voices hung suspended in the night, time ceased for them, for an eternal instant they were happy. When at last they parted it was by tacit agreement on a note of the ridiculous.

"Be a good boy and take your bromide!" she said.

"Yes, mother, I'll take my medicine!"

In his stateroom, he mixed himself a strong potion of bromide, a very strong one, and got into bed. He would have no trouble in falling asleep: he felt more tired, more supremely exhausted, than he had ever been in his life; nor had bed ever seemed so delicious. And that long, magnificent, delirious swoop of dizziness . . . the Great Circle . . . the swift pathway to Arcturus . . .

It was all as before, but infinitely more rapid. Never had Mr. Arcularis achieved such phenomenal, such supernatural, speed. In no time at all he was beyond the moon, shot past the North Star as if it were standing still (which perhaps it was?), swooped in a long, bright curve round the Pleiades, shouted his frosty greetings to Betelgeuse, and was off to the little blue star which pointed the way to the unknown. Forward into the untrodden! Courage, old man, and hold on to your umbrella! Have you got your garters on? Mind your hat! In no time at all we'll be back to Clarice with the frozen time-feather, the rime-feather, the snowflake of the Absolute, the Obsolete. If only we don't wake . . . if only we needn't wake . . . if only we don't wake in that—in that—time and space . . . somewhere or nowhere . . . cold and dark . . . "Cavalleria Rusticana" sobbing among the palms; if a lonely . . . if only . . . the coffers of the poor—not coffers, not coffers, not coffers. Oh, God, not coffers, but light, delight, supreme white and brightness, and above all whirling lightness, whirling lightness above all—and freezing—freezing—freezing . . .

At this point in the void the surgeon's last effort to save Mr. Arcularis's life had failed. He stood back from the operating table and made a tired gesture with a rubber-gloved hand.

"It's all over," he said. "As I expected."

He looked at Miss Hoyle, whose gaze was downward, at the basin she held. There was a moment's stillness, a pause, a brief flight of unexchanged comment, and then the ordered life of the hospital was resumed.

## MY KINSMAN, MAJOR MOLINEUX

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

After the kings of Great Britain had assumed the right of appointing the colonial governors, the measures of the latter seldom met with the ready and generous approbation which had been paid to those of their predecessors, under the original charters. The people looked with most jealous scrutiny to the exercise of power which did not emanate from themselves, and they usually rewarded their rulers with slender gratitude for the compliances by which, in softening their instructions from beyond the sea, they had incurred the reprehension of those who gave them. The annals of Massachusetts Bay will inform us, that of six governors in the space of about forty years from the surrender of the old charter, under James II., two were imprisoned by a popular insurrection; a third, as Hutchinson inclines to believe, was driven from the province by the whizzing of a musket-ball; a fourth, in the opinion of the same historian, was hastened to his grave by continual bickerings with the House of Representatives; and the remaining two, as well as their successors, till the Revolution, were favored with few and brief intervals of peaceful sway. The inferior members of the court party, in times of high political excitement, led scarcely a more desirable life. These remarks may serve as a preface to the following adventures, which chanced upon a summer night, not far from a hundred years ago. The reader, in order to avoid a long and dry detail of colonial affairs, is requested to dispense with an account of the train of circumstances that had caused much temporary inflammation of the popular mind.

It was near nine o'clock of a moonlight evening, when a boat crossed the ferry with a single passenger, who had obtained his conveyance at that unusual hour by the promise of an extra fare. While he stood on the landing-place, searching in either pocket for the means of fulfilling his agreement, the ferryman lifted a lantern, by the aid of which, and the newly risen moon, he took a very accurate survey of the stranger's figure. He was a youth of barely eighteen years, evidently country-bred, and now, as it should seem, upon his first visit to town. He was clad in a coarse gray coat, well worn, but in excellent repair; his under garments were durably constructed of leather, and fitted tight to a pair of serviceable and well-shaped limbs; his stockings of blue yarn were the incontestable work of a mother or a sister; and on his head was a three-cornered hat, which in its better days had perhaps sheltered the graver brow of the lad's father. Under his left arm was a heavy cudgel formed of an oak sapling, and retaining a part of the hardened root; and his equipment was completed by a wallet, not so abundantly stocked as to incommode the vigorous shoulders on which it hung.

Brown, curly hair, well-shaped features, and bright, cheerful eyes were nature's gifts, and worth all that art could have done for his adornment.

The youth, one of whose names was Robin, finally drew from his pocket the half of a little province bill of five shillings, which, in the depreciation in that sort of currency, did but satisfy the ferryman's demand, with the surplus of a sexangular piece of parchment, valued at three pence. He then walked forward into the town, with as light a step as if his day's journey had not already exceeded thirty miles, and with as eager an eye as if he were entering London city, instead of the little metropolis of a New England colony. Before Robin had proceeded far, however, it occurred to him that he knew not whither to direct his steps; so he paused, and looked up and down the narrow street, scrutinizing the small and mean wooden buildings that were scattered on either side.

"This low hovel cannot be my kinsman's dwelling," thought he, "nor yonder old house, where the moonlight enters at the broken casement; and truly I see none hereabouts that might be worthy of him. It would have been wise to inquire my way of the ferryman, and doubtless he would have gone with me, and earned a shilling from the Major for his pains. But the next man I meet will do as well."

He resumed his walk, and was glad to perceive that the street now became wider, and the houses more respectable in their appearance. He soon discerned a figure moving on moderately in advance, and hastened his steps to overtake it. As Robin drew nigh, he saw that the passenger was a man in years, with a full periwig of gray hair, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth, and silk stockings rolled above his knees. He carried a long and polished cane, which he struck down perpendicularly before him at every step; and at regular intervals he uttered two successive hems, of a peculiarly solemn and sepulchral intonation. Having made these observations, Robin laid hold of the skirt of the old man's coat, just when the light from the open door and windows of a barber's shop fell upon both their figures.

"Good evening to you, honored sir," said he, making a low bow, and still retaining his hold of the skirt. "I pray you tell me whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux."

The youth's question was uttered very loudly; and one of the barbers, whose razor was descending on a well-soaped chin, and another who was dressing a Ramillies wig, left their occupations, and came to the door. The citizen, in the mean time, turned a long-favored countenance upon Robin, and answered him in a tone of excessive anger and annoyance. His two sepulchral hems, however, broke into the very centre of his rebuke, with most singular effect, like a thought of the cold grave obtruding among wrathful passions.

"Let go my garment, fellow! I tell you, I know not the man you speak of. What! I have authority, I have—hem, hem—authority; and if this be the respect you show for your betters, your feet shall be brought acquainted with the stocks by daylight, tomorrow morning!"

Robin released the old man's skirt, and hastened away, pursued by an ill-mannered roar of laughter from the barber's shop. He was at first considerably surprised by the result of his question, but, being a shrewd youth, soon thought himself able to account for the mystery.

"This is some country representative," was his conclusion, "who has never seen the inside of my kinsman's door, and lacks the breeding to answer a stranger civilly. The man is old, or verily—I might be tempted to turn back and smite him on the nose.



Ah, Robin, Robin! even the barber's boys laugh at you for choosing such a guide! You will be wiser in time, friend Robin."

He now became entangled in a succession of crooked and narrow streets, which crossed each other, and mcandered at no great distance from the water-side. The smell of tar was obvious to his nostrils, the masts of vessels pierced the moonlight above the tops of the buildings, and the numerous signs, which Robin paused to read, informed him that he was near the centre of business. But the streets were empty, the shops were closed, and lights were visible only in the second stories of a few dwelling-houses. At length, on the corner of a narrow lane, through which he was passing, he beheld the broad countenance of a British hero swinging before the door of an inn, whence proceeded the voices of many guests. The casement of one of the lower windows was thrown back, and a very thin curtain permitted Robin to distinguish a party at supper, round a well-furnished table. The fragrance of the good cheer steamed forth into the outer air, and the youth could not fail to recollect that the last remnant of his travelling stock of provision had yielded to his morning appetite, and that noon had found and left him dinnerless.

"Oh, that a parchment three-penny might give me a right to sit down at yonder table!" said Robin, with a sigh. "But the Major will make me welcome to the best of his victuals; so I will even step boldly in, and inquire my way to his dwelling."

He entered the tavern, and was guided by the murmur of voices and the fumes of tobacco to the public-room. It was a long and low apartment, with oaken walls, grown dark in the continual smoke, and a floor which was thickly sanded, but of no immaculate purity. A number of persons—the larger part of whom appeared to be mariners, or in some way connected with the sea—occupied the wooden benches, or leather-bottomed chairs, conversing on various matters, and occasionally lending their attention to some topic of general interest. Three or four little groups were draining as many bowls of punch, which the West India trade had long since made a familiar drink in the colony. Others, who had the appearance of men who lived by regular and laborious handicraft, preferred the insulated bliss of an unshared potation, and became more taciturn under its influence. Nearly all, in short, evinced a predilection for the Good Creature in some of its various shapes, for this is a vice to which, as Fast Day sermons of a hundred years ago will testify, we have a long hereditary claim. The only guests to whom Robin's sympathies inclined him were two or three sheepish countrymen, who were using the inn somewhat after the fashion of a Turkish caravansary; they had gotten themselves into the darkest corner of the room, and heedless of the Nicotian atmosphere, were supping on the bread of their own ovens, and the bacon cured in their own chimney-smoke. But though Robin felt a sort of brotherhood with these strangers, his eyes were attracted from them to a person who stood near the door, holding whispered conversation with a group of ill-dressed associates. His features were separately striking almost to grotesqueness, and the whole face left a deep impression on the memory. The forehead bulged out into a double prominence, with a vale between; the nose came boldly forth in an irregular curve, and its bridge was of more than a finger's breadth; the eyebrows were deep and shaggy, and the eyes glowed beneath them like fire in a cave.

While Robin deliberated of whom to inquire respecting his kinsman's dwelling, he was accosted by the innkeeper, a little man in a stained white apron, who had come to pay his professional welcome to the stranger. Being in the second generation from a French Protestant, he seemed to have inherited the courtesy of his parent nation;

but no variety of circumstances was ever known to change his voice from the one shrill note in which he now addressed Robin.

"From the country, I presume, sir?" said he, with a profound bow. "Beg leave to congratulate you on your arrival, and trust you intend a long stay with us. Fine town here, sir, beautiful buildings, and much that may interest a stranger. May I hope for the honor of your commands in respect to supper?"

"The man sees a family likeness! the rogue has guessed that I am related to the Major!" thought Robin, who had hitherto experienced little superfluous civility.

All eyes were now turned on the country lad, standing at the door, in his worn three-cornered hat, gray coat, leather breeches, and blue yarn stockings, leaning on an oak cudgel, and bearing a wallet on his back.

Robin replied to the courteous innkeeper, with such an assumption of confidence as befitted the Major's relative. "My honest friend," he said, "I shall make it a point to patronize your house on some occasion, when"—here he could not help lowering his voice—"when I may have more than a parchment three-pence in my pocket. My present business," continued he, speaking with lofty confidence, "is merely to inquire my way to the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux."

There was a sudden and general movement in the room, which Robin interpreted as expressing the eagerness of each individual to become his guide. But the innkeeper turned his eyes to a written paper on the wall, which he read, or seemed to read, with occasional recurrences to the young man's figure.

"What have we here?" said he, breaking his speech into little dry fragments. "'Left the house of the subscriber, bounden servant, Hezekiah Mudge,—had on, when he went away, gray coat, leather breeches, master's third-best hat. One pound currency reward to whosoever shall lodge him in any jail of the providence.' Better trudge, boy; better trudge!"

Robin had begun to draw his hand towards the lighter end of the oak cudgel, but a strange hostility in every countenance induced him to relinquish his purpose of breaking the courteous innkeeper's head. As he turned to leave the room, he encountered a sneering glance from the bold-featured personage whom he had before noticed; and no sooner was he beyond the door, than he heard a general laugh, in which the innkeeper's voice might be distinguished, like the dropping of small stones into a kettle.

"Now, is it not strange," thought Robin, with his usual shrewdness,—"*is it not strange that the confession of an empty pocket should outweigh the name of my kinsman, Major Molineux? Oh, if I had one of those grinning rascals in the woods, where I and my oak sapling grew up together, I would teach him that my arm is heavy though my purse be light!*"

On turning the corner of the narrow lane, Robin found himself in a spacious street, with an unbroken line of lofty houses on each side, and a steepled building at the upper end, whence the ringing of a bell announced the hour of nine. The light of the moon, and the lamps from the numerous shop-windows, discovered people promenading on the pavement, and amongst them Robin had hoped to recognize his hitherto inscrutable relative. The result of his former inquiries made him unwilling to hazard another, in a scene of such publicity, and he determined to walk slowly and silently up the street, thrusting his face close to that of every elderly gentleman, in search of the Major's lineaments. In his progress, Robin encountered many gay and gallant figures. Embroidered garments of showy colors, enormous periwigs, gold-laced hats, and silver-hilted swords glided past him and dazzled his optics. Travelled

youths, imitators of the European fine gentlemen of the period, trod jauntily along, half dancing to the fashionable tunes which they hummed, and making poor Robin ashamed of his quiet and natural gait. At length, after many pauses to examine the gorgeous display of goods in the shop-windows, and after suffering some rebukes for the impertinence of his scrutiny into people's faces, the Major's kinsman found himself near the steepled building, still unsuccessful in his search. As yet, however, he had seen only one side of the thronged street; so Robin crossed, and continued the same sort of inquisition down the opposite pavement, with stronger hopes than the philosopher seeking an honest man, but with no better fortune. He had arrived about midway towards the lower end, from which his course began, when he overheard the approach of some one who struck down a cane on the flag-stones at every step, uttering at regular intervals, two sepulchral hems.

"Mercy on us!" quoth Robin, recognizing the sound.

Turning a corner, which chanced to be close at his right hand, he hastened to pursue his researches in some other part of the town. His patience now was wearing low, and he seemed to feel more fatigue from his rambles since he crossed the ferry, than from his journey of several days on the other side. Hunger also pleaded loudly within him, and Robin began to balance the propriety of demanding, violently, and with lifted cudgel, the necessary guidance from the first solitary passenger whom he should meet. While a resolution to this effect was gaining strength, he entered a street of mean appearance, on either side of which a row of ill-built houses was straggling towards the harbor. The moonlight fell upon no passenger along the whole extent, but in the third domicile which Robin passed there was a half-opened door, and his keen glance detected a woman's garment within.

"My luck may be better here," he said to himself.

Accordingly, he approached the door, and beheld it shut closer as he did so; yet an open space remained, sufficing for the fair occupant to observe the stranger, without a corresponding display on her part. All that Robin could discern was a strip of scarlet petticoat, and the occasional sparkle of an eye, as if the moonbeams were trembling on some bright thing.

"Pretty mistress," for I may call her so with a good conscience, thought the shrewd youth, since I know nothing to the contrary,—*"my sweet pretty mistress, will you be kind enough to tell me whereabouts I must seek the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"*

Robin's voice was plaintive and winning, and the female, seeing nothing to be shunned in the handsome country youth, thrust open the door, and came forth into the moonlight. She was a dainty little figure, with a white neck, round arms, and a slender waist, at the extremity of which her scarlet petticoat jutted out over a hoop, as if she were standing in a balloon. Moreover, her face was oval and pretty, her hair dark beneath the little cap, and her bright eyes possessed a sly freedom, which triumphed over those of Robin.

"Major Molineux dwells here," said this fair woman.

Now, her voice was the sweetest Robin had heard that night, yet he could not help doubting whether that sweet voice spoke Gospel truth. He looked up and down the mean street, and then surveyed the house before which they stood. It was a small, dark edifice of two stories, the second of which projected over the lower floor, and the front apartment had the aspect of a shop for petty commodities.

"Now, truly, I am in luck," replied Robin, cunningly, "and so indeed is my kinsman, the Major, in having so pretty a housekeeper. But I prithee trouble him to step to the

door; I will deliver him a message from his friends in the country, and then go back to my lodgings at the inn."

"Nay, the Major has been abed this hour or more," said the lady of the scarlet petticoat; "and it would be to little purpose to disturb him to-night, seeing his evening draught was the strongest. But he is a kind-hearted man, and it would be as much as my life's worth to let a kinsman of his turn away from the door. You are the good old gentleman's very picture, and I could swear that was his rainy-weather hat. Also he has garments very much resembling those leather small-clothes. But come in, I pray, for I bid you hearty welcome in his name."

So saying, the fair and hospitable dame took our hero by the hand; and the touch was light, and the force was gentleness, and though Robin read in her eyes what he did not hear in her words, yet the slender-waisted woman in the scarlet petticoat proved stronger than the athletic country youth. She had drawn his half-willing footsteps nearly to the threshold, when the opening of a door in the neighborhood startled the Major's housekeeper, and, leaving the Major's kinsman, she vanished speedily into her own domicile. A heavy yawn preceded the appearance of a man, who, like the Moonshine of Pyramus and Thisbe, carried a lantern, needlessly aiding his sister luminary in the heavens. As he walked sleepily up the street, he turned his broad, dull face on Robin, and displayed a long staff, spiked at the end.

"Home, vagabond, home!" said the watchman, in accents that seemed to fall asleep as soon as they were uttered. "Home, or we'll set you in the stocks by peep of day!"

"This is the second hint of the kind," thought Robin. "I wish they would end my difficulties, by setting me there to-night."

Nevertheless, the youth felt an instinctive antipathy towards the guardian of midnight order, which at first prevented him from asking his usual question. But just when the man was about to vanish behind the corner, Robin resolved not to lose the opportunity, and shouted lustily after him,—

"I say, friend! will you guide me to the house of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The watchman made no reply, but turned the corner and was gone; yet Robin seemed to hear the sound of drowsy laughter stealing along the solitary street. At that moment, also, a pleasant titter saluted him from the open window above his head; he looked up, and caught the sparkle of a saucy eye; a round arm beckoned to him, and next he heard light footsteps descending the staircase within. But Robin, being of the household of a New England clergyman, was a good youth, as well as a shrewd one; so he resisted temptation, and fled away.

He now roamed desperately, and at random, through the town, almost ready to believe that a spell was on him, like that by which a wizard of his country had once kept three pursuers wandering, a whole winter night, within twenty paces of the cottage which they sought. The streets lay before him, strange and desolate, and the lights were extinguished in almost every house. Twice, however, little parties of men, among whom Robin distinguished individuals in outlandish attire, came hurrying along; but, though on both occasions, they paused to address him, such intercourse did not at all enlighten his perplexity. They did but utter a few words in some language of which Robin knew nothing, and perceiving his inability to answer, bestowed a curse upon him in plain English and hastened away. Finally, the lad determined to knock at the door of every mansion that might appear worthy to be occupied by his kinsman, trusting that perseverance would overcome the fatality that had hitherto thwarted him. Firm in this resolve, he was passing beneath the walls of a church, which formed the corner of two streets, when, as he turned into the shade

of its steeple, he encountered a bulky stranger, muffled in a cloak. The man was proceeding with the speed of earnest business, but Robin planted himself full before him, holding the oak cudgel with both hands across his body as a bar to further passage.

"Halt, honest man, and answer me a question," said he, very resolutely. "Tell me, this instant, whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux!"

"Keep your tongue between your teeth, fool, and let me pass!" said a deep, gruff voice, which Robin partly remembered. "Let me pass, or I'll strike you to the earth!"

"No, no, neighbor!" cried Robin, flourishing his cudgel and then thrusting its larger end close to the man's muffled face. "No, no, I'm not the fool you take me for, nor do you pass till I have an answer to my question. Whereabouts is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The stranger, instead of attempting to force his passage, stepped back into the moonlight, unmuffled his face, and stared full into that of Robin.

"Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by," said he.

Robin gazed with dismay and astonishment on the unprecedented physiognomy of the speaker. The forehead with its double prominence, the broad hooked nose, the shaggy eyebrows, and fiery eyes were those which he had noticed at the inn, but the man's complexion had undergone a singular, or, more properly, a twofold change. One side of the face blazed an intense red, while the other was black as midnight, the division line being in the broad bridge of the nose; and a mouth which seemed to extend from ear to ear was black or red, in contrast to the color of the cheek. The effect was as if two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves to form this infernal visage. The stranger grinned in Robin's face, muffled his parti-colored features, and was out of sight in a moment.

"Strange things we travellers see!" ejaculated Robin.

He seated himself, however, upon the steps of the church-door, resolving to wait the appointed time for his kinsman. A few moments were consumed in philosophical speculations upon the species of man who had just left him; but having settled this point shrewdly, rationally, and satisfactorily, he was compelled to look elsewhere for his amusement. And first he threw his eyes along the street. It was of more respectable appearance than most of those into which he had wandered; and the moon, creating, like the imaginative power, a beautiful strangeness in familiar objects, gave something of romance to a scene that might not have possessed it in the light of day. The irregular and often quaint architecture of the houses, some of whose roofs were broken into numerous little peaks, while others ascended, steep and narrow, into a single point, and others again were square; the pure snow-white of some of their complexions, the aged darkness of others, and the thousand sparklings, reflected from bright substances in the walls of many; these matters engaged Robin's attention for a while, and then began to grow wearisome. Next he endeavored to define the forms of distant objects, starting away, with almost ghostly indistinctness, just as his eye appeared to grasp them; and finally he took a minute survey of an edifice which stood on the opposite side of the street, directly in front of the church-door, where he was stationed. It was a large, square mansion, distinguished from its neighbors by a balcony, which rested on tall pillars, and by an elaborate Gothic window, communicating therewith.

"Perhaps this is the very house I have been seeking," thought Robin.

Then he strove to speed away the time, by listening to a murmur which swept continually along the street, yet was scarcely audible, except to an unaccustomed ear

like his; it was a low, dull, dreamy sound, compounded of many noises, each of which was at too great a distance to be separately heard. Robin marvelled at this snore of a sleeping town, and marvelled more whenever its continuity was broken by now and then a distant shout, apparently loud where it originated. But altogether it was a sleep-inspiring sound, and, to shake off its drowsy influence, Robin arose, and climbed a window-frame, that he might view the interior of the church. There the moon-beams came trembling in, and fell down upon the deserted pews, and extended along the quiet aisles. A fainter yet more awful radiance was hovering around the pulpit, and one solitary ray had dared to rest upon the open page of the great Bible. Had nature, in that deep hour, become a worshipper in the house which man had builded? Or was that heavenly light the visible sanctity of the place,—visible because no earthly and impure feet were within the walls? The scene made Robin's heart shiver with a sensation of loneliness stronger than he had ever felt in the remotest depths of his native woods; so he turned away and sat down again before the door. There were graves around the church, and now an uneasy thought obtruded into Robin's breast. What if the object of his search, which had been so often and so strangely thwarted, were all the time mouldering in his shroud? What if his kinsman should glide through yonder gate, and nod and smile to him in dimly passing by?

"Oh that any breathing thing were here with me!" said Robin.

Recalling his thoughts from this uncomfortable track, he sent them over forest, hill, and stream, and attempted to imagine how that evening of ambiguity and weariness had been spent by his father's household. He pictured them assembled at the door, beneath the tree, the great old tree, which had been spared for its huge twisted trunk and venerable shade, when a thousand leafy brethren fell. There, at the going down of the summer sun, it was his father's custom to perform domestic worship, that the neighbors might come and join with him like brothers of the family, and that the wayfaring man might pause to drink at that fountain, and keep his heart pure by freshening the memory of home. Robin distinguished the seat of every individual of the little audience; he saw the good man in the midst, holding the Scriptures in the golden light that fell from the western clouds; he beheld him close the book and all rise up to pray. He heard the old thanksgivings for daily mercies, the old supplications for their continuance, to which he had so often listened in weariness, but which were now among his dear remembrances. He perceived the slight inequality of his father's voice when he came to speak of the absent one; he noted how his mother turned her face to the broad and knotted trunk; how his elder brother scorned, because the beard was rough upon his upper lip, to permit his features to be moved; how the younger sister drew down a low hanging branch before her eyes; and how the little one of all, whose sports had hitherto broken the decorum of the scene, understood the prayer for her playmate, and burst into clamorous grief. Then he saw them go in at the door; and when Robin would have entered also, the latch tinkled into its place, and he was excluded from his home.

"Am I here, or there?" cried Robin, starting; for all at once, when his thoughts had become visible and audible in a dream, the long, wide, solitary street shone out before him.

He aroused himself, and endeavored to fix his attention steadily upon the large edifice which he had surveyed before. But still his mind kept vibrating between fancy and reality; by turns, the pillars of the balcony lengthened into the tall, bare stems of pines, dwindled down to human figures, settled again into their true shape and size, and then commenced a new succession of changes. For a single moment,

when he deemed himself awake, he could have sworn that a visage—one which he seemed to remember, yet could not absolutely name as his kinsman's—was looking towards him from the Gothic window. A deeper sleep wrestled with and nearly overcame him, but fled at the sound of footsteps along the opposite pavement. Robin rubbed his eyes, discerned a man passing at the foot of the balcony, and addressed him in a loud, peevish, and lamentable cry.

"Hallo, friend! must I wait here all night for my kinsman, Major Molineux?"

The sleeping echoes awoke, and answered the voice; and the passenger, barely able to discern a figure sitting in the oblique shade of the steeple, traversed the street to obtain a nearer view. He was himself a gentleman in his prime, of open, intelligent, cheerful, and altogether prepossessing countenance. Perceiving a country youth, apparently homeless and without friends, he accosted him in a tone of real kindness, which had become strange to Robin's ears.

"Well, my good lad, why are you sitting here?" inquired he. "Can I be of service to you in any way?"

"I am afraid not, sir," replied Robin, despondingly; "yet I shall take it kindly, if you'll answer me a single question. I've been searching, half the night, for one Major Molineux; now, sir, is there really such a person in these parts, or am I dreaming?"

"Major Molineux! The name is not altogether strange to me," said the gentleman, smiling. "Have you any objection to telling me the nature of your business with him?"

Then Robin briefly related that his father was a clergyman, settled on a small salary, at a long distance back in the country, and that he and Major Molineux were brothers' children. The Major, having inherited riches, and acquired civil and military rank, had visited his cousin, in great pomp, a year or two before; had manifested much interest in Robin and an elder brother, and, being childless himself, had thrown out hints respecting the future establishment of one of them in life. The elder brother was destined to succeed to the farm which his father cultivated in the interval of sacred duties; it was therefore determined that Robin should profit by his kinsman's generous intentions, especially as he seemed to be rather the favorite, and was thought to possess other necessary endowments.

"For I have the name of being a shrewd youth," observed Robin, in this part of his story.

"I doubt not you deserve it," replied his new friend, good-naturedly; "but pray proceed."

"Well, sir, being nearly eighteen years old, and well grown, as you see," continued Robin, drawing himself up to his full height, "I thought it high time to begin in the world. So my mother and sister put me in handsome trim, and my father gave me half the remnant of his last year's salary, and five days ago I started for this place, to pay the Major a visit. But, would you believe it, sir! I crossed the ferry a little after dark, and have yet found nobody that would show me the way to his dwelling; only, an hour or two since, I was told to wait here, and Major Molineux would pass by."

"Can you describe the man who told you this?" inquired the gentleman.

"Oh, he was a very ill-favored fellow, sir," replied Robin, "with two great bumps on his forehead, a hook nose, fiery eyes; and, what struck me as the strangest, his face was of two different colors. Do you happen to know such a man, sir?"

"Not intimately," answered the stranger, "but I chanced to meet him a little time previous to your stopping me. I believe you may trust his word, and that the Major will very shortly pass through this street. In the mean time, as I have a singular

curiosity to witness your meeting, I will sit down here upon the steps and bear you company."

He seated himself accordingly, and soon engaged his companion in animated discourse. It was but of brief continuance, however, for a noise of shouting, which had long been remotely audible, drew so much nearer that Robin inquired its cause.

"What may be the meaning of this uproar?" asked he. "Truly, if your town be always as noisy, I shall find little sleep while I am an inhabitant."

"Why, indeed, friend Robin, there do appear to be three or four riotous fellows abroad to-night," replied the gentleman. "You must not expect all the stillness of your native woods here in our streets. But the watch will shortly be at the heels of these lads and"—

"Ay, and set them in the stocks by peep of day," interrupted Robin, recollecting his own encounter with the drowsy lantern-bearer. "But, dear sir, if I may trust my ears, an army of watchmen would never make head against such a multitude of rioters. There were at least a thousand voices went up to make that one shout."

"May not a man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?" said his friend.

"Perhaps a man may; but Heaven forbid that a woman should!" responded the shrewd youth, thinking of the seductive tones of the Major's housekeeper.

The sounds of a trumpet in some neighboring street now became so evident and continual, that Robin's curiosity was strongly excited. In addition to the shouts, he heard frequent bursts from many instruments of discord, and a wild and confused laughter filled up the intervals. Robin rose from the steps, and looked wistfully towards a point whither people seemed to be hastening.

"Surely some prodigious merry-making is going on," exclaimed he. "I have laughed very little since I left home, sir, and should be sorry to lose an opportunity. Shall we step round the corner by that darkish house, and take our share of the fun?"

"Sit down again, sit down, good Robin," replied the gentleman, laying his hand on the skirt of the gray coat. "You forget that we must wait here for your kinsman; and there is reason to believe that he will pass by, in the course of a very few moments."

The near approach of the uproar had now disturbed the neighborhood; windows flew open on all sides; and many heads, in the attire of the pillow, and confused by sleep suddenly broken, were protruded to the gaze of whoever had leisure to observe them. Eager voices hailed each other from house to house, all demanding the explanation, which not a soul could give. Half-dressed men hurried towards the unknown commotion, stumbling as they went over the stone steps that thrust themselves into the narrow foot-walk. The shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray, the antipodes of music, came onwards with increasing din, till scattered individuals, and then denser bodies, began to appear round a corner at the distance of a hundred yards.

"Will you recognize your kinsman, if he passes in this crowd?" inquired the gentleman.

"Indeed, I can't warrant it, sir; but I'll take my stand here, and keep a bright lookout," answered Robin, descending to the outer edge of the pavement.

A mighty stream of people now emptied into the street, and came rolling slowly towards the church. A single horseman wheeled the corner in the midst of them, and close behind him came a band of fearful wind-instruments, sending forth a fresher discord now that no intervening buildings kept it from the ear. Then a redder light disturbed the moonbeams, and a dense multitude of torches shone along the



street, concealing, by their glare, whatever object they illuminated. The single horseman, clad in a military dress, and bearing a drawn sword, rode onward as the leader, and, by his fierce and variegated countenance, appeared like war personified; the red of one cheek was an emblem of fire and sword; the blackness of the other betokened the mourning that attends them. In his train were wild figures in the Indian dress, and many fantastic shapes without a model, giving the whole march a visionary air, as if a dream had broken forth from some feverish brain, and were sweeping visibly through the midnight streets. A mass of people, inactive, except as applauding spectators, hemmed the procession in; and several women ran along the sidewalk, piercing the confusion of heavier sounds with their shrill voices of mirth or terror.

"The double-faced fellow has his eye upon me," muttered Robin, with an indefinite but an uncomfortable idea that he was himself to bear a part in the pagantry.

The leader turned himself in the saddle, and fixed his glance full upon the country youth, as the steed went slowly by. When Robin had freed his eyes from those fiery ones, the musicians were passing before him, and the torches were close at hand; but the unsteady brightness of the latter formed a veil which he could not penetrate. The rattling of wheels over the stones sometimes found its way to his ear, and confused traces of a human form appeared at intervals, and then melted into the vivid light. A moment more, and the leader thundered a command to halt: the trumpets vomited a horrid breath, and then held their peace; the shouts and laughter of the people died away, and there remained only a universal hum, allied to silence. Right before Robin's eyes was an uncovered cart. There the torches blazed the brightest, there the moon shone out like day, and there, in tar-and-feathery dignity, sat his kinsman, Major Molineux!

He was an elderly man, of large and majestic person, and strong, square features, betokening a steady soul; but steady as it was, his enemies had found means to shake it. His face was pale as death, and far more ghastly; the broad forehead was contracted in his agony, so that his eyebrows formed one grizzled line; his eyes were red and wild, and the foam hung white upon his quivering lip. His whole frame was agitated by a quick and continual tremor, which his pride strove to quell, even in those circumstances of overwhelming humiliation. But perhaps the bitterest pang of all was when his eyes met those of Robin; for he evidently knew him on the instant, as the youth stood witnessing the foul disgrace of a head grown gray in honor. They stared at each other in silence, and Robin's knees shook, and his hair bristled, with a mixture of pity and terror. Soon, however, a bewildering excitement began to seize upon his mind; the preceding adventures of the night, the unexpected appearance of the crowd, the torches, the confused din and the hush that followed, the spectre of his kinsman reviled by that great multitude,—all this, and, more than all, a perception of tremendous ridicule in the whole scene, affected him with a sort of mental inebriety. At that moment a voice of sluggish merriment saluted Robin's ears; he turned instinctively, and just behind the corner of the church stood the lantern-bearer, rubbing his eyes, and drowsily enjoying the lad's amazement. Then he heard a peal of laughter like the ringing of silvery bells; a woman twitched his arm, a saucy eye met his, and he saw the lady of the scarlet petticoat. A sharp, dry cackinnation appealed to his memory, and, standing on tiptoe in the crowd, with his white apron over his head, he beheld the courteous little innkeeper. And lastly, there sailed over the heads of the multitude a great, broad laugh, broken in the midst by two sepulchral hems; thus, "Haw, haw, haw,—hem, hem,—haw, haw, haw, haw!"

The sound proceeded from the balcony of the opposite edifice and thither Robin turned his eyes. In front of the Gothic window stood the old citizen, wrapped in a wide gown, his gray periwig exchanged for a nightcap, which was thrust back from his forehead, and his silk stockings hanging about his legs. He supported himself on his polished cane in a fit of convulsive merriment, which manifested itself on his solemn old features like a funny inscription on a tombstone. Then Robin seemed to hear the voices of the barbers, of the guests of the inn, and of all who had made sport of him that night. The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street,—every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there. The cloud-spirits peeped from their silvery islands, as the congregated mirth went roaring up the sky! The Man in the Moon heard the far bellow. "Oho," quoth he, "the old earth is frolicsome to-night!"

When there was a momentary calm in that tempestuous sea of sound, the leader gave the sign, the procession resumed its march. On they went, like fiends that throng in mockery around some dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony. On they went, in counterfeited pomp, in senseless uproar, in frenzied merriment, trampling all on an old man's heart. On swept the tumult, and left a silent street behind.

"Well, Robin, are you dreaming?" inquired the gentleman, laying his hand on the youth's shoulder.

Robin started, and withdrew his arm from the stone post to which he had instinctively clung, as the living stream rolled by him. His cheek was somewhat pale, and his eye not quite as lively as in the earlier part of the evening.

"Will you be kind enough to show me the way to the ferry?" said he, after a moment's pause.

"You have, then, adopted a new subject of inquiry?" observed his companion, with a smile.

"Why, yes, sir," replied Robin, rather dryly. "Thanks to you, and to my other friends, I have at last met my kinsman, and he will scarce desire to see my face again. I begin to grow weary of a town life, sir. Will you show me the way to the ferry?"

"No, my good friend Robin,—not to-night, at least," said the gentleman. "Some few days hence, if you wish it, I will speed you on your journey. Or, if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux."

## THE BEAR

WILLIAM FAULKNER (1897— )

He was ten. But it had already begun, long before that day when at last he wrote his age in two figures and he saw for the first time the camp where his father and Major de Spain and old General Compson and the others spent two weeks each November and two weeks again each June. He had already inherited then, without

ever having seen it, the tremendous bear with one trap-ruined foot which, in an area almost a hundred miles deep, had earned itself a name, a definite designation like a living man.

He had listened to it for years: the long legend of corncribs rifled, of shotes and grown pigs and even calves carried bodily into the woods and devoured, of traps and dead-falls overthrown and dogs mangled and slain, and shotgun and even rifle charges delivered at point-blank range and with no more effect than so many peas blown through a tube by a boy—a corridor of wreckage and destruction beginning back before he was born, through which sped, not fast but rather with the ruthless and irresistible deliberation of a locomotive, the shaggy tremendous shape.

It ran in his knowledge before he ever saw it. It looked and towered in his dreams before he even saw the unaxed woods where it left its crooked print, shaggy, huge, red-eyed, not malevolent but just big—too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride it down, for the men and the bullets they fired into it, too big for the very country which was its constricting scope. He seemed to see it entire with a child's complete divination before he ever laid eyes on either—the doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with axes and plows who feared it because it was wilderness, men myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name, through which ran not even a mortal animal but an anachronism, indomitable and invincible, out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life at which the puny humans swarmed and hacked in a fury of abhorrence and fear, like pygmies about the ankles of a drowsing elephant: the old bear solitary, indomitable and alone, widowed, childless, and absolved of mortality—old Priam reft of his old wife and having outlived all his sons.

Until he was ten, each November he would watch the wagon containing the dogs and the bedding and food and guns and his father and Tennie's Jim, the Negro, and Sam Fathers, the Indian, son of a slave woman and a Chickasaw chief, depart on the road to town, to Jefferson, where Major de Spain and the others would join them. To the boy, at seven, eight, and nine, they were not going into the Big Bottom to hunt bear and deer, but to keep yearly rendezvous with the bear which they did not even intend to kill. Two weeks later they would return, with no trophy, no head and skin. He had not expected it. He had not even been afraid it would be in the wagon. He believed that even after he was ten and his father would let him go too, for those two weeks in November, he would merely make another one, along with his father and Major de Spain and General Compson and the others, the dogs which feared to bay at it and the rifles and shotguns which failed even to bleed it, in the yearly pageant of the old bear's furious immortality.

Then he heard the dogs. It was in the second week of his first time in the camp. He stood with Sam Fathers against a big oak beside the faint crossing where they had stood each dawn for nine days now, hearing the dogs. He had heard them once before, one morning last week—a murmur, sourceless, echoing through the wet woods, swelling presently into separate voices which he could recognize and call by name. He had raised and cocked the gun as Sam told him and stood motionless again while the uproar, the invisible course, swept up and past and faded; it seemed to him that he could actually see the deer, the buck, blond, smoke-colored, elongated with speed, fleeing, vanishing, the woods, the gray solitude, still ringing even when the cries of the dogs had died away.

"Now let the hammers down," Sam said.

"You knew they were not coming here too," he said.

"Yes," Sam said. "I want you to learn how to do when you didn't shoot. It's after the chance for the bear or the deer has done already come and gone that men and dogs get killed."

"Anyway," he said, "it was just a deer."

Then on the tenth morning he heard the dogs again. And he readied the too-long, too-heavy gun as Sam had taught him, before Sam even spoke. But this time it was no deer, no ringing chorus of dogs running strong on a free scent, but a moiling yapping an octave too high, with something more than indecision and even abjectness in it, not even moving very fast, taking a long time to pass completely out of hearing, leaving then somewhere in the air that echo, thin, slightly hysterical, abject, almost grieving, with no sense of a fleeing, unseen, smoke-colored, grass-eating shape ahead of it, and Sam, who had taught him first of all to cock the gun and take position where he could see everywhere and then never move again, had himself moved up beside him; he could hear Sam breathing at his shoulder, and he could see the arched curve of the old man's inhaling nostrils.

"Hah," Sam said. "Not even running. Walking."

"Old Ben!" the boy said. "But up here!" he cried. "Way up here!"

"He do it every year," Sam said. "Once. Maybe to see who in camp this time, if he can shoot or not. Whether we got the dog yet that can bay and hold him. He'll take them to the river, then he'll send them back home. We may as well go back too; see how they look when they come back to camp."

When they reached the camp the hounds were already there, ten of them crouching back under the kitchen, the boy and Sam squatting to peer back into the obscurity where they had huddled, quiet, the eyes luminous, glowing at them and vanishing, and no sound, only that effluvium of something more than dog, stronger than dog and not just animal, just beast, because still there had been nothing in front of that abject and almost painful yapping save the solitude, the wilderness, so that when the eleventh hound came in at noon and with all the others watching—even old Uncle Ash, who called himself first a cook—Sam daubed the tattered ear and the raked shoulder with turpentine and axle grease, to the boy it was still no living creature, but the wilderness which, leaning for the moment down, had patted lightly once the hound's temerity.

"Just like a man," Sam said. "Just like folks. Put off as long as she could having to be brave, knowing all the time that sooner or later she would have to be brave to keep on living with herself, and knowing all the time beforehand what was going to happen to her when she done it."

That afternoon, himself on the one-eyed wagon mule which did not mind the smell of blood nor, as they told him, of bear, and with Sam on the other one, they rode for more than three hours through the rapid, shortening winter day. They followed no path, no trail even that he could see; almost at once they were in a country which he had never seen before. Then he knew why Sam had made him ride the mule which would not spook. The sound one stopped short and tried to whirl and bolt even as Sam got down, blowing its breath, jerking and wrenching at the rein, while Sam held it, coaxing it forward with his voice, since he could not risk tying it, drawing it forward while the boy got down from the marred one.

Then, standing beside Sam in the gloom of the dying afternoon, he looked down at the rotted over-turned log, gutted and scored with claw marks and, in the wet earth beside it, the print of the enormous warped two-toed foot. He knew now what he

had smelled when he peered under the kitchen where the dogs huddled. He realized for the first time that the bear which had run in his listening and loomed in his dreams since before he could remember to the contrary, and which, therefore, must have existed in the listening and dreams of his father and Major de Spain and even old General Compson, too, before they began to remember in their turn, was a mortal animal, and that if they had departed for the camp each November without any actual hope of bringing its trophy back, it was not because it could not be slain, but because so far they had had no actual hope to.

"Tomorrow," he said.

"We'll try tomorrow," Sam said. "We ain't got the dog yet."

"We've got eleven. They ran him this morning."

"It won't need but one," Sam said. "He ain't here. Maybe he ain't nowhere. The only other way will be for him to run by accident over somebody that has a gun."

"That wouldn't be me," the boy said. "It will be Walter or Major or—"

"It might," Sam said. "You watch close in the morning. Because he's smart. That's how come he had lived this long. If he gets hemmed up and has to pick out somebody to run over, he will pick out you."

"How?" the boy said. "How will he know—" He ceased. "You mean he already knows me, that I ain't never been here before, ain't had time to find out yet whether I—" He ceased again, looking at Sam, the old man whose face revealed nothing until it smiled. He said humbly, not even amazed, "It was me he was watching. I don't reckon he did need to come but once."

The next morning they left the camp three hours before daylight. They rode this time because it was too far to walk, even the dogs in the wagon; again the first gray light found him in a place which he had never seen before, where Sam had placed him and told him to stay and then departed. With the gun which was too big for him, which did not even belong to him, but to Major de Spain, and which he had fired only once—at a stump on the first day, to learn the recoil and how to reload it—he stood against a gum tree beside a little bayou whose black still water crept without movement out of a canebrake and crossed a small clearing and into cane again, where, invisible, a bird—the big woodpecker called Lord-to-God by Negroes—clattered at a dead limb.

It was a stand like any other, dissimilar only in incidentals to the one where he had stood each morning for ten days; a territory new to him, yet no less familiar than that other one which, after almost two weeks, he had come to believe he knew a little—the same solitude, the same loneliness through which human beings had merely passed without altering it, leaving no mark, no scar, which looked exactly as it must have looked when the first ancestor of Sam Father's Chickasaw predecessors crept into it and looked about, club or stone ax or bone arrow drawn and poised; different only because, squatting at the edge of the kitchen, he smelled the hounds huddled and cringing beneath it and saw the raked ear and shoulder of the one who, Sam said, had had to be brave once in order to live with herself, and saw yesterday in the earth beside the gutted log the print of the living foot.

He heard no dogs at all. He never did hear them. He only heard the drumming of the woodpecker stop short off and knew that the bear was looking at him. He never saw it. He did not know whether it was in front of him or behind him. He did not move, holding the useless gun, which he had not even had warning to cock and which even now he did not cock, tasting in his saliva that taint as of brass which he knew now because he had smelled it when he peered under the kitchen at the huddled dogs.

Then it was gone. As abruptly as it had ceased, the woodpecker's dry, monotonous clatter set up again, and after a while he even believed he could hear the dogs—a murmur, scarce a sound even, which he had probably been hearing for some time before he even remarked it, drifting into hearing and then out again, dying away. They came nowhere near him. If it was a bear they ran, it was another bear. It was Sam himself who came out of the cane and crossed the bayou, followed by the injured bitch of yesterday. She was almost at heel, like a bird dog, making no sound. She came and crouched against his leg, trembling, staring off into the cane.

"I didn't see him," he said. "I didn't, Sam!"

"I know it," Sam said. "He done the looking. You didn't hear him neither, did you?"

"No," the boy said. "I—"

"He's smart," Sam said. "Too smart." He looked down at the hound, trembling faintly and steadily against the boy's knee. From the raked shoulder a few drops of fresh blood oozed and clung. "Too big. We ain't got the dog yet. But maybe someday. Maybe not next time. But someday."

*So I must see him*, he thought. *I must look at him*. Otherwise, it seemed to him that it would go on like this forever, as it had gone on with his father and Major de Spain, who was older than his father, and even with old General Compson, who had been old enough to be a brigade commander in 1865. Otherwise, it would go on so forever, next time and next time, after and after and after. It seemed to him that he could never see the two of them, himself and the bear, shadowy in the limbo from which time emerged, becoming time; the old bear absolved of mortality and himself partaking, sharing a little of it, enough of it. And he knew now what he had smelled in the huddled dogs and tasted in his saliva. He recognized fear. *So I will have to see him*, he thought, without dread or even hope. *I will have to look at him*.

It was in June of the next year. He was eleven. They were in camp again, celebrating Major de Spain's and General Compson's birthdays. Although the one had been born in September and the other in the depth of winter and in another decade, they had met for two weeks to fish and shoot squirrels and turkey and run coons and wildcats with the dogs at night. That is, he and Boon Hoggenbeck and the Negroes fished and shot squirrels and ran the coons and cats, because the proved hunters, not only Major de Spain and old General Compson, who spent those two weeks sitting in a rocking chair before a tremendous iron pot of Brunswick stew, stirring and tasting, with old Ash to quarrel with about how he was making it and Tennie's Jim to pour whiskey from the demijohn into the tin dipper from which he drank it, but even the boy's father and Walter Ewell, who were still young enough, scorned such, other than shooting the wild gobblers with pistols for wagers on their marksmanship.

Or, that is, his father and the others believed he was hunting squirrels. Until the third day, he thought that Sam Fathers believed that too. Each morning he would leave the camp right after breakfast. He had his own gun now, a Christmas present. He went back to the tree beside the bayou where he had stood that morning. Using the compass which old General Compson had given him, he ranged from that point; he was teaching himself to be a better-than-fair woodsman without knowing he was doing it. On the second day he even found the gutted log where he had first seen the crooked print. It was almost completely crumbled now, healing with unbelievable speed, a passionate and almost visible relinquishment, back into the earth from which the tree had grown.

He ranged the summer woods now, green with gloom; if anything, actually dimmer than in November's gray dissolution, where, even at noon, the sun fell only in intermittent dappling upon the earth, which never completely dried out and which crawled with snakes—moccasins and water snakes and rattlers, themselves the color of the dappling gloom, so that he would not always see them until they moved, returning later and later, first day, second day, passing in the twilight of the third evening the little log pen enclosing the log stable where Sam was putting up the horses for the night.

"You ain't looked right yet," Sam said.

He stopped. For a moment he didn't answer. Then he said peacefully, in a peaceful rushing burst as when a boy's miniature dam in a little brook gives way, "All right. But how? I went to the bayou. I even found that log again. I—"

"I reckon that was all right. Likely he's been watching you. You never saw his foot?"

"I," the boy said—"I didn't—I never thought—"

"It's the gun," Sam said. He stood beside the fence, motionless—the old man, the Indian, in the battered faded overalls and the five-cent straw hat which in the Negro's race had been the badge of his enslavement and was now the regalia of his freedom. The camp—the clearing, the house, the barn and its tiny lot with which Major de Spain in his turn had scratched punily and evanescently at the wilderness—faded in the dusk, back into the immemorial darkness of the woods. *The gun*, the boy thought. *The gun*.

"Be scared," Sam said. "You can't help that. But don't be afraid. Ain't nothing in the woods going to hurt you unless you corner it, or it smells that you are afraid. A bear or a deer, too, has got to be scared of a coward the same as a brave man has got to be."

*The gun*, the boy thought.

"You will have to choose," Sam said.

He left the camp before daylight, long before Uncle Ash would wake in his quilts on the kitchen floor and start the fire for breakfast. He had only the compass and a stick for snakes. He could go almost a mile before he would begin to need the compass. He sat on a log, the invisible compass in his invisible hand, while the secret night sounds, fallen still at his movements, scurried again and then ceased for good, and the owls ceased and gave over to the waking of day birds, and he could see the compass. Then he went fast yet still quietly; he was becoming better and better as a woodsman, still without having yet realized it.

He jumped a doe and a fawn at sunrise, walked them out of the bed, close enough to see them—the crash of undergrowth, the white scut, the fawn scudding behind her faster than he had believed it could run. He was hunting right, upwind, as Sam had taught him; not that it mattered now. He had left the gun; of his own will and relinquishment he had accepted not a gambit, not a choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the old rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated. He would not even be afraid, not even in the moment when the fear would take him completely—blood, skin, bowels, bones, memory from the long time before it became his memory—all save that thin, clear, immortal lucidity which alone differed him from this bear and from all the other bear and deer he would ever kill in the humility and pride of his skill and endurance, to which Sam had spoken when he leaned in the twilight on the lot fence yesterday.

By noon he was far beyond the little bayou, farther into the new and alien country than he had ever been. He was traveling now not only by the old, heavy, biscuit-thick

silver watch which had belonged to his grandfather. When he stopped at last, it was for the first time since he had risen from the log at dawn when he could see the compass. It was far enough. He had left the camp nine hours ago; nine hours from now, dark would have already been an hour old. But he didn't think that. He thought, *All right. Yes. But what?* and stood for a moment, alien and small in the green and topless solitude, answering his own question before it had formed and ceased. It was the watch, the compass, the stick—the three lifeless mechanicals with which for nine hours he had fended the wilderness off; he hung the watch and compass carefully on a bush and leaned the stick beside them and relinquished completely to it.

He had not been going very fast for the last two or three hours. He went no faster now, since distance would not matter even if he could have gone fast. And he was trying to keep a bearing on the tree where he had left the compass, trying to complete a circle which would bring him back to it or at least intersect itself, since direction would not matter now either. But the tree was not there, and he did as Sam had schooled him—made the next circle in the opposite direction, so that the two patterns would bisect somewhere, but crossing no point of his own feet, finding the tree at last, but in the wrong place—no bush, no compass, no watch—and the tree not even the tree, because there was a down log beside it and he did what Sam Fathers had told him was the next thing and the last.

As he sat down on the log he saw the crooked print—the warped, tremendous, two-toed indentation which, even as he watched it, filled with water. As he looked up, the wilderness coalesced, solidified—the glade, the tree he sought, the bush, the watch and the compass glinting where a ray of sunshine touched them. Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, solid, fixed in the hot dappling of the green and windless noon, not as big as he had dreamed it, but as big as he had expected it, bigger, dimensionless, against the dappled obscurity, looking at him where he sat quietly on the log and looked back at it.

Then it moved. It made no sound. It did not hurry. It crossed the glade, walking for an instant into the full glare of the sun; when it reached the other side it stopped again and looked back at him across one shoulder while his quiet breathing inhaled and exhaled three times.

Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods, the undergrowth. It faded, sank back into the wilderness as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink and vanish into the dark depths of its pool without even any movement of its fins.

He thought, *It will be next fall.* But it was not next fall, nor the next nor the next. He was fourteen then. He had killed his buck, and Sam Fathers had marked his face with the hot blood, and in the next year he killed a bear. But even before that accolade he had become as competent in the woods as many grown men with the same experience; by his fourteenth year he was a better woodsman than most grown men with more. There was no territory within thirty miles of the camp that he did not know—bayou, ridge, brake, landmark, tree and path. He could have led anyone to any point in it without deviation, and brought them out again. He knew the game trails that even Sam Fathers did not know; in his thirteenth year he found a buck's bedding place, and unbeknown to his father he borrowed Walter Ewell's rifle and lay in wait at dawn and killed the buck when it walked back to the bed, as Sam had told him how the old Chickasaw fathers did.

But not the old bear, although by now he knew its footprints better than he did his own, and not only the crooked one. He could see any one of the three sound ones and



distinguish it from any other, and not only by its size. There were other bears within these thirty miles which left tracks almost as large, but this was more than that. If Sam Fathers had been his mentor and the back-yard rabbits and squirrels at home his kindergarten, then the wilderness the old bear ran was his college, the old male bear itself, so long unwed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor, was his alma mater. But he never saw it.

He could find the crooked print now almost whenever he liked, fifteen or ten or five miles, or sometimes nearer the camp than that. Twice while on stand during the three years he heard the dogs strike its trail by accident; on the second time they jumped it seemingly, the voices high, abject, almost human in hysteria, as on that first morning two years ago. But not the bear itself. He would remember that noon three years ago, the glade, himself and the bear fixed during that moment in the windless and dappled blaze, and it would seem to him that it had never happened, that he had dreamed that too. But it had happened. They had looked at each other, they had emerged from the wilderness old as earth, synchronized to the instant by something more than the blood that moved the flesh and bones which bore them, and touched, pledged something, affirmed, something more lasting than the frail web of bones and flesh which any accident could obliterate.

Then he saw it again. Because of the very fact that he thought of nothing else, he had forgotten to look for it. He was still hunting with Walter Ewell's rifle. He saw it cross the end of a long blow-down, a corridor where a tornado had swept, rushing through rather than over the tangle of trunks and branches as a locomotive would have, faster than he had ever believed it could move, almost as fast as a deer even, because a deer would have spent most of that time in the air, faster than he could bring the rifle sights up with it. And now he knew what had been wrong during all the three years. He sat on a log, shaking and trembling as if he had never seen the woods before nor anything that ran them, wondering with incredulous amazement how he could have forgotten the very thing which Sam Fathers had told him and which the bear itself had proved the next day and had now returned after three years to reaffirm.

And now he knew what Sam Fathers had meant about the right dog, a dog in which size would mean less than nothing. So when he returned alone in April—school was out then, so that the sons of farmers could help with the land's planting, and at last his father had granted him permission, on his promise to be back in four days—he had the dog. It was his own, a mongrel of the sort called by Negroes a fyce, a ratter, itself not much bigger than a rat and possessing that bravery which had long since stopped being courage and had become foolhardiness.

It did not take four days. Alone again, he found the trail on the first morning. It was not a stalk; it was an ambush. He timed the meeting almost as if it were an appointment with a human being. Himself holding the fyce muffled in a feed sack and Sam Fathers with two of the hounds on a piece of plowline rope, they lay down wind of the trail at dawn of the second morning. They were so close that the bear turned without even running, as if in surprised amazement at the shrill and frantic uproar of the released fyce, turning at bay against the trunk of a tree, on its hind feet; it seemed to the boy that it would never stop rising, taller and taller, and even the two hounds seemed to take a desperate and despairing courage from the fyce, following it as it went in.

Then he realized that the fyce was actually not going to stop. He flung, threw the gun away, and ran; when he overtook and grasped the frantically pin-wheeling little dog, it seemed to him that he was directly under the bear.

He could smell it, strong and hot and rank. Sprawling, he looked up to where it loomed and towered over him like a cloudburst and colored like a thunderclap, quite familiar, peacefully and even lucidly familiar, until he remembered: This was the way he had used to dream about it. Then it was gone. He didn't see it go. He knelt, holding the frantic fyce with both hands, hearing the abashed wailing of the hounds drawing farther and farther away, until Sam came up. He carried the gun. He laid it down quietly beside the boy and stood looking down at him.

"You've done seed him twice now with a gun in your hands," he said. "This time you couldn't have missed him."

The boy rose. He still held the fyce. Even in his arms and clear of the ground, it *yapped frantically, straining and surging after the fading uproar of the two hounds like a tangle of wire springs. He was panting a little, but he was neither shaking nor trembling now.*

"Neither could you!" he said. "You had the gun! Neither did you!"

"And you didn't shoot," his father said. "How close were you?"

"I don't know, sir," he said. "There was a big wood tick inside his right hind leg. I saw that. But I didn't have the gun then."

"But you didn't shoot when you had the gun," his father said. "Why?"

But he didn't answer, and his father didn't wait for him to, rising and crossing the room, across the pelt of the bear which the boy had killed two years ago and the larger one which his father had killed before he was born, to the bookcase beneath the mounted head of the boy's first buck. It was the room which his father called the office, from which all the plantation business was transacted; in it for the fourteen years of his life he had heard the best of all talking. Major de Spain would be there and sometimes old General Compson, and Walter Ewell and Boon Hoggenback and Sam Fathers and Tennie's Jim, too, were hunters, knew the woods and what ran them.

He would hear it, not talking himself but listening—the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it or Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his to convey. It was of the men, not white nor black nor red, but men, hunters with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and deer juxtaposed and relieved against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest by the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exact remembering, while he squatted in the blazing firelight as Tennie's Jim squatted, who stirred only to put more wood on the fire and to pass the bottle from one glass to another. Because the bottle was always present, so that after a while it seemed to him that those fierce instants of heart and brain and courage and wiliness and speed were concentrated and distilled into that brown liquor which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they had spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base hope of acquiring the virtues of cunning and strength and speed, but in salute to them.

His father returned with the book and sat down again and opened it. "Listen," he said. He read the five stanzas aloud, his voice quiet and deliberate in the room where there was no fire now because it was already spring. Then he looked up. The boy watched him. "All right," his father said. "Listen." He read again, but only the

second stanza this time, to the end of it, the last two lines, and closed the book and put it on the table beside him. "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, for ever wilt thou love, and she be fair," he said.

"He's talking about a girl," the boy said.

"He had to talk about something," his father said. Then he said, "He was talking about truth. Truth doesn't change. Truth is one thing. It covers all things which touch the heart—honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?"

He didn't know. Somehow it was simpler than that. There was an old bear, fierce and ruthless, not merely just to stay alive, but with the fierce pride of liberty and freedom, proud enough of the liberty and freedom to see it threatened without fear or even alarm; nay, who at times even seemed deliberately to put that freedom and liberty in jeopardy in order to savor them, to remind his old strong bones and flesh to keep supple and quick to defend and preserve them. There was an old man, son of a Negro slave and an Indian king, inheritor on the one side of the long chronicle of a people who had learned humility through suffering, and pride through the endurance which survived the suffering and injustice, and on the other side, the chronicle of a people even longer in the land than the first, yet who no longer existed in the land at all save in the solitary brotherhood of an old Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear. There was a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods, who suddenly found himself becoming so skillful so rapidly that he feared he would never become worthy because he had not learned humility and pride, although he had tried to, until one day and as suddenly he discovered that an old man who could not have defined either had led him, as though by the hand, to that point where an old bear and a little mongrel of a dog showed him that, by possessing one thing other, he would possess them both.

And a little dog, nameless and mongrel and many-fathered, grown, yet weighing less than six pounds, saying as if to itself, "I can't be dangerous, because there's nothing much smaller than I am; I can't be fierce, because they would call it just a noise; I can't be humble, because I'm already too close to the ground to genuflect; I can't be proud, because I wouldn't be near enough to it for anyone to know who was casting the shadow, and I don't even know that I'm not going to heaven, because they have already decided that I don't possess an immortal soul. So all I can be is brave. But it's all right. I can be that, even if they still call it just noise."

That was all. It was simple, much simpler than somebody talking in a book about youth and a girl he would never need to grieve over, because he could never approach any nearer her and would never have to get any farther away. He had heard about a bear, and finally got big enough to trail it, and he trailed it four years and at last met it with a gun in his hands and he didn't shoot. Because a little dog— But he could have shot long before the little dog covered the twenty yards to where the bear waited, and Sam Fathers could have shot at any time during that interminable minute while Old Ben stood on his hind feet over them. He stopped. His father was watching him gravely across the spring-rife twilight of the room; when he spoke, his words were as quiet as the twilight, too, not loud, because they did not need to be because they would last, "Courage, and honor, and pride," his father said, "and pity, and love of justice and of liberty. They all touch the heart, and what the heart holds to becomes truth, as far as we know the truth. Do you see now?"

Sam, and Old Ben, and Nip, he thought. And himself too. He had been all right too. His father had said so. "Yes, sir," he said.

## THE HORSE DEALER'S DAUGHTER

D. H. LAWRENCE (1885-1930)

"Well, Mabel, and what are you going to do with yourself?" asked Joe, with foolish flippancy. He felt quite safe himself. Without listening for an answer, he turned aside, worked a grain of tobacco to the tip of his tongue, and spat it out. He did not care about anything, since he felt safe himself.

The three brothers and the sister sat round the desolate breakfast table, attempting some sort of desultory consultation. The morning's post had given the final tap to the family fortune, and all was over. The dreary dining-room itself, with its heavy mahogany furniture, looked as if it were waiting to be done away with.

But the consultation amounted to nothing. There was a strange air of ineffectuality about the three men, as they sprawled at table, smoking and reflecting vaguely on their own condition. The girl was alone, a rather short, sullen-looking young woman of twenty-seven. She did not share the same life as her brothers. She would have been good-looking, save for the impassive fixity of her face, "bull-dog," as her brothers called it.

There was a confused tramping of horses' feet outside. The three men all sprawled round in their chairs to watch. Beyond the dark holly-bushes that separated the strip of lawn from the highroad, they could see a cavalcade of shire horses swinging out of their own yard, being taken for exercise. This was the last time. These were the last horses that would go through their hands. The young men watched with critical, callous look. They were all frightened at the collapse of their lives, and the sense of disaster in which they were involved left them no inner freedom.

Yet they were three fine, well-set fellows enough. Joe, the eldest, was a man of thirty-three, broad and handsome in a hot, flushed way. His face was red, he twisted his black moustache over a thick finger, his eyes were shallow and restless. He had a sensual way of uncovering his teeth when he laughed, and his bearing was stupid. Now he watched the horses with a glazed look of helplessness in his eyes, a certain stupor of downfall.

The great draught-horses swung past. They were tied head to tail, four of them, and they heaved along to where a lane branched off from the highroad, planting their great hoofs floutingly in the fine black mud, swinging their great rounded haunches sumptuously, and trotting a few sudden steps as they were led into the lane, round the corner. Every movement showed a massive, slumbrous strength, and a stupidity which held them in subjection. The groom at the head looked back, jerking the leading rope. And the cavalcade moved out of sight up the lane, the tail of the last horse, bobbed up tight and stiff, held out taut from the swinging great haunches as they rocked behind the hedges in a motion-like sleep.

Joe watched with glazed hopeless eyes. The horses were almost like his own body to him. He felt he was done for now. Luckily he was engaged to a woman as old as himself, and therefore her father, who was steward of a neighbouring estate, would pro-

vide him with a job. He would marry and go into harness. His life was over, he would be a subject animal now.

He turned uneasily aside, the retreating steps of the horses echoing in his ears. Then, with foolish restlessness, he reached for the scraps of bacon-rind from the plates, and making a faint whistling sound, flung them to the terrier that lay against the fender. He watched the dog swallow them, and waited till the creature looked into his eyes. Then a faint grin came on his face, and in a high, foolish voice he said:

"You won't get much more bacon, shall you, you little bitch?"

The dog faintly and dismally wagged its tail, then lowered its haunches, circled round, and lay down again.

There was another helpless silence at the table. Joe sprawled uneasily in his seat, not willing to go till the family conclave was dissolved. Fred Henry, the second brother, was erect, clean-limbed, alert. He had watched the passing of the horses with more sang-froid. If he was an animal, like Joe, he was an animal which controls, not one which is controlled. He was master of any horse, and he carried himself with a well-tempered air of mastery. But he was not master of the situations of life. He pushed his coarse brown moustache upwards, off his lip, and glanced irritably at his sister, who sat impassive and inscrutable.

"You'll go and stop with Lucy for a bit, shan't you?" he asked. The girl did not answer.

"I don't see what else you can do," persisted Fred Henry.

"Go as a skivvy," Joe interpolated laconically.

The girl did not move a muscle.

"If I was her, I should go in for training for a nurse," said Malcolm, the youngest of them all. He was the baby of the family, a young man of twenty-two with a fresh, jaunty *museau*.

But Mabel did not take any notice of him. They had talked at her and round her for so many years, that she hardly heard them at all.

The marble clock on the mantelpiece softly chimed the half-hour, the dog rose uneasily from the hearthrug and looked at the party at the breakfast table. But still they sat on in ineffectual conclave.

"Oh, all right," said Joe suddenly, apropos of nothing. "I'll get a move on."

He pushed back his chair, straddled his knees with a downward jerk, to get them free, in horsey fashion, and went to the fire. Still he did not go out of the room; he was curious to know what the others would do or say. He began to charge his pipe, looking down at the dog and saying, in a high, affected voice:

"Going wi' me? Going wi' me are ter? Tha'rt goin' further than tha counts on just now, dost hear?"

The dog faintly wagged its tail, the man stuck out his jaw and covered his pipe with his hands, and puffed intently, losing himself in the tobacco, looking down all the while at the dog with an absent brown eye. The dog looked up at him in mournful distrust. Joe stood with his knees stuck out, in real horsey fashion.

"Have you had a letter from Lucy?" Fred Henry asked of his sister.

"Last week," came the neutral reply.

"And what does she say?"

There was no answer.

"Does she ask you to go and stop there?" persisted Fred Henry.

"She says I can if I like."

"Well, then, you'd better. Tell her you'll come on Monday."

This was received in silence.

"That's what you'll do then, is it?" said Fred Henry, in some exasperation.

But she made no answer. There was a silence of futility and irritation in the room. Malcolm grinned fatuously.

"You'll have to make up your mind between now and next Wednesday," said Joe loudly, "or else find yourself lodgings on the kerbstone."

The face of the young woman darkened, but she sat on immutable.

"Here's Jack Fergusson!" exclaimed Malcolm, who was looking aimlessly out of the window.

"Where?" exclaimed Joe, loudly.

"Just gone past."

"Coming in?"

Malcolm craned his neck to see the gate.

"Yes," he said.

There was a silence. Mabel sat on like one condemned, at the head of the table. Then a whistle was heard from the kitchen. The dog got up and barked sharply. Joe opened the door and shouted:

"Come on."

After a moment a young man entered. He was muffled up in overcoat and a purple woollen scarf, and his tweed cap, which he did not remove, was pulled down on his head. He was of medium height, his face was rather long and pale, his eyes looked tired.

"Hello, Jack! Well, Jack!" exclaimed Malcolm and Joe. Fred Henry merely said, "Jack."

"What's doing?" asked the newcomer, evidently addressing Fred Henry.

"Same. We've got to be out by Wednesday. Got a cold?"

"I have—got it bad, too."

"Why don't you stop in?"

"Me stop in? When I can't stand on my legs, perhaps I shall have a chance." The young man spoke huskily. He had a slight Scotch accent.

"It's a knock-out, isn't it," said Joe, boisterously, "if a doctor goes round croaking with a cold. Looks bad for the patients, doesn't it?"

The young doctor looked at him slowly.

"Anything the matter with *you*, then?" he asked sarcastically.

"Not as I know of. Damn your eyes, I hope not. Why?"

"I thought you were very concerned about the patients, wondered if you might be one yourself."

"Damn it, no, I've never been patient to no flaming doctor, and hope I never shall be," returned Joe.

At this point Mabel rose from the table, and they all seemed to become aware of her existence. She began putting the dishes together. The young doctor looked at her, but did not address her. He had not greeted her. She went out of the room with the tray, her face impassive and unchanged.

"When are you off then, all of you?" asked the doctor.

"I'm catching the eleven-forty," replied Malcolm. "Are you goin' down wi' th' trap, Joe?"

"Yes, I've told you I'm going down wi' th' trap, haven't I?"

"We'd better be getting her in then. So long, Jack, if I don't see you before I go," said Malcolm, shaking hands.

He went out, followed by Joe, who seemed to have his tail between his legs.

"Well, this is the devil's own," exclaimed the doctor, when he was left alone with Fred Henry. "Going before Wednesday, are you?"

"That's the orders," replied the other.

"Where, to Northampton?"

"That's it."

"The devil!" exclaimed Fergusson, with quiet chagrin.

And there was silence between the two.

"All settled up, are you?" asked Fergusson.

"About."

There was another pause.

"Well, I shall miss yer, Freddy, boy," said the young doctor.

"And I shall miss thee, Jack," returned the other.

"Miss you like hell," mused the doctor.

Fred Henry turned aside. There was nothing to say. Mabel came in again, to finish clearing the table.

"What are *you* going to do, then, Miss Pervin?" asked Fergusson. "Going to your sister's, are you?"

Mabel looked at him with her steady, dangerous eyes, that always made him uncomfortable, unsettling his superficial ease.

"No," she said.

"Well, what in the name of fortune *are* you going to do? Say what you mean to do," cried Fred Henry, with futile intensity.

But she only averted her head, and continued her work. She folded the white table-cloth, and put on the chenille cloth.

"The sulkiest bitch that ever trod!" muttered her brother.

But she finished her task with perfectly impassive face, the young doctor watching her interestedly all the while. Then she went out.

Fred Henry stared after her, clenching his lips, his blue eyes fixing in sharp antagonism, as he made a grimace of sour exasperation.

"You could bray her into bits, and that's all you'd get out of her," he said in a small, narrowed tone.

The doctor smiled faintly.

"What's she *going* to do, then?" he asked.

"Strike me if I know!" returned the other.

There was a pause. Then the doctor stirred.

"I'll be seeing you to-night, shall I?" he said to his friend.

"Ay—where's it to be? Are we going over to Jessdale?"

"I don't know. I've got such a cold on me. I'll come round to the Moon and Stars, anyway."

"Let Lizzie and May miss their night for once, eh?"

"That's it—if I feel as I do now."

"All's one—"

The two young men went through the passage and down to the back door together. The house was large, but it was servantless now, and desolate. At the back was a small bricked house-yard, and beyond that a big square, gravelled fine and red, and

having stables on two sides. Sloping, dank, winter-dark fields stretched away on the open sides.

But the stables were empty. Joseph Pervin, the father of the family, had been a man of no education, who had become a fairly large horse dealer. The stables had been full of horses, there was a great turmoil and come-and-go of horses and of dealers and grooms. Then the kitchen was full of servants. But of late things had declined. The old man had married a second time, to retrieve his fortunes. Now he was dead and everything was gone to the dogs, there was nothing but debt and threatening.

For months, Mabel had been servantless in the big house, keeping the home together in penury for her ineffectual brothers. She had kept house for ten years. But previously it was with unstinted means. Then, however brutal and coarse everything was, the sense of money had kept her proud, confident. The men might be foul-mouthed, the women in the kitchen might have bad reputations, her brothers might have illegitimate children. But so long as there was money, the girl felt herself established, and brutally proud, reserved.

No company came to the house, save dealers and coarse men. Mabel had no associates of her own sex, after her sister went away. But she did not mind. She went regularly to church, she attended to her father. And she lived in the memory of her mother, who had died when she was fourteen, and whom she had loved. She had loved her father, too, in a different way, depending upon him, and feeling secure in him, until at the age of fifty-four he married again. And then she had set hard against him. Now he had died and left them all hopelessly in debt.

She had suffered badly during the period of poverty. Nothing, however, could shake the curious sullen, animal pride that dominated each member of the family. Now, for Mabel, the end had come. Still she would not cast about her. She would follow her own way just the same. She would always hold the keys of her own situation. Mindless and persistent, she endured from day to day. Why should she think? Why should she answer anybody? It was enough that this was the end, and there was no way out. She need not pass any more darkly along the main street of the small town, avoiding every eye. She need not demean herself any more, going into the shops and buying the cheapest food. This was at an end. She thought of nobody, not even of herself. Mindless and persistent, she seemed in a sort of ecstasy to be coming nearer to her fulfilment, her own glorification, approaching her dead mother, who was glorified.

In the afternoon she took a little bag, with shears and sponge and a small scrubbing brush, and went out. It was a grey, wintry day, with saddened, dark green fields and an atmosphere blackened by the smoke of foundries not far off. She went quickly, darkly along the causeway, heeding nobody, through the town to the churchyard.

There she always felt secure, as if no one could see her, although as a matter of fact she was exposed to the stare of every one who passed along under the churchyard wall. Nevertheless, once under the shadow of the great looming church, among the graves, she felt immune from the world, reserved within the thick churchyard wall as in another country.

Carefully she clipped the grass from the grave, and arranged the pinky white, small chrysanthemums in the tin cross. When this was done, she took an empty jar from a neighbouring grave, brought water, and carefully, most scrupulously sponged the marble head-stone and the coping-stone.



It gave her sincere satisfaction to do this. She felt in immediate contact with the world of her mother. She took minute pains, went through the park in a state bordering on pure happiness, as if in performing this task she came into a subtle, intimate connection with her mother. For the life she followed here in the world was far less real than the world of death she inherited from her mother.

The doctor's house was just by the church. Fergusson, being a mere hired assistant, was slave to the country-side. As he hurried now to attend to the outpatients in the surgery, glancing across the graveyard with his quick eye, he saw the girl at her task at the grave. She seemed so intent and remote, it was like looking into another world. Some mystical element was touched in him. He slowed down as he walked, watching her as if spell-bound.

She lifted her eyes, feeling him looking. Their eyes met. And each looked away again at once, each feeling, in some way, found out by the other. He lifted his cap and passed on down the road. There remained distinct in his consciousness, like a vision, the memory of her face, lifted from the tombstone in the churchyard, and looking at him with slow, large, portentous eyes. It *was* portentous, her face. It seemed to mesmerize him. There was a heavy power in her eyes which laid hold of his whole being, as if he had drunk some powerful drug. He had been feeling weak and done before. Now the life came back into him, he felt delivered from his own fretted, daily self.

He finished his duties at the surgery as quickly as might be, hastily filling up the bottle of the waiting people with cheap drugs. Then, in perpetual haste, he set off again to visit several cases in another part of his round, before teatime. At all times he preferred to walk if he could, but particularly when he was not well. He fancied the motion restored him.

The afternoon was falling. It was grey, deadened, and wintry, with a slow, moist, heavy coldness sinking in and deadening all the faculties. But why should he think or notice? He hastily climbed the hill and turned across the dark green fields, following the black cinder-track. In the distance, across a shallow dip in the country, the small town was clustered like smouldering ash, a tower, a spire, a heap of low, raw, extinct houses. And on the nearest fringe of the town, sloping into the dip, was Oldmeadow, the Pervins' house. He could see the stables and the outbuildings distinctly, as they lay towards him on the slope. Well, he would not go there many more times! Another resource would be lost to him, another place gone: the only company he cared for in the alien, ugly little town he was losing. Nothing but work, drudgery, constant hastening from dwelling to dwelling among the colliers and the iron-workers. It wore him out, but at the same time he had a craving for it. It was a stimulant to him to be in the homes of the working people, moving as it were through the innermost body of their life. His nerves were excited and gratified. He could come so near, into the very lives of the rough, inarticulate, powerfully emotional men and women. He grumbled, he said he hated the hellish hole. But as a matter of fact it excited him, the contact with the rough, strongly-feeling people was a stimulant applied direct to his nerves.

Below Oldmeadow, in the green, shallow, soddened hollow of fields, lay a square, deep pond. Roving across the landscape, the doctor's quick eye detected a figure in black passing through the gate of the field, down towards the pond. He looked again. It would be Mabel Pervin. His mind suddenly became alive and attentive.

Why was she going down there? He pulled up on the path on the slope above, and stood staring. He could just make sure of the small black figure moving in the

hollow of the failing day. He seemed to see her in the midst of such obscurity, that he was like a clairvoyant, seeing rather with the mind's eye than with ordinary sight. Yet he could see her positively enough, whilst he kept his eye attentive. He felt, if he looked away from her, in the thick, ugly falling dusk, he would lose her altogether.

He followed her minutely as she moved, direct and intent, like something transmitted rather than stirring in voluntary activity, straight down the field towards the pond. There she stood on the bank for a moment. She never raised her head. Then she waded slowly into the water.

He stood motionless as the small black figure walked slowly and deliberately towards the centre of the pond, very slowly, gradually moving deeper into the motionless water, and still moving forward as the water got up to her breast. Then he could see her no more in the dusk of the dead afternoon.

"There!" he exclaimed: "Would you believe it?"

And he hastened straight down, running over the wet, soddened fields, pushing through the hedges, down into the depression of callous wintry obscurity. It took him several minutes to come to the pond. He stood on the bank, breathing heavily. He could see nothing. His eyes seemed to penetrate the dead water. Yes, perhaps that was the dark shadow of her black clothing beneath the surface of the water.

He slowly ventured into the pond. The bottom was deep, soft clay, he sank in, and the water clasped dead cold round his legs. As he stirred he could smell the cold, rotten clay that fouled up into the water. It was objectionable in his lungs. Still, repelled and yet not heeding, he moved deeper into the pond. The cold water rose over his thighs, over his loins, upon his abdomen. The lower part of his body was all sunk in the hideous cold element. And the bottom was so deeply soft and uncertain, he was afraid of pitching with his mouth underneath. He could not swim, and was afraid.

He crouched a little, spreading his hands under the water and moving them round, trying to feel for her. The dead cold pond swayed upon his chest. He moved again, a little deeper, and again, with his hands underneath, he felt all around under the water. And he touched her clothing. But it evaded his fingers. He made a desperate effort to grasp it.

And so doing he lost his balance and went under, horribly, suffocating in the foul earthy water, struggling madly for a few moments. At last, after what seemed an eternity, he got his footing, rose again into the air and looked around. He gasped, and knew he was in the world. Then he looked at the water. She had risen near him. He grasped her clothing, and drawing her nearer, turned to take his way to land again.

He went very slowly, carefully, absorbed in the slow progress. He rose higher, climbing out of the pond. The water was now only about his legs; he was thankful, full of relief to be out of the clutches of the pond. He lifted her and staggered on to the bank, out of the horror of wet, grey clay.

He laid her down on the bank. She was quite unconscious and running with water. He made the water come from her mouth, he worked to restore her. He did not have to work very long before he could feel the breathing begin again in her; she was breathing naturally. He worked a little longer. He could feel her live beneath his hands; she was coming back. He wiped her face, wrapped her in his overcoat, looked round into the dim, dark grey world, then lifted her and staggered down the bank and across the fields.

It seemed an unthinkable long way, and his burden so heavy he felt he would never get to the house. But at last he was in the stable-yard, and then in the house-yard.

He opened the door and went into the house. In the kitchen he laid her down on the hearthrug, and called. The house was empty. But the fire was burning in the grate.

Then again he kneeled to attend to her. She was breathing regularly, her eyes were wide open and as if conscious, but there seemed something missing in her look. She was conscious in herself, but unconscious of her surroundings.

He ran upstairs, took blankets from a bed, and put them before the fire to warm. Then he removed her saturated, earthy-smelling clothing, rubbed her dry with a towel, and wrapped her naked in the blankets. Then he went into the dining-room, to look for spirits. There was a little whisky. He drank a gulp himself, and put some into her mouth.

The effect was instantaneous. She looked full into his face, as if she had been seeing him for some time, and yet had only just become conscious of him.

"Dr. Fergusson?" she said.

"What?" he answered.

He was divesting himself of his coat, intending to find some dry clothing upstairs. He could not bear the smell of the dead, clayey water, and he was mortally afraid for his own health.

"What did I do?" she asked.

"Walked into the pond," he replied. He had begun to shudder like one sick, and could hardly attend to her. Her eyes remained full on him, he seemed to be going dark in his mind, looking back at her helplessly. The shuddering became quieter in him, his life came back in him, dark and unknowing, but strong again.

"Was I out of my mind?" she asked, while her eyes were fixed on him all the time.

"Maybe, for the moment," he replied. He felt quiet, because his strength had come back. The strange fretful strain had left him.

"Am I out of my mind now?" she asked.

"Are you?" He reflected a moment. "No," he answered truthfully, "I don't see that you are." He turned his face aside. He was afraid now, because he felt dazed, and felt dimly that her power was stronger than his, in this issue. And she continued to look at him fixedly all the time. "Can you tell me where I shall find some dry things to put on?" he asked.

"Did you dive into the pond for me?" she asked.

"No," he answered. "I walked in. But I went in overhead as well."

There was silence for a moment. He hesitated. He very much wanted to go upstairs to get into dry clothing. But there was another desire in him. And she seemed to hold him. His will seemed to have gone to sleep, and left him, standing there slack before her. But he felt warm inside himself. He did not shudder at all, though his clothes were sodden on him.

"Why did you?" she asked.

"Because I didn't want you to do such a foolish thing," he said.

"It wasn't foolish," she said, still gazing at him as she lay on the floor, with a sofa cushion under her head. "It was the right thing to do. I knew best, then."

"I'll go and shift these wet things," he said. But still he had not the power to move out of her presence, until she sent him. It was as if she had the life of his body in her hands, and he could not extricate himself. Or perhaps he did not want to.

Suddenly she sat up. Then she became aware of her own immediate condition. She felt the blankets about her, she knew her own limbs. For a moment it seemed

as if her reason were going. She looked round, with wild eye, as if seeking something. He stood still with fear. She saw her clothing lying scattered.

"Who undressed me?" she asked, her eyes resting full and inevitable on his face.

"I did," he replied, "to bring you round."

For some moments she sat and gazed at him awfully, her lips parted.

"Do you love me, then?" she asked.

He only stood and stared at her, fascinated. His soul seemed to melt.

She shuffled forward on her knees, and put her arms round him, round his legs, as he stood there, pressing her breasts against his knees and thighs, clutching him with strange, convulsive certainty, pressing his thighs against her, drawing him to her face, her throat, as she looked up at him with flaring, humble eyes of transfiguration, triumphant in first possession.

"You love me," she murmured, in strange transport, yearning and triumphant and confident. "You love me. I know you love me, I know."

And she was passionately kissing his knees, through the wet clothing, passionately and indiscriminately kissing his knees, his legs, as if unaware of everything.

He looked down at the tangled wet hair, the wild, bare, animal shoulders. He was amazed, bewildered, and afraid. He had never thought of loving her. He had never wanted to love her. When he rescued her and restored her, he was a doctor, and she was a patient. He had had no single personal thought of her. Nay, this introduction of the personal element was very distasteful to him, a violation of his professional honour. It was horrible to have her there embracing his knees. It was horrible. He revolted from it, violently. And yet—and yet—he had not the power to break away.

She looked at him again, with the same supplication of powerful love, and that same transcendent, frightening light of triumph. In view of the delicate flame which seemed to come from her face like a light, he was powerless. And yet he had never intended to love her. He had never intended. And something stubborn in him could not give way.

"You love me," she repeated, in a murmur of deep, rhapsodic assurance. "You love me."

Her hands were drawing him, drawing him down to her. He was afraid, even a little horrified. For he had, really, no intention of loving her. Yet her hands were drawing him towards her. He put out his hand quickly to steady himself, and grasped her bare shoulder. A flame seemed to burn the hand that grasped her soft shoulder. He had no intention of loving her: his whole will was against his yielding. It was horrible. And yet wonderful was the touch of her shoulders, beautiful the shining of her face. Was she perhaps mad? He had a horror of yielding to her. Yet something in him ached also.

He had been staring away at the door, away from her. But his hand remained on her shoulder. She had gone suddenly very still. He looked down at her. Her eyes were now wide with fear, with doubt, the light was dying from her face, a shadow of terrible greyness was returning. He could not bear the touch of her eyes' question upon him, and the look of death behind the question.

With an inward groan he gave way, and let his heart yield towards her. A sudden gentle smile came on his face. And her eyes, which never left his face, slowly, slowly filled with tears. He watched the strange water rise in her eyes, like some slow fountain coming up. And his heart seemed to burn and melt away in his breast.

He could not bear to look at her any more. He dropped on his knees and caught her head with his arms and pressed her face against his throat. She was very still. His heart, which seemed to have broken, was burning with a kind of agony in his breast. And he felt her slow, hot tears wetting his throat. But he could not move.

He felt the hot tears wet his neck and the hollows of his neck, and he remained motionless, suspended through one of man's eternities. Only now it had become indispensable to him to have her face pressed close to him; he could never let her go again. He could never let her head go away from the close clutch of his arm. He wanted to remain like that for ever, with his heart hurting him in a pain that was also life to him. Without knowing, he was looking down on her damp, soft brown hair.

Then, as it were suddenly, he smelt the horrid stagnant smell of that water. And at the same moment she drew away from him and looked at him. Her eyes were wistful and unfathomable. He was afraid of them, and he fell to kissing her, not knowing what he was doing. He wanted her eyes not to have that terrible, wistful, unfathomable look.

When she turned her face to him again, a faint delicate flush was glowing, and there was again dawning that terrible shining of joy in her eyes, which really terrified him, and yet which he now wanted to see, because he feared the look of doubt still more.

"You love me?" she said, rather faltering.

"Yes." The word cost him a painful effort. Not because it wasn't true. But because it was too newly true, the *saying* seemed to tear open again his newly-torn heart. And he hardly wanted it to be true, even now.

She lifted her face to him, and he bent forward and kissed her on the mouth, gently, with the one kiss that is an eternal pledge. And as he kissed her his heart strained again in his breast. He never intended to love her. But now it was over. He had crossed over the gulf to her, and all that he had left behind had shrivelled and become void.

After the kiss, her eyes again slowly filled with tears. She sat still, away from him, with her face drooped aside, and her hands folded in her lap. The tears fell very slowly. There was complete silence. He too sat there motionless and silent on the hearthrug. The strange pain of his heart that was broken seemed to consume him. That he should love her? That this was love! That he should be ripped open in this way! Him, a doctor! How they would all jeer if they knew! It was agony to him to think they might know.

In the curious naked pain of the thought he looked again to her. She was sitting there drooped into a muse. He saw a tear fall, and his heart flared hot. He saw for the first time that one of her shoulders was quite uncovered, one arm bare, he could see one of her small breasts; dimly, because it had become almost dark in the room.

"Why are you crying?" he asked, in an altered voice.

She looked up at him, and behind her tears the consciousness of her situation for the first time brought a dark look of shame to her eyes.

"I'm not crying, really," she said, watching him half frightened.

He reached his hand, and softly closed it on her bare arm.

"I love you! I love you!" he said in a soft, low vibrating voice, unlike himself.

She shrank, and dropped her head. The soft, penetrating grip of his hand on her arm distressed her. She looked up at him.

"I want to go," she said. "I want to go and get you some dry things."

"Why?" he said. "I'm all right."

"But I want to go," she said. "And I want you to change your things."

He released her arm, and she wrapped herself in the blanket, looking at him rather frightened. And still she did not rise.

"Kiss me," she said wistfully.

He kissed her, but briefly, half in anger.

Then, after a second, she rose nervously, all mixed up in the blanket. He watched her in her confusion, as she tried to extricate herself and wrap herself up so that she could walk. He watched her relentlessly, as she knew. And as she went, the blanket trailing, and as he saw a glimpse of her feet and her white leg, he tried to remember her as she was when he had wrapped her in the blanket. But then he didn't want to remember, because she had been nothing to him then, and his nature revolted from remembering her as she was when she was nothing to him.

A tumbling, muffled noise from within the dark house startled him. Then he heard her voice:—"There are clothes." He rose and went to the foot of the stairs, and gathered up the garments she had thrown down. Then he came back to the fire to rub himself down and dress. He grinned at his own appearance when he had finished.

The fire was sinking, so he put on coal. The house was now quite dark, save for the light of a street-lamp that shone in faintly from beyond the holly trees. He lit the gas with matches he found on the mantelpiece. Then he emptied the pockets of his own clothes, and threw all his wet things in a heap into the scullery. After which he gathered up her sodden clothes, gently, and put them in a separate heap on the copper-top in the scullery.

It was six o'clock on the clock. His own watch had stopped. He ought to go back to the surgery. He waited, and still she did not come down. So he went to the foot of the stairs and called:

"I shall have to go."

Almost immediately he heard her coming down. She had on her best dress of black voile, and her hair was tidy, but still damp. She looked at him—and in spite of herself, smiled.

"I don't like you in those clothes," she said.

"Do I look a sight?" he answered.

They were shy of one another.

"I'll make you some tea," she said.

"No, I must go."

"Must you?" And she looked at him again with the wide, strained, doubtful eyes. And again, from the pain of his breast, he knew how he loved her. He went and bent to kiss her, gently, passionately, with his heart's painful kiss.

"And my hair smells so horrible," she murmured in distraction. "And I'm so awful, I'm so awful! Oh, no, I'm too awful." And she broke into bitter, heart-broken sobbing. "You can't want to love me, I'm horrible."

"Don't be silly, don't be silly," he said, trying to comfort her, kissing her, holding her in his arms. "I want you, I want to marry you, we're going to be married, quickly, quickly—tomorrow if I can."

But she only sobbed terribly, and cried:

"I feel awful. I feel awful. I feel I'm horrible to you."

"No, I want you, I want you," was all he answered, blindly, with that terrible intonation which frightened her almost more than her horror lest he should *not* want her.

## TWO BLUE BIRDS

D. H. LAWRENCE (1885-1930)

There was a woman who loved her husband, but she could not live with him. The husband, on his side, was sincerely attached to his wife, yet he could not live with her. They were both under forty, both handsome and both attractive. They had the most sincere regard for one another, and felt, in some odd way, eternally married to one another. They knew one another more intimately than they knew anybody else, they felt more known to one another than to any other person.

Yet they could not live together. Usually, they kept a thousand miles apart, geographically. But when he sat in the greyness of England, at the back of his mind, with a certain grim fidelity, he was aware of his wife, her strange yearning to be loyal and faithful, having her gallant affairs away in the sun, in the south. And she, as she drank her cocktail on the terrace over the sea, and turned her grey, sardonic eyes on the heavy dark face of her admirer, whom she really liked quite a lot, she was actually preoccupied with the clear-cut features of her handsome young husband, thinking of how he would be asking his secretary to do something for him, asking in that good-natured, confident voice of a man who knows that his request will be only too gladly fulfilled.

The secretary, of course, adored him. She was *very* competent, quite young, and quite good-looking. She adored him. But then all his servants always did, particularly his women-servants. His men-servants were likely to swindle him.

When a man has an adoring secretary, and you are the man's wife, what are you to do? Not that there was anything "wrong"—if you know what I mean!—between them. Nothing you could call adultery, to come down to brass tacks. No, no! They were just the young master and his secretary. He dictated to her, she slaved for him and adored him, and the whole thing went on wheels.

He didn't "adore" her. A man doesn't need to adore his secretary. But he depended on her. "I simply rely on Miss Wrexall." Whereas he could never rely on his wife. The one thing he knew finally about *her* was that she didn't intend to be relied on.

So they remained friends, in the awful unspoken intimacy of the once-married. Usually each year they went away together for a holiday, and if they had not been man and wife, they would have found a great deal of fun and stimulation in one another. The fact that they were married, had been married for the last dozen years, and couldn't live together for the last three or four, spoilt them for one another. Each had a private feeling of bitterness about the other.

However they were awfully kind. He was the soul of generosity, and held her in real, tender esteem, no matter how many gallant affairs she had. Her gallant affairs were part of her modern necessity. "After all, I've got to *live*. I can't turn into a pillar of salt in five minutes just because you and I can't live together! It takes years for a woman like me to turn into a pillar of salt. At least I hope so!"

"Quite!" he replied. "Quite! By all means put them in pickle, make pickled cucumbers of them, before you crystallize out. That's my advice."

He was like that: so awfully clever and enigmatic. She could more or less fathom the idea of the pickled cucumbers, but the "crystallizing out"—what did that signify?

And did he mean to suggest that he himself had been well pickled and that further immersion was for him unnecessary, would spoil his flavour? Was that what he meant? And herself, was she the brine and the vale of tears?

You never knew how catty a man was being, when he was really clever and enigmatic, withal a bit whimsical. He was adorably whimsical, with a twist of his flexible, vain mouth, that had a long upper lip, so fraught with vanity! But then a handsome, clear-cut histrionic young man like that, how could he help being vain? The women made him so.

Ah, the women! How nice men would be if there were no other women!

And how nice the women would be if there were no other men! That's the best of a secretary. She may have a husband, but a husband is the mere shred of a man compared to a boss, a chief, a man who dictates to you and whose words you faithfully write down and then transcribe. Imagine a wife writing down anything her husband said to her! But a secretary! Every *and* and *but* of his she preserves for ever. What are candied violets in comparison!

Now it is all very well having gallant affairs under the southern sun, when you know there is a husband whom you adore dictating to a secretary whom you are too scornful to hate yet whom you rather despise, though you allow she has her good points, away north in the place you ought to regard as home. A gallant affair isn't much good when you've got a bit of grit in your eye. Or something at the back of your mind.

What's to be done? The husband, of course, did not send his wife away.

"You've got your secretary and your work," she said. "There's no room for me."

"There's a bedroom and a sitting-room exclusively for you," he replied. "And a garden and half a motor-car. But please yourself entirely. Do what gives you most pleasure."

"In that case," she said, "I'll just go south for the winter."

"Yes, do!" he said. "You always enjoy it."

"I always do," she replied.

They parted with a certain relentlessness that had a touch of wistful sentiment behind it. Off she went to her gallant affairs, that were like the curate's egg, palatable in parts. And he settled down to work. He said he hated working, but he never did anything else. Ten or eleven hours a day. That's what it is to be your own master!

So the winter wore away, and it was spring, when the swallows homeward fly, or northward, in this case. This winter, one of a series similar, had been rather hard to get through. The bit of grit in the gallant lady's eye had worked deeper in the more she blinked. Dark faces might be dark, and icy cocktails might lend a glow; she blinked her hardest to blink that bit of grit away, without success. Under the spicy balls of the mimosa she thought of that husband of hers in his library, and of that neat, competent but *common* little secretary of his, forever taking down what he said!

"How a man can *stand* it! How *she* can stand it, common little thing as she is, I don't know!" the wife cried to herself.

She meant this dictating business, this ten hours a day intercourse, *à deux*, with nothing but a pencil between them, and a flow of words.

What was to be done? Matters, instead of improving, had grown worse. The little secretary had brought her mother and sister into the establishment. The mother was a sort of cook-housekeeper, the sister was a sort of upper maid—she did the fine laundry, and looked after "his" clothes, and valeted him beautifully. It was really an



excellent arrangement. The old mother was a splendid plain cook, the sister was all that could be desired as a valet de chambre, a fine laundress, an upper parlour-maid, and a table-waiter. And all economical to a degree. They knew his affairs by heart. His secretary flew to town when a creditor became dangerous, and she *always* smoothed over the financial crisis.

"He," of course, had debts, and he was working to pay them off. And if he had been a fairy prince who could call the ants to help him, he would not have been more wonderful than in securing this secretary and her family. They took hardly any wages. And they seemed to perform the miracle of loaves and fishes daily.

"She," of course, was the wife who loved her husband, but helped him into debt, and she still was an expensive item. Yet when she appeared at her "home," the secretarial family received her with most elaborate attentions and deference. The knight returning from the Crusades didn't create a greater stir. She felt like Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth, a sovereign paying a visit to her faithful subjects. But perhaps there lurked always this hair in her soup! Won't they be glad to be rid of me again!

But they protested No! No! They had been waiting and hoping and praying she would come. They had been pining for her to be there, in charge: the mistress, "his" wife. Ah, "his" wife!

"His" wife! His halo was like a bucket over her head.

The cook-mother was "of the people," so it was the upper-maid daughter who came for orders.

"What will you order for tomorrow's lunch and dinner, Mrs. Gee?"

"Well, what do you usually have?"

"Oh, we want *you* to say."

"No, what do you *usually* have?"

"We don't have anything fixed. Mother goes out and chooses the best she can find, that is nice and fresh. But she thought you would tell her now what to get."

"Oh, I don't know! I'm not very good at that sort of thing. Ask her to go on just the same; I'm quite sure she knows best."

"Perhaps you'd like to suggest a sweet?"

"No, I don't care for sweets—and you know Mr. Gee doesn't. So don't make one for me."

Could anything be more impossible! They had the house spotless and running like a dream; how could an incompetent and extravagant wife dare to interfere, when she saw their amazing and almost inspired economy! But they ran the place on simply nothing!

Simply marvellous people! And the way they strewed palm-branches under her feet! But that only made her feel ridiculous.

"Don't you think the family manage very well?" he asked her tentatively.

"Awfully well! Almost romantically well!" she replied. "But I suppose you're perfectly happy?"

"I'm perfectly comfortable," he replied.

"I can see you are," she replied. "Amazingly so! I never knew such comfort! Are you sure it isn't bad for you?"

She eyed him stealthily. He looked very well, and extremely handsome, in his histrionic way. He was shockingly well-dressed and valeted. And he had that air of easy *aplomb* and good humour which is so becoming to a man, and which he

only acquires when he is cock of his own little walk, made much of by his own hens.

"No!" he said, taking his pipe from his mouth and smiling whimsically round at her. "Do I look as if it were bad for me?"

"No, you don't," she replied promptly: thinking, naturally, as a woman is supposed to think nowadays, of his health and comfort, the foundation, apparently, of all happiness.

Then, of course, away she went on the backwash.

"Perhaps for your work, though, it's not so good as it is for *you*," she said in a rather small voice. She knew he couldn't bear it if she mocked at his work for one moment. And he knew that rather small voice of hers.

"In what way?" he said, bristles rising.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered indifferently. "Perhaps it's not good for a man's work if he is too comfortable."

"I don't know about *that*!" he said, taking a dramatic turn round the library and drawing at his pipe. "Considering I work, actually, by the clock, for twelve hours a day, and for ten hours when it's a short day, I don't think you can say I am deteriorating from easy comfort."

"No, I suppose not," she admitted.

Yet she did think it, nevertheless. His comfortableness didn't consist so much in good food and a soft bed, as in having nobody, absolutely nobody and nothing, to contradict him. "I do like to think he's got nothing to aggravate him," the secretary had said to the wife.

"Nothing to aggravate him!" What a position for a man! Fostered by women who would let nothing "aggravate" him. If anything would aggravate his wounded vanity, this would!

So thought the wife. But what was to be done about it? In the silence of midnight she heard his voice in the distance, dictating away, like the voice of God to Samuel, alone and monotonous, and she imagined the little figure of the secretary busily scribbling shorthand. Then in the sunny hours of morning, while he was still in bed—he never rose till noon—from another distance came that sharp insect-noise of the typewriter, like some immense grasshopper chirping and rattling. It was the secretary, poor thing, typing out his notes.

That girl—she was only twenty-eight—really slaved herself to skin and bone. She was small and neat, but she was actually worn out. She did far more work than he did, for she had not only to take down all those words he uttered, she had to type them out, make three copies, while he was still resting.

"What on earth she gets out of it," thought the wife, "I don't know. She's simply worn to the bone, for a very poor salary, and he's never kissed her, and never will, if I know anything about him."

Whether his never kissing her—the secretary, that is—made it worse or better, the wife did not decide. He never kissed anybody. Whether she herself—the wife, that is—wanted to be kissed by him, even that she was not clear about. She rather thought she didn't.

What on earth did she want then? She was his wife. What on earth did she want of him?

She certainly didn't want to take him down in shorthand and type out again all those words. And she didn't really want him to kiss her; she knew him too well. Yes, she knew him too well. If you know a man too well, you don't want him to kiss you.

What then? What did she want? Why had she such an extraordinary hang-over about him? Just because she was his wife? Why did she rather "enjoy" other men—and she was relentless about enjoyment—without ever taking them seriously? And why must she take him so damn seriously, when she never really "enjoyed" him?

Of course she *had* had good times with him, in the past, before—ah! before a thousand things, all amounting really to nothing. But she enjoyed him no more. She never even enjoyed being with him. There was a silent, ceaseless tension between them, that never broke, even when they were a thousand miles apart.

Awful! That's what you call being married! What's to be done about it? Ridiculous, to know it all and not do anything about it!

She came back once more, and there she was, in her own house, a sort of super-guest, even to him. And the secretarial family devoting their lives to him.

Devoting their lives to him! But actually! Three women pouring out their lives for him day and night! And what did they get in return? Not one kiss! Very little money, because they knew all about his debts, and had made it their life-business to get them paid off! No expectations! Twelve hours' work a day! Comparative isolation, for he saw nobody!

And beyond that? Nothing! Perhaps a sense of uplift and importance because they saw his name and photograph in the newspapers sometimes. But would anybody believe that it was good enough?

Yet they adored it! They seemed to get a deep satisfaction out of it, like people with a mission. Extraordinary!

Well, if they did, let them. They were, of course, rather common, "of the people"; there might be a sort of glamour in it for them.

But it was bad for him. No doubt about it. His work was getting diffuse and poor in quality—and what wonder! His whole tone was going down—becoming commoner. Of course it was bad for him.

Being his wife, she felt she ought to do something to save him. But how could she? That perfectly devoted, marvellous secretarial family, how could she make an attack on them? Yet she'd love to sweep them into oblivion. Of course they were bad for him: ruining his work, ruining his reputation as a writer, ruining his life. Ruining him with their slavish service.

Of course she ought to make an onslaught on them! But how *could* she? Such devotion! And what had she herself to offer in their place? Certainly not slavish devotion to him, nor to his flow of words! Certainly not!

She imagined him stripped once more naked of secretary and secretarial family, and she shuddered. It was like throwing the naked baby in the dust-bin. Couldn't do that!

Yet something must be done. She felt it. She was almost tempted to get into debt for another thousand pounds and send in the bill, or have it sent in to him, as usual.

But no! Something more drastic!

Something more drastic, or perhaps more gentle. She wavered between the two. And wavering, she first did nothing, came to no decision, dragged vacantly on from day to day, waiting for sufficient energy to take her departure once more.

It was spring! What a fool she had been to come up in spring! And she was forty! What an idiot of a woman to go and be forty!

She went down the garden in the warm afternoon, when birds were whistling loudly from the cover, the sky being low and warm, and she had nothing to do. The garden was full of flowers: he loved them for their theatrical display. Lilac and snowball bushes, and laburnum and red may, tulips and anemones and coloured daisies. Lots of flowers! Borders of forget-me-nots! Bachelor's buttons! What absurd names flowers had! She would have called them blue dots and yellow blobs and white frills. Not so much sentiment, after all!

There is a certain nonsense, something showy and stagey, about spring, with its pushing leaves and chorus-girl flowers, unless you have something corresponding inside you. Which she hadn't.

Oh, heaven! Beyond the hedge she heard a voice, a steady rather theatrical voice. Oh, heaven! He was dictating to his secretary, in the garden. Good God, was there nowhere to get away from it!

She looked around: there was indeed plenty of escape. But what was the good of escaping? He would go on and on. She went quietly towards the hedge, and listened.

He was dictating a magazine article about the modern novel. "What the modern novel lacks is architecture." Good God! Architecture! He might just as well say: What the modern novel lacks is whalebone, or a teaspoon, or a tooth stopped.

Yet the secretary took it down, took it down, took it down! No, this could not go on! It was more than flesh and blood could bear.

She went quietly along the hedge, somewhat wolf-like in her prowl, a broad, strong woman in an expensive mustard-coloured silk jersey and cream-coloured pleated skirt. Her legs were long and shapely, and her shoes were expensive.

With a curious wolf-like stealth she turned the hedge and looked across at the small, shaded lawn where the daisies grew impertinently. "He" was reclining in a coloured hammock under the pink-flowering horse-chestnut tree, dressed in white serge with a fine yellow-coloured linen shirt. His elegant hand dropped over the side of the hammock and beat a sort of vague rhythm to his words. At a little wicker table the little secretary, in a green knitted frock, bent her dark head over her notebook, and diligently made those awful shorthand marks. He was not difficult to take down, as he dictated slowly, and kept a sort of rhythm, beating time with his dangling hand.

"In every novel there must be one outstanding character with which we always sympathize—with *whom* we always sympathize—even though we recognize it—even when we are most aware of the human frailties—"

Every man his own hero, thought the wife grimly, forgetting that every woman is intensely her own heroine.

But what did startle her was a blue bird dashing about near the feet of the absorbed, shorthand-scribbling little secretary. At least it was a blue-tit, blue with grey and some yellow. But to the wife it seemed blue, that juicy spring day, in the translucent afternoon. The blue bird, fluttering round the pretty but rather *common* little feet of the little secretary.

The blue bird! The blue bird of happiness! Well, I'm blest, thought the wife. Well, I'm blest!

And as she was being blest, appeared another blue bird—that is, another blue-tit—and began to wrestle with the first blue-tit. A couple of blue birds of happiness, having a fight over it! Well, I'm blest!

She was more or less out of sight of the human preoccupied pair. But "he" was disturbed by the fighting blue birds, whose little feathers began to float loose.

"Get out!" he said to them mildly, waving a dark-yellow handkerchief at them. "Fight your little fight, and settle your private affairs, elsewhere, my dear little gentlemen."

The little secretary looked up quickly, for she had already begun to write it down. He smiled at her his twisted whimsical smile.

"No, don't take that down," he said affectionately. "Did you see those two tits laying into one another?"

"No!" said the little secretary, gazing brightly round, her eyes half-blinded with work.

But she saw the queer, powerful, elegant, wolf-like figure of the wife, behind her, and terror came into her eyes.

"I did!" said the wife, stepping forward with those curious, shapely, she-wolf legs of hers, under the very short skirt.

"Aren't they extraordinarily vicious little beasts?" said he.

"Extraordinarily!" she re-echoed, stooping and picking up a little breast-feather. "Extraordinarily! See how the feathers fly!"

And she got the feather on the tip of her finger, and looked at it. Then she looked at the secretary, then she looked at him. She had a queer, werewolf expression between her brows.

"I think," he began, "these are the loveliest afternoons, when there's no direct sun, but all the sounds and the colours and the scents are sort of dissolved, don't you know, in the air, and the whole thing is steeped, steeped in spring. It's like being on the inside, you know how I mean, like being inside the egg and just ready to chip the shell."

"Quite like that!" she assented without conviction.

There was a little pause. The secretary said nothing. They were waiting for the wife to depart again.

"I suppose," said the latter, "you're awfully busy, as usual?"

"Just about the same," he said, pursing his mouth deprecatingly.

Again the blank pause, in which he waited for her to go away again.

"I know I'm interrupting you," she said.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I was just watching those two blue-tits."

"Pair of little demons!" said the wife, blowing away the yellow feather from her finger-tip.

"Absolutely!" he said.

"Well, I'd better go, and let you get on with your work," she said.

"No hurry!" he said, with benevolent nonchalance. "As a matter of fact, I don't think it's a great success, working out of doors."

"What made you try it?" said the wife. "You know you never could do it."

"Miss Wrexall suggested it might make a change. But I don't think it altogether helps, do you, Miss Wrexall?"

"I'm sorry," said the little secretary.

"Why should *you* be sorry?" said the wife, looking down at her as a wolf might look down half-benignly at a little black-and-tan mongrel. "You only suggested it for his good, I'm sure!"

"I thought the air might be good for him," the secretary admitted.

"Why do people like you never think about yourselves?" the wife asked.

The secretary looked her in the eye.

"I suppose we do, in a different way," she said.

"A *very* different way!" said the wife ironically. "Why don't you make *him* think about *you*?" she added slowly, with a sort of drawl. "On a soft spring afternoon like this, you ought to have him dictating poems to you, about the blue birds of happiness fluttering round your dainty little feet. I know *I* would, if I were his secretary."

There was a dead pause. The wife stood immobile and statuesque, in an attitude characteristic of her, half turning back to the little secretary, half averted. She half turned her back on everything.

The secretary looked at him.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I was doing an article on the Future of the Novel."

"I know that," said the wife. "That's what's so awful! Why not something lively in the life of the novelist?"

There was a prolonged silence, in which he looked pained, and somewhat remote, statuesque. The little secretary hung her head. The wife sauntered slowly away.

"Just where were we, Miss Wrexall?" came the sound of his voice.

The little secretary started. She was feeling profoundly indignant. Their beautiful relationship, his and hers, to be so insulted!

But soon she was veering downstream on the flow of his words, too busy to have any feelings, except one of elation at being so busy.

Tea-time came; the sister brought out the tea-tray into the garden. And immediately, the wife appeared. She had changed, and was wearing a chicory-blue dress of fine cloth. The little secretary had gathered up her papers and was departing, on rather high heels.

"Don't go, Miss Wrexall," said the wife.

The little secretary stopped short, then hesitated.

"Mother will be expecting me," she said.

"Tell her you're not coming. And ask your sister to bring another cup. I want you to have tea with us."

Miss Wrexall looked at the man, who was reared on one elbow in the hammock, and was looking enigmatical, Hamletish.

He glanced at her quickly, then pursed his mouth in a boyish negligence.

"Yes, stay and have tea with us for once," he said. "I see strawberries, and I know you're the bird for them."

She glanced at him, smiled wanly, and hurried away to tell her mother. She even stayed long enough to slip on a silk dress.

"Why, how smart you are!" said the wife, when the little secretary reappeared on the lawn, in chicory-blue silk.

"Oh, don't look at my dress, compared to yours!" said Miss Wrexall. They were of the same colour, indeed!

"At least you earned yours, which is more than I did mine," said the wife, as she poured tea. "You like it strong?"

She looked with her heavy eyes at the smallish, birdy, blue-clad, overworked young woman, and her eyes seemed to speak many inexplicable dark volumes.

"Oh, as it comes, thank you," said Miss Wrexall, leaning nervously forward.

"It's coming pretty black, if you want to ruin your digestion," said the wife.

"Oh, I'll have some water in it, then."

"Better, I should say."

"How'd the work go—all right?" asked the wife, as they drank tea, and the two women looked at each other's blue dresses.

"Oh!" he said. "As well as you can expect. It was a piece of pure flummery. But it's what they want. Awful rot, wasn't it, Miss Wrexall?"

Miss Wrexall moved uneasily on her chair.

"It interested me," she said, "though not so much as the novel."

"The novel? Which novel?" said the wife. "Is there another new one?"

Miss Wrexall looked at him. Not for words would she give away any of his literary activities.

"Oh, I was just sketching out an idea to Miss Wrexall," he said.

"Tell us about it!" said the wife. "Miss Wrexall, *you* tell us what it's about."

She turned on her chair and fixed the little secretary.

"I'm afraid"—Miss Wrexall squirmed—"I haven't got it very clearly myself, yet."

"Oh, go along! Tell us what you *have* got then!"

Miss Wrexall sat dumb and very vexed. She felt she was being baited. She looked at the blue pleatings of her skirt.

"I'm afraid I can't," she said.

"Why are you afraid you can't? You're so *very* competent. I'm sure you've got it all at your finger-ends. I expect you write a good deal of Mr. Gee's books for him, really. He gives you the hint, and you fill it all in. Isn't that how you do it?" She spoke ironically, and as if she were teasing a child. And then she glanced down at the fine pleatings of her own blue skirt, very fine and expensive.

"Of course you're not speaking seriously?" said Miss Wrexall, rising on her mettle.

"Of course I am! I've suspected for a long time—at least, for some time—that you write a good deal of Mr. Gee's books for him, from his hints."

It was said in a tone of raillery, but it was cruel.

"I should be terribly flattered," said Miss Wrexall, straightening herself, "if I didn't know you were only trying to make me feel a fool."

"Make you feel a fool? My dear child!—why, nothing could be farther from me! You're twice as clever and a million times as competent as I am. Why, my dear child, I've the greatest admiration for you! I wouldn't do what you do, not for all the pearls in India. I *couldn't* anyhow——"

Miss Wrexall closed up and was silent.

"Do you mean to say my books read as if——" he began, rearing up and speaking in a harrowed voice.

"I do!" said the wife. "*Just* as if Miss Wrexall had written them from your hints. I *honestly* thought she did—when you were too busy——"

"How very clever of you!" he said.

"Very!" she cried. "Especially if I was wrong!"

"Which you were," he said.

"How very extraordinary!" she cried. "Well, I am once more mistaken!"

There was a complete pause.

It was broken by Miss Wrexall, who was nervously twisting her fingers.

"You want to spoil what there is between me and him, I can see that," she said bitterly.

"My dear, but what *is* there between you and him?" asked the wife.

"I was *happy* working with him, working for him! I was *happy* working for him!" cried Miss Wrexall, tears of indignant anger and chagrin in her eyes.

"My dear child!" cried the wife, with stimulated excitement, "go *on* being happy working with him, go *on* being happy while you can! If it makes you happy, why then, enjoy it! Of course! Do you think I'd be so cruel as to want to take it away from you?—working with him? I can't do shorthand and typewriting and double-entrance book-keeping, or whatever it's called. I tell you, I'm utterly incompetent. I never earn anything. I'm the parasite on the British oak, like the mistletoe. The blue bird doesn't flutter round my feet. Perhaps they're too big and trampling."

She looked down at her expensive shoes.

"If I *did* have a word of criticism to offer," she said, turning to her husband, "it would be to you, Cameron, for taking so much from her and giving her nothing."

"But he gives me everything, everything!" cried Miss Wrexall. "He gives me everything!"

"What do you mean by everything?" said the wife, turning on her sternly.

Miss Wrexall pulled up short. There was a snap in the air and a change of currents.

"I mean nothing that *you* need begrudge me," said the little secretary rather haughtily. "I've never made myself cheap."

There was a blank pause.

"My God!" said the wife. "You don't call that being cheap? Why, I should say you got nothing out of him at all, you only give! And if you don't call that making yourself cheap—my God!"

"You see, we see things different," said the secretary.

"I should say we do!—*thank* God!" rejoined the wife.

"On whose behalf are you thanking God?" he asked sarcastically.

"Everybody's, I suppose! Yours, because you get everything for nothing, and Miss Wrexall's, because she seems to like it, and mine because I'm well out of it all."

"You *needn't* be out of it all," cried Miss Wrexall magnanimously, "if you didn't *put* yourself out of it all."

"Thank you, my dear, for your offer," said the wife, rising. "But I'm afraid no man can expect *two* blue birds of happiness to flutter round his feet, tearing out their little feathers!"

With which she walked away.

After a tense and desperate interim, Miss Wrexall cried:

"And *really*, need any woman be jealous of *me*?"

"Quite!" he said.

And that was all he did say.

## THE FLY

KATHERINE MANSFIELD (1888–1923)

"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 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 moustaches, 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 liked 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 broad 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 on to 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 waste-paper 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.

## A STILL MOMENT

EUDORA WELTY (1909- )

Lorenzo Dow rode the Old Natchez Trace at top speed upon a race horse, and the cry of the itinerant Man of God, "I must have souls! And souls I must have!" rang in his own windy ears. He rode as if never to stop, toward his night's appointment.

It was the hour of sunset. All the souls that he had saved and all those he had not took dusky shapes in the mist that hung between the high banks, and seemed by their great number and density to block his way, and showed no signs of melting or changing back into mist, so that he feared his passage was to be difficult forever. The poor souls that were not saved were darker and more pitiful than those that were, and still there was not any of the radiance he would have hoped to see in such a congregation.

"Light up, in God's name!" he called, in the pain of his disappointment.

Then a whole swarm of fireflies instantly flickered all around him, up and down, back and forth, first one golden light and then another, flashing without any of the weariness that had held back the souls. These were the signs sent from God that he had not seen the accumulated radiance of saved souls because he was not able, and that his eyes were more able to see the fireflies of the Lord than His blessed souls.

"Lord, give me the strength to see the angels when I am in Paradise," he said. "Do not let my eyes remain in this failing proportion to my loving heart always."

He gasped and held on. It was that day's complexity of horse-trading that had left him in the end with a Spanish race horse for which he was bound to send money in November from Georgia. Riding faster on the beast and still faster until he felt as if he were flying he sent thoughts of love with matching speed to his wife Peggy in Massachusetts. He found it effortless to love at a distance. He could look at the flowering trees and love Peggy in fullness, just as he could see his visions and love God. And Peggy, to whom he had not spoken until he could speak fateful words ("Would she accept of such an object as him?"), Peggy, the bride, with whom he had spent a few hours of time, showing of herself a small round handwriting, declared all in one letter, her first, that she felt the same as he, and that the fear was never of separation, but only of death.

Lorenzo well knew that it was Death that opened underfoot, that rippled by at night, that was the silence the birds did their singing in. He was close to death, closer than any animal or bird. On the back of one horse after another, winding them all, he was always riding toward it or away from it, and the Lord sent him directions with protection in His mind.

Just then he rode into a thicket of Indians taking aim with their new guns. One stepped out and took the horse by the bridle, it stopped at a touch, and the rest made a closing circle. The guns pointed.

"Incline!" The inner voice spoke sternly and with its customary lightning-quickness.

Lorenzo inclined all the way forward and put his head to the horse's silky mane, his body to its body, until a bullet meant for him would endanger the horse and make his death of no value. Prone he rode out through the circle of Indians, his obedience to the voice leaving him almost fearless, almost careless with joy.

But as he straightened and pressed ahead, care caught up with him again. Turning half-beast and half-divine, dividing himself like a heathen Centaur, he had escaped his death once more. But was it to be always by some metamorphosis of himself that he escaped, some humiliation of his faith, some admission to strength and argumentation and not frailty? Each time when he acted so it was at the command of an instinct that he took at once as the word of an angel, until too late, when he knew it was the word of the devil. He had roared like a tiger at Indians, he had submerged himself in water blowing the savage bubbles of the alligator, and they skirted him by. He had prostrated himself to appear dead, and deceived bears. But all the time God would have protected him in His own way, less hurried, more divine.

Even now he saw a serpent crossing the Trace, giving out knowing glances.

He cried, "I know you now!", and the serpent gave him one look out of which all the fire had been taken, and went away in two darts into the tangle.

He rode on, all expectation, and the voices in the throats of the wild beasts went, almost without his noticing when, into words. "Praise God," they said. "Deliver us from one another." Birds especially sang of divine love which was the one ceaseless protection. "Peace, in peace," were their words so many times when they spoke from the briars, in a courteous sort of inflection, and he turned his countenance toward all perched creatures with a benevolence striving to match their own.

He rode on past the little intersecting trails, letting himself be guided by voices and by lights. It was battlesounds he heard most, sending him on, but sometimes ocean sounds, that long beat of waves that would make his heart pound and retreat as heavily as they, and he despaired again in his failure in Ireland when he took a voyage and persuaded with the Catholics with his back against the door, and then ran away to their cries of "Mind the white hat!" But when he heard singing it was not the militant and sharp sound of Wesley's hymns, but a soft, tireless and tender air that had no beginning and no end, and the softness of distance, and he had pleaded with the Lord to find out if all this meant that it was wicked, but no answer had come.

Soon night would descend, and a camp-meeting ground ahead would fill with its sinners like the sky with its stars. How he hungered for them! He looked in pre-science with a longing of love over the throng that waited while the flames of the torches threw change, change, change over their faces. How could he bring them enough, if it were not divine love and sufficient warning of all that could threaten them? He rode on faster. He was a filler of appointments, and he filled more and more, until his journeys up and down creation were nothing but a shuttle, driving back and forth upon the rich expanse of his vision. He was homeless by his own choice, he must be everywhere at sometime, and somewhere soon. There hastening in the wilderness on his flying horse he gave the night's torch-lit crowd a premature benediction, he could not wait. He spread his arms out, one at a time for safety, and he wished, when they would all be gathered in by his tin horn blasts and the inspired words would go out over their heads, to brood above the entire and passionate life of the wide world, to become its rightful part.

He peered ahead. "Inhabitants of Time! The wilderness is your souls on earth!" he shouted ahead into the treetops. "Look about you, if you would view the condi-

*tions of your spirit, put here by the good Lord to show you and affright you. These wild places and these trails of awesome loneliness lie nowhere, nowhere, but in your heart."*

A dark man, who was James Murrell the outlaw, rode his horse out of a cane brake and began going along beside Lorenzo without looking at him. He had the alternately proud and aggrieved look of a man believing himself to be an instrument in the hands of a power, and when he was young he said at once to strangers that he was being used by Evil, or sometimes he stopped a traveler by shouting, "Stop! I'm the Devil!" He rode along now talking and drawing out his talk, by some deep control of the voice gradually slowing the speed of Lorenzo's horse down until both the horses were softly trotting. He would have wondered that nothing he said was heard, not knowing that Lorenzo listened only to voices of whose heavenly origin he was more certain.

Murrell riding along with his victim-to-be, Murrell riding, was Murrell talking. He told away at his long tales, with always a distance and a long length of time flowing through them, and all centered about a silent man. In each the silent man would have done a piece of evil, a robbery or a murder, in a place of long ago, and it was all made for the revelation in the end that the silent man was Murrell himself, and the long story had happened yesterday, and the place *here*—the Natchez Trace. It would only take one dawning look for the victim to see that all of this was another story and he himself had listened his way into it, and that he too was about to recede in time (to where the dread was forgotten) for some listener and to live for a listener in the long ago. Destroy the present!—that must have been the first thing that was whispered in Murrell's heart—the living moment and the man that lives in it must die before you can go on. It was his habit to bring the journey—which might even take days—to a close with a kind of ceremony. Turning his face at last into the face of the victim, for he had never seen him before now, he would tower up with the sudden height of a man no longer the tale teller but the speechless protagonist, silent at last, one degree nearer the hero. Then he would murder the man.

But it would always start over. This man going forward was going backward with talk. He saw nothing, observed no world at all. The two ends of his journey pulled at him always and held him in a nowhere, half asleep, smiling and witty, dangling his predicament. He was a murderer whose final stroke was over-long postponed, who had to bring himself through the greatest tedium to act, as if the whole wilderness, where he was born, were his impediment. But behind him and before him he kept in sight a victim, he saw a man fixed and stayed at the point of death—no matter how the man's eyes denied it, a victim, hands spreading to reach as if for the first time for life. Contempt! That is what Murrell gave that man.

Lorenzo might have understood, if he had not been in haste, that Murrell in laying hold of a man meant to solve his mystery of being. It was as if other men, all but himself, would lighten their hold on the secret, upon assault, and let it fly free at death. In his violence he was only treating of enigma. The violence shook his own body first, like a force gathering, and now he turned in the saddle.

Lorenzo's despair had to be kindled as well as his ecstasy, and could not come without that kindling. Before the awe-filled moment when the faces were turned up under the flares, as though an angel hand tipped their chins, he had no way of telling whether he would enter the sermon by sorrow or by joy. But at this moment the face of Murrell was turned toward him, turning at last, all solitary, in its full, and Lorenzo would have seized the man at once by his black coat and shaken him like prey for a

lost soul, so instantly was he certain that the false fire was in his heart instead of the true fire. But Murrell, quick when he was quick, had put his own hand out, a restraining hand, and laid it on the wavelike flesh of the Spanish race horse, which quivered and shuddered at the touch.

They had come to a great live-oak tree at the edge of a low marsh-land. The burning sun hung low, like a head lowered on folded arms, and over the long reaches of violet trees the evening seemed still with thought. Lorenzo knew the place from having seen it among many in dreams, and he stopped readily and willingly. He drew rein, and Murrell drew rein, he dismounted and Murrell dismounted, he took a step, and Murrell was there too; and Lorenzo was not surprised at the closeness, how Murrell in his long dark coat and over it his dark face darkening still, stood beside him like a brother seeking light.

But in that moment instead of two men coming to stop by the great forked tree, there were three.

From far away, a student, Audubon, had been approaching lightly on the wilderness floor, disturbing nothing in his lightness. The long day of beauty had led him this certain distance. A flock of purple finches that he tried for the first moment to count went over his head. He made a spelling of the soft *pet* of the ivory-billed woodpecker. He told himself always: remember.

Coming upon the Trace, he looked at the high cedars, azure and still as distant smoke overhead, with their silver roots trailing down on either side like the veins of deepness in this place, and he noted some fact to his memory—this earth that wears but will not crumble or slide or turn to dust, they say it exists in one other spot in the world, Egypt—and then forgot it. He walked quietly. All life used this Trace, and he liked to see the animals move along it in direct, oblivious journeys, for they had begun it and made it, the buffalo and deer and the small running creatures before man ever knew where he wanted to go, and birds flew a great mirrored course above.

Walking beneath them Audubon remembered how in the cities he had seen these very birds in his imagination, calling them up whenever he wished, even in the hard and glittering outer parlors where if an artist were humble enough to wait, some idle hand held up promised money. He walked lightly and he went as carefully as he had started at two that morning, crayon and paper, a gun, and a small bottle of spirits disposed about his body. (*Note: "The mocking birds so gentle that they would scarcely move out of the way."*) He looked with care; great abundance had ceased to startle him, and he could see things one by one. In Natchez they had told him of many strange and marvelous birds that were to be found here. Their descriptions had been exact, complete, and wildly varying, and he took them for inventions and believed that like all the worldly things that came out of Natchez, they would be disposed of and shamed by any man's excursion into the reality of Nature.

In the valley he appeared under the tree, a sure man, very sure and tender, as if the touch of all the earth rubbed upon him and the stains of the flowery swamp had made him so.

Lorenzo welcomed him and turned fond eyes upon him. To transmute a man into an angel was the hope that drove him all over the world and never let him flinch from a meeting or withhold good-byes for long. This hope insistently divided his life into only two parts, journey and rest. There could be no night and day and love and despair and longing and satisfaction to make partitions in the single ecstasy of this alternation. All things were speech.

"God created the world," said Lorenzo, "and it exists to give testimony. Life is the tongue: speak."

But instead of speech there happened a moment of deepest silence.

Audubon said nothing because he had gone without speaking a word for days. He did not regard his thoughts for the birds and animals as susceptible, in their first change, to words. His long playing on the flute was not in its origin a talking to himself. Rather than speak to order or describe, he would always draw a deer with a stroke across it to communicate his need of venison to an Indian. He had only found words when he discovered that there is much otherwise lost that can be noted down each item in its own day, and he wrote often now in a journal, not wanting anything to be lost the way it had been, all the past, and he would write about a day, "Only sorry that the Sun Sets."

Murrell, his cheated hand hiding the gun, could only continue to smile at Lorenzo, but he remembered in malice that he had disguised himself once as an Evangelist, and his final words to this victim would have been, "One of my disguises was what you are."

Then in Murrell Audubon saw what he thought of as "acquired sorrow"—that cumbrousness and darkness from which the naked Indian, coming just as he was made from God's hand, was so lightly free. He noted the eyes—the dark kind that loved to look through chinks, and saw neither closeness nor distance, light nor shade, wonder nor familiarity. They were narrowed to contract the heart, narrowed to make an averting plan. Audubon knew the finest-drawn tendons of the body and the working of their power, for he had touched them, and he supposed then that in man the enlargement of the eye to see started a motion in the hands to make or do, and that the narrowing of the eye stopped the hand and contracted the heart. Now Murrell's eyes followed an ant on a blade of grass, up the blade and down, many times in the single moment. Audubon had examined the Cave-In Rock where one robber had lived his hiding life, and the air in the cave was the cavelike air that enclosed this man, the same odor, flinty and dark. O secret life, he thought—is it true that the secret is withdrawn from the true disclosure, that man is a cave man, and that the openness I see, the ways through forests, the rivers brimming light, the wide arches where the birds fly, are dreams of freedom? If my origin is withheld from me, is my end to be unknown too? Is the radiance I see closed into an interval between two darks, or can it not illuminate them both and discover at last, though it cannot be spoken, what was thought hidden and lost?

In that quiet moment a solitary snowy heron flew down not far away and began to feed beside the marsh water.

At the single streak of flight, the ears of the race horse lifted, and the eyes of both horses filled with the soft lights of sunset, which in the next instant were reflected in the eyes of the men too as they all looked into the west toward the heron, and all eyes seemed infused with a sort of wildness.

Lorenzo gave the bird a triumphant look, such as a man may bestow upon his own vision, and thought, Nearness is near, lighted in a marsh-land, feeding at sunset. Praise God, His love has come visible.

Murrell, in suspicion pursuing all glances, blinking into a haze, saw only whiteness ensconced in darkness, as if it were a little luminous shell that drew in and held the eyesight. When he shaded his eyes, the brand "H.T." on his thumb thrust itself into his own vision, and he looked at the bird with the whole plan of the Mystic Rebellion darting from him as if in rays of the bright reflected light, and he stood looking



proudly, leader as he was bound to become of the slaves, the brigands and outcasts of the entire Natchez country, with plans, dates, maps burning like a brand into his brain, and he saw himself proudly in a moment of prophecy going down rank after rank of successively bowing slaves to unroll and flaunt an awesome great picture of the Devil colored on a banner.

Audubon's eyes embraced the object in the distance and he could see it as carefully as if he held it in his hand. It was a snowy heron alone out of its flock. He watched it steadily, in his care noting the exact inevitable things. When it feeds it muddies the water with its foot. . . . It was as if each detail about the heron happened slowly in time, and only once. He felt again the old stab of wonder—what structure of life bridged the reptile's scale and the heron's feather? That knowledge too had been lost. He watched without moving. The bird was defenseless in the world except for the intensity of its life, and he wondered, how can heat of blood and speed of heart defend it? Then he thought, as always as if it were new and unbelievable, it has nothing in space or time to prevent its flight. And he waited, knowing that some birds will wait for a sense of their presence to travel to men before they will fly away from them.

Fixed in its pure white profile it stood in the precipitous moment, a plumicorn on its head, its breeding dress extended in rays, eating steadily the little water creatures. There was a little space between each man and the others, where they stood overwhelmed. No one could say the three had ever met, or that this moment of intersection had ever come in their lives, or its promise fulfilled. But before them the white heron rested in the grasses with the evening all around it, lighter and more serene than the evening, flight closed in its body, the circuit of its beauty closed, a bird seen and a bird still, its motion calm as if it were offered: Take my flight. . . .

What each of them had wanted was simply *all*. To save all souls, to destroy all men, to see and to record all life that filled this world—all, all—but now a single frail yearning seemed to go out of the three of them for a moment and to stretch toward this one snowy, shy bird in the marshes. It was as if three whirlwinds had drawn together at some center, to find there feeding in peace a snowy heron. Its own slow spiral of flight could take it away in its own time, but for a little it held them still, it laid quiet over them, and they stood for a moment unburdened. . . .

Murrell wore no mask, for his face was that, a face that was aware while he was somnolent, a face that watched for him, and listened for him, alert and nearly brutal, the guard of a planner. He was quick without that he might be slow within, he staved off time, he wandered and plotted, and yet his whole desire mounted in him toward the end (was this the end—the sight of a bird feeding at dusk?), toward the instant of confession. His incessant deeds were thick in his heart now, and flinging himself to the ground he thought wearily, when all these trees are cut down, and the Trace lost, then my Conspiracy that is yet to spread itself will be disclosed, and all the stone-loaded bodies of murdered men will be pulled up, and all everywhere will know poor Murrell. His look pressed upon Lorenzo, who stared upward, and Audubon, who was taking out his gun, and his eyes squinted up to them in pleading as if to say, "How soon may I speak, and how soon will you pity me?" Then he looked back to the bird, and he thought if it would look at him a dread penetration would fill and gratify his heart.

Audubon in each act of life was aware of the mysterious origin he half-concealed and half-sought for. People along the way asked him in their kindness or their rudeness if it were true, that he was born a prince, and was the Lost Dauphin, and some

said it was his secret, and some said that that was what he wished to find out before he died. But if it was his identity that he wished to discover, or if it was what a man had to seize beyond that, the way for him was by endless examination, by the care for every bird that flew in his path and every serpent that shone underfoot. Not one was enough; he looked deeper and deeper, on and on, as if for a particular beast or some legendary bird. Some men's eyes persisted in looking outward when they opened to look inward, and to their delight, there outflung was the astonishing world under the sky. When a man at last brought himself to face some mirror-surface he still saw the world looking back at him, and if he continued to look, to look closer and closer, what then? The gaze that looks outward must be trained without rest, to be indomitable. It must see as slowly as Murrell's ant in the grass, as exhaustively as Lorenzo's angel of God, and then, Audubon dreamed, with his mind going to his pointed brush, it must see like this, and he tightened his hand on the trigger of the gun and pulled it, and his eyes went closed. In memory the heron was all its solitude, its total beauty. All its whiteness could be seen from all sides at once, its pure feathers were as if counted and known and their array one upon the other would never be lost. But it was not from that memory that he could paint.

His opening eyes met Lorenzo's, close and flashing, and it was on seeing horror deep in them, like fires in abysses, that he recognized it for the first time. He had never seen horror in its purity and clarity until now, in bright blue eyes. He went and picked up the bird. He had thought it to be a female, just as one sees the moon as female; and so it was. He put it in his bag, and started away. But Lorenzo had already gone on, leaning a-tilt on the horse which went slowly.

Murrell was left behind, but he was proud of the dispersal, as if he had done it, as if he had always known that three men in simply being together and doing a thing can, by their obstinacy, take the pride out of one another. Each must go away alone, each send the others away alone. He himself had purposely kept to the wildest country in the world, and would have sought it out, the loneliest road. He looked about with satisfaction, and hid. Travelers were forever innocent, he believed: that was his faith. He lay in wait; his faith was in innocence and his knowledge was of ruin; and had these things been shaken? Now, what could possibly be outside his grasp? Churning all about him like a cloud about the sun was the great folding descent of his thought. Plans of deeds made his thoughts, and they rolled and mingled about his ears as if he heard a dark voice that rose up to overcome the wilderness voice, or was one with it. The night would soon come, and he had gone through the day.

Audubon, splattered and wet, turned back into the wilderness with the heron warm under his hand, his head still light in a kind of trance. It was undeniable, on some Sunday mornings, when he turned over and over his drawings they seemed beautiful to him, through what was dramatic in the conflict of life, or what was exact. What he would draw, and what he had seen, became for a moment one to him then. Yet soon enough, and it seemed to come in that same moment, like Lorenzo's horror and the gun's firing, he knew that even the sight of the heron which surely he alone had appreciated, had not been all his belonging, and that never could any vision, even any simple sight, belong to him or to any man. He knew that the best he could make would be, after it was apart from his hand, a dead thing and not a live thing, never the essence, only a sum of parts; and that it would always meet with a stranger's sight, and never be one with the beauty in any other man's head in the world. As he had seen the bird most purely at its moment of death, in some fatal way, in his care for looking outward, he saw his long labor most revealingly at the point where it met its

limit. Still carefully, for he was trained to see well in the dark, he walked on into the deeper woods, noting all sights, all sounds, and was gentler than they as he went.

In the woods that echoed yet in his ears, Lorenzo riding slowly looked back. The hair rose on his head and his hands began to shake with cold, and suddenly it seemed to him that God Himself, just now, thought of the Idea of Separateness. For surely He had never thought of it before, when the little white heron was flying down to feed. He could understand God's giving Separateness first and then giving Love to follow and heal in its wonder; but God had reversed this, and given Love first and then Separateness, as though it did not matter to Him which came first. Perhaps it was that God never counted the moments of Time; Lorenzo did that, among his tasks of love. Time did not occur to God. Therefore—did He even know of it? How to explain Time and Separateness back to God, Who had never thought of them, Who could let the whole world come to grief in a scattering moment?

Lorenzo brought his cold hands together in a clasp and stared through the distance at the place where the bird had been as if he saw it still; as if nothing could really take away what had happened to him, the beautiful little vision of the feeding bird. Its beauty had been greater than he could account for. The sweat of rapture poured down from his forehead, and then he shouted into the marshes:

"Tempter!"

He whirled forward in the saddle and began to hurry the horse to its high speed. His camp ground was far away still, though even now they must be lighting the torches and gathering in the multitudes, so that at the appointed time he would duly appear in their midst, to deliver his address on the subject of "In that day when all hearts shall be disclosed."

Then the sun dropped below the trees, and the new moon, slender and white, hung shyly in the west.



*Billy Budd*  
*Foretopman*

What befell him  
in the year of the  
Great Mutiny  
etc.

Dedicated  
to  
Jack Chace  
Englishman

Wherever that great heart may now be  
Here on earth or harbored in Paradise  
Captain of the main-top in the year 1843  
in the U.S. Frigate "United States"

# BILLY BUDD, FORETOPMAN \*

HERMAN MELVILLE (1819-1891)

## *Preface*

The year 1797, the year of this narrative, belongs to a period which as every thinker now feels, involved a crisis for Christendom not exceeded in its undetermined momentousness at the time by any other era whereof there is record. The opening proposition made by the Spirit of that Age, involved the rectification of the Old World's hereditary wrongs. In France to some extent this was bloodily effected. But what then? Straightway the Revolution itself became a wrongdoer, one more oppressive than the kings. Under Napoleon it enthroned upstart Kings, and initiated that prolonged agony of continual war whose final throe was Waterloo. During those years not the wisest could have foreseen that the outcome of all would be what to some thinkers apparently it has since turned out to be, a political advance along nearly the whole line for Europeans.

Now, as elsewhere hinted, it was something caught from the Revolutionary Spirit that at Spithead emboldened the man-of-war's men to rise against real abuses, long-standing ones, and afterwards at the Nore to make inordinate and aggressive demands, successful resistance to which was confirmed only when the ringleaders were hung for an admonitory spectacle to the anchored fleet. Yet in a way analogous to the operation of the Revolution at large the Great Mutiny, though by Englishmen naturally deemed monstrous at the time, doubtless gave the first latent prompting to most important reforms in the British Navy.

## I

In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable sea-port would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed mariners, man-of-war's men or merchant-sailors in holiday attire ashore on liberty. In certain instances they would flank, or, like a body-guard quite surround some superior figure of their own class, moving along with them like Aldebaran among the lesser lights of his constellation. That signal object was the "Handsome Sailor" of the less prosaic time alike of the military and merchant navies. With no perceptible trace of the vainglorious about him, rather with the off-hand unaffectedness of natural regality, he seemed to accept the spontaneous homage of his shipmates. A somewhat remarkable instance recurs to me. In Liverpool, now half a

\* The present text incorporates the *Corrigenda* to F. Barron Freeman's edition of *Melville's Billy Budd* (Harvard University Press, 1948). Freeman's *Corrigenda* lists over five hundred errors that came to light upon his reëxamination of the printed version of Melville's manuscript. The present text incorporates these revisions except for instances where the manuscript version seemed confusing because of faulty punctuation or paragraphing or spelling, and in these rather necessary instances we have arbitrarily exercised our own judgment. However, we have tried to limit our interference to a minimum. (Editors' note.)

century ago I saw under the shadow of the great dingy streetwall of Prince's Dock (an obstruction long since removed) a common sailor, so intensely black that he must needs have been a native African of the unadulterate blood of Ham. A symmetric figure much above the average height. The two ends of a gay silk handkerchief thrown loose about the neck danced upon the displayed ebony of his chest; in his ears were big hoops of gold, and a Scotch Highland bonnet with a tartan band set off his shapely head.

It was a hot noon in July; and his face, lustrous with perspiration, beamed with barbaric good humor. In jovial sallies right and left, his white teeth flashing into view, he rollicked along, the centre of a company of his shipmates. These were made up of such an assortment of tribes and complexions as would have well fitted them to be marched up by Anacharsis Cloots before the bar of the first French Assembly as Representatives of the Human Race. At each spontaneous tribute rendered by the wayfarers to this black pagod of a fellow—the tribute of a pause and stare, and less frequent an exclamation,—the motley retinue showed that they took that sort of pride in the evoker of it which the Assyrian priests doubtless showed for their grand sculptured Bull when the faithful prostrated themselves.

To return.

If in some cases a bit of a nautical Murat in setting forth his person ashore, the handsome sailor of the period in question evinced nothing of the dandified Billy-be-Dam, an amusing character all but extinct now, but occasionally to be encountered, and in a form yet more amusing than the original, at the tiller of the boats on the tempestuous Erie Canal or, more likely, vamping in the grogeries along the tow-path. Invariably a proficient in his perilous calling, he was also more or less of a mighty boxer or wrestler. It was strength and beauty. Tales of his prowess were recited. Ashore he was the champion; afloat the spokesman; on every suitable occasion always foremost. Close-reefing topsails in a gale, there he was, astride the weather yard-arm-end, foot in the Flemish horse as "stirrup," both hands tugging at the "carring" as at a bridle, in very much the attitude of young Alexander curbing the fiery Bucephalus. A superb figure, tossed up as by the horns of Taurus against the thunderous sky, cheerily hallooing to the strenuous file along the spar.

The moral nature was seldom out of keeping with the physical make. Indeed, except as toned by the former, the comeliness and power, always attractive in masculine conjunction, hardly could have drawn the sort of honest homage the Handsome Sailor in some examples received from his less gifted associates.

Such a cynosure, at least in aspect, and something such too in nature, though with important variations made apparent as the story proceeds, was welkin-eyed Billy Budd, or Baby Budd as more familiarly under circumstances hereafter to be given he at last came to be called, aged twenty-one, a foretopman of the British fleet toward the close of the last decade of the eighteenth century. It was not very long prior to the time of the narration that follows that he had entered the King's Service, having been impressed on the Narrow Seas from a homeward-bound English merchantman into a seventy-four outward-bound, H.M.S. *Indomitable*; which ship, as was not unusual in those hurried days, having been obliged to put to sea short of her proper complement of men. Plump upon Billy at first sight in the gangway the boarding officer Lieutenant Ratcliffe pounced even before the merchantman's crew was formally mustered on the quarter-deck for his deliberate inspection. And him only he elected. For whether it was because the other men when ranged before him showed to ill advantage after Billy, or whether he had some scruples in view of the merchantman being rather



short-handed, however it might be, the officer contented himself with his first spontaneous choice. To the surprise of the ship's company, though much to the Lieutenant's satisfaction Billy made no demur. But, indeed, any demur would have been as idle as the protest of a goldfinch popped into a cage.

Noting this uncomplaining acquiescence, all but cheerful one might say, the shipmates turned a surprised glance of silent reproach at the sailor. The shipmaster was one of those worthy mortals found in every vocation even the humbler ones—the sort of person whom everybody agrees in calling "a respectable man." And—not so strange to report as it may appear to be—though a ploughman of the troubled waters, life-long contending with the intractable elements, there was nothing this honest soul at heart loved better than simple peace and quiet. For the rest, he was fifty or thereabouts, a little inclined to corpulence, a prepossessing face, unwhiskered, and of an agreeable color—a rather full face, humanely intelligent in expression. On a fair day with a fair wind and all going well, a certain musical chime in his voice seemed to be the veritable unobstructed outcome of the innermost man. He had much prudence, much conscientiousness, and there were occasions when these virtues were the cause of overmuch disquietude in him. On a passage, so long as his craft was in any proximity to land, no sleep for Captain Graveling. He took to heart those serious responsibilities not so heavily borne by some shipmasters.

Now while Billy Budd was down in the forecabin getting his kit together, the *Indomitable's* lieutenant, burly and bluff, nowise disconcerted by Captain Graveling's omitting to proffer the customary hospitalities on an occasion so unwelcome to him, an omission simply caused by preoccupation of thought, unceremoniously invited himself into the cabin, and also to a flask from the spirit-locker, a receptacle which his experienced eye instantly discovered. In fact he was one of those sea-dogs in whom all the hardship and peril of naval life in the great prolonged wars of his time never impaired the natural instinct for sensuous enjoyment. His duty he always faithfully did; but duty is sometimes a dry obligation, and he was for irrigating its aridity, whensoever possible with a fertilizing decoction of strong waters. For the cabin's proprietor there was nothing left but to play the part of the enforced host with whatever grace and alacrity were practicable. As necessary adjuncts to the flask, he silently placed tumbler and water-jug before the irrepressible guest. But excusing himself from partaking just then, he dismally watched the unembarrassed officer deliberately diluting his grog a little, then tossing it off in three swallows, pushing the empty tumbler away, yet not so far as to be beyond easy reach, at the same time settling himself in his seat and smacking his lips with high satisfaction, looking straight at the host.

These proceedings over, the Master broke the silence; and there lurked a rueful reproach in the tone of his voice: "Lieutenant, you are going to take my best man from me, the jewel of 'em."

"Yes, I know," rejoined the other, immediately drawing back the tumbler preliminary to a replenishing; "Yes, I know. Sorry."

"Beg pardon, but you don't understand, Lieutenant. See here now. Before I shipped that young fellow, my forecabin was a rat-pit of quarrels. It was black times, I tell you, aboard the '*Rights*' here. I was worried to that degree my pipe had no comfort for me. But Billy came; and it was like a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy. Not that he preached to them or said or did anything in particular; but a virtue went out of him, sugaring the sour ones. They took to him like hornets to treacle; all but the buffer of the gang, the big shaggy chap with the fire-red whiskers.

He indeed out of envy, perhaps, of the newcomer, and thinking such a 'sweet and pleasant fellow,' as he mockingly designated him to the others, could hardly have the spirit of a game-cock, must needs bestir himself in trying to get up an ugly row with him. Billy forebore with him and reasoned with him in a pleasant way—he is something like myself, Lieutenant, to whom aught like a quarrel is hateful—but nothing served. So, in the second dog-watch one day the Red Whiskers in presence of the others, under pretence of showing Billy just whence a sirloin steak was cut—for the fellow had once been a butcher—insultingly gave him a dig under the ribs. Quick as lightning Billy let fly his arm. I dare say he never meant to do quite as much as he did, but anyhow he gave the burly fool a terrible drubbing. It took about half a minute, I should think. And, lord bless you, the lubber was astonished at the celerity. And will you believe it, Lieutenant, the Red Whiskers now really loves Billy—loves him, or is the biggest hypocrite that ever I heard of. But they all love him. Some of 'em do his washing, darn his old trousers for him; the carpenter is at odd times making a pretty little chest of drawers for him. Anybody will do anything for Billy Budd; and it's the happy family here. But now Lieutenant, if that young fellow goes—I know how it will be aboard the '*Rights*.' Not again very soon shall I, coming up from dinner, lean over the capstan smoking a quiet pipe—no, not very soon again, I think. Ay, Lieutenant, you are going to take away the jewel of 'em; you are going to take away my peacemaker!" And with that the good soul had really some ado in checking a rising sob.

"Well," said the officer who had listened with amused interest to all this, and now waxing merry with his tittle; "Well, blessed are the peacemakers especially the fighting peacemakers! And such are the seventy-four beauties some of which you see poking their noses out of the port-holes of yonder war-ship lying-to for me" pointing through the cabin window at the *Indomitable*. "But courage! don't look so down-hearted, man. Why, I pledge you in advance the royal approbation. Rest assured that His Majesty will be delighted to know that in a time when his hard tack is not sought for by sailors with such avidity as should be; a time also when some ship-masters privily resent the borrowing from them a tar or two for the service; His Majesty, I say, will be delighted to learn that *one* shipmaster at least cheerfully surrenders to the King, the flower of his flock, a sailor who with equal loyalty makes no dissent.—But where's my beauty? Ah," looking through the cabin's open door, "Here he comes; and, by Jove—lugging along his chest—Apollo with his portmanteau! —My man," stepping out to him, "you can't take that big box aboard a warship. The boxes there are mostly shot-boxes. Put your duds in a bag, lad. Boot and saddle for the cavalryman, bag and hammock for the man-of-war's man."

The transfer from chest to bag was made. And, after seeing his man into the cutter and then following him down, the lieutenant pushed off from the *Rights-of-Man*. That was the merchant-ship's name; though by her master and crew abbreviated in sailor fashion into *The Rights*. The hard-headed Dundee owner was a staunch admirer of Thomas Paine whose book in rejoinder to Burke's arraignment of the French Revolution had then been published for some time and had gone everywhere. In christening his vessel after the title of Paine's volume the man of Dundee was something like his contemporary shipowner, Stephen Girard of Philadelphia, whose sympathies, alike with his native land and its liberal philosophers, he evinced, by naming his ships after Voltaire, Diderot, and so forth.

But now, when the boat swept under the merchant-man's stern, and officer and oarsmen were noting—some bitterly and others with a grin,—the name emblazoned

there; just then it was that the new recruit jumped up from the bow where the coxswain had directed him to sit, and waving his hat to his silent shipmates sorrowfully looking over at him from the taffrail, bade the lads a genial good-bye. Then, making a salutation as to the ship herself, "And good-bye to you too, old *Rights of Man*."

"Down, Sir!" roared the lieutenant, instantly assuming all the rigor of his rank, though with difficulty repressing a smile.

To be sure, Billy's action was a terrible breach of naval decorum. But in that decorum he had never been instructed; in consideration of which the lieutenant would hardly have been so energetic in reproof but for the concluding farewell to the ship. This he rather took as meant to convey a covert sally on the new recruit's part, a sly slur at impressment in general, and that of himself in especial. And yet, more likely, if satire it was in effect, it was hardly so by intention, for Billy, though happily endowed with the gayety of high health, youth and a free heart, was yet by no means of a satirical turn. The will to it and the sinister dexterity were alike wanting. To deal in double meanings and insinuations of any sort was quite foreign to his nature.

As to his enforced enlistment, that he seemed to take pretty much as he was wont to take any vicissitude of weather. Like the animals, though no philosopher, he was, without knowing it, practically a fatalist. And, it may be, that he rather liked this adventurous turn in his affairs, which promised an opening into novel scenes and martial excitements.

Aboard the *Indomitable* our merchant-sailor was forthwith rated as an able-seaman and assigned to the starboard watch of the fore-top. He was soon at home in the service, not at all disliked for his unpretentious good looks and a sort of genial happy-go-lucky air. No merrier man in his mess: in marked contrast to certain other individuals included like himself among the impressed portion of the ship's company; for these when not actively employed were sometimes, and more particularly in the last dog-watch when the drawing near of twilight induced revery, apt to fall into a saddish mood which in some partook of sullenness. But they were not so young as our foretopman, and no few of them must have known a hearth of some sort, others may have had wives and children left, too probably, in uncertain circumstances, and hardly any but must have had acknowledged kith and kin, while for Billy, as will shortly be seen, his entire family was practically invested in himself.

## 2

Though our new-made foretopman was well received in the top and on the gun-decks, hardly here was he that cynosure he had previously been among those minor ship's companies of the merchant marine, with which companies only had he hitherto consorted.

He was young; and despite his all but fully developed frame in aspect looked even younger than he really was, owing to a lingering adolescent expression in the as yet smooth face all but feminine in purity of natural complexion but where, thanks to his seagoing, the lily was quite suppressed and the rose had some ado visibly to flush through the tan.

To one essentially such a novice in the complexities of factitious life, the abrupt transition from his former and simpler sphere to the ampler and more knowing world of a great war-ship; this might well have abashed him had there been any conceit or vanity in his composition. Among her miscellaneous multitude, the

*Indomitable* mustered several individuals who however inferior in grade were of no common natural stamp, sailors more signally susceptible of that air which continuous martial discipline and repeated presence in battle can in some degree impart even to the average man. As the *handsome sailor* Billy Budd's position aboard the seventy-four was something analogous to that of a rustic beauty transplanted from the provinces and brought into competition with the high-born dames of the court. But this change of circumstances he scarce noted. As little did he observe that something about him provoked an ambiguous smile in one or two harder faces among the blue-jackets. Nor less unaware was he of the peculiar favorable effect his person and demeanor had upon the more intelligent gentlemen of the quarter-deck. Nor could this well have been otherwise. Cast in a mould peculiar to the finest physical examples of those Englishmen in whom the Saxon strain would seem not at all to partake of any Norman or other admixture, he showed in face that humane look of reposeful good nature which the Greek sculptor in some instances gave to his heroic strong man, Hercules. But this again was subtly modified by another and pervasive quality. The ear, small and shapely, the arch of the foot, the curve in mouth and nostril, even the indurated hand dyed to the orange-tawny of the toucan's bill, a hand telling alike of the halyards and tar-bucket; but, above all, something in the mobile expression, and every chance attitude and movement, something suggestive of a mother eminently favored by Love and the Graces; all this strangely indicated a lineage in direct contradiction to his lot. The mysteriousness here, became less mysterious through a matter-of-fact elicited when Billy at the capstan was being formally mustered into the service. Asked by the officer, a small brisk little gentleman as it chanced, among other questions, his place of birth, he replied, "Please, Sir, I don't know."

"Don't know where you were born?—Who was your father?"

"God knows, Sir."

Struck by the straightforward simplicity of these replies, the officer next asked "Do you know anything about your beginning?"

"No, Sir. But I have heard that I was found in a pretty silk-lined basket hanging one morning from the knocker of a good man's door in Bristol."

"*Found* say you? Well," throwing back his head and looking up and down the new recruit; "Well it turns out to have been a pretty good find. Hope they'll find some more like you, my man; the fleet sadly needs them."

Yes, Billy Budd was a foundling, a presumable bye-blow, and, evidently, no ignoble one. Noble descent was as evident in him as in a blood horse.

For the rest, with little or no sharpness of faculty or any trace of the wisdom of the serpent, nor yet quite a dove, he possessed that kind or degree of intelligence going along with the unconventional rectitude of a sound human creature, one to whom not yet has been proffered the questionable apple of knowledge. He was illiterate; he could not read, but he could sing, and like the illiterate nightingale was sometimes the composer of his own song.

Of self-consciousness he seemed to have little or none, or about as much as we may reasonably impute to a dog of Saint Bernard's breed.

Habitually living with the elements and knowing little more of the land than as a beach, or, rather, that portion of the terraqueous globe providentially set apart for dance-houses doxies and tapsters, in short what sailors call a "fiddlers'-green," his simple nature remained unsophisticated by those moral obliquities which are not in every case incompatible with that manufacturable thing known as respectability. But

are sailors, frequenters of "fiddlers'-greens," without vices? No; but less often than with landsmen do their vices, so called, partake of crookedness of heart, seeming less to proceed from viciousness than exuberance of vitality after long constraint; frank manifestations in accordance with natural law. By his original constitution aided by the cooperating influences of his lot, Billy in many respects was little more than a sort of upright barbarian, much such perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company.

And here be it submitted that apparently going to corroborate the doctrine of man's fall, a doctrine now popularly ignored, it is observable that where certain virtues pristine and unadulterate peculiarly characterize anybody in the external uniform of civilization, they will upon scrutiny seem not to be derived from custom or convention, but rather to be out of keeping with these, as if indeed exceptionally transmitted from a period prior to Cain's city and citified man. The character marked by such qualities has to an unvitiated taste an untampered-with flavor like that of berries, while the man thoroughly civilized even in a fair specimen of the breed has to the same moral palate a questionable smack as of a compounded wine. To any stray inheritor of these primitive qualities found, like Caspar Hauser, wandering dazed in any Christian capital of our time, the good-natured poet's famous invocation, near two thousand years ago, of the good rustic out of his latitude in the Rome of the Caesars, still appropriately holds:—

"Honest and poor, Faithful in word and thought,  
What has thee, Fabian, to the city brought."

Though our Handsome Sailor had as much of masculine beauty as one can expect anywhere to see; nevertheless, like the beautiful woman in one of Hawthorne's minor tales, there was just one thing amiss in him. No visible blemish, indeed, as with the lady; no, but an occasional liability to a vocal defect. Though in the hour of elemental uproar or peril, he was everything that a sailor should be, yet under sudden provocation of strong heart-feeling his voice otherwise singularly musical, as if expressive of the harmony within, was apt to develop an organic hesitancy, in fact more or less of a stutter or even worse. In this particular Billy was a striking instance that the arch interferer, the envious marplot of Eden still has more or less to do with every human consignment to this planet of earth. In every case, one way or another he is sure to slip in his little card as much as to remind us—I too have a hand here.

The avowal of such an imperfection in the Handsome Sailor should be evidence not alone that he is not presented as a conventional hero, but also that the story in which he is the main figure is no romance.

3

At the time of Billy Budd's arbitrary enlistment into the *Indomitable* that ship was on her way to join the Mediterranean fleet. No long time elapsed before the junction was affected. As one of that fleet the seventy-four participated in its movements, though at times on account of her superior sailing qualities, in the absence of frigates, despatched on separate duty as a scout and at times on less temporary service. But with all this the story has little concernment, restricted as it is to the inner life of one particular ship and the career of an individual sailor.

It was the summer of 1797. In the April of that year had occurred the commotion at Spithead followed in May by a second and yet more serious outbreak in the fleet

at the Nore. The latter is known, and without exaggeration in the epithet, as the Great Mutiny. It was indeed a demonstration more menacing to England than the contemporary manifestos and conquering and proselyting armies of the French Directory.

To the British Empire the Nore Mutiny was what a strike in the fire-brigade would be to London threatened by general arson. In a crisis when the kingdom might well have anticipated the famous signal that some years later published along the naval line of battle what it was that upon occasion England expected of Englishmen; *that* was the time when at the mastheads of the three-deckers and seventy-fours moored in her own roadstead—a fleet, the right arm of a Power then all but the sole free conservative one of the Old World, the bluejackets, to be numbered by thousands, ran up with huzzas the British colors with the union and cross wiped out; by that cancellation transmuting the flag of founded law and freedom defined, into the enemy's red meteor of unbridled and unbounded revolt. Reasonable discontent growing out of practical grievances in the fleet had been ignited into irrational combustion as by live cinders blown across the Channel from France in flames.

The event converted into irony for a time those spirited strains of Dibdin—as a song-writer no mean auxiliary to the English Government at the European conjuncture—strains celebrating, among other things, the patriotic devotion of the British tar:

*"And as for my life, 'tis the King's!"*

Such an episode in the Island's grand naval story her naval historians naturally abridge; one of them (G. P. R. James) candidly acknowledging that fain would he pass it over did not "impartiality forbid fastidiousness." And yet his mention is less a narration than a reference, having to do hardly at all with details. Nor are these readily to be found in the libraries. Like some other events in every age befalling states everywhere, including America, the Great Mutiny was of such character that national pride along with views of policy would fain shade it off into the historical background. Such events can not be ignored, but there is a considerate way of historically treating them. If a well-constituted individual refrains from blazoning aught amiss or calamitous in his family; a nation in the like circumstance may without reproach be equally discreet.

Though after parleyings between Government and the ringleaders, and concessions by the former as to some glaring abuses, the first uprising—that at Spithead—with difficulty was put down, or matters for the time pacified; yet at the Nore the unforeseen renewal of insurrection on a yet larger scale, and emphasized in the conferences that ensued by demands deemed by the authorities not only inadmissible but aggressively insolent, indicated—if the Red Flag did not sufficiently do so, what was the spirit animating the men. Final suppression, however, there was; but only made possible perhaps by the unswerving loyalty of the marine corps and a voluntary resumption of loyalty among influential sections of the crews.

To some extent the Nore Mutiny may be regarded as analogous to the distempering irruption of contagious fever in a frame constitutionally sound, and which anon throws it off.

At all events, of these thousands of mutineers were some of the tars who not so very long afterwards—whether wholly prompted thereto by patriotism, or pugnacious instinct, or by both,—helped to win a coronet for Nelson at the Nile, and the naval crown of crowns for him at Trafalgar. To the mutineers those battles and especially

Trafalgar were a plenary absolution and a grand one: For all that goes to make up scenic naval display, heroic magnificence in arms, those battles especially Trafalgar stand unmatched in human annals.

## 4

Concerning "The greatest sailor since the world began." Tennyson?

In this matter of writing, resolve as one may to keep to the main road, some by-paths have an enticement not readily to be withstood. I am going to err into such a by-path. If the reader will keep me company I shall be glad. At the least we can promise ourselves that pleasure which is wickedly said to be in sinning, for a literary sin the divergence will be.

Very likely it is no new remark that the inventions of our time have at last brought about a change in sea-warfare in degree corresponding to the revolution in all warfare effected by the original introduction from China into Europe of gunpowder. The first European fire-arm, a clumsy contrivance, was, as is well known, scouted by no few of the knights as a base implement, good enough peradventure for weavers too craven to stand up crossing steel with steel in frank fight. But as ashore knightly valor though shorn of its blazonry did not cease with the knights, neither on the seas, though nowadays in encounters there a certain kind of displayed gallantry be fallen out of date as hardly applicable under changed circumstances, did the nobler qualities of such naval magnates as Don John of Austria, Doria, Van Tromp, Jean Bart, the long line of British Admirals and the American Decatur of 1812 become obsolete with their wooden walls.

Nevertheless, to anybody who can hold the Present at its worth without being inappreciative of the Past, it may be forgiven, if to such an one the solitary old hulk at Portsmouth, Nelson's *Victory*, seems to float there, not alone as the decaying monument of a fame incorruptible, but also as a poetic reproach, softened by its picturesqueness, to the *Monitors* and yet mightier hulls of the European iron-clads. And this not altogether because such craft are unsightly, unavoidably lacking the symmetry and grand lines of the old battle-ships, but equally for other reasons.

There are some, perhaps, who while not altogether inaccessible to that poetic reproach just alluded to, may yet on behalf of the new order, be disposed to parry it; and this to the extent of iconoclasm, if need be. For example, prompted by the sight of the star inserted in the *Victory's* quarter-deck designating the spot where the Great Sailor fell, these martial utilitarians may suggest considerations implying that Nelson's ornate publication of his person in battle was not only unnecessary, but not military, nay savored of foolhardiness and vanity. They may add, too, that at Trafalgar it was in effect nothing less than a challenge to death; and death came; and that but for his bravado the victorious Admiral might possibly have survived the battle, and so, instead of having his sagacious dying injunctions overruled by his immediate successor in command he himself when the contest was decided might have brought his shattered fleet to anchor, a proceeding which might have averted the deplorable loss of life by shipwreck in the elemental tempest that followed the martial one.

Well, should we set aside the more disputable point whether for various reasons it was possible to anchor the fleet, then plausibly enough the Benthamites of war may urge the above.

But the *might-have-been* is but boggy ground to build on. And, certainly, in foresight as to the larger issue of an encounter, and anxious preparations for it—buoying the deadly way and mapping it out, as at Copenhagen—few commanders have been so painstakingly circumspect as this same reckless declarer of his person in fight.

Personal prudence even when dictated by quite other than selfish considerations surely is no special virtue in a military man; while an excessive love of glory, impassioning a less burning impulse, the honest sense of duty, is the first. If the name *Wellington* is not so much of a trumpet to the blood as the simpler name *Nelson*, the reason for this may perhaps be inferred from the above. Alfred in his funeral ode on the victor of Waterloo ventures not to call him the greatest soldier of all time, though in the same ode he invokes Nelson as "the greatest sailor since the world began."

At Trafalgar Nelson on the brink of opening the fight sat down and wrote his last brief will and testament. If under the presentiment of the most magnificent of all victories to be crowned by his own glorious death, a sort of priestly motive led him to dress his person in the jewelled vouchers of his own shining deeds; if thus to have adorned himself for the altar and the sacrifice were indeed vainglory, then affectation and fustian is each more heroic line in the great epics and dramas, since in such lines the poet but embodies in verse those exaltations of sentiment that a nature like Nelson, the opportunity being given, vitalizes into acts.

## 5

Yes, the outbreak at the Nore was put down. But not every grievance was redressed. If the contractors, for example, were no longer permitted to ply some practices peculiar to their tribe everywhere, such as providing shoddy cloth, rations not sound, or false in the measure; not the less impressment, for one thing, went on. By custom sanctioned for centuries, and judicially maintained by a Lord Chancellor as late as Mansfield, that mode of manning the fleet, a mode now fallen into a sort of abeyance but never formally renounced, it was not practicable to give up in those years. Its abrogation would have crippled the indispensable fleet, one wholly under canvas, no steam-power, its innumerable sails and thousands of cannon, everything in short, worked by muscle alone; a fleet the more insatiate in demand for men, because then multiplying its ships of all grades against contingencies present and to come of the convulsed Continent.

Discontent foreran the Two Mutinies, and more or less it lurkily survived them. Hence it was not unreasonable to apprehend some return of trouble sporadic or general. One instance of such apprehensions: In the same year with this story, Nelson, then Vice Admiral Sir Horatio, being with the fleet off the Spanish coast, was directed by the Admiral in command to shift his pennant from the *Captain* to the *Theseus*; and for this reason: that the latter ship having newly arrived on the station from home where it had taken part in the Great Mutiny, danger was apprehended from the temper of the men; and it was thought that an officer like Nelson was the one, not indeed to terrorize the crew into base subjection, but to win them, by force of his mere presence back to an allegiance if not as enthusiastic as his own, yet as true. So it was that for a time on more than one quarter-deck anxiety did exist. At sea precautionary vigilance was strained against relapse. At short notice an engagement might come on. When it did, the lieutenants assigned to batteries felt it incumbent on them, in some instances, to stand with drawn swords behind the men working the guns.



But on board the seventy-four in which Billy now swung his hammock, very little in the manner of the men and nothing obvious in the demeanor of the officers would have suggested to an ordinary observer that the Great Mutiny was a recent event. In their general bearing and conduct the commissioned officers of a war-ship naturally take their tone from the commander, that is if he have that ascendancy of character that ought to be his.

Captain the Honorable Edward Fairfax Vere, to give his full title, was a bachelor of forty or thereabouts, a sailor of distinction even in a time prolific of renowned seamen. Though allied to the higher nobility his advancement had not been altogether owing to influences connected with that circumstance. He had seen much service, been in various engagements, always acquitting himself as an officer mindful of the welfare of his men, but never tolerating an infraction of discipline; thoroughly versed in the science of his profession, and intrepid to the verge of temerity, though never injudiciously so. For his gallantry in the West Indian waters as flag-lieutenant under Rodney in that Admiral's crowning victory over De Grasse, he was made a post-captain.

Ashore in the garb of a civilian scarce anyone would have taken him for a sailor, more especially that he never garnished unprofessional talk with nautical terms, and grave in his bearing, evinced little appreciation of mere humor. It was not out of keeping with these traits that on a passage when nothing demanded his paramount action, he was the most undemonstrative of men. Any landsman observing this gentleman not conspicuous by his stature and wearing no pronounced insignia, emerging from his cabin retreat to the open deck, and noting the silent deference of the officers retiring to leeward, might have taken him for the King's guest, a civilian aboard the King's-ship, some highly honorable discreet envoy on his way to an important post. But in fact the unobtrusiveness of demeanor may have proceeded from a certain unaffected modesty of manhood sometimes accompanying a resolute nature, a modesty evinced at all times not calling for pronounced action, and which shown in any rank of life suggests a virtue aristocratic in kind.

As with some others engaged in various departments of the world's more heroic activities, Captain Vere though practical enough upon occasion would at times betray a certain dreaminess of mood. Standing alone on the weather-side of the quarter deck, one hand holding by the rigging he would absently gaze off at the blank sea. At the presentation to him then of some minor matter interrupting the current of his thoughts he would show more or less irascibility; but instantly he would control it.

In the Navy he was popularly known by the appellation Starry Vere. How such a designation happened to fall upon one who whatever his sterling qualities was without any brilliant ones was in this wise: A favorite kinsman, Lord Denton, a free-hearted fellow, had been the first to meet and congratulate him upon his return to England from his West Indian cruise; and but the day previous turning over a copy of Andrew Marvell's poems had lighted, not for the first time however, upon the lines entitled *Appleton House*, the name of one of the seats of their common ancestor, a hero in the German wars of the seventeenth century, in which poem occur the lines,

"This 'tis to have been from the first  
In a domestic heaven nursed,  
Under the discipline severe  
Of Fairfax and the starry Vere."

And so, upon embracing his cousin fresh from Rodney's great victory wherein he had played so gallant a part, brimming over with just family pride in the sailor of their house, he exuberantly exclaimed, "Give ye joy, Ed; give ye joy, my starry Vere!" This got currency, and the novel prefix serving in familiar parlance readily to distinguish the *Indomitable's* Captain from another Vere his senior, a distant relative, an officer of like rank in the navy, it remained permanently attached to the surname.

## 7

In view of the part that the commander of the *Indomitable* plays in scenes shortly to follow, it may be well to fill out that sketch of him outlined in the previous chapter.

Aside from his qualities as a sea-officer Captain Vere was an exceptional character. Unlike no few of England's renowned sailors, long and arduous service with signal devotion to it, had not resulted in absorbing and *salting* the entire man. He had a marked leaning toward everything intellectual. He loved books, never going to sea without a newly replenished library, compact but of the best. The isolated leisure, in some cases so wearisome, falling at intervals to commanders even during a war-cruise, never was tedious to Captain Vere. With nothing of that literary taste which less heeds the thing conveyed than the vehicle, his bias was toward those books to which every serious mind of superior order occupying any active post of authority in the world, naturally inclines: books treating of actual men and events no matter of what era—history, biography and unconventional writers, who, free from cant and convention, like Montaigne, honestly and in the spirit of common sense philosophize upon realities.

In this love of reading he found confirmation of his own more reserved thoughts—confirmation which he had vainly sought in social converse, so that as touching most fundamental topics, there had got to be established in him some positive convictions, which he forfeit would abide in him essentially unmodified so long as his intelligent part remained unimpaired. In view of the troubled period in which his lot was cast this was well for him. His settled convictions were as a dyke against those invading waters of novel opinion, social, political and otherwise, which carried away as in a torrent no few minds in those days, minds by nature not inferior to his own. While other members of that aristocracy to which by birth he belonged were incensed at the innovators mainly because their theories were inimical to the privileged classes, not alone Captain Vere disinterestedly opposed them because they seemed to him incapable of embodiment in lasting institutions, but at war with the peace of the world and the true welfare of mankind.

With minds less stored than his and less earnest, some officers of his rank, with whom at times he would necessarily consort, found him lacking in the companionable quality, a dry and bookish gentleman, as they deemed. Upon any chance withdrawal from their company one would be apt to say to another, something like this: "Vere is a noble fellow, Starry Vere. 'Spite the gazettes, Sir Horatio" meaning him with the Lord title "is at bottom scarce a better seaman or fighter. But between you and me now don't you think there is a queer streak of the pedantic running through him? Yes, like the King's yarn in a coil of navy-rope?"

Some apparent ground there was for this sort of confidential criticism; since not only did the Captain's discourse never fall into the jocosely familiar, but in illustrating of any point touching the stirring personages and events of the time he would be as apt to cite some historic character or incident of antiquity as that he would to cite from the moderns. He seemed unmindful of the circumstance that to his bluff com-

pany such remote allusions however pertinent they might really be were altogether alien to men whose reading was mainly confined to the journals. But considerateness in such matters is not easy to natures constituted like Captain Vere's. Their honesty prescribes to them directness, sometimes far-reaching like that of a migratory fowl that in its flight never heeds when it crosses a frontier.

## 8

The lieutenants and other commissioned gentlemen forming Captain Vere's staff it is not necessary here to particularize, nor needs it to make any mention of any of the warrant-officers. But among the petty-officers was one who having much to do with the story, may as well be forthwith introduced. His portrait I essay, but shall never hit it. This was John Claggart, the Master-at-arms. But that sea-title may to landsmen seem somewhat equivocal. Originally doubtless that petty-officer's function was the instruction of the men in the use of arms, sword or cutlas. But very long ago, owing to the advance in gunnery making hand-to-hand encounters less frequent and giving to nitre and sulphur the preeminence over steel, that function ceased; the Master-at-arms of a great war-ship becoming a sort of Chief of Police charged among others matters with the duty of preserving order on the populous lower gun-decks.

Claggart was a man about five and thirty, somewhat spare and tall, yet of no ill figure upon the whole. His hand was too small and shapely to have been accustomed to hard toil. The face was a notable one; the features all except the chin cleanly cut as those on a Greek medallion; yet the chin, beardless as Tecumseh's, had something of strange protuberant heaviness in its make that recalled the prints of the Rev. Dr. Titus Oates, the historic deponent with the clerical drawl in the time of Charles II and the fraud of the alleged Popish Plot. It served Claggart in his office that his eye could cast a tutoring glance. His brow was of the sort phrenologically associated with more than average intellect; silken jet curls partly clustering over it, making a foil to the pallor below, a pallor tinged with a faint shade of amber akin to the hue of time-tinted marbles of old. This complexion, singularly contrasting with the red or deeply bronzed visages of the sailors, and in part the result of his official seclusion from the sunlight, though it was not exactly displeasing, nevertheless seemed to hint of something defective or abnormal in the constitution and blood. But his general aspect and manner were so suggestive of an education and career incongruous with his naval function that when not actively engaged in it he looked like a man of high quality, social and moral, who for reasons of his own was keeping incog. Nothing was known of his former life. It might be that he was an Englishman; and yet there lurked a bit of accent in his speech suggesting that possibly he was not such by birth, but through naturalization in early childhood. Among certain grizzled sea-gossips of the gun-decks and fore-castle went a rumor perdue that the Master-at-arms was a *chevalier* who had volunteered into the King's navy by way of compounding for some mysterious swindle whereof he had been arraigned at the King's Bench. The fact that nobody could substantiate this report was, of course, nothing against its secret currency. Such a rumor once started on the gun-decks in reference to almost anyone below the rank of a commissioned officer would, during the period assigned to this narrative, have seemed not altogether wanting in credibility to the tarry old wiseacres of a man-of-war crew. And indeed a man of Claggart's accomplishments, without prior nautical experience entering the navy at mature life, as he did, and necessarily allotted at the start to the lowest grade in it; a man too who never made allusion to his previous life ashore; these were circumstances which in the dearth

of exact knowledge as to his true antecedents opened to the invidious a vague field for unfavorable surmise.

But the sailors' dog-watch gossip concerning him derived a vague plausibility from the fact that now for some period the British Navy could so little afford to be squeamish in the matter of keeping up the muster-rolls, that not only were press-gangs notoriously abroad both afloat and ashore, but there was little or no secret about another matter, namely that the London police were at liberty to capture any able-bodied suspect, any questionable fellow at large and summarily ship him to the dock-yard or fleet. Furthermore, even among voluntary enlistments there were instances where the motive thereto partook neither of patriotic impulse nor yet of a random desire to experience a bit of sea-life and martial adventure. Insolvent debtors of minor grade, together with the promiscuous lame ducks of morality, found in the Navy a convenient and secure refuge. Secure, because once enlisted aboard a King's-Ship, they were as much in sanctuary, as the transgressor of the Middle Ages harboring himself under the shadow of the altar. Such sanctioned irregularities which for obvious reasons the Government would hardly think to parade at the time and which consequently, and as affecting the least influential class of mankind, have all but dropped into oblivion, lend color to something for the truth whereof I do not vouch, and hence have some scruple in stating; something I remember having seen in print though the book I can not recall; but the same thing was personally communicated to me now more than forty years ago by an old pensioner in a cocked hat with whom I had a most interesting talk on the terrace at Greenwich, a Baltimore negro, a Trafalgar man. It was to this effect: In the case of a warship short of hands whose speedy sailing was imperative, the deficient quota in lack of any other way of making it good, would be eked out by draughts culled direct from the jails. For reasons previously suggested it would not perhaps be easy at the present day directly to prove or disprove the allegation. But allowed as a verity, how significant would it be of England's straits at the time confronted by those wars which like a flight of harpies rose shrieking from the din and dust of the fallen Bastille. That era appears measurably clear to us who look back at it, and but read of it. But to the grandfathers of us gray-beards, the more thoughtful of them, the genius of it presented an aspect like that of Camoën's Spirit of the Cape, an eclipsing menace mysterious and prodigious. Not America was exempt from apprehension. At the height of Napoleon's unexampled conquests, there were Americans who had fought at Bunker Hill who looked forward to the possibility that the Atlantic might prove no barrier against the ultimate schemes of this French portentous upstart from the revolutionary chaos who seemed in act of fulfilling judgment prefigured in the Apocalypse.

But the less credence was to be given to the gun-deck talk touching Claggart, seeing that no man holding his office in a man-of-war can ever hope to be popular with the crew. Besides, in derogatory comments upon anyone against whom they have a grudge, or for any reason or no reason mislike, sailors are much like landsmen, they are apt to exaggerate or romance it.

About as much was really known to the *Indomitable's* tars of the Master-at-arms' career before entering the service as an astronomer knows about a comet's travels prior to its first observable appearance in the sky. The verdict of the sea quidnuncs has been cited only by way of showing what sort of moral impression the man made upon rude uncultivated natures whose conceptions of human wickedness were necessarily of the narrowest, limited to ideas of vulgar rascality,—a thief among the

swinging hammocks during a night-watch, or the man-brokers and land-sharks of the sea-ports.

It was no gossip, however, but fact, that though, as before hinted, Claggart upon his entrance into the Navy was, as a novice, assigned to the least honorable section of a man-of-war's crew, embracing the drudgery, he did not long remain there.

The superior capacity he immediately evinced, his constitutional sobriety, ingratiating deference to superiors, together with a peculiar ferreting genius manifested on a singular occasion, all this capped by a certain austere patriotism abruptly advanced him to the position of Master-at-arms.

Of this maritime Chief of Police the ship's-corporals, so called, were the immediate subordinates, and compliant ones; and this, as is to be noted in some business departments ashore, almost to a degree inconsistent with entire moral volition. His place put various converging wires of underground influence under the Chief's control, capable when astutely worked through his under-strappers of operating to the mysterious discomfort, if nothing worse, of any of the sea-commonalty.

## 9

Life in the fore-top well agreed with Billy Budd. There, when not actually engaged on the yards yet higher aloft, the topmen, who as such had been picked out for youth and activity, constituted an aerial club lounging at ease against the smaller stunsails rolled up into cushions, spinning yarns like the lazy gods, and frequently amused with what was going on in the busy world of the decks below. No wonder then that a young fellow of Billy's disposition was well content in such society. Giving no cause of offence to anybody, he was always alert at a call. So in the merchant service it had been with him. But now such a punctiliousness in duty was shown that his topmates would sometimes good-naturedly laugh at him for it. This heightened alacrity had its cause, namely the impression made upon him by the first formal gangway-punishment he had ever witnessed, which befell the day following his impressment. It had been incurred by a little fellow, young, a novice, an after-guardsmen absent from his assigned post when the ship was being put about; a dereliction resulting in a rather serious hitch to that manœuvre, one demanding instantaneous promptitude in letting go and making fast. When Billy saw the culprit's naked back under the scourge gridironed with red welts, and worse; when he marked the dire expression on the liberated man's face as with his woolen shirt flung over him by the executioner he rushed forward from the spot to bury himself in the crowd, Billy was horrified. He resolved that never through remissness would he make himself liable to such a visitation or do or omit aught that might merit even verbal reproof. What then was his surprise and concern when ultimately he found himself getting into petty trouble occasionally about such matters as the stowage of his bag or something amiss in his hammock, matters under the police oversight of the ship's-corporals of the lower decks, and which brought down on him a vague threat from one of them.

So heedful in all things as he was, how could this be? He could not understand it, and it more than vexed him. When he spoke to his young topmates about it they were either lightly incredulous or found something comical in his unconcealed anxiety. "Is it your bag, Billy?" said one; "well, sew yourself up in it, bully boy, and then you'll be sure to know if anybody meddles with it."

Now there was a veteran aboard who because his years began to disqualify him for more active work had been recently assigned duty as main-mast-man in his watch,

looking to the gear belayed at the rail roundabout that great spar near the deck. At off-times the foretopman had picked up some acquaintance with him, and now in his trouble it occurred to him that he might be the sort of person to go to for wise counsel. He was an old Dansker long anglicized in the service, of few words, many wrinkles and some honorable scars. His wizened face, time-tinted and weather-stained to the complexion of an antique parchment, was here and there peppered blue by the chance explosion of a gun-cartridge in action. He was an *Agamemnon*-man; some two years prior to the time of this story having served under Nelson when but Sir Horatio, in that ship immortal in naval memory, and which dismantled and in part broken up to her bare ribs is seen a grand skeleton in Haydon's etching. As one of a boarding-party from the *Agamemnon* he had received a cut slantwise along one temple and cheek, leaving a long pale scar like a streak of dawn's light falling athwart the dark visage. It was on account of that scar and the affair in which it was known that he had received it, as well as from his blue-peppered complexion, that the Dansker went among the *Indomitable's* crew by the name of "Board-her-in-the-smoke."

Now the first time that his small weazel-eyes happened to light on Billy Budd, a certain grim internal merriment set all his ancient wrinkles into antic play. Was it that his eccentric unsentimental old sapience primitive in its kind saw or thought it saw something which in contrast with the war-ship's environment looked oddly incongruous in the handsome sailor? But after slyly studying him at intervals, the old Merlin's equivocal merriment was modified; for now when the twain would meet, it would start in his face a quizzing sort of look, but it would be but momentary and sometimes replaced by an expression of speculative query as to what might eventually befall a nature like that, dropped into a world not without some man-traps and against whose subtleties simple courage lacking experience and address and without any touch of defensive ugliness, is of little avail; and where such innocence as man is capable of does yet in a moral emergency not always sharpen the faculties or enlighten the will.

However it was, the Dansker in his ascetic way rather took to Billy. Nor was this only because of a certain philosophic interest in such a character. There was another cause. While the old man's eccentricities, sometimes bordering on the ursine, repelled the juniors, Billy, undeterred thereby, revering him as a salt hero, would make advances, never passing the old *Agamemnon*-man without a salutation marked by that respect which is seldom lost on the aged however crabbed at times or whatever their station in life.

There was a vein of dry humor, or what not, in the mastman; and, whether in freak of patriarchal irony touching Billy's youth and athletic frame, or for some other and more recondite reason, from the first in addressing him he always substituted Baby for Billy. The Dansker in fact being the originator of the name by which the foretopman eventually became known aboard the ship.

Well then, in his mysterious little difficulty going in quest of the wrinkled one, Billy found him off duty in a dog-watch ruminating by himself seated on a shot-box of the upper gun-deck now and then surveying with a somewhat cynical regard certain of the more swaggering promenaders there. Billy recounted his trouble, again wondering how it all happened. The salt seer attentively listened, accompanying the foretopman's recital with queer twitchings of his wrinkles and problematical little sparkles of his small ferret eyes. Making an end of his story, the foretopman asked, "And now, Dansker, do tell me what you think of it."

The old man, shoving up the front of his tarpaulin and deliberately rubbing the long slant scar at the point where it entered the thin hair, laconically said, "Baby Budd, *Jemmy Legs*" (meaning the Master-at-arms) "is down on you."

"*Jimmy Legs!*" ejaculated Billy, his welkin eyes expanding; "what for? Why he calls me *the sweet and pleasant young fellow*, they tell me."

"Does he so?" grinned the grizzled one; then said "Ay Baby Lad a sweet voice has *Jimmy Legs*."

"No, not always. But to me he has. I seldom pass him but there comes a pleasant word."

"And that's because he's down upon you, Baby Budd."

Such reiteration along with the manner of it, incomprehensible to a novice, disturbed Billy almost as much as the mystery for which he had sought explanation. Something less unpleasingly oracular he tried to extract; but the old sea-Chiron thinking perhaps that for the nonce he had sufficiently instructed his young Achilles, pursed his lips, gathered all his wrinkles together and would commit himself to nothing further.

Years, and those experiences which befall certain shrewder men subordinated life-long to the will of superiors, all this had developed in the Dansker the pithy guarded cynicism that was his leading characteristic.

## 10

The next day an incident served to confirm Billy Budd in his incredulity as to the Dansker's strange summing up of the case submitted. The ship at noon going large before the wind was rolling on her course, and he below at dinner and engaged in some sportful talk with the members of his mess, chanced in a sudden lurch to spill the entire contents of his soup-pan upon the new-scrubbed deck. Claggart, the Master-at-arms, official rattan in hand, happened to be passing along the battery in a bay of which the mess was lodged, and the greasy liquid streamed just across his path. Stepping over it, he was proceeding on his way without comment, since the matter was nothing to take notice of under the circumstances, when he happened to observe who it was that had done the spilling. His countenance changed. Pausing, he was about to ejaculate something hasty at the sailor, but checked himself, and pointing down to the streaming soup, playfully tapped him from behind with his rattan, saying in a low musical voice peculiar to him at times "Handsomely done, my lad! And handsome is as handsome did it too!" And with that passed on. Not noted by Billy as not coming within his view was the involuntary smile, or rather grimace, that accompanied Claggart's equivocal words. Aridly it drew down the thin corners of his shapely mouth. But everybody taking his remark as meant for humorous, and at which therefore as coming from a superior they were bound to laugh, "with counterfeited glee" acted accordingly; and Billy tickled, it may be, by the allusion to his being the handsome sailor, merrily joined in; then addressing his messmates exclaimed "There now, who says that *Jimmy Legs* is down on me!"

"And who said he was, Beauty?" demanded one Donald with some surprise. Whereat the foretopman looked a little foolish recalling that it was only one person, Board-her-in-the-smoke, who had suggested what to him was the smoky idea that this Master-at-arms was in any peculiar way hostile to him. Meantime that functionary resuming his path must have momentarily worn some expression less guarded than that of the bitter smile, and usurping the face from the heart, some distorting expression perhaps, for a drummer-boy, heedlessly frolicking along from the opposite

direction and chancing to come into light collision with his person was strangely disconcerted by his aspect. Nor was the impression lessened when the official, impulsively giving him a sharp cut with the rattan, vehemently exclaimed "Look where you go!"

II

What was the matter with the Master-at-arms? And, be the matter what it might, how could it have direct relation to Billy Budd with whom prior to the affair of the spilled soup he had never come into any special contact official or otherwise? What indeed could the trouble have to do with one so little inclined to give offence as the merchant-ship's *peacemaker*, even him who in Claggart's own phrase was "the sweet and pleasant young fellow?" Yes, why should *Jemmy Legs*, to borrow the Dansker's expression, be *down* on the Handsome Sailor? But, at heart and not for nothing, as the late chance encounter may indicate to the discerning, down on him, secretly down on him, he assuredly was.

Now to invent something touching the more private career of Claggart, something involving Billy Budd, of which something the latter should be wholly ignorant, some romantic incident implying that Claggart's knowledge of the young blue-jacket began at some period anterior to catching sight of him on board the seventy-four—all this, not so difficult to do, might avail in a way more or less interesting to account for whatever of enigma may appear to lurk in the case. But in fact there was nothing of the sort. And yet the cause, necessarily to be assumed as the sole one assignable, is in its very realism as much charged with that prime element of Radcliffian romance, *the mysterious*, as any that the ingenuity of the author of the *Mysteries of Udolpho* could devise. For what can more partake of the mysterious than an antipathy spontaneous and profound such as is evoked in certain exceptional mortals by the mere aspect of some other mortal, however harmless he may be, if not called forth by this very harmlessness itself?

Now there can exist no irritating juxtaposition of dissimilar personalities comparable to that which is possible aboard a great war-ship fully manned and at sea. There, every day among all ranks almost every man comes into more or less of contact with almost every other man. Wholly there to avoid even the sight of an aggravating object one must needs give it Jonah's toss or jump overboard himself. Imagine how all this might eventually operate on some peculiar human creature the direct reverse of a saint?

But for the adequate comprehending of Claggart by a normal nature these hints are insufficient. To pass from a normal nature to him one must cross "the deadly space between." And this is best done by indirection.

Long ago an honest scholar my senior, said to me in reference to one who like himself is now no more, a man so unimpeachably respectable that against him nothing was ever openly said though among the few something was whispered, "Yes, X—— is a nut not to be cracked by the tap of a lady's fan. You are aware that I am the adherent of no organized religion much less of any philosophy built into a system. Well, for all that, I think that to try and get into X——, enter his labyrinth and get out again, without a clue derived from some source other than what is known as *knowledge of the world*—that were hardly possible, at least for me."

"Why," said I, "X——, however singular a study to some, is yet human, and knowledge of the world assuredly implies the knowledge of human nature, and in most of its varieties."



"Yes, but a superficial knowledge of it, serving ordinary purposes. But for anything deeper, I am not certain whether to know the world and to know human nature be not two distinct branches of knowledge, which while they may coexist in the same heart, yet either may exist with little or nothing of the other. Nay, in an average man of the world, his constant rubbing with it blunts that fine spiritual insight indispensable to the understanding of the essential in certain exceptional characters, whether evil ones or good. In a matter of some importance I have seen a girl wind an old lawyer about her little finger. Nor was it the dotage of senile love. Nothing of the sort. But he knew law better than he knew the girl's heart. Coke and Blackstone hardly shed so much light into obscure spiritual places as the Hebrew prophets. And who were they? Mostly recluses."

At the time my inexperience was such that I did not quite see the drift of all this. It may be that I see it now. And, indeed, if that lexicon which is based on Holy Writ were any longer popular, one might with less difficulty define and denominate certain phenomenal men. As it is, one must turn to some authority not liable to the charge of being tintured with the Biblical element.

In a list of definitions included in the authentic translation of Plato, a list attributed to him, occurs this: "Natural Depravity: a depravity according to nature." A definition which though savoring of Calvinism, by no means involves Calvin's dogma as to total mankind. Evidently its intent makes it applicable but to individuals. Not many are the examples of this depravity which the gallows and jail supply. At any rate for notable instances, since these have no vulgar alloy of the brute in them, but invariably are dominated by intellectuality, one must go elsewhere. Civilization, especially if of the austerer sort, is auspicious to it. It folds itself in the mantle of respectability. It has its certain negative virtues serving as silent auxiliaries. It never allows wine to get in its guard. It is not going too far to say that it is without vices or small sins. There is a phenomenal pride in it that excludes them from anything mercenary or avaricious. In short the depravity here meant partakes nothing of the sordid or sensual. It is serious, but free from acerbity. Though no flatterer of mankind it never speaks ill of it.

But the thing which in eminent instances signalizes so exceptional a nature is this: though the man's even temper and discreet bearing would seem to intimate a mind peculiarly subject to the law of reason, not the less in his heart he would seem to riot in complete exemption from that law having apparently little to do with reason further than to employ it as an ambidexter implement for effecting the irrational. That is to say: Toward the accomplishment of an aim which in wantonness of malignity would seem to partake of the insane, he will direct a cool judgement sagacious and sound.

These men are true madmen, and of the most dangerous sort, for their lunacy is not continuous but occasional, evoked by some special object; it is probably secretive, which is as much to say it is self-contained, so that when moreover, most active, it is to the average mind not distinguishable from sanity, and for the reason above suggested: that whatever its aims may be—and the aim is never declared—the method and the outward proceeding are always perfectly rational.

Now something such an one was Claggart, in whom was the mania of an evil nature, not engendered by vicious training or corrupting books or licentious living, but born with him and innate, in short "a depravity according to nature."

*Lawyers, Experts, Clergy*

## AN EPISODE

By the way, can it be the phenomenon, disowned or at least concealed, that in some criminal cases puzzles the courts? For this cause have our juries at times not only to endure the prolonged contentions of lawyers with their fees, but also the yet more perplexing strife of the medical experts with theirs?—But why leave it to them? Why not subpoena as well the clerical proficient? Their vocation bringing them into peculiar contact with so many human beings, and sometimes in their least guarded hour, in interviews very much more confidential than those of physician and patient; this would seem to qualify them to know something about those intricacies involved in the question of moral responsibility; whether in a given case, say, the crime proceeded from mania in the brain or rabies of the heart. As to any differences among themselves these clerical proficient might develop on the stand, these could hardly be greater than the direct contradictions exchanged between the remunerated medical experts.

Dark sayings are these, some will say. But why? Is it because they somewhat savor of Holy Writ in its phrase "mysteries of iniquity"? If they do, such savor was far enough from being intended, for little will it commend these pages to many a reader of to-day.

The point of the present story turning on the hidden nature of the Master-at-arms has necessitated this chapter. With an added hint or two in connection with the incident at the mess, the resumed narrative must be left to vindicate, as it may, its own credibility.

*Pale ire, envy and despair*

That Claggart's figure was not amiss, and his face, save the chin, well moulded, has already been said. Of these favorable points he seemed not insensible, for he was not only neat but careful in his dress. But the form of Billy Budd was heroic; and if his face was without the intellectual look of the pallid Claggart's, not the less was it lit, like his, from within, though from a different source. The bonfire in his heart made luminous the rose-tan in his cheek.

In view of the marked contrast between the persons of the twain, it is more than probable that when the Master-at-arms in the scene last given applied to the sailor the proverb *Handsome is as handsome does*; he there let escape an ironic inkling, not caught by the young sailors who heard it, as to what it was that had first moved him against Billy, namely, his significant personal beauty.

Now envy and antipathy, passions irreconcilable in reason, nevertheless in fact may spring conjoined like Chang and Eng in one birth. Is Envy then such a monster? Well, though many an arraigned mortal has in hopes of mitigated penalty pleaded guilty to horrible actions, did ever anybody seriously confess to envy? Something there is in it universally felt to be more shameful than even felonious crime. And not only does everybody disown it but the better sort are inclined to incredulity when it is in earnest imputed to an intelligent man. But since its lodgement is in the heart

not the brain, no degree of intellect supplies a guarantee against it. But Claggart's was no vulgar form of the passion. Nor, as directed toward Billy Budd, did it partake of that streak of apprehensive jealousy that marred Saul's visage perturbedly brooding on the comely young David. Claggart's envy struck deeper. If askance he eyed the good looks, cherry health and frank enjoyment of young life in Billy Budd, it was because these went along with a nature that as Claggart magnetically felt, had in its simplicity never willed malice or experienced the reactionary bite of that serpent. To him, the spirit lodged within Billy, and looking out from his welkin eyes as from windows, that ineffability it was which made the dimple in his dyed cheek, supplied his joints, and dancing in his yellow curls made him preeminently the Handsome Sailor. One person excepted the Master-at-arms was perhaps the only man in the ship intellectually capable of adequately appreciating the moral phenomenon presented in Billy Budd. And the insight but intensified his passion, which assuming various secret forms within him, at times assumed that of cynic disdain—disdain of innocence. To be nothing more than innocent! Yet in an aesthetic way he saw the charm of it, the courageous free-and-easy temper of it, and fain would have shared it, but he despaired of it.

With no power to annul the elemental evil in him, though readily enough he could hide it; apprehending the good, but powerless to be it; a nature like Claggart's surcharged with energy as such natures almost invariably are, what recourse is left to it but to recoil upon itself and like the scorpion for which the Creator alone is responsible, act out to the end the part allotted it.

## 14

Passion, and passion in its profoundest, is not a thing demanding a palatial stage whereon to play its part. Down among the groundlings, among the beggars and rakers of the garbage, profound passion is enacted. And the circumstances that provoke it, however trivial or mean, are no measure of its power. In the present instance the stage is a scrubbed gun-deck, and one of the external provocations a man-of-war's-man's spilled soup.

Now when the Master-at-arms noticed whence came that greasy fluid streaming before his feet, he must have taken it—to some extent wilfully, perhaps—not for the mere accident it assuredly was, but for the sly escape of a spontaneous feeling on Billy's part more or less answering to the antipathy on his own. In effect a foolish demonstration he must have thought, and very harmless, like the futile kick of a heifer, which yet were the heifer a shod stallion would not be so harmless. Even so was it that into the gall of Claggart's envy he infused the vitriol of his contempt. But the incident confirmed to him certain tell-tale reports purveyed to his ear by *Squeak*, one of his more cunning Corporals, a grizzled little man, so nicknamed by the sailors on account of his squeaky voice, and sharp visage ferreting about the dark corners of the lower decks after interlopers, satirically suggesting to them the idea of a rat in a cellar.

From his Chief's employing him as an implicit tool in laying little traps for the worriment of the Foretopman—for it was from the Master-at-arms that the petty persecutions heretofore adverted to had proceeded—the corporal having naturally enough concluded that his master could have no love for the sailor, made it his business, faithful understrapper that he was, to foment the ill blood by perverting to his Chief certain innocent frolics of the good natured Foretopman, besides inventing for his mouth sundry contumelious epithets he claimed to have overheard him let

This incident sorely puzzled Billy Budd. It was an entirely new experience; the first time in his life that he had ever been personally approached in underhand intriguing fashion. Prior to this encounter he had known nothing of the afterguardsman, the two men being stationed wide apart, one forward and aloft during his watch, the other on deck and aft.

What could it mean? And could they really be guineas, those two glittering objects the interloper had held up to his (Billy's) eyes? Where could the fellow get guineas? Why even buttons, sparc buttons, are not so plentiful at sea. The more he turned the matter over, the more he was non-plussed, and made uneasy and discomforted. In his disgustful recoil from an overture which though he but ill comprehended he instinctively knew must involve evil of some sort, Billy Budd was like a young horse fresh from the pasture suddenly inhaling a vile whiff from some chemical factory and by repeated snortings tries to get it out of his nostrils and lungs. This frame of mind barred all desire of holding further parley with the fellow, even were it but for the purpose of gaining some enlightenment as to his design in approaching him. And yet he was not without natural curiosity to see how such a visitor in the dark would look in broad day.

He espied him the following afternoon in his first dog-watch below, one of the smokers on that forward part of the upper gun deck allotted to the pipe. He recognized him by his general cut and build, more than by his round freckled face and glassy eyes of pale blue, veiled with lashes all but white. And yet Billy was a bit uncertain whether indeed it were he—yonder chap about his own age, chatting and laughing in free-hearted way, leaning against a gun; a genial young fellow enough to look at, and something of a rattle-brain, to all appearance. Rather chubby too for a sailor even an afterguardsman. In short the last man in the world, one would think, to be overburdened with thoughts, especially those perilous thoughts that must needs belong to a conspirator in any serious project, or even to the underling of such a conspirator.

Although Billy was not aware of it, the fellow, with a sidelong watchful glance had perceived Billy first, and then noting that Billy was looking at him, thereupon nodded a familiar sort of friendly recognition as to an old acquaintance, without interrupting the talk he was engaged in with the group of smokers. A day or two afterwards chancing in the evening promenade on a gun deck, to pass Billy, he offered a flying word of good-fellowship as it were, which by its unexpectedness, and equivocallness under the circumstances so embarrassed Billy that he knew not how to respond to it, and let it go unnoticed.

Billy was now left more at a loss than before. The ineffectual speculations into which he was led were so disturbingly alien to him that he did his best to smother them. It never entered his mind that here was a matter which from its extreme questionableness, it was his duty as a loyal blue-jacket to report in the proper quarter. And, probably, had such a step been suggested to him, he would have been deterred from taking it by the thought, one of novice-magnanimity, that it would savor overmuch of the dirty work of a tell-tale. He kept the thing to himself. Yet upon one occasion, he could not forbear a little disburthening himself to the old Dansker, tempted thereto perhaps by the influence of a balmy night when the ship lay becalmed; the twain, silent for the most part, sitting together on deck, their heads propped against the bulwarks. But it was only a partial and anonymous account that Billy gave, the unfounded scruples above referred to preventing full disclosure to anybody.

Upon hearing Billy's version, the sage Dansker seemed to divine more than he was told; and after a little meditation during which his wrinkles were pursed as into a point, quite effacing for the time that quizzing expression his face sometimes wore,—  
"Didn't I say so, Baby Budd?"

"Say what?" demanded Billy.

"Why, *Jemmy Legs* is down on you."

"And what" rejoined Billy in amazement, "has *Jemmy Legs* to do with that cracked afterguardsman?"

"Ho, it was an afterguardsman, then. A cat's-paw, a cat's-paw!" And with that exclamation, which, whether it had reference to a light puff of air just then coming over the calm sea, or subtler relation to the afterguardsman, there is no telling, the old Merlin gave a twisting wrench with his black teeth at his plug of tobacco, vouchsafing no reply to Billy's impetuous question, though now repeated, for it was his wont to relapse into grim silence when interrogated in skeptical sort as to any of his sententious oracles, not always very clear ones, rather partaking of that obscurity which invests most Delphic deliverances from any quarter. Long experience had very likely brought this old man to that bitter prudence which never interferes in aught and never gives advice.

## 17

Yes, despite the Dansker's pithy insistence as to the Master-at-arms being at the bottom of these strange experiences of Billy on board the *Indomitable*, the young sailor was ready to ascribe them to almost anybody but the man who, to use Billy's own expression, "always had a pleasant word for him." This is to be wondered at. Yet not so much to be wondered at. In certain matters, some sailors even in mature life remain unsophisticated enough. But a young seafarer of the disposition of our athletic Foretopman is much of a child-man. And yet a child's utter innocence is but its blank ignorance, and the innocence more or less wanes as intelligence waxes. But in Billy Budd intelligence, such as it was, had advanced, while yet his simplemindedness remained for the most part unaffected. Experience is a teacher indeed; yet did Billy's years make his experience small. Besides, he had none of that intuitive knowledge of the bad which in natures not good or incompletely so foreruns experience, and therefore may pertain, as in some instances it too clearly does pertain, even to youth.

And what could Billy know of man except of man as a mere sailor? And the old-fashioned sailor, the veritable man-before-the-mast, the sailor from boyhood up, he, though indeed of the same species as a landsman, is in some respects singularly distinct from him. The sailor is frankness, the landsman is finesse. Life is not a game with the sailor, demanding the long head; no intricate game of chess where few moves are made in straightforwardness, and ends are attained by indirection; an oblique, tedious, barren game hardly worth that poor candle burnt out in playing it.

Yes, as a class, sailors are in character a juvenile race. Even their deviations are marked by juvenility. And this more especially holding true with the sailors of Billy's time. Then, too, certain things which apply to all sailors, do more pointedly operate here and there, upon the junior one. Every sailor, too is accustomed to obey orders without debating them; his life afloat is externally ruled for him; he is not brought into that promiscuous commerce with mankind where unobstructed free agency on equal terms—equal superficially, at least—soon teaches one that unless upon occasion he exercise a distrust keen in proportion to the fairness of the appearance, some foul

turn may be served him. A ruled undemonstrative distrustfulness is so habitual, not with business-men so much, as with men who know their kind in less shallow relations than business, namely, certain men-of-the-world, that they come at last to employ it all but unconsciously; and some of them would very likely feel real surprise at being charged with it as one of their general characteristics.

## 18

But after the little matter at the mess Billy Budd no more found himself in strange trouble at times about his hammock or his clothes-bag or what not. While, as to that smile that occasionally sunned him, and the pleasant passing word, these were if not more frequent, yet if anything more pronounced than before.

But for all that, there were certain other demonstrations now. When Claggart's unobserved glance happened to light on belted Billy rolling along the upper gun-deck in the leisure of the second dog-watch exchanging passing broadsides of fun with other young promenaders in the crowd; that glance would follow the cheerful sea-Hyperion with a settled meditative and melancholy expression, his eyes strangely suffused with incipient feverish tears. Then would Claggart look like the man of sorrows. Yes, and sometimes the melancholy expression would have in it a touch of soft yearning, as if Claggart could even have loved Billy but for fate and ban. But this was an evanescence, and quickly repented of, as it were, by an immitigable look, pinching and shrivelling the visage into the momentary semblance of a wrinkled walnut. But sometimes catching sight in advance of the Foretopman coming in his direction, he would, upon their nearing, step aside a little to let him pass, dwelling upon Billy for the moment with the glittering dental satire of a Guise. But upon any abrupt unforeseen encounter a red light would flash forth from his eye like a spark from an anvil in a dusk smithy. That quick fierce light was a strange one, darted from orbs which in repose were of a color nearest approaching a deeper violet, the softest of shades.

Though some of these caprices of the pit could not but be observed by their object, yet were they beyond the construing of such a nature. And the *thews* of Billy were hardly compatible with that sort of sensitive spiritual organisation which in some cases instinctively conveys to ignorant innocence an admonition of the proximity of the malign. He thought the Master-at-arms acted in a manner rather queer at times. That was all. But the occasional frank air and pleasant word went for what they purported to be, the young sailor never having heard as yet of the "too fair-spoken man."

Had the Foretopman been conscious of having done or said anything to provoke the ill will of the official, it would have been different with him, and his sight might have been purged if not sharpened. As it was, innocence was his blinder.

So was it with him in yet another matter. Two minor officers—the Armorer and Captain of the Hold, with whom he had never exchanged a word, his position in the ship not bringing him into contact with them—these men now for the first began to cast upon Billy when they chanced to encounter him, that peculiar glance which evidences that the man from whom it comes has been some way tampered with and to the prejudice of him upon whom the glance lights. Never did it occur to Billy as a thing to be noted or a thing suspicious, though he well knew the fact, that the Armorer and Captain of the Hold, with the ship's-yeoman, apothecary, and others of that grade, were by naval usage, messmates of the Master-at-arms men with ears convenient to his confidential tongue.

But the general popularity that our *Handsome Sailor's* manly forwardness upon occasion, and irresistible good nature indicating no mental superiority tending to excite an invidious feeling; this good will on the part of most of his shipmates made him the less to concern himself about such mute aspects toward him, as those whereto allusion has just been made, as far as he could not so fathom as to infer their whole import.

As to the afterguardsman, though Billy for reasons already given necessarily saw little of him, yet when the two did happen to meet, invariably came the fellow's off-hand cheerful recognition, sometimes accompanied by a passing pleasant word or two. Whatever that equivocal young person's original design may really have been, or the design of which he might have been the deputy, certain it was from his manner upon these occasions, that he had wholly dropped it.

It was as if his precocity of crookedness (and every vulgar villain is precocious) had for once deceived him, and the man he had sought to entrap as a simpleton had, through his very simplicity ignominiously baffled him.

But shrewd ones may opine that it was hardly possible for Billy to refrain from going up to the afterguardsman and bluntly demanding to know his purpose in the initial interview, so abruptly closed in the fore-chains. Shrewd ones may also think it but natural in Billy to set about sounding some of the other impressed men of the ship in order to discover what basis, if any, there was for the emissary's obscure suggestions as to plotting disaffection aboard. Yes, the shrewd may so think. But something more, or rather, something else than mere shrewdness is perhaps needful for the due understanding of such a character as Billy Budd's.

As to Claggart, the monomania in the man—if that indeed it were—as involuntarily disclosed by starts in the manifestations detailed, yet in general covered over by his self-contained and rational demeanor; this, like a subterranean fire was eating its way deeper and deeper in him. Something decisive must come of it.

## 19

After the mysterious interview in the fore-chains, the one so abruptly ended there by Billy, nothing especially germane to the story occurred until the events now about to be narrated.

Elsewhere it has been said that owing to the lack of frigates (of course better sailers than line-of-battle ships) in the English squadron up the Straits at that period, the *Indomitable* was occasionally employed not only as an available substitute for a scout, but at times on detached service of more important kind. This was not alone because of her sailing qualities, not common in a ship of her rate, but quite as much, probably, that the character of her commander, it was thought, specially adapted him for any duty where under unforeseen difficulties a prompt initiative might have to be taken in some matter demanding knowledge and ability in addition to those qualities implied in good seamanship. It was on an expedition of the latter sort, a somewhat distant one, and when the *Indomitable* was almost at her furthest remove from the fleet that in the latter part of an afternoon-watch she unexpectedly came in sight of a ship of the enemy. It proved to be a frigate. The latter, perceiving through the glass that the weight of men and metal would be heavily against her, invoking her light heels crowded sail to get away. After a chase urged almost against hope and lasting until about the middle of the first dog-watch, she signally succeeded in effecting her escape.

Not long after the pursuit had been given up, and ere the excitement incident thereto had altogether waned away, the Master-at-arms ascending from his cavernous sphere made his appearance cap in hand by the mainmast respectfully waiting the notice of Captain Vere then solitary walking the weather-side of the quarter-deck, doubtless somewhat chafed at the failure of the pursuit. The spot where Claggart stood was the place allotted to the men of lesser grades seeking some more particular interview either with the officer-of-the-deck or the Captain himself. But from the latter it was not often that a sailor or petty-officer of those days would seek a hearing; only some exceptional cause would, according to established custom, have warranted that.

Presently, just as the Commander absorbed in his reflections was on the point of turning aft in his promenade, he became sensible of Claggart's presence, and saw the doffed cap held in deferential expectancy. Here be it said that Captain Vere's personal knowledge of this petty-officer had only begun at the time of the ship's last sailing from home, Claggart then for the first, in transfer from a ship detained for repairs, supplying on board the *Indomitable* the place of a previous Master-at-arms disabled and ashore.

No sooner did the Commander observe who it was that now deferentially stood awaiting his notice, than a peculiar expression came over him. It was not unlike that which uncontrollably will flit across the countenance of one at unawares encountering a person who though known to him indeed has hardly been long enough known for thorough knowledge, but something in whose aspect nevertheless now for the first provokes a vaguely repellent distaste. But coming to a stand, and resuming much of his wonted official manner, save that a sort of impatience lurked in the intonation of the opening word, he said, "Well? what is it, Master-at-arms?"

With the air of a subordinate grieved at the necessity of being a messenger of ill tidings, and while conscientiously determined to be frank, yet equally resolved upon shunning overstatement, Claggart at this invitation or rather summons to disburthen, spoke up. What he said, conveyed in the language of no uneducated man, was to the effect following if not altogether in these words, namely, that during the chase and preparations for the possible encounter he had seen enough to convince him that at least one sailor aboard was a dangerous character in a ship mustering some who not only had taken a guilty part in the late serious troubles, but others also who, like the man in question, had entered His Majesty's service under another form than enlistment.

At this point Captain Vere with some impatience interrupted him: "Be direct, man; say impressed men."

Claggart made a gesture of subservience, and proceeded.

Quite lately whereof he (Claggart) had begun to suspect that on the gun-decks some sort of movement prompted by the sailor in question was covertly going on, but he had not thought himself warranted in reporting the suspicion so long as it remained indistinct. But from what he had that afternoon observed in the man referred to the suspicion of something clandestine going on had advanced to a point less removed from certainty. He deeply felt, he added, the serious responsibility assumed in making a report involving such possible consequences to the individual mainly concerned, besides tending to augment those natural anxieties which every naval commander must feel in view of extraordinary outbreaks so recent as those which, he sorrowfully said it, it needed not to name.

Now at the first broaching of the matter Captain Vere taken by surprise could not wholly dissemble his disquietude. But as Claggart went on, the former's aspect changed



into restiveness under something in a witness' manner in giving his testimony. However, he refrained from interrupting him. And Claggart, continuing, concluded with this:

"God forbid, your honor, that the *Indomitable's* should be the experience of the——"

"Never mind that!" here peremptorily broke in the superior, his face altering with anger, instinctively divining the ship that the other was about to name, one in which the Nore Mutiny had assumed a singularly tragical character that for a time jeopardized the life of its commander. Under the circumstances he was indignant at the purposed allusion. When the commissioned officers themselves were on all occasions very heedful how they referred to the recent events, for a petty-officer unnecessarily to allude to them in the presence of his Captain, this struck him as a most immodest presumption. Besides, to his quick sense of self-respect, it even looked under the circumstances something like an attempt to alarm him. Nor at first was he without some surprise that one who so far as he had hitherto come under his notice had shown considerable tact in his function should in this particular evince such lack of it.

But these thoughts and kindred dubious ones flitting across his mind were suddenly replaced by an intuitional surmise which though as yet obscure in form served practically to affect his reception of the ill tidings. Certain it is, that long versed in everything pertaining to the complicated gun-deck life, which like every other form of life has its secret mines and dubious side, the side popularly disclaimed, Captain Vere did not permit himself to be unduly disturbed by the general tenor of his subordinate's report. Furthermore, if in view of recent events prompt action should be taken at the first palpable sign of recurring insubordination, for all that, not judicious would it be, he thought, to keep the idea of lingering disaffection alive by undue forwardness in crediting an informer even if his own subordinate and charged among other things with police surveillance of the crew. This feeling would not perhaps have so prevailed with him were it not that upon a prior occasion the patriotic zeal officially evinced by Claggart had somewhat irritated him as appearing rather supersensible and strained. Furthermore, something even in the official's self-possessed and somewhat ostentatious manner in making his specifications strangely reminded him of a bandsman, a perjurious witness in a capital case before a court-martial ashore of which when a lieutenant he (Captain Vere) had been a member.

Now the peremptory check given to Claggart in the matter of the arrested allusion was quickly followed up by this: "You say that there is at least one dangerous man aboard. Name him."

"William Budd. A foretopman, your honor——"

"William Budd" repeated Captain Vere with unfeigned astonishment; "and mean you the man that Lieutenant Ratcliffe took from the merchantman not very long ago—the young fellow who seems to be so popular with the men—Billy, the Handsome Sailor, as they call him?"

"The same, your honor; but for all his youth and good looks, a deep one. Not for nothing does he insinuate himself into the good will of his shipmates, since at the least all hands will at a pinch say a good word for him at all hazards. Did Lieutenant Ratcliffe happen to tell your honor of that adroit fling of Budd's, jumping up in the cutter's bow under the merchantman's stern when he was being taken off? It is even masqued by that sort of good humored air that at heart he resents his impressment. You have but noted his fair cheek. A man-trap may be under his ruddy-tipped daisies."

Now the *Handsome Sailor* as a signal figure among the crew had naturally enough attracted the Captain's attention from the first. Though in general not very demonstrative to his officers, he had congratulated Lieutenant Ratcliffe upon his good fortune in lighting on such a fine specimen of the genus homo, who in the nude might have posed for a statue of young Adam before the Fall.

As to Billy's adieu to the ship *Rights-of-Man*, which the boarding lieutenant had indeed reported to him, but in a deferential way more as a good story than aught else, Captain Vere, though mistakenly understanding it as a satiric sally, had but thought so much the better of the impressed man for it; as a military sailor, admiring the spirit that could take an arbitrary enlistment so merrily and sensibly. The Foretopman's conduct, too, so far as it had fallen under the Captain's notice had confirmed the first happy augury, while the new recruit's qualities as a *sailor-man* seemed to be such that he had thought of recommending him to the executive officer for promotion to a place that would more frequently bring him under his own observation, namely, the captaincy of the mizzen-top, replacing there in the starboard watch a man not so young whom partly for that reason he deemed less fitted for the post. Be it parenthesized here that since the mizzen-top-men have not to handle such breadths of heavy canvas as the lower sails on the mainmast and foremast, a young man if of the right stuff not only seems best adapted to duty there, but in fact is generally selected for the captaincy of that top, and the company under him are light hands and often but striplings. In sum, Captain Vere had from the beginning deemed Billy Budd to be what in the naval parlance of the time was called a "*King's bargain*," that is to say, for His Britannic Majesty's navy a capital investment at small outlay or none at all.

After a brief pause during which the reminiscences above mentioned passed vividly through his mind and he weighed the import of Claggart's last suggestion conveyed in the phrase "pitfall under the clover," and the more he weighed it the less reliance he felt in the informer's good faith, suddenly he turned upon him and in a low voice: "Do you come to me, Master-at-arms, with so foggy a tale? As to Budd, cite me an act or spoken word of his confirmatory of what you in general charge against him. Stay," drawing nearer to him, "heed what you speak. Just now, and in a case like this, there is a yard-arm-end for the false-witness."

"Ah, your honor!" sighed Claggart mildly shaking his shapely head as in sad deprecation of such unmerited severity of tone. Then, bristling—erecting himself as in virtuous self-assertion, he circumstantially alleged certain words and acts which collectively, if credited, led to presumptions mortally inculpatory Budd. And for some of these averments, he added, substantiating proof was not far.

With gray eyes impatient and distrustful essaying to fathom to the bottom Claggart's calm violet ones, Captain Vere again heard him out; then for the moment stood ruminating. The mood he evinced, Claggart—himself for the time liberated from the other's scrutiny—steadily regarded with a look difficult to render,—a look curious of the operation of his tactics, a look such as might have been that of the spokesman of the envious children of Jacob deceptively imposing upon the troubled patriarch the blood-dyed coat of young Joseph.

Though something exceptional in the moral quality of Captain Vere made him, in earnest encounter with a fellow-man, a veritable touch-stone of that man's essential nature, yet now as to Claggart and what was really going on in him his feeling partook less of intuitional conviction than of strong suspicion clogged by strange dubieties. The perplexity he evinced proceeded less from aught touching the man informed against—as Claggart doubtless opined—than from considerations how best to act in

regard to the informer. At first indeed he was naturally for summoning that substantiation of his allegations which Claggart said was at hand. But such a proceeding would result in the matter at once getting abroad, which in the present stage of it, he thought, might undesirably affect the ship's company. If Claggart was a false witness,—that closed the affair. And therefore before trying the accusation, he would first practically test the accuser; and he thought this could be done in a quiet undemonstrative way.

The measure he determined upon involved a shifting of the scene, a transfer to a place less exposed to observation than the broad quarter-deck. For although the few gun-room officers there at the time had, in due observance of naval etiquette, withdrawn to leeward the moment Captain Vere had begun his promenade on the deck's weather-side; and though during the colloquy with Claggart they of course ventured not to diminish the distance; and though throughout the interview Captain Vere's voice was far from high, and Claggart's silvery and low; and the wind in the cordage and the wash of the sea helped the more to put them beyond ear-shot; nevertheless, the interview's continuance already had attracted observation from some topmen aloft and other sailors in the waist or further forward.

Having determined upon his measures, Captain Vere forthwith took action. Abruptly turning to Claggart he asked "Master-at-arms, is it now Budd's watch aloft?"

"No, your honor." Whereupon, "Mr. Wilkes!" summoning the nearest midshipman, "tell Albert to come to me." Albert was the Captain's hammock-boy, a sort of sea-valet in whose direction and fidelity his master had much confidence. The lad appeared. "You know Budd the Foretopman?"

"I do, Sir."

"Go find him. It is his watch off. Manage to tell him out of earshot that he is wanted aft. Contrive it that he speaks to nobody. Keep him in talk yourself. And not till you get well aft here, not till then let him know that the place where he is wanted is my cabin. You understand. Go.—Master-at-arms, show yourself on the decks below, and when you think it time for Albert to be coming with his man, stand by quietly to follow the sailor in."

20

Now when the Foretopman found himself closeted there, as it were, in the cabin with the Captain and Claggart, he was surprised enough. But it was a surprise unaccompanied by apprehension or distrust. To an immature nature essentially honest and humane, forewarning intimations of subtler danger from one's kind come tardily if at all. The only thing that took shape in the young sailor's mind was this: Yes, the Captain, I have always thought, looks kindly upon me. Wonder if he's going to make me his coxswain. I should like that. And maybe now he is going to ask the Master-at-arms about me.

"Shut the door there, sentry," said the Commander; "stand without, and let nobody come in.—Now, Master-at-arms, tell this man to his face what you told of him to me;" and stood prepared to scrutinize the mutually confronting visages.

With the measured step and calm collected air of an asylum-physician approaching in the public hall some patient beginning to show indications of a coming paroxysm, Claggart deliberately advanced within short range of Billy, and mesmerically looking him in the eye, briefly recapitulated the accusation.

Not at first did Billy take it in. When he did, the rose-tan of his cheek looked struck as by white leprosy. He stood like one impaled and gagged. Meanwhile the accuser's eyes removing not as yet from the blue dilated ones, underwent a phenom-

enal change, their wonted rich violet color blurring into a muddy purple. Those lights of human intelligence losing human expression, gelidly protruding like the alien eyes of certain uncatalogued creatures of the deep. The first mesmeric glance was one of serpent fascination; the last was as the hungry lurch of the torpedo-fish.

"Speak, man!" said Captain Vere to the transfixed one, struck by his aspect even more than by Claggart's, "Speak! defend yourself." Which appeal caused but a strange dumb gesturing and gurgling in Billy; amazement at such an accusation so suddenly sprung on inexperienced nonage; this, and, it may be, horror of the accuser, serving to bring out his lurking defect and in this instance for the time intensifying it into a convulsed tongue-tie; while the intent head and entire form straining forward in an agony of ineffectual eagerness to obey the injunction to speak and defend himself, gave an expression to the face like that of a condemned Vestal priestess in the moment of being buried alive, and in the first struggle against suffocation.

Though at the time Captain Vere was quite ignorant of Billy's liability to vocal impediment, he now immediately divined it, since vividly Billy's aspect recalled to him that of a bright young schoolmate of his whom he had once seen struck by much the same startling impotence in the act of eagerly rising in the class to be foremost in response to a testing question put to it by the master. Going close up to the young sailor, and laying a soothing hand on his shoulder, he said: "There is no hurry, my boy. Take your time, take your time." Contrary to the effect intended, these words so fatherly in tone, doubtless touching Billy's heart to the quick, prompted yet more violent efforts at utterance—efforts soon ending for the time in confirming the paralysis, and bringing to his face an expression which was as a crucifixion to behold. The next instant, quick as the flame from a discharged cannon at night, his right arm shot out, and Claggart dropped to the deck. Whether intentionally or but owing to the young athlete's superior height, the blow had taken effect full upon the forehead, so shapely and intellectual-looking a feature in the Master-at-arms; so that the body fell over lengthwise, like a heavy plank tilted from erectness. A gasp or two, and he lay motionless.

"Fated boy," breathed Captain Vere in tone so low as to be almost a whisper, "what have you done! But here, help me."

The twain raised the felled one from the loins up into a sitting position. The spare form flexibly acquiesced, but inertly. It was like handling a dead snake. They lowered it back. Regaining erectness Captain Vere with one hand covering his face stood to all appearance as impassive as the object at his feet. Was he absorbed in taking in all the bearings of the event and what was best not only now at once to be done, but also in the sequel? Slowly he uncovered his face; and the effect was as if the moon emerging from eclipse should reappear with quite another aspect than that which had gone into hiding. The father in him, manifested towards Billy thus far in the scene, was replaced by the military disciplinarian. In his official tone he bade the Foretopman retire to a state-room aft (pointing it out) and there remain till thence summoned. This order Billy in silence mechanically obeyed. Then going to the cabin-door where it opened on the quarter-deck, Captain Vere said to the sentry without, "Tell somebody to send Albert here." When the lad appeared his master so contrived it that he should not catch sight of the prone one "Albert," he said to him, "tell the Surgeon I wish to see him. You need not come back till called."

When the Surgeon entered—a self-poised character of that grave sense and experience that hardly anything could take him aback,—Captain Vere advanced to meet him, thus unconsciously intercepting his view of Claggart and, interrupting the other's

wonted ceremonious salutation, said, "Nay, tell me how it is with yonder man," directing his attention to the prostrate one.

The Surgeon looked, and for all his self-command, somewhat started at the abrupt revelation. On Claggart's always pallid complexion, thick black blood was now oozing from nostril and ear. To the gazer's professional eye it was unmistakably no living man that he saw.

"Is it so then?" said Captain Vere intently watching him. "I thought it. But verify it." Whereupon the customary tests confirmed the Surgeon's first glance, who now looking up in unfeigned concern, cast a look of intense inquisitiveness upon his superior. But Captain Vere, with one hand to his brow, was standing motionless. Suddenly, catching the Surgeon's arm convulsively, he exclaimed, pointing down to the body—"It is the divine judgment on Ananias! Look!"

Disturbed by the excited manner he had never before observed in the *Indomitable's* Captain, and as yet wholly ignorant of the affair, the prudent Surgeon nevertheless held his peace, only again looking an earnest interrogation as to what it was that had resulted in such a tragedy.

But Captain Vere was now again motionless standing absorbed in thought. But again starting, he vehemently exclaimed—"Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!"

At these passionate interjections, mere incoherences to the listener as yet unapprised of the antecedents, the Surgeon was profoundly discomposed. But now as recollecting himself, Captain Vere in less passionate tone briefly related the circumstances leading up to the event.

"But come; we must despatch" he added. "Help me to remove him (meaning the body) to yonder compartment," designating one opposite that where the Foretopman remained immured. Anew disturbed by a request that as implying a desire for secrecy, seemed unaccountably strange to him, there was nothing for the subordinate to do but comply.

"Go now" said Captain Vere with something of his wonted manner—"Go now. I shall presently call a drum-head court. Tell the lieutenants what has happened, and tell Mr. Mordant," meaning the captain of marines, "and charge them to keep the matter to themselves."

## 21

Full of disquietude and misgiving the Surgeon left the cabin. Was Captain Vere suddenly affected in his mind, or was it but a transient excitement, brought about by so strange and extraordinary a happening? As to the drum-head court, it struck the Surgeon as impolitic, if nothing more. The thing to do, he thought, was to place Billy Budd in confinement and in a way dictated by usage, and postpone further action in so extraordinary a case, to such time as they should rejoin the squadron, and then refer it to the Admiral. He recalled the unwonted agitation of Captain Vere and his excited exclamations so at variance with his normal manner. Was he unhinged? But assuming that he is, it is not so susceptible of proof. What then can he do? No more trying situation is conceivable than that of an officer subordinate under a Captain whom he suspects to be, not mad indeed, but yet not quite unaffected in his intellect. To argue his order to him would be insolence. To resist him would be mutiny.

In obedience to Captain Vere he communicated what had happened to the lieutenants and captain of marines; saying nothing as to the Captain's state. They fully

shared his own surprise and concern. Like him too they seemed to think that such a matter should be referred to the Admiral.

## 22

Who in the rainbow can show the line where the violet tint ends and the orange tint begins? Distinctly we see the difference of the colors, but when exactly does the one first blindingly enter into the other? So with sanity and insanity. In pronounced cases there is no question about them. But in some supposed cases, in various degrees supposedly less pronounced, to draw the exact line of demarkation few will undertake though for a fee some professional experts will. There is nothing namable but that some men will undertake to do it for pay.

Whether Captain Vere, as the Surgeon professionally and privately surmised, was really the sudden victim of any degree of aberration, one must determine for himself by such light as this narrative may afford.

That the unhappy event which has been narrated could not have happened at a worse juncture was but too true. For it was close on the heel of the suppressed insurrections, an aftertime very critical to naval authority, demanding from every English sea-commander two qualities not readily interfusible—prudence and rigor. Moreover there was something crucial in the case.

In the jugglery of circumstances preceding and attending the event on board the *Indomitable* and in the light of that martial code whereby it was formally to be judged, innocence and guilt personified in Claggart and Budd in effect changed places. In a legal view the apparent victim of the tragedy was he who had sought to victimize a man blameless; and the indisputable deed of the later, navally regarded, constituted the most heinous of military crimes. Yet more. The essential right and wrong involved in the matter, the clearer that might be, so much the worse for the responsibility of a loyal sea-commander inasmuch as he was not authorized to determine the matter on that primitive basis.

Small wonder then that the *Indomitable's* Captain though in general a man of rapid decision, felt that circumspectness not less than promptitude was necessary. Until he could decide upon his course, and in each detail; and not only so, but until the concluding measure was upon the point of being enacted, he deemed it advisable, in view of all the circumstances to guard as much as possible against publicity. Here he may or may not have erred. Certain it is however that subsequently in the confidential talk of more than one or two gun-rooms and cabins he was not a little criticized by some officers, a fact imputed by his friends and vehemently by his cousin Jack Denton to professional jealousy of *Starry Vere*. Some imaginative ground for invidious comment there was. The maintenance of secrecy in the matter, the confining all knowledge of it for a time to the place where the homicide occurred, the quarter-deck cabin; in these particulars lurked some resemblance to the policy adopted in those tragedies of the palace which have occurred more than once in the capital founded by Peter the Barbarian.

The case indeed was such that fain would the *Indomitable's* Captain have deferred taking any action whatever respecting it further than to keep the Foretopman a close prisoner till the ship rejoined the squadron and then submitting the matter to the judgment of his Admiral.

But a true military officer is in one particular like a true monk. Not with more of self-abnegation will the latter keep his vows of monastic obedience than the former his vows of allegiance to martial duty.

Feeling that unless quick action were taken on it, the deed of the Foretopman, so soon as it should be known on the gun-decks would tend to awaken any slumbering embers of the Nore among the crew, a sense of the urgency of the case overruled in Captain Vere every other consideration. But though a conscientious disciplinarian he was no lover of authority for mere authority's sake. Very far was he from embracing opportunities for monopolizing to himself the perils of moral responsibility, none at least that could properly be referred to an official superior or shared with him by his official equals or even subordinates. So thinking, he was glad it would not be at variance with usage to turn the matter over to a summary court of his own officers, reserving to himself, as the one on whom the ultimate accountability would rest, the right of maintaining a supervision of it, or formally or informally interposing at need. Accordingly a drum-head court was summarily convened, he electing the individuals composing it, the First Lieutenant, the Captain of marines, and the Sailing Master.

In associating an officer of marines with the sea-lieutenants in a case having to do with a sailor the Commander perhaps deviated from general custom. He was prompted thereto by the circumstance that he took that soldier to be a judicious person, thoughtful, and not altogether incapable of grappling with a difficult case unprecedented in his prior experience. Yet even as to him he was not without some latent misgiving, for withal he was an extremely good-natured man, an enjoyer of his dinner, a sound sleeper, and inclined to obesity. A man who though he would always maintain his manhood in battle might not prove altogether reliable in a moral dilemma involving aught of the tragic. As to the First Lieutenant and the Sailing Master, Captain Vere could not but be aware that though honest natures, of approved gallantry upon occasion, their intelligence was mostly confined to the matter of active seamanship and the fighting demands of their profession. The court was held in the same cabin where the unfortunate affair had taken place. This cabin, the Commander's, embraced the entire area under the poop-deck. Aft, and on either side was a small stateroom the one room temporarily a jail and the other a dead-house and a yet smaller compartment leaving a space between, expanding forward into a goodly oblong of length coinciding with the ship's beam. A skylight of moderate dimension was overhead and at each end of the oblong space were two sashed port-hole windows easily convertible back into embrasures for short carronades.

All being quickly in readiness, Billy Budd was arraigned, Captain Vere necessarily appearing as the sole witness in the case, and as such temporarily sinking his rank, though singularly maintaining it in a matter apparently trivial, namely, that he testified from the ship's weather-side with that object having caused the court to sit on the lee-side. Concisely he narrated all that had led up to the catastrophe, omitting nothing in Claggart's accusation and deposing as to the manner in which the prisoner had received it. At this testimony the three officers glanced with no little surprise at Billy Budd, the last man they would have suspected either of the mutinous design alleged by Claggart or the undeniable deed he himself had done.

The First Lieutenant, taking judicial primacy and turning toward the prisoner, said, "Captain Vere has spoken. Is it or is it not as Captain Vere says?" In response came syllables not so much impeded in the utterance as might have been anticipated. They were these: "Captain Vere tells the truth. It is just as Captain Vere says, but it is not as the Master-at-arms said. I have eaten the King's bread and I am true to the King."

"I believe you, my man," said the witness his voice indicating a suppressed emotion not otherwise betrayed.

"God will bless you for that, Your Honor!" not without stammering said Billy, and all but broke down. But immediately was recalled to self-control by another question, to which with the same emotional difficulty of utterance he said "No, there was no malice between us. I never bore malice against the Master-at-arms. I am sorry that he is dead. I did not mean to kill him. Could I have used my tongue I would not have struck him. But he foully lied to my face and in presence of my Captain, and I had to say something, and I could only say it with a blow, God help me!"

In the impulsive above-board manner of the frank one the court saw confirmed all that was implied in words that just previously had perplexed them, coming as they did from the testifier to the tragedy and promptly following Billy's impassioned disclaimer of mutinous intent—Captain Vere's words, "I believe you, my man."

Next it was asked of him whether he knew of or suspected aught savoring of incipient trouble (meaning mutiny, though the explicit term was avoided) going on in any section of the ship's company.

The reply lingered. This was naturally imputed by the court to the same vocal embarrassment which had retarded or obstructed previous answers. But in main it was otherwise here; the question immediately recalling to Billy's mind the interview with the afterguardsman in the fore-chains. But an innate repugnance to playing a part at all approaching that of an informer against one's own shipmates—the same erring sense of uninstructed honor which had stood in the way of his reporting the matter at the time though as a loyal man-of-war-man it was incumbent on him and failure so to do, if charged against him and proven, would have subjected him to the heaviest of penalties; this, with the blind feeling now his, that nothing really was being hatched, prevailed with him. When the answer came it was a negative.

"One question more," said the officer of marines now first speaking and with a troubled earnestness, "You tell us that what the Master-at-arms said against you was a lie. Now why should he have so lied, so maliciously lied, since you declare there was no malice between you?"

At that question unintentionally touching on a spiritual sphere wholly obscure to Billy's thoughts, he was nonplussed, evincing a confusion indeed that some observers, such as can readily be imagined, would have construed into involuntary evidence of hidden guilt. Nevertheless he strove some way to answer, but all at once relinquished the vain endeavor, at the same time turning an appealing glance towards Captain Vere as deeming him his best helper and friend. Captain Vere, who had been seated for a time, rose to his feet, addressing the interrogator. "The question you put to him comes naturally enough. But how can he rightly answer it? or anybody else? unless indeed it be he who lies within there" designating the compartment where lay the corpse. "But the prone one there will not rise to our summons. In effect, though, as it seems to me, the point you make is hardly material. Quite aside from any conceivable motive actuating the Master-at-arms, and irrespective of the provocation to the blow, a martial court must needs in the present case confine its attention to the blow's consequence, which consequence justly is to be deemed not otherwise than as the striker's deed."

This utterance, the full significance of which it was not at all likely that Billy took in, nevertheless caused him to turn a wistful interrogative look toward the speaker, a look in its dumb expressiveness not unlike that which a dog of generous breed might turn upon his master seeking in his face some elucidation of a previous gesture ambiguous to the canine intelligence. Nor was the same utterance without marked effect upon the three officers, more especially the soldier. Couched in it seemed to them a



meaning unanticipated, involving a prejudgement on the speaker's part. It served to augment a mental disturbance previously evident enough.

The soldier once more spoke; in a tone of suggestive dubiety addressing at once his associates and Captain Vere: "Nobody is present—none of the ship's company, I mean—who might shed lateral light, if any is to be had, upon what remains mysterious in this matter."

"That is thoughtfully put" said Captain Vere; "I see your drift. Ay, there is a mystery; but, to use a Scriptural phrase, it is 'a mystery of iniquity,' a matter for psychologic theologians to discuss. But what has a military court to do with it? Not to add that for us any possible investigation of it is cut off by the lasting tongue-tie of—him—in yonder," again designating the mortuary state-room. "The prisoner's deed,—with that alone we have to do."

To this, and particularly the closing reiteration, the marine soldier knowing not how aptly to reply, sadly abstained from saying aught. The First Lieutenant who at the outset had not unnaturally assumed primacy in the court, now overrulingly instructed by a glance from Captain Vere, a glance more effective than words, resumed that primacy. Turning to the prisoner, "Budd," he said, and scarce in equable tones, "Budd, if you have aught further to say for yourself, say it now."

Upon this the young sailor turned another quick glance toward Captain Vere; then, as taking a hint from that aspect, a hint confirming his own instinct that silence was now best, replied to the Lieutenant, "I have said all, Sir."

The marine—the same who had been the sentinel without the cabin door at the time that the Foretopman, followed by the Master-at-arms, entered it—he, standing by the sailor throughout these judicial proceedings, was now directed to take him back to the after compartment originally assigned to the prisoner and his custodian. As the twain disappeared from view, the three officers as partially liberated from some inward constraint associated with Billy's mere presence, simultaneously stirred in their seats. They exchanged looks of troubled indecision, yet feeling that decide they must and without long delay. As for Captain Vere, he for the time stood unconsciously with his back toward them, apparently in one of his absent fits, gazing out from a sashed port-hole to windward upon the monotonous blank of the twilight sea. But the court's silence continuing, broken only at moments by brief consultations in low earnest tones, this seemed to assure him and encourage him. Turning, he to-and-fro paced the cabin athwart; in the returning ascent to windward, climbing the slant deck in the ship's lee roll; without knowing it symbolizing thus in his action a mind resolute to surmount difficulties even if against primitive instincts strong as the wind and the sea. Presently he came to a stand before the three. After scanning their faces he stood less as mustering his thoughts for expression, than as one inly deliberating how best to put them to well-meaning men not intellectually mature, men with whom it was necessary to demonstrate certain principles that were axioms to himself. Similar impatience as to talking is perhaps one reason that deters some minds from addressing any popular assemblies.

When speak he did, something both in the substance of what he said and his manner of saying it, showed the influence of unshared studies modifying and tempering the practical training of an active career. This, along with his phraseology now and then was suggestive of the grounds whereon rested that imputation of a certain pedantry socially alleged against him by certain naval men of wholly practical cast, captains who nevertheless would frankly concede that His Majesty's navy mustered no more efficient officer of their grade than *Starry Vere*.

What he said was to this effect: "Hitherto I have been but the witness, little more; and I should hardly think now to take another tone, that of your coadjutor, for the time, did I not perceive in you—at the crisis too—a troubled hesitancy, proceeding, I doubt not from the clash of military duty with moral scruple—scruple vitalized by compassion. For the compassion, how can I otherwise than share it. But, mindful of paramount obligations I strive against scruples that may tend to enervate decision. Not, gentlemen, that I hide from myself that the case is an exceptional one. Speculatively regarded, it well might be referred to a jury of casuists. But for us here acting not as casuists or moralists, it is a case practical, and under martial law practically to be dealt with.

"But your scruples: do they move as in a dusk? Challenge them. Make them advance and declare themselves. Come now: do they import something like this: If, mindless of palliating circumstances, we are bound to regard the death of the Master-at-arms as the prisoner's deed, then does that deed constitute a capital crime whereof the penalty is a mortal one? But in natural justice is nothing but the prisoner's overt act to be considered? How can we adjudge to summary and shameful death a fellow-creature innocent before God, and whom we feel to be so?—Does that state it aright? You sign sad assent. Well, I too feel that, the full force of that. It is Nature. But do these buttons that we wear attest that our allegiance is to Nature? No, to the King. Though the ocean, which is inviolate Nature primeval, though this be the element where we move and have our being as sailors, yet as the King's officers lies our duty in a sphere correspondingly natural? So little is that true, that in receiving our commissions we in the most important regards ceased to be natural free-agents. When war is declared, are we the commissioned fighters previously consulted? We fight at command. If our judgements approve the war, that is but coincidence. So in other particulars. So now. For suppose condemnation to follow these present proceedings. Would it be so much we ourselves that would condemn as it would be martial law operating through us? For that law and the rigour of it, we are not responsible. Our vowed responsibility is in this: That however pitilessly that law may operate, we nevertheless adhere to it and administer it.

"But the exceptional in the matter moves the hearts within you. Even so too is mine moved. But let not warm hearts betray heads that should be cool. Ashore in a criminal case will an upright judge allow himself, off the bench, to be waylaid by some tender kinswoman of the accused seeking to touch him with her tearful plea? Well the heart [which] here denotes the feminine in man is as that piteous woman, and hard though it be she must here be ruled out."

He paused, earnestly studying them for a moment; then resumed.

"But something in your aspect seems to urge that it is not solely the heart that moves in you, but also the conscience, the private conscience. But tell me whether or not, occupying the position we do, private conscience should not yield to that imperial one formulated in the code under which alone we officially proceed?"

Here the three men moved in their seats, less convinced than agitated by the course of an argument troubling but the more the spontaneous conflict within.

Perceiving which, the speaker paused for a moment; then abruptly changing his tone, went on.

"To steady us a bit, let us recur to the facts.—In war-time at sea a man-of-war's-man strikes his superior in grade, and the blow kills. Apart from its effect the blow itself is, according to the Articles of War, a capital crime. Furthermore—"

"Ay, Sir," emotionally broke in the officer of marines, "in one sense it was. But surely Budd purposed neither mutiny nor homicide."

"Surely not, my good man. And before a court less arbitrary and more merciful than a martial one, that plea would largely extenuate. At the last Assizes it shall acquit. But how here? We proceed under the law of the Mutiny Act. In feature no child can resemble his father more than that Act resembles in spirit the thing from which it derives—War. In His Majesty's service—in this ship indeed—there are Englishmen forced to fight for the King against their will. Against their conscience, for aught we know. Though as their fellow-creatures some of us may appreciate their position, yet as navy officers, what reck we of it? Still less recks the enemy. Our impressed men he would fain cut down in the same swath with our volunteers. As regards the enemy's naval conscripts, some of whom may even share our own abhorrence of the regicidal French Directory, it is the same on our side. War looks but to the frontage, the appearance. And the Mutiny Act, War's child, takes after the father. Budd's intent or non-intent is nothing to the purpose.

"But while, put to it by those anxieties in you which I can not but respect, I only repeat myself—while thus strangely we prolong proceedings that should be summary—the enemy may be sighted and an engagement result. We must do; and one of two things must we do—condemn or let go."

"Can we not convict and yet mitigate the penalty?" asked the junior Lieutenant here speaking, and falteringly, for the first.

"Lieutenant, were that clearly lawful for us under the circumstances consider the consequences of such clemency. The people" (meaning the ship's company) "have native-sense; most of them are familiar with our naval usage and tradition; and how would they take it? Even could you explain to them—which our official position forbids—they, long moulded by arbitrary discipline have not that kind of intelligent responsiveness that might qualify them to comprehend and discriminate. No, to the people the Foretopman's deed however it be worded in the announcement will be plain homicide committed in a flagrant act of mutiny. What penalty for that should follow, they know. But it does not follow. *Why?* they will ruminate. You know what sailors are. Will they not revert to the recent outbreak at the Nore? Ay. They know the well-founded alarm—the panic it struck throughout England. Your clement sentence they would account pusillanimous. They would think that we flinch, that we are afraid of them—afraid of practising a lawful rigour singularly demanded at this juncture lest it should provoke new troubles. What shame to us such a conjecture on their part, and how deadly to discipline. You see then, whither prompted by duty and the law I steadfastly drive. But I beseech you, my friends, do not take me amiss. I feel as you do for this unfortunate boy. But did he know our hearts, I take him to be of that generous nature that he would feel even for us on whom in this military necessity so heavy a compulsion is laid."

With that, crossing the deck he resumed his place by the sashed port-hole, tacitly leaving the three to come to a decision. On the cabin's opposite side the troubled court sat silent. Loyal lieges, plain and practical, though at bottom they dissented from some points Captain Vere had put to them, they were without the faculty, hardly had the inclination, to gainsay one whom they felt to be an earnest man, one too not less their superior in mind than in naval rank. But it is not improbable that even such of his words as were not without influence over them, less came home to them than his closing appeal to their instinct as sea-officers in the forethought he threw out as to the

practical consequences to discipline, considering the unconfirmed tone of the fleet at the time, should a man-of-war's-man's violent killing at sea of a superior in grade be allowed to pass for aught else than a capital crime demanding prompt infliction of the penalty.

Not unlikely they were brought to something more or less akin to that harassed frame of mind which in the year 1842 actuated the commander of the U.S. brig-of-war *Somers* to resolve, under the so-called Articles of War, Articles modelled upon the English Mutiny Act, to resolve upon the execution at sea of a midshipman and two petty-officers as mutineers designing the seizure of the brig. Which resolution was carried out though in a time of peace and within not many days' sail of home. An act vindicated by a naval court of inquiry subsequently convened ashore. History, and here cited without comment. True, the circumstances on board the *Somers* were different from those on board the *Indomitable*. But the urgency felt, well-warranted or otherwise, was much the same.

Says a writer whom few know, "Forty years after a battle it is easy for a non-combatant to reason about how it ought to have been fought. It is another thing personally and under fire to direct the fighting while involved in the obscuring smoke of it. Much so with respect to other emergencies involving considerations both practical and moral, and when it is imperative promptly to act. The greater the fog the more it imperils the steamer, and speed is put on though at the hazard of running somebody down. Little ween the snug card-players in the cabin of the responsibilities of the sleepless man on the bridge."

In brief, Billy Budd was formally convicted and sentenced to be hung at the yard-arm in the early morning-watch, it being now night. Otherwise, as is customary in such cases, the sentence would forthwith have been carried out. In war-time on the field or in the fleet, a mortal punishment decreed by a drum-head court—on the field sometimes decreed by but a nod from the General—follows without delay on the heel of conviction without appeal.

## 23

It was Captain Vere himself who of his own motion communicated the finding of the court to the prisoner; for that purpose going to the compartment where he was in custody and bidding the marine there to withdraw for the time.

Beyond the communication of the sentence what took place at this interview was never known. But in view of the character of the twain briefly closeted in that state-room, each radically sharing in the rarer qualities of our nature—so rare indeed as to be all but incredible to average minds however much cultivated—some conjectures may be ventured.

It would have been in consonance with the spirit of Captain Vere should he on this occasion have concealed nothing from the condemned one—should he indeed have frankly disclosed to him the part he himself had played in bringing about the decision, at the same time revealing his actuating motives. On Billy's side it is not improbable that such a confession would have been received in much the same spirit that prompted it. Not without a sort of joy indeed he might have appreciated the brave opinion of him implied in his Captain making such a confidant of him. Nor, as to the sentence itself could he have been insensible that it was imparted to him as to one not afraid to die. Even more may have been. Captain Vere in the end may have developed the passion sometimes latent under an exterior stoical or indifferent. He was old enough to have been Billy's father. The austere devotee of military duty letting himself melt

back into what remains primeval in our formalized humanity may in the end have caught Billy to his heart even as Abraham may have caught young Isaac on the brink of resolutely offering him up in obedience to the exacting behest. But there is no telling the sacrament, seldom if in any case revealed to the gadding world, wherever under circumstances at all akin to those here attempted to be set forth two of great Nature's nobler order embrace. There is privacy at the time, inviolable to the survivor, and holy oblivion, the sequel to each diviner magnanimity, providentially covers all at last.

The first to encounter Captain Vere in act of leaving the compartment was the senior Lieutenant. The face he beheld, for the moment one expressive of the agony of the strong, was to that officer, though a man of fifty, a startling revelation. That the condemned one suffered less than he who mainly had effected the condemnation was apparently indicated by the former's exclamation in the scene soon perforce to be touched upon.

## 24

Of a series of incidents within a brief term rapidly following each other, the adequate narration may take up a term less brief, especially if explanation or comment here and there seem requisite to the better understanding of such incidents. Between the entrance into the cabin of him who never left it alive, and him who when he did leave it left it as one condemned to die; between this and the closeted interview just given less than an hour and a half had elapsed. It was an interval long enough however to awaken speculations among no few of the ship's company as to what it was that could be detaining in the cabin the Master-at-arms and the sailor; for a rumor that both of them had been seen to enter it and neither of them had been seen to emerge, this rumor had got abroad upon the gun-decks and in the tops; the people of a great warship being in one respect like villagers taking microscopic note of every outward movement or non-movement going on. When therefore in weather not at all tempestuous all hands were called in the second dog-watch, a summons under such circumstances not usual in those hours, the crew were not wholly unprepared for some announcement extraordinary, one having connection too with the continued absence of the two men from their wonted haunts.

There was a moderate sea at the time; and the moon, newly risen and near to being at its full, silvered the white spar-deck wherever not blotted by the clear-cut shadows horizontally thrown of fixtures and moving men. On either side the quarter-deck the marine guard under arms was drawn up; and Captain Vere standing in his place surrounded by all the ward-room officers, addressed his men. In so doing his manner showed neither more nor less than that properly pertaining to his supreme position aboard his own ship. In clear terms and concise he told them what had taken place in the cabin; that the Master-at-arms was dead; that he who had killed him had been already tried by a summary court and condemned to death; and that the execution would take place in the early morning watch. The word *mutiny* was not named in what he said. He refrained too from making the occasion an opportunity for any preachment as to the maintenance of discipline, thinking perhaps that under existing circumstances in the Navy the consequence of violating discipline should be made to speak for itself.

Their captain's announcement was listened to by the throng of standing sailors in a dumbness like that of a seated congregation of believers in hell listening to the clergyman's announcement of his Calvinistic text.

At the close, however, a confused murmur went up. It began to wax. All but instantly, then, at a sign, it was pierced and suppressed by shrill whistles of the Boatswain and his Mates piping down one watch.

To be prepared for burial Claggart's body was delivered to certain petty-officers of his mess. And here, not to clog the sequel with lateral matters, it may be added that at a suitable hour, the Master-at-arms was committed to the sea with every funeral honor properly belonging to his naval grade.

In this proceeding as in every public one growing out of the tragedy strict adherence to usage was observed. Nor in any point could it have been at all deviated from, either with respect to Claggart or Billy Budd, without begetting undesirable speculations in the ship's company—sailors, and more particularly men-of-war's men, being of all men the greatest sticklers for usage.

For similar cause, all communication between Captain Vere and the condemned one ended with the closeted interview already given, the latter being now surrendered to the ordinary routine preliminary to the end. This transfer under guard from the Captain's quarters was effected without unusual precautions—at least no visible ones.

If possible not to let the men so much as surmise that their officers anticipate aught amiss from them is the tacit rule in a military ship. And the more that some sort of trouble should really be apprehended the more do the officers keep that apprehension to themselves; though not the less unostentatious vigilance may be augmented.

In the present instance the sentry placed over the prisoner had strict orders to let no one have communication with him but the Chaplain. And certain unobtrusive measures were taken absolutely to insure this point.

## 25

In a seventy-four of the old order the deck known as the upper gun-deck was the one covered over by the spar-deck which last though not without its armament was for the most part exposed to the weather. In general it was at all hours free from hammocks; those of the crew swinging on the lower gun-deck, and berth-deck, the latter being not only a dormitory but also the place for the stowing of the sailors' bags, and on both sides lined with the large chests or movable pantries of the many messes of the men.

On the starboard side of the *Indomitable's* upper gun-deck, behold Billy Budd under sentry lying prone in irons in one of the bays formed by the regular spacing of the guns comprising the batteries on either side. All these pieces were of the heavier calibre of that period. Mounted on lumbering wooden carriages they were hampered with cumbersome harness of breechen and strong side-tackles for running them out. Guns and carriages, together with the long rammers and shorter lintstocks lodged in loops overhead—all these, as customary, were painted black; and the heavy hempen breechens tarred to the same tint, wore the like livery of the undertakers. In contrast with the funereal hue of these surroundings the prone sailor's exterior apparel, white *jumper* and white duck trousers, each more or less soiled, dimly glimmered in the obscure light of the bay like a patch of discolored snow in early April lingering at some upland cave's black mouth. In effect he is already in his shroud or the garments that shall serve him in lieu of one. Over him but scarce illuminating him, two battle-lanterns swing from two massive beams of the deck above. Fed with the oil supplied by the war-contractors (whose gains, honest or otherwise, are in every land an anticipated portion of the harvest of death) with flickering splashes of dirty yellow light they pollute the pale moonshine all but ineffectually struggling in obstructed flecks through the open ports from which the tompioned cannon protrude. Other lanterns at intervals

serve but to bring out somewhat the obscurer bays which like small confessionals or side-chapels in a cathedral branch from the long dim-vistaed broad aisle between the two batteries of that covered tier.

Such was the deck where now lay the Handsome Sailor. Through the rose-tan of his complexion, no pallor could have shown. It would have taken days of sequestration from the winds and the sun to have brought about the effacement of that. But the skeleton in the cheek-bone at the point of its angle was just beginning delicately to be defined under the warm-tinted skin. In fervid hearts self-contained, some brief experiences devour our human tissue as secret fire in a ship's hold consumes cotton in the bale.

But now lying between the two guns, as nipped in the vice of fate, Billy's agony, mainly proceeding from a generous young heart's virgin experience of the diabolical incarnate and effective in some men—the tension of that agony was over now. It survived not the something healing in the closeted interview with Captain Vere. Without movement, he lay as in a trance. That adolescent expression previously noted as his, taking on something akin to the look of a slumbering child in the cradle when the warm hearth-glow of the still chamber at night plays on the dimples that at times mysteriously form in the cheek, silently coming and going there. For now and then in the gyved one's trance a serene happy light born of some wandering reminiscence or dream would diffuse itself over his face, and then wane away only anew to return.

The Chaplain coming to see him and finding him thus, and perceiving no sign that he was conscious of his presence, attentively regarded him for a space, then slipping aside, withdrew for the time, peradventure feeling that even he the minister of Christ though receiving his stipend from Mars had no consolation to proffer which could result in a peace transcending that which he beheld. But in the small hours he came again. And the prisoner now awake to his surroundings noticed his approach and civilly, all but cheerfully, welcomed him. But it was to little purpose that in the interview following the good man sought to bring Billy Budd to some godly understanding that he must die, and at dawn. True, Billy himself freely referred to his death as a thing close at hand; but it was something in the way that children will refer to death in general, who yet among their other sports will play a funeral with hearse and mourners.

Not that like children Billy was incapable of conceiving what death really is. No, but he was wholly without irrational fear of it, a fear more prevalent in highly civilized communities than those so-called barbarous ones which in all respects stand nearer to unadulterate Nature. And, as elsewhere said, a barbarian Billy radically was; as much so, for all the costume, as his countrymen the British captives, living trophies, made to march in the Roman triumph of Germanicus. Quite as much so as those later barbarians, young men probably, and picked specimens among the earlier British converts of Christianity, at least nominally such and taken to Rome (as today converts from lesser isles of the sea may be taken to London) of whom the Pope of that time, admiring the strangeness of their personal beauty so unlike the Italian stamp, their clear ruddy complexion and curled flaxen locks, exclaimed, "*Angles*" (meaning *English* the modern derivative) "*Angles* do you call them? And is it because they look so like angels?" Had it been later in time one would think that the Pope had in mind Fra Angelico's seraphs some of whom, plucking apples in gardens of the Hesperides have the faint rose-bud complexion of the more beautiful English girls.

If in vain the good Chaplain sought to impress the young barbarian with ideas of death akin to those conveyed in the skull, dial, and cross-bones on old tombstones; equally futile to all appearance were his efforts to bring home to him the thought of

salvation and a Saviour. Billy listened, but less out of awe or reverence perhaps than from a certain natural politeness; doubtless at bottom regarding all that in much the same way that most mariners of his class take any discourse abstract or out of the common tone of the work-a-day world. And this sailor-way of taking clerical discourse is not wholly unlike the way in which the pioneer of Christianity full of transcendent miracles was received long ago on tropic isles by any superior *savage*, so called—a Tahitian say of Captain Cook's time or shortly after that time. Out of natural courtesy he received, but did not appropriate. It was like a gift placed on the palm of an out-reached hand upon which the fingers do not close.

But the *Indomitable's* Chaplain was a discreet man possessing the good sense of a good heart. So he insisted not in his vocation here. At the instance of Captain Vere, a lieutenant had apprised him of pretty much everything as to Billy; and since he felt that innocence was even a better thing than religion wherewith to go to Judgement, he reluctantly withdrew; but in his emotion not without first performing an act strange enough in an Englishman, and under the circumstances yet more so in any regular priest. Stooping over, he kissed on the fair cheek his fellow-man, a felon in martial law, one who though on the confines of death he felt he could never convert to a dogma; nor for all that did he fear for his future.

Marvel not that having been made acquainted with the young sailor's essential innocence (an irruption of heretic thought hard to suppress) <sup>1</sup> the worthy man lifted not a finger to avert the doom of such a martyr to martial discipline. So to do would not only have been as idle as invoking the desert, but would also have been an audacious transgression of the bounds of his function, one as exactly prescribed to him by military law as that of the boatswain or any other naval officer. Bluntly put, a chaplain is the minister of the Prince of Peace serving in the host of the God of War—Mars. As such, he is as incongruous as that musket of Blücher etc. at Christmas. Why then is he there? Because he indirectly subserves the purpose attested by the cannon; because too he lends the sanction of the religion of the meek to that which practically is the abrogation of everything but brute Force.

## 26

The night so luminous on the spar-deck but otherwise on the cavernous ones below, levels so like the tiered galleries in a coalmine—the luminous night passed away. But, like the prophet in the chariot disappearing in heaven and dropping his mantle to Elisha, the withdrawing night transferred its pale robe to the breaking day. A meek shy light appeared in the East, where stretched a diaphanous fleece of white furrowed vapor. That light slowly waxed. Suddenly *eight bells* was struck aft, responded to by one louder metallic stroke from forward. It was four o'clock in the morning. Instantly the silver whistles were heard summoning all hands to witness punishment. Up through the great hatchways rimmed with racks of heavy shot, the watch below came pouring overspreading with the watch already on deck the space between the mainmast and foremast including that occupied by the capacious *launch* and the black booms tiered on either side of it, boat and booms making a summit of observation for the

<sup>1</sup> This parenthetical phrase appears at the very bottom of a page in the manuscript. It is written in ink apparently different from that of the rest of the page—a fact suggesting that it was added later. The manuscript page begins at the top with the words "a lieutenant had apprised him . . ." and ends with the words "young sailor's essential innocence." The parenthetical phrase probably refers to the ideas contained in the two long sentences of the preceding paragraph rather than only to the sentence which contains the parenthesis. [Editors' note]



powder-boys and younger tars. A different group comprising one watch of topmen leaned over the rail of that sea-balcony, no small one in a seventy-four, looking down on the crowd below. Man or boy none spake but in whisper, and few spake at all. Captain Vere—as before, the central figure among the assembled commissioned officers—stood nigh the break of the poop-deck facing forward. Just below him on the quarter-deck the marines in full equipment were drawn up much as at the scene of the promulgated sentence.

At sea in the old time, the execution by halter of a military sailor was generally from the fore-yard. In the present instance, for special reasons the main-yard was assigned. Under an arm of that weather *or* lee<sup>2</sup> yard the prisoner was presently brought up, the Chaplain attending him. It was noted at the time and remarked upon afterwards, that in this final scene the good man evinced little or nothing of the perfunctory. Brief speech indeed he had with the condemned one, but the genuine Gospel was less on his tongue than in his aspect and manner towards him. The final preparations personal to the latter being speedily brought to an end by two boatswain's-mates, the consummation impended. Billy stood facing aft. At the penultimate moment, his words, his only ones, words wholly unobstructed in the utterance were these—"God bless Captain Vere!" Syllables so unanticipated coming from one with the ignominious hemp about his neck—a conventional felon's benediction directed aft towards the quarters of honor; syllables too delivered in the clear melody of a singing-bird on the point of launching from the twig, had a phenomenal effect, not unenhanced by the rare personal beauty of the young sailor spiritualized now through late experiences so poignantly profound.

Without volition as it were, as if indeed the ship's populace were but the vehicles of some vocal current electric, with one voice from aloft and aloft came a resonant sympathetic echo—"God bless Captain Vere!" And yet at that instant Billy alone must have been in their hearts, even as he was in their eyes.

At the pronounced words and the spontaneous echo that voluminously rebounded them, Captain Vere, either through stoic self-control or a sort of momentary paralysis induced by emotional shock, stood erectly rigid as a musket in the ship-armorer's rack.

The hull deliberately recovering from the periodic roll to leeward was just regaining an even keel, when the last signal a preconcerted dumb one was given. At the same moment it chanced that the vapory fleece hanging low in the East, was shot through with a soft glory as of the fleece of the Lamb of God seen in mystical vision and simultaneously therewith, watched by the wedged mass of upturned faces, Billy ascended; and, ascending, took the full rose of the dawn.

In the pinioned figure, arrived at the yard-end, to the wonder of all no motion was apparent, none save that created by the ship's motion, in moderate weather so majestic in a great ship ponderously cannoned.

### A Digression

When some days afterward in reference to the singularity just mentioned, the Purser, a rather ruddy rotund person more accurate as an accountant than profound as a philosopher, said at mess to the Surgeon, "What testimony to the force lodged in will-power" the latter—saturnine, spare and tall, one in whom a discreet causticity went

<sup>2</sup> The words *weather or lee* were written above the line. Melville's apparent intention was to make sure which term was nautically correct, but he did not record a final decision. [Editors' note]

along with a manner less genial than polite—replied, "Your pardon, Mr. Purser. In a hanging scientifically conducted—and under special orders I myself directed how Budd's was to be effected—any movement following the completed suspension and originating in the body suspended, such movement indicates mechanical spasm in the muscular system. Hence the absence of that is no more attributable to will-power as you call it than to horse-power—begging your pardon."

"But this muscular spasm you speak of, is not that in a degree more or less invariable in these cases?"

"Assuredly so, Mr. Purser."

"How then, my good sir, do you account for its absence in this instance?"

"Mr. Purser, it is clear that your sense of the singularity in this matter equals not mine. You account for it by what you call will-power a term not yet included in the lexicon of science. For me I do not, with my present knowledge, pretend to account for it at all. Even should we assume the hypothesis that at the first touch of the halyards the action of Budd's heart, intensified by extraordinary emotion at its climax, abruptly stopped—much like a watch when in carelessly winding it up you strain at the finish, thus snapping the chain—even under that hypothesis how account for the phenomenon that followed."

"You admit then that the absence of spasmodic movement was phenomenal."

"It was phenomenal, Mr. Purser, in the sense that it was an appearance the cause of which is not immediately to be assigned."

"But tell me, my dear Sir," pertinaciously continued the other, "was the man's death effected by the halter, or was it a species of euthanasia?"

"*Euthanasia*, Mr. Purser, is something like your *will-power*: I doubt its authenticity as a scientific term—begging your pardon again. It is at once imaginative and metaphysical,—in short, Greek. But" abruptly changing his tone, "there is a case in the sick-bay that I do not care to leave to my assistants. Beg your pardon, but excuse me." And rising from the mess he formally withdrew.

## 28

The silence at the moment of execution and for a moment or two continuing thereafter, a silence but emphasized by the regular wash of the sea against the hull or the flutter of a sail caused by the helmsman's eyes being tempted astray, this emphasized silence was gradually disturbed by a sound not easily to be verbally rendered. Whoever has heard the freshet-wave of a torrent suddenly swelled by pouring showers in tropical mountains, showers not shared by the plain; whoever has heard the first muffled murmur of its sloping advance through precipitous woods, may form some conception of the sound now heard. The seeming remoteness of its source was because of its murmurous indistinctness since it came from close-by, even from the men massed on the ship's open deck. Being inarticulate, it was dubious in significance further than it seemed to indicate some capricious revulsion of thought or feeling such as mobs ashore are liable to, in the present instance possibly implying a sullen revocation on the men's part of their involuntary echoing of Billy's benediction. But ere the murmur had time to wax into clamor it was met by a strategic command, the more telling that it came with abrupt unexpectedness.

"Pipe down the starboard watch, Boatswain, and see that they go."

Shrill as the shriek of the sea-hawk the whistles of the Boatswain and his Mates pierced that ominous low sound, dissipating it; and yielding to the mechanism of discipline the throng was thinned by one half. For the remainder most of them were set

to temporary employments connected with trimming the yards and so forth, business readily to be got up to serve occasion by any officer-of-the-deck.

Now each proceeding that follows a mortal sentence pronounced at sea by a drum-head court is characterised by promptitude not perceptibly merging into hurry, though bordering that. The hammock, the one which had been Billy's bed when alive, having already been ballasted with shot and otherwise prepared to serve for his canvas coffin, the last offices of the sea-undertakers, the Sail-maker's Mates, were now speedily completed. When everything was in readiness a second call for all hands made necessary by the strategic movement before mentioned was sounded and now to witness burial.

The details of this closing formality it needs not to give. But when the tilted plank let slide its freight into the sea, a second strange human murmur was heard, blended now with another inarticulate sound proceeding from certain larger sea-fowl whose attention having been attracted by the peculiar commotion in the water resulting from the heavy sloped dive of the shotted hammock into the sea, flew screaming to the spot. So near the hull did they come, that the stridor or bony creak of their gaunt double-jointed pinions was audible. As the ship under light airs passed on, leaving the burial-spot astern, they still kept circling it low down with the moving shadow of their outstretched wings and the croaked requiem of their cries.

Upon sailors as superstitious as those of the age preceding ours, men-of-war's men too who had just beheld the prodigy of repose in the form suspended in air and now foundering in the deeps; to such mariners the action of the sea-fowl though dictated by mere animal greed for prey, was big with no prosaic significance. An uncertain movement began among them, in which some encroachment was made. It was tolerated but for a moment. For suddenly the drum beat to quarters, which familiar sound happening at least twice every day, had upon the present occasion a signal peremptoriness in it. True martial discipline long continued superinduces in average man a sort of impulse of docility whose operation at the official sound of command much resembles in its promptitude the effect of an instinct.

The drum-beat dissolved the multitude, distributing most of them along the batteries of the two covered gun-decks. There, as wont, the guns' crews stood by their respective cannon erect and silent. In due course the First Officer, sword under arm and standing in his place on the quarter-deck, formally received the successive reports of the sworded Lieutenants commanding the sections of batteries below; the last of which reports being made the summed report he delivered with the customary salute to the Commander. All this occupied time, which in the present case was the object of beating to quarters at an hour prior to the customary one. That such variance from usage was authorized by an officer like Captain Vere, a martinet as some deemed him, was evidence of the necessity for unusual action implied in what he deemed to be temporarily the mood of his men. "With mankind" he would say "forms, measured forms are everything; and that is the import couched in the story of Orpheus with his lyre spell-binding the wild denizens of the wood." And this he once applied to the disruption of forms going on across the Channel and the consequences thereof.

At this unwonted muster at quarters, all proceeded as at the regular hour. The band on the quarter-deck played a sacred air. After which the Chaplain went through the customary morning service. That done, the drum beat the retreat, and toned by music and religious rites subserving the discipline and purpose of war, the men in their wonted orderly manner dispersed to the places allotted them when not at the guns.

And now it was full day. The fleece of low-hanging vapor had vanished, licked up by the sun that late had so glorified it. And the curcumambient air in the clearness of

its serenity was like smooth white marble in the polished block not yet removed from the marble-dealer's yard.

## 29

The symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction can not so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact. Truth uncompromisingly told will always have its ragged edges; hence the conclusion of such a narration is apt to be less finished than an architectural finial.

How it fared with the Handsome Sailor during the year of the Great Mutiny has been faithfully given. But though properly the story ends with his life, something in way of sequel will not be amiss. Three brief chapters will suffice.

In the general re-christening under the Directory of the craft originally forming the navy of the French monarchy, the *St. Louis* line-of-battle ship was named the *Albéiste*. Such a name, like some other substituted ones in the Revolutionary fleet, while proclaiming the infidel audacity of the ruling power was yet, though not so intended to be, the aptest name, if one consider it, ever given to a war-ship; far more so indeed than the *Devastation*, the *Erebus* (the *Hell*) and similar names bestowed upon fighting ships.

On the return-passage to the English fleet from the detached cruise during which occurred the events already recorded, the *Indomitable* fell in with the *Albéiste*. An engagement ensued; during which Captain Vere in the act of putting his ship alongside the enemy with a view of throwing his boarders across her bulwarks, was hit by a musket-ball from a port-hole of the enemy's main cabin. More than disabled he dropped to the deck and was carried below to the same cock-pit where some of his men already lay. The senior Lieutenant took command. Under him the enemy was finally captured and though much crippled was by rare good fortune successfully taken into Gibraltar, an English port not very distant from the scene of the fight. There, Captain Vere with the rest of the wounded was put ashore. He lingered for some days, but the end came. Unhappily he was cut off too early for the Nile and Trafalgar. The spirit that, 'spite its philosophic austerity, may yet have indulged in the most secret of all passions, ambition, never attained to the fulness of fame.

Not long before death while lying under the influence of that magical drug which soothing the physical frame mysteriously operates on the subtler element in man, he was heard to murmur words inexplicable to his attendant—"Billy Budd, Billy Budd." That these were not the accents of remorse, would seem clear from what the attendant said to the *Indomitable's* senior officer of marines who as the most reluctant to condemn of the members of the drum-head court, too well knew, though here he kept the knowledge to himself, who Billy Budd was.

## 30

Some few weeks after the execution, among other matters under the head of *News from the Mediterranean*, there appeared in a naval chronicle of the time, an authorized weekly publication, an account of the affair. It was doubtless for the most part written in good faith, though the medium, partly rumor, through which the facts must have reached the writer, served to deflect and in part falsify them. The account was as follows:—

"On the tenth of the last month a deplorable occurrence took place on board H.M.S. *Indomitable*. John Claggart, the ship's Master-at-arms, discovering that some sort of plot was incipient among an inferior section of the ship's company, and that the ring-

leader was one William Budd; he, Claggart in the act of arraigning the man before the Captain was vindictively stabbed to the heart by the suddenly drawn sheath-knife of Budd.

"The deed and the implement employed, sufficiently suggest that though mustered into the service under an English name the assassin was no Englishman, but one of those aliens adopting English cognomens whom the present extraordinary necessities of the Service have caused to be admitted into it in considerable numbers.

"The enormity of the crime and the extreme depravity of the criminal, appear the greater in view of the character of the victim, a middle-aged man respectable and discreet, belonging to that minor official grade, the petty-officers, upon whom, as none know better than the commissioned gentlemen, the efficiency of His Majesty's navy so largely depends. His function was a responsible one; at once onerous and thankless and his fidelity in it the greater because of his strong patriotic impulse. In this instance as in so many other instances in these days, the character of this unfortunate man signally refutes, if refutation were needed, that peevish saying attributed to the late Dr. Johnson, that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

"The criminal paid the penalty of his crime. The promptitude of the punishment has proved salutary. Nothing amiss is now apprehended aboard H.M.S. *Indomitable*."

The above, appearing in a publication now long ago superannuated and forgotten is all that hitherto has stood in human record to attest what manner of men respectively were John Claggart and Billy Budd.

### 31

Everything is for a term remarkable in navies. Any tangible object associated with some striking incident of the service is converted into a monument. The spar from which the Foretopman was suspended, was for some few years kept trace of by the bluejackets. Their knowledge followed it from ship to dock-yard and again from dock-yard to ship, still pursuing it even when at last reduced to a mere dock-yard boom. To them a chip of it was as a piece of the Cross. Ignorant though they were of the secret facts of the tragedy, and not thinking but that the penalty was somehow unavoidably inflicted from the naval point of view, for all that they instinctively felt that Billy was a sort of man as incapable of mutiny as of wilful murder. They recalled the fresh young image of the Handsome Sailor, that face never deformed by a sneer or subtler vile freak of the heart within. Their impression of him was doubtless deepened by the fact that he was gone, and in a measure mysteriously gone. On the gun-decks of the *Indomitable* the general estimate of his nature and its unconscious simplicity eventually found rude utterance from another foretopman, one of his own watch, gifted as some sailors are with an artless poetic temperament. The tarry hands made some lines which, after circulating among the shipboard crew for a while, finally got rudely printed at Portsmouth as a ballad. The title given to it was the sailor's.

### BILLY IN THE DARBIES

Good of the Chaplain to enter Lone Bay  
And down on his marrow-bones here and pray  
For the likes just o' me, Billy Budd.—But look:  
Through the port comes the moon-shine astray!  
It tips the guard's cutlas and silvers this nook;  
But 'twill die in the dawning of Billy's last day.

A jewel-block they'll make of me tomorrow,  
Pendant pearl from the yard-arm-end  
Like the ear-drop I gave to Bristol Molly—  
O, 'tis me, not the sentence they'll suspend.  
Ay, Ay, all is up; and I must up too  
Early in the morning, aloft from alow.  
On an empty stomach, now, never it would do.  
They'll give me a nibble—bit o' biscuit ere I go.  
Sure, a messmate will reach me the last parting cup;  
But, turning heads away from the hoist and the belay,  
Heaven knows who will have the running of me up!  
No pipe to those halyards.—But aren't it all sham?  
A blur's in my eyes; it is dreaming that I am.  
A hatchet to my hawser? all adrift to go?  
The drum roll to grog, and Billy never know?  
But Donald he has promised to stand by the plank;  
So I'll shake a friendly hand ere I sink.  
But—no! It is dead then I'll be, come to think.—  
I remember Taff the Welshman when he sank.  
And his cheek it was like the budding pink.  
But me they'll lash me in hammock, drop me deep.  
Fathoms down, fathoms down, how I'll dream fast asleep.  
I feel it stealing now. Sentry, are you there?  
Just ease these darbies at the wrist,  
                    and roll me over fair,  
I am sleepy, and the oozy weeds about me twist.

END OF BOOK

APRIL 19TH  
1891

## *II: The Short Story and the Creative Process*

*There are, so far as I know, three ways, and three ways only, of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it, or lastly . . . you may take a certain atmosphere and get action and persons to express it and realize it. I'll give you an example—The Merry Men. There I began with the feeling of one of those islands on the west coast of Scotland, and I gradually developed the story to express the sentiment with which that coast affected me.*

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON





## ETHAN BRAND

### A Chapter From an Abortive Romance

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

Bartram the lime-burner, a rough, heavy-looking man, begrimed with charcoal, sat watching his kiln at nightfall, while his little son played at building houses with the scattered fragments of marble, when, on the hill-side below them, they heard a roar of laughter, not mirthful, but slow, and even solemn, like a wind shaking the boughs of the forest.

"Father, what is that?" asked the little boy, leaving his play, and pressing betwixt his father's knees.

"Oh, some drunken man, I suppose," answered the lime-burner; "some merry fellow from the bar-room in the village, who dared not laugh loud enough within doors lest he should blow the roof of the house off. So here he is, shaking his jolly sides at the foot of Graylock."

"But, father," said the child, more sensitive than the obtuse, middle-aged clown, "he does not laugh like a man that is glad. So the noise frightens me!"

"Don't be a fool, child!" cried his father, gruffly. "You will never make a man, I do believe; there is too much of your mother in you. I have known the rustling of a leaf startle you. Hark! Here comes the merry fellow now. You shall see that there is no harm in him."

Bartram and his little son, while they were talking thus, sat watching the same lime-kiln that had been the scene of Ethan Brand's solitary and meditative life, before he began his search for the Unpardonable Sin. Many years, as we have seen, had now elapsed, since that portentous night when the IDEA was first developed. The kiln, however, on the mountain-side, stood unimpaired, and was in nothing changed since he had thrown his dark thoughts into the intense glow of its furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life. It was a rude, round, tower-like structure about twenty feet high, heavily built of rough stones, and with a hillock of earth heaped about the larger part of its circumference; so that the blocks and fragments of marble might be drawn by cart-loads, and thrown in at the top. There was an opening at the bottom of the tower, like an oven-mouth, but large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture, and provided with a massive iron door. With the smoke and jets of flame issuing from the chinks and crevices of this door, which seemed to give admittance into the hill-side, it resembled nothing so much as the private entrance to the infernal regions, which the shepherds of the Delectable Mountains were accustomed to show to pilgrims.

There are many such lime-kilns in that tract of country, for the purpose of burning the white marble which composes a large part of the substance of the hills. Some of them, built years ago, and long deserted, with weeds growing in the vacant round of the interior, which is open to the sky, and grass and wild-flowers rooting themselves

into the chinks of the stones, look already like relics of antiquity, and may yet be over-spread with the lichens of centuries to come. Others, where the lime-burner still feeds his daily and night-long fire, afford points of interest to the wanderer among the hills, who seats himself on a log of wood or a fragment of marble, to hold a chat with the solitary man. It is a lonesome, and, when the character is inclined to thought, may be an intensely thoughtful occupation; as it proved in the case of Ethan Brand, who had mused to such strange purpose, in days gone by, while the fire in this very kiln was burning.

The man who now watched the fire was of a different order, and troubled himself with no thoughts save the very few that were requisite to his business. At frequent intervals, he flung back the clashing weight of the iron door, and, turning his face from the insufferable glare, thrust in huge logs of oak, or stirred the immense brands with a long pole. Within the furnace were seen the curling and riotous flames, and the burning marble, almost molten with the intensity of heat; while without, the reflection of the fire quivered on the dark intricacy of the surrounding forest, and showed in the foreground a bright and ruddy little picture of the hut, the spring beside its door, the athletic and coal-begrimed figure of the lime-burner, and the half-frightened child, shrinking into the protection of his father's shadow. And when, again, the iron door was closed, then reappeared the tender light of the half-full moon, which vainly strove to trace out the indistinct shapes of the neighboring mountains; and, in the upper sky, there was a flitting congregation of clouds, still faintly tinged with the rosy sunset, though thus far down into the valley the sunshine had vanished long and long ago.

The little boy now crept still closer to his father, as footsteps were heard ascending the hill-side, and a human form thrust aside the bushes that clustered beneath the trees.

"Halloo! who is it?" cried the lime-burner, vexed at his son's timidity, yet half infected by it. "Come forward, and show yourself, like a man, or I'll fling this chunk of marble at your head!"

"You offer me a rough welcome," said a gloomy voice, as the unknown man drew nigh. "Yet I neither claim nor desire a kinder one, even at my own fireside."

To obtain a distincter view, Bartram threw open the iron door of the kiln, whence immediately issued a gush of fierce light, that smote full upon the stranger's face and figure. To a careless eye there appeared nothing very remarkable in his aspect, which was that of a man in a coarse, brown, country-made suit of clothes, tall and thin, with the staff and heavy shoes of a wayfarer. As he advanced, he fixed his eyes—which were very bright—intently upon the brightness of the furnace, as if he beheld, or expected to behold, some object worthy of note within it.

"Good evening, stranger," said the lime-burner; "whence come you, so late in the day?"

"I come from my search," answered the wayfarer; "for, at last, it is finished."

"Drunk!—or crazy!" muttered Bartram to himself. "I shall have trouble with the fellow. The sooner I drive him away, the better."

The little boy, all in a tremble, whispered to his father, and begged him to shut the door of the kiln, so that there might not be so much light; for that there was something in the man's face which he was afraid to look at, yet could not look away from. And, indeed, even the lime-burner's dull and torpid sense began to be impressed by an indescribable something in that thin, rugged, thoughtful visage, with the grizzled hair hanging wildly about it, and those deeply sunken eyes, which gleamed like fires

within the entrance of a mysterious cavern. But, as he closed the door, the stranger turned towards him, and spoke in a quiet, familiar way, that made Bartram feel as if he were a sane and sensible man, after all.

"Your task draws to an end, I see," said he. "This marble has already been burning three days. A few hours more will convert the stone to lime."

"Why, who are you?" exclaimed the lime-burner. "You seem as well acquainted with my business as I am myself."

"And well I may be," said the stranger; "for I followed the same craft many a long year, and here, too, on this very spot. But you are a new-comer in these parts. Did you never hear of Ethan Brand?"

"The man that went in search of the Unpardonable Sin?" asked Bartram, with a laugh.

"The same," answered the stranger. "He has found what he sought, and therefore he comes back again."

"What! then you are Ethan Brand himself?" cried the lime-burner, in amazement. "I am a new-comer here, as you say, and they call it eighteen years since you left the foot of Graylock. But, I can tell you, the good folks still talk about Ethan Brand, in the village yonder, and what a strange errand took him away from his lime-kiln. Well, and so you have found the Unpardonable Sin?"

"Even so!" said the stranger, calmly.

"If the question is a fair one," proceeded Bartram, "where might it be?"

Ethan Brand laid his finger on his own heart.

"Here!" replied he.

And then, without mirth in his countenance, but as if moved by an involuntary recognition of the infinite absurdity of seeking throughout the world for what was the closest of all things to himself, and looking into every heart, save his own, for what was hidden in no other breast, he broke into a laugh of scorn. It was the same slow, heavy laugh, that had almost appalled the lime-burner when it heralded the wayfarer's approach.

The solitary mountain-side was made dismal by it. Laughter, when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child,—the madman's laugh,—the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot,—are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills.

"Joe," said he to his little son, "scamper down to the tavern in the village, and tell the jolly fellows there that Ethan Brand has come back, and that he has found the Unpardonable Sin!"

The boy darted away on his errand, to which Ethan Brand made no objection, nor seemed hardly to notice it. He sat on a log of wood, looking steadfastly at the iron door of the kiln. When the child was out of sight, and his swift and light footsteps ceased to be heard treading first on the fallen leaves and then on the rocky mountain-path, the lime-burner began to regret his departure. He felt that the little fellow's presence had been a barrier between his guest and himself, and that he must now deal, heart to heart, with a man who, on his own confession, had committed the one only crime for which Heaven could afford no mercy. That crime, in its indistinct

blackness, seemed to overshadow him. The lime-burner's own sins rose up within him, and made his memory riotous with a throng of evil shapes that asserted their kindred with the Master Sin, whatever it might be, which it was within the scope of man's corrupted nature to conceive and cherish. They were all of one family; they went to and fro between his breast and Ethan Brand's, and carried dark greetings from one to the other.

Then Bartram remembered the stories which had grown traditionary in reference to this strange man, who had come upon him like a shadow of the night, and was making himself at home in his old place, after so long absence, that the dead people, dead and buried for years, would have had more right to be at home, in any familiar spot, than he. Ethan Brand, it was said, had conversed with Satan himself in the lurid blaze of this very kiln. The legend had been matter of mirth heretofore, but looked grisly now. According to this tale, before Ethan Brand departed on his search, he had been accustomed to evoke a fiend from the hot furnace of the lime-kiln, night after night, in order to confer with him about the Unpardonable Sin; the man and the fiend each laboring to frame the image of some mode of guilt which could neither be atoned for nor forgiven. And, with the first gleam of light upon the mountain-top, the fiend crept in at the iron door, there to abide the intensest element of fire until again summoned forth to share in the dreadful task of extending man's possible guilt beyond the scope of Heaven's else infinite mercy.

While the lime-burner was struggling with the horror of these thoughts, Ethan Brand rose from the log, and flung open the door of the kiln. The action was in such accordance with the idea in Bartram's mind, that he almost expected to see the Evil One issue forth, red-hot, from the raging furnace.

"Hold! hold!" cried he, with a tremulous attempt to laugh; for he was ashamed of his fears, although they overmastered him. "Don't, for mercy's sake, bring out your Devil now!"

"Man!" sternly replied Ethan Brand, "what need have I of the Devil? I have left him behind me, on my track. It is with such half-way sinners as you that he busies himself. Fear not, because I open the door. I do but act by old custom, and am going to trim your fire, like a lime-burner, as I was once."

He stirred the vast coals, thrust in more wood, and bent forward to gaze into the hollow prison-house of the fire, regardless of the fierce glow that reddened upon his face. The lime-burner sat watching him, and half suspected this strange guest of a purpose, if not to evoke a fiend, at least to plunge bodily into the flames, and thus vanish from the sight of man. Ethan Brand, however, drew quietly back, and closed the door of the kiln.

"I have looked," said he, "into many a human heart that was seven times hotter with sinful passions than yonder furnace is with fire. But I found not there what I sought. No, not the Unpardonable Sin!"

"What is the Unpardonable Sin?" asked the lime-burner; and then he shrank farther from his companion, trembling lest his question should be answered.

"It is a sin that grew within my own breast," replied Ethan Brand, standing erect, with a pride that distinguishes all enthusiasts of his stamp. "A sin that grew nowhere else! The sin of an intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its own mighty claims! The only sin that deserves a recompense of immortal agony! Freely, were it to do again, would I incur the guilt. Unshrinkingly I accept the retribution!"

"The man's head is turned," muttered the lime-burner to himself. "He may be a sinner like the rest of us,—nothing more likely,—but, I'll be sworn, he is a madman too."

Nevertheless, he felt uncomfortable at his situation, alone with Ethan Brand on the wild mountain-side, and was right glad to hear the rough murmur of tongues, and the footsteps of what seemed a pretty numerous party, stumbling over the stones and rustling through the underbrush. Soon appeared the whole lazy regiment that was wont to infest the village tavern, comprehending three or four individuals who had drunk flip beside the bar-room fire through all the winters, and smoked their pipes beneath the stoop through all the summers, since Ethan Brand's departure. Laughing boisterously, and mingling all their voices together in unceremonious talk, they now burst into the moonshine and narrow streaks of firelight that illuminated the open space before the lime-kiln. Bartram set the door ajar again, flooding the spot with light, that the whole company might get a fair view of Ethan Brand, and he of them.

There, among other old acquaintances, was a once ubiquitous man, now almost extinct, but whom we were formerly sure to encounter at the hotel of every thriving village throughout the country. It was the stage-agent. The present specimen of the genus was a wilted and smoke-dried man, wrinkled and red-nosed, in a smartly cut, brown, bob-tailed coat, with brass buttons, who for a length of time unknown, had kept his desk and corner in the bar-room, and was still puffing what seemed to be the same cigar that he had lighted twenty years before. He had great fame as a dry joker, though, perhaps, less on account of any intrinsic humor than from a certain flavor of brandy-toddy and tobacco-smoke, which impregnated all his ideas and expressions, as well as his person. Another well-remembered, though strangely altered, face was that of Lawyer Giles, as people still called him in courtesy; an elderly ragamuffin, in his soiled shirt-sleeves and tow-cloth trousers. This poor fellow had been an attorney, in what he called his better days, a sharp practitioner, and in great vogue among the village litigants; but flip, and sling, and toddy, and cocktails, imbibed at all hours, morning, noon, and night, had caused him to slide from intellectual to various kinds and degrees of bodily labor, till at last, to adopt his own phrase, he slid into a soap-vat. In other words, Giles was now a soap-boiler, in a small way. He had come to be but the fragment of a human being, a part of one foot having been chopped off by an axe, and an entire hand torn away by the devilish grip of a steam-engine. Yet, though the corporeal hand was gone, a spiritual member remained; for, stretching forth the stump, Giles steadfastly averred that he felt an invisible thumb and fingers with as vivid a sensation as before the real ones were amputated. A maimed and miserable wretch he was; but one, nevertheless, whom the world could not trample on, and had no right to scorn, either in this or any previous stage of his misfortunes, since he had still kept up the courage and spirit of a man, asking nothing in charity, and with his one hand—and that the left one—fought a stern battle against want and hostile circumstances.

Among the throng, too, came another personage, who, with certain points of similarity to Lawyer Giles, had many more of difference. It was the village doctor; a man of some fifty years, whom, at an earlier period of his life, we introduced as paying a professional visit to Ethan Brand during the latter's supposed insanity. He was now a purple-visaged, rude, and brutal, yet half-gentlemanly figure, with something wild, ruined, and desperate in his talk, and in all the details of his gesture and manners. Brandy possessed this man like an evil spirit, and made him as surly and savage as a

wild beast, and as miserable as a lost soul; but there was supposed to be in him such wonderful skill, such native gifts of healing, beyond any which medical science could impart, that society caught hold of him, and would not let him sink out of its reach. So, swaying to and fro upon his horse, and grumbling thick accents at the bedside, he visited all the sick-chambers for miles about among the mountain towns, and sometimes raised a dying man, as it were, by miracle, or quite as often, no doubt, sent his patient to a grave that was dug many a year too soon. The doctor had an everlasting pipe in his mouth, and, as somebody said, in allusion to his habit of swearing, it was always alight with hell-fire.

These three worthies pressed forward, and greeted Ethan Brand each after his own fashion, earnestly inviting him to partake of the contents of a certain black bottle, in which, as they averred, he would find something far better worth seeking for than the Unpardonable Sin. No mind, which has wrought itself by intense and solitary meditation into a high state of enthusiasm, can endure the kind of contact with low and vulgar modes of thought and feeling to which Ethan Brand was now subjected. It made him doubt—and, strange to say, it was a painful doubt—whether he had indeed found the Unpardonable Sin, and found it within himself. The whole question on which he had exhausted life, and more than life, looked like a delusion.

"Leave me," he said bitterly, "ye brute beasts, that have made yourselves so, shrivelling up your souls with fiery liquors! I have done with you. Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!"

"Why, you uncivil scoundrel," cried the fierce doctor, "is that the way you respond to the kindness of your best friends? Then let me tell you the truth. You have no more found the Unpardonable Sin than yonder boy Joe has. You are but a crazy fellow,—I told you so twenty years ago,—neither better nor worse than a crazy fellow, and the fit companion of old Humphrey, here!"

He pointed to an old man, shabbily dressed, with long white hair, thin visage, and unsteady eyes. For some years past this aged person had been wandering about among the hills, inquiring of all travelers whom he met for his daughter. The girl, it seemed, had gone off with a company of circus-performers, and occasionally tidings of her came to the village, and fine stories were told of her glittering appearance as she rode on horseback in the ring, or performed marvelous feats on the tight-rope.

The white-haired father now approached Ethan Brand, and gazed unsteadily into his face.

"They tell me you have been all over the earth," said he, wringing his hands with earnestness. "You must have seen my daughter, for she makes a grand figure in the world, and everybody goes to see her. Did she send any word to her old father, or say when she was coming back?"

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girl whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process.

"Yes," murmured he, turning away from the hoary wanderer, "it is no delusion. There is an Unpardonable Sin!"

While these things were passing, a merry scene was going forward in the area of cheerful light, beside the spring and before the door of the hut. A number of the youth of the village, young men and girls, had hurried up the hill-side, impelled by curiosity to see Ethan Brand, the hero of so many a legend familiar to their childhood.

Finding nothing, however, very remarkable in his aspect,—nothing but a sunburnt wayfarer, in plain garb and dusty shoes, who sat looking into the fire as if he fancied pictures among the coals,—these young people speedily grew tired of observing him. As it happened, there was other amusement at hand. An old German Jew, traveling with a diorama on his back, was passing down the mountain-road towards the village just as the party turned aside from it, and, in hopes of eking out the profits of the day, the showman had kept them company to the lime-kiln.

"Come, old Dutchman," cried one of the young men, "let us see your pictures, if you can swear they are worth looking at!"

"Oh yes, Captain," answered the Jew,—whether as a matter of courtesy or craft, he styled everybody Captain,—*"I shall show you, indeed, some very superb pictures!"*

So, placing his box in a proper position, he invited the young men and girls to look through the glass orifices of the machine, and proceeded to exhibit a series of the most outrageous scratchings and daubings, as specimens of the fine arts, that ever an itinerant showman had the face to impose upon his circle of spectators. The pictures were worn out, moreover, tattered, full of cracks and wrinkles, dingy with tobacco-smoke, and otherwise in a most pitiable condition. Some purported to be cities, public edifices, and ruined castles in Europe; others represented Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; and in the midst of these would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand,—which might have been mistaken for the Hand of Destiny, though, in truth, it was only the showman's,—pointing its forefinger to various scenes of the conflict, while its owner gave historical illustrations. When, with much merriment at its abominable deficiency of merit, the exhibition was concluded, the German bade little Joe put his head into the box. Viewed through the magnifying-glasses, the boy's round, rosy visage assumed the strangest imaginable aspect of an immense Titanic child, the mouth grinning broadly, and the eyes and every other feature overflowing with fun at the joke. Suddenly, however, that merry face turned pale, and its expression changed to horror, for this easily impressed and excitable child had become sensible that the eye of Ethan Brand was fixed upon him through the glass.

"You make the little man to be afraid, Captain," said the German Jew, turning up the dark and strong outline of his visage from his stooping posture. "But look again, and, by chance, I shall cause you to see somewhat that is very fine, upon my word!"

Ethan Brand gazed into the box for an instant, and then starting back, looked fixedly at the German. What had he seen? Nothing, apparently; for a curious youth, who had peeped in almost at the same moment, beheld only a vacant space of canvas.

"I remember you now," muttered Ethan Brand to the showman.

"Ah, Captain," whispered the Jew of Nuremberg, with a dark smile, "I find it to be a heavy matter in my show-box,—this Unpardonable Sin! By my faith, Captain, it has wearied my shoulders, this long day, to carry it over the mountain."

"Peace," answered Ethan Brand, sternly, "or get thee into the furnace yonder!"

The Jew's exhibition had scarcely concluded, when a great, elderly dog—who seemed to be his own master, as no person in the company laid claim to him—saw fit to render himself the object of public notice. Hitherto, he had shown himself a very quiet, well-disposed old dog, going round from one to another, and, by way of being sociable, offering his rough head to be patted by any kindly hand that would take so much trouble. But now, all of a sudden, this grave and venerable quadruped, of his own mere motion, and without the slightest suggestion from anybody else, began to run round after his tail, which, to heighten the absurdity of the proceeding, was a great deal shorter than it should have been. Never was seen such headlong eagerness

in pursuit of an object that could not possibly be attained; never was heard such a tremendous outbreak of growling, snarling, barking, and snapping,—as if one end of the ridiculous brute's body were at deadly and most unforgivable enmity with the other. Faster and faster, round about went the cur; and faster and still faster fled the unapproachable brevity of his tail; and louder and fiercer grew his yells of rage and animosity; until, utterly exhausted, and as far from the goal as ever, the foolish old dog ceased his performance as suddenly as he had begun it. The next moment he was as mild, quiet, sensible, and respectable in his deportment, as when he first scraped acquaintance with the company.

As may be supposed, the exhibition was greeted with universal laughter, clapping of hands, and shouts of encore, to which the canine performer responded by wagging all that there was to wag of his tail, but appeared totally unable to repeat his very successful effort to amuse the spectators.

Meanwhile, Ethan Brand had resumed his seat upon the log, and moved, it might be, by a perception of some remote analogy between his own case and that of this self-pursuing cur, he broke into the awful laugh, which, more than any other token, expressed the condition of his inward being. From that moment, the merriment of the party was at an end; they stood aghast, dreading lest the inauspicious sound should be reverberated around the horizon, and that mountain would thunder it to mountain, and so the horror be prolonged upon their ears. Then, whispering one to another that it was late,—that the moon was almost down,—that the August night was growing chill,—they hurried homewards, leaving the lime-burner and little Joe to deal as they might with their unwelcome guest. Save for these three human beings, the open space on the hill-side was a solitude, set in a vast gloom of forest. Beyond that darksome verge, the firelight glimmered on the stately trunks and almost black foliage of pines, intermixed with the lighter verdure of sapling oaks, maples, and poplars, while here and there lay the gigantic corpses of dead trees, decaying on the leaf-strewn soil. And it seemed to little Joe—a timorous and imaginative child—that the silent forest was holding its breath until some fearful thing should happen.

Ethan Brand thrust more wood into the fire, and closed the door of the kiln; then looking over his shoulder at the lime-burner and his son, he bade, rather than advised, them to retire to rest.

"For myself, I cannot sleep," said he. "I have matters that it concerns me to meditate upon. I will watch the fire, as I used to do in the old time."

"And call the Devil out of the furnace to keep you company, I suppose," muttered Bartram, who had been making intimate acquaintance with the black bottle above mentioned. "But watch, if you like, and call as many devils as you like! For my part, I shall be all the better for a snooze. Come, Joe!"

As the boy followed his father into the hut, he looked back at the wayfarer, and the tears came into his eyes, for his tender spirit had an intuition of the bleak and terrible loneliness in which this man had enveloped himself.

When they had gone, Ethan Brand sat listening to the crackling of the kindled wood, and looking at the little spirits of fire that issued through the chinks of the door. These trifles, however, once so familiar, had but the slightest hold of his attention, while deep within his mind he was reviewing the gradual but marvelous change that had been wrought upon him by the search to which he had devoted himself. He remembered how the night dew had fallen upon him,—how the dark forest had whispered to him,—how the stars had gleamed upon him,—a simple and loving man, watching his fire in the years gone by, and ever musing as it burned. He remembered



with what tenderness, with what love and sympathy for mankind, and what pity for human guilt and woe, he had first begun to contemplate those ideas which afterwards became the inspiration of his life; with what reverence he had then looked into the heart of man, viewing it as a temple originally divine, and, however desecrated, still to be held sacred by a brother; with what awful fear he had deprecated the success of his pursuit, and prayed that the Unpardonable Sin might never be revealed to him. Then ensued that vast intellectual development, which, in its progress, disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart. The Idea that possessed his life had operated as a means of education; it had gone on cultivating his powers to the highest point of which they were susceptible; it had raised him from the level of an unlettered laborer to stand on a star-lit eminence, whither the philosophers of the earth, laden with the lore of universities, might vainly strive to clamber after him. So much for the intellect! But where was the heart? That, indeed, had withered,—had contracted,—had hardened,—had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers or the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and, at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study.

Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect. And now, as his highest effort and inevitable development,—as the bright and gorgeous flower, and rich, delicious fruit of his life's labor,—he had produced the Unpardonable Sin!

"What more have I to seek? what more to achieve?" said Ethan Brand to himself. "My task is done, and well done!"

Starting from the log with a certain alacrity in his gait and ascending the hillock of earth that was raised against the stone circumference of the lime-kiln, he thus reached the top of the structure. It was a space of perhaps ten feet across, from edge to edge, presenting a view of the upper surface of the immense mass of broken marble with which the kiln was heaped. All these innumerable blocks and fragments of marble were red-hot and vividly on fire, sending up great spouts of blue flame, which quivered aloft and danced madly, as within a magic circle, and sank and rose again, with continual and multitudinous activity. As the lonely man bent forward over this terrible body of fire, the blasting heat smote up against his person with a breath that, it might be supposed, would have scorched and shrivelled him up in a moment.

Ethan Brand stood erect, and raised his arms on high. The blue flames played upon his face, and imparted the wild and ghastly light which alone could have suited its expression; it was that of a fiend on the verge of plunging into his gulf of intensest torment.

"O Mother Earth," cried he, "who art no more my Mother, and into whose bosom this frame shall never be resolved! O mankind, whose brotherhood I have cast off, and trampled thy great heart beneath my feet! O stars of heaven, that shone on me of old, as if to light me onward and upward!—farewell all, and forever. Come, deadly element of Fire,—henceforth my familiar friend! Embrace me, as I do thee!"

That night the sound of a fearful peal of laughter rolled heavily through the sleep of the lime-burner and his little son; dim shapes of horror and anguish haunted their dreams, and seemed still present in the rude hovel, when they opened their eyes to the daylight.

"Up, boy, up!" cried the lime-burner, staring about him. "Thank Heaven, the night is gone, at last; and rather than pass such another, I would watch my lime-kiln, wide awake, for a twelvemonth. This Ethan Brand, with his humbug of an Unpardonable Sin, has done me no such mighty favor, in taking my place!"

He issued from the hut, followed by little Joe, who kept fast hold of his father's hand. The early sunshine was already pouring its gold upon the mountain-tops, and though the valleys were still in shadow, they smiled cheerfully in the promise of the bright day that was hastening onward. The village, completely shut in by hills, which swelled away gently about it, looked as if it had rested peacefully in the hollow of the great hand of Providence. Every dwelling was distinctly visible; the little spires of the two churches pointed upwards, and caught a fore-glimmering of brightness from the sun-gilt skies upon their gilded weathercocks. The tavern was astir, and the figure of the old, smoke-dried stage-agent, cigar in mouth, was seen beneath the stoop. Old Graylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains, there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others, of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it.

To supply that charm of the familiar and homely, which Nature so readily adopts into a scene like this, the stage-coach was rattling down the mountain-road, and the driver sounded his horn, while Echo caught up the notes, and intertwined them into a rich and varied and elaborate harmony, of which the original performer could lay claim to little share. The great hills played a concert among themselves, each contributing a strain of airy sweetness.

Little Joe's face brightened at once.

"Dear father," cried he, skipping cheerily to and fro, "that strange man is gone, and the sky and the mountains all seem glad of it!"

"Yes," growled the lime-burner, with an oath, "but he has let the fire go down, and no thanks to him if five hundred bushels of lime are not spoiled. If I catch the fellow hereabouts again, I shall feel like tossing him into the furnace!"

With his long pole in his hand, he ascended to the top of the kiln. After a moment's pause, he called to his son.

"Come up here, Joe!" said he.

So little Joe ran up the hillock, and stood by his father's side. The marble was all burnt into perfect, snow-white lime. But on its surface, in the midst of the circle,—snow-white too, and thoroughly converted into lime,—lay a human skeleton, in the attitude of a person who, after long toil, lies down to long repose. Within the ribs—strange to say—was the shape of a human heart.

"Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" cried Bartram, in some perplexity at this phenomenon. "At any rate, it is burnt into what looks like special good lime; and, taking all the bones together, my kiln is half a bushel the richer for him."

So saying, the rude lime-burner lifted his pole, and, letting it fall upon the skeleton, the relics of Ethan Brand were crumbled into fragments.

## SOURCE MATERIAL FOR "ETHAN BRAND"

## FROM THE NOTEBOOKS OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE\*

1835.—Amid the seeming confusion of our mysterious world, individuals are so nicely adjusted to a system, and systems to one another and to a whole, that, by stepping aside for a moment, a man exposes himself to a fearful risk of losing his place forever. Like Wakefield, he may become, as it were, the Outcast of the Universe.

1835.—It might be stated, as the closing circumstance of a tale, that the body of one of the characters had been petrified, and still existed in that state.

1837.—... Like all other men around whom an engrossing purpose wreathes itself, he [the portrait painter] was insulated from the mass of human kind. He had no aim—no pleasure—no sympathies—but what were ultimately connected with his art. Though gentle in manner and upright in intent and action, he did not possess kindly feelings; his heart was cold. . . . It is not good for man to cherish a solitary ambition. Unless there be those around him by whose example he may regulate himself, his thoughts, desires, and hopes will become extravagant, and he the semblance, perhaps the reality, of a madman. Reading other bosoms with an acuteness almost preternatural, the painter failed to see the disorder of his own. . . .

July 26, 1838.—... This morning an under-witted old man met me on a walk, and held a pretty long conversation, insisting upon shaking hands (to which I was averse, lest his hand should not be clean), and insisting on his right to do so, as being a "friend of mankind." He was an old gray, bald-headed, wrinkle-visaged figure, decently dressed, with cowhide shoes, a coat on one arm, and an umbrella on the other; and said that he was going to see a widow in the neighborhood. Finding that I was not provided with a wife, he recommended a certain "maid" of forty years, who had 300 acres of land. He spoke of his children, who are proprietors of a circus establishment, and have taken a granddaughter to bring up in their way of life; and he gave me a message to tell them, in case we should meet. While this old man is wandering among the hills, his children are in the gaze of multitudes. He told me the place where he was born, directing me to it by pointing to a wreath of mist which lay on the side of a mountain ridge, which he termed the "smoke yonder." Speaking of the widow, he said, "My wife has been dead these seven years, and why should not I enjoy myself a little." His manner was full of quirks and quips and eccentricities, waving his umbrella and gesticulating strangely, with a great deal of action. I suppose, to help his natural foolishness, he had been drinking. We parted, he exhorting me not to forget his message to his sons, and I shouting after him a request to be remembered to the widow. Conceive something tragical to be talked about; and much might be made of this interview, in a wild road among the hills; with Graylock at no great distance, looking sombre and angry by reason of the gray, heavy mist upon his head. . . .

July 29, 1838.—Remarkable characters:—a disagreeable figure, waning from middle-age, clad in a pair of tow homespun pantaloons and very dirty shirt, bare-foot, and

\* For notes on the source material of "Ethan Brand" see *Notes and Questions*, pages 339-340.

with one of his feet maimed by an axe; also, an arm amputated two or three inches below the elbow. His beard of a week's growth, grim and grisly, with a general effect of black;—altogether a filthy and disgusting object. Yet he has signs of having been a handsome man in his idea; though now such a beastly figure that, probably, no living thing but his great dog would touch him without an effort. Coming to the stoop, where several persons were sitting,—“Good morning, gentlemen,” said the wretch. Nobody answered for a time, till at last one said, “I don't know who you speak to;—not me, I'm sure;” meaning that he did not claim to be a gentleman. “Why, I thought you'd all speak at once,” replied the figure laughing. So he sat himself down on the lower step of the stoop, and began to talk; and the conversation being turned upon his bare feet, by one of the company, he related the story of his losing his toes by the glancing aside of an axe, and with what grim fortitude he bore it. Then he made a transition to the loss of his arm; and setting his teeth and drawing in his breath, said that the pain was dreadful; but this, too, he seems to have borne like an Indian; and a person testified to his fortitude by saying that he did not suppose that there was any feeling in him, from observing how he bore it. The man spoke of the pain of cutting the muscles, and the particular agony at one moment, while the bone was being sawed asunder; and there was a strange expression of remembered agony, as he shrugged his half-limb, and described the matter. Afterwards, in a reply to a question of mine whether he still seemed to feel the hand that had been amputated, he answered that he did, always—and baring the stump, he moved the severed muscles, saying, “There is the thumb, there the forefinger” &c. Then he talked to me about phrenology, of which he seems a firm believer and skilful practitioner, telling how he had hit upon the true characters of many people. There was a great deal of sense and acuteness in his talk, and something of elevation in his expression; perhaps a studied elevation—and a sort of courtesy in his manner; but his sense had something out of the way in it; something wild, and ruined, and desperate, in his talk, though I can hardly say what it was. There was something of the gentleman and man of intellect in his deep degradation; and a pleasure in intellectual pursuits, and an acuteness and trained judgment, which bespoke a mind once strong and cultivated. “My study is man,” said he. And looking at me “I do not know your name,” said he, “but there is something of the hawk-eye about you too.” This man was formerly a lawyer in good practice, but taking to drinking, was reduced to this lowest state. Yet not the lowest; for, after the amputation of his arm, being advised by divers persons to throw himself upon the public for support, he told them that, even if he should lose his other arm, he would still be able to support himself and a waiter. Certainly he is a strong minded and iron-constituted man; but, looking at the stump of his arm, he said “that the pain of the mind was a thousand times greater than the pain of the body—That hand could make the pen go fast,” said he. Among people in general, he does not seem to have any greater consideration in his ruin, for the sake of his former standing in society. He supports himself by making soap; and on account of the offals used in that business, there is probably rather an evil smell in his domicile. Talking about a dead horse, near his house, he said that he could not bear the scent of it. “I should not think you could smell carrion in that house,” said a stage-agent. Whereupon the soap-maker dropped his head, with a little snort, as it were, of wounded feeling; but immediately said that he took all in good part. There was an old squire of the village, a lawyer probably, whose demeanor was different—with a distance, yet a kindliness; for he remembered the times when they met on equal terms. “You and I,” said the squire, alluding to their respective troubles and sicknesses, “would have died long ago, if we had not had

the courage to live." The poor devil kept talking to me long after everybody else had left the stoop, giving vent to much practical philosophy and just observation on the ways of men, mingled with rather more assumption of literature and cultivation, than belonged to the present condition of his mind. Meantime his great dog—a cleanly looking, and not ill-bred dog, being the only decent attribute appertaining to his master—a well natured dog, too, and receiving civilly any demonstration of courtesy from other people, though preserving a certain distance of deportment—this great dog grew weary of his master's lengthy talk, and expressed his impatience to be gone, by thrusting himself between his legs, rolling over on his back, seizing his ragged trowsers, or playfully taking his maimed bare foot into his mouth—using, in short, the kindly and humorous freedom of a friend, with a wretch to whom all are free enough, but none other kind. His master rebuked him, but with kindness too, and not so that the dog felt himself bound to desist, though he seemed willing to allow his master all the time that could possibly be spared. And, at last, having said many times that he must go and shave and dress himself—and as his beard had been at least a week growing, it might have seemed almost a week's work to get rid of it—he rose from the stoop, and went his way, a forlorn and miserable thing in the light of the cheerful summer Sabbath morning. Yet he seems to keep his spirits up, and still preserves himself a man among men, asking nothing from them—nor is it clearly perceptible what right they have to scorn him, though he seems to acquiesce, in a sort, in their doing so. And yet he cannot wholly have lost his self-respect; and doubtless there were persons on the stoop more grovelling than himself. . . .

*July 30, 1838.*— . . . A little boy, named Joe, who haunts about the bar-room and the stoop, about four years old, in a thin short jacket, and full-breeched trowsers, and bare feet. The men plague him, and put quids of tobacco in his mouth, under pretence of giving him a fig, and he gets enraged, and utters a peculiar sharp, spiteful cry, and strikes at them with a stick, to their great mirth. He is always in trouble, yet will not keep away. They dispatch him with two or three cents to buy candy, and nuts and raisins. They set him down in a niche of the door, and tell him to remain there a day and a half; he sits down very demurely, as if he really meant to fulfil his penance;—but, a moment after, behold there is little Joe, capering across the street to join two or three boys who are playing in a wagon. Take this boy as the germ of a tavern-haunter, a country roué, to spend a wild and brutal youth, ten years of his prime in the State-Prison, and his age in the poor-house. . . .

*July 31, 1838.*— . . . In the deep valleys of this neighborhood, where the shadows at sunset are thrown from mountain to mountain, the clouds have a beautiful effect, flitting high over the valley, bright with heavenly gold;—it seems as if the soul might soar up from the gloom, and alight upon them, and soar away. Walking along one of the valleys, the other evening, while a pretty fresh breeze blew along it, the clouds that were skimming the length of the valley, over my head, seemed to conform themselves to the valley's shape. . . .

A steam engine in a factory to be supposed to possess a malignant spirit; it catches one man's arm, and pulls it off; seizes another by the coat-tails, and almost grapples him bodily;—catches a girl by the hair, and scalps her;—and finally draws a man, and crushes him to death. . . .

The one-armed soap-maker, lawyer Haynes, wears an iron hook, which serves him instead of a hand for the purposes of holding on. They nickname him Black Hawk. . . .

Doctors walk about the village with their saddle-bags on their arms. One always with a pipe in his mouth. . . .

*August 11, 1838.*—... A doctor, a stout, tall, round-paunched, red-faced, brutal looking old fellow, who gets drunk daily. He sat down on the step of our stoop, looking surly, and speaking to nobody; then got up and walked homeward, with a surly swagger, and a slight unevenness of track, attended by a fine Newfoundland dog....

*August 31, 1838.*—A ride, on Tuesday, to Shelburne Falls—twenty-two miles, or thereabouts, distant. Started at about eight o'clock in a wagon with Mr. Leach and Mr. Buck. Our road lay over the Green Mountain; the long ridge of which was made awful by a dark, heavy, threatening cloud, apparently rolled and condensed along the whole summit. As we ascended the zig-zag road, we looked behind, at every opening through the forest, and beheld a wide landscape of mountain-swells, and valleys inter-mixt, and old Graylock, and the whole of Saddle-back. Over this wide scene, there was a general gloom; but there was a continual vicissitude of bright sunshine flitting over it; now resting for a brief space on portions of the heights, now flooding the valleys with green brightness, now marking out distinctly each dwelling, and the hotels, and then two small brick churches of the distant village—denoting its prosperity, while all around seemed under adverse fortunes. But we, who stood so elevated above mortal things, and saw so wide and far, could see the sunshine of prosperity departing from one spot and rolling toward another; so that we could not think it much matter which spot were sunny or gloomy at any one moment.

The top of this Green Mountain is a long ridge, marked on the county map as 2160 ft. above the sea; the summit is occupied by a valley, not very deep, but one or two miles wide, composing the town of Lebrida. Here there are respectable farmers, though it is a rough, and must be a bleak place. The first house, after reaching the summit, is a small, homely tavern, kept by P. Witt. We left our horse in the shed; and entering the little unpainted bar-room, we heard a voice, in a strange outlandish accent, explaining a diorama. It was an old man, with a full, gray-bearded countenance; and Mr. Leach exclaimed "Ah here's the old Dutchman again!" And he answered "Yes, Captain, here's the old Dutchman,"—tho' by the way, he is a German, and travels the country with this diorama, in a wagon; and had recently been at South Adams, and was now returning from Saratoga Springs. We looked through the glass orifice of his machine, while he exhibited a succession of the very worst scratchings and daubings that can be imagined—worn out, too, and full of cracks and wrinkles, besmeared with tobacco smoke, and every otherwise dilapidated. There were none in a later fashion than thirty years since, except some figures that had been cut from tailors' show-bills. There were views of cities and edifices in Europe, and ruins,—and of Napoleon's battles and Nelson's sea-fights; in the midst of which would be seen a gigantic, brown, hairy hand—the Hand of Destiny—pointing at the principal points of the conflict, while the old Dutchman explained. He gave considerable dramatic effect to his descriptions, but his accent and intonation cannot be written. He seemed to take an interest and pride in his exhibition; yet when the utter and ludicrous misery thereof made us laugh, he joined in the joke very readily. When the last picture had been exhibited, he caused a country boor, who stood gaping beside the machine, to put his head within it, and thrust his tongue out. The head becoming gigantic, a singular effect was produced.

The old Dutchman's exhibition over, a great dog—apparently an elderly dog—suddenly made himself the object of notice, evidently in rivalry of the Dutchman. He had seemed to be a good-natured, quiet kind of dog, offering his head to be patted by those kindly disposed towards him. This great, old dog, suddenly and of his own

motion, began to run round after his own not very long tail, with the utmost eagerness; and catching hold of it, he growled furiously at it, and still continued to circle round, growling and snarling, with increasing rage, as if one half of his body were at deadly enmity with the other. Faster and faster went he round and round-about, growling still fiercer, till at last he ceased in a state of utter exhaustion; but no sooner had his exhibition finished, than he became the same mild, quiet, sensible old dog as before; and no one could have suspected him of such nonsense as getting enraged with his own tail. He was first taught this trick by attaching a bell to the end of his tail; but he now commences entirely of his own accord, and I really believe feels vain at the attention he excites.

It was chill and bleak on the mountain-top, and a fire was burning in the bar-room. The old Dutchman bestowed on everybody the title of Captain—perhaps because such a title has a great chance of suiting an American. . . .

*September 7, 1838.*—Mr. Leach and I took a walk by moonlight, last evening, on the road that leads over the mountain. Remote from houses, far up on the hill side, we found a lime kiln burning near the road side; and approaching it, a watcher started from the ground, where he had been lying at his length. There are several of these lime-kilns in this vicinity; they are built circular with stones, like a round tower, eighteen or twenty feet high; having a hillock heaped around a considerable of their circumference, so that the marble may be brought and thrown in by cart loads at the top. At the bottom there is a doorway large enough to admit a man in a stooping posture. Thus an edifice of great solidity is composed, which will endure for centuries, unless needless pains are taken to tear it down. There is one on the hill side close to the village, wherein weeds grow at the bottom, and grass, and shrubs too are rooted in the interstices of the stones; and its low doorway had a dungeonlike aspect; and we look down from the top as into a roofless tower. It apparently has not been used for many years; and the lime, and weather-stained fragments of marble are scattered about.

But in the one we saw last night, a hard wood fire was burning merrily beneath the superincumbent marble—the kiln being heaped full; and shortly after we came, the man (a dark, black-bearded figure in shirt-sleeves) opened the iron door, through the chinks of which the fire was gleaming, and thrust in huge logs of wood, and stirred the immense coals with a long pole; and showed us the glowing lime-stone,—the lower layer of it. The glow of the fire was powerful, at the distance of several yards from the open door. He talked very sociably with us,—being doubtless glad to have two visitors to vary his solitary night-watch; for it would not do for him to get asleep; since the fire should be refreshed as often as every twenty minutes. We ascended the hillock to the top of the kiln; and the marble was red-hot and burning with a bluish lambent flame, quivering up, sometimes, nearly a yard high, and resembling the flame of anthracite coal—only, the marble being in larger fragments, the flame was higher. The kiln was perhaps six or eight feet across. Four hundred bushels of marble were then in a state of combustion. The expense of converting this quantity into lime is about fifty dollars; and it sells for 25 cts per bushel at the kiln. We talked with the man about whether he would run across the top of the intensely burning kiln for a thousand dollars, barefooted; and he said he would for ten;—he said that the lime had been burning 48 hours, and would be finished in 36 more, and cooled sufficiently to handle in 12 more. He liked the business of watching it better by night than day; because the days were often hot; but such a mild and beautiful night as the last was just right. Here a poet might make verses, with moonlight in them—and a gleam of

fierce firelight flickering through them. It is a shame to use this brilliant, white, almost transparent marble, in this way. A man said of it, the other day, that into some pieces of it, when polished, one could see a considerable distance; and instanced a certain gravestone.

Mr. Leach told me how a girl, to whom he was once paying attention, with some idea of marrying her, made a confession of having forfeited her chastity. He had heard rumors of her having been indiscreet, with reference to a man who was formerly attentive to her—but had no idea of anything more than a merely pardonable indiscretion, in having trusted herself in long and solitary walk with this man. He began to talk with her on this subject, intending gently to reprehend her; but she became greatly agitated, and fell weeping bitterly—her thoughts flying immediately to her guilt, and probably thinking that he was aware or suspicious of the full extent of it. She told so much, or betrayed so much, that he besought her to say no more. "That was the only time, Mr. Leach," sobbed she, "that I ever strayed from the path of virtue." Much might be made of such a scene—the lover's astoundment, at discovering so much more than he expected. Mr. Leach spoke to me as if one deviation from chastity might not be an altogether insuperable objection to making a girl his wife!! . . .

1842.—To trace out the influence of a frightful and disgraceful crime in debasing and destroying a character naturally high and noble—the guilty person being alone conscious of the crime.

1844.—". . . Rappaccini, it is said, . . . cares infinitely more for science than for mankind. His patients are interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment. He would sacrifice human life, his own among the rest, or whatever else was dearest to him, for the sake of adding so much as a grain of mustard seed to the great heap of his accumulated knowledge. . . ."

1844.—The search of an investigator for the Unpardonable Sin;—he at last finds it in his own heart and practice. . . .

1844.—The Unpardonable Sin might consist in a want of love and reverence for the Human Soul; in consequence of which, the investigator pried into its dark depths, not with a hope or purpose of making it better, but from a cold philosophical curiosity,—content that it should be wicked in whatever kind or degree, and only desiring to study it out. Would not this, in other words, be the separation of the intellect from the heart? . . .

July 29, 1849.—. . . Julian has too much tenderness, love, and sensibility in his nature; he needs to be hardened and tempered. I would not take a particle of the love out of him; but methinks it is highly desirable that some sterner quality should be interfused throughout the softness of his heart; else, in course of time, the hard intercourse of the world, and the many knocks and bruises he will receive, will cause a morbid crust of callousness to grow over his heart; so that, for at least a portion of his life, he will have less sympathy and love for his fellow-beings than those who began life with a much smaller portion. After a lapse of years, indeed, if he have native vigor enough, there may be a second growth of love and benevolence; but the first crop, with its wild luxuriance, stands a good chance of being blighted. . . .



## A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

It was late in November, 1456. The snow fell over Paris with rigorous, relentless persistence; sometimes the wind made a sally and scattered it in flying vortices; sometimes there was a lull, and flake after flake descended out of the black night air, silent, circuitous, interminable. To poor people, looking up under moist eyebrows, it seemed a wonder where it all came from. Master Francis Villon had propounded an alternative that afternoon, at a tavern window: was it only Pagan Jupiter plucking geese upon Olympus, or were the holy angels moulting? He was only a poor Master of Arts, he went on; and as the question somewhat touched upon divinity, he durst not venture to conclude. A silly old priest from Montargis, who was among the company, treated the young rascal to a bottle of wine in honor of the jest and grimaces with which it was accompanied, and swore on his own white beard that he had been just such another irreverent dog when he was Villon's age.

The air was raw and pointed, but not far below freezing; and the flakes were large, damp, and adhesive. The whole city was sheeted up. An army might have marched from end to end and not a footfall given the alarm. If there were any belated birds in heaven, they saw the island like a large white patch, and the bridges like slim white spars, on the black ground of the river. High up overhead the snow settled among the tracery of the cathedral towers. Many a niche was drifted full; many a statue wore a long white bonnet on its grotesque or sainted head. The gargoyles had been transformed into great false noses, drooping toward the point. The crockets were like upright pillows swollen on one side. In the intervals of the wind there was a dull sound of dripping about the precincts of the church.

The cemetery of St. John had taken its own share of the snow. All the graves were decently covered; tall, white housetops stood around in grave array; worthy burghers were long ago in bed, benightcapped like their domiciles; there was no light in all the neighborhood but a little peep from a lamp that hung swinging in the church choir, and tossed the shadows to and fro in time to its oscillations. The clock was hard on ten when the patrol went by with halberds and a lantern, beating their hands; and they saw nothing suspicious about the cemetery of St. John.

Yet there was a small house, backed up against the cemetery wall, which was still awake, and awake to evil purpose, in that snoring district. There was not much to betray it from without; only a stream of warm vapor from the chimney top, a patch where the snow melted on the roof, and a few half-obliterated footprints at the door. But within, behind the shuttered windows, Master Francis Villon, the poet, and some of the thieving crew with whom he consorted, were keeping the night alive and passing around the bottle.

A great pile of living embers diffused a strong and ruddy glow from the arched chimney. Before this straddled Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk, with his skirts picked up and his fat legs bared to the comfortable warmth. His dilated shadow cut the room in half; and the firelight only escaped on either side of his broad person, and in a

little pool between his outspread feet. His face had the beery, bruised appearance of the continual drinker's; it was covered with a network of congested veins, purple in ordinary circumstances, but now pale violet, for even with his back to the fire the cold pinched him on the other side. His cowl had half fallen back, and made a strange excrescence on either side of his bull neck. So he straddled, grumbling, and cut the room in half with the shadow of his portly frame.

On the right, Villon and Guy Tabary were huddled together over a scrap of parchment; Villon making a ballade which he was to call the *Ballade of Roast Fish*, and Tabary spluttering admiration at his shoulder. The poet was a rag of a man, dark, little, and lean, with hollow cheeks and thin black locks. He carried his four-and-twenty years with feverish animation. Greed had made folds about his eyes, evil smiles had puckered his mouth. The wolf and pig struggled together in his face. It was an eloquent, sharp, ugly, earthly countenance. His hands were small and prehensile, with fingers knotted like a cord; and they were continually flickering in front of him in violent and expressive pantomime. As for Tabary, a broad, complacent, admiring imbecility breathed from his squash nose and slobbering lips: he had become a thief, just as he might have become the most decent of burgesses, by the imperious chance that rules the lives of human geese and human donkeys.

At the monk's other hand, Montigny and Thevenin Pensete played a game of chance. About the first there clung some flavor of good birth and training, as about a fallen angel; something long, lithe, and courtly in the person; something aquiline and darkling in the face. Thevenin, poor soul, was in great feather: he had done a good stroke of knavery that afternoon in the Faubourg St. Jacques, and all night he had been gaining from Montigny. A flat smile illuminated his face; his bald head shone rosily in a garland of red curls; his little protuberant stomach shook with silent chucklings as he swept in his gains.

"Doubles or quits?" said Thevenin.

Montigny nodded grimly.

"Some may prefer to dine in state," wrote Villon, "*On bread and cheese on silver plate. Or—or—help me out, Guido!*"

Tabary giggled.

"*Or parsley on a golden dish,*" scribbled the poet.

The wind was freshening without; it drove the snow before it, and sometimes raised its voice in a victorious whoop, and made sepulchral grumbings in the chimney. The cold was growing sharper as the night went on. Villon, protruding his lips, imitated the gust with something between a whistle and a groan. It was an eerie, uncomfortable talent of the poet's, much detested by the Picardy monk.

"Can't you hear it rattle in the gibbet?" said Villon. "They are all dancing the devil's jig on nothing, up there. You may dance, my gallants, you'll be none the warmer! Whew, what a gust! Down went somebody just now! A medlar the fewer on the three-legged medlar-tree!—I say, Dom Nicolas, it'll be cold tonight on the St. Denis Road?" he asked.

Dom Nicolas winked both his big eyes, and seemed to choke upon his Adam's apple. Montfaucon, the great grisly Paris gibbet, stood hard by the St. Denis Road, and the pleasantry touched him on the raw. As for Tabary, he laughed immoderately over the medlars; he had never heard anything more light-hearted; and he held his sides and crowed. Villon fetched him a fillip on the nose, which turned his mirth into an attack of coughing.

"Oh, stop that row," said Villon, "and think of rhymes to 'fish.' "

"Doubles or quits," said Montigny doggedly.

"With all my heart," quoth Thevenin.

"Is there any more in that bottle?" asked the monk.

"Open another," said Villon. "How do you ever hope to fill that big hogshead, your body, with little things like bottles? And how do you expect to get to heaven? How many angels, do you fancy, can be spared to carry up a single monk from Picardy? Or do you think yourself another Elias—and they'll send the coach for you?"

"*Hominibus impossibile*," replied the monk, as he filled his glass.

Tabary was in ecstasies.

Villon filliped his nose again.

"Laugh at my jokes, if you like," he said.

"It was very good," objected Tabary.

Villon made a face at him. "Think of rhymes to 'fish,' " he said. "What have you to do with Latin? You'll wish you knew none of it at the great assizes, when the devil calls for Guido Tabary, clericus—the devil with the hump-back and red-hot finger-nails. Talking of the devil," he added in a whisper, "look at Montigny!"

All three peered covertly at the gamester. He did not seem to be enjoying his luck. His mouth was a little to a side; one nostril nearly shut, and the other much inflated. The black dog was on his back, as people say, in terrifying nursery metaphor; and he breathed hard under the gruesome burden.

"He looks as if he could knife him," whispered Tabary, with round eyes.

The monk shuddered, and turned his face and spread his open hands to the red embers. It was the cold that thus affected Dom Nicolas, and not any excess of moral sensibility.

"Come now," said Villon—"about this ballade. How does it run so far?" And beating time with one hand, he read it aloud to Tabary.

They were interrupted at the fourth rhyme by a brief and fatal movement among the gamesters. The round was completed, and Thevenin was just opening his mouth to claim another victory, when Montigny leaped up, swift as an adder, and stabbed him to the heart. The blow took effect before he had time to utter a cry, before he had time to move. A tremor or two convulsed his frame; his hands opened and shut, his heels rattled on the floor; then his head rolled backward over one shoulder with the eyes open, and Thevenin Pensete's spirit had returned to Him who made it.

Every one sprang to his feet; but the business was over in two twos. The four living fellows looked at each other in rather a ghastly fashion; the dead man contemplating a corner of the roof with a singular and ugly leer.

"My God!" said Tabary, and he began to pray in Latin.

Villon broke out into hysterical laughter. He came a step forward and ducked a ridiculous bow at Thevenin, and laughed still louder. Then he sat down suddenly, all of a heap, upon a stool, and continued laughing bitterly as though he would shake himself to pieces.

Montigny recovered his composure first.

"Let's see what he has about him," he remarked; and he picked the dead man's pockets with a practised hand, and divided the money into four equal portions on the table. "There's for you," he said.

The monk received his share with a deep sigh, and a single stealthy glance at the dead Thevenin, who was beginning to sink into himself and topple sideways off the chair.

"We're all in for it," cried Villon, swallowing his mirth. "It's a hanging job for every man jack of us that's here—not to speak of those who aren't." He made a shocking gesture in the air with his raised right hand, and put out his tongue and threw his head on one side, so as to counterfeit the appearance of one who has been hanged. Then he pocketed his share of the spoil, and executed a shuffle with his feet as if to restore the circulation.

Tabary was the last to help himself; he made a dash at the money, and retired to the other end of the apartment.

Montigny stuck Thevenin upright in the chair, and drew out the dagger, which was followed by a jet of blood.

"You fellows had better be moving," he said, as he wiped the blade on the victim's doublet.

"I think we had," returned Villon with a gulp. "Damm his fat head!" he broke out. "It sticks in my throat like phlegm. What right has a man to have red hair when he is dead?" And he fell all of a heap again upon the stool, and fairly covered his face with his hands.

Montigny and Dom Nicolas laughed aloud, even Tabary feebly chiming in.

"Cry baby," said the monk.

"I always said he was a woman," added Montigny with a sneer. "Sit up, can't you?" he went on, giving another shake to the murdered body. "Tread out that fire, Nick."

But Nick was better employed; he was quietly taking Villon's purse, as the poet sat, limp and trembling, on the stool where he had been making a ballade not three minutes before. Montigny and Tabary dumbly demanded a share of the booty, which the monk silently promised as he passed the little bag into the bosom of his gown. In many ways an artistic nature unfits a man for practical existence.

No sooner had the theft been accomplished than Villon shook himself, jumped to himself, and began helping to scatter and extinguish the embers. Meanwhile Montigny opened the door and cautiously peered into the street. The coast was clear; there was no meddlesome patrol in sight. Still it was judged wiser to slip out severally; and as Villon was himself in a hurry to escape from the neighborhood of the dead Thevenin, and the rest were in a still greater hurry to get rid of him before he should discover the loss of his money, he was the first by general consent to issue forth into the street.

The wind had triumphed and swept all the clouds from heaven. Only a few vapors, as thin as moonlight, fled rapidly across the stars. It was bitter cold; and by a common optical effect, things seemed almost more definite than in the broadest daylight. The sleeping city was absolutely still: a company of white hoods, a field full of little Alps, below the twinkling stars. Villon cursed his fortune. Would it were still snowing! Now, wherever he went he left an indelible trail behind him on the glittering streets; wherever he went he was still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St. John; wherever he went he must weave, with his own plodding feet, the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind him to the gallows. The leer of the dead man came back to him with a new significance. He snapped his fingers as if to pluck up his own spirits, and choosing a street at random, stepped boldly forward in the snow.

Two things preoccupied him as he went: the aspect of the gallows at Montfaucon in this bright windy phase of the night's existence, for one; and for another, the look of the dead man with his bald head and garland of red curls. Both struck cold upon

his heart, and he kept quickening his pace as if he could escape from unpleasant thoughts by mere fleetness of foot. Sometimes he looked back over his shoulder with a sudden nervous jerk; but he was the only moving thing in the white streets, except when the wind swept around a corner and threw up the snow, which was beginning to freeze, in spouts of glittering dust.

Suddenly he saw, a long way before him, a black clump and a couple of lanterns. The clump was in motion, and the lanterns swung as though carried by men walking. It was a patrol. And though it was merely crossing his line of march, he judged it wiser to get out of eyeshot as speedily as he could. He was not in the humor to be challenged, and he was conscious of making a very conspicuous mark upon the snow. Just on his left hand there stood a great hotel, with some turrets and a large porch before the door; it was half-ruinous, he remembered, and had stood long empty; and so he made three steps of it and jumped inside the shelter of the porch. It was pretty dark inside, after the glimmer of the snowy streets, and he was groping forward with outspread hands, when he stumbled over some substance which offered an indescribable mixture of resistances, hard and soft, firm and loose. His heart gave a leap, and he sprang two steps back and stared dreadfully at the object. Then he gave a little laugh of relief. It was only a woman, and she dead. He knelt beside her to make sure upon this latter point. She was freezing cold, and rigid like a stick. A little ragged finery fluttered in the wind about her hair, and her cheeks had been heavily rouged that same afternoon. Her pockets were quite empty; but in her stocking, underneath the garter, Villon found two small coins that went by the name of whites. It was little enough; but it was always something; and the poet was moved with a deep sense of pathos that she should have died before she had spent her money. That seemed to him a dark and pitiable mystery; and he looked from the coins in his hand to the dead woman, and back again to the coins, shaking his head over the riddle of man's life. Henry V of England, dying at Vincennes just after he had conquered France, and this poor jade cut off by a cold draught in a great man's doorway, before she had time to spend her couple of whites—it seemed a cruel way to carry on the world. Two whites would have taken such a little while to squander; and yet it would have been one more good taste in the mouth, one more smack of the lips, before the devil got the soul, and the body was left to birds and vermin. He would like to use all his tallow before the light was blown out and the lantern broken.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was feeling, half-mechanically, for his purse. Suddenly his heart stopped beating; a feeling of cold scales passed up the back of his legs, and a cold blow seemed to fall upon his scalp. He stood petrified for a moment; then he felt again with one feverish motion; and then his loss burst upon him, and he was covered with perspiration. To spendthrifts money is so living and actual—it is such a thin veil between them and their pleasures! There is only one limit to their fortune—that of time; and a spendthrift with only a few crowns is the Emperor of Rome until they are spent. For such a person to lose his money is to suffer the most shocking reverse, and fall from heaven to hell, from all to nothing, in a breath. And all the more if he has put his head in the halter for it; if he may be hanged to-morrow for that same purse, so dearly earned, so foolishly departed. Villon stood and cursed; he threw the two whites into the street; he shook his fist at heaven; he stamped, and was not horrified to find himself trampling the poor corpse. Then he began rapidly to retrace his steps toward the house beside the cemetery. He had forgotten all fear of the patrol, which was long gone by at any rate, and he had no idea but that of his lost purse. It was in vain that he looked right

and left upon the snow; nothing was to be seen. He had not dropped it in the streets. Had it fallen in the house? He would have liked dearly to go in and see; but the idea of the grisly occupant unmanned him. And he saw besides, as he drew near, that their efforts to put out the fire had been unsuccessful; on the contrary, it had broken into a blaze, and a changeful light played in the chinks of the door and window, and revived his terror for the authorities and Paris gibbet.

He returned to the hotel with the porch, and groped about in the snow for the money he had thrown away in his childish passion. But he could only find one white; the other had probably struck sideways and sunk deeply in. With a single white in his pocket, all his projects for a rousing night in some wild tavern vanished utterly away. And it was not only pleasure that fled laughing from his grasp; positive discomfort, positive pain, attacked him as he stood ruefully before the porch. His perspiration had dried upon him; and though the wind had now fallen, a binding frost was setting in stronger with every hour, and he felt benumbed and sick at heart. What was to be done? Late as was the hour, improbable as was success, he would try the house of his adopted father, the chaplain of St. Benoît.

He ran there all the way, and knocked timidly. There was no answer. He knocked again and again, taking heart with every stroke; and at last steps were heard approaching from within. A barred wicket fell open in the iron-studded door, and emitted a gush of yellow light.

"Hold up your face to the wicket," said the chaplain from within.

"It's only me," whimpered Villon.

"Oh, it's only you, is it?" returned the chaplain; and he cursed him with foul unpriestly oaths for disturbing him at such an hour, and bade him be off to hell, where he came from.

"My hands are blue to the wrists," pleaded Villon; "my feet are dead and full of twinges; my nose aches with the sharp air; the cold lies at my heart. I may be dead before morning. Only this once, father, and before God I will never ask again!"

"You should have come earlier," said the ecclesiastic, coolly. "Young men require a lesson now and then." He shut the wicket and retired deliberately into the interior of the house.

Villon was beside himself; he beat upon the door with his hands and feet, and shouted hoarsely after the chaplain.

"Wormy old fox!" he cried. "If I had my hand under your twist, I would send you flying into the bottomless pit."

A door shut in the interior, faintly audible to the poet down long passages. He passed his hand over his mouth with an oath. And then the humor of the situation struck him, and he laughed and looked lightly up to heaven, where the stars seemed to be winking over his discomfiture.

What was to be done? It looked very like a night in the frosty streets. The idea of the dead woman popped into his imagination, and gave him a hearty fright; what had happened to her in the early night might very well happen to him before morning. And he so young! and with such immense possibilities of disorderly amusement before him! He felt quite pathetic over the notion of his own fate, as if it had been some one else's, and made a little imaginative vignette of the scene in the morning when they should find his body.

He passed all his chances under review, turning the white between his thumb and forefinger. Unfortunately he was on bad terms with some old friends who would once have taken pity on him in such a plight. He had lampooned them in verses, he had

beaten and cheated them; and yet now, when he was in so close a pinch, he thought there was at least one who might perhaps relent. It was a chance. It was worth trying at least, and he would go and see.

On the way, two little accidents happened to him which colored his musings in a very different manner. For, first, he fell in with the track of a patrol, and walked in it for some hundred yards, although it lay out of his direction. And this spirited him up; at least he had confused his trail; for he was still possessed with the idea of people tracking him all about Paris over the snow, and collaring him next morning before he was awake. The other matter affected him quite differently. He passed a street corner, where, not so long before, a woman and her child had been devoured by wolves. This was just the kind of weather, he reflected, when wolves might take it into their heads to enter Paris again; and a lone man in these deserted streets would run the chance of something worse than a mere scare. He stopped and looked upon the place with an unpleasant interest—it was a centre where several lanes intersected each other; and he looked down them all one after another, and held his breath to listen, lest he should detect some galloping black things on the snow or hear the sound of howling between him and the river. He remembered his mother telling him the story and pointing out the spot, while he was yet a child. His mother! If he only knew where she lived, he might make sure at least of shelter. He determined he would inquire upon the morrow; nay, he would go and see her, too, poor old girl! So thinking, he arrived at his destination—his last hope for the night.

The house was quite dark, like its neighbors; and yet after a few taps, he heard a movement overhead, a door opening, and a cautious voice asking who was there. The poet named himself in a loud whisper, and waited, not without some trepidation, the result. Nor had he to wait long. A window was suddenly opened, and a pailful of slops splashed down upon the doorstep. Villon had not been unprepared for something of the sort, and had put himself as much in shelter as the nature of the porch admitted; but for all that, he was deplorably drenched below the waist. His hose began to freeze almost at once. Death from cold and exposure stared him in the face; he remembered he was of phthisical tendency, and began coughing tentatively. But the gravity of the danger steadied his nerves. He stopped a few hundred yards from the door where he had been so rudely used, and reflected with his finger to his nose. He could only see one way of getting a lodging, and that was to take it. He had noticed a house not far away which looked as if it might be easily broken into, and thither he betook himself promptly, entertaining himself on the way with the idea of a room still hot, with a table still loaded with the remains of a supper, where he might pass the rest of the black hours, and whence he should issue, on the morrow, with an armful of valuable plate. He even considered on what viands and wines he should prefer; and as he was calling the roll of his favorite dainties, roast fish presented itself with an odd mixture of amusement and horror.

"I shall never finish that ballade," he thought to himself; and then, with another shudder at the recollection, "Oh, damn his fat head!" he repeated fervently, and spat upon the snow.

The house in question looked dark at first sight; but as Villon made a preliminary inspection in search of the handiest point of attack, a little twinkle of light caught his eye from behind a curtained window.

"The devil!" he thought. "People awake! Some student or some saint, confound the crew! Can't they get drunk and lie in bed snoring like their neighbors! What's the good of a curfew, and poor devils of bell-ringers jumping at a rope's-end in bell-

towers? What's the use of day, if people sit up all night? The gripes to them!" He grinned as he saw where his logic was leading him. "Every man to his business, after all," added he, "and if they're awake, by the Lord, I may come by a supper honestly for once, and cheat the devil."

He went boldly to the door, and knocked with an assured hand. On both previous occasions he had knocked timidly and with some dread of attracting notice but now, when he had just discarded the thought of a burglarious entry, knocking at a door seemed a mighty simple and innocent proceeding. The sound of his blows echoed through the house with thin, phantasmal reverberations, as though it were quite empty; but these had scarcely died away before a measured tread drew near, a couple of bolts were withdrawn, and one wing was opened broadly, as though no guile or fear of guile were known to those within. A tall figure of a man, muscular and spare, but a little bent, confronted Villon. The head was massive in bulk, but finely sculptured; the nose blunt at the bottom but refining upward to where it joined a pair of strong and honest eyebrows; the mouth and eyes surrounded with delicate markings, and the whole face based upon a thick white beard, boldly and squarely trimmed. Seen as it was by the light of a flickering hand-lamp, it looked perhaps nobler than it had a right to do; but it was a fine face, honorable rather than intelligent, strong, simple, and righteous.

"You knock late, sir," said the old man in resonant, courteous tones.

Villon cringed, and brought up many servile words of apology; at a crisis of this sort the beggar was uppermost in him, and the man of genius hid his head with confusion.

"You are cold," repeated the old man, "and hungry? Well, step in." And he ordered him into the house with a noble enough gesture.

"Some great seigneur," thought Villon, as his host, setting down the lamp on the flagged pavement of the entry, shot the bolts once more into their places.

"You will pardon me if I go in front," he said, when this was done; and he preceded the poet up-stairs into a large apartment, warmed with a pan of charcoal and lit by a great lamp hanging from the roof. It was very bare of furniture; only some gold plate on a sideboard; some folios; and a stand of armor between the windows. Some smart tapestry hung upon the walls, representing the crucifixion of our Lord in one piece, and in another a scene of shepherds and shepherdesses by a running stream. Over the chimney was a shield of arms.

"Will you seat yourself," said the old man, "and forgive me if I leave you? I am alone in my house tonight, and if you are to eat I must forage for you myself."

No sooner was his host gone than Villon leaped from the chair on which he had just seated himself, and began examining the room, with the stealth and passion of a cat. He weighed the gold flagons in his hand, opened all the folios, and investigated the arms upon the shield, and the stuff with which the seats were lined. He raised the window-curtains, and saw that the windows were set with rich stained glass in figures, so far as he could see, of martial import. Then he stood in the middle of the room, drew a long breath, and retaining it with puffed cheeks, looked round and round him, turning on his heels, as if to impress every feature of the apartment on his memory.

"Seven pieces of plate," he said. "If there had been ten I would have risked it. A fine old house, and a fine old master, so help me all the saints!"

And just then, hearing the old man's tread returning along the corridor, he stole back to his chair, and began toasting his wet legs before the charcoal pan.



His entertainer had a plate of meat in one hand and a jug of wine in the other. He set down the plate upon the table, motioning Villon to draw in his chair, and going to the sideboard, brought back two goblets, which he filled.

"I drink to your better fortune," he said, gravely touching Villon's cup with his own.

"To our better acquaintance," said the poet, growing bold. A mere man of the people would have been awed by the courtesy of the old seigneur, but Villon was hardened in that matter; he had made mirth for great lords before now, and found them as black rascals as himself. And so he devoted himself to the viands with a ravenous gusto, while the old man, leaning backward, watched him with steady, curious eyes.

"You have blood on your shoulder, my man," he said.

Montigny must have laid his wet right hand upon his shoulder as he left the house. He cursed Montigny in his heart.

"It was none of my shedding," he stammered.

"I had not supposed so," returned his host quietly. "A brawl?"

"Well, something of that sort," Villon admitted with a quaver.

"Perhaps a fellow murdered?"

"Oh, no, not murdered," said the poet more and more confused. "It was all fair play—murdered by accident. I had no hand in it, God strike me dead!" he added fervently.

"One rogue the fewer, I dare say," observed the master of the house.

"You may dare to say that," agreed Villon, infinitely relieved. "As big a rogue as there is between here and Jerusalem. He turned up his toes like a lamb. But it was a nasty thing to look at. I dare say you've seen dead men in your time, my lord?" he added, glancing at the armor.

"Many," said the old man. "I have followed the wars, as you imagine."

Villon laid down his knife and fork, which he had just taken up again.

"Were any of them bald?" he asked.

"Oh yes, and with hair as white as mine."

"I don't think I would mind the white so much," said Villon. "His was red." And he had a return of his shuddering and tendency to laughter, which he drowned with a great draught of wine. "I'm a little put out when I think of it," he went on. "I knew him—damn him! And the cold gives a man fancies—or the fancies give a man cold, I don't know which."

"Have you any money?" asked the old man.

"I have one white," returned the poet laughing. "I got it out of a dead jade's stocking in a porch. She was as dead as Caesar, poor wench, and as cold as a church, with bits of ribbon sticking in her hair. This is a hard world in winter for wolves and wenches and poor rogues like me."

"I," said the old man, "am Enguerrand de la Feuillée, seigneur de Brisetout, bailly du Patatrac. Who and what may you be?"

Villon rose and made a suitable reverence. "I am called Francis Villon," he said, "a poor Master of Arts of this university. I know some Latin, and a deal of vice. I can make chansons, ballades, lais, virelais, and roundels, and I am very fond of wine. I was born in a garret, and I shall not improbably die upon the gallows. I may add, my lord, that from this night forward I am your lordship's very obsequious servant to command."

"No servant of mine," said the knight; "my guest for this evening, and no more."

"A very grateful guest," said Villon politely; and he drank in dumb show to his entertainer.

"You are shrewd," began the old man, tapping his forehead, "very shrewd; you have learning; you are a clerk; and yet you take a small piece of money off a dead woman in the street. Is it not a kind of theft?"

"It is a kind of a theft much practiced in the wars, my lord."

"The wars are the field of honor," returned the old man proudly. "There a man plays his life upon the cast; he fights in the name of his lord, the king, his Lord God, and all their lordships the holy saints and angels."

"Put it," said Villon, "that I were really a thief, should I not play my life also, and against heavier odds?"

"For gain, and not for honor."

"Gain?" repeated Villon with a shrug. "Gain! The poor fellow wants supper, and takes it. So does the soldier in a campaign. Why, what are all these requisitions we hear so much about? If they are not gain to those who take them, they are loss enough to others. The men-at-arms drink by a good fire, while the burgher bites his nails to buy them wine and wood. I have seen a good many ploughmen swinging on trees about the country; ay, I have seen thirty on one elm, and a very poor figure they made; and when I asked some one how all these came to be hanged, I was told it was because they could not scrape together enough crowns to satisfy the men-at-arms."

"These things are a necessity of war, which the low-born must endure with constancy. It is true that some captains drive overhard; there are spirits in every rank not easily moved by pity; and, indeed, many follow arms who are no better than brigands."

"You see," said the poet, "you cannot separate the soldier from the brigand; and what is a thief but an isolated brigand with circumspect manners? I steal a couple of mutton chops, without so much as disturbing people's sleep; the farmer grumbles a bit, but sups none the less wholesomely on what remains. You come up blowing gloriously on a trumpet, take away the whole sheep, and beat the farmer pitifully into the bargain. I have no trumpet; I am only Tom, Dick, or Harry; I am a rogue and a dog, and hanging's too good for me—with all my heart—but just you ask the farmer which of us he prefers, just find out which of us he lies awake to curse on cold nights."

"Look at us two," said his lordship. "I am old, strong, and honored. If I were turned from my house tomorrow, hundreds would be proud to shelter me. Poor people would go out and pass the night in the streets with their children, if I merely hinted that I wished to be alone. And I find you up, wandering homeless, and picking farthings off dead women by the wayside! I fear no man and nothing; I have seen you tremble and lose countenance at a word. I wait God's summons contentedly in my own house, or, if it please the king to call me out again, upon the field of battle. You look for the gallows; a rough, swift death, without hope or honor. Is there no difference between these two?"

"As far as to the moon," Villon acquiesced. "But if I had been born lord of Brisetout, and you had been the poor scholar Francis, would the difference have been any less? Should not I have been warming my knees at this charcoal pan, and would not you have been groping for farthings in the snow? Should not I have been the soldier, and you the thief?"

"A thief!" cried the old man. "I a thief! If you understood your words, you would repent them."

Villon turned out his hands with a gesture of inimitable impudence. "If your lordship had done me the honor to follow my argument!" he said.

"I do you too much honor in submitting to your presence," said the knight. "Learn to curb your tongue when you speak with old and honorable men, or some one hastier than I may reprove you in a sharper fashion." And he rose and paced the lower end of the apartment, struggling with anger and antipathy. Villon surreptitiously filled his cup, and settled himself more comfortably in his chair, crossing his knees and leaning his head upon one hand and the elbow against the back of the chair. He was now replete and warm; and he was in no wise frightened of his host, having gauged him as justly as was possible between two such different characters. The night was far spent, and in very comfortable fashion after all; and he felt morally certain of a safe departure on the morrow.

"Tell me one thing," said the old man, pausing in his walk. "Are you really a thief?"

"I claim the sacred rights of hospitality," returned the poet. "My lord, I am."

"You are very young," the knight continued.

"I should never have been so old," replied Villon, showing his fingers, "if I had not helped myself with these ten talents. They have been my nursing mothers and my nursing fathers."

"You may still repent and change."

"I repent daily," said the poet. "There are few people more given to repentance than poor Francis. As for change, let somebody change my circumstances. A man must continue to eat, if it were only that he may continue to repent."

"The change must begin in the heart," returned the old man solemnly.

"My dear lord," answered Villon, "do you really fancy that I steal for pleasure? I hate stealing, like any other piece of work or danger. My teeth chatter when I see the gallows. But I must eat, I must drink, I must mix in society of some sort. What the devil! Man is not a solitary animal—*Cui Deus foeminam tradit*. Make me king's pantler—make me abbot of St. Denis; make me bailly of the Patatrac; and then I shall be changed indeed. But as long as you leave me the poor scholar Francis Villon, without a farthing, why, of course, I remain the same."

"The grace of God is all-powerful."

"I should be a heretic to question it," said Francis. "It has made you lord of Brisetout, and bailly of the Patatrac; it has given me nothing but the quick wits under my hat and these ten toes upon my hands. May I help myself to wine? I thank you respectfully. By God's grace, you have a very superior vintage."

The lord of Brisetout walked to and fro with his hands behind his back. Perhaps he was not quite settled in his mind about the parallel between thieves and soldiers; perhaps Villon had interested him by some cross-thread of sympathy; perhaps his wits were simply muddled by so much unfamiliar reasoning; but whatever the cause, he somehow yearned to convert the young man to a better way of thinking, and could not make up his mind to drive him forth again into the street.

"There is something more than I can understand in this," he said, at length. "Your mouth is full of subtleties, and the devil has led you far astray; but the devil is only a very weak spirit before God's truth, and all his subtleties vanish at a word of true honor, like darkness at morning. Listen to me once more. I learned long ago that a gentleman should live chivalrously and lovingly to God, and the king, and his lady; and though I have seen many strange things done, I have still striven to command my ways upon that rule. It is not only written in all noble histories, but in every

man's heart, if he will take care to read. You speak of food and wine, and I know very well that hunger is a difficult trial to endure; but you do not speak of other wants; you say nothing of honor, of faith to God and other men, of courtesy, of love without reproach. It may be that I am not very wise—and yet I think I am—but you seem to me like one who has lost his way and made a great error in life. You are attending to the little wants, and you have totally forgotten the great and only real ones, like a man who should be doctoring a toothache on the Judgment Day. For such things as honor and love and faith are not only nobler than food and drink, but, indeed, I think that we desire them more, and suffer more sharply for their absence. I speak to you as I think you will most easily understand me. Are you not, while careful to fill your belly, disregarding another appetite in your heart, which spoils the pleasure of your life and keeps you continually wretched?"

Villon was sensibly nettled under all this sermonizing. "You think I have no sense of honor!" he cried. "I'm poor enough, God knows! It's hard to see rich people with their gloves, and you blowing in your hands. An empty belly is a bitter thing, although you speak so lightly of it. If you had had as many as I, perhaps you would change your tune. Anyway, I'm a thief—make the most of that—but I'm not a devil from hell, God strike me dead. I would have you to know that I've an honor of my own, as good as yours, though I don't prate about it all day long, as if it were a God's miracle to have any. It seems quite natural to me; I keep it in its box till it's wanted. Why now, look you here, how long have I been in this room with you? Did you not tell me you were alone in this house? Look at your gold plate! You're strong, if you like, but you're old and unarmed, and I have my knife. What did I want but a jerk of the elbow, and here would have been you with the cold steel in your bowels, and there would have been me, linking in the streets, with an armful of gold cups! Did you suppose I hadn't wit enough to see that? And I scorned the action. There are your damned goblets, as safe as in a church; there are you, with your heart ticking as good as new; and here am I, ready to go out again as poor as I came in, with my one white that you threw in my teeth! And you think I have no sense of honor—God strike me dead!"

The old man stretched out his right arm. "I will tell you what you are," he said. "You are a rogue, my man, an impudent and black-hearted rogue and vagabond. I have passed an hour with you. Oh! believe me, I feel myself disgraced! And you have eaten and drunk at my table. But now I am sick at your presence; the day has come, and the night-bird should be off to his roost. Will you go before, or after?"

"Which you please," returned the poet, rising. "I believe you to be strictly honorable." He thoughtfully emptied his cup. "I wish I could add you were intelligent," he went on, knocking on his head with his knuckles. "Age, age, the brains stiff and rheumatic."

The old man preceded him from a point of self-respect; Villon followed, whistling, with his thumbs in his girdle.

"God pity you," said the lord of Brisetout at the door.

"Good-bye, papa," returned Villon, with a yawn. "Many thanks for the cold mutton."

The door closed behind him. The dawn was breaking over the white roofs. A chill, uncomfortable morning ushered in the day. Villon stood and heartily stretched himself in the middle of the road.

"A very dull old gentleman," he thought. "I wonder what his goblets may be worth."

## FRANÇOIS VILLON

## Student, Poet, and Housebreaker

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

Perhaps one of the most curious revolutions in literary history is the sudden bull's-eye light cast by M. Longnon on the obscure existence of François Villon.\* His book is not remarkable merely as a chapter of biography exhumed after four centuries. To readers of the poet it will recall, with a flavor of satire, that characteristic passage in which he bequeaths his spectacles—with a humorous reservation of the case—to the hospital for blind paupers known as the Fifteen-Score. Thus equipped, let the blind paupers go and separate the good from the bad in the cemetery of the Innocents! For his own part the poet can see no distinction. Much have the dead people made of their advantages. What does it matter now that they have lain in state beds and nourished portly bodies upon cakes and cream! Here they all lie, to be trodden in the mud; the large estate and the small, sounding virtue and adroit or powerful vice, in very much the same condition; and a bishop not to be distinguished from a lamp-lighter with even the strongest spectacles.

Such was Villon's cynical philosophy. Four hundred years after his death, when surely all danger might be considered at an end, a pair of critical spectacles have been applied to his own remains; and though he left behind him a sufficiently ragged reputation from the first, it is only after these four hundred years that his delinquencies have been finally tracked home, and we can assign him to his proper place among the good or wicked. It is a staggering thought, and one that affords a fine figure of the imperishability of men's acts, that the stealth of the private inquiry office can be carried so far back into the dead and dusty past. We are not so soon quit of our concerns as Villon fancied. In the extreme of dissolution, when not so much as a man's name is remembered, when his dust is scattered to the four winds, and perhaps the very grave and the very graveyard where he was laid to rest have been forgotten, desecrated, and buried under populous towns—even in this extreme let an antiquary fall across a sheet of manuscript, and the name will be recalled, the old infamy will pop out into daylight like a toad out of a fissure in the rock, and the shadow of the shade of what was once a man will be heartily pilloried by his descendants. A little while ago and Villon was almost totally forgotten; then he was revived for the sake of his verses; and now he is being revived with a vengeance in the detection of his misdemeanors. How unsubstantial is this projection of a man's existence, which can lie in abeyance for centuries and then be brushed up again and set forth for the consideration of posterity by a few dips in an antiquary's inkpot! This precarious tenure of fame goes a long way to justify those (and they are not few) who prefer cakes and cream in the immediate present.

A WILD YOUTH.—François de Montcorbier, *alias* François des Loges, *alias* François Villon, *alias* Michel Mouton, Master of Arts in the University of Paris, was born in

\* "Etude Biographique sur François Villon." Paris: H. Menu. [All footnotes are those of Stevenson himself.]

that city in the summer of 1431. It was a memorable year for France on other and higher considerations. A great-hearted girl and a poor-hearted boy made, the one her last, the other his first appearance on the public stage of that unhappy country. On the 30th of May the ashes of Joan of Arc were thrown into the Seine, and on the 2d of December our Henry Sixth made his Joyous Entry dismally enough into disaffected and depopulating Paris. Sword and fire still ravaged the open country. On a single April Saturday twelve hundred persons, besides children, made their escape out of the starving capital. The hangman, as is not uninteresting to note in connection with Master Francis, was kept hard at work in 1431; on the last of April and on the 4th of May alone, sixty-two bandits swung from Paris gibbets.\* A more confused or troublous time it would have been difficult to select for a start in life. Not even a man's nationality was certain; for the people of Paris there was no such thing as a Frenchman. The English were the English indeed, but the French were only the Armagnacs, whom, with Joan of Arc at their head, they had beaten back from under their ramparts not two years before. Such public sentiment as they had centered about their dear Duke of Burgundy, and the dear Duke had no more urgent business than to keep out of their neighborhood. . . . At least, and whether he liked it or not, our disreputable troubadour was tubbed and swaddled as a subject of the English crown.

We hear nothing of Villon's father except that he was poor and of mean extraction. His mother was given piously, which does not imply very much in an old Frenchwoman, and quite uneducated. He had an uncle, a monk in an abbey at Angers, who must have prospered beyond the family average, and was reported to be worth five or six hundred crowns. Of this uncle and his money-box the reader will hear once more. In 1448 Francis became a student of the University of Paris; in 1450 he took the degree of Bachelor, and in 1452 that of Master of Arts. His *bourse*, or the sum paid weekly for his board, was of the amount of two sous. Now two sous was about the price of a pound of salt butter in the bad times of 1417; it was the price of half-a-pound in the worse times of 1419; and in 1444, just four years before Villon joined the University, it seems to have been taken as the average wage for a day's manual labor.† In short, it cannot have been a very profuse allowance to keep a sharp-set lad in breakfast and supper for seven mortal days; and Villon's share of the cakes and pastry and general good cheer, to which he is never weary of referring, must have been slender from the first.

The educational arrangements of the University of Paris were, to our way of thinking, somewhat incomplete. Worldly and monkish elements were presented in a curious confusion, which the youth might disentangle for himself. If he had an opportunity, on the one hand, of acquiring much hair-drawn divinity and a taste for formal disputation, he was put in the way of much gross and flaunting vice upon the other. The lecture room of a scholastic doctor was sometimes under the same roof with establishments of a very different and peculiarly unedifying order. The students had extraordinary privileges, which by all accounts they abused extraordinarily. And while some condemned themselves to an almost sepulchral regularity and seclusion, others fled the schools, swaggered in the street "with their thumbs in their girdle," passed the night in riot, and behaved themselves as the worthy forerunners of Jehan Frollo in the romance of *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Villon tells us himself that he was among the truants, but we hardly needed his avowal. The burlesque erudition in which he sometimes indulged implies no more than the merest smattering of knowledge;

\* "*Bourgeois de Paris*," ed. Panthéon, pp. 688, 689.

† "*Bourgeois*," pp. 627, 636, and 725.

whereas his acquaintance with blackguard haunts and industries could only have been acquired by early and consistent impiety and idleness. He passed his degrees, it is true; but some of us who have been to modern universities will make their own reflections on the value of the test. As for his three pupils, Colin Laurent, Girard Gos-souyn, and Jehan Marceau—if they were really his pupils in any serious sense—what can we say but God help them! And sure enough, by his own description, they turned out as ragged, rowdy, and ignorant as was to be looked for from the views and manners of their rare preceptor.

At some time or other, before or during his university career, the poet was adopted by Master Guillaume de Villon, chaplain of Saint Benoît-de-Betourne near the Sorbonne. From him he borrowed the surname by which he is known to posterity. It was most likely from his house, called the *Porte Rouge*, and situated in a garden in the cloister of St. Benoît, that Master Francis heard the bell of the Sorbonne ring out the Angelus while he was finishing his "Small Testament" at Christmastide in 1456. Toward this benefactor he usually gets credit for a respectable display of gratitude. But with his trap and pitfall style of writing, it is easy to make too sure. His sentiments are about as much to be relied on as those of a professional beggar; and in this, as in so many other matters, he comes toward us whining and piping the eye, and goes off again with a whoop and his finger to his nose. Thus, he calls Guillaume de Villon his "more than father," thanks him with a great show of sincerity for having helped him out of many scrapes, and bequeaths him his portion of renown. But the portion of renown which belonged to a young thief, distinguished (if, at the period when he wrote this legacy, he was distinguished at all) for having written some more or less obscene and scurrilous ballads, must have been little fitted to gratify the self-respect or increase the reputation of a benevolent ecclesiastic. The same remark applies to a subsequent legacy of the poet's library, with specification of one work which was plainly neither decent nor devout. We are thus left on the horns of a dilemma. If the chaplain was a godly, philanthropic personage, who had tried to graft good principles and good behavior on this wild slip of an adopted son, these jesting legacies would obviously cut him to the heart. The position of an adopted son toward his adoptive father is one full of delicacy; where a man lends his name he looks for great consideration. And this legacy of Villon's portion of renown may be taken as the mere fling of an unregenerate scapegrace who has wit enough to recognize in his own shame the readiest weapon of offense against a prosy benefactor's feelings. The gratitude of Master Francis figures, on this reading, as a frightful *minus* quantity. If, on the other hand, those jests were given and taken in good humor, the whole relation between the pair degenerates into the unedifying complicity of a debauched old chaplain and a witty and dissolute young scholar. At this rate the house with the red door may have rung with the most mundane minstrelsy; and it may have been below its roof that Villon, through a hole in the plaster, studied, as he tells us, the leises of a rich ecclesiastic.

It was, perhaps, of some moment in the poet's life that he should have inhabited the cloister of Saint Benoît. Three of the most remarkable among his early acquaintances are Catherine de Vausselles, for whom he entertained a short-lived affection and an enduring and most unmanly resentment; Regnier de Montigny, a young blackguard of good birth; and Colin de Cayeux, a fellow with a marked aptitude for picking locks. Now we are on a foundation of mere conjecture, but it is at least curious to find that two of the canons of Saint Benoît answered respectively to the names of Pierre de Vaucel and Etienne de Montigny, and that there was a householder called

Nicolas de Cayeux in a street—the Rue des Poirees—in the immediate neighborhood of the cloister. M. Longnon is almost ready to identify Catherine as the niece of Pierre; Regnier as the nephew of Etienne, and Colin as the son of Nicolas. Without going so far, it must be owned that the approximation of names is significant. As we go on to see the part played by each of these persons in the sordid melodrama of the poet's life, we shall come to regard it as even more notable. Is it not Clough who has remarked that, after all, everything lies in juxtaposition? Many a man's destiny has been settled by nothing apparently more grave than a pretty face on the opposite side of the street and a couple of bad companions round the corner.

Catherine de Vausselles (or de Vaucel—the change is within the limits of Villon's license) had plainly delighted in the poet's conversation; near neighbors or not, they were much together; and Villon made no secret of his court, and suffered himself to believe that his feeling was repaid in kind. This may have been an error from the first, or he may have estranged her by subsequent misconduct or temerity. One can easily imagine Villon an impatient wooer. One thing, at least, is sure: that the affair terminated in a manner bitterly humiliating to Master Francis. In presence of his lady-love, perhaps under her window and certainly with her connivance, he was unmercifully thrashed by one Noë le Joly—beaten, as he says himself, like dirty linen on the washing-board. It is characteristic that his malice had notably increased between the time when he wrote the "Small Testament" immediately on the back of the occurrence, and the time when he wrote the "Large Testament" five years after. On the latter occasion nothing is too bad for his "damsel with the twisted nose," as he calls her. She is spared neither hint nor accusation, and he tells his messenger to accost her with the vilest insults. Villon, it is thought, was out of Paris when these amenities escaped his pen; or perhaps the strong arm of Noë le Joly would have been again in requisition. So ends the love story, if love story it may properly be called. Poets are not necessarily fortunate in love; but they usually fall among more romantic circumstances and bear their disappointment with a better grace.

The neighborhood of Regnier de Montigny and Colin de Cayeux was probably more influential on his after life than the contempt of Catherine. For a man who is greedy of all pleasures, and provided with little money and less dignity of character, we may prophesy a safe and speedy voyage downward. Humble or even truckling virtue may walk unspotted in this life. But only those who despise the pleasures can afford to despise the opinion of the world. A man of a strong, heady temperament, like Villon, is very differently tempted. His eyes lay hold on all provocations greedily, and his heart flames up at a look into imperious desire; he is snared and broached-to by anything and everything, from a pretty face to a piece of pastry in a cookshop window; he will drink the rinsing of the wine cup, stay the latest at the tavern party; tap at the lighted windows, follow the sound of singing, and beat the whole neighborhood for another reveler, as he goes reluctantly homeward; and grudge himself every hour of sleep as a black empty period in which he cannot follow after pleasure. Such a person is lost if he have not dignity, or, failing that, at least pride, which is its shadow and in many ways its substitute. Master Francis, I fancy, would follow his own eager instincts without much spiritual struggle. And we soon find him fallen among thieves in sober, literal earnest, and counting as acquaintances the most disreputable people he could lay his hands on: fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat; sergeants of the criminal court, and archers of the watch; blackguards who slept at night under the butchers' stalls, and for whom the aforesaid archers peered about carefully with lanterns; Regnier de Montigny, Colin de Cayeux,



and their crew, all bound on a favoring breeze toward the gallows; the disorderly abbess of Port Royal, who went about at fair time with soldiers and thieves, and conducted her abbey on the queerest principles; and most likely Perette Mauger, the great Paris receiver of stolen goods, not yet dreaming, poor woman! of the last scene of her career when Henry Cousin, executor of the high justice, shall bury her, alive and most reluctant, in front of the new Montigny gibbet.\* Nay, our friend soon began to take a foremost rank in this society. He could string off verses, which is always an agreeable talent; and he could make himself useful in many other ways. The whole ragged army of Bohemia, and whosoever loved good cheer without at all loving to work and pay for it, are addressed in contemporary verses as the "Subjects of François Villon." He was a good genius to all hungry and unscrupulous persons; and became the hero of a whole legendary cycle of tavern tricks and cheat-eries. At best, these were doubtful levities, rather too thievish for a schoolboy, rather too gamesome for a thief. But he would not linger long in this equivocal border land. He must soon have complied with his surroundings. He was one who would go where the cannikin clinked, not caring who should pay; and from supping in the wolves' den, there is but a step to hunting with the pack. And here, as I am on the chapter of his degradation, I shall say all I mean to say about its darkest expression, and be done with it for good. Some charitable critics see no more than a *jeu d'esprit*, a graceful and trifling exercise of the imagination, in the grimy ballad of Fat Peg ("Grosse Margot"). I am not able to follow these gentlemen to this polite extreme. Out of all Villon's works that ballad stands forth in flaring reality, gross and ghastly, as a thing written in a contraction of disgust. M. Longnon shows us more and more clearly at every page that we are to read our poet literally, that his names are the names of real persons, and the events he chronicles were actual events. But even if the tendency of criticism had run the other way, this ballad would have gone far to prove itself. I can well understand the reluctance of worthy persons in this matter; for of course it is unpleasant to think of a man of genius as one who held, in the words of Marina to Boulton—

"A place, for which the pained'st fiend  
Of Hell would not in reputation change."

But beyond this natural unwillingness, the whole difficulty of the case springs from a highly virtuous ignorance of life. Paris now is not so different from the Paris of then; and the whole of the doings of Bohemia are not written in the sugar-candy pastorals of Murger. It is really not at all surprising that a young man of the fifteenth century, with a knack of making verses, should accept his bread upon disgraceful terms. The race of those who do is not extinct; and some of them to this day write the prettiest verses imaginable. . . . After this, it were impossible for Master Francis to fall lower: to go and steal for himself would be an admirable advance from every point of view, divine or human.

And yet it is not as a thief, but as a homicide, that he makes his first appearance before angry justice. On June 5, 1455, when he was about twenty-four, and had been Master of Arts for a matter of three years, we behold him for the first time quite definitely. Angry justice had, as it were, photographed him in the act of his homicide; and M. Longnon, rummaging among old deeds, has turned up the negative and printed it off for our instruction. Villon had been supping—copiously we may

\* "Chronique Scandaleuse," ed. Panthéon, p. 237.

believe—and sat on a stone bench in front of the Church of St. Benoît, in company with a priest called Gilles and a woman of the name of Isabeau. It was nine o'clock, a mighty late hour for the period, and evidently a fine summer's night. Master Francis carried a mantle, like a prudent man, to keep him from the dews, and had a sword below it dangling from his girdle. So these three dallied in front of St. Benoît, taking their pleasure. Suddenly there arrived upon the scene a priest, Philippe Chermoye or Sermaise, also with sword and cloak, and accompanied by one Master Jehan le Mardi. Sermaise, according to Villon's account, which is all we have to go upon, came up blustering and denying God; as Villon rose to make room for him upon the bench, thrust him rudely back into his place; and finally drew his sword and cut open his lower lip, by what I should imagine was a very clumsy stroke. Up to this point, Villon professes to have been a model of courtesy, even of feebleness: and the brawl, in his version, reads like the fable of the wolf and the lamb. But now the lamb was roused; he drew his sword, stabbed Sermaise in the groin, knocked him on the head with a big stone, and then, leaving him to his fate, went away to have his own lip doctored by a barber of the name of Fouquet. In one version, he says that Gilles, Isabeau, and Le Mardi ran away at the first high words, and that he and Sermaise had it out alone; in another, Le Mardi is represented as returning and wresting Villon's sword from him: the reader may please himself. Sermaise was picked up, lay all that night in the prison of Saint Benoît, where he was examined by an official of the châtelet and expressly pardoned Villon, and died on the following Saturday in the Hotel Dieu.

This, as I have said, was in June. Not before January of the next year could Villon extract a pardon from the king; but while his hand was in, he got two. One is for "François des Loges, *alias* de Villon;" and the other runs in the name of François de Montcorbier. Nay, it appears there was a further complication; for in the narrative of the first of these documents, it is mentioned that he passed himself off upon Fouquet, the barber-surgeon, as one Michel Mouton. M. Longnon has a theory that this unhappy accident with Sermaise was the cause of Villon's subsequent irregularities; and that up to that moment he had been the pink of good behavior. But the matter has to my eyes a more dubious air. A pardon necessary for Des Loges and another for Montcorbier? and these two the same person? and one or both of them known by the *alias* of Villon, however honestly come by? and lastly, in the heat of the moment, a fourth name thrown out with an assured countenance? A ship is not to be trusted that sails under so many colors. This is not the simple bearing of innocence. No—the young master was already treading crooked paths; already, he would start and blench at a hand upon his shoulder, with the look we know so well in the face of Hogarth's Idle Apprentice; already, in the blue devils, he would see Henry Cousin, the executor of high justice, going in dolorous procession toward Montfaucon, and hear the wind and the birds crying around Paris gibbet.

A GANG OF THIEVES.—In spite of the prodigious number of people who managed to get hanged, the fifteenth century was by no means a bad time for criminals. A great confusion of parties and great dust of fighting favored the escape of private housebreakers and quiet fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat. Prisons were leaky; and as we shall see, a man with a few crowns in his pocket and perhaps some acquaintance among the officials, could easily slip out and become once more a free marauder. There was no want of a sanctuary where he might harbor until troubles blew by; and accomplices helped each other with more or less good faith. Clerks, above all, had remarkable facilities for a criminal way of life; for they were privileged,

except in cases of notorious incorrigibility, to be plucked from the hands of rude secular justice and tried by a tribunal of their own. In 1402, a couple of thieves, both clerks of the University, were condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. As they were taken to Montfaucon, they kept crying "high and clearly" for their benefit of clergy, but were none the less pitilessly hanged and gibbeted. Indignant Alma Mater interfered before the king; and the Provost was deprived of all royal offices, and condemned to return the bodies and erect a great stone cross, on the road from Paris to the gibbet, graven with the effigies of these two holy martyrs.\* We shall hear more of the benefit of clergy; for after this the reader will not be surprised to meet with thieves in the shape of tonsured clerks, or even priests and monks.

To a knot of such learned pilferers our poet certainly belonged; and by turning over a few more of M. Longnon's negatives, we shall get a clear idea of their character and doings. Montigny and De Cayeux are names already known; Guy Tabary, Petit-Jehan, Dom Nicolas, little Thibault, who was both clerk and goldsmith, and who made picklocks and melted plate for himself and his companions—with these the reader has still to become acquainted. Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux were handy fellows and enjoyed a useful pre-eminence in honor of their doings with the picklock. But the flower of the flock was little Thibault; it was reported that no lock could stand before him; he had a persuasive hand; let us salute capacity wherever we may find it. Perhaps the term *gang* is not quite properly applied to the persons whose fortunes we are now about to follow; rather they were independent male-factors, socially intimate, and occasionally joining together for some serious operation, just as modern stockjobbers form a syndicate for an important loan. Nor were they at all particular to any branch of misdoing. They did not scrupulously confine themselves to a single sort of theft, as I hear is common among modern thieves. They were ready for anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. Montigny, for instance, had neglected neither of these extremes, and we find him accused of cheating at games of hazard on the one hand and on the other of the murder of one Thevenin Pensete in a house by the Cemetery of St. John. If time had only spared us some particulars, might not this last have furnished us with the matter of a grisly winter's tale?

At Christmas-time in 1456, readers of Villon will remember that he was engaged on the "Small Testament." About the same period, he took part in a memorable supper at the Mule Tavern, in front of the Church of St. Mathurin. Tabary, who seems to have been very much Villon's creature, had ordered the supper in the course of the afternoon. He was a man who had had troubles in his time and languished in the Bishop of Paris's prisons on a suspicion of picking locks; confiding, convivial, not very astute—who had copied out a whole improper romance with his own right hand. This supper-party was to be his first introduction to De Cayeux and Petit-Jehan, which was probably a matter of some concern to the poor man's muddy wits; in the sequel, at least, he speaks of both with an undisguised respect, based on professional inferiority in the matter of picklocks. Dom Nicolas, a Picardy monk, was the fifth and last at table. When supper had been dispatched and fairly washed down, we may suppose, with white Baigneux or red Beaune, which were favorite wines among the fellowship, Tabary was solemnly sworn over to secrecy on the night's performances; and the party left the Mule and proceeded to an unoccupied house belonging to Robert de Saint-Simon. This, over a low wall, they entered without difficulty. All but Tabary took off their upper garments; a

\* Monstrelet: "Panthéon Littéraire," p. 26.

ladder was found and applied to the high wall which separated Saint-Simon's house from the court of the College of Navarre; the four fellows in their shirt-sleeves (as we might say) clambered over in a twinkling; and Master Guy Tabary remained alone beside the overcoats. From the court the burglars made their way into the vestry of the chapel, where they found a large chest, strengthened with iron bands and closed with four locks. One of these locks they picked, and then, by levering up the corner, forced the other three. Inside was a small coffer, of walnut wood, also barred with iron, but fastened with only three locks, which were all comfortably picked by way of the keyhole. In the walnut coffer—a joyous sight by our thieves' lantern—were five hundred crowns of gold. There was some talk of opening the aumries, where, if they had only known, a booty eight or nine times greater lay ready to their hand; but one of the party (I have a humorous suspicion it was Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk) hurried them away. It was ten o'clock when they mounted the ladder; it was about midnight before Tabary beheld them coming back. To him they gave ten crowns, and promised a share of a two-crown dinner on the morrow; whereat we may suppose his mouth watered. In course of time, he got wind of the real amount of their booty and understood how scurvily he had been used; but he seems to have borne no malice. How could he, against such superb operators as Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux; or a person like Villon, who could have made a new improper romance out of his own head, instead of merely copying an old one with mechanical right hand?

The rest of the winter was not uneventful for the gang. First they made a demonstration against the Church of St. Mathurin after chalices, and were ignominiously chased away by barking dogs. Then Tabary fell out with Casin Chollet, one of the fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat, who subsequently became a sergeant of the Châtelet and distinguished himself by misconduct, followed by imprisonment and public castigation, during the wars of Louis Eleventh. The quarrel was not conducted with a proper regard to the king's peace, and the pair publicly belabored each other until the police stepped in, and Master Tabary was cast once more into the prisons of the Bishop. While he still lay in durance, another job was cleverly executed by the band in broad daylight, at the Augustine Monastery. Brother Guillaume Coiffier was beguiled by an accomplice to St. Mathurin to say mass; and during his absence, his chamber was entered and five or six hundred crowns in money and some silver plate successfully abstracted. A melancholy man was Coiffier on his return! Eight crowns from this adventure were forwarded by little Thibault to the incarcerated Tabary; and with these he bribed the jailer and reappeared in Paris taverns. Some time before or shortly after this, Villon set out for Angers, as he had promised in the "Small Testament." The object of this excursion was not merely to avoid the presence of his cruel mistress or the strong arm of Noë le Joly, but to plan a deliberate robbery on his uncle the monk. As soon as he had properly studied the ground, the others were to go over in force from Paris—picklocks and all—and away with my uncle's strongbox! This throws a comical sidelight on his own accusation against his relatives, that they had "forgotten natural duty" and disowned him because he was poor. A poor relation is a distasteful circumstance at the best, but a poor relation who plans deliberate robberies against those of his blood, and trudges hundreds of weary leagues to put them into execution, is surely a little on the wrong side of toleration. The uncle at Angers may have been monstrously undutiful; but the nephew from Paris was upsides with him.

On the 23d April, that venerable and discreet person, Master Pierre Marchand, Curate and Prior of Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Chartres, arrived in Paris and put up at the sign of the Three Chandeliers, in the Rue de la Huchette. Next day, or the day after, as he was breakfasting at the sign of the Armchair, he fell into talk with two customers, one of whom was a priest and the other our friend Tabary. The idiotic Tabary became mighty confidential as to his past life. Pierre Marchand, who was an acquaintance of Guillaume Coiffier's and had sympathized with him over his loss, pricked up his ears at the mention of picklocks, and led on the transcriber of improper romances from one thing to another, until they were fast friends. For picklocks the Prior of Paray professed a keen curiosity; but Tabary, upon some late alarm, had thrown all his into the Seine. Let that be no difficulty, however, for was there not little Thibault, who could make them of all shapes and sizes, and to whom Tabary, smelling an accomplice, would be only too glad to introduce his new acquaintance? On the morrow, accordingly, they met; and Tabary, after having first wet his whistle at the Prior's expense, led him to Notre Dame and presented him to four or five "young companions," who were keeping sanctuary in the church. They were all clerks, recently escaped, like Tabary himself, from the episcopal prisons. Among these we may notice Thibault, the operator, a little fellow of twenty-six, wearing long hair behind. The Prior expressed, through Tabary, his anxiety to become their accomplice and altogether such as they were. Mighty polite they showed themselves, and made him many fine speeches in return. But for all that, perhaps because they had longer heads than Tabary, perhaps because it is less easy to wheedle men in a body, they kept obstinately to generalities and gave him no information as to their exploits, past, present, or to come. I suppose Tabary groaned under this reserve; for no sooner were he and the Prior out of the church than he fairly emptied his heart to him, gave him full details of many hanging matters in the past, and explained the future intentions of the band. The scheme of the hour was to rob another Augustine monk, Robert de la Porte, and in this the Prior agreed to take a hand with simulated greed. Thus, in the course of two days, he had turned this wineskin of a Tabary inside out. For a while longer the farce was carried on; the Prior was introduced to Petit-Jehan, whom he describes as a little, very smart man of thirty, with a black beard and a short jacket; an appointment was made and broken in the de la Porte affair; Tabary had some breakfast at the Prior's charge and leaked out more secrets under the influence of wine and friendship; and then all of a sudden, on the 17th day of May, an alarm sprang up, the Prior picked up his skirts and walked quietly over to the Châtelet to make a deposition, and the whole band took to their heels and vanished out of Paris and the sight of the police.

Vanish as they like, they all go with a clog about their feet. Sooner or later, here or there, they will be caught in the fact, and ignominiously sent home. From our vantage of four centuries afterward, it is odd and pitiful to watch the order in which the fugitives are captured and dragged in.

Montigny was the first. In August of that same year, he was laid by the heels on many grievous counts; sacrilegious robberies, frauds, incorrigibility, and that bad business about Thevenin Pensete in the house by the Cemetery of St. John. He was reclaimed by the ecclesiastical authorities as a clerk; but the claim was rebutted on the score of incorrigibility, and ultimately fell to the ground; and he was condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. It was a very rude hour for Montigny, but hope was not yet over. He was a fellow of some birth; his father had been king's pantler;

his sister, probably married to some one about the Court, was in the family way, and her health would be endangered if the execution was proceeded with. So down comes Charles the Seventh with letters of mercy, commuting the penalty to a year in a dungeon on bread and water, and a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Galicia. Alas! the document was incomplete; it did not contain the full tale of Montigny's enormities; it did not recite that he had been denied benefit of clergy, and it said nothing about Thevenin Pensete. Montigny's hour was at hand. Benefit of clergy, honorable descent from king's pantler, sister in the family way, royal letters of commutation—all were of no avail. He had been in prison in Rouen, in Tours, in Bordeaux, and four times already in Paris; and out of all these he had come scatheless; but now he must make a little excursion as far as Montfaucon with Henry Cousin, executor of high justice. There let him swing among the carrion crows.

About a year later, in July 1458, the police laid hands on Tabary. Before the ecclesiastical commissary he was twice examined, and, on the latter occasion, put to the question ordinary and extraordinary. What a dismal change from pleasant suppers at the Mule, where he sat in triumph with expert operators and great wits! He is at the lees of life, poor rogue; and those fingers which once transcribed improper romances are now agonizingly stretched upon the rack. We have no sure knowledge, but we may have a shrewd guess of the conclusion. Tabary, the admirer, would go the same way as those whom he admired.

The last we hear of is Colin de Cayeux. He was caught in autumn 1460, in the great Church of St. Leu d'Esserens, which makes so fine a figure in the pleasant Oise Valley between Creil and Beaumont. He was reclaimed by no less than two bishops; but the Procureur for the Provost held fast by incorrigible Colin. 1460 was an ill-starred year: for justice was making a clean sweep of "poor and indigent persons, thieves, cheats, and lockpickers," in the neighborhood of Paris;\* and Colin de Cayeux, with many others, was condemned to death and hanged.†

VILLON AND THE GALLOWS.—Villon was still absent on the Angers expedition when the Prior of Paray sent such a bombshell among his accomplices; and the dates of his return and arrest remain undiscoverable. M. Campaux plausibly enough opined for the autumn of 1457, which would make him closely follow on Montigny, and the first of those denounced by the Prior to fall into the toils. We may suppose, at least, that it was not long thereafter; we may suppose him competed for between lay and clerical Courts; and we may suppose him alternately pert and impudent, humble and fawning, in his defense. But at the end of all supposing, we come upon some nuggets of fact. For first, he was put to the question by water. He who had tossed off so many cups of white Baigneux or red Beaune, now drank water through linen folds, until his bowels were flooded and his heart stood still. After so much raising of the elbow, so much outcry of fictitious thirst, here at last was enough drinking for a lifetime. Truly, of our pleasant vices, the gods make whips to scourge us. And secondly he was condemned to be hanged. A man may have been expecting a catastrophe for years, and yet find himself unprepared when it arrives. Certainly, Villon found, in this legitimate issue of his career, a very staggering and grave

\* "Chron. Scand.," *ut supra*.

† Here and there, principally in the order of events, this article differs from M. Longon's own reading of his material. The ground on which he defers the execution of Montigny and De Cayeux beyond the date of their trials seems insufficient. There is a law of parsimony for the construction of historical documents; simplicity is the first duty of narration; and hanged they were.

consideration. Every beast, as he says, clings bitterly to a whole skin. If everything is lost, and even honor, life still remains; nay, and it becomes, like the ewe lamb in Nathan's parable, as dear as all the rest. "Do you fancy," he asks, in a lively ballad, "that I had not enough philosophy under my hood to cry out: 'I appeal'? If I had made any bones about the matter, I should have been planted upright in the fields, by the St. Denis Road"—Montfaucon being on the way to St. Denis. An appeal to Parliament, as we saw in the case of Colin de Cayeux, did not necessarily lead to an acquittal or a commutation; and while the matter was pending, our poet had ample opportunity to reflect on his position. Hanging is a sharp argument, and to swing with many others on the gibbet adds a horrible corollary for the imagination. With the aspect of Montfaucon he was well acquainted; indeed, as the neighborhood appears to have been sacred to junketing and nocturnal picnics of wild young men and women, he had probably studied it under all varieties of hour and weather. And now, as he lay in prison waiting the mortal push, these different aspects crowded back on his imagination with a new and startling significance; and he wrote a ballad, by way of epitaph for himself and his companions, which remains unique in the annals of mankind. It is, in the highest sense, a piece of his biography:

"La pluye nous a debuez et lavez,  
Et le soleil dessechez et noirciz;  
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,  
Et arrachez la barbe et les sourcilz.  
Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes rassis;  
Puis cà, puis là, comme le vent varie,  
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie,  
Plus becquetez d'oiseaulx que dez à couldre.  
Ne soyez donc de nostre confrairie,  
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre."

Here is some genuine thieves' literature after so much that was spurious; sharp as an etching, written with a shuddering soul. There is an intensity of consideration in the piece that shows it to be the transcript of familiar thoughts. It is the quintessence of many a doleful nightmare on the straw, when he felt himself swing helpless in the wind, and saw the birds turn about him, screaming and menacing his eyes.

And, after all, the Parliament changed his sentence into one of banishment; and to Roussillon, in Dauphiny, our poet must carry his woes without delay. Travelers between Lyons and Marseilles may remember a station on the line, some way below Vienne, where the Rhone fleets seaward between vine-clad hills. This was Villon's Siberia. It would be a little warm in summer perhaps, and a little cold in winter in that draughty valley between two great mountain fields; but what with the hills, and the racing river, and the fiery Rhone wines, he was little to be pitied on the conditions of his exile. Villon, in a remarkably bad ballad, written in a breath, heartily thanked and fulsomely belauded the Parliament; the *envoi*, like the proverbial postscript of a lady's letter, containing the pith of his performance in a request for three days' delay to settle his affairs and bid his friends farewell. He was probably not followed out of Paris, like Antoine Fradin, the popular preacher, another exile of a few years later, by weeping multitudes;\* but I daresay one or two rogues of his acquaintance would keep him company for a mile or so on the south road, and drink

\* "Chron. Scand.," p. 338.

a bottle with him before they turned. For banished people, in those days, seem to have set out on their own responsibility, in their own guard, and at their own expense. It was no joke to make one's way from Paris to Roussillon alone and penniless in the fifteenth century. Villon says he left a rag of his tails on every bush. Indeed, he must have had many a weary tramp, many a slender meal, and many a to-do with blustering captains of the Ordonnance. But with one of his light fingers, we may fancy that he took as good as he gave; for every rag of his tail, he would manage to indemnify himself upon the population in the shape of food, or wine, or ringing money; and his route would be traceable across France and Burgundy by housewives and innkeepers lamenting over petty thefts, like the track of a single human locust. A strange figure he must have cut in the eyes of the good country people: this ragged, blackguard city poet, with a smack of the Paris student, and a smack of the Paris street arab, posting along the highways, in rain or sun, among the green fields and vineyards. For himself, he had no taste for rural loveliness; green fields and vineyards would be mighty indifferent to Master Francis; but he would often have his tongue in his cheek at the simplicity of rustic dupes, and often, at city gates, he might stop to contemplate the gibbet with its swinging bodies, and hug himself on his escape.

How long he stayed at Roussillon, how far he became the protege of the Bourbons, to whom that town belonged, or when it was that he took part, under the auspices of Charles of Orleans, in a rhyming tournament, are matters that still remain in darkness, in spite of M. Longnon's diligent rummaging among archives. When we next find him, in summer 1461, alas! he is once more in durance: this time at Meun-sur-Loire, in the prisons of Thibault d'Aussigny, Bishop of Orleans. He had been lowered in a basket into a noisome pit, where he lay, all summer, gnawing hard crusts and railing upon fate. His teeth, he says, were like the teeth of a rake: a touch of haggard portraiture all the more real for being excessive and burlesque, and all the more proper to the man for being a caricature of his own misery. His eyes were "bandaged with thick walls." It might blow hurricanes overhead; the lightning might leap in high heaven; but no word of all this reached him in his noisome pit. Above all, he was fevered with envy and anger at the freedom of others; and his heart flowed over into curses as he thought of Thibault d'Aussigny, walking the streets in God's sunlight, and blessing people with extended fingers. So much we find sharply lined in his own poems. Why he was cast again into prison—how he had again managed to shave the gallows—this we know not, nor, from the destruction of authorities, are we ever likely to learn. But on October 2, 1461, or some day immediately preceding, the new King, Louis Eleventh, made his joyous entry into Meun. Now it was a part of the formality on such occasions for the new King to liberate certain prisoners; and so the basket was let down into Villon's pit, and hastily did Master Francis scramble in, and was most joyfully hauled up, and shot out, blinking and tottering, but once more a free man, into the blessed sun and wind. Now or never is the time for verses! Such a happy revolution would turn the head of a stocking-weaver, and set him jingling rhymes. And so—after a voyage to Paris, where he finds Montigny and De Cayeux clattering their bones upon the gibbet, and his three pupils roistering in Paris streets, "with their thumbs under their girdles"—down sits Master Francis to write his "Large Testament," and perpetuate his name in a sort of glorious ignominy.

THE "LARGE TESTAMENT."—Of this capital achievement and, with it, of Villon's style in general, it is here the place to speak. The "Large Testament" is a hurly-burly



of cynical and sentimental reflections about life, jesting legacies to friends and enemies, and, interspersed among these, many admirable ballades, both serious and absurd. With so free a design, no thought that occurred to him would need to be dismissed without expression; and he could draw at full length the portrait of his own bedeviled soul, and of the bleak and blackguardly world which was the theater of his exploits and sufferings. If the reader can conceive something between the slap-dash inconsequence of Byron's "Don Juan" and the racy humorous gravity and brief noble touches that distinguish the vernacular poems of Burns, he will have formed some idea of Villon's style. To the latter writer—except in the ballades, which are quite his own, and can be paralleled from no other language known to me—he bears a particular resemblance. In common with Burns he has a certain rugged compression, a brutal vivacity of epithet, a homely vigor, a delight in local personalities, and an interest in many sides of life, that are often despised and passed over by more effete and cultured poets. Both also, in their strong, easy colloquial way, tend to become difficult and obscure; the obscurity in the case of Villon passing at times into the absolute darkness of cant language. They are perhaps the only two great masters of expression who keep sending their readers to a glossary.

"Shall we not dare to say of a thief," asks Montaigne, "that he has a handsome leg?" It is a far more serious claim that we have to put forward in behalf of Villon. Beside that of his contemporaries, his writing, so full of color, so eloquent, so picturesque, stands out in an almost miraculous isolation. If only one or two of the chroniclers could have taken a leaf out of his book, history would have been a pastime, and the fifteenth century as present to our minds as the age of Charles Second. This gallows-bird was the one great writer of his age and country, and initiated modern literature for France. Boileau, long ago, in the period of perukes and snuff-boxes, recognized him as the first articulate poet in the language; and if we measure him, not by priority of merit, but living duration of influence, not on a comparison with obscure forerunners, but with great and famous successors, we shall install this ragged and disreputable figure in a far higher niche in glory's temple than was ever dreamed of by the critic. It is, in itself, a memorable fact that, before 1542, in the very dawn of printing, and while modern France was in the making, the works of Villon ran through seven different editions. Out of him flows much of Rabelais; and through Rabelais, directly and indirectly, a deep, permanent, and growing inspiration. Not only his style, but his callous pertinent way of looking upon the sordid and ugly sides of life, becomes every day a more specific feature in the literature of France. And only the other year, a work of some power appeared in Paris, and appeared with infinite scandal, which owed its whole inner significance and much of its outward form to the study of our rhyming thief.

The world to which he introduces us is, as before said, blackguardly and bleak. Paris swarms before us, full of famine, shame, and death; monks and the servants of great lords hold high wassail upon cakes and pastry; the poor man licks his lips before the baker's window; people with patched eyes sprawl all night under the stalls; chuckling Tabary transcribes an improper romance; bare-bosomed lasses and ruffling students swagger in the streets; the drunkard goes stumbling homeward; the graveyard is full of bones; and away on Montfaucon, Colin de Cayeux and Montigny hang dragged in the rain. Is there nothing better to be seen than sordid misery and worthless joys? Only where the poor old mother of the poet kneels in church below painted windows, and makes tremulous supplication to the Mother of God.

In our mixed world, full of green fields and happy lovers, where not long before Joan of Arc had led one of the highest and noblest lives in the whole story of mankind, this was all worth chronicling that our poet could perceive. His eyes were indeed sealed with his own filth. He dwelt all his life in a pit more noisome than the dungeon at Meun. In the moral world, also, there are large phenomena not cognizable out of holes and corners. Loud winds blow, speeding home deep-laden ships and sweeping rubbish from the earth; the lightning leaps and cleans the face of heaven; high purposes and brave passions shake and sublimates men's spirits; and meanwhile, in the narrow dungeon of his soul, Villon is mumbling crusts and picking vermin.

Along with this deadly gloom of outlook, we must take another characteristic of his work: its unrivaled insincerity. I can give no better similitude of this quality than I have given already: that he comes up with a whine, and runs away with a whoop and his finger to his nose. His pathos is that of a professional mendicant who should happen to be a man of genius; his levity that of a bitter street arab, full of bread. On a first reading, the pathetic passages pre-occupy the reader, and he is cheated out of an alms in the shape of sympathy. But when the thing is studied the illusion fades away: in the transitions, above all, we can detect the evil, ironical temper of the man; and instead of a flighty work, where many crude but genuine feelings tumble together for the mastery as in the lists of tournament, we are tempted to think of the "Large Testament" as of one long-drawn epical grimace, pulled by a merry-andrew, who has found a certain despicable eminence over human respect and human affections by perching himself astride upon the gallows. Between these two views, at best, all temperate judgments will be found to fall; and rather, as I imagine, toward the last.

There were two things on which he felt with perfect and, in one case, even threatening sincerity.

The first of these was an undisguised envy of those richer than himself. He was forever drawing a parallel, already exemplified from his own words, between the happy life of the well-to-do and the miseries of the poor. Burns, too proud and honest not to work, continued through all reverses to sing of poverty with a light, defiant note. Beranger waited till he was himself beyond the reach of want, before writing the "Old Vagabond" or "Jacques." Samuel Johnson, although he was very sorry to be poor, "was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty" in his ill days. Thus it is that brave men carry their crosses, and smile with the fox burrowing in their vitals. But Villon, who had not the courage to be poor with honesty, now whiningly implores our sympathy, now shows his teeth upon the dung-heap with an ugly snarl. He envies bitterly, envies passionately. Poverty, he protests, drives men to steal, as hunger makes the wolf sally from the forest. The poor, he goes on, will always have a carping word to say, or, if that outlet be denied, nourish rebellious thoughts. It is a calumny on the noble army of the poor. Thousands in a small way of life, ay, and even in the smallest, go through life with tenfold as much honor and dignity and peace of mind, as the rich gluttons whose dainties and state-beds awakened Villon's covetous temper. And every morning's sun sees thousands who pass whistling to their toil. But Villon was the "*mauvais pauvre*" defined by Victor Hugo, and in its English expression, so admirably stereotyped by Dickens. He was the first wicked sansculotte. He is the man of genius with the moleskin cap. He is mighty pathetic and beseeching here in the street, but I would not go down a dark road with him for a large consideration.

The second of the points on which he was genuine and emphatic was common to the Middle Ages; a deep and somewhat sniveling conviction of the transitory

nature of this life and the pity and horror of death. Old age and the grave, with some dark and yet half-skeptical terror of an after-world—these were ideas that clung about his bones like a disease. An old ape, as he says, may play all the tricks in its repertory, and none of them will tickle an audience into good humor. It is not the old jester who receives most recognition at a tavern party, but the young fellow, fresh and handsome, who knows the new slang, and carries off his vice with a certain air. Of this, as a tavern jester himself, he would be pointedly conscious. As for the women with whom he was best acquainted, his reflections on their old age, in all their harrowing pathos, shall remain in the original for me. Horace has disgraced himself to something the same tune; but what Horace throws out with an ill-favored laugh, Villon dwells on with an almost maudlin whimper.

It is in death that he finds his truest inspiration; in the swift and sorrowful change that overtakes beauty; in the strange revolution by which great fortunes and renowns are diminished to a handful of churchyard dust; and in the utter passing away of what was once lovable and mighty. It is in this that the mixed texture of his thought enables him to reach such poignant and terrible effects, and to enhance pity with ridicule, like a man cutting capers to a funeral march. It is in this, also, that he rises out of himself into the higher spheres of art. So, in the ballade by which he is best known, he rings the changes on names that once stood for beautiful and queenly women, and are now no more than letters and a legend. "Where are the snows of yester year?" runs the burden. And so, in another not so famous, he passes in review the different degrees of bygone men, from the Holy Apostles and the golden Emperor of the East, down to the heralds, pursuivants, and trumpeters, who also bore their part in the world's pageantries and ate greedily at great folks' tables: all this to the refrain of "So much carry the winds away!" Probably, there was some melancholy in his mind for a yet lower grade, and Montigny and Colin de Cayeux clattering their bones on Paris gibbet. Alas, and with so pitiful an experience of life, Villon can offer us nothing but terror and lamentation about death! No one has ever more skillfully communicated his own disenchantment; no one ever blown a more ear-piercing note of sadness. This unrepentant thief can attain neither to Christian confidence, nor to the spirit of the bright Greek saying, that whom the gods love die early. It is a poor heart, and a poorer age, that cannot accept the conditions of life with some heroic readiness.

. . . . .

The date of the "Large Testament" is the last date in the poet's biography. After having achieved that admirable and despicable performance, he disappears into the night from whence he came. How or when he died, whether decently in bed or trussed up to a gallows, remains a riddle for foolhardy commentators. It appears his health had suffered in the pit at Meun; he was thirty years of age and quite bald; with the notch in his under lip where Sermaise had struck him with the sword, and what wrinkles the reader may imagine. In default of portraits, this is all I have been able to piece together, and perhaps even the baldness should be taken as a figure of his destitution. A sinister dog, in all likelihood, but with a look in his eye, and the loose flexible mouth that goes with wit and an over-weening sensual temperament. Certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame.

## THE OPEN BOAT

A Tale intended to be after the fact. Being the Experience of Four Men  
from the Sunk Steamer "Commodore"

STEPHEN CRANE (1871-1900)

## I

None of them knew the colour of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colours of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks.

Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: "Gawd! That was a narrow clip." As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.

The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he command for a day or a decade, and this captain had on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

"Keep 'er a little more south, Billie," said he.

"A little more south, sir," said the oiler in the stern.

A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and, by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.

A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slaty wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.

In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtless have been weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the colour of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the colour of the waves that rolled toward them.

In disjointed sentences the cook and the correspondent argued as to the difference between a life-saving station and a house of refuge. The cook had said: "There's a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Light, and as soon as they see us, they'll come off in their boat and pick us up."

"As soon as who see us?" said the correspondent.

"The crew," said the cook.

"Houses of refuge don't have crews," said the correspondent. "As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don't carry crews."

"Oh yes, they do," said the cook.

"No, they don't," said the correspondent.

"Well, we're not there yet, anyhow," said the oiler, in the stern.

"Well," said the cook, "perhaps it's not a house of refuge that I'm thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light. Perhaps it's a life-saving station."

"We're not there yet," said the oiler, in the stern.

## II

As for the boat bounced from the top of each wave, the wind tore through the hair of the hatless men, and as the craft plopped her stern down again the spray slashed past them. The crest of each of these waves was a hill, from the top of which the men surveyed, for a moment, a broad tumultuous expanse, shining and wind-driven. It was probably splendid. It was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emerald and white and amber.

"Bully good thing it's an on-shore wind," said the cook. "If not, where would we be? Wouldn't have a show."

"That's right," said the correspondent.

The busy oiler nodded his assent.

Then the captain, in the bow, chuckled in a way that expressed humour, contempt, tragedy, all in one. "Do you think we've got much of a show now, boys?" said he.

Whereupon the three were silent, save for a trifle of hemming and hawing. To express any particular optimism at this time they felt to be childish and stupid, but

they all doubtless possessed this sense of the situation in their mind. A young man thinks doggedly at such times. On the other hand, the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.

"Oh, well," said the captain, soothing his children, "we'll get ashore all right."

But there was that in his tone which made them think, so the oiler quoth: "Yes! If this wind holds!"

The cook was bailing: "Yes! If we don't catch hell in the surf."

Canton flannel gulls flew near and far. Sometimes they sat down on the sea, near patches of brown seaweed that rolled over the waves with a movement like carpets on a line in a gale. The birds sat comfortably in groups, and they were envied by some in the dingey, for the wrath of the sea was no more to them than it was to a covey of prairie chickens a thousand miles inland. Often they came very close and stared at the men with black bead-like eyes. At these times they were uncanny and sinister in their unblinking scrutiny, and the men hooted angrily at them, telling them to be gone. One came, and evidently decided to alight on the top of the captain's head. The bird flew parallel to the boat and did not circle, but made short sidelong jumps in the air in chicken-fashion. His black eyes were wistfully fixed upon the captain's head. "Ugly brute," said the oiler to the bird. "You look as if you were made with a jackknife." The cook and the correspondent swore darkly at the creature. The captain naturally wished to knock it away with the end of the heavy painter; but he did not dare to do it, because anything resembling an emphatic gesture would have capsized this freighted boat, and so with his open hand, the captain gently and carefully waved the gull away. After it had been discouraged from the pursuit the captain breathed easier on account of his hair, and others breathed easier because the bird struck their minds at this time as being somehow gruesome and ominous.

In the meantime the oiler and the correspondent rowed. And also they rowed.

They sat together in the same scat, and each rowed an oar. Then the oiler took both oars; then the correspondent took both oars; then the oiler; then the correspondent. They rowed and they rowed. The very ticklish part of the business was when the time came for the reclining one in the stern to take his turn at the oars. By the very last star of truth, it is easier to steal eggs from under a hen than it was to change seats in the dingey. First the man in the stern slid his hand along the thwart and moved with care, as if he were of Sèvres. Then the man in the rowing seat slid his hand along the other thwart. It was all done with the most extraordinary care. As the two sidled past each other, the whole party kept watchful eyes on the coming wave, and the captain cried: "Look out now! Steady there!"

The brown mats of seaweed that appeared from time to time were like islands, bits of earth. They were travelling, apparently, neither one way nor the other. They were, to all intents, stationary. They informed the men in the boat that it was making progress slowly toward the land.

The captain, rearing cautiously in the bow, after the dingey soared on a great swell, said that he had seen the lighthouse at Mosquito Inlet. Presently the cook remarked that he had seen it. The correspondent was at the oars then, and for some reason he too wished to look at the lighthouse, but his back was toward the far shore and the waves were important, and for some time he could not seize an opportunity to turn his head. But at last there came a wave more gentle than the others, and when at the crest of it he swiftly scoured the western horizon.

"See it?" said the captain.

"No," said the correspondent slowly. "I didn't see anything."

"Look again," said the captain. He pointed. "It's exactly in that direction."

At the top of another wave, the correspondent did as he was bid, and this time his eyes chanced on a small still thing on the edge of the swaying horizon. It was precisely like the point of a pin. It took an anxious eye to find a lighthouse so tiny.

"Think we'll make it, captain?"

"If this wind holds and the boat don't swamp, we can't do much else," said the captain.

The little boat, lifted by each towering sea, and splashed viciously by the crests, made progress that in the absence of seaweed was not apparent to those in her. She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top up, at the mercy of five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her.

"Bail her, cook," said the captain serenely.

"All right, captain," said the cheerful cook.

### III

It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dingey. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.

"I wish we had a sail," remarked the captain. "We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest." So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.

Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed colour, and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.

At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. "We must be about opposite New Smyrna," said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. "Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago."

"Did they?" said the captain.

The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their old impetuous swooping at the dingey, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.

Shipwrecks are *apropos of nothing*. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dingey none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dingey, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.

For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.

"Take her easy, now, boys," said the captain. "Don't spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you'll need all your strength, because we'll sure have to swim for it. Take your time."

Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. "That's the house of refuge, sure," said the cook. "They'll see us before long, and come out after us."

The distant lighthouse reared high. "The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he's looking through a glass," said the captain. "He'll notify the life-saving people."

"None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck," said the oiler, in a low voice. "Else the lifeboat would be out hunting us."

Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. "We'll never be able to make the lighthouse now," said the captain. "Swing her head a little more north, Billie."

"A little more north, sir," said the oiler.

Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsman watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.

Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dingey like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scatheless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

#### IV

"Cook," remarked the captain, "there don't seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge."



"No," replied the cook. "Funny they don't see us!"

A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the eyes of the men. It was of low dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little grey length.

Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dingey northward. "Funny they don't see us," said the men.

The surf's roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. "We'll swamp sure," said everybody.

It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation's live-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dingey and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.

"Funny they don't see us."

The light-heartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.

"Well," said the captain, ultimately, "I suppose we'll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we'll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps."

And so the oiler, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscles. There was some thinking.

"If we don't all get ashore—" said the captain. "If we don't all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?"

They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: "If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men's fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd. . . . But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work." Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: "Just you drown me, and then hear what I call you!"

The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would have concluded that the dingey could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. "Boys," he said swiftly, "she won't live three minutes more, and we're too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?"

"Yes! Go ahead!" said the captain.

This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.

There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke. "Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now."

The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east. A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.

"What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain't they peaches?"

"Funny they haven't seen us."

"Maybe they think we're out here for sport! Maybe they think we're fishin'. Maybe they think we're damned fools."

It was a long afternoon. A changed tide tried to force them southward, but wind and wave said northward. Far ahead, where coastline, sea and sky formed their mighty angle, there were little dots which seemed to indicate a city on the shore.

"St. Augustine?"

The captain shook his head. "Too near Mosquito Inlet."

And the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed. Then the oiler rowed. It was a weary business. The human back can become the seat of more aches and pains than are registered in books for the composite anatomy of a regiment. It is a limited area, but it can become the theatre of innumerable muscular conflicts, tangles, wrenches, knots, and other comforts.

"Did you ever like to row, Billie?" asked the correspondent.

"No," said the oiler. "Hang it."

When one exchanged the rowing-seat for a place in the bottom of the boat, he suffered a bodily depression that caused him to be careless of everything save an obligation to wiggle one finger. There was cold sea-water swashing to and fro in the boat, and he lay in it. His head, pillowed on a thwart, was within an inch of the swirl of a wave crest, and sometimes a particularly obstreperous sea came in-board and drenched him once more. But these matters did not annoy him. It is almost certain that if the boat had capsized he would have tumbled comfortably out upon the ocean as if he felt sure that it was a great soft mattress.

"Look! There's a man on the shore!"

"Where?"

"There! See 'im? See 'im?"

"Yes, sure! He's walking along."

"Now he's stopped. Look! He's facing us!"

"He's waving at us!"

"So he is! By thunder!"

"Ah, now we're all right! Now we're all right! There'll be a boat out here for us in half an hour."

"He's going on. He's running. He's going up to that house there."

The remote beach seemed lower than the sea, and it required a searching glance to discern the little black figure. The captain saw a floating stick and they rowed to it. A bath-towel was by some weird chance in the boat, and, tying this on the stick, the captain waved it. The oarsman did not dare turn his head, so he was obliged to ask questions.

"What's he doing now?"

"He's standing still again. He's looking, I think. . . . There he goes again. Toward the house. . . . Now he's stopped again."

"Is he waving at us?"

"No, not now! he was, though."

"Look! There comes another man!"

"He's running."

"Look at him go, would you."

"Why, he's on a bicycle. Now he's met the other man. They're both waving at us. Look!"

"There comes something up the beach."

"What the devil is that thing?"

"Why, it looks like a boat."

"Why, certainly it's a boat."

"No, it's on wheels."

"Yes, so it is. Well, that must be the life-boat. They drag them along shore on a wagon."

"That's the life-boat, sure."

"No, by—, it's—it's an omnibus."

"I tell you it's a life-boat."

"It is not! It's an omnibus. I can see it plain. See? One of these big hotel omnibuses."

"By thunder, you're right. It's an omnibus, sure as fate. What do you suppose they are doing with an omnibus? Maybe they are going around collecting the life-crew, hey?"

"That's it, likely. Look! There's a fellow waving a little black flag. He's standing on the steps of the omnibus. There comes those other two fellows. Now they're all talking together. Look at the fellow with the flag. Maybe he ain't waving it."

"That ain't a flag, is it? That's his coat. Why, certainly, that's his coat."

"So it is. It's his coat. He's taken it off and is waving it around his head. But would you look at him swing it."

"Oh, say, there isn't any life-saving station there. That's just a winter resort hotel omnibus that has brought over some of the boarders to see us drown."

"What's that idiot with the coat mean? What's he signalling, anyhow?"

"It looks as if he were trying to tell us to go north. There must be a life-saving station up there."

"No! He thinks we're fishing. Just giving us a merry hand. See? Ah, there, Willie."

"Well, I wish I could make something out of those signals. What do you suppose he means?"

"He don't mean anything. He's just playing."

"Well, if he'd just signal us to try the surf again, or to go to sea and wait, or go north, or go south, or go to hell—there would be some reason in it. But look at him. He just stands there and keeps his coat revolving like a wheel. The ass!"

"There come more people."

"Now there's quite a mob. Look! Isn't that a boat?"

"Where? Oh, I see where you mean. No, that's no boat."

"That fellow is still waving his coat."

"He must think we like to see him do that. Why don't he quit it? It don't mean anything."

"I don't know. I think he is trying to make us go north. It must be that there's a life-saving station there somewhere."

"Say, he ain't tired yet. Look at 'im wave."

"Wonder how long he can keep that up. He's been revolving his coat ever since he caught sight of us. He's an idiot. Why aren't they getting men to bring a boat out? A fishing boat—one of those big yawls—could come out here all right. Why don't he do something?"

"Oh, it's all right, now."

"They'll have a boat out here for us in less than no time, now that they've seen us."

A faint yellow tone came into the sky over the low land. The shadows on the sea slowly deepened. The wind bore coldness with it, and the men began to shiver.

"Holy smoke!" said one, allowing his voice to express his impious mood, "if we keep on monkeying out here! If we've got to flounder out here all night!"

"Oh, we'll never have to stay here all night! Don't you worry. They've seen us now, and it won't be long before they'll come chasing out after us."

The shore grew dusky. The man waving a coat blended gradually into this gloom, and it swallowed in the same manner the omnibus and the group of people. The spray, when it dashed uproariously over the side, made the voyagers shrink, and swear like men who were being branded.

"I'd like to catch the chump who waved that coat. I feel like soaking him one, just for luck."

"Why? What did he do?"

"Oh, nothing, but then he seemed so damned cheerful."

In the meantime the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed, and then the oiler rowed. Grey-faced and bowed forward, they mechanically, turn by turn, plied the leaden oars. The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star appeared, just lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the west passed before the all-merging darkness, and the sea to the east was black. The land had vanished, and was expressed only by the low and drear thunder of the surf.

"If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?"

The patient captain, drooped over the water-jar, was sometimes obliged to speak to the oarsman.

"Keep her head up! Keep her head up!"

"Keep her head up, sir." The voices were weary and low.

This was surely a quiet evening. All save the oarsman lay heavily and listlessly in the boat's bottom. As for him, his eyes were just capable of noting the tall black waves that swept forward in a most sinister silence, save for an occasional subdued growl of a crest.

The cook's head was on a thwart, and he looked without interest at the water under his nose. He was deep in other scenes. Finally he spoke. "Billie," he murmured, dreamfully, "what kind of pie do you like best?"

v

"Pie," said the oiler and the correspondent, agitatedly. "Don't talk about those things, blast you!"

"Well," said the cook, "I was just thinking about ham sandwiches, and—"

A night on the sea in an open boat is a long night. As darkness settled finally, the shine of the light, lifting from the sea in the south, changed to full gold. On the northern horizon a new light appeared, a small bluish gleam on the edge of the waters. These two lights were the furniture of the world. Otherwise there was nothing but waves.

Two men huddled in the stern, and distances were so magnificent in the dingey that the rower was enabled to keep his feet partly warmed by thrusting them under his companions. Their legs indeed extended far under the rowing-seat until they touched the feet of the captain forward. Sometimes, despite the efforts of the tired oarsman, a wave came piling into the boat, an icy wave of the night, and the chilling water soaked them anew. They would twist their bodies for a moment and groan, and sleep the dead sleep once more, while the water in the boat gurgled about them as the craft rocked.

The plan of the oiler and the correspondent was for one to row until he lost the ability, and then arouse the other from his sea-water couch in the bottom of the boat.

The oiler plied the oars until his head drooped forward, and the overpowering sleep blinded him. And he rowed yet afterward. Then he touched a man in the bottom of the boat, and called his name. "Will you spell me for a little while?" he said, meekly.

"Sure, Billic," said the correspondent, awakening and dragging himself to a sitting position. They exchanged places carefully, and the oiler, cuddling down in the sea-water at the cook's side, seemed to go to sleep instantly.

The particular violence of the sea had ceased. The waves came without snarling. The obligation of the man at the oars was to keep the boat headed so that the tilt of the rollers would not capsize her, and to preserve her from filling when the crests rushed past. The black waves were silent and hard to be seen in the darkness. Often one was almost upon the boat before the oarsman was aware.

In a low voice the correspondent addressed the captain. He was not sure that the captain was awake, although this iron man seemed to be always awake. "Captain, shall I keep her making for that light north, sir?"

The same steady voice answered him. "Yes. Keep it about two points off the port bow."

The cook had tied a life-belt around himself in order to get even the warmth which this clumsy cork contrivance could donate, and he seemed almost stove-like when a rower, whose teeth invariably chattered wildly as soon as he ceased his labour, dropped down to sleep.

The correspondent, as he rowed, looked down at the two men sleeping underfoot. The cook's arm was around the oiler's shoulders, and, with their fragmentary clothing and haggard faces, they were the babes of the sea, a grotesque rendering of the old babes in the wood.

Later he must have grown stupid at his work, for suddenly there was a growling of water, and a crest came with a roar and a swash into the boat, and it was a wonder that it did not set the cook afloat in his life-belt. The cook continued to sleep, but the oiler sat up, blinking his eyes and shaking with the new cold.

"Oh, I'm awful sorry, Billie," said the correspondent, contritely.

"That's all right, old boy," said the oiler, and lay down again and was asleep.

Presently it seemed that even the captain dozed, and the correspondent thought that he was the one man afloat on all the oceans. The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end.

There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife.

Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with the open mouth and looked at the sea.

Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail.

The correspondent looked over his shoulder at the captain. His face was hidden, and he seemed to be asleep. He looked at the babes of the sea. They certainly were asleep. So, being bereft of sympathy, he leaned a little way to one side and swore softly into the sea.

But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the whiroo of the dark fin. The speed and power of the thing was greatly to be admired. It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile.

The presence of this biding thing did not affect the man with the same horror that it would if he had been a picnicker. He simply looked at the sea dully and swore in an undertone.

Nevertheless, it is true that he did not wish to be alone with the thing. He wished one of his companions to awaken by chance and keep him company with it. But the captain hung motionless over the water-jar, and the oiler and the cook in the bottom of the boat were plunged in slumber.

## VI

"If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?"

During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard. The man felt it would be a crime most unnatural. Other people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—

When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples. Any visible expression of nature would surely be pelleted with his jeers.

Then, if there be no tangible thing to hoot he feels, perhaps, the desire to confront a personification and indulge in pleas, bowed to one knee, and with hands supplicant, saying: "Yes, but I love myself."

A high cold star on a winter's night is the word he feels that she says to him. Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation.

The men in the dingey had not discussed these matters, but each had, no doubt, reflected upon them in silence and according to his mind. There was seldom any expression upon their faces save the general one of complete weariness. Speech was devoted to the business of the boat.

To chime the notes of his emotion, a verse mysteriously entered the correspondent's head. He had even forgotten that he had forgotten this verse, but it suddenly was in his mind.

A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,  
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of woman's tears;  
But a comrade stood beside him, and he took that comrade's hand,  
And he said: "I shall never see my own, my native land."

In his childhood, the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as important. Myriads of his school-fellows had informed him of the soldier's plight, but the dinning had naturally ended by making him perfectly indifferent. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter for sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil's point.

Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. It was no longer merely a picture of a few throes in the breast of a poet, meanwhile drinking tea and warming his feet at the grate; it was an actuality—stern, mournful, and fine.

The correspondent plainly saw the soldier. He lay on the sand with his feet out straight and still. While his pale left hand was upon his chest in an attempt to thwart the going of his life, the blood came between his fingers. In the far Algerian distance, a city of low square forms was set against a sky that was faint with the last sunset hues. The correspondent, plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.

The thing which had followed the boat and waited had evidently grown bored at the delay. There was no longer to be heard the slash of the cutwater, and there was no longer the flame of the long trail. The light in the north still glimmered, but it was apparently no nearer to the boat. Sometimes the boom of the surf rang in the correspondent's ears, and he turned the craft seaward then and rowed harder. Southward, someone had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering, roseate reflection upon the bluff back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat. The wind came stronger, and sometimes a wave suddenly raged out like a mountain-cat, and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest.

The captain, in the bow, moved on his water-jar and sat erect. "Pretty long night," he observed to the correspondent. He looked at the shore. "Those life-saving people take their time."

"Did you see that shark playing around?"

"Yes, I saw him. He was a big fellow, all right."

"Wish I had known you were awake."

Later the correspondent spoke into the bottom of the boat.

"Billie!" There was a slow and gradual disentanglement. "Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

As soon as the correspondent touched the cold comfortable sea-water in the bottom of the boat, and had huddled close to the cook's life-belt he was deep in sleep, despite the fact that his teeth played all the popular airs. This sleep was so good to him that

it was but a moment before he heard a voice call his name in a tone that demonstrated the last stages of exhaustion. "Will you spell me?"

"Sure, Billie."

The light in the north had mysteriously vanished, but the correspondent took his course from the wide-awake captain.

Later in the night they took the boat farther out to sea, and the captain directed the cook to take one oar at the stern and keep the boat facing the seas. He was to call out if he should hear the thunder of the surf. This plan enabled the oiler and the correspondent to get respite together. "We'll give those boys a chance to get into shape again," said the captain. They curled down and, after a few preliminary chatterings and trembles, slept once more the dead sleep. Neither knew they had bequeathed to the cook the company of another shark, or perhaps the same shark.

As the boat caroused on the waves, spray occasionally bumped over the side and gave them a fresh soaking, but this had no power to break their repose. The ominous slash of the wind and the water affected them as it would have affected mummies.

"Boys," said the cook, with the notes of every reluctance in his voice, "she's drifted in pretty close. I guess one of you had better take her to sea again." The correspondent, aroused, heard the crash of the toppled crests.

As he was rowing, the captain gave him some whisky-and-water, and this steadied the chills out of him. "If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar—"

At last there was a short conversation.

"Billie . . . Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

## VII

When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the sea and the sky were each of the grey hue of the dawning. Later, carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendour, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves.

On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall white windmill reared above them. No man, nor dog, nor bicycle appeared on the beach. The cottages might have formed a deserted village.

The voyagers scanned the shore. A conference was held in the boat. "Well," said the captain, "if no help is coming, we might better try a run through the surf right away. If we stay out here much longer we will be too weak to do anything for ourselves at all." The others silently acquiesced in this reasoning. The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is, perhaps, plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.



"Now, boys," said the captain, "she is going to swamp sure. All we can do is to work her in as far as possible, and then when she swamps, pile out and scramble for the beach. Keep cool now, and don't jump until she swamps sure."

The oiler took the oars. Over his shoulders he scanned the surf. "Captain," he said, "I think I'd better bring her about, and keep her head-on to the seas and back her in."

"All right, Billie," said the captain. "Back her in." The oiler swung the boat then and, seated in the stern, the cook and the correspondent were obliged to look over their shoulders to contemplate the lonely and indifferent shore.

The monstrous in-shore rollers heaved the boat high until the men were again enabled to see the white sheets of water scudding up the slanted beach. "We won't get in very close," said the captain. Each time a man could wrest his attention from the rollers, he turned his glance toward the shore, and in the expression of the eyes during this contemplation there was a singular quality. The correspondent, observing the others, knew that they were not afraid, but the full meaning of their glances was shrouded.

As for himself, he was too tired to grapple fundamentally with the fact. He tried to coerce his mind into thinking of it, but the mind was dominated at this time by the muscles, and the muscles said they did not care. It merely occurred to him that if he should drown it would be a shame.

There were no hurried words, no pallor, no plain agitation. The men simply looked at the shore. "Now, remember to get well clear of the boat when you jump," said the captain.

Seaward the crest of a roller suddenly fell with a thunderous crash, and the long white comber came roaring down upon the boat.

"Steady now," said the captain. The men were silent. They turned their eyes from the shore to the comber and waited. The boat slid up the incline, leaped at the furious top, bounced over it, and swung down the long back of the waves. Some water had been shipped and the cook bailed it out.

But the next crest crashed also. The tumbling, boiling flood of white water caught the boat and whirled it almost perpendicular. Water swarmed in from all sides. The correspondent had his hands on the gunwale at this time, and when the water entered at that place he swiftly withdrew his fingers, as if he objected to wetting them.

The little boat, drunken with this weight of water, reeled and snuggled deeper into the sea.

"Bail her out, cook! Bail her out," said the captain.

"All right, captain," said the cook.

"Now, boys, the next one will do for us, sure," said the oiler. "Mind to jump clear of the boat."

The third wave moved forward, huge, furious, implacable. It fairly swallowed the dingey, and almost simultaneously the men tumbled into the sea. A piece of life-belt had lain in the bottom of the boat, and as the correspondent went overboard he held this to his chest with his left hand.

The January water was icy, and he reflected immediately that it was colder than he had expected to find it off the coast of Florida. This appeared to his dazed mind as a fact important enough to be noted at the time. The coldness of the water was sad; it was tragic. This fact was somehow so mixed and confused with his opinion of his own situation that it seemed almost a proper reason for tears. The water was cold.

When he came to the surface he was conscious of little but the noisy water. Afterward he saw his companions in the sea. The oiler was ahead in the race. He was swimming strongly and rapidly. Off to the correspondent's left, the cook's great white and corked back bulged out of the water, and in the rear the captain was hanging with his one good hand to the keel of the overturned dingey.

There is a certain immovable quality to a shore, and the correspondent wondered at it amid the confusion of the sea.

It seemed also very attractive, but the correspondent knew that it was a long journey, and he paddled leisurely. The piece of life-preserver lay under him, and sometimes he whirled down the incline of a wave as if he were on a hand-sled.

But finally he arrived at a place in the sea where travel was beset with difficulty. He did not pause swimming to inquire what manner of current had caught him, but there his progress ceased. The shore was set before him like a bit of scenery on a stage, and he looked at it and understood with his eyes each detail of it.

As the cook passed, much farther to the left, the captain was calling to him, "Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar."

"All right, sir." The cook turned on his back, and, paddling with an oar, went ahead as if he were a canoe.

Presently the boat also passed to the left of the correspondent with the captain clinging with one hand to the keel. He would have appeared like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat. The correspondent marvelled that the captain could still hold to it.

They passed on, nearer to shore—the oiler, the cook, the captain—and following them went the water-jar, bouncing gaily over the seas.

The correspondent remained in the grip of this strange new enemy—a current. The shore, with its white slope of sand and its green bluff, topped with little silent cottages, was spread like a picture before him. It was very near to him then, but he was impressed, as one who in a gallery looks at a scene from Brittany or Algiers.

He thought: "I am going to drown? Can it be possible? Can it be possible? Can it be possible?" Perhaps an individual must consider his own death to be the final phenomenon of nature.

But later a wave perhaps whirled him out of this small deadly current, for he found suddenly that he could again make progress toward the shore. Later still, he was aware that the captain, clinging with one hand to the keel of the dingey, had his face turned away from the shore and toward him, and was calling his name. "Come to the boat! Come to the boat!"

In his struggle to reach the captain and the boat, he reflected that when one gets properly wearied, drowning must really be a comfortable arrangement, a cessation of hostilities accompanied by a large degree of relief, and he was glad of it, for the main thing in his mind for some moments had been horror of the temporary agony. He did not wish to be hurt.

Presently he saw a man running along the shore. He was undressing with most remarkable speed. Coat, trousers, shirt, everything flew magically off him.

"Come to the boat," called the captain.

"All right, captain." As the correspondent paddled, he saw the captain let himself down to bottom and leave the boat. Then the correspondent performed his one little marvel of the voyage. A large wave caught him and flung him with ease and supreme speed completely over the boat and far beyond it. It struck him even then as an event

in gymnastics, and a true miracle of the sea. An overturned boat in the surf is not a plaything to a swimming man.

The correspondent arrived in water that reached only to his waist, but his condition did not enable him to stand for more than a moment. Each wave knocked him into a heap, and the under-tow pulled at him.

Then he saw the man who had been running and undressing, and undressing and running, come bounding into the water. He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded toward the captain, but the captain waved him away, and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked, naked as a tree in winter, but a halo was about his head, and he shone like a saint. He gave a strong pull, and a long drag, and a bully heave at the correspondent's hand. The correspondent, schooled in the minor formulæ, said: "Thanks, old man." But suddenly the man cried: "What's that?" He pointed a swift finger. The correspondent said: "Go."

In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea.

The correspondent did not know all that transpired afterward. When he achieved safe ground he fell, striking the sand with each particular part of his body. It was as if he had dropped from a roof, but the thud was grateful to him.

It seems that instantly the beach was populated with men, with blankets, clothes, and flasks, and women with coffee-pots and all the remedies sacred to their minds. The welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous, but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land's welcome for it could only be the different and sinister hospitality of the grave.

When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.

## NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE WRECK OF THE COMMODORE

### I

[*New York Press*, Monday, January 4, 1897]

#### MORE OF THE FILIBUSTERS SAFE

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COMMODORE'S WRECKED SEAMEN STRUGGLE FOR LIFE IN A HEAVY SURF

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#### STEPHEN CRANE, NOVELIST, SWIMS ASHORE

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YOUNG NEW YORK WRITER ASTONISHES THE SEA DOGS BY HIS COURAGE  
IN THE FACE OF DEATH

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#### CUBANS ASSERT A TRAITOR SUNK THE VESSEL

FEDERAL AUTHORITIES ORDER OUT THE THREE FRIENDS TO AID IN THE WORK OF RESCUE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Jan. 3.—Seventeen men accounted for out of the twenty-eight on the Cuban filibuster *Commodore* is the record here to-night, with a slight chance of seven more yet alive. Five men came ashore at Daytona this noon—Captain Murphy, Stephen Crane, the novelist, the cook and two sailors. One of the latter, William Higgins of Rhode Island, died soon after reaching land from the effects of severe wounds received while landing through the high surf. His family live in Boston. One of the survivors gives the following graphic details:

##### STORY OF A SURVIVOR

"The tug sank at 7 o'clock Saturday morning, twenty miles off New Smyrna, and the Americans on board remained till the last moment. A traitor in Spanish pay was the cause of the leak. Should he be found he will be dealt with severely. The leak was discovered at about 3 a.m. The pumps would not work long, though they did good service for a while.

"Finding that the water gained on us, the captain called all hands and at 3 the vessel was turned shoreward. As she still continued to sink, two boat loads of Cubans,

twelve men in all, were first sent off. One boat containing six men was capsized, and I am afraid that the men were lost. The Americans all remained on the tug till she sank. One of the lifeboats containing nine men was swamped and a hastily constructed raft was made up from materials thrown to them, and they then disappeared from our sight. Captain Murphy, Stephen Crane, the novelist and correspondent, Higgins, myself and one other sailor took to the ten-foot dingy at the last moment. We tried to save the men in the water around us, but the heavy seas and blinding wind swept them from us. The spray was so thick that we could see only a few rods. Their cries were heartrending, but we could do nothing, it requiring all our efforts to keep our small boat right side up.

##### THROWN INTO THE BREAKERS

"For twenty-four hours we battled with the heavy seas, constantly bailing, and at last land was sighted. As we attempted to land the wind drove us into the breakers and in an instant the boat was overturned and we were struggling for life. For an hour almost we battled for life, and then managed to crawl out on the sands, almost

dead. Captain Murphy saved Mr. Crane by helping him when a cramp caught him. Higgins was struck on the head by floating

timbers and he died soon after landing. He was a good sailor and a brave man. He worked to save his comrades." . . .

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### PRAISE FOR CRANE

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DAYTONA, Fla., Jan. 3.—"That newspaper feller was a nervy man," said the cook of the ill-fated *Commodore* to-night in reference to Stephen Crane, the novelist, who is after material for stories. "He didn't seem to know what fear was. He was down on the ship's papers as an able seaman at \$20 a month. When we started out he insisted upon doing a seaman's work, and he did it well, too. When aroused Saturday morning he never quailed when he came on deck and saw the foaming and raging billows and knew that the vessel was sinking and that it was only a question of time when we would be at the mercy of the terrible sea in a small ten-foot dingy.

"He stood on the bridge with glasses in hand, sweeping the horizon in an effort to get a glimpse of land. He had one of the sailor lads above him on the short mast, and once he mounted the rigging to get a better view. I thought sure that he would be swept off as the vessel rolled from side to side, her yards almost touching the water as she rolled down. One of the Cubans got rattled and tried to run out one of the boats before time, and Crane let him have it right from the shoulder, and the man rolled down the leeway, stunned for the moment.

"When the boats were launched he was the last one, except Captain Murphy, to get in, and his nerve greatly encouraged all hands. In the small dingy he rowed as well as the others, notwithstanding he was so worn out that he could hardly hold his oar straight in the terrific seas. At the last moment he rose on his seat, and, seeing the big wave coming that overthrew us, cried out, 'Look out, boys, there's trouble for us. Jump, captain!'

### SAVES A DROWNING MAN

"Both he and Captain Murphy were thrown out on the same side. Crane was partially thrown under the overturned boat and but for Captain Murphy's readiness in catching him by the collar he would have gone under. We all battled there in the water for hours, it seemed to us. Crane was a good swimmer, and he really saved one of the sailors, as the man could not swim a stroke, and Crane had to keep him up by the aid of an oar. These newspaper fellers have got spunk, if they do tell such awful woppers at times," concluded the cook, as he took another big swig of the "life preservative" provided by the good people here.

## II

[*New York Press*, Tuesday, January 5, 1897]

### COMMODORE SAID TO BE OVERLADEN

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MANY THINK THAT FACT, AND NOT TREACHERY, SUNK HER

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### FOUR MORE MEN RESCUED

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HALF-FAMISHED FILIBUSTERS LAND AT PORT ORANGE—CAPTAIN MURPHY COMPLIMENTS CRANE. . . .

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### CAPTAIN MURPHY TALKS

. . . Captain Murphy had his arm in a sling, but otherwise seemed all right. All of them looked tired and worn out.

The captain paid a marked compliment to his men for their orderly conduct. He said that Higgins was a game man, and

fought hard for his life and to aid his ship-mates. Higgins was buried at Daytona yesterday.

Captain Murphy, in response to a direct question, answered evasively as to the report of the treachery, and stated that the leaks were not there early Friday evening, but were there at midnight.

Cubans here feel much dispirited over the sad affair, and the terrible ending of the expedition from which so much was expected.

#### JOKES AMID DANGER

"His shoes, new ones, were slippery on the deck, and he took them off and tossed them overboard, saying, with a laugh: 'Well, captain, I guess I won't need them if we have to swim.' He stood on the deck by me all the while, smoking his cigarette, and aided me greatly while the boats were getting off. When in the dingey he suggested putting up the overcoat for a sail, and he took his turn at the oars or holding up the oar mast.

#### CRANE'S SPLENDID GRIT

"That man Crane is the spunkiest fellow out," said Captain Murphy to-night to The Press correspondent, in speaking of the wreck and incidents pertaining to it. "The sea was so rough that even old sailors got seasick when we struck the open sea after leaving the bar, but Crane behaved like a born sailor. He and I were about the only ones not affected by the big seas which tossed us about. As we went south he sat in the pilot house with me, smoking and telling yarns. When the leak was discovered he was the first man to volunteer aid.

#### TRIES TO SAVE HIGGINS

"When we went over I called to him to see that his life preserver was on all right and he replied in his usual tones, saying that he would obey orders. He was under the boat once, but got out in some way. He held up Higgins when the latter got so terribly tired and endeavored to bring him in but the sailor was so far gone that he could hardly help himself. When we were thrown up by the waves, Crane was the first man to stagger up the beach looking for houses. He's a thoroughbred," concluded the captain, "and a brave man, too, with plenty of grit."

### III

[*Florida Times-Union*, Tuesday, January 5, 1897]

#### CAPTAIN MURPHY'S SHIPWRECKED CREW

TWENTY MEN ARE NOW SAFE IN JACKSONVILLE WITH FRIENDS.

BUT EIGHT OTHERS MAY BE AT THE BOTTOM

STORY OF THE WRECK OF THE COMMODORE TOLD BY THE COMMANDER OF THE ILL-FATED VESSEL

THERE IS STILL SOME TALK OF TREACHERY

THREE MEN WERE DROWNED AS THE STEAMER SUNK—ONE DIED ON THE BEACH AND FIVE ARE AT SEA ON A RAFT—THE NEWARK AND THREE FRIENDS ARE STILL LOOKING FOR THEM, BUT THERE IS LITTLE OR NO HOPE THAT ANY MORE WILL BE SAVED.

... Captain Murphy's story is as follows:

"The engineer reported to me, about midnight, that the vessel was gaining water in

her hold and that he was unable to get the pumps to work. They had tried to get the water out, but the pumps would not heave the water. The pipe was evidently choked

or the suction gone. It is customary to keep the water clear of the hold. All necessary was to run the steam pumps now and then. If the water is allowed to get up into the coal, the coal is washed down and chokes the pumps. All the water that entered the ship was in the engine room."

"Was it treachery, do you think?" asked the Times-Union reporter.

"No, I don't think so. It was neglect, more than anything else.

"I gave the order to use the buckets; also an order to pile into the furnace wood, oil and alcohol, hoping to get up sufficient steam to run into Mosquito Inlet, about eighteen miles almost due west of us. The men used the buckets with a will. None stood back, but to our chagrin the water gained upon us slowly and surely, and we had not proceeded three miles when the fires were quenched. There was no hope then of saving the ship. I let go the anchor to get her head to the sea and told the men to quietly proceed to man the boats. We got two of the boats off. They contained all the Cubans.

"One boat was in command of Julio Rodriguez Baz, and those with him were Manuel Gonzalez, Luis Sierra Mederos and Jesus Alvarez.

"The other, in command of Paul F. Rojo, contained Ricardo Delgado, Felix de los Rios, Emelio Marquez, Ventura Linares, Romeo Hernandez, J. Francisco Blanco, Jose Hernandez, T. Benecenor, Lion Soldera, Gabriel Martinez and Santingo Diaz. Senor Baz's boat stood by for a considerable time to render us assistance, but finally, as we had boats sufficient for the rescue of all those left aboard, we told them to go ahead. Later on we launched the ship's boat, with seven men, in charge of Mate Grane. I told all those to go who desired to do so. All went except Mr. Crane, a brave little gentleman, Steward Montgomery and William Higgins. I intended to stand by the ship and then put ashore in the dingy. Later on we also embarked. We had proceeded but a few yards when we heard a cry from the ship:

#### ONE BOAT STOVE IN

"The big boat is stove!' They were also flying a distress flag.

"I don't know how this happened unless the mate returned and attempted to get some article that he had forgotten. We immediately put back in the dingy, and I

told the men to construct a raft. They made three and got on these. Meanwhile, our little boat was remaining distant about 200 yards.

"Finally, they begged us to take them in tow. We put back against the waves and wind and made a towline fast. The first sea nearly filled our boat, and we were compelled to let go and bail our own craft dry. We went back again and once more made fast, but the first sea parted the rafts and broke our towline. The rafts all parted and were scattered. I told them to return to the vessel and make another raft while I bailed out. When fifty yards away, the vessel went down broadside. Three men went down with her, like heroes, with no cry of despair, not a murmur. I remained by the rafts twenty minutes longer, but as the boat was being filled by almost every sea, and as the wind was constantly increasing in force, we allowed our boat to go whither the elements carried her.

#### HOW THEY LANDED

"Saturday afternoon at 4 o'clock, we came in sight of the coast north of Mosquito Inlet. We saw people on shore and I flew a flag of distress, and repeatedly fired my pistol to attract their attention. I do not see how they could have failed to see us and appreciate our perilous position, for we were only a half mile from shore. Feeling certain that we had been seen, and thinking that they would send to us a staunch surf boat, we waited at the spot, pulling like Trojans against the heavy sea and wind all that afternoon and all that night. I do not see now, looking back upon it, how human strength could have successfully contended against the fierce odds of nature. We had a little store of brandy and this stood us in good stead. The next morning we found ourselves off the beach opposite Daytona, and seeing no one, resolved to make one last desperate effort with our little remaining strength to reach shore through the breakers. I gave one life belt to the steward and one to Mr. Crane. (The captain does not say that he, with a badly injured arm and shoulder, took none himself.) The sea upset the boat and washed us all away. I grabbed it and got on the bottom, but she was rolled over again. Higgins tried to swim, but sank. I tried to encourage him, and he made another attempt. The boat went over again, and I saw no more of him until his corpse came up on the beach.

## DEATH OF HIGGINS

"John Getchell, one of nature's noble-men, who lives upon the beach, saw our dreadful predicament. He stripped to the skin and plunged into the surf and helped the steward and Mr. Crane in. I was safe in shallow water. I then saw Higgins' body on the wet sand. We rolled him and made every effort to bring him to life, but unfortunately failed. Poor fellow, he was brave and did his duty faithfully.

"We had not been on the beach long before the good women of the town came to us with hot coffee and all kinds of restoratives. Their attentions warmed a man's heart to the appreciation of human charity. Not one of these women came to us without some present of food, clothing, and all with offers of shelter. The people of Daytona buried poor Higgins at their own expense."

## IV

[*New York Press*, Thursday, January 7, 1897]

## STEPHEN CRANE'S OWN STORY

HE TELLS HOW THE COMMODORE WAS WRECKED AND HOW HE ESCAPED

## FEAR-CRAZED NEGRO NEARLY SWAMPS BOAT

YOUNG WRITER COMPELLED TO WORK IN STIFLING ATMOSPHERE OF THE FIRE ROOM

## BRAVERY OF CAPTAIN MURPHY AND HIGGINS

TRIED TO TOW THEIR COMPANIONS WHO WERE ON THE RAFT—  
LAST DASH FOR THE SHORE THROUGH THE SURF.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Jan. 6.—It was the afternoon of New Year's. The Commodore lay at her dock in Jacksonville and negro stevedores processioned steadily toward her with box after box of ammunition and bundle after bundle of rifles. Her hatch, like the mouth of a monster, engulfed them. It might have been the feeding time of some legendary creature of the sea. It was in broad daylight and the crowd of gleeful Cubans on the pier did not forbear to sing the strange patriotic ballads of their island.

Everything was perfectly open. The Commodore was cleared with a cargo of arms and munition for Cuba. There was none of that extreme modesty about the proceeding which had marked previous departures of the famous tug. She loaded up as placidly as if she were going to carry oranges to New York, instead of Remingtons to Cuba. Down the river, furthermore, the revenue cutter Boutwell, the old isosceles triangle that protects United States interests

in the St. John's, lay at anchor, with no sign of excitement aboard her.

## EXCHANGING FAREWELLS

On the decks of the Commodore there were exchanges of farewells in two languages. Many of the men who were to sail upon her had many intimates in the old Southern town, and we who had left our friends in the remote North received our first touch of melancholy on witnessing these strenuous and earnest good-bys.

It seems, however, that there was more difficulty at the custom house. The officers of the ship and the Cuban leaders were detained there until a mournful twilight settled upon the St. John's, and through a heavy fog the lights of Jacksonville blinked dimly. Then at last the Commodore swung clear of the dock, amid a tumult of good-bys. As she turned her bow toward the distant sea the Cubans ashore cheered and



cheered. In response the Commodore gave three long blasts of her whistle, which even to this time impressed me with their sadness. Somehow, they sounded as wails.

Then at last we began to feel like filibusters. I don't suppose that the most stolid brain could contrive to believe that there is not a mere trifle of danger in filibustering, and so as we watched the lights of Jacksonville swing past us and heard the regular thump, thump, thump of the engines we did considerable reflecting.

But I am sure that there were no hifalutin emotions visible upon any of the faces which confronted the speeding shore. In fact, from cook's boy to captain, we were all enveloped in a gentle satisfaction and cheerfulness. But less than two miles from Jacksonville, this atrocious fog caused the pilot to ram the bow of the Commodore hard upon the mud and in this ignominious position we were compelled to stay until daybreak.

#### HELP FROM THE BOUTWELL

It was to all of us more than a physical calamity. We were now no longer filibusters. We were men on a ship stuck in the mud. A certain mental somersault was made once more necessary.

But word had been sent to Jacksonville to the captain of the revenue cutter Boutwell, and Captain Kilgore turned out promptly and generously fired up his old triangle, and came at full speed to our assistance. She dragged us out of the mud, and again we headed for the mouth of the river. The revenue cutter pounded along a half mile astern of us, to make sure that we did not take on board at some place along the river men for the Cuban army.

This was the early morning of New Year's Day, and the fine golden southern sunlight fell full upon the river. It flashed over the ancient Boutwell, until her white sides gleamed like pearl, and her rigging was spun into little threads of gold.

Cheers greeted the old Commodore from passing ship and from the shore. It was a cheerful, almost merry, beginning to our voyage. At Mayport, however, we changed our river pilot for a man who could take her to open sea, and again the Commodore was beached. The Boutwell was fussing around us in her venerable way, and, upon seeing our predicament, she came again to assist us, but this time, with engines reversed, the Commodore dragged herself

away from the grip of the sand and again headed for the open sea.

The captain of the revenue cutter grew curious. He hailed the Commodore: "Are you fellows going to sea to-day?"

Captain Murphy of the Commodore called back: "Yes, sir."

And then as the whistle of the Commodore saluted him, Captain Kilgore doffed his cap and said: "Well, gentlemen, I hope you have a pleasant cruise," and this was our last word from shore.

When the Commodore came to enormous rollers that flee over the bar a certain light-heartedness departed from the ship's company.

#### SLEEP IMPOSSIBLE

As darkness came upon the waters, the Commodore was a broad, flaming path of blue and silver phosphorescence, and as her stout bow lunged at the great black waves she threw flashing, roaring cascades to either side. And all that was to be heard was the rhythmic and mighty pounding of the engines. Being an inexperienced filibuster, the writer had undergone considerable mental excitement since the starting of the ship, and in consequence he had not yet been to sleep and so I went to the first mate's bunk to indulge myself in all the physical delights of holding one's-self in bed. Every time the ship lurched I expected to be fired through a bulkhead, and it was neither amusing nor instructive to see in the dim light a certain accursed valise aiming itself at the top of my stomach with every lurch of the vessel.

#### THE COOK IS HOPEFUL

The cook was asleep on a bench in the galley. He is of a portly and noble exterior, and by means of a checker board he had himself wedged on this bench in such a manner the motion of the ship would be unable to dislodge him. He woke as I entered the galley and delivered himself of some dolorous sentiments: "God," he said in the course of his observations, "I don't feel right about this ship, somehow. It strikes me that something is going to happen to us. I don't know what it is, but the old ship is going to get it in the neck, I think."

"Well, how about the men on board of her?" said I. "Are any of us going to get out, prophet?"

"Yes," said the cook. "Sometimes I have these damned feelings come over me, and they are always right, and it seems to me, somehow, that you and I will both get and meet again somewhere, down at Coney Island, perhaps, or some place like that."

#### ONE MAN HAS ENOUGH

Finding it impossible to sleep, I went back to the pilot house. An old seaman, Tom Smith, from Charleston, was then at the wheel. In the darkness I could not see Tom's face, except at those times when he leaned forward to scan the compass and the dim light from the box came upon his weatherbeaten features.

"Well, Tom," said I, "how do you like filibustering?"

He said "I think I am about through with it. I've been in a number of these expeditions and the pay is good, but I think if I ever get back safe this time I will cut it."

I sat down in the corner of the pilot house and almost went to sleep. In the meantime the captain came on duty and he was standing near me when the chief engineer rushed up the stairs and cried hurriedly to the captain that there was something wrong in the engine room. He and the captain departed swiftly.

I was drowsing there in my corner when the captain returned, and, going to the door of the little room directly back of the pilot-house, he cried to the Cuban leader:

"Say, can't you get those fellows to work. I can't talk their language and I can't get them started. Come on and get them going."

#### HELPS IN THE FIREROOM

The Cuban leader turned to me and said: "Go help in the fireroom. They are going to bail with buckets."

The engine room, by the way, represented a scene at this time taken from the middle kitchen of hades. In the first place, it was insufferably warm, and the lights burned faintly in a way to cause mystic and grew-some shadows. There was a quantity of soapish sea water swirling and sweeping and swirling among machinery that roared and banged and clattered and steamed, and, in the second place, it was a devil of a way down below.

Here I first came to know a certain young oiler named Billy Higgins. He was sloshing around this inferno filling buckets with water and passing them to a chain of men

that extended up the ship's side. Afterward we got orders to change our point of attack on water and to operate through a little door on the windward side of the ship that led into the engine room.

#### NO PANIC ON BOARD

During this time there was much talk of pumps out of order and many other statements of a mechanical kind, which I did not altogether comprehend but understood to mean that there was a general and sudden ruin in the engine room.

There was no particular agitation at this time, and even later there was never a panic on board the *Commodore*. The party of men who worked with Higgins and me at this time were all Cubans, and we were under the direction of the Cuban leaders. Presently we were ordered again to the afterhold, and there was some hesitation about going into the abominable fireroom again, but Higgins dashed down the companionway with a bucket.

#### LOWERING BOATS

The heat and hard work in the fireroom affected me and I was obliged to come on deck again. Going forward, I heard as I went talk of lowering the boats. Near the corner of the galley the mate was talking with a man.

"Why don't you send up a rocket?" said this unknown man. And the mate replied: "What the hell do we want to send up a rocket for? The ship is all right."

Returning with a little rubber and cloth overcoat, I saw the first boat about to be lowered. A certain man was the first person in this first boat, and they were handing him in a valise about as large as a hotel. I had not entirely recovered from astonishment and pleasure in witnessing this noble deed when I saw another valise go to him.

#### HUMAN HOG APPEARS

This valise was not perhaps so large as a hotel, but it was a big valise anyhow. Afterward there went to him something which looked to me like an overcoat.

Seeing the chief engineer leaning out of his little window, I remarked to him:

"What do you think of that blank, blank, blank?"

"Oh, he's a bird," said the old chief.

It was now that was heard the order to get away the lifeboat, which was stowed on

top of the deckhouse. The deckhouse was a mighty slippery place, and with each roll of the ship, the men there thought themselves likely to take headers into the deadly black sea.

Higgins was on top of the deckhouse, and, with the first mate and two colored stokers, we wrestled with that boat, which, I am willing to swear, weighed as much as a Broadway cable car. She might have been spiked to the deck. We could have pushed a little brick schoolhouse along a corduroy road as easily as we could have moved this boat. But the first mate got a tackle to her from a leeward davit, and on the deck below the captain corralled enough men to make an impression upon the boat.

We were ordered to cease hauling then, and in this lull the cook of the ship came to me and said: "What are you going to do?"

I told him of my plans, and he said:

"Well, by God, that's what I am going to do."

#### A WHISTLE OF DESPAIR

Now the whistle of the *Commodore* had been turned loose, and if there ever was a voice of despair and death, it was in the voice of this whistle. It had gained a new tone. It was as if its throat was already choked by the water, and this cry on the sea at night, with a wind blowing the spray over the ship, and the waves roaring over the bow, and swirling white along the decks, was to each of us probably a song of man's end.

It was now that the first mate showed a sign of losing his grip. To us who were trying in all stages of competence and experience to launch the lifeboat he raged in all terms of fiery satire and hammerlike abuse. But the boat moved at last and swung down toward the water.

Afterward, when I went aft, I saw the captain standing, with his arm in a sling, holding on to a stay with his one good hand and directing the launching of the boat. He gave me a five-gallon jug of water to hold, and asked me what I was going to do. I told him what I thought was about the proper thing, and he told me then that the cook had the same idea, and ordered me to go forward and be ready to launch the ten-foot dingy.

#### IN THE TEN-FOOT DINGY

I remember well that he turned then to swear at a colored stoker who was prowling

around, done up in life preservers until he looked like a feather bed. I went forward with my five-gallon jug of water, and when the captain came we launched the dingy, and they put me over the side to fend her off from the ship with an oar.

They handed me down the water jug, and then the cook came into the boat, and we sat there in the darkness, wondering why, by all our hopes of future happiness, the captain was so long in coming over to the side and ordering us away from the doomed ship.

The captain was waiting for the other boat to go. Finally he hailed in the darkness: "Are you all right, Mr. Graines?"

The first mate answered: "All right, sir."

"Shove off, then," cried the captain.

The captain was just about to swing over the rail when a dark form came forward and a voice said: "Captain, I go with you."

The captain answered: "Yes, Billy; get in."

#### HIGGINS LAST TO LEAVE SHIP

It was Billy Higgins, the oiler. Billy dropped into the boat and a moment later the captain followed, bringing with him an end of about forty yards of lead line. The other end was attached to the rail of the ship.

As we swung back to leeward the captain said: "Boys, we will stay right near the ship till she goes down."

This cheerful information, of course, filled us all with glee. The line kept us headed properly into the wind, and as we rode over the monstrous waves we saw upon each rise the swaying lights of the dying *Commodore*.

When came the gray shade of dawn, the form of the *Commodore* grew slowly clear to us as our little ten-foot boat rose over each swell. She was floating with such an air of buoyancy that we laughed when we had time, and said "What a gag it would be on those other fellows if she didn't sink at all."

But later we saw men aboard of her, and later still they began to hail us.

#### HELPING THEIR MATES

I had forgot to mention that previously we had loosened the end of the lead line and dropped much further to leeward. The men on board were a mystery to us, of course, as we had seen all the boats leave

the ship. We rowed back to the ship, but did not approach too near, because we were four men in a ten-foot boat, and we knew that the touch of a hand on our gunwale would assuredly swamp us.

The first mate cried out from the ship that the third boat had foundered alongside. He cried that they had made rafts, and wished us to tow them.

The captain said, "All right."

Their rafts were floating astern. "Jump in!" cried the captain, but there was a singular and most harrowing hesitation. There were five white men and two negroes. This scene in the gray light of morning impressed one as would a view into some place where ghosts move slowly. These seven men on the stern of the sinking Commodore were silent. Save the words of the mate to the captain there was no talk. Here was death, but here also was a most singular and indefinable kind of fortitude.

Four men, I remember, clambered over the railing and stood there watching the cold, steely sheen of the sweeping waves. "Jump," cried the captain again.

The old chief engineer first obeyed the order. He landed on the outside raft and the captain told him how to grip the raft and he obeyed as promptly and as docilely as a scholar in riding school.

#### THE MATE'S MAD PLUNGE

A stoker followed him, and then the first mate threw his hands over his head and plunged into the sea. He had no life belt and for my part, even when he did this horrible thing, I somehow felt that I could see in the expression of his hands, and in the very toss of his head, as he leaped thus to death, that it was rage, rage, rage unspeakable that was in his heart at the time.

And then I saw Tom Smith, the man who was going to quit filibustering after this expedition, jump to a raft and turn his face toward us. On board the Commodore three men strode, still in silence and with their faces turned toward us. One man had his arms folded and was leaning against the deckhouse. His feet were crossed, so that the toe of his left foot pointed downward. There they stood gazing at us, and neither from the deck nor from the rafts was a voice raised. Still was there this silence.

#### TRIED TO TOW THE RAFTS

The colored stoker on the first raft threw us a line and we began to tow. Of course,

we perfectly understood the absolute impossibility of any such thing; our dingy was within six inches of the water's edge, there was an enormous sea running, and I knew that under the circumstances a tug-boat would have no light task in moving these rafts.

But we tried it, and would have continued to try it indefinitely, but that something critical came to pass. I was at an oar and so faced the rafts. The cook controlled the line. Suddenly the boat began to go backward and then we saw this negro on the first raft pulling on the line hand over hand and drawing us to him.

He had turned into a demon. He was wild—wild as a tiger. He was crouched on this raft and ready to spring. Every muscle of him seemed to be turned into an elastic spring. His eyes were almost white. His face was the face of a lost man reaching upward, and we knew that the weight of his hand on our gunwale doomed us.

#### THE COMMODORE SINKS

The cook let go of the line. We rowed around to see if we could not get a line from the chief engineer, and all this time, mind you, there were no shrieks, no groans, but silence, silence and silence, and then the Commodore sank.

She lurched to windward, then swung afar back, righted and dove into the sea, and the rafts were suddenly swallowed by this frightful maw of the ocean. And then by the men on the ten-foot dingy were words that were still not words—something far beyond words.

The lighthouse of Mosquito Inlet stuck up above the horizon like the point of a pin. We turned our dingy toward the shore.

The history of life in an open boat for thirty hours would no doubt be instructive for the young, but none is to be told here and now. For my part I would prefer to tell the story at once, because from it would shine the splendid manhood of Captain Edward Murphy and of William Higgins, the oiler, but let it suffice at this time to say that when we were swamped in the surf and making the best of our way toward the shore the captain gave orders amid the wildness of the breakers as clearly as if he had been on the quarter deck of a battleship.

John Kitchell of Daytona came running down the beach, and as he ran the air was filled with clothes. If he had pulled a single lever and undressed, even as the fire horses

harness, he could not seem to me to have stripped with more speed. He dashed into the water and dragged the cook. Then he went after the captain, but the captain sent

him to me, and then it was that he saw Billy Higgins lying with his forehead on sand that was clear of the water, and he was dead.

STEPHEN CRANE.

## THE PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK (1909- )

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 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 disc, 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.

## THE GHOST OF AN APPREHENSION

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK (1909- )

It being the declared purpose of this series to offer examples of the writing process rather than critical appraisals, I have chosen to expose myself by way of a little piece called "The Portable Phonograph," first because it was more than ordinarily conscious in its inception, and so may be reconsidered with a minimum of discovery after the fact, and secondly because it is readily accessible in full should the reader wish to apply the comment more specifically than a synopsis will allow.

Since the story took shape 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 this approach has occurred 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 seven 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 backdrop, so to speak) a desolate prairie, pitted by craters and 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 time, 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 this 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 the 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 home-making 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 believed 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 hangover 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 had 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.

### *III: The Short Story and the Reader*

*Books are to be called for and supplied on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-sleep, but in the highest sense an exercise, a gymnastic struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself.*

—WALT WHITMAN





## LIGEIA

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.

JOSEPH GLANVILL

I cannot, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through much suffering. Or, perhaps, I cannot *now* bring these points to mind, because, in truth, the character of my beloved, her rare learning, her singular yet placid cast of beauty, and the thrilling and enthralling eloquence of her low musical language, made their way into my heart by paces so steadily and stealthily progressive that they have been unnoticed and unknown. Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine. Of her family—I have surely heard her speak. That it is of a remotely ancient date cannot be doubted. Ligeia! Ligeia! Buried in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden impressions of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone—by Ligeia—that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And now, while I write, a recollection flashes upon me that I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom. Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia? or was it a test of my strength of affection, that I should institute no inquiries upon this point? or was it rather a caprice of my own—a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion? I but indistinctly recall the fact itself—what wonder that I have utterly forgotten the circumstances which originated or attended it? And, indeed, if ever that spirit which is entitled *Romance*—if ever she, the wan and the misty-winged Ashtophet of idolatrous Egypt, presided, as they tell, over marriages ill-omened, then most surely she presided over mine.

There is one dear topic, however, on which my memory fails me not. It is the *person* of Ligeia. In stature she was tall, somewhat slender, and, in her latter days, even emaciated. I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease, of her demeanor, or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study, save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her marble hand upon my shoulder. In beauty of face no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of an opium-dream—an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the fantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos. Yet her features were not of that regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in the classical labors of the heathen. "There is no exquisite beauty," says Bacon, Lord Verulam, speaking truly of all the forms and genera of beauty,

"without some *strangeness* in the proportion." Yet, although I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity—although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed "exquisite," and felt that there was much of "strangeness" pervading it, yet I have tried in vain to detect the irregularity and to trace home my own perception of "the strange." I examined the contour of the lofty and pale forehead: it was faultless—how cold indeed that word when applied to a majesty so divine!—the skin rivalling the purest ivory, the commanding extent and repose, the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples; and then the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant, and naturally-curling tresses, setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, "hyacinthine!" I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose—and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly—the magnificent turn of the short upper lip—the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under—the dimples which sported, and the color which spoke—the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the holy light which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinized the formation of the chin: and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the majesty, the fulness and the spirituality, of the Greek—the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a dream to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia.

For eyes we have no models in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes of our own race. They were even fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad. Yet it was only at intervals—in moments of intense excitement—that this peculiarity became more than slightly noticeable in Ligeia. And at such moments was her beauty—in my heated fancy thus it appeared perhaps—the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth, the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turk. The hue of the orbs was the most brilliant of black, and, far over them, hung jetty lashes of great length. The brows, slightly irregular in outline, had the same tint. The "strangeness," however, which I found in the eyes, was of a nature distinct from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and must, after all, be referred to the *expression*. Ah, word of no meaning! behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual. The expression of the eyes of Ligeia! How for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, through the whole of a midsummer night, struggled to fathom it! What was it—that something more profound than the well of Democritus—which lay far within the pupils of my beloved? What *was* it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs! became to me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers.

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact—never, I believe, noticed in the schools—that in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length entirely depart! And (strange, oh strangest mystery

of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze, or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven, (one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra,) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not infrequently by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill, which (perhaps merely from its quaintness—who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment: "And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."

Length of years and subsequent reflection have enabled me to trace, indeed, some remote connection between this passage in the English moralist and a portion of the character of Ligeia. An *intensity* in thought, action, or speech, was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me—by the almost magical melody, modulation, distinctness, and placidity of her very low voice—and by the fierce energy (rendered doubly effective by contrast with her manner of utterance) of the wild words which she habitually uttered.

I have spoken of the learning of Ligeia: it was immense—such as I have never known in women. In the classical tongues was she deeply proficient, and as far as my own acquaintance extended in regard to the modern dialects of Europe, I have never known her at fault. Indeed upon any theme of the most admired, because simply the most abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy, have I *ever* found Ligeia at fault? How singularly, how thrillingly, this one point in the nature of my wife has forced itself, at this late period only, upon my attention! I said her knowledge was such as I have never known in woman—but where breathes the man who has traversed, and successfully, *all* the wide areas of moral, physical, and mathematical science? I saw not then what I now clearly perceive, that the acquisitions of Ligeia were gigantic, were astounding; yet I was sufficiently aware of her infinite supremacy to resign myself, with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation at which I was most busily occupied during the earlier years of our marriage. With how vast a triumph, with how vivid a delight, with how much of all that is ethereal in hope, did I *feel*, as she bent over me in studies but little sought—but less known—that delicious vista by slow degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!

How poignant, then, must have been the grief with which, after some years, I beheld my well-grounded expectations take wings to themselves and fly away! Without Ligeia I was but as a child groping benighted. Her presence, her readings alone, rendered vividly luminous the many mysteries of the transcendentalism in which we were immersed. Wanting the radiant lustre of her eyes, letters, lambent and golden, grew duller than Saturnian lead. And now those eyes shone less and less frequently upon the pages over which I pored. Ligeia grew ill. The wild eyes blazed with a too—too glorious effulgence; the pale fingers became of the transparent waxen hue of the grave; and the blue veins upon the lofty forehead swelled and sank impetuously with the tides of the most gentle emotion. I saw that she must die—and I struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael. And the struggles of the passionate wife were, to my astonishment, even more energetic than my own. There had been much in her stern nature to impress me with the belief that, to her, death would have come without its terrors; but not so. Words are impotent to convey any just idea of the fierceness of resistance with which she wrestled with the Shadow. I groaned in anguish at the pitiable spectacle. I would have soothed—I would have reasoned; but, in the intensity of her wild desire for life—for life—*but* for life—solace and reason were alike the uttermost of folly. Yet not until the last instance, amid the most convulsive writhings of her fierce spirit, was shaken the external placidity of her demeanor. Her voice grew more gentle—grew more low—yet I would not wish to dwell upon the wild meaning of the quietly uttered words. My brain reeled as I hearkened, entranced, to a melody more than mortal—to assumptions and aspirations which mortality had never before known.

That she loved me I should not have doubted; and I might have been easily aware that, in a bosom such as hers, love would have reigned no ordinary passion. But in death only was I fully impressed with the strength of her affection. For long hours, detaining my hand, would she pour out before me the overflowing of a heart whose more than passionate devotion amounted to idolatry. How had I deserved to be so blessed by such confessions? How had I deserved to be so cursed with the removal of my beloved in the hour of her making them? But upon this subject I cannot bear to dilate. Let me say only, that in Ligeia's more than womanly abandonment to a love, alas! all unmerited, all unworthily bestowed, I at length recognized the principle of her longing, with so wildly earnest a desire, for the life which was now fleeing so rapidly away. It is this wild longing, it is this eager vehemence of desire for life—*but* for life, that I have no power to portray, no utterance capable of expressing.

At high noon of the night in which she departed, beckoning me peremptorily to her side, she bade me repeat certain verses composed by herself not many days before. I obeyed her. They were these:

[THE CONQUEROR WORM]

Lo! 'tis a gala night  
Within the lonesome latter years!  
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight  
In veils, and drowned in tears,  
Sit in a theatre, to see  
A play of hopes and fears,  
While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
 Mutter and mumble low,  
 And hither and thither fly—  
 Mere puppets they, who come and go  
 At bidding of vast formless things  
 That shift the scenery to and fro,  
 Flapping from out their condor wings  
 Invisible Woe!

That motley drama—oh, be sure  
 It shall not be forgot!  
 With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
 By a crowd that seize it not,  
 Through a circle that ever returneth in  
 To the self-same spot,  
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin,  
 And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout  
 A crawling shape intrude!  
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out  
 The scenic solitude!  
 It writhes—it writhes! with mortal pangs  
 The mimes become its food,  
 And seraphs sob at vermin fangs  
 In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!  
 And over each quivering form  
 The curtain, a funeral pall,  
 Comes down with the rush of a storm,  
 While the angels, all pallid and wan,  
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm  
 That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"  
 And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

"O God!" half shrieked Ligeia, leaping to her feet and extending her arms aloft with a spasmodic movement, as I made an end of these lines—"O God! O Divine Father! shall these things be undeviatingly so? shall this Conqueror be not once conquered? Are we not part and parcel in Thee? Who—who knoweth the mysteries of the will with its vigor? 'Man doth not yield him to the angels, *nor unto death utterly save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*'"

And now, as if exhausted with emotion, she suffered her white arms to fall, and returned solemnly to her bed of death. And as she breathed her last sighs, there came mingled with them a low murmur from her lips. I bent to them my ear, and distinguished, again, the concluding words of the passage in Glanvill: "*Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*"

She died: and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow, could no longer endure the lonely desolation of my dwelling in the dim and decaying city by the Rhine. I had no lack of what the world calls wealth. Ligeia had brought me far more, very far more, than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals. After a few months, therefore,

of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England. The gloomy and dreary grandeur of the building, that almost savage aspect of the domain, the many melancholy and time-honored memories connected with both, had much in unison with the feelings of utter abandonment which had driven me into that remote and unsocial region of the country. Yet although the external abbey, with its verdant decay hanging about it, suffered but little alteration, I gave way with a child-like perversity, and perchance with a faint hope of alleviating my sorrows, to a display of more than regal magnificence within. For such follies, even in childhood, I had imbibed a taste, and now they came back to me as if in the dotage of grief. Alas, I feel how much even of incipient madness might have been discovered in the gorgeous and fantastic draperies, in the solemn carvings of Egypt, in the wild cornices and furniture, in the Bedlam patterns of the carpets of tufted gold! I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring from my dreams. But these absurdities I must not pause to detail. Let me speak only of that one chamber, ever accursed, whither, in a moment of mental alienation, I led from the altar as my bride—as the successor of the unforgotten Ligcia—the fair-haired and blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine.

There is no individual portion of the architecture and decoration of that bridal chamber which is not now visibly before me. Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment so bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved? I have said that I minutely remember the details of the chamber—yet I am sadly forgetful on topics of deep moment; and here there was no system, no keeping, in the fantastic display, to take hold upon the memory. The room lay in a high turret of the castellated abbey, was pentagonal in shape, and of capacious size. Occupying the whole southern face of the pentagon was the sole window—an immense sheet of unbroken glass from Venice—a single pane, and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre on the objects within. Over the upper portion of this huge window extended the trellis-work of an aged vine, which clambered up the massy walls of the turret. The ceiling, of gloomy-looking oak, was excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical device. From out the most central recess of this melancholy vaulting depended, by a single chain of gold with long links, a huge censer of the same metal, Saracenic in pattern, and with many perforations so contrived that there writhed in and out of them, as if endued with a serpent vitality, a continual succession of parti-colored fires.

Some few ottomans and golden candelabra, of Eastern figure, were in various stations about; and there was the couch, too—the bridal couch—of an Indian model, and low, and sculptured of solid ebony, with a pall-like canopy above. In each of the angles of the chamber stood on end a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor, with their aged lids full of immemorial sculpture. But in the draping of the apartment lay, alas! the chief fantasy of all. The lofty walls, gigantic in height, even unproportionably so, were hung from summit to foot, in vast folds, with a heavy and massive-looking tapestry—tapestry of a material which was found alike as a carpet on the floor, as a covering for the ottomans and the ebony bed, as a canopy for the bed, and as the gorgeous volutes of the curtains which partially shaded the window. The material was the richest cloth of gold. It was spotted all over, at irregular intervals, with arabesque figures, about a foot in

diameter, and wrought upon the cloth in patterns of the most jetty black. But these figures partook of the true character of the arabesque only when regarded from a single point of view. By a contrivance now common, and indeed traceable to a very remote period of antiquity, they were made changeable in aspect. To one entering the room, they bore the appearance of simple monstrosities; but upon a farther advance, this appearance gradually departed; and, step by step, as the visitor moved his station in the chamber, he saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk. The phantasmagoric effect was vastly heightened by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind the draperies, giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole.

In halls such as these, in a bridal chamber such as this, I passed, with the Lady of Tremaine, the unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage—passed them with but little disquietude. That my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper—that she shunned me, and loved me but little—I could not help perceiving; but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man. My memory flew back (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams (for I was habitually fettered in the shackles of the drug), I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed, I could restore her to the pathway she had abandoned—ah, *could* it be forever?—upon the earth.

About the commencement of the second month of the marriage, the Lady Rowena was attacked with sudden illness, from which her recovery was slow. The fever which consumed her, rendered her nights uneasy; and in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the chamber of the turret, which I concluded had no origin save in the distemper of her fancy, or perhaps in the phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself. She became at length convalescent—finally, well. Yet but a brief period elapsed, ere a second more violent disorder again threw her upon a bed of suffering; and from this attack her frame, at all times feeble, never altogether recovered. Her illnesses were, after this epoch, of alarming character, and of more alarming recurrence, defying alike the knowledge and the great exertions of her physicians. With the increase of the chronic disease, which had thus apparently taken too sure hold upon her constitution to be eradicated by human means, I could not fail to observe a similar increase in the nervous irritation of her temperament, and in her excitability by trivial causes of fear. She spoke again, and now more frequently and pertinaciously, of the sounds—of the slight sounds—and of the unusual motions among the tapestries, to which she had formerly alluded.

One night, near the closing in of September, she pressed this distressing subject with more than usual emphasis upon my attention. She had just awakened from an unquiet slumber, and I had been watching, with feelings half of anxiety, half of vague terror, the workings of her emaciated countenance. I sat by the side of her ebony bed, upon one of the ottomans of India. She partly arose, and spoke, in an earnest low whisper, of sounds which she *then* heard, but which I could not hear—of motions which she *then* saw, but which I could not perceive. The wind was rushing hurriedly

behind the tapestries, and I wished her to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those almost inarticulate breathings, and those very gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of that customary rushing of the wind. But a deadly pallor, overspreading her face, had proved to me that my exertions to reassure her would be fruitless. She appeared to be fainting, and no attendants were within call. I remembered where was deposited a decanter of light wine which had been ordered by her physicians, and hastened across the chamber to procure it. But, as I stepped beneath the light of the censer, two circumstances of a startling nature attracted my attention. I had felt that some palpable although invisible object had passed lightly by my person; and I saw that there lay upon the golden carpet, in the very middle of the rich lustre thrown from the censer, a shadow—a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect—such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade. But I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena. Having found the wine, I recrossed the chamber, and poured out a gobletful, which I held to the lips of the fainting lady. She had now partially recovered, however, and took the vessel herself, while I sank upon an ottoman near me, with my eyes fastened upon her person. It was then that I became distinctly aware of a gentle footfall upon the carpet, and near the couch; and in a second thereafter, as Rowena was in the act of raising the wine to her lips, I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby-colored fluid. If this I saw—not so Rowena. She swallowed the wine unhesitatingly, and I forbore to speak to her of a circumstance which must after all, I considered, have been but the suggestion of a vivid imagination, rendered morbidly active by the terror of the lady, by the opium, and by the hour.

Yet I cannot conceal it from my own perception that, immediately subsequent to the fall of the ruby-drops, a rapid change for the worse took place in the disorder of my wife; so that, on the third subsequent night, the hands of her menials prepared her for the tomb, and on the fourth, I sat alone, with her shrouded body, in that fantastic chamber which had received her as my bride. Wild visions, opium-engendered, flitted shadow-like before me. I gazed with unquiet eye upon the sarcophagi in the angles of the room, upon the varying figures of the drapery, and upon the writhing of the parti-colored fires in the censer overhead. My eyes then fell, as I called to mind the circumstances of a former night, to the spot beneath the glare of the censer where I had seen the faint traces of the shadow. It was there, however, no longer; and breathing with greater freedom, I turned my glances to the pallid and rigid figure upon the bed. Then rushed upon me a thousand memories of Ligeia—and then came back upon my heart, with the turbulent violence of a flood, the whole of that unutterable woe with which I had regarded *her* thus enshrouded. The night waned; and still, with a bosom full of bitter thoughts of the one only and supremely beloved, I remained gazing upon the body of Rowena.

It might have been midnight, or perhaps earlier, or later, for I had taken no note of time, when a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct, startled me from my reverie. I *felt* that it came from the bed of ebony—the bed of death. I listened in an agony of superstitious terror—but there was no repetition of the sound. I strained my vision to detect any motion in the corpse—but there was not the slightest perceptible. Yet I could not have been deceived. I *had* heard the noise, however faint, and my soul was awakened within me. I resolutely and perseveringly kept my attention riveted



upon the body. Many minutes elapsed before any circumstance occurred tending to throw light upon the mystery. At length it became evident that a slight, a very feeble, and barely noticeable tinge of color had flushed up within the cheeks, and along the sunken small veins of the eyelids. Through a species of unutterable horror and awe, for which the language of mortality has no sufficiently energetic expression, I felt my heart cease to beat, my limbs grow rigid where I sat. Yet a sense of duty finally operated to restore my self-possession. I could no longer doubt that we had been precipitate in our preparations—that Rowena still lived. It was necessary that some immediate exertion be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants—there were none within call—I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes—and this I could not venture to do. I therefore struggled alone in my endeavors to call back the spirit still hovering. In a short period it was certain, however, that a relapse had taken place; the color disappeared from both eyelid and cheek, leaving a wanness even more than that of marble; the lips became doubly shrivelled and pinched up in the ghastly expression of death; a repulsive clamminess and coldness overspread rapidly the surface of the body; and all the usual rigorous stiffness immediately supervened. I fell back with a shudder upon the couch from which I had been so startlingly aroused, and again gave myself up to passionate waking visions of Ligeia.

An hour thus elapsed, when (could it be possible?) I was a second time aware of some vague sound issuing from the region of the bed. I listened—in extremity of horror. The sound came again—it was a sigh. Rushing to the corpse, I saw—distinctly saw—a tremor upon the lips. In a minute afterwards they relaxed, disclosing a bright line of the pearly teeth. Amazement now struggled in my bosom with the profound awe which had hitherto reigned there alone. I felt that my vision grew dim, that my reason wandered; and it was only by a violent effort that I at length succeeded in nerving myself to the task which duty thus once more had pointed out. There was now a partial glow upon the forehead and upon the cheek and throat; a perceptible warmth pervaded the whole frame; there was even a slight pulsation at the heart. The lady *lived*; and with redoubled ardor I betook myself to the task of restoration. I chafed and bathed the temples and the hands, and used every exertion which experience, and no little medical reading, could suggest. But in vain. Suddenly, the color fled, the pulsation ceased, the lips resumed the expression of the dead, and, in an instant afterward, the whole body took upon itself the icy chilliness, the livid hue, the intense rigidity, the sunken outline, and all the loathsome peculiarities of that which has been, for many days, a tenant of the tomb.

And again I sunk into visions of Ligeia—and again, (what marvel that I shudder while I write?) *again* there reached my ears a low sob from the region of the ebony bed. But why shall I minutely detail the unspeakable horrors of that night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after time, until near the period of the gray dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated; how each terrific relapse was only into a sterner and apparently more irredeemable death; how each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe; and how each struggle was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse? Let me hurry to a conclusion.

The greater part of the fearful night had worn away, and she who had been dead, once again stirred—and now more vigorously than hitherto, although arousing from a dissolution more appalling in its utter helplessness than any. I had long ceased to struggle or to move, and remained sitting rigidly upon the ottoman, a helpless prey

to a whirl of violent emotions, of which extreme awe was perhaps the least terrible, the least consuming. The corpse, I repeat, stirred, and now more vigorously than before. The hues of life flushed up with unwonted energy into the countenance—and limbs relaxed—and, save that the eyelids were yet pressed heavily together, and that the bandages and draperies of the grave still imparted their charnel character to the figure, I might have dreamed that Rowena had indeed shaken off, utterly, the fetters of Death. But if this idea was not, even then, altogether adopted, I could at least doubt no longer, when, arising from the bed, tottering, with feeble steps, with closed eyes, and with the manner of one bewildered in a dream, the thing that was enshrouded advanced bodily and palpably into the middle of the apartment.

I trembled not—I stirred not—for a crowd of unutterable fancies connected with the air, the stature, the demeanor of the figure, rushing hurriedly through my brain, had paralyzed—had chilled me into stone. I stirred not—but gazed upon the apparition. There was a mad disorder in my thoughts—a tumult unappeasable. Could it, indeed, be the *living* Rowena who confronted me? Could it indeed be Rowena *at all*—the fair-haired, the blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine? Why, *why* should I doubt it? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth—but then might it not be the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine? And the cheeks—yes, these might indeed be the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. And the chin, with its dimples, as in health, might it not be hers? but *had she then grown taller since her malady?* What inexpressible madness seized me with that thought? One bound, and I had reached her feet! Shrinking from my touch, she let fall from her head the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and there streamed forth, into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber, huge masses of long and dishevelled hair; *it was blacker than the raven wings of the midnight!* And now slowly opened *the eyes* of the figure which stood before me. "Here then, at least," I shrieked aloud, "can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love—of the lady—of the LADY LIGEIA."

## POE'S "LIGEIA"

ROY P. BASLER (1906- )

Although a number of biographers, psychoanalytical and otherwise, have employed the data and theories of several schools of thought in nonrational psychology in attempting to interpret the personality of Poe, and have indicated the need for such an approach in the interpretation of much of his writing, no one, as far as I am aware, has undertaken to point out the specific bearing of nonrational psychology on the critical interpretation of a number of Poe's stories which in their entire context seem to indicate that Poe dealt deliberately with the psychological themes of obsession and madness. Such a story is "Ligeia," the most important of a group of stories, generally but inadequately classified as "impressionistic," which includes the kindred pieces "Morella" and "Berenice." Each of these three tales shows a similar preoccupation with the *idée fixe* or obsession in an extreme form of monomania which seems intended by Poe to be the psychological key to its plot. Even a casual com-

parison of these stories will reveal not merely the similar theme of obsession but also the dominant concepts which provide the motivation in all three: the power of the psychical over the physical and the power of frustrate love to create an erotic symbolism and mythology in compensation for sensual disappointment. Although Poe grinds them differently in each story, they are the same grist to his mill.

In the interpretation of "Ligeia" particularly, an understanding of the nonrational makes necessary an almost complete reversal of certain critical opinions and explanations which assume that the story is a tale of the supernatural. Clayton Hamilton's analysis of "Ligeia" in his *Manual of the Art of Fiction* (1918) is a rationalization which outdoes Poe's rationalization of "The Raven" in its attempt to show how Poe chose with mathematical accuracy just the effect and just the word which would make the perfect story of the supernatural. Unfortunately, Hamilton's basic assumptions seem obviously erroneous when he takes for granted that Ligeia is the main character, that the action of the story is concerned primarily with her struggle to overcome death, that the hero (the narrator) is "an ordinary character" who functions merely as an "eyewitness" and as a "standard by which the unusual capabilities of the central figure may be measured," and that Ligeia is "a woman of superhuman will, and her husband, a man of ordinary powers." These assumptions ignore the obvious context with its emphasis on the hero's obsession, madness, and hallucination. Actually, the story seems both aesthetically and psychologically more intelligible as a tale, not of supernatural, but rather of entirely natural, though highly phrenetic, psychological phenomena.

Perhaps the naïveté and excesses of certain psychoanalytical biographies of Poe have militated against the recognition of the value of nonrational psychology in the study of Poe. At any rate, scholarly critical biographers have hesitated to credit the indubitable data of the science; and even recent critical studies, following the traditional interpretation, ignore the most obvious evidence of the nonrational theme and motivation of "Ligeia" and undertake to analyze the story again as a tale of the supernatural. Although we need not consider here either the value of nonrational psychology as a means of understanding Poe's personality or the mistakes of broad assumption and overconfidence which the analysts of Poe have made, it must be recognized that, if nonrational psychology provides a better means of understanding the structure and effect of a tale like "Ligeia" and enables the reader to appreciate better what Poe accomplished as an artist, then the critic who refuses to accept nonrational psychology does so at the risk of his entire critical principle.

Let us examine the personality of the hero of "Ligeia," the narrator whose psycho-emotional experience weaves the plot. He is presented in the first paragraph as a man with an erotic obsession of long standing; his wife is presumably dead, but his idolatrous devotion to her has kept her physical beauty and her personality painfully alive in his every thought. That this devotion approaches monomania becomes more clear with every statement he makes about her. She is the acme of womanly beauty and spiritual perfection. From the time of his first acquaintance with her he has been oblivious of all but her beauty and her power over him: "I CANNOT, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the Lady Ligeia." Furthermore, there is his interesting admission that "I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom." In view of the fact that she was of an exceedingly ancient family and had brought him wealth "very far more, than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals," these admissions are more than

strange. Though the hero half recognizes the incongruity of his unbelievable ignorance, he dismisses it as evidence of a lover's devotion—a "wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion."

Beginning with the second paragraph, we see more clearly the degree of his obsession. Although he makes much of the power of Ligeia's intellect, his imaginative preoccupation with her physical beauty is highly sensuous, even voluptuous, in its intensity. He seems to be a psychopath who has failed to find the last, final meaning of life in the coils of Ligeia's raven hair, her ivory skin, her "jetty lashes of great length," and, above all, in her eyes, "those shining, those divine orbs!" But his imaginative desire has outrun his capabilities. Though his senses have never revealed the final meaning of the mystery which has enthralled him, his imagination refuses to accept defeat. The key to his failure is hinted in the paragraph which reveals his symbolic deification of Ligeia as a sort of personal Venus Aphrodite who personifies the dynamic urge of life itself but who, because of the hero's psychic incapacity, cannot reveal to him the "forbidden knowledge":

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of the mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact—never, I believe, noticed in the schools—that in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length entirely depart! And (strange, oh, strangest mystery of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly-growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean—in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven (one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill, which (perhaps merely from its quaintness—who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment: "And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."

In this passage it is not difficult to perceive the oblique confession of inadequacy and to trace the psychological process of symbolism, which compensates for the failure of sense by apotheosis of the object of desire. Although sensuous delight leads the hero to "the very verge" of a "wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden," final knowledge of the secret of Ligeia's eyes is blocked by an obstacle deep within the hero's own psyche, and the insatiable imagination seeks for a realm of experience not sensual and mortal and identifies Ligeia with the dynamic power and mystery of

the entire universe. She becomes not merely a woman but a goddess, through the worship of whom he "feels" that he may "pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden." There is for him, however, no possibility of fathoming the mystery which she symbolizes, though in the height of passionate adoration he feels himself to be "*upon the very verge*," which experience he likens to that of almost but not quite recalling something from the depths of his unconscious.

This analogy of the will's inability to dictate to the unconscious and its inability to dictate to love reveals something more than the hero's vague awareness of a psychic flaw which thwarts his desire; it reveals the source of the obsession which dominates in a compensatory process his struggle to achieve by power of mind what he cannot achieve through love. The passage from Glanvill is the key, the psychic formula, which he hopes may open to him the very mystery of being, his own as well as Ligeia's, in which as he conceives lies the source of the dark failure and frustration of his senses. From this psychic formula derives, then, the megalomania that he can by power of will become god-like, blending his spirit with the universal spirit of deity symbolized in the divine Ligeia, who possesses in apotheosis all the attributes of his own wish, extended in a symbolic ideal beyond the touch of mortality and raised to the absoluteness of deity—intensity in thought, passion, and sensibility; perfection in wisdom, beauty, and power of mind. It is worth noting that Poe had earlier used the name Ligeia in *Al Aaraaf* for a divinity representing much the same dynamic beauty in all nature.

But the hero's approach to power is thwarted by Ligeia's death. Just at the point when triumph seems imminent, when he feels "that delicious vista by slow degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden"—just then Ligeia dies, because of the weakness of her own mortal will and in spite of the fervor with which the hero himself "struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael."

At this point it may be noted that the obsession with the *idée fixe* expressed in the passage from Glanvill begins with the hero himself and does not express Ligeia's belief. It is his will to conquer death that motivates the rest of the story, not hers. Even when she recites the formula on her deathbed, the lines are but the echo of his wish, given in antiphonal response to the materialistic creed which she has avowed in her poem "The Conqueror Worm," which represents her philosophy and is read by the hero merely at her peremptory request. This fact is always overlooked in the rational interpretations of the story, which assume that Ligeia's struggle is the primary motivating action of the tale. Thus, in spite of her power and beauty and her passionate desire for life, "*but for life*," the earthly body of Ligeia dies—perhaps, as the obsessed hero conceives, because she has not believed in her power to conquer death. Her failure of spirit, however, is not the end. Nor is the hero's failure as he "struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael" the end, but rather the beginning of the grim mania in which he is resolved to bring her back to life.

In following all that the hero says, the reader must keep constantly in mind that, if the hero is suffering from obsession, his narrative cannot be accepted merely at its face value as authentic of all the facts; and he must remember that incidents and circumstances have a primary significance in terms of the hero's mania which is often at variance with the significance which the hero believes and means to convey. This is to say that Poe's psychological effect in "Ligeia" is similar to that of later delvers

in psychological complexity like Henry James, whose stories told by a narrator move on two planes. There is the story which the narrator means to tell, and there is the story which he tells without meaning to, as he unconsciously reveals himself.

Hence, the important elements in the hero's description of Ligeia are of primary significance as they reveal his feeling of psychic inadequacy, his voluptuous imagination, and his megalomania and fierce obsession with the idea that by power of will man may thwart death through spiritual love. Likewise, the narrative of the circumstances of Ligeia's death is of significance, not merely as it reveals her love of life and her struggle to live, but as it reveals the psychological crisis in which the hero's psychic shock and frustration bring on final and complete mania, the diagnostic fallacy of which is that his will is omnipotent and can bring Ligeia back to life. Up to the point of her death the hero's obsession has taken the form of adoration and worship of her person in an erotomania primarily sensual (though frustrated by a psychic flaw which he is aware of but does not understand) and hence projected into a symbolic realm of deity and forbidden wisdom. Following her death, however, his obsession becomes an intense megalomania motivated by his will to restore her to life in another body through a process of metempsychosis.

It is of particular importance that, with the beginning of the second half of the story, the reader keep in mind these two planes of meaning, for the primary significance of what the hero tells in this part is never in any circumstance the plain truth. It is rather an entirely, and obviously, fantastic representation of the facts, which justifies his obsessed psyche and proves that he has been right and Ligeia (and perhaps the gentle reader) wrong in the assumption that mortality is the common human fate—the old story of the madman who knows that he is right and the rest of the world wrong.

Thus even the hero's admission of his "incipient madness" must be recognized as the cunning condescension of the megalomaniac to the normal mind, which would not otherwise understand the excesses of his peculiar "childlike perversity" in choosing such macabre furnishings for his bridal chamber or in debauching his senses with opium—both of which "perversities" he dismisses with pseudo-naïveté as minor "absurdities." The contempt which he feels for people of normal mentality almost leads him to give himself away in his blistering question: "Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment so bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved?" In other words, why could not the parents of Rowena perceive in the macabre furnishings—the "ebony couch" with draperies of gold "spotted all over, at regular intervals, with arabesque figures . . . of the most jetty black," the "sarcophagus of black granite," and the "endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk"—why could they not perceive the obvious death chamber which he intended the bridal room to be? Likewise, one must recognize the maniacal condescension which prompts the hardly disarming naïveté with which he confesses the pleasure he derived from Rowena's dread avoidance of him in the "unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage" and with which he testifies, "I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man."

Perhaps he relies on this imperciency of the normal mind to befuddle also the moral equilibrium of his audience into a sentimental acceptance of the phrenetic devotion of his spirit to the memory of Ligeia, which in his madness justifies, of course, his ghastly treatment of Rowena in terms of a pure, ethereal love for Ligeia.

Thus he concludes his introductory statement in the second half of the story on a plane which, while utterly sincere in its obsessional idealism, is highly equivocal in its moral and psychological implications and reveals the fact that underlying his mad persecution of Rowena lies his frustrate desire for and worship of the lost Ligeia:

. . . My memory flew back (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty—her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams (for I was habitually fettered in the shackles of the drug), I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed, I could restore her to the pathways she had abandoned—ah, *could* it be forever?—upon the earth.

Up to this point in the second half of the story, the hero has unintentionally mixed a generous amount of obliquely truthful interpretation with the facts of his story; but from this point to the end he narrates events with a pseudo-objectivity that wholly, though not necessarily intentionally, falsifies their significance. He tells what he saw and heard and felt, but these things must be understood as the hallucinations of his mania, as wish-projections which arise from his obsession with the idea of resurrecting Ligeia in the body of Rowena. He tells the effects but ignores or misrepresents the causes: he wants his audience to believe that the power of Ligeia's will effected her resurrection in the body of Rowena but does not want his audience to recognize (what he himself would not) that he was the actual agent of Rowena's death and his perceptions mere hallucinations produced by obsessional desire.

In brief, it must be recognized that the hero has murdered Rowena in his maniacal attempt to restore Ligeia to life. Although his narrative of the "sudden illness" which seized Rowena "about the second month of the marriage" avoids anything which suggests a physical attempt at murder, there are unintentional confessions of deliberate psychological cruelty in the macabre furnishing of the apartment and in the weird sounds and movements designed to produce ghostly effects. The hero mentions with apparent casualness and objectivity that, "in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the chamber of the turret, which I concluded had no origin save in the distemper of her fancy, or perhaps in the phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself." But by his earlier confession he had calculated these "sounds" and "motions" in advance, as instruments of mental torture for the young bride, by so arranging the figured draperies as to produce optical illusions of motion and by introducing "a strong current of wind behind the draperies." He further confesses that as her dread and fear began to produce symptoms of hysteria and physical collapse he "wished to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those almost inarticulate breathings, and those very gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of that customary rushing of the wind." But he did not tell her!

At this point he narrates how he became aware of a "presence" in the chamber, a supernatural agency at work. This is the wish-illusion that not he but the ghost of Ligeia, vampire-like, is preying upon the distraught and febrile body of Rowena. The details of resuscitation and relapse he wishes to believe evidence of the struggle of Ligeia's spirit to drive Rowena's spirit out of the body and to reanimate it herself.

Hence arises the hallucination of the shadow on the carpet—"a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect—such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade." But, as he admits immediately, he had indulged in "an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena." Such deprecation of his own perception is again the cunning of the maniac who must tell his story and must equally not tell it wholly, lest he spoil it by supplying evidence of a sort likely to encourage suspicion that there is something more than opiumism in his madness.

Then comes the crux of the death scene. Here, in the *mélange* of fact and hallucination, is *the fact* which betrays him: "I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby colored fluid." Impatient for results and fearful that the apparent progress of Rowena's hysteria and physical collapse will not suffice, doubting the power of his will alone to effect his purpose, he has resorted to actual poison, which, however, his obsession adapts into the pattern of hallucination by perceiving that it is distilled from the atmosphere rather than dropped from a bottle held in his own hand. He cannot in his obsession recognize the bottle or the poison as physical facts, for then the power of the spirit must bow to the greater power of a merely physical drug.

The deed is accomplished, and the remainder of the narrative reveals the final stage of his mania. As the body of Rowena writhes in the throes of death, his wish takes complete command of his brain. As he watches, his mind is filled with "a thousand memories of Ligeia." The shadow on the carpet disappears, and he hears "a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct," which he "*felt* . . . came from the bed of ebony." As evidence of returning life appears in the corpse, he feels it necessary that "some immediate exertion be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants—there were none within call—I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes—and this I could not venture to do." With this obviously satisfactory explanation made, he relates how he struggled alone to call back "the spirit still hovering," only to fall back with a shudder and resume his "passionate waking visions of Ligeia."

Again and again the symptoms of life appear and diminish, and each time the hero testifies that he "sunk into visions of Ligeia," with the result that each period of struggle "was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse," until finally his obsessed brain and senses perceive their desire-wish accomplished. The phrenetic tension of hallucination mounts in the concluding paragraph to an orgasm of psychopathic horror and wish-fulfilment in the final sentence: "'Here, then, at least,' I shrieked aloud, 'can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love—of the Lady—of the Lady Ligeia!'"

This conclusion is artistically perfect and unassailable if the story is understood to be that of a megalomaniac, a revelation of obsessional psychology and mania. If, however, the story is taken to be a rational narrative of the quasi-supernatural told by a man in his right mind, the conclusion is not a conclusion but a climax, the proper denouement of which would be the corpse's reassumption of Rowena's lineaments and its final lapse into certain death, recognized this time as complete and final by the mind of the hero. Philip Pendleton Cooke, presuming the entirely rational interpretation to be the one Poe intended, called Poe's attention to this supposed weakness of the ending in a letter otherwise filled with large praise for the story's effect. Cooke's comment is as follows:



There I was shocked by a violation of the ghostly proprieties—so to speak—and wondered how the Lady Ligeia—a wandering essence—could, in quickening *the body of the Lady Rowena* (such is the idea) become suddenly the visible, bodily Ligeia.

Poe's answer takes full cognizance of the justice of Cooke's criticism and tacitly admits the rational interpretation to be the one he intended, making the somewhat lame excuse that

. . . it was necessary, since "Morella" was written, to modify "Ligeia." I was forced to be content with a sudden half-consciousness, on the part of the narrator, that Ligeia stood before him. One point I have not fully carried out—I should have intimated that the *will* did not perfect its intention—there should have been a relapse—a final one—and Ligeia (who had only succeeded in so much as to convey an idea of the truth to the narrator) should be at length entombed as Rowena—the bodily alterations having gradually faded away.

It is possible that Poe meant in this statement merely to bow to Cooke's praise and accept a criticism which completely misses the primary significance of the entire story, in order to avoid the necessity of explaining to an admirer the painful truth that he had missed the point. Poe was avid for the praise that came all too seldom, and he may have avoided controversy with his appreciative correspondent somewhat out of gratitude. That he could not have held seriously or for long the opinion that the story needed an added denouement seems obvious from the fact that, although he made careful and detailed revisions of the story afterward, he did not alter the nature of the conclusion. That he would have done so without hesitation had he actually believed the conclusion defective, we may be sure from his indefatigable practice of revising his favorite pieces even in the minor details which did not fulfil his wishes.

There seem to be two alternatives here: either Poe meant the story to be read as Cooke read it, and failed to provide the sort of conclusion which he admitted to be necessary, or he meant it to be read approximately as we have analyzed it, and merely bowed to Cooke's criticism out of gratitude for appreciation. Possibly there is a third alternative, however, which is not incompatible with Poe's genius. Perhaps the intention in the story was not entirely clear and rationalized in Poe's own mind, pre-occupied as he was with the very ideas and obsessions which motivate the hero of the story. Anyone who has studied Poe's rationalization of "The Raven" in "The Philosophy of Composition" must recognize that in its *post hoc* reasoning Poe largely ignores the obvious psycho-emotional motivation of his own creative process. In his offhand and casual comments on his writings, however, he sometimes admitted the essentially "unconscious" source of his compositions. An example of this admission is his comment written in a copy of the *Broadway Journal* which he sent to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman:

The poem ["To Helen"—of 1848] which I sent you contained all the events of a *dream* which occurred to me soon after I knew you. Ligeia was also suggested by a *dream*—observe the *eyes* in both tale and poem.

As an artist Poe depicted the functioning of both rational and nonrational processes in a character obsessed by a psychopathic desire. But, since Poe was not entirely clear in his own mind concerning the nonrational logic of the unconscious which he used as an artist, he accepted Cooke's criticism as justified, even though he felt the "truth"

and appropriateness of the conclusion as he had written it, in part, at least, out of his own unconscious. Poe's penciled comment on the manuscript copy of one of his later poems, as quoted by Mrs. Whitman, is again indicative of the source of his artistic if not of his critical certainty:

"All that I have here expressed was actually present to me. Remember the mental condition which gave rise to 'Ligeia'—recall the passage of which I spoke, and observe the coincidence . . . I regard these visions," he says, "even as they arise, with an awe which in some measure moderates or tranquilizes the ecstasy—I so regard them through a conviction that this ecstasy, in itself, is of a character supernal to the human nature—*is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world.*"

Thus, when he came to revise the story, his artistic sense, rooted deeply in his own unconscious processes (or, if one chooses, in "the spirit's outer world"), did not permit the alteration of the conclusion to fit an interpretation essentially superficial and incomplete in its perception of the psychological origin of the story. Had Poe been able to understand the nonrational processes of the psyche as fully as Freud did later, he might have written a reply to Cooke that would have outdone "The Philosophy of Composition" in logical analysis of the creation of a work of art out of both rational and nonrational mental processes, but it is not likely that he could have written as an artist a more effective psychological story than "Ligeia."

The merits of this analysis must, of course, stand or be dismissed on the evidence within the context of the story itself, and the evidence in this case is—what it is not in the case of Poe's personality—complete. The hero of the story either is or is not to be completely trusted as a rational narrator whose account can be accepted with the meaning which he wishes it to have, and Poe either does or does not give the reader to understand which point of view he must take. To me, at least, Poe makes obvious the fact of the hero's original obsession in the first half of the story and his megalomania in the second half. The concluding paragraph remains aesthetically as utterly incomprehensible to me as it was to Philip Pendleton Cooke, if the story is merely a story of the supernatural designed to produce an impression. And I cannot think that Poe, fully aware of the justice of Cooke's criticism in that view, would have left the denouement as it was originally written unless he believed that there was more artistic verisimilitude in the story as he had created it than there was in the story as Cooke had interpreted it.

## THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL

KATHERINE MANSFIELD (1888–1923)

### I

The week after was one of the busiest weeks of their lives. Even when they went to bed it was only their bodies that lay down and rested; their minds went on, thinking things out, talking things over, wondering, deciding, trying to remember where . . .

Constantia lay like a statue, her hands by her sides, her feet just overlapping each other, the sheet up to her chin. She stared at the ceiling.

"Do you think that father would mind if we gave his top-hat to the porter?"

"The porter?" snapped Josephine. "Why ever the porter? What a very extraordinary idea!"

"Because," said Constantia slowly, "he must often have to go to funerals. And I noticed at—at the cemetery that he only had a bowler." She paused. "I thought then how very much he'd appreciate a top-hat. We ought to give him a present, too. He was always very nice to father."

"But," cried Josephine, flouncing on her pillow and staring across the dark at Constantia, "father's head!" And suddenly, for one awful moment, she nearly giggled. Not, of course, that she felt in the least like giggling. It must have been habit. Years ago, when they had stayed awake at night talking, their beds had simply heaved. And now the porter's head, disappearing, popped out, like a candle, under father's hat. . . . The giggle mounted, mounted; she clenched her hands; she fought it down; she frowned fiercely at the dark and said, "Remember" terribly sternly.

"We can decide tomorrow," she sighed.

Constantia had noticed nothing; she sighed.

"Do you think we ought to have our dressing-gowns dyed as well?"

"Black?" almost shrieked Josephine.

"Well, what else?" said Constantia. "I was thinking—it doesn't seem quite sincere, in a way, to wear black out of doors when we're fully dressed, and then when we're at home—"

"But nobody sees us," said Josephine. She gave the bedclothes such a twitch that both her feet become uncovered, and she had to creep up the pillows to get them well under again.

"Kate does," said Constantia. "And the postman very well might."

Josephine thought of her dark-red slippers, which matched her dressing-gown, and of Constantia's favorite indefinite green ones which went with hers. Black! Two black dressing-gowns and two pairs of black woolly slippers, creeping off to the bathroom like black cats.

"I don't think it's absolutely necessary," said she.

Silence. Then Constantia said, "We shall have to post the papers with the notice in them tomorrow to catch the Ceylon mail. . . . How many letters have we had up till now?"

"Twenty-three."

Josephine had replied to them all, and twenty-three times when she came to "We miss our dear father so much," she had broken down and had to use her handkerchief, and on some of them even to soak up a very light-blue tear with an edge of blotting-paper. Strange! She couldn't have put it on—but twenty-three times. Even now, though, when she said over to herself sadly, "We miss our dear father *so* much" she could have cried if she'd wanted to.

"Have you got enough stamps?" came from Constantia.

"Oh, how could I tell?" said Josephine crossly. "What's the good of asking me that now?"

"I was just wondering," said Constantia mildly.

Silence again. There came a little rustle, a scurry, a hop.

"A mouse," said Constantia.

"It can't be a mouse because there aren't any crumbs," said Josephine.

"But it doesn't know there aren't," said Constantia.

A spasm of pity squeezed her heart. Poor little thing! She wished she'd left a tiny piece of biscuit on the dressing-table. It was awful to think of it not finding anything. What would it do?

"I can't think of how they manage to live at all," she said slowly.

"Who?" demanded Josephine.

And Constantia said more loudly than she meant to, "Mice."

Josephine was furious. "Oh, what nonsense, Con!" she said. "What have mice got to do with it? You're asleep."

"I don't think I am," said Constantia. She shut her eyes to make sure. She was.

Josephine arched her spine, pulled up her knees, folded her arms so that her fists came under her ears, and pressed her cheek hard against the pillow.

## II

Another thing that complicated matters was they had Nurse Andrews staying on with them that week. It was their own fault; they had asked her. It was Josephine's idea. On the morning—well, on the last morning, when the doctor had gone, Josephine had said to Constantia, "Don't you think it would be rather nice if we asked Nurse Andrews to stay on for a week as our guest?"

"Very nice," said Constantia.

"I thought," went on Josephine quickly, "I should just say this afternoon, after we've paid her, 'My sister and I would be very pleased, after all you've done for us, Nurse Andrews, if you would stay on for a week as our guest.' I'd have to put that in about being our guest in case—"

"Oh, but she could hardly expect to be paid!" cried Constantia.

"One never knows," said Josephine sagely.

Nurse Andrews had, of course, jumped at the idea. But it was a bother. It meant they had to have regular sit-down meals at the proper times, whereas if they'd been alone they could have just asked Kate if she wouldn't have minded bringing them a tray wherever they were. And meal-times now that the strain was over were rather a trial.

Nurse Andrews was simply fearful about butter. Really they couldn't help feeling that about butter, at least, she took advantage of their kindness. And she had that maddening habit of asking for just an inch more bread to finish what she had on her plate, and then, at the last mouthful, absentmindedly—of course it wasn't absentmindedly—taking another helping. Josephine got very red when this happened, and she fastened her small, bead-like eyes on the table-cloth as if she saw a minute strange insect creeping through the web of it. But Constantia's long, pale face lengthened and set, and she gazed away—away—far over the desert to where that line of camels unwound like a thread of wool.

"When I was with Lady Tukes," said Nurse Andrews, "she had such a dainty little contrayvance for the buttah. It was a silvah Cupid balanced on the—on the bordah of a glass dish, holding a tayny fork. And when you wanted some buttah you simply pressed his foot and he bent down and speared you a piece. It was quite a gayme."

Josephine could hardly bear that. But "I think those things are very extravagant," was all she said.

"But why?" asked Nurse Andrews, beaming through her eye-glasses. "No one, surely, would take more buttah than one wanted—would one?"

"Ring, Con," cried Josephine. She couldn't trust herself to reply.

And proud young Kate, the enchanted princess, came in to see what the old tabbies wanted now. She snatched away their plates of mock something or other and slapped down a white, terrified blanc-mange.

"Jam, please, Kate," said Josephine kindly.

Kate knelt and burst open the side-board, lifted the lid of the jam-pot, saw it was empty, put it on the table, and stalked off.

"I'm afraid," said Nurse Andrews a moment later, "there isn't any."

"Oh, what a bother!" said Josephine. She bit her lip. "What had we better do?"

Constantia looked dubious. "We can't disturb Kate again," she said softly.

Nurse Andrews waited, smiling at them both. Her eyes wandered, spying at everything behind her eye-glasses. Constantia in despair went back to her camels. Josephine frowned heavily—concentrated. If it hadn't been for this idiotic woman she and Con would, of course, have eaten their blanc-mange without. Suddenly the idea came.

"I know," she said. "Marmalade. There's some marmalade in the side-board. Get it, Con."

"I hope," laughed Nurse Andrews, and her laugh was like a spoon tinkling against a medicine-glass—"I hope it's not very bittah marmalayde."

### III

But, after all, it was not long now, and then she'd be gone for good. And there was no getting away from the fact that she had been very kind to father. She had nursed him day and night at the end. Indeed, both Constantia and Josephine felt privately that she had rather overdone the not leaving him at the very last. For when they had gone in to say good-bye Nurse Andrews had sat beside his bed the whole time, holding his wrist and pretending to look at her watch. It couldn't have been necessary. It was so tactless, too. Supposing father had wanted to say something—something private to them. Not that he had. Oh, far from it! He lay there, purple, a dark, angry purple in the face, and never even looked at them when they came in. Then, as they were standing there, wondering what to do, he had suddenly opened one eye. Oh, what a difference it would have made, what a difference to their memory of him, how much easier to tell people about it, if he had only opened both! But no—one eye only. It glared at them a moment and then . . . went out.

### IV

It had made it very awkward for them when Mr. Farolles, of St. John's, called the same afternoon.

"The end was quite peaceful, I trust?" were the first words he said as he glided towards them through the dark drawing-room.

"Quite," said Josephine faintly. They both hung their heads. Both of them felt certain that eye wasn't at all a peaceful eye.

"Won't you sit down?" said Josephine.

"Thank you, Miss Pinner," said Mr. Farolles gratefully. He folded his coat-tails and began to lower himself into father's armchair, but just as he touched it he almost sprang up and slid into the next chair instead.

He coughed. Josephine clasped her hands; Constantia looked vague.

"I want you to feel, Miss Pinner," said Mr. Farolles, "and you, Miss Constantia, that I'm trying to be helpful. I want to be helpful to you both, if you will let me.

These are the times," said Mr. Farolles, very simply and earnestly, "when God means us to be helpful to one another."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Farolles," said Josephine and Constantia.

"Not at all," said Mr. Farolles gently. He drew his kid gloves through his fingers and leaned a little forward. "And if either of you would like a little Communion, either or both of you, here *and* now, you have only to tell me. A little Communion is often very helpful—a great comfort," he added tenderly.

But the idea of a little Communion terrified them. What! In the drawing-room by themselves—with no—no altar or anything! The piano would be much too high, thought Constantia, and Mr. Farolles could not possibly lean over it with the chalice. And Kate would be sure to come bursting in and interrupt them, thought Josephine. And supposing the bell rang in the middle? It might be somebody important—about their mourning. Would they get up reverently and go out, or would they have to wait . . . in torture?

"Perhaps you will send round a note by your good Kate if you would care for it later," said Mr. Farolles.

"Oh, yes, thank you very much!" they both said.

Mr. Farolles got up and took his black straw hat from the round table.

"And about the funeral," he said softly. "I may arrange that—as your dear father's old friend and yours, Miss Pinner—and Miss Constantia?"

Josephine and Constantia got up too.

"I should like it to be quite simple," said Josephine firmly, "and not too expensive. At the same time, I should like—"

"A good one that will last," thought dreamy Constantia, as if Josephine were buying a night-gown. But of course Josephine didn't say that. "One suitable to our father's position." She was very nervous.

"I'll run round to our good friend Mr. Knight," said Mr. Farolles soothingly. "I will ask him to come and see you. I am sure you will find him very helpful indeed."

## V

Well, at any rate, all that part of it was over, though neither of them could possibly believe that father was never coming back. Josephine had had a moment of absolute terror at the cemetery, while the coffin was lowered, to think that she and Constantia had done this thing without asking his permission. What would father say when he found out? For he was bound to find out sooner or later. He always did. "Buried. You two girls had me *buried*!" She heard his stick thumping. Oh, what would they say? What possible excuse could they make? It sounded such an appallingly heartless thing to do. Such a wicked advantage to take of a person because he happened to be helpless at the moment. The other people seemed to treat it all as a matter of course. They were strangers; they couldn't be expected to understand that father was the very last person for such a thing to happen to. No, the entire blame for it all would fall on her and Constantia. And the expense, she thought, stepping into the tight-buttoned cab. When she had to show him the bills. What would he say then?

She heard him absolutely roaring, "And do you expect me to pay for this gimcrack excursion of yours?"

"Oh," groaned poor Josephine aloud, "we shouldn't have done it, Con!"

And Constantia, pale as a lemon in all that blackness, said in a frightened whisper, "Done what, Jug?"

"Let them bu-bury father like that," said Josephine, breaking down and crying into her new, queer-smelling mourning handkerchief.

"But what else could we have done?" asked Constantia wonderingly. "We couldn't have kept him, Jug—we couldn't have kept him unburied. At any rate, not in a flat that size."

Josephine blew her nose; the cab was dreadfully stuffy.

"I don't know," she said forlornly. "It is all so dreadful. I feel we ought to have tried to, just for a time at least. To make perfectly sure. One thing's certain"—and her tears sprang out again—"father will never forgive us for this—never!"

## VI

Father would never forgive them. That was what they felt more than ever when, two mornings later, they went into his room to go through his things. They had discussed it quite calmly. It was even down on Josephine's list of things to be done. *Go through father's things and settle about them.* But that was a very different matter from saying after breakfast:

"Well, are you ready, Con?"

"Yes, Jug—when you are."

"Then I think we'd better get it over."

It was dark in the hall. It had been a rule for years never to disturb father in the morning, whatever happened. And now they were going to open the door without knocking even. . . . Constantia's eyes were enormous at the idea; Josephine felt weak in the knees.

"You—you go first," she gasped, pushing Constantia.

But Constantia said, as she always had said on those occasions. "No, Jug, that's not fair. You're eldest."

Josephine was going to say—what at other times she wouldn't have owned to for the world—what she kept for her very last weapon, "But you're tallest," when they noticed that the kitchen door was open, and there stood Kate. . . .

"Very stiff," said Josephine, grasping the door-handle and doing her best to turn it. As if anything ever deceived Kate.

It couldn't be helped. That girl was . . . Then the door was shut behind them, but—but they weren't in father's room at all. They might have suddenly walked through the wall by mistake into a different flat altogether. Was the door just behind them? They were too frightened to look. Josephine knew that if it was it was holding itself tight shut; Constantia felt that, like the doors in dreams, it hadn't any handle at all. It was the coldness which made it so awful. Or the whiteness—which? Everything was covered. The blinds were down, a cloth hung over the mirror, a sheet hid the bed; a huge fan of white paper filled the fireplace. Constantia timidly put out her hand; she almost expected a snowflake to fall. Josephine felt a queer tingling in her nose, as if her nose was freezing. Then a cab klop-klopped over the cobbles below, and the quiet seemed to shake into little pieces.

"I had better pull up a blind," said Josephine bravely.

"Yes, it might be a good idea," whispered Constantia.

They only gave the blind a touch, but it flew up and the cord flew after, rolling round the blind-stick, and the little tassel tapped as if trying to get free. That was too much for Constantia.

"Don't you think—don't you think we might put it off for another day?" she whispered.

"Why?" snapped Josephine, feeling, as usual, much better now that she knew for certain that Constantia was terrified. "It's got to be done. But I do wish you wouldn't whisper, Con."

"I didn't know I was whispering," whispered Constantia.

"And why do you keep staring at the bed?" said Josephine, raising her voice almost defiantly. "There's nothing *on* the bed."

"Oh, Jug, don't say so!" said poor Connie. "At any rate, not so loudly."

Josephine felt herself that she had gone too far. She took a wide swerve over to the chest of drawers, put out her hand, but quickly drew it back again.

"Connie!" she gasped, and she wheeled round and leaned with her back against the chest of drawers.

"Oh, Jug—What?"

Josephine could only glare. She had the most extraordinary feeling that she had just escaped something awful. But how could she explain to Constantia that father was in the chest of drawers? He was in the top drawer with his handkerchiefs and neckties, or in the next with his shirts and pajamas, or in the lowest of all with his suits. He was watching there, hidden away—just behind the door-handle—ready to spring.

She pulled a funny old-fashioned face at Constantia, just as she used to in the old days when she was going to cry.

"I can't open," she nearly wailed.

"No, don't, Jug," whispered Constantia, earnestly. "It's much better not to. Don't let's open anything. At any rate, not for a long time."

"But—but it seems so weak," said Josephine, breaking down.

"But why not be weak for once, Jug?" argued Constantia, whispering quite fiercely. "If it is weak." And her pale stare flew from the locked writing-table—so safe—to the huge glittering wardrobe, and she began to breathe in a queer, panting way. "Why shouldn't we be weak for once in our lives, Jug? It's quite excusable. Let's be weak—be weak, Jug. It's much nicer to be weak than to be strong."

And then she did one of those amazingly bold things that she'd done about twice before in their lives; she marched over to the wardrobe, turned the key, and took it out of the lock. Took it out of the lock and held it up to Josephine, showing Josephine by her extraordinary smile that she knew what she'd done, she'd risked deliberately father being in there among his overcoats.

If the huge wardrobe had lurched forward, had crashed down on Constantia, Josephine wouldn't have been surprised. On the contrary, she would have thought it the only suitable thing to happen. But nothing happened. Only the room seemed quieter than ever, and bigger flakes of cold air fell on Josephine's shoulders and knees. She began to shiver.

"Come, Jug," said Constantia, still with that awful callous smile, and Josephine followed just as she had that last time, when Constantia had pushed Benny into the round pond.

## VII

But the strain told on them when they were back in the dining-room. They sat down, very shaky, and looked at each other.

"I don't feel I can settle to anything," said Josephine, "until I've had something. Do you think we could ask Kate for two cups of hot water?"



"I really don't see why we shouldn't," said Constantia carefully. She was quite normal again. "I won't ring. I'll go to the kitchen door and ask her."

"Yes, do," said Josephine, sinking down into a chair. "Tell her, just two cups, Con, nothing else—on a tray."

"She needn't even put the jug on, need she?" said Constantia, as though Kate might very well complain if the jug had been there.

"Oh, no, certainly not! The jug's not at all necessary. She can pour it direct out of the kettle," cried Josephine, feeling that would be a labour-saving indeed.

Their cold lips quivered at the greenish brims. Josephine curved her small red hands round the cup; Constantia sat up and blew on the wavy steam, making it flutter from one side to the other.

"Speaking of Benny," said Josephine.

And though Benny hadn't been mentioned Constantia immediately looked as though he had.

"He'll expect us to send him something of father's, of course. But it's so difficult to know what to send to Ceylon."

"You mean things get unstuck so on the voyage," murmured Constantia.

"No, lost," said Josephine sharply. "You know there's no post. Only runners."

Both paused to watch a black man in white linen drawers running through the pale fields for dear life, with a large brown-paper parcel in his hands. Josephine's black man was tiny; he scurried along glistening like an ant. But there was something blind and tireless about Constantia's tall, thin fellow which made him, she decided, a very unpleasant person indeed . . . On the veranda, dressed all in white and wearing a cork helmet, stood Benny. His right hand shook up and down, as father's did when he was impatient. And behind him, not in the least interested, sat Hilda, the unknown sister-in-law. She swung in a cane rocker and flicked over the leaves of the *Taller*.

"I think his watch would be the most suitable present," said Josephine.

Constantia looked up; she seemed surprised.

"Oh, would you trust a gold watch to a native?"

"But of course I'd disguise it," said Josephine. "No one would know it was a watch." She liked the idea of having to make a parcel such a curious shape that no one could possibly guess what it was. She even thought for a moment of hiding the watch in a narrow cardboard corset-box that she'd kept by her for a long time, waiting for it to come in for something. It was such a beautiful firm cardboard. But, no, it wouldn't be appropriate for this occasion. It had lettering on it: *Medium Women's 28. Extra Firm Buses*. It would be almost too much of a surprise for Benny to open that and find father's watch inside.

"And of course it isn't as though it would be going—ticking, I mean," said Constantia, who was still thinking of the native love of jewellery. "At least," she added, "it would be very strange if after all that time it was."

#### VIII

Josephine made no reply. She had flown off on one of her tangents. She had suddenly thought of Cyril. Wasn't it more usual for the only grandson to have the watch? And then dear Cyril was so appreciative, and a gold watch meant so much to a young man. Benny, in all probability, had quite got out of the habit of watches; men so seldom wore waistcoats in those hot climates. Whereas Cyril in London wore them from year's end to year's end. And it would be so nice for her and Constantia,

when he came to tea, to know it was there. "I see you've got on grandfather's watch, Cyril." It would be somehow so satisfactory.

Dear boy! What a blow his sweet, sympathetic little note had been. Of course they quite understood; but it was most unfortunate.

"It would have been such a point, having him," said Josephine.

"And he would have enjoyed it so," said Constantia, not thinking what she was saying.

However, as soon as he got back he was coming to tea with his aunties. Cyril to tea was one of their rare treats.

"Now, Cyril, you mustn't be frightened of our cakes. Your Auntie Con and I bought them at Buzzard's this morning. We know what a man's appetite is. So don't be ashamed of making a good tea."

Josephine cut recklessly into the rich dark cake that stood for her winter gloves or the soling and heeling of Constantia's only respectable shoes. But Cyril was most unmanlike in appetite.

"I say, Aunt Josephine, I simply can't. I've only just had lunch, you know."

"Oh, Cyril, that can't be true! It's after four," cried Josephine. Constantia sat with her knife poised over the chocolate-roll.

"It is, all the same," said Cyril. "I had to meet a man at Victoria, and he kept me hanging about till . . . there was only time to get lunch and to come on here. And he gave me—phew"—Cyril put his hand to his forehead—"a terrific blowout," he said.

It was disappointing—today of all days. But still he couldn't be expected to know.

"But you'll have a meringue, won't you, Cyril?" said Aunt Josephine. "These meringues were bought specially for you. Your dear father was so fond of them. We were sure you are, too."

"I *am*, Aunt Josephine," cried Cyril ardently. "Do you mind if I take half to begin with?"

"Not at all, dear boy; but we mustn't let you off with that."

"Is your dear father still so fond of meringues?" asked Auntie Con gently. She winced faintly as she broke through the shell of hers.

"Well, I don't quite know, Auntie Con," said Cyril breezily.

At that they both looked up.

"Don't know?" almost snapped Josephine. "Don't know a thing like that about your own father, Cyril?"

"Surely," said Auntie Con softly.

Cyril tried to laugh it off. "Oh, well," he said, "it's such a long time since—" He faltered. He stopped. Their faces were too much for him.

"Even so," said Josephine.

And Auntie Con looked.

Cyril put down his teacup. "Wait a bit," he cried. "Wait a bit, Aunt Josephine. What am I thinking of?"

He looked up. They were beginning to brighten. Cyril slapped his knee.

"Of course," he said, "it was meringues. How could I have forgotten? Yes, Aunt Josephine, you're perfectly right. Father's most frightfully keen on meringues."

They didn't only beam. Aunt Josephine went scarlet with pleasure; Auntie Con gave a deep, deep sigh.

"And now, Cyril, you must come and see father," said Josephine. "He knows you were coming today."

"Right," said Cyril, very firmly and heartily. He got up from his chair; suddenly he glanced at the clock.

"I say, Auntie Con, isn't your clock a bit slow? I've got to meet a man at—at Paddington just after five. I'm afraid I shan't be able to stay very long with grandfather."

"Oh he won't expect you to say *very* long!" said Aunt Josephine.

Constantia was still gazing at the clock. She couldn't make up her mind if it was fast or slow. It was one or the other, she felt almost certain of that. At any rate, it had been.

Cyril still lingered. "Aren't you coming along, Auntie Con?"

"Of course," said Josephine, "we shall all go. Come on, Con."

## IX

They knocked at the door, and Cyril followed his aunts into grandfather's hot, sweetish room.

"Come on," said Grandfather Pinner. "Don't hang about. What is it? What've you been up to?"

He was sitting in front of a roaring fire, clasping his stick. He had a thick rug over his knees. On his lap there lay a beautiful pale yellow silk handkerchief.

"It's Cyril, father," said Josephine shyly. And she took Cyril's hand and led him forward.

"Good afternoon, grandfather," said Cyril, trying to take his hand out of Aunt Josephine's. Grandfather Pinner shot his eyes at Cyril in the way he was famous for. Where was Auntie Con? She stood on the other side of Aunt Josephine; her long arms hung down in front of her; her hands were clasped. She never took her eyes off grandfather.

"Well," said Grandfather Pinner, beginning to thump, "what have you got to tell me?"

What had he, what had he got to tell him? Cyril felt himself smiling like a perfect imbecile. The room was stifling, too.

But Aunt Josephine came to his rescue. She cried brightly, "Cyril says his father is still very fond of meringues, father dear."

"Eh?" said Grandfather Pinner, curving his hand like a purple meringue-shell over one ear.

Josephine repeated, "Cyril says his father is still very fond of meringues."

"Can't hear," said old Colonel Pinner. And he waved Josephine away with his stick, then pointed to Cyril. "Tell me what she's trying to say," he said.

(My God!) "Must I?" said Cyril, blushing and staring at Aunt Josephine.

"Do, dear," she smiled. "It will please him so much."

"Come on, out with it!" cried Colonel Pinner testily, beginning to thump again.

And Cyril leaned forward and yelled, "Father's still very fond of meringues."

At that Grandfather Pinner jumped as though he had been shot.

"Don't shout!" he cried. "What's the matter with the boy? *Meringues!* What about 'em?"

"Oh, Aunt Josephine, must we go on?" groaned Cyril desperately.

"It's quite all right, dear boy," said Aunt Josephine, as though he and she were at the dentist's together. "He'll understand in a minute." And she whispered to Cyril, "He's getting a bit deaf, you know." Then she leaned forward and really bawled at Grandfather Pinner, "Cyril only wanted to tell you, father dear, that *his* father is still very fond of meringues."

Colonel Pinner heard that time, heard and brooded, looking Cyril up and down.

"What an extraordinary thing!" said old Grandfather Pinner. "What an extraordinary thing to come all this way here to tell me!"

And Cyril felt it *was*.

"Yes, I shall send Cyril the watch," said Josephine.

"That would be very nice," said Constantia. "I seem to remember last time he came here there was some little trouble about the time."

X

They were interrupted by Kate bursting through the door in her usual fashion, as though she had discovered some secret panel in the wall.

"Fried or boiled?" asked the bold voice.

Fried or boiled? Josephine and Constantia were quite bewildered for the moment. They could hardly take it in.

"Fried or boiled what, Kate?" asked Josephine, trying to begin to concentrate.

Kate gave a loud sniff. "Fish."

"Well, why didn't you say so immediately?" Josephine reproached her gently. "How could you expect us to understand? There are a great many things in this world, you know, which are fried or boiled." And after such a display of courage, she said quite brightly to Constantia, "Which do you prefer, Con?"

"I think it might be nice to have it fried," said Constantia. "On the other hand, of course boiled fish is very nice. I think I prefer both equally well. . . . Unless you . . . In that case—"

"I shall fry it," said Kate, and she bounced back, leaving their door open and slamming the door of her kitchen.

Josephine gazed at Constantia; she raised her pale eyebrows until they rippled away into her pale hair. She got up. She said in a very lofty, imposing way, "Do you mind following me into the drawing-room, Constantia? I've something of great importance to discuss with you."

For it was always to the drawing-room they retired when they wanted to talk over Kate.

Josephine closed the door meaningly. "Sit down, Constantia," she said, still very grand. She might have been receiving Constantia for the first time. And Con looked round vaguely for a chair, as though she felt indeed quite a stranger.

"Now, the question is," said Josephine, bending forward, "whether we shall keep her or not."

"That is the question," agreed Constantia.

"And this time," said Josephine firmly, "we must come to a definite decision."

Constantia looked for a moment as though she might begin going over all the other times, but she pulled herself together and said, "Yes, Jug."

"You see, Con," explained Josephine, "everything is so changed now." Constantia looked up quickly. "I mean," went on Josephine, "we're not dependent on Kate as we were." And she blushed faintly. "There's not father to cook for."

"That is perfectly true," agreed Constantia. "Father certainly doesn't want any cooking now, whatever else—"

Josephine broke in sharply, "You're not sleepy, are you, Con?"

"Sleepy, Jug?" Constantia was wide-eyed.

"Well, concentrate more," said Josephine sharply, and she returned to the subject. "What it comes to is, if we did"—and this she barely breathed, glancing at the door—"give Kate notice"—she raised her voice again—"we could manage our own food."

"Why not?" cried Constantia. She couldn't help smiling. The idea was so exciting. She clasped her hands. "What should we live on, Jug?"

"Oh, eggs in various forms!" said Jug, lofty again. "And besides, there are all the cooked foods."

"But I've always heard," said Constantia, "they are considered so very expensive."

"Not if one buys them in moderation," said Josephine. But she tore herself away from the fascinating bypath and dragged Constantia after her.

"What we've got to decide now, however, is whether we really do trust Kate or not."

Constantia leaned back. Her flat little laugh flew from her lips.

"Isn't it curious, Jug," said she, "that just on this one subject I've never been able to quite make up my mind."

## XI

She never had. The whole difficulty was to prove anything. How did one prove things, how could one? Suppose Kate had stood in front of her and deliberately made a face. Mightn't she very well have been in pain? Wasn't it impossible, at any rate, to ask Kate if she was making a face at her? If Kate answered "No"—and of course she would say "No"—what a position! How undignified! Then again Constantia suspected, she was almost certain, that Kate went to her chest of drawers when she and Josephine were out, not to take things but to spy. Many times she had come back to find her amethyst cross in the most unlikely places, under her lace ties or on top of her evening Bertha. More than once she had laid a trap for Kate. She had arranged things in a special order and then called Josephine to witness.

"You see, Jug?"

"Quite, Con."

"Now we shall be able to tell."

But, oh, dear, when she did go to look, she was as far off from proof as ever! If anything was displaced, it might so very well have happened as she closed the drawer; a jolt might have done it so easily.

"You come, Jug, and decide. I really can't. It's too difficult."

But after a long pause and a long glare Josephine would sigh, "Now you've put the doubt into my mind, Con, I'm sure I can't tell myself."

"Well, we can't postpone it again," said Josephine. "If we postpone it this time—"

## XII

But at that moment in the street below a barrel-organ struck up. Josephine and Constantia sprang to their feet together.

"Run, Con," said Josephine. "Run quickly. There's six-pence on the—"

Then they remembered. It didn't matter. They would never have to stop the organ-grinder again. Never again would she and Constantia be told to make that monkey take his noise somewhere else. Never would sound that loud, strange bellow when father thought they were not hurrying enough. The organ-grinder might play there all day and the stick would not thump.

*It never will thump again,  
It never will thump again,*

played the barrel-organ.

What was Constantia thinking? She had such a strange smile; she looked different. She couldn't be going to cry.

"Jug, Jug," said Constantia softly, pressing her hands together. "Do you know what day it is? It's Saturday. It's a week today, a whole week."

*A week since father died,  
A week since father died,*

cried the barrel-organ. And Josephine, too, forgot to be practical and sensible; she smiled faintly, strangely. On the Indian carpet there fell a square of sunlight, pale red; it came and went and came—and stayed, deepened—until it shone almost golden.

"The sun's out," said Josephine, as though it really mattered.

A perfect fountain of bubbling notes shook from the barrel-organ, round, bright notes, carelessly scattered.

Constantia lifted her big, cold hands as if to catch them, and then her hands fell again. She walked over to the mantel-piece to her favourite Buddha. And the stone and gilt image, whose smile always gave her such a queer feeling, almost a pain and yet a pleasant pain, seemed today to be more than smiling. He knew something; he had a secret. "I know something you don't know," said her Buddha. Oh, what was it, what could it be? And yet she had always felt there was . . . something.

The sunlight pressed through the windows, thieved its way in, flashed its light over the furniture and the photographs. Josephine watched it. When it came to mother's photograph, the enlargement over the piano, it lingered as though puzzled to find so little remained of mother, except the earrings shaped like tiny pagodas and a black feather boa. Why did the photographs of dead people always fade so? wondered Josephine. As soon as a person was dead her photograph died too. But, of course, this one of mother was very old. It was thirty-five years old. Josephine remembered standing on a chair and pointing out that feather boa to Constantia and telling her that it was a snake that had killed their mother in Ceylon. . . . Would everything have been different if mother hadn't died? She didn't see why. Aunt Florence had lived with them until they had left school, and they had moved three times and had their yearly holiday and . . . and there'd been changes of servants, of course.

Some little sparrows, young sparrows they sounded, chirped on the window-ledge. *Yeep-yeep-yeep*. But Josephine felt they were not sparrows, not on the window-ledge. It was inside her, that queer little crying noise. *Yeep-yeep-yeep*. Ah, what was it crying, so weak and forlorn?

If mother had lived, might they have married? But there had been nobody for them to marry. There had been father's Anglo-Indian friends before he quarrelled with them. But after that she and Constantia never met a single man except clergymen. How did one meet men? Or even if they'd met them, how could they have got to know men well enough to be more than strangers? One read of people having adventures, being followed, and so on. But nobody had ever followed Constantia and her. Oh, yes, there had been one year at Eastbourne a mysterious man at their boarding-house who had put a note on the jug of hot water outside their bedroom door! But by the time Connie had found it the steam had made the writing too faint to read; they couldn't even make out to which of them it was addressed. And he had

left the next day. And that was all. The rest had been looking after father, and at the same time keeping out of father's way. But now? But now? The thieving sun touched Josephine gently. She lifted her face. She was drawn over to the window by gentle beams . . .

Until the barrel-organ stopped playing Constantia stayed before the Buddha, wondering, but not as usual, not vaguely. This time her wonder was like longing. She remembered the times she had come in here, crept out of bed in her nightgown when the moon was full, and lain on the floor with her arms outstretched, as though she was crucified. Why? The big, pale moon had made her do it. The horrible dancing figures on the carved screen had leered at her and she hadn't minded. She remembered too how, whenever they were at the seaside, she had gone off by herself and got as close to the sea as she could, and sung something, something she had made up, while she gazed all over that restless water. There had been this other life, running out, bringing things home in bags, getting things on approval, discussing them with Jug, taking them back to get more things on approval, and arranging father's trays and trying not to annoy father. But it all seemed to have happened in a kind of tunnel. It wasn't real. It was only when she came out of the tunnel into the moonlight or by the sea or into a thunderstorm that she really felt herself. What did it mean? What did it all lead to? Now? Now?

She turned away from the Buddha with one of her vague gestures. She went over to where Josephine was standing. She wanted to say something to Josephine, something frightfully important, about—about the future and what . . .

"Don't you think perhaps—" she began.

But Josephine interrupted her. "I was wondering if now—" she murmured. They stopped; they waited for each other.

"Go on, Con," said Josephine.

"No, no, Jug; after you," said Constantia.

"No, say what you were going to say. You began," said Josephine.

"I . . . I'd rather hear what you were going to say first," said Constantia.

"Don't be absurd, Con."

"Really, Jug."

"Connie!"

"Oh, Jug!"

A pause. Then Constantia said faintly, "I can't say what I was going to say, Jug, because I've forgotten what it was . . . that I was going to say."

Josephine was silent for a moment. She stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. Then she replied shortly, "I've forgotten too."

## KATHERINE MANSFIELD: ARTIST IN MINIATURE (Student Analysis)

ARTHUR NELSON (1922-1945) \*

. . . The main characters of "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" are two spinsters, Constantia and Josephine, daughters of a retired colonel of the British foreign service; the effect of his death upon them is the immediate theme of the story. Comedy and tragedy are co-existent in them: their childlike helplessness is comic, providing the constant which is carried by the tone straight through the story. Comic also is the contrast between them: Constantia is vague and absent-minded, Josephine practical and efficient. But the *reason* for their common weakness is tragic: the narrow confinement of their lives due to environmental circumstances, and to their domination by, and utter dependence upon, their aged father. Similarly tragic is the reason for the contrast between them: Constantia has accepted her weakness in an escape from life, while Josephine has tried, unsuccessfully, to overcome hers. But the author never tells us this in so many words; she allows us to deduce it from her presentation of them in comic terms.

In the last episode, Constantia sums up her life by reflecting that "it had all taken place in a kind of tunnel." The word "tunnel" here denotes darkness, fear, confinement, monotony and purposelessness. To provide sufficient cause for the use of this word, the author must in the previous episodes have brought out, without destroying her humor, these five qualities, and must have made it clear that they have been characteristic of the *entire* lives of her characters. She must also have created a high enough tension to prevent bathos when it is finally resolved in the blank despair of this word. These two things are accomplished primarily by means of structure, setting and detail.

Her structure, . . . by its use of episode and retrospection simulates the action of memory, and gives a sense of extension in time. In this story, there are twelve episodes which seem at first to have no particular reason for their order, to be merely glimpses selected at random from the week following the Colonel's death. A second reading, however, shows their sequence to have a definite part in bringing out the implications which cause the tension.

The first six episodes reveal the sisters' pitiful plight as primarily the result of their father's domination; the last six show it in relation to the isolation of their past environment. Both groups of six form units in themselves, Episode 6 acting as a climax to the first group (in the sense that it is a focal point of the irony), Episode 12 to the second and to the whole story. Each group revolves around one of the only two episodes, 3 and 9, in which the Colonel actually appears, thus keeping the fact of his influence central throughout.

\* Arthur Nelson wrote this essay while a first-year student of literature at Yale University. His essay was first published in the *Yale Literary Magazine* in April, 1941. It was reprinted in *The Art of Modern Fiction*, by Ray B. West Jr. and R. W. Stallman (Rinehart, 1949).

In March of 1945, Arthur Nelson was killed in the Philippine Islands.



Episode 1 contains in embryo all the elements of the story; it describes four trivial incidents, each one of which defines the two characters in both their similarity and their contrast. Their "thinking things out, talking things over, wondering, deciding, trying to remember where" in the first paragraph characterizes not just their present occupation, but that of their entire lives (monotony, lack of purpose). And Josephine's hysterical weeping at the same place twenty-three times in replying to their letters of condolence is, apart from its surface humor, an indication of the emotional release effected in her subconscious by the ironic words, "We miss our dear father so much." He has been at once the cause of their misery and their only reason for living: they miss him, but not as a father.

The second, third and fourth episodes begin the themes of loneliness and fear, emphasizing the irony of the death and its aftermath, as evidenced in the sisters' pathetic inability to understand reality or to cope with little emergencies. Episode 2 is taken up with the annoying personality of Nurse Andrews, whose laugh is "like a spoon tinkling against a medicine-glass"; Episode 4, with the equally objectionable minister, Mr. Farolles, bent on giving them a "little Communion" in the drawing-room. These are the only two people to enter the house in the week following the Colonel's death, making them symbolic of the meager contacts that have made up the social lives of Constantia and Josephine (as comes out in the last episode when Josephine reflects that she "had never met a single man except clergymen"). Episode 3, a brief paragraph squeezed in between 2 and 4, recounts the anticlimax of the death-scene: all father did when they came in was to open one eye which, after glaring at them a moment, simply "—went out." The brevity of this episode and its position between two longer ones give exactly the impression of a sharp, painful recollection, refusing to allow itself to be hidden among other less painful ones.

The fifth and sixth episodes, taking place respectively in a cab after the funeral and in father's vacated room, continue the fear theme begun in the third; they depict in vivid terms the hypnotic effect he continues to exercise over them even after death. In the sixth, the central tragedy of the story is summed up indirectly by Constantia when she says, exhorting Josephine not to open father's bureau, "Why shouldn't we be weak for once in our lives" and performs the "amazingly bold act" of removing the key. The irony here is that she is really exhorting Josephine to be weak not "for once," but as they have always been so; and her removal of the key is "bold" only in that it is an acceptance of her weakness.

We have now a half-idea of the reason beneath the superficial comedy, the next three episodes—seven, eight and nine—give us, retrospectively, the other half, heretofore barely suggested—the loneliness of their position as women in the man's world of the British colonial system. The separation of the family appears through their naïve conjectures about their brother Benny, away for years in Ceylon; their pitiful need for an object of affection, in the reenactment of one of their rare treats, "Cyril to tea." (Cyril is their nephew.) Episode 9 unites both the influential factors—father and environment—in one scene, wholly occupied with the attempts of Cyril and his aunts to explain to the deaf Colonel that his son Benny is still fond of meringues. It also repeats the anticlimax of Episode 3 in the ridiculous appearance of the old man who has inspired so much fear.

The several associations of the "tunnel" towards which the author has been working are by this time fairly evident; a last one, lack of purpose, now comes to the surface in two episodes which deal with the pettiness of the relation between the sisters and Kate, their servant. This acquires poignancy in the light of what we

already know of their loneliness. Indecision and doubt dominate in these two episodes, preparing for the last one, in which all the implications of the previous eleven are drawn together into one persistent question: "What now?" Past and future merge with present as the tension resolves in the image of the tunnel, and the author, having built up step by step the walls behind and around her characters, now abandons them, with no sign of any opening in the endless darkness ahead.

It is, of course, through her use of suggestive detail that she links all these episodes together and creates the tension from which the emotional impact of the last episode is derived. Having in mind the general structure of the story, we are now in a position to see it as it should be seen—as an organic whole, and to analyze the function of detail in that whole. This function is, again, comparable to that in a painting: each individual sense-impression acts not only in the setting of the particular episode in which it occurs, but also in the pattern of which the episodes are parts. The episodic structure is merely a frame for this organization of detail. Similarly, every descriptive detail applied to the physical appearance of a character applies with equal aptness to her personality and even to her past experience.

Thus, when Constantia is described in the first episode as lying "like a statue," the image tells us, first of her physical position at the moment, then of her personality (stoical, apathetic), and finally of her life (bleak, cold, unvaried). This is reinforced by a passage in Episode 7, in which she is seen picturing to herself a native runner in Ceylon: "but there was something blind and tireless about Constantia's tall, thin fellow"; and again in the last episode, when she lifts her "big, cold hands" to catch the notes of the barrel-organ.

A very important detail is, in Episode 3, the dying Colonel's single glaring eye, which is a concentration into one image of the entire father-daughter relationship. It expresses, in addition to an old man's petulance, precisely the *hypnotic* influence he has had, and still has, over them, and lends a sharpness to the irony of his death.

This episode is linked with the other one (9) in which he appears by a deft use of detail. In Episode 3 his face is described as an angry purple in color. In 9, when they are trying to tell him about his son and meringues, he curves his hand over one ear "like a purple meringue-shell." The simile, drawn from the context, adds immediacy to the image—"shell" suggesting dryness, "purple," high blood-pressure—and fuses it with the memory of his death.

The fifth and sixth episodes are those in which fear is most stressed. The sense of confinement predominant in both of them (one in a "tight-buttoned cab," the other in the dead man's room) prepares for the tunnel-image; and the emotion is further intensified by the sharp contrast in color between them—one pitch black, the other cold white. The fear-suggesting properties of black are increased when, in the cab, Constantia is called "pale as a lemon in all that blackness." A lemon being the most commonplace of objects, it works here toward conveying, humorously, the negative quality of her personality, modifying the conception we had formed from the statue simile.

The ninth episode is, as we have seen, intensely ironic when we find that the Colonel is after all nothing more than a deaf old gentleman. But there is one suggestion—faint, easily overlooked—of something else: on his lap there lies "a beautiful pale yellow silk handkerchief." This one detail colors the whole episode, the whole story; for the pale handkerchief, with its many associations of past youth, beauty and

grandeur, here transforms the particular into the universal human tragedy of old age and faded glory.

But it is in the last episode that the greatest use of the symbolic associations of objects in the setting is made. Here the barrel-organ, providing the impulse that sends the sisters' minds back over the years, becomes, as Constantia lifts her hands to catch its "fountain of round, bright notes," identified with all the bright, sparkling world outside the confining wall of their experience. As they sit listening, a beam of sunlight enters the room, and we realize that this is its first appearance—that sunlight, in fact, has until now been absent altogether. This makes it here an extremely effective symbol of their first uncertain glimmer of hope; the way it has to *press, thieve* its way in makes the darkness, of which we had been only half aware, seem suddenly tangible, oppressive. The beam (their hope) now falls on a faded photograph, symbolic of decay and futility, reawakening their dead memories, and impressing upon them the unreality of their hope. When finally, in the last line, the sun disappears behind a cloud, returning them to darkness, it is actually the faded photograph which has made it disappear.

Such use of symbolic detail and insight comparison is the most important element of that elusive thing known as Katherine Mansfield's "style." The latter term includes, in fact, all the other separate elements—tension, structure, setting—and can be understood only after an analysis of these. Its effectiveness has been found to lie in its power of conveying an emotional experience all at once, in its entirety. As one critic has said, one gets the impression that her life has consisted of a continuous bombardment of "moments"; moments in which sounds, colors and smells unite to produce a single, sharp sensation. The words themselves, by following the broken, sporadic rhythm of thought-language, do not merely describe, but *are* the sensation. The way this happens can be illustrated by a single passage taken from the sixth episode of "The Daughters" (Kate has just caught them hesitating fearfully at the door—quickly they go in):

It couldn't be helped. That girl was . . . Then the door was shut behind them, but—but they weren't in father's room at all. They might have suddenly walked through the wall by mistake into a different flat together. Was the door just behind them? They were too frightened to look. Josephine knew that if it was it was holding itself tight shut; Constantia felt that, like the doors in dreams, it hadn't any handle at all. It was the coldness which made it so awful. Or the whiteness—which? Everything was covered. The blinds were down, a cloth hung over the mirror, a sheet hid the bed; a huge fan of white paper filled the fireplace. Constantia timidly put out her hand; she almost expected a snowflake to fall. Josephine felt a queer tingling in her nose, as if her nose was freezing. Then a cab klop-klopped over the cobbles below, and the quiet seemed to shake into little pieces.

This passage shows, first, how the words simulate thoughts to convey the emotion: "but—but they weren't in father's room at all." Then a quick insight comparison: "They might have suddenly walked through the wall by mistake . . ." to reinforce the emotion. The idea of the door as a malignant entity, holding itself shut, or without a handle, makes much more vivid the sense of confinement than objective description could have done. The coldness and whiteness, after a quick inventory of the specific white objects in the room to particularize the picture, now fuse into their

logical product—snow, providing the excuse for Josephine's "tingling" nose, equally suggestive of fear and coldness. By this time the imagery has created what might be a peaceful winter scene, but for the confinement and other-worldliness of the first lines. The inter-reaction of the two—soft, soundless snow, against panic—captures so perfectly the silent blankness of a room in which some one has recently died that the quiet literally *does* "shake into little pieces," so great is the relief when a sound breaks the spell.

This last phrase is a typical device of Katherine Mansfield's: she has simply taken the ordinary expression, "the silence was broken," and revived it by endowing it with a force commensurate to the emotion. No better instance could be found of the essential "secret" of her work; what she has done to a cliché here, she has done on a larger scale to the clichés of life.

## A HUNGER-ARTIST \*

FRANZ KAFKA (1883-1924)

In recent decades there has been a distinct falling-off in the interest shown in hunger-artists. Whereas in earlier times one could stage such exhibitions at one's own expense and be quite sure of success, today such a thing is utterly impossible. Those were other times. In those days the entire city occupied itself with the hunger-artist; the interest in him grew from fast day to fast day; every one wanted to see the hunger-artist at least once a day, and in the latter stages there were regular subscribers who sat before the small latticed cage for days on end. Performances were given at night too, in order to heighten the effect by torchlight. On sunny days the cage was carried out into the open, and on these occasions it was especially the children to whom the hunger-artist was exhibited. But whereas for the adults he was often no more than a source of amusement, of which they partook only because it was the stylish thing to do, the children would gaze upon him open-mouthed, holding one another by the hand for safety's sake, as he sat there on his straw, scorning even so much as a chair, deathly pale, dressed in black tights, his ribs protruding powerfully, sometimes nodding politely and answering questions with a forced smile, even thrusting his arm through the bars to let them feel his emaciation, then lapsing once more into complete self-absorption and paying attention to no one, ignoring even the striking of the clock which was the cage's sole decoration, looking straight before him with eyes almost closed, and sipping occasionally from a tiny glass of water to wet his lips.

Besides the spectators who merely came and went, there were also regular guards chosen by the public—usually butchers, for some remarkable reason, and always by threes—to whom was assigned the task of watching the hunger-artist day and night, lest he might succeed after all in surreptitiously partaking of nourishment. But that was no more than a formality, introduced to satisfy the masses, because the initiated were well aware that the hunger-artist would never under any circumstances, not even under compulsion, partake of any nourishment during the period of fasting. His

\* Translation by M. L. Nielsen.

honor as an artist forbade such a thing. Of course not every guard could comprehend this. Sometimes there were groups of watchers who were very lax in their guard duty, who would purposely sit down together in a distant corner and absorb themselves in a game of cards with the obvious intention of allowing the hunger-artist a little refreshment which they seemed to believe he could produce from some secret supply. To the hunger-artist nothing was more painful than such guards; they filled him with unspeakable sadness; they made fasting terribly difficult for him. Sometimes he would overcome his weakness and sing during such a watch as this, sing as long as his strength held out, just to show the people how unjust were their suspicions. But it availed him little; in such cases they would simply marvel at the cleverness which enabled him to eat even while singing. Much more to his liking were the guards who sat down close to the cage, and not satisfied with the gloomy illumination of the hall, turned upon him the pocket torches with which they had been provided by the impresario. The bright light bothered him not at all. Sleep was impossible in any case, and he could always drowse a little, under any illumination and at any hour, even when the hall was noisy and overcrowded. He was only too willing to pass the night with such watchers entirely without sleep; he would put himself out to joke with them, to tell them tales of his wanderings or on the other hand to listen to their stories: anything to stay awake, to be able to show them again and again that he had nothing edible in his cage and that he was fasting as none of them could possibly do. But his happiest moment was when morning came and a sumptuous breakfast was brought to them at his expense, and he saw them fall upon it with the appetite of healthy men who had spent a tiresome night in wakeful watching. To be sure there were people who pretended to see in this breakfast an unseemly attempt to influence the guards, but that was going too far, and when they were asked whether they would be willing to take upon themselves the task of watching through the night for the sake of the thing itself and without the breakfast, they made a wry face, though they continued to harbor their suspicions just the same.

After all, this was simply one of the suspicions unavoidably connected with fasting. Obviously no one was in a position to spend every day and night as a watchman at the side of the hunger-artist, and no one could be sure from his own observation that the fasting was really uninterrupted and complete; only the hunger-artist himself could know that, and so only he who was the faster could be at the same time a completely satisfied spectator of his fasting. And yet for another reason he never was satisfied. Perhaps it wasn't fasting at all which made him so emaciated that some people to their great regret had to stay away because they couldn't bear the sight of him; perhaps his emaciation came solely from his dissatisfaction with himself. For the fact was that only he and no one else, not even the initiated, knew how easy a thing it was to fast. It was the easiest thing in the world. He didn't keep it a secret either, but no one would believe him. At best people said he was modest, but usually he was accused of being a publicity hound or even an out-and-out fraud for whom fasting was easy because he knew how to make it easy, and who had the cheek on top of that practically to admit as much. All this he was forced to accept; he had become accustomed to it in the course of years; but inside him was the constant gnawing of dissatisfaction.

And yet never, never once at the end of any hunger period—this all were forced to admit—had he left his cage willingly. The impresario had set forty days as the maximum period for fasting, beyond that he would never let the fasting go, not even in the great world centers—and for a very good reason. Experience had shown that

for about forty days, through the use of gradually intensified publicity, the interest of a city could be brought to an ever higher pitch, but that at the end of that time public enthusiasm began to wane and a marked decrease in patronage became apparent. There were of course minor differences in this respect from city to city and country to country, but the rule was that forty days was the maximum time. And so on the fortieth day the door of the flower-bedecked cage was opened, an enthusiastic audience filled the amphitheater, a military band played, two doctors entered the cage to carry out the necessary measurements on the body of the hunger-artist, the results were announced to the hall through a megaphone, and finally there came two young ladies, happy in the knowledge that they and no one else had been chosen for the task, whose duty it was to lead the hunger-artist from his cage and down a few steps at the bottom of which stood a tiny table set with a carefully-chosen invalid's repast. And at this moment the hunger-artist invariably rebelled. He was willing enough to place his bony arms into the helping hands which the young ladies extended as they bent over him, but he didn't want to stand up. Why stop just now, at the end of forty days? He could have borne it much longer, immeasurably longer; why stop just now, at the point when his fasting was at its best—no, not even yet at its best. Why did they want to rob him of the honor of fasting on, of becoming not only the greatest hunger-artist of all time, which he probably was already, but of surpassing himself beyond measure, for he sensed that there was no limit to his capacity for fasting. Why did this throng, which pretended to marvel so at his feat, have so little patience with him? If he could bear to go on fasting, why could they not bear with him? Besides he was weary, his seat in the straw was comfortable, and now they wanted him to rouse himself, stand up, and go to the meal, the very thought of which induced in him a nausea which he was barely able to suppress out of respect for the women. And he looked into the eyes of the women who appeared so friendly but were in reality so cruel and wearily shook the head which was so much too heavy for the fragile neck. But now there happened the thing which always happened at this point. The impresario would come, and silently—for the music rendered speech impossible—he would raise his arms over the hunger-artist as if inviting heaven to look down upon its work here upon the straw, this pitiful martyr—and martyr the hunger-artist was, to be sure, though in an entirely different sense. Then he would grasp the hunger-artist about his frail waist, trying as he did to make it obvious by his exaggerated caution with what a fragile object he was dealing, and, after surreptitiously shaking him a little and causing his legs to wobble and his body to sway uncontrollably, would turn him over to the ladies, who had meanwhile turned as pale as death. Now the hunger-artist offered no further resistance. His head lay on his chest, as if it had rolled there and somehow inexplicably stuck fast; his torso was cavernous; his legs, impelled by the urge to self-preservation, were pressed tightly together at the knees, and yet his feet scraped the earth as if it were not real, as if they were seeking the real one. And the entire weight of his body, light though it was, rested upon one of the ladies, who, breathless and looking about imploringly for help (she had not pictured this post of honor thus), first tried to avoid contact with the hunger-artist by stretching her neck as far as possible, and then—since this availed her nothing and her more fortunate companion did nothing to help her, but simply contented herself with carrying the hand of the hunger-artist, a mere bundle of bones, in her own trembling hand—she broke into tears to the accompaniment of delighted laughter from the audience, and had to be relieved at her post by an attendant who had long been held in readiness. Then came the meal, a little of which the impresario

managed to force down the half-unconscious hunger-artist, the while he chattered amiably to divert attention from his condition; then a toast was spoken to the public, which the impresario pretended had been whispered to him by the hunger-artist; the orchestra provided a mighty climax with a flourish of trumpets; the crowd broke up, and no one had the right to be dissatisfied with what he had seen, no one but the hunger-artist, always only he.

And so it went on for many years, with only brief intervals of recuperation. He lived in apparent glory, honored by the world, but for the most part filled with a gloomy melancholy which was deepened by the fact that no one understood it. And indeed what comfort could one offer him? What else could he wish for? And when sometimes a good-natured person appeared who felt sorry for him and tried to explain to him that his sadness was caused by the lack of food, it was quite likely—especially if the fasting period was far advanced—that the hunger-artist would answer by flying into a rage and terrifying all those around him by shaking the bars of his cage like a wild animal. But for such outbreaks the impresario had a method of punishment which he was very fond of employing. He would apologize to the assembled public on behalf of the hunger-artist and admit that his conduct could be pardoned only by understanding the irritability caused by fasting, an irritability which would be less easy to understand in a well-fed person; then he would lead logically to the hunger-artist's claim—also to be explained by his over-wrought state—that he could fast much longer, and would praise the lofty endeavor, worthy determination and great self-denial which were evidenced by this claim. But then he would attempt to refute this claim simply by passing around photographs—which at the same time were offered for sale—in which one could see the hunger-artist on the fortieth day of fasting, lying in bed and so weak that he was on the point of expiring. This perversion of the truth, so well known to the hunger-artist, and yet so unnerving when applied, was more than he could bear. That which was the effect of the premature ending of the fasting was here being set forth as its cause! Against this lack of understanding, this universal lack of understanding, it was impossible to fight. Each time he would stand at the bars and listen eagerly to what the impresario was saying, but always when the photographs were brought forth he would relax his hold on the bars and sink back onto the straw, and once more the reassured public could come near and view him undisturbed.

When the witnesses of such scenes thought back on them a few years later, they found it hard to understand themselves. For meanwhile the aforementioned transformation had taken place. Perhaps there were deep-lying reasons for it; but who was interested in seeking them out? At any rate, the pampered hunger-artist one day found himself abandoned by the pleasure-seeking multitude, which preferred to flock to other spectacles. Once again the impresario raced through half of Europe with him to see whether the old interest would not here and there manifest itself. But in vain; as if by some secret agreement a genuine dislike for fasting exhibitions had everywhere developed. In reality of course it couldn't have come as suddenly as all that, and now one tardily remembered certain warning signs which at the time, in the intoxication of success, had not been sufficiently heeded or sufficiently combatted—but it was too late now to do anything about it. To be sure it was certain that one day the time for fasting would come again, but for the living that was no comfort. What was the hunger-artist to do now?—He whom thousands had acclaimed couldn't put himself on display in the exhibition booths at small annual fairs, and as for going into some other profession he was not only too old but above all too fanatically devoted to fast-

ing. And so he dismissed the impresario, the companion of a brilliant career, and hired himself out to a great circus. In order to spare his feelings, he did not even examine the terms of his contract.

A great circus with its huge throng of contrasting yet complementary men and animals and its masses of equipment can always find a place for another attraction, even a hunger-artist—that is, if his claims are modest enough. But in this case it was not only the hunger-artist who was engaged, but also his old and well-known name itself. Indeed it wasn't even possible to say, in view of the peculiar nature of this art which showed no flagging with increasing age, that a superannuated artist no longer at the height of his powers had taken refuge in a quiet position with a circus. On the contrary: the hunger-artist gave assurance that he could fast as well as he ever could—a thoroughly credible claim—indeed, he even maintained that, if allowed to go his own way (a privilege immediately granted to him), he would only now for the first time set the world in justifiable astonishment, a claim which, in view of the temper of times, forgotten by the hunger-artist in his zeal, evinced no more than a smile from those who were in the know.

Actually, however, even the hunger-artist did not lose sight of the true state of affairs, and he was not at all surprised when he saw that his cage was stationed not in the middle of the circus as a feature attraction but out in the vicinity of the menagerie, a place which in its own way certainly was accessible enough. Large, gaily-colored signs surrounded the cage and proclaimed what was to be seen there. During the intermissions in the performances, when the crowds thronged to see the animals fed, it was almost unavoidable that they should pass by the hunger-artist and pause there for a little. Perhaps they would have stayed there longer had it not been for the fact that the people who were pushing impatiently from the rear in the narrow alley way, not understanding the reason for the delay on the way to the eagerly-awaited stalls, made a longer and more leisurely view impossible. This explained too why the hunger-artist, though longing impatiently for these visits, which he naturally saw as his reason for existence, couldn't help feeling at the same time a certain apprehension. At first he could scarcely wait for the intermissions; he would note the approach of the throng with charmed anticipation; but only too soon he became convinced of the fact that again and again, without exception, they were on their way to the animals, and his experience in this matter overcame even the most stubborn, almost conscious self-deception. And this view of the throng from a distance continued to be the most agreeable one. For once they had reached his cage, he was immediately submerged in a sea of shouting, cursing people who formed ever-changing groups, one made up of those who wanted to view him at their leisure—not because they had any understanding for him, but simply impelled by a whim or out of sheer willfulness (and these soon became for the hunger-artist the more unpleasant)—and the other consisting of those who were bent on getting immediately to the stalls. Once the great crowd had passed by, there would come the stragglers, and these of course, for whom there was no obstacle to stopping had they only felt the desire, strode by with hurried steps in order not to be late at the stalls. And it was no more than a fortunate but infrequent stroke of luck when the father of a family would come by with his children, point to the hunger-artist, and explain in detail what it was all about; and he would tell about earlier times when he had been present at similar but incomparably finer exhibitions. But naturally the children, on account of inadequate preparation in the schools and in life, always remained without any understanding. What did fasting mean to them? And yet in the sparkling of their pene-



trating eyes they gave a hint of new and more merciful days to come. Perhaps, the hunger-artist would say to himself on such occasions, everything would be better if his station were not quite so close to the animals. It made the choice too easy for the people, to say nothing of the fact that the evil odors from the stalls, the restlessness of the animals at night, the sight of pieces of raw meat for the beasts of prey being carried by, and the screams of the animals at feeding time offended him and kept him in a constant state of depression. But he didn't venture to complain to the management; after all he owed to the animals the fact that he had so many visitors, among whom there might be now and then one destined for him. And who knew to what spot they might banish him if he reminded them of his existence, and of the fact that, when seen aright, he served only as a hindrance on the way to the animals.

A minor hindrance, to be sure, and one that was constantly growing smaller. People came to take for granted the novelty of having anyone demand attention for a hunger-artist in modern times, and this taking-for-granted spelled his doom. Let him fast with all the skill of which he was capable—and he did—but nothing could save him now, people simply passed him by. Just try to explain the art of fasting to some one! He who has no feeling for it simply cannot comprehend it. The beautiful signs grew dirty and illegible; they were torn down, and it occurred to no one to replace them. The little board showing the number of days of fasting achieved, which at first had been conscientiously changed, had remained the same for weeks on end, for the attendants had grown weary even of this little task. And so the hunger-artist fasted on without hindrance, as he had once dreamed of doing, and was able to do it without difficulty, just as he had once predicted, but no one counted the days; no one, not even the hunger-artist himself, knew how great his achievement actually was, and his heart grew heavy. And if on occasion some idler stopped, ridiculed the old numbers on the board, and spoke of fraud, it was the most stupid lie which indifference and inborn malice could possibly invent, because it was not the hunger-artist who was cheating; he was doing his duty honorably, but the world was cheating him of his reward.

And yet more days passed, but that too had its end. Once one of the managers happened to notice the cage, and he asked the attendants why such a good serviceable cage with its putrid straw should be left standing unused. No one could say, until one of them, with the help of the numbered board, remembered the hunger-artist. The straw was probed with poles, and inside they found the hunger-artist. "You're still fasting?" asked the manager. "When in heaven's name will you be done?" "Forgive me, all of you," whispered the hunger-artist. "Certainly," said the manager, and he pointed to his head with his finger to indicate the hunger-artist's condition to the attendants, "we forgive you." "I always wanted you to admire my fasting," said the hunger-artist. "And we do admire it," replied the manager obligingly. "But you shouldn't admire it," said the hunger-artist. "Well, then, we don't admire it," said the manager, "but why shouldn't we admire it?" "Because I have to fast, I can't help myself," said the hunger-artist. "Just listen to that," said the manager; "and why can't you help yourself?" "Because," said the hunger-artist, and he lifted his dainty head a little, and, thrusting his lips forward as if for a kiss, spoke directly into the manager's ear so that no word would be lost, "because I could find no food to my liking. If I had found it, believe me, I should have caused no stir, I should have eaten my fill just as you do, and all others." Those were his last words, but in his glazed eyes there remained the firm, though no longer proud, conviction that he was still fasting.

"Well, now clean things up!" said the manager, and they buried the hunger-artist together with the straw. And into the cage they put a young panther. It was perceptibly refreshing even to the dullest temperament to see this wild animal hurl itself about in this cage which so long had been desolate. He lacked for nothing. Without any delay, the keepers brought him just the kind of food he craved. And he appeared not even to miss his freedom. This noble body, healthy to the point of bursting, seemed in fact to carry its own freedom around with it (a freedom which appeared to reside somewhere in the region of its teeth); and its joy in living issued forth from its throat with such fierceness that it wasn't easy for those who watched it to stand firm. But they overcame their hesitation, crowded about the cage, and just couldn't tear themselves away.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF FRANZ KAFKA'S "A HUNGER-ARTIST"

R. W. STALLMAN (1911- )

"A Hunger-Artist" is an allegory, but Kafka's method is quite different from that of such an allegorist as Bunyan. In *Pilgrim's Progress* each character represents the trait, virtue, or vice which his name signifies—Christian, Faithful, Envy, Lord Hate-good, and so on. Bunyan manipulates these characters through a story whose every element has a direct meaning in his moral parable. Further, these meanings are constant throughout the story: Faithful is always faithful, Envy is always envious, Appolion is always the epitome of evil, the town of Vanity Fair is so called because "all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is vanity." In the allegories of the quite different but equally familiar *Gulliver's Travels* the same constancy of image is found. The rope-skipping Lilliputians satirize political preferment; the dispute between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians satirizes theological controversy. Both sets of terms are equally fantastic, but the one having to do with egg-breaking has no connection with the one having to do with rope-jumping. There is no overlap of meaning from one unit into the next.

Kafka's method is very different. He employs symbols rather than allegorical images. He assigns multiple meanings to his realistic or fantastic details; their significance is therefore not constant, nor can they be paraphrased back into point-by-point equivalents. As D. H. Lawrence puts it, "An allegorical image has a meaning. Mr. Facing-both-ways has a meaning. But I defy you to lay your finger on the full meaning of Janus, who is a symbol." Kafka employs continuous symbolization. Therefore we find his images meaning different things not only at different times but *at the same time*. There is a constant interweaving of symbolical meanings, an overlapping of allegorical patterns. As we shall see, it is possible to read the allegory of "A Hunger-Artist" on at least three different levels; there is never a time when we can say that any of its elements means *precisely and exactly this*.

The same thing is true of the story pattern. Bunyan and Swift employ narratives that proceed in logical order from their assumptions. Bunyan assumes that Christian will make a journey through a land which never existed to a City not of this life;

Swift assumes the tiny world of Lilliput and the gigantic one of Brobdingnag. Having postulated these, however, they stick to their facts; the frame of reference is always constant. It is no accident that *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels* have been read as adventure stories by generations of children happily ignorant of allegory and satire.

Kafka is no more bound by precision in his narrative than in his symbols. He has a fantastic genius for imparting a sense of everyday reality while completely ignoring everyday logic. His symbolic objects do not conform to the nature of objects in the actual world; they are subject not to the determinate laws of nature, but rather to the laws of that unique world in which they have their special function. The hunger-artist hires himself out to a great circus, an enormous, complex, and efficient machine which nevertheless contrives to forget his existence so completely that he is finally discovered only by probing into the "putrid straw" of his "empty" cage. Obviously this is a circus of fantasy; like the rest of Kafka's "facts," it is an imaginary phenomenon that belongs to a dream world. In "A Hunger-Artist" the laws of physics and biology are defied, the facts of human existence distorted. Though all the details are apparently simple and commonplace, they become, on closer examination, elusive, charged with multiple significance. It is impossible to keep Kafka's facts as facts or to suppress or minimize their metaphorical character. As a starting point for this analysis of "A Hunger-Artist," here is a matter-of-fact account of the story stripped of interpretation:

The story is about a once-popular spectacle staged for the entertainment of a pleasure-seeking public: the exhibition of a professional "hunger-artist" performing in a cage of straw his stunt of "fasting." His cage's sole decoration is a clock. His spectators see him as a trickster and common circus-freak and therefore they expect him to cheat, to break fast on the sly. But fasting is his sole reason for existing, his life purpose; not even under compulsion would he partake of food. For him, to fast is the easiest thing he can do; and so he says, but no one believes in him. Because the public distrusts him, he is guarded—usually by three butchers—and prevented from fasting beyond a forty-day period, not for humane reasons, but only because patronage stops after that time. His guards tempt him with food and sometimes mistreat him; yet they breakfast on food supplied at his expense! A great public festival celebrates his achievement, and thus he is "honored by the world." But when he is removed from his cage he collapses in a rage, not from hunger, but from having been cheated of the honor of fasting on and on and on and of becoming thus "the greatest hunger-artist of all time." Though emaciated almost to the point of death, he quickly recovers and after brief intervals of recuperation performs again and again.

Nowadays, however, he has been abandoned for other spectacles. People visit his cage in the circus tent, but only because it is next to the menagerie. His spectators are fascinated by the animals. All's changed: there is, apparently, no clock, and the once beautiful signs to announce the purpose of his act have been torn down. Now no tally is kept of the number of fasting days achieved. There are no guards. "And so the hunger-artist fasted on without hindrance, as he had once dreamed of doing . . . just as he had once predicted, but no one counted the days; no one, not even the hunger-artist himself, knew how great his achievement was and his heart grew heavy." Thus the world robs him of his reward. Indifference replaces admiration and on this note he expires. He is buried with the straw of his cage and replaced by a panther, who devours fiercely the food he naturally craves. The people crowd about his cage.

We notice that the facts in this "matter-of-fact" account are not in themselves complete or sufficient, and that our attempt to take them at their matter-of-fact or literal level is quite impossible. They seem to compete with each other and to thrust us beyond their literal properties into the plane of their allegorical significance. That clock seems to be simply a clock; it does not apparently represent anything else. And yet no literal meaning can be ascribed to that bizarre clock. It strikes the hour just like a real clock, but, so to speak, it does not appear to tick. The life of this hunger-artist is unlocked. He exists outside time, and periodically he survives starvation sieges no ordinary man could endure. (Actually, a calendar would be the logical means for reckoning the artist's fasting days.) As for the other facts, these objects likewise suggest symbolic significance. It is impossible to reduce Kafka's facts to a single self-consistent system of meaning. The trouble is that his meanings emerge at several planes at once, and the planes are inter-connected. No complete paraphrase is possible.

We cannot confine Kafka's meaning to a single circle of thought. The plight of the hunger-artist in his cage represents the plight of the artist in the modern world: his dissociation from the society in which he lives. By this reading of the story, "A Hunger-Artist" is a sociological allegory. But we can also interpret the hunger-artist to represent a mystic, a holy man, or a priest. By this reading the story allegorizes in historical perspective the plight of religion. A third possible interpretation projects us into a metaphysical allegory: the hunger-artist represents spirit, man as a spiritual being; the panther, in contrast, represents matter, the animal nature of man. If the story is translated into metaphysical terms, the division is between the spiritual and the physical; into religious terms, between the divine and the human, the soul and the body; into sociological terms, between the artist and his society. Kafka's blueprint—the groundplan of ideas upon which he has built this structure of parables—is tool-marked with these three different systems of thought.

Consider first the story as an allegory of the dilemma of the artist. He is set in contrast to the multitude. The people who attend his exhibitions of fasting cannot comprehend his art. "Just try to explain the art of fasting to some one! He who has no feeling for it simply cannot comprehend it." The artist starves himself for the sake of his vision. He has faith in his vision, faith in himself, and integrity of aesthetic conscience. As the initiated alone understood, "the hunger-artist would never under any circumstances, not even under compulsion, partake of any nourishment during the period of fasting. His honor as an artist forbade such a thing." It is his vision, solely this, which nourishes him. Of course the artist can "fast" as no one else can do. It's not everyone who is an artist. We concede, "in view of the peculiar nature of this art which showed no flagging with increasing age," the claim he makes of limitless capacity for creating works of art. But if his public is devoid of any sympathetic understanding of the artist and of his art, if his public has no faith in him, how then can he cling to this faith in himself? It is because his public is an unbeliever that the artist is in a cage (the cage symbolizes his isolation). Society and the artist—each disbelieves in the other. And so the artist comes to disbelieve, finally, in himself; he cannot survive in isolation.

The hunger-artist is emaciated because of the disunity within himself, which is the result of his dissociation of soul from body, and because of the disjunction between himself and his society. It is his denial of the world of materiality that is the source of his gnawing doubt and "constant state of depression." He repudiates half of life, and the multitude repudiate him. The public reject the emaciated body of the artist for the healthy body of the panther—they reject art for life itself. These two occupants of

the cage, the purely spiritual and the purely bestial, represent, then, the dual nature of man. The people outside the cage, with whom he is also contrasted, crave the same food as the panther. For them, as for the beast, their joy in living issues from their throat—and from their belly. These human and bestial beings represent the sensuous physical realm of matter. They are all-flesh, whereas the hunger-artist is no-flesh. In the one we have pure matter; in the other, pure spirit. But the hunger-artist, as pure soul, is a failure. Though he is apparently free from those gnawing dissatisfactions which our purely physical appetites create in us again and again, nevertheless he is not entirely free from the claims of the body, from the claims of matter, from the claims of the world in which he lives. At the same time that he denies the evil natural social world he longs for some recognition of his fasting from the public; he wants the people to crowd around his cage. Finally, "though longing impatiently for these visits [of the people on their way to the eagerly-awaited stalls], which he naturally saw as his reason for existence, [he] couldn't help feeling at the same time a certain apprehension." He apprehends the truth that he who is the faster cannot be "at the same time a completely satisfied spectator of his fasting." He sees that an existence of pure spirituality is impossible to man. He sees that this insatiable hunger with which he, as artist or as mystic, is possessed is at bottom only the sign of his maladjusted, and therefore imperfect, soul.

Complete detachment from physical reality is spiritual death. This statement sums up the meaning of "A Hunger-Artist" in so far as the story is an allegory about the nature of man. What is man, matter or spirit? The story might be described as a kind of critique of this philosophical problem. Spirit and matter—each is needed to fulfill the other. At the moment of his death the hunger-artist recognizes his failure as an artist or creator. For this super-annuated artist there is no possibility of resurrection because in our present-day world not spirit but matter is recognized. The fact that matter has today triumphed over spirit is recognized by the dying hunger-artist as he confesses his secret. I had to fast, he admits, because I could find no food to my liking. Fasting, you see, was my destiny. But "If I had found it [*e.g.*, food to my liking], believe me, I should have caused no stir, I should have eaten my fill just as you do, and all the others.' Those were his last words, but in his glazed eyes there remained the firm, though no longer proud, conviction that he was still fasting." Here, then, is the key to his enigma. Cut off from the multitude, the artist performing his creative act (his fasting) has to die daily and be daily reborn. This is a martyrdom, but for what purpose? The creative artist cannot also be his own public; he dies when no one cares that he and his art should live. Devotion to an aesthetic or spiritual vision cannot be an end in itself. Pure creativeness is impossible, even as absolute spirituality is impossible. The creative imagination must feed upon all reality. For art is but a vision of reality. The artist, no less than the mystic-faster, must live in the world of mundane life. Art requires the material conditions of life, and these conditions nourish it. Life is at once the subject of art and its wellspring.

It is the clock in the hunger-artist's cage that triumphs over the artist. It is time that triumphs over the very one who denies the flux of time, which is our present reality. The clock in his cage is a mockery of the artist's faith in the immortality of his creative act or vision, a mockery of his faith in his art as an artifice of eternity. The tragedy of Kafka's hunger-artist is not that he dies, but that he fails to die into life. As he dies he seeks recognition from those whom he has all his life repudiated: "'I always wanted you to admire my fasting,' said the hunger-artist." It is his confession that spirit has no absolute sovereignty over matter, soul has no absolute sovereignty

over body, and art has no absolute sovereignty over life. Throughout the story the author laments the passing of our hunger-artists, their decline and extinction in our present-day civilization. But nonetheless throughout the story all the logic is weighted against this hunger-artist's efforts at autarchy. In his last words we are given his confession that the artist must come to terms with life, with the civilization in which he lives, the world of total reality. "Forgive me, all of you," he whispers to the circus manager, as though in a confessional before some priest. And they forgive him. They forgive him for his blasphemy against nature.

In the same way that Kafka's sets of facts can be translated into allegorical terms at the philosophical and aesthetic levels of meaning, so too in terms of the religious allegory the multiple meanings of the facts overlap. Our post-Renaissance world has discarded the philosopher, the artist, and the mystic. The hunger-artist as mystic-faster is dead. Call him priest or artist, he has been rejected by the "pleasure-seeking multitude" and replaced by other amusements; for instance, by the exhibition of a live panther. It was different in times past. For example, in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance he "lived in apparent glory, honored by the world." Then he had his patron. (The patron of the artist was the impresario.) He had his critics, the butchers who guarded him out of the public distrust of his creative act. And he had his historians, the attendants who recorded his creative act or kept count of his remarkable performances. In those times he was at least admired for his achievements as an imitator of life. In his cage he imitated a panther: ". . . deathly pale, dressed in black tights, his ribs protruding powerfully, sometimes nodding politely and answering questions with a forced smile, even thrusting his arm through the bars to let them feel his emaciation . . . and paying attention to no one . . . looking straight before him with eyes almost closed. . . ." But what a poor imitation of real life he presented! In those times he was at least celebrated (albeit, not without hypocrisy), honored by rituals conscientiously enacted upon appointed fast days. Consider this hunger-artist as mystic-faster or priest. At one time, everyone attended his services daily. Regular subscribers sat, as in church pews, "before the small latticed cage for days on end." Everyone pretended to marvel at his holy fast. Actually, however, not one worshiper had faith. Nevertheless, despite this sham of faith in him, he submitted again and again to crucifixion by these pretenders to faith. He was a martyr for his divine cause. The multitude, because "it was the stylish thing to do," attended his "small latticed cage"—they attended it as they might a confessional box. But the multitude, since it does not understand what Faith is, has no sin to confess. The hunger-priest hears no confession. (Ironically it is he who, in dying, confesses.) In short, all mankind—apart from a few acolytes to his cult, disbelieves this Christ who many times died for man's sake. And when he dies, see how these disbelievers exploit the drama of his death. Here is Kafka's parody on the drama of the Virgin mourning the loss of her Son.

But now there happened the thing which always happened at this point. The impresario would come, and silently—for the music rendered speech impossible—he would raise his arms over the hunger-artist as if inviting heaven to look down upon its work here upon the straw, this pitiful martyr—and martyr the hunger-artist was, to be sure, though in an entirely different sense. Then he would grasp the hunger-artist about his frail waist, trying as he did to make it obvious by his exaggerated caution with what a fragile object he was dealing, and after surreptitiously shaking him a little and causing his legs to wobble and his body to sway uncontrollably, would turn him over to the ladies, who had meanwhile turned as pale as death.

The ladies who so cruelly sentimentalize over his martyrdom represent sympathy without understanding; a sympathy which is devoid of understanding is mere self-sentiment. One of the ladies weeps—but not for him. She breaks into tears only in shame for having touched him.

And the entire weight of his body, light though it was, rested upon one of the ladies, who, breathless and looking imploringly for help (she had not pictured this post of honor thus), first tried to avoid contact with the hunger-artist by stretching her neck as far as possible, and then . . . she broke into tears to the accompaniment of delighted laughter from the audience . . .

It is a mock lamentation that these two Marys perform.





# NOTES AND QUESTIONS

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## 1: *The Short Story*

### 3. THE CATBIRD SEAT

JAMES THURBER

What weapon does Mr. Martin have to "rub out" Mrs. Barrows when he calls at her apartment? He considers using the metal paper knife but on trying its point he finds: "It was *blunt*. It wouldn't do." Comment on the word *blunt*—what does it suggest about Mr. Martin? And about Mrs. Barrows? Why is Mrs. Barrows' first name "Ulgine"? Explain the title of the story, "The Catbird Seat." What is suggested by the name "Martin"? What prepares us to know that Mr. Martin's little scheme is bound to succeed? And why should Mr. Fitweiler discredit Mrs. Barrows' story? In what sense is the ending of the story a surprise ending? Does it involve a situation that is reversed, a turn-about?

### 8. A TRIP TO CZARDIS

EDWIN GRANBERRY

10.40, Okeechobee: A large shallow lake in Florida.

This story is told from a sharply limited point of view—that of the boy Jim. Can you suggest any reason why Granberry preferred to use the third person pronoun rather than the first person? Notice that the story communicates on two levels—the level of the boys and the level of the reader who sees and understands more than they do. Is the style of the story appropriate to both levels?

What are the differences between Jim and Dan'l? Why is it right that the author tells us nothing of the crime for which the father is to be executed? Do we learn all that is necessary about the mother?

Why is the opening effective? Does it parallel the later psychological "awakening" that is part of the theme of the story? Is there any symbolism in the story, or any meaning beyond the obvious tragic one? For instance, should the pomegranate tree be interpreted symbolically?

### 13. TWO FRIENDS

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Are the descriptions of spring mornings and autumn afternoons, near the beginning of the story, necessary? Is the brief political discussion between the two friends significant? In what way does Mount Valerien serve as a symbol? What is the character of the Prussian officer? How is he like Mount Valerien? Is there any difference in the character of the two friends? Is there any similarity intended between war and fishing? Is the irony of M. Sauvage's pleasure about offering fried fish made too obvious? How does Maupassant avoid sentimentality?

### 17. A LITTLE CLOUD

JAMES JOYCE

Whereas in "Two Friends" character was revealed through similarity and the description of external events, in "A Little Cloud" the revelation comes chiefly through contrast and the description of internal workings of a mind. Are there other differences in method? What is the "Cloud" of the title? What is the significance of all the diminutives in the story—"little cloud," "Little Chandler," "a little man," "childish white teeth," "an infant hope," "little house," etc.? Is Chandler psychologically mature? Why is his admiration for Gal-

laher phrased in clichés—"fearless accent," "unspoiled by success," "heart was in the right place," "deserved to win," "he had lived, he had seen the world," etc.? Could Chandler ever become a poet? (Compare this portrait of a would-be poet with what is indicated by the selections in the part of this book entitled "The Poem and the Creative Process.") What is significant in his liking the particular poem by Byron that is quoted in the story? Point out the stereotyped responses in Little Chandler's attitude toward his environment and toward his supposed ambition.

What is symbolic of immaturity during his walk to Corless's? Is his rebelliousness against life much less inchoate and childish than that of his wailing baby son? Now consider the contrasting Gallaher. Is he deserving of anyone's admiration? What do you think of his "talent" as evidenced in the remark about his "considering cap" that so impresses Little Chandler? What do we learn about Gallaher's standards of value from his remarks about Paris, from his observations of life in Berlin and elsewhere? Is Gallaher adolescent in his own way? Define the similarities and differences between the two men.

## 26. THE GLOVES

COLETTE AUDRY

In this brief story the characters of three persons are skilfully revealed through the tensions that develop among them, tensions that are frequently indicated by references to hands, eyes, etc. Define the tensions between the detective and the manager, the manager and the woman, the woman and the detective. There are also internal conflicts—between the woman and her gloved, strangely detached hands, "which presumed to have a life of their own"; between the manager and his voice—"he seemed to be listening to his own voice." Is there anything similar in the detective? Why does the manager conceal the theft of the gloves by the detective? Why is it significant that he "felt his hands grow wet"? What is significant in the fact that towards the end the woman is able to hold the detective "under her stare"? Why does the woman steal the ashtray? Why does the detective steal the gloves? Why does the manager tear up the filing card?

## 31. THE BLACK GODMOTHER

JOHN GALSWORTHY

32.1, *Osmunda*: A species of fern found in bogs and marshy woods in Britain.

34.13, *Death of Procris*: A painting by Piero di Cosimo (1462-1521), Florentine artist. Procris, the wife of Cephalus, was accidentally and unknowingly killed by her husband during a hunt in mistake for an animal. According to one version of the myth the name of the dog silently watching her die was *Lelops*. In the painting there is a satyr at her head, *Lelops* at her feet, and several other dogs in the background, indifferent to the event.

This brief story could be called an anecdote or parable. What are the characteristics of these types? Note the statement of the theme at the beginning. Is there any suspense in "The Black Godmother"? What is the significance of the title? Why is a narrator used? What is his character? What kind of persons are his listeners? Why is the setting left indefinite? What would the story lose if there was no black retriever sitting beside the narrator? Is the ending effective? Why? In what way does this story have wider implications than a simple tale about a particular dog?

## 34. AMY FOSTER

JOSEPH CONRAD

Although there are striking similarities in theme and incident between this story published (1901) and "The Black Godmother" (published 1912), the differences are much more important. Both stories concern a fear-motivated cruelty toward a misunderstood victim, but "Amy Foster" includes in its theme many more aspects of human behavior than does the other story. Both of the victims are in a sense castaways, both suffer beatings by a succession of persons who misinterpret actions of a victim who is unable to communicate, both are forcibly "captured," both utter strange cries, both (after an interval of kindness from one person) die wretchedly and alone and unmourned. Moreover, both stories are told to friends by narrators who took it upon themselves to find out the complete stories, and both stories are in a sense told to illustrate an abstract truth or "moral." On the other hand, the differences, though less easy to enumerate, are nevertheless all important: they are respon-

sible for the fact that Conrad's story is a piece of great literature whereas Galsworthy's is, by comparison, unimportant. The differences are to be looked for in the vividness of setting, the complexity of theme and characterization, the emotional power, the closely integrated structure, and the overtones and general symbolic implications of Conrad's story.

Close study of the two stories will be well repaid with a better appreciation of the characteristics of great literary art. Many writers could produce a "Black Godmother," but only a master could create "Amy Foster."

Consider first the way Conrad presents his narrative. The story of Amy and Yanko has happened quite a long time previously. It was told to a friend by Dr. Kennedy, and is being retold to the reader by this friend as author-narrator. What are some of the possible reasons for this deliberate indirection? On the practical level, it is at once clear that neither Amy nor Yanko could tell their own stories, since both are inarticulate victims of forces they not only cannot control but cannot even define. Kennedy as a narrator has many advantages: he is intelligent and interested, while being possessed of some scientific detachment; he is too busy for active participation, but as a doctor he would be called in at moments of great crisis; he seeks understanding but is not omniscient, and therefore some mysteries can convincingly remain unexplained; etc. But, at the same time, Kennedy is himself an actor in the main story; he is involved in the fate of Yanko; he has even a certain responsibility for it, along with the residents of the district. On the other hand, the author-narrator, Kennedy's friend, is a visitor, capable of including Kennedy in the same perspective as the others. Now, why are the two lapses of time desirable—the lapse between the events and Kennedy's telling them to his friend, and the lapse between the friend's hearing the story and telling it as author?

Does not the deliberate indirection in the presentation of the story correspond to one of the themes of the story? This theme is the desire for and simultaneously the difficulty of understanding human nature and communicating between human beings—coupled with the fact that not one but many persons are involved in understanding the life of every man. Notice, for instance, how we constantly see Yanko in at least two simultaneous ways—through the un-

friendly eyes of the fear-ridden country folk and through the sympathetic eyes of the indignant doctor. As a matter of fact, one should probably add to this double vision the view of the author-narrator and even of the readers, since all participate in the imaginative comprehension of Yanko. In this connection one might ask what Conrad considered to be the role of imagination in life—at least as seen in this story.

What is the character of Dr. Kennedy? How does he differ from his friend to whom he tells the story? What is gained by introducing Kennedy's story as Conrad does—first giving the setting, then the meeting with Amy on the doctor's rounds without the friend knowing anything about her, followed by the description of Yanko (without his being named or his connection with Amy stated) as a remembered contrast to the plodding workman, the later resuming of the story in the doctor's study, and so on?

Consider the setting itself—the opening description, the drive, the doctor's study with its wide casement, etc. What is gained by such shifts of place? What is the significance of the description (by the friend, notice, not by Kennedy) of the sunset's glow upon the horses and wagon, a description which comes just after the meeting with Amy and the doctor's friend's listless designation of her as "a dull creature"? What is the significance of the next description of the "joyous and sombre aspect" of the grasslands, which is followed by the first description of Yanko as he passes along the road in vibrant contrast to the stolid villagers? In what way are references to the sea used in the story (apart from the shipwreck scenes)? What other examples are there of Conrad's use of nature and of physical details to comment on or influence or objectify human behavior?

Conrad adroitly uses parallel events to create the sense of inevitability and to enrich the emotional texture of the story. For instance, Amy's treatment of the parrot parallels her later treatment of Yanko; her fearful flight through the night with her child parallels that of Yanko after the shipwreck; Yanko's dying in the rain and the dark, face down in a puddle of water, parallels his near-dying in the shipwreck; Yanko on his straw pallet covered with horse blankets parallels Little Yanko in his cot at the end of the story. Are there other similar parallels? Notice the different occasions on which Kennedy uses the comparison of "a bird caught in a snare."

Why was Amy attracted to Yanko? Why was she unmoved by criticism of him before marriage, but affected afterwards? Why were the villagers opposed to him? Answering "fear of the Incomprehensible" or some equivalent is inadequate, since the "why" is merely pushed farther back: *Why* are men afraid of the incomprehensible? Is Kennedy satisfied that he understands these questions? Is the author?

Perhaps the story is really one on the fundamental mystery of life, the mystery of human relationships of love and hate, pity and fear. The story may also have autobiographical significance, since Conrad himself, as a Pole who spoke no English until he was a mature man, was, at one stage in his life, like Yanko, a man isolated by language and customs from the people among whom his lot was cast. Taking a larger perspective, one might ask if the story could symbolically represent the life of every individual, dangerously arriving at birth into an incomprehensible world of violence and strangeness, a world including some pity and love but more cruelty and indifference? Could it be the story of Mankind emerging out of mystery and a dim past into an incomprehensible world with which it is forced to make terms as best it can—"cast out mysteriously by the sea to perish in the supreme disaster of loneliness and despair"—a picture of man's fate not too far removed from that advanced by some thinkers of the past half century?

The end of the story—suggesting resurrection of the parent in the child—is worth noting. How does it serve to extend the dimensions of the story?

## 52. THE UPTURNED FACE

STEPHEN CRANE

52.6, *Spitzbergen infantry*: Though "The Upturned Face" was inspired by Crane's experience in the Spanish American War, the action and setting belong to no particular war. The "Spitzbergen infantry" and the "Rostina sharpshooters" are entirely imaginary.

Would this story be significantly altered if no bullets were flying overhead? What is the difference between the two officers? Why does the adjutant cry, "let us say something—while he can hear us"? Have the opening words of the prayer any connection with the reluctance to cover the upturned face? Why does Lean become angry at the end? Compare this story with

the poems by Owen and Fletcher on p. 747.

## 54. A CLEAN, WELL-LIGHTED PLACE

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

57.5, *bodegas*: wine-cellars. 16, *nada y pues nada*: nothing, and . . . well . . . nothing. 24, *Otro loco mas*: another crazy one. 30, *copita*: little cup.

What are the main "scenes" that constitute the structure of this story? How is contrast used as the method of developing both characters and theme? Why is the contrast between youth and age not fundamental? In the brief dialogue—"He was in despair." "What about?" "Nothing,"—which waiter answers "Nothing"? Defend your opinion. How do these speeches foreshadow the whole later development of the story? Why is the emphasis placed on "a clean, well-lighted place" rather than on an entertaining or lively place? Would amusement cure the despair that arises from the loss of faith in a meaningful world? What, then, is symbolized by "a clean, well-lighted place," which both the old man and the old waiter value so highly? What is indicated by the fact that although the old man drinks brandy, the old waiter drinks coffee in a "bright and pleasant" coffee bar? Is the difference in drinks or the similarity in surroundings the essential? Are the values by which the younger waiter lives very admirable ones? What is the effect achieved by the author in using such a spare and simple style to deal with a rather large philosophical theme? Would the story be more effective if the theme were stated more directly? Why, or why not?

## 57. GEESE FLYING SOUTH

AUGUST DERLETH

Compare the opening of this story with that of Hemingway's story. Which is the better? Why? Why does the author use August as the narrator? What is the significance of the discussion about whether or not it is nine-thirty? Of the reminiscences of the grandparents' early married life? Of the sentence ending "my grandmother looked at me and her eyes twinkled"? Of the opening of the window at the end of the story? Was Aunt Cella wrong in her facts when she said the grandmother "was losing her faculties," or wrong in her values? What is Aunt Cella's character? What do

the wild geese symbolize? Does the grandmother's remark, "Must be they lost their leader," apply to more than the geese? Has the "south" of the title a symbolic significance?

## 61. PASTE

HENRY JAMES

Henry James, in his Preface to *The Author of Beltraffio . . . And Other Tales* (London: Macmillan Co., 1922), wrote as follows:

The origin of "Paste" . . . was to consist but of the ingenious thought of transposing the terms of one of Guy de Maupassant's admirable *contes*. In "La Parure" ["The Necklace"] a poor young woman, under "social" stress, the need of making an appearance on an important occasion, borrows from an old school friend, now much richer than herself, a pearl necklace which she has the appalling misfortune to lose by some mischance never afterwards cleared up. Her life and her pride, as well as her husband's with them, become subject, from the hour of the awful accident, to the redemption of their debt; which, effort by effort, sacrifice by sacrifice, franc by franc, with specious pretexts, excuses, a rage of desperate explanation of their failure to restore the missing object, they finally obliterate—all to find that their whole consciousness and life have been convulsed and deformed in vain, that the pearls were but highly artful "imitation" and that their passionate penance has ruined them for nothing. It seemed harmless sport simply to turn the situation round—to shift, in other words, the ground of the horrid mistake, making this a matter not of a false treasure supposed to be true and precious, but of a real treasure supposed to be false and hollow: though a new little "drama," a new setting for *my* pearls—and as different as possible from the other—had of course withal to be found.

For a person who has not read de Maupassant's story, James's summary of the plot might be supplemented by making clearer one important point. Not very long after the loss of the necklace, the young

woman and her husband, by selling and pawning their possessions and borrowing a huge sum of money, were able to get a jeweller to produce a copy or imitation of the lost necklace—in real pearls, of course, such as they thought the lost necklace had consisted of. This they returned to the original owner who thereafter for years wore a necklace of real pearls *thinking* them to be paste. Not until a lifetime of grinding penury had at last repaid all the borrowed money did the woman who lost the pearls tell the owner the truth. The story ends with the revelation to the reader, as well as to the poor woman, that the real or original necklace was imitation. And only then does the owner learn that the necklace she thought was paste or imitation was in fact real.

Does James's story depend for its effect on a "surprise twist" at the end? Is his main concern (a) with the truth about the necklace or (b) with the truth about the characters involved? From the summary of de Maupassant's story, would you conclude that his concern is with human morality or with an "irony of fate"? What about James's story?

How important is Mrs. Guy in the story? Define the several moral issues in the story—and the different standards of morality revealed by the several characters.

## 71. AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE

AMBROSE BIERCE

Obviously, the psychological facts at the moment of death—the possibility of such a vision as Farquhar's—cannot be truly known. Is the value of the story thereby affected? Though the story is narrated in the third person, the point of view throughout is that of Farquhar. His character, therefore, is the keystone of the story. What observations and thoughts show him to have some knowledge of military procedures? On the other hand, what is the evidence that, emotionally, he is a romantic caught up in a world of stark reality? What is indicated by such phrases as "chafed under the inglorious restraint," "the larger life of a soldier," "no service too humble . . . no adventure too dangerous"? Why is he unsuspicious of the passing soldier's gray uniform? Is the impersonal word "Occurrence" in the title of the story a commentary on Farquhar's romanticism, on his "wishful thinking"?

How does the ticking of the watch prepare us for the later lengthy vision? How well do the details of the vision parallel the probable physical facts of the hanging? What is indicated by the details in the vision gradually becoming less "realistic"—the trees come to seem like "giant garden plants," the forest seems "interminable," the road "wide and straight as a city street," the carpeting of turf, etc.? Is the theme of the story an indictment of war, an ironic revelation that military efficiency does not yield to the wishful thinking of romantic amateurs, or something else?

## 77. MR. ARCULARIS CONRAD AIKEN

77.6, *Cavalleria Rusticana*: A one-act opera by Pietro Mascagni (first performed in 1890) in which Turiddu, a young Sicilian peasant, returns from war to find his sweetheart, Lola, married to Alfio, the well-to-do village carter. For consolation Turiddu woos and wins, but not honorably, Santuzza, who loves him as ardently as he has loved the fickle Lola. Her jealousy aroused, Lola exerts her coquetry and regains Turiddu, betraying her husband. Learning of the perfidy of his wife from Santuzza, Alfio challenges Turiddu and kills him. Among the opera's best-known melodies are Turiddu's drinking song "Hail the ruby wine"; his prelude-song in praise of Lola, sung before the curtain rises, "O Lola, fair as flowers in beauty smiling"; the Easter chorus in the church and village square; and the famous intermezzo for the orchestra, occurring just before Turiddu and his mistress Lola leave the church service.

78.32, *Ain't it grand*: Possibly a tag from the chorus of a London music-hall song.

79.1, *But let there be no moaning*: An echo from Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar." The exact words are: "And may there be no moaning of the bar, / When I put out to sea." There is a pun, of course, on the word "bar" in Aiken's story.

79.43, *Melozzo da Forlì*: An Italian painter (c. 1438–1494), first master of the so-called Roman school which later included such figures as Raphael and Michelangelo. Melozzo anticipated Correggio in representing celestial events as they would appear to a person looking up from below.

80.7, *déjà vu*: already seen; seen before.

85.27, *sea . . . multitudinously incarnadined*: An echo from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Act II, Sc. ii, ll. 61–63.

86.5, *Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow*: Also from *Macbeth*, Act V, Sc. v, l. 19. The entire speech of Macbeth is relevant.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted  
fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out,  
brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor  
player

That struts and frets his hour upon  
the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a  
tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and  
fury,

Signifying nothing.

86.26, *When I was a tadpole and you were a fish*: An echo from a poem entitled "Evolution" (1895), by Langdon Smith.

86.27, *Battle of Teutoburg Forest*: In the years 9 and 15 A.D., Arminius, the German national hero, decisively defeated two Roman forces led by Varus and Germanicus in battles in Teutoburg Forest.

88.22, *On such a night as this—*: An echo from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Act V, Sc. i, ll. 1–24, where the two lovers, Lorenzo and Jessica, vie with each other in recalling the actions of other lovers on similar occasions. The phrase repeated in Shakespeare's play, however, is "In such a night as this."

Like "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," this story presents as a sequence of actual events what in the end proves to be a stream of mental images passing through the mind of a dying man. Compare the two stories in the degree of "realism" obtained in the imaginative stream. What events, images, and symbols in both stories help prepare the reader for the discovery that the events are those in fantasy?

In "Mr. Arcularis," what is symbolized by the coldness? By the ship and the sea voyage? By the journey into space? What is suggested by the discontinuity of the story at several points? What is the significance of the touches of humor, the word play, and the occasional use of literary quotations? What is the significance of the recurrence of the melody from *Cavalleria Rusticana*?

Comment on the references to Mr. Arcularis's feeling like a child (wanting to cry; *etc.*), and the references to his mother, his father, and his father's home. Explain how the steward's reference to the coffin in the hold and Mr. Arcularis's observation of the circumambulating people prepare for the sleepwalking and the stellar flights. Define the relationship between Clarice Dean and Mr. Arcularis—noting, for instance, the similarity of the names *Clarice* and *Arcularis*. Does it matter that we never learn what Mr. Arcularis presumably feels "worried" or "guilty" about—as both the parson and the doctor guess that he does? Would the story be improved if it began, as well as ended, in the hospital's operating room? Justify your opinion.

This story has been dramatized for both stage and radio. In both versions a possibly important glimpse is provided into Mr. Arcularis's past. As a child, he spied upon a morning meeting between his very pretty mother and his high-spirited uncle—a younger brother of the boy's father. The uncle's favorite tune was the melody which now haunts Mr. Arcularis. The mother and the uncle go off together in a cabin boat, a storm comes up, they do not return. Next morning the child discovers the boat sunk among reeds, with the pair inside the cabin.

Try to explain why this glimpse seemed to be necessary in a drama but not in a short story. *Could* it have been included in the story? If so, explain how. Does the omission give the story a more universal significance?

## 89. MY KINSMAN, MAJOR MOLINEUX NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

89.10, Hutchinson: Thomas Hutchinson (1711-1780), author of *The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, from 1628 . . . to . . . 1750*, 2 vols. (1764, 1767).

93.9, philosopher seeking an honest man: The supposed hopeless search of Diogenes (412-323, B.C.), Greek philosopher, often shown with a lantern in his hand.

94.17, Moonshine of Pyramus and Thisbe: See Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, Sc. i; Act V, Sc. i.

Hawthorne here demonstrates, in one of his earliest stories (first published 1832), that he had already mastered the creation of atmosphere, the invention of meaningful

incidents, and, above all, the introduction of characteristic symbolic overtones through the adroit treatment of details. If this story is read on the "realistic" level only, the response is likely to be an acknowledgment of a certain pictorial vividness and perhaps psychological insights into the behavior of a youth under environmental influences; but, at the same time, such a reader is likely to feel that the story lacks "point," that the "build up" leads only to a "breakdown" at the end. However, the story can be read on a level other than the realistic. In fact, a number of symbolic meanings are possible—indicating in Hawthorne not artistic confusion but, on the contrary, a positive richness of imagination.

For instance, the story can be read as a parable of the growth of American independence from Britain, as Q. D. Leavis contends in *The Sewanee Review*, 59:198-205 (Spring, 1951). In this reading, Robin is young America, who is at first desirous of advancing himself through the aid of his kinsman (the mother country), who is then bewildered by insurrectionary currents, but who finally joins in with the noisy mob, led by "war personified," in repudiating dependency and ejecting the representatives of foreign rule. As the gentleman tells Robin at the end: "You are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman." But it is possible also to read the story with psychological rather than political connotations—that a youth looks for assistance and guidance from his elders, as represented not merely by the uncle but by the various older men whom Robin accosts, but all fail him, either ridiculing, misleading, or deliberately bewildering him, until the youth eventually comes to learn for himself the distinctions between the true and false, the dream and the reality. Or the story can be read as a kind of moral parable of human life—the characters and "institutions" encountered on an individual's journey through life. In this reading, the barber shop, tavern, brothel, mansion, church—for instance—become symbolic of such abstractions as vanity, intemperance, unchastity, social rank, religion. Finally, if the reader at the beginning of the story should be struck by the parallel between Robin's paying the ferryman the last of his money and the crossing of the river Styx in Greek mythology, with Charon demanding his fare, then the story unfolds in an entirely different fashion. And there are perhaps other possibilities more cogent than those suggested here. Cer-

rainly we know enough about Hawthorne to recognize that he spoke the literal truth when he once said of himself that he had "an inveterate love of allegory."

Could the initial paragraph of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" be dropped without serious loss? Why, or why not? Examine the successive descriptions of the kinds of streets or districts in the town traversed by Robin in his search, and the successive persons he questions. Are they significantly varied? Are the recurrent outbursts of laughter significant? How do they contribute to both the theme and the atmosphere of the story? What is indicated by the contrast between the moonlight falling on the Bible in the empty church in town and the "golden light" of the sun on the Bible read in family gatherings at Robin's country home? What is suggested by the fact that in Robin's dream of home he finds himself barred from entering? What is the significance of such remarks as these: "Am I here, or there?"; ". . . his mind kept vibrating between fancy and reality"; "May not a man have several voices, Robin, as well as two complexions?"

## 100. THE BEAR

WILLIAM FAULKNER

101.24, old Priam: Priam was king of Troy, married first to Arisbe, then to Hecuba. According to Homer, Priam fathered 50 sons and 12 daughters.

108.46, the five stanzas: See "Ode on a Grecian Urn," by John Keats, p. 710.

Like Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," Faulkner's story, on the realistic level, seems to be a rather inconclusive account of a series of vivid experiences. But as a symbolic story, "The Bear" emerges as a masterly treatment of a boy's discovery of himself and of a system of values. As in all good symbolic stories, the symbols in "The Bear" open perspectives rather than close them; in other words, the reader should not ask for point-to-point correspondences between the symbols and any one set of abstractions. In the story, the father "explains" the meaning of the boy's experience by reading him a poem which presents its "truth" through another set of symbols, opening other perspectives. The clear implication is that abstractions such as "truth" and "meaning" exist as a pattern of relationships among concrete objects or experiences, and that without the concrete

terms—that is, the symbols—the relationship is not apparent, is perhaps even non-existent. When the boy says of the poet, "He's talking about a girl," the father replies, "He had to talk about something. He was talking about truth." The same remark applies to Faulkner's story as well. Faulkner is talking about a bear and a boy because he had to talk about something—but Faulkner is also talking about truth and honor and a number of other abstractions that can only be talked about in a meaningful way by talking apparently about something else.

At what point in the story does it become evident that this is more than a hunting story? What is suggested by "the wilderness"? Is it merely a geographical area or something metaphysical, such as might be indicated (but of course not defined) in such a phrase as "the mystery of the unknown in the universe and in human life"? In what way does the bear epitomize this "wilderness"? What is suggested by the references to the bear's "immortality"? What qualities are illustrated by the bear, in its actions and also in its attitude towards the boy? At what stages in his initiation does the boy acquire some or all of the abstract values listed by the father towards the end of the story? What is meant by the boy's leaving behind "the three lifeless mechanicals with which . . . he had fended the wilderness off"? What qualities are represented by Sam Fathers? By the fyce?

## 110. THE HORSE DEALER'S DAUGHTER

D. H. LAWRENCE

What motivated Mabel to attempt suicide, what drew her into the pond of "dead water"? What is symbolized by that pond? And what is symbolized by land? Is it a way of life that enslaves or disappoints them all, even the doctor? Define Mabel's attitude toward her mother.

Mabel is saved and restored to life, symbolically as well as literally. Is the fact that Fergusson is a doctor rather than something else—say, a priest—*symbolically* significant?

Comment on the following passages: "It was as if she had the life of his body in her hands, and he could not extricate himself." "Then, as it were suddenly, he smelt the horrid stagnant smell of the water." "He never intended to love her. But now it was over. He had crossed over the gulf to



her, and all that he had left behind had shrivelled and become void." "His own watch had stopped."

About Joe we are told that "He felt he was done for now. . . . He would marry and go into harness. His life was over, he would be a subject animal now." Do these words apply also to Fergusson, or is there a difference between his plight and Joe's? If so, what constitutes that difference? Does Mabel's future promise to be similar or different?

What points of comparison can you establish between "The Horse Dealer's Daughter" and the other story by Lawrence, "The Two Blue Birds" (p. 121)?

## 121. TWO BLUE BIRDS

D. H. LAWRENCE

The opening words of this story, "There was a woman who loved her husband . . .," immediately suggest the beginning of a fable or parable, in which the protagonists are types rather than individuals and the "plot" an illustration of some moral or psychological truth. Does the whole story carry out this suggestion? What "way of life" is represented by the wife? The husband? The secretary? What is suggested by the "wolf-like" traits attributed to the wife? Is the secretary "common," as the wife says? What do the blue birds symbolize? How complete is the parallelism between the birds and the women?

From whose point of view is the story chiefly told? Can you suggest reasons why Lawrence did not employ the first person method? What does the husband mean by his final remark: *Quite!*? Lawrence's style has been called "fresh and poetic." Does this observation hold true for this story? Are there any examples of symbolic word-play in this story as in Joyce's "A Little Cloud"?

## 130. THE FLY

KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Woodfield brings back the memory of the lost son when he remarks about the boy's grave, and the Boss arranges himself for a little session of memorial to his son: "He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep. . . ." Is the story intending a criticism of the Boss because he no longer possesses the capacity to feel? Notice that

in the incident of the pot of jam as retold by Woodfield there is the phrase "trading on our feelings." How does this apply to the Boss? Notice also that the Boss constantly uses clichés—such as "sacrilege to tamper," "a terrible shock," "time . . . could make no difference," "a broken man with his life in ruins," "Never say die," etc., etc. Clichés are the common coin of stock responses, and that the Boss speaks and thinks in stock phrases is surely illuminating.

The attitude of Woodfield's family towards "Reggie" parallels that of the boss towards his son, and yet it diverges from it too. Woodfield cannot remember what he had in mind when he started out in the morning. There is also significant similarity between the Boss's agreeing with Woodfield, though "he hadn't the least idea" what he was agreeing with, and his inability at the end of the story to understand what caused the "grinding feeling of wretchedness" and to remember what he had been thinking about before. What other parallelisms do you find in the story? In what sense is Woodfield like a fly to the Boss? In what sense is the Boss himself like a fly? Why is the Boss without a name?

## 134. A STILL MOMENT

EUDORA WELTY

134.1, Lorenzo Dow: Dow (1777-1834) was an evangelist and itinerant preacher, who during the most active years of his life traveled through many of the Southern states, visiting Indians, preaching many sermons a week, carrying his own brand of Protestantism wherever he felt called to go. He made at least one visit to Ireland, in answer to a divine call to preach to the Roman Catholics there. He married Peggy Holcomb (1780-1820) in 1804, with the understanding that she was not to restrict his roamings. The day after the marriage he left for a trip to the lower Mississippi region. He kept a journal or diary of his dreams and adventures.

134.1, Natchez Trace: An early road from Natchez on the Mississippi to Nashville, Tennessee. By treaties with the Indians, a right of way was obtained in 1801, and in 1806 Congress authorized a certain amount of construction. For several decades the Trace was rather dangerous for travel because of the prevalence of men like Murrell.

**135.30, white hat:** An allusion to the mitre, a liturgical head-dress usually made of white silk, worn by bishops and some other dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church.

**136.4, James Murrell:** A famous outlaw of the Old Southwest, who terrorized the region for decades before being finally captured in 1834. At first he operated alone, but gradually gathered about him a large and murderous gang whose violence and cruelty were notorious. He was reputed to be planning a great Negro insurrection, the "Mystic Rebellion"—needless to say, not for any benefit to the Negroes. After his capture he served a ten-year term for Negro-stealing, and died of tuberculosis a few years afterwards.

**137.15, Audubon:** John James Audubon (1785–1851), artist and naturalist. Numerous legends gathered about his name and origins, but he was born in Santo Domingo of a French father and Creole mother. He was taken to France as a child, studied for a time under the French painter Jacques Louis David (1748–1825), but returned to America in 1804. Between 1810 and about 1819 he was engaged in rather unsuccessful business ventures in Kentucky, preferring to spend his time on extended trips about the country following his interests as a naturalist and drawing his pictures of birds. His later career, arranging for the publication of his drawings and journals, need not concern us here.

In this story the three protagonists are historical figures, but they are also very complex symbols. The author draws upon biographical facts, and in a sense her representations are true-to-life portraits (though not, of course, photographic), but quite obviously her interest lies less in the "real" persons she uses than in what they can serve to signify. On the most obvious level we meet the man of God, the man of the Devil, and the man of Knowledge and Beauty—the good man, the bad man, and the amoral man. But each of these "simple" types, after examination, unfolds as highly complex. In other words, this is a story that is very rich in its symbolic pattern; the questions which follow barely begin to reveal the manifold implications. Close study of the details of this brief masterpiece will be repaid by a fuller appreciation of the art of the short story.

What is Lorenzo's attitude towards Time? Does he live in and for the Past, Present, or

Future? What is suggested in the phrase "Destroy the present," which we are told "must have been the first thing that was whispered in Murrell's heart"? What is Audubon's attitude toward Past, Present, and Future? Explain the full significance of the title of the story. What is similar in the way in which Lorenzo and Murrell see their surroundings? How does Audubon differ? How is it fitting that Audubon is on foot, whereas the others ride? Both Lorenzo and Murrell believe themselves to be, in their opposite ways, instruments in the hands of larger powers (God and Devil). Is Audubon of a similar opinion about himself? What might be said to be the principal ambition of each of the three? Does Audubon typify the creative artist or the scientist—or both? Explain why and how.

What does the heron symbolize? What does each of the three see in the heron? What does each "learn" from the experience? How is what each observer sees and learns consistent with his own character? What is suggested by this diversity of response or interpretation? Is this diversity of interpretation comparable to the different interpretations, by different readers, of symbolic stories—such as this one?

#### 143. BILLY BUDD, FORETOPMAN HERMAN MELVILLE

**145.25, Aldebaran:** A star in the constellation of Taurus, and one of the twenty brightest stars in the sky.

**146.3, Ham:** The second son of Noah, who aroused his father's displeasure and was cursed. See *Genesis* 9.20–27. Noah prophesied at the time: "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Ham, whose name in Hebrew means *brown*, was frequently asserted to be the forefather of the Negro peoples.

**146.12, Anarcharis Cloots:** Baptised Jean Baptiste, he was born into a wealthy family of the Prussian nobility. At the age of 20 he adopted the revolutionary republicanism and rationalistic philosophy of his times, and started traveling the continent preaching liberty, equality, fraternity, and rationalism. In 1790 he led a delegation of 36 alleged foreigners, supposed to represent many different nationalities, before the bar of the French Assembly, and in the name of this "Embassy of the Human Race" he demanded that the whole world subscribe to the doctrines of the Rights of Man and of

the Citizen. He dropped his title of baron and assumed the name Anarcharsis from a contemporary philosophical romance by J. J. Barthélemy: *The Travels of the Young Anarcharsis in Greece Towards the Middle of the 4th Century B.C.* He eventually lost favor with Robespierre, and was guillotined in 1794, at the age of 39.

146.19, Murat: Joachim Murat (1767-1815) was an innkeeper's son who rose with Napoleon and became King of Naples. Reputed to be the most dashing cavalry leader of his times, he was immensely popular with his troops.

146.29, Bucephalus: Favorite war horse of Alexander the Great.

146.30, Taurus: A constellation of stars, fabled by the Greeks to be the bull which after tossing Europa across his back carried her across the seas to Crete. Taurus was afterwards raised to the sky by Jupiter as a constellation.

148.20, peacemaker: Cf. *Matthew* 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

148.42, Paine: Thomas Paine (1737-1809), a very influential propagandist during the American Revolution, later returned to England where in 1791 he published *The Rights of Man*, eloquently upholding the libertarian principles of the French Revolution in answer to Edmund Burke's attack on them in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

148.47, Voltaire, Diderot: Two French writers of the pre-Revolutionary period whose writings helped clarify the issues and create the intellectual atmosphere leading to the reform demands of 1789.

151.13, Cain: See *Genesis* 4. Cain, the eldest son of Adam and Eve, killed his brother Abel, thereby becoming the first murderer.

151.17, Casper Hauser: A German youth famous in the 19th Century because of an apparent mystery about his birth and antecedents. In May 1828, at about the age of 16, he appeared in Nuremberg, wandering in bewilderment about the streets. He had letters on him stating that he had been kept in close confinement since infancy by a peasant guardian, who had, however, taught him reading, writing, and Christianity. He died in 1833 as the result of a wound—whether inflicted by himself or by others is not known.

151.24, "one of Hawthorne's minor tales": The allusion is to the story "The Birthmark."

152.3-4, French Directory: After the fall of Robespierre (in 1794), the French Con-

vention set up a Directory of five members, assisted by two legislative bodies. The Directory controlled France until overthrown by Napoleon's coup d'état in 1799.

152.7, famous signal: Lord Nelson's famous exhortation to his men before the battle of Trafalgar: "England expects every man to do his duty."

152.17, Dibdin: Charles Dibdin (1745-1814), prolific English composer of operatic dramas, martial ballads, sea songs and street songs. His output numbered about 1400 songs of various kinds. His ballad "Poor Jack" contains the line "As for my life, 'tis the king's"—quoted by Melville.

152.22, G. P. R. James: Melville here erroneously uses the name of a contemporary English popular novelist for that of the British naval historian William James, author of the six-volume *Naval History of Great Britain* (London, 1860).

152.46, Nelson: Horatio Nelson, British naval hero. When war broke out with revolutionary France, Nelson was appointed captain of the *Agamemnon* (1794), and served chiefly in the Mediterranean until he was disabled by the loss of an arm in 1797. He was victorious over the French fleet at the Nile (1798), as well as over the Spanish fleet in 1797 in the great battle off Cape St. Vincent. In 1801, during the battle of Copenhagen against the Danish fleet, occurred the famous incident of his putting his telescope to his blind eye when informed that his commanding officer had signalled for retreat. When the war reopened after the collapse of the Peace of Amiens, Nelson as Commander-in-Chief led his ships to victory at Trafalgar in 1805, though it cost him his life—he was struck by a bullet from a sharpshooter firing from an enemy ship, the *Redoubtable*. He died aboard his flagship, the *Victory*.

153.4, "The greatest sailor. . .": Quoted from Alfred Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (1852). Wellington was the British military hero of the Napoleonic wars, his career culminating in the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, June 18, 1815.

153.20, Don John, Doria, Van Tromp, Jean Bart, Decatur: All famous naval commanders—respectively Austrian, Genoese, Dutch, French, and American.

153.44, Benthamites: Believers in the doctrines of Jeremy Bentham, the founder of Utilitarianism.

155.13, Rodney . . . de Grasse: George Rodney (1718-1792), British Admiral, whose crowning victory over the comte de Grasse

took place off Dominica in 1782 (April 12).

**156.20, Montaigne:** Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), famous French essayist.

**157.20, Tecumseh:** Famous Shawnee chief, organizer of an Indian confederacy; he fought with the British in the War of 1812.

**157.22, Dr. Titus Oates:** Titus Oates (1649-1705) was an English conspirator who, to serve his own ambitions, posed as a Roman Catholic to help uncover alleged Catholic plots against the British crown. He forged evidence of various kinds and as a result of the hysteria he helped foment, many Jesuits and other Roman Catholics were accused of treason.

**158.32, Camoëns:** Luis de Camoëns (1524-1580), greatest of Portuguese lyric and epic poets, wrote *The Lusiad*, a magnificent account of the voyage of Vasco da Gama, discoverer of the sea route to India around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. Woven into the poem is an epic treatment of the history of Portugal.

**158.37, Apocalypse:** The final book of the New Testament, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine."

**160.10, Haydon:** Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), British painter and a friend of John Keats.

**160.21, Merlin:** A 5th Century magician and prophet, in medieval romance.

**161.13, Chiron:** In Greek myth, a centaur famous for his wisdom and knowledge of healing. He was the teacher of Achilles, the hero of Homer's *Iliad*.

**162.22, Radcliffe:** Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), famous author of "Gothic" romances, published *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in 1794.

**163.10, Coke and Blackstone:** English lawyers, authors of one of the earliest standard law textbooks, which remained an authority for many decades.

**163.19, "Calvin's dogma":** The doctrine of total depravity—that all human beings at birth are depraved in sin because of Adam's fall.

**164.35, Chang and Eng:** The original "Siamese twins." Two men of Chinese extraction, who were born in Siam in 1811, were brought to America in 1829 and widely exhibited, and died in North Carolina in 1874.

**165.3-4, Saul . . . David:** See *I Samuel* 18.6-16.

**166.19, Guy Fawkes:** Guy Fawkes (1570-1606), the English conspirator, was converted to Roman Catholicism in his early manhood and became involved in plots

against the English government. The famed Gunpowder Plot was an attempt to blow up the House of Lords. Fawkes was found lurking among the hidden casks of gunpowder and was arrested on November 5, 1605. The anniversary of that day is still known in England as Guy Fawkes Day—and is the day on which children set off firecrackers and burn the effigy of the conspirator in lavish bonfires.

**170.14, Hyperion:** In Greek myth, a Titan and father of Helios, the sun-god. Hyperion was famed for his beauty.

**170.15, "man of sorrows":** *Isaiah* 53.3. Various phrases in this 53rd chapter of *Isaiah* may have been in Melville's mind during the conception of Claggart—e.g., "Smitten of God, and afflicted . . . the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"; "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?" But in other ways the "man of sorrows" sketched by *Isaiah* differs radically from the character of Claggart.

**170.22, "dental satire of a Guise":** Probably a reference to Charles of Guise (1524-1574), Cardinal of Lorraine—a man whose insincerity and treachery were matched only by his intrigues and cruelties. He was a member of a very powerful family of nobility in 16th Century France.

**174.42, "envious children of Jacob":** See *Genesis* 37.31-32.

**177.12, Ananias:** There are two men of this name mentioned in *The Acts of the Apostles*: (1) a priest by whose order St. Paul was struck in the mouth; (2) a liar struck dead for telling a falsehood to Peter. In the generic sense, Ananias means any liar. All texts of *Billy Budd* published prior to this one contain a misreading of Melville's manuscript. Melville actually wrote Captain Vere's remark as "It is the divine judgement on Ananias! Look!"—whereas previous texts of the story print the remark as "the divine judgement of Ananias!" This misreading seems to point to Ananias the priest, identified above. But the true reading shows that the Ananias Melville intended is the one associated with Peter, struck dead for lying—just as the liar Claggart is struck dead.

**183.4, last Assizes:** Judgement Day.

**185.2, Abraham . . . Isaac:** See *Genesis* 22.1-13.

**187.37, Germanicus:** Germanicus Caesar (15 B.C.-19 A.D.), a Roman general, nephew of Mark Antony.

**187.45, Fra Angelico:** Giovanni da Fiesole (1387-1455), an Italian painter.

187.45, gardens of the Hesperides: The gardens in which grew the golden apples of Greek mythology. The Hesperides were the maidens entrusted with guarding the apples.

188.7, Captain Cook: James Cook (1728–1779), the English naval explorer, visited Tahiti in 1769 and explored the neighboring islands. His later voyages took him to almost all parts of the South Pacific.

188.26, "Blücher etc.": A conjectural reading of an illegible phrase. The meaning, if any, has not been traced. There may be a reference to the Prussian Field Marshal, Blücher, veteran of many Napoleonic battles, including Waterloo.

188.32, "prophet in the chariot . . . Elisha": The prophet Elijah ascended by "a whirlwind into heaven" in "a chariot of fire." As Elijah rose upward in the presence of his young follower Elisha, the prophet's mantle fell from him; Elisha took it up and wrought miracles. See *II Kings* 2.7–15.

191.40, Orpheus: In Greek myth, Orpheus was given a lyre by Apollo and the Muses taught him to use it so well that he charmed not only the beasts but the trees and stones.

193.16, Dr. Johnson: Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), a great man of letters in 18th Century England.

What is there in the beginning of the story that foreshadows Billy Budd's tragic death? What, for instance, is accomplished by the incident between Billy and Red Whiskers, in the first chapter? Even before that, in Melville's dedication of his book to Jack Chace, we encounter the words: "Wherever that great heart may now be. . . ." How do these words function in the story itself? What is *in* the story that harks back to these words as motif or theme? How does the incident of the spilled soup, in Chapter 10, look forward to what follows?

Melville opens Chapter 29 by writing: "The symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction cannot so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact." Explain what Melville means by asserting his novel has "less to do with fable than with fact." Do you agree with Melville about his book? To what extent does Melville seem to have reconstructed facts into fable? Did Melville compose this sentence because he felt the need to forestall the criticism that his own novel lacked "symmetry of form"—especially in the concluding sections of the narrative? Do these sections—from Chapter 30 to the end—represent, in your opinion,

a spoiling of the architectonics of the whole story, a lapse from a "symmetry of form"?

What does the death of Captain Vere contribute, *as pattern*, to what precedes Chapter 29? What does Chapter 30, particularly the account of the Budd-Claggart affair quoted from the naval chronicle, contribute to the *theme* or *motif* of the entire narrative? Again, what purpose is served by the discussion of Billy's manner of dying—a discussion called "A Digression" (Chapter 27)? And earlier in the story, is the inclusion of descriptions of the Spithead and Nore mutinies fully justified? Explain.

On hearing Claggart's accusation, Billy, we are told, "stood like one impaled and gagged." At the moment of his death, a vapory fleece hanging low in the East "was shot through with a soft glory as of the fleece of the Lamb of God seen in mystical vision. . . ." As Billy dies, he ascends; "and ascending, took the full rose of the dawn." And after his death he is remembered reverently by the crew, and even the spar used in the hanging "was for some years kept trace of by the bluejackets. . . . To them a chip of it was as a piece of the Cross." By these and similar details what seems to be implied about the manner and the meaning of Billy's death?

Melville was a man who knew the Bible thoroughly, reading it frequently and writing marginal comments (sometimes critical ones) on passages that particularly struck him. The Biblical allusions scattered throughout the novel will repay study.

What does Melville achieve by the use of color symbolism in the story? Note the recurrence of the color rose in connection with Billy—the "rose-tan" of his cheek as well as the color of the morning sky when he dies. What is the meaning of the phrase used to describe Billy at the moment of Claggart's accusation—"the rose-tan of his cheek looked struck as by white leprosy"? How account for the seeming inaccuracy in "white leprosy"? Elsewhere in the story, what does white versus black signify?

About Billy we are told in Chapter 8 that "Nothing was known of his former life." (Is anything much known about Claggart's former life?) When Billy is questioned by an officer as to his place of birth (Chapter 2), he confesses ignorance; all he knows is that he is a foundling: "I was found in a pretty silk-lined basket hanging one morning from the knocker of a good man's door in Bristol." (What is the key word in this passage—"silk-lined" or "good"? Melville's manuscript shows that he had first written

"in a basket of oakum"; comment on the alteration.) When the officer asks Billy "Who was your father?" Billy replies, "God knows, Sir." Then in Chapter 23 (p. 184), Captain Vere is said to be "old enough to have been Billy's father" and there is the allusion to Abraham and his son Isaac. Are we intended to conjecture an *actual* parental connection?

Define the relationship, in terms of myth, between Billy and Vere, and in the light of this relationship comment on Billy's last words: "God bless Captain Vere!" And also on Vere's last words: "Billy Budd, Billy Budd." Is there any connection be-

tween Vere's last words and Melville's inscription to Jack Chace in the dedication at the beginning of the novel?

The moral and philosophical implications of *Billy Budd* are numerous and inviting. Consider, for instance, some of the antitheses treated: depravity versus innocence, intuition versus "knowledge of the world," the earthly versus the heavenly, head versus heart, military duty versus private conscience, war versus religion, landsmen versus seamen, the society versus the individual, and many others—all raised here.

## II: The Short Story and the Creative Process

### 197. ETHAN BRAND

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

197.20, as we have seen: This is one of several phrases in the story referring to nonexistent earlier chapters. When Hawthorne first published the story he used as a kind of subtitle the phrase: "A Chapter from an Abortive Romance." But if other chapters were projected and written, they do not now exist, and there seems to be little reason why they ever should have existed, since the story as published is complete in itself.

197.32, *Delectable Mountains*: The mountains in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* from which Christian first sees the Celestial City.

202.40, *Esther of our tale*: See the first note above.

203.37, *Jew of Nuremberg*: Note the change from the notebook entry.

"My father," said Julian Hawthorne, "was two men, one sympathetic and intuitional, the other critical and logical; together they formed a combination which could not be thrown off its feet." In Nathaniel's fiction this doubleness of character transposes into themes of engagement with life versus withdrawal from man and God, dramas of open spaces where secret guilt is disclosed and locked rooms where the heart remains unopened. Hawthorne's symbols disclose the author himself, and the unresolved conflicts in the man are reflected in the moral ambivalence of his themes and

symbols. Ambiguity is his artistic creed. No darkness is absolute, no sunlight is pure; light manifests shadow, and darkness shines.

Nature, for instance, is frequently used by Hawthorne to comment upon the human plight. How does his description of the sunlit surroundings on the morning after Brand's death-by-fire hint at the meaning of Brand's death? Is Nature, as Joe thinks, rejoicing at Brand's extinction; or is Nature rejoicing at his final redemption? What are the implications of such a sentence as "Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in the air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might thus ascend into the heavenly regions"? Compare this morning scene with that of the preceding evening and night, the one lighted by the sun, the other by burning marble.

Just before leaping into the kiln, Ethan had bent over to watch the blue flames which "danced madly, as within a magic circle." The figure of a circle applies to a great many of the objects and actions in the story—and indeed the very structure of the story itself is circular. On its literal level, a man starts a search at a particular time and place, pursues it round the world, and ends where he began. He seeks the Unpardonable Sin by ranging widely among mankind, but finds it in the innermost circle of his own heart. And at the end of the story we are told that within a circle of snow-white lime lie the bones of Ethan Brand—and within the circle of bones them-

selves there remains "the shape of a human heart."

What does the failure of Bartram to understand the moral import of the phenomenon he discovers reveal of Bartram's own character? What is indicated by his final remark? Is Bartram or Ethan Brand the more selfish, smug, and hard of the two? "Was the fellow's heart made of marble?" How would you answer Bartram's question? Does Bartram display here his own unpardonable sin?

Notice the part played earlier in the story by the circle of curious onlookers who come first to look at Ethan Brand and then at the Jew's showbox. What is signified by the physical deformities of Lawyer Giles? Is he also deformed psychologically or morally? How is the doctor similar to Ethan Brand? Does the dog chasing his tail provide too obvious an analogy with Ethan Brand's life? Are there parallels with Ethan in the search by Old Humphrey for his daughter, and in the endless travels of the Jew of Nuremberg—the legendary Wandering Jew? Just as Ethan locates the Unpardonable Sin in the kiln of his own heart, so the showman finds the Unpardonable Sin a heavy burden in his showbox—as he whispers to Ethan Brand. What is the literal and symbolic function in the story of Old Humphrey's daughter?

What is suggested by likening the showman's hairy hand manipulating the scenes in the showbox to "the Hand of Destiny"? Does the implied contrast between the real (the "hairy hand") and the illusion (the "Hand of Destiny") carry over into other elements in the story? When viewed through the "magnifying-glasses," little Joe's face to some of the spectators was that of a Titanic child filled with merriment; but when Ethan applies his eyes to the magnifying lens, the child's face alters radically. Later, in his solitary vigil, Ethan looks into another kind of showbox—the fiery kiln—and what he sees there is also a horror. On the other hand, what Bartram sees when he looks is very different. Does the story suggest that what is found is in the eye of the beholder?

What part in the story is played by laughter, not only that of Ethan—which reverberates throughout the story from the roar which heralds his appearance to the final peal which rolls through the dreams of the lime-burner and his little son—but that of others in the story? Compare the use of laughter in this story with that in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," p. 89.

## 207. SOURCE MATERIAL FOR "ETHAN BRAND"

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Although most of the excerpts given here are taken from Hawthorne's notebooks—particularly the record of events of a holiday excursion to North Adams, Mass., July 26 to Sept. 9, 1838—a few passages from short stories written prior to "Ethan Brand" are included to indicate the earlier existence of ideas which undoubtedly contributed to the creation of Ethan's character and situation. Notice that the "source materials" cover a time span of fifteen years, since "Ethan Brand" was first published in January, 1850.

Although for purposes of convenience these passages have been gathered together in series here, the student should remember that for Hawthorne himself they were written with a great deal of intervening matter which he rejected as useless for this particular story.

**207.4, Wakefield:** These sentences form the concluding "moral" of one of Hawthorne's earliest published tales—"Wakefield." This tale is about a man who left his home for a whim, stayed away many years, and found himself unable to resume his former life when he at last wished to do so.

**207.8, the portrait painter:** This passage comes from "The Prophetic Pictures," a short story dealing with a character-type of frequent occurrence in Hawthorne's fiction.

**212.21, Rappaccini:** The scientist in the story "Rappaccini's Daughter." In studying the effect of poisons on living organisms, Rappaccini raised his daughter along with the poisonous plants in his garden until she too became deadly to all forms of natural life.

**212.26, Unpardonable Sin:** Hawthorne's view of this sin reminds every reader of the many examples in his fiction of characters who separated the intellect from the heart, who substituted intellectual analysis for sympathetic brotherhood. Beside Ethan Brand one would place Rappaccini, Chillingworth, Hollingsworth, Holgrave, Kenyon, and others. Some were saved in time, some not. It was a sin or state of existence which Hawthorne felt might all too easily develop in himself.

**212.34, Julian:** Hawthorne's son, about three years old at this time. This item may represent the many passages in the notebooks in which Hawthorne recorded the

doings, sayings, and characteristics of his children, Una and Julian—from whom he derived hints and even direct examples of child behavior that he used in his fiction.

What characteristics of Hawthorne may be inferred from the kind of material he includes in his notebooks? How does the style of the notebook entries differ from that of the stories?

## 213. A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

214.40, medlar: A European fruit resembling a crabapple, unfit to eat until it begins to decay from over-ripeness. Villon is making a grim jest about the decaying corpses on the public gallows.

215.7, Elias: *i.e.*, Elijah. See II Kings, 2:11.

215.8, Hominibus impossibile: Part of a Latin phrase which means "Impossible to men but possible to God."

221.41, Seigneur de Brisetout: a fictitious nobleman.

223.28, Cui Deus foeminam tradit: To whom God gives woman.

Does the impression of Villon gained from the story (first published in October, 1877) differ from that gained from the essay, published two months earlier? Does Stevenson, in both essay and story, give equal weight to the dual aspects of Villon's character: the poet of imagination, sensitivity and intelligence; and the petty criminal, sensuous, dishonest, and craven? What details in the story illustrate each of these aspects of Villon?

In this story, published years before the invention of moving pictures, Stevenson introduces his story in a way subsequently used in many films: a panoramic "shot" of a city at night, with the "camera-eye" gradually narrowing down to a specific area (the cemetery), then to a house, and then into the house to a particular room, with a sweeping "shot" of the room before we finally focus upon the "hero" of the tale. How effective is this type of introduction?

Among the details invented by Stevenson for his piece of fiction about Villon, three of the more important are Thevenin's "red curls," the dead prostitute, and the lord of Brisetout. Are the inventions successful? Are there details in the biographical sketch that would serve as well? In presenting the argument between Villon and Brisetout, is Stevenson completely objective? Is he more objective than in the biographical sketch?

Compare the endings of the essay and the short story. What is similar and what is different in the impression left on the reader? Is each equally effective in its respective place? Though Stevenson had already published several reviews and essays, "A Lodging for the Night" was his first short story to be published. Can you detect any signs of a beginner's hand?

## 225. FRANÇOIS VILLON ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

226.44, Jehan Frolo: A character in Victor Hugo's novel *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), a romance of the reign of Louis XI, king of France (1461-1483).

229.29, Marina, Boul: Characters in Shakespeare's *Pericles*. See Act IV, Sc. vi, ll. 169-170. Marina has been sold by her captors to a brothel. Boul is a pimp.

229.35, Murger: Henry Murger (1822-1861), a French writer whose *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* (1848) was afterwards the basis of Puccini's opera, *La Bohème* (1898).

230.38, Idle Apprentice: One of a series of twelve prints, entitled "Industry and Idleness," by William Hogarth (1697-1764), the great English pictorial satirist.

230.48, Clerks: *i.e.*, clerics. Used chiefly of students proceeding towards a degree.

231.4-5, benefit of clergy: The privilege, claimed by the medieval Church, of demanding trial before an ecclesiastical court for one of the clergy when accused of crime before a temporal tribunal. A smattering of Latin was sometimes sufficient to enable a man to claim "benefit of clergy." He did not have to be an actual member of a religious order to be designated a "cleric." Ecclesiastical courts were generally more lenient except in crimes against the Church.

235-3, Nathan's parable: See *II Samuel*, 12:1-7.

235.18, La pluye nous a debuez, etc.: Richard Aldington's translation of this stanza from Villon's "Epitaph: in ballade form" is as follows:

The rain doth weaken all our strength  
and lave

Us, the sun blackens us again and dries;  
Our eyes the ravens hollow like a grave.  
Our beards and eyebrows are plucked off  
by pies [*i.e.*, magpies]

Never rest comes to us in any wise;  
Now here, now there, as the wind sways,  
sway we,

Swung at the wind's high pleasure cease-  
lessly,



More pecked by birds than hazel-nuts that ripen.

Be ye not then of our fraternity,  
But pray to God that all we be forgiven.

238.43, *mauvais pauvre*: a seedy rascal.

239.18-19, *Ballade* . . . best known: Dante Gabriel Rossetti has an excellent English translation of this poem under the title "The Ballad of Dead Ladies."

In the two selections from Stevenson we have an author dealing with the same material for nearly the same purpose (character portrayal), but using two different forms: a biographical essay and a short story.

As in most fiction, the organization of the story is perfectly chronological. How does this differ from the organization of Stevenson's essay? Would Stevenson's *essay* have been improved if it were organized even less chronologically—that is if, for instance, it had logically followed the "points" set forth in the subtitle of the essay: "Student, Poet, and Housebreaker"? Why, or why not?

Stevenson's essay on Villon was first published in August 1877. Five years later, when he republished it in a volume with a number of other biographical pieces collected from magazines, he wrote a special Preface to the collection. In this Preface he confessed that in order "to condense in a few pages the events of a whole lifetime" and to present his subjects from the striking "point of view" demanded in magazine publication, he was forced to omit "all the more neutral circumstances from the lives of his subjects." That kind of omission, he declared, by "negative exaggeration . . . lends to the matter in hand a certain false and specious glitter." Of the Villon essay, in particular, Stevenson wrote:

I am tempted to regret that I ever wrote on this subject, not merely because the paper strikes me as too picturesque by half, but because I regarded Villon as a bad fellow. Others still think well of him, and can find beautiful and human traits where I saw nothing but artistic evil; and by the principle of the art, those should have written of the man, and not I. Where you see no good, silence is the best. Though this penitence comes too late, it may be well, at least, to give it expression.

. . . Villon . . . still gives us the most vivid and shocking impression of reality. Even if that were not worth

doing at all, it would be worth doing as well as he does it; for the pleasure we take in the author's skill repays us, or at least reconciles us to the baseness of his attitude.

Can Stevenson's be called a factual essay? Comment on its objectivity, organization, kinds of evidence, etc. What qualities of style—diction, figures of speech, use of allusions, etc.—are shown in the essay?

## 240. THE OPEN BOAT

STEPHEN CRANE

Trace the contrasts indicated within the story between life on land and life on the sea. Are any allegorical implications present? What does the "wind-tower" in Section VII symbolize? Are there other symbols in the story? What qualities in nature are emphasized? Is the theme of "the brotherhood of men" mentioned at the start of Section III an important one throughout the story? Explain. What is the function of the verse about the dying Legionnaire in Section VI? What is the purpose of the humor encountered at several points in the story? What characteristics of Crane's style are illustrated in such phrases as "These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall" (p. 240), "cold, comfortable sea-water" (p. 251), "There is a certain immovable quality to a shore" (p. 254), "Striking the sand with each particular part of his body" (p. 255)?

Show how the death of the oiler is prepared for in the course of the story—especially in Section I. Is there a contradiction here between Crane's art—which depicts a meaningful pattern leading to the oiler's death (though not "causing" it)—and his naturalistic philosophy which regards the death as pure chance (any of the others might equally have been drowned instead)? What was the correspondent's attitude towards the sea at the start of the story? Is it the same throughout the story, and at the end?

What are the most important ways in which the story differs from the newspaper reports of the same incident—subject, theme, tone, etc.?

## 256. NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE WRECK OF THE *COMMODORE*

In these four news reports of the sinking of the *Commodore* and the open boat voyage of four men we have fairly characteristic pieces of journalism, including "eye-

witness" accounts and an article by a special correspondent. They are reproduced here for the contrast they offer to the imaginative use of the same material in the masterly short story "The Open Boat".

Do you think the language attributed to the "survivor" and the "cook" in the first news report is accurately reproduced? Contrast such phrases as "their cries were heart-rending" and "he never quailed when he . . . saw the foaming and raging billows" with the dialogue given by Crane in his short story. Which is the more "true-to-life," the factual or the fictional? Is the language attributed to Captain Murphy in the third report more probable? Consider such remarks as "but to our chagrin the water gained upon us," "go whither the elements carried her," and "one of nature's noblemen." Why is the fourth report, by Crane himself, better than the accounts of the other reporters and eyewitnesses? Captain Murphy and Crane in their factual accounts both mention the furiously undressing man on the shore who finally helps them land; compare the descriptions here with the account of the same episode in the short story.

## 265. THE PORTABLE PHONOGRAPH

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK

What effect is achieved by combining natural and mechanical details in the opening paragraphs? Comment on such phrases as "cloud strips like threats," "little islands of an old oil pavement," "falling meteors,"

"rakish remnants of fence . . . one portion of tangled and multiple barbed wire," "expeditionary talk," "like the mouth of a mine tunnel"? Why is the setting not geographically identified? Why is the season autumn rather than one of the other seasons? What does the portable phonograph symbolize? How do the attitudes of the four men toward it differ? In what respect are their attitudes similar? What is symbolized by the cave? By the four flying stars mentioned near the end of the story? What are some of the other symbolic objects and actions in the story? Does this story (first published in 1941) depend too much on topical events of our times? What is suggested by the Doctor's fear at the end of the story?

Compare this story with Hawthorne's "Ethan Brand" (p. 197) and Kafka's "A Hunger-Artist" (p. 312)—both of which are also allegorical stories replete with symbolism.

Clark's own account of the writing of the story, in "The Ghost of an Apprehension," reveals the origin of the story to be a mood or upsurging of emotion, followed by the "coming alive" in his mind of the physical setting which fitted the mood, and then the discovering and inventing of fictional actions or "plot" to dramatize and communicate the initiating intention. Do you think this to be a common creative pattern? Insofar as one can deduce from the evidence, do the processes followed by Hawthorne, Crane, and Stevenson, as revealed in this section, seem similar to Clark's? Is Clark equally successful in all three aspects of the story: mood or atmosphere, setting, and plot?

## III: The Short Story and the Reader

### 277. LIGEIA

EDGAR ALLAN POE

This story was first published in September, 1838. The poem "The Conqueror Worm" was first published in 1843 and not united with the story until the story was reprinted in the *Broadway Journal* in 1845—seven years after the first version had appeared. Some adjustment of the sentences before and after the poem was made necessary by the insertion.

277-5, Joseph Glanvill: An English philosopher (1636-1680). The supposed quo-

tation has not been found in Glanvill's extant writings, and is presumably Poe's own invention.

277-26, Ashtophet: The reference seems to be to Ashtoreth, or Ashtaroth, an oriental name for Astarte, goddess of fertility and reproduction, creatress of life, representing the feminine principle.

277-36, daughters of Delos: On the island of Delos, Greek maidens brought offerings to the temple of Artemis, with whom Ashtoreth was at least partly identified.

277-39, Bacon: Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam (1561-1626), in his essay "Of

Beauty" actually wrote: "There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion."

278.7-8, gentle prominence of the regions above the temples: Poe's interest in phrenology is reflected in his description of Ligeia. The characteristic here mentioned supposedly denotes "Love of Life" and is thus a foreshadowing of the dénouement of the story. See Edward Hungerford: "Poe and Phrenology," *American Literature*, II, 209-231 (1930).

278.21, Cleomenes: Cleomenes, the son of Apollodorus, was the sculptor of the Venus of Medici. Poe attributes his inspiration to a dream sent by Apollo.

278.26, Nourjahad: An allusion to the exotic setting of a novel by Frances Sheridan (1724-1766), *The History of Nourjahad* (1767).

278.39, Democritus: A Greek philosopher, of the fifth century, B.C., who said that truth lies in a deep well.

278.41, twin stars of Leda: Leda and Zeus had twin sons, Castor and Pollux, whose names were given to the two brightest stars in the constellation Gemini. See the poem by W. B. Yeats, "Leda and the Swan," p. 714.

279.49, wisdom too divinely precious: See *Genesis* 3:5-6.

280.11, Azrael: The angel of death, in Jewish and Mohammedan religions, who separates the soul from the body.

Is this a story illustrating the power of mind over matter—that "the will . . . dieth not"? Is the use of the "ruby-drops" a flaw, in that it introduces a physical agency into a spiritual struggle? Is the poem effective in the story? Why? Poe repeats the words attributed to Glanvill at several points in the story. Is the repetition desirable or not?

## 294. THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE COLONEL KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Although the focus here is upon the characters of the "daughters," nevertheless the five other characters in the story emerge clearly. For instance, what does the phrase "proud young Kate, the enchanted princess" reveal of the maid's character? What phrases in the opening paragraph of the story summarize the whole lives of the two sisters? How do the sisters differ? What are some examples of their lack of a sense of proportion, their confusing the trivial with the important? Arrange the events

of the twelve episodes in chronological order. How does the episodic form of the story parallel and reveal the characters of the sisters? Why does the author mix together events from the remembered past and imagined future with the present thoughts and experiences of Jug and Con?

Explain the symbolic use in the story of the watches and clocks, slow time and fast time, etc. How is the sisters' reluctance to decide anything, to accept finality in anything, related to these time symbols? Do the imaginary flights indulged in by the sisters suggest that only in this way could they escape their father's domination, escape into their own timeless realm? Why is the tone of the story deliberately made a humorous one? Select words and phrases that contribute to this tone. Point out some resemblances between this story of continuing immaturity and Joyce's "A Little Cloud." Point out differences in narrative technique and "atmosphere."

Does Mr. Nelson in his analysis place too much emphasis on the "tunnel" image—or does he support his contention with adequate evidence?

## 312. A HUNGER-ARTIST FRANZ KAFKA

Compare this story with Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." Both are stories that can be read as realistic narratives, though as such both seem eventually unsatisfactory. Despite their apparent realism, both are actually stories of symbolism, even though the symbols cannot perhaps be mechanically equated with static abstractions. Both stories invite their readers to venture on voyages of imaginative discovery in an ambiguous world. (The very ambiguity, of course, might be termed the "realism" of the stories, since life's experiences are themselves ambiguous, with meanings far to seek and difficult to find.) According to one view, the hunger-artist symbolizes the plight of the creative artist in an increasingly shoddy and materialistic world. According to another, the artist is representative of religion in a period of shift from spiritual to physical values. According to a third, the artist is the moral man who tries to live for and by his ideal in a world of the skeptical and indifferent. Some of the details in the narrative seem difficult to reconcile with one or another of these views; perhaps all views are to be held at once.



## Part Two:

# DRAMA

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### *I: The Play*

*These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a wrack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



# ANTIGONE

SOPHOCLES (496?-406 B.C.)

*Translation by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald*

## CHARACTERS

|          |           |                                            |
|----------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| ANTIGONE | CREON     | A SENTRY                                   |
| ISMENE   | HAIMON    | A MESSENGER                                |
| EURYDICE | TEIRESIAS | CHORUS ( <i>with a leader or</i> CHORAGOS) |

*Because of the curse that their father had laid upon them, ETEOCLES and POLYNEICES quarreled about the royal power, and POLYNEICES was finally driven from Thebes. He took refuge in Argos and married the daughter of KING ADRASTOS; then, as one of seven captains whose commander was ADRASTOS, he marched upon Thebes to recover his throne. In the assault, ETEOCLES and POLYNEICES met at the Seventh Gate and killed each other in combat. CREON became king, and his first official act was to forbid, on pain of death, the burial of POLYNEICES.*

SCENE: *Before the palace of CREON, King of Thebes. A central double door, and two lateral doors. A platform extends the length of the façade, and from this platform three steps lead down into the orchestra, or chorus-ground. Time: dawn of the day after the repulse of the Argive army from the assault on Thebes.*

## PROLOGUE

ANTIGONE and ISMENE enter from the central door of the Palace.

ANTIGONE.    Ismene, dear sister,  
                  You would think that we had already suffered enough  
                  For the curse on Oedipus:  
                  I cannot imagine any grief  
                  That you and I have not gone through. And now—  
                  Have they told you the new decree of our King Creon?

ISMENE.       I have heard nothing: I know  
                  That two sisters lost two brothers, a double death  
                  In a single hour; and I know that the Argive army  
                  Fled in the night; but beyond this, nothing.

10

ANTIGONE.    I thought so. And that is why I wanted you  
                  To come out here with me. There is something we must do.

ISMENE.       Why do you speak so strangely?

- ANTIGONE. Listen, Ismene:  
 Creon buried our brother Eteocles  
 With military honours, gave him a soldier's funeral,  
 And it was right that he should; but Polyneices,  
 Who fought as bravely and died as miserably,—  
 They say that Creon has sworn  
 No one shall bury him, no one mourn for him, 20  
 But his body must lie in the fields, a sweet treasure  
 For carrion birds to find as they search for food.  
 That is what they say, and our good Creon is coming here  
 To announce it publicly; and the penalty—  
 Stoning to death in the public square!  
 There it is,  
 And now you can prove what you are:  
 A true sister, or a traitor to your family.
- ISMENE. Antigone, you are mad! What could I possibly do?
- ANTIGONE. You must decide whether you will help me or not.
- ISMENE. I do not understand you. Help you in what? 30
- ANTIGONE. Ismene, I am going to bury him. Will you come?
- ISMENE. Bury him! You have just said the new law forbids it.
- ANTIGONE. He is my brother. And he is your brother, too.
- ISMENE. But think of the danger! Think what Creon will do!
- ANTIGONE. Creon is not strong enough to stand in my way.
- ISMENE. Ah sister!  
 Oedipus died, everyone hating him  
 For what his own search brought to light, his eyes  
 Ripped out by his own hand; and Iocaste died,  
 His mother and wife at once: she twisted the cords 40  
 That strangled her life; and our two brothers died,  
 Each killed by the other's sword. And we are left:  
 But oh, Antigone,  
 Think how much more terrible than these  
 Our own death would be if we should go against Creon  
 And do what he has forbidden! We are only women,  
 We cannot fight with men, Antigone!  
 The law is strong, we must give in to the law  
 In this thing, and in worse. I beg the Dead  
 To forgive me, but I am helpless: I must yield 50  
 To those in authority. And I think it is dangerous business  
 To be always meddling.
- ANTIGONE. If that is what you think,  
 I should not want you, even if you asked to come.



You have made your choice, you can be what you want to be.  
 But I will bury him; and if I must die,  
 I say that this crime is holy: I shall lie down  
 With him in death, and I shall be as dear  
 To him as he to me.

It is the dead,  
 Not the living, who make the longest demands:  
 We die for ever . . .

You may do as you like,  
 Since apparently the laws of the gods mean nothing to you.

60

ISMENE. They mean a great deal to me; but I have no strength  
 To break laws that were made for the public good.

ANTIGONE. That must be your excuse, I suppose. But as for me,  
 I will bury the brother I love.

ISMENE. Antigone,  
 I am so afraid for you!

ANTIGONE. You need not be:  
 You have yourself to consider, after all.

ISMENE. But no one must hear of this, you must tell no one!  
 I will keep it a secret, I promise!

ANTIGONE. Oh tell it! Tell everyone!  
 Think how they'll hate you when it all comes out  
 If they learn that you knew about it all the time!

70

ISMENE. So fiery! You should be cold with fear.

ANTIGONE. Perhaps. But I am doing only what I must.

ISMENE. But can you do it? I say that you cannot.

ANTIGONE. Very well: when my strength gives out, I shall do no more.

ISMENE. Impossible things should not be tried at all.

ANTIGONE. Go away, Ismene:  
 I shall be hating you soon, and the dead will too,  
 For your words are hateful. Leave me my foolish plan:  
 I am not afraid of the danger; if it means death,  
 It will not be the worst of deaths—death without honour.

80

ISMENE. Go then, if you feel that you must.  
 You are unwise,  
 But a loyal friend indeed to those who love you.

*(Exit into the Palace. ANTIGONE goes off, Left. Enters the CHORUS.)*

DRAMA  
PARODOS

CHORUS.      Now the long blade of the sun, lying [STROPHE 1  
                  Level east to west, touches with glory  
                  Thebes of the Seven Gates. Open, unlidded  
                  Eye of the golden day! O marching light  
                  Across the eddy and rush of Dirce's stream,  
                  Striking the white shields of the enemy  
                  Thrown headlong backward from the blaze of morning!

CHORAGOS.   Polyneices their commander  
                  Roused them with windy phrases,  
                  He the wild eagle screaming 10  
                  Insults above our land,  
                  His wings their shields of snow,  
                  His crest their marshalled helms.

CHORUS.      Against our seven gates in a yawning ring [ANTISTROPHE 1  
                  The famished spears came onward in the night;  
                  But before his jaws were sated with our blood,  
                  Or pinefire took the garland of our towers,  
                  He was thrown back; and as he turned, great Thebes—  
                  No tender victim for his noisy power—  
                  Rose like a dragon behind him, shouting war. 20

CHORAGOS.   For God hates utterly  
                  The bray of bragging tongues;  
                  And when he beheld their smiling,  
                  Their swagger of golden helms,  
                  The frown of his thunder blasted  
                  Their first man from our walls.

CHORUS.      We heard his shout of triumph high in the air [STROPHE 2  
                  Turn to a scream; far out in a flaming arc  
                  He fell with his windy torch, and the earth struck him.  
                  And others storming in fury no less than his 30  
                  Found shock of death in the dusty joy of battle.

CHORAGOS.   Seven captains at seven gates  
                  Yielded their clanging arms to the god  
                  That bends the battle-line and breaks it.  
                  These two only, brothers in blood,  
                  Face to face in matchless rage,  
                  Mirroring each the other's death,  
                  Clashed in long combat.

CHORUS.      But now in the beautiful morning of victory [ANTISTROPHE 2  
                  Let Thebes of the many chariots sing for joy! 40  
                  With hearts for dancing we'll take leave of war:  
                  Our temples shall be sweet with hymns of praise,  
                  And the long night shall echo with our chorus.

## SCENE I

CHORAGOS. But now at last our new King is coming:  
 Creon of Thebes, Menoiceus' son.  
 In this auspicious dawn of his reign  
 What are the new complexities  
 That shifting Fate has woven for him?  
 What is his counsel? Why has he summoned  
 The old men to hear him?

*(Enter CREON from the Palace. He addresses the CHORUS from the top step.)*

CREON. Gentlemen: I have the honour to inform you that our Ship of State, which recent storms have threatened to destroy, has come safely to harbour at last, guided by the merciful wisdom of Heaven. I have 10 summoned you here this morning because I know that I can depend upon you: your devotion to King Laios was absolute; you never hesitated in your duty to our late ruler Oedipus; and when Oedipus died, your loyalty was transferred to his children. Unfortunately, as you know, his two sons, the princes Eteocles and Polyneices, have killed each other in battle; and I, as the next in blood, have succeeded to the full power of the throne.

I am aware, of course, that no Ruler can expect complete loyalty from his subjects until he has been tested in office. Nevertheless, I say to you at the very outset that I have nothing but contempt for the kind of 20 Governor who is afraid, for whatever reason, to follow the course that he knows is best for the State; and as for the man who sets private friendship above the public welfare,—I have no use for him, either. I call God to witness that if I saw my country headed for ruin, I should not be afraid to speak out plainly; and I need hardly remind you that I would never have any dealings with an enemy of the people. No one values friendship more highly than I; but we must remember that friends made at the risk of wrecking our Ship are not real friends at all.

These are my principles, at any rate, and that is why I have made 30 the following decision concerning the sons of Oedipus: Eteocles, who died as a man should die, fighting for his country, is to be buried with full military honours, with all the ceremony that is usual when the greatest heroes die; but his brother Polyneices, who broke his exile to come back with fire and sword against his native city and the shrines of his father's gods, whose one idea was to spill the blood of his blood and sell his own people into slavery—Polyneices, I say, is to have no burial: no man is to touch him or say the least prayer for him; he shall lie on the plain, unburied; and the birds and the scavenging dogs can do with him whatever they like. 40

This is my command, and you can see the wisdom behind it. As long as I am King, no traitor is going to be honoured with the loyal man.

But whoever shows by word and deed that he is on the side of the State,  
—he shall have my respect while he is living, and my reverence when  
he is dead.

CHORAGOS. If that is your will, Creon son of Menoiceus,  
You have the right to enforce it: we are yours.

CREON. That is my will. Take care that you do your part.

CHORAGOS. We are old men: let the younger ones carry it out.

CREON. I do not mean that: the sentries have been appointed. 50

CHORAGOS. Then what is it that you would have us do?

CREON. You will give no support to whoever breaks this law.

CHORAGOS. Only a crazy man is in love with death!

CREON. And death it is; yet money talks, and the wisest  
Have sometimes been known to count a few coins too many.

(Enter SENTRY.)

SENTRY. I'll not say that I'm out of breath from running, King, because every  
time I stopped to think about what I have to tell you, I felt like going  
back. And all the time a voice kept saying, 'You fool, don't you know  
you're walking straight into trouble?'; and then another voice: 'Yes,  
but if you let somebody else get the news to Creon first, it will be 60  
even worse than that for you!' But good sense won out, at least I hope  
it was good sense, and here I am with a story that makes no sense at all;  
but I'll tell it anyhow, because, as they say, what's going to happen's  
going to happen, and—

CREON. Come to the point. What have you to say?

SENTRY. I did not do it. I did not see who did it. You must not punish me for  
what someone else has done.

CREON. A comprehensive defense! More effective, perhaps,  
If I knew its purpose. Come: what is it?

SENTRY. A dreadful thing . . . I don't know how to put it— 70

CREON. Out with it!

SENTRY. Well, then;  
The dead man—  
Polyneices—

(Pause. The SENTRY is overcome, fumbles for words. CREON waits impassively.)

out there—

someone,—

New dust on the slimy flesh!

*(Pause. No sign from CREON.)*

Someone has given it burial that way, and  
Gone . . .

*(Long pause. CREON finally speaks with deadly control.)*

CREON. And the man who dared do this?

SENTRY. I swear I  
Do not know! You must believe me!

Listen:  
The ground was dry, not a sign of digging, no,  
Not a wheel track in the dust, no trace of anyone.  
It was when they relieved us this morning: and one of them,  
The corporal, pointed to it.

80

There it was,  
The strangest—

Look:  
The body, just mounted over with light dust: you see?  
Not buried really, but as if they'd covered it  
Just enough for the ghost's peace. And no sign  
Of dogs or any wild animal that had been there.

And then what a scene there was! Every man of us  
Accusing the other: we all proved the other man did it,  
We all had proof that we could not have done it.

We were ready to take hot iron in our hands,  
Walk through fire, swear by all the gods,  
*It was not I!*

90

*I do not know who it was, but it was not I!*

*(CREON's rage has been mounting steadily, but the SENTRY is too intent upon his story to notice it.)*

And then, when this came to nothing, someone said  
A thing that silenced us and made us stare  
Down at the ground: you had to be told the news,  
And one of us had to do it! We threw the dice,  
And the bad luck fell to me. So here I am,  
No happier to be here than you are to have me:  
Nobody likes the man who brings bad news.

100

CHORAGOS. I have been wondering, King: can it be that the gods have done this?

CREON. *(furiously)* Stop!  
Must you doddering wrecks  
Go out of your heads entirely? 'The gods!'  
Intolerable!  
The gods favour this corpse? Why? How had he served them?  
Tried to loot their temples, burn their images,

Yes, and the whole State, and its laws with it!  
Is it your senile opinion that the gods love to honour bad men?  
A pious thought!—

No, from the very beginning  
There have been those who have whispered together,  
Stiff-necked anarchists, putting their heads together,  
Scheming against me in alleys. These are the men,  
And they have bribed my own guard to do this thing.  
(*sententiously*) Money!  
There's nothing in the world so demoralising as money.  
Down go your cities,  
Homes gone, men gone, honest hearts corrupted,  
Crookedness of all kinds, and all for money!

(*to SENTRY*) But you—!  
I swear by God and by the throne of God,  
The man who has done this thing shall pay for it!  
Find that man, bring him here to me, or your death  
Will be the least of your problems: I'll string you up  
Alive, and there will be certain ways to make you  
Discover your employer before you die;  
And the process may teach you a lesson you seem to have missed.  
The dearest profit is sometimes all too dear.  
That depends on the source. Do you understand me?  
A fortune won is often misfortune.

SENTRY. King, may I speak?

CREON. Your very voice distresses me. 130

SENTRY. Are you sure that it is my voice, and not your conscience?

CREON. By God, he wants to analyse me now!

SENTRY. It is not what I say, but what has been done, that hurts you.

CREON. You talk too much.

SENTRY. Maybe; but I've done nothing.

CREON. Sold your soul for some silver: that's all you've done.

SENTRY. How dreadful it is when the right judge judges wrong!

CREON. Your figures of speech  
May entertain you now; but unless you bring me the man,  
You will get little profit from them in the end.

(*Exit CREON into the Palace*)

SENTRY. 'Bring me the man'—!  
I'd like nothing better than bringing him the man! 140

But bring him or not, you have seen the last of me here.  
At any rate, I am safe!

(*Exit* SENTRY)

## ODE I

CHORUS.      Numberless are the world's wonders, but none      [STROPHE 1  
More wonderful than man; the stormgrey sea  
Yields to his prow, the huge crests bear him high;  
Earth, holy and inexhaustible, is graven  
With shining furrows where his plows have gone  
Year after year, the timeless labour of stallions.

The lightboned birds and beasts that cling to cover,      [ANTISTROPHE 1  
The lithe fish lighting their reaches of dim water,  
All are taken, tamed in the net of his mind;  
The lion on the hill, the wild horse windy-maned,      10  
Resign to him; and his blunt yoke has broken  
The sultry shoulders of the mountain bull.

Words also, and thought as rapid as air,      [STROPHE 2  
He fashions to his good use; statecraft is his,  
And his skill that deflects the arrows of snow,  
The spears of winter rain: from every wind  
He has made himself secure—from all but one:  
In the late wind of death he cannot stand.

O clear intelligence, force beyond all measure!      [ANTISTROPHE 2  
O fate of man, working both good and evil!      20  
When the laws are kept, how proudly his city stands!  
When the laws are broken, what of his city then?  
Never may the anarchic man find rest at my hearth,  
Never be it said that my thoughts are his thoughts.

## SCENE II

*Re-enter* SENTRY *leading* ANTIGONE.

CHORAGOS.      What does this mean? Surely this captive woman  
Is the Princess, Antigone. Why should she be taken?

SENTRY.      Here is the one who did it! We caught her  
In the very act of burying him.—Where is Creon?

CHORAGOS.      Just coming from the house.

(*Enter* CREON, *Center*.)

CREON.      What has happened?  
Why have you come back so soon?

- SENTRY. (*expansively*) O King,  
 A man should never be too sure of anything:  
 I would have sworn  
 That you'd not see me here again: your anger  
 Frightened me so, and the things you threatened me with; 10  
 But how could I tell then  
 That I'd be able to solve the case so soon?  
 No dice-throwing this time: I was only too glad to come!  
 Here is this woman. She is the guilty one:  
 We found her trying to bury him.  
 Take her, then; question her; judge her as you will.  
 I am through with the whole thing now, and glad of it.
- CREON. But this is Antigone! Why have you brought her here?
- SENTRY. She was burying him, I tell you!
- CREON. (*severely*) Is this the truth?
- SENTRY. I saw her with my own eyes. Can I say more? 20
- CREON. The details: come, tell me quickly!
- SENTRY. It was like this:  
 After those terrible threats of yours, King,  
 We went back and brushed the dust away from the body.  
 The flesh was soft by now, and stinking,  
 So we sat on a hill to windward and kept guard.  
 No napping this time! We kept each other awake.  
 But nothing happened until the white round sun  
 Whirled in the centre of the round sky over us:  
 Then, suddenly,  
 A storm of dust roared up from the earth, and the sky 30  
 Went out, the plain vanished with all its trees  
 In the stinging dark. We closed our eyes and endured it.  
 The whirlwind lasted a long time, but it passed;  
 And then we looked, and there was Antigone!  
 I have seen  
 A mother bird come back to a stripped nest, heard  
 Her crying bitterly a broken note or two  
 For the young ones stolen. Just so, when this girl  
 Found the bare corpse, and all her love's work wasted,  
 She wept, and cried on heaven to damn the hands 40  
 That had done this thing  
 And then she brought more dust  
 And sprinkled wine three times for her brother's ghost.  
 We ran and took her at once. She was not afraid,  
 Not even when we charged her with what she had done.



She denied nothing.

And this was a comfort to me,  
And some uneasiness: for it is a good thing  
To escape from death, but it is no great pleasure  
To bring death to a friend.

Yet I always say  
There is nothing so comfortable as your own safe skin!

CREON. (*slowly, dangerously*) And you, Antigone, 50  
You with your head hanging,—do you confess this thing?

ANTIGONE. I do. I deny nothing.

CREON. (*to SENTRY*) You may go. (*Exit SENTRY*)

(*to ANTIGONE*) Tell me, tell me briefly:  
Had you heard my proclamation touching this matter?

ANTIGONE. It was public. Could I help hearing it?

CREON. And yet you dared defy the law.

ANTIGONE. I dared.  
It was not God's proclamation. That final Justice  
That rules the world below makes no such laws.

Your edict, King, was strong,  
But all your strength is weakness itself against 60  
The immortal unrecorded laws of God.  
They are not merely now: they were, and shall be,  
Operative for ever, beyond man utterly.

I knew I must die, even without your decree:  
I am only mortal. And if I must die  
Now, before it is my time to die,  
Surely this is no hardship: can anyone  
Living, as I live, with evil all about me,  
Think Death less than a friend? This death of mine 70  
Is of no importance; but if I had left my brother  
Lying in death unburied, I should have suffered.  
Now I do not.

You smile at me. Ah Creon,  
Think me a fool, if you like; but it may well be  
That a fool convicts me of folly.

CHORAGOS. Like father, like daughter: both headstrong, deaf to reason!  
She has never learned to yield.

CREON. She has much to learn.  
The inflexible heart breaks first, the toughest iron  
Cracks first, and the wildest horses bend their necks

At the pull of the smallest curb.

Pride? In a slave?

This girl is guilty of a double insolence,  
Breaking the given laws and boasting of it.

80

Who is the man here,  
She or I, if this crime goes unpunished?  
Sister's child, or more than sister's child,  
Or closer yet in blood—she and her sister  
Win bitter death for this!

(*to servants*)

Go, some of you,

Arrest Ismene. I accuse her equally.

Bring her: you will find her sniffing in the house there.

Her mind's a traitor: crimes kept in the dark  
Cry for light, and the guardian brain shudders;  
But how much worse than this  
Is brazen boasting of barefaced anarchy!

90

ANTIGONE. Creon, what more do you want than my death?

CREON. Nothing.  
That gives me everything.

ANTIGONE. Then I beg you: kill me.  
This talking is a great weariness: your words  
Are distasteful to me, and I am sure that mine  
Seem so to you. And yet they should not seem so:  
I should have praise and honour for what I have done.  
All these men here would praise me  
Were their lips not frozen shut with fear of you.

100

(*bitterly*) Ah the good fortune of kings,  
Licensed to say and do whatever they please!

CREON. You are alone here in that opinion.

ANTIGONE. No, they are with me. But they keep their tongues in leash.

CREON. Maybe. But you are guilty, and they are not.

ANTIGONE. There is no guilt in reverence for the dead.

CREON. But Eteocles—was he not your brother too?

ANTIGONE. My brother too.

CREON. And you insult his memory?

ANTIGONE. (*softly*) The dead man would not say that I insult it.

CREON. He would: for you honour a traitor as much as him.

110

ANTIGONE. His own brother, traitor or not, and equal in blood.

CREON. He made war on his country. Eteocles defended it.

ANTIGONE. Nevertheless, there are honours due all the dead.

CREON. But not the same for the wicked as for the just.

ANTIGONE. Ah Creon, Creon,  
Which of us can say what the gods hold wicked?

CREON. An enemy is an enemy, even dead.

ANTIGONE. It is my nature to join in love, not hate.

CREON. (*finally losing patience*) Go join them, then; if you must have your  
love,  
Find it in hell! 120

CHORAGOS. But see, Ismene comes:

(*Enter ISMENE, guarded.*)

Those tears are sisterly, the cloud  
That shadows her eyes rains down gentle sorrow.

CREON. You too, Ismene,  
Snake in my ordered house, sucking my blood  
Stealthily—and all the time I never knew  
That these two sisters were aiming at my throne! Ismene,  
Do you confess your share in this crime, or deny it?  
Answer me.

ISMENE. Yes, if she will let me say so. I am guilty. 130

ANTIGONE. (*coldly*) No, Ismene. You have no right to say so.  
You would not help me, and I will not have you help me.

ISMENE. But now I know what you meant; and I am here  
To join you, to take my share of punishment.

ANTIGONE. The dead man and the gods who rule the dead  
Know whose act this was. Words are not friends.

ISMENE. Do you refuse me, Antigone? I want to die with you:  
I too have a duty that I must discharge to the dead.

ANTIGONE. You shall not lessen my death by sharing it.

ISMENE. What do I care for life when you are dead? 140

ANTIGONE. Ask Creon. You're always hanging on his opinions.

ISMENE. You are laughing at me. Why, Antigone?

ANTIGONE. It's a joyless laughter, Ismene.

- ISMENE. But can I do nothing?
- ANTIGONE. Yes. Save yourself. I shall not envy you.  
There are those who will praise you; I shall have honour, too.
- ISMENE. But we are equally guilty!
- ANTIGONE. No, more, Ismene.  
You are alive, but I belong to Death.
- CREON. (*to the CHORUS*) Gentlemen, I beg you to observe these girls:  
One has just now lost her mind; the other  
It seems, has never had a mind at all. 150
- ISMENE. Grief teaches the steadiest minds to waver, King.
- CREON. Yours certainly did, when you assumed guilt with the guilty!
- ISMENE. But how could I go on living without her?
- CREON. You are.  
She is already dead.
- ISMENE. But your own son's bride!
- CREON. There are places enough for him to push his plow.  
I want no wicked women for my sons!
- ISMENE. O dearest Haimon, how your father wrongs you!
- CREON. I've had enough of your childish talk of marriage!
- CHORAGOS. Do you really intend to steal this girl from your son?
- CREON. No; Death will do that for me.
- CHORAGOS. Then she must die? 160
- CREON. You dazzle me.  
—But enough of this talk!  
(*to GUARDS*) You, there, take them away and guard them well:  
For they are but women, and even brave men run  
When they see Death coming.

(*Exeunt* ISMENE, ANTIGONE, *and* GUARDS)

## ODE II

- [STROPHE I]
- CHORUS. Fortunate is the man who has never tasted God's vengeance!  
Where once the anger of heaven has struck, that house is shaken  
For ever: damnation rises behind each child  
Like a wave cresting out of the black northeast,

When the long darkness under sea roars up  
And bursts drumming death upon the windwhipped sand.

## [ANTISTROPHE 1]

I have seen this gathering sorrow from time long past  
Loom upon Oedipus' children: generation from generation  
Takes the compulsive rage of the enemy god.  
So lately this last flower of Oedipus' line 10  
Drank the sunlight! but now a passionate word  
And a handful of dust have closed up all its beauty.

What mortal arrogance

## [STROPHE 2]

Transcends the wrath of Zeus?

Sleep cannot lull him, nor the effortless long months  
Of the timeless gods: but he is young for ever,  
And his house is the shining day of high Olympus.

All that is and shall be,

And all the past, is his.

No pride on earth is free of the curse of heaven. 20

The straying dreams of men

## [ANTISTROPHE 2]

May bring them ghosts of joy:

But as they drowse, the waking embers burn them;  
Or they walk with fixed eyes, as blind men walk.  
But the ancient wisdom speaks for our own time:

*Fate works most for woe*

*With Folly's fairest show.*

Man's little pleasure is the spring of sorrow.

## SCENE III

CHORAGOS. But here is Haimon, King, the last of all your sons.  
Is it grief for Antigone that brings him here,  
And bitterness at being robbed of his bride?

(Enter HAIMON.)

CREON. We shall soon see, and no need of diviners.

—Son,

You have heard my final judgment on that girl:  
Have you come here hating me, or have you come  
With deference and with love, whatever I do?

HAIMON. I am your son, father. You are my guide.  
You make things clear for me, and I obey you.  
No marriage means more to me than your continuing wisdom. 10

CREON. Good. That is the way to behave: subordinate  
Everything else, my son, to your father's will.  
This is what a man prays for, that he may get  
Sons attentive and dutiful in his house,

Each one hating his father's enemies,  
Honouring his father's friends. But if his sons  
Fail him, if they turn out unprofitably,  
What has he fathered but trouble for himself  
And amusement for the malicious?

So you are right

Not to lose your head over this woman.

20

Your pleasure with her would soon grow cold, Haimon,  
And then you'd have a hellcat in bed and elsewhere.  
Let her find her husband in Hell!  
Of all the people in this city, only she  
Has had contempt for my law and broken it.

Do you want me to show myself weak before the people?  
Or to break my sworn word? No, and I will not.  
The woman dies.

I suppose she'll plead 'family ties.' Well, let her.  
If I permit my own family to rebel,  
How shall I earn the world's obedience?  
Show me the man who keep his house in hand,  
He's fit for public authority.

30

I'll have no dealings  
With law-breakers, critics of the government:  
Whoever is chosen to govern should be obeyed—  
Must be obeyed, in all things, great and small,  
Just and unjust! O Haimon,  
The man who knows how to obey, and that man only,  
Knows how to give commands when the time comes.  
You can depend on him, no matter how fast  
The spears come: he's a good soldier, he'll stick it out.

40

Anarchy, anarchy! Show me a greater evil!  
This is why cities tumble and the great houses rain down,  
This is what scatters armies!

No, no: good lives are made so by discipline.  
We keep the laws then, and the lawmakers,  
And no woman shall seduce us. If we must lose,  
Let's lose to a man, at least! Is a woman stronger than we?

CHORAGOS.

Unless time has rusted my wits,  
What you say, King, is said with point and dignity.

50

HAIMON.

(*boyishly earnest*) Father:  
Reason is God's crowning gift to man, and you are right  
To warn me against losing mine. I cannot say—  
I hope that I shall never want to say!—that you  
Have reasoned badly. Yet there are other men  
Who can reason, too; and their opinions might be helpful.  
You are not in a position to know everything

That people say or do, or what they feel:  
 Your temper terrifies them—everyone  
 Will tell you only what you like to hear. 60  
 But I, at any rate, can listen; and I have heard them  
 Muttering and whispering in the dark about this girl.  
 They say no woman has ever, so unreasonably,  
 Died so shameful a death for a generous act:  
 'She covered her brother's body. Is this indecent?  
 'She kept him from dogs and vultures. Is this a crime?  
 'Death?—She should have all the honour that we can give her!'

This is the way they talk out there in the city.

You must believe me:  
 Nothing is closer to me than your happiness. 70  
 What could be closer? Must not any son  
 Value his father's fortune as his father does his?  
 I beg you, do not be unchangeable:  
 Do not believe that you alone can be right.  
 The man who thinks that,  
 The man who maintains that only he has the power  
 To reason correctly, the gift to speak, the soul—  
 A man like that, when you know him, turns out empty.

It is not reason never to yield to reason!

In flood time you can see how some trees bend, 80  
 And because they bend, even their twigs are safe,  
 While stubborn trees are torn up, roots and all.  
 And the same thing happens in sailing:  
 Make your sheet fast, never slacken,—and over you go,  
 Head over heels and under: and there's your voyage.  
 Forget you are angry! Let yourself be moved!  
 I know I am young; but please let me say this:  
 The ideal condition  
 Would be, I admit, that men should be right by instinct;  
 But since we are all too likely to go astray, 90  
 The reasonable thing is to learn from those who can teach.

CHORAGOS. You will do well to listen to him, King,  
 If what he says is sensible. And you, Haimon,  
 Must listen to your father.—Both speak well.

CREON. You consider it right for a man of my years and experience  
 To go to school to a boy?

HAIMON. It is not right  
 If I am wrong. But if I am young, and right,  
 What does my age matter?

CREON. You think it right to stand up for an anarchist?

- HAIMON. Not at all. I pay no respect to criminals. 100
- CREON. Then she is not a criminal?
- HAIMON. The City would deny it, to a man.
- CREON. And the City proposes to teach me how to rule?
- HAIMON. Ah. Who is it that's talking like a boy now?
- CREON. My voice is the one voice giving orders in this City!
- HAIMON. It is no City if it takes orders from one voice.
- CREON. The State is the King!
- HAIMON. Yes, if the State is a desert.
- (Pause.)
- CREON. This boy, it seems, has sold out to a woman.
- HAIMON. If you are a woman: my concern is only for you.
- CREON. So? Your 'concern'! In a public brawl with your father! 110
- HAIMON. How about you, in a public brawl with justice?
- CREON. With justice, when all that I do is within my rights?
- HAIMON. You have no right to trample on God's right.
- CREON. (*completely out of control*) Fool, adolescent fool! Taken in by a woman!
- HAIMON. You'll never see me taken in by anything vile.
- CREON. Every word you say is for her!
- HAIMON. (*quietly, darkly*) And for you.  
And for me. And for the gods under the earth.
- CREON. You'll never marry her while she lives.
- HAIMON. Then she must die.—But her death will cause another.
- CREON. Another? 120  
Have you lost your senses? Is this an open threat?
- HAIMON. There is no threat in speaking to emptiness.
- CREON. I swear you'll regret this superior tone of yours!  
You are the empty one!
- HAIMON. If you were not my father,  
I'd say you were perverse.





And mortal man, in his one day's dusk,  
Trembles before your glory.

Surely you swerve upon ruin  
The just man's consenting heart,  
As here you have made bright anger  
Strike between father and son—  
And none has conquered but Love!  
A girl's glance working the will of heaven:  
Pleasure to her alone who mocks us,  
Merciless Aphrodite.

[ANTISTROPHE  
10

## SCENE IV

CHORAGOS. (*as ANTIGONE enters guarded*) But I can no longer stand in awe of  
this,  
Nor, seeing what I see, keep back my tears.  
Here is Antigone, passing to that chamber  
Where all find sleep at last.

ANTIGONE. Look upon me, friends, and pity me  
Turning back at the night's edge to say  
Good-bye to the sun that shines for me no longer;  
Now sleepy Death  
Summons me down to Acheron, that cold shore:  
There is no bridesong there, nor any music. 10

CHORUS. Yet not unpraised, not without a kind of honour,  
You walk at last into the underworld;  
Untouched by sickness, broken by no sword.  
What woman has ever found your way to death?

ANTIGONE. How often I have heard the story of Niobe,  
Tantalos' wretched daughter, how the stone  
Clung fast about her, ivy-close: and they say  
The rain falls endlessly  
And sifting soft snow; her tears are never done.  
I feel the loneliness of her death in mine. 20

CHORUS. But she was born of heaven, and you  
Are woman, woman-born. If her death is yours,  
A mortal woman's, is this not for you  
Glory in our world and in the world beyond?

ANTIGONE. You laugh at me. Ah, friends, friends,  
Can you not wait until I am dead? O Thebes,  
O men many-charioted, in love with Fortune,  
Dear springs of Dirce, sacred Theban grove,  
Be witnesses for me, denied all pity,  
Unjustly judged! and think a word of love 30

[STROPHE 2

For her whose path turns  
Under dark earth, where there are no more tears.

CHORUS. You have passed beyond human daring and come at last  
Into a place of stone where Justice sits.  
I cannot tell  
What shape of your father's guilt appears in this.

ANTIGONE. You have touched it at last: that bridal bed [ANTISTROPHE 2  
Unspeakable, horror of son and mother mingling:  
Their crime, infection of all our family!  
O Oedipus, father and brother! 40  
Your marriage strikes from the grave to murder mine.  
I have been a stranger here in my own land:  
All my life  
The blasphemy of my birth has followed me.

CHORUS. Reverence is a virtue, but strength  
Lives in established law: that must prevail.  
You have made your choice,  
Your death is the doing of your conscious hand.

ANTIGONE. Then let me go, since all your words are bitter, [EPODE  
And the very light of the sun is cold to me. 50  
Lead me to my vigil, where I must have  
Neither love nor lamentation; no song, but silence.

(CREON *interrupts impatiently.*)

CREON. If dirges and planned lamentations could put off death,  
Men would be singing for ever.  
(*to the SERVANTS*) Take her, go!  
You know your orders: take her to the vault  
And leave her alone there. And if she lives or dies,  
That's her affair, not ours: our hands are clean.

ANTIGONE. O tomb, vaulted bride-bed in eternal rock,  
Soon I shall be with my own again  
Where Persephone welcomes the thin ghosts underground: 60  
And I shall see my father again, and you, mother,  
And dearest Polyneices—  
dearest indeed  
To me, since it was my hand  
That washed him clean and poured the ritual wine:  
And my reward is death before my time!

And yet, as men's hearts know, I have done no wrong,  
I have not sinned before God. Or if I have,  
I shall know the truth in death. But if the guilt  
Lies upon Creon who judged me, then, I pray,  
May his punishment equal my own.

- CHORAGOS. O passionate heart, 70  
Unyielding, tormented still by the same winds!
- CREON. Her guards shall have good cause to regret their delaying.
- ANTIGONE. Ah! That voice is like the voice of death!
- CREON. I can give you no reason to think you are mistaken.
- ANTIGONE. Thebes, and you my fathers' gods,  
And rulers of Thebes, you see me now, the last  
Unhappy daughter of a line of kings,  
Your kings, led away to death. You will remember  
What things I suffer, and at what men's hands,  
Because I would not transgress the laws of heaven. 80  
(*to the GUARDS, simply*) Come: let us wait no longer.  
(*Exit ANTIGONE, Left, guarded*)

## ODE IV

- CHORUS. All Danae's beauty was locked away [STROPHE I  
In a brazen cell where the sunlight could not come:  
A small room, still as any grave, enclosed her.  
Yet she was a princess too,  
And Zeus in a rain of gold poured love upon her.  
O child, child,  
No power in wealth or war  
Or tough sea-blackened ships  
Can prevail against untiring Destiny!
- And Dryas' son also, that furious king, 10 [ANTISTROPHE I  
Bore the god's prisoning anger for his pride:  
Sealed up by Dionysos in deaf stone,  
His madness died among echoes.  
So at the last he learned what dreadful power  
His tongue had mocked:  
For he had profaned the revels,  
And fired the wrath of the nine  
Implacable Sisters that love the sound of the flute.
- And old men tell a half-remembered tale [STROPHE 2  
Of horror done where a dark ledge splits the sea 20  
And a double surf beats on the grey shores:  
How a king's new woman, sick  
With hatred for the queen he had imprisoned,  
Ripped out his two sons' eyes with her bloody hands  
While grinning Ares watched the shuttle plunge  
Four times: four blind wounds crying for revenge,
- Crying, tears and blood mingled.—Piteously born, [ANTISTROPHE 2  
Those sons whose mother was of heavenly birth!

Her father was the god of the North Wind  
 And she was cradled by gales,  
 She raced with young colts on the glittering hills  
 And walked untrammelled in the open light:  
 But in her marriage deathless Fate found means  
 To build a tomb like yours for all her joy.

30

## SCENE V

*(Enter blind TEIRESIAS, led by a boy. The opening speeches of TEIRESIAS should be in singsong contrast to the realistic lines of CREON.)*

TEIRESIAS. This is the way the blind man comes, Princes, Princes,  
 Lock-step, two heads lit by the eyes of one.

CREON. What new thing have you to tell us, old Teiresias?

TEIRESIAS. I have much to tell you: listen to the prophet, Creon.

CREON. I am not aware that I have ever failed to listen.

TEIRESIAS. Then you have done wisely, King, and ruled well.

CREON. I admit my debt to you. But what have you to say?

TEIRESIAS. This, Creon. you stand once more on the edge of fate.

CREON. What do you mean? Your words are a kind of dread.

10

TEIRESIAS. Listen, Creon:

I was sitting in my chair of augury, at the place  
 Where the birds gather about me. They were all a-chatter,  
 As is their habit, when suddenly I heard  
 A strange note in their jangling, a scream, a  
 Whirring fury; I knew that they were fighting,  
 Tearing each other, dying  
 In a whirlwind of wings clashing. And I was afraid.  
 I began the rites of burnt-offering at the altar,  
 But Hephaistos failed me: instead of bright flame,  
 There was only the sputtering slime of the fat thigh-flesh  
 Melting: the entrails dissolved in grey smoke,  
 The bare bone burst from the welter. And no blaze!

20

This was a sign from heaven. My boy described it,  
 Seeing for me as I see for others.

I tell you, Creon, you yourself have brought  
 This new calamity upon us. Our hearths and altars  
 Are stained with the corruption of dogs and carrion birds  
 That glut themselves on the corpse of Oedipus' son.  
 The gods are deaf when we pray to them, their fire  
 Recoils from our offering, their birds of omen

30

Have no cry of comfort, for they are gorged  
With the thick blood of the dead.

O my son,  
These are no trifles! Think: all men make mistakes,  
But a good man yields when he knows his course is wrong,  
And repairs the evil. The only crime is pride.

Give in to the dead man, then: do not fight with a corpse—  
What glory is it to kill a man who is dead?

Think, I beg you:

It is for your own good that I speak as I do.

40

You should be able to yield for your own good.

CREON. It seems that prophets have made me their especial province.  
All my life long  
I have been a kind of butt for the dull arrows  
Of doddering fortune-tellers!

No, Teiresias:  
If your birds—if the great eagles of God himself  
Should carry him stinking bit by bit to heaven,  
I would not yield. I am not afraid of pollution:  
No man can defile the gods.

Do what you will,  
Go into business, make money, speculate  
In India gold or that synthetic gold from Sardis,  
Get rich otherwise than by my consent to bury him.  
Teiresias, it is a sorry thing when a wise man  
Sells his wisdom, lets out his words for hire!

50

TEIRESIAS. Ah Creon! Is there no man left in the world—

CREON. To do what?—Come, let's have the aphorism!

TEIRESIAS. No man who knows that wisdom outweighs any wealth?

CREON. As surely as bribes are baser than any baseness.

TEIRESIAS. You are sick, Creon! You are deathly sick!

CREON. As you say: it is not my place to challenge a prophet.

60

TEIRESIAS. Yet you have said my prophecy is for sale.

CREON. The generation of prophets has always loved gold.

TEIRESIAS. The generation of kings has always loved brass.

CREON. You forget yourself! You are speaking to your King.

TEIRESIAS. I know it. You are a king because of me.

CREON. You have a certain skill; but you have sold out.

TEIRESIAS. King, you will drive me to words that—

CREON. Say them, say them!  
Only remember: I will not pay you for them.

TEIRESIAS. No, you will find them too costly.

CREON. No doubt. Speak:  
Whatever you say, you will not change my will.

70

TEIRESIAS. Then take this, and take it to heart!  
The time is not far off when you shall pay back  
Corpse for corpse, flesh of your own flesh.  
You have thrust the child of this world into living night,  
You have kept from the gods below the child that is theirs:  
The one in a grave before her death, the other,  
Dead, denied the grave. This is your crime:  
And the Furies and the dark gods of Hell  
Are swift with terrible punishment for you.

Do you want to buy me now, Creon?

Not many days,  
And your house will be full of men and women weeping,  
And curses will be hurled at you from far  
Cities grieving for sons unburied, left to rot before the walls  
of Thebes.

80

These are my arrows, Creon: they are all for you.

(to BOY) But come, child: lead me home.  
Let him waste his fine anger upon younger men.  
Maybe he will learn at last  
To control a wiser tongue in a better head.

(Exit TEIRESIAS)

CHORAGOS. The old man has gone, King, but his words  
Remain to plague us. I am old, too,  
But I can not remember that he was ever false.

90

CREON. That is true. . . . It troubles me.  
Oh it is hard to give in! but it is worse  
To risk everything for stubborn pride.

CHORAGOS. Creon: take my advice.

CREON. What shall I do?

CHORAGOS. Go quickly: free Antigone from her vault  
And build a tomb for the body of Polyneices.

CREON. You would have me do this?

- CHORAGOS. Creon, yes!  
And it must be done at once: God moves  
Swiftly to cancel the folly of stubborn men. 100
- CREON. It is hard to deny the heart! But I  
Will do it: I will not fight with destiny.
- CHORAGOS. You must go yourself, you cannot leave it to others.
- CREON. I will go.  
—Bring axes, servants:  
Come with me to the tomb. I buried her, I  
Will set her free.  
Oh quickly!  
My mind misgives—  
The laws of the gods are mighty, and a man must serve them  
To the last day of his life!  
(Exit CREON)

## PÆN

- CHORAGOS. God of many names [STROPHE I
- CHORUS. O Iacchos  
son  
of Cadmeian Semele  
O born of the Thunder!  
Guardian of the West  
Regent  
of Eleusis' plain  
O Prince of mænad Thebes  
and the Dragon Field by rippling Ismenos:
- CHORAGOS. God of many names [ANTISTROPHE I
- CHORUS. the flame of torches  
flares on our hills  
the nymphs of Iacchos  
dance at the spring of Castalia:  
from the vine-close mountain  
come ah come in ivy:  
*Evohé evohé!* sings through the streets of Thebes 10
- CHORAGOS. God of many names [STROPHE 2
- CHORUS. Iacchos of Thebes  
heavenly child  
of Semele bride of the Thunderer!



The shadow of plague is upon us:  
                                come  
with clement feet         oh come from Parnasos  
down the long slopes      across the lamenting water

CHORAGOS. Iô Fire! Chorister of the throbbing stars!  
O purest among the voices of the night!  
Thou son of God, blaze for us!

[ANTISTROPHE 2]

**CHORUS.** Come with choric rapture of circling Mænads  
Who cry *lô lacche!*

*God of many names!* 20

## EXODOS

*Enter MESSENGER.*

**MESSENGER.** Men of the line of Cadmos, you who live  
Near Amphion's citadel:

I cannot say  
Of any condition of human life 'This is fixed,  
This is clearly good, or bad.' Fate raises up,  
And Fate casts down the happy and unhappy alike:  
No man can foretell his Fate.

Take the case of Creon:  
 Creon was happy once, as I count happiness:  
 Victorious in battle, sole governor of the land,  
 Fortunate father of children nobly born.  
 And now it has all gone from him! Who can say  
 That a man is still alive when his life's joy fails?  
 He is a walking dead man. Grant him rich,  
 Let him live like a king in his great house:  
 If his pleasure is gone, I would not give  
 So much as the shadow of smoke for all he owns.

**CHORAGOS.** Your words hint at sorrow: what is your news for us?

**MESSENGER.** They are dead. The living are guilty of their death.

**CHORAGOS.** Who is guilty? Who is dead? Speak!

**MESSENGER.** **Haimon.**  
Haimon is dead; and the hand that killed him  
Is his own hand.

**CHORAGOS.** His father's? or his own? 20

**MESSENGER.** His own, driven mad by the murder his father had done.

CHORAGOS. Teiresias, Teiresias, how clearly you saw it all!

MESENTER. This is my news: you must draw what conclusions you can from it.

CHORAGOS. But look: Eurydice, our Queen:  
Has she overheard us?

*(Enter EURYDICE from the Palace, Center.)*

EURYDICE. I have heard something, friends:  
As I was unlocking the gate of Pallas' shrine,  
For I needed her help today, I heard a voice  
Telling of some new sorrow. And I fainted  
There at the temple with all my maidens about me. 30  
But speak again: whatever it is, I can bear it:  
Grief and I are no strangers.

MESENTER. Dearest Lady,  
I will tell you plainly all that I have seen.  
I shall not try to comfort you: what is the use,  
Since comfort could lie only in what is not true?  
The truth is always best.

I went with Creon  
To the outer plain where Polyneices was lying,  
No friend to pity him, his body shredded by dogs.  
We made our prayers in that place to Hecate  
And Pluto, that they would be merciful. And we bathed 40  
The corpse with holy water, and we brought  
Fresh-broken branches to burn what was left of it,  
And upon the urn we heaped up a towering barrow  
Of the earth of his own land.

When we were done, we ran  
To the vault where Antigone lay on her couch of stone.  
One of the servants had gone ahead,  
And while he was yet far off he heard a voice  
Grieving within the chamber, and he came back  
And told Creon. And as the King went closer,  
The air was full of wailing, the words lost, 50  
And he begged us to make all haste. 'Am I a prophet?'  
He said, weeping, 'And must I walk this road,  
'The saddest of all that I have gone before?  
'My son's voice calls me on. Oh quickly, quickly!  
'Look through the crevice there, and tell me  
'If it is Haimon, or some deception of the gods!'

We obeyed; and in the cavern's farthest corner  
We saw her lying:  
She had made a noose of her fine linen veil  
And hanged herself. Haimon lay beside her, 60  
His arms about her waist, lamenting her,

His love lost under ground, crying out  
 That his father had stolen her away from him.  
 When Creon saw him the tears rushed to his eyes  
 And he called to him: 'What have you done, child? Speak to me.  
 'What are you thinking that makes your eyes so strange?  
 'O my son, my son, I come to you on my knees!'  
 But Haimon spat in his face. He said not a word,  
 Staring—

And suddenly drew his sword  
 And lunged. Creon shrank back, the blade missed; and the boy, 70  
 Desperate against himself, drove it half its length  
 Into his own side, and fell. And as he died  
 He gathered Antigone close in his arms again,  
 Choking, his blood bright red on her white cheek.  
 And now he lies dead with the dead, and she is his  
 At last, his bride in the houses of the dead.

*(Exit EURYDICE into the Palace)*

CHORAGOS. She has left us without a word. What can this mean?

MESENTER. It troubles me, too; yet she knows what is best,  
 Her grief is too great for public lamentation,  
 And doubtless she has gone to her chamber to weep 80  
 For her dead son, leading her maidens in his dirge.

CHORAGOS. It may be so: but I fear this deep silence.

*(Pause.)*

MESENTER. I will see what she is doing. I will go in.

*(Exit MESSENGER into the Palace)*

*(Enter CREON with attendants, bearing HAIMON's body.)*

CHORAGOS. But here is the King himself: oh look at him,  
 Bearing his own damnation in his arms.

CREON. Nothing you say can touch me any more.  
 My own blind heart has brought me  
 From darkness to final darkness. Here you see  
 The father murdering, the murdered son—  
 And all my civic wisdom! 90  
 Haimon my son, so young, so young to die,  
 I was the fool, not you; and you died for me.

CHORAGOS. That is the truth; but you were late in learning it.

CREON. This truth is hard to bear. Surely a god  
 Has crushed me beneath the hugest weight of heaven,

And driven me headlong a barbaric way  
To trample out the thing I held most dear.

The pains that men will take to come to pain!

*(Enter MESSENGER from the Palace.)*

MESSENGER. The burden you carry in your hands is heavy,  
But it is not all: you will find more in your house. 100

CREON. What burden worse than this shall I find there?

MESSENGER. The Queen is dead.

CREON. O port of death, deaf world,  
Is there no pity for me? And you, Angel of evil,  
I was dead, and your words are death again.  
Is it true, boy? Can it be true?  
Is my wife dead? Has death bred death?

MESSENGER. You can see for yourself.

*(The doors are opened, and the body of EURYDICE disclosed within.)*

CREON. Oh pity!  
All true, all true, and more than I can bear! 110  
O my wife, my son!

MESSENGER. She stood before the altar, and her heart  
Welcomed the knife her own hand guided,  
And a great cry burst from her lips for Megareus dead,  
And for Haimon dead, her sons; and her last breath  
Was a curse for their father, the murderer of her sons.  
And she fell, and the dark flowed in through her closing eyes.

CREON. O God, I am sick with fear.  
Are there no swords here? Has no one a blow for me?

MESSENGER. Her curse is upon you for the deaths of both. 120

CREON. It is right that it should be. I alone am guilty.  
I know it, and I say it. Lead me in,  
Quickly, friends.  
I have neither life nor substance. Lead me in.

CHORAGOS. You are right, if there can be right in so much wrong.  
The briefest way is best in a world of sorrow.

CREON. Let it come,  
Let death come quickly, and be kind to me.  
I would not ever see the sun again.

CHORAGOS. All that will come when it will; but we, meanwhile,  
Have much to do. Leave the future to itself.

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CREON. All my heart was in that prayer!

CHORAGOS. Then do not pray any more: the sky is deaf.

CREON. Lead me away. I have been rash and foolish.  
I have killed my son and my wife.  
I look for comfort; my comfort lies here dead.  
Whatever my hands have touched has come to nothing.  
Fate has brought all my pride to a thought of dust.

*(As CREON is being led into the house, the CHORAGOS advances and speaks directly to the audience.)*

CHORAGOS. There is no happiness where there is no wisdom;  
No wisdom but in submission to the gods.  
Big words are always punished,  
And proud men in old age learn to be wise.

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# THE WILD DUCK

HENRIK IBSEN (1828-1906)

## CHARACTERS

WERLE, *a merchant, manufacturer, etc.*

GREGERS WERLE, *his son.*

OLD EKDAL.

HALMAR EKDAL, *his son, a photographer.*

GINA EKDAL, *Halmar's wife.*

HEDVIG, *their daughter, a girl of fourteen.*

MRS. SÖRBY, *Werle's housekeeper.*

RELLING, *a doctor.*

MOLVIK, *student of theology.*

GRÄBERG, *Werle's bookkeeper.*

PETTERSEN, *Werle's servant.*

JENSEN, *a hired waiter.*

A FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

A THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.

A SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN.

SIX OTHER GENTLEMEN, *guests at Werle's dinner-party.*

SEVERAL HIRED WAITERS.

*The first act passes in WERLE'S house, the remaining acts at HALMAR EKDAL'S.*

Pronunciation of Names: GREGERS WERLE = *Grayghers Verlē*; HALMAR EKDAL = *Yalmar Aykdal*; GINA = *Cheena*; GRÄBERG = *Groberg*; JENSEN = *Yensen*.

## ACT I

*At WERLE'S house. A richly and comfortably furnished study; bookcases and upholstered furniture; a writing-table, with papers and documents, in the centre of the room; lighted lamps with green shades, giving a subdued light. At the back, open folding-doors with curtains drawn back. Within is seen a large and handsome room, brilliantly lighted with lamps and branching candlesticks. In front, on the right (in the study), a small baize door leads into WERLE'S office. On the left, in front, a fireplace with a glowing coal fire, and farther back a double door leading into the dining-room.*

WERLE'S servant, PETTERSEN, *in livery*, and JENSEN, *the hired waiter, in black*, are putting the study in order. In the large room, two or three other hired waiters are moving about, arranging things and lighting more candles. From the dining-room, the hum of conversation and laughter of many voices are heard; a glass is tapped with a knife; silence follows, and a toast is proposed; shouts of "Bravo!" and then again a buzz of conversation.

PETTERSEN (*lights a lamp on the chimney-place and places a shade over it*). Hark to them, Jensen! now the old man's on his legs holding a long palaver about Mrs. Sörby.

JENSEN (*pushing forward an armchair*). Is it true, what folks say, that they're—very good friends, eh?

PETTERSEN. Lord knows.

JENSEN. I've heard tell as he's been a lively customer in his day.

PETTERSEN. May be.

JENSEN. And he's giving this spread in honour of his son, they say.

PETTERSEN. Yes. His son came home yesterday.

JENSEN. This is the first time I ever heard as Mr. Werle had a son.

PETTERSEN. Oh, yes, he has a son, right enough. But he's a fixture, as you might say, up at the Høidal works. He's never once come to town all the years I've been in service here.

A WAITER (*in the doorway of the other room*). Pettersen, here's an old fellow wanting . . .

PETTERSEN (*mutter*s). The devil—who's this now?

(OLD EKDAL *appears from the right, in the inner room. He is dressed in a threadbare overcoat with a high collar; he wears woollen mittens and carries in his hand a stick and a fur cap. Under his arm, a brown paper parcel. Dirty red-brown wig and small grey moustache.*)

PETTERSEN (*goes towards him*). Good Lord—what do you want here?

EKDAL (*in the doorway*). Must get into the office, Pettersen.

PETTERSEN. The office was closed an hour ago, and . . .

EKDAL. So they told me at the front door. But Gråberg's in there still. Let me slip in this way, Pettersen; there's a good fellow. (*Points towards the baize door*) It's not the first time I've come this way.

PETTERSEN. Well, you may pass. (*Opens the door*) But mind you go out again the proper way, for we've got company.

EKDAL. I know, I know—h'm! Thanks, Pettersen, good old friend! Thanks! (*Mutter*s softly) Ass!

(*He goes into the office; PETTERSEN shuts the door after him.*)

JENSEN. Is he one of the office people?

PETTERSEN. No, he's only an outside hand that does odd jobs of copying. But he's been a tip-topper in his day, has old Ekdal.

JENSEN. You can see he's been through a lot.

PETTERSEN. Yes; he was an army officer, you know.

JENSEN. You don't say so?

PETTERSEN. No mistake about it. But then he went into the timber trade or something of the sort. They say he once played Mr. Werle a very nasty trick. They were partners in the Høidal works at the time. Oh, I know old Ekdal well, I do. Many a nip of bitters and bottle of ale we two have drunk at Madam Eriksen's.

JENSEN. He don't look as if he'd much to stand treat with.

PETTERSEN. Why, bless you, Jensen, it's me that stands treat. I always think there's no harm in being a bit civil to folks that have seen better days.

JENSEN. Did he go bankrupt, then?

PETTERSEN. Worse than that. He went to prison.

JENSEN. To prison!

PETTERSEN. Or perhaps it was the Penitentiary. (*Listens*) Sh! They're leaving the table.

(*The dining-room door is thrown open from within by a couple of waiters. MRS. SÖRBY comes out conversing with two gentlemen. Gradually the whole company follows, amongst them WERLE. Last come HIALMAR EKDAL and GREGERS WERLE.*)

MRS. SÖRBY (*in passing, to the servant*). Tell them to serve the coffee in the music-room, Pettersen.

PETTERSEN. Very well, Madam.

(*She goes with the two gentlemen into the inner room and thence out to the right. PETTERSEN and JENSEN go out the same way.*)

A FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*to a THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN*). Whew! What a dinner!—It was no joke to do it justice!

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. Oh, with a little good-will one can get through a lot in three hours.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Yes, but afterwards, afterwards, my dear Chamberlain!

A THIRD GENTLEMAN. I hear the coffee and maraschino are to be served in the music-room.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Bravo! Then perhaps Mrs. Sörby will play us something.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN (*in a low voice*). I hope Mrs. Sörby mayn't play us a tune we don't like, one of these days!

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Oh, no, not she! Bertha will never turn against her old friends.

(*They laugh and pass into the inner room.*)

WERLE (*in a low voice, dejectedly*). I don't think anybody noticed it, Gregers.



GREGERS (*looks at him*). Noticed what?

WERLE. Did you not notice it either?

GREGERS. What do you mean?

WERLE. We were thirteen at table.

GREGERS. Indeed? Were there thirteen of us?

WERLE (*glances towards HIALMAR EKDAL*). Our usual party is twelve. (*To the others*) This way, gentlemen!

(*WERLE and the others, all except HIALMAR and GREGERS, go out by the back, to the right.*)

HIALMAR (*who has overheard the conversation*). You ought not to have invited me, Gregers.

GREGERS. What! Not ask my best and only friend to a party supposed to be in my honour . . . ?

HIALMAR. But I don't think your father likes it. You see I am quite outside his circle.

GREGERS. So I hear. But I wanted to see you and have a talk with you, and I certainly shan't be staying long.—Ah, we two old schoolfellows have drifted far apart from each other. It must be sixteen or seventeen years since we met.

HIALMAR. Is it so long?

GREGERS. It is indeed. Well, how goes it with you? You look well. You have put on flesh and grown almost stout.

HIALMAR. Well, "stout" is scarcely the word; but I daresay I look a little more of a man than I used to.

GREGERS. Yes, you do; your outer man is in first-rate condition.

HIALMAR (*in a tone of gloom*). Ah, but the inner man! That is a very different matter, I can tell you! Of course you know of the terrible catastrophe that has befallen me and mine since last we met.

GREGERS (*more softly*). How are things going with your father now?

HIALMAR. Don't let us talk of it, old fellow. Of course my poor unhappy father lives with me. He hasn't another soul in the world to care for him. But you can understand that this is a miserable subject for me.—Tell me, rather, how you have been getting on up at the works.

GREGERS. I have had a delightfully lonely time of it—plenty of leisure to think and think about things. Come over here; we may as well make ourselves comfortable.

(*He seats himself in an armchair by the fire and draws HIALMAR down into another alongside of it.*)

HIALMAR (*sentimentally*). After all, Gregers, I thank you for inviting me to your father's table; for I take it as a sign that you have got over your feeling against me.

GREGERS (*surprised*). How could you imagine I had any feeling against you?

HIALMAR. You had at first, you know.

GREGERS. How at first?

HIALMAR. After the great misfortune. It was natural enough that you should. Your father was within an ace of being drawn into that—well, that terrible business.

GREGERS. Why should that give me any feeling against you? Who can have put that into your head?

HIALMAR. I know it did, Gregers; your father told me so himself.

GREGERS (*starts*). My father! Oh, indeed. H'm.—Was that why you never let me hear from you?—not a single word.

HIALMAR. Yes.

GREGERS. Not even when you made up your mind to become a photographer?

HIALMAR. Your father said I had better not write to you at all, about anything.

GREGERS (*looking straight before him*). Well, well, perhaps he was right.—But tell me now, Hialmar: are you pretty well satisfied with your present position?

HIALMAR (*with a little sigh*). Oh, yes, I am; I have really no cause to complain. At first, as you may guess, I felt it a little strange. It was such a totally new state of things for me. But of course my whole circumstances were totally changed. Father's utter, irretrievable ruin,—the shame and disgrace of it, Gregers . . .

GREGERS (*affected*). Yes, yes; I understand.

HIALMAR. I couldn't think of remaining at college; there wasn't a shilling to spare; on the contrary, there were debts—mainly to your father, I believe . . .

GREGERS. H'm . . .

HIALMAR. In short, I thought it best to break, once for all, with my old surroundings and associations. It was your father that specially urged me to it; and since he interested himself so much in me . . .

GREGERS. My father did?

HIALMAR. Yes, you surely knew that, didn't you? Where do you suppose I found the money to learn photography, and to furnish a studio and make a start? All that cost a pretty penny, I can tell you.

GREGERS. And my father provided the money?

HIALMAR. Yes, my dear fellow, didn't you know? I understood him to say he had written to you about it.

GREGERS. Not a word about his part in the business. He must have forgotten it. Our correspondence has always been purely a business one. So it was my father that . . . !

HIALMAR. Yes, certainly. He didn't wish it to be generally known; but he it was. And of course it was he, too, that put me in a position to marry. Don't you—don't you know about that either?

GREGERS. No, I haven't heard a word of it. (*Shakes him by the arm*) But, my dear Hialmar, I can't tell you what pleasure all this gives me—pleasure, and self-reproach. I have perhaps done my father injustice after all—in some things. This proves that he has a heart. It shows a sort of compunction . . .

HIALMAR. Compunction . . . ?

GREGERS. Yes, yes—whatever you like to call it. Oh, I can't tell you how glad I am to hear this of father.—So you are a married man, Hialmar! That is further than I shall ever get. Well, I hope you are happy in your married life?

HIALMAR. Yes, thoroughly happy. She is as good and capable a wife as any man could wish for. And she is by no means without culture.

GREGERS (*rather surprised*). No, of course not.

HIALMAR. You see, life is itself an education. Her daily intercourse with me . . . And then we know one or two rather remarkable men, who come a good deal about us. I assure you, you would hardly know Gina again.

GREGERS. Gina?

HIALMAR. Yes; had you forgotten that her name was Gina?

GREGERS. Whose name? I haven't the slightest idea . . .

HIALMAR. Don't you remember that she used to be in service here?

GREGERS (*looks at him*). Is it Gina Hansen . . . ?

HIALMAR. Yes, of course it is Gina Hansen.

GREGERS. . . . who kept house for us during the last year of my mother's illness?

HIALMAR. Yes, exactly. But, my dear friend, I'm quite sure your father told you that I was married.

GREGERS (*who has risen*). Oh, yes, he mentioned it; but not that . . . (*Walking about the room*) Stay—perhaps he did—now that I think of it. My father always writes such short letters. (*Half seats himself on the arm of the chair*) Now tell me, Hialmar—this is interesting—how did you come to know Gina—your wife?

HIALMAR. The simplest thing in the world. You know Gina did not stay here long; everything was so much upset at that time, owing to your mother's illness and so forth, that Gina was not equal to it all; so she gave notice and left. That was the year before your mother died—or it may have been the same year.

GREGERS. It was the same year. I was up at the works then. But afterwards . . . ?

HIALMAR. Well, Gina lived at home with her mother, Madam Hansen, an excellent hard-working woman, who kept a little eating-house. She had a room to let, too; a very nice comfortable room.

GREGERS. And I suppose you were lucky enough to secure it?

HIALMAR. Yes; in fact, it was your father that recommended it to me. So it was there, you see, that I really came to know Gina.

GREGERS. And then you got engaged?

HIALMAR. Yes. It doesn't take young people long to fall in love . . . ; h'm . . .

GREGERS (*rises and moves about a little*). Tell me: was it after your engagement—was it then that my father—I mean was it then that you began to take up photography?

HIALMAR. Yes, precisely. I wanted to make a start and to set up house as soon as possible; and your father and I agreed that this photography business was the readiest way. Gina thought so, too. Oh, and there was another thing in its favour, by-the-bye; it happened, luckily, that Gina had learnt to retouch.

GREGER. That chimed in marvellously.

HIALMAR (*pleased, rises*). Yes, didn't it? Don't you think it was a marvellous piece of luck?

GREGERS. Oh, unquestionably. My father seems to have been almost a kind of providence for you.

HIALMAR (*with emotion*). He did not forsake his old friend's son in the hour of his need. For he has a heart, you see.

MRS. SÖRBY (*enters, arm-in-arm with WERLE*). Nonsense, my dear Mr. Werle; you mustn't stop there any longer staring at all the lights. It's very bad for you.

WERLE (*lets go her arm and passes his hand over his eyes*). I daresay you are right.

(PETTERSEN and JENSEN carry round refreshment trays.)

MRS. SÖRBY (*to the guests in the other room*). This way, if you please, gentlemen. Whoever wants a glass of punch must be so good as to come in here.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*comes up to MRS. SÖRBY*). Surely, it isn't possible that you have suspended our cherished right to smoke?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes. No smoking here, in Mr. Werle's sanctum, Chamberlain.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. When did you enact these stringent amendments on the cigar law, Mrs. Sörby?

MRS. SÖRBY. After the last dinner, Chamberlain, when certain persons permitted themselves to overstep the mark.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. And may one never overstep the mark a little bit, Madame Bertha? Not the least little bit?

MRS. SÖRBY. Not in any respect whatsoever, Mr. Balle.

*(Most of the guests have assembled in the study; servants hand round glasses of punch.)*

WERLE *(to HIALMAR, who is standing beside a table)*. What are you studying so intensely, Ekdal?

HIALMAR. Only an album, Mr. Werle.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN *(who is wandering about)*. Ah, photographs! They are quite in your line, of course.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN *(in an armchair)*. Haven't you brought any of your own with you?

HIALMAR. No, I haven't.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. You ought to have; it's very good for the digestion to sit and look at pictures.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. And it contributes to the entertainment, you know.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN. And all contributions are thankfully received.

MRS. SÖRBY. The Chamberlains think that when one is invited out to dinner, one ought to exert oneself a little in return, Mr. Ekdal.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Where one dines so well, that duty becomes a pleasure.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. And when it's a case of the struggle for existence, you know . . .

MRS. SÖRBY. I quite agree with you!

*(They continue the conversation, with laughter and joking.)*

GREGERS *(softly)*. You must join in, Hialmar.

HIALMAR *(writbing)*. What am I to talk about?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Don't you think, Mr. Werle, that Tokay may be considered one of the more wholesome sorts of wine?

WERLE (*by the fire*). I can answer for the Tokay you had today, at any rate; it's one of the very finest seasons. Of course you would notice that.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Yes, it had a remarkably delicate flavour.

HALMAR (*slyly*). Is there any difference between the seasons?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*laughs*). Come! That's good!

WERLE (*smiles*). It really doesn't pay to set fine wine before you.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. Tokay is like photographs, Mr. Ekdal: they both need sunshine. Am I right?

HALMAR. Yes, light is important no doubt.

MRS. SÖRBY. And it's exactly the same with Chamberlains—they, too, depend very much on sunshine,\* as the saying is.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. Oh, fie! That's a very threadbare sarcasm!

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN. Mrs. Sörby is coming out . . .

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. . . . and at our expense, too. (*Holds up his finger reprovingly*) Oh, Madame Bertha, Madame Bertha!

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, and there's not the least doubt that the seasons differ greatly. The old vintages are the finest.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN. Do you reckon me among the old vintages?

MRS. SÖRBY. Oh, far from it.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. There now! But me, dear Mrs. Sörby . . . ?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Yes, and me? What vintage should you say that we belong to?

MRS. SÖRBY. Why, to the sweet vintage, gentlemen.

(*She sips a glass of punch. The gentlemen laugh and flirt with her.*)

WERLE. Mrs. Sörby can always find a loop-hole—when she wants to. Fill your glasses, gentlemen! Pettersen, will you see to it . . . ! Gregers, suppose we have a glass together. (GREGERS *does not move*) Won't you join us, Ekdal? I found no opportunity of drinking with you at table.

(GRÅBERG, *the bookkeeper, looks in at the baize door.*)

GRÅBERG. Excuse me, sir, but I can't get out.

WERLE. Have you been locked in again?

GRÅBERG. Yes, and Flakstad has carried off the keys.

\* The "sunshine" of court favour.

WERLE. Well, you can pass out this way.

GRÅBERG. But there's some one else . . .

WERLE. All right; come through, both of you. Don't be afraid.

(GRÅBERG and OLD EKDAL come out of the office.)

WERLE (*involuntarily*). Ugh!

(*The laughter and talk among the guests cease. HIALMAR starts at the sight of his father, puts down his glass and turns towards the fireplace.*)

EKDAL (*does not look up, but makes little bows to both sides as he passes, murmuring*). Beg pardon, come the wrong way. Door locked—door locked. Beg pardon.

(*He and GRÅBERG go out by the back, to the right.*)

WERLE (*between his teeth*). That idiot Gråberg.

GREGERS (*open-mouthed and staring, to HIALMAR*). Why surely that wasn't . . . !

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. What's the matter? Who was it?

GREGERS. Oh, nobody, only the bookkeeper and some one with him.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN (*to HIALMAR*). Did you know that man?

HIALMAR. I don't know—I didn't notice . . .

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. What the deuce has come over every one?

(*He joins another group who are talking softly.*)

MRS. SÖRBY (*whispers to the servant*). Give him something to take with him;—something good, mind.

PETTERSEN (*nods*). I'll see to it. (*Goes out.*)

GREGERS (*softly and with emotion, to HIALMAR*). So that was really he!

HIALMAR. Yes.

GREGERS. And you could stand there and deny that you knew him!

HIALMAR (*whispers vehemently*). But how could I . . . !

GREGERS. . . . acknowledge your own father?

HIALMAR (*with pain*). Oh, if you were in my place . . .

(*The conversation amongst the guests, which has been carried on in a low tone, now swells into constrained joviality.*)

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN (*approaching HIALMAR and GREGERS in a friendly manner*). Aha! Reviving old college memories, eh? Don't you smoke, Mr. Ekdal? May I give you a light? Oh, by-the-bye, we mustn't . . .

HIALMAR. No, thank you, I won't . . .

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Haven't you a nice little poem you could recite to us, Mr. Ekdal? You used to recite so charmingly.

HIALMAR. I am sorry I can't remember anything.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Oh, that's a pity. Well, what shall we do, Balle?

(*Both gentlemen move away and pass into the other room.*)

HIALMAR (*gloomily*). Gregers—I am going! When a man has felt the crushing hand of Fate, you see . . . Say good-bye to your father for me.

GREGERS. Yes, yes. Are you going straight home?

HIALMAR. Yes. Why?

GREGERS. Oh, because I may perhaps look in on you later.

HIALMAR. No, you mustn't do that. You must not come to my home. Mine is a melancholy abode, Gregers; especially after a splendid banquet like this. We can always arrange to meet somewhere in the town.

MRS. SÖRBY (*who has quietly approached*). Are you going, Ekdal?

HIALMAR. Yes.

MRS. SÖRBY. Remember me to Gina.

HIALMAR. Thanks.

MRS. SÖRBY. And say I am coming up to see her one of these days.

HIALMAR. Yes, thank you. (*To GREGERS*) Stay here; I will slip out unobserved.

(*He saunters away, then into the other room, and so out to the right.*)

MRS. SÖRBY (*softly to the servant, who has come back*). Well, did you give the old man something?

PETTERSEN. Yes; I sent him off with a bottle of cognac.

MRS. SÖRBY. Oh, you might have thought of something better than that.

PETTERSEN. Oh, no, Mrs. Sörby; cognac is what he likes best in the world.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*in the doorway with a sheet of music in his hand*). Shall we play a duet, Mrs. Sörby?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, suppose we do.



THE GUESTS. Bravo, bravo!

*(She goes with all the guests through the back room, out to the right. GREGERS remains standing by the fire. WERLE is looking for something on the writing-table and appears to wish that GREGERS would go; as GREGERS does not move, WERLE goes towards the door.)*

GREGERS. Father, won't you stay a moment?

WERLE *(stops)*. What is it?

GREGERS. I must have a word with you.

WERLE. Can it not wait till we are alone?

GREGERS. No, it cannot; for perhaps we shall never be alone together.

WERLE *(drawing nearer)*. What do you mean by that?

*(During what follows, the pianoforte is faintly heard from the distant music-room.)*

GREGERS. How has that family been allowed to go so miserably to the wall?

WERLE. You mean the Ekdals, I suppose.

GREGERS. Yes, I mean the Ekdals. Lieutenant Ekdal was once so closely associated with you.

WERLE. Much too closely; I have felt that to my cost for many a year. It is thanks to him that I—yes *I*—have had a kind of slur cast upon my reputation.

GREGERS *(softly)*. Are you sure that he alone was to blame?

WERLE. Who else do you suppose . . . ?

GREGERS. You and he acted together in that affair of the forests . . .

WERLE. But was it not Ekdal that drew the map of the tracts we had bought—that fraudulent map! It was he who felled all that timber illegally on Government ground. In fact, the whole management was in his hands. I was quite in the dark as to what Lieutenant Ekdal was doing.

GREGERS. Lieutenant Ekdal himself seems to have been very much in the dark as to what he was doing.

WERLE. That may be. But the fact remains that he was found guilty and I acquitted.

GREGERS. Yes, I know that nothing was proved against you.

WERLE. Acquittal is acquittal. Why do you rake up these old miseries that turned my hair grey before its time? Is that the sort of thing you have been brooding over up there, all these years? I can assure you, Gregers, here in the town the whole story has been forgotten long ago—so far as *I* am concerned.

GREGERS. But that unhappy Ekdal family . . .

WERLE. What would you have had me do for the people? When Ekdal came out of prison he was a broken-down being, past all help. There are people in the world who dive to the bottom the moment they get a couple of slugs in their body and never come to the surface again. You may take my word for it, Gregers, I have done all I could without positively laying myself open to all sorts of suspicion and gossip . . .

GREGERS. Suspicion . . . ? Oh, I see.

WERLE. I have given Ekdal copying to do for the office, and I pay him far, far more for it than his work is worth . . .

GREGERS (*without looking at him*). H'm; that I don't doubt.

WERLE. You laugh? Do you think I am not telling you the truth? Well, I certainly can't refer you to my books, for I never enter payments of that sort.

GREGERS (*smiles coldly*). No, there are certain payments it is best to keep no account of.

WERLE (*taken aback*). What do you mean by that?

GREGERS (*mustering up courage*). Have you entered what it cost you to have Hialmar Ekdal taught photography?

WERLE. I? How "entered" it?

GREGERS. I have learnt that it was you who paid for his training. And I have learnt, too, that it was you who enabled him to set up house so comfortably.

WERLE. Well, and yet you talk as though I had done nothing for the Ekdals! I can assure you these people have cost me enough in all conscience.

GREGERS. Have you entered any of these expenses in your books?

WERLE. Why do you ask?

GREGERS. Oh, I have my reasons. Now tell me: when you interested yourself so warmly in your old friend's son—it was just before his marriage, was it not?

WERLE. Why, deuce take it—after all these years, how can I . . . ?

GREGERS. You wrote me a letter about that time—a business letter, of course; and in a postscript you mentioned—quite briefly—that Hialmar Ekdal had married a Miss Hansen.

WERLE. Yes, that was quite right. That was her name.

GREGERS. But you did not mention that this Miss Hansen was Gina Hansen—our former housekeeper.

WERLE (*with a forced laugh of derision*). No; to tell the truth, it didn't occur to me that you were so particularly interested in our former housekeeper.

GREGERS. No more I was. But (*lowers his voice*) there were others in this house who were particularly interested in her.

WERLE. What do you mean by that? (*Flaring up*) You are not alluding to me, I hope?

GREGERS (*softly but firmly*). Yes, I am alluding to you.

WERLE. And you dare . . . ! You presume to . . . ! How can that ungrateful hound—that photographer fellow—how dare he go making such insinuations!

GREGERS. Hjalmar has never breathed a word about this. I don't believe he has the faintest suspicion of such a thing.

WERLE. Then where have you got it from? Who can have put such notions in your head?

GREGERS. My poor unhappy mother told me; and that the very last time I saw her.

WERLE. Your mother! I might have known as much! You and she—you always held together. It was she who turned you against me, from the first.

GREGERS. No, it was all that she had to suffer and submit to, until she broke down and came to such a pitiful end.

WERLE. Oh, she had nothing to suffer or submit to; not more than most people, at all events. But there's no getting on with morbid, overstrained creatures—that I have learnt to my cost.—And you could go on nursing such a suspicion—burrowing into all sorts of old rumours and slanders against your own father! I must say, Gregers, I really think that at your age you might find something more useful to do.

GREGERS. Yes, it is high time.

WERLE. Then perhaps your mind would be easier than it seems to be now. What can be your object in remaining up at the works, year out and year in, drudging away like a common clerk, and not drawing a farthing more than the ordinary monthly wage? It is downright folly.

GREGERS. Ah, if I were only sure of that.

WERLE. I understand you well enough. You want to be independent; you won't be beholden to me for anything. Well, now there happens to be an opportunity for you to become independent, your own master in everything.

GREGERS. Indeed? In what way . . . ?

WERLE. When I wrote you insisting on your coming to town at once—h'm . . .

GREGERS. Yes, what is it you really want of me? I have been waiting all day to know.

WERLE. I want to propose that you should enter the firm, as partner.

GREGERS. I! Join your firm? As partner?

WERLE. Yes. It would not involve our being constantly together. You could take over the business here in town, and I should move up to the works.

GREGERS. You would?

WERLE. The fact is, I am not so fit for work as I once was. I am obliged to spare my eyes, Gregers; they have begun to trouble me.

GREGERS. They have always been weak.

WERLE. Not as they are now. And besides, circumstances might possibly make it desirable for me to live up there—for a time, at any rate.

GREGERS. That is certainly quite a new idea to me.

WERLE. Listen, Gregers: there are many things that stand between us; but we are father and son after all. We ought surely to be able to come to some sort of understanding with each other.

GREGERS. Outwardly, you mean, of course?

WERLE. Well, even that would be something. Think it over, Gregers. Don't you think it ought to be possible? Eh?

GREGERS (*looking at him coldly*). There is something behind all this.

WERLE. How so?

GREGERS. You want to make use of me in some way.

WERLE. In such a close relationship as ours, the one can always be useful to the other.

GREGERS. Yes, so people say.

WERLE. I want very much to have you at home with me for a time. I am a lonely man, Gregers; I have always felt lonely, all my life through; but most of all now that I am getting up in years. I feel the need of some one about me . . .

GREGERS. You have Mrs. Sörby.

WERLE. Yes, I have her; and she has become, I may say, almost indispensable to me. She is lively and even-tempered; she brightens up the house; and that is a very great thing for me.

GREGERS. Well, then, you have everything just as you wish it.

WERLE. Yes, but I am afraid it can't last. A woman so situated may easily find herself in a false position, in the eyes of the world. For that matter it does a man no good, either.

GREGERS. Oh, when a man gives such dinners as you give, he can risk a great deal.

WERLE. Yes, but how about the woman, Gregers? I fear she won't accept the situation much longer; and even if she did—even if, out of attachment to me, she were to take her chance of gossip and scandal and all that . . . ? Do you think, Gregers—you with your strong sense of justice . . .

GREGERS (*interrupts him*). Tell me in one word: are you thinking of marrying her?

WERLE. Suppose I were thinking of it? What then?

GREGERS. That's what I say: what then?

WERLE. Should you be inflexibly opposed to it?

GREGERS. Not at all. Not by any means.

WERLE. I was not sure whether your devotion to your mother's memory . . .

GREGERS. I am not overstrained.

WERLE. Well, whatever you may or may not be, at all events you have lifted a great weight from my mind. I am extremely pleased that I can reckon on your concurrence in this matter.

GREGERS (*looking intently at him*). Now I see the use you want to put me to.

WERLE. Use to put you to? What an expression!

GREGERS. Oh, don't let us be nice in our choice of words—not when we are alone together, at any rate. (*With a short laugh*) Well, well! So this is what made it absolutely essential that I should come to town in person. For the sake of Mrs. Sörby, we are to get up a pretence at family life in the house—a tableau of filial affection! That will be something new indeed.

WERLE. How dare you speak in that tone!

GREGERS. Was there ever any family life here? Never since I can remember. But now, forsooth, your plans demand something of the sort. No doubt it will have an excellent effect when it is reported that the son has hastened home, on the wings of filial piety, to the grey-haired father's wedding-feast. What will then remain of all the rumours as to the wrongs the poor dead mother had to submit to? Not a vestige. Her son annihilates them at one stroke.

WERLE. Gregers—I believe there is no one in the world you detest as you do me.

GREGERS (*softly*). I have seen you at too close quarters.

WERLE. You have seen me with your mother's eyes. (*Lowers his voice a little*) But you should remember that her eyes were—clouded now and then.

GREGERS (*quivering*). I see what you are hinting at. But who was to blame for mother's unfortunate weakness? Why you, and all those . . . ! The last of them

was this woman that you palmed off upon Hjalmar Ekdal, when you were . . .  
Ugh!

WERLE (*shrugs his shoulders*). Word for word as if it were your mother speaking!

GREGERS (*without heeding*). And there he is now, with his great, confiding, child-like mind, compassed about with all this treachery—living under the same roof with such a creature and never dreaming that what he calls his home is built upon a lie! (*Comes a step nearer*) When I look back upon your past, I seem to see a battle-field with shattered lives on every hand.

WERLE. I begin to think the chasm that divides us is too wide.

GREGERS (*bowing, with self-command*). So I have observed; and therefore I take my hat and go.

WERLE. You are going! Out of the house?

GREGERS. Yes. For at last I see my mission in life.

WERLE. What mission?

GREGERS. You would only laugh if I told you.

WERLE. A lonely man doesn't laugh so easily, Gregers.

GREGERS (*pointing towards the background*). Look, father,—the Chamberlains are playing blind-man's-buff with Mrs. Sörby.—Good-night and good-bye.

(*He goes out by the back to the right. Sounds of laughter and merriment from the company, who are now visible in the outer room.*)

WERLE (*muttering contemptuously after GREGERS*). Ha . . . ! Poor wretch—and he says he is not overstrained!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

## ACT II

HJALMAR EKDAL'S studio, a good-sized room, evidently in the top story of the building. On the right, a sloping roof of large panes of glass, half-covered by a blue curtain. In the right-hand corner, at the back, the entrance door; farther forward, on the same side, a door leading to the sitting-room. Two doors on the opposite side, and between them an iron stove. At the back, a wide double sliding-door. The studio is plainly but comfortably fitted up and furnished. Between the doors on the right, standing out a little from the wall, a sofa with a table and some chairs; on the table a lighted lamp with a shade; beside the stove an old arm-chair. Photographic instruments and apparatus of different kinds lying about the room. Against the back wall, to the left of the double door, stands a bookcase containing a few books, boxes, and bottles of chemicals, instruments, tools, and other objects. Photographs and small articles, such as camel's-hair pencils, paper, and so forth, lie on the table.

GINA EKDAL *sits on a chair by the table, sewing. HEDVIG is sitting on the sofa, with her hands shading her eyes and her thumbs in her ears, reading a book.*

GINA (*glances once or twice at HEDVIG, as if with secret anxiety; then says*). Hedvig! (*HEDVIG does not hear.*)

GINA (*repeats more loudly*). Hedvig!

HEDVIG (*takes away her hands and looks up*). Yes, mother?

GINA. Hedvig dear, you mustn't sit reading any longer now.

HEDVIG. Oh, mother, mayn't I read a little more? Just a little bit?

GINA. No, no, you must put away your book now. Father doesn't like it; he never reads hisself in the evening.

HEDVIG (*shuts the book*). No, father doesn't care much about reading.

GINA (*puts aside her sewing and takes up a lead pencil and a little account-book from the table*). Can you remember how much we paid for the butter today?

HEDVIG. It was one crown sixty-five.

GINA. That's right. (*Puts it down*) It's terrible what a lot of butter we get through in this house. Then there was the smoked sausage, and the cheese—let me see—(*Writes*)—and the ham—(*Adds up*) Yes, that makes just . . .

HEDVIG. And then the beer.

GINA. Yes, to be sure. (*Writes*) How it do mount up! But we can't manage with no less.

HEDVIG. And then you and I didn't need anything hot for dinner, as father was out.

GINA. No; that was so much to the good. And then I took eight crowns fifty for the photographs.

HEDVIG. Really! So much as that?

GINA. Exactly eight crowns fifty.

(*Silence. GINA takes up her sewing again, HEDVIG takes paper and pencil and begins to draw, shading her eyes with her left hand.*)

HEDVIG. Isn't it jolly to think that father is at Mr. Werle's big dinner-party?

GINA. You know he's not really Mr. Werle's guest. It was the son invited him. (*After a pause*) We have nothing to do with that Mr. Werle.

HEDVIG. I'm longing for father to come home. He promised to ask Mrs. Sörby for something nice for me.

GINA. Yes, there's plenty of good things going in that house, I can tell you.

HEDVIG (*goes on drawing*). And I believe I'm a little hungry, too.

(OLD EKDAL, *with the paper parcel under his arm and another parcel in his coat pocket, comes in by the entrance door.*)

GINA. How late you are today, grandfather!

EKDAL. They had locked the office door. Had to wait in Gråberg's room. And then they let me through—h'm.

HEDVIG. Did you get some more copying to do, grandfather?

EKDAL. This whole packet. Just look

GINA. That's capital.

HEDVIG. And you have another parcel in your pocket.

EKDAL. Eh? Oh, never mind, that's nothing. (*Puts his stick away in a corner*) This work will keep me going a long time, Gina. (*Opens one of the sliding-doors in the back wall a little*) Hush! (*Peeeps into the room for a moment, then pushes the door carefully to again*) Hee-hee! They're fast asleep, all the lot of them. And she's gone into the basket herself. Hee-hee!

HEDVIG. Are you sure she isn't cold in that basket, grandfather?

EKDAL. Not a bit of it! Cold? With all that straw? (*Goes towards the farther door on the left*) There are matches in here, I suppose.

GINA. The matches is on the drawers.

(EKDAL *goes into his room.*)

HEDVIG. It's nice that grandfather has got all that copying.

GINA. Yes, poor old father; it means a bit of pocket-money for him.

HEDVIG. And he won't be able to sit the whole forenoon down at that horrid Madam Eriksen's.

GINA. No more he won't. (*Short silence.*)

HEDVIG. Do you suppose they are still at the dinner-table?

GINA. Goodness knows; as like as not.

HEDVIG. Think of all the delicious things father is having to eat! I'm certain he'll be in splendid spirits when he comes. Don't you think so, mother?

GINA. Yes; and if only we could tell him we'd got the room let . . .

HEDVIG. But we don't need that this evening.

GINA. Oh, we'd be none the worse of it, I can tell you. It's no use to us as it is.



HEDVIG. I mean we don't need it this evening, for father will be in a good humour at any rate. It is best to keep the letting of the room for another time.

GINA (*looks across at her*). You like having some good news to tell father when he comes home in the evening?

HEDVIG. Yes; for then things are pleasanter somehow.

GINA (*thinking to herself*). Yes, yes, there's something in that.

(OLD EKDAL comes in again and is going out by the foremost door to the left.)

GINA (*half turning in her chair*). Do you want something out of the kitchen, grandfather?

EKDAL. Yes, yes, I do. Don't you trouble. (*Goes out.*)

GINA. He's not poking away at the fire, is he? (*Waits a moment*) Hedvig, go and see what he's about.

(EKDAL comes in again with a small jug of steaming hot water.)

HEDVIG. Have you been getting some hot water, grandfather?

EKDAL. Yes, hot water. Want it for something. Want to write, and the ink has got as thick as porridge—h'm.

GINA. But you'd best have your supper first, grandfather. It's laid in there.

EKDAL. Can't be bothered with supper, Gina. Very busy, I tell you. No one's to come to my room. No one—h'm.

(*He goes into his room; GINA and HEDVIG look at each other.*)

GINA (*softly*). Can you imagine where he's got money from?

HEDVIG. From Gråberg, perhaps.

GINA. Not a bit of it. Gråberg always sends the money to me.

HEDVIG. Then he must have got a bottle on credit somewhere.

GINA. Poor grandfather, who'd give him credit?

(HIALMAR EKDAL, in an overcoat and grey felt hat, comes in from the right.)

GINA (*throws down her sewing and rises*). Why, Ekdal, is that you already?

HEDVIG (*at the same time jumping up*). Fancy your coming so soon, father!

HIALMAR (*taking off his hat*). Yes, most of the people were coming away.

HEDVIG. So early?

HIALMAR. Yes, it was a dinner-party, you know. (*Is taking off his overcoat.*)

GINA. Let me help you.

HEDVIG. Me, too.

*(They draw off his coat; GINA hangs it up on the back wall.)*

HEDVIG. Were there many people there, father?

HALMAR. Oh, no, not many. We were about twelve or fourteen at table.

GINA. And you had some talk with them all?

HALMAR. Oh, yes, a little; but Gregers took me up most of the time.

GINA. Is Gregers as ugly as ever?

HALMAR. Well, he's not very much to look at. Hasn't the old man come home?

HEDVIG. Yes, grandfather is in his room, writing.

HALMAR. Did he say anything?

GINA. No, what should he say?

HALMAR. Didn't he say anything about . . . ? I heard something about his having been with Gråberg. I'll go in and see him for a moment.

GINA. No, no, better not.

HALMAR. Why not? Did he say he didn't want me to go in?

GINA. I don't think he wants to see nobody this evening . . .

HEDVIG *(making signs)*. H'm—h'm!

GINA *(not noticing)*. . . . he has been in to fetch hot water . . .

HALMAR. Aha! Then he's . . .

GINA. Yes, I suppose so.

HALMAR. Oh, God! my poor old white-haired father! . . . Well, well; there let him sit and get all the enjoyment he can.

*(OLD EKDAL, in an indoor coat and with a lighted pipe, comes from his room.)*

EKDAL. Got home? Thought it was you I heard talking.

HALMAR. Yes, I have just come.

EKDAL. You didn't see me, did you?

HALMAR. No, but they told me you had passed through—so I thought I would follow you.

EKDAL. H'm, good of you, Hialmar.—Who were they, all those fellows?

HIALMAR. Oh, all sorts of people. There was Chamberlain Flor, and Chamberlain Balle, and Chamberlain Kaspersen and Chamberlain—this, that, and the other—I don't know who all . . .

EKDAL (*nodding*). Hear that, Gina! Chamberlains every one of them!

GINA. Yes, I hear as they're terrible genteel in that house nowadays.

HEDVIG. Did the Chamberlains sing, father? Or did they read aloud?

HIALMAR. No, they only talked nonsense. They wanted me to recite something for them; but I knew better than that.

EKDAL. You weren't to be persuaded, eh?

GINA. Oh, you might have done it.

HIALMAR. No; one mustn't be at everybody's beck and call. (*Walks about the room*) That's not my way, at any rate.

EKDAL. No, no; Hialmar's not to be had for the asking, he isn't.

HIALMAR. I don't see why *I* should bother myself to entertain people on the rare occasions when I go into society. Let the others exert themselves. These fellows go from one great dinner-table to the next and gorge and guzzle day out and day in. It's for them to bestir themselves and do something in return for all the good feeding they get.

GINA. But you didn't say that?

HIALMAR (*humming*). Ho-ho-ho . . . ; faith, I gave them a bit of my mind.

EKDAL. Not the Chamberlains?

HIALMAR. Oh, why not? (*Lightly*) After that, we had a little discussion about Tokay.

EKDAL. Tokay! There's a fine wine for you!

HIALMAR (*comes to a standstill*). It may be a fine wine. But of course you know the vintages differ; it all depends on how much sunshine the grapes have had.

GINA. Why, you know everything, Ekdal.

EKDAL. And did they dispute that?

HIALMAR. They tried to; but they were requested to observe that it was just the same with Chamberlains—that with them, too, different batches were of different qualities.

GINA. What things you do think of!

EKDAL. Hee-hee! So they got that in their pipes, too?

HIALMAR. Right in their teeth.

EKDAL. Do you hear that, Gina? He said it right in the very teeth of all the Chamberlains.

GINA. Fancy . . . ! Right in their teeth!

HIALMAR. Yes, but I don't want it talked about. One doesn't speak of such things. The whole affair passed off quite amicably of course. They were nice, genial fellows; I didn't want to wound them—not I!

EKDAL. Right in their teeth, though . . . !

HEDVIG (*caressingly*). How nice it is to see you in a dress-coat! It suits you so well, father.

HIALMAR. Yes, don't you think so? And this one really fits to perfection. It fits almost as if it had been made for me;—a little tight in the arm-holes perhaps;—help me, Hedwig (*takes off the coat*). I think I'll put on my jacket. Where is my jacket, Gina?

GINA. Here it is. (*Brings the jacket and helps him.*)

HIALMAR. That's it! Don't forget to send the coat back to Molvik first thing tomorrow morning.

GINA (*laying it away*). I'll be sure and see to it.

HIALMAR (*stretching himself*). After all, there's a more homely feeling about this. A free-and-easy indoor costume suits my whole personality better. Don't you think so, Hedvig?

HEDVIG. Yes, father.

HIALMAR. When I loosen my necktie into a pair of flowing ends—like this—eh?

HEDVIG. Yes, that goes so well with your moustache and the sweep of your curls,

HIALMAR. I should not call them curls exactly; I should rather say locks.

HEDVIG. Yes, they are too big for curls.

HIALMAR. Locks describes them better.

HEDVIG (*after a pause, twitching his jacket*). Father.

HIALMAR. Well, what is it?

HEDVIG. Oh, you know very well.

HIALMAR. No, really I don't . . .

HEDVIG (*half laughing, half whimpering*). Oh, yes, father; now don't tease me any longer!

HIALMAR. Why, what do you mean?

HEDVIG (*shaking him*). Oh, what nonsense; come, where are they, father? All the good things you promised me, you know?

HIALMAR. Oh—if I haven't forgotten all about them!

HEDVIG. Now you're only teasing me, father! Oh, it's too bad of you! Where have you put them?

HIALMAR. No, I positively forgot to get anything. But wait a little! I have something else for you, Hedvig. (*Goes and searches in the pockets of the coat.*)

HEDVIG (*skipping and clapping her hands*). Oh, mother, mother!

GINA. There, you see; if you only give him time . . .

HIALMAR (*with a paper*). Look, here it is.

HEDVIG. That? Why, that's only a paper.

HIALMAR. That is the bill of fare, my dear; the whole bill of fare. Here you see: "Menu"—that means bill of fare.

HEDVIG. Haven't you anything else?

HIALMAR. I forgot the other things, I tell you. But you may take my word for it, these dainties are very unsatisfying. Sit down at the table and read the bill of fare, and then I'll describe to you how the dishes taste. Here you are, Hedvig.

HEDVIG (*gulping down her tears*). Thank you. (*She seats herself, but does not read; GINA makes signs to her; HIALMAR notices it.*)

HIALMAR (*pacing up and down the room*). It's monstrous what absurd things the father of a family is expected to think of; and if he forgets the smallest trifle, he is treated to sour faces at once. Well, well, one gets used to that, too. (*Stops near the stove, by the old man's chair*) Have you peeped in there this evening, father?

EKDAL. Yes, to be sure I have. She's gone into the basket.

HIALMAR. Ah, she has gone into the basket. Then she's beginning to get used to it.

EKDAL. Yes; just as I prophesied. But you know there are still a few little things . . .

HIALMAR. A few improvements, yes.

EKDAL. They've got to be made, you know.

HIALMAR. Yes, let us have a talk about the improvements, father. Come, let us sit on the sofa.

EKDAL. All right. H'm—think I'll just fill my pipe first. Must clean it out, too. H'm. (*He goes into his room.*)

GINA (*smiling to HIALMAR*). His pipe!

HALMAR. Oh, yes, yes, Gina; let him alone—the poor, shipwrecked old man.—Yes, these improvements—we had better get them out of hand tomorrow.

GINA. You'll hardly have time tomorrow, Ekdal.

HEDVIG (*interposing*). Oh, yes he will, mother!

GINA. . . . for remember them prints that has to be retouched; they've sent for them time after time.

HALMAR. There now! those prints again! I shall get them finished all right! Have any new orders come in?

GINA. No, worse luck; tomorrow I have nothing but those two sittings, you know.

HALMAR. Nothing else? Oh, no, if people won't set about things with a will . . .

GINA. But what more can I do? Don't I advertise in the papers as much as we can afford?

HALMAR. Yes, the papers, the papers; you see how much good they do. And I suppose no one has been to look at the room either?

GINA. No, not yet.

HALMAR. That was only to be expected. If people won't keep their eyes open. . . . Nothing can be done without a real effort, Gina!

HEDVIG (*going towards him*). Shall I fetch you the flute, father?

HALMAR. No; no flute for me; I want no pleasures in this world. (*Pacing about*) Yes, indeed I will work tomorrow; you shall see if I don't. You may be sure I shall work as long as my strength holds out.

GINA. But my dear, good Ekdal, I didn't mean it in that way.

HEDVIG. Father, mayn't I bring in a bottle of beer?

HALMAR. No, certainly not. I require nothing, nothing . . . (*Comes to a standstill*) Beer? Was it beer you were talking about?

HEDVIG (*cheerfully*). Yes, father; beautiful, fresh beer.

HALMAR. Well—since you insist upon it, you may bring in a bottle.

GINA. Yes, do; and we'll be nice and cosy.

(*HEDVIG runs towards the kitchen door.*)

HALMAR (*by the stove, stops her, looks at her, puts his arm round her neck and presses her to him*). Hedvig, Hedvig!

HEDVIG (*with tears of joy*). My dear, kind father!

HIALMAR. No, don't call me that. Here have I been feasting at the rich man's table,—battening at the groaning board . . . ! And I couldn't even . . . !

GINA (*sitting at the table*). Oh, nonsense, nonsense, Ekdal.

HIALMAR. It's not nonsense! And yet you mustn't be too hard upon me. You know that I love you for all that.

HEDVIG (*throwing her arms round him*). And we love you, oh so dearly, father!

HIALMAR. And if I am unreasonable once in a while,—why then—you must remember that I am a man beset by a host of cares. There, there! (*Dries his eyes*) No beer at such a moment as this. Give me the flute.

(*HEDVIG runs to the bookcase and fetches it.*)

HIALMAR. Thanks! That's right. With my flute in my hand and you two at my side . . . ah . . . !

(*HEDVIG seats herself at the table near GINA; HIALMAR paces backwards and forwards, pipes up vigorously and plays a Bohemian peasant dance, but in a slow plaintive tempo, and with sentimental expression.*)

HIALMAR (*breaking off the melody, holds out his left hand to GINA and says with emotion*). Our roof may be poor and humble, Gina; but it is home. And with all my heart I say: here dwells my happiness.

(*He begins to play again; almost immediately after, a knocking is heard at the entrance door.*)

GINA (*rising*). Hush, Ekdal,—I think there's some one at the door.

HIALMAR (*laying the flute on the bookcase*). There! Again!

(*GINA goes and opens the door.*)

GREGERS WERLE (*in the passage*). Excuse me . . .

GINA (*starting back slightly*). Oh!

GREGERS. . . . does not Mr. Ekdal, the photographer, live here?

GINA. Yes, he does.

HIALMAR (*going towards the door*). Gregers! You here after all? Well, come in then.

GREGERS (*coming in*). I told you I would come and look you up.

HIALMAR. But this evening . . . ? Have you left the party?

GREGERS. I have left both the party and my father's house.—Good evening, Mrs. Ekdal. I don't know whether you recognize me?

GINA. Oh, yes; it's not difficult to know young Mr. Werle again.

GREGERS. No, I am like my mother; and no doubt you remember her.

HALMAR. Left your father's house, did you say?

GREGERS. Yes, I have gone to a hotel.

HALMAR. Indeed. Well, since you're here, take off your coat and sit down.

GREGERS. Thanks.

*(He takes off his overcoat. He is now dressed in a plain grey suit of a countrified cut.)*

HALMAR. Here, on the sofa. Make yourself comfortable.

*(GREGERS seats himself on the sofa; HALMAR takes a chair at the table.)*

GREGERS *(looking around him)*. So these are your quarters, Hialmar—this is your home.

HALMAR. This is the studio, as you see . . .

GINA. But it's the largest of our rooms, so we generally sit here.

HALMAR. We used to live in a better place; but this flat has one great advantage: there are such capital outer rooms . . .

GINA. And we have a room on the other side of the passage that we can let.

GREGERS *(to HALMAR)*. Ah—so you have lodgers, too?

HALMAR. No, not yet. They're not so easy to find, you see; you have to keep your eyes open. *(To HEDVIG)* What about the beer, eh?

*(HEDVIG nods and goes out into the kitchen.)*

GREGERS. So that is your daughter?

HALMAR. Yes, that is Hedvig.

GREGERS. And she is your only child?

HALMAR. Yes, the only one. She is the joy of our lives, and—*(lowering his voice)*—at the same time our deepest sorrow, Gregers.

GREGERS. What do you mean?

HALMAR. She is in serious danger of losing her eyesight.

GREGERS. Becoming blind?

HALMAR. Yes. Only the first symptoms have appeared as yet, and she may not feel it much for some time. But the doctor has warned us. It is coming, inexorably.

GREGERS. What a terrible misfortune! How do you account for it?

HALMAR *(sighs)*. Hereditary, no doubt.



GREGERS (*starting*). Hereditary?

GINA. Ekdal's mother had weak eyes.

HALMAR. Yes, so my father says; I can't remember.

GREGERS. Poor child! And how does she take it?

HALMAR. Oh, you can imagine we haven't the heart to tell her of it. She dreams of no danger. Gay and careless and chirping like a little bird, she flutters onward into a life of endless night. (*Overcome*) Oh, it is cruelly hard on me, Gregers.

(HEDVIG *brings a tray with beer and glasses, which she sets upon the table.*)

HALMAR (*stroking her hair*). Thanks, thanks, Hedvig.

(HEDVIG *puts her arm around his neck and whispers in his ear.*)

HALMAR. No, no bread and butter just now. (*Looks up*) But perhaps you would like some, Gregers.

GREGERS (*with a gesture of refusal*). No, no thank you.

HALMAR (*still melancholy*). Well, you can bring in a little all the same. If you have a crust, that is all I want. And plenty of butter on it, mind.

(HEDVIG *nods gaily and goes out into the kitchen again.*)

GREGERS (*who has been following her with his eyes*). She seems quite strong and healthy otherwise.

GINA. Yes. In other ways there's nothing amiss with her, thank goodness.

GREGERS. She promises to be very like you, Mrs. Ekdal. How old is she now?

GINA. Hedvig is close on fourteen; her birthday is the day after tomorrow.

GREGERS. She is pretty tall for her age, then.

GINA. Yes, she's shot up wonderful this last year.

GREGERS. It makes one realize one's own age to see these young people growing up.—How long is it now since you were married?

GINA. We've been married—let me see—just on fifteen years.

GREGERS. Is it so long as that?

GINA (*becomes attentive; looks at him*). Yes, it is indeed.

HALMAR. Yes, so it is. Fifteen years all but a few months. (*Changing his tone*) They must have been long years for you, up at the works, Gregers.

GREGERS. They seemed long while I was living them; now they are over, I hardly know how the time has gone.

(OLD EKDAL comes from his room without his pipe, but with his old-fashioned uniform cap on his head; his gait is somewhat unsteady.)

EKDAL. Come now, Hjalmar, let's sit down and have a good talk about this—h'm—what was it again?

HALMAR (*going towards him*). Father, we have a visitor here—Gregers Werle.—I don't know if you remember him.

EKDAL (*looking at GREGERS, who has risen*). Werle? Is that the son? What does he want with me?

HALMAR. Nothing; it's me he has come to see.

EKDAL. Oh! Then there's nothing wrong?

HALMAR. No, no, of course not.

EKDAL (*with a large gesture*). Not that I'm afraid, you know, but . . .

GREGERS (*goes over to him*). I bring you a greeting from your old hunting-grounds, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL. Hunting-grounds?

GREGERS. Yes, up in Höidal, about the works, you know.

EKDAL. Oh, up there. Yes, I knew all those places well in the old days.

GREGERS. You were a great sportsman then.

EKDAL. So I was, I don't deny it. You're looking at my uniform cap. I don't ask anybody's leave to wear it in the house. So long as I don't go out in the streets with it. . . .

(HEDVIG brings a plate of bread and butter, which she puts upon the table.)

HALMAR. Sit down, father, and have a glass of beer. Help yourself, Gregers.

(EKDAL mutters and stumbles over to the sofa. GREGERS seats himself on the chair nearest to him, HALMAR on the other side of GREGERS. GINA sits a little way from the table, sewing; HEDVIG stands beside her father.)

GREGERS. Can you remember, Lieutenant Ekdal, how Hjalmar and I used to come up and visit you in the summer and at Christmas?

EKDAL. Did you? No, no, no; I don't remember it. But sure enough I've been a tidy bit of a sportsman in my day. I've shot bears, too. I've shot nine of 'em, no less.

GREGERS (*looking sympathetically at him*). And now you never get any shooting?

EKDAL. Can't just say that, sir. Get a shot now and then perhaps. Of course not in the old way. For the woods you see—the woods, the woods . . . ! (*Drinks*) Are the woods fine up there now?

GREGERS. Not so fine as in your time. They have been thinned a good deal.

EKDAL. Thinned? (*More softly, and as if afraid*) It's dangerous work that. Bad things come of it. The woods revenge themselves.

HALMAR (*filling up his glass*). Come—a little more, father.

GREGERS. How can a man like you—such a man for the open air—live in the midst of a stuffy town, boxed within four walls?

EKDAL (*laughs quietly and glances at HALMAR*). Oh, it's not bad here. Not at all so bad.

GREGERS. But don't you miss all the things that used to be a part of your very being—the cool sweeping breezes, the free life in the woods and on the uplands, among beasts and birds . . . ?

EKDAL (*smiling*). Hialmar, shall we let him see it?

HALMAR (*hastily and a little embarrassed*). Oh, no, no, father; not this evening.

GREGERS. What does he want to show me?

HALMAR. Oh, it's only something—you can see it another time.

GREGERS (*continues, to the old man*). You see, I have been thinking, Lieutenant Ekdal, that you should come up with me to the works; I am sure to be going back soon. No doubt you could get some copying there, too. And here, you have nothing on earth to interest you—nothing to liven you up.

EKDAL (*stares in astonishment at him*). Have I nothing on earth to . . . !

GREGERS. Of course you have Hialmar; but then he has his own family. And a man like you, who has always had such a passion for what is free and wild . . .

EKDAL (*thumps the table*). Hialmar, he shall see it!

HALMAR. Oh, do you think it's worth while, father? It's all dark.

EKDAL. Nonsense; it's moonlight. (*Rises*) He shall see it, I tell you. Let me pass! Come and help me, Hialmar.

HEDVIG. Oh, yes, do, father!

HALMAR (*rising*). Very well then.

GREGERS (*to GINA*). What is it?

GINA. Oh, nothing so very wonderful, after all.

(*EKDAL and HALMAR have gone to the back wall and are each pushing back a side of the sliding door; HEDVIG helps the old man; GREGERS remains standing by the sofa; GINA sits still and sews. Through the open doorway a large, deep, irregular garret is seen with odd nooks and corners; a couple of stove-pipes running*

*through it, from rooms below. There are skylights through which clear moon-beams shine in on some parts of the great room; others lie in deep shadow.)*

EKDAL (*to GREGERS*). You may come close up if you like.

GREGERS (*going over to them*). Why, what is it?

EKDAL. Look for yourself. H'm.

HIALMAR (*somewhat embarrassed*). This belongs to father, you understand.

GREGERS (*at the door, looks into the garret*). Why, you keep poultry, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL. Should think we did keep poultry. They've gone to roost now. But you should just see our fowls by daylight, sir!

HEDVIG. And there's a . . .

EKDAL. Sh—sh! don't say anything about it yet.

GREGERS. And you have pigeons, too, I see.

EKDAL. Oh, yes, haven't we just got pigeons! They have their nest-boxes up there under the roof-tree; for pigeons like to roost high, you see.

HIALMAR. They aren't all common pigeons.

EKDAL. Common! Should think not indeed! We have tumblers and a pair of pouters, too. But come here! Can you see that hutch down there by the wall?

GREGERS. Yes; what do you use it for?

EKDAL. That's where the rabbits sleep, sir.

GREGERS. Dear me; so you have rabbits, too?

EKDAL. Yes, you may take my word for it, we have rabbits! He wants to know if we have rabbits, Hialmar! H'm! But now comes the thing, let me tell you! Here we have it! Move away, Hedvig. Stand here; that's right,—and now look down there.—Don't you see a basket with straw in it?

GREGERS. Yes. And I can see a fowl lying in the basket.

EKDAL. H'm—"a fowl" . . .

GREGERS. Isn't it a duck?

EKDAL (*hurt*). Why, of course it's a duck.

HIALMAR. But what kind of duck, do you think?

HEDVIG. It's not just a common duck . . .

EKDAL. Sh!

GREGERS. And it's not a Muscovy duck either.

EKDAL. No, Mr.—Werle; it's not a Muscovy duck; for it's a wild duck!

GREGERS. Is it really? A wild duck?

EKDAL. Yes, that's what it is. That "fowl" as you call it—is the wild duck. It's our wild duck, sir.

HEDVIG. My wild duck. It belongs to me.

GREGERS. And can it live up here in the garret? Does it thrive?

EKDAL. Of course it has a trough of water to splash about in, you know.

HALMAR. Fresh water every other day.

GINA (*turning towards HALMAR*). But my dear Ekdal, it's getting icy cold here.

EKDAL. H'm, we had better shut up then. It's as well not to disturb their night's rest, too. Close up, Hedvig.

(HALMAR and HEDVIG *push the garret doors together*.)

EKDAL. Another time you shall see her properly. (*Sits himself in the armchair by the stove*) Oh, they're curious things, these wild ducks. I can tell you.

GREGERS. How did you manage to catch it, Lieutenant Ekdal?

EKDAL. I didn't catch it. There's a certain man in this town whom we have to thank for it.

GREGERS (*starts slightly*). That man was not my father, was he?

EKDAL. You've hit it. Your father and no one else. H'm.

HALMAR. Strange that you should guess that, Gregers.

GREGERS. You were telling me that you owed so many things to my father; and so I thought perhaps . . .

GINA. But we didn't get the duck from Mr. Werle himself . . .

EKDAL. Its Håkon Werle we have to thank for her, all the same, Gina. (*To GREGERS*) He was shooting from a boat, you see, and he brought her down. But your father's sight is not very good now. H'm; she was only wounded.

GREGERS. Ah! She got a couple of slugs in her body, I suppose.

HALMAR. Yes, two or three.

HEDVIG. She was hit under the wing, so that she couldn't fly.

GREGERS. And I suppose she dived to the bottom, eh?

EKDAL (*sleepily, in a thick voice*). Of course. Always do that, wild ducks do. They shoot to the bottom as deep as they can get, sir—and bite themselves fast in the tangle and seaweed—and all the devil's own mess that grows down there. And they never come up again.

GREGERS. But your wild duck came up again, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL. He had such an amazingly clever dog, your father had. And that dog—he dived in after the duck and fetched her up again.

GREGERS (*who has turned to HIALMAR*). And then she was sent to you here?

HIALMAR. Not at once; at first your father took her home. But she wouldn't thrive there; so Pettersen was told to put an end to her . . .

EKDAL (*half asleep*). H'm—yes—Pettersen—that ass . . .

HIALMAR (*speaking more softly*). That was how we got her, you see; for father knows Pettersen a little; and when he heard about the wild duck he got him to hand her over to us.

GREGERS. And now she thrives as well as possible in the garret there?

HIALMAR. Yes, wonderfully well. She has got fat. You see, she has lived in there so long now that she has forgotten her natural wild life; and it all depends on that.

GREGERS. You are right there, Hialmar. Be sure you never let her get a glimpse of the sky and the sea. . . . But I mustn't stay any longer; I think your father is asleep.

HIALMAR. Oh, as for that . . .

GREGERS. But, by-the-bye—you said you had a room to let—a spare room?

HIALMAR. Yes; what then? Do you know of anybody . . . ?

GREGERS. Can I have that room?

HIALMAR. You?

GINA. Oh, no, Mr. Werle, you . . .

GREGERS. May I have the room? If so, I'll take possession first thing tomorrow morning.

HIALMAR. Yes, with the greatest pleasure . . .

GINA. But, Mr. Werle, I'm sure it's not at all the sort of room for you.

HIALMAR. Why, Gina! how can you say that?

GINA. Why, because the room's neither large enough nor light enough, and . . .

GREGERS. That really doesn't matter, Mrs. Ekdal.

HALMAR. I call it quite a nice room, and not at all badly furnished either.

GINA. But remember the pair of them underneath.

GREGERS. What pair?

GINA. Well, there's one as has been a tutor . . .

HALMAR. That's Molvik—Mr. Molvik, B.A.

GINA. And then there's a doctor, by the name of Relling.

GREGERS. Relling? I know him a little; he practised for a time up in Höidal.

GINA. They're a regular rackety pair, they are. As often as not, they're out on the loose in the evenings; and then they come home at all hours, and they're not always just . . .

GREGERS. One soon gets used to that sort of thing. I daresay I shall be like the wild duck . . .

GINA. H'm; I think you ought to sleep upon it first, anyway.

GREGERS. You seem very unwilling to have me in the house, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA. Oh, no! What makes you think that?

HALMAR. Well, you really behave strangely about it, Gina. (*To GREGERS*) Then I suppose you intend to remain in the town for the present?

GREGERS (*putting on his overcoat*). Yes, now I intend to remain here.

HALMAR. And yet not at your father's? What do you propose to do, then?

GREGERS. Ah, if I only knew that, Hialmar, I shouldn't be so badly off! But when one has the misfortune to be called Gregers—! "Gregers"—and then "Werle" after it; did you ever hear anything so hideous?

HALMAR. Oh, I don't think so at all.

GREGERS. Ugh! Bah! I feel I should like to spit upon the fellow that answers to such a name. But when a man is once for all doomed to be Gregers—Werle in this world, as I am . . .

HALMAR (*laughs*). Ha, ha! If you weren't Gregers Werle, what would you like to be?

GREGERS. If I should choose, I should like best to be a clever dog.

GINA. A dog!

HEDVIG (*involuntarily*). Oh, no!

GREGERS. Yes, an amazingly clever dog; one that goes to the bottom after wild ducks when they dive and bite themselves fast in tangle and seaweed, down among the ooze.

HIALMAR. Upon my word now, Gregers—I don't in the least know what you're driving at.

GREGERS. Oh, well, you might not be much the wiser if you did. It's understood, then, that I move in early tomorrow morning. (*To GINA*) I won't give you any trouble; I do everything for myself. (*To HIALMAR*) We can talk about the rest tomorrow. —Good-night, Mrs. Ekdal. (*Nods to HEDVIG*) Good-night.

GINA. Good-night, Mr. Werle.

HEDVIG. Good-night.

HIALMAR (*who has lighted a candle*). Wait a moment; I must show you a light; the stairs are sure to be dark.

(*GREGERS and HIALMAR go out by the passage door.*)

GINA (*looking straight before her, with her sewing in her lap*). Wasn't that queer-like talk about wanting to be a dog?

HEDVIG. Do you know, mother—I believe he meant something quite different by that.

GINA. Why, what should he mean?

HEDVIG. Oh, I don't know; but it seemed to me he meant something different from what he said—all the time.

GINA. Do you think so? Yes, it was sort of queer.

HIALMAR (*comes back*). The lamp was still burning. (*Puts out the candle and sets it down*) Ah, now one can get a mouthful of food at last. (*Begins to eat the bread and butter*) Well, you see, Gina—if only you keep your eyes open . . .

GINA. How, keep your eyes open . . . ?

HIALMAR. Why, haven't we at last had the luck to get the room let? And just think—to a person like Gregers—a good old friend.

GINA. Well, I don't know what to say about it.

HEDVIG. Oh, mother, you'll see; it'll be such fun!

HIALMAR. You're very strange. You were so bent upon getting the room let before; and now you don't like it.

GINA. Yes, I do, Ekdal; if it had only been to some one else . . . But what do you suppose Mr. Werle will say?

HIALMAR. Old Werle? It doesn't concern him.

GINA. But surely you can see that there's something amiss between them again, or the young man wouldn't be leaving home. You know very well those two can't get on with each other.



HIALMAR. Very likely not, but . . .

GINA. And now Mr. Werle may fancy it's you that has egged him on . . .

HIALMAR. Let him fancy so, then! Mr. Werle has done a great deal for me; far be it from me to deny it. But that doesn't make me everlastingly dependent upon him.

GINA. But, my dear Ekdal, maybe grandfather'll suffer for it. He may lose the little bit of work he gets from Gråberg.

HIALMAR. I could almost say: so much the better! Is it not humiliating for a man like me to see his grey-haired father treated as a pariah? But now I believe the fulness of time is at hand. (*Takes a fresh piece of bread and butter*) As sure as I have a mission in life, I mean to fulfil it now!

HEDVIG. Oh, yes, father, do!

GINA. Hush! Don't wake him!

HIALMAR (*more softly*). I will fulfil it, I say. The day shall come when . . . And that is why I say it's a good thing we have let the room; for that makes me more independent. The man who has a mission in life must be independent. (*By the armchair, with emotion*) Poor old white-haired father! Rely on your Hialmar. He has broad shoulders—strong shoulders, at any rate. You shall yet wake up some fine day and . . . (*To GINA*) Do you not believe it?

GINA (*rising*). Yes, of course I do; but in the meantime suppose we see about getting him to bed.

HIALMAR. Yes, come.

(*They take hold of the old man carefully.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

### ACT III

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio. *It is morning: the daylight shines through the large window in the slanting roof; the curtain is drawn back.*

HIALMAR is sitting at the table, busy retouching a photograph; several others lie before him. Presently GINA, wearing her hat and cloak, enters by the passage door; she has a covered basket on her arm.

HIALMAR. Back already, Gina?

GINA. Oh, yes, one can't let the grass grow under one's feet. (*Sets her basket on a chair and takes off her things.*)

HIALMAR. Did you look in at Gregers' room?

GINA. Yes, that I did. It's a rare sight, I can tell you; he's made a pretty mess to start off with.

HALMAR. How so?

GINA. He was determined to do everything for himself, he said; so he sets to work to light the stove, and what must he do but screw down the damper till the whole room is full of smoke. Ugh! There was a smell fit to . . .

HALMAR. Well, really!

GINA. But that's not the worst of it; for then he thinks he'll put out the fire, and goes and empties his water-jug into the stove and so makes the whole floor one filthy puddle.

HALMAR. How annoying!

GINA. I've got the porter's wife to clear up after him, pig that he is! But the room won't be fit to live in till the afternoon.

HALMAR. What's he doing with himself in the meantime?

GINA. He said he was going out for a little while.

HALMAR. I looked in upon him, too, for a moment—after you had gone.

GINA. So I heard. You've asked him to lunch.

HALMAR. Just to a little bit of early lunch, you know. It's his first day—we can hardly do less. You've got something in the house, I suppose?

GINA. I shall have to find something or other.

HALMAR. And don't cut it too fine, for I fancy Relling and Molvik are coming up, too. I just happened to meet Relling on the stairs, you see; so I had to . . .

GINA. Oh, are we to have those two as well?

HALMAR. Good Lord—a couple more or less can't make any difference.

OLD EKDAL (*opens his door and looks in*). I say, Hialmar . . . (*Sees GINA*) Oh!

GINA. Do you want anything, grandfather?

EKDAL. Oh, no, it doesn't matter. H'm! (*Retires again.*)

GINA (*takes up the basket*). Be sure you see that he doesn't go out.

HALMAR. All right, all right. And, Gina, a little herring-salad wouldn't be a bad idea; Relling and Molvik were out on the loose again last night.

GINA. If only they don't come before I'm ready for them . . .

HALMAR. No, of course they won't; take your own time.

GINA. Very well; and meanwhile you can be working a bit.

HALMAR. Well, I am working! I am working as hard as I can!

GINA. Then you'll have that job off your hands, you see.

*(She goes out to the kitchen with her basket. HIALMAR sits for a time pencilling away at the photograph, in an indolent and listless manner.)*

EKDAL *(peeps in, looks round the studio and says softly)*. Are you busy?

HIALMAR. Yes, I'm toiling at these wretched pictures . . .

EKDAL. Well, well, never mind,—since you're so busy—h'm. *(He goes out again; the door stands open.)*

HIALMAR *(continues for some time in silence; then he lays down his brush and goes over to the door)*. Are you busy, father?

EKDAL *(in a grumbling tone, within)*. If you're busy, I'm busy, too. H'm!

HIALMAR. Oh, very well, then. *(Goes to his work again.)*

EKDAL *(presently, coming to the door again)*. H'm; I say, Hialmar, I'm not so very busy, you know.

HIALMAR. I thought you were writing.

EKDAL. Oh, the devil take it! can't Gråberg wait a day or two? After all, it's not a matter of life and death.

HIALMAR. No; and you're not his slave either.

EKDAL. And about that other business in there . . .

HIALMAR. Just what I was thinking of. Do you want to go in? Shall I open the door for you?

EKDAL. Well, it wouldn't be a bad notion.

HIALMAR *(rises)*. Then we'd have that off our hands.

EKDAL. Yes, exactly. It's got to be ready first thing tomorrow. It is tomorrow, isn't it? H'm?

HIALMAR. Yes, of course it's tomorrow.

*(HIALMAR and EKDAL push aside each his half of the sliding door. The morning sun is shining in through the skylights; some doves are flying about; others sit cooing, upon the perches; the hens are heard clucking now and then, further back in the garret.)*

HIALMAR. There; now you can get to work, father.

EKDAL *(goes in)*. Aren't you coming, too?

HIALMAR. Well, really, do you know . . .; I almost think . . . *(Sees GINA at the kitchen door)* I? No; I haven't time; I must work.—But now for our new contrivance . . .

*(He pulls a cord, a curtain slips down inside, the lower part consisting of a piece of old sailcloth, the upper part of a stretched fishing net. The floor of the garret is thus no longer visible.)*

HIALMAR *(goes to the table)*. So! Now, perhaps I can sit in peace for a little while.

GINA. Is he rampaging in there again?

HIALMAR. Would you rather have had him slip down to Madam Eriksen's? *(Seats himself)* Do you want anything? You know you said . . .

GINA. I only wanted to ask if you think we can lay the table for lunch here?

HIALMAR. Yes; we have no early appointment, I suppose?

GINA. No, I expect no one today except those two sweethearts that are to be taken together.

HIALMAR. Why the deuce couldn't they be taken together another day!

GINA. Don't you know, I told them to come in the afternoon, when you are having your nap.

HIALMAR. Oh, that's capital. Very well, let us have lunch here then.

GINA. All right; but there's no hurry about laying the cloth; you can have the table for a good while yet.

HIALMAR. Do you think I am not sticking at my work? I'm at it as hard as I can!

GINA. Then you'll be free later on, you know. *(Goes out into the kitchen again. Short pause.)*

EKDAL *(in the garret doorway, behind the net)*. Hialmar!

HIALMAR. Well?

EKDAL. Afraid we shall have to move the water-trough, after all.

HIALMAR. What else have I been saying all along?

EKDAL. H'm—h'm—h'm. *(Goes away from the door again. HIALMAR goes on working a little; glances towards the garret and half rises. HEDVIG comes in from the kitchen.)*

HIALMAR *(sits down again hurriedly)*. What do you want?

HEDVIG. I only wanted to come in beside you, father.

HIALMAR *(after a pause)*. What makes you go prying around like that? Perhaps you are told off to watch me?

HEDVIG. No, no.

HIALMAR. What is your mother doing out there?

HEDVIG. Oh, mother's in the middle of making the herring-salad. (*Goes to the table*) Isn't there any little thing I could help you with, father?

HIALMAR. Oh, no. It is right that I should bear the whole burden—so long as my strength holds out. Set your mind at rest, Hedvig; if only your father keeps his health . . .

HEDVIG. Oh, no, father! You mustn't talk in that horrid way.

(*She wanders about a little, stops by the doorway and looks into the garret.*)

HIALMAR. Tell me, what is he doing?

HEDVIG. I think he's making a new path to the water-trough.

HIALMAR. He can never manage that by himself! And here am I doomed to sit . . . !

HEDVIG (*goes to him*). Let me take the brush, father; I can do it, quite well.

HIALMAR. Oh, nonsense; you will only hurt your eyes.

HEDVIG. Not a bit. Give me the brush.

HIALMAR (*rising*). Well, it won't take more than a minute or two.

HEDVIG. Pooh, what harm can it do then? (*Takes the brush*) There! (*Seats herself*) I can begin upon this one.

HIALMAR. But mind you don't hurt your eyes! Do you hear? I won't be answerable; you do it on your own responsibility—understand that.

HEDVIG (*retouching*). Yes, yes, I understand.

HIALMAR. You are quite clever at it, Hedvig. Only a minute or two, you know.

(*He slips through by the edge of the curtain into the garret. HEDVIG sits at her work. HIALMAR and EKDAL are heard disputing inside.*)

HIALMAR (*appears behind the net*). I say, Hedvig—give me those pincers that are lying on the shelf. And the chisel. (*Turns away inside*) Now you shall see, father. Just let me show you first what I mean!

(*HEDVIG has fetched the required tools from the shelf and hands them to him through the net.*)

HIALMAR. Ah, thanks. I didn't come a moment too soon. (*Goes back from the curtain again; they are heard carpentering and talking inside. HEDVIG stands looking in at them. A moment later there is a knock at the passage door; she does not notice it.*)

GREGERS WERLE (*bareheaded; in indoor dress, enters and stops near the door*). H'm . . . !

HEDVIG (*turns and goes towards him*). Good morning. Please come in.

GREGERS. Thank you. (*Looking towards the garret*) You seem to have workpeople in the house.

HEDVIG. No, it is only father and grandfather. I'll tell them you are here.

GREGERS. No, no, don't do that; I would rather wait a little. (*Sits himself on the sofa.*)

HEDVIG. It looks so untidy here . . . (*Begins to clear away the photographs.*)

GREGERS. Oh, don't take them away. Are those prints that have to be finished off?

HEDVIG. Yes, they are a few I was helping father with.

GREGERS. Please don't let me disturb you.

HEDVIG. Oh, no.

(*She gathers the things to her and sits down to work; GREGERS looks at her, meanwhile, in silence.*)

GREGERS. Did the wild duck sleep well last night?

HEDVIG. Yes, I think so, thanks.

GREGERS (*turning towards the garret*). It looks quite different by day from what it did last night in the moonlight.

HEDVIG. Yes, it changes ever so much. It looks different in the morning and in the afternoon; and it's different on rainy days from what it is in fine weather.

GREGERS. Have you noticed that?

HEDVIG. Yes, how could I help it?

GREGERS. Are you, too, fond of being in there with the wild duck?

HEDVIG. Yes, when I can manage it . . .

GREGERS. But I suppose you haven't much spare time; you go to school, no doubt.

HEDVIG. No, not now; father is afraid of my hurting my eyes.

GREGERS. Oh; then he reads with you himself?

HEDVIG. Father has promised to read with me; but he has never had time yet.

GREGERS. Then is there nobody else to give you a little help?

HEDVIG. Yes, there is Mr. Molvik; but he is not always exactly—quite . . .

GREGERS. Sober?

HEDVIG. Yes, I suppose that's it!

GREGERS. Why, then you must have any amount of time on your hands. And in there I suppose it is a sort of world by itself?

HEDVIG. Oh, yes, quite. And there are such lots of wonderful things.

GREGERS. Indeed?

HEDVIG. Yes, there are big cupboards full of books; and a great many of the books have pictures in them.

GREGERS. Aha!

HEDVIG. And there's an old bureau with drawers and flaps, and a big clock with figures that go out and in. But the clock isn't going now.

GREGERS. So time has come to a standstill in there—in the wild duck's domain.

HEDVIG. Yes. And then there's an old paint-box and things of that sort; and all the books.

GREGERS. And you read the books, I suppose?

HEDVIG. Oh, yes, when I get the chance. Most of them are English though, and I don't understand English. But then I look at the pictures.—There is one great big book called "Harrison's History of London." \* It must be a hundred years old; and there are such heaps of pictures in it. At the beginning there is Death with an hour-glass and a woman. I think that is horrid. But then there are all the other pictures of churches and castles and streets and great ships sailing on the sea.

GREGERS. But tell me, where did all those wonderful things come from?

HEDVIG. Oh, an old sea captain once lived here, and he brought them home with him. They used to call him "The Flying Dutchman." That was curious, because he wasn't a Dutchman at all.

GREGERS. Was he not?

HEDVIG. No. But at last he was drowned at sea; and so he left all those things behind him.

GREGERS. Tell me now—when you are sitting in there looking at the pictures, don't you wish you could travel and see the real world for yourself?

HEDVIG. Oh, no! I mean always to stay at home and help father and mother.

GREGERS. To retouch photographs?

HEDVIG. No, not only that. I should love above everything to learn to engrave pictures like those in the English books.

GREGERS. H'm. What does your father say to that?

\* *A New and Universal History of the Cities of London and Westminster*, by Walter Harrison, London, 1775, folio.

HEDVIG. I don't think father likes it; father is strange about such things. Only think, he talks of my learning basket-making and straw-plaiting! But I don't think that would be much good.

GREGERS. Oh, no, I don't think so either.

HEDVIG. But father was right in saying that if I had learnt basket-making I could have made the new basket for the wild duck.

GREGERS. So you could; and it was you that ought to have done it, wasn't it?

HEDVIG. Yes, for it's my wild duck.

GREGERS. Of course it is.

HEDVIG. Yes, it belongs to me. But I lend it to father and grandfather as often as they please.

GREGERS. Indeed? What do they do with it?

HEDVIG. Oh, they look after it, and build places for it, and so on.

GREGERS. I see; for no doubt the wild duck is by far the most distinguished inhabitant of the garret?

HEDVIG. Yes, indeed she is; for she is a real wild fowl, you know. And then she is so much to be pitied; she has no one to care for, poor thing.

GREGERS. She has no family, as the rabbits have . . .

HEDVIG. No. The hens, too, many of them, were chickens together; but she has been taken right away from all her friends. And then there is so much that is strange about the wild duck. Nobody knows her, and nobody knows where she came from either.

GREGERS. And she has been down in the depths of the sea.

HEDVIG (*with a quick glance at him, represses a smile and asks*). Why do you say "the depths of the sea"?

GREGERS. What else should I say?

HEDVIG. You could say "the bottom of the sea." \*

GREGERS. Oh, mayn't I just as well say the depths of the sea?

HEDVIG. Yes; but it sounds so strange to me when other people speak of the depths of the sea.

GREGERS. Why so? Tell me why?

HEDVIG. No, I won't; it's so stupid.

\* Gregers here uses the old-fashioned expression "havsens bund," while Hedvig would have him use the more commonplace "havets bund" or "havbunden."



GREGERS. Oh, no, I am sure it's not. Do tell me why you smiled.

HEDVIG. Well, this is the reason: whenever I come to realize suddenly—in a flash—what is in there, it always seems to me that the whole room and everything in it should be called "the depths of the sea."—But that is so stupid.

GREGERS. You mustn't say that.

HEDVIG. Oh, yes, for you know it is only a garret.

GREGERS (*looks fixedly at her*). Are you so sure of that?

HEDVIG (*astonished*). That it's a garret?

GREGERS. Are you quite certain of it?

(*HEDVIG is silent, and looks at him open-mouthed. GINA comes in from the kitchen with the table things.*)

GREGERS (*rising*). I have come in upon you too early.

GINA. Oh, you must be somewhere; and we're nearly ready now, anyway. Clear the table, Hedvig.

(*HEDVIG clears away her things; she and GINA lay the cloth during what follows. GREGERS seats himself in the armchair and turns over an album.*)

GREGERS. I hear you can retouch, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA (*with a side glance*). Yes, I can.

GREGERS. That was exceedingly lucky.

GINA. How—lucky?

GREGERS. Since Ekdal took to photography, I mean.

HEDVIG. Mother can take photographs, too.

GINA. Oh, yes; I was bound to learn that.

GREGERS. So it is really you that carry on the business, I suppose?

GINA. Yes, when Ekdal hasn't time himself . . .

GREGERS. He is a great deal taken up with his old father, I daresay.

GINA. Yes; and then you can't expect a man like Ekdal to do nothing but take car-de-visits of Dick, Tom and Harry.

GREGERS. I quite agree with you; but having once gone in for the thing . . .

GINA. You can surely understand, Mr. Werle, that Ekdal's not like one of your common photographers.

GREGERS. Of course not; but still . . .

(*A shot is fired within the garret.*)

GREGERS (*starting up*). What's that?

GINA. Ugh! now they're firing again!

GREGERS. Have they firearms in there?

HEDVIG. They are out shooting.

GREGERS. What! (*At the door of the garret*) Are you shooting, Hialmar?

HIALMAR (*inside the net*). Are you there? I didn't know; I was so taken up . . .  
(*To HEDVIG*) Why did you not let us know? (*Comes into the studio.*)

GREGERS. Do you go shooting in the garret?

HIALMAR (*showing a double-barrelled pistol*). Oh, only with this thing.

GINA. Yes, you and grandfather will do yourselves a mischief some day with that there pigstol.

HIALMAR (*with irritation*). I believe I have told you that this kind of firearm is called a pistol.

GINA. Oh, that doesn't make it much better, that I can see.

GREGERS. So you have become a sportsman, too, Hialmar?

HIALMAR. Only a little rabbit-shooting now and then. Mostly to please father, you understand.

GINA. Men are strange beings; they must always have something to pervert themselves with.

HIALMAR (*snappishly*). Just so; we must always have something to divert ourselves with.

GINA. Yes, that's just what I say.

HIALMAR. H'm. (*To GREGERS*) You see the garret is fortunately so situated that no one can hear us shooting. (*Lays the pistol on the top shelf of the bookcase*) Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! One of the barrels is loaded; remember that.

GREGERS (*looking through the net*). You have a fowling-piece, too, I see.

HIALMAR. That is father's old gun. It's of no use now; something has gone wrong with the lock. But it's fun to have it all the same; for we can take it to pieces now and then, and clean and grease it, and screw it together again.—Of course, it's mostly father that fiddle-faddles with all that sort of thing.

HEDVIG (*beside GREGERS*). Now you can see the wild duck properly.

GREGERS. I was just looking at her. One of her wings seems to me to droop a bit.

HEDVIG. Well, no wonder; her wing was broken, you know.

GREGERS. And she trails one foot a little. Isn't that so?

HIALMAR. Perhaps a very little bit.

HEDVIG. Yes, it was by that foot the dog took hold of her.

HIALMAR. But otherwise she hasn't the least thing the matter with her; and that is simply marvellous for a creature that has a charge of shot in her body and has been between a dog's teeth . . .

GREGERS (*with a glance at HEDVIG*) . . . and that has lain in the depths of the sea—so long.

HEDVIG (*smiling*). Yes.

GINA (*laying the table*). That blessed wild duck! What a lot of fuss you do make over her.

HIALMAR. H'm;—will lunch soon be ready?

GINA. Yes, directly. Hedvig, you must come and help me now.

(GINA and HEDVIG go out into the kitchen.)

HIALMAR (*in a low voice*). I think you had better not stand there looking in at father; he doesn't like it. (GREGERS moves away from the gullet door.) Besides, I may as well shut up before the others come. (*Claps his hands to drive the fowls back*) Shh-shh, in with you! (*Draws up the curtain and pulls the doors together*) All the contrivances are my own invention. It's really quite amusing to have things of this sort to potter with and to put to rights when they get out of order. And it's absolutely necessary, too; for Gina objects to having rabbits and fowls in the studio.

GREGERS. To be sure; and I suppose the studio is your wife's special department?

HIALMAR. As a rule, I leave the everyday details of business to her; for then I can take refuge in the parlour and give my mind to more important things.

GREGERS. What things may they be, Hialmar?

HIALMAR. I wonder you have not asked that question sooner. But perhaps you haven't heard of the invention?

GREGERS. The invention? No.

HIALMAR. Really? Have you not? Oh, no, out there in the wilds . . .

GREGERS. So you have invented something, have you?

HIALMAR. It is not quite completed yet; but I am working at it. You can easily imagine that when I resolved to devote myself to photography, it wasn't simply with the idea of taking likenesses of all sorts of commonplace people.

GREGERS. No; your wife was saying the same thing just now.

HIALMAR. I swore that if I consecrated my powers to this handicraft, I would so exalt it that it should become both an art and a science. And to that end I determined to make this great invention.

GREGERS. And what is the nature of the invention? What purpose does it serve?

HIALMAR. Oh, my dear fellow, you mustn't ask for details yet. It takes time, you see. And you must not think that my motive is vanity. It is not for my own sake that I am working. Oh, no; it is my life's mission that stands before me night and day.

GREGERS. What is your life's mission?

HIALMAR. Do you forget the old man with the silver hair?

GREGERS. Your poor father? Well, but what can you do for him?

HIALMAR. I can raise up his self-respect from the dead, by restoring the name of Ekdal to honour and dignity.

GREGERS. Then that is your life's mission?

HIALMAR. Yes. I will rescue the shipwrecked man. For shipwrecked he was, by the very first blast of the storm. Even while those terrible investigations were going on, he was no longer himself. That pistol there—the one we use to shoot rabbits with—has played its part in the tragedy of the house of Ekdal.

GREGERS. The pistol? Indeed?

HIALMAR. When the sentence of imprisonment was passed—he had the pistol in his hand . . .

GREGERS. Had he . . . ?

HIALMAR. Yes; but he dared not use it. His courage failed him. So broken, so demoralized was he even then! Oh, can you understand it? He, a soldier; he, who had shot nine bears, and who was descended from two lieutenant-colonels—one after the other, of course. Can you understand it, Gregers?

GREGERS. Yes, I understand it well enough.

HIALMAR. I cannot. And once more the pistol played a part in the history of our house. When he had put on the grey clothes and was under lock and key—oh, that was a terrible time for me, I can tell you. I kept the blinds drawn down over both my windows. When I peeped out, I saw the sun shining as if nothing had happened. I could not understand it. I saw people going along the street, laughing and talking about indifferent things. I could not understand it. It seemed to me that the whole of existence must be at a standstill—as if under an eclipse.

GREGERS. I felt that, too, when my mother died.

HIALMAR. It was in such an hour that Hialmar Ekdal pointed the pistol at his own breast.

GREGERS. You, too, thought of . . . !

HIALMAR. Yes.

GREGERS. But you did not fire?

HIALMAR. No. At the decisive moment I won the victory over myself. I remained in life. But I can assure you it takes some courage to choose life under circumstances like those.

GREGERS. Well, that depends on how you look at it.

HIALMAR. Yes, indeed, it takes courage. But I am glad I was firm; for now I shall soon perfect my invention; and Dr. Relling thinks, as I do myself, that father may be allowed to wear his uniform again. I will demand that as my sole reward.

GREGERS. So that is what he meant about his uniform . . . ?

HIALMAR. Yes, that is what he most yearns for. You can't think how my heart bleeds for him. Every time we celebrate any little family festival—Gina's and my wedding-day, or whatever it may be—in comes the old man in the lieutenant's uniform of happier days. But if he only hears a knock at the door—for he daren't show himself to strangers, you know—he hurries back to his room again as fast as his old legs can carry him. Oh, it's heart-rending for a son to see such things!

GREGERS. How long do you think it will take you to finish your invention?

HIALMAR. Come now, you mustn't expect me to enter into particulars like that. An invention is not a thing completely under one's own control. It depends largely on inspiration—on intuition—and it is almost impossible to predict when the inspiration may come.

GREGERS. But it's advancing?

HIALMAR. Yes, certainly, it is advancing. I turn it over in my mind every day; I am full of it. Every afternoon, when I have had my dinner, I shut myself up in the parlour, where I can ponder undisturbed. But I can't be goaded to it; it's not a bit of good; Relling says so, too.

GREGERS. And you don't think that all that business in the garret draws you off and distracts you too much?

HIALMAR. No, no, no; quite the contrary. You mustn't say that. I cannot be everlastingly absorbed in the same laborious train of thought. I must have something alongside of it to fill up the time of waiting. The inspiration, the intuition, you see—when it comes, it comes, and there's an end of it.

GREGERS. My dear Hialmar, I almost think you have something of the wild duck in you.

HALMAR. Something of the wild duck? How do you mean?

GREGERS. You have dived down and bitten yourself fast in the undergrowth.

HALMAR. Are you alluding to the well-nigh fatal shot that has broken my father's wing—and mine, too?

GREGERS. Not exactly to that. I don't say that your wing has been broken; but you have strayed into a poisonous marsh, Hialmar; an insidious disease has taken hold of you, and you have sunk down to die in the dark.

HALMAR. I? To die in the dark? Look here, Gregers, you must really leave off talking such nonsense.

GREGERS. Don't be afraid; I shall find a way to help you up again. I, too, have a mission in life now; I found it yesterday.

HALMAR. That's all very well; but you will please leave me out of it. I can assure you that—apart from my very natural melancholy, of course—I am as contented as any one can wish to be.

GREGERS. Your contentment is an effect of the marsh poison.

HALMAR. Now, my dear Gregers, pray do not go on about disease and poison; I am not used to that sort of talk. In my house nobody ever speaks to me about unpleasant things.

GREGERS. Ah, that I can easily believe.

HALMAR. It's not good for me, you see. And there are no marsh poisons here, as you express it. The poor photographer's roof is lowly, I know—and my circumstances are narrow. But I am an inventor, and I am the breadwinner of a family. That exalts me above my mean surroundings.—Ah, here comes lunch!

(GINA and HEDVIG bring bottles of ale, a decanter of brandy, glasses, etc. At the same time, RELLING and MOLVIK enter from the passage; they are both without hat or overcoat. MOLVIK is dressed in black.)

GINA (*placing the things upon the table*). Ah, you two have come in the nick of time.

RELLING. Molvik got it into his head that he could smell herring-salad, and then there was no holding him.—Good morning again, Ekdal.

HALMAR. Gregers, let me introduce you to Mr. Molvik. Doctor . . . Oh, you know Relling, don't you?

GREGERS. Yes, slightly.

RELLING. Oh, Mr. Werle, junior! Yes, we two have had one or two little skirmishes up at the Höidal works. You've just moved in?

GREGERS. I moved in this morning.

RELLING. Molvik and I live right under you; so you haven't far to go for the doctor and the clergyman, if you should need anything in that line.

GREGERS. Thanks, it's not quite unlikely; for yesterday we were thirteen at table.

HIALMAR. Oh, come now, don't let us get upon unpleasant subjects again!

RELLING. You may make your mind easy, Ekdal; I'll be hanged if the finger of fate points to you.

HIALMAR. I should hope not, for the sake of my family. But let us sit down now, and eat and drink and be merry.

GREGERS. Shall we not wait for your father?

HIALMAR. No, his lunch will be taken in to him later. Come along!

*(The men seat themselves at table, and eat and drink. GINA and HEDVIG go in and out and wait upon them.)*

RELLING. Molvik was frightfully stewed yesterday, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA. Really? Yesterday again?

RELLING. Didn't you hear him when I brought him home last night?

GINA. No, I can't say I did.

RELLING. That was a good thing, for Molvik was disgusting last night.

GINA. Is that true, Molvik?

MOLVIK. Let us draw a veil over last night's proceedings. That sort of thing is totally foreign to my better self.

RELLING *(to GREGERS)*. It comes over him like a sort of possession, and then I have to go out on the loose with him. Mr. Molvik is dæmonic, you see.

GREGERS. Dæmonic?

RELLING. Molvik is dæmonic, yes.

GREGERS. H'm.

RELLING. And dæmonic natures are not made to walk straight through the world; they must meander a little now and then.—Well, so you still stick up there at those horrible grimy works?

GREGERS. I have stuck there until now.

RELLING. And did you ever manage to collect that claim you went about presenting?

GREGERS. Claim? *(Understands him)* Ah, I see.

HIALMAR. Have you been presenting claims, Gregers?

GREGERS. Oh, nonsense.

RELLING. Faith, but he has, though! He went around to all the cotters' cabins presenting something he called "the claim of the ideal."

GREGERS. I was young then.

RELLING. You're right; you were very young. And as for the claim of the ideal—you never got it honoured while *I* was up there.

GREGERS. Nor since either.

RELLING. Ah, then you've learnt to knock a little discount off, I expect.

GREGERS. Never, when I have a true man to deal with.

HIALMAR. No, I should think, indeed. A little butter, Gina.

RELLING. And a slice of bacon for Molvik.

MOLVIK. Ugh, not bacon! (*A knock at the garret door.*)

HIALMAR. Open the door, Hedvig; father wants to come out.

(*HEDVIG goes and opens the door a little way; EKDAL enters with a fresh rabbit-skin; she closes the door after him.*)

EKDAL. Good morning, gentlemen! Good sport today. Shot a big one.

HIALMAR. And you've gone and skinned it without waiting for me . . . !

EKDAL. Salted it, too. It's good tender meat, is rabbit; it's sweet; it tastes like sugar. Good appetite to you gentlemen. (*Goes into his room.*)

MOLVIK (*rising*). Excuse me . . . ; I can't . . . ; I must get downstairs immediately . . .

RELLING. Drink some soda water, man!

MOLVIK (*hurrying away*). Ugh—ugh! (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

RELLING (*to HIALMAR*). Let us drain a glass to the old hunter.

HIALMAR (*clinks glasses with him*). To the undaunted sportsman who has looked death in the face!

RELLING. To the grey-haired . . . (*Drinks*) By-the-bye, is his hair grey or white?

HIALMAR. Something between the two, I fancy; for that matter, he has very few hairs left of any colour.

RELLING. Well, well, one can get through the world with a wig. After all, you are a happy man, Ekdal; you have your noble mission to labour for . . .

HIALMAR. And I do labour, I can tell you.

RELLING. And then you have your excellent wife, shuffling quietly in and out in her felt slippers, and that see-saw walk of hers, and making everything cosy and comfortable about you.



HIALMAR. Yes, Gina—(*nods to her*)—you are a good helpmate on the path of life.

GINA. Oh, don't sit there cricketizing me.

RELLING. And your Hedvig, too, Ekdal!

HIALMAR (*affected*). The child, yes! The child before everything! Hedvig, come here to me. (*Strokes her hair*) What day is it tomorrow, eh?

HEDVIG (*shaking him*). Oh, no, you're not to say anything, father.

HIALMAR. It cuts me to the heart when I think what a poor affair it will be; only a little festivity in the garret . . .

HEDVIG. Oh, but that's just what I like!

RELLING. Just you wait till the wonderful invention sees the light, Hedvig!

HIALMAR. Yes, indeed—then you shall see . . . ! Hedvig, I have resolved to make your future secure. You shall live in comfort all your days. I will demand—something or other—on your behalf. That shall be the poor inventor's sole reward.

HEDVIG (*whispering, with her arms round his neck*). Oh, you dear, kind father!

RELLING (*to GREGERS*). Come now, don't you find it pleasant, for once in a way, to sit at a well-spread table in a happy family circle?

HIALMAR. Ah, yes, I really prize these social hours.

GREGERS. For my part, I don't thrive in marsh vapours.

RELLING. Marsh vapours?

HIALMAR. Oh, don't begin with that stuff again!

GINA. Goodness knows there's no marsh vapours in this house, Mr. Werle; I give the place a good airing every blessed day.

GREGERS (*leaves the table*). No airing you can give will drive out the taint I mean.

HIALMAR. Taint!

GINA. Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal!

RELLING. Excuse me—may it not be you yourself that have brought the taint from those mines up there?

GREGERS. It is like you to call what I bring into this house a taint.

RELLING (*goes up to him*). Look here, Mr. Werle, junior: I have a strong suspicion that you are still carrying about that "claim of the ideal," large as life, in your coat-tail pocket.

GREGERS. I carry it in my breast.

RELLING. Well, wherever you carry it, I advise you not to come dunning us with it, so long as I am on the premises.

GREGERS. And if I do so nonetheless?

RELLING. Then you'll go head-foremost down the stairs; now I've warned you.

HIALMAR (*rising*). Oh, but Relling . . . !

GREGERS. Yes, you may turn me out . . .

GINA (*interposing between them*). We can't have that, Relling. But I must say, Mr. Werle, it ill becomes you to talk about vapours and taints, after all the mess you made with your stove. (*A knock at the passage door.*)

HEDVIG. Mother, there's somebody knocking.

HIALMAR. There now, we're going to have a whole lot of people!

GINA. I'll go . . . (*Goes over and opens the door, starts, and draws back*) Oh-oh, dear!

(WERLE, in a fur coat, advances one step into the room.)

WERLE. Excuse me; but I think my son is staying here.

GINA (*with a gulp*). Yes.

HIALMAR (*approaching him*). Won't you do us the honour to . . . ?

WERLE. Thank you, I merely wish to speak to my son.

GREGERS. What is it? Here I am.

WERLE. I want a few words with you, in your room.

GREGERS. In my room? Very well . . . (*About to go.*)

GINA. No, no, your room's not in a fit state . . .

WERLE. Well then, out in the passage here; I want to have a few words with you alone.

HIALMAR. You can have them here, sir. Come into the parlour, Relling.

(HIALMAR and RELING go off to the right. GINA takes HEDVIG with her into the kitchen.)

GREGERS (*after a short pause*). Well, now we are alone.

WERLE. From something you let fall last evening, and from your coming to lodge with the Ekdals, I can't help inferring that you intend to make yourself unpleasant to me, in one way or another.

GREGERS. I intend to open Hialmar Ekdal's eyes. He shall see his position as it really is—that is all.

WERLE. Is that the mission in life you spoke of yesterday?

GREGERS. Yes. You have left me no other.

WERLE. Is it I, then, that crippled your mind, Gregers?

GREGERS. You have crippled my whole life. I am not thinking of all that about mother . . . But it's thanks to you that I am continually haunted and harassed by a guilty conscience.

WERLE. Indeed! It is your conscience that troubles you, is it?

GREGERS. I ought to have taken a stand against you when the trap was set for Lieutenant Ekdal. I ought to have cautioned him; for I had a misgiving as to what was in the wind.

WERLE. Yes, that was the time to have spoken.

GREGERS. I did not dare to, I was so cowed and spiritless. I was mortally afraid of you—not only then, but long afterwards.

WERLE. You have got over that fear now, it appears.

GREGERS. Yes, fortunately. The wrong done to old Ekdal, both by me and by—others, can never be undone; but Hjalmar I can rescue from all the falsehood and deception that are bringing him to ruin.

WERLE. Do you think that will be doing him a kindness?

GREGERS. I have not the least doubt of it.

WERLE. You think our worthy photographer is the sort of man to appreciate such friendly offices?

GREGERS. Yes, I do.

WERLE. H'm—we shall see.

GREGERS. Besides, if I am to go on living, I must try to find some cure for my sick conscience.

WERLE. It will never be sound. Your conscience has been sickly from childhood. That is a legacy from your mother, Gregers—the only one she left you.

GREGERS (*with a scornful half-smile*). Have you not yet forgiven her for the mistake you made in supposing she would bring you a fortune?

WERLE. Don't let us wander from the point.—Then you hold to your purpose of setting young Ekdal upon what you imagine to be the right scent?

GREGERS. Yes, that is my fixed resolve.

WERLE. Well, in that case I might have spared myself this visit; for, of course, it is useless to ask whether you will return home with me?

GREGERS. Quite useless.

WERLE. And I suppose you won't enter the firm either?

GREGERS. No.

WERLE. Very good. But as I am thinking of marrying again, your share in the property will fall to you at once.\*

GREGERS (*quickly*). No, I do not want that.

WERLE. You don't want it?

GREGERS. No, I dare not take it, for conscience' sake.

WERLE (*after a pause*). Are you going up to the works again?

GREGERS. No; I consider myself released from your service.

WERLE. But what are you going to do?

GREGERS. Only to fulfill my mission; nothing more.

WERLE. Well, but afterwards? What are you going to live upon?

GREGERS. I have laid by a little out of my salary.

WERLE. How long will that last?

GREGERS. I think it will last my time.

WERLE. What do you mean?

GREGERS. I shall answer no more questions.

WERLE. Good-bye then, Gregers.

GREGERS. Good-bye. (WERLE *goes*.)

HIALMAR (*peeping in*). He's gone, isn't he?

GREGERS. Yes.

(HIALMAR and RELING enter; also GINA and HEDVIG from the kitchen.)

RELING. That luncheon-party was a failure.

GREGERS. Put on your coat, Hialmar; I want you to come for a long walk with me.

HIALMAR. With pleasure. What was it your father wanted? Had it anything to do with me?

GREGERS. Come along. We must have a talk. I'll go and put on my overcoat. (*Goes out by the passage door*.)

\* By Norwegian law, before a widower can marry again, a certain proportion of his property must be settled on his children by his former marriage.

GINA. You shouldn't go out with him, Ekdal.

RELLING. No, don't you do it. Stay where you are.

HIALMAR (*gets his hat and overcoat*). Oh, nonsense! When a friend of my youth feels impelled to open his mind to me in private . . .

RELLING. But devil take it—don't you see that the fellow's mad, cracked, demented!

GINA. There, what did I tell you! His mother before him had crazy fits like that sometimes.

HIALMAR. The more need for a friend's watchful eye. (*To GINA*) Be sure you have dinner ready in good time. Good-bye for the present. (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

RELLING. It's a thousand pities the fellow didn't go to hell through one of the Höidal mines.

GINA. Good Lord! what makes you say that?

RELLING (*muttering*). Oh, I have my own reasons.

GINA. Do you think young Werle is really mad?

RELLING. No, worse luck; he's no madder than most other people. But one disease he has certainly got in his system.

GINA. What is it that's the matter with him?

RELLING. Well, I'll tell you, Mrs. Ekdal. He is suffering from an acute attack of integrity.

GINA. Integrity?

HEDVIG. Is that a kind of disease?

RELLING. Yes, it's a national disease; but it only appears sporadically. (*Nods to GINA*) Thanks for your hospitality. (*He goes out by the passage door.*)

GINA (*moving restlessly to and fro*). Ugh, that Gregers Werle—he was always a wretched creature.

HEDVIG (*standing by the table and looking searchingly at her*). I think all this is very strange.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

#### ACT IV

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio. A photograph has just been taken; a camera with the cloth over it, a pedestal, two chairs, a folding table, etc., are standing out in the room. Afternoon light; the sun is going down; a little later it begins to grow dusk.

GINA *stands in the passage doorway, with a little box and a wet glass plate in her hand, and is speaking to somebody outside.*

GINA. Yes, certainly. When I make a promise I keep it. The first dozen shall be ready on Monday. Good afternoon.

*(Someone is heard going downstairs. GINA shuts the door, slips the plate into the box and puts it into the covered camera.)*

HEDVIG *(comes in from the kitchen)*. Are they gone?

GINA *(tidying up)*. Yes, thank goodness, I've got rid of them at last.

HEDVIG. But can you imagine why father hasn't come home yet?

GINA. Are you sure he's not down in Relling's room?

HEDVIG. No, he's not; I ran down the kitchen stair just now and asked.

GINA. And his dinner standing and getting cold, too.

HEDVIG. Yes, I can't understand it. Father's always so careful to be home to dinner!

GINA. Oh, he'll be here directly, you'll see.

HEDVIG. I wish he would come; everything seems so queer today.

GINA *(calls out)*. There he is!

*(HIALMAR EKDAL comes in at the passage door.)*

HEDVIG *(going to him)*. Father! Oh, what a time we've been waiting for you!

GINA *(glancing sidelong at him)*. You've been out a long time, Ekdal.

HIALMAR *(without looking at her)*. Rather long, yes.

*(He takes off his overcoat; GINA and HEDVIG go to help him; he motions them away.)*

GINA. Perhaps you've had dinner with Werle?

HIALMAR *(hanging up his coat)*. No.

GINA *(going towards the kitchen door)*. Then I'll bring some in for you.

HIALMAR. No; let the dinner alone. I want nothing to eat.

HEDVIG *(going nearer to him)*. Are you not well, father?

HIALMAR. Well? Oh, yes, well enough. We have had a tiring walk, Gregers and I.

GINA. You didn't ought to have gone so far, Ekdal; you're not used to it.

HIALMAR. H'm; there's many a thing a man must get used to in this world. *(Wanders about the room)* Has any one been here whilst I was out?

GINA. Nobody but the two sweethearts.

HALMAR. No new orders?

GINA. No, not today.

HEDVIG. There will be some tomorrow, father, you'll see.

HALMAR. I hope there will; for tomorrow I am going to set to work in real earnest.

HEDVIG. Tomorrow! Don't you remember what day it is tomorrow?

HALMAR. Oh, yes, by-the-bye. . . . Well, the day after, then. Henceforth I mean to do everything myself; I shall take all the work into my own hands.

GINA. Why, what can be the good of that, Ekdal? It'll only make your life a burden to you. I can manage the photography all right; and you can go on working at your invention.

HEDVIG. And think of the wild duck, father,—and all the hens and rabbits and . . . !

HALMAR. Don't talk to me of all that trash! From tomorrow I will never set foot in the garret again.

HEDVIG. Oh, but father, you promised that we should have a little party . . .

HALMAR. H'm, true. Well, then, from the day after tomorrow. I should almost like to wring that cursed wild duck's neck!

HEDVIG (*sobs*). The wild duck!

GINA. Well, I never!

HEDVIG (*shaking him*). Oh, no, father; you know it's my wild duck!

HALMAR. That is why I don't do it. I haven't the heart to—for your sake, Hedvig. But in my inmost soul I feel that I ought to do it. I ought not to tolerate under my roof a creature that has been through those hands.

GINA. Why, good gracious, even if grandfather did get it from that poor creature, Pettersen . . .

HALMAR (*wandering about*). There are certain claims—what shall I call them?—let me say claims of the ideal—certain obligations, which a man cannot disregard without injury to his soul.

HEDVIG (*going after him*). But think of the wild duck,—the poor wild duck!

HALMAR (*stops*). I tell you I will spare it—for your sake. Not a hair of its head shall be—I mean, it shall be spared. There are greater problems than that to be dealt with. But you should go out a little now, Hedvig, as usual; it is getting dusk enough for you now.

HEDVIG. No, I don't care about going out now.

HALMAR. Yes, do; it seems to me your eyes are blinking a great deal; all these vapours in here are bad for you. The air is heavy under this roof.

HEDVIG. Very well, then, I'll run down the kitchen stair and go for a little walk. My cloak and hat?—oh, they're in my own room. Father—be sure you don't do the wild duck any harm whilst I'm out.

HALMAR. Not a feather of its head shall be touched. (*Draws her to him*) You and I, Hedvig—we two . . . ! Well, go along.

(*HEDVIG nods to her parents and goes out through the kitchen.*)

HALMAR (*walks about without looking up*). Gina.

GINA. Yes?

HALMAR. From tomorrow—or, say, from the day after tomorrow—I should like to keep the household account-book myself.

GINA. Do you want to keep the accounts, too, now?

HALMAR. Yes; or to check the receipts at any rate.

GINA. Lord help us! that's soon done.

HALMAR. One would hardly think so; at any rate, you seem to make the money go a very long way. (*Stops and looks at her*) How do you manage it?

GINA. It's because me and Hedvig, we need so little.

HALMAR. Is it the case that father is very liberally paid for the copying he does for Mr. Werle?

GINA. I don't know as he gets anything out of the way. I don't know the rates for that sort of work.

HALMAR. Well, what does he get, about? Let me hear!

GINA. Oh, it varies; I daresay it'll come to about as much as he costs us, with a little pocket-money over.

HALMAR. As much as he costs us! And you have never told me this before!

GINA. No. How could I tell you? It pleased you so much to think he got everything from you.

HALMAR. And he gets it from Mr. Werle.

GINA. Oh, well, he has plenty and to spare, he has.

HALMAR. Light the lamp for me, please!

GINA (*lighting the lamp*). And, of course, we don't know as it's Mr. Werle himself, it may be Gråberg . . .



HIALMAR. Why attempt such an evasion?

GINA. I don't know; I only thought . . .

HIALMAR. H'm.

GINA. It wasn't me that got grandfather that copying. It was Bertha, when she used to come about us.

HIALMAR. It seems to me your voice is trembling.

GINA (*putting the lamp-shade on*). Is it?

HIALMAR. And your hands are shaking, are they not?

GINA (*firmly*). Come right out with it, Ekdal. What has he been saying about me?

HIALMAR. Is it true—can it be true that—that there was an—an understanding between you and Mr. Werle, while you were in service there?

GINA. That's not true. Not at that time. Mr. Werle did come after me, that's a fact. And his wife thought there was something in it, and then she made such a hocus-pocus and hurly-burly, and she hustled me and bustled me about so, that I left her service.

HIALMAR. But afterwards, then?

GINA. Well, then I went home. And mother—well, she wasn't the woman you took her for, Ekdal; she kept on worrying and worrying at me about one thing and another—for Mr. Werle was a widower by that time.

HIALMAR. Well, and then?

GINA. I suppose you've got to know it. He gave me no peace until he'd had his way.

HIALMAR (*striking his hands together*). And this is the mother of my child! How could you hide this from me?

GINA. Yes, it was wrong of me; I ought certainly to have told you long ago.

HIALMAR. You should have told me at the very first;—then I should have known the sort of woman you were.

GINA. But would you have married me all the same?

HIALMAR. How can you dream that I would?

GINA. That's just why I didn't dare tell you anything, then. For I'd come to care for you so much, you see; and I couldn't go and make myself utterly miserable . . .

HIALMAR (*walks about*). And this is my Hedvig's mother. And to know that all I see before me—(*kicks a chair*)—all that I call my home—I owe to a favoured predecessor! Oh, that scoundrel Werle!

GINA. Do you repent of the fourteen—the fifteen years we've lived together?

HIALMAR (*placing himself in front of her*). Have you not every day, every hour, repented of the spider's-web of deceit you have spun around me? Answer me that! How could you help writhing with penitence and remorse?

GINA. Oh, my dear Ekdal, I've had all I could do to look after the house and get through the day's work . . .

HIALMAR. Then you never think of reviewing your past?

GINA. No; Heaven knows I'd almost forgotten those old stories.

HIALMAR. Oh, this dull, callous contentment! To me there is something revolting about it. Think of it—never so much as a twinge of remorse!

GINA. But tell me, Ekdal—what would have become of you if you hadn't had a wife like me?

HIALMAR. Like you . . . !

GINA. Yes; for you know I've always been a bit more practical and wide-awake than you. Of course I'm a year or two older.

HIALMAR. What would have become of me!

GINA. You'd got into all sorts of bad ways when first you met me; that you can't deny.

HIALMAR. "Bad ways" do you call them? Little do you know what a man goes through when he is in grief and despair—especially a man of my fiery temperament.

GINA. Well, well, that may be so. And I've no reason to crow over you, neither; for you turned a moral of a husband, that you did, as soon as ever you had a house and home of your own.—And now we'd got everything so nice and cosy about us; and me and Hedvig was just thinking we'd soon be able to let ourselves go a bit, in the way of both food and clothes.

HIALMAR. In the swamp of deceit, yes.

GINA. I wish to goodness that detestable thing had never set his foot inside our doors!

HIALMAR. And I, too, thought my home such a pleasant one. That was a delusion. Where shall I now find the elasticity of spirit to bring my invention into the world of reality? Perhaps it will die with me; and then it will be your past, Gina, that will have killed it.

GINA (*nearly crying*). You mustn't say such things, Ekdal. Me, that has only wanted to do the best I could for you, all my days!

HIALMAR. I ask you, what becomes of the breadwinner's dream? When I used to lie in there on the sofa and brood over my invention, I had a clear enough presentiment that it would sap my vitality to the last drop. I felt even then that the

day when I held the patent in my hand—that day—would bring my—release. And then it was my dream that you should live on after me, the dead inventor's well-to-do widow.

GINA (*drying her tears*). No, you mustn't talk like that, Ekdal. May the Lord never let me see the day I am left a widow!

HIALMAR. Oh, the whole dream has vanished. It is all over now. All over!

(GREGERS WERLE *opens the passage door cautiously and looks in.*)

GREGERS. May I come in?

HIALMAR. Yes, come in.

GREGERS (*comes forward, his face beaming with satisfaction, and holds out both his hands to them*). Well, dear friends . . . ! (*Looks from one to the other and whispers to HIALMAR*) Have you not done it yet?

HIALMAR (*aloud*). It is done.

GREGERS. It is?

HIALMAR. I have passed through the bitterest moments of my life.

GREGERS. But also, I trust, the most ennobling.

HIALMAR. Well, at any rate, we have got through it for the present.

GINA. God forgive you, Mr. Werle.

GREGERS (*in great surprise*). But I don't understand this.

HIALMAR. What don't you understand?

GREGERS. After so great a crisis—a crisis that is to be the starting-point of an entirely new life—of a communion founded on truth and free from all taint of deception . . .

HIALMAR. Yes, yes, I know; I know that quite well.

GREGERS. I confidently expected, when I entered the room, to find the light of transfiguration shining upon me from both husband and wife. And now I see nothing but dullness, oppression, gloom . . .

GINA. Oh, is that it? (*Takes off the lamp-shade.*)

GREGERS. You will not understand me, Mrs. Ekdal. Ah, well, you, I suppose, need time to. . . . But you, Hialmar? Surely you feel a new consecration after the great crisis.

HIALMAR. Yes, of course I do. That is—in a sort of way.

GREGERS. For surely nothing in the world can compare with the joy of forgiving one who has erred and raising her up to oneself in love.

HIALMAR. Do you think a man can so easily throw off the bitter cup I have drained?

GREGERS. No, not a common man, perhaps. But a man like you . . . !

HIALMAR. Good God! I know that well enough. But you must keep me up to it, Gregers. It takes time, you know.

GREGERS. You have much of the wild duck in you, Hialmar. (*RELLING has come in at the passage door.*)

RELLING. Oho! is the wild duck to the fore again?

HIALMAR. Yes; Mr. Werle's wing-broken victim.

RELLING. Mr. Werle's . . . ? So it's him you are talking about?

HIALMAR. Him and—ourselves.

RELLING (*in an undertone to GREGERS*). May the devil fly away with you!

HIALMAR. What is that you are saying?

RELLING. Only uttering a heartfelt wish that this quack-salver would take himself off. If he stays here, he is quite equal to making an utter mess of life, for both of you.

GREGERS. These two will not make a mess of life, Mr. Relling. Of course I won't speak of Hialmar—him we know. But she, too, in her innermost heart, has certainly something loyal and sincere . . .

GINA (*almost crying*). You might have let me alone for what I was, then.

RELLING (*to GREGERS*). Is it rude to ask what you really want in this house?

GREGERS. To lay the foundations of a true marriage.

RELLING. So you don't think Ekdal's marriage is good enough as it is?

GREGERS. No doubt it is as good a marriage as most others, worse luck. But a true marriage it has yet to become.

HIALMAR. You have never had eyes for the claims of the ideal, Relling.

RELLING. Rubbish, my boy!—but excuse me, Mr. Werle: how many—in round numbers—how many true marriages have you seen in the course of your life?

GREGERS. Scarcely a single one.

RELLING. Nor I either.

GREGERS. But I have seen innumerable marriages of the opposite kind. And it has been my fate to see at close quarters what ruin such a marriage can work in two human souls.

HIALMAR. A man's whole moral basis may give way beneath his feet; that is the terrible part of it.

RELLING. Well, I can't say I've ever been exactly married, so I don't pretend to speak with authority. But this I know, that the child enters into the marriage problem. And you must leave the child in peace.

HALMAR. Oh—Hedvig! my poor Hedvig!

RELLING. Yes, you must be good enough to keep Hedvig outside of all this. You two are grown-up people; you are free, in God's name, to make what mess and muddle you please of your life. But you must deal cautiously with Hedvig, I tell you; else you may do her a great injury.

HALMAR. An injury!

RELLING. Yes, or she may do herself an injury—and perhaps others, too.

GINA. How can you know that, Relling?

HALMAR. Her sight is in no immediate danger, is it?

RELLING. I am not talking about her sight. Hedvig is at a critical age. She may be getting all sorts of mischief into her head.

GINA. That's true—I've noticed it already! She's taken to carrying on with the fire, out in the kitchen. She calls it playing at house-on-fire. I'm often scared for fear she really sets fire to the house.

RELLING. You see; I thought as much.

GREGERS (*to RELLING*). But how do you account for that?

RELLING (*sullenly*). Her constitution's changing, sir.

HALMAR. So long as the child has me . . . ! So long as *I* am above ground . . . !  
(*A knock at the door.*)

GINA. Hush, Ekdal; there's some one in the passage. (*Calls out*) Come in!

(*MRS. SÖRBY, in walking dress, comes in.*)

MRS. SÖRBY. Good evening.

GINA (*going towards her*). Is it really you, Bertha?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, of course it is. But I'm disturbing you, I'm afraid?

HALMAR. No, not at all; an emissary from that house . . .

MRS. SÖRBY (*to GINA*). To tell the truth, I hoped your men-folk would be out at this time. I just ran up to have a little chat with you, and to say good-bye.

GINA. Good-bye? Are you going away, then?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, tomorrow morning,—up to Höidal. Mr. Werle started this afternoon. (*Lightly to GREGERS*) He asked me to say good-bye for him.

GINA. Only fancy . . . !

HIALMAR. So Mr. Werle has gone? And now you are going after him?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal?

HIALMAR. I say: beware!

GREGERS. I must explain the situation. My father and Mrs. Sörby are going to be married.

HIALMAR. Going to be married!

GINA. Oh, Bertha! So it's come to that at last!

RELLING (*his voice quivering a little*). This is surely not true?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, my dear Relling, it's true enough.

RELLING. You are going to marry again?

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, it looks like it. Werle has got a special license, and we are going to be married quite quietly, up at the works.

GREGERS. Then I must wish you all happiness, like a dutiful stepson.

MRS. SÖRBY. Thank you very much—if you mean what you say. I certainly hope it will lead to happiness, both for Werle and for me.

RELLING. You have every reason to hope that. Mr. Werle never gets drunk—so far as I know; and I don't suppose he's in the habit of thrashing his wives, like the late lamented horse-doctor.

MRS. SÖRBY. Come now, let Sörby rest in peace. He had his good points, too.

RELLING. Mr. Werle has better ones, I have no doubt.

MRS. SÖRBY. He hasn't frittered away all that was good in him, at any rate. The man who does that must take the consequences.

RELLING. I shall go out with Molvik this evening.

MRS. SÖRBY. You mustn't do that, Relling. Don't do it—for my sake.

RELLING. There's nothing else for it. (*To HIALMAR*) If you're going with us, come along.

GINA. No, thank you. Ekdal doesn't go in for that sort of dissertation.

HIALMAR (*half aloud, in vexation*). Oh, do hold your tongue!

RELLING. Good-bye, Mrs.—Werle. (*Goes out through the passage door.*)

GREGERS (*to MRS. SÖRBY*). You seem to know Dr. Relling pretty intimately.

MRS. SÖRBY. Yes, we have known each other for many years. At one time it seemed as if things might have gone further between us.

GREGERS. It was surely lucky for you that they did not.

MRS. SÖRBY. You may well say that. But I have always been wary of acting on impulse. A woman can't afford absolutely to throw herself away.

GREGERS. Are you not in the least afraid that I may let my father know about this old friendship?

MRS. SÖRBY. Why, of course, I have told him all about it myself.

GREGERS. Indeed?

MRS. SÖRBY. Your father knows every single thing that can, with any truth, be said about me. I have told him all; it was the first thing I did when I saw what was in his mind.

GREGERS. Then you have been franker than most people, I think.

MRS. SÖRBY. I have always been frank. We women find that the best policy.

HIALMAR. What do you say to that, Gina?

GINA. Oh, we're not all alike, us women aren't. Some are made one way, some another.

MRS. SÖRBY. Well, for my part, Gina, I believe it's wisest to do as I've done. And Werle has no secrets either, on his side. That's really the great bond between us, you see. Now he can talk to me as openly as a child. He has never had the chance to do that before. Fancy a man like him, full of health and vigour, passing his whole youth and the best years of his life in listening to nothing but penitential sermons! And very often the sermons had for their text the most imaginary offenses—at least so I understand.

GINA. That's true enough.

GREGERS. If you ladies are going to follow up this topic, I had better withdraw.

MRS. SÖRBY. You can stay as far as that's concerned. I shan't say a word more. But I wanted you to know that I had done nothing secretly or in an underhand way. I may seem to have come in for a great piece of luck; and so I have, in a sense. But after all, I don't think I am getting any more than I am giving. I shall stand by him always, and I can tend and care for him as no one else can, now that he is getting helpless.

HIALMAR. Getting helpless?

GREGERS (*to* MRS. SÖRBY). Hush, don't speak of that here.

MRS. SÖRBY. There is no disguising it any longer, however much he would like to. He is going blind.

HIALMAR (*starts*). Going blind? That's strange. He, too, going blind!

GINA. Lots of people do.

MRS. SÖRBY. And you can imagine what that means to a business man. Well, I shall try as well as I can to make my eyes take the place of his. But I mustn't stay any longer; I have such heaps of things to do.—Oh, by-the-bye, Ekdal, I was to tell you that if there is anything Werle can do for you, you must just apply to Gråberg.

GREGERS. That offer I am sure Hialmar Ekdal will decline with thanks.

MRS. SÖRBY. Indeed? I don't think he used to be so . . .

GINA. No, Bertha, Ekdal doesn't need anything from Mr. Werle now.

HIALMAR (*slowly, and with emphasis*). Will you present my compliments to your future husband and say that I intend very shortly to call upon Mr. Gråberg . . .

GREGERS. What! You don't really mean that?

HIALMAR. To call upon Mr. Gråberg, I say, and obtain an account of the sum I owe his principal. I will pay that debt of honour—ha ha ha! a debt of honour, let us call it! In any case, I will pay the whole with five per cent. interest.

GINA. But, my dear Ekdal, God knows we haven't got the money to do it.

HIALMAR. Be good enough to tell your future husband that I am working assiduously at my invention. Please tell him that what sustains me in this laborious task is the wish to free myself from a torturing burden of debt. That is my reason for proceeding with the invention. The entire profits shall be devoted to releasing me from my pecuniary obligations to your future husband.

MRS. SÖRBY. Something has happened here.

HIALMAR. Yes, you are right.

MRS. SÖRBY. Well, good-bye. I had something else to speak to you about, Gina; but it must keep till another time. Good-bye.

(HIALMAR and GREGERS bow silently. GINA follows MRS. SÖRBY to the door.)

HIALMAR. Not beyond the threshold, Gina!

(MRS. SÖRBY goes; GINA shuts the door after her.)

HIALMAR. There now, Gregers, I have got that burden of debt off my mind.

GREGERS. You soon will, at all events.

HIALMAR. I think my attitude may be called correct.

GREGERS. You are the man I have always taken you for.

HIALMAR. In certain cases, it is impossible to disregard the claim of the ideal. Yet, as the breadwinner of a family, I cannot but writhe and groan under it. I can



tell you it is no joke for a man without capital to attempt the repayment of a long-standing obligation, over which, so to speak, the dust of oblivion had gathered. But it cannot be helped: the Man in me demands his rights.

GREGERS (*laying his hand on HIALMAR's shoulder*). My dear Hialmar—was it not a good thing I came?

HIALMAR. Yes.

GREGERS. Are you not glad to have had your true position made clear to you?

HIALMAR (*somewhat impatiently*). Yes, of course I am. But there is one thing that is revolting to my sense of justice.

GREGERS. And what is that?

HIALMAR. It is that—but I don't know whether I ought to express myself so unreservedly about your father.

GREGERS. Say what you please, so far as I am concerned.

HIALMAR. Well, then, is it not exasperating to think that it is not I, but he, who will realize the true marriage?

GREGERS. How can you say such a thing?

HIALMAR. Because it is clearly the case. Isn't the marriage between your father and Mrs. Sörby founded upon complete confidence, upon entire and unreserved candour on both sides? They hide nothing from each other, they keep no secrets in the background; their relation is based, if I may put it so, on mutual confession and absolution.

GREGERS. Well, what then?

HIALMAR. Well, is not that the whole thing? Did you not yourself say that this was precisely the difficulty that had to be overcome in order to found a true marriage?

GREGERS. But this is a totally different matter, Hialmar. You surely don't compare either yourself or your wife with those two . . . ? Oh, you understand me well enough.

HIALMAR. Say what you like, there is something in all this that hurts and offends my sense of justice. It really looks as if there were no just providence to rule the world.

GINA. Oh, no, Ekdal; for God's sake don't say such things.

GREGERS. H'm; don't let us get upon those questions.

HIALMAR. And yet, after all, I cannot but recognize the guiding finger of fate. He is going blind.

GINA. Oh, you can't be sure of that.

HIALMAR. There is no doubt about it. At all events there ought not to be; for in that very fact lies the righteous retribution. He has hoodwinked a confiding fellow creature in days gone by . . .

GREGERS. I fear he has hoodwinked many.

HIALMAR. And now comes inexorable, mysterious Fate and demands Werle's own eyes.

GINA. Oh, how dare you say such dreadful things! You make me quite scared.

HIALMAR. It is profitable, now and then, to plunge deep into the night side of existence.

(HEDVIG, in her hat and cloak, comes in by the passage door. She is pleasurably excited and out of breath.)

GINA. Are you back already?

HEDVIG. Yes, I didn't care to go any farther. It was a good thing, too; for I've just met some one at the door.

HIALMAR. It must have been that Mrs. Sörby.

HEDVIG. Yes.

HIALMAR (*walks up and down*). I hope you have seen her for the last time.

(*Silence. HEDVIG, discouraged, looks first at one and then at the other, trying to divine their frame of mind.*)

HEDVIG (*approaching, coaxingly*). Father.

HIALMAR. Well—what is it, Hedvig?

HEDVIG. Mrs. Sörby had something with her for me.

HIALMAR (*stops*). For you?

HEDVIG. Yes, something for tomorrow.

GINA. Bertha has always given you some little thing on your birthday.

HIALMAR. What is it?

HEDVIG. Oh, you mustn't see it now. Mother is to give it to me tomorrow morning before I'm up.

HIALMAR. What is all this hocus-pocus that I am to be in the dark about!

HEDVIG (*quickly*). Oh, no, you may see it if you like. It's a big letter. (*Takes the letter out of her cloak pocket.*)

HIALMAR. A letter, too?

HEDVIG. Yes, it is only a letter. The rest will come afterwards, I suppose. But fancy—a letter! I've never had a letter before. And there's "Miss" written upon it. (*Reads*) "Miss Hedvig Ekdal." Only fancy—that's me!

HIALMAR. Let me see that letter.

HEDVIG (*hands it to him*). There it is.

HIALMAR. That is Mr. Werle's hand.

GINA. Are you sure of that, Ekdal?

HIALMAR. Look for yourself.

GINA. Oh, what do I know about such-like things?

HIALMAR. Hedvig, may I open the letter—and read it?

HEDVIG. Yes, of course you may, if you want to.

GINA. No, not tonight, Ekdal; it's to be kept till tomorrow.

HEDVIG (*softly*). Oh can't you let him read it! It's sure to be something good; and then father will be glad, and everything will be nice again.

HIALMAR. I may open it, then?

HEDVIG. Yes, do, father. I'm so anxious to know what it is.

HIALMAR. Well and good. (*Opens the letter, takes out a paper, reads it through and appears bewildered*) What is this . . . !

GINA. What does it say?

HEDVIG. Oh, yes, father—tell us!

HIALMAR. Be quiet. (*Reads it through again; he has turned pale, but says with self-control:*) It is a deed of gift, Hedvig.

HEDVIG. Is it? What sort of gift am I to have?

HIALMAR. Read for yourself.

(*HEDVIG goes over and reads for a time by the lamp.*)

HIALMAR (*half-aloud, clenching his hands*). The eyes! The eyes—and then that letter!

HEDVIG (*leaves off reading*). Yes, but it seems to me that it's grandfather that's to have it.

HIALMAR (*takes letter from her*). Gina—can you understand this?

GINA. I know nothing whatever about it; tell me what's the matter.

HALMAR. Mr. Werle writes to Hedvig that her old grandfather need not trouble himself any longer with the copying, but that he can henceforth draw on the office for a hundred crowns a month . . .

GREGERS. Aha!

HEDVIG. A hundred crowns, mother! I read that.

GINA. What a good thing for grandfather!

HALMAR. . . . a hundred crowns a month so long as he needs it—that means, of course, so long as he lives.

GINA. Well, so he's provided for, poor dear.

HALMAR. But there is more to come. You didn't read that, Hedvig. Afterwards this gift is to pass on to you.

HEDVIG. To me! The whole of it?

HALMAR. He says that the same amount is assured to you for the whole of your life. Do you hear that, Gina?

GINA. Yes, I hear.

HEDVIG. Fancy—all that money for me! (*Shakes him*) Father, father, aren't you glad . . . ?

HALMAR (*eluding her*). Glad! (*Walks about*) Oh, what vistas—what perspectives open up before me! It is Hedvig, Hedvig that he showers these benefactions upon!

GINA. Yes, because it's Hedvig's birthday . . .

HEDVIG. And you'll get it all the same, father! You know quite well I shall give all the money to you and mother.

HALMAR. To mother, yes! There we have it.

GREGERS. Hialmar, this is a trap he is setting for you.

HALMAR. Do you think it's another trap?

GREGERS. When he was here this morning he said: Hialmar Ekdal is not the man you imagine him to be.

HALMAR. Not the man . . . !

GREGERS. That you shall see, he said.

HALMAR. He meant you should see that I would let myself be bought off . . . !

HEDVIG. Oh, mother, what does all this mean?

GINA. Go and take off your things.

(HEDVIG goes out by the kitchen door, half-crying.)

GREGERS. Yes, Hialmar—now is the time to show who was right, he or I.

HIALMAR (*slowly tears the paper across, lays both pieces on the table and says*).  
Here is my answer.

GREGERS. Just what I expected.

HIALMAR (*goes over to GINA, who stands by the stove, and says in a low voice*).  
Now please make a clean breast of it. If the connection between you and him  
was quite over when you—came to care for me, as you call it—why did he place  
us in a position to marry?

GINA. I suppose he thought as he could come and go in our house.

HIALMAR. Only that? Was not he afraid of a possible contingency?

GINA. I don't know what you mean.

HIALMAR. I want to know whether—your child has the right to live under my roof.

GINA (*draws herself up; her eyes flash*). You ask that!

HIALMAR. You shall answer me this one question: Does Hedvig belong to me—  
or . . . ? Well!

GINA (*looking at him with cold defiance*). I don't know.

HIALMAR (*quivering a little*). You don't know!

GINA. How should I know. A creature like me . . .

HIALMAR (*quietly turning away from her*). Then I have nothing more to do in this  
house.

GREGERS. Take care, Hialmar! Think what you are doing!

HIALMAR (*puts on his overcoat*). In this case, there is nothing for a man like me to  
think twice about.

GREGERS. Yes, indeed, there are endless things to be considered. You three must be  
together if you are to attain the true frame of mind for self-sacrifice and for-  
giveness.

HIALMAR. I don't want to attain it. Never, never! My hat! (*Takes his hat*) My  
home has fallen in ruins about me. (*Bursts into tears*) Gregers, I have no child!

HEDVIG (*who has opened the kitchen door*). What is that you're saying? (*Coming  
to him*) Father, father!

GINA. There, you see!

HIALMAR. Don't come near me, Hedvig! Keep far away. I cannot bear to see you.  
Oh! those eyes . . . ! Good-bye. (*Makes for the door.*)

HEDVIG (*clinging close to him and screaming loudly*). No! no! Don't leave me!

GINA (*cries out*). Look at the child, Ekdal! Look at the child!

HALMAR. I will not! I cannot! I must get out—away from all this!

(*He tears himself away from HEDVIG and goes out by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*with despairing eyes*). He is going away from us, mother! He is going away from us! He will never come back again!

GINA. Don't cry, Hedvig. Father's sure to come back again.

HEDVIG (*throws herself sobbing on the sofa*). No, no, he'll never come home to us any more.

GREGERS. Do you believe I meant all for the best, Mrs. Ekdal?

GINA. Yes, I daresay you did; but God forgive you, all the same.

HEDVIG (*lying on the sofa*). Oh, this will kill me! What have I done to him? Mother, you must fetch him home again!

GINA. Yes, yes, yes; only be quiet, and I'll go out and look for him. (*Puts on her outdoor things*) Perhaps he's gone in to Relling's. But you mustn't lie there and cry. Promise me!

HEDVIG (*weeping convulsively*). Yes, I'll stop, I'll stop; if only father comes back!

GREGERS (*to GINA, who is going*). After all, had you not better leave him to fight out his bitter fight to the end?

GINA. Oh, he can do that afterwards. First of all, we must get the child quieted. (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*sits up and dries her tears*). Now you must tell me what all this means. Why doesn't father want me any more?

GREGERS. You mustn't ask that till you are a big girl—quite grown-up.

HEDVIG (*sobs*). But I can't go on being as miserable as this till I'm grown-up.—I think I know what it is.—Perhaps I'm not really father's child.

GREGERS (*uneasily*). How could that be?

HEDVIG. Mother might have found me. And perhaps father has just got to know it; I've read of such things.

GREGERS. Well, but if it were so . . .

HEDVIG. I think he might be just as fond of me for all that. Yes, fonder almost. We got the wild duck in a present, you know, and I love it so dearly all the same.

GREGERS (*turning the conversation*). Ah, the wild duck, by-the-bye! Let us talk about the wild duck a little, Hedvig.

HEDVIG. The poor wild duck! He doesn't want to see it any more either. Only think, he wanted to wring its neck!

GREGERS. Oh, he won't do that.

HEDVIG. No; but he said he would like to. And I think it was horrid of father to say it; for I pray for the wild duck every night and ask that it may be preserved from death and all that is evil.

GREGERS (*looking at her*). Do you say your prayers every night?

HEDVIG. Yes.

GREGERS. Who taught you to do that?

HEDVIG. I myself; one time when father was very ill, and had leeches on his neck and said that death was staring him in the face.

GREGERS. Well?

HEDVIG. Then I prayed for him as I lay in bed; and since then I have always kept it up.

GREGERS. And now you pray for the wild duck, too?

HEDVIG. I thought it was best to bring in the wild duck; for she was so weakly at first.

GREGERS. Do you pray in the morning, too?

HEDVIG. No, of course not.

GREGERS. Why not in the morning as well?

HEDVIG. In the morning it's light, you know, and there's nothing in particular to be afraid of.

GREGERS. And your father was going to wring the neck of the wild duck that you love so dearly?

HEDVIG. No; he said he ought to wring its neck, but he would spare it for my sake; and that was kind of father.

GREGERS (*coming a little nearer*). But suppose you were to sacrifice the wild duck of your own free will for his sake.

HEDVIG (*rising*). The wild duck!

GREGERS. Suppose you were to make a free-will offering for his sake, of the dearest treasure you have in the world!

HEDVIG. Do you think that would do any good?

GREGERS. Try it, Hedvig.

HEDVIG (*softly, with flashing eyes*). Yes, I will try it.

GREGERS. Have you really the courage for it, do you think?

HEDVIG. I'll ask grandfather to shoot the wild duck for me.

GREGERS. Yes, do. But not a word to your mother about it.

HEDVIG. Why not?

GREGERS. She doesn't understand us.

HEDVIG. The wild duck! I'll try it tomorrow morning.

(GINA comes in by the passage door.)

HEDVIG (*going towards her*). Did you find him, mother?

GINA. No, but I heard as he had called and taken Relling with him.

GREGERS. Are you sure of that?

GINA. Yes, the porter's wife said so. Molvik went with them, too, she said.

GREGERS. This evening, when his mind so sorely needs to wrestle in solitude . . . !

GINA (*takes off her things*). Yes, men are strange creatures, so they are. The Lord only knows where Relling has dragged him to! I ran over to Madam Eriksen's, but they weren't there.

HEDVIG (*struggling to keep back her tears*). Oh, if he should never come home any more!

GREGERS. He will come home again. I shall have news to give him tomorrow; and then you shall see how he comes home. You may rely upon that, Hedvig, and sleep in peace. Good-night.

(*He goes out by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*throws herself sobbing on GINA's neck*). Mother, mother!

GINA (*pats her shoulder and sighs*). Ah, yes; Relling was right, he was. That's what comes of it when crazy creatures go about presenting the claims of the—what-you-may-call-it.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

## ACT V

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio. Cold, grey morning light. Wet snow lies upon the large panes of the sloping roof-windows.



GINA *comes from the kitchen with an apron and bib on, and carrying a dusting-brush and a duster; she goes towards the sitting-room door. At the same moment HEDVIG comes hurriedly in from the passage.*

GINA (*stops*). Well?

HEDVIG. Oh, mother, I almost think he's down at Relling's . . .

GINA. There, you see!

HEDVIG. . . . because the porter's wife says she could hear that Relling had two people with him when he came home last night.

GINA. That's just what I thought.

HEDVIG. But it's no use his being there, if he won't come up to us.

GINA. I'll go down and speak to him at all events.

(*OLD EKDAL, in dressing-gown and slippers, and with a lighted pipe, appears at the door of his room.*)

EKDAL. Hialmar . . . Isn't Hialmar at home?

GINA. No, he's gone out.

EKDAL. So early? And in such a tearing snowstorm? Well, well; just as he pleases; I can take my morning walk alone.

(*He slides the garret door aside; HEDVIG helps him; he goes in; she closes it after him.*)

HEDVIG (*in an undertone*). Only think, mother, when poor grandfather hears that father is going to leave us.

GINA. Oh, nonsense; grandfather mustn't hear anything about it. It was a heaven's mercy he wasn't at home yesterday in all that hurly-burly.

HEDVIG. Yes, but . . .

(*GREGERS comes in by the passage door.*)

GREGERS. Well, have you any news of him?

GINA. They say he's down at Relling's.

GREGERS. At Relling's! Has he really been out with those creatures?

GINA. Yes, like enough.

GREGERS. When he ought to have been yearning for solitude, to collect and clear his thoughts . . .

GINA. Yes, you may well say so.

(RELLING enters from the passage.)

HEDVIG (*going to him*). Is father in your room?

GINA (*at the same time*). Is he there?

RELLING. Yes, to be sure he is.

HEDVIG. And you never let us know!

RELLING. Yes, I'm a brute. But in the first place I had to look after the other brute;  
I mean our dæmonic friend, of course; and then I fell so dead asleep that . . .

GINA. What does Ekdal say today?

RELLING. He says nothing whatever.

HEDVIG. Doesn't he speak?

RELLING. Not a blessed word.

GREGERS. No, no; I can understand that very well.

GINA. But what's he doing then?

RELLING. He's lying on the sofa, snoring.

GINA. Oh, is he? Yes, Ekdal's a rare one to snore.

HEDVIG. Asleep? Can he sleep?

RELLING. Well it certainly looks like it.

GREGERS. No wonder, after the spiritual conflict that has rent him . . .

GINA. And then he's never been used to gadding about out of doors at night.

HEDVIG. Perhaps it's a good thing that he's getting sleep, mother.

GINA. Of course it is; and we must take care we don't wake him up too early. Thank you, Relling. I must get the house cleaned up a bit now, and then . . . Come and help me, Hedvig.

(GINA and HEDVIG go into the sitting-room.)

GREGERS (*turning to RELLING*). What is your explanation of the spiritual tumult that is now going on in Hjalmar Ekdal?

RELLING. Devil a bit of a spiritual tumult have I noticed in him.

GREGERS. What! Not at such a crisis, when his whole life has been placed on a new foundation . . . ? How can you think that such an individuality as Hjalmar's . . . ?

RELLING. Oh, individuality—he! If he ever had any tendency to the abnormal developments you call individuality, I can assure you it was rooted out of him while he was still in his teens.

GREGERS. That would be strange indeed,—considering the loving care with which he was brought up.

RELLING. By those two high-flown, hysterical maiden aunts, you mean?

GREGERS. Let me tell you that they were women who never forgot the claim of the ideal—but of course you will only jeer at me again.

RELLING. No, I'm in no humour for that. I know all about those ladies; for he has ladled out no end of rhetoric on the subject of his "two soul-mothers." But I don't think he has much to thank them for. Ekdal's misfortune is that in his own circle he has always been looked upon as a shining light . . .

GREGERS. Not without reason, surely. Look at the depth of his mind!

RELLING. I have never discovered it. That his father believed in it I don't so much wonder; the old lieutenant has been an ass all his days.

GREGERS. He has had a child-like mind all his days; that is what you cannot understand.

RELLING. Well, so be it. But then, when our dear, sweet Hjalmar went to college, he at once passed for the great light of the future amongst his comrades, too! He was handsome, the rascal—red and white—a shop-girl's dream of manly beauty; and with his superficially emotional temperament, and his sympathetic voice and his talent for declaiming other people's verses and other people's thoughts . . .

GREGERS (*indignantly*). Is it Hjalmar Ekdal you are talking about in this strain?

RELLING. Yes, with your permission; I am simply giving you an inside view of the idol you are grovelling before.

GREGERS. I should hardly have thought I was quite stone blind.

RELLING. Yes, you are—or not far from it. You are a sick man, too, you see.

GREGERS. You are right there.

RELLING. Yes. Yours is a complicated case. First of all there is that plaguy integrity-fever; and then—what's worse—you are always in a delirium of hero-worship; you must always have something to adore, outside yourself.

GREGERS. Yes, I must certainly seek it outside myself.

RELLING. But you make such shocking mistakes about every new phoenix you think you have discovered. Here again you have come to a cotter's cabin with your claim of the ideal; and the people of the house are insolvent.

GREGERS. If you don't think better than that of Hjalmar Ekdal, what pleasure can you find in being everlastingly with him?

RELLING. Well, you see, I'm supposed to be a sort of a doctor—save the mark! I can't but give a hand to the poor sick folk who live under the same roof with me.

GREGERS. Oh, indeed! Hialmar Ekdal is sick, too, is he!

RELLING. Most people are, worse luck.

GREGERS. And what remedy are you applying in Hialmar's case?

RELLING. My usual one. I am cultivating the life-illusion \* in him.

GREGERS. Life—illusion? I didn't catch what you said.

RELLING. Yes, I said illusion. For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle.

GREGERS. May I ask with what illusion Hialmar is inoculated?

RELLING. No, thank you; I don't betray professional secrets to quack-salvers. You would probably go and muddle his case still more than you have already. But my method is infallible. I have applied it to Molvik as well. I have made him "dæmonic." That's the blister I have to put on his neck.

GREGERS. Is he not really dæmonic, then?

RELLING. What the devil do you mean by dæmonic! It's only a piece of gibberish I've invented to keep up a spark of life in him. But for that, the poor harmless creature would have succumbed to self-contempt and despair many a long year ago. And then the old lieutenant! But he has hit upon his own cure, you see.

GREGERS. Lieutenant Ekdal? What of him?

RELLING. Just think of the old bear-hunter shutting himself up in that dark garret to shoot rabbits! I tell you there is not a happier sportsman in the world than that old man pottering about in there among all that rubbish. The four or five withered Christmas trees he has saved up are the same to him as the whole great fresh Høidal forest; the cock and the hens are big game-birds in the fir-tops; and the rabbits that flop about the garret floor are the bears he has to battle with—the mighty hunter of the mountains!

GREGERS. Poor unfortunate old man! Yes; he has indeed had to narrow the ideals of his youth.

RELLING. While I think of it, Mr. Werle, junior—don't use that foreign word: ideals. We have the excellent native word: lies.

GREGERS. Do you think the two things are related?

RELLING. Yes, just about as closely as typhus and putrid fever.

GREGERS. Dr. Relling, I shall not give up the struggle until I have rescued Hialmar from your clutches!

RELLING. So much the worse for him. Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke. (*To HEDVIG, who comes in from the sitting-room*) Well, little wild-duck-mother, I'm just going down to see whether papa is still lying meditating upon that wonderful invention of his. (*Goes out by passage door.*)

\* "Livslögnen," literally "the life-lie."

GREGERS (*approaches* HEDVIG). I can see by your face that you have not yet done it.

HEDVIG. What? Oh, that about the wild duck! No.

GREGERS. I suppose your courage failed when the time came.

HEDVIG. No, that wasn't it. But when I awoke this morning and remembered what we had been talking about, it seemed so strange.

GREGERS. Strange?

HEDVIG. Yes, I don't know . . . Yesterday evening, at the moment, I thought there was something so delightful about it; but since I have slept and thought of it again, it somehow doesn't seem worth while.

GREGERS. Ah, I thought you could not have grown up quite unharmed in this house.

HEDVIG. I don't care about that, if only father would come up . . .

GREGERS. Oh, if only your eyes had been open to that which gives life its value—if you possessed the true, joyous, fearless spirit of sacrifice, you would soon see how he would come up to you.—But I believe in you still, Hedvig.

(*He goes out by the passage door. HEDVIG wanders about the room for a time; she is on the point of going into the kitchen when a knock is heard at the garret door. HEDVIG goes over and opens it a little; old EKDAL comes out; she pushes the door to again.*)

EKDAL. H'm, it's not much fun to take one's morning walk alone.

HEDVIG. Wouldn't you like to go shooting, grandfather?

EKDAL. It's not the weather for it today. It's so dark there, you can scarcely see where you're going.

HEDVIG. Do you never want to shoot anything besides the rabbits?

EKDAL. Do you think the rabbits aren't good enough?

HEDVIG. Yes, but what about the wild duck?

EKDAL. Ho-ho! are you afraid I shall shoot your wild duck? Never in the world. Never.

HEDVIG. No, I suppose you couldn't; they say it's very difficult to shoot wild ducks.

EKDAL. Couldn't! Should rather think I could.

HEDVIG. How would you set about it, grandfather?—I don't mean with my wild duck, but with others?

EKDAL. I should take care to shoot them in the breast, you know; that's the surest place. And then you must shoot against the feathers, you see—not the way of the feathers.

HEDVIG. Do they die then, grandfather?

EKDAL. Yes, they die right enough—when you shoot properly. Well, I must go and brush up a bit. H'm—understand—h'm (*Goes into his room.*)

(*HEDVIG waits a little, glances towards the sitting-room door, goes over to the bookcase, stands on tip-toe, takes the double-barrelled pistol down from the shelf and looks at it. GINA, with brush and duster, comes from the sitting-room. HEDVIG hastily lays down the pistol, unobserved.*)

GINA. Don't stand raking amongst father's things, Hedvig.

HEDVIG (*goes away from the bookcase*). I was only going to tidy up a little.

GINA. You'd better go into the kitchen and see if the coffee's keeping hot; I'll take his breakfast on a tray, when I go down to him.

(*HEDVIG goes out. GINA begins to sweep and clean up the studio. Presently the passage door is opened with hesitation, and HIALMAR EKDAL looks in. He has on his overcoat, but not his hat; he is unwashed, and his hair is dishevelled and unkempt. His eyes are dull and heavy.*)

GINA (*standing with the brush in her hand and looking at him*). Oh, there now, Ekdal—so you've come after all!

HIALMAR (*comes in and answers in a toneless voice*). I come—only to depart again immediately.

GINA. Yes, yes, I suppose so. But, Lord help us! what a sight you are!

HIALMAR. A sight?

GINA. And your nice winter coat, too! Well, that's done for.

HEDVIG (*at the kitchen door*). Mother, hadn't I better . . . ? (*Sees HIALMAR, gives a loud scream of joy and runs to him.*) Oh, father, father!

HIALMAR (*turns away and makes a gesture of repulsion*). Away, away, away! (*To GINA*) Keep her away from me, I say!

GINA (*in a low tone*). Go into the sitting-room, Hedvig.

(*HEDVIG does so without a word.*)

HIALMAR (*fussily pulls out the table-drawer*). I must have my books with me. Where are my books?

GINA. Which books?

HIALMAR. My scientific books, of course; the technical magazines I require for my invention.

GINA (*searches in the bookcase*). Is it these here paper-covered ones?

HIALMAR. Yes, of course.

GINA (*lays a heap of magazines on the table*). Shan't I get Hedvig to cut them for you?

HIALMAR. I don't require to have them cut for me. (*Short silence.*)

GINA. Then you're still set on leaving us, Ekdal?

HIALMAR (*rummaging amongst the books*). Yes, that is a matter of course, I should think.

GINA. Well, well.

HIALMAR (*vehemently*). How can I live here, to be stabbed to the heart every hour of the day?

GINA. God forgive you for thinking such vile things of me.

HIALMAR. Prove . . . !

GINA. I think it's you as has got to prove.

HIALMAR. After a past like yours? There are certain claims—I may almost call them claims of the ideal . . .

GINA. But what about grandfather? What's to become of him, poor dear!

HIALMAR. I know my duty; my helpless father will come with me. I am going out into the town to make arrangements . . . H'm—(*hesitatingly*)—has any one found my hat on the stairs?

GINA. No. Have you lost your hat?

HIALMAR. Of course I had it on when I came in last night; there's no doubt about that; but I couldn't find it this morning.

GINA. Lord help us! where have you been to with those two ne'er-do-wells?

HIALMAR. Oh, don't bother me about trifles. Do you suppose I am in the mood to remember details?

GINA. If only you haven't caught cold, Ekdal . . . (*Goes out into the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*talks to himself in a low tone of irritation, whilst he empties the table-drawer*). You're a scoundrel, Relling!—You're a low fellow!—Ah, you shameless tempter!—I wish I could get some one to stick a knife into you!

(*He lays some old letters on one side, finds the torn document of yesterday, takes it up and looks at the pieces; puts it down hurriedly as GINA enters.*)

GINA (*sets a tray with coffee, etc., on the table*). Here's a drop of something hot, if you'd fancy it. And there's some bread and butter and a snack of salt meat.

HIALMAR (*glancing at the tray*). Salt meat? Never under this roof! It's true I have not had a mouthful of solid food for nearly twenty-four hours; but no matter.—

My memoranda! The commencement of my autobiography! What has become of my diary, and all my important papers? (*Opens the sitting-room door but draws back*) She is there, too!

GINA. Good Lord! the child must be somewhere!

HALMAR. Come out.

(*He makes room; HEDVIG comes, scared, into the studio.*)

HALMAR (*with his hand upon the door-handle, says to GINA*). In these, the last moments I spend in my former home, I wish to be spared from interlopers . . . (*Goes into the room.*)

HEDVIG (*with a bound towards her mother, asks softly, trembling*). Does that mean me?

GINA. Stay out in the kitchen, Hedvig; or, no—you'd best go into your own room. (*Speaks to HALMAR as she goes in to him*) Wait a bit, Ekdal; don't rummage so in the drawers; I know where everything is.

HEDVIG (*stands a moment immovable, in terror and perplexity, biting her lips to keep back the tears; then she clenches her hands convulsively and says softly*). The wild duck.

(*She steals over and takes the pistol from the shelf, opens the garret door a little way, creeps in and draws the door to after her. HALMAR and GINA can be heard disputing in the sitting-room.*)

HALMAR (*comes in with some manuscript books and old loose papers, which he lays upon the table*). That portmanteau is of no use! There are a thousand and one things I must drag with me.

GINA (*following with the portmanteau*). Why not leave all the rest for the present and only take a shirt and a pair of woollen drawers with you?

HALMAR. Whew!—all these exhausting preparations . . . ! (*Pulls off his overcoat and throws it upon the sofa.*)

GINA. And there's the coffee getting cold.

HALMAR. H'm. (*Drinks a mouthful without thinking of it and then another.*)

GINA (*dusting the backs of the chairs*). A nice job you'll have to find such another big garret for the rabbits.

HALMAR. What! Am I to drag all those rabbits with me, too?

GINA. You don't suppose grandfather can get on without his rabbits.

HALMAR. He must just get used to doing without them. Have not I to sacrifice very much greater things than rabbits!

GINA (*dusting the bookcase*). Shall I put the flute in the portmanteau for you?



HIALMAR. No. No flute for me. But give me the pistol!

GINA. Do you want to take the pistol with you?

HIALMAR. Yes. My loaded pistol.

GINA (*searching for it*). It's gone. He must have taken it in with him.

HIALMAR. Is he in the garret?

GINA. Yes, of course he's in the garret.

HIALMAR. H'm—poor lonely old man.

(*He takes a piece of bread and butter, eats it, and finishes his cup of coffee.*)

GINA. If we hadn't have let that room, you could have moved in there.

HIALMAR. And continued to live under the same roof with . . . ! Never,—never!

GINA. But couldn't you put up with the sitting-room for a day or two? You could have it all to yourself.

HIALMAR. Never within these walls!

GINA. Well, then, down with Relling and Molvik.

HIALMAR. Don't mention those wretches' names to me! The very thought of them almost takes away my appetite.—Oh, no, I must go out into the storm and the snow-drift,—go from house to house and seek shelter for my father and myself.

GINA. But you've got no hat, Ekdal! You've been and lost your hat, you know.

HIALMAR. Oh, those two brutes, those slaves of all the vices! A hat must be procured.  
(*Takes another piece of bread and butter*) Some arrangements must be made.  
For I have no mind to throw away my life, either. (*Looks for something on the tray.*)

GINA. What are you looking for?

HIALMAR. Butter.

GINA. I'll get some at once. (*Goes into the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*calls after her*). Oh, it doesn't matter; dry bread is good enough for me.

GINA (*brings a dish of butter*). Look here; this is fresh churned.

(*She pours out another cup of coffee for him; he seats himself on the sofa, spreads more butter on the already buttered bread, and eats and drinks a while in silence.*)

HIALMAR. Could I, without being subject to intrusion—intrusion of any sort—could I live in the sitting-room there for a day or two?

GINA. Yes, to be sure you could, if you only would.

HIALMAR. For I see no possibility of getting all father's things out in such a hurry.

GINA. And, besides, you've surely got to tell him first as you don't mean to live with us others no more.

HALMAR (*pushes away his coffee cup*). Yes, there is that, too; I shall have to lay bare the whole tangled story to him . . . I must turn matters over; I must have breathing-time; I cannot take all these burdens on my shoulders in a single day.

GINA. No, especially in such horrible weather as it is outside.

HALMAR (*touching WERLE's letter*). I see that paper is still lying about here.

GINA. Yes, *I* haven't touched it.

HALMAR. So far as I am concerned it is mere waste paper . . .

GINA. Well, *I* have certainly no notion of making any use of it.

HALMAR. . . . but we had better not let it get lost all the same;—in all the upset when I move, it might easily . . .

GINA. I'll take good care of it, Ekdal.

HALMAR. The donation is in the first instance made to father, and it rests with him to accept or decline it.

GINA (*sighs*). Yes, poor old father . . .

HALMAR. To make quite safe . . . Where shall I find some gum?

GINA (*goes to the bookcase*). Here's the gum-pot.

HALMAR. And a brush?

GINA. The brush is here, too. (*Brings him the things.*)

HALMAR (*takes a pair of scissors*). Just a strip of paper at the back . . . (*Clips and gums*) Far be it from me to lay hands upon what is not my own—and least of all upon what belongs to a destitute old man—and to—the other as well.—There now. Let it lie there for a time; and when it is dry, take it away. I wish never to see that document again. Never!

(GREGERS WERLE *enters from the passage.*)

GREGERS (*somewhat surprised*). What,—are you sitting here, Hialmar?

HALMAR (*rises hurriedly*). I had sunk down from fatigue.

GREGERS. You have been having breakfast, I see.

HALMAR. The body sometimes makes its claims felt, too.

GREGERS. What have you decided to do?

HALMAR. For a man like me, there is only one course possible. I am just putting my most important things together. But it takes time, you know.

GINA (*with a touch of impatience*). Am I to get the room ready for you, or am I to pack your portmanteau?

HALMAR (*after a glance of annoyance at GREGERS*). Pack—and get the room ready!

GINA (*takes the portmanteau*). Very well; then I'll put in the shirt and the other things. (*Goes into the sitting-room and draws the door to after her.*)

GREGERS (*after a short silence*). I never dreamed that this would be the end of it. Do you really feel it a necessity to leave house and home?

HIALMAR (*wanders about restlessly*). What would you have me do?—I am not fitted to bear unhappiness, Gregers. I must feel secure and at peace in my surroundings.

GREGERS. But can you not feel that here? Just try it. I should have thought you had firm ground to build upon now—if only you start afresh. And remember, you have your invention to live for.

HIALMAR. Oh, don't talk about my invention. It's perhaps still in the dim distance.

GREGERS. Indeed!

HIALMAR. Why, great heavens, what would you have me invent? Other people have invented almost everything already. It becomes more and more difficult every day . . .

GREGERS. And you have devoted so much labour to it.

HIALMAR. It was that blackguard Relling that urged me to it.

GREGERS. Relling?

HIALMAR. Yes, it was he that first made me realize my aptitude for making some notable discovery in photography.

GREGERS. Aha—it was Relling!

HIALMAR. Oh, I have been so truly happy over it! Not so much for the sake of the invention itself, as because Hedvig believed in it—believed in it with a child's whole eagerness of faith.—At least, I have been fool enough to go and imagine that she believed in it.

GREGERS. Can you really think Hedvig has been false to you?

HIALMAR. I can think anything now. It is Hedvig that stands in my way. She will blot out the sunlight from my whole life.

GREGERS. Hedvig! Is it Hedvig you are talking of? How should she blot out your sunlight?

HIALMAR (*without answering*). How unutterably I have loved that child! How unutterably happy I have felt every time I came home to my humble room, and she flew to meet me, with her sweet little blinking eyes. Oh, confiding fool that I have been! I loved her unutterably;—and I yielded myself up to the dream, the delusion, that she loved me unutterably in return.

GREGERS. Do you call that a delusion?

HIALMAR. How should I know? I can get nothing out of Gina; and besides, she is totally blind to the ideal side of these complications. But to you I feel impelled to open my mind, Gregers. I cannot shake off this frightful doubt—perhaps Hedvig has never really and honestly loved me.

GREGERS. What would you say if she were to give you a proof of her love? (*Listens*) What's that? I thought I heard the wild duck . . . ?

HIALMAR. It's the wild duck quacking. Father's in the garret.

GREGERS. Is he? (*His face lights up with joy*) I say, you may yet have proof that your poor misunderstood Hedvig loves you!

HIALMAR. Oh, what proof can she give me? I dare not believe in any assurance from that quarter.

GREGERS. Hedvig does not know what deceit means.

HIALMAR. Oh, Gregers, that is just what I cannot be sure of. Who knows what Gina and that Mrs. Sörby may many a time have sat here whispering and tattling about? And Hedvig usually has her ears open, I can tell you. Perhaps the deed of gift was not such a surprise to her, after all. In fact, I'm not sure but that I noticed something of the sort.

GREGERS. What spirit is this that has taken possession of you?

HIALMAR. I have had my eyes opened. Just you notice;—you'll see, the deed of gift is only a beginning. Mrs. Sörby has always been a good deal taken up with Hedvig; and now she has the power to do whatever she likes for the child. They can take her from me whenever they please.

GREGERS. Hedvig will never, never leave you.

HIALMAR. Don't be so sure of that. If only they beckon to her and throw out a golden bait . . . ! And, oh! I have loved her so unspeakably! I would have counted it my highest happiness to take her tenderly by the hand and lead her, as one leads a timid child through a great dark empty room!—I am cruelly certain now that the poor photographer in his humble attic has never really and truly been anything to her. She has only cunningly contrived to keep on a good footing with him until the time came.

GREGERS. You don't believe that yourself, Hialmar.

HIALMAR. That is just the terrible part of it—I don't know what to believe,—I never can know it. But can you really doubt that it must be as I say? Ho-ho, you have far too much faith in the claim of the ideal, my good Gregers! If those others came, with the glamour of wealth about them, and called to the child:—"Leave him: come to us: here life awaits you . . . !"

GREGERS (*quickly*). Well, what then?

HIALMAR. If I then asked her: Hedvig, are you willing to renounce that life for me? (*Laughs scornfully*) No, thank you! You would soon hear what answer I should get. (*A pistol shot is heard from within the garret.*)

GREGERS (*loudly and joyfully*). Hialmar!

HIALMAR. There now; he must needs go shooting, too.

GINA (*comes in*). Oh, Ekdal, I can hear grandfather blazing away in the garret by himself.

HIALMAR. I'll look in . . .

GREGERS (*eagerly, with emotion*). Wait a moment! Do you know what that was?

HIALMAR. Yes, of course I know.

GREGERS. No, you don't know. But *I* do. That was the proof!

HIALMAR. What proof?

GREGERS. It was a child's free-will offering. She has got your father to shoot the wild duck.

HIALMAR. To shoot the wild duck!

GINA. Oh, think of that . . . !

HIALMAR. What was that for?

GREGERS. She wanted to sacrifice to you her most cherished possession; for then she thought you would surely come to love her again.

HIALMAR (*tenderly, with emotion*). Oh, poor child!

GINA. What things she does think of!

GREGERS. She only wanted your love again, Hialmar. She could not live without it.

GINA (*struggling with her tears*). There, you can see for yourself, Ekdal.

HIALMAR. Gina, where is she?

GINA (*sniffs*). Poor dear, she's sitting out in the kitchen, I dare say.

HIALMAR (*goes over, tears open the kitchen door and says*). Hedvig, come, come in to me! (*Looks around*) No, she's not here.

GINA. Then she must be in her own little room.

HIALMAR (*without*). No, she's not here either. (*Comes in*) She must have gone out.

GINA. Yes, you wouldn't have her anywheres in the house.

HIALMAR. Oh, if she would only come home quickly, so that I can tell her . . . Everything will come right now, Gregers; now I believe we can begin life afresh.

GREGERS (*quietly*). I knew it; I knew the child would make amends.

(OLD EKDAL *appears at the door of his room; he is in full uniform and is busy buckling on his sword.*)

HIALMAR (*astonished*). Father! Are you there?

GINA. Have you been firing in your room?

EKDAL (*resentfully, approaching*). So you go shooting alone, do you, Hialmar?

HIALMAR (*excited and confused*). Then it wasn't you that fired that shot in the garret?

EKDAL. Me that fired? H'm.

GREGERS (*calls out to HIALMAR*). She has shot the wild duck herself!

HALMAR. What can it mean? (*Hastens to the garret door, tears it aside, looks in and calls loudly*). Hedvig!

GINA (*runs to the door*). Good God, what's that!

HALMAR (*goes in*). She's lying on the floor!

GREGERS. Hedvig! lying on the floor! (*Goes in to HALMAR*)

GINA (*at the same time*). Hedvig! (*Inside the garret*) No, no, no!

EKDAL. Ho-ho! does she go shooting, too, now?

(*HALMAR, GINA and GREGERS carry HEDVIG into the studio; in her dangling right hand she holds the pistol fast clasped in her fingers.*)

HALMAR (*distracted*). The pistol has gone off. She has wounded herself. Call for help! Help!

GINA (*runs into the passage and calls down*). Relling! Relling! Doctor Relling; come up as quick as you can!

(*HALMAR and GREGERS lay HEDVIG down on the sofa.*)

EKDAL (*quietly*). The woods avenge themselves.

HALMAR (*on his knees beside HEDVIG*). She'll soon come to now. She's coming to . . . ; yes, yes, yes.

GINA (*who has come in again*). Where has she hurt herself? I can't see anything . . .

(*RELLING comes hurriedly, and immediately after him MOLVIK; the latter without his waistcoat and necktie, and with his coat open.*)

RELLING. What's the matter here?

GINA. They say Hedvig has shot herself.

HALMAR. Come and help us!

RELLING. Shot herself!

(*He pushes the table aside and begins to examine her.*)

HALMAR (*kneeling and looking anxiously up at him*). It can't be dangerous? Speak, Relling! She is scarcely bleeding at all. It can't be dangerous?

RELLING. How did it happen?

HALMAR. Oh, we don't know . . .

GINA. She wanted to shoot the wild duck.

RELLING. The wild duck?

HALMAR. The pistol must have gone off.

RELLING. H'm. Indeed.

EKDAL. The woods avenge themselves. But I'm not afraid, all the same. (*Goes into the garret and closes the door after him.*)

HALMAR. Well, Relling,—why don't you say something?

RELLING. The ball has entered the breast.

HALMAR. Yes, but she's coming to!

RELLING. Surely you can see that Hedvig is dead.

GINA (*bursts into tears*). Oh, my child, my child . . .

GREGERS (*buskily*). In the depths of the sea . . .

HALMAR (*jumps up*). No, no, she must live! Oh, for God's sake, Relling—only a moment—only just till I can tell her how unspeakably I loved her all the time!

RELLING. The bullet has gone through her heart. Internal hemorrhage. Death must have been instantancous.

HALMAR. And I! I hunted her from me like an animal! And she crept terrified into the garret and died for love of me! (*Sobbing*) I can never atone to her! I can never tell her . . . ! (*Clenches his hands and cries, upwards*) O thou above . . . ! If thou be indeed! Why hast thou done this thing to me?

GINA. Hush, hush, you mustn't go on that awful way. We had no right to keep her, I suppose.

MOLVIK. The child is not dead, but sleepeth.

RELLING. Bosh!

HALMAR (*becomes calm, goes over to the sofa, folds his arms and looks at HEDVIG*). There she lies so stiff and still.

RELLING (*tries to loosen the pistol*). She's holding it so tight, so tight.

GINA. No, no, Relling, don't break her fingers; let the pistol be.

HALMAR. She shall take it with her.

GINA. Yes, let her. But the child mustn't lie here for a show. She shall go to her own room, so she shall. Help me, Ekdal. (*HALMAR and GINA take HEDVIG between them.*)

HALMAR (*as they are carrying her*). Oh, Gina, Gina, can you survive this!

GINA. We must help each other to bear it. For now at least she belongs to both of us.

MOLVIK (*stretches out his arms and mumbles*). Blessed be the Lord; to earth thou shalt return; to earth thou shalt return . . .

RELLING (*whispers*). Hold your tongue, you fool; you're drunk.

(*HALMAR and GINA carry the body out through the kitchen door. RELLING shuts it after them. MOLVIK slinks out into the passage.*)

RELLING (*goes over to GREGERS and says*). No one shall ever convince me that the pistol went off by accident.

GREGERS (*who has stood terrified, with convulsive twitchings*). Who can say how the dreadful thing happened?

RELLING. The powder has burnt the body of her dress. She must have pressed the pistol right against her breast and fired.

GREGERS. Hedvig has not died in vain. Did you not see how sorrow set free what is noble in him?

RELLING. Most people are ennobled by the actual presence of death. But how long do you suppose this nobility will last in him?

GREGERS. Why should it not endure and increase throughout his life?

RELLING. Before a year is over, little Hedvig will be nothing to him but a pretty theme for declamation.

GREGERS. How dare you say that of Hjalmar Ekdal?

RELLING. We will talk of this again, when the grass has first withered on her grave. Then you'll hear him spouting about "the child too early torn from her father's heart"; then you'll see him steep himself in a syrup of sentiment and self-admiration and self-pity. Just you wait!

GREGERS. If you are right and I am wrong, then life is not worth living.

RELLING. Oh, life would be quite tolerable, after all, if only we could be rid of the confounded duns that keep on pestering us, in our poverty, with the claim of the ideal.

GREGERS (*looking straight before him*). In that case, I am glad that my destiny is what it is.

RELLING. May I inquire,—what is your destiny?

GREGERS (*going*). To be the thirteenth at table.

RELLING. The devil it is.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)



# THE CHERRY ORCHARD \*

ANTON CHEKHOV (1860-1904)

## CHARACTERS

|                                                   |                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| LYUBOF ANDREYEVNA RANEVSKY, a land-owner          | CHARLOTTE IVANOVNA, a governess               |
| ANYA, her daughter, aged seventeen                | SIMEON PANTELEYEVITCH EPHIKHODOF, a clerk     |
| BARBARA, her adopted daughter, aged twenty-seven  | DUNYASHA (AVDOTYA FYODOROVNA), a maid         |
| LEONID ANDREYEVITCH GAYEF, her brother            | FIRS,† a man-servant; aged eighty-seven       |
| YERMOLAI ALEXEYEVITCH LOPAKHIN, a merchant        | YASHA, a young man-servant                    |
| PETER SERGEYEVITCH TROPHIMOF, a student           | A TRAMP                                       |
| BORIS BORISOVITCH SIMEONOF-PISHTCHIK, a landowner | A STATION MASTER                              |
|                                                   | GUESTS                                        |
|                                                   | A POST OFFICE CLERK                           |
|                                                   | SERVANTS                                      |
|                                                   | † Pronounced like a Scotsman saying "fierce." |

*The action takes place on MADAME RANEVSKY'S estate.*

## ACT I

*A room which is still called the nursery. One door leads to ANYA'S room. Dawn, the sun will soon rise. It is already May, the cherry-trees are in blossom, but it is cold in the garden and there is a morning frost. The windows are closed.*

*Enter DUNYASHA with a candle, and LOPAKHIN with a book in his hand.*

LOPAKHIN. So the train has come in, thank heaven. What is the time?

DUNYASHA. Nearly two. (*Putting the candle out*) It is light already.

LOPAKHIN. How late is the train? A couple of hours at least. (*Yawning and stretching*) What do you think of me? A fine fool I have made of myself. I came on purpose to meet them at the station and then I went and fell asleep, fell asleep as I sat in my chair. What a nuisance it is! You might have woke me up anyway.

DUNYASHA. I thought that you had gone. (*She listens*) That sounds like them driving up.

LOPAKHIN (*listening*). No; they have got to get the luggage out and all that. (*A pause*) Madame Ranevsky has been five years abroad. I wonder what she has

\* Translation by George Calderon.

become like. What a splendid creature she is! So easy and simple in her ways. I remember when I was a youngster of fifteen my old father (he used to keep a shop here in the village then) struck me in the face with his fist and set my nose bleeding. We had come for some reason or other, I forget what, into the courtyard, and he had been drinking. Madame Ranevsky, I remember it like yesterday, still a young girl, and oh, so slender, brought me to the wash-hand stand, here, in this very room, in the nursery. "Don't cry, little peasant," she said, "it'll mend by your wedding." \* (*A pause*) "Little peasant!" . . . My father, it is true, was a peasant, and here am I in a white waistcoat and brown boots; a silk purse out of a sow's ear, as you might say; just turned rich, with heaps of money, but when you come to look at it, still a peasant of the peasants. (*Turning over the pages of the book*) Here's this book that I was reading and didn't understand a word of; I just sat reading and fell asleep.

DUNYASHA. The dogs never slept all night, they knew that their master and mistress were coming.

LOPAKHIN. What's the matter with you, Dunyasha? You're all . . .

DUNYASHA. My hands are trembling, I feel quite faint.

LOPAKHIN. You are too refined, Dunyasha, that's what it is. You dress yourself like a young lady, and look at your hair! You ought not to do it; you ought to remember your place.

(*Enter EPHIKHODOF with a nosegay. He is dressed in a short jacket and brightly polished boots which squeak noisily. As he comes in he drops the nosegay.*)

EPHIKHODOF (*picking it up*). The gardener has sent this; he says it is to go in the dining-room. (*Handing it to DUNYASHA*)

LOPAKHIN. And bring me some kvass.

DUNYASHA. Yes, sir. (*Exit*)

EPHIKHODOF. There's a frost this morning, three degrees, and the cherry-trees all in blossom. I can't say I think much of our climate; (*sighing*) that is impossible. Our climate is not adapted to contribute; and I should like to add, with your permission, that only two days ago I bought myself a new pair of boots, and I venture to assure you they do squeak beyond all bearing. What am I to grease them with?

LOPAKHIN. Get out; I'm tired of you.

EPHIKHODOF. Every day some misfortune happens to me; but do I grumble? No; I am used to it; I can afford to smile. (*Enter DUNYASHA, and hands a glass of kvass to LOPAKHIN*) I must be going. (*He knocks against a chair, which falls to the ground*) There you are! (*In a voice of triumph*) You see, if I may venture on the expression, the sort of incidents *inter alia*. It really is astonishing!

(*Exit EPHIKHODOF*)

DUNYASHA. To tell you the truth, Yermolai Alexeyitch, Ephikhodof has made me a proposal.

\* *It'll mend by your wedding*: a proverbial phrase. [All footnotes are by the translator.]

LOPAKHIN. Humph!

DUNYASHA. I hardly know what to do. He is such a well-behaved young man, only so often when he talks one doesn't know what he means. It is all so nice and full of good feeling, but you can't make out what it means. I fancy I am rather fond of him. He adores me passionately. He is a most unfortunate man; every day something seems to happen to him. They call him "Twenty-two misfortunes," that's his nickname.

LOPAKHIN (*listening*). There, surely that is them coming!

DUNYASHA. They're coming! Oh, what is the matter with me? I am all turning cold.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, there they are, and no mistake. Let's go and meet them. Will she know me again, I wonder? It is five years since we met.

DUNYASHA. I am going to faint! . . . I am going to faint!

(*Two carriages are heard driving up to the house. LOPAKHIN and DUNYASHA exeunt quickly. The stage remains empty. A hubbub begins in the neighbouring rooms. FIRS walks hastily across the stage, leaning on a walking-stick. He has been to meet them at the station. He is wearing an old-fashioned livery and a tall hat; he mumbles something to himself but not a word is audible. The noise behind the scenes grows louder and louder. A voice says: "Let's go this way."*)

(*Enter MADAME RANEVSKY, ANYA, CHARLOTTE, leading a little dog on a chain, all dressed in travelling dresses; BARBARA in greatcoat with a kerchief over her head, GAYEF, SIMEONOF-PISHTCHIK, LOPAKHIN, DUNYASHA, carrying parcel and umbrella, servants with luggage, all cross the stage.*)

ANYA. Come through this way. Do you remember what room this is, mamma?

MADAME RANEVSKY (*joyfully, through her tears*). The nursery.

BARBARA. How cold it is. My hands are simply frozen. (*To MADAME RANEVSKY*) Your two rooms, the white room and the violet room, are just the same as they were, mamma.

MADAME RANEVSKY. My nursery, my dear, beautiful nursery! This is where I used to sleep when I was a little girl. (*Crying*) I am like a little girl still. (*Kissing GAYEF and BARBARA and then GAYEF again*) Barbara has not altered a bit, she is just like a nun, and I knew Dunyasha at once. (*Kissing DUNYASHA*)

GAYEF. Your train was two hours late. What do you think of that? There's punctuality for you!

CHARLOTTE (*to SIMEONOF-PISHTCHIK*). My little dog eats nuts.

PISHTCHIK (*astonished*). You don't say so! well I never!

(*Exeunt all but ANYA and DUNYASHA*)

DUNYASHA. At last you've come! (*She takes off ANYA's overcoat and hat*)

ANYA. I have not slept for four nights on the journey. I am frozen to death.

DUNYASHA. It was Lent when you went away. There was snow on the ground, it was freezing; but now! Oh, my dear! (*Laughing and kissing her*) How I have

waited for you, my joy, my light! Oh, I must tell you something at once, I cannot wait another minute.

ANYA (*without interest*). What, again?

DUNYASHA. Ephikhodof, the clerk, proposed to me in Easter week.

ANYA. Same old story. . . . (*Putting her hair straight*) All my hairpins have dropped out. (*She is very tired, staggering with fatigue*)

DUNYASHA. I hardly know what to think of it. He loves me! oh, how he loves me!

ANYA (*looking into her bedroom, affectionately*). My room, my windows, just as if I had never gone away! I am at home again! When I wake up in the morning I shall run out into the garden. . . . Oh, if only I could get to sleep! I have not slept the whole journey from Paris, I was so nervous and anxious.

DUNYASHA. Monsieur Trophimof arrived the day before yesterday.

ANYA (*joyfully*). Peter?

DUNYASHA. He is sleeping outside in the bathhouse; he is living there. He was afraid he might be in the way. (*Looking at her watch*) I'd like to go and wake him, only Mamzelle Barbara told me not to. "Mind you don't wake him," she said.

(*Enter BARBARA with bunch of keys hanging from her girdle.*)

BARBARA. Dunyasha, go and get some coffee, quick. Mamma wants some coffee.

DUNYASHA. In a minute! (*Exit*)

BARBARA. Well, thank heaven, you have come. Here you are at home again. (*Carelessly*) My little darling is back! My pretty one is back!

ANYA. What I've had to go through!

BARBARA. I can believe you.

ANYA. I left here in Holy Week. How cold it was! Charlotte would talk the whole way and keep doing conjuring tricks. What on earth made you tie Charlotte round my neck?

BARBARA. Well, you couldn't travel alone, my pet. At seventeen!

ANYA. When we got to Paris, it was so cold! there was snow on the ground. I can't talk French a bit. Mamma was on the fifth floor of a big house. When I arrived there were a lot of Frenchmen with her, and ladies, and an old Catholic priest with a book, and it was very uncomfortable and full of tobacco smoke. I suddenly felt so sorry for mamma, oh, so sorry! I took her head in my arms and squeezed it and could not let it go, and then mamma kept kissing me and crying.

BARBARA (*crying*). Don't go on, don't go on!

ANYA. She's sold her villa near Mentone already. She's nothing left, absolutely nothing; and I hadn't a farthing either. We only just managed to get home. And mamma won't understand! We get out at a station to have some dinner, and she asks for all the most expensive things and gives the waiters a florin each for

a tip; and Charlotte does the same. And Yasha wanted his portion too. It was too awful! Yasha is mamma's new man-servant. We have brought him back with us.

BARBARA. I've seen the rascal.

ANYA. Come, tell me all about everything! Has the interest on the mortgage been paid?

BARBARA. How could it be?

ANYA. Oh dear! Oh dear!

BARBARA. The property will be sold in August.

ANYA. Oh dear, Oh dear!

LOPAKHIN (*looking in at the door and mooing like a cow*). Moo-o.

(*He goes away again*)

BARBARA (*laughing through her tears, and shaking her fist at the door*). Oh, I should like to give him one!

ANYA (*embracing BARBARA softly*). Barbara, has he proposed to you? (*BARBARA shakes her head*) And yet I am sure he loves you. Why don't you come to an understanding? What are you waiting for?

BARBARA. I don't think anything will come of it. He has so much to do; he can't be bothered with me; he hardly takes any notice. Confound the man, I can't bear to see him! Everyone talks about our marriage; everyone congratulates me, but, as a matter of fact, there is nothing in it; it's all a dream. (*Changing her tone*) You've got on a brooch like a bee.

ANYA (*sadly*). Mamma bought it for me. (*Going into her room, talking gaily, like a child*) When I was in Paris, I went up in a balloon!

BARBARA. How glad I am you are back, my little pet! my pretty one! (*DUNYASHA has already returned with a coffee-pot and begins to prepare the coffee; standing by the door*) I trudge about all day looking after things, and I think and think. What are we to do? If only we could marry you to some rich man it would be a load off my mind. I would go into a retreat, and then to Kiev, to Moscow; I would tramp about from one holy place to another, always tramping and tramping. What bliss!

ANYA. The birds are singing in the garden. What time is it now?

BARBARA. It must be past two. It is time to go to bed, my darling. (*Following ANYA into her room*) What bliss!

(*Enter YASHA with a shawl and a travelling bag.*)

YASHA (*crossing the stage, delicately*). May I pass this way, mademoiselle?

DUNYASHA. One would hardly know you, Yasha. How you've changed abroad!

YASHA. Ahem! and who may you be?

DUNYASHA. When you left here I was a little thing like that. (*Indicating with her hand*) My name is Dunyasha, Theodore Kozoyedof's daughter. Don't you remember me?

YASHA. Ahem! You little cucumber! (*He looks round cautiously, then embraces her. She screams and drops a saucer. Exit YASHA, hastily*)

BARBARA (*in the doorway, crossly*). What's all this?

DUNYASHA (*crying*). I've broken a saucer.

BARBARA. Well, it brings luck.

(*Enter ANYA from her room.*)

ANYA. We must tell mamma that Peter's here.

BARBARA. I've told him not to wake him.

ANYA (*thoughtfully*). It's just six years since papa died. And only a month afterwards poor little Grisha was drowned in the river; my pretty little brother, only seven years old! It was too much for mamma; she ran away, ran away without looking back. (*Shuddering*) How well I can understand her, if only she knew! (*A pause*) Peter Trophimof was Grisha's tutor; he might remind her.

(*Enter FIRS in long coat and white waistcoat.*)

FIRS (*going over to the coffee-pot, anxiously*). My mistress is going to take coffee here. (*Putting on white gloves*) Is the coffee ready? (*Sternly, to DUNYASHA*) Here, girl, where's the cream?

DUNYASHA. Oh, dear! oh, dear! (*Exit hastily*)

FIRS (*bustling about the coffee-pot*). Ah, you . . . job-lot! \* (*Mumbling to himself*) She's come back from Paris. The master went to Paris once in a post-chaise. (*Laughing*)

BARBARA. What is it, Firs?

FIRS. I beg your pardon? (*Joyfully*) My mistress has come home; at last I've seen her. Now I'm ready to die. (*He cries with joy*)

(*Enter MADAME RANEVSKY, LOPAKHIN, GAYEF and PISHTCHIK in Russian breeches and coat of fine cloth. GAYEF as he enters makes gestures as if playing billiards.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. What was the expression? Let me see. "I'll put the red in the corner pocket; double into the middle——"

\* In the original, *nedotëpa*, a word invented by Chekhov, and now established as classical. Derived from *ne*, not, and *dotyapat*, to finish chopping. The implication is: You're a bungling piece of work, chopped out with a hatchet, and not finished at that. "Botchment" or "underbungle" would have been more literal. "You are one of those who never get there," was the Stage Society rendering. Batyushkof looks on it as the key to the whole play (the word occurs several times); they are all *nedotëpas*, Madame Ranevsky, Gayef, Lopakhin, Trophimof, Ephikhodof, Yasha, even the tramp who lurches across in Act II. That is the tragedy of it, and of Russian life.

GAYEF. I'll chip the red in the right-hand top. Once upon a time, Lyuba, when we were children, we used to sleep here side by side in two little cots, and now I'm fifty-one, and can't bring myself to believe it.

LOPAKHIN. Yes; time flies.

GAYEF. Who's that?

LOPAKHIN. Time flies, I say.

GAYEF. There's a smell of patchouli!

ANYA. I am going to bed. Good-night, mamma. (*Kissing her mother*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. My beloved little girl! (*Kissing her hands*) Are you glad you're home again? I can't come to my right senses.

ANYA. Good-night, uncle.

GAYEF (*kissing her face and hands*). God bless you, little Anya. How like your mother you are! (*To MADAME RANEVSKY*) You were just such another girl at her age, Lyuba.

(*ANYA shakes hands with LOPAKHIN and SIMEONOF-PISHTCHIK, and exit, shutting her bedroom door behind her.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. She's very, very tired.

PISHTCHIK. It must have been a long journey.

BARBARA (*to LOPAKHIN and PISHTCHIK*). Well, gentlemen, it's past two; time you were off.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*laughing*). You haven't changed a bit, Barbara! (*Drawing her to herself and kissing her*) I'll just finish my coffee, then we'll all go. (*FIRS puts a footstool under her feet*) Thank you, friend. I'm used to my coffee. I drink it day and night. Thank you, you dear old man. (*Kissing FIRS*)

BARBARA. I'll go and see if they've got all the luggage. (*Exit*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Can it be me that's sitting here? (*Laughing*) I want to jump and wave my arms about. (*Pausing and covering her face*) Surely I must be dreaming! God knows I love my country. I love it tenderly. I couldn't see out of the window from the train, I was crying so. (*Crying*) However, I must drink my coffee. Thank you, Firs; thank you, you dear old man. I'm so glad to find you still alive.

FIRS. The day before yesterday.

GAYEF. He's hard of hearing.

LOPAKHIN. I've got to be off for Kharkov by the five o'clock train. Such a nuisance! I wanted to stay and look at you and talk to you. You're as splendid as you always were.

PISHTCHIK (*sighing heavily*). Handsomer than ever and dressed like a Parisian . . . perish my waggon and all its wheels!

LOPAKHIN. Your brother, Leonid Andreyitch, says I'm a snob, a money-grubber. He can say what he likes. I don't care a hang. Only I want you to believe in me as you used to; I want your wonderful, touching eyes to look at me as they used to. Merciful God in heaven! My father was your father's serf, and your grandfather's serf before him; but you, you did so much for me in the old days that I've forgotten everything, and I love you like a sister—more than a sister.

MADAME RANEVSKY. I can't sit still! I can't do it! (*Jumping up and walking about in great agitation*) This happiness is more than I can bear. Laugh at me! I am a fool! (*Kissing a cupboard*) My darling old cupboard! (*Caressing a table*) My dear little table!

GAYEF. Nurse is dead since you went away.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*sitting down and drinking coffee*). Yes, Heaven rest her soul. They wrote and told me.

GAYEF. And Anastasi is dead. Squint-eyed Peter has left us and works in the town at the Police Inspector's now. (*Takes out a box of sugar candy from his pocket, and begins to eat it*)

PISHTCHIK. My daughter Dashenka sent her compliments.

LOPAKHIN. I long to say something charming and delightful to you. (*Looking at his watch*) I'm just off; there's no time to talk. Well, yes, I'll put it in two or three words. You know that your cherry orchard is going to be sold to pay the mortgage: the sale is fixed for the twenty-second of August; but don't you be uneasy, my dear lady; sleep peacefully; there's a way out of it. This is my plan. Listen to me carefully. Your property is only fifteen miles from the town; the railway runs close beside it; and if only you will cut up the cherry orchard and the land along the river into building lots and let it off on lease for villas, you will get at least two thousand five hundred pounds a year out of it.

GAYEF. Come, come! What rubbish you're talking!

MADAME RANEVSKY. I don't quite understand what you mean, Yermolai Alexeyitch.

LOPAKHIN. You will get a pound a year at least for every acre from the tenants, and if you advertise the thing at once, I am ready to bet whatever you like, by the autumn you won't have a clod of that earth left on your hands. It'll all be snapped up. In two words, I congratulate you; you are saved. It's a first-class site, with a good deep river. Only of course you will have to put it in order and clear the ground; you will have to pull down all the old buildings—this house, for instance, which is no longer fit for anything; you'll have to cut down the cherry orchard. . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY. Cut down the cherry orchard! Excuse me, but you don't know what you're talking about. If there is one thing that's interesting, remarkable in fact, in the whole province, it's our cherry orchard.

LOPAKHIN. There's nothing remarkable about the orchard except that it's a very big one. It only bears once every two years, and then you don't know what to do with the fruit. Nobody wants to buy it.



GAYEF. Our cherry orchard is mentioned in Andreyevsky's Encyclopaedia.

LOPAKHIN (*looking at his watch*). If we don't make up our minds or think of any way, on the twenty-second of August the cherry orchard and the whole property will be sold by auction. Come, make up your mind! There's no other way out of it, I swear—absolutely none.

FIRS. In the old days, forty or fifty years ago, they used to dry the cherries and soak 'em and pickle 'em, and make jam of 'em; and the dried cherries . . .

GAYEF. Shut up, Firs.

FIRS. The dried cherries used to be sent in waggons to Moscow and Kharkov. A heap of money! The dried cherries were soft and juicy and sweet and sweet-smelling then. They knew some way in those days.

MADAME RANEVSKY. And why don't they do it now?

FIRS. They've forgotten. Nobody remembers how to do it.

PISHTCHIK (*to MADAME RANEVSKY*). What about Paris? How did you get on? Did you eat frogs?

MADAME RANEVSKY. Crocodiles.

PISHTCHIK. You don't say so! Well I never!

LOPAKHIN. Until a little while ago there was nothing but gentry and peasants in the villages; but now villa residents have made their appearance. All the towns, even the little ones, are surrounded by villas now. In another twenty years the villa resident will have multiplied like anything. At present he only sits and drinks tea on his verandah, but it is quite likely that he will soon take to cultivating his three acres of land, and then your old cherry orchard will become fruitful, rich and happy. . . .

GAYEF (*angry*). What gibberish!

(*Enter BARBARA and YASHA.*)

BARBARA (*taking out a key and noisily unlocking an old-fashioned cupboard*). There are two telegrams for you, mamma. Here they are.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*tearing them up without reading them*). They're from Paris. I've done with Paris.

GAYEF. Do you know how old this cupboard is, Lyuba? A week ago I pulled out the bottom drawer and saw a date burnt in it. That cupboard was made exactly a hundred years ago. What do you think of that, eh? We might celebrate its jubilee. It's only an inanimate thing, but for all that it's a historic cupboard.

PISHTCHIK (*astonished*). A hundred years? Well, I never!

GAYEF (*touching the cupboard*). Yes, it's a wonderful thing. . . . Beloved and venerable cupboard; honour and glory to your existence, which for more than a hundred years has been directed to the noble ideals of justice and virtue. Your silent summons to profitable labour has never weakened in all these hundred years.

(*Crying*) You have upheld the courage of succeeding generations of our human kind; you have upheld faith in a better future and cherished in us ideals of goodness and social consciousness. (*A pause*)

LOPAKHIN. Yes. . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY. You haven't changed, Leonid.

GAYEF (*embarrassed*). Off the white in the corner, chip the red in the middle pocket!

LOPAKHIN (*looking at his watch*). Well, I must be off.

YASHA (*handing a box to MADAME RANEVSKY*). Perhaps you'll take your pills now.

PISHTCHIK. You oughtn't to take medicine, dear lady. It does you neither good nor harm. Give them here, my friend. (*He empties all the pills into the palm of his hand, blows on them, puts them in his mouth and swallows them down with a draught of kvass*) There!

MADAME RANEVSKY (*alarmed*). Have you gone off your head?

PISHTCHIK. I've taken all the pills.

LOPAKHIN. Greedy fellow! (*Everyone laughs*)

FIRS (*mumbling*). They were here in Easter week and finished off a gallon of pickled gherkins.

MADAME RANEVSKY. What's he talking about?

BARBARA. He's been mumbling like that these three years. We've got used to it.

YASHA. Advancing age.

(*CHARLOTTE crosses in a white frock, very thin, tightly laced, with a lorgnette at her waist.*)

LOPAKHIN. Excuse me, Charlotte Ivanovna, I've not paid my respects to you yet. (*He prepares to kiss her hand*)

CHARLOTTE (*drawing her hand away*). If one allows you to kiss one's hand, you will want to kiss one's elbow next, and then one's shoulder.

LOPAKHIN. I'm having no luck to-day. (*All laugh*) Charlotte Ivanovna, do us a conjuring trick.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Charlotte, do do us a conjuring trick.

CHARLOTTE. No, thank you. I'm going to bed.

(*Exit*)

LOPAKHIN. We shall meet again in three weeks. (*Kissing MADAME RANEVSKY'S hand*) Meanwhile, good-bye. I must be off. (*To GAYEF*) So-long. (*Kissing PISHTCHIK*) Ta-ta. (*Shaking hands with BARBARA, then with FIRS and YASHA*) I hate having to go. (*To MADAME RANEVSKY*) If you make up your mind about the villas, let me know, and I'll raise you five thousand pounds at once. Think it over seriously.

BARBARA (*angrily*). For heaven's sake do go!

LOPAKHIN. I'm going, I'm going.

(Exit)

GAYEF. Snob! . . . However, *pardon!* Barbara's going to marry him; he's Barbara's young man.

BARBARA. You talk too much, uncle.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Why, Barbara, I shall be very glad. He's a nice man.

PISHTCHIK. Not a doubt about it. . . . A most worthy individual. My Dashenka, she says . . . oh, she says . . . lots of things. (*Snoring and waking up again at once*) By the by, dear lady, can you lend me twenty-five pounds? I've got to pay the interest on my mortgage to-morrow.

BARBARA (*alarmed*). We can't! we can't!

MADAME RANEVSKY. It really is a fact that I haven't any money.

PISHTCHIK. I'll find it somewhere. (*Laughing*) I never lose hope. Last time I thought: "Now I really am done for, I'm a ruined man," when behold, they ran a railway over my land and paid me compensation. And so it'll be again; something will happen, if not to-day, then to-morrow. Dashenka may win the twenty-thousand-pound prize; she's got a ticket in the lottery.

MADAME RANEVSKY. The coffee's finished. Let's go to bed.

FIRS (*brushing GAYEF's clothes, admonishingly*). You've put on the wrong trousers again. Whatever am I to do with you?

BARBARA (*softly*). Anya is asleep. (*She opens the window quietly*) The sun's up already; it isn't cold now. Look, mamma, how lovely the trees are. Heavens! what a sweet air! The starlings are singing!

GAYEF (*opening the other window*). The orchard is all white. You've not forgotten it, Lyuba? This long avenue going straight on, straight on, like a ribbon between the trees? It shines like silver on moonlight nights. Do you remember? You've not forgotten?

MADAME RANEVSKY (*looking out into the garden*). Oh, my childhood, my pure and happy childhood! I used to sleep in this nursery. I used to look out from here into the garden. Happiness awoke with me every morning! and the orchard was just the same then as it is now; nothing is altered. (*Laughing with joy*) It is all white, all white! Oh, my cherry orchard! After the dark and stormy autumn and the frosts of winter you are young again and full of happiness; the angels of heaven have not abandoned you. Oh! if only I could free my neck and shoulders from the stone that weighs them down! If only I could forget my past!

GAYEF. Yes; and this orchard will be sold to pay our debts, however impossible it may seem. . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY. Look! There's mamma walking in the orchard . . . in a white frock! (*Laughing with joy*) There she is!

GAYEF. Where?

BARBARA. Heaven help you!

MADAME RANEVSKY. There's no one there, really. It only looked like it; there on the right where the path turns down to the summer-house; there's a white tree that leans over and looks like a woman. (*Enter TROPHIMOF in a shabby student uniform and spectacles*) What a wonderful orchard, with its white masses of blossom and the blue sky above!

TROPHIMOF. Lyubof Andreyevna! (*She looks round at him*) I only want to say, "How do you do," and go away at once. (*Kissing her hand eagerly*) I was told to wait till the morning, but I hadn't the patience.

(MADAME RANEVSKY *looks at him in astonishment.*)

BARBARA (*crying*). This is Peter Trophimof.

TROPHIMOF. Peter Trophimof; I was Grisha's tutor, you know. Have I really altered so much?

(MADAME RANEVSKY *embraces him and cries softly.*)

GAYEF. Come, come, that's enough, Lyuba!

BARBARA (*crying*). I told you to wait till to-morrow, you know, Peter.

MADAME RANEVSKY. My little Grisha! My little boy! Grisha . . . my son. . . .

BARBARA. It can't be helped, mamma. It was the will of God.

TROPHIMOF (*gently, crying*). There, there!

MADAME RANEVSKY (*crying*). He was drowned. My little boy was drowned. Why? What was the use of that, my dear? (*In a softer voice*) Anya's asleep in there, and I am speaking so loud, and making a noise. . . . But tell me, Peter, why have you grown so ugly? Why have you grown so old?

TROPHIMOF. An old woman in the train called me a "mouldy gentleman."

MADAME RANEVSKY. You were quite a boy then, a dear little student, and now your hair's going and you wear spectacles. Are you really still a student? (*Going towards the door*)

TROPHIMOF. Yes, I expect I shall be a perpetual student.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*kissing her brother and then BARBARA*). Well, go to bed. You've grown old too, Leonid.

PISHTCHIK (*following her*). Yes, yes; time for bed. Oh, oh, my gout! I'll stay the night here. Don't forget, Lyubof Andreyevna, my angel, to-morrow morning . . . twenty-five.

GAYEF. He's still on the same string.

PISHTCHIK. Twenty-five . . . to pay the interest on my mortgage.

MADAME RANEVSKY. I haven't any money, my friend.

PISHTCHIK. I'll pay you back, dear lady. It's a trifling sum.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Well, well, Leonid will give it to you. Let him have it, Leonid.

GAYEF (*ironically*). I'll give it him right enough! Hold your pocket wide!

MADAME RANEVSKY. It can't be helped. . . . He needs it. He'll pay it back.

(*Exeunt* MADAME RANEVSKY, TROPHIMOF, PISHTCHIK and FIRS. GAYEF, BARBARA and YASHA remain.)

GAYEF. My sister hasn't lost her old habit of scattering the money. (*To* YASHA) Go away, my lad! You smell of chicken.

YASHA (*laughing*). You're just the same as you always were, Leonid Andreyevitch!

GAYEF. Who's that? (*To* BARBARA) What does he say?

BARBARA (*to* YASHA). Your mother's come up from the village. She's been waiting for you since yesterday in the servants' hall. She wants to see you.

YASHA. What a nuisance she is!

BARBARA. You wicked, unnatural son!

YASHA. Well, what do I want with her? She might just as well have waited till to-morrow. (*Exit*)

BARBARA. Mamma is just like she used to be; she hasn't changed a bit. If she had her way, she'd give away everything she has.

GAYEF. Yes. (*A pause*) If people recommend very many cures for an illness, that means that the illness is incurable. I think and think, I batter my brains; I know of many remedies, very many, and that means really that there is none. How nice it would be to get a fortune left one by somebody! How nice it would be if Anya could marry a very rich man! How nice it would be to go to Yaroslav and try my luck with my aunt the Countess. My aunt is very, very rich, you know.

BARBARA (*crying softly*). If only God would help us!

GAYEF. Don't howl! My aunt is very rich, but she does not like us. In the first place, my sister married a solicitor, not a nobleman. (*ANYA appears in the doorway*) She married a man who was not a nobleman, and it's no good pretending that she has led a virtuous life. She's a dear, kind, charming creature, and I love her very much, but whatever mitigating circumstances one may find for her, there's no getting round it that she's a sinful woman. You can see it in her every gesture.

BARBARA (*whispering*). Anya is standing in the door!

GAYEF. Who's that? (*A pause*) It's very odd, something's got into my right eye. I can't see properly out of it. Last Thursday when I was down at the District Court . . .

(*ANYA comes down.*)

BARBARA. Why aren't you asleep, Anya?

ANYA. I can't sleep. It's no good trying.

GAYEF. My little pet! (*Kissing ANYA's hands and face*) My little girl! (*Crying*) You're not my niece; you're my angel; you're my everything. Trust me, trust me. . . .

ANYA. I do trust you, uncle. Everyone loves you, everyone respects you; but dear, dear uncle, you ought to hold your tongue, only to hold your tongue. What were you saying just now about mamma? about your own sister? What was the good of saying that?

GAYEF. Yes, yes. (*Covering his face with her hand*) You're quite right; it was awful of me! Lord, Lord! save me from myself! And a little while ago I made a speech over a cupboard. What a stupid thing to do! As soon as I had done it, I knew it was stupid.

BARBARA. Yes, really, uncle. You ought to hold your tongue. Say nothing; that's all that's wanted.

ANYA. If only you would hold your tongue, you'd be so much happier!

GAYEF. I will! I will! (*Kissing ANYA's and BARBARA's hands*) I'll hold my tongue. But there's one thing I must say; it's business. Last Thursday, when I was down at the District Court, a lot of us were there together, we began to talk about this and that, one thing and another, and it seems I could arrange a loan on note of hand to pay the interest into the bank.

BARBARA. If only Heaven would help us!

GAYEF. I'll go in on Tuesday and talk it over again. (*To BARBARA*) Don't howl! (*To ANYA*) Your mamma shall have a talk with Lopakhin. Of course he won't refuse her. And as soon as you are rested you must go to see your grandmother, the Countess, at Yaroslav. We'll operate from three points, and the trick is done. We'll pay the interest, I'm certain of it. (*Taking sugar candy*) I swear on my honour, or whatever you will, the property shall not be sold. (*Excitedly*) I swear by my hope of eternal happiness! There's my hand on it. Call me a base, dishonourable man if I let it go to auction. I swear by my whole being!

ANYA (*calm again and happy*). What a dear you are, uncle, and how clever! (*Embraces him*) Now I'm easy again. I'm easy again! I'm happy!

(*Enter FIRS.*)

FIRS (*reproachfully*). Leonid Andreyevitch, have you no fear of God? When are you going to bed?

GAYEF. I'm just off—just off. You get along, Firs. I'll undress myself all right. Come, children, bye-bye! Details to-morrow, but now let's go to bed. (*Kissing ANYA and BARBARA*) I'm a good Liberal, a man of the eighties. People abuse the eighties, but I think that I may say I've suffered something for my convictions in my time. It's not for nothing that the peasants love me. We ought to know the peasants; we ought to know with what . . .

ANYA. You're at it again, uncle!

BARBARA. Why don't you hold your tongue, uncle?

FIRS (*angrily*). Leonid Andreyevitch!

GAYEF. I'm coming; I'm coming. Now go to bed. Off two cushions in the middle pocket! I start another life! . . .

(*Exit, with FIRS hobbling after him*)

ANYA. Now my mind is at rest. I don't want to go to Yaroslav; I don't like grand-mamma; but my mind is at rest, thanks to Uncle Leonid. (*She sits down*)

BARBARA. Time for bed. I'm off. Whilst you were away there's been a scandal. You know that nobody lives in the old servants' quarters except the old people, Ephim, Pauline, Evstigney and old Karp. Well, they took to having in all sorts of queer fish to sleep there with them. I didn't say a word. But at last I heard they had spread a report that I had given orders that they were to have nothing but peas to eat; out of stinginess, you understand? It was all Evstigney's doing. "Very well," I said to myself, "you wait a bit." So I sent for Evstigney. (*Yawning*) He comes. "Now then, Evstigney," I said, "you old imbecile, how do you dare . . ." (*Looking at ANYA*) Anya, Anya! (*A pause*) She's asleep. (*Taking ANYA's arm*) Let's go to bed. Come along. (*Leading her away*) Sleep on, my little one! Come along; come along! (*They go towards ANYA's room. In the distance beyond the orchard a shepherd plays his pipe. TROPHIMOF crosses the stage and, seeing BARBARA and ANYA, stops*) 'Sh! She's asleep, she's asleep! Come along, my love.

ANYA (*drowsily*). I'm so tired! Listen to the bells! Uncle, dear uncle! Mamma! Uncle!

BARBARA. Come along, my love! Come along.

(*Exeunt BARBARA and ANYA to the bedroom*)

TROPHIMOF (*with emotion*). My sunshine! My spring!

(*Curtain.*)

## ACT II

*In the open fields; an old crooked half-ruined shrine. Near it a well; big stones, apparently old tombstones; an old bench. Road to the estate beyond. On one side rise dark poplar-trees. Beyond them begins the cherry orchard. In the distance a row of telegraph poles, and, far away on the horizon, the dim outlines of a big town, visible only in fine, clear weather. It is near sunset.*

CHARLOTTE, YASHA and DUNYASHA sit on the bench. EPHIKHODOF stands by them and plays on a guitar; they meditate. CHARLOTTE wears an old peaked cap. She has taken a gun from off her shoulders and is mending the buckle of the strap.

CHARLOTTE (*thoughtfully*). I have no proper passport. I don't know how old I am; I always feel I am still young. When I was a little girl my father and mother used to go about from one country fair to another, giving performances, and very good ones too. I used to do the *salto mortale* and all sorts of tricks. When papa and mamma died an old German lady adopted me and educated me. Good! When I grew up I became a governess. But where I come from and who I am, I haven't a notion. Who my parents were—very likely they weren't married—I don't know. (*Taking a cucumber from her pocket and beginning to eat it*) I don't know anything about it. (*A pause*) I long to talk so, and I have no one to talk to, I have no friends or relations.

EPHIKHODOF (*playing on the guitar and singing*).

"What is the noisy world to me?  
Oh, what are friends and foes?"

How sweet it is to play upon a mandolin!

DUNYASHA. That's a guitar, not a mandolin. (*She looks at herself in a hand-glass and powders her face*)

EPHIKHODOF. For the madman who loves, it is a mandolin. (*Singing*)

"Oh, that my heart were cheered  
By the warmth of requited love."

(*YASHA joins in.*)

CHARLOTTE. How badly these people do sing! Foo! Like jackals howling!

DUNYASHA (*to YASHA*). What happiness it must be to live abroad!

YASHA. Of course it is; I quite agree with you. (*He yawns and lights a cigar*)

EPHIKHODOF. It stands to reason. Everything abroad has attained a certain culmination.\*

YASHA. That's right.

EPHIKHODOF. I am a man of cultivation; I have studied various remarkable books, but I cannot fathom the direction of my preferences; do I want to live or do I want to shoot myself, so to speak? But in order to be ready for all contingencies, I always carry a revolver in my pocket. Here it is. (*Showing revolver*)

CHARLOTTE. That's done. I'm off. (*Slinging the rifle over her shoulder*) You're a clever fellow, Ephikhodof, and very alarming. Women must fall madly in love with you. Brrr! (*Going*) These clever people are all so stupid; I have no one to talk to. I am always alone, always alone; I have no friends or relations, and who I am, or why I exist, is a mystery. (*Exit slowly*)

EPHIKHODOF. Strictly speaking, without touching upon other matters, I must protest *inter alia* that destiny treats me with the utmost rigour, as a tempest might treat a small ship. If I labour under a misapprehension, how is it that when I woke up this morning, behold, so to speak, I perceived sitting on my chest a spider of præternatural dimensions, like that? (*Indicating with both hands*) And if I go to take a draught of kvass, I am sure to find something of the most indelicate character, in the nature of a cockroach. (*A pause*) Have you read Buckle? † (*A pause; to DUNYASHA*) I should like to trouble you, Avdotya Fyodorovna, for a momentary interview.

DUNYASHA. Talk away.

EPHIKHODOF. I should prefer to conduct it *tête-à-tête*. (*Sighing*)

\* This represents a similar blunder of Ephikhodof's in the original.

† Buckle's "History of Civilization" is better known in Russia than here. To have read it is a sort of cachet of popular erudition, equivalent, say, to knowing your Herbert Spencer in England. Ephikhodof is a new type, evolved since the Liberation and the Reforms of Alexander II. He is just the opposite of Lopakhin. Ephikhodof is stupid and has intellectual aspirations. Lopakhin is clever and has no intellectual aspirations.



DUNYASHA (*confused*). Very well, only first please fetch me my cloak. It's by the cupboard. It's rather damp here.

EPHIKHODOF. Very well, mademoiselle. I will go and fetch it, mademoiselle. Now I know what to do with my revolver. (*Takes his guitar and exits, playing*)

YASHA. Twenty-two misfortunes! Between you and me, he's a stupid fellow. (*Yawning*)

DUNYASHA. Heaven help him, he'll shoot himself! (*A pause*) I have grown so nervous, I am always in a twitter. I was quite a little girl when they took me into the household, and now I have got quite disused to common life, and my hands are as white as white, like a lady's. I have grown so refined, so delicate and genteel, I am afraid of everything. I'm always frightened. And if you deceive me, Yasha, I don't know what will happen to my nerves.

YASHA (*kissing her*). You little cucumber! Of course every girl ought to behave herself properly; there's nothing I dislike as much as when girls aren't proper in their behaviour.

DUNYASHA. I've fallen dreadfully in love with you. You're so educated; you can talk about anything! (*A pause*)

YASHA (*yawning*). Yes. . . . The way I look at it is this; if a girl falls in love with anybody, then I call her immoral. (*A pause*) How pleasant it is to smoke one's cigar in the open air. (*Listening*) There's someone coming. It's the missis and the rest of 'em. . . . (DUNYASHA *embraces him hastily*) Go towards the house as if you'd just been for a bathe. Go by this path or else they'll meet you and think that I've been walking out with you. I can't stand that sort of thing.

DUNYASHA (*coughing softly*). Your cigar has given me a headache. (*Exit*)

(YASHA *remains sitting by the shrine. Enter MADAME RANEVSKY, GAYEF and LOPAKHIN.*)

LOPAKHIN. You must make up your minds once and for all. Time waits for no man. The question is perfectly simple. Are you going to let off the land for villas or not? Answer in one word; yes or no? Only one word!

MADAME RANEVSKY. Who's smoking horrible cigars here? (*She sits down*)

GAYEF. How handy it is now they've built the railway. (*Sitting*) We've been into town for lunch and back again. . . . Red in the middle! I must just go up to the house and have a game.

MADAME RANEVSKY. There's no hurry.

LOPAKHIN. Only one word—yes or no! (*Entreatingly*) Come, answer the question!

GAYEF (*yawning*). Who's that?

MADAME RANEVSKY (*looking into her purse*). I had a lot of money yesterday but there's hardly any left now. Poor Barbara tries to save money by feeding us all on milk soup; the old people in the kitchen get nothing but peas, and yet I go squandering aimlessly. . . . (*Dropping her purse and scattering gold coins; vexed*) There, I've dropped it all!

YASHA. Allow me, I'll pick it up. (*Collecting the coins*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Yes, please do, Yasha! Whatever made me go into town for lunch? I hate your horrid restaurant with the organ and the tablecloths all smelling of soap. Why do you drink so much, Leonid? Why do you eat so much? Why do you talk so much? You talked too much at the restaurant again, and most unsuitably, about the seventies, and the decadents. And to whom? Fancy talking about decadents to the waiters!

LOPAKHIN. Quite true.

GAYEF (*with a gesture*). I'm incorrigible, that's plain. (*Irritably to YASHA*) What do you keep dodging about in front of me for?

YASHA (*laughing*). I can't hear your voice without laughing.

GAYEF (*to MADAME RANEVSKY*). Either he or I . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY. Go away, Yasha; run along.

YASHA (*banding MADAME RANEVSKY her purse*). I'll go at once. (*Restraining his laughter with difficulty*) This very minute. (*Exit*)

LOPAKHIN. Deriganof, the millionaire, wants to buy your property. They say he'll come to the auction himself.

MADAME RANEVSKY. How did you hear?

LOPAKHIN. I was told so in town.

GAYEF. Our aunt at Yaroslav has promised to send something; but I don't know when, or how much.

LOPAKHIN. How much will she send? Ten thousand pounds? Twenty thousand pounds?

MADAME RANEVSKY. Oh, come . . . A thousand or fifteen hundred at the most.

LOPAKHIN. Excuse me, but in all my life I never met anybody so frivolous as you two, so crazy and unbusiness-like! I tell you in plain Russian your property is going to be sold, and you don't seem to understand what I say.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Well, what are we to do? Tell us what you want us to do.

LOPAKHIN. Don't I tell you every day? Every day I say the same thing over and over again. You must lease off the cherry orchard and the rest of the estate for villas; you must do it at once, this very moment; the auction will be on you in two twos! Try and understand. Once you make up your mind there are to be villas, you can get all the money you want, and you're saved.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Villas and villa residents, oh, please . . . it's so vulgar!

GAYEF. I quite agree with you.

LOPAKHIN. I shall either cry, or scream, or faint. I can't stand it! You'll be the death of me. (*To GAYEF*) You're an old woman!

GAYEF. Who's that?

LOPAKHIN. You're an old woman! (*Going*)

MADAME RANEVSKY (*frightened*). No, don't go. Stay here, there's a dear! Perhaps we shall think of some way.

LOPAKHIN. What's the good of thinking!

MADAME RANEVSKY. Please don't go; I want you. At any rate it's gayer when you're here. (*A pause*) I keep expecting something to happen, as if the house were going to tumble down about our ears.

GAYEF (*in deep abstraction*). Off the cushion on the corner; double into the middle pocket. . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY. We have been very, very sinful!

LOPAKHIN. You! What sins have you committed?

GAYEF (*eating candy*). They say I've devoured all my substance in sugar candy. (*Laughing*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Oh, the sins that I have committed . . . I've always squandered money at random like a mad-woman; I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband drank himself to death on champagne; he was a fearful drinker. Then for my sins I fell in love and went off with another man; and immediately—that was my first punishment—a blow full on the head . . . here, in this very river . . . my little boy was drowned; and I went abroad, right, right away, never to come back any more, never to see this river again. . . . I shut my eyes and ran, like a mad thing, and *he* came after me, pitiless and cruel. I bought a villa at Mentone, because he fell ill there, and for three years I knew no rest day or night; the sick man tormented and wore down my soul. Then, last year, when my villa was sold to pay my debts, I went off to Paris, and he came and robbed me of everything, left me and took up with another woman, and I tried to poison myself. . . . It was all so stupid, so humiliating. . . . Then suddenly I longed to be back in Russia, in my own country, with my little girl. . . . (*Wiping away her tears*) Lord, Lord, be merciful to me; forgive my sins! Do not punish me any more! (*Taking a telegram from her pocket*) I got this to-day from Paris . . . He asks to be forgiven, begs me to go back. . . . (*Tearing up the telegram*) Isn't that music I hear? (*Listening*)

GAYEF. That's our famous Jewish band. You remember? Four fiddles, a flute and a double bass.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Does it still exist? We must make them come up some time; we'll have a dance.

LOPAKHIN (*listening*). I don't hear anything. (*Singing softly*)

"The Germans for a fee will turn  
A Russ into a Frenchman."

(*Laughing*) I saw a very funny piece at the theatre last night; awfully funny!

MADAME RANEVSKY. It probably wasn't a bit funny. You people oughtn't to go and see plays; you ought to try to see yourselves; to see what a dull life you lead, and how much too much you talk.

LOPAKHIN. Quite right. To tell the honest truth, our life's an imbecile affair. (*A pause*) My papa was a peasant, an idiot; he understood nothing; he taught me nothing; all he did was to beat me when he was drunk, with a walking-stick. As a matter of fact I'm just as big a blockhead and idiot as he was. I never did any lessons; my handwriting's abominable; I write so badly I'm ashamed before people; like a pig.

MADAME RANEVSKY. You ought to get married.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, that's true.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Why not marry Barbara? She's a nice girl.

LOPAKHIN. Yes.

MADAME RANEVSKY. She's a nice straightforward creature; works all day; and what's most important, she loves you. You've been fond of her for a long time.

LOPAKHIN. Well, why not? I'm quite willing. She's a very nice girl. (*A pause*)

GAYEF. I've been offered a place in a bank. Six hundred pounds a year. Do you hear?

MADAME RANEVSKY. You in a bank! Stay where you are.

(*Enter FIRS carrying an overcoat.*)

FIRS (*to GAYEF*). Put this on, please, master; it's getting damp.

GAYEF (*putting on the coat*). What a plague you are, Firs!

FIRS. What's the use. . . . You went off and never told me. (*Examining his clothes*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. How old you've got, Firs!

FIRS. I beg your pardon?

LOPAKHIN. She says how old you've got!

FIRS. I've been alive a long time. When they found me a wife, your father wasn't even born yet. (*Laughing*) And when the Liberation came I was already chief valet. But I wouldn't have any Liberation then; I stayed with the master. (*A pause*) I remember how happy everybody was, but why they were happy they didn't know themselves.

LOPAKHIN. It was fine before then. Anyway they used to flog 'em.

FIRS (*mishearing him*). I should think so! The peasants minded the masters, and the masters minded the peasants, but now it's all higgledy-piggledy; you can't make head or tail of it.

GAYEF. Shut up, Firs. I must go into town again to-morrow. I've been promised an introduction to a general who'll lend money on a bill.

LOPAKHIN. You'll do no good. You won't even pay the interest; set your mind at ease about that.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*to LOPAKHIN*). He's only talking nonsense. There's no such general at all.

(Enter TROPHIMOF, ANYA and BARBARA.)

GAYEF. Here come the others.

ANYA. Here's mamma.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*tenderly*). Come along, come along, . . . my little ones. . . .  
(*Embracing ANYA and BARBARA*) If only you knew how much I love you both!  
Sit beside me . . . there, like that. (*Everyone sits*)

LOPAKHIN. The Perpetual Student's always among the girls.

TROPHIMOF. It's no affair of yours.

LOPAKHIN. He's nearly fifty and still a student.

TROPHIMOF. Stop your idiotic jokes!

LOPAKHIN. What are you losing your temper for, silly?

TROPHIMOF. Why can't you leave me alone?

LOPAKHIN (*laughing*). I should like to know what your opinion is of me?

TROPHIMOF. My opinion of you, Yermolai Alexeyitch, is this. You're a rich man; you'll soon be a millionaire. Just as a beast of prey which devours everything that comes in its way is necessary for the conversion of matter, so you are necessary too.

(*All laugh.*)

BARBARA. Tell us something about the planets, Peter, instead.

MADAME RANEVSKY. No. Let's go on with the conversation we were having yesterday.

TROPHIMOF. What about?

GAYEF. About the proud man.

TROPHIMOF. We had a long talk yesterday, but we didn't come to any conclusion. There is something mystical in the proud man in the sense in which you use the words. You may be right from your point of view, but, if we look at it simple-mindedly, what room is there for pride? Is there any sense in it, when man is so poorly constructed from the physiological point of view, when the vast majority of us are so gross and stupid and profoundly unhappy? We must give up admiring ourselves. The only thing to do is to work.

GAYEF. We shall die all the same.

TROPHIMOF. Who knows? And what does it mean, to die? Perhaps man has a hundred senses, and when he dies only the five senses that we know perish with him, and the other ninety-five remain alive.

MADAME RANEVSKY. How clever you are, Peter.

LOPAKHIN (*ironically*). Oh, extraordinary!

TROPHIMOF. Mankind marches forward, perfecting its strength. Everything that is unattainable for us now will one day be near and clear; but we must work; we

must help with all our force those who seek for truth. At present only a few men work in Russia. The vast majority of the educated people that I know seek after nothing, do nothing, and are as yet incapable of work. They call themselves the "Intelligentsia," they say "thou" and "thee" to the servants, they treat the peasants like animals, learn nothing, read nothing serious, do absolutely nothing, only talk about science, and understand little or nothing about art. They are all serious; they all have solemn faces; they only discuss important subjects; they philosophise; but meanwhile the vast majority of us, ninety-nine per cent, live like savages; at the least thing they curse and punch people's heads; they eat like beasts and sleep in dirt and bad air; there are bugs everywhere, evil smells, damp and moral degradation. . . . It's plain that all our clever conversations are only meant to distract our own attention and other people's. Show me where those crèches are, that they're always talking so much about; or those reading-rooms. They are only things people write about in novels; they don't really exist at all. Nothing exists but dirt, vulgarity and Asiatic ways. I am afraid of solemn faces; I dislike them; I am afraid of solemn conversations. Let us rather hold our tongues.

LOPAKHIN. Do you know, I get up at five every morning, I work from morning till night; I am always handling my own money or other people's, and I see the sort of men there are about me. One only has to begin to do anything to see how few honest and decent people there are. Sometimes, as I lie awake in bed, I think: "O Lord, you have given us mighty forests, boundless fields and immeasurable horizons, and we, living in their midst, ought really to be giants."

MADAME RANEVSKY. Oh dear, you want giants! They are all very well in fairy stories; but in real life they are rather alarming. (*EPHIKHODOF passes at the back of the scene, playing on his guitar, pensively*) There goes Ephikhodof.

ANYA (*pensively*). There goes Ephikhodof.

GAYEF. The sun has set.

TROPHIMOF. Yes.

GAYEF (*as if declaiming, but not loud*). O Nature, wonderful Nature, you glow with eternal light; beautiful and indifferent, you whom we call our mother, uniting in yourself both life and death, you animate and you destroy. . . .

BARBARA (*entreatingly*). Uncle!

ANYA. You're at it again, uncle!

TROPHIMOF. You'd far better double the red into the middle pocket.

GAYEF. I'll hold my tongue! I'll hold my tongue! (*They all sit pensively. Silence reigns, broken only by the mumbling of old FIRS. Suddenly a distant sound is heard as if from the sky, the sound of a string breaking, dying away, melancholy*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. What's that?

LOPAKHIN. I don't know. It's a lifting-tub given way somewhere away in the mines. It must be a long way off.

GAYEF. Perhaps it's some sort of bird . . . a heron, or something.

TROPHIMOF. Or an owl. . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY (*shuddering*). There's something uncanny about it!

FIRS. The same thing happened before the great misfortune: the owl screeched and the samovar kept humming.

GAYEF. What great misfortune?

FIRS. The Liberation. (*A pause*) \*

MADAME RANEVSKY. Come, everyone, let's go in; it's getting late. (*To ANYA*) You've tears in your eyes. What is it, little one? (*Embracing her*)

ANYA. Nothing, mamma. I'm all right.

TROPHIMOF. There's someone coming.

(*A TRAMP appears in a torn white peaked cap and overcoat. He is slightly drunk.*)

TRAMP. Excuse me, but can I go through this way straight to the station?

GAYEF. Certainly. Follow this path.

TRAMP. I am uncommonly obliged to you, sir. (*Coughing*) We're having lovely weather. (*Declaiming*) "Brother, my suffering brother" . . . "Come forth to the Volga. Who moans?" . . . (*To BARBARA*) Mademoiselle, please spare a six-pence for a hungry fellow-countryman.

(*BARBARA, frightened, screams.*)

LOPAKHIN (*angrily*). There's a decency for every indecency to observe!

MADAME RANEVSKY. Take this; here you are. (*Fumbling in her purse*) I haven't any silver. . . . Never mind, take this sovereign.

TRAMP. I am uncommonly obliged to you, madam. (*Exit. Laughter*)

BARBARA (*frightened*). I'm going! I'm going! Oh, mamma, there's nothing for the servants to eat at home, and you've gone and given this man a sovereign.

MADAME RANEVSKY. What's to be done with your stupid old mother? I'll give you up everything I have when I get back. Yermolai Alexeyitch, lend me some more money.

LOPAKHIN. Very good.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Come along, everyone; it's time to go in. We've settled all about your marriage between us, Barbara. I wish you joy.

BARBARA (*through her tears*). You mustn't joke about such things, mamma.

LOPAKHIN. Amelia, get thee to a nunnery, go!

GAYEF. My hands are all trembling; it's ages since I had a game of billiards.

LOPAKHIN. Amelia, nymphlet, in thine orisons remember me.

\* The sound of a tub falling in a mine is a very old remembrance, an impression of boyhood got in the steppes; Chekhov made use of it once before.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Come along. It's nearly supper-time.

BARBARA. How he frightened me! My heart is simply throbbing.

LOPAKHIN. Allow me to remind you, the cherry orchard is to be sold on the twenty-second of August. Bear that in mind; bear that in mind!

*(Exeunt omnes except TROPHIMOF and ANYA)*

ANYA *(laughing)*. Many thanks to the Tramp for frightening Barbara; at last we are alone.

TROPHIMOF. Barbara's afraid we shall go and fall in love with each other. Day after day she never leaves us alone. With her narrow mind she cannot understand that we are above love. To avoid everything petty, everything illusory, everything that prevents one from being free and happy, that is the whole meaning and purpose of our life. Forward! We march on irresistibly towards that bright star which burns far, far before us! Forward! Don't tarry, comrades!

ANYA *(clapping her hands.)* What beautiful things you say! *(A pause)* Isn't it enchanting here to-day!

TROPHIMOF. Yes, it's wonderful weather.

ANYA. What have you done to me, Peter? Why is it that I no longer love the cherry orchard as I did? I used to love it so tenderly; I thought there was no better place on earth than our garden.

TROPHIMOF. All Russia is our garden. The earth is great and beautiful; it is full of wonderful places. *(A pause)* Think, Anya, your grandfather, your great-grandfather and all your ancestors were serf-owners, owners of living souls. Do not human spirits look out at you from every tree in the orchard, from every leaf and every stem? Do you not hear human voices? . . . Oh! it is terrible. Your orchard frightens me. When I walk through it in the evening or at night, the rugged bark on the trees glows with a dim light, and the cherry-trees seem to see all that happened a hundred and two hundred years ago in painful and oppressive dreams. Well, well, we have fallen at least two hundred years behind the times. We have achieved nothing at all as yet; we have not made up our minds how we stand with the past; we only philosophise, complain of boredom, or drink vodka. It is so plain that, before we can live in the present, we must first redeem the past, and have done with it; and it is only by suffering that we can redeem it, only by strenuous, unremitting toil. Understand that, Anya.

ANYA. The house we live in has long since ceased to be our house; and I shall go away, I give you my word.

TROPHIMOF. If you have the household keys, throw them in the well and go away. Be free, be free as the wind.

ANYA *(enthusiastically)*. How beautifully you put it!

TROPHIMOF. Believe what I say, Anya; believe what I say. I'm not thirty yet; I am still young, still a student; but what I have been through! I am hungry as the winter; I am sick, anxious, poor as a beggar. Fate has tossed me hither and thither;



I have been everywhere, everywhere. But wherever I have been, every minute, day and night, my soul has been full of mysterious anticipations. I feel the approach of happiness, Anya; I see it coming. . . .

ANYA (*pensively*). The moon is rising.

(EPHIKHODOF is heard still playing the same sad tune on his guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere beyond the poplar-trees, BARBARA is heard calling for ANYA: "Anya, where are you?")

TROPHIMOF. Yes, the moon is rising. (*A pause*) There it is, there is happiness; it is coming towards us, nearer and nearer; I can hear the sound of its footsteps. . . . And if we do not see it, if we do not know it, what does it matter? Others will see it.

BARBARA (*without*). Anya? Where are you?

TROPHIMOF. There's Barbara again! (*Angrily*) It really is too bad!

ANYA. Never mind. Let us go down to the river. It's lovely there.

TROPHIMOF. Come on! (*Exeunt ANYA and TROPHIMOF*)

BARBARA (*without*). Anya! Anya!

(*Curtain.*)

### ACT III

*A sitting-room separated by an arch from a big drawing-room behind. Chandelier lighted. The Jewish band mentioned in Act II is heard playing on the landing. Evening. In the drawing-room they are dancing the grand rond. SIMEONOF-PISHTCHIK is heard crying: "Promenade à une paire!"*

*The dancers come down into the sitting-room. The first pair consists of PISHTCHIK and CHARLOTTE; the second of TROPHIMOF and MADAME RANEVSKY; the third of ANYA and the POST OFFICE OFFICIAL; the fourth of BARBARA and the STATION-MASTER, etc., etc. BARBARA is crying softly and wipes away the tears as she dances. In the last pair comes DUNYASHA. They cross the sitting-room.*

PISHTCHIK. Grand rond, balancez . . . Les cavaliers à genou et remerciez vos dames.

(*FIRS in evening dress carries seltzer water across on a tray. PISHTCHIK and TROPHIMOF come down into the sitting-room.*)

PISHTCHIK. I am a full-blooded man; I've had two strokes already; it's hard work dancing, but, as the saying goes: "If you run with the pack, bark or no, but anyway wag your tail." I'm as strong as a horse. My old father, who was fond of his joke, rest his soul, used to say, talking of our pedigree, that the ancient stock of the Simeonof-Pishtchiks was descended from that very horse that Caligula made a senator. . . . (*Sitting*) But the worst of it is, I've got no money. A hungry dog believes in nothing but meat. (*Snoring and waking up again at once*) I'm just the same . . . it's nothing but money, money, with me.

TROPHIMOF. Yes, it's quite true, there is something horse-like about your build.

PISHTCHIK. Well, well . . . a horse is a jolly creature . . . you can sell a horse.

(*A sound of billiards being played in the next room. BARBARA appears in the drawing-room beyond the arch.*)

TROPHIMOF (*teasing her*). Madame Lopakhin! Madame Lopakhin!

BARBARA (*angrily*). Mouldy gentleman!

TROPHIMOF. Yes, I'm a mouldy gentleman, and I'm proud of it.

BARBARA (*bitterly*). We've hired the band, but where's the money to pay for it?  
(*Exit*)

TROPHIMOF (*to PISHTCHIK*). If the energy which you have spent in the course of your whole life in looking for money to pay the interest on your loans had been diverted to some other purpose, you would have had enough of it, I dare say, to turn the world upside down.

PISHTCHIK. Nietzsche the philosopher, a very remarkable man, very famous, a man of gigantic intellect, says in his works that it's quite right to forge banknotes.

TROPHIMOF. What, have you read Nietzsche?

PISHTCHIK. Well . . . Dashenka told me. . . . But I'm in such a hole, I'd forge 'em for two-pence. I've got to pay thirty-one pounds the day after to-morrow. . . . I've got thirteen pounds already. (*Feeling his pockets; alarmed*) My money's gone! I've lost my money! (*Crying*) Where's my money got to? (*Joyfully*) Here it is, inside the lining. . . . It's thrown me all in a perspiration.

(*Enter MADAME RANEVSKY and CHARLOTTE.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY (*humming a lezginka \**). Why is Leonid so long? What can he be doing in the town? (*To DUNYASHA*) Dunyasha, ask the musicians if they'll have some tea.

TROPHIMOF. The sale did not come off, in all probability.

MADAME RANEVSKY. It was a stupid day for the musicians to come; it was a stupid day to have this dance. . . . Well, well, it doesn't matter. . . . (*She sits down and sings softly to herself*)

CHARLOTTE (*giving PISHTCHIK a pack of cards*). Here is a pack of cards. Think of any card you like.

PISHTCHIK. I've thought of one.

CHARLOTTE. Now shuffle the pack. That's all right. Give them here, oh, most worthy Mr. Pishtchik. Ein, zwei, drei! Now look and you'll find it in your side pocket.

PISHTCHIK (*taking a card from his side pocket*). The Eight of Spades! You're perfectly right. (*Astonished*) Well, I never!

CHARLOTTE (*holding the pack on the palm of her hand, to TROPHIMOF*). Say quickly, what's the top card?

\* A lively Caucasian dance in two-four time, popularised by Glinka, and by Rubinstein in his opera, *Demon*.

TROPHIMOF. Well, say the Queen of Spades.

CHARLOTTE. Right! (*To PISHTCHIK*) Now then, what's the top card?

PISHTCHIK. Ace of Hearts.

CHARLOTTE. Right! (*She claps her hands; the pack of cards disappears*) What a beautiful day we've been having.

(*A mysterious female VOICE answers her as if from under the floor: "Yes, indeed, a charming day, mademoiselle."*)

CHARLOTTE. You are my beautiful ideal.

THE VOICE. "I think you also ferry beautiful, mademoiselle."

STATIONMASTER (*applauding*). Bravo, Miss Ventriloquist!

PISHTCHIK (*astonished*). Well, I never! Bewitching Charlotte Ivanovna, I'm head over ears in love with you.

CHARLOTTE. In love! (*Shrugging her shoulders*) Are you capable of love? Guter Mensch, aber schlechter Musikant!

TROPHIMOF (*slapping PISHTCHIK on the shoulder*). You old horse!

CHARLOTTE. Now attention, please; one more trick. (*Taking a shawl from a chair*) Now here's a shawl, and a very pretty shawl; I'm going to sell this very pretty shawl. (*Shaking it*) Who'll buy? who'll buy?

PISHTCHIK (*astonished*). Well I never!

CHARLOTTE. Ein, zwei, drei! (*She lifts the shawl quickly; behind it stands ANYA, who drops a curtsy, runs to her mother, kisses her, then runs up into the drawing-room amid general applause*)

MADAME RANEVSKY (*applauding*). Bravo! bravo!

CHARLOTTE. Once more. Ein, zwei, drei! (*She lifts up the shawl; behind it stands BARBARA, bowing*)

PISHTCHIK (*astonished*). Well I never!

CHARLOTTE. That's all. (*She throws the shawl over PISHTCHIK, makes a curtsy and runs up into the drawing-room*)

PISHTCHIK (*hurrying after her*). You little rascal . . . there's a girl for you, there's a girl. . . . (Exit)

MADAME RANEVSKY. And still no sign of Leonid. What he's doing in the town so long, I can't understand. It must be all over by now; the property's sold; or the auction never came off; why does he keep me in suspense so long?

BARBARA (*trying to soothe her*). Uncle has bought it, I am sure of that.

TROPHIMOF (*mockingly*). Of course he has!

BARBARA. Grannie sent him a power of attorney to buy it in her name and transfer the mortgage. She's done it for Anya's sake. I'm perfectly sure that Heaven will help us and uncle will buy it.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Your Yaroslav grannie sent fifteen hundred pounds to buy the property in her name—she doesn't trust us—but it wouldn't be enough even to pay the interest. (*Covering her face with her hands*) My fate is being decided to-day, my fate. . . .

TROPHIMOF (*teasing BARBARA*). Madame Lopakhin!

BARBARA (*angrily*). Perpetual Student! He's been sent down twice from the University.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Why do you get angry, Barbara? He calls you Madame Lopakhin for fun. Why not? You can marry Lopakhin if you like; he's a nice, interesting man; you needn't if you don't; nobody wants to force you, my pet.

BARBARA. I take it very seriously, mamma, I must confess. He's a nice man and I like him.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Then marry him. There's no good putting it off that I can see.

BARBARA. But, mamma, I can't propose to him myself. For two whole years everybody's been talking about him to me, everyone; but he either says nothing or makes a joke of it. I quite understand. He's making money; he's always busy; he can't be bothered with me. If I only had some money, even a little, even ten pounds, I would give everything up and go right away. I would go into a nunnery.

TROPHIMOF (*mocking*). What bliss!

BARBARA (*to TROPHIMOF*). A student ought to be intelligent. (*In a gentler voice, crying*) How ugly you've grown, Peter; how old you've grown! (*She stops crying; to MADAME RANEVSKY*) But I can't live without work, mamma. I must have something to do every minute of the day.

(*Enter YASHA.*)

YASHA (*trying not to laugh*). Ephikhodof has broken a billiard cue. (*Exit*)

BARBARA. What's Ephikhodof doing here? Who gave him leave to play billiards? I don't understand these people. (*Exit*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Don't tease her, Peter. Don't you see that she's unhappy enough already?

TROPHIMOF. I wish she wouldn't be so fussy, always meddling in other people's affairs. The whole summer she's given me and Anya no peace; she is afraid we'll work up a romance between us. What business is it of hers? I'm sure I never gave her any grounds; I'm not likely to be so commonplace. We are above love!

MADAME RANEVSKY. Then I suppose I must be beneath love. (*Deeply agitated*) Why doesn't Leonid come? Oh, if only I knew whether the property's sold or not! It seems such an impossible disaster, that I don't know what to think. . . . I'm bewildered . . . I shall burst out screaming, I shall do something idiotic. Save me, Peter; say something to me, say something. . . .

TROPHIMOF. Whether the property is sold to-day or whether it's not sold, surely it's all one? It's all over with it long ago; there's no turning back; the path is over-

grown. Be calm, dear Lyubof Andreyevna. You mustn't deceive yourself any longer; for once you must look the truth straight in the face.

MADAME RANEVSKY. What truth? You can see what's truth, and what's untruth, but I seem to have lost the power of vision; I see nothing. You settle every important question so boldly; but tell me, Peter, isn't that because you're young, because you have never solved any question of your own as yet by suffering? You look boldly ahead; isn't it only that you don't see or divine anything terrible in the future; because life is still hidden from your young eyes? You are bolder, honester, deeper than we are, but reflect, show me just a finger's breadth of consideration, take pity on me. Don't you see? I was born here, my father and mother lived here, and my grandfather; I love this house; without the cherry orchard my life has no meaning for me, and if it *must* be sold, then for heaven's sake sell me too! (*Embracing TROPHIMOF and kissing him on the forehead*) My little boy was drowned here. (*Crying*) Be gentle with me, dear, kind Peter.

TROPHIMOF. You know I sympathise with all my heart.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Yes, yes, but you ought to say it somehow differently. (*Taking out her handkerchief and dropping a telegram*) I am so wretched to-day, you can't imagine! All this noise jars on me, my heart jumps at every sound. I tremble all over; but I can't shut myself up; I am afraid of the silence when I'm alone. Don't be hard on me, Peter; I love you like a son. I would gladly let Anya marry you, I swear it; but you must work, Peter; you must get your degree. You do nothing; Fate tosses you about from place to place; and that's not right. It's true what I say, isn't it? And you must do something to your beard to make it grow better. (*Laughing*) I can't help laughing at you.

TROPHIMOF (*picking up the telegram*). I don't wish to be an Adonis.

MADAME RANEVSKY. It's a telegram from Paris. I get them very day. One came yesterday, another to-day. That savage is ill again; he's in a bad way. . . . He asks me to forgive him, he begs me to come; and I really ought to go to Paris and be with him. You look at me sternly; but what am I to do, Peter? What am I to do? He's ill, he's lonely, he's unhappy. Who is to look after him? Who is to keep him from doing stupid things? Who is to give him his medicine when it's time? After all, why should I be ashamed to say it? I love him, that's plain. I love him, I love him. . . . My love is like a stone tied round my neck; it's dragging me down to the bottom; but I love my stone. I can't live without it. (*Squeezing TROPHIMOF's hand*) Don't think ill of me, Peter; don't say anything! Don't say anything!

TROPHIMOF (*crying*). Forgive my bluntness, for heaven's sake; but the man has simply robbed you.

MADAME RANEVSKY. No, no, no! (*Stopping her ears*) You mustn't say that!

TROPHIMOF. He's a rascal; everybody sees it but yourself; he's a petty rascal, a ne'er-do-weel. . . .

MADAME RANEVSKY (*angry but restrained*). You're twenty-six or twenty-seven, and you're still a Lower School boy!

TROPHIMOF. Who cares?

MADAME RANEVSKY. You ought to be a man by now; at your age you ought to understand people who love. You ought to love someone yourself, you ought to be in love! (*Angrily*) Yes, yes! It's not purity with you; it's simply you're smug, a figure of fun, a freak. . . .

TROPHIMOF (*horrified*). What does she say?

MADAME RANEVSKY. "I am above love!" You're not above love; you're simply what Firs calls a "job-lot." At your age you ought to be ashamed not to have a mistress!

TROPHIMOF (*aghast*). This is awful! What does she say? (*Going quickly up into the drawing-room, clasping his head with his hands*) This is something awful! I can't stand it; I'm off . . . (*Exit, but returns at once*) All is over between us! (*Exit to landing*)

MADAME RANEVSKY (*calling after him*). Stop, Peter! Don't be ridiculous; I was only joking! Peter!

(*TROPHIMOF is heard on the landing going quickly down the stairs, and suddenly falling down them with a crash. ANYA and BARBARA scream. A moment later the sound of laughter.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. What has happened?

(*ANYA runs in.*)

ANYA (*laughing*). Peter's tumbled downstairs. (*She runs out again*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. What a ridiculous fellow he is!

(*The STATIONMASTER stands in the middle of the drawing-room beyond the arch and recites Alexey Tolstoy's poem, "The Sinner." Everybody stops to listen, but after a few lines the sound of a waltz is heard from the landing and he breaks off. All dance. TROPHIMOF, ANYA, BARBARA and MADAME RANEVSKY enter from the landing.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Come, Peter, come, you pure spirit. . . . I beg your pardon. Let's have a dance. (*She dances with TROPHIMOF, ANYA and BARBARA dance*)

(*Enter FIRS, and stands his walking-stick by the side door. Enter YASHA by the drawing-room; he stands looking at the dancers.*)

YASHA. Well, grandfather?

FIRS. I'm not feeling well. In the old days it was generals and barons and admirals that danced at our dances, but now we send for the Postmaster and the Stationmaster, and even they make a favour of coming. I'm sort of weak all over. The old master, their grandfather, used to give us all sealing wax, when we had anything the matter. I've taken sealing wax every day for twenty years and more. Perhaps that's why I'm still alive.\*

\* If any reader of this play wants to try Firs' treatment, he must soak the sealing wax well in water, and then drink the water.

YASHA. I'm sick of you, grandfather. (*Yawning*) I wish you'd die and have done with it.

FIRS. Ah! you . . . job-lot! (*He mumbles to himself*)

(TROPHIMOF and MADAME RANEVSKY dance beyond the arch and down into the sitting-room.)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Merci. I'll sit down. (*Sitting*) I'm tired.

(*Enter ANYA.*)

ANYA (*agitated*). There was somebody in the kitchen just now saying that the cherry orchard was sold to-day.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Sold? Who to?

ANYA. He didn't say who to. He's gone. (*She dances with TROPHIMOF. Both dance up into the drawing-room*)

YASHA. It was some old fellow chattering; a stranger.

FIRS. And still Leonid Andreyitch doesn't come. He's wearing his light overcoat *demi-saison*; he'll catch cold as like as not. Ah, young wood, green wood!

MADAME RANEVSKY. This is killing me. Yasha, go and find out who it was sold to.

YASHA. Why, he's gone long ago, the old man. (*Laughs*)

MADAME RANEVSKY (*vexed*). What are you laughing at? What are you glad about?

YASHA. He's a ridiculous fellow is Ephikhodof. Nothing in him. Twenty-two misfortunes!

MADAME RANEVSKY. Firs, if the property is sold, where will you go to?

FIRS. Wherever you tell me, there I'll go.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Why do you look like that? Are you ill? You ought to be in bed.

FIRS (*ironically*). Oh yes, I'll go to bed, and who'll hand the things round, who'll give orders? I've the whole house on my hands.

YASHA. Lyubof Andreyevna! Let me ask a favour of you; be so kind; if you go to Paris again, take me with you, I beseech you. It's absolutely impossible for me to stay here. (*Looking about; sotto voce*) What's the use of talking? You can see for yourself this is a barbarous country; the people have no morals; and the boredom! The food in the kitchen is something shocking, and on the top of it old Firs going about mumbling irrelevant nonsense. Take me back with you; be so kind!

(*Enter PISHTCHIK.*)

PISHTCHIK. May I have the pleasure . . . a bit of a waltz, charming lady? (MADAME RANEVSKY takes his arm) All the same, enchanting lady, you must let me have eighteen pounds. (*Dancing*) Let me have . . . eighteen pounds.

(*Exeunt dancing through the arch*)

YASHA (*singing to himself*).

"Oh, wilt thou understand  
The turmoil of my soul?"

(*Beyond the arch appears a figure in grey tall hat and check trousers, jumping and waving its arms. Cries of "Bravo, Charlotte Ivanovna."*)

DUNYASHA (*stopping to powder her face*). Mamselle Anya tells me I'm to dance; there are so many gentlemen and so few ladies. But dancing makes me giddy and makes my heart beat, Firs Nikolayevitch; and just now the gentleman from the post office said something so nice to me, oh, so nice! It quite took my breath away. (*The music stops*)

FIRS. What did he say to you?

DUNYASHA. He said, "You are like a flower."

YASHA (*yawning*). Cad!

(*Exit*)

DUNYASHA. Like a flower! I am so ladylike and refined, I dote on compliments.

FIRS. You'll come to a bad end.

(*Enter EPHIKHODOF.*)

EPHIKHODOF. You are not pleased to see me, Avdotya Fyodorovna, no more than if I were some sort of insect. (*Sighing*) Ah! Life! Life!

DUNYASHA. What do you want?

EPHIKHODOF. Undoubtedly perhaps you are right. (*Sighing*) But of course, if one regards it, so to speak, from the point of view, if I may allow myself the expression, and with apologies for my frankness, you have finally reduced me to a state of mind. I quite appreciate my destiny; every day some misfortune happens to me, and I have long since grown accustomed to it, and face my fortune with a smile. You have passed your word to me, and although I . . .

DUNYASHA. Let us talk of this another time, if you please; but now leave me in peace. I am busy meditating. (*Playing with her fan*)

EPHIKHODOF. Every day some misfortune befalls me, and yet, if I may venture to say so, I meet them with smiles and even laughter.

(*Enter BARBARA from the drawing-room.*)

BARBARA (*to EPHIKHODOF*). Haven't you gone yet, Simeon? You seem to pay no attention to what you're told. (*To DUNYASHA*) You get out of here, Dunyasha. (*To EPHIKHODOF*) First you play billiards and break a cue, and then you march about the drawing-room as if you were a guest!

EPHIKHODOF. Allow me to inform you that it's not your place to call me to account.

BARBARA. I'm not calling you to account; I'm merely talking to you. All you can do is to walk about from one place to another, without ever doing a stroke of work; and why on earth we keep a clerk at all heaven only knows.



EPHIKHODOF (*offended*). Whether I work, or whether I walk, or whether I eat, or whether I play billiards is a question to be decided only by my elders and people who understand.

BARBARA (*furios*). How dare you talk to me like that! How dare you! I don't understand things, don't I? You clear out of here this minute! Do you hear me? This minute!

EPHIKHODOF (*flinching*). I must beg you to express yourself in genteeler language.

BARBARA (*beside herself*). You clear out this instant second! Out you go! (*Following him as he retreats towards the door*) Twenty-two misfortunes! Make yourself scarce! Get out of my sight! (Exit EPHIKHODOF)

EPHIKHODOF (*without*). I shall lodge a complaint against you.

BARBARA. What! You're coming back, are you? (*Seizing the walking-stick left at the door by FIRS*) Come on! Come on! Come on! I'll teach you! Are you coming? Are you coming? Then take that. (*She slashes with the stick*)

(Enter LOPAKHIN.)

LOPAKHIN. Many thanks; much obliged.

BARBARA (*still angry, but ironical*). Sorry!

LOPAKHIN. Don't mention it. I'm very grateful for your warm reception.

BARBARA. It's not worth thanking me for. (*She walks away, then looks round and asks in a gentle voice*) I didn't hurt you?

LOPAKHIN. Oh no, nothing to matter. I shall have a bump like a goose's egg, that's all.

(*Voices from the drawing-room: "Lopakhin has arrived! Yermolai Alexeyitch!"*)

PISHTCHIK. Let my eyes see him, let my ears hear him! (*He and LOPAKHIN kiss*) You smell of brandy, old man. We're having a high time, too.

(Enter MADAME RANEVSKY.)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Is it you, Yermolai Alexeyitch? Why have you been so long? Where is Leonid?

LOPAKHIN. Leonid Andreyitch came back with me. He's just coming.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*agitated*). What happened? Did the sale come off? Tell me, tell me!

LOPAKHIN (*embarrassed, afraid of showing his pleasure*). The sale was all over by four o'clock. We missed the train and had to wait till half-past eight. (*Sighing heavily*) Ouf! I'm rather giddy. . . .

(Enter GAYEF. *In one hand he carries parcels; with the other he wipes away his tears.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. What happened, Lenya? Come, Lenya! (*Impatiently, crying*) Be quick, be quick, for heaven's sake!

GAYEF (*answering her only with an up and down gesture of the hand; to FIRS, crying*). Here, take these. . . . Here are some anchovies and Black Sea herrings. I've had nothing to eat all day. Lord, what I've been through! (*Through the open door of the billiard-room comes the click of the billiard balls and YASHA's voice: "Seven, eighteen!" GAYEF's expression changes; he stops crying*) I'm frightfully tired. Come and help me change, Firs. (*He goes up through the drawing-room, FIRS following*)

PISHTCHIK. What about the sale? Come on, tell us all about it.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Was the cherry orchard sold?

LOPAKHIN. Yes.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Who bought it?

LOPAKHIN. I did. (*A pause. MADAME RANEVSKY is overwhelmed at the news. She would fall to the ground but for the chair and table by her. BARBARA takes the keys from her belt, throws them on the floor in the middle of the sitting-room, and exit*) I bought it. Wait a bit; don't hurry me; my head's in a whirl; I can't speak. . . . (*Laughing*) When we got to the sale, Deriganof was there already. Leonid Andreyitch had only fifteen hundred pounds, and Deriganof bid three thousand more than the mortgage right away. When I saw how things stood, I went for him and bid four thousand. He said four thousand five hundred. I said five thousand five hundred. He went up by five hundreds, you see, and I went up by thousands. . . . Well, it was soon over. I bid nine thousand more than the mortgage, and got it; and now the cherry orchard is mine! Mine! (*Laughing*) Heaven's alive! Just think of it! The cherry orchard is mine! Tell me that I'm drunk; tell me that I'm off my head; tell me that it's all a dream! . . . (*Stamping his feet*) Don't laugh at me! If only my father and my grandfather could rise from their graves and see the whole affair, how their Yermolai, their flogged and ignorant Yermolai, who used to run about barefooted in the winter, how this same Yermolai had bought a property that hasn't its equal for beauty anywhere in the whole world! I have bought the property where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed into the kitchen. I'm asleep, it's only a vision, it isn't real. . . . 'Tis the fruit of imagination, wrapped in the mists of ignorance. (*Picking up the keys and smiling affectionately*) She's thrown down her keys; she wants to show that she's no longer mistress here. . . . (*Jingling them together*) Well, well, what's the odds? (*The musicians are heard tuning up*) Hey, musicians, play! I want to hear you. Come everyone and see Yermolai Lopakhin lay his axe to the cherry orchard, come and see the trees fall down! We'll fill the place with villas; our grandsons and great-grandsons shall see a new life here. . . . Strike up, music! (*The band plays. MADAME RANEVSKY sinks into a chair and weeps bitterly. Reproachfully*) Oh, why, why didn't you listen to me? You can't put the clock back now, poor dear. (*Crying*) Oh, that all this were past and over! Oh, that our unhappy topsyturvy life were changed!

PISHTCHIK (*taking him by the arm, sotto voce*). She's crying. Let's go into the drawing-room and leave her alone to . . . Come on. (*Taking him by the arm, and going up towards the drawing-room*)

LOPAKHIN. What's up? Play your best, musicians! Let everything be as I want. *(Ironically)* Here comes the new squire, the owner of the cherry orchard! *(Knocking up by accident against a table and nearly throwing down the candelabra)* Never mind, I can pay for everything!

*(Exit with PISHTCHIK. Nobody remains in the drawing-room or sitting-room except MADAME RANEVSKY, who sits huddled together, weeping bitterly. The band plays softly. Enter ANYA and TROPHIMOF quickly. ANYA goes to her mother and kneels before her. TROPHIMOF stands in the entry to the drawing room.)*

ANYA. Mamma! Are you crying, mamma? My dear, good, sweet mamma! Darling, I love you! I bless you! The cherry orchard is sold; it's gone; it's quite true, it's quite true. But don't cry, mamma, you've still got life before you, you've still got your pure and lovely soul. Come with me, darling; come away from here. We'll plant a new garden, still lovelier than this. You will see it and understand, and happiness, deep, tranquil happiness will sink down on your soul, like the sun at eventide, and you'll smile, mamma. Come, darling, come with me!

*(Curtain.)*

#### ACT IV

*Same scene as Act I. There are no window-curtains, no pictures. The little furniture left is stacked in a corner, as if for sale. A feeling of emptiness. By the door to the hall and at the back of the scene are piled portmanteaux, bundles, etc. The door is open and the voices of BARBARA and ANYA are audible.*

LOPAKHIN stands waiting. YASHA holds a tray with small tumblers full of champagne. EPHIKHODOF is tying up a box in the hall. A distant murmur of voices behind the scene; the PEASANTS have come to say good-bye.

GAYEF *(without)*. Thank you, my lads, thank you.

YASHA. The common people have come to say good-bye. I'll tell you what I think, Yermolai Alexeyitch; they're good fellows but rather stupid.

*(The murmur of voices dies away. Enter MADAME RANEVSKY and GAYEF from the hall. She is not crying, but she is pale, her face twitches, she cannot speak.)*

GAYEF. You gave them your purse, Lyuba. That was wrong, very wrong!

MADAME RANEVSKY. I couldn't help it, I couldn't help it! *(Exeunt both)*

LOPAKHIN *(calling after them through the doorway)*. Please come here! Won't you come here? Just a glass to say good-bye. I forgot to bring any from the town, and could only raise one bottle at the station. Come along. *(A pause)* What, won't you have any? *(Returning from the door)* If I'd known, I wouldn't have bought it. I shan't have any either. *(YASHA sets the tray down carefully on a chair)* Drink it yourself, Yasha.

YASHA. Here's to our departure! Good luck to them that stay! *(Drinking)* This isn't real champagne, you take my word for it.

LOPAKHIN. Sixteen shillings a bottle. *(A pause)* It's devilish cold in here.

YASHA. The fires weren't lighted to-day; we're all going away. (*He laughs*)

LOPAKHIN. What are you laughing for?

YASHA. Just pleasure.

LOPAKHIN. Here we are in October, but it's as calm and sunny as summer. Good building weather. (*Looking at his watch and speaking off*) Don't forget that there's only forty-seven minutes before the train goes. You must start for the station in twenty minutes. Make haste.

(*Enter TROPHIMOF in an overcoat, from out of doors.*)

TROPHIMOF. I think it's time we were off. The carriages are round. What the deuce has become of my goloshes? I've lost 'em. (*Calling off*) Anya, my goloshes have disappeared. I can't find them anywhere!

LOPAKHIN. I've got to go to Kharkov. I'll start in the same train with you. I'm going to spend the winter in Kharkov. I've been loafing about all this time with you people, eating my head off for want of work. I can't live without work, I don't know what to do with my hands; they dangle about as if they didn't belong to me.

TROPHIMOF. Well, we're going now, and you'll be able to get back to your beneficent labours.

LOPAKHIN. Have a glass.

TROPHIMOF. Not for me.

LOPAKHIN. Well, so you're off to Moscow?

TROPHIMOF. Yes, I'll see them into the town, and go on to Moscow to-morrow.

LOPAKHIN. Well, well. . . . I suppose the professors haven't started their lectures yet; they're waiting till you arrive.

TROPHIMOF. It is no affair of yours.

LOPAKHIN. How many years have you been up at the University?

TROPHIMOF. Try and think of some new joke; this one's getting a bit flat. (*Looking for his goloshes*) Look here, I dare say we shan't meet again, so let me give you a bit of advice as a keepsake: Don't flap your hands about! Get out of the habit of flapping. Building villas, prophesying that villa residents will turn into small free-holders, all that sort of thing is flapping too. Well, when all's said and done, I like you. You have thin, delicate, artist fingers; you have a delicate artist soul.

LOPAKHIN (*embracing him*). Good-bye, old chap. Thank you for everything. Take some money off me for the journey if you want it.

TROPHIMOF. What for? I don't want it.

LOPAKHIN. But you haven't got any.

TROPHIMOF. Yes, I have. Many thanks. I got some for a translation. Here it is, in my pocket. (*Anxiously*) I can't find my goloshes anywhere!

BARBARA (*from the next room*). Here, take your garbage away! (*She throws a pair of goloshes on the stage*)

TROPHIMOF. What are you so cross about, Barbara? Humph! . . . But those aren't my goloshes!

LOPAKHIN. In the spring I sowed three thousand acres of poppy and I have cleared four thousand pounds net profit. When my poppies were in flower, what a picture they made! So you see, I cleared four thousand pounds; and I wanted to lend you a bit because I've got it to spare. What's the good of being stuck up? I'm a peasant. . . . As man to man. . . .

TROPHIMOF. Your father was a peasant; mine was a chemist; it doesn't prove anything. (*LOPAKHIN takes out his pocket-book with paper money*) Shut up, shut up. . . . If you offered me twenty thousand pounds I would not take it. I am a free man; nothing that you value so highly, all of you, rich and poor, has the smallest power over me; it's like thistledown floating on the wind. I can do without you; I can go past you; I'm strong and proud. Mankind marches forward to the highest truth, to the highest happiness possible on earth, and I march in the foremost ranks.

LOPAKHIN. Will you get there?

TROPHIMOF. Yes. (*A pause*) I will get there myself or I will show others the way.

(*The sound of axes hewing is heard in the distance.*)

LOPAKHIN. Well, good-bye, old chap; it is time to start. Here we stand swaggering to each other, and life goes by all the time without heeding us. When I work for hours without getting tired, I get easy in my mind and I seem to know why I exist. But God alone knows what most of the people in Russia were born for. . . . Well, who cares? It doesn't affect the circulation of work. They say Leonid Andreyitch has got a place; he's going to be in a bank and get six hundred pounds a year. . . . He won't sit it out, he's too lazy.

ANYA (*in the doorway*). Mamma says, will you stop cutting down the orchard till she has gone.

TROPHIMOF. Really, haven't you got tact enough for that? (*Exit by the hall*)

LOPAKHIN. Of course, I'll stop them at once. What fools they are!  
(*Exit after TROPHIMOF*)

ANYA. Has Firs been sent to the hospital?

YASHA. I told 'em this morning. They're sure to have sent him.

ANYA (*to EPHIKHODOF, who crosses*). Simeon Panteleyitch, please find out if Firs has been sent to the hospital.

YASHA (*offended*). I told George this morning. What's the good of asking a dozen times?

EPHIKHODOF. Our centenarian friend, in my conclusive opinion, is hardly worth tinkering; it's time he was dispatched to his forefathers. I can only say I envy him.

(*Putting down a portmanteau on a bandbox and crushing it flat*) There you are!  
I knew how it would be! (Exit)

YASHA (*jeering*). Twenty-two misfortunes!

BARBARA (*without*). Has Firs been sent to the hospital?

ANYA. Yes.

BARBARA. Why didn't they take the note to the doctor?

ANYA. We must send it after them. (Exit)

BARBARA (*from the next room*). Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother is here. She wants to say good-bye to him.

YASHA (*with a gesture of impatience*). It's enough to try the patience of a saint!

(DUNYASHA *has been busying herself with the luggage. Seeing YASHA alone, she approaches him.*)

DUNYASHA. You might just look once at me, Yasha. You are going away, you are leaving me. (*Crying and throwing her arms round his neck*)

YASHA. What's the good of crying? (*Drinking champagne*) In six days I shall be back in Paris. To-morrow we take the express, off we go, and that's the last of us! I can hardly believe it's true. Vive la France! This place don't suit me. I can't bear it . . . it can't be helped. I have had enough barbarism; I'm fed up. (*Drinking champagne*) What's the good of crying? You be a good girl, and you'll have no call to cry.

DUNYASHA (*powdering her face and looking into a glass*). Write me a letter from Paris. I've been so fond of you, Yasha, ever so fond! I am a delicate creature, Yasha.

YASHA. Here's somebody coming. (*He busies himself with the luggage, singing under his breath*)

(Enter MADAME RANEVSKY, GAYEF, ANYA and CHARLOTTE.)

GAYEF. We'll have to be off; it's nearly time. (*Looking at YASHA*) Who is it smells of red herring?

MADAME RANEVSKY. We must take our seats in ten minutes. (*Looking round the room*) Good-bye, dear old house, good-bye, grandpapa! When winter is past and spring comes again, you will be here no more; they will have pulled you down. Oh, think of all these walls have seen! (*Kissing ANYA passionately*) My treasure, you look radiant, your eyes flash like two diamonds. Are you happy? very happy?

ANYA. Very, very happy. We're beginning a new life, mamma.

GAYEF (*gaily*). She's quite right, everything's all right now. Till the cherry orchard was sold we were all agitated and miserable; but once the thing was settled finally and irrevocably, we all calmed down and got jolly again. I'm a bank clerk now; I'm a financier . . . red in the middle! And you, Lyuba, whatever you may say, you're looking ever so much better, not a doubt about it.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Yes, my nerves are better; it's quite true. (*She is helped on with her hat and coat*) I sleep well now. Take my things out, Yasha. We must be off. (*To ANYA*) We shall soon meet again, darling. . . . I'm off to Paris; I shall live on the money your grandmother sent from Yaroslav to buy the property. God bless your grandmother! I'm afraid it won't last long.

ANYA. You'll come back very, very soon, won't you, mamma? I'm going to work and pass the examination at the Gymnase and get a place and help you. We'll read all sorts of books together, won't we, mamma? (*Kissing her mother's hands*) We'll read in the long autumn evenings, we'll read heaps of books, and a new, wonderful world will open up before us. (*Meditating*) . . . Come back, mamma!

MADAME RANEVSKY. I'll come back, my angel. (*Embracing her*)

(*Enter LOPAKHIN. CHARLOTTE sings softly.*)

GAYEF. Happy Charlotte, she's singing.

CHARLOTTE (*taking a bundle of rugs, like a swaddled baby*). Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree top . . . (*The baby answers, "W'ah-wab"*) Hush, my little one, hush, my pretty one! (*"W'ah, wab"*) You'll break your mother's heart. (*She throws the bundle down on the floor again*) Don't forget to find me a new place, please. I can't do without it.

LOPAKHIN. We'll find you a place, Charlotte Ivanovna, don't be afraid.

GAYEF. Everybody's deserting us. Barbara's going. Nobody seems to want us.

CHARLOTTE. There's nowhere for me to live in the town. I'm obliged to go. (*Hums a tune*) What's the odds?

(*Enter PISHTCHIK.*)

LOPAKHIN. Nature's masterpiece!

PISHTCHIK (*panting*). Oy, oy, let me get my breath again! . . . I'm done up! . . . My noble friends! . . . Give me some water.

GAYEF. Wants some money, I suppose. No, thank you; I'll keep out of harm's way. (*Exit*)

PISHTCHIK. It's ages since I have been here, fairest lady. (*To LOPAKHIN*) You here? Glad to see you, you man of gigantic intellect. Take this; it's for you (*Giving LOPAKHIN money*) Forty pounds! I still owe you eighty-four.

LOPAKHIN (*amazed, shrugging his shoulders*). It's like a thing in a dream! Where did you get it from?

PISHTCHIK. Wait a bit. . . . I'm hot. . . . A most remarkable thing! Some Englishmen came and found some sort of white clay on my land. (*To MADAME RANEVSKY*) And here's forty pounds for you, lovely, wonderful lady. (*Giving her money*) The rest another time. (*Drinking water*) Only just now a young man in the train was saying that some . . . some great philosopher advises us all to jump off roofs . . . Jump, he says, and there's an end of it. (*With an astonished air*) Just think of that! More water!

LOPAKHIN. Who were the Englishmen?

PISHTCHIK. I leased them the plot with the clay on it for twenty-four years. But I haven't any time now . . . I must be getting on. I must go to Znoikof's, to Kar-damonof's. . . . I owe everybody money. (*Drinking*) Good-bye to everyone; I'll look in on Thursday.

MADAME RANEVSKY. We're just moving into town, and to-morrow I go abroad.

PISHTCHIK. What! (*Alarmed*) What are you going into town for? Why, what's happened to the furniture? . . . Trunks? . . . Oh, it's all right. (*Crying*) It's all right. People of powerful intellect . . . those Englishmen. It's all right. Be happy . . . God be with you . . . it's all right. Everything in this world has to come to an end. (*Kissing MADAME RANEVSKY'S hand*) If ever the news reaches you that I have come to an end, give a thought to the old . . . horse, and say, "Once there lived a certain Simeonof-Pishtchik, Heaven rest his soul." . . . Remarkable weather we're having. . . . Yes. . . . (*Goes out deeply moved. Returns at once and says from the doorway*) Dashenka sent her compliments. (*Exit*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Now we can go. I have only two things on my mind. One is poor old Firs. (*Looking at her watch*) We can still stay five minutes.

ANYA. Firs has been sent to the hospital already, mamma. Yasha sent him off this morning.

MADAME RANEVSKY. My second anxiety is Barbara. She's used to getting up early and working, and now that she has no work to do she's like a fish out of water. She has grown thin and pale and taken to crying, poor dear. . . . (*A pause*) You know very well, Yermolai Alexeyitch, I always hoped . . . to see her married to you, and as far as I can see, you're looking out for a wife. (*She whispers to ANYA, who nods to CHARLOTTE, and both exeunt*) She loves you; you like her; and I can't make out why you seem to fight shy of each other. I don't understand it.

LOPAKHIN. I don't understand it either, to tell you the truth. It all seems so odd. If there's still time, I'll do it this moment. Let's get it over and have done with it; without you there, I feel as if I should never propose to her.

MADAME RANEVSKY. A capital idea! After all, it doesn't take more than a minute. I'll call her at once.

LOPAKHIN. And here's the champagne all ready. (*Looking at the glasses*) Empty; someone's drunk it. (*YASHA coughs*) That's what they call lapping it up and no mistake!

MADAME RANEVSKY (*animated*). Capital! We'll all go away. . . . *Allez*, Yasha. I'll call her. (*At the door*) Barbara, leave all that and come here. Come along! (*Exeunt MADAME RANEVSKY and YASHA*)

LOPAKHIN (*looking at his watch*). Yes.

(*A pause. A stifled laugh behind the door; whispering; at last enter BARBARA.*)

BARBARA (*examining the luggage*). Very odd; I can't find it anywhere . . .



LOPAKHIN. What are you looking for?

BARBARA. I packed it myself, and can't remember. (*A pause*)

LOPAKHIN. Where are you going to-day, Barbara Mikhailovna?

BARBARA. Me? I'm going to the Ragulins'. I'm engaged to go and keep house for them, to be housekeeper or whatever it is.

LOPAKHIN. Oh, at Yashnevo? That's about fifty miles from here. (*A pause*) Well, so life in this house is over now.

BARBARA (*looking at the luggage*). Wherever can it be? Perhaps I put it in the trunk. . . . Yes, life here is over now; there won't be any more . . .

LOPAKHIN. And I'm off to Kharkov at once . . . by the same train. A lot of business to do. I'm leaving Ephikhodof to look after this place. I've taken him on.

BARBARA. Have you?

LOPAKHIN. At this time last year snow was falling already, if you remember; but now it's fine and sunny. Still, it's cold for all that. Three degrees of frost.

BARBARA. Were there? I didn't look. (*A pause*) Besides, the thermometer's broken. (*A pause*)

A VOICE (*at the outer door*). Yermolai Alexeyitch!

LOPAKHIN (*as if he had only been waiting to be called*). I'm just coming!  
(*Exit quickly*)

(*BARBARA sits on the floor, puts her head on a bundle and sobs softly. The door opens and MADAME RANEVSKY comes in cautiously.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Well? (*A pause*) We must be off.

BARBARA (*no longer crying, wiping her eyes*). Yes, it's time, mamma. I shall get to the Ragulins' all right to-day, so long as I don't miss the train.

MADAME RANEVSKY (*calling off*). Put on your things, Anya.

(*Enter ANYA, then GAYEF and CHARLOTTE. GAYEF wears a warm overcoat with a hood. The servants and drivers come in. EPHIKHODOF busies himself about the luggage.*)

MADAME RANEVSKY. Now we can start on our journey.

ANYA (*delighted*). We can start on our journey!

GAYEF. My friends, my dear, beloved friends! Now that I am leaving this house for ever, can I keep silence? Can I refrain from expressing those emotions which fill my whole being at such a moment?

ANYA (*pleadingly*). Uncle!

BARBARA. Uncle, what's the good?

GAYEF (*sadly*). Double the red in the middle pocket. I'll hold my tongue.

(Enter TROPHIMOF, then LOPAKHIN.)

TROPHIMOF. Come along, it's time to start.

LOPAKHIN. Ephikhodof, my coat.

MADAME RANEVSKY. I must sit here another minute. It's just as if I had never noticed before what the walls and ceilings of the house were like. I look at them hungrily, with such tender love. . . .

GAYEF. I remember, when I was six years old, how I sat in this window on Trinity Sunday, and watched father starting out for church.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Has everything been cleared out?

LOPAKHIN. Apparently everything. (*To EPHIKHODOF, putting on his overcoat*) See that everything's in order, Ephikhodof.

EPHIKHODOF (*in a hoarse voice*). You trust me, Yermolai Alexeyitch.

LOPAKHIN. What's up with your voice?

EPHIKHODOF. I was just having a drink of water. I swallowed something.

YASHA (*contemptuously*). Cad!

MADAME RANEVSKY. We're going, and not a soul will be left here.

LOPAKHIN. Until the spring.

(*BARBARA, pulls an umbrella out of a bundle of rugs, as if she were brandishing it to strike. LOPAKHIN pretends to be frightened.*)

BARBARA. Don't be so silly! I never thought of such a thing.

TROPHIMOF. Come, we'd better go and get in. It's time to start. The train will be in immediately.

BARBARA. There are your goloshes, Peter, by that portmanteau. (*Crying*) What dirty old things they are!

TROPHIMOF (*putting on his goloshes*). Come along.

GAYEF (*much moved, afraid of crying*). The train . . . the station . . . double the red in the middle; doublette to put the white in the corner.

MADAME RANEVSKY. Come on!

LOPAKHIN. Is everyone here? No one left in there? (*Locking the door*) There are things stacked in there; I must lock them up. Come on!

ANYA. Good-bye, house; good-bye, old life!

TROPHIMOF. Welcome, new life!

(*Exit with ANYA. BARBARA looks round the room, and exit slowly. Exeunt YASHA, and CHARLOTTE with her dog.*)

LOPAKHIN. Till the spring, then. Go on, everybody. So long!

(*Exit*)

(MADAME RANEVSKY and GAYEF remain alone. They seem to have been waiting for this, throw their arms round each other's necks and sob restrainedly and gently, afraid of being overheard.)

GAYEF (*in despair*). My sister! my sister!

MADAME RANEVSKY. Oh, my dear, sweet, lovely orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, farewell! Farewell!

ANYA (*calling gaily without*). Mamma!

TROPHIMOF (*gay and excited*). Aoo!

MADAME RANEVSKY. One last look at the walls and the windows. . . . Our dear mother used to walk up and down this room.

GAYEF. My sister! my sister!

ANYA (*without*). Mamma!

TROPHIMOF (*without*). Aoo!

MADAME RANEVSKY. We're coming.

(*Exeunt*)

(*The stage is empty. One hears all the doors being locked, and the carriages driving away. All is quiet. Amid the silence the thud of the axes on the trees echoes sad and lonely. The sound of footsteps. FIRS appears in the doorway right. He is dressed, as always, in his long coat and white waistcoat; he wears slippers. He is ill.*)

FIRS (*going to the door left and trying the handle*). Locked. They've gone. (*Sitting on the sofa*) They've forgotten me. Never mind! I'll sit here. Leonid Andreyitch is sure to have put on his cloth coat instead of his fur. (*He sighs anxiously*) He hadn't me to see. Young wood, green wood! (*He mumbles something incomprehensible*) Life has gone by as if I'd never lived. (*Lying down*) I'll lie down. There's no strength left in you; there's nothing, nothing. Ah, you . . . job-lot!

(*He lies motionless. A distant sound is heard, as if from the sky, the sound of a string breaking, dying away, melancholy. Silence ensues, broken only by the stroke of the axe on the trees far away in the cherry orchard.*)

(*Curtain.*)

# BILLY BUDD

LOUIS O. COXE (1918- ) and ROBERT CHAPMAN (1919- )

## CHARACTERS

JENKINS, *Captain of the Maintop*  
THE DANSKER, *Mainmast Man*  
JACKSON, *Maintopman*  
JOHN CLAGGART, *Master-at-Arms*  
TALBOT, *Maintopman*  
BUTLER, *Maintopman*  
KINCAID, *Maintopman*  
PAYNE, *Maintopman*  
O'DANIEL, *Maintopman*  
MESSBOY  
SQUEAK, *Master-at-Arms' Man*  
DUNCAN, *Mate of the Main Deck*

SURGEON  
GARDINER, *a Midshipman*  
BILLY BUDD, *Foretopman*  
EDWARD FAIRFAX VERE, *Captain, Royal Navy*  
HALLAM, *a Marine*  
REA, *a Midshipman*  
PHILIP MICHAEL SEYMOUR, *First Officer*  
JOHN RATCLIFFE, *First Lieutenant*  
BORDMAN WYATT, *Sailing Master*  
STOLL, *Helmsman*  
BYREN, *Relief Helmsman*  
DRUMMER

*The entire action takes place aboard H.M.S. Indomitable at sea, August, 1798, the year following the Naval mutinies at Spithead and the Nore.*

## ACT I

### SCENE I

*Although outside it is a fine morning in early August, the between-decks compartment of the crew's quarters assigned to the maintopmen is dark and shadowy except for the light spilling down the companionway from above and, through the open gun-ports, the flicker of sunlight reflected on the water. The smoking lamp burns feebly over a wooden mess table and two benches lowered for use.*

JENKINS *sits at the table mending a piece of clothing. In the shadow the DANSKER sits motionless on a low sea chest, smoking a pipe. Neither man speaks for a long minute.*

*Then JACKSON appears on deck at the top of the companionway and lurches down into the compartment. He is doubled up in pain.*

CLAGGART (*off*). You there! Jackson!

JACKSON. Oh Christ, he's followed me!

JENKINS. Who?

JACKSON. Master-at-Arms. He'll send me aloft again sure, and I can't hang on . . .

JENKINS. What the devil's wrong with you, jack? Here, sit down.

CLAGGART (*entering down the companionway*). Why have you come down off the mainmast, Jackson? Your watch over?

JACKSON. Sick, Mister Claggart, I'm bloody sick, so I'm shaking up there on the yard till I near fell off.

JENKINS. Grab an arm, mate, I'll take you along to sick-bay.

CLAGGART. Stand away from him, Jenkins. (*To JACKSON*) Just where does this sickness strike you, in the guts, or limbs? Or in the head? Does it exist at all?

JENKINS. You can see he's sick as a puking cat, plain as your stick.

CLAGGART. The role of Good Samaritan hardly fits you, Jenkins. (*To JACKSON*) Now up, man. Turn topside.

JACKSON. I can't, I can't, I'm deathly sick, God help me, sir!

CLAGGART. That's hard. But this ship needs all hands. We're undermanned. The aches and pains of landsmen have their cures, but ours have none. You'll have to get aloft. Now move!

JACKSON. I ain't bluffing, sir, swear I'm not! Please, Mister Claggart . . . I got Cooper's leave, he says all right, I can come down.

CLAGGART. You have not got my leave. Cooper is captain of the maintop and ought to know better. Four men to every spar, and no replacements. Now up. Back where you belong.

JACKSON (*starts up the ladder*). God, sir, I can't, I can't stand it! It'll be my death, sure!

CLAGGART. No more talk, man! Up you get! Start! (*JACKSON goes painfully up the ladder and out of sight on deck. CLAGGART starts out after him*)

JENKINS (*mutters*). God damn your bloody heart!

CLAGGART. Did you say something, Jenkins? (*JENKINS does not answer. CLAGGART goes out, calling after JACKSON*) Now Jackson, get along. Up! Up!

JENKINS. I'll stick him one day before long! I will, if I hang for it.

(*Laughter and talk in the next compartment followed by entrance of BUTLER, TALBOT and KINCAID.*)

BUTLER. Messboy!

TALBOT. Haul in the slops!

KINCAID. Suppose we'll get the new man? The jack they 'pressed this morning off that merchantman? I see 'em come alongside just now.

TALBOT. I pity that poor bastard, so I do. I hear they get good pay on merchant ships. Eat good, too, and them treated like the God-damn Prince of Wales. (*MESSBOY enters with an iron pot of food and spits on the deck*) Spit in it, damn you. Can't taste no worse.

MESSBOY. Ain't nobody making you eat it, mate. You can wash your feet in it if you like.

(*O'DANIEL and PAYNE enter.*)

TALBOT. What's eating you, Jenkins? Ain't you going to join the banquet?

JENKINS. By God, I seen a thing just now I won't stand for! I'm sitting here off watch, and I seen it all. That blacksnake Claggart kicked Jackson back aloft, and him sick as a pinkass baby in a cradle, as any fool could see.

PAYNE. He's the Master-at-Arms, ain't he?

JENKINS. Cooper sent him down. Who's captain of the starboard watch, him or Claggart? Cooper could have found him a relief. Plain murder, by God!

TALBOT. You think Claggart can get away with what he does without Captain Starry Vere knows what's going on? Him and that red snapper Seymour, and them other bloody officers!

JENKINS. Jackson'll fall. By God, no man can hang to a spar sick like that. He'll fall sure.

O'DANIEL. Tush, man, nobody falls in His Majesty's Navy. We lose our footing. 'Tis flying we do, to be sure.

TALBOT. I tell you it's Vere that's the cause of it! Our glorious fine Captain Vere, with a league of braid around his arm and a ramrod up his bum.

O'DANIEL. Vere, is it. As captains go, mate, let me tell you, he's an angel with a harp alongside of the skipper on the *Royal George*. Every day that one flogged a dozen men. Picked 'em by lottery, by God. Never took the gratings down till they was rusty with blood. Ho! This Vere's a saint in heaven after him.

JENKINS. Ram the *Royal George* and everybody in her! Claggart's the man we want, and the sooner the better, say I!

O'DANIEL. Ah, we'd had him puking his blood at Spithead, the devil rot his wick.

BUTLER. You was there, O'Daniel? At Spithead?

O'DANIEL. Aye. I was. Wherever do you find Englishmen doing a smart thing, you'll find an Irishman is at the bottom of it. Oho, fine it was, every day of it, with the officers quaking in their cabins, spitting green, and the whole English government wetting their breeches from the fear of us! Ah, lovely it was, lovely!

TALBOT. Belay your Irish noise, you fat-mouthed mackerel-snatcher. I'll tell you this, we need men on here is not afraid to use their knives if it come to that. And you can be bloody sure it will come to that, mind my word, Mickey Cork.

JENKINS. What did you ever use your knife for, Talbot, but to scratch your lice? Ah, you're a dancing daredevil, you are for sure.

TALBOT. I'll be happy to show you, if you like.

JENKINS. Trouble will be hunting you out, mate, if you're not careful.

TALBOT. Trouble! You whoreson cockney cullion! There's not a man aboard don't know you for a coward, you whining bitch-boy!

JENKINS. Get out.

TALBOT. Damn your seed, I'm not afraid of you, or your sniveling hangbys, either!

JENKINS. Move! Get out of it, or by God I'll run my knife to the hilts in you!

TALBOT. You son of a whore! Pigsticker!

*(They attack one another with drawn knives, JENKINS reaching suddenly across the table to seize TALBOT. Silently they thrash around the compartment upsetting benches and food while the others look on unmoved.)*

O'DANIEL. Ah, I do love to see two Englishmen fighting each other. It's fonder they are of killing themselves than fighting their proper enemies. *(Laughs hoarsely)*

PAYNE. Tomorrow's rum on Jenkins. Any bets?

KINCAID. He's never lost one yet.

*(JENKINS throws TALBOT on the deck and holds the knife at his throat for a moment before letting him up, first taking his knife. He holds out his band.)*

JENKINS. I'm leading seaman in this compartment, mind that. *(TALBOT hits JENKINS' hand and goes off angrily)*

KINCAID. You're captain, that's all right by me.

O'DANIEL. Eyes in the boat, lads. Here comes pfft-face.

*(SQUEAK, BILLY and GARDINER appear on deck and start down the companionway.)*

GARDINER. Hang it, step lively, boy! Your ship is . . . Doff your hat to officers when they speak to you! By God, I'll teach you to touch your hat to a midshipman's coat, if it's only stuck on a broomstick to dry!

BILLY. Aye, sir.

*(The men react to GARDINER with yawns and gestures behind his back.)*

GARDINER. Very well. Your ship is *H.M.S. Indomitable* now, and we sail her tautly, and we tolerate no nonsense. Is that clear?

BILLY. Aye, sir.

GARDINER *(to SQUEAK)*. See this new man is assigned to a watch, and get him squared away. *(To BILLY)* You're green, of course, I can see that. But I expect we'll ripen you. *(He trips going up the ladder and SQUEAK tries to help him)* Carry on.

*(GARDINER exits)*

SQUEAK. My name's Squeak. I'm the Master-at-Arms' man. Have you met the Master-at-Arms yet, Mister Claggart? *(BILLY shakes his head)* Oh, you'll like him. He's a nice fellow. *(O'DANIEL chokes on his pipe smoke and the other men react similarly)* Stow your gear along in there. This here's the larboard section of the maintop. Captain of the watch is Jenkins. Him, there. Report to him. *(He pats BILLY on the chest and grins before starting up the ladder)*

JENKINS. What's a green hand dumped in here for?

SQUEAK. Complaining, Jenkins?

JENKINS. I'm asking. What's wrong with that?

SQUEAK. Mister Claggart wants him here, that's why. Maybe he wants for Billy Boy to set you pigs an example. Refer any more complaints to the Master-at-Arms!

(Exits. BILLY grins at the men, who return his look.)

BILLY. My name is Budd. Billy, if you like.

KINCAID. I'm Kincaid. This is where you swing your hammock. That's O'Daniel, this here's Payne, and Butler. This is Jenkins, captain of the watch, and that old jack's called the Dansker. Don't know why, unless maybe he's Danish. You ever had a real name, Dansker?

DANSKER. Not for many years.

BUTLER. You'd be the new impressed man?

BILLY. Aye, so I am. I just came of the *Rights of Man* this morning.

DANSKER. Forget about the *Rights of Man* now, lad.

JENKINS. How long you been going to sea, baby?

BILLY. About ten years, but in the merchant service.

O'DANIEL. Merchant service! Whissht! (*Laughs hoarsely*)

BILLY. I know I'm new at Navy work, and probably there'll be some things I'll need help with.

JENKINS. No doubt, little boy.

BILLY. I'll learn fast, never fear. But she's a big old girl, this ship. I never was in a ship-of-the-line before. I'd have got lost trying to find the mess by myself. Maybe fallen in the magazine!

O'DANIEL. Ah, you get used to it. She's big, is this tub, but she's not so big you can get lost in her.

PAYNE. Sometimes I wish to God you could. Maybe we could lose O'Daniel.

(BILLY laughs and the others join.)

BILLY. You're Irish, aren't you? I like the Irish. There was an Irishman on the *Rights of Man*, with big red whiskers . . . when I came away, he gave me a silver knife. This is it.

O'DANIEL. It's a beauty. Mind you keep an eye on it.

BUTLER. What's the matter, boy?

BILLY. I was just thinking, maybe I won't ever see my friends again.

O'DANIEL. If they was Irish, don't you worry at all. The Irish is liable to turn up almost anywheres, excepting England and the fires of hell, which is much the same.



PAYNE. Danny, if it wasn't for the harps, the devil wouldn't have nothing to do. What was potato-eaters doing on a merchant ship?

BILLY. Just sailors, like me. Most of us had no other home, even the skipper. He was a kind old bloke. Looked fierce, but he always had a kind word. Used to keep a bird in a cage in his cabin. The skipper let me feed the bird sometimes. Worms right out of the ship's biscuit. That was mostly all the meat we got.

O'DANIEL. The bargemen is in Navy biscuit would eat the bird.

KINCAID. Sit down here, Bill. Maggots or not, this is what we get. You hungry?

BILLY. I'm always hungry.

KINCAID. Try your first sample of His Majesty's bounty. We don't know what it is, but we been eating it for a long time.

BUTLER. Here, eat mine. Tastes like it's been cat before, anyhow.

JENKINS. Give him more lobsouse, Butler. We got to keep the roses in his cheeks, ain't we, boy?

BILLY (*laughing*). I could eat anything right now. Even this.

O'DANIEL. Help you to forget about home and mother, lad.

JENKINS. Tell us about home and mother, Baby Budd.

BILLY. There's not much to tell. I've got no home, and never had a family to remember.

JENKINS. Ain't that too bad.

BILLY. Oh, I'd feel a lot worse if I'd been 'pressed with a wife and children.

KINCAID. That's the truth.

O'DANIEL. We're all patriotic volunteers.

KINCAID. Guano! Wait till my hitch is up, you won't see no more of me.

BUTLER. Three weeks drunk in Portsmouth, then back in the ruddy fleet.

DANSKER. Men like us got no other home.

O'DANIEL. No other home, is it? Ah 'tis so thick the sweet thoughts is in here, I can scarce breathe.

PAYNE. Then you can strangle or get out.

JENKINS. Aye, get along, you lousy harp, give us some fresh air.

O'DANIEL. If you begged me to stay itself, I'd be off to where there's smarter lads. Boy, let you pay no heed to these white mice, mind what I say. And be hanged, the lot of you! (*He starts up the ladder*)

KINCAID. You'll catch it, Danny, if Captain holds an inspection.

O'DANIEL (*returning*). Ah whissht, I was forgetting that. And I do think that me figure shows up better here below than it does in the broad daylight.

BILLY. Inspection today?

PAYNE. Ah, the Old Man crawls over the ship from arsehole to appetite any time he ain't got nothing else to do. You never know when till you see him.

KINCAID. What the devil he wants to inspect this hooker for, I can't figure. He's seen it before.

BUTLER. He ain't seen Billy.

BILLY. What's the Captain like? On the *Rights of Man*, the captain . . .

JENKINS. You going to jaw some more about that rocking horse? I suppose *you* was at Spithead, too?

BILLY. Spithead? Where is that?

JENKINS. A little party the Navy had a year ago. A mutiny, Baby, a mutiny. Know what that is?

BILLY. Why did they mutiny?

O'DANIEL. Arra, it's easy to see you're new to the Navy.

JENKINS. Jimmy-Legs is ten good God-damn reasons for it, himself.

BILLY. Who's Jimmy-Legs?

KINCAID. Master-at-Arms. We call him Jimmy-Legs.

BUTLER. Watch out for that one, Billy.

PAYNE. He's the devil himself between decks.

O'DANIEL. What d'you expect, the saints of heaven? Not in an English tub.

BILLY. Why don't you like the Master-at-Arms?

JENKINS. You'll find out soon enough, Baby.

BUTLER. Watch him, boy. Jenkins can tell you. He's had a time or two with Claggart.

JENKINS. Aye, and I'll have another one day before too long.

BUTLER. Sure, Jenkins. You look after Bill.

JENKINS. How old are you, kid? Sixteen?

BILLY. I don't know, maybe . . . twenty.

JENKINS. He don't even know how old he is! My guess is, too young to know what his parts are for.

O'DANIEL. Is it anybody is that young?

KINCAID. Stow it, Jenkins. Come on, don't pay no attention to him. He's feeling ugly today.

JENKINS. Well now, ain't you getting holier than a bloody bishop. Let him talk up for himself, if he don't like it.

KINCAID. Stow it, I say. You got no reason to crawl over Bill. Let him be.

BILLY. That's all right, Tom. I don't mind a joke. Black's the white of me eye, mates!

*(All laugh except JENKINS.)*

JENKINS. Mama taught you pretty manners, huh? Oh! Ain't got no mama, you say? Well now, think what that makes you! *(Laughs)*

BILLY. Tell me what you mean, Mister Jenkins.

PAYNE. What's gnawing your arse, Jenkins? Can't you see the boy's trying to be friendly?

JENKINS. You forgetting who's leading seaman here? Come on, Baby, talk back, why don't you? Scared?

BILLY. N-no. Why do you think I'd be scared, M-M-Mister Jenkins?

JENKINS. He stammers! What do you know! The little bastard's so scared he's stammering.

BILLY. Don't call me that again.

JENKINS. Sounds good, ha? Sounds fine. I like the way it rolls out your mouth. Bastard Baby Budd . . .

*(BILLY strikes him. JENKINS staggers and falls, pulls a knife and gets up, lunging at BILLY. PAYNE, BUTLER and KINCAID get up and stand close to BILLY, silently protecting him.)*

JENKINS. Get away, God damn you! He's got to find out who gives orders here.

KINCAID. Not this time, Jenkins. Lay off.

O'DANIEL. Belay it. You're wearing me out, the pair of yous.

BUTLER. Put away the knife.

*(JENKINS sees their determination and relaxes a little, uncertain what to do.)*

BILLY. Will you shake hands? Or would you rather fight?

JENKINS. You little bas . . . *(Lunges forward. BILLY catches his arm and bends it, holding JENKINS cursing and powerless)*

BILLY. That's enough, mate. Pipe down and let us be.

O'DANIEL. Good lad! Save the great strength is in you, Jenkins, for fighting the devil is after your soul.

JENKINS. All right, all right. You can let me go now.

O'DANIEL. Leave him go, lad. I won't hurt him at all.

BILLY. You're like Red Whiskers on the *Rights*, he liked to fight too. *(Freeing him)* Will you shake hands, mate?

JENKINS (*momentarily uncertain what to do*). Shake hands, is it? . . . Well, you beat me fair. You got guts, which is more than I give you credit for. (*They shake hands*)

KINCAID. You're a hell of a peacemaker, Bill.

PAYNE. That's the only time I ever hear Jenkins eating his own words.

O'DANIEL. Ah, that's a terrible diet, would make any man puke.

JENKINS. Don't you be getting any wrong ideas. I'm still a match for you!

KINCAID. Better belay your mess gear, Bill.

JENKINS. Where you come from, Baby?

PAYNE. Stow it! Jimmy-Legs!

(BILLY goes on talking as CLAGGART enters.)

BILLY. I don't know, I guess from Portsmouth. I never lived ashore, that I can remember. Where do you come from? (*Drops a pot on deck. CLAGGART stands over him*)

CLAGGART. Handsomely done, young fellow, handsomely done. And handsome is as handsome did it, too. You can wipe that up, Jenkins. (*To BILLY*) What is your name?

BILLY. Budd, sir. William Budd, ship *Rights of Man*.

CLAGGART. Your ship is *H.M.S. Indomitable* now.

BILLY. Aye, sir.

CLAGGART. You look sturdy. What was your station aboard the merchantman?

BILLY. M-m-mizzentopman, sir.

CLAGGART. You like that station?

BILLY. Aye, sir, well enough.

CLAGGART. How long have you been at sea?

BILLY. Ten years, sir, near as I can tell.

CLAGGART. Education?

BILLY. None, sir.

CLAGGART. So. You come aboard with nothing but your face to recommend you. Well, while beauty is always welcome, that alone may not avail us much against the French. There are other requirements in the service.

BILLY. I'll learn quickly, sir.

CLAGGART. The sea's a taskmaster, young fellow. It salts the sweetness out of boyish faces. You cannot tell what motion lies asleep in that flat water. Down where the manta drifts, and the shark and ray, storms wait for a wind while all the surface dazzles.

BILLY. I am a seaman, sir. I love the sea. I've hardly lived ashore.

CLAGGART. Then let the wind and sea have license to plunder at their will. As of today, a new maintopman swings between sky and water. (*He turns toward the ladder and notices the mess on deck*) I thought I asked you to wipe that up, Jenkins.

JENKINS. That's the messboy's job.

CLAGGART. Clean up, Jenkins. (*JENKINS hesitates.*) That is an order. Turn to.

BILLY. I'll give you a hand, Jenkins. Come on.

CLAGGART. Ah, there. See how helpful Billy is. Why can't you take a leaf from this innocent young David's book, Jenkins? (*Turns away. JENKINS accidentally brushes against him and receives a savage cut from CLAGGART'S rattan across his face*) Watch what you're doing, man!

JENKINS. I swear . . . !

CLAGGART. Yes, what is it that you swear? Well, speak. Nothing at all to say? Then hear me: I have my methods with unruly tempers.

(*On deck there is a loud crescendo scream and a crash. Running footsteps, shouts, voice calling for the SURGEON. The men surge toward the ladder.*)

CLAGGART. Stand fast! (*SQUEAK enters down the hatchway, whispers to CLAGGART.*) All right, I know. (*SQUEAK comes down into the compartment and runs off*)

JENKINS. It's Jackson! I knew it, by God, I told you so!

(*Men turn to stare at CLAGGART as several sailors enter down the companionway, bearing the body of JACKSON, inert and shattered. They carry him through the compartment and off to sick-bay.*)

SURGEON (*as he moves through the compartment*). Clear the way, you men. Take him into the sick-bay, through here. Carry him gently. Easy, now. Easy. (*Exit*)

JENKINS (*pointing to CLAGGART*). He sent him back aloft. Killed him, he did!

O'DANIEL. Might as well have knifed him.

CLAGGART. Stand fast. Stop where you are. Your man Jackson is looked after.

O'DANIEL (*in a low voice*). Then he's a dead man surely.

CLAGGART. Who spoke?

JENKINS. We'll have a showdown now! After him, mates! Cut into him!

(*The men move toward CLAGGART in a rush, drawing knives and cursing him, as CAPTAIN VERE appears in the companion hatchway.*)

VERE. Stand fast! Hold where you are. Master-at-Arms, what is the matter here?

(*The men stop in their tracks and stare at VERE, who comes part way down the ladder.*)

CLAGGART. These dogs are out of temper, sir.

VERE (*to men*). You will come to attention when I address you! Let me remind you that this ship is at war. This is a wartime cruise, and this vessel sails under the Articles of War. Volunteer or 'pressed man, veteran seaman or recruit, you are no longer citizens, but sailors: a crew that I shall work into a weapon. One lawless act, one spurt of rebel temper from any man in this ship, high or low, I will pay out in coin you know of. You have but two duties: to fight and to obey, and I will bend each contumacious spirit, each stiff-necked prideful soul of you, or crush the spirit in you if I must. Abide by the Articles of War and my commands, or they will cut you down. Now: choose. (*The men are silent*) Very well. Master-at-Arms, this accident on deck, the sailor fallen from the yardarm. Do you know how it occurred?

CLAGGART. I do not, sir.

VERE. You are his messmates. Does any man of you know how this occurred? (*To BUTLER*) You?

BUTLER. No, sir.

VERE. Jenkins, do you?

JENKINS (*hesitates a moment. CLAGGART moves slightly, tapping his hand with the rattan*). No, sir.

VERE (*notices the cut on JENKIN'S face*). What's this, what's this? Speak up, man. I want no random bloodshed aboard this ship.

JENKINS. I . . . fell, Captain. Fell, and . . . and cut my cheek.

VERE. I see. You fell. Master-at-Arms, you will excuse this man from duty till the Surgeon tends him.

CLAGGART. Aye, aye, sir.

VERE. We must not wound ourselves, draining the blood from enterprise that takes a whole man. (*He turns to go up the ladder and sees BILLY*) Well. This is a new face. Who are you, boy?

CLAGGART. Maintopman 'pressed from the *Rights of Man* this morning, sir. William Budd.

VERE. Let him speak for himself. (*BILLY tries to speak but can only stammer incoherently.*) That's all right, boy, take your time. No need to be nervous.

BILLY. I saw a man go aloft, sir, as I came on board just a while ago. He looked sick, sir, he did. This officer was there, too, he can tell you. (*To CLAGGART*) Don't you remember, sir?

VERE. Did you send a sick man, aloft, Master-at-Arms?

CLAGGART. I did not, sir.

VERE. Very well. (*To BILLY*) Well, Budd. I hope you take to Navy life and duty without too much regret. We go to fight the French and shall need wits and hearts about us equal to the task.

BILLY. I'll do my best, sir.

VERE. I'm sure you will. We are all here to do our several duties, and though they may seem petty from one aspect, still they must all be done. The Admiral himself looks small and idle to the man like you who can see him from the maintop, threading his pattern on the quarterdeck. The Navy's only life.

(SURGEON enters.)

SURGEON. Captain—Jackson, the man who fell just now—he's dead, sir.

VERE (*after a pause*). Carry on, Master-at-Arms.

(*He goes out up the companionway. SURGEON exits.*)

CLAGGART. You've made a good impression on the Captain, Billy Budd. You have a pleasant way with you. If you wish to make a good impression on me, you will need to curb your tongue. Jenkins, I thought you were ordered to sick-bay. Jump to it. And I suggest you change that shirt. See how fouled it is with a peculiar stain. Why can't you keep clean like Billy here? (*He strikes JENKINS viciously on the arm with his rattan, smiles at him, and exits up the ladder*)

JENKINS. God damn his flaming soul! I can't stand it no more!

BILLY. I don't see what you can do, mate. He didn't mean it when he hurt you then.

JENKINS. Listen, boy, I know Jimmy-Legs. He lives on hurting people. Stay away from him, and keep your mouth shut, if you don't want trouble.

O'DANIEL. Did you hear the lad speak up to the skipper?

PAYNE. Aye, you watch your tongue, Bill. Claggart will be after you for talking up like that.

KINCAID. He's a cool one, Billy is. None of us got the nerve.

BUTLER. It's nerve gets a man in trouble in this tub.

DANSKER. Jimmy-Legs is down on you already, Billy.

BILLY. Down on me? Why he's friendly to me.

JENKINS. Claggart don't make no friends.

O'DANIEL. You seen Jackson when they brought him below. That's how friendly he gets. (*Bosun's pipe off.*)

DUNCAN (*off*). Relieve the watch!

KINCAID. First watch on the *Indomitable*, Bill. Better lay up to the mainmast and report. (*Exit*)

BUTLER. Don't slip off the yardarm.

PAYNE. Watch your step.

BILLY. Not me. You watch for me. Got to find the mainmast, and I'm in a hurry.

O'DANIEL. You'll never find your way in this old tub. I'll come along and show you.  
If anybody comes calling for O'Daniel while I'm out, take the message.

PAYNE. O'Daniel couldn't find his breeches if they wasn't buttoned on. You come with me. (BILLY and PAYNE go off)

JENKINS. Poor bastard. I pity him, I do.

BUTLER. He's dead, ain't he? Better off than us.

JENKINS. Not Jackson. I mean the baby here. Billy.

BUTLER. We could have fared worse for a messmate.

JENKINS. Aye. He can take care of himself. Heave up the table.

## SCENE II

*In the early evening of the same day, the off-duty sections of the crew are mustered aft on the maindeck for JACKSON's funeral. Above them CAPTAIN VERE stands uncovered at the forward break of the quarterdeck, reading the Committal Prayer. The westward sky is bright yellow and red, but fades into darkness as the scene progresses.*

*The men are uncovered and stand at attention.*

VERE. Unto Almighty God we commend the soul of our brother departed and we commit his body to the deep, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto Eternal Life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the sea shall give up her dead, and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed and made like unto His glorious body according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Amen.

MEN. Amen.

*(Short drum-roll followed by a muffled splash as JACKSON's body slips over the side. Then the bosun's pipe. Officers cover and march off.)*

CLAGGART. Ship's company: Cover! Petty officers, dismiss your divisions.

VOICE (off). Carpenters and gunners: Dismiss!

VOICE (off). Afterguardsmen: Dismiss!

VOICE (off). Fore, main, and mizzentopmen: Dismiss!

*(The men break formation and go off, excepting BUTLER, JENKINS, PAYNE, KINCAID and BILLY, who gather near the railines, at the rail.)*

BUTLER. I suppose in this clear water you could see him go down for quite a way.

BILLY. We're moving slow in this calm.

JENKINS. There'll be wind enough before dawn.

BUTLER. And that's the end of Enoch Jackson. Over the side he goes, and his mates forget him.



JENKINS Whatever's happened to Jackson, he ain't worried none. He's got a hundred fathoms over him to keep him warm and cosy.

BILLY. I'd rather be buried at sea than on the beach, when I come to die. Will you stand by the plank, Tom, so I'll shake a friendly hand before I sink? Oh! But it's dead I'll be then, come to think! (*All laugh*)

PAYNE. Don't you worry none. By that time, you won't give a sailmaker's damn.

KINCAID. It's only living makes sense to me, anyhow.

BILLY. Aye, I like to live. Even when it seems bad, there's a lot that's good in it.

JENKINS. Maybe for you, Bill. You wouldn't know trouble if it come up and spit in your eye.

BILLY. Don't you try now, mate! You might miss, and I got a clean jumper on!

PAYNE. That's the way to be, if you ask me. There's always trouble, if you know where to look for it.

BUTLER. You don't have to see nothing if you close your eyes.

KINCAID. When I close my eyes I sleep sound as a drunk marine.

BILLY. Aye, after I roll in my hammock, it's one, two, three, and I'm deep down under.

JENKINS. Well it's down under for me right now. Let's lay below.

KINCAID. Aye, we'll be on watch before long. Coming, Bill?

BILLY. I think I'll stay and watch the water for a while. I like to watch the sea at night.

JENKINS. Aye. It's deep and silent, and it can drown a man before he knows it.

BILLY. Sleep sound, mates. (*All but JENKINS go down the companion hatchway.*)

JENKINS. Billy: stay clear of Jimmy-Legs.

(*JENKINS exits down the hatchway. BILLY is left alone staring over the side until CLAGGART enters. He does not see BILLY, but stops near the quarterdeck ladder and gazes fixedly seaward.*)

BILLY. Good evening, sir.

CLAGGART (*startled, then subtly sarcastic*). Good evening.

BILLY. Will it be all right if I stay topside a bit to watch the water?

CLAGGART. I suppose the Handsome Sailor may do many things forbidden to his mess-mates.

BILLY. Yes, sir. The sea's calm tonight, isn't it? Calm and peaceful.

CLAGGART. The sea's deceitful, boy: calm above, and underneath, a world of gliding monsters preying on their fellows. Murderers, all of them. Only the sharpest teeth survive.

BILLY. I'd like to know about such things, as you do, sir.

CLAGGART. You're an ingenuous sailor, Billy Budd. Is there, behind that youthful face, the wisdom pretty virtue has need of? Even the gods must know their rivals, boy; and Christ had first to recognize the ills before he cured 'em.

BILLY. What, sir?

CLAGGART. Never mind. But tell me this: how have you stomach to stand here and talk to me? Are you so innocent and ignorant of what I am? You know my reputation. Jenkins and the rest are witnesses, and certainly you've heard them talking to me. Half of them would knife me in the back some night and do it gladly; Jenkins is thinking of it. Doubtless he'll try one day. How do you dare, then? Have you not intelligence enough to be afraid of me? To hate me as all the others do?

BILLY. Why should I be afraid of you, sir? You speak to me friendly when we meet. I know some of the men . . . are fearful of you, sir, but I can't believe they're right about it.

CLAGGART. You're a fool, fellow. In time, you'll learn to fear me like the rest. Young you are, and scarcely used to the fit of your man's flesh.

BILLY. I know they're wrong, sir. You aren't like they say. Nobody could be so.

CLAGGART. So . . . ? So what, boy? Vicious, did you mean to say, or brutal? But they aren't wrong, and you would see it, but for those blue eyes that light so kindly on your fellow men.

BILLY. Oh, I've got no education, I know that. There must be a lot of things a man misses when he's ignorant. But learning's hard. Must be sort of lonely, too.

CLAGGART. What are you prating of, half-man, half-child? Your messmates crowd around, admire your yellow hair and your blue eyes, do tricks and favors for you out of love, and you talk about loneliness!

BILLY. I just noticed the way you were looking off to leeward as I came up, sir. Kind of sad, you were looking.

CLAGGART. Not sadness, boy. Another feeling, more like . . . pleasure. That's it. I can feel it now, looking at you. A certain . . . pleasure.

BILLY (*flattered*). Thank you, sir.

CLAGGART (*annoyed at BILLY's incomprehension*). Pah.

BILLY. Just talking with you, sir, I can tell they're wrong about you. They're ignorant, like me.

CLAGGART. Compliment for compliment, eh, boy? Have you no heart for terror, fellow? You've seen this stick in use. Have you not got sense and spleen and liver to be scared, even to be cowardly?

BILLY. No, sir, I guess not. I like talking to you, sir. But please, sir, tell me something.

CLAGGART. I wonder if I can. Well, ask it.

BILLY. Why do you want us to believe you're cruel, and not really like everybody else?

CLAGGART. I think you are the only child alive who wouldn't understand if I explained; or else you'd not believe it.

BILLY. Oh, I'd believe you, sir. There's much I could learn from you: I never knew a man like you before.

CLAGGART (*slowly*). Do you—like me, Billy Budd?

BILLY. You've always been most pleasant with me, sir.

CLAGGART. Have I?

BILLY. Yes, sir. In the mess, the day I came aboard? And almost every day you have a pleasant word.

CLAGGART. And what I have said tonight, are these pleasant words?

BILLY. Yes, sir. I was wondering . . . could I talk to you between watches, when you've nothing else to do?

CLAGGART. You're a plausible boy, Billy. Aye, the nights are long, and talking serves to pass them.

BILLY. Thank you, sir. That would mean a lot to me.

CLAGGART. Perhaps to me as well. (*Drops his rattan. BILLY picks it up and hands it back to him. CLAGGART stares at it a moment, then at BILLY*) No. No! Charm me, too, would you! Get away!

BILLY (*surprised and puzzled*). Aye, sir.

(*He exits down the hatchway. After a pause in which CLAGGART recovers his self-control SQUEAK appears.*)

CLAGGART (*without turning*). Come here. I thought I told you to put that new sea-man Budd on report. Why was it not done?

SQUEAK. I tried, Mister Claggart, sir. I couldn't find nothing out of place. Gear all stowed perfect.

CLAGGART. Then disarrange it. You know the practice. I want him on report.

SQUEAK. Two of his messmates is once nearly caught me at it before.

CLAGGART. Then be more careful. Now get along and see you make out something. (*SQUEAK scurries off below decks as VERE comes into sight on the quarterdeck.*)

VERE. Master-at-Arms. What is that man doing above decks?

CLAGGART. Ship's corporal, sir. A routine report.

VERE. There is nothing in this ship of so routine a nature that I do not concern myself in it. Remember that.

CLAGGART. Aye, aye, sir. With your permission, sir.

(Exit)

(VERE walks along the deck and scans the sails as SEYMOUR enters.)

SEYMOUR. Fine evening, sir.

VERE. Yes, a fine evening, Seymour. How is the glass?

SEYMOUR. Falling, I believe, sir. I think we'll toss a little before morning. Well, I suppose I should be in my cabin inspecting the deck logs.

VERE. Stay for a moment, Seymour. In the days and nights to come, you and I will not often have an opportunity to stand easy and talk.

SEYMOUR. Aye, sir. I expect the French will put us to our stations any hour now.

VERE. Are you impressed by omens, Seymour? This seaman we've just buried: I think of him as an omen of some sort, a melancholy prologue to this voyage.

SEYMOUR. Aye, sir. Hard on the sailor, certainly, but that's the service. But we've been lucky in other ways. An accident, now, that's unavoidable.

VERE. It was more than an accident, Seymour.

SEYMOUR. This maintop sailor? How do you mean, sir?

VERE. The man was sent aloft sick, by the Master-at-Arms, contrary to my standing order. Budd, the new seaman, implied as much, and the maintop watch confirmed it. The Master-at-Arms lied to me.

SEYMOUR. What are you going to do, sir? What action can you take? He's a valuable man, one we can hardly do without as things are now.

VERE. I shall do nothing at present, only wait and observe him. No court-martial could do more than strip him of his rank for such misconduct. I will let him have his head until some act puts him squarely counter to the law, then let the law consume him.

SEYMOUR. Why trouble the natural order to no purpose? Shouldn't we let it be?

VERE. Must a man always shrug, let things alone and drift? Would to God I could take this power of mine and break him now, smash all the laws to powder and be a man again.

SEYMOUR. We must serve the law, sir, or give up the right and privilege of service. It's how we live.

VERE. Live? Oh, you're right. Below this deck are men who at a call skip on the hurling spars against the wind, at Beat-to-quarters run as if they willed it. Yet each of us steps alone within this pattern, this formal movement centered on itself. Men live and die, taken by pattern, born to it, knowing nothing. No man can defy the code we live by and not be broken by it.

SEYMOUR. You are the Captain, sir. You maintain that code.

VERE. Keep an order we cannot understand. That's true. The world demands it: demands that at the back of every peacemaker there be the gun, the gallows and the gaol. I talk of justice, and would turn the law gentle for those who serve here; but a Claggart stands in my shadow, for I need him. So the world goes, wanting not justice, but order . . . to be let alone to hug its own iniquities. Let a man work to windward of that law and he'll be hove down. No hope for him, none.

(Enter WYATT.)

WYATT. Eight o'clock report, sir. Ship inspected and all in order.

SEYMOUR. Very well, carry on. (WYATT goes off) By your leave, sir. Good night.  
(Exit)

(VERE remains, crosses to the hatch and looks down, then slowly upward at the set of the sails.)

### SCENE III

*The maindeck several nights later.*

*Four bells is struck offstage. A sailor climbs wearily down the ratlines, drops to the deck and goes below. CLAGGART stands by the larboard rail.*

*As BILLY enters from below decks, he sees the Master-at-Arms.*

BILLY. Hello, sir. (CLAGGART looks at him without answering, then turns and goes off forward. The DANSKER follows BILLY up onto the deck) Well, that's all there is to tell, Dansker. I always lash my hammock just so, and stow my gear same as all the others. They don't get in trouble.

DANSKER. Mister Claggart is down upon you, Billy.

BILLY. Jimmy-Legs? Why he calls me the sweet and pleasant fellow, they tell me.

DANSKER. Does he so, Baby lad? Aye, a sweet voice has Mister Claggart.

BILLY. For me he has. I seldom pass him but there comes a pleasant word.

DANSKER. And that's because he's down upon you.

BILLY. But he's my friend. I know he talks a little strange, but he's my friend.

DANSKER. Nobody's friend is Jimmy-Legs. Yours the least of all, maybe. Lay aloft, Baby. You'll be late to relieve your watch.

BILLY. Aye, Dansker.

*(He climbs up the ratlines out of sight. The DANSKER watches him go. CLAGGART appears, but the DANSKER ignores him and goes off aft. As JENKINS comes into view climbing down the ratlines, CLAGGART gestures off and fades into a shadowy corner of the deck near the quarterdeck ladder. SQUEAK enters as JENKINS drops to the deck, and intercepts him as he starts down the companionway.)*

SQUEAK. It's all right, mate, slack off and stay a bit.

JENKINS. What do you want? I pick my own company.

SQUEAK. So does I, mate, so does I. And if I may make so bold to say it, you'll be smarter to pick your company more careful.

JENKINS. If you got something to say to me, talk up, else I'll get below.

SQUEAK. Don't be hasty, now, mate, don't be in a sweat. It's haste gets good men into trouble. What d'you think of our new hand here, Billy Boy? Mister Claggart's taken with him, too. Fine young fellow, ha?

JENKINS. Talk plain. What d'you mean?

SQUEAK. I overheard him talking just this day. Would maybe surprise you some, what he had to say about yourself and a few other lads.

JENKINS. What?

SQUEAK. Aoh, bit of talk about his messmates. He don't fancy us! Not like his feather boys aboard the merchantman.

JENKINS. You lying cut-throat, try something else! Billy's in my mess; since he come on board he's rare been out of my sight. You're lying, you bloody mark! I know you too well. You'll need to try some other way to get Bill into trouble. Get away, and don't come lying to me no more.

SQUEAK. Aoh, so it's that friendly you are! Well, now, ain't that sweet! You're not smart, Jenkins. Remember, man: I tried to help you out. When you're feeling the cat between your shoulders . . .

JENKINS (*seizing him*). Damn your lies! Get back to Jimmy-Legs and kiss his butt. And stay out of my way! (*Throws SQUEAK down and exits.*)

(*SQUEAK watches him go. CLAGGART steps out of the shadows.*)

CLAGGART. I heard your little talk. You lack subtlety; but I'm the greater fool to use you in these matters. You're inept.

SQUEAK. Aoh! Why don't you do it yourself, if you don't need me!

CLAGGART. I need nobody, least of all a rum-soaked footpad from the *Old Bailey*. If you wish to have free rein with your distasteful habits, mind your cockney manners! I stand between you and the flogging whip. Improve your style, or you stand tomorrow forenoon at the gratings!

SQUEAK. I only meant as you could do it better, Mister Claggart, I wouldn't say nothing to . . .

CLAGGART (*cuts him on the arm with his rattan*). Don't touch me!—Keep Budd in petty troubles, that you can do. Unlash his hammock. Keep him on report. In time I'll let you know what plans I have for him. Get aft! (*SQUEAK, eager to get away, scuttles aft as the DANSKER enters.*) Well, old man. Moon's in and out tonight. There's weather somewhere. (*The DANSKER turns down the night lamp over the cabin door and starts off.*) Stay and have a pipe.

DANSKER. I have the watch.

CLAGGART. You take your duties as seriously as ever.

DANSKER. Aye. They are all of life for an old seaman like me. (*Turns to go*)

CLAGGART. You move away from me as though I were some kind of stalking beast. You avoid me, too.

DANSKER. Your word, John, "too."

CLAGGART. You know what I mean. The hands detest me. You are a hand, older than most, and older in your hatred, I have no doubt. But why, man? You at least should see me as I am, a man who knows how the world's made: made as I am.

DANSKER. How can I know what goes on in your head?

CLAGGART. The enigmatic Dansker. Come, it's dark, we can drop disguises when night serves to hold the disclosing soul apart.

DANSKER. You know who you remind me of . . . maintopman: Billy Budd.

CLAGGART. More enigmas! That sunny, smiling infant with no spleen nor knowledge in his head?

DANSKER. I'll leave you now.

CLAGGART. No, stay a while. This is a night for secrets and disclosures.

DANSKER. You have half the truth and Billy Budd the other. He can't see there's evil in the world, and you won't see the good.

CLAGGART. So. And I take it you come in between.

DANSKER. I keep outside. I am too old to stand between sky and water.

CLAGGART. And yet you hate me, too.

DANSKER. I hate an incomplete man.

CLAGGART. Damn all this talk. Hate me and have done. Let it alone, I say. Whatever else it is, this thing is Man, still!

DANSKER. I'll be off.

CLAGGART. Don't go. The moon's gone under. Let us talk this out. You are a wise man in your senile way.

DANSKER. Then take this for all my wisdom. You recognize the hatred of your ship-mates as an honor paid to a soul they cannot understand. Your fine contempt for human love is nothing but regret.

CLAGGART. Stop there. I know the rest by heart. Nothing you say to me but clatters in my belly, watch on watch. Aye: when this arm moves out in gesture of love, it mocks me with a blow. Who lifts this arm? What officer commands this hireling flesh? Somewhere below the farthest marks and deeps, God anchors hearts, and his sea rusts mine hollow. The flukes break in the bottom, and I slack and stand, go in and out forever at God's humor. Look at this sea: for all her easy swell, who knows what bones, ribs and decay are fathomed at her base and move in her motion, so that on the flattest water, the very stricture of the dead can kill

that beauty with a dance of death?—Here is a man. He holds, past fathom curves, drowned fleets of human agonies that gesture when the long tide pulls.

DANSKER. Aye, John. But you must know that other men are moved so. Look up some evening at the quarterdeck for another poor thoughtful devil like you, like me, pacing all night between his doubts.

CLAGGART. What, Vere? That fine-drawn manner doesn't deceive me. There's a whited sepulchre, like all soft-spoken charmers of this world.

DANSKER. You don't believe in anything besides yourself, eh John?

CLAGGART. I've said what I have said. I know myself, and look to that. You should try it. Go to your post, old man, and your ever-lasting duties. (CLAGGART *turns away*. BILLY *scrambles into view down the railines and calls out excitedly*.)

BILLY. Quarterdeck ho!

RATCLIFFE (*coming forward to the forward break of the quarterdeck*). Sound off!

BILLY. Strange sail one mile off the larboard beam!

CLAGGART (*to DANSKER*). A Frenchman! Get to your station.

RATCLIFFE (*on the quarterdeck ladder*). Mister Duncan! Sound Beat-to-quarters! Clear for action!

DUNCAN (*offstage*). Aye aye, sir!

RATCLIFFE. Gardiner! (*Enter GARDINER*.)

GARDINER. Sir?

RATCLIFFE. Report to the Captain, strange sail on the larboard beam. Then send Payne to the wheel. (*Exit GARDINER*.) Master-at-Arms, send a man to the mast to relay lookout's reports. Inspect battle stations and report to me when they are fully manned.

CLAGGART. Aye aye, sir. (Exit)

VOICE (*off*). She's a French frigate! Steering east by south! (*Enter VERE and SEYMOUR*.)

VERE. Prepare to make chasc. Have your quartermaster steer small.

RATCLIFFE. Aye aye, sir.

(*Enter the DRUMMER and sound Beat-to-quarters. Men run on, to gun stations, rigging, crossing stage and off*.)

SEYMOUR. She's too fast for us, sir. We'll never come up with her.

VERE. We are bound to try, though we were sure to fail. And we may smell powder before this chase is over.

CLAGGART (*re-entering*). Battle stations fully manned, sir!

SEYMOUR. May we try a shot at her now?



VERE. She's drawing south. Yes, commence firing, Mr. Seymour.

SEYMOUR. Larboard battery, fire one!

DUNCAN. Fire! (*Fire one gun.*)

VERE. Fire at will!

SEYMOUR. Fire at will!

(*Guns fire dissynchronously.*)

## ACT II

### SCENE I

*The quarterdeck and part of the maindeck a few minutes before 0800. A big wind. On the quarterdeck are Lieutenant WYATT, Midshipman REA and the helmsman, STOLL.*

REA. I'm glad this watch is over. I'm tired.

WYATT. Make your entry in the log before your relief comes up. Bring it out here and I'll sign it.

REA. Aye, sir. What was our last position, do you remember?

WYATT. Thirteen ten west, forty-three forty north.

REA. And an easterly breeze.

WYATT. Aye, make it so. That'll make Ratcliffe happy. Last time he had an east wind, she blew his hat over the side. And put down "Running ground swell."

REA. Aye aye, sir.

(*Exit*)

WYATT. Helmsman, keep her close-hauled.

STOLL. I can't, sir. Too much cloth in the wind.

WYATT. Well hold her close as you can, and let the next watch reef sail if they like.

STOLL. Aye aye, sir. (*Enter RATCLIFFE.*)

WYATT. Morning, Johnny! You're on time!

RATCLIFFE. What's the course?

WYATT. Steady south. Wind's easterly. Glass is dropping.

RATCLIFFE. East wind? Damn it. (*Enter BYREN, the relief helmsman.*) By the way, you forgot to sign the order book.

WYATT. All right. Thanks.

STOLL. I've been relieved, sir. Byren has the helm.

WYATT. Very well. (*Exit STOLL.*) Who's mate of your watch?

RATCLIFFE. The Admiralty midshipman. That lobcock Gardiner, hang him. (*Eight bells.*)

WYATT. Where the devil is he? It's eight. (*Enter REA and GARDINER separately, meeting.*)

RATCLIFFE. There he comes. He looks happy. That means trouble for some poor devil. (*GARDINER snatches the log out of REA'S hands and bounds up to the quarterdeck.*)

REA. I've been relieved, sir. Horatio, Lord Gardiner has the watch.

WYATT. Ah, Midshipman Gardiner. The backbone of the British Navy.

RATCLIFFE. The backside, if you ask me.

WYATT. All right, Rea. You can turn in. (*REA exits*)

RATCLIFFE. Pity we lost that Frenchman last night. A little action would season the monotony of these interminable watches.

WYATT. Did you ever hear of a ship-of-the-line running down a frigate, even with the wind? Ah, it's a magnificent morning! Thickening overcast, heavy ground swell, a fresh levanter breeze, and you, Johnny, are the Pride of the Morning!

RATCLIFFE. Mmmm. Has the skipper been on deck yet?

WYATT. Not since sunrise. He came up then and paced the deck and stared off east like a sleepwalker. Then went below again without a word.

RATCLIFFE. He thinks too much.

WYATT. Well if you ever make captain, your crew won't have that to complain of, anyway. Am I relieved?

RATCLIFFE. Yes, I relieve you. (*Tosses his cap to WYATT*) Here. Take this below, will you?

WYATT. What? You'll be out of uniform, man. Mister Gardiner wouldn't approve of your standing watch without a hat, would you, Midshipman Gardiner?

GARDINER. Sir, the Articles state that officers on watch . . .

RATCLIFFE. Well hang it, I lost twelve shillings the last time my hat went over the rail, and this is the only other one I've got. To hell with the Articles.

WYATT. Mind your language! It's downright mutinous. Well, don't expect me to stand your watches if you catch your death of cold. Good morning. (*Exit*)

GARDINER. Midshipman Rea, sir, I don't like to say it, but his log entries are impossible.

RATCLIFFE. Then enter yourself, Mister Gardiner. So are you.

GARDINER. Yes, sir. But I do think he ought to be told . . .

RATCLIFFE. Go find the Captain and report to him the wind's abeam. Respectfully suggest we ought to take in topsails.

GARDINER. Aye aye, sir. (*Goes down stairs.*)

RATCLIFFE. And don't forget to tell him I haven't got a hat.

GARDINER. What's that, sir?

RATCLIFFE. Nothing, sir! You got my order. Dump your ballast and shove off.

GARDINER. I thought you spoke to me, sir.

RATCLIFFE. I avoid that whenever possible. Move!

GARDINER. Yes, sir.

RATCLIFFE. Ye gods, what a brat. Nothing off, helmsman. She's well enough thus.

BYREN. Nothing off, sir.

GARDINER (*nearly bumping into VERE as he emerges from cabin, followed by SEYMOUR and HALLAM*). Attention!

RATCLIFFE. Good morning, sir.

VERE. Morning, Mister Ratcliffe.

GARDINER (*starting after VERE, bumps into HALLAM*). Damn it, man, watch what you're doing!

VERE. Midshipman Gardiner.

GARDINER. Sir?

VERE. How long, pray, have you been in this ship, or any ship?

GARDINER. This is my first cruise, sir.

VERE. Your first cruise. A wartime cruise as well. And you are a midshipman. A midshipman, Mister Gardiner, let me tell you, is neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, and certainly no seaman. You're a saltwater hermaphrodite, Mister Gardiner. And unless you have a mind to be generally known as Spit-kit Gardiner, I recommend more tolerance toward the men. Now, is that clear?

GARDINER. Aye aye, sir!

VERE. Very well, you may carry on.

RATCLIFFE. We've a weather helm, sir, and bow seas.

VERE. Take in topsails, if you please, Mister Ratcliffe.

RATCLIFFE. Aye aye, sir. Mister Duncan!

DUNCAN (*enters*). Aye, sir?

RATCLIFFE. Douse your topsails and topgallants. Haul in the weather braces.

DUNCAN. Aye aye, sir. (*Exit*) Away aloft! Hands by topgallant sheets and halyards!

GARDINER. Aloft there! Keep fast the weather sheets till the yards are down, da . . . if you please!

RATCLIFFE. Get aloft yourself, Mister Gardiner, see they do it right, since you're not satisfied.

GARDINER. Sir, the Articles state that . . .

RATCLIFFE. Did you hear me?

GARDINER. Aye aye, sir.

*(Exits up ratlines)*

DUNCAN *(off)*. Haul tort!

VERE. You disapprove of Gardiner, Mister Ratcliffe?

RATCLIFFE. He seems to think he's the only midshipman aboard capable of doing anything properly. He's always looking at you as if your hat weren't squared.

VERE. That is an unfortunate simile under the present circumstances.

RATCLIFFE *(caught)*. Oh, I—er— Keep her close to the wind, helmsman. Don't fall away!

DUNCAN *(off)*. Let go topgallant bowlines!

VERE. I think Gardiner has had enough correction for one day. Call him down to our level, Mister Ratcliffe.

RATCLIFFE. Aye, sir. Mister Gardiner! You may come off your perch now! *(BILLY descends rigging and starts offstage.)* What do you think of our new man Budd, Captain?

SEYMOUR. That boy did a smart piece of work for us last night, sir. He's the nimblest man on the tops I've ever watched. Wyatt wants him for captain of the foretop.

VERE. Very well, let Budd take the post. He certainly deserves it for his actions last night during the chase. I'll speak to him myself.

SEYMOUR. He'll like hearing it from you, sir.

VERE. Hallam, go call Budd, the lad moving forward there. *(Exit HALLAM. GARDINER appears, looking sick.)* Well done, Gardiner. You may lay below and draw an extra tot of rum. You look . . . chilly.

GARDINER. Thank you, sir.

*(Exit)*

SEYMOUR. By the way, sir, Budd has been on the Master-at-Arms' report once or twice for some petty misdemeanor. Nothing serious. *(Steps aside with RATCLIFFE. BILLY enters, followed by HALLAM.)*

BILLY. You sent for me, sir?

VERE. Yes, Budd. Your division officer recommends you for a post of more responsibility. He thinks you can perform duties of a higher station, and so do I, after last night. So I've agreed that you shall have Williams' place on the foretop.

BILLY. But—Williams is captain of the foretop, sir.

VERE. The station calls for a younger man. Lieutenant Wyatt asked for you, and the spirit you showed last night warrants it. That is a real honor for a man so new on board.

BILLY. The Navy's new to me, Captain, but I hardly know anything else but the sea and ships.

VERE. And how do you like us, now that the awesomeness has worn away a bit?

BILLY. The Navy's a bustling world, sir. Bigger than the *Rights of Man*, and I get lost sometimes. But my mates lend me a hand. Why even Jimmy-Legs—beg pardon, sir, the Master-at-Arms, I mean—he's good to me, too.

VERE. The sea and the Navy exact a discipline, but it need not be a harsh one. In some ways I envy the man who dances across the tops and seems to rule the ship and sea below. Up there is a pleach of ropes for you to make a world of. Though winds have their way with tackle of your world, you live at ease against your strength and the round bole of the mast in your back. You are a king up there, while the water curds and frolics at the forefoot. I envy you that stance.

BILLY. You can trust me, Captain.

VERE. I do, boy. Very well, that's all.

BILLY. Aye aye, sir. Thank you, sir, thank you! (Runs off)

VERE. Hallam, find the Master-at-Arms and bid him report to me.

HALLAM. Aye aye, sir. (Exit. SEYMOUR joins VERE)

VERE. If I had a son, I'd hope for one like Budd.

SEYMOUR. Aye, sir. Fine boy. He's a force for order in this ship, certainly. I hope his charm's contagious.

VERE. One such is enough. Men cannot stand very much perfection. It's a disease that we stamp out at its first rash showing. (Enter CLAGGART. SEYMOUR withdraws.) Master-at-Arms, I want to make a change on the Watch, Quarter and Station Bill. I needn't have troubled you about it until later, but I am especially interested in this change.

CLAGGART. The time of day is indifferent to me, sir.

VERE. Williams, present captain of the foretop, is assigned to the afterguard. I am replacing him with Budd.

CLAGGART. William Budd, sir? You do not mean the so-called Handsome Sailor?

VERE. Aye, William Budd, the new seaman from the *Rights of Man*.

CLAGGART. I know him, sir.

VERE. Do you find anything unusual in this replacement?

CLAGGART. You must be aware, sir, that he is . . .

VERE. Well? That he is what? I know he's an able seaman.

CLAGGART. Nothing, sir. But I wondered if he were entirely trustworthy. He has been aboard such a brief time.

VERE. Long enough to prove himself to me, and to his shipmates.

CLAGGART. Very good, sir.

VERE. He is captain of the foretop. That is all.

CLAGGART. With your permission, sir. Will there not be some dissatisfaction among the foretopmen who have been aboard much longer than Budd?

VERE. Master-at-Arms: I concern myself with these matters. They are none of your function. Until such time as the senior topmen formally object to Budd for incapacity, he is captain of the foretop. Make it so on the Bill. *(Exit)*

RATCLIFFE. What are you waiting for, man? Light to dawn? Promotion? You got the order.

CLAGGART. With your permission, sir.

*(As CLAGGART goes off, RATCLIFFE spits over the rail.)*

## SCENE II

*Forward part of the deck. Night. Eight bells. A man descends the rigging and goes off. CLAGGART enters, stands by the hatch for a moment, then exits forward. BILLY comes down off watch, drops to the deck and remains in shadow, leaning over the rail, looking seaward. JENKINS stealthily and silently comes up from below deck.*

BILLY. Jenkins! What you doing topside . . . *(JENKINS puts his hand over BILLY'S mouth.)*

JENKINS. *(in a whisper)*. Stow the noise! *(Releases BILLY.)*

BILLY. You're after Mister Claggart, like you said you would!

JENKINS. Well? What about it? You try and stop me?

BILLY. He knows, Jenkins! I tell you, he knows! He's ready for you!

JENKINS. Then by God, I'll oblige him! I been waiting up here every night, waiting for him to come by when it's dark. Now get away and let me do it!

BILLY. No! I won't let you hang yourself!

JENKINS. I don't give a fiddler's damn what happens to me! Move out of my way, mate!

BILLY. No! Give me the knife.

JENKINS. The knife's for Claggart. You're a nice boy, Bill, but I ain't playing with you. You get away below, quick. This game ain't for boys.

BILLY. Damme, no, Jenkins! You'll hang yourself!

JENKINS. Take your hands off! The moon's under, I can do it now! Oh, sweet mother of God, leave me go!

BILLY. No!

JENKINS. Yes, by God!

(JENKINS strikes BILLY; struggle, in which BILLY wrests knife from JENKINS, and it falls on deck. BILLY knocks JENKINS down.)

CLAGGART (*offstage*). What's that noise? Stand where you are! (*Entering*) You again! Well? Explain this pageant.

BILLY. He . . . I had to hit him, sir. He struck at me.

CLAGGART. Mm. And drew that knife on you, too, no doubt.

BILLY. Yes, sir.

CLAGGART. I have been waiting, forward there, for Jenkins. You intercepted him, I take it.

BILLY. I didn't know you were looking for him, sir.

CLAGGART. You shouldn't meddle, my fine young friend, in matters that don't concern you! I was expecting him. (*Enter DANSKER.*) There, help the body up. I do not thank you, boy, for cheating me of the pleasure of his punishment.

WYATT (*offstage*). What's the disturbance there? You, forward on the spardeck!

CLAGGART. Master-at-Arms reports all in order, sir!

WYATT (*offstage*). Stand where you are.

CLAGGART. The sweet and pleasant fellow saved you, Jenkins. But I reserve you still for my own justice in due time. Say nothing to this officer. (*Enter WYATT.*)

WYATT. What's the matter, Master-at-Arms? It's an odd hour for stargazing.

CLAGGART. A slight matter, sir. I found these two men together here on deck, contrary to the Captain's orders. I was sending them below when you called out.

WYATT. Oh, is that all. Carry on, then.

CLAGGART. Aye aye, sir. Now then, get below, both of you. (*Enter VERE followed by HALLAM. The DANSKER goes off.*) Atten-tion!

VERE. Wyatt, what's this mean?

WYATT. Two men on deck without permission, sir.

VERE. Is there no more to this? The story's lame, man. What occurred? (*Silence*) Very well, then. Go along, both of you.

BILLY. Aye aye, sir. Come along, mate.

(*Exits with JENKINS*)

VERE. Your knife, Master-at-Arms?

CLAGGART. William Budd's, sir, I believe.

VERE. Return it to him.

(*Exits with HALLAM and WYATT*)

(CLAGGART raps rail with rattan. SQUEAK approaches warily.)

CLAGGART. Listen carefully; you may make up for your late mistake if you do this smartly. Give Budd just time enough to get to sleep. At four bells wake him. Bring him to the lee forechains. You understand?

SQUEAK. Mister Claggart, sir . . . we done enough to him. He's a good lad, Mister Claggart. Couldn't it be somebody else? Jenkins, maybe?

CLAGGART. So. He's softened your heart too, eh? Do as you're ordered, man, or I'll see your back laid raw with a flogging whip! Remember: I will be watching you. Bring him to the lee forechains. And when you're there . . .

SQUEAK. Dansker. Moving forward.

CLAGGART. Step back, you fool. Wait for me.

(Exit SQUEAK. The DANSKER enters.)

DANSKER. Baby saved you, eh? And you are angry.

CLAGGART. Saved me, you say? From what? I've tried to tempt Jenkins to this blow, so as to break his toplofty spirit with his neck; and I am "saved" by that guileless idiot! He'd turn the other cheek to me, in Christian kindness! Well, there's a second pleasure in striking that same face twice. I can destroy him, too, if I choose to do it!

DANSKER. Crazy, crazy.

CLAGGART. All right, old man, call it madness then. Whatever its name, it will plunder the sweetness from that face, or it will kill us both.

DANSKER. You are afraid of him.

CLAGGART. Afraid? Of Budd? What nonsense is that?

DANSKER. He usurps the crew; they turn from hating you to loving him, and leave you impotent.

CLAGGART. That bastard innocent frighten me! That witless kindness that spills from him has neither force nor aim. Stand out from between us, or you founder together, sink in five hundred fathoms with him, if I want it so!

DANSKER. Aye, then, if you take that tack, let it be both of us. You expect me to sit by and watch your deliberate arm seize him and force him under?

CLAGGART. Why not? You have always done that. I thought your practice was to stay outside. What breeds the saintly knight errant in you?

DANSKER. I am old, but I have some manhood left.

CLAGGART. What can you do? You've drifted with the tide too long, old one. You are as involved as I am now.

DANSKER. So you may say. In this ship a man lives as he can, and finds a way to make life tolerable for himself. I did so. That was a fault. But no longer.

CLAGGART. Stand clear. You haven't courage to cross me.

DANSKER. Eh, I'm not afraid of you; I see your scheme.

CLAGGART. Damn your feeble, ineffectual eyes! (*Striking him; the DANSKER falls*) You can see only what I let you see!



DANSKER. Say what you like. I see your scheme; so will Captain if need be.

CLAGGART (*pulling him to his feet*). Take a warning for yourself, old man. And keep away! You are on watch, eh? Well, go back to sleep again, or I'll report you.

(DANSKER *exits*. CLAGGART *watches him go, then violently breaks his rattan and throws the pieces over the side.*)

## SCENE II

*Forward part of the main deck. Four bells. CLAGGART stands with one hand on the rail, waiting. After a short pause, hearing a sound, he fades into shadow. SQUEAK enters, bending over and running.*

SQUEAK. Hsssssssst! (BILLY, *sleepy and rubbing his eyes, enters.*)

BILLY. You brought me all the way up here, out of my hammock. Now what do you want?

SQUEAK. I heard you're captain of the foretop, Bill. That right?

BILLY. Aye. What's that to do with you?

SQUEAK. Ah, now you can be more use to your shipmates then ever you was before.

BILLY. What?

SQUEAK. You was impressed, now, weren't you? Well, so was I. We're not the only impressed ones, Billy. There's a gang of us. Could you help . . . at a pinch?

BILLY. What do you mean?

SQUEAK. See here . . . (*Holds up two coins*) Here's two gold guineas for you, Bill. Put in with us. Most of the men aboard are only waiting for a word, and they'll follow you. There's more for you where these come from. What d'you say? If you join us, Bill, there's not a man aboard won't come along! Are you with us? The ship'll be ours when we're ready to take it!

BILLY. Damme, I don't know what you're driving at, but you had better go where you belong! (SQUEAK, *surprised, does not move*. BILLY *springs up*) If you don't start, I'll toss you back over the rail! (SQUEAK *decamps*. BILLY *watches him and starts off himself*. DANSKER, *offstage, calls out.*)

DANSKER. Hallo, what's the matter? (*Enters*) Ah, Beauty, is it you again? Something must have been the matter, for you stammered. (CLAGGART *appears and comes forward.*)

CLAGGART. You seem to favor the maindeck, Billy Budd. What brings you topside at this hour, man, against my orders and the Captain's?

BILLY. I . . . found an afterguardsman in our part of the ship here, and I bid him be off where he belongs.

DANSKER. And is that all you did about it, boy?

BILLY. Aye, Dansker, nothing more.

CLAGGART. A strange sort of hour to police the deck. Name the afterguardsman.

BILLY. I . . . can't say, Mister Claggart. I couldn't see him clear enough.

DANSKER. Don't be a fool, speak up, accuse him.

CLAGGART. Well?

BILLY. I can't say, sir.

CLAGGART. You refuse? Then get below, and stay where you belong.

BILLY. Aye aye, sir. Good night, sir. Good night, Dansker. (Exit)

CLAGGART. I'm glad you saw this mutinous behavior.

DANSKER. Your crazy brain squeezes out false conclusions. He has done nothing except find you out, though he's too innocent to know it.

CLAGGART. I am not hoodwinked by his weak excuse. What else would he be doing at this hour, but fanning rebel tempers like his own?

DANSKER. I stood in the shadows forward when your pander Squeak slipped by me, running from this place. You set him on, on purpose to trap Billy.

CLAGGART. And I will do that, old man. But you will say nothing about it; see you don't. *(Enter VERE followed by HALLAM.)*

VERE. Well, Master-at-Arms? You stand long watches.

CLAGGART. Sir. May I take the liberty of reserving my explanation for your private ear. I believe your interest in this matter would incline you to prefer some privacy.

VERE *(to DANSKER and HALLAM)*. Leave us. Hallam, stand within hail. *(DANSKER and HALLAM go off)* Well? What is it you wish to say, Master-at-Arms?

CLAGGART. During my rounds this night, I have seen enough to convince me that one man aboard, at least, is dangerous; especially in a ship which musters some who took a guilty part in the late serious uprisings . . .

VERE. You may spare a reference to that.

CLAGGART. Your pardon, sir. Quite lately I have begun to notice signs of some sort of movement secretly afoot, and prompted by the man in question. I thought myself not warranted, so long as this suspicion was only indistinct, in reporting it. But recently . . .

VERE. Come to the point, man.

CLAGGART. Sir, I deeply feel the cruel responsibility of making a report involving such serious consequences to the sailor mainly concerned. But God forbid, sir, that this ship should suffer the experience of the Nore.

VERE. Never mind that! You say there is one dangerous man. Name him.

CLAGGART. William Budd, the . . . captain of the foretop.

VERE. William Budd?

CLAGGART. The same, sir. But for all his youth and appealing manners, a secret, vicious lad.

VERE. How, vicious?

CLAGGART. He insinuates himself into the good will of his mates so that they will at least say a word for him, perhaps even take action with him, should it come to that. With your pardon, sir; you note but his fair face; under that there lies a man-trap.

VERE (*after a pause*). Master-at-Arms, I intend to test your accusation here and now. Hallam! (*Enter HALLAM.*)

HALLAM. Aye, sir.

VERE. Find Budd, the foretopman. Manage to tell him out of earshot that he is wanted here. Keep him in talk yourself. Go along.

HALLAM. Aye aye, sir. (*Exit*)

VERE (*angry and perturbed*). Do you come to me with such a foggy tale, Master-at-Arms? As to William Budd, cite me an act, or spoken word of his, confirming what you here in general charge against him. Wait; weigh what you speak. Just now, and in this case, there is the yardarm end for false witness.

CLAGGART. I understand, sir. Tonight, when on my rounds, discovering Budd's hammock was unused, I combed the ship, and found him in conclave with several growlers; men, who, like himself, spread unrest and rebellion in the crew. They were collected here, near the lee forechains, and when I ordered them below, young Budd and others threatened me, and swore they'd drop me, and some officers they hate, overboard, some misty night. Should you, sir, desire substantial proof, it is not far.

(*Enter HALLAM, followed by BILLY.*)

VERE. Hallam, stand apart and see that we are not disturbed. (*HALLAM exits.*) And now, Master-at-Arms, tell this man to his face what you told me of him.

CLAGGART (*moving near to BILLY, and looking directly at him*). Certainly, sir. I said this man, this William Budd, acting so out of angry resentment against impressment and his officers, against this ship, this Service, and the King, breeds in the crew a spirit of rebellion against the officers, the mates, and me, urging some outrage like the late revolt. I myself have seen and heard him speak with manifest malingerers and men who growl of mistreatment, harshness, unfair pay and similar complaints. I say this man threatened his officers with murder, and was bent tonight on urging other men to act concertedly in mutiny. I have nothing further to say, sir.

(*BILLY tries to speak, but can make only incoherent sounds. He seems to be in pain from the contortions of his face and the gurgling which is all he can effect for speech.*)

VERE. Speak, man, speak! Defend yourself! (*Remembering BILLY's impediment, goes to him and puts a hand on his shoulder reassuringly.*) There is no hurry, boy. Take your time, take your time.

*(After agonized dumb gesturing and stammering, increased by VERE's kindness, BILLY'S arm hits out at CLAGGART. CLAGGART staggers, falls, lies still.)*

VERE. Stand back, man! It was a lie, then! *(BILLY, shaking, only stares at the body. VERE raises the body to a sitting position. Since CLAGGART remains inert, VERE lowers him again slowly, then rises. BILLY tries again to speak, without success; he is crying and badly frightened.)* No need to speak now, Billy. Hallam! *(Enter HALLAM.)* Tell the Surgeon I wish to see him here at once. And bid Mister Seymour report to my cabin without delay. *(To BILLY)* Retire to the stateroom aft. Remain there till I summon you. *(BILLY exits. VERE waits, turning once to stare at CLAGGART'S body. Enter the SURGEON.)* Surgeon, tell me how it is with him. *(SURGEON bends over CLAGGART briefly, then looks up in surprise.)* Come, we must dispatch. Go now. I shall presently call a drumhead court to try the man who out of God's own instinct dropped him there. Tell the lieutenants that a foretopman has, in an accidental fury, killed this man. Inform the Captain of Marines as well, and charge them to keep the matter to themselves. *(SURGEON exits.)* The divine judgment of Ananias! Struck dead by the Angel of God . . . and I must judge the Angel. Can I save him? Have I that choice?

### ACT III

#### SCENE I

CAPTAIN VERE'S cabin, a quarter of an hour later. VERE and SEYMOUR.

SEYMOUR. Budd beat a man to death! What had he done?

VERE. Lied again: lied to Budd's face, hoping to kill him by it. Oh, the boy was tempted to it past endurance.

SEYMOUR. False witness has its penalty, sir. Budd has set our justice right.

VERE. Aye, too right. This natural, right act, done in an instinct's fever of recognition, was late and fatal.

SEYMOUR. What are you going to do, Captain? Isn't this last lie of the Master-at-Arms the very act you were waiting for, so as to let the law destroy him, as you said? He should have suffered at the yardarm if Billy hadn't killed him.

VERE. Yes. He should. But by fair process of authority. Budd has prevented that, and turned the law against himself.

SEYMOUR. You can't condemn the boy for answering with his arm for lack of words! The motive was clearly justified.

VERE. Aye, but was the act? For God's sake try, try to convince me I am wrong!

SEYMOUR. This Master-at-Arms, you knew him for a liar, a vicious dog.

VERE. A dog's obeyed in office. Claggart was authority.

SEYMOUR. Then authority's an evil!

VERE. It often is. But it commands, and no man is its equal, not Billy, nor you, nor I. It will strike us down, and rightly, if we resist it.

SEYMOUR. Rightly! What power gives evil its authority? We should thank God the man's dead, and the world well rid of that particular devil.

VERE. Our life has ways to hedge its evil in. No one must go above them; even innocents. Laws of one kind or other shape our course from birth to death. These are the laws pronouncing Billy's guilt; Admiralty codes are merely shadows of them.

SEYMOUR. That's tyranny, not law, forcing conformity to wrongs, giving the victory to the devil himself!

VERE. I thought so once. But without this lawful tyranny, what should we have but worse tyranny of anarchy and chaos? So aboard this man-of-war. Oh, if I were a man alone, manhood would declare for Billy.

SEYMOUR. Then do it. Put your strength and your authority behind Budd, and let him go.

VERE. When I think I could have watched him grow in comely wholesomeness of manhood . . . all lost now. What could have been, quenched in evil, swept out by that undertow.

SEYMOUR. It's more than anyone can have to answer for, Captain; to his peers, or to his God. Let him go free and try on mortal flesh! Will you urge a noose for him, marked like a common felon, and that devil still to have his wish, killing the boy at last?

VERE. Can I do otherwise? I'd give my life to save his, if I could.

SEYMOUR. It's in your hands, Captain. Only you can help him now.

VERE. Billy, Billy. What have we done to you? (*Knock*) Yes, come in. (*Enter HALLAM.*)

HALLAM. Lieutenants Ratcliffe and Wyatt, sir.

VERE. Let them come in. (*Enter RATCLIFFE and WYATT.*)

SEYMOUR. You both know why you've been summoned hither?

WYATT. Yes, sir.

RATCLIFFE. Aye, sir, in a general sort of way.

SEYMOUR. Then take your chairs. Ratcliffe. You here, Wyatt. You are appointed members of a court-martial convened under extraordinary circumstances by Captain Vere. I am Senior Member, and I declare this court open. (*WYATT, RATCLIFFE, and SEYMOUR sit. VERE remains standing, apart.*) Sentry, bring the prisoner in. (*HALLAM salutes and exits.*) As you know, the Master-at-Arms has been killed by the foretopman, Budd. Whether by accident or by design, and whether the act shall carry the penalty of death or no, you are to decide. There is only one witness, Captain Vere. I shall call upon him to give his deposition as soon as the sentry brings in the prisoner. (*An uneasy silence.*)

WYATT. Budd wouldn't kill a minnow without good reason.

RATCLIFFE. What did the . . .

SEYMOUR. I had rather you did not express an opinion until after you have heard the evidence. (*Another awkward silence. HALLAM finally enters with BILLY.*) Sentry, stand outside. (*Exit HALLAM.*) You may sit down.

BILLY. Th-th-thank you, sir.

SEYMOUR. Captain: will you be good enough to give us your account?

VERE (*turning toward them*). I speak<sup>i</sup> not as your Captain, but as witness before this court. The Master-at-Arms early this morning detailed to me an account of mutinous sentiments expressed by Budd, and in particular, spoke of overhearing a specific conversation last night on the mid-watch. He alleged that Budd offered him violence and threatened further violence against the officers.

WYATT. Budd a mutineer! That's absurd, he's the best-liked man . . .

RATCLIFFE. Did the Master-at-Arms specify who the other malcontents were, sir?

VERE. He did not. He said merely that he was in possession of substantial proof of his accusation.

SEYMOUR. With your permission, sir . . . Budd, did you speak with anyone in the Master-at-Arms' hearing last night?

BILLY. I . . . spoke a little . . . with the Dansker, sir.

WYATT. Who is the Dansker?

BILLY. He's just called the Dansker, sir. He's always called so.

RATCLIFFE. I know him. A mainmast sailor.

SEYMOUR. Sentry. (*Enter HALLAM.*)

HALLAM. Sir.

SEYMOUR. Do you know a mainmast sailor referred to as "the Dansker"?

HALLAM. Aye, sir.

SEYMOUR. Go on deck and find him. Let him know apart that he is wanted here, and arrange it so that none of the other people notice his withdrawing. See you do it tactfully. I want no curiosity aroused among the men.

HALLAM. Aye aye, sir.

(*Exit*)

SEYMOUR. Please go on.

VERE. I sent at once for Budd. I ordered the Master-at-Arms to be present at this interview, to make his accusation to Budd's face.

RATCLIFFE. May I ask what was the prisoner's reaction on being confronted by the Master-at-Arms?

VERE. I perceived no sign of uneasiness in his demeanor. I believe he smiled.

RATCLIFFE. And for the Master-at-Arms?

VERE. When I directed him to repeat his accusation, he faced Budd and did so.

WYATT. Did Budd reply?

VERE. He tried to speak, but could not frame his words.

SEYMOUR. And then, sir?

VERE. He answered with blows, and his accuser fell. . . . It was apparent at once that the attack was fatal, but I summoned the Surgeon to verify the fact. (*Turns away.*)

SEYMOUR (*to BILLY*). You have heard Captain Vere's account. Is it, or is it not, as he says?

BILLY. Captain Vere tells the truth. It is just as Captain Vere says, but it is not as the Master-at-Arms said. I have eaten the King's bread, and I am true to the King.

VERE. I believe you, boy.

BILLY. God knows . . . I . . . thank you, sir.

SEYMOUR. Was there any malice between you and the Master-at-Arms?

BILLY. I bore no malice against the Master-at-Arms. I'm sorry he is dead. I did not mean to kill him. If I'd found my tongue, I would not have struck him. But he lied foully to my face, and I . . . had to say . . . something . . . and I could only say it . . . with a blow. God help me.

SEYMOUR. One question more—you tell us that what the Master-at-Arms said against you was a lie. Now, why should he have lied with such obvious malice, when you have declared that there was no malice between you? (*BILLY looks appealingly at VERE.*) Did you hear my question?

BILLY. I . . . I . . .

VERE. The question you put to him comes naturally enough. But can he rightly answer it? Or anyone else, unless, indeed, it be he who lies within there. (*Knock and enter immediately HALLAM.*)

HALLAM. The mainmast man, sir.

SEYMOUR. Send him in. (*HALLAM nods off and the DANSKER enters. HALLAM withdraws, closing door.*) State your name and station.

DANSKER. I have no name. I'm called the Dansker, that's all I know. Mainmast man.

SEYMOUR. You have been summoned in secrecy to appear as a witness before this court, of which I am Senior Member. I may not at this time disclose to you the nature of the offense being tried. However, the offender is William Budd, foretopman. (*Pause*) Do you consent to give this court your testimony, though ignorant of the case at trial, and further, to keep in strictest confidence all that passes here?

DANSKER. Aye.

SEYMOUR (*pushes forward a Bible*). Do you so swear?

DANSKER (*touching the Bible*). I do.

SEYMOUR. Then this is my question. In your opinion, is there malice between Budd and the Master-at-Arms?

DANSKER. Aye.

VERE (*wheeling around*). How!

SEYMOUR. Explain your statement.

DANSKER. How should he not have hated him?

SEYMOUR. Be plain, man. We do not deal in riddles here.

DANSKER. Master-at-Arms bore malice towards a grace he could not have. There was no reason for it.

RATCLIFFE. In other words, this malice was one-sided?

DANSKER. Aye.

RATCLIFFE. And you cannot explain how it arose?

DANSKER. Master-at-Arms hated Billy . . .

SEYMOUR. One moment. I notice that you have been using the past tense in your testimony. Why?

DANSKER. I look around and sense finality here.

WYATT. You cannot explain further the cause of Claggart's hate for Budd?

DANSKER. Master-at-Arms made his world in his own image. Pride was his demon, and he kept it strong by others' fear of him. Billy could not imagine such a nature, saw nothing but a lonely man, strange, but a man still, nothing to be feared. So Claggart, lest his world be proven false, planned Billy's death. The final reason is beyond my thinking.

VERE. Aye, that is thoughtfully put. There is a mystery in iniquity. But it seems to me, Seymour, that the point we seek here is hardly material.

SEYMOUR. Aye, sir. Very well, you may go.

DANSKER. One thing more. Since this Master-at-Arms first came on board from God knows where, I have seen his shadow lengthen along the deck, and being under it, I was afraid. Whatever happened here, I am in part to blame—more than this lad. (*To BILLY*) I am an old man, Billy. You—try to—forgive me. (*Exit*)

SEYMOUR. Have you any further questions to put to the accused?

RATCLIFFE. No.

WYATT. None.

SEYMOUR. William Budd, if you have anything further to say for yourself, say it now.

BILLY (*after glance at VERE*). I have said all, sir.

SEYMOUR. Sentry. (*Enter HALLAM.*) Remove the prisoner to the after compartment. (*HALLAM and BILLY exit. A long pause*) Have you anything to say, Ratcliffe?



RATCLIFFE. Yes, sir. Claggart was killed because Budd couldn't speak. In that sense, that he stammers, he's a cripple. You don't hang a man for that, for speaking the only way he could.

WYATT. If you condemn him, it's the same thing as condoning the apparent lie the Master-at-Arms clearly told. I'd have struck him, too. The boy is clearly innocent, struck him in self-defense.

RATCLIFFE. Aye. I'm ready to acquit him now.

SEYMOUR. Good. Then we can reach a verdict at once.

VERE. Hitherto I have been a witness at this trial, no more. And I hesitate to interfere, except that at this clear crisis you ignore one fact we cannot close our eyes to.

SEYMOUR. With your pardon, sir, as Senior Member of this court, I must ask if you speak now as our commanding officer or as a private man.

VERE. As convening authority, Seymour. I summoned this court, and I must review its findings and approve them before passing them on to the Admiralty.

SEYMOUR. Aye, sir, that is your right.

VERE. No right. Which of us here has rights? Is it my duty, and I must perform it. Budd has killed a man—his superior officer.

SEYMOUR. We have found a verdict, sir.

VERE. I know that, Seymour. Your verdict sets him free, and so would I wish to do. But are we free to choose as we would do if we were private citizens? The Admiralty has its code. Do you suppose it cares who Budd is? Who you and I are?

SEYMOUR. We don't forget that, sir. But surely Claggart's tales were simply lies. We've established that.

VERE. Aye. But the Nore and Spithead were brute facts, and must not come again. The men were starved out before, but if they should think we are afraid . . .

RATCLIFFE. Captain, how could they? They certainly know Budd is no mutineer.

WYATT. Of course not. Since he came on board, he's done more to keep the crew in hand than any of us.

SEYMOUR. That's true. The men took naturally to him.

VERE. As officers we are concerned to keep this ship effective as a weapon. And the law says what we must do in such a case as this. Come now, you know the facts, and the Mutiny Act's provisions. At sea, in time of war, an impressed man strikes his superior officer, and the blow is fatal. The mere blow alone would hang him, at least according to the Act. Well then, the men on board know that as well as you and I. And we acquit him. They have sense, they know the proper penalty to follow, and yet it does not follow.

SEYMOUR. But they know Budd, sir, and Claggart too, I daresay. Would they not applaud the decision that frees Budd? They would thank us.

WYATT. String him to a yard, and they'll turn round and rescue him, and string us up instead!

RATCLIFFE. Aye, that's a point. It's twice as dangerous to hang the boy as it would be to let him go. If there's a mutinous temper in the crew, condemning Budd would surely set it off.

VERE. That is possible. Whatever step we take, the risk is great; but it is ours. That is what makes us officers. Yet if in fear of what our office demands we shirk our duty, we only play at war, at being men. If by our lawful rigor mutiny comes, there is no blame for us. But if in fear, miscalled a kind of mercy, we pardon Budd against specific order, and then the crew revolts, how culpable and weak our verdict would appear! The men on board know what our case is, how we are haunted by the Spithead risings. Have they forgotten how the panic spread through England? No. Your clemency would be accounted fear, and they would say we flinch from practising a lawful rigor lest new outbreaks be provoked. What a shame to us! And what a deadly blow to discipline!

RATCLIFFE. I concede that, sir. But this case is exceptional, and pity, if we are men, is bound to move us, Captain.

VERE. So am I moved. Yet we cannot have warm hearts betraying heads that should be cool. In such a case ashore, an upright judge does not allow the pleading tears of women to touch his nature. Here at sea, the heart, the female in a man, weeps like a woman. She must be ruled out, hard though it be. (*Pause*) Still silent? Very well, I see that something in all your downcast faces seems to urge that not alone the heart moves hesitancy. Conscience, perhaps. The private conscience moves you.

WYATT. Aye, that's it, sir. How can we condemn this man and live at peace again within ourselves? We have our standards; ethics, if you like.

VERE. Challenge your scruples! They move as in a dusk. Come, do they import something like this: if we are bound to judge, regardless of palliating circumstances, the death of Claggart as the prisoner's deed, then does that deed appear a capital crime whereof the penalty is mortal? But can we adjudge to summary and shameful death a fellow creature innocent before God, and whom we feel to be so? Does that state the case rightly?

SEYMOUR. That is my feeling, sir.

VERE. You all feel, I am sure, that the boy in effect is innocent; that what he did was from an unhappy stricture of speech that made him speak with blows. And I believe that, too; believe as you do, that he struck his man down, tempted beyond endurance. Acquit him, then, you say, as innocent?

RATCLIFFE. Exactly! Oh, I know the Articles prescribe death for what Budd has done, but that . . .

WYATT. Oh, stow the Articles! They don't account for such a case as this. You yourself say Budd is innocent.

VERE. In intent, Wyatt, in intent.

WYATT. Does that count for nothing? His whole attitude, his motive, count for nothing? If his intent . . .

VERE. The intent or non-intent of Budd is nothing to the purpose. In a court more merciful than martial it would extenuate, and shall, at the last Assizes, set him free. But here we have these alternatives only: condemn or let go.

SEYMOUR. But it seems to me we've got to consider the problem as a moral one, sir, despite the fact that we're not moralists. When Claggart told you his lie, the case immediately went beyond the scope of military justice.

VERE. I, too, feel that. But do these gold stripes across our arms attest that our allegiance is to Nature?

RATCLIFFE. To our country, sir.

VERE. Aye, Ratcliffe; to the King. And though the sea, which is inviolate Nature primeval, though it be the element whereon we move and have our being as sailors, is our official duty hence to Nature? No. So little is that true that we resign our freedom when we put this on. And when war is declared, are we, the fighters commissioned to destroy, consulted first?

WYATT. Does that deny us the right to act like men? We're not trying a murderer, a dockside cut-throat!

VERE. The gold we wear shows that we serve the King, the Law. What does it matter that our acts are fatal to our manhood, if we serve as we are forced to serve? What bitter salt leagues move between our code and God's own judgments! We are conscripts, every one, upright in this uniform of flesh. There is no truce to war born in the womb. We fight at command.

WYATT. All I know is that I can't sit by and see Budd hanged!

VERE. I say we fight by order, by command of our superiors. And if our judgments approve the war, it is only coincidence. And so it is with all our acts. So now, would it be so much we ourselves who speak as judges here, as it would be martial law operating through us? For that law, and for its rigor, we are not responsible. Our duty lies in this: that we are servants only.

RATCLIFFE. The Admiralty doesn't want service like that. What good would it do? Who'd profit by Budd's death?

WYATT. You want to make us murderers!

SEYMOUR. Wyatt! Control yourself!

VERE. What is this vessel that you serve in, Wyatt, an ark of peace? Go count her guns; then tell your conscience to lie quiet, if you can.

RATCLIFFE. But that is war. This would be downright killing!

SEYMOUR. It's all war, Ratcliffe; war to the death, for all of us.

VERE. You see that, Seymour? That this war began before our time?

SEYMOUR. And will end long after it.

VERE. Here we have the Mutiny Act for justice. No child can own a closer tie to parent than can that Act to what it stems from: War. This is a wartime cruise and in this ship are Englishmen who fight against their wills, perhaps against their conscience, 'pressed by war into the service of the King. Though we as fellow creatures understand their lot, what does it matter to the officer, or to the enemy? The French will cut down conscripts in the same swath with volunteers, and we will do as much for them. War has no business with anything but surfaces. War's child, the Mutiny Act, is featured like the father.

RATCLIFFE. Couldn't we mitigate the penalty if we convict him?

VERE. No, Ratcliffe. The penalty is prescribed.

RATCLIFFE. I'd like to think it over, Captain. I'm not sure.

VERE. I repeat, then, that while we ponder and you hesitate over anxieties I confess to sharing, the enemy comes nearer. We must act, and quickly. The French close in on us; the crew will find out shortly what has happened. Our consciences are private matters, Ratcliffe. But we are public men, controlling life and death within this world at sea. Tell me whether or not in our positions we dare let our consciences take precedence of the code that makes us officers and calls this case to trial.

RATCLIFFE (*after a pause; quietly*). No, sir.

WYATT. Can you stand Budd's murder on your conscience?

SEYMOUR. Wyatt! Hold your tongue!

WYATT (*jumping up*). I say let him go!

SEYMOUR. Sit down, sir!

VERE. Let him speak.

WYATT. I won't bear a hand to hang a man I know is innocent! My blood's not cold enough. I can't give the kind of judgment you want to force on us! I ask to be excused from sitting upon this court.

SEYMOUR. Do you know what you're saying? Sit down and hold your tongue, man!

VERE. The kind of judgment I ask of you is only this, Wyatt: that you recognize your function in this ship. I believe you know it quite as well as we, yet you rebel. Can't you see that you must first strip off the uniform you wear, and after that your flesh, before you can escape the case at issue here? Decide you must, Wyatt. Oh, you may be excused and wash your hands of it, but someone must decide. We are the law; law orders us to act, and shows us how. Do you imagine Seymour, or Ratcliffe here, or I, would not save this boy if we could see a way consistent with our duties? Acquit Budd if you can. God knows I wish I could. If in your mind as well as in your heart, you can say freely that his life is not forfeit to the law we serve, reason with us! Show us how to save him without putting aside our function. Or if you can't do that, teach us to put by our responsibility and not betray ourselves. Can you do this? Speak, man, speak! Show us how! Save him, Wyatt, and you save us all. (*WYATT slowly sits down.*) You recognize the logic of the choice I force upon you. But do not think me pitiless in thus demand-

ing sentence on a luckless boy. I feel as you do for him. But even more, I think there is a grace of soul within him that shall forgive the law we bind him with, and pity us, stretched on the cross of choice. (*Turns away.*)

SEYMOUR. Well, gentlemen. Will you decide. (*Officers write their verdicts on paper before them, and hand them to SEYMOUR, who rises, draws his dirk and places it on the table, pointing forward*) He is condemned, sir. Shall we appoint the dawn?

## SCENE II

CAPTAIN VERE'S cabin, 0400. Ship's bell strikes offstage. VERE sitting alone at his desk. Knock at the door.

VERE. Come in. (*Enter SEYMOUR.*) Oh, it's Seymour.

SEYMOUR. It's eight bells, Captain.

VERE. What's the hour of sunrise?

SEYMOUR. Four fifty-two, sir.

VERE. Eight bells. And one bell at four-thirty. Odd and even numbers caught between two hands. Budd shall not live to hear the odd made even or wrong made right. —Call all hands to quarters at four-thirty.

SEYMOUR. Aye aye, Captain. (*Turns irresolutely.*)

VERE. The wind has slackened, I think. How is the glass?

SEYMOUR. It's risen slightly. Sea has flattened out.

VERE. Fair weather after foul . . . it's all nature, nature and law. How exigent are these Mediterranean climates of the heart, and temperate zones of mind!

SEYMOUR. Have you been here all night, sir?

VERE. All night, Seymour . . . all my life moving between dark and dark. It has been a long night, but day will be quick and deadly on the mainyard. D'you think, Seymour, a man can forgive a wrong done of the heart's own election?

SEYMOUR. Most people are decent enough. You can forgive them trespasses.

VERE. No, by God. There's wickedness alive. It's dead now in one man, but it's alive to feel and smell at night . . . Seymour, go below. Get Budd and bring him here.

SEYMOUR. But Captain . . .

VERE. Do as you're told. Get Budd and bring him here. (*SEYMOUR exits. VERE sits motionless for a few moments, then rises and goes to the cabin door*) Sentry.

HALLAM. Yes, sir?

VERE. Who has the deck this watch?

HALLAM. Mister Ratcliffe, Captain.

VERE. Very well. (*Pause*) Sentry!

HALLAM. Sir?

VERE. When Mister Seymour has returned, admit him right way.

HALLAM. Aye aye, Captain.

VERE. The wind's still sharp. You must be cold there, Hallam. Go to the leeward side. I'll be responsible.

HALLAM. Thank you, sir. This is the coldest hour now, just before sunrise.

VERE (*closes door, returns slowly to his desk*). The lamp holds steady when the vessel heels. Does the law hang straight in crooked lives? It burns, and shapes nothing but shadows here, plumb in the twisting cabin of the mind. (*Footsteps, voices. VERE turns to door. Enter SEYMOUR, BILLY and HALLAM.*) Take off the manacles. (*HALLAM frees BILLY.*)

SEYMOUR (*to HALLAM*). Outside, man. Bear a hand (*Exits with HALLAM*)

VERE. Sit down. No, it's better that I stand.

BILLY. I was thinking, locked up below there . . . the Captain knows the rights of this. He'll save me if it's right. Then you sent for me. Is there hope for me, Captain?

VERE. Billy, what hope is there?

BILLY. Tell me why. I only want to understand.

VERE. How young you still are, Billy! Oh, I can tell you this: nothing is lost of anything that happens. I have given you the judgment of the world . . . deadly constraint . . . a length of hemp and a yardarm. I have done this to you, no one else.

BILLY. I can't get the rights of all that's happened.

VERE. There's not much right, Billy. Only necessity. You and Claggart broke man's compromise with good and evil, and both of you must pay the penalty.

BILLY. Penalty? What for? Would anyone make laws just to be broken by fellows like me?

VERE. Aye, boy. You have learned this late. Most of us find out early and trim to a middle course.

BILLY. Do you mean . . . it's better to be like that?

VERE. Better as this world goes. When a man is born, he takes a guilt upon him, I can't say how or why. And life takes its revênge on those who hurt its pride with innocence.

BILLY. Do you think Claggart knew it would come to this?

VERE. He knew he would kill you, and he died to gain that end. But if you trust me, he'll not win entirely.

BILLY. How could he hate me like that?

VERE. The world we breathe is love and hatred both, but hatred must not win the victory.

BILLY. Claggart is dead. Now I'm to hang. Doesn't that show the law is wrong, when it can't choose between him and me?

VERE. Yes, it's all wrong, all wrong.

BILLY. I don't know, Captain. I never was a hand to wonder about things, but now I think that maybe there's a kind of cruelty in people that's just as much a part of them as kindness, say, or honesty, or m-m-m . . . I can't find words, I guess, Captain.

VERE. There are no words. We are all prisoners of deadly forms that are made to break us to their measure. Nothing has power to overcome them, except forgiveness. . . . Can you forgive what I have done?

BILLY. I *can* trust you, can't I? *Can* you show me it's all right, my being . . .

VERE (*turns away; a long pause*). It's nearly dawn, lad. In the Spanish villages they're lighting fires.

BILLY. I'm not afraid, sir. (*Steps toward VERE*) It's getting light.

VERE. There's no time for either of us left. Go, take the morning. God knows you have the right to it. And when you are on the mainyard, think of me, and pray for those who must make choices. Hallam. (*Enter HALLAM in doorway.*) Take Budd into your charge. (*BILLY and HALLAM go out.*) Time has run out.

### SCENE III

*Main deck aft. Drum-to-formation. Crew forming up. WYATT, Midshipmen GARDINER and REA.*

WYATT. Bear a hand. Form the men up in ranks.

GARDINER. Aye, sir. All right, you! Close ranks! Move up, Stoll That's better. Talbot, square your hat. Form up straight there, damn it! (*Drum. Men come to attention.*)

WYATT. Division commanders report!

VOICE (*off*). Carpenters and gunners, present or accounted for, sir!

VOICE (*off*). Marine Detachment, present or accounted for, sir!

VOICE (*off*). Afterguard, present or accounted for, sir!

GARDINER. Fore, main and mizzentopmen . . . one absentee!

WYATT. All hands will stand by to witness punishment! Stand easy.

VOICES (*off*). Stand easy! (*WYATT walks away from men. Murmur in ranks.*)

KINCAID. Where the devil is Billy? He wasn't in his hammock when they piped us up.

O'DANIEL. He'll be getting himself in trouble if he don't fall in.

KINCAID. Who the hell they punishing, and what for?

JENKINS. It's got to be flogging, or they wouldn't have us all up here.

KINCAID. Vere never flogs anybody. And there ain't no gratings up.

DANSKER. They flog men at noon. The early morning's for hanging.

KINCAID. Hanging! (*The word travels back.*) Who? What for?

O'DANIEL. The skipper, he don't confide in me no more.

KINCAID. I thought they waited till they got ashore before they hanged a man.

DANSKER. Not in wartime.

JENKINS. He goes up them ratlines, out on the yard, they slips a noose around his neck, and then he jumps and hangs himself.

O'DANIEL. They'd have the devil's work getting O'Daniel to jump.

KINCAID. It's jump, or get pushed.

JENKINS. Where's Claggart? God, you don't suppose it's Claggart! Oh, Judas, let it be that fishblooded nark!

KINCAID. Not him. He's too smart, he is.

JENKINS. Where is he, then? He ain't here.

DANSKER. He is here.

KINCAID. Where? I don't see him.

DANSKER. He is here.

KINCAID. Ah . . . you're balmy, old man.

(*Enter VERE, SEYMOUR, RATCLIFFE and the SURGEON. Drum sounds Attention.*)

WYATT (*to SEYMOUR*). Ship's company present to witness execution, sir.

SEYMOUR. Very well. (*To VERE*) Ship's company present to witness execution, sir.  
(*VERE nods.*)

SEYMOUR (*to WYATT*). Lieutenant Wyatt, have the prisoner brought forward.

WYATT. Aye, aye, sir. (*Marches to wing*) Sentries, bring forward the prisoner.  
(*Marches back to his post.*)

(*Enter BILLY with two sentries. Astonished murmur through the crew, who momentarily break ranks.*)

WYATT. No talking in ranks! (*Continued restless movement and murmuring.*) Form up!

GARDINER. You men are at attention!

WYATT (*over subdued muttering*). You hear me? Silence in ranks!



(*Silence. Sentries lead BILLY to the foot of the ropes. SEYMOUR looks at VERE, who nods. SEYMOUR steps forward and reads.*)

SEYMOUR. Proceedings of the court-martial held aboard *H.M.S. Indomitable* on the eighth August, 1798. Convened under the authority of Edward Fairfax Vere, Senior Captain, Royal Navy, and composed of the First Officer, the Sailing Master, and the First Lieutenant of said vessel. In the case of William Budd, foretopman, Royal Navy. While attached and so serving in the aforesaid vessel, he did, on the eighth day of August, 1798, strike and kill his superior officer, one John Claggart, Master-at-Arms, Royal Navy.

(*Crew breaks out uneasily, astonished, talking excitedly.*)

|                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| JENKINS. Billy! Did you, boy? | } <i>All together</i> |
| VOICE. Good lad!              |                       |
| VOICE. Serves him proper!     |                       |
| KINCAID. Hi, Billy! Hurrah!   |                       |

WYATT. Quiet! Silence, you men! Form up!

GARDINER. Stand at attention, hang you! Silence in the ranks!

WYATT. Do you hear? (*Excited muttering, low voices.*)

SEYMOUR. You will be silent and remain at strict attention until dismissed. (*Silence*) . . . Master-at-Arms, Royal Navy. Therefore, the court sentences the aforementioned William Budd, foretopman, Royal Navy, to die by hanging on the first watch of the day following these proceedings. By authority of his Gracious Majesty George Rex and Alan Napier, Viscount Kelsey, First Sea Lord. Signed, Philip Seymour, Senior Member.

(*During the last phrases of the reading, the crew, upon hearing the sentence, breaks out again, some stepping forward, shouting; they are in an ugly temper.*)

|                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| VOICES. No he don't!                | } <i>All together</i> |
| Not if I know it!                   |                       |
| Hang the jemmies instead, I say!    |                       |
| You ain't hanging Billy,            |                       |
| Not Billy, you bloody swineheads!   |                       |
| Not him, by Christ! damn your eyes! |                       |
| Let them dance on a rope's end!     |                       |

WYATT. Stand back! Sentries, guard your prisoner, if you have to fire!

GARDINER. Stand back, you damned clods! Keep back!

SEYMOUR (*steps forward*). Silence there! You will resume discipline instantly! Be warned. (*Waits a silent moment. Men stop in disordered formation.*) Stand back into ranks.

GARDINER. Form up again, quick about it now! (*There is a surly movement into irregular lines.*)

SEYMOUR (*warily resuming procedure*). Prisoner, have you anything to say? (BILLY *shakes his head*.) If you have nothing to say, when the drum roll is sounded, you will proceed to carry out the sentence of this court. (*Signals to WYATT.*)

WYATT. Sound off!

(*Drums roll. BILLY turns and starts up the ropes.*)

VOICES. Get him! Now!

Bill! Stay where you are, boy, don't do it!

Wait, Billy! Wait!

Rush the deck, mates! Don't let them do it!

We're here, Bill, don't you worry!

} *All  
together*

BILLY (*stops, turns forward, looks at VERE, and shouts out loud and clear, without trace of stammer*). God bless Captain Vere!

(*A second's pause; VERE is profoundly shaken; BILLY goes quickly up the ropes and out of sight. The crew moves back a step, is silent; officers and men in deep breathless quiet watch him out of sight and are staring overhead as the curtain falls.*)

## *II: The Play and the Creative Process*

*All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages.*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



# THE TEMPEST

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

*Edited and Annotated by Hardin Craig*

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ALONSO, *King of Naples.*

SEBASTIAN, *his brother.*

PROSPERO, *the right Duke of Milan.*

ANTONIO, *his brother, the usurping  
Duke of Milan.*

FERDINAND, *son to the King of  
Naples.*

GONZALO, *an honest old Counsellor.*

ADRIAN, }  
FRANCISCO, } *Lords.*

CALIBAN, *a savage and deformed  
Slave.*

TRINCULO, *a Jester.*

STEPHANO, *a drunken Butler.*

MASTER OF A SHIP.

BOATSWAIN.

MARINERS.

MIRANDA, *daughter to Prospero.*

ARIEL, *an airy Spirit.*

IRIS,

CERES,

JUNO,

NYMPS,

REAPERS,

OTHER SPIRITS *attending on Prospero.*

} *presented by Spirits.*

SCENE—*A ship at Sea: an island.*

## ACT I

SCENE I. *On a ship at sea: a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard.*

*Enter a SHIP-MASTER and a BOATSWAIN.*

MASTER. Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN. Here, master: what cheer?

MASTER. Good, speak to the mariners: fall to 't, yarely or we run ourselves  
aground: bestir, bestir. (Exit)

*(Enter MARINERS.)*

BOATSWAIN. Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! yare, yare! Take in the  
topsail. Tend to the master's whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind,  
if room enough!

*(Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, and others.)*

ALONSO. Good boatswain, have care. Where 's the master? Play the men.

BOATSWAIN. I pray now, keep below.

ACT I. SCENE I. 1. Boatswain: under-officer in a ship, having to do with sails and rigging  
and the supervision of the crew at work. 3. Good: probably, good friend. fall . . . yarely:  
set to work nimbly. 6. Tend: attend. Blow, etc.: addressed to the storm. 8. Play the

- ALONSO. Where is the master, boatswain? 10
- BOATSWAIN. Do you not hear him? You mar our labour: keep your cabins: you do assist the storm.
- GONZALO. Nay, good, be patient.
- BOATSWAIN. When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of king? To cabin: silence! trouble us not.
- GONZALO. Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.
- BOATSWAIN. None that I more love than myself. You are a counsellor; if you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more; use your authority: if you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your 20 cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap. Cheerly, good hearts! Out of our way, I say. (Exit)
- GONZALO. I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging: make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable. (Exeunt)

(Re-enter BOATSWAIN.)

- BOATSWAIN. Down with the topmast! yare! lower, lower! Bring her to try with main-course. (*A cry within.*) A plague upon this howling! they are louder than the weather or our office. 30

(Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO.)

Yet again! what do you here? Shall we give o'er and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

- SEBASTIAN. A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

- BOATSWAIN. Work you then.

- ANTONIO. Hang, cur! hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker! We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

- GONZALO. I'll warrant him for drowning; though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an unstanch'd wench.

- BOATSWAIN. Lay her a-hold! set her two courses off to sea again; lay her off.

men: New Cambridge editors define as "pipe all hands." 14. cares: described as a singular verb used with a plural subject on account of haste; also as an old northern plural of the verb in *s.* roarers: waves or winds, or both; allusion to *roarer* meaning "bully," "blusterer." 18. work . . . present: calm the storm. 19. hand: handle. 24. complexion . . . gallows: appearance shows he was born to be hanged. 26. doth little advantage, is of little benefit. 28-29. Bring . . . course: sail her close to the wind by means of the mainsail. 29-30. they . . . office: the passengers make more noise than the winds or than we do at work. 37. warrant him for drowning: guarantee that he will never be drowned. 39. a-hold: close to the wind. courses: probably, sails; i.e., they would set her foresail as well as her mainsail.

(Enter MARINERS *wet*.)

MARINERS. All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost! 40

BOATSWAIN. What, must our mouths be cold?

GONZALO. The king and prince at prayers! let's assist them,  
For our case is as theirs.

SEBASTIAN. I'm out of patience.

ANTONIO. We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards:  
This wide-chapp'd rascal—would thou mightst lie drowning  
The washing of ten tides!

GONZALO. He'll be hang'd yet,  
Though every drop of water swear against it  
And gape at widest to glut him.

(A CONFUSED NOISE WITHIN: 'Mercy on us!'—  
'We split, we split!'—'Farewell my wife and children!' 50  
'Farewell, brother!'—'We split, we split, we split!')

ANTONIO. Let 's all sink with the king.

SEBASTIAN. Let 's take leave of him. (Exeunt ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN)

GONZALO. Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren  
ground, long heath, brown furze, any thing. The wills above be done!  
but I would fain die a dry death. (Exeunt)

SCENE II. *The island. Before PROSPERO'S cell.*

Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA.

MIRANDA. If by your art, my dearest father, you have  
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.  
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,  
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,  
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffer'd  
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,  
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,  
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock  
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd.  
Had I been any god of power, I would 10  
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere  
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and  
The fraughting souls within her.

41. must . . . cold: let us heat up our mouths with liquor. 44. merely: absolutely, entirely.  
45. wide-chapp'd: with mouth wide open. 45-46. lie . . . tides. Pirates were hanged on the  
shore and left until three tides had come in. 48. glut, swallow. 50. split, i.e., on the rocks.  
55. long heath, defined as "open barren ground"; also as "heather." furze, broom,  
or gorse (a prickly shrub); F: firrs, taken to mean "firrs" (New Cambridge).

SCENE II. 3. stinking pitch, suggestion of heat. 4. But that, were it not that. 13.  
fraughting, forming the cargo.

- PROSPERO. Be collected:  
No more amazement: tell your piteous heart  
There's no harm done.
- MIRANDA. O, woe the day!
- PROSPERO. No harm.  
I have done nothing but in care of thee,  
Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who  
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing  
Of whence I am, nor that I am more better  
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell, 20  
And thy no greater father.
- MIRANDA. More to know  
Did never meddle with my thoughts.
- PROSPERO. 'Tis time  
I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,  
And pluck my magic garment from me. So: (*Lays down his mantle*)  
Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.  
The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd  
The very virtue of compassion in thee,  
I have with such provision in mine art  
So safely ordered that there is no soul—  
No, not so much perdition as an hair 30  
Betid to any creature in the vessel  
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. Sit down;  
For thou must now know farther.
- MIRANDA. You have often  
Begun to tell me what I am, but stopp'd  
And left me to a bootless inquisition,  
Concluding 'Stay: not yet.'
- PROSPERO. The hour 's now come;  
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear;  
Obey and be attentive. Canst thou remember  
A time before we came unto this cell?  
I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not 40  
Out three years old.
- MIRANDA. Certainly, sir, I can.
- PROSPERO. By what? by any other house or person?  
Of any thing the image tell me that  
Hath kept with thy remembrance.
- MIRANDA. 'Tis far off  
And rather like a dream than an assurance

14. amazement, astonishment, bewilderment. piteous, pitiful. 19. more better, double comparative, as often. 20. full, very, exceedingly. 22. meddle, mingle. 24. So, used with a gesture, meaning "good," "very well." 28. provision, foresight. 29. no soul, i.e., lost; many emendations. 30. perdition, loss. 31. Betid, happened. 35. bootless inquisition, profitless inquiry. 41. Out, fully. 45-46. assurance . . .



That my remembrance warrants. Had I not  
Four or five women once that tended me?

PROSPERO. Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it  
That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else  
In the dark backward and abysm of time?  
If thou remember'st aught ere thou camest here,  
How thou camest here thou mayst.

50

MIRANDA. But that I do not.

PROSPERO. Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,  
Thy father was the Duke of Milan and  
A prince of power.

MIRANDA. Sir, are not you my father?

PROSPERO. Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and  
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father  
Was Duke of Milan; and thou his only heir  
And princess no worse issued.

MIRANDA. O the heavens!  
What foul play had we, that we came from thence?  
Or blessed was 't we did?

60

PROSPERO. Both, both, my girl:  
By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,  
But blessedly help hither.

MIRANDA. O, my heart bleeds  
To think o' the teen that I have turn'd you to,  
Which is from my remembrance! Please you, farther.

PROSPERO. My brother and thy uncle, call'd Antonio---  
I pray thee, mark me—that a brother should  
Be so perfidious!—he whom next thyself  
Of all the world I loved and to him put  
The manage of my state; as at that time  
Through all the signories it was the first  
And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed  
In dignity, and for the liberal arts  
Without a parallel; those being all my study,  
The government I cast upon my brother  
And to my state grew stranger, being transported  
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle---  
Dost thou attend me?

70

MIRANDA. Sir, most heedfully.

warrants, certainty that my memory guarantees. 56. piece, masterpiece. 59. issued, born. 64. teen . . . to, trouble I have brought you into. 65. from, i.e., has no place in. 70. manage, management. 71. signories, states of northern Italy. 73. liberal arts, allusion to the learned studies of the Middle Ages. 76. state, position as ruler. 77. Secret studies, magic, the occult.

PROSPERO. Being once perfected how to grant suits,  
 How to deny them, who to advance and who 80  
 To trash for over-topping, new created  
 The creatures that were mine, I say, or changed 'em,  
 Or else new form'd 'em; having both the key  
 Of officer and office, set all hearts i' the state  
 To what tune pleased his ear; that now he was  
 The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,  
 And suck'd my verdure out on 't. Thou attend'st not.

MIRANDA. O, good sir, I do.

PROSPERO. I pray thee, mark me.  
 I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated  
 To closeness and the bettering of my mind 90  
 With that which, but by being so retired,  
 O'er-prized all popular rate, in my false brother  
 Awaked an evil nature; and my trust,  
 Like a good parent, did beget of him  
 A falsehood in its contrary as great  
 As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,  
 A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,  
 Not only with what my revenue yielded,  
 But what my power might else exact, like one 100  
 Who having into truth, by telling of it,  
 Made such a sinner of his memory,  
 To credit his own lie, he did believe  
 He was indeed the duke; out o' the substitution,  
 And executing the outward face of royalty,  
 With all prerogative: hence his ambition growing—  
 Dost thou hear?

MIRANDA. Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROSPERO. To have no screen between this part he play'd  
 And him he play'd it for, he needs will be  
 Absolute Milan. Me, poor man, my library  
 Was dukedom large enough: of temporal royalties 110  
 He thinks me now incapable; confederates—

79. *perfected*, informed completely. 81. *trash*, check a hound by tying a weight to its neck. *over-topping*, running too far ahead of the pack. 83. *key*, tool for tuning stringed instruments, with suggestion of the usual meaning.

90. *closeness*, retirement, seclusion. 91-92. *but . . . rate*, except that it was done in retirement, (would have) surpassed in value all popular estimate. 93. *Awaked*. *I* in line 89 is the subject. 95. *in its contrary*, of an opposite kind. 97. *lorded*, raised to lordship. 100-102. *Who . . . lie*, a difficult passage; the meaning is: He had lied so long that he believed his own lies. New Cambridge editors read *minted for into*, interpreting the passage as a figure from coining of baser metals, so that *telling* means "counting," *substitution* means "the substituting of baser metals for gold," and *executing . . . royalty* means "stamping the coins." 109. *Absolute Milan*, actual duke of Milan. 110. *royalties*, prerogatives and rights of a sovereign. 111. *confederates*, conspires.

So dry he was for sway—wi' the King of Naples  
 To give him annual tribute, do him homage,  
 Subject his coronet to his crown and bend  
 The dukedom yet unbow'd—alas, poor Milan!—  
 To most ignoble stooping.

MIRANDA. O the heavens!

PROSPERO. Mark his condition and the event; then tell me  
 If this might be a brother.

MIRANDA. I should sin  
 To think but nobly of my grandmother:  
 Good wombs have borne bad sons.

PROSPERO. Now the condition. 120

This King of Naples, being an enemy  
 To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit;  
 Which was, that he, in lieu o' the premises  
 Of homage and I know not how much tribute,  
 Should presently extirpate me and mine  
 Out of the dukedom and confer fair Milan  
 With all the honours on my brother; whereon,  
 A treacherous army levied, one midnight  
 Fated to the purpose did Antonio open  
 The gates of Milan, and, i' the dead of darkness, 130  
 The ministers for the purpose hurried thence  
 Me and thy crying self.

MIRANDA. Alack, for pity!  
 I, not remembering how I cried out then,  
 Will cry it o'er again: it is a hint  
 That wrings mine eyes to 't.

PROSPERO. Hear a little further  
 And then I'll bring thee to the present business  
 Which now 's upon 's; without the which this story  
 Were most impertinent.

MIRANDA. Wherefore did they not  
 That hour destroy us?

PROSPERO. Well demanded, wench:  
 My tale provokes that question. Dear, they durst not, 140  
 So dear the love my people bore me, nor set  
 A mark so bloody on the business, but  
 With colours fairer painted their foul ends.

112. dry, thirsty, eager. 123. in . . . premises, in return for the stipulations. 125. presently, at once, immediately. 131. ministers, those employed to serve Antonio. 134. hint, occasion. 135. wrings . . . to, forces. 138. impertinent, irrelevant. 139. wench, used as a term of affectionate address. 143. colours, pretexts, excuses.

In few, they hurried us aboard a bark,  
 Bore us some leagues to sea; where they prepared  
 A rotten carcass of a boat, not rigg'd,  
 Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats  
 Instinctively have quit it: there they hoist us,  
 To cry to the sea that roar'd to us, to sigh  
 To the winds whose pity, sighing back again,  
 Did us but loving wrong.

150

MIRANDA. Alack, what trouble  
 Was I then to you!

PROSPERO. O, a cherubin  
 Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,  
 Infused with a fortitude from heaven.  
 When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt,  
 Under my burthen groan'd; which raised in me  
 An undergoing stomach, to bear up  
 Against what should ensue.

MIRANDA. How came we ashore?

PROSPERO. By Providence divine.  
 Some food we had and some fresh water that  
 A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,  
 Out of his charity, who being then appointed  
 Master of this design, did give us, with  
 Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessities,  
 Which since have steaded much; so, of his gentleness,  
 Knowing I loved my books, he furnish'd me  
 From mine own library with volumes that  
 I prize above my dukedom.

160

MIRANDA. Would I might  
 But ever see that man!

PROSPERO. Now I arise: (*Resumes his mantle*)  
 Sit still, and hear the last of our sea-sorrow.  
 Here in this island we arrived; and here  
 Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit  
 Than other princesses can that have more time  
 For vainer hours and tutors not so careful.

170

MIRANDA. Heavens thank you for 't! And now, I pray you, sir,  
 For still 'tis beating in my mind, your reason  
 For raising this sea-storm?

144. few, few words. 146. boat, F: *butt*, which might be retained with the meaning "tub" (for boat). 148. hoist, heaved, lifted. 151. loving wrong, figure of speech called oxymoron, in which, to emphasize a contrast, contradictory terms are associated; the *wrong* done by sea and winds was wrought by seeming sympathy. 152. cherubin, plural used as singular; applied to an angelic woman. 155. deck'd. New Cambridge editors read *eked*, increased. 156. which, i.e., the smile. 157. undergoing stomach, courage to undergo. 165. steaded, been useful.

PROSPERO.

Know thus far forth.

By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,  
 Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies  
 Brought to this shore; and by my prescience  
 I find my zenith doth depend upon  
 A most auspicious star, whose influence  
 If now I court not but omit, my fortunes  
 Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions:  
 Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dulness,  
 And give it way: I know thou canst not choose. (*Miranda sleeps*)  
 Come away, servant, come. I am ready now.  
 Approach, my Ariel, come.

180

(*Enter ARIEL.*)

ARIEL.

All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come  
 To answer thy best pleasure; be 't to fly,  
 To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
 On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding task  
 Ariel and all his quality.

190

PROSPERO.

Hast thou, spirit,

Perform'd to point the tempest that I bade thee?

ARIEL.

To every article.

I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,  
 Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,  
 I flamed amazement: sometime I 'ld divide,  
 And burn in many places; on the topmast,  
 The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,  
 Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors  
 O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary  
 And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks  
 Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune  
 Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,  
 Yea, his dread trident shake.

200

PROSPERO.

My brave spirit!

Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil  
 Would not infect his reason?

ARIEL.

Not a soul

But felt a fever of the mad and play'd  
 Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners  
 Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,  
 Then all afire with me: the king's son, Ferdinand,

210

181. *zenith*, height of fortune; astrological term. 185. *dulness*, drowsiness. 187. *Come away, come*. 192. *task*, make demands upon. 194. *point*, i.e., to the smallest detail. 196. *beak*, prow. 197. *waist*, midship. *deck*, poopdeck at the stern. 198. *flamed amazement*, caused amazement by flame. 200. *distinctly*, separately. 202. *momentary*, instantaneous. 207. *coil*, turmoil. 209. *fever of the mad*, i.e., such as madmen feel. Some editors follow Dryden in reading *mind*.

With hair up-staring,—then like reeds, not hair,—  
Was the first man that leap'd; cried, 'Hell is empty,  
And all the devils are here.'

PROSPERO. Why, that 's my spirit!  
But was not this nigh shore?

ARIEL. Close by, my master.

PROSPERO. But are they, Ariel, safe?

ARIEL. Not a hair perish'd;  
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,  
But fresher than before: and, as thou badest me,  
In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle. 220  
The king's son have I landed by himself;  
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs  
In an odd angle of the isle and sitting,  
His arms in this sad knot.

PROSPERO. Of the king's ship  
The mariners say how thou hast disposed  
And all the rest o' the fleet.

ARIEL. Safely in harbour  
Is the king's ship; in the deep nook, where once  
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew  
From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she 's hid: 230  
The mariners all under hatches stow'd;  
Who, with a charm join'd to their suffer'd labour,  
I have left asleep: and for the rest o' the fleet  
Which I dispersed, they all have met again  
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,  
Bound sadly home for Naples,  
Supposing that they saw the king's ship wreck'd  
And his great person perish.

PROSPERO. Ariel, thy charge  
Exactly is perform'd: but there 's more work.  
What is the time o' the day?

ARIEL. Past the mid season.

PROSPERO. At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six and now 240  
Must by us both be spent most precious.

213. up-staring, standing on end. 218. sustaining garments, probably, garments that sustained them in the sea. 223. angle, corner. 227. nook, bay. 228. fetch dew, for some incantation. 229. Bermoothes, Bermudas; a possible reference to *A Discovery of the Bermudas* (1610), one of the sources of the play. 234. flote, sea, or possibly, flotilla, i.e., making for the Mediterranean flotilla (New Cambridge). 240. glasses, i.e., hourglasses.

ARIEL. Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,  
Let me remember thee what thou hast promised,  
Which is not yet perform'd me.

PROSPERO. How now? moody?  
What is 't thou canst demand?

ARIEL. My liberty.

PROSPERO. Before the time be out? no more!

ARIEL. I prithee,  
Remember I have done thee worthy service;  
Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served  
Without or grudge or grumblings: thou didst promise  
To bate me a full year.

PROSPERO. Dost thou forget 250  
From what a torment I did free thee?

ARIEL. No.

PROSPERO. Thou dost, and think'st it much to tread the ooze  
Of the salt deep,  
To run upon the sharp wind of the north,  
To do me business in the veins o' the earth  
When it is baked with frost.

ARIEL. I do not, sir.

PROSPERO. Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot  
The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy  
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?

ARIEL. No, sir.

PROSPERO. Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me. 260

ARIEL. Sir, in Argier.

PROSPERO. O, was she so? I must  
Once in a month recount what thou hast been,  
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch Sycorax,  
For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible  
To enter human hearing, from Argier,  
Thou know'st, was banish'd: for one thing she did  
They would not take her life. Is not this true?

243. remember, remind.

248. mistakings, errors. 250. bate . . . year, remit me a year of service. Ariel, as a spirit, longs for freedom; as a spirit, he is also incapable of affection or gratitude as entertained by human beings. 249. grudge, reluctance, grumbling. 258. Sycorax, name of unknown origin; according to one conjecture made up of σῦς, a sow, and κόραξ, a raven. 261. Argier, Algiers. 266. one thing she did, allusion not explained; taken by New Cambridge editors as evidence of a cut in the play. Lamb suggested that Shakespeare was thinking of the witch who saved Algiers from Charles V in 1541 by raising a storm that

ARIEL. Ay, sir.

PROSPERO. This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child  
And here was left by the sailors. Thou, my slave, 270  
As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant;  
And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate  
To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,  
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,  
By help of her more potent ministers  
And in her most unmitigable rage,  
Into a cloven pine; within which rift  
Imprison'd thou didst painfully remain  
A dozen years; within which space she died  
And left thee there; where thou did'st vent thy groans 280  
As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this island—  
Save for the son that she did litter here,  
A freckled whelp hag-born—not honour'd with  
A human shape.

ARIEL. Yes, Caliban her son.

PROSPERO. Dull thing, I say so; he, that Caliban  
Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know'st  
What torment I did find thee in; thy groans  
Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts  
Of ever angry bears: it was a torment  
To lay upon the damn'd, which Sycorax 290  
Could not again undo: it was mine art,  
When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape  
The pine and let thee out.

ARIEL. I thank thee, master.

PROSPERO. If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak  
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till  
Thou hast howl'd away twelve winters.

ARIEL. Pardon, master;  
I will be correspondent to command  
And do my spiriting gently.

PROSPERO. Do so, and after two days  
I will discharge thee.

ARIEL. That 's my noble master!  
What shall I do? say what; what shall I do? 300

PROSPERO. Go make thyself like a nymph o' the sea: be subject  
To no sight but thine and mine, invisible  
To every eyeball else. Go take this shape

dispersed his fleet. The allusion may be to the pregnancy of Sycorax. 269. blue-eyed, usually interpreted as referring to dark circles under the eyes. Staunton suggested *'blear-eyed'*. 274. hests, commands. 275. ministers, serving spirits. 283. freckled, spotted. 297. correspondent, responsive, submissive. 298. gently, in cheerful and proper fashion.



And hither come in 't: go, hence with diligence!  
 Awake, dear heart, awake! thou hast slept well;  
 Awake!

(Exit ARIEL)

MIRANDA.           The strangeness of your story put  
 Heaviness in me.

PROSPERO.           Shake it off. Come on;  
 We'll visit Caliban my slave, who never  
 Yields us kind answer.

MIRANDA.           'Tis a villain, sir,  
 I do not love to look on.

PROSPERO.           But, as 'tis,  
 We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,  
 Fetch in our wood and serves in offices  
 That profit us. What, ho! slave! Caliban!  
 Thou earth, thou! speak.

310

CALIBAN.           (*within*) There 's wood enough within.

PROSPERO.           Come forth, I say! there 's other business for thee:  
 Come, thou tortoise! when?

(*Re-enter ARIEL like a water-nymph.*)

Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,  
 Hark in thine ear.

ARIEL.               My lord, it shall be done.

(Exit)

PROSPERO.           Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself  
 Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!

320

(Enter CALIBAN.)

CALIBAN.           As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd  
 With raven's feather from unwholesome fen  
 Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye  
 And blister you all o'er!

PROSPERO.           For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,  
 Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins  
 Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,  
 All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd  
 As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging  
 Than bees that made 'em.

CALIBAN.           I must eat my dinner.  
 This island 's mine, by Sycorax my mother,

330

311. miss, do without. 312. offices, probably domestic services. 317. quaint, dainty or clever.  
 321. wicked, mischievous, harmful. 323. south-west, i.e., wind (bringing disease). 326.  
 urchins, hedgehogs; here, suggesting goblins. 327. vast, long hours. 328. exercise, practice,  
 work.

Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,  
 Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, wouldst give me  
 Water with berries in 't, and teach me how  
 To name the bigger light, and how the less,  
 That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee  
 And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,  
 The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:  
 Cursed be I that did so! All the charms  
 Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!  
 For I am all the subjects that you have,  
 Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me  
 In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me  
 The rest o' the island.

340

PROSPERO. Thou most lying slave,  
 Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee,  
 Filth as thou art, with human care, and lodged thee  
 In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate  
 The honour of my child.

CALIBAN. O ho, O ho! would 't had been done!  
 Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else  
 This isle with Calibans.

350

PROSPERO. Abhorred slave,  
 Which any print of goodness wilt not take,  
 Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,  
 Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
 One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,  
 Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
 A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
 With words that made them known. But thy vile race,  
 Though thou didst learn, had that in 't which good natures  
 Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou  
 Deservedly confined into this rock,  
 Who hadst deserved more than a prison.

360

CALIBAN. You taught me language; and my profit on 't  
 Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
 For learning me your language!

PROSPERO. Hag-seed, hence!  
 Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou 'rt best,  
 To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?  
 If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly

334. berries. Strachey's *Repertory*, one of the sources, says that the Bermudas were full of thickets of "goodly Cedar . . . the Berries whereof, our men seething, straining, and letting stand some three or foure daies, made a kind of pleasant drinke." 338. brine-pits, salt springs. 342. sty, put in sty. 346. human, humane. 351-362. Abhorred . . . prison. F. assigns this speech to Miranda. This may be correct, since Prospero seems to break in suddenly in line 365. 357-358 endow'd . . . known, enabled you to make known what was going on in your mind. 358. race, natural disposition. 364. red plague, bubonic plague. rid, destroy, with play on red. 365. Hag-seed, hag's offspring.

What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,  
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar  
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

370

CALIBAN.

No, pray thee.

(*aside*) I must obey: his art is of such power,  
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,  
And make a vassal of him.

PROSPERO.

So, slave; hence!

(Exit CALIBAN)

(*Re-enter ARIEL, invisible, playing and singing; FERDINAND following.*)

ARIEL's song.

Come unto these yellow sands,  
And then take hands:  
Courtsied when you have and kiss'd  
The wild waves whist,  
Foot it featly here and there;  
And sweet sprites, the burthen bear.

380

*Burthen (dispersedly).* Hark, hark!

Bow-wow.

The watch-dogs bark:

Bow-wow.

ARIEL.

Hark, hark! I hear  
The strain of strutting chanticleer  
Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

FERDINAND.

Where should this music be? i' the air or the earth?  
It sounds no more: and, sure, it waits upon  
Some god o' the island. Sitting on a bank,  
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,  
This music crept by me upon the waters,  
Allaying both their fury and my passion  
With its sweet air: thence I have follow'd it,  
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.  
No, it begins again.

390

ARIEL (*sings*).

Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:

400

*Burthen.* Ding-dong.

370. aches, pronounced "aitches." 373. Setebos, mentioned in Eden's *History of Travel* (1577) as a deity, or devil, of the Patagonians. 376-378. Come . . . kiss'd, three motions before the dance—take hands, curtsy, kiss (New Cambridge). 379. whist, silent. 380. featly, neatly. 381. *burthen*, refrain. 399-400 Nothing . . . sea-change, his fading or decaying parts

ARIEL. Hark! now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell.

FERDINAND. The ditty does remember my drown'd father.  
This is no mortal business, nor no sound  
That the earth owes. I hear it now above me.

PROSPERO. The fringed curtains of thine eye advance  
And say what thou seest yond.

MIRANDA. What is 't? a spirit?  
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,  
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit. 410

PROSPERO. No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses  
As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest  
Was in the wreck; and, but he 's something stain'd  
With grief that 's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him  
A goodly person: he hath lost his fellows  
And strays about to find 'em.

MIRANDA. I might call him  
A thing divine, for nothing natural  
I ever saw so noble.

PROSPERO. (*aside*) It goes on, I see,  
As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit! I'll free thee 420  
Within two days for this.

FERDINAND. Most sure, the goddess  
On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe my prayer  
May know if you remain upon this island;  
And that you will some good instruction give  
How I may bear me here: my prime request,  
Which I do last pronounce is, O you wonder!  
If you be maid or no?

MIRANDA. No wonder, sir;  
But certainly a maid.

FERDINAND. My language! heavens!  
I am the best of them that speak this speech,  
Were I but where 'tis spoken.

PROSPERO. How? the best? 430  
What wert thou, if the King of Naples heard thee?

FERDINAND. A single thing, as I am now, that wonders  
To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me;  
And that he does I weep: myself am Naples,

merely undergo a change by the sea. 405. remember, commemorate. 414. something, somewhat. 415 canker, cankerworm (feeding on buds and leaves). 419. It goes on, my charm works. 422. airs, Ariel's music. 423. remain, dwell. 429. best, i.e., in birth. 432. single, solitary, with a suggestion of feebleness.

Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld  
The king my father wreck'd.

MIRANDA. Alack, for mercy!

FERDINAND. Yes, faith, and all his lords; the Duke of Milan  
And his brave son being twain.

PROSPERO. (aside) The Duke of Milan  
And his more braver daughter could control thee,  
If now 'twere fit to do 't. At the first sight 440  
They have changed eyes. Delicate Ariel,  
I'll set thee free for this. (To FERDINAND) A word, good sir;  
I fear you have done yourself some wrong: a word.

MIRANDA. Why speaks my father so ungently? This  
Is the third man that e'er I saw, the first  
That e'er I sigh'd for: pity move my father  
To be inclined my way!

FERDINAND. O, if a virgin,  
And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you  
The queen of Naples.

PROSPERO. Soft, sir! one word more.  
(aside) They are both in either's powers; but this swift business 450  
I must uneasy make, lest too light winning  
Make the prize light. (To FERDINAND) One word more; I charge thee  
That thou attend me: thou dost here usurp  
The name thou owest not; and hast put thyself  
Upon this island as a spy, to win it  
From me, the lord on 't.

FERDINAND. No, as I am a man.

MIRANDA. There 's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:  
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,  
Good things will strive to dwell with 't.

PROSPERO. Follow me.  
Speak not you for him; he 's a traitor. Come;  
I'll manacle thy neck and feet together:  
Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be  
The fresh-brook mussels, wither'd roots and husks  
Wherein the acorn cradled. Follow. 460

FERDINAND. No;  
I will resist such entertainment till  
Mine enemy has more power.

(Draws, and is charmed from moving.)

439. control, confute. 441. changed eyes, exchanged amorous glances, with suggestion of the eye as the origin of the passion of love. 443. done . . . wrong, are mistaken. 451. uneasy, difficult. 451, 452. light, light, easy, cheap. 454. owest, ownest. 463. husks, chaff (of grain). 465. entertainment, treatment.

MIRANDA. O dear father,  
Make not too rash a trial of him, for  
He 's gentle and not fearful.

PROSPERO. What? I say,  
My foot my tutor? Put thy sword up, traitor;  
Who makest a show but darest not strike, thy conscience 470  
Is so possess'd with guilt: come from thy ward,  
For I can here disarm thee with this stick  
And make thy weapon drop.

MIRANDA. Beseech you, father.

PROSPERO. Hence! hang not on my garments.

MIRANDA. Sir, have pity;  
I'll be his surety.

PROSPERO. Silence! one word more  
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What!  
An advocate for an impostor! hush!  
Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,  
Having seen but him and Caliban: foolish wench!  
To the most of men this is a Caliban 480  
And they to him are angels.

MIRANDA. My affections  
Are then most humble; I have no ambition  
To see a goodlier man.

PROSPERO. Come on; obey:  
Thy nerves are in their infancy again  
And have no vigour in them.

FERDINAND. So they are;  
My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.  
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,  
The wreck of all my friends, nor this man's threats,  
To whom I am subdued, are but light to me, 490  
Might I but through my prison once a day  
Behold this maid: all corners else o' the earth  
Let liberty make use of; space enough  
Have I in such a prison.

PROSPERO. (*aside*) It works. (*To FERDINAND*) Come on.  
Thou hast done well, fine Ariel! (*To FERDINAND*) Follow me.  
(*To ARIEL*) Hark what thou else shalt do me.

468. gentle, well-born, high-spirited. not fearful, not dangerous (because incapable of treachery). 469. foot, subordinate. Miranda (the foot) presumes to instruct Prospero (the head). 471. come . . . ward. New Cambridge editors read comma after *come*, with the meaning, "Come, off thy guard." 484. nerves, sinews. 491-492. all . . . of, those who are free may have all the rest of the world.

MIRANDA.

Be of comfort;

My father 's of a better nature, sir,  
Than he appears by speech: this is unwonted  
Which now came from him.

PROSPERO.

Thou shalt be as free  
As mountain winds: but then exactly do  
All points of my command.

ARIEL.

To the syllable.

500

PROSPERO.

Come, follow. Speak not for him.

*(Exeunt)*

## ACT II

SCENE I. *Another part of the island.**Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and others.*

GONZALO.

Beseech you, sir, be merry; you have cause,  
So have we all, of joy; for our escape  
Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe  
Is common; every day some sailor's wife,  
The masters of some merchant and the merchant  
Have just our theme of woe; but for the miracle,  
I mean our preservation, few in millions  
Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh  
Our sorrow with our comfort.

ALONSO.

Prithee, peace.

SEBASTIAN.

He receives comfort like cold porridge.

10

ANTONIO.

The visitor will not give him o'er so.

SEBASTIAN.

Look, he 's winding up the watch of his wit; by and by it will strike.

GONZALO.

Sir,—

SEBASTIAN.

One: tell.

GONZALO.

When every grief is entertain'd that 's offer'd,  
Comes to the entertainer—

SEBASTIAN.

A dollar.

GONZALO.

Dolour comes to him, indeed: you have spoken truer than you purposed.

SEBASTIAN.

You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

GONZALO.

Therefore, my lord,—

20

ANTONIO.

Fie, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue!

ACT II. SCENE I. 5. merchant, merchant, merchant vessel, merchant. 11. visitor, one taking nourishment to the sick. 16. entertainer, one who entertains a feeling; Sebastian takes the word to mean "one who provides entertainment." 17. dollar, widely circulated coin, the Ger-

- ALONSO. I prithee, spare.
- GONZALO. Well, I have done: but yet,—
- SEBASTIAN. He will be talking.
- ANTONIO. Which, of he or Adrian, for a good wager, first begins to crow?
- SEBASTIAN. The old cock.
- ANTONIO. The cockerel.
- SEBASTIAN. Done. The wager?
- ANTONIO. A laughter.
- SEBASTIAN. A match! 30
- ADRIAN. Though this island seem to be desert,—
- SEBASTIAN. Ha, ha, ha! So, you 're paid.
- ADRIAN. Uninhabitable and almost inaccessible,—
- SEBASTIAN. Yet,—
- ADRIAN. Yet,—
- ANTONIO. He could not miss 't.
- ADRIAN. It must needs be of subtle, tender and delicate temperance.
- ANTONIO. Temperance was a delicate wench.
- SEBASTIAN. Ay, and a subtle; as he most learnedly delivered.
- ADRIAN. The air breathes upon us here most sweetly. 40
- SEBASTIAN. As if it had lungs and rotten ones.
- ANTONIO. Or as 'twere perfumed by a fen.
- GONZALO. Here is every thing advantageous to life.
- ANTONIO. True; save means to live.
- SEBASTIAN. Of that there 's none, or little.
- GONZALO. How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!
- ANTONIO. The ground indeed is tawny.
- SEBASTIAN. With an eye of green in 't.
- ANTONIO. He misses not much.

man *Tbaler* and the Spanish *piece of eight*; with pun on *Dolour* in the next line. 29. laughter, sitting of eggs. When Adrian (*the cockerel*) begins to speak (l. 31), Sebastian loses the bet and pays with a *laugh* (*Ha, ha, ha!* l. 32) for a *laughter*. 30. A match, a bargain; agreed. 36. He . . . miss 't, i.e., even if it is uninhabitable and inaccessible, he could not refrain from talking about it. 37. temperance, temperature. 38. Temperance, a Puritan name for women, thought also to refer to Temperance, a character in Chapman's *May Day* (1611). 47. tawny, dull brown. 48. eye, tinge.



- SEBASTIAN. No; he doth but mistake the truth totally. 50
- GONZALO. But the rarity of it is,—which is indeed almost beyond credit,—
- SEBASTIAN. As many vouched rarities are.
- GONZALO. That our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and glosses, being rather new-dyed than stained with salt water.
- ANTONIO. If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies?
- SEBASTIAN. Ay, or very falsely pocket up his report.
- GONZALO. Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the king's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis. 60
- SEBASTIAN. 'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.
- ADRIAN. Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to their queen.
- GONZALO. Not since widow Dido's time.
- ANTONIO. Widow! a pox o' that! How came that widow in? widow Dido!
- SEBASTIAN. What if he had said 'widower Æneas' too? Good Lord, how you take it!
- ADRIAN. 'Widow Dido' said you? you make me study of that: she was of Carthage, not of Tunis.
- GONZALO. This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.
- ADRIAN. Carthage?
- GONZALO. I assure you, Carthage. 70
- SEBASTIAN. His word is more than the miraculous harp; he hath raised the wall and houses too.
- ANTONIO. What impossible matter will he make easy next?
- SEBASTIAN. I think he will carry this island home in his pocket and give it his son for an apple.
- ANTONIO. And, sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands.
- GONZALO. Ay.
- ANTONIO. Why, in good time.
- GONZALO. Sir, we were talking that our garments seem now as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage of your daughter, who is now queen. 80

54. *glosses*, New Cambridge: *gloss*. 56. *pockets*. Some editors suppose that reference is made to mud in the pockets. There is, at any rate, some peculiarity in Gonzalo's appearance. 63. *widow Dido*, queen of Carthage deserted by Aeneas; possible topical reference to Chapman's *Widow's Tears*, or some other play. 71. *miraculous harp*, allusion to Amphiion's harp with which he raised the walls of Thebes. 78, in *good time*, vague expression of agreement or approbation.

- ANTONIO. And the rarest that e'er came there.
- SEBASTIAN. Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.
- ANTONIO. O, widow Dido! ay, widow Dido.
- GONZALO. Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I wore it? I mean, in a sort.
- ANTONIO. That sort was well fished for.
- GONZALO. When I wore it at your daughter's marriage?
- ALONSO. You cram these words into mine ears against  
The stomach of my sense. Would I had never  
Married my daughter there! for, coming thence, 90  
My son is lost and, in my rate, she too,  
Who is so far from Italy removed  
I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir  
Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish  
Hath made his meal on thee?
- FRANCISCO. Sir, he may live:  
I saw him beat the surges under him,  
And ride upon their backs; he trod the water,  
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted  
The surge most swoln that met him; his bold head  
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd 100  
Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke  
To the shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bow'd,  
As stooping to relieve him: I not doubt  
He came alive to land.
- ALONSO. No, no, he 's gone.
- SEBASTIAN. Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,  
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,  
But rather loose her to an African;  
Where she at least is banish'd from your eye,  
Who hath cause to wet the grief on 't.
- ALONSO. Prithee, peace.
- SEBASTIAN. You were kneel'd to and importuned otherwise 110  
By all of us, and the fair soul herself  
Weigh'd between loathness and obedience, at  
Which end o' the beam should bow. We have lost your son,  
I fear, for ever: Milan and Naples have

82. Bate, leave out. 86 sort, lucky catch after much angling; probable suggestion of the age of the garment, with a play on *sort* in line 85. 95-104. Sir . . . land, *Francisco's* only speech. New Cambridge editors think the speech belongs to Gonzalo, and see in its assignment to Francisco a relic of an older version. 102. basis, foot, base. 107. loose, so F; Globe: *lose*.

109. Who, which (eye). 111-113. the fair . . . bow, the fair soul herself was poised uncertain between unwillingness and obedience as to which end of the scale should sink.

Moe widows in them of this business' making  
Than we bring men to comfort them:  
The fault 's your own.

ALONSO. So is the dear'st o' the loss.

GONZALO. My lord Sebastian.  
The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness  
And time to speak it in: you rub the sore,  
When you should bring the plaster. 120

SEBASTIAN. Very well.

ANTONIO. And most chirurgeonly.

GONZALO. It is foul weather in us all, good sir,  
When you are cloudy.

SEBASTIAN. Foul weather?

ANTONIO. Very foul.

GONZALO. Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,—

ANTONIO. He 'ld sow 't with nettle-seed.

SEBASTIAN. Or docks, or mallows.

GONZALO. And were the king on 't, what would I do?

SEBASTIAN. 'Scape being drunk for want of wine.

GONZALO. I' the commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none; contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;  
No occupation; all men idle, all;  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty;— 130

SEBASTIAN. Yet he would be king on 't.

ANTONIO. The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

GONZALO. All things in common nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony, 140

115. Moe, more. 122. *chirurgeonly*, like a skilled surgeon. 123. *foul*. The pun on this word is not clear. New Cambridge edition suggests that there was something suggestive of a bird in Gonzalo's appearance. 125. *plantation*, colonization; subsequent play on the literal meaning. 129–138. I' the . . . *sovereignty*. This passage on man in his primitive state is based on Montaigne, *Essays*, I, xxx, and derived from Florio's translation (1603). [For the passage cited, see below, p. 628.—Editors' note.]

132. *Letters, learning*. 133. *use of service*, custom of employing servants. *succession*, holding of property by right of inheritance. 134. *Bourn*, boundaries. *bound of land*,

Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,  
 Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,  
 Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance,  
 To feed my innocent people.

SEBASTIAN. No marrying 'mong his subjects?

ANTONIO. None, man; all idle; whores and knaves.

GONZALO. I would with such perfection govern, sir,  
 To excel the golden age.

SEBASTIAN. God save his majesty!

ANTONIO. Long live Gonzalo!

GONZALO. And,—do you mark me, sir? 150

ALONSO. Prithee, no more: thou dost talk nothing to me.

GONZALO. I do well believe your highness; and did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible and nimble lungs that they always use to laugh at nothing.

ANTONIO. 'Twas you we laughed at.

GONZALO. Who in this kind of merry fooling am nothing to you: so you may continue and laugh at nothing still.

ANTONIO. What a blow was there given!

SEBASTIAN. An it had not fallen flat-long.

GONZALO. You are gentlemen of brave mettle; you would lift the moon out of her sphere, if she would continue in it five weeks without changing. 160

(Enter ARIEL, invisible, playing solemn music.)

SEBASTIAN. We would so, and then go a bat-fowling.

ANTONIO. Nay, good my lord, be not angry.

GONZALO. No, I warrant you; I will not adventure my discretion so weakly. Will you laugh me asleep, for I am very heavy?

ANTONIO. Go sleep, and hear us.

(All sleep except ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, and ANTONIO.)

landmarks. tilth, tillage of soil. 142. engine, instrument of warfare. 144. it, its. foison, plenty. 149. God. Omitted in F in deference to the statute forbidding profanity on the stage. 151. talk, talk of. 153. sensible, sensitive. nimble, easily excited. 158. flat-long, with the flat of the sword. 159. mettle, temper, nature. 159-160. lift . . . sphere. As a planet in the old astronomy, the moon had a crystal sphere in which she moved. Gonzalo means that they would lift the moon out of her sphere if she remained steady in it. 161. bat-fowling, hunting birds at night with lantern and stick; also, gulling a simpleton. Gonzalo is the simpleton (or fowl), and Sebastian will use the moon as his lantern. 163. adventure, risk. 165. Go . . . us, let our laughing send you to sleep, or, go to sleep

ALONSO.           What, all so soon asleep! I wish mine eyes  
Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts: I find  
They are inclined to do so.

SEBASTIAN.                           Please you, sir,  
Do not omit the heavy offer of it:                           170  
It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth,  
It is a comforter.

ANTONIO.                           We two, my lord,  
Will guard your person while you take your rest,  
And watch your safety.

ALONSO.                           Thank you. Wondrous heavy.

(ALONSO sleeps. Exit ARIEL.)

SEBASTIAN.    What a strange drowsiness possesses them!

ANTONIO.    It is the quality o' the climate.

SEBASTIAN.                           Why  
Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not  
Myself disposed to sleep.

ANTONIO.                           Nor I; my spirits are nimble.  
They fell together all, as by consent;  
They dropp'd, as by a thunder-stroke. What might,                           180  
Worthy Sebastian? O, what might?—No more:—  
And yet methinks I see it in thy face,  
What thou shouldst be: the occasion speaks thee, and  
My strong imagination sees a crown  
Dropping upon thy head.

SEBASTIAN.                           What, art thou waking?

ANTONIO.    Do you not hear me speak?

SEBASTIAN.                           I do; and surely  
It is a sleepy language and thou speak'st  
Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?  
This is a strange repose, to be asleep  
With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving,                           190  
And yet so fast asleep.

ANTONIO.                           Noble Sebastian,  
Thou let'st thy fortune sleep—die, rather; wink'st  
Whiles thou art waking.

SEBASTIAN.                           Thou dost snore distinctly;  
There 's meaning in thy snores.

and hear us laugh at you. 170. omit, neglect. heavy, drowsy. 179. consent, agreement as to a course of action. 183. speaks, calls upon, proclaims (thee) king. 192. wink'st, closest thine eyes. 193. distinctly, with separate and individual sounds.

ANTONIO. I am more serious than my custom: you  
Must be so too, if heed me; which to do  
Trebles thee o'er.

SEBASTIAN. Well, I am standing water.

ANTONIO. I'll teach you how to flow.

SEBASTIAN. Do so: to ebb  
Hereditary sloth instructs me.

ANTONIO. O,  
If you but knew how you the purpose cherish 200  
Whiles thus you mock it! how, in stripping it,  
You more invest it! Ebbing men, indeed,  
Most often do so near the bottom run  
By their own fear or sloth.

SEBASTIAN. Prithee, say on:  
The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim  
A matter from thee, and a birth indeed  
Which throes thee much to yield.

ANTONIO. Thus, sir:  
Although this lord of weak remembrance, this,  
Who shall be of as little memory  
When he is earth'd, hath here almost persuaded,— 210  
For he 's a spirit of persuasion, only  
Professes to persuade,—the king his son's alive,  
'Tis as impossible that he 's undrown'd  
As he that sleeps here swims.

SEBASTIAN. I have no hope  
That he 's undrown'd.

ANTONIO. O, out of that 'no hope'  
What great hope have you! no hope that way is  
Another way so high a hope that even  
Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,  
But doubt discovery there. Will you grant with me  
That Ferdinand is drown'd?

SEBASTIAN. He 's gone.

197. Trebles. New Cambridge editors read *Troubles* in view of *standing water*. Onions defines as "makes thee three times as great." *standing water*, water which neither flows nor ebbs.

200. purpose, i.e., of being king. 201. stripping it, stripping off all pretense, revealing it. 202. invest, array, adorn. Ebbing men, men whose fortunes ebb, leaving them stranded. 203. setting, set expression. 206. matter, matter of importance. 207. throes, pains. 208. this lord, Gonzalo. remembrance, power of remembering. 210. earth'd, buried. 212. Professes to persuade, he was a privy councilor. 216. that way, i.e., in regard to Ferdinand's being saved. 218–219. Ambition . . . there, ambition itself cannot see any further than that hope (of the crown) without doubting the reality of the objects it sees. Furness, following Nicholson's conjecture of *dout* (extinguish) for *doubt*, interprets, "when

- ANTONIO. Then, tell me, 220  
Who's the next heir of Naples?
- SEBASTIAN. Claribel.
- ANTONIO. She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells  
Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples  
Can have no note, unless the sun were post—  
The man i' the moon 's too slow—till new-born chins  
Be rough and razorable; she that—from whom?  
We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,  
And by that destiny to perform an act  
Whereof what 's past is prologue, what to come  
In yours and my discharge.
- SEBASTIAN. What stuff is this! how say you? 230  
'Tis true, my brother's daughter 's queen of Tunis;  
So is she heir of Naples; 'twixt which regions  
There is some space.
- ANTONIO. A space whose every cubit  
Seems to cry out, 'How shall that Claribel  
Measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis,  
And let Sebastian wake.' Say, this were death  
That now hath seized them; why, they were no worse  
Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples  
As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate  
As amply and unnecessarily 240  
As this Gonzalo; I myself could make  
A chough of as deep chat. O, that you bore  
The mind that I do! what a sleep were this  
For your advancement! Do you understand me?
- SEBASTIAN. Methinks I do.
- ANTONIO. And how does your content  
Tender your own good fortune?
- SEBASTIAN. I remember  
You did supplant your brother Prospero.
- ANTONIO. True:  
And look how well my garments sit upon me;  
Much feater than before; my brother's servants  
Were then my fellows; now they are my men. 250

ambition pierces to its furthest wink there discovery ceases, and the crown is found." 223. Ten . . . life, it would take more than a lifetime to get there. 224. note, intimation. 226. she . . . whom, broken and difficult construction. from whom? Probably, from whom will she learn? 227. cast, were disgorged, with pun on *casting* (of parts for a play). 230. discharge, performance, i.e., to get done. 235. Measure us, find (her) way. 235-236. Keep . . . wake, let her stay in Tunis, and let Sebastian wake (to his good fortune). 241-242. I . . . chat, I could teach a jackdaw to talk as wisely. 245. content, desire contentment. 246. Tender, provide for. 249. feater, more becomingly.

SEBASTIAN. But, for your conscience?

ANTONIO. Ay, sir; where lies that? if 'twere a kibe,  
 'Twould put me to my slipper: but I feel not  
 This deity in my bosom: twenty consciences,  
 That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they  
 And melt ere they molest! Here lies your brother,  
 No better than the earth he lies upon,  
 If he were that which now he 's like, that 's dead;  
 Whom I, with this obedient steel, three inches of it,  
 Can lay to bed for ever; whiles you, doing thus, 260  
 To the perpetual wink for aye might put  
 This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who  
 Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,  
 They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk;  
 They'll tell the clock to any business that  
 We say befits the hour.

SEBASTIAN. Thy case, dear friend,  
 Shall be my precedent; as thou got'st Milan,  
 I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword: one stroke  
 Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest;  
 And I the king shall love thee.

ANTONIO. Draw together; 270  
 And when I rear my hand, do you the like,  
 To fall it on Gonzalo.

SEBASTIAN. O, but one word.

(*They talk apart.*)

(*Re-enter ARIEL, invisible.*)

ARIEL. My master through his art foresees the danger  
 That you, his friend, are in; and sends me forth—  
 For else his project dies—to keep them living.  
 (*Sings in GONZALO's ear*)

While you here do snoring lie,  
 Open-eyed conspiracy  
 His time doth take.  
 If of life you keep a care,  
 Shake off slumber, and beware: 280  
 Awake, awake!

ANTONIO. Then let us both be sudden.

GONZALO. Now, good angels  
 Preserve the king.

(*They wake.*)

252. kibe, sore on the heel. 253. put . . . slipper, compel me to wear my slipper. 255. candied, frozen, congealed. 261. wink, sleep. 262. ancient morsel, Gonzalo. 265. tell the clock, count the strokes as we do, i.e., be subservient to us. 272. fall it, let it fall. 278. time, opportunity. 282. sudden, swift in action.



ALONSO. Why, how now? ho, awake! Why are you drawn?  
Wherefore this ghastly looking?

GONZALO. What 's the matter?

SEBASTIAN. Whiles we stood here securing your repose,  
Even now, we heard a hollow burst of bellowing  
Like bulls, or rather lions: did 't not wake you?  
It struck mine ear most terribly.

ALONSO. I heard nothing.

ANTONIO. O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear, 290  
To make an earthquake! sure, it was the roar  
Of a whole herd of lions.

ALONSO. Heard you this, Gonzalo?

GONZALO. Upon mine honour, sir, I heard a humming,  
And that a strange one too, which did awake me:  
I shaked you, sir, and cried: as mine eyes open'd,  
I saw their weapons drawn: there was a noise,  
That 's verily. 'Tis best we stand upon our guard,  
Or that we quit this place: let 's draw our weapons.

ALONSO. Lead off this ground; and let 's make further search 300  
For my poor son.

GONZALO. Heavens keep him from these beasts!  
For he is, sure, i' the island.

ALONSO. Lead away.

ARIEL. Prospero my lord shall know what I have done:  
So, king, go safely on to seek thy son. (Exeunt)

SCENE II. *Another part of the island.*

*Enter CALIBAN with a burden of wood. A noise of thunder heard.*

CALIBAN. All the infections that the sun sucks up  
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him  
By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me  
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,  
Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i' the mire,  
Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark  
Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but  
For every trifle are they set upon me;  
Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me  
And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which 10  
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount

293. humming, i.e., Ariel's song. 297. verily, true.

SCENE II. 3. inch-meal, little by little. 5. urchin-shows, appearances as goblins. 9. mow, make faces.

Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I  
 All wound with adders who with cloven tongues  
 Do hiss me into madness.

(*Enter TRINCULO.*) Lo, now, lo!

Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me  
 For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat;  
 Perchance he will not mind me.

TRINCULO. Here 's neither bush nor shrub, to bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing; I hear it sing i' the wind: yond same black cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul bombard that would shed 20 his liquor. If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to hide my head: yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by pailfuls. What have we here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of not of the newest Poor-John. A strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver: there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man: when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Legged like a man! and his fins like arms! Warm o' my troth! I do now let loose my 30 opinion; hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander, that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt. (*Thunder.*) Alas, the storm is come again! my best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabout: misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows. I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past.

(*Enter STEPHANO, singing: a bottle in his hand.*)

STEPHANO.

I shall no more to sea, to sea,  
 Here shall I die ashore—

This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man 's funeral: well, here 's my comfort. (*Drinks*)

(*Sings*) The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I, 40

The gunner and his mate  
 Loved Mall, Meg and Marian and Margery,  
 But none of us cared for Kate;  
 For she had a tongue with a tang,  
 Would cry to a sailor, Go hang!

She loved not the savour of tar nor of pitch,  
 Yet a tailor might scratch her where'er she did itch:  
 Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!

This is a scurvy tune too: but here 's my comfort. (*Drinks*)

CALIBAN.

Do not torment me: Oh!

50

18. bear off, keep off. 20. foul bombard, dirty leathern bottle. 25. Poor-John, salted hake, type of poor fare. fish. Malone cites a license issued by the Master of the Revels (1632) "to shew a strange fish for half a yeare." 26. painted, i.e., on a board to be hung up outside a booth. 27. make a man, i.e., make his fortune. 33. gaberdine, cloak, loose upper garment. 35. shroud, take shelter. dregs, last remains.

- STEPHANO. What 's the matter? Have we devils here? Do you put tricks upon 's with savages and men of Ind, ha? I have not 'scaped drowning to be afeard now of your four legs; for it hath been said, As proper a man as ever went on four legs cannot make him give ground; and it shall be said so again while Stephano breathes at nostrils.
- CALIBAN. The spirit torments me; Oh!
- STEPHANO. This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who hath got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil should he learn our language? I will give him some relief, if it be but for that. If I can recover him and keep him tame and get to Naples with him, he 's a present for any emperor 60 that ever trod on neat's-leather.
- CALIBAN. Do not torment me, prithee; I'll bring my wood home faster.
- STEPHANO. He's in his fit now and does not talk after the wisest. He shall taste of my bottle: if he have never drunk wine afore, it will go near to remove his fit. If I can recover him and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him; he shall pay for him that hath him, and that soundly.
- CALIBAN. Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling: now Prosper works upon thee.
- STEPHANO. Come on your ways; open your mouth; here is that which will give language to you, cat: open your mouth; this will shake your shak- 70 ing, I can tell you, and that soundly: you cannot tell who 's your friend: open your chaps again.
- TRINCULO. I should know that voice: it should be—but he is drowned; and these are devils: O defend me!
- STEPHANO. Four legs and two voices: a most delicate monster! His forward voice now is to speak well of his friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches and to detract. If all the wine in my bottle will recover him, I will help his ague. Come. Amen! I will pour some in thy other mouth.
- TRINCULO. Stephano! 80
- STEPHANO. Doth thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy! This is a devil, and no monster: I will leave him; I have no long spoon.
- TRINCULO. Stephano! If thou beest Stephano, touch me and speak to me; for I am Trinculo—be not afeard—thy good friend Trinculo.
- STEPHANO. If thou beest Trinculo, come forth: I'll pull thee by the lesser legs: if any be Trinculo's legs, these are they. Thou art very Trinculo indeed!

52. Ind, India, or vaguely, the East. 59. recover, restore. 61. neat's-leather, leather from the skin of an animal of the ox kind. 65-66. take too much, ironical, meaning: He will take as much as he can get. 68. trembling, suggestion of demonic possession. 70. cat . . . mouth, allusion to the proverb, "Good liquor will make a cat speak." 82. long spoon, allusion to the proverb, "He that sups with the devil has need of a long spoon."

How camest thou to be the siege of this moon-calf? can he vent Trinculos?

TRINCULO. I took him to be killed with a thunder-stroke. But art thou not drowned, Stephano? I hope now thou art not drowned. Is the storm overblown? I hid me under the dead moon-calf's gaberdine for fear of the storm. And art thou living, Stephano? O Stephano, two Neapolitans 'scaped!

STEPHANO. Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not constant.

CALIBAN. (*aside*) These be fine things, an if they be not sprites. That 's a brave god and bears celestial liquor. I will kneel to him.

STEPHANO. How didst thou 'scape? How camest thou hither? swear by this bottle how thou camest hither. I escaped upon a butt of sack which the sailors heaved o'erboard, by this bottle! which I made of the bark of a tree with mine own hands since I was cast ashore. 100

CALIBAN. I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject; for the liquor is not earthly.

STEPHANO. Here; swear then how thou escapedst.

TRINCULO. Swum ashore, man, like a duck: I can swim like a duck, I'll be sworn.

STEPHANO. Here, kiss the book. Though thou canst swim like a duck, thou art made like a goose.

TRINCULO. O Stephano, hast any more of this?

STEPHANO. The whole butt, man: my cellar is in a rock by the sea-side where my wine is hid. How now, moon-calf! how does thine ague?

CALIBAN. Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven? 110

STEPHANO. Out o' the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man i' the moon when time was.

CALIBAN. I have seen thee in her and I do adore thee: My mistress show'd me thee and thy dog and thy bush.

STEPHANO. Come, swear to that; kiss the book: I will furnish it anon with new contents: swear.

TRINCULO. By this good light, this is a very shallow monster! I afeard of him! A very weak monster! The man i' the moon! A most poor credulous monster! Well drawn, monster, in good sooth!

86. moon-calf, monster, abortion (supposed to be caused by the influence of the moon). 93. not constant, unsteady. 98. butt of sack, barrel of Canary wine. 105. kiss the book. He gives him the bottle instead of the Bible on which to make his oath. 111-112. when time was, once upon a time. 114. dog . . . bush. See *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, V, i, 136. 119. Well drawn. Caliban takes a good draft of the wine.

- CALIBAN. I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island;  
And I will kiss thy foot: I prithee, be my god. 120
- TRINCULO. By this light, a most perfidious and drunken monster! when 's god 's asleep, he'll rob his bottle.
- CALIBAN. I'll kiss thy foot; I'll swear myself thy subject.
- STEPHANO. Come on then; down, and swear.
- TRINCULO. I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster. A most scurvy monster! I could find in my heart to beat him,—
- STEPHANO. Come, kiss.
- TRINCULO. But that the poor monster 's in drink: an abominable monster!
- CALIBAN. I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;  
I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough. 130  
A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!  
I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,  
Thou wondrous man.
- TRINCULO. A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a poor drunkard!
- CALIBAN. I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;  
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;  
Show thee a jay's nest and instruct thee how  
To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee  
To clustering filberts and sometimes I'll get thee 140  
Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?
- STEPHANO. I prithee now, lead the way without any more talking. Trinculo, the king and all our company else being drowned, we will inherit here: here; bear my bottle: fellow Trinculo, we'll fill him by and by again.
- CALIBAN. (*Sings drunkenly*)  
Farewell, master; farewell, farewell!
- TRINCULO. A howling monster; a drunken monster!
- CALIBAN. No more dams I'll make for fish;  
Nor fetch in firing  
At requiring;  
Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish: 150  
'Ban, 'Ban, Calaliban  
Has a new master: get a new man.  
Freedom, hey-day! hey-day, freedom! freedom, hey-day, freedom!
- STEPHANO. O brave monster! Lead the way. (*Exeunt*)

122. *perfidious*, faithless, pagan. 137. *pig-nuts*, roundish tubers of *bunium flexuosum*; earth-chestnuts. 139. *marmoset*, small monkey. 141. *scamels*, not explained. Keightley conjectured *seamels* (seagulls), Theobald: *stannels* (kestrels); New Cambridge editors call attention to the fact that "seamews" occurs in Strachey's letter. 143. *inherit*, take possession.

## ACT III

SCENE I. *Before PROSPERO's cell.*

*Enter FERDINAND, bearing a log.*

FERDINAND. There be some sports are painful, and their labour  
 Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness  
 Are nobly undergone and most poor matters  
 Point to rich ends. This my mean task  
 Would be as heavy to me as odious, but  
 The mistress which I serve quickens what 's dead  
 And makes my labours pleasures: O, she is  
 Ten times more gentle than her father 's crabbed,  
 And he 's composed of harshness. I must remove  
 Some thousands of these logs and pile them up, 10  
 Upon a sore injunction: my sweet mistress  
 Weeps when she sees me work, and says, such baseness  
 Had never like executor. I forget:  
 But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,  
 Most busy lest, when I do it. .

*(Enter MIRANDA; and PROSPERO at a distance, unseen.)*

MIRANDA. Alas, now, pray you,  
 Work not so hard: I would the lightning had  
 Burnt up those logs that you are enjoin'd to pile!  
 Pray, set it down and rest you: when this burns,  
 'Twill weep for having wearied you. My father  
 Is hard at study; pray now, rest yourself; 20  
 He 's safe for these three hours.

FERDINAND. O most dear mistress,  
 The sun will set before I shall discharge  
 What I must strive to do.

MIRANDA. If you'll sit down,  
 I'll bear your logs the while: pray, give me that;  
 I'll carry it to the pile.

FERDINAND. No, precious creature;  
 I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,  
 Than you should such dishonour undergo,  
 While I sit lazy by.

MIRANDA. It would become me  
 As well as it does you: and I should do it  
 With much more ease; for my good will is to it, 30  
 And yours it is against.

ACT III. SCENE I. 11. sore, grievous, severe. 13. executor, performer. 15. Most . . . lest, unexplained; Spedding suggests *Most busiest when idlest*; New Cambridge editors suggest *busy-idlest*, employed in trifles.

PROSPERO. Poor worm, thou art infected!  
This visitation shows it.

MIRANDA. You look wearily.

FERDINAND. No, noble mistress; 'tis fresh morning with me  
When you are by at night. I do beseech you—  
Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers—  
What is your name?

MIRANDA. Miranda.—O my father,  
I have broke your hest to say so!

FERDINAND. Admired Miranda!

Indeed the top of admiration! worth  
What 's dearest to the world! Full many a lady  
I have eyed with best regard and many a time  
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage  
Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues  
Have I liked several women; never any  
With so full soul, but some defect in her  
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed  
And put it to the foil: but you, O you,  
So perfect and so peerless, are created  
Of every creature's best!

40

MIRANDA. I do not know  
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,  
Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen  
More that I may call men than you, good friend,  
And my dear father: how features are abroad,  
I am skillless of; but, by my modesty,  
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish  
Any companion in the world but you,  
Nor can imagination form a shape,  
Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle  
Something too wildly and my father's precepts  
I therein do forget.

50

FERDINAND. I am in my condition  
A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king;  
I would, not so!—and would no more endure  
This wooden slavery than to suffer  
The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:  
The very instant that I saw you, did  
My heart fly to your service; there resides,  
To make me slave to it; and for your sake  
Am I this patient log-man.

60

MIRANDA. Do you love me?

32. visitation, affliction. 37. Admired Miranda, the two words have the same meaning.  
45. owed, possessed. 46. put . . . foil, disgraced it; a wrestling phrase. 53. skillless, ignorant.

- FERDINAND. O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound  
And crown what I profess with kind event  
If I speak true! if hollowly, invert 70  
What best is boded me to mischief! I  
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world  
Do love, prize, honour you.
- MIRANDA. I am a fool  
To weep at what I am glad of.
- PROSPERO. Fair encounter  
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace  
On that which breeds between 'em!
- FERDINAND. Wherefore weep you?
- MIRANDA. At mine unworthiness that dare not offer  
What I desire to give, and much less take  
What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;  
And all the more it seeks to hide itself, 80  
The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!  
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!  
I am your wife, if you will marry me;  
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow  
You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,  
Whether you will or no.
- FERDINAND. My mistress, dearest;  
And I thus humble ever.
- MIRANDA. My husband, then?
- FERDINAND. Ay, with a heart as willing  
As bondage e'er of freedom: here 's my hand.
- MIRANDA. And mine, with my heart in 't: and now farewell 90  
Till half an hour hence.
- FERDINAND. A thousand thousand!  
(*Exeunt FERDINAND and MIRANDA severally*)
- PROSPERO. So glad of this as they I cannot be,  
Who are surprised withal; but my rejoicing  
At nothing can be more. I'll to my book,  
For yet ere supper-time must I perform  
Much business appertaining. (Exit)

70. hollowly, insincerely, falsely. 79. to want, through wanting. 84. fellow, equal. 91. thousand thousand, i.e., farewells. 94. book, book of magic. 96. appertaining, incumbent upon me.



SCENE II. *Another part of the island.**Enter* CALIBAN, STEPHANO, *and* TRINCULO.

- STEPHANO. Tell not me; when the butt is out, we will drink water; not a drop before: therefore bear up, and board 'em. Servant-monster, drink to me.
- TRINCULO. Servant-monster! the folly of this island! They say there 's but five upon this isle: we are three of them; if th' other two be brained like us, the state totters.
- STEPHANO. Drink, servant-monster, when I bid thee: thy eyes are almost set in thy head.
- TRINCULO. Where should they be set else? he were a brave monster indeed, if they were set in his tail.
- STEPHANO. My man-monster hath drown'd his tongue in sack: for my part, <sup>10</sup> the sea cannot drown me; I swam, ere I could recover the shore, five and thirty leagues off and on. By this light, thou shalt be my lieutenant, monster, or my standard.
- TRINCULO. Your lieutenant, if you list; he 's no standard.
- STEPHANO. We'll not run, Monsieur Monster.
- TRINCULO. Nor go neither; but you'll lie like dogs and yet say nothing neither.
- STEPHANO. Moon-calf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a good moon-calf.
- CALIBAN. How does thy honour? Let me lick thy shoe.  
I'll not serve him; he is not valiant.
- TRINCULO. Thou liest, most ignorant monster: I am in case to justle a con- <sup>20</sup> stable. Why, thou deboshed fish, thou, was there ever man a coward that hath drunk so much sack as I to-day? Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but half a fish and half a monster?
- CALIBAN. Lo, how he mocks me! wilt thou let him, my lord?
- TRINCULO. 'Lord' quoth he. That a monster should be such a natural!
- CALIBAN. Lo, lo, again! bite him to death, I prithee.
- STEPHANO. Trinculo, keep a good tongue in your head; if you prove a mutineer,—the next tree! The poor monster 's my subject and he shall not suffer indignity.
- CALIBAN. I thank my noble lord. Wilt thou be pleased to hearken once again <sup>30</sup> to the suit I made to thee?

SCENE II. 2. *bear up*, put the helm up so as to bring the ship into the wind. *board 'em*, climb aboard: both phrases refer to drinking. 4. *brained*, endowed with brains. 6. *thy eyes . . . head*, current description of drunkenness meaning that the eyes are fixed in a stare, or dimmed by drink. 13. *standard*, standard-bearer. 14. *standard*, something that stands up. 16. *go*, walk. 20. *case*, condition. *justle*, jostle. 21. *deboshed*, debauched. 23. *natural*, idiot.

STEPHANO. Marry, will I: kneel and repeat it; I will stand, and so shall Trinculo.

(Enter ARIEL, invisible.)

CALIBAN. As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island.

ARIEL. Thou liest.

CALIBAN. Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou: I would my valiant master would destroy thee! I do not lie.

STEPHANO. Trinculo, if you trouble him any more in 's tale, by this hand, I will supplant some of your teeth.

TRINCULO. Why, I said nothing. 40

STEPHANO. Mum, then, and no more. Proceed.

CALIBAN. I say, by sorcery he got this isle;  
From me he got it. If thy greatness will  
Revenge it on him,—for I know thou darest,  
But this thing dare not,—

STEPHANO. That 's most certain.

CALIBAN. Thou shalt be lord of it and I'll serve thee.

STEPHANO. How now shall this be compassed?  
Canst thou bring me to the party?

CALIBAN. Yea, yea, my lord: I'll yield him thee asleep, 50  
Where thou mayst knock a nail into his head.

ARIEL. Thou liest; thou canst not.

CALIBAN. What a pied ninny 's this! Thou scurvy patch!  
I do beseech thy greatness, give him blows  
And take his bottle from him: when that 's gone  
He shall drink nought but brine; for I'll not show him  
Where the quick freshes are.

STEPHANO. Trinculo, run into no further danger: interrupt the monster one word further, and, by this hand, I'll turn my mercy out o' doors and make a stock-fish of thee.

TRINCULO. Why, what did I? I did nothing. I'll go farther off. 60

STEPHANO. Didst thou not say he lied?

ARIEL. Thou liest.

STEPHANO. Do I so? take thou that. (Beats TRINCULO) As you like this, give me the lie another time.

39. supplant, displace. 49. party, the one concerned in this affair. 53. pied ninny, fool in motley. patch, common word for fool. 57. quick freshes, running springs. 59. stock-fish, dried cod beaten before boiling.

TRINCULO. I did not give the lie. Out o' your wits and hearing too? A pox o' your bottle! this can sack and drinking do. A murrain on your monster, and the devil take your fingers!

CALIBAN. Ha, ha, ha!

STEPHANO. Now, forward with your tale. Prithee, stand farther off.

CALIBAN. Beat him enough: after a little time 70  
I'll beat him too.

STEPHANO. Stand farther. Come, proceed.

CALIBAN. Why, as I told thee, 'tis a custom with him,  
I' th' afternoon to sleep: there thou mayst brain him,  
Having first seized his books, or with a log  
Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,  
Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember  
First to possess his books; for without them  
He 's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not  
One spirit to command: they all do hate him 80  
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.  
He has brave utensils,—for so he calls them,—  
Which, when he has a house, he'll deck withal.  
And that most deeply to consider is  
The beauty of his daughter; he himself  
Calls her a nonpareil: I never saw a woman,  
But only Sycorax my dam and she;  
But she as far surpasseth Sycorax  
As great'st does least.

STEPHANO. Is it so brave a lass?

CALIBAN. Ay, lord; she will become thy bed, I warrant. 90  
And bring thee forth brave brood.

STEPHANO. Monster, I will kill this man: his daughter and I will be king and queen,—save our graces!—and Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou like the plot, Trinculo?

TRINCULO. Excellent.

STEPHANO. Give me thy hand: I am sorry I beat thee; but, while thou livest, keep a good tongue in thy head.

CALIBAN. Within this half hour will he be asleep:  
Wilt thou destroy him then?

STEPHANO. Ay, on mine honour.

ARIEL. This will I tell my master. 100

66. murrain, plague. 75. paunch, stab in the belly. 76. wezand, windpipe. 79. sot, fool.  
82. utensils, household goods. 83. deck, adorn. 86. nonpareil, one having no equal.

CALIBAN. Thou makest me merry; I am full of pleasure:  
Let us be jocund: will you troll the catch  
You taught me but while-ere?

STEPHANO. At thy request, monster, I will do reason, any reason. Come on, Trinculo, let us sing. (*Sings*)  
Flout 'em and scout 'em  
And scout 'em and flout 'em;  
Thought is free.

CALIBAN. That 's not the tune.

(*ARIEL plays the tune on a tabor and pipe.*)

STEPHANO. What is this same? 110

TRINCULO. This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture of Nobody.

STEPHANO. If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy likeness: if thou beest a devil, take 't as thou list.

TRINCULO. O, forgive me my sins!

STEPHANO. He that dies pays all debts: I defy thee. Mercy upon us!

CALIBAN. Art thou afeard?

STEPHANO. No, monster, not I.

CALIBAN. Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments 120  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices  
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,  
I cried to dream again.

STEPHANO. This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing.

CALIBAN. When Prospero is destroyed.

STEPHANO. That shall be by and by: I remember the story. 130

TRINCULO. The sound is going away; let 's follow it, and after do our work.

STEPHANO. Lead, monster; we'll follow. I would I could see this taborer; he lays it on.

TRINCULO. Wilt come? I'll follow, Stephano. (*Exeunt*)

102. troll the catch, sing the song. 103. while-ere, a while since. 107. scout, deride (Onions). New Cambridge editors emend, *cont* (befool). 109. Stage Direction: tabor, small drum. 111. picture of Nobody, an unexplained topical allusion. New Cambridge editors suggest a reference to the sign of "Nobody" used by John Trundle, bookseller and printer. 132. taborer, drummer.

SCENE III. *Another part of the island.**Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and others.*

GONZALO. By 'r lakin, I can go no further, sir;  
 My old bones ache: here 's a maze trod indeed  
 Through forth-rights and meanders! By your patience,  
 I needs must rest me.

ALONSO. Old lord, I cannot blame thee,  
 Who am myself attach'd with weariness,  
 To the dulling of my spirits: sit down, and rest.  
 Even here I will put off my hope and keep it  
 No longer for my flatterer: he is drown'd  
 Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks  
 Our frustrate search on land. Well, let him go.

10

ANTONIO. (*aside to SEBASTIAN*) I am right glad that he 's so out of hope.  
 Do not, for one repulse, forego the purpose  
 That you resolved to effect.

SEBASTIAN. (*aside to ANTONIO*) The next advantage  
 Will we take thoroughly.

ANTONIO. (*aside to SEBASTIAN*) Let it be to-night;  
 For, now they are oppress'd with travel, they  
 Will not, nor cannot, use such vigilance  
 As when they are fresh.

SEBASTIAN. (*aside to ANTONIO*) I say, to-night: no more.

(*Solemn and strange music.*)

ALONSO. What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

GONZALO. Marvellous sweet music!

(*Enter PROSPERO above, invisible. Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; they dance about it with gentle actions of salutation; and, inviting the King, &c. to eat, they depart.*)

ALONSO. Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?

20

SEBASTIAN. A living drollery. Now I will believe  
 That there are unicorns, that in Arabia  
 There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix  
 At this hour reigning there.

ANTONIO. I'll believe both;  
 And what does else want credit, come to me,  
 And I'll be sworn 'tis true: travellers ne'er did lie,  
 Though fools at home condemn 'em.

SCENE III. 1. By 'r lakin, by our Lady. 3. forth-rights and meanders, paths straight and crooked. 5. attach'd, seized. 14. thoroughly, thoroughly, completely. 20. keepers, guardian angels. 21. drollery, puppet show.

- GONZALO. If in Naples  
 I should report this now, would they believe me?  
 If I should say, I saw such islanders—  
 For, certes, these are people of the island— 30  
 Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,  
 Their manners are more gentle-kind than of  
 Our human generation you shall find  
 Many, nay, almost any.
- PROSPERO. (aside) Honest lord,  
 Thou hast said well; for some of you there present  
 Are worse than devils.
- ALONSO. I cannot too much muse  
 Such shapes, such gesture and such sound, expressing,  
 Although they want the use of tongue, a kind  
 Of excellent dumb discourse.
- PROSPERO. (aside) Praise in departing..
- FRANCISCO. They vanish'd strangely.
- SEBASTIAN. No matter, since 40  
 They have left their viands behind; for we have stomachs.  
 Will 't please you taste of what is here?
- ALONSO. Not I.
- GONZALO. Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,  
 Who would believe that there were mountaineers  
 Dew-lapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em  
 Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men  
 Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find  
 Each putter-out of five for one will bring us  
 Good warrant of.
- ALONSO. I will stand to and feed, 50  
 Although my last: no matter, since I feel  
 The best is past. Brother, my lord the duke,  
 Stand to and do as we.
- (Thunder and lighting. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy; claps his wings upon the table;  
 and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes.)
- ARIEL. You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,  
 That hath to instrument this lower world

30. certes, certainly. 36. muse, wonder at.

39. Praise in departing, proverbial expression meaning, "Praise comes at the end." Yale editor interprets as "Save your praise until the end of the performance." 45. Dew-lapp'd, having a dewlap, or fold of skin hanging from the neck, as cattle; often supposed to refer to people afflicted with goiter. 47. heads . . . breasts. Furness quotes Grey's reference to Pliny, who so describes the Blemmyi; other late accounts; cf. *Othello*, I, iii, 145. 48. putter-out . . . one, one who invests money, or gambles on the risks of travel on the condition that, if he returns safely, he is to receive five times the amount deposited. 52. Stage Direction: harpy, a fabulous monster with a woman's face and vulture's body

And what is in 't, the never-surfeited sea  
 Hath caused to belch up you; and on this island  
 Where man doth not inhabit; you 'mongst men  
 Being most unfit to live, I have made you mad;  
 And even with such-like valour men hang and drown  
 Their proper selves. (ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, &c. *draw their swords.*)

You fools! I and my fellows 60  
 Are ministers of Fate: the elements,  
 Of whom your swords are temper'd, may as well  
 Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs  
 Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish  
 One dowe that 's in my plume: my fellow-ministers  
 Are like invulnerable. If you could hurt,  
 Your swords are now too massy for your strengths  
 And will not be uplifted. But remember—  
 For that 's my business to you—that you three 70  
 From Milan did supplant good Prospero;  
 Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,  
 Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed  
 The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have  
 Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,  
 Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,  
 They have bereft; and do pronounce by me  
 Lingering perdition, worse than any death  
 Can be at once, shall step by step attend  
 You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from—  
 Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls 80  
 Upon your heads—is nothing but heart-sorrow  
 And a clear life ensuing.

(*He vanishes in thunder; then, to soft music, enter the Shapes again, and dance, with  
 mocks and mows, and carrying out the table.*)

PROSPERO. Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou  
 Perform'd, my Ariel; a grace it had, devouring:  
 Of my instruction hast thou nothing bated  
 In what thou hadst to say: so, with good life  
 And observation strange, my meaner ministers  
 Their several kinds have done. My high charms work  
 And these mine enemies are all knit up  
 In their distractions; they now are in my power;  
 And in these fits I leave them, while I visit 90

supposed to be a minister of divine vengeance. quaint device, ingenious stage contrivance; perhaps harpies seemed to swallow the food. 54-55. That . . . in 't, that uses this lower world and what is in it as instruments (for its purposes). 65. dowe, soft, fine feather. plume, plumage (?) (Onions). 66. like, likewise, similarly. 71. requit, requited, avenged. 82. clear, unspotted, innocent. 84. devouring. New Cambridge editors conjecture *devoiring* (serving, waiting at table). 86. so . . . life, with faithful reproduction. 87. observation

Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drown'd,  
And his and mine loved darling.

(Exit above)

GONZALO. I' the name of something holy, sir, why stand you  
In this strange stare?

ALONSO. O, it is monstrous, monstrous!  
Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;  
The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,  
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced  
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass.  
Therefore my son i' the ooze is bedded, and  
I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded  
And with him there lie mudded.

100

(Exit)

SEBASTIAN. But one fiend at a time,  
I'll fight their legions o'er.

ANTONIO. I'll be thy second.

(Exeunt SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO)

GONZALO. All three of them are desperate: their great guilt,  
Like poison given to work a great time after,  
Now 'gins to bite the spirits. I do beseech you  
That are of suppler joints, follow them swiftly  
And hinder them from what this ecstasy  
May now provoke them to.

ADRIAN. Follow, I pray you.

(Exeunt)

## ACT IV

### SCENE I. Before PROSPERO's cell.

Enter PROSPERO, FERDINAND, and MIRANDA.

PROSPERO. If I have too austere<sup>4</sup>ly punish'd you,  
Your compensation makes amends, for I  
Have given you here a thr<sup>id</sup> of mine own life,  
Or that for which I live; who once again  
I tender to thy hand: all thy vexations  
Were but my trials of thy love, and thou  
Hast strangely stood the test: here, afore Heaven,  
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,  
Do not smile at me that I boast her off,  
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise  
And make it halt behind her.

10

strange, rare attention to detail. 99. bass my trespass, proclaimed my trespass like a bass note in music. 106. bite the spirits, i.e., conscience troubles them.

ACT IV. SCENE I. 3. thr<sup>id</sup>, defined as "thread," "narrative"; F: *third*, which is probably correct—the other thirds were Prospero himself and his wife. 7. strangely, extraordinarily. 9. off, to best advantage (W. J. Craig).



FERDINAND. I do believe it  
Against an oracle.

PROSPERO. Then, as my gift and thine own acquisition  
Worthily purchased, take my daughter: but  
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before  
All sanctimonious ceremonies may  
With full and holy rite be minister'd,  
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall  
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,  
Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew  
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly  
That you shall hate it both: therefore take heed,  
As Hymen's lamps shall light you. 20

FERDINAND. As I hope  
For quiet days, fair issue and long life,  
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,  
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion  
Our worser genius can, shall never melt  
Mine honour into lust, to take away  
The edge of that day's celebration  
When I shall think, or Phœbus' steeds are founder'd,  
Or Night kept chain'd below. 30

PROSPERO. Fairly spoke.  
Sit then and talk with her; she is thine own.  
What, Ariel! my industrious servant, Ariel!

(Enter ARIEL.)

ARIEL. What would my potent master? here I am.

PROSPERO. Thou and thy meaner fellows your last service  
Did worthily perform; and I must use you  
In such another trick. Go bring the rabble,  
O'er whom I give thee power, here to this place:  
Incite them to quick motion; for I must  
Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple  
Some vanity of mine art: it is my promise,  
And they expect it from me. 40

ARIEL. Presently?

PROSPERO. Ay, with a twink.

ARIEL. Before you can say 'come' and 'go,'  
And breathe twice and cry 'so, so,'

16. sanctimonious, sacred. 18. aspersion, dew, shower.

23. Hymen's. Hymen was the Greek and Roman god of marriage. 27. genius, evil genius, or evil attendant spirit. can, is able to offer. 29. edge, enjoyment. 30. founder'd, broken down, made lame. 35. meaner fellows, Ariel's subordinate assistants. 37. rabble, band. 41. vanity, illusion. 43. with a twink, in the twinkling of an eye.

Each one, tripping on his toe,  
Will be here with mop and mow.  
Do you love me, master? no?

PROSPERO. Dearly, my delicate Ariel. Do not approach  
Till thou does hear me call.

ARIEL. Well, I conceive. (Exit) 50

PROSPERO. Look thou be true; do not give dalliance  
Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw  
To the fire i' the blood: be more abstemious,  
Or else, good night your vow!

FERDINAND. I warrant you, sir;  
The white cold virgin snow upon my heart  
Abates the ardour of my liver.

PROSPERO. Well.  
Now come, my Ariel! bring a corollary,  
Rather than want a spirit: appear, and pertly!  
No tongue! all eyes! be silent. (Soft music)

(Enter IRIS.)

IRIS. Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas 60  
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and pease;  
Thy turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,  
And flat meads thatch'd with stover, them to keep;  
Thy banks with pioned and twilled brims,  
Which spongy April at thy hest betrimms,  
To make cold nymphs chaste crowns; and thy broom-groves,  
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,  
Being lass-lorn; thy pole-clipt vineyard;  
And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky-hard,  
Where thou thyself dost air;—the queen o' the sky, 70  
Whose watery arch and messenger am I,  
Bids thee leave these, and with her sovereign grace,  
Here on this grass-plot, in this very place,  
To come and sport: her peacocks fly amain:  
Approach, rich Ceres, her to entertain.

(Enter CERES.)

47. mop and mow, grimace and made faces. 56. liver, as the seat of the passions. 57. corollary, supernumerary. 58. pertly, briskly. 60-138. Ceres . . . footing. This is the most perfect example of the masque in Shakespeare. His authorship of it has, however, sometimes been called in question. For another example of a masque in honor of betrothal see the end of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. 63. stover, fodder for cattle. 64. pioned and twilled, unexplained; excavated (?) or trenched (?) (Onions), ridged (New Cambridge), grown over with peonies and lilies (Hanmer). 66. broom-groves, groves of broom (?). 68. pole-clipt, hedged in with poles. 70. dost air, enjoy the air (?). 71. watery arch, rainbow. Iris was goddess of the rainbow. 74. amain, with full force or speed. 75. Ceres, part played

- CERES. Hail, many-colour'd messenger, that ne'er  
Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter;  
Who with thy saffron wings upon my flowers  
Diffusest honey-drops, refreshing showers,  
And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown 80  
My bosky acres and my unshrub'd down,  
Rich scarf to my proud earth; why hath thy queen  
Summon'd me hither, to this short-grass'd green?
- IRIS. A contract of true love to celebrate;  
And some donation freely to estate  
On the blest lovers.
- CERES. Tell me, heavenly bow,  
If Venus or her son, as thou dost know,  
Do now attend the queen? Since they did plot  
The means that dusky Dis my daughter got,  
Her and her blind boy's scandal'd company 90  
I have forsworn.
- IRIS. Of her society  
Be not afraid: I met her deity  
Cutting the clouds towards Paphos and her son  
Dove-drawn with her. Here thought they to have done  
Some wanton charm upon this man and maid,  
Whose vows are, that no bed-right shall be paid  
Till Hymen's torch be lighted: but in vain;  
Mars's hot minion is return'd again;  
Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows,  
Swears he will shoot no more but play with sparrows 100  
And be a boy right out.
- CERES. High'st queen of state,  
Great Juno, comes; I know her by her gait.
- (Enter JUNO.)
- JUNO. How does my bounteous sister? Go with me  
To bless this twain, that they may prosperous be  
And honour'd in their issue.
- (They sing:)
- JUNO. Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,  
Long continuance, and increasing,  
Hourly joys be still upon you!  
Juno sings her blessings on you.

by Ariel; see l. 167. 81. *bosky*, covered with shrubs. *unshrub'd down*, shrubless upland. 89. *Dis* . . . got. Pluto, god of the infernal regions, carried off Persephone, daughter of Ceres, to be his bride in Hades. 90. *scandal'd*, brought into disrepute; New Cambridge editors suggest *sandal'd*. 93. *Paphos*, a town in the island of Cyprus, sacred to Venus. 98. *Mars's* . . . *minion*, Venus, the beloved of Mars. 99. *waspish-headed*, fiery, hot-headed (?).

CERES. Earth's increase, foison plenty, 110  
 Barns and garners never empty,  
 Vines with clustering bunches growing,  
 Plants with goodly burthen bowing;

Spring come to you at the farthest  
 In the very end of harvest!  
 Scarcity and want shall shun you;  
 Ceres' blessing so is on you.

FERDINAND. This is a most majestic vision, and  
 Harmonious charmingly. May I be bold  
 To think these spirits?

PROSPERO. Spirits, which by mine art 120  
 I have from their confines call'd to enact  
 My present fancies.

FERDINAND. Let me live here ever;  
 So rare a wonder'd father and a wife  
 Makes this place Paradise.

(JUNO and CERES whisper, and send IRIS on employment.)

PROSPERO. Sweet, now, silence!  
 Juno and Ceres whisper seriously;  
 There 's something else to do: hush, and be mute,  
 Or else our spell is marr'd.

IRIS. You nymphs, call'd Naiads, of the windring brooks,  
 With your sedged crowns and ever-harmless looks,  
 Leave your crisp channels and on this green land 130  
 Answer your summons; Juno does command:  
 Come, temperate nymphs, and help to celebrate  
 A contract of true love; be not too late.

(Enter certain NYMPHS.)

You sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary,  
 Come hither from the furrow and be merry:  
 Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on  
 And these fresh nymphs encounter every one  
 In country footing.

(Enter certain REAPERS, properly habited: they join with the NYMPHS in a graceful  
 dance; towards the end whereof PROSPERO starts suddenly, and speaks; after  
 which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish.)

110. foison plenty, plentiful harvest. 119. charmingly, with magic charm.

123. wonder'd, wonder-performing. 128. Naiads, spirits of lakes, rivers, brooks, and foun-  
 tains. windring, wandering (?) or winding (?). 130. crisp, curled, rippled. 132. temperate,  
 chaste. 134. sicklemen, reapers with sickles or reaping hooks. 138. country footing,

PROSPERO. (*aside*) I had forgot that foul conspiracy  
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates 140  
Against my life: the minute of their plot  
Is almost come. (*To the SPIRITS*) Well done! avoid; no more!

FERDINAND. This is strange: your father 's in some passion  
That works him strongly.

MIRANDA. Never till this day  
Saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd.

PROSPERO. You do look, my son, in a moved sort,  
As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and 150  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;  
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled:  
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity: 160  
If you be pleased, retire into my cell  
And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,  
To still my beating mind.

FERDINAND, MIRANDA. We wish your peace. (*Exeunt*)

PROSPERO. Come with a thought. I thank thee, Ariel: come.

(*Enter ARIEL.*)

ARIEL. Thy thoughts I cleave to. What 's thy pleasure?

PROSPERO. Spirit,  
We must prepare to meet with Caliban.

ARIEL. Ay, my commander: when I presented Ceres,  
I thought to have told thee of it, but I fear'd  
Lest I might anger thee.

PROSPERO. Say again, where didst thou leave these varlets? 170

ARIEL. I told you, sir, they were red-hot with drinking;  
So full of valour that they smote the air  
For breathing in their faces; beat the ground

country-dancing. Stage Direction: heavily, sorrowfully. 142. avoid, depart, withdraw.  
144. works, affects. 145. distemper'd, vexed. 146. sort, state, condition. 154. which it  
inherit, who possess it. 156. rack, mass of cloud driven before the wind in the upper  
air (Onions). 164. with a thought, on the instant.

For kissing of their feet; yet always bending  
 Towards their project. Then I beat my tabor;  
 At which, like unback'd colts, they prick'd their ears,  
 Advanced their eyelids, lifted up their noses  
 As they smelt music: so I charm'd their ears  
 That calf-like they my lowing follow'd through  
 Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss and thorns, 180  
 Which enter'd their frail shins: at last I left them  
 I' the filthy-mantled pool beyond your cell,  
 There dancing up to the chins, that the foul lake  
 O'erstunk their feet.

PROSPERO. This was well done, my bird.  
 Thy shape invisible retain thou still:  
 The trumpery in my house, go bring it hither,  
 For stale to catch these thieves.

ARIEL. I go, I go. (Exit)

PROSPERO. A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
 Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,  
 Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost; 190  
 And as with age his body uglier grows,  
 So his mind cankers. I will plague them all,  
 Even to roaring. (*Re-enter ARIEL, loaden with glistening apparel, &c.*)  
 Come, hang them on this line.

(PROSPERO and ARIEL remain, invisible. Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO, all wet.)

CALIBAN. Pray you, tread softly, that the blind mole may not  
 Hear a foot fall: we now are near his cell.

STEPHANO. Monster, your fairy, which you say is a harmless fairy, has done little  
 better than played the Jack with us.

TRINCULO. Monster, I do smell all horse-piss; at which my nose is in great indigna-  
 tion. 200

STEPHANO. So is mine. Do you hear, monster? If I should take a displeasure  
 against you, look you,—

TRINCULO. Thou wert but a lost monster.

CALIBAN. Good my lord, give me thy favour still.  
 Be patient, for the prize I'll bring thee to  
 Shall hoodwink this mischance: therefore speak softly.  
 All 's hush'd as midnight yet.

176. unback'd, unbroken, unriden.

180. goss, gorse, a prickly shrub. 182. filthy-mantled, covered with vegetable coating, slimy. 184. feet, New Cambridge conjectures: *sweat*. bird, used as a term of endearment. 187. stale, decoy. 189. Nurture, education, culture. 193. line, probably, lime tree. 198. played the Jack, done a mean trick. *Jack* has a double meaning, "knave" and "will-o'-the-wisp." 206. hoodwink, cover up; hawking term.

- TRINCULO. Ay, but to lose our bottles in the pool,—
- STEPHANO. There is not only disgrace and dishonour in that, monster, but an infinite loss. 210
- TRINCULO. That 's more to me than my wetting: yet this is your harmless fairy, monster.
- STEPHANO. I will fetch off my bottle, though I be o'er ears for my labour.
- CALIBAN. Prithee, my king, be quiet. See'st thou here,  
This is the mouth o' the cell: no noise, and enter.  
Do that good mischief which may make this island  
Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban,  
For aye thy foot-licker.
- STEPHANO. Give me thy hand. I do begin to have bloody thoughts.
- TRINCULO. O king Stephano! O peer! O worthy Stephano! look what a 220  
wardrobe here is for thee!
- CALIBAN. Let it alone, thou fool; it is but trash.
- TRINCULO. O, ho, monster! we know what belongs to a frippery. O king Stephano!
- STEPHANO. Put off that gown, Trinculo; by this hand, I'll have that gown.
- TRINCULO. Thy grace shall have it.
- CALIBAN. The dropsy drown this fool! what do you mean  
To dote thus on such luggage? Let 's alone  
And do the murder first: if he awake,  
From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches,  
Make us strange stuff. 230
- STEPHANO. Be you quiet, monster. Mistress line, is not this my jerkin? Now is the jerkin under the line: now, jerkin, you are like to lose your hair and prove a bald jerkin.
- TRINCULO. Do, do: we steal by line and level, an 't like your grace.
- STEPHANO. I thank thee for that jest; here 's a garment for 't: wit shall not go unrewarded while I am king of this country. 'Steal by line and level' is an excellent pass of pate; there 's another garment for 't.
- TRINCULO. Monster, come, put some lime upon your fingers, and away with the rest.

218. foot-licker, fawning servant.

220. king Stephano, allusion to the old ballad beginning, "King Stephen was a worthy peer."  
223. frippery, place where cast-off clothes are sold. 227. luggage, impedimenta, heavy stuff to be carried. 231. Mistress line, clothesline. 232. jerkin, jacket made of leather. under the line, under the lime tree, with punning allusion, probably, to the equinoctial line. lose your hair. The jerkin will lose all its hair when Stephano wears it. 234. by line and level, i.e., by means of instruments, or, methodically, like dishonest carpenters and masons. 237. pass of pate, folly of wit. 238. lime, birdlime.

CALIBAN. I will have none on 't: we shall lose our time,  
And all be turn'd to barnacles, or to apes 240  
With foreheads villanous low.

STEPHANO. Monster, lay to your fingers: help to bear this away where my hogs-  
head of wine is, or I'll turn you out of my kingdom: go to, carry this.

TRINCULO. And this.

STEPHANO. Ay, and this.

(*A noise of hunters heard. Enter divers SPIRITS, in shape of dogs and hounds, and hunt them about, PROSPERO and ARIEL setting them on.*)

PROSPERO. Hey, Mountain, hey!

ARIEL. Silver! there it goes, Silver!

PROSPERO. Fury, Fury! there, Tyrant, there! hark! hark!

(CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO are driven out.)

Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints  
With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews 250  
With aged cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them  
Than pard or cat o' mountain.

ARIEL. Hark, they roar!

PROSPERO. Let them be hunted soundly. At this hour  
Lie at my mercy all mine enemies:  
Shortly shall all my labours end, and thou  
Shalt have the air at freedom: for a little  
Follow, and do me service. (Exeunt)

## ACT V

### SCENE I. *Before PROSPERO's cell.*

*Enter PROSPERO in his magic robes, and ARIEL.*

PROSPERO. Now does my project gather to a head:  
My charms crack not; my spirits obey; and time  
Goes upright with his carriage. How 's the day?

ARIEL. On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord,  
You said our work should cease.

240. barnacles, barnacle geese, formerly supposed to be hatched from seashells attached to trees and to fall thence into the water; possibly, the ordinary meaning is intended. 250. convulsions, cramps. 252. pard, panther or leopard. cat o' mountain, wildcat.

ACT. V. SCENE I. 2. crack, figure not entirely clear; possibly, since his project gathers "to a head," the reference is to an ulcer; "the breaking of magic bands" has been suggested. He may merely mean that his charms do not fail. 3. carriage, burden. How's



PROSPERO.

I did say so,  
When first I raised the tempest. Say, my spirit,  
How fares the king and 's followers?

ARIEL.

Confined together

In the same fashion as you gave in charge,  
Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,  
In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell; 10  
They cannot budge till your release. The king,  
His brother and yours, abide all three distracted  
And the remainder mourning over them,  
Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly  
Him that you term'd, sir, 'The good old lord, Gonzalo;'  
His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops  
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em  
That if you now beheld them, your affections  
Would become tender.

PROSPERO.

Dost thou think so, spirit?

ARIEL.

Mine would, sir, were I human.

PROSPERO.

And mine shall. 20

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling  
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,  
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,  
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?  
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,  
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury  
Do I take part: the rarer action is  
In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,  
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend  
Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel: 30  
My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,  
And they shall be themselves.

ARIEL.

I'll fetch them, sir.

(Exit)

PROSPERO.

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,  
And ye that on the sands with printless foot  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him  
When he comes back; you demi-puppets that  
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,  
Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime

the day? What time is it? 10. line-grove, grove of lime trees. weather-fends, protects from the weather. 17. eaves of reeds, thatch. 23. all, quite. 27. rarer, nobler. 33-37. Ye . . . book. This famous passage is an embellished paraphrase of Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, vii, 197-219. [For the passage cited, see below, p. 628.—The Editors.] Critics have often seen in Prospero's farewell to magic an analogue to Shakespeare's farewell to the stage. *The Tempest* is the next to his last complete play. After writing it he probably retired to Stratford. 36. demi-puppets, elves and fairies; literally, puppets of half-size. 37. green sour ringlets, fairy rings, circles of grass produced by

Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice  
 To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid, 40  
 Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm'd  
 The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,  
 And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault  
 Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder  
 Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak  
 With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory  
 Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up  
 The pine and cedar: graves at my command  
 Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth  
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic 50  
 I here abjure, and, when I have required  
 Some heavenly music, which even now I do,  
 To work mine end upon their senses that  
 This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,  
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
 I'll drown my book.

(Solemn music.)

(Re-enter ARIEL before: then ALONSO, with a frantic gesture, attended by GONZALO;  
 SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO in like manner, attended by ADRIAN and FRANCISCO:  
 they all enter the circle which PROSPERO had made, and there stand charmed;  
 which PROSPERO observing, speaks:)

A solemn air and the best comforter  
 To an unsettled fancy cure thy brains,  
 Now useless, boil'd within thy skull! There stand, 60  
 For you are spell-stopp'd.  
 Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,  
 Mine eyes, even sociable to the show of thine,  
 Fall fellowly drops. The charm dissolves apace,  
 And as the morning steals upon the night,  
 Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
 Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle  
 Their clearer reason. O good Gonzalo,  
 My true preserver, and a loyal sir  
 To him thou follow'st! I will pay thy graces 70  
 Home both in word and deed. Most cruelly  
 Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter:  
 Thy brother was a furtherer in the act.  
 Thou art pinch'd for 't now, Sebastian. Flesh and blood,

fungus within the soil. 40. curfew. The curfew, which sent people to bed, would send the spirits on their rounds. 44-45. to . . . fire, the dread rattling thunderbolt I have discharged. 47. spurs, roots. 50. rough magic. Prospero will cease the practice of compulsive physical magic in favor of the magic of goodness and wisdom. 60. boil'd, made hot with humors. 63. sociable, sympathetic. show, appearance. 64. Fall, let fall. 67. ignorant fumes. The fumes which rose up into the brain to produce sleep brought with them unconsciousness. 74. pinch'd. The references to pinching here and in line

You, brother mine, that entertain'd ambition,  
 Expell'd remorse and nature; who, with Sebastian,  
 Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong,  
 Would here have kill'd your king; I do forgive thee,  
 Unnatural though thou art. Their understanding  
 Begins to swell, and the approaching tide  
 Will shortly fill the reasonable shore  
 That now lies foul and muddy. Not one of them  
 That yet looks on me, or would know me: Ariel,  
 Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell:  
 I will discase me, and myself present  
 As I was sometime Milan: quickly, spirit;  
 Thou shalt ere long be free.

80

(*ARIEL sings and helps to attire him.*)

*ARIEL'S song.*

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
 In a cowslip's bell I lie;  
 There I couch when owls do cry.  
 On the bat's back I do fly  
 After summer merrily.  
 Merrily, merrily shall I live now  
 Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

90

PROSPERO. Why, that 's my dainty Ariel! I shall miss thee;  
 But yet thou shalt have freedom: so, so, so.  
 To the king's ship, invisible as thou art:  
 There shalt thou find the mariners asleep  
 Under the hatches; the master and the boatswain  
 Being awake, enforce them to this place,  
 And presently, I prithee.

100

ARIEL. I drink the air before me, and return  
 Or ere your pulse twice beat.

(*Exit*)

GONZALO. All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement  
 Inhabits here: some heavenly power guide us  
 Out of this fearful country!

PROSPERO. Behold, sir king.  
 The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero:  
 For more assurance that a living prince  
 Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;  
 And to thee and thy company I bid  
 A hearty welcome.

110

77 suggest physical pain and hardship, also pangs of conscience. 85. *discase*, undress. 90. *couch*, to lie down as on a couch, or, more probably lie hidden. 96. *so, so, so*, that will do very well.

ALONSO.                               Whether thou be'st he or no,  
                                           Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,  
                                           As late I have been, I not know: thy pulse  
                                           Beats as of flesh and blood; and, since I saw thee,  
                                           The affliction of my mind amends, with which,  
                                           I fear, a madness held me: this must crave,  
                                           An if this be at all, a most strange story.  
                                           Thy dukedom I resign and do entreat  
                                           Thou pardon me my wrongs. But how should Prospero  
                                           Be living and be here?

PROSPERO.                               First, noble friend, 120  
                                           Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot  
                                           Be measured or confined.

GONZALO.                               Whether this be  
                                           Or be not, I'll not swear.

PROSPERO.                               You do yet taste  
                                           Some subtilties o' the isle, that will not let you  
                                           Believe things certain. Welcome, my friends all!  
                                           (*aside to SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO:*)  
                                           But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,  
                                           I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you  
                                           And justify you traitors: at this time  
                                           I will tell no tales.

SEBASTIAN.                               (*aside*) The devil speaks in him.

PROSPERO.                               No. 130  
                                           For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother  
                                           Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive  
                                           Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require  
                                           My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,  
                                           Thou must restore.

ALONSO.                               If thou be'st Prospero,  
                                           Give us particulars of thy preservation;  
                                           How thou hast met us here, who three hours since  
                                           Were wreck'd upon this shore; where I have lost—  
                                           How sharp the point of this remembrance is!—  
                                           My dear son Ferdinand.

PROSPERO.                               I am woe for 't, sir.

ALONSO.                               Irreparable is the loss, and patience 140  
                                           Says it is past her cure.

PROSPERO.                               I rather think  
                                           You have not sought her help, of whose soft grace

112. trifle, trick of magic. abuse, deceive. 124. subtilties, illusions.  
 128. justify you, prove you to be. 139. woe, sorry.

**You the like loss!**

## A daughter?

150

160

No, my dear'st love,

**If this prove**

A vision of the island, one dear son  
Shall I twice lose.

145. late, i.e., as great to me as it is recent. 155. devour, render null, destroy. 174. score, double meaning: game or wager in which the score is reckoned by kingdoms, and also twenty kingdoms. wrangle, meaning (1) contend in a game or wager, and (2) argue or contend in words.

**SEBASTIAN.** A most high miracle!

**FERDINAND.** Though the seas threaten, they are merciful;  
I have cursed them without cause. (*Kneels.*)

**ALONSO.** Now all the blessings  
Of a glad father compass thee about!  
Arise, and say how thou camest here.

MIRANDA. O, wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in 't!

PROSPERO. 'Tis new to thee.

ALONSO. What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?  
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours:  
Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,  
And brought us thus together?

FERDINAND. Sir, she is mortal;  
But by immortal Providence she 's mine:  
I chose her when I could not ask my father  
For his advice, nor thought I had one. She  
Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,  
Of whom so often I have heard renown,  
But never saw before; of whom I have  
Received a second life; and second father  
This lady makes him to me.

ALONSO. I am hers:  
But, O, how oddly will it sound that I  
Must ask my child forgiveness!

**PROSPERO.** There, sir, stop:  
Let us not burthen our remembrance with  
A heaviness that's gone.

GONZALO. I have inly wept  
Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods,  
And on this couple drop a blessed crown!  
For it is you that have chalk'd forth the way  
Which brought us hither.

**ALONSO.** I say, Amen, Gonzalo!

GONZALO. Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue  
Should become kings of Naples? O, rejoice  
Beyond a common joy, and set it down  
With gold on lasting pillars: In one voyage

186. eld'st, earliest. 193. renown, report, fame. 203. chalk'd, traced out the way as with chalk.

Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis  
 And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife  
 Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom  
 In a poor isle and all of us ourselves  
 When no man was his own.

210

ALONSO. (*To FERDINAND and MIRANDA*) Give me your hands:  
 Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart  
 That doth not wish you joy!

GONZALO. Be it so! Amen!

(*Re-enter ARIEL, with the MASTER and BOATSWAIN amazedly following.*)

O, look, sir, look, sir! here is more of us:  
 I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,  
 This fellow could not drown. Now, blasphemy,  
 That swear'st grace o'erboard, not an oath on shore?  
 Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

220

BOATSWAIN. The best news is, that we have safely found  
 Our king and company; the next, our ship—  
 Which, but three glasses since, we gave out split—  
 Is tight and yare and bravely rigg'd as when  
 We first put out to sea.

ARIEL. (*aside to PROSPERO*) Sir, all this service  
 Have I done since I went.

PROSPERO. (*aside to ARIEL*) My tricky spirit!

ALONSO. These are not natural events; they strengthen  
 From strange to stranger. Say, how came you hither?

BOATSWAIN. If I did think, sir, I were well awake,  
 I 'ld strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep,  
 And—how we know not—all clapp'd under hatches;  
 Where but even now with strange and several noises  
 Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,  
 And moe diversity of sounds, all horrible,  
 We were awaked; straightway, at liberty;  
 Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld  
 Our royal, good and gallant ship, our master  
 Capering to eye her: on a trice, so please you,  
 Even in a dream, were we divided from them  
 And were brought moping hither.

230

ARIEL. (*aside to PROSPERO*) Was 't well done?

240

PROSPERO. (*aside to ARIEL*) Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

213. own, i.e., master of his senses. 223. glasses, hourglasses, hours. split, i.e., wrecked on a rock. 224. yare, ready. 236. freshly beheld, beheld her fresh; transferred epithet. 238. Capering, dancing for joy. 240. moping, moving in a state of bewilderment.

ALONSO.        This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod;  
                     And there is in this business more than nature  
                     Was ever conduct of: some oracle  
                     Must rectify our knowledge.

PROSPERO.                                Sir, my liege,  
                     Do not infest your mind with beating on  
                     The strangeness of this business; at pick'd leisure  
                     Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you,  
                     Which to you shall seem probable, of every  
                     These happen'd accidents; till when, be cheerful                                250  
                     And think of each thing well. (*Aside to ARIEL*) Come hither, spirit:  
                     Set Caliban and his companions free;  
                     Untie the spell. How fares my gracious sir?                                (*Exit ARIEL*)  
                     There are yet missing of your company  
                     Some few odd lads that you remember not.

(*Re-enter ARIEL, driving in CALIBAN, STEPHANO and TRINCULO, in their stolen apparel.*)

STEPHANO.        Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself;  
                     for all is but fortune. Coragio, bully-monster, coragio!

TRINCULO.        If these be true spies which I wear in my head, here 's a goodly sight.

CALIBAN.        O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!  
                     How fine my master is! I am afraid                                260  
                     He will chastise me.

SEBASTIAN.                                Ha, ha!  
                     What things are these, my lord Antonio?  
                     Will money buy 'em?

ANTONIO.                                Very like; one of them  
                     Is a plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable.

PROSPERO.        Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,  
                     Then say if they be true. This mis-shapen knave,  
                     His mother was a witch, and one so strong  
                     That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,  
                     And deal in her command without her power.  
                     These three have robb'd me; and this demi-devil—                                270  
                     For he 's a bastard one—had plotted with them  
                     To take my life. Two of these fellows you  
                     Must know and own; this thing of darkness I  
                     Acknowledge mine.

244. conduct, guide, leader.

246. infest, harass, disturb. beating on, pondering or hammering as on an anvil.

247. pick'd, chosen. 248. single, i.e., when we are alone together. F has no comma after *shortly*, in which reading *single* means "unbroken," "absolute." 257. Coragio, courage. bully-monster, gallant monster. 258. spies, observers. 265. badges, emblems of cloth or silver worn on the arms of retainers. 269. deal . . . power, wield the moon's power, either



- CALIBAN. I shall be pinch'd to death.
- ALONSO. Is not this Stephano, my drunken butler?
- SEBASTIAN. He is drunk now: where had he wine?
- ALONSO. And Trinculo is reeling ripe: where should they  
Find this grand liquor that hath gilded 'em?  
How camest thou in this pickle?
- TRINCULO. I have been in such a pickle since I saw you last that, I fear me, 280  
will never out of my bones: I shall not fear fly-blowing.
- SEBASTIAN. Why, how now, Stephano!
- STEPHANO. O, touch me not; I am not Stephano, but a cramp.
- PROSPERO. You 'ld be king o' the isle, sirrah?
- STEPHANO. I should have been a sore one then.
- ALONSO. This is a strange thing as e'er I look'd on. (*Pointing to CALIBAN*)
- PROSPERO. He is as disproportion'd in his manners  
As in his shape. Go, sirrah, to my cell;  
Take with you your companions; as you look  
To have my pardon, trim it handsomely. 290
- CALIBAN. Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter  
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass  
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god  
And worship this dull fool!
- PROSPERO. Go to; away!
- ALONSO. Hence, and bestow your luggage where you found it.
- SEBASTIAN. Or stole it, rather. (*Exeunt CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO*)
- PROSPERO. Sir, I invite your highness and your train  
To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest  
For this one night; which, part of it, I'll waste  
With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it 300  
Go quick away; the story of my life  
And the particular accidents gone by  
Since I came to this isle: and in the morn  
I'll bring you to your ship and so to Naples,  
Where I have hope to see the nuptial  
Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;  
And thence retire me to my Milan, where  
Every third thought shall be my grave.

without her authority, or beyond her influence. The line is ambiguous. 277. ripe, drunk. 278. gilded, flushed, made drunk. 281. fly-blowing. They are pickled with drink and the slime of the pond, and pickling prevents fly-blowing. 292-294. What . . . fool. Caliban is superior in intelligence to his companions. 302. accidents, occurrences, events.

ALONSO.

I long

To hear the story of your life, which must  
Take the ear strangely.

PROSPERO.

I'll deliver all;

310

And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales  
And sail so expeditious that shall catch  
Your royal fleet far off. (*Aside to ARIEL*) My Ariel, chick,  
That is thy charge: then to the elements  
Be free, and fare thou well! Please you, draw near.

(*Exeunt*)

## EPILOGUE

*Spoken by* PROSPERO.

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,  
And what strength I have 's mine own,  
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,  
I must be here confined by you,  
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,  
Since I have my dukedom got  
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell  
In this bare island by your spell;  
But release me from my bands  
With the help of your good hands:  
Gentle breath of yours my sails  
Must fill, or else my project fails,  
Which was to please. Now I want  
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,  
And my ending is despair,  
Unless I be relieved by prayer,  
Which pierces so that it assaults  
Mercy itself and frees all faults.  
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,  
Let your indulgence set me free.

10

20

310. Take, take effect upon. deliver, declare, relate.

EPILOGUE. 10. hands, applause.

## From INTRODUCTION TO THE TEMPEST \*

HARDIN CRAIG (1875- )

*The Tempest* is written in Shakespeare's most mature style and seems to have been composed late in 1610 or early in 1611. . . . The story dramatized in *The Tempest* was of a romantic nature and appears in several analogous versions. The poet William Collins (1721-1759), who was a scholarly man, told Thomas Warton, the first great historian of English literature, that he had read the actual source of *The Tempest* in an Italian short story, now lost. The reference he gave Warton was wrong, but some confirmation of his statement has come from various sources. The parallel to *The Tempest* longest known is a comedy by the Nuremberg dramatist Jakob Ayler (1543-1605), *Die schöne Sidea*, and the resemblance is unmistakable. Another analogue is found in a Spanish collection of novels, *Noches de Invierno*, by Antonio de Eslava, published in 1609 or 1610, and, finally, Sir Edmund Chambers in his account of *The Tempest* in *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (1930, I, 490-494) lays stress on various scenarios for *commedie dell' arte* contained in a manuscript in Rome and published by Neri. These scenarios deal with shipwrecks, islands, sailors, and native maidens, as also with a magician and with various kinds of gods and devils. In Eslava there are suggestions of a Bulgarian origin for the main plot, and this clue was followed by M. Henri Grégoire in an article entitled "The Bulgarian Origin of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*" (*Studies in Philology*, XXXVIII, 1940, 236-256). Grégoire does not find an immediate source for Shakespeare's play, but he does show that the story is based on events in Bulgarian and Byzantine history of the tenth and eleventh centuries. He shows also that the narrative made its way into Italy and appears in *Il regno degli Slavi* (1601) of the Italian Abbé Mauro Orbini and perhaps elsewhere in Italian literature, whence it would almost certainly have been excerpted and used as a *novella* or short story. . . .

The process of fitting parts together to form a unified complex of events was always, and particularly in the later stages of his work, characteristic of Shakespeare's procedure as a dramatist. . . . *The Tempest* also possesses this feature. To be sure, the main structure, that of the wronged prince and magician who gets his enemy in his power and makes peace with him by arranging a marriage between his own daughter and a good son of his enemy, is itself a large block from one quarry, large but not all that was needed. In the process of his amplification of this plot Shakespeare shows the tendency to gather beautiful or significant bits from various sources, which add facility or richness to his theme.

Specifically, Shakespeare brought to his story a body of material of great current interest, namely, exploration of strange lands. He borrowed from Sylvester Jourdan's *A Discovery of the Bermudas* (1610) and from William Strachey's *A true Repertory of the wrack and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight, upon and from the islands of the Bermudas*, a letter dated July 15, 1610, and probably seen in manuscript.<sup>1</sup> With

\* From *An Introduction to Shakespeare*, edited by Hardin Craig. Copyright, 1952, by Scott, Foresman and Company. By permission of Scott, Foresman and Company.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from these accounts by Jourdan and Strachey may be found on pp. 625 and 626. [Editors' note.]

his usual thoroughness Shakespeare seems also to have read an anonymous pamphlet, also published in 1610, called *A True Declaration of the estate of the Colonie of Virginia*. From these works Shakespeare cannot be said to have derived much that was tangible or important. He never becomes definite geographically, but he did get atmosphere and perhaps minor incident from these accounts of colonization and shipwreck. Capell discovered that Shakespeare had made a definite and somewhat extensive borrowing from Montaigne's essay *Des Cannibales*<sup>2</sup> in *The Tempest*, Act II, scene i, lines 129-145. Steevens pointed out that Prospero's famous speech about the disappearance of the vision (IV, i, 146-163) is taken in idea at least from Sir William Alexander's *Tragedie of Darius* (1603).<sup>3</sup> There are other minor borrowings that increase the beauty and significance of the play. The one thing we lack is a better background for the magic of the play. We need to know more about how Shakespeare conceived of both Ariel and Caliban. They are both elemental spirits, and Ariel seems quite definitely to belong to air and fire. Caliban, on the other hand, suggests earth and water, lower and more evil elements. But the nature of Caliban is not clear, and his pedigree suggests that he may be a cross between the rosicrucian spirits of earth and water and the savages of the western world.

Particularly, these borrowings and this magic look to the exaltation of Prospero, and this was no doubt Shakespeare's intention. Nowhere, unless in Hamlet, has Shakespeare been at such pains to endow a character with such virtues and accomplishments. Prospero is both generous and just, clever and simple-hearted. He has mastered his own experience and with it the experience of the world. He is wise, and his wisdom, like all true wisdom, is the way in which he bears and applies his vast learning. It is natural enough to admire him. Prospero's eloquence alone would win the admiration of the world. But critics and producers have made of *The Tempest* merely a portrait of Prospero. A great school of them, headed by Edward Dowden, have thought that in depicting Prospero, Shakespeare was painting a portrait of himself. When Prospero broke his staff and buried it certain fathoms deep in the earth and drowned his book deeper than ever did plummet sound, they saw the image of William Shakespeare leaving the theater and returning to Stratford to end his days. This is innocent enough and not without interest and fitness, but to exalt Prospero and neglect the rest of the play is certainly to forget the romance and to spoil *The Tempest* as a drama on the stage.

This overexaltation of Prospero serves as a key and a caution both in the reading and the playing of *The Tempest*. If one can put one's attention on other things and other people in the drama besides Prospero, one can get a far better impression of the dramatic power of the play. It was no small thing in the Renaissance to lose a dukedom, and the persons to whom Prospero lost his, himself innocent, were base and deserving of great punishment. Prospero's duty as a prince and an upright man called upon him to demand retribution and recall. The story of Ferdinand and Miranda has an almost unequaled beauty and simplicity. The plot of Sebastian and Antonio against the life of Alonso is dangerous. "King" Stephano and Trinculo are associated with Caliban to produce most excellent low comedy. Shakespeare's study of the cool elemental spirit Ariel, master of song and device, is perfect, and Caliban, played by some of the greatest of Shakespearean actors, is a mysterious triumph in character depiction. But the play must be studied as Shakespeare conceived it, that is, as a whole. Great as Prospero is, he tends to be static. There is no struggle. Prospero can do everything, and there is little drama in omnipotence. There are other elements of dramatic and

<sup>2</sup> See p. 628. [Editors' note] <sup>3</sup> See p. 629. [Editors' note.]

poetic interest in the play, and one asks if it would do injury even to Prospero to associate him with normal characters and events. There is, for example, something memorable in old Gonzalo, one of those wise and faithful aged counselors, like Menenius Agrippa in *Coriolanus*, who appear frequently in Shakespeare's later plays. Indeed, it is obvious that Prospero would be more interestingly realized by a fuller recognition of his humanity. One would like to see *The Tempest* played and read with a fairer, broader emphasis on all parts of the play.

As a stage play, *The Tempest* has actually suffered from the greatness of its spectacular possibilities. The stage has tended to formalize, if not vulgarize, the play, and the noble reaches of poetic suggestiveness and symbolic beauty have been caught by readers and not by theater-goers. With readers, thinkers, poets, and students *The Tempest* has been a great favorite, whereas in theaters its finer significances have tended to be lost in mere magic, scenic beauty, and spectacular effects. Dryden and D'Avenant rewrote Shakespeare's play in 1667 as *The Tempest or the Enchanted Island*, and that operatic version, which does frightful violence to almost everything we prize in Shakespeare's play, banished *The Tempest* from the stage for generations. It affected adversely the performances of David Garrick, John Philip Kemble, and even William Macready. Samuel Phelps played Shakespeare's play at Sadler's Wells in 1847, as did Charles Kean in a famous spectacular performance in 1857. Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's much admired presentation of *The Tempest* in 1904 was, like most other modern renditions, at the limit of scenic magnificence. The stage history of *The Tempest* is disappointing, but as a great piece of literature it stands secure. It may be that ultimately our dramatic public will be able to grasp the beauty and subtlety of one of Shakespeare's greatest works.

## SOME SOURCE MATERIALS OF *THE TEMPEST*

### I. *From A DISCOVERY OF THE BERMUDAS, OTHERWISE CALLED THE ISLE OF DEVILS . . . (1610)*

*Sylvester Jourdan*

[After three days and nights, the crew of *The Sea-Venture*, wearied with pumping] were even resolved, without any hope of their lives, to shut up the hatches and to have committed themselves to the mercy of the sea. . . . So that some of them having some good and comfortable waters [liquor] in the ship, fetched them, and drunk one to the other, taking their last leave one of the other. . . . [But suddenly Sir George Somers, in command of the expedition, descried land, and encouraged them to work at the pumps. They complied, though so weary] that for the most part they were fallen asleep in corners. [Fortunately, the ship] fell in between two rocks, where she was fast lodged and locked, for further budging. [One hundred and fifty men got safely ashore, and saved some part of their provisions and supplies, which later enabled them to fit out another vessel to carry them to Virginia.]

But our delivery was not more strange in falling so opportunely and happily upon the land, as [than] our feeding and provision was, beyond our hopes, and all men's expectations, most admirable; for the Islands of the Bermudas, as every man knoweth that hath heard or read of them, were never inhabited by any Christian or heathen

people, but ever esteemed and reputed a most prodigious and enchanted place, affording nothing but gusts, storms, and foul weather; which made every navigator and mariner to avoid them as Scylla and Charybdis, or as they would shun the Devil himself; and no man was ever heard to make for this place, but as, against their wills, they have, by storms and dangerousness of the rocks lying seven leagues into the sea, suffered shipwreck. Yet did we find there the air so temperate and the country so aboundingly fruitful of all fit necessities for the sustentation and preservation of man's life, that, most in a manner of all our provision of bread, beer, and victuals, being quite spoiled in lying long drowned in salt water, notwithstanding we were there for the space of nine months (few days over or under) we were not only well refreshed, comforted, and with good satiety contented, but out of the abundance thereof provided us some reasonable quantity and proportion of provision to carry us for Virginia, and to maintain ourselves and that company we found there;—wherefore my opinion sincerely of this island is that whereas it hath been, and is still accounted the most dangerous, unfortunate, and forlorn place of the world, it is in truth the richest, healthfulest, and pleasing land, (the quantity and bigness thereof considered,) and merely natural, as ever man set foot upon.

[There was a great abundance of fish], very fat and sweet, and of that proportion and bigness that three of them will conveniently [burden] two men: those we called rock-fish. . . .

There is fowl in great abundance in the islands, where they breed, that there hath been taken in two or three hours a thousand at the least, being of the bigness of a good pigeon.

Another sea-fowl there is that lieth in little holes in the ground, like unto a cony-hole, and are in great numbers; exceeding good meat, very fat and sweet (those we had in the winter) and their eggs are white and of that bigness that they are not to be known from hen-eggs. . . .

## II. *From A TRUE REPERTORY OF THE WRECK AND REDEMPTION.* . . .

*William Strachey*

[Starting from Plymouth on June 2, 1609, the expedition encountered no difficulties until] on St. James's Day, July 24, being Monday (preparing for no less all the black night before) the clouds gathering thick upon us, and the winds singing, and whistling most unusually . . . a dreadful storm and hideous began to blow from out the North-east, which swelling, and roaring as it were by fits, some hours with more violence than others, at length did beat all light from heaven; which like a hell of darkness turned black upon us, so much the more fuller of horror, as in such cases horror and fear use to overrun the troubled, and overmastered senses of all, which (taken up with amazement) the ears lay so sensible to the terrible cries, and murmurs of the winds, and distraction of our company, as who was most armed, and best prepared, was not a little shaken. . . . Sometimes [the storm] strikes in our ship amongst women, and passengers, not used to such hurly and discomforts, made us look one upon the other with troubled hearts, and panting bosoms: our clamours drowned in the winds, and the winds in thunder. Prayers might well be in the heart and lips, but drowned in the outcries of the Officers. . . . The sea swelled above the clouds, and gave battle unto heaven. . . . there was not a moment in which the sudden splitting or instant over-setting of the ship was not expected. . . .

During all this time, the heavens looked so black upon us, that it was not possible the elevation of the Pole [star] might be observed. . . . Only upon the Thursday night Sir George Somers being upon the watch, had an apparition of a little round light, like a faint star, trembling, and streaming along with a sparkling blaze, half the height upon the main mast, and shooting sometimes from shroud to shroud, tempting to settle as it were upon any of the four shrouds: and for three or four hours together, or rather more, half the night it kept with us, running sometimes along the mainyard to the very end, and then returning. At which, Sir George Somers called divers [persons] about him, and showed them the same, who observed it with much wonder and carefulness: but upon a sudden, towards the morning watch, they lost sight of it, and knew not what way it made. The superstitious seamen make many constructions of this sea-fire, which nevertheless is usual in storms: the same (it may be) which the Grecians were wont to call *Castor and Pollux*. . . . The Italians call it (a *sacred body*) *Corpo Sancto*: the Spaniards call it *St. Elmo*. . . .

[We] threw overboard much luggage . . . and staved many a butt of beer, hogs-heads of oil, cider, wine and vinegar. . . . It being now Friday, the fourth morning, it wanted little, to have shut up the hatches, and commending our sinful souls to God, committed the ship to the mercy of the sea . . . but see the goodness and sweet introduction of better hope, by our merciful God given unto us. Sir George Somers, when no man dreamed of such happiness, had discovered, and cried Land. . . . Having no hope to save [the ship] by coming to an anchor . . . we were forced to run her ashore, as near the land as we could. . . . And by the mercy of God . . . all our men, women, and children, about the number of one hundred and fifty [we brought] safe into the island.

We found it to be the dangerous and dreaded island, or rather islands, of the Bermuda . . . [which] be so terrible to all that ever touched on them, and such tempests, thunders, and other fearful objects are seen and heard about them, that they be called commonly the Devil's Islands, and are feared and avoided of all sea travelers alive, above any other place in the world. . . . It being counted of most, that they can be no habitation for men, but rather given over to devils and wicked spirits. . . .

There is not through the whole islands, either [plains], valleys, or fresh rivers. They are full of [groves] of goodly cedar . . . the berries whereof, our men seething, straining, and letting stand some three or four days, made a kind of pleasant drink. . . .

Sure it is, that there are no rivers nor running springs of fresh water to be found upon any of [the islands]: when we came first we digged and found certain gushings and soft bubblings . . . fed with rain water, which soon . . . vanisheth away. . . .

The shore and bays . . . afforded great store of fish . . . . A kind of web-footed fowl there is, of the bigness of an English green plover, or sea-mew . . . these gather themselves together and breed in those islands which are high . . . there in the ground they have their burrows, like conies in a warren . . . they were a good and well relished fowl, fat and full as a partridge. . . . There are . . . two or three islands full of their burrows. . . . [These birds] for their blindness (for they see weakly in the day) and for their cry and hooting, we called the sea-owl; they will bite cruelly with their crooked bills. . . .

We had knowledge that there were wild hogs upon the island, at first by our own swine preserved from the wreck and brought to shore: for they straying into the woods, an huge wild boar followed down to our quarter, which at night was watched and taken in this sort. One of Sir George Somers' men went and lay among the swine,

when the boar being come and groveled by the sows, he put over his hand and rubbed the side gently of the boar, which then lay still, by which means he fastened a rope with a sliding knot to the hinder leg and so took him. . . .

Sure it was happy for us . . . that we . . . had our Governor with us . . . else, I am persuaded, we had most of us finished our days there, so willing were the major part of the common sort (especially when they found such a plenty of victuals) to settle a foundation of ever inhabiting there. . . . Some dangerous and secret discontents nourished amongst us had like to have been the parents of bloody issues and mischiefs; . . . what hath a more adamantine power to draw unto it the consent and attraction of the idle, untoward, and wretched number of the many, than liberty, and fullness of sensuality? . . . [There were three mutinous conspiracies; at least one conspirator was executed and a couple of others were left behind as outlaws when the rest of the company finally finished building the pinnacle which took them on to Virginia.]

### III. *From Michel de Montaigne's Essay "OF THE CANNIBALS"*

*Translation by John Florio (1603)*

It is a nation . . . that hath no kind of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politic superiority; no use of service, of richness or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, but common; no apparel but natural; no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corn, or metal. The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulations, covetousness, envie, detraction, and pardon were never heard of amongst them. . . .

These leave this full possession of goods in common, and without division to their heirs, without other claim or title but that which Nature doth plainly impart unto all creatures, even as she brings them into the world.

[See *The Tempest*, Act II, Sc. I, ll. 129-145.]

### IV. *From Ovid's METAMORPHOSES, BOOK VII, LINES 197-206*

*Translation by Arthur Golding (1567)*

Ye airs and winds: ye elves of hills, of brooks, of woods alone,  
Of standing lakes, and of the night; approach ye every one  
Through help of whom (the crooked banks much wondering at the thing)  
I have compelled streams to run clean backward to their spring.  
By charms I make the calm seas rough, and make the rough seas plain,  
And cover all the sky with clouds and chase them thence again.  
By charms I raise and lay the winds, and burst the viper's jaw.  
And from the bowels of the earth both stones and trees do draw.  
Whole woods and forests I remove: I make the mountains shake,  
And even the earth itself to groan and fearfully to quake.  
I call up dead men from their graves, and thee, O lightsome Moon  
I darken oft, though beaten brass abate thy peril soon.  
Our sorcery dims the morning fair, and darks the sun at noon.

[See *The Tempest*, Act V, Sc. I, ll. 33-50.]



V. *From* THE TRAGEDY OF DARIUS (1603)

*William Alexander*

Let greatness of her glassy scepters vaunt;  
Not scepters, no, but reeds, soon bruised soon broken:  
And let this worldly pomp our wits enchant.  
All fades, and scarcely leaves behind a token.

Those golden palaces, those gorgeous halls,  
With furniture superfluously fair:

Those stately courts, those sky-encountering walls  
Evanish all like vapours in the air.

[See *The Tempest*, Act IV, Sc. I, ll. 151-156.]



### III: The Play and the Reader

*. . . The purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it makes the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others.*

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



## THE MEANING OF *THE TEMPEST*

HAROLD C. GODDARD (1878-1950)

. . . *The Tempest* has an unrivaled power to inspire in almost all sensitive readers a belief that it contains a secret meaning. Even those who make no attempt to search it out retain the feeling that it is there and that if it could only be found it would lead close not merely to the heart of Shakespeare's convictions about life but close to the heart of life itself. Naturally I have no reference here to the many minute and elaborate allegorical interpretations of the play that have been offered, which, even if they were convincing within their own limits, could have only a historical, biographical, or other subpoetical interest. What I have in mind rather are more modest attempts to connect and elucidate the main themes and symbols around which the poem is obviously built and which seem to have in peculiar degree the power, in Keats's words, to "tease us out of thought as doth eternity." To set out to interpret *The Tempest* (which I do not intend to do) is one thing; to point out certain aspects of its symbolism and thematic structure with which any satisfactory interpretation must come to terms as a sort of minimum requirement is another and much less ambitious undertaking.

To begin with, this play is centrally concerned with the three things that Shakespeare had perhaps come to value most highly in life: liberty, love, and wonder—the identical trinity, by the way, that Hafiz, long before Shakespeare, had also chosen. Concerned with realities rather than with names, the poet not only gives examples of these things but, to make clear what they are in their purity, shows us what they are in their perversions: license is set over against liberty; lust against love; banality, but more particularly "wonders," against wonder.

And the play has also what might be called a biological theme. As has often been pointed out, the characters are arranged in a sort of evolutionary hierarchy from Caliban, who is a kind of demi-creature of water and earth, up through human strata of various stages of development to Ariel, who is all fire and air—though it is made clear that where human nature becomes degenerate it seems to sink to a level lower than that of Caliban.

Closely allied to this, yet distinct from it, is a psychological interest. The play is fairly saturated with references to sleep and waking—and to various states of consciousness and unconsciousness between the two, drowsiness, daydreaming, dreaming, trance, hallucination, and other hypnagogic conditions. Likewise *The Tempest* is filled from end to end with noises and music—from the thunder and roaring of the storm itself, the howling of beasts, through the sounds and sweet airs of the Enchanted Isle that could charm even Caliban, through every variety of human utterance from the cries and coarse ballads of drunkards to the voices of lovers, up finally to the songs of Ariel. And Shakespeare seems interested not only in these two things, sleep and music, but even more in the relation between them—in the relation, to put it more pedantically, between music and the unconscious mind. The voices of the isle could induce such sleep in Caliban that when he waked he cried to dream again. Miranda falls asleep on the entrance of Ariel and awakens on his exit. The same is true in some

degree of the other good characters, but not of the baser ones, who become victims on at least one occasion of an evil form of waking hallucination. All these reactions turn on the receptivity of the unconscious mind.

These various themes and symbols are inextricably interwoven, and, seen from a slightly different angle, give us Shakespeare's final word on a subject that had engaged his attention from the beginning: the different kinds of power that men possess and are possessed by. Here the political and religious aspects of the story merge as we are carried all the way from the demonic tyranny of the witch Sycorax to the reign of pure goodness in old Gonzalo's ideal commonwealth. More specifically, we have within the main action of the play: the political and military power of Alonso and Antonio, the magical power of Prospero, the alcoholic power of Stephano, the unveiling power of love in Ferdinand and Miranda, and the musical power of Ariel. (Nor am I omitting, though I may seem to be, the religious power of forgiveness.)

The play culminates in three emancipations—of Caliban from the enthrallment of the drunken Stephano, of Prospero from his magic, and of Ariel from the service of Prospero in the cause of that magic (not to mention the emancipation from moral bondage of Alonso and his companions). What might be called, grotesquely, the biography of Ariel gives at least an intimation of what these interrelated emancipations mean, though we must beware here not to fetter the play within any rigid allegory. For twelve years—"years" doubtless comparable to the "days" of creation in Genesis—Ariel was imprisoned in a cloven pine by the witch Sycorax because he was

a spirit too delicate  
To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands.

This imprisonment, once imposed, Sycorax is powerless to undo and Prospero with his art must come to the rescue. What does this signify? Might it not mean that when imagination is enslaved by the senses superstition usurps its function—and the senses become powerless to release it? It must be set free by knowledge and reason. But that is not the end of the story. Out from under the domination of the senses, imagination now becomes the slave of the very intellect that rescued it. Prospero is now master and the delicate spirit he has set free from Sycorax is impressed into the service of his magic—even at one point at the threat of a second imprisonment, in a cloven oak, of like duration as the first, if he complains. Here, again, is a Prospero remote enough from anything we associate with Shakespeare.

What is the character of Prospero's magic? If it is not black art, it certainly is not "white" in the sense of being dedicated unreservedly to noble ends. Prospero was indeed the victim of injustice. But his main miracle, the raising of the tempest, appears to have been undertaken primarily to get his enemies within his power for purposes of revenge. Moreover, his magic banquets and charmed swords have an element of mere display about them that is reminiscent of the "wonders" of the common conjurer. The higher the nature of the miracle sought, the more Prospero seems to intrust its execution to Ariel's improvisation, as in the saving of Gonzalo and most of all the falling in love of Ferdinand and Miranda. Prospero willed this love affair, but the bringing of it into being was plainly Ariel's work, and his success so delights Prospero that he promises his servant his freedom as a reward:

PROSPERO.

It goes on, I see,  
As my soul prompts it.

(Not, notice, "as I ordered" but "as my soul prompts"!)

Spirit, fine spirit! I'll free thee  
Within two days for this.

And as if he would not have us miss the point, the poet repeats it a moment later:

At the first sight  
They have chang'd eyes. Delicate Ariel,  
I'll set thee free for this!

He sees that this is Ariel's accomplishment—nothing of his own magic at all. (From Prospero's command to his servant to summon his "rabble" of spirits and "incite them to quick motion" we seem entitled to think that even the wedding masque is mainly the latter's doing.) As in the case of Lear and his Fool, the servant has become the master of the master, a fact that comes out emphatically when Prospero has his enemies at his mercy. He is then in the same position as was the banished Coriolanus, except that the force at his command is knowledge and magic rather than the sword.

Now does my project gather to a head,

he cries triumphantly in the first line of the last act. His foes, along with some innocent ones entangled with them, are powerless to budge, and we feel that he is now about to get even for the injustices they formerly inflicted on him. And then, like Virgilia with her kiss, Ariel speaks:

ARIEL. Him that you term'd, sir, "the good old lord, Gonzalo,"  
His tears run down his beard like winter's drops  
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works them  
That if you now beheld them, your affections  
Would become tender.

PROSPERO. Dost thou think so, spirit?

ARIEL. Mine would, sir, were I human.

PROSPERO. And mine shall.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling  
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,  
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply  
Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?  
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,  
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury  
Do I take part. The rarer action is  
In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,  
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend  
Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel.  
My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,  
And they shall be themselves.

Prospero thinks it is his reason that overcomes his fury. But what has just happened contradicts him. It was his angel that whispered the suggestion in his ear. And a man's angel or genius is not to be confused with the man himself.<sup>1</sup> Indeed this very

<sup>1</sup> "Thy demon—that's thy spirit which keeps thee" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, II, iii, 19).  
[All footnotes in the essay are Professor Goddard's.]

one of Prospero's is a spirit whose independence he is about to declare. Crying, "My charms I'll break," he invokes the elves and demi-puppets—"weak masters" who have helped him to do only such trifles as to bedim the sun and call forth winds—and bids farewell forever to them and magic. Ariel, his strong master, enters on the instant, with music, to displace them. And forthwith follows a wonder that genuinely deserves the name—the forgiveness and reconciliation that Prospero has just resolved on. Here is a divine right of kings to which even the strictest equalitarian could not object—the intervention of one of those angels in whom Richard II, because he was unworthy, trusted in vain. Here is the counterpart and antithesis of Macbeth's surrender to the Witches. As they tempted him to crime and death, so Ariel tempts Prospero to forgiveness and life.

How all this illuminates what has gone before! The stages in Ariel's estate now stand out unmistakable. While he was subjected to Sycorax, he was imprisoned and powerless. While he obeys Prospero, he performs material wonders—though even then, if the initiative is left to him, he goes beyond them. Finally, when it is he who whispers the hint in Prospero's ear and Prospero obeys *him*, the wonder of a spiritual miracle occurs. Music replaces magic; Ariel's songs achieve what is beyond the scope of Prospero's wand.

Those who, once powerful, suffer defeat, are restored to power, and then might take revenge but do not—they hold the keys of peace. That is what the end of *The Tempest* seems to say, as Shakespeare himself said it in the 94th sonnet:

They that have power to hurt and will do none . . .  
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces.

It is an old truth—no discovery of Shakespeare's. But crowning as it does the last act of what was probably the last full play he ever wrote, backed up by hundreds, we might almost say thousands, of minute particulars from his previous works, and embodied in his own practice of understanding rather than judging all humanity from saint to sinner, it acquires the character of a revelation.

Be cheerful  
And think of each thing well.

By itself, that could sound commonplace or even banal. But against the inferno of the Tragedies, it is no silly philosophy of smiling evil out of existence.

## II

Where the bee sucks, there suck I,

sings Ariel when Prospero tells him the moment of his release is near,

Where the bee sucks, there suck I.  
In a cowslip's bell I lie;  
There I couch when owls do cry.  
On the bat's back I do fly  
After summer merrily.  
Merrily, merrily shall I live now  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.



This angel will not use his freedom to fly away to some distant heaven: he will hide under the nearest flower. The world of spirit, in other words, is not Another World after all. It is this world rightly seen and heard. From end to end *The Tempest* reiterates this. To innocent senses the isle itself is pure loveliness; to corrupted ones it is no better than a swamp.

ADRIAN. The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.  
 SEBASTIAN. As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.  
 ANTONIO. Or as 'twere perfumed by a fen.  
 GONZALO. Here is everything advantageous to life.  
 ANTONIO. True; save means to live.

Even in Caliban an Ariel slumbers. He loves the voices of the isle, and his moral awakening at the end—

What a thrice-double ass  
 Was I, to take this drunkard for a god  
 And worship this dull fool!

—though passed over swiftly is as hopeful a note as is struck in the entire play. Prospero was wrong in thinking that Caliban was impervious to education.

But it is Miranda of course, of the human inhabitants of the isle, who gives supreme expression to the way the world looks to uncontaminated senses and imagination:

O, wonder!  
 How many goodly creatures are there here!  
 How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world  
 That has such people in 't!

Imagination, as dreams show, is something that awakens in most of us only when the senses are put to sleep. It is only when *they* awaken refreshed at sunrise that we occasionally see the world for a moment as God intended us to. But really, Shakespeare is telling us in *The Tempest*, sense and spirit are as much made for each other as lovers are. It is appetite and intellect that have put an abyss between them. That is what Prospero the Magician learned from Ariel and his own child. Miranda did not need to read *King Lear*. But unless we have a child or angel to teach us, we do. We must go to Shakespeare and the other poets—for poetry, as Shelley said, "lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world and makes familiar things as if they were not familiar."

But whatever may be true of the rest of us, why does a poet need poetry? It is easy to see why a young poet does. But why should an old one?

We have noted how Shakespeare's need for drama in the narrower sense yielded to his need for poetry. Was his need for poetry now yielding to his need for life? It was the moment after Prospero listened to his spirit that he decided to break his staff and drown his book. Perhaps Shakespeare at last perceived that dramatic compositions, even poetic ones, are only airy charms. Perhaps he said to himself,

. . . this rough magic  
 I here abjure:

I will return from the necromancy of art to the wonder of life itself. Whatever he said or didn't say, he must have come to realize what creative minds in the end are almost bound to see: that the arts are to men only what toys are to children, a means for the

rehearsal of life. And so, paradoxically, the object of art is to get rid of the arts. When they mature, the art of life will be substituted for them—as children outgrow their toys.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

Perhaps Shakespeare had himself in mind when he wrote those lines of Ariel's. I picture him retired to Stratford lying under a plum tree in May doing "nothing." "Had I a little son," said Charles Lamb, "I would christen him Nothing-to-Do; he should do nothing." Shakespeare would have understood. "Nothing brings me all things."

### III

Shakespeare could have bidden farewell to the theater in no better way than through Ariel, for no figure he ever created more utterly transcends the stage. How shall Ariel be acted? The most graceful girl to be found for the part, the most charming boy, will instantly blur or erase the Shakespearean conception. Which, indeed, should play the role, if it is to be played, boy or girl? And what pronoun should be resorted to in referring to this spirit of music and the dance? The paucity of language compels us, as in the case of the angels, to use either the masculine or the feminine. But neither will do. Ariel is above sex. In that respect this ultimate creation of the poet's genius seems like the culmination of something he had been seeking all his life. From Adonis and the Young Man of the Sonnets, through Rosalind and Hamlet, Desdemona and Cordelia, on to Imogen, Florizel and Cadwal, Ferdinand and Miranda (remember her willingness to carry logs!), Shakespeare is bent on finding men and women who, without losing the virtues and integrity of their own sex, have also the virtues of the other. If Shakespeare had no admiration for the womanly woman in the sense of the clinging vine, neither had he any for the manly man as embodied in what our generation refers to as the "he-man" or the "red-blooded man." He scorned the gentleman, but all his best men are gentle men. Whatever else he may be, Ariel is a symbol of this union of the masculine and feminine elements of the soul.

But what makes Ariel even more akin, if possible, to the spirit of his maker is the capacity to assume any form or shape, to perform any function, to be at home in any element. By universal consent this is close to Shakespeare's supreme gift. And there is no better example of it than his creation (along with Caliban) of this very Ariel—a creature so unique that he seems to have sprung full-blown from the head of his maker. But even Ariel has been prepared for. From Puck with his flower juice squeezed in lovers' eyes, to the Fool with his wise folly whispered in Lear's ear, Ariel has seldom been far away in Shakespeare wherever spiritual force from without comes to the rescue of weak or foolish or proud humanity. Who shall say that Ariel was not there when the God Hercules left Antony and music was heard in the air, or when Cleopatra herself turned to fire and air?

### IV

Of the many universal symbols on which *The Tempest* is erected that of the island is fundamental. An island is a bit of a higher element rising out of a lower—like a fragment of consciousness thrusting up out of the ocean of unconsciousness. Like a

clearing in the wilderness or a walled city, like a temple or a monastery, it is a piece of cosmos set over against chaos and ready to defend itself if chaos, as it will be bound to do, tries to bring it back under its old domination. It is a magic circle, a small area of perfection shutting out all the rest of infinite space. What wonder that an island has come to be a symbol of birth and of rebirth, or that from the fabled Atlantis and that earthly island, the Garden of Eden, to the latest Utopia, an island, literal or metaphorical, is more often than any other the spot the human imagination chooses for a fresh experiment in life! <sup>2</sup>

Like Ariel himself, this island play, *The Tempest*, is so *sui generis* that we do not easily see how naturally it emerges from the rest of Shakespeare. In its emphasis on parent and child and the theme of reconciliation, its kinship with the others in the group of plays that begins with *Pericles*, it is true, is a commonplace. But its roots go deeper than that.

Prospero, Duke of Milan, deprived of his dukedom and exiled on an island, is restored at the end to his former place, a man so altered by his experience that henceforth, he declares, every third thought shall be his grave. Obviously, this is the pattern of *As You Like It* with the Forest of Arden in place of the Enchanted Isle and with the difference that the Senior Duke is in no need of regeneration. But, less obviously, this theme of the King, Prince, Duke, or other person of high estate losing his place or inheritance only to recover it or its spiritual equivalent, after exile or suffering, in a sense in which he never possessed it before, is repeated by Shakespeare over and over. All stemming in a way from that early and under-valued study of King Henry VI, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and parts of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* are built on this situation. They all, in one way or another, contrast with and supplement *Hamlet*, whose hero propounds the same problem, wavers on the edge of a fresh solution, only to offer in the end the old erroneous answer. They all, in various keys, reiterate the theme of *Timon*: "Nothing brings me all things."

But it is not just those who have lost worldly kingdoms in a literal sense who come to realize this truth. Shakespeare uses the same idea metaphorically. Over and over in his plays when the object valued or the person loved is taken away, an imaginative object or person, more than compensating for the loss, appears in its place.

Friar Francis in *Much Ado about Nothing* formulates the psychology of it. Hero, accused at the marriage altar by Claudio of unfaithfulness, falls unconscious—dead, it is thought at first. Give it out that she is dead, advises Friar Francis later, and you will perceive a miracle: the real Hero will be reborn in Claudio's soul.

So will it fare with Claudio.  
When he shall hear she died upon his words,  
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep  
Into his study of imagination,  
And every lovely organ of her life  
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,  
More moving-delicate and full of life,  
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,  
Than when she liv'd indeed.

<sup>2</sup> A rarely beautiful and subtle example is Green Island in Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs*.

And so it proves, when the supposedly dead Hero, posing as her own cousin, is produced, and Claudio, seeing now with his imagination, superimposes his purified memory on the new bride and cries, "Another Hero!" Another Hero indeed, and yet the same. Beatrice and Benedick, too, are toppled out of their pride and disdain by a variation of the same psychology. Listening to "lies" about each other and themselves that are nearer the truth than the counterfeit personalities their wit has created, and shaken into sincerity by Claudio's mistreatment of Hero, they bid farewell to contempt and confess their love. And as if fascinated by the situation, Shakespeare relies on it yet again in *All's Well That Ends Well*, when Bertram sees the "dead" Helena at the end. In the light comedy of these over-theatrical plays, however, Claudio and Bertram have acted so outrageously that their conversions are to many modern readers or spectators unconvincing. Some will suspect the poet himself of skepticism or irony in these happy endings.

But the moment we pass to tragedy we accept this psychology without question. Romeo falls in love with Juliet at first sight but he loves her utterly only when she lies "dead" at his feet. Hamlet<sup>3</sup> realizes what Ophelia is to him only when he has driven her to madness and death and is literally with her in her grave. Othello recognizes the divinity of Desdemona only after he has killed her. Lear "sees" Cordelia fully only when she is dead in his arms. Antony becomes conqueror of himself only when he believes that Cleopatra has committed suicide, and Cleopatra is translated into fire and air only when her Emperor has proved his faith by taking his own life. The number of repetitions of this theme or situation in the Tragedies is startling and it is continued in modified form in the last group of plays. Posthumus discards his Italian weeds and his shame only when he believes he has murdered Imogen. Leontes falls truly in love with the "dead" wife he has wronged only when she is transformed into a statue. Symbolically this last instance might stand for all. The "illusion" of loss permits the senses to see life as if it were a work of art. In how many cases imagination is the child of death: in tragedy generally of death itself, in comedy often of a false report of death—death being the supreme "nothing" that brings "all things." In the dramatic romances especially Shakespeare seems to be asking whether some great shock short of death cannot awaken the imagination as death itself does in the Tragedies. In banishment, exile, or separation Shakespeare finds such shocks, but even these understudies of death, as they might be called, are rather the necessary condition than the cause of the awakening. Prospero on his island is not enough. There must be a Miranda too. And in all the plays where this theme of exile is conspicuous, of which *The Tempest* is the typical and terminal one, we never fail to find childhood or a childlike innocence preserved into maturity as seed for the soil that has been plowed by adversity. It is not chance that in these last plays there are so many children, unspotted maidens (and young men) together with older women and old men who have attained the wisdom of a renewed childhood: young Mamillius, Cadwal and Polydore, Perdita and Florizel, Marina, Imogen, Ferdinand and Miranda, Hermione, Paulina, Belarius, the Old Shepherd and Prospero himself. (The innocent Desdemona is in a sense the tragic mother of them all.) One of the certainties about the later Shakespeare is his conviction of the reciprocal necessity of childhood to age and of age to childhood. Confirming *King Lear* these plays assert that where the older generation has sinned it must seek pardon of the younger generation:

ALONSO. But O! how oddly will it sound that I  
Must ask my child forgiveness!

<sup>3</sup> This case, it is admitted, is debatable.

but where it has kept virtuous, as Belarius did, its function is to help keep the younger generation uncontaminated by the world—uncontaminated by it, be it noted, not unacquainted with it. For Shakespeare is the last one to advocate the closing of eyes to fact. Only he keeps faith in the power of imagination to subdue fact to its own shape. *The Tempest* seems like the summation and consummation of what he has been saying on that subject all his life. Prospero, when expelled from his dukedom, is a narrow and partial man. Thanks to his child, the island, and Ariel, he gives promise of coming back to it something like a whole one. But an integrated man is only another name for an imaginative man. And so the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda is not the only union this play celebrates, nor is the island the only symbol of wholeness. On this isle we have all found ourselves, Gonzalo proclaims in the end, "when no man was his own." In this location of spiritual treasure within the self ("The Kingdom of Heaven is within you") as well as in its emphasis on childhood and forgiveness, together with the note of humility and the appeal for mercy on which its epilogue ends, *The Tempest* is a profoundly Christian play.

## V

When we consider out of what this poem is woven, is it any wonder it produces the effect it does? Its action takes place on an enchanted island. Its main human character is a magician. Its most celestial figure is the very spirit of metamorphosis. Its most earthy one undergoes a seemingly impossible transformation—an extreme example of the moral regeneration that comes to a number of others in the play. Its atmosphere throughout is as insubstantial as a rainbow. (Iris herself actually appears at one point.) The best-remembered sentence from its best-remembered speech is

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on.

Shakespeare must have known what would happen within the minds of readers and auditors to such a diaphanous and ethereal thing. Life, as he had long since discovered, reveals as much of herself to any man as he brings to her—and no two bring the same. Bright or dark, the world seems contrived to confirm whatever idea of it we conceive it under. A poem, in proportion as it is like life, like that world, will do the same. What else than this is the ultimate meaning of the Shakespearean firmament at which we have been gazing—this human universe we have been passing in review—wherein hundreds of stars, though they inhabit the same sky, differ in glory each from each? A single universal symbol invites projection as surely as a mirror does reflection. *The Tempest* is crowded with such symbols from end to end. How inevitable that it should tempt the sensitive reader, as the stories of Belarius did Cadwal, to "strike life" into it and "show much more his own conceiving"! So long as we reverence and do not neglect its text, what *The Tempest* means, then, is what it means to you or to me. And it will never mean when we are in one mood precisely what it does when we are in another, or mean tomorrow precisely what it does today. And so, as in the case of *Hamlet*, and in due degree of the other plays, each age will find its own interpretation of *The Tempest*, and, miraculously, it will seem to have been written for each age. A main thing it says to our age ought to be plain. Its great opposed symbols are the tempest of Prospero, which Ariel made as Prospero's slave, and Ariel's music, which Ariel made of his own free will. The former is the result

of necromantic science or theurgy. The latter is a spontaneous overflow of joy in life. The one creates an opportunity for revenge. The other resolves the situation thus created. What that says to a generation that has used its own science to make an atomic bomb is as illuminating as a flash of lightning by night.

## VI

If lovers of Shakespeare were asked to select a single passage from his works best representative of both his poetry and his philosophy of life, there would probably be nearly unanimous agreement in choosing Prospero's lines beginning,

Our revels now are ended. . . .

through

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

In their context, as Prospero utters them, they are susceptible of a profoundly sad, not to say pessimistic, interpretation. But as Shakespeare's words the world has on the whole refused to take them so, finding in them rather a supreme expression of the mystery and wonder of life. "Rounded with a sleep" can mean several other things than ended with a sleep, and when did a dream ever exist without a dreamer?

There is one little word here, of only two letters, that makes all the difference. Most commentators explain that "We are such stuff as dreams are made on" means according to Elizabethan usage, as indeed it may, "We are such stuff as dreams are made of." But it may also mean just what it says to the unlearned modern mind. Whether we are such stuff as dreams are made of is at best a matter of opinion or conviction, even though Shakespeare's authority is supposed to support the assertion. But that we are such stuff as dreams are made on is a matter of fact. It is indeed the one datum of consciousness—more nearly ultimate even than Descartes's *Cogito, ergo sum*. The science of our age seeks to explain the constitution of matter. But perhaps the final secret and definition of matter will turn out to be not some mathematical formula but simply this: Matter is that stuff on which dreams can be imprinted, that substance, in other words, on which creative energy can be projected. How else could things as frail as dreams have survived the tempest and chaos of material evolution?

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

A question that contains its own answer.

## NOTES AND QUESTIONS

### I: THE PLAY

#### 347. ANTIGONE SOPHOCLES

*From a commentary by the translators:*

##### I

We have made cuts only when it seemed absolutely necessary. The most notable excision is that of a passage of sixteen lines beginning with Antigone's long speech near the end of Scene IV, which has been bracketed as spurious, either in whole or in part, by the best critics. Aristotle quotes two verses from it, which proves, as Professor Jebb points out, that if it is an interpolation it must have been made soon after Sophocles' death, possibly by his son Iophon. However that may be, it is dismal stuff. Antigone is made to interrupt her lamentation by a series of inferior verses whose sense is as unsatisfactory as their sound. We quote the Oxford Translation, the style of which is for once wholly adequate to the occasion:

"And yet, in the opinion of those who have just sentiments, I honoured you [Polyneices] aright. For neither, though I had been the mother of children, nor though my husband dying, had mouldered away, would I have undertaken this toil against the will of the citizens. On account of what law do I say this? There would have been another husband for me if the first died, and if I lost my child there would have been another from another man! But my father and my mother being laid in the grave, it is impossible a brother should ever be born to me. On the principle of such a law, having preferred you, my brother, to all other considerations, I seemed to Creon to commit a sin, and to dare what was dreadful. And now, seizing me by force, he thus leads me away, having never enjoyed the nuptial bed, nor heard the nuptial lay, nor having gained the lot of marriage, nor of rearing my children; but thus I, an unhappy woman, deserted by my friends, go, while alive, to the cavern of the dead."

There are other excisions of less importance. Perhaps the discussion of one of them will serve to explain them all. Near the end of the *Exodos*, Creon is told of his wife's death. The Messenger has five very graphic lines describing Eurydice's suicide, to which Creon responds with an outburst of dread and grief; yet two lines later, as if he had not heard the first time, he is asking the Messenger how Eurydice died. The Messenger replies that she stabbed herself to the heart. There is no evidence that the question and reply are interpolations: on the contrary, they serve the definite purpose of filling out the iambic interlude between two lyric strophes; but in a modern version which does not attempt to reproduce the strophic structure of this passage they merely clog the dialogue. Therefore we have skipped them; and the occasional suppression of short passages throughout the play is based upon similar considerations.

##### II

In a like manner, we have not hesitated to use free paraphrase when a literal rendering of the Greek would result in obscurity. Again, the discussion of a specific instance may illuminate the whole question.

After Antigone has been led away to death, the Chorus, taking a hint from her having compared her own fate to that of Niobe, proceeds to elaborate the stories of mythological persons who have suffered similar punishment. The Fourth Ode cites Danae, Lycurgus, the son of Dryas, and Kleopatra, the daughter of Boreas and wife of the Thracian king Phineus. Only Danae is mentioned by name; the others are allusively identified. The difficulty [of translation] arises from the allusive method: Sophocles' audience would be certain to recognize the allusions, but that is not true of ours. To what extent can we depend upon the audience's recognition in a day when, to quote Mr. I. A. Richards, "we can no longer refer with any confidence to any episode in the Bible, or to any nursery tale

or any piece of mythology"? We can assume that the story of Danaë is still current; but Lycurgus is forgotten now, and the sordid Phineus-Kleopatras-Eidothea affair no longer stirs so much as an echo. Nevertheless, Sophocles devotes two of his four strophes to this Kleopatras, and he does it in so oblique a manner that "translation" is out of the question. We have therefore rendered these strophes with such slight additions to the Greek sense as might convey an equivalent suggestion of fable to a modern audience.

### III

The Chorus is composed, says the Scholiast, of "certain old men of Thebes": leading citizens ("O men many-charioted, in love with Fortune") to whom Creon addresses his fatal decree, and from whom he later takes advice. Sophocles' Chorus probably numbered fifteen, including the Choragos, or Leader; its function was to chant the Odes and, in the person of the Choragos, to participate in the action. In a version designed for the modern stage certain changes are inevitable. It cannot be urged too strongly that the words of the Odes must be intelligible to the audience; and they are almost certain not to be intelligible if they are chanted in unison by so large a group, with or without musical accompaniment. It is suggested, then, that in producing this play no attempt be made to follow the ancient choric method. There should be no dancing. The *parados*, for example, should be a solemn but almost unnoticeable evolution of moving or still patterns accompanied by a drumbeat whose rhythm may be derived from the cadence of the Ode itself. The lines given to the Chorus in the Odes should probably be spoken by single voices. The only accompaniment should be percussion: we follow Allan Sly's score of the *Alcestis* in suggesting a large side drum from which the snares have been removed, to be struck with two felt-headed tympani sticks, one hard, one soft.

### IV

A careful production might make successful use of masks. They should be of the Benda type used in the production of O'Neill's *The Great God Brown*: lifelike, closely fitting the contours of the face, and valuable only as they give the effect of

immobility to character. On no account should there be any attempt to reproduce the Greek mask, which was larger than life size and served a function non-existent on the modern stage—the amplification of voice and mood for projection to the distant seats of the outdoor theatre.

If masks are used at all, they might well be allotted only to those characters who are somewhat depersonalized by official position or discipline: Creon, Teiresias, the Chorus and Choragos, possibly the Messenger. By this rule, Antigone has no mask; neither has Ismene, Haimon, nor Eurydice. If Creon is masked, we see no objection, in art or feeling, to the symbolic removal of his mask before he returns with the dead body of his son.

DUDLEY FITTS  
ROBERT FITZGERALD

### 379. THE WILD DUCK

HENRIK IBSEN

In what sense does the entire action of Act I represent, in terms of the whole play, a "front" or mask? What is the party at Werle's house *masking*?

Mrs. Sörby, Werle's housekeeper, engages with the guests at Werle's party in a game of Blind Man's Bluff. What is signified? Just previous to this incident, with which Act I ends, Werle tells his son that his eyes have begun to trouble him, and Gregers replies: "They have always been weak." He intends a double meaning, and Ibsen is here using a symbolic device. In Act IV, Mrs. Sörby says that Werle is going blind, to which Gina replies: "Lots of people do." To how many persons in the play does this apply? Who is *not* blind, symbolically speaking, and what are all the others blind to? Though Werle is losing his eyesight, is Gregers correct in his implied accusation that always his father's eyesight has been at fault? Does Gregers himself possess good "eyesight"? From the point of view of Relling, what is not good about Gregers' "eyesight"? In Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Lear*, Kent admonishes Lear, the self-deposed king: "See better, Lear." In what sense might Relling speak the same words to Gregers?

Werle, as Hjalmar sees him, has "hoodwinked a confiding fellow creature in days gone by." Who else in the play "hoodwinks a confiding fellow creature"? What part would Relling take in hoodwinking others? Gina hoodwinks her husband, but Gregers hoodwinks himself. Gregers believes that



he can "rescue" Hjalmar "from all the falsehood and deception that are bringing him to ruin" (Act II). But Hjalmar is not rescued, and Gregers himself sinks under his own lie and deception. Define that self-delusion which blinds Gregers. He compares himself with "an amazingly clever dog; one that goes to the bottom after wild ducks when they dive and bite themselves fast in tangle and sea-weed, down among the ooze" (Act II). Explain the symbolism here. Hedwig says, about Gregers's wanting to be like a dog, "I believe he meant something quite different by that." What *did* Gregers mean?

How does this metaphor of the wild duck "rescued" by the dog apply to the relationship between Gregers and his father? Between Gregers and Hjalmar? Between Gregers and Hedwig? In the relationship between Gregers and Relling, however, the dog who "rescues" the wild duck is not Gregers. Explain how and why Ibsen has inverted the metaphoric situation, as well as the literal one from which the metaphor springs. What purpose is served by this inverted symbol? What theme or meaning emerges? (For another instance of inversion of symbol see Katherine Mansfield's short story "The Fly." Pages 130-134.)

The literal wild duck fetched up from the bottom of the pond by Werle's "clever dog" survives in the garret now, in an alien environment, and splashes about in a trough there filled with fresh water every day. She didn't thrive at Werle's house, but she thrives now under Ekdal's care in the garret at Hjalmar's house. Why should this be the case? As Hjalmar says: "You see, she has lived in there so long now that she has forgotten her natural wild life; and all depends on that." And Gregers replies: "Be sure you never let her get a glimpse of the sky and the sea. . . ." Explain the meaning of this passage. In what sense is Ekdal a "wild duck"? And Hjalmar? Hedwig claims the wild duck as her very own: "It belongs to me" (Act II). Gregers persuades Hedwig to "sacrifice the wild duck" for the sake of her father, as a "free-will offering, for his sake, of the dearest treasure you have in the world!" To wring the neck of the wild duck *means* what? And why does Gregers persuade Hedwig to wring the neck of the wild duck? Does she do it? Hedwig's "blindness" is said to be "hereditary" (Act II). It is also symbolical. In what sense do we

all share Hedwig's "blindness"? Does Hedwig finally attain to a moment of insight and recognition of the truth?

Why has Ibsen designated Hjalmar as a "photographer"? Hedwig, like Werle, is in danger of losing her eyesight, but nevertheless Hjalmar lets her work at his photography, *tinting* the pictures. What is the symbolic import and purpose here? Hjalmar's photography is one form of retreat from life, and Ekdal's garret with the wild duck is another. What others are there? Does the "claim of the ideal" provide another example? How so? The trouble with Hjalmar, according to Relling, is that "in his own circle he has always been looked upon as a shining light—" (Act V). It's that very light that has blinded him from seeing himself and from seeing the world for what it is. Old Ekdal supplies the parallel to Hjalmar. What they have feared is the dark places where truth lies concealed. The wild duck "looks quite different by day from what it did last night in the moonlight" (Act III), and Hedwig in the night prays for the duck—*not* in the morning, because "In the morning it's light, you know, and there's nothing in particular to be afraid of" (Act IV). What meaning attaches to *light* and *darkness*? Hjalmar's photographs are made in the light but developed in darkness, and they are tinted under lamplight.

When Gregers enters Hjalmar's apartment (Act IV), he complains about the gloom there, and Gina takes off the lampshade. Why does Ibsen inject this particular action at this particular moment? Just previous to Gregers's visit Hjalmar asks Gina to light the lamp for him, and Gina does so and then puts on the lampshade. Why does this action occur where it does, and what does it signify in terms of the context of the conversation between Gina and Hjalmar? Why does Gina shade the light from Hjalmar? In what other ways does Gina shade the "light" from her husband? Does Mrs. Sörby shade the truth from Werle?

Does the "claim of the ideal" equate as meaning with "light" or with "darkness"? Does truth exist at the Hoidal Works or in Ekdal's garret? What wisdom has the person who is a "wild duck," and what wisdom has the person who is the dog retrieving the duck from dark places? What validity emerges from the play, considering it from the author's point of view, for quests for the truth, cure-alls prescribed against illusions, the "delirium of hero-

worship," or the claim of the "conscience"? Locate instances of expressions of noble sentiments throughout the play and show how these are exploded by contradictory facts. What does this device of contrasted moods tell about the author's own philosophy of life or attitude toward it? Compare in similar terms Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

#### 469. THE CHERRY ORCHARD ANTON CHEKHOV

What justification as motif or theme is there for Lopakhin's remark, which begins the play: "What is the time?" Why this remark and not another? What incidents and what characters illustrate the theme of Facing Up to Time, and what characters or incidents illustrate the obverse of this theme?

The construction of the whole play consists of alternations of contradictory moods; a passage evoking a mood of happiness is followed by a passage evoking a contradiction of that mood. In Act One, Madame Ranevsky exclaims: "This happiness is more than I can bear." She kisses the cupboard in her joy and caresses a little table, as Gayef remarks: "Nurse is dead since you went away." "And Anastasi is dead." And with that, Gayef eats some sugar candy. Lopakhin wants everything to be sweet too: "I long to say something charming and delightful to you." But he doesn't. Instead, he looks at his watch. (Lopakhin represents Progress, the capacity for living in time, moving with time, instead of standing still or longing for the past. Does Chekhov admire Lopakhin for this characteristic?) While he looks at his watch, Lopakhin characteristically says: "I'm just off; there's no time to talk." And then he reminds them all that the cherry orchard is up for sale and he proposes his plan: Cut up the cherry orchard! For him the cherries are useless; nobody buys the fruit. What does this tell us about Lopakhin? Gayef retorts: "Our orchard is mentioned in Andreyevsky's Encyclopaedia." What does this tell us about Gayef?

Gayef, imitating Madame Ranevsky's nostalgic caressing of the cupboard, makes an address to the cupboard as though it were alive and listening. "Beloved and venerable cupboard; honour and glory to your existence, which for more than a hundred years has been directed to the noble ideals of justice and virtue." His grandiose

sentiments, though they contain an element of half-truth, are obviously sham, and, unwittingly or not, he has mocked the very thing he dearly loves. "You haven't changed, Leonid," Madame Ranevsky says to him. What other persons in the play provide a parallel to Gayef in terms of this theme of change?

Immediately following this, Gayef is confused and embarrassed. His next remark has no logical connection with what precedes it. It is this utter lack of logical connection between almost every speech or incident throughout the play that makes *The Cherry Orchard* more difficult reading than most plays. *The Cherry Orchard* demands from an audience or a reader a different kind of approach from other plays. Like other works by Chekhov, it asks for—and rewards—a personal participation in the progress of what is happening inwardly rather than outwardly, and in how those happenings are revealed in dialogue. Outwardly, nothing much "happens" in *The Cherry Orchard*—but look at what is going on inwardly, as in the little exchange between Madame Ranevsky and her brother Gayef. Confused and embarrassed by self-recognition of the fact that he has made a fool of himself in his silly eulogy of the old cupboard, Gayef tries to turn aside the implications with an attempt at comedy in the enigmatic phrase: "Off the white in the corner, chip the red in the middle pocket!"—delivered with burlesque gestures.

Gayef's aside about the billiard balls has a purpose, then, in terms of what precedes it. Find in the play other passages in which this principle of structure and style may be found—that is, passages in which one remark is a psychological, rather than a logical, consequence of a preceding remark.

In Act III, Trophimof, the student, admonishes Madame Ranevsky: "Be calm, dear Lyubof Andreyevna. You mustn't deceive yourself any longer; for once you must look the truth straight in the face." Does Trophimof himself "look the truth straight in the face"? What person in the play does so? Does seeing things as they are without illusions represent Chekhov's answer to the question? On this same question what stand does Ibsen seem to take in *The Wild Duck*? Does Ibsen commit himself? In *The Cherry Orchard* trace instances where the characters are expressing self-deluded dreams, illusions. For example, in Act II, Trophimof pronounces the dogma: "... before we

can live in the present, we must first redeem the past, and have done with it; and it is only by suffering that we can redeem it, only by strenuous, unremitting toil. Understand that, Anya." But are not Peter's grand ideals themselves illusions? Madame Ranevsky punctures his pretty theory (in Act III), undercutting his philosophy by the facts: "You settle every important question so boldly; but tell me, Peter, isn't that because you're young, because you have never solved any question of your own as yet by suffering?"

Anya (in Act II) no longer loves the orchard, because Trophimof has changed her notions about it. "What have you done to me, Peter? Why is it that I no longer love the cherry orchard as I did? I used to love it so tenderly; I thought there was no better place on earth than our garden." What, to the contrary, is Madame Ranevsky's attitude toward the orchard (see Act III)? How does Lopakhin regard the orchard? For Trophimof: "All Russia is our garden" (Act II). And first, what is his outlook about the orchard? In sum, then, there are multiple viewpoints expressed by the various characters concerning the cherry orchard. Where lies the truth about it? Does any one person express the final truth about it? How does this motif or theme operate elsewhere in other contexts throughout the play?

"All Russia is our garden," says Trophimof. "To avoid everything petty, everything illusory, everything that prevents one from being free and happy, that is the whole meaning and purpose of our life. Forward!" Would Lopakhin agree with Trophimof's fine sentiment? Anya is taken in by it, but is Madame Ranevsky? Chekhov has loaded his drama with sham sentiments that are again and again shattered by injections of hard facts, romantic moods

exploded by realities. For one example, when Ephikhodof, through his singing, tries to project himself into the role of a lover with a mandolin (in Act II), Dunyasha breaks into his mood to point out that it is a guitar he is strumming, not a romantic mandolin. And for another example, it is in the midst of a ball, with all the romantic atmosphere suggested by such an event, that the brutal fact becomes known that the cherry orchard has been sold to Lopakhin. Find further examples, in both dialogue and incident.

Discuss what Chekhov achieves in using the offstage sound of "a string breaking." Would such a device be effective in a stage presentation? Why—or why not? Are the occasions on which the sound is heard particularly important occasions? Explain.

## 512. BILLY BUDD

LOUIS O. COXE and  
ROBERT CHAPMAN

What occurrence in Chapter 15 of the novel, *Billy Budd, Foretopman*, has been changed in the play version, *Billy Budd*? What does the play gain or lose by this changed portion? What other changes do you notice throughout the play? What themes or motifs in the novel are not incorporated into the play? Is the play more than a translation or dramatic reproduction of Melville's novel?

Have the playwrights succeeded in translating into dramatic terms the characteristic Melville defines as "natural depravity"? Explain. Are the changes made in the role of the Dansker necessary? What is lost by the play's omission of Captain Vere's death?

How does the play differ from the novel in terms of religious symbolism?



## Part Three

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# POETRY

### *I: The Poem*

*A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language. Whether this love is a sign of his poetic gift or the gift itself—for falling in love is given not chosen—I don't know, but it is certainly the sign by which one recognizes whether a young man is potentially a poet or not.*

—W. H. AUDEN

*Poetry should please by a fine excess and not by singularity. It should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost as a remembrance.*

—JOHN KEATS



## *i. The Poem as Narrative*

### THE THREE RAVENS

ANONYMOUS

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.

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

"Downe in yonder greene field, <sup>10</sup>  
There lies a knight slain under his shield.

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

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

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

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

She got him up upon her backe, <sup>20</sup>  
And carried him to earthen lake.

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

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

<sup>16</sup>, fallow doe: the reference is to the knight's wife or lover. <sup>25</sup>, leman: (archaic) —sweetheart.

### THE TWA CORBIES

ANONYMOUS

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

"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, <sup>10</sup>

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." <sup>20</sup>

<sup>2</sup>, twa corbies: (Scottish dialect)—two crows or ravens. <sup>2</sup>, mane: moan, lament. <sup>3</sup>, tane: one. <sup>4</sup>, gang: go. <sup>5</sup>, fail dyke: turf wall. <sup>6</sup>, wot: know. <sup>10</sup>, hame: home. <sup>13</sup>, hause-bane: neck-bone. <sup>14</sup>, een: eyes. <sup>16</sup>, theek: thatch.

## THE FALCON

ANONYMOUS

*Lully, lulley! lully, lulley!**The faucon hath borne my make away!*

He bare him up, he bare him down,  
 He bare him into an orchard brown.

In that orchard there was an halle,  
 That was hangéd with purple and pall.

And in that hall there was a bed,  
 It was hangéd with gold sa red.

2, make: mate. 13, may: maiden. 16,  
 Corpus Christi: body of Christ.

And in that bed there li'th a knight,  
 His woundés bleeding day and night. 10

At that bed's foot there li'th a hound,  
 Licking the blood as it runs down.

By that bed-side kneeleth a may,  
 And she weepeth both night and day.

And at that bed's head standeth a stone,  
*Corpus Christi* written thereon.

*Lully, lulley! lully, lulley!*  
*The faucon hath borne my make away.*

## SIR PATRICK SPENS

ANONYMOUS

The king sits in Dumferling toun,  
 Drinking the blude-reid wine:

"O whar will I get guid sailor,  
 To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knight,  
 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 signed 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 lauchéd 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! 20

9, braid: full, long. 14, lauch: laugh.  
 16, ee: eye. 29, laith: loath. 30, weet their  
 cork-heild schoone: wet their cork-heeled  
 shoes. 31, lang owre a' the play . . . : long  
 before the whole play. . . 32, aboone:  
 above. 38, kems: combs. 41, haf owre: half  
 [the way] over.

"Mak hast, mak hast, 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."

10 O our Scots nobles wer richt laith  
 To weet their cork-heild schoone; 30  
 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. 40

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



## THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

ANONYMOUS

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,  
And a wealthy wife was she;  
She had three stout and stalwart sons,  
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,  
A week but barely ane,  
Whan word came to the carline wife,  
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,  
A week but barely three, 10  
Whan word came to the carline wife,  
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,  
Nor fashes in the flood,  
Till my three sons come hame to me,  
In earthly flesh and blood."

It fell about the Martinmass,  
When nights are lang and mirk,  
The carline wife's three sons came hame,  
And their hats were o' the birk. 20

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,  
Nor yet in ony sheugh;  
But at the gates o' Paradise,  
That birk grew fair eneugh.

7, carline: old woman. 14, fashes: storms,  
troubles. 17, Martinmass: November 11.  
18, mirk: dark. 20, birk: birch. 21, syke:  
trench. 22, sheugh: furrow. 36, 'Tis

"Blow up the fire, my maidens;  
Bring water from the well!  
For a' my house shall feast this night,  
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,  
She's made it large and wide; 30  
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,  
Sat down at the bed-side.

Up then crew the red, red cock,  
And up and crew the gray;  
The eldest to the youngest said,  
"'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,  
And clapp'd his wings at a',  
When the youngest to the eldest said,  
"Brother, we must awa. 40

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,  
The channerin' worm doth chide:  
Gin we be mist out o' our place,  
A sair pain we maun bide.

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!  
Fareweel to barn and byre!  
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass,  
That kindles my mother's fire."

time . . . : it was believed that at cockcrow  
the dead must all return to their graves.  
42, channerin': fretting. 43, Gin: If. 46,  
byre: cowshed.

## THE UNQUIET GRAVE

ANONYMOUS

"The wind doth blow today, my love,  
And a few small drops of rain;  
I never had but one true-love,  
In cold grave she was lain.

"I'll do as much for my true-love  
As any young man may;

I'll sit and mourn all at her grave  
For a twelvemonth and a day."

The twelvemonth and a day being up,  
The dead began to speak: 10  
"Oh, who sits weeping on my grave,  
And will not let me sleep?"

" 'Tis I, my love, sits on your grave,  
And will not let you sleep;  
For I crave one kiss of your clay-cold lips,  
And that is all I seek."

"You crave one kiss of my clay-cold lips;  
But my breath smells earthy strong;  
If you have one kiss of my clay-cold lips,  
Your time will not be long. 20

" 'Tis down in yonder garden green,  
Love, where we used to walk,  
The finest flower that ere was seen  
Is withered to a stalk.

"The stalk is withered dry, my love,  
So will our hearts decay;  
So make yourself content, my love,  
Till God calls you away."

## BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

### ANONYMOUS

It was in and about the Martinmas time,  
When the green leaves were a falling,  
That Sir John Graeme, in the West Coun-  
try,  
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town,  
To the place where she was dwelling:  
"O haste and come to my master dear,  
Gin ye be Barbara Allan."

O hooly, hooly rose she up,  
To the place where he was lying, 10  
And when she drew the curtain by,  
"Young man, I think you're dying."

"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,  
And 't is a' for Barbara Allan:"  
"O the better for me ye's never be,  
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

1, Martinmas: November 11. 8, Gin: If.  
9, hooly: softly, slowly. 15, ye's: ye shall.  
17, dinna ye mind: do ye not remember?  
31, jow: stroke; geid: gave.

"O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,  
"When ye was in the tavern a drinking,  
That ye made the healths gae round and  
round,  
And slighted Barbara Allan?" 20

He turned his face unto the wall,  
And death was with him dealing:  
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,  
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

And slowly, slowly raise she up,  
And slowly, slowly left him,  
And sighing said, she could not stay,  
Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,  
When she heard the dead-bell ringing,  
And every jow that the dead-bell geid, 31  
It cry'd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

"O mother, mother, make my bed!  
O make it saft and narrow!  
Since my love died for me to-day,  
I'll die for him to-morrow."

## BARBARA ALLEN'S CRUELTY

### ANONYMOUS

In Scarlet town, where I was born,  
There was a fair maid dwellin',  
Made every youth cry *Well-a-way!*  
Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,  
When green buds they were swellin',  
Young Jemmy Grove on his death-bed lay,  
For love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his man in to her then,  
 To the town where she was dwellin'; 10  
 "O haste and come to my master dear,  
 If your name be Barbara Allen."

So slowly, slowly rase she up,  
 And slowly she came nigh him,  
 And when she drew the curtain by,  
 "Young man, I think you're dyin'."

"O it's I am sick and very very sick,  
 And it's all for Barbara Allen."  
 "O the better for me ye'se never be, 19  
 Tho' your heart's blood were a-spillin'!"

"O dinna ye mind, young man," says she,  
 "When the red wine ye were fillin',  
 That ye made the healths go round and  
 round,  
 And slighted Barbara Allen?"

He turned his face unto the wall,  
 And death was with him dealin':  
 "Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,  
 And be kind to Barbara Allen!"

As she was walking o'er the fields,  
 She heard the dead-bell knellin'; 30  
 And every jow the dead-bell gave  
 Cried "Woe to Barbara Allen."

"O mother, mother, make my bed,  
 O make it saft and narrow:  
 My love has died for me to-day,  
 I'll die for him to-morrow.

"Farewell," she said, "ye virgins all,  
 And shun the fault I fell in:  
 Henceforth take warning by the fall  
 Of cruel Barbara Allen." 40

## THE TWA BROTHERS

## ANONYMOUS

There were twa brethren in the north,  
 They went to school thegithar;  
 The one unto the other said,  
 Will you try a warsle afore?

They wrestled up, they wrestled down,  
 Till Sir John fell to the ground,  
 And there was a knife in Sir Willie's  
 pouch,  
 Gied him a deadlie wound.

"Oh brither dear, take me on your back,  
 Carry me to yon burn clear, 10  
 And wash the blood from off my wound,  
 And it will bleed nae mair."

He took him up upon his back,  
 Carried him to yon burn clear,  
 And washd the blood from off his wound,  
 And aye it bled the mair.

"Oh brother dear, take me on your back,  
 Carry me to yon kirk-yard,  
 And dig a grave baith wide and deep,  
 And lay my body there." 20

10, burn: stream. 16, aye: ever, always.  
 22, kirk-yard: churchyard. 37, loe: love.

He's taen him up upon his back,  
 Carried him to yon kirk-yard,  
 And dug a grave both deep and wide,  
 And laid his body there.

"But what will I say to my father dear,  
 Should he chance to say, Willie, whar's  
 John?"

"Oh say that he's to England gone,  
 To buy him a cask of wine."

"And what shall I say to my mother dear,  
 Should she chance to say, Willie, whar's  
 John?" 30

"Oh say that he's to England gone,  
 To buy her a new silk gown."

"And what will I say to my sister dear,  
 Should she chance to say, Willie, whar's  
 John?"

"Oh say that he's to England gone,  
 To buy her a wedding ring."

"What will I say to her you loe dear,  
 Should she cry, Why tarries my John?"

"Oh tell her I lie in fair Kirk-land,  
 And home will never come." 40

## EDWARD

## ANONYMOUS

"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 sac guid,  
     And I had nae mair bot hee O."

"Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,  
     Edward, Edward, 10  
 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."

"Your steid was auld, and ye hae got mair,  
     Edward, Edward,  
 Your steid was auld, and ye hae got mair,  
     Sum other dule ye drie O" 20  
 "O I hae killed my fadir deir,  
     Mither, mither.  
 O I hae killed my fadir deir,  
     Alas, and wae is mee O!"

"And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,  
     Edward, Edward,  
 And whatten penance will ye drie for that?  
     My deir son, now tell me O."  
 "Ile set my feit in yonder boat,  
     Mither, mither, 30  
 Ile set my feit in yonder boat,  
     And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

"And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and  
     your ha,  
     Edward, Edward?  
 And what wul you 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." 40

"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."

"And what wul ye leive to your ain mither  
     deir,  
     Edward, Edward? 50  
 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."

1, dois: does; brand: sword, knife. 4,  
 gang: go, walk. 8, bot: but. 16, erst:  
 formerly; frie: good, fine. 20, dule ye  
 drie: grief ye suffer.

33, ha: hall. 37, tul: till; fa: fall. 40,  
 maun: must. 41, bairns: children. 45,  
 warldis: world's; late: let; thrae: through.  
 56, Sic: Such.

## LORD RANDAL

ANONYMOUS

"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?" 10  
 "I gat eels boil'd 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 swell'd and they died; mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"O I fear ye are poison'd, Lord Randal, my son!  
 O I fear ye are poison'd, my handsome young man!"  
 "O yes! I am poison'd; mother, make my bed soon,  
 For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down." 20

4, wald: would. 11, broo: brew, broth.

## LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

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

O 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, 10  
 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. 20

I set her on my pacing steed,  
 And nothing else saw all day long.  
 For sidelong would she bend, 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.'

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!' 40

She took me to her elfin grot,  
 And there she wept, and sighed full  
 sore, 30  
 And there I shut her wild wild eyes  
 With kisses four.

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 there she lulled me asleep,  
 And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!  
 The latest dream I ever dreamed  
 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.

## LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

ROLFE HUMPHRIES (1894— )

Three of us walking, and two of us were tall,  
 Walking, in this dream,  
 On a down-hill path, in a grove of laurel and pine,  
 On our way to a pleasant stream.

—*Who is the third who always walks beside you?*

And the third was not so tall, but her eyes were clear,  
 And her look so sweet and mild  
 That rather than wife and mother, she seemed to be  
 An innocent-hearted child.

—*Who is the third who always walks beside you?*

10

We paused on the path, through the green and lovely wood,  
 For a moment, in the dream;  
 We had plenty of time, we felt no wise compelled  
 To rush to reach the stream.

And all of a sudden she raised her ringless hand  
 And pointed straight at me,  
 And cried, "How ugly and horrible he is!  
 Look for yourself, and see!"

"Look for yourself, and see!" she cried aloud,  
 In rage and fright, and you,  
 Obedient to her voice and gesture, turned,  
 Looked, and saw it was true.

20

I was no more I, but a lewd and evil shape,  
 Coarse-grained and dead as stone,  
 And the sight of the utter stark and staring truth  
 Numbed you in every bone.

And she held the pose, and she looked at you, and smiled,  
 Turned over her hand, and screamed,  
 Screamed, and vanished: and you awoke, alone,  
 To face what you had dreamed.

30

—*Who is the third who always walks beside you?*

## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

### ARGUMENT

How a ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold country toward the south pole, and how from thence she made her course to the tropical latitude of the great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the ancient Mariner came back to his own country.

### PART I

An ancient Mariner  
 meeteth three Gallants  
 bidden to a wedding-  
 feast, and detaineth  
 one.

It is an ancient Mariner,  
 And he stoppeth one of three.  
 "By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,  
 Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,  
 And I am next of kin;  
 The guests are met, the feast is set:  
 May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
 "There was a ship," quoth he.  
 "Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"  
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

10

The Wedding-Guest is  
 spell-bound by the eye  
 of the old sea-faring  
 man, and constrained  
 to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
 The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
 And listens like a three years' child:  
 The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:  
 He cannot choose but hear;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

20

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how  
the ship sailed southward  
with a good wind and fair  
weather, till it reached the  
Line.

The sun came up upon the left,  
Out of the sea came he!  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,  
Till over the mast at noon—" 30  
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest  
heareth the bridal music;  
but the Mariner continueth  
his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
Red as a rose is she;  
Nodding their heads before her goes  
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
Yet he cannot choose but hear;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

The ship driven by a  
storm toward the south  
pole.

"And now the storm-blast came, and he  
Was tyrannous and strong:  
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,  
As who pursued with yell and blow  
Still treads the shadow of his foe,  
And forward bends his head,  
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,  
And it grew wondrous cold:  
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of  
fearful sounds where no  
living thing was to be  
seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts  
Did send a dismal sheen:  
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—  
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around: 60



It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called  
the Albatross, came  
through the snow-fog, and  
was received with great  
joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,  
Thorough the fog it came;  
As if it had been a Christian soul,  
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
And round and round it flew.  
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;  
The helmsman steered us through!

70

And lo! the Albatross  
proveth a bird of good  
omen, and followeth the  
ship as it returneth north-  
ward through fog and  
floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind;  
The Albatross did follow,  
And every day, for food or play,  
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,  
It perched for vespers nine;  
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

The ancient Mariner  
inhospitably killeth the  
pious bird of good omen.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!  
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—  
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow  
I shot the Albatross.

80

## PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:  
Out of the sea came he,  
Still hid in mist, and on the left  
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet bird did follow,  
Nor any day for food or play  
Came to the mariners' hollo!

90

His shipmates cry out  
against the ancient  
Mariner, for killing the  
bird of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work 'em woe:  
For all averred, I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow.  
'Ah wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,  
That made the breeze to blow!'

But when the fog cleared  
off, they justify the same,  
and thus make themselves  
accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist:  
Then all averred, I had killed the bird

That brought the fog and mist. 100  
 'Twas right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,  
 That bring the fog and mist.'

The fair breeze continues;  
 the ship enters the Pacific  
 Ocean, and sails north-  
 ward, even till it reaches  
 the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
 The furrow followed free;  
 We were the first that ever burst  
 Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been  
 suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
 'Twas sad as sad could be;  
 And we did speak only to break  
 The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,  
 The bloody Sun, at noon,  
 Right up above the mast did stand,  
 No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
 As idle as a painted ship  
 Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins  
 to be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,  
 And all the boards did shrink;  
 Water, water, everywhere 120  
 Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!  
 That ever this should be!  
 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
 Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout  
 The death-fires danced at night;  
 The water, like a witch's oils,  
 Burnt green, and blue, and white. 130

A Spirit had followed  
 them; one of the invisible  
 inhabitants of this planet,  
 neither departed souls nor  
 angels; concerning whom  
 the learned Jew, Josephus,  
 and the Platonic Con-  
 stantinopolitan, Michael  
 Psellus, may be consulted.  
 They are very numerous,  
 and there is no climate or  
 element without one or  
 more.

And some in dreams assured were  
 Of the Spirit that plagued us so:  
 Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
 From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,  
 Was withered at the root;  
 We could not speak, no more than if  
 We had been choked with soot.

The ship-mates, in their  
sore distress, would fain  
throw the whole guilt on  
the ancient Mariner: in  
sign whereof they hang the  
dead sea-bird round his  
neck.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young!  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

140

PART III

The ancient Mariner  
beholdeth a sign in the  
element afar off.

"There passed a weary time. Each throat  
Was parched, and glazed each eye.  
A weary time! a weary time!  
How glazed each weary eye,  
When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist;  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

150

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!  
And still it neared and neared:  
As if it dodged a water-sprite,  
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach,  
it seemeth him to be a  
ship; and at a dear ransom  
he freeth his speech from  
the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
We could nor laugh nor wail;  
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!  
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,  
And cried, 'A sail! a sail!'

160

A flash of joy;

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
Agape they heard me call;  
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,  
And all at once their breath drew in,  
As they were drinking all.

And horror follows. For  
can it be a ship that comes  
onward without wind or  
tide?

'See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!  
Hither to work us weal;  
Without a breeze, without a tide,  
She steadies with upright keel!'

170

The western wave was all a-flame;  
The day was well nigh done!  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright Sun;  
When that strange shape drove suddenly  
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him but the  
skeleton of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,  
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)  
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered  
With broad and burning face.

180

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)  
How fast she nears and nears!  
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,  
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are seen as  
bars on the face of the  
setting Sun. The Spectre-  
Woman and her Death-  
mate, and no other on  
board the skeleton-ship.  
Like vessel, like crew!

Are those her ribs through which the Sun  
Did peer, as through a grate?  
And is that Woman all her crew?  
Is that a Death? and are there two?  
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold:  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The nightmare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

190

Death and Life-in-Death  
have diced for the ship's  
crew, and she (the latter)  
winneeth the ancient  
Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came,  
And the twain were casting dice;  
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'—  
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the  
courts of the Sun.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:  
At one stride comes the dark;  
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,  
Off shot the spectre-bark.

200

At the rising of the Moon,

We listened and looked sideways up!  
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
My life-blood seemed to sip!  
The stars were dim, and thick the night,  
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;  
From the sails the dew did drip—  
Till clomb above the eastern bar  
The horned Moon, with one bright star  
Within the nether tip.

210

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
Too quick for groan or sigh,  
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down  
dead.

Four times fifty living men,  
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)

With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins  
her work on the ancient  
Mariner.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—  
They fled to bliss or woe!  
And every soul, it passed me by,  
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

220

## PART IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth  
that a Spirit is talking to  
him;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!  
I fear thy skinny hand!  
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

But the ancient Mariner  
assureth him of his bodily  
life, and proceedeth to  
relate his horrible penance.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,  
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—  
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!  
This body dropt not down.

230

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide, wide sea!  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures  
of the calm.

The many men, so beautiful!  
And they all dead did lie:  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that they  
should live, and so many  
lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,  
And drew my eyes away;  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

240

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;  
But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
And the balls like pulses beat;  
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky  
Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
And the dead were at my feet.

250

But the curse liveth for  
him in the eye of the  
dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
Nor rot nor reek did they:  
The look with which they looked on me  
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell  
 A spirit from on high;  
 But oh! more horrible than that  
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye!  
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
 And yet I could not die.

260

In his loneliness and fixed-  
 ness he yearneth toward the  
 journeying Moon; and the  
 stars that still sojourn, yet  
 still move onward; and  
 everywhere the blue sky  
 belongs to them, and is  
 their appointed rest, and  
 their native country and  
 their own natural homes,  
 which they enter un-  
 announced, as lords that are  
 certainly expected and yet  
 there is a silent joy at their  
 arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,  
 And nowhere did abide:  
 Softly she was going up,  
 And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,  
 Like April hoar-frost spread;  
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
 The charmed water burnt alway  
 A still and awful red.

270

By the light of the Moon  
 he beholdeth God's  
 creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
 I watched the water-snakes:  
 They moved in tracks of shining white,  
 And when they reared, the elfish light  
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
 I watched their rich attire:  
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
 They coiled and swam; and every track  
 Was a flash of golden fire.

280

Their beauty and their  
 happiness.

O happy living things! no tongue  
 Their beauty might declare:  
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
 And I blessed them unaware:  
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
 And I blessed them unaware.

He blesseth them in his  
 heart.

The spell begins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray;  
 And from my neck so free  
 The Albatross fell off, and sank  
 Like lead into the sea.

290

## PART V

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,  
 Beloved from pole to pole!  
 To Mary Queen the praise be given!  
 She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,  
 That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy  
Mother, the ancient  
Mariner is refreshed with  
rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;  
And when I awoke, it rained.

300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs;  
I was so light—almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds and  
seeth strange sights and  
commotions in the sky and  
the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:  
It did not come anear;  
But with its sound it shook the sails,  
That were so thin and sere.

310

The upper air burst into life!  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,  
To and fro they were hurried about!  
And to and fro, and in and out,  
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
And the sails did sigh like sedge;  
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;  
The Moon was at its edge.

320

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
The Moon was at its side:  
Like waters shot from some high crag,  
The lightning fell with never a jag,  
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
Yet now the ship moved on!  
Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
The dead men gave a groan.

330

The bodies of the ship's  
crew are inspired, and the  
ship moves on;

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;  
It had been strange, even in a dream,  
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;  
Yet never a breeze up blew;  
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,

Where they were wont to do;  
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
 We were a ghastly crew.

340

The body of my brother's son  
 Stood by me, knee to knee:  
 The body and I pulled at one rope  
 But he said nought to me."

But not by the souls of  
 the men, nor by daemons  
 of earth or middle air, but  
 by a blessed troop of  
 angelic spirits, sent down  
 by the invocation of the  
 guardian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"  
 "Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!  
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,  
 Which to their corpses came again,  
 But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,  
 And clustered round the mast;  
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
 And from their bodies passed.

350

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
 Then darted to the Sun;  
 Slowly the sounds came back again,  
 Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
 I heard the sky-lark sing;  
 Sometimes all little birds that are,  
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
 With their sweet jargoning!

360

And now 'twas like all instruments,  
 Now like a lonely flute;  
 And now it is an angel's song,  
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on  
 A pleasant noise till noon,  
 A noise like of a hidden brook  
 In the leafy month of June,  
 That to the sleeping woods all night  
 Singeth a quiet tune.

370

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
 Yet never a breeze did breathe:  
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship,  
 Moved onward from beneath.



The lonesome Spirit from  
the south pole carries on  
the ship as far as the  
Line, in obedience to the  
angelic troop, but still  
requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
From the land of mist and snow,  
The Spirit slid: and it was he  
That made the ship to go.  
The sails at noon left off their tune,  
And the ship stood still also.

380

The Sun, right up above the mast,  
Had fixed her to the ocean:  
But in a minute she 'gan stir,  
With a short uneasy motion—  
Backwards and forwards half her length  
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
She made a sudden bound:  
It flung the blood into my head,  
And I fell down in a swoond.

390

The Polar Spirit's fellow-  
daemons, the invisible  
inhabitants of the element,  
take part in his wrong;  
and two of them relate,  
one to the other, that  
penance long and heavy for  
the ancient Mariner hath  
been accorded to the Polar  
Spirit, who returneth  
southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
I have not to declare;  
But ere my living life returned,  
I heard and in my soul discerned  
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?  
By Him who died on cross,  
With his cruel bow he laid full low  
The harmless Albatross.

400

The Spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow,  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew:  
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.'

## PART VI

### *First Voice*

" 'But tell me, tell me! speak again,  
Thy soft response renewing—  
What makes that ship drive on so fast?  
What is the ocean doing?'

410

*Second Voice*

'Still as a slave before his lord,  
The ocean hath no blast;  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;  
For she guides him smooth or grim.  
See, brother, see! how graciously  
She looketh down on him.'

420

*First Voice*

The Mariner hath been  
cast into a trance; for the  
angelic power causeth the  
vessel to drive northward  
faster than human life  
could endure.

'But why drives on that ship so fast,  
Without or wave or wind?'

*Second Voice*

'The air is cut away before,  
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!  
Or we shall be belated:  
For slow and slow that ship will go,  
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion  
is retarded; the Mariner  
awakes, and his penance  
begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on  
As in a gentle weather:  
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high,  
The dead men stood together.

430

All stood together on the deck,  
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:  
All fixed on me their stony eyes,  
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
Had never passed away:  
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,  
Nor turn them up to pray.

440

The curse is finally  
expiated.

And now this spell was snap: once more  
I viewed the ocean green,  
And looked far forth, yet little saw  
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turned round walks on,  
And turns no more his head;  
Because he knows a frightful fiend  
Doth close behind him tread.

450

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
Nor sound nor motion made:  
Its path was not upon the sea,  
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
Like a meadow-gale of spring—  
It mingled strangely with my fears,  
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,  
Yet she sailed softly too:  
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—  
On me alone it blew.

460

And the ancient Mariner  
beholdeth his native  
country.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed  
The light-house top I see?  
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?  
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,  
And I with sobs did pray—  
O let me be awake, my God!  
Or let me sleep away.

470

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,  
So smoothly it was strewn!  
And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,  
That stands above the rock:  
The moonlight steeped in silentness  
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light  
Till rising from the same,  
Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
In crimson colors came.

480

The angelic spirits leave  
the dead bodies,

A little distance from the prow.  
Those crimson shadows were:  
I turned my eyes upon the deck—  
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

And appear in their own  
forms of light.

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
And, by the holy rood!  
A man all light, a seraph-man,  
On every corse there stood.

490

This seraph-band, each waved his hand;  
 It was a heavenly sight!  
 They stood as signals to the land,  
 Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,  
 No voice did they impart—  
 No voice; but oh! the silence sank  
 Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,  
 I heard the Pilot's cheer;  
 My head was turned perforce away,  
 And I saw a boat appear.

506

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,  
 I heard them coming fast:  
 Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy  
 The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:  
 It is the Hermit good!  
 He singeth loud his godly hymns  
 That he makes in the wood.  
 He'll shrieve my soul; he'll wash away  
 The Albatross's blood.

510

## PART VII

The Hermit of the Wood

"This Hermit good lives in that wood  
 Which slopes down to the sea.  
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!  
 He loves to talk with mariners  
 That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—  
 He hath a cushion plump:  
 It is the moss that wholly hides  
 The rotted old oak-stump.

520

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,  
 'Why, this is strange, I trow!  
 Where are those lights so many and fair,  
 That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the ship with  
 wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—  
 'And they answered not our cheer!  
 The planks look warped! and see those sails,  
 How thin they are and sere!  
 I never saw aught like to them,  
 Unless perchance it were

530

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
 My forest-brook along;  
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,  
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,  
 That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—  
 (The Pilot made reply)  
 I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!'  
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

540

The boat came closer to the ship,  
 But I nor spake nor stirred;  
 The boat came close beneath the ship,  
 And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,  
 Still louder and more dread:  
 It reached the ship, it split the bay;  
 The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is  
 saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,  
 Which sky and ocean smote,  
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
 My body lay afloat;  
 But swift as dreams, myself I found  
 Within the Pilot's boat.

550

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
 The boat spun round and round;  
 And all was still, save that the hill  
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked  
 And fell down in a fit;  
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
 And prayed where he did sit.

560

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,  
 Who now doth crazy go,  
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
 His eyes went to and fro.  
 'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,  
 The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,  
 I stood on the firm land!  
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
 And scarcely he could stand.

570

The ancient Mariner  
earnestly entreateth the  
Hermit to shrieve him;  
and the penance of life  
falls on him.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'  
The Hermit crossed his brow.  
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—  
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
With a woful agony,  
Which forced me to begin my tale;  
And then it left me free.

58

And ever and anon  
throughout his future life  
an agony constraineth him  
to travel from land to  
land,

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns:  
And till my ghastly tale is told,  
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;  
I have strange power of speech;  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me:  
To him my tale I teach.

59

What loud uproar bursts from that door!  
The wedding-guests are there:  
But in the garden-bower the bride  
And bride-maids singing are:  
And hark the little vesper bell  
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been  
Alone on a wide, wide sea;  
So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
Scarce seemèd there to be.

60

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
'Tis sweeter far to me,  
To walk together to the kirk  
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,  
And all together pray,  
While each to his great Father bends,  
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own  
example, love and  
reverence to all things  
that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell  
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!  
He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

61

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;

For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest  
Turned from the Bridegroom's door.

620

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn:  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn.

## THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

Had she come all the way for this,  
To part at last without a kiss?  
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain  
That her own eyes might see him slain  
Beside the haystack in the floods?

Along the dripping leafless woods,  
The stirrup touching either shoe,  
She rode astride as troopers do;  
With kirtle kilted to her knee,  
To which the mud splashed wretchedly;  
And the wet dripped from every tree  
Upon her head and heavy hair,  
And on her eyelids broad and fair;  
The tears and rain ran down her face.

10

By fits and starts they rode apace,  
And very often was his place  
Far off from her; he had to ride  
Ahead, to see what might betide  
When the roads crossed; and sometimes, when  
There rose a murmuring from his men,  
Had to turn back with promises;  
Ah me! she had but little ease;  
And often for pure doubt and dread  
She sobbed, made giddy in the head  
By the swift riding; while, for cold,  
Her slender fingers scarce could hold  
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,  
She felt the foot within her shoe  
Against the stirrup: all for this,  
To part at last without a kiss  
Beside the haystack in the floods.

20

30

For when they neared that old soaked hay,  
 They saw across the only way  
 That Judas, Godmar, and the three  
 Red running lions dismally  
 Grinned from his pennon, under which  
 In one straight line along the ditch,  
 They counted thirty heads.

So then,  
 While Robert turned round to his men,  
 She saw at once the wretched end,  
 And, stooping down, tried hard to rend  
 Her coif the wrong way from her head,  
 And hid her eyes; while Robert said:  
 "Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one;  
 At Poitiers where we made them run  
 So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer,  
 The Gascon frontier is so near,  
 Nought after us."

But, "O," she said,  
 "My God! my God! I have to tread  
 The long way back without you; then  
 The court at Paris; those six men;  
 The gratings of the Chatelet;  
 The swift Seine on some rainy day  
 Like this, and people standing by,  
 And laughing, while my weak hands try  
 To recollect how strong men swim.  
 All this, or else a life with him,  
 For which I should be damned at last;  
 Would God that this next hour were past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry,  
 "St. George for Marny!" cheerily;  
 And laid his hand upon her rein.  
 Alas! no man of all his train  
 Gave back that cheery cry again;  
 And, while for rage his thumb beat fast  
 Upon his sword-hilt, some one cast  
 About his neck a kerchief long,  
 And bound him.

Then they went along  
 To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,  
 Your lover's life is on the wane  
 So fast, that, if this very hour  
 You yield not as my paramour,



He will not see the rain leave off—  
 Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,  
 Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,  
 Then gazed upon the palm, as though  
 She thought her forehead bled, and—"No,"  
 She said, and turned her head away,  
 As there were nothing else to say,  
 And everything were settled: red  
 Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:  
 "Jehane, on yonder hill there stands  
 My castle, guarding well my lands:  
 What hinders me from taking you,  
 And doing that I list to do  
 To your fair wilful body, while  
 Your knight lies dead?"

80

A wicked smile  
 Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,  
 A long way out she thrust her chin:  
 "You know that I should strangle you  
 While you were sleeping; or bite through  
 Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she said,  
 "Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!  
 For in such wise they hem me in,  
 I cannot choose but sin and sin,  
 Whatever happens: yet I think  
 They could not make me eat or drink,  
 And so should I just reach my rest."  
 "Nay, if you do not my behest,  
 O Jehane! though I love you well,"  
 Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell  
 All that I know?" "Foul lies," she said.  
 "Eh! lies, my Jehane? by God's head,  
 At Paris folks would deem them true!  
 Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you:  
 'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!'  
 Give us Jehane to burn or drown!"—  
 Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my friend,  
 This were indeed a piteous end  
 For those long fingers, and long feet,  
 And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;  
 An end that few men would forget  
 That saw it—So, an hour yet:  
 Consider, Jehane, which to take  
 Of life or death!"

90

100

110

So, scarce awake,  
 Dismounting, did she leave that place,  
 And totter some yards: with her face  
 Turned upward to the sky she lay,  
 Her head on a wet heap of hay, 12  
 And fell asleep: and while she slept,  
 And did not dream, the minutes crept  
 Round to the twelve again; but she,  
 Being waked at last, sighed quietly,  
 And strangely childlike came, and said:  
 "I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,  
 As though it hung on strong wires, turned  
 Most sharply round, and his face burned.  
 For Robert—both his eyes were dry,  
 He could not weep, but gloomily 13  
 He seemed to watch the rain; yea, too,  
 His lips were firm; he tried once more  
 To touch her lips; she reached out, sore  
 And vain desire so tortured them,  
 The poor gray lips, and now the hem  
 Of his sleeve brushed them.

With a start  
 Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;  
 From Robert's throat he loosed the bands  
 Of silk and mail; with empty hands  
 Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw 14  
 The long bright blade without a flaw  
 Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand  
 In Robert's hair; she saw him bend  
 Back Robert's head; she saw him send  
 The thin steel down; the blow told well,  
 Right backward the knight Robert fell,  
 And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,  
 Unwitting, as I deem: so then  
 Godmar turned grinning to his men,  
 Who ran, some five or six and beat 15  
 His head to pieces at their feet.  
 Then Godmar turned again and said:  
 "So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!  
 Take not, my lady, that your way  
 Lies backward to the Chatelet!"  
 She shook her head and gazed awhile  
 At her cold hands with a rueful smile,  
 As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had  
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

## *ii. The Poem as Subject and Theme*

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### RAIN AT NIGHT

HELEN HOYT (1887- )

Are you awake? Do you hear the rain?  
How rushingly it strikes upon the ground,  
And on the roof, and the wet window-pane!  
Sometimes I think it is a comfortable sound,  
Making us feel how safe and snug we are:  
Closing us off in this dark, away from the dark outside.  
The rest of the world seems dim tonight, mysterious and far.

Oh, there is no world left! Only darkness, darkness stretching wide  
And full of the blind rain's immeasurable fall!

How nothing must we seem unto this ancient thing! 10  
How nothing unto the earth—and we so small!  
Oh, wake, wake!—do you not feel my hands cling?  
One day it will be raining as it rains tonight; the same wind blow—  
Raining and blowing on this house wherein we lie: but you and I—  
We shall not hear, we shall not ever know.  
O love, I had forgot that we must die.

### WOODYARDS IN RAIN

ANNE MARRIOTT (1913- )

The smell of woodyards in the rain is strong  
like six-foot lumberjacks with hairy chests  
and thick axe-leathered hands.  
The scent is raw, it slices through  
pale drizzle and thin mist  
biting the sense.  
I like to watch piled wetness dripping off  
the yellow-brown stacked shingles, while behind  
the smoke churns up in black revolving towers  
from lean mill chimneys.  
Now the broad-hipped tugs  
sniff through the squall and swing the oblong booms

10

by tar-stained wharves,  
 as with a last fierce gesture rain  
 smallpocks the oil-green water with a hurled  
 ten million wire nails.

## STILL FALLS THE RAIN

*The Raids, 1940. Night and Dawn*

EDITH SITWELL (1887- )

Still falls the Rain—  
 Dark as the world of man, black as our loss—  
 Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails  
 Upon the Cross.

Still falls the Rain  
 With a sound like the pulse of the heart that is changed to the hammer-beat  
 In the Potter's Field, and the sound of the impious feet

On the Tomb:

Still falls the Rain  
 In the Field of Blood where the small hopes breed and the human brain  
 Nurtures its greed, that worm with the brow of Cain. 10

Still falls the Rain  
 At the feet of the Starved Man hung upon the Cross.  
 Christ that each day, each night, nails there, have mercy on us—  
 On Dives and on Lazarus:  
 Under the rain the sore and the gold are as one.

Still falls the Rain—  
 Still falls the blood from the Starved Man's wounded Side:  
 He bears in His Heart all wounds,—those of the light that died,  
 The last faint spark 20  
 In the self-murdered heart, the wounds of the sad uncomprehending dark,

The wounds of the baited bear,—  
 The blind and weeping bear whom the keepers beat  
 On his helpless flesh . . . the tears of the hunted hare.

Still falls the Rain—  
 Then—O Ile leape up to my God: who pulles me doune—  
 See, see where Christ's blood streames in the firmament:  
 It flows from the Brow we nailed upon the tree  
 Deep to the dying, to the thirsting heart  
 That holds the fires of the world,—dark-smirched with pain  
 As Caesar's laurel crown. 30

Then sounds the voice of One who like the heart of man  
 Was once a child who among beasts has lain—  
 "Still do I love, still shed my innocent light, my Blood, for thee."

## A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

A noiseless patient spider,  
 I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,  
 Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,  
 It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,  
 Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,  
 Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,  
 Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,  
 Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,  
 Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

10

## THE SPIDER HOLDS A SILVER BALL

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

The spider holds a silver ball  
 In unperceived hands  
 And dancing softly to himself  
 His yarn of pearl unwinds.

He plies from naught to naught  
 In unsubstantial trade,  
 Supplants our tapestries with his  
 In half the period—

An hour to rear supreme  
 His theories of light,  
 Then dangle from the housewife's broom,  
 His sophistries forgot.

10

## THE SNAKE

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

A narrow fellow in the grass  
 Occasionally rides;  
 You may have met him,—did you not?  
 His notice sudden is.

He likes a boggy acre,  
 A floor too cool for corn.  
 Yet when a child, and barefoot,  
 I more than once, at morn,

10

The grass divides as with a comb,  
 A spotted shaft is seen;  
 And then it closes at your feet  
 And opens further on.

Have passed, I thought, a whiplash  
 Unbraiding in the sun,—  
 When, stooping to secure it,  
 It wrinkled, and was gone.

Several of nature's people  
 I know, and they know me;  
 I feel for them a transport  
 Of cordiality;

20

But never met this fellow,  
 Attended or alone,  
 Without a tighter breathing,  
 And zero at the bone.

## SNAKE

D. H. LAWRENCE (1885-1930)

A snake came to my water-trough  
 On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,  
 To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-tree  
 I came down the steps with my pitcher  
 And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom  
 And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone  
 trough  
 And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,  
 And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness, 10  
 He sipped with his straight mouth,  
 Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,  
 Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,  
 And I, like a second comer, waiting.

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,  
 And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,  
 And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a moment,  
 And stooped and drank a little more,  
 Being earth brown, earth golden from the burning burning bowels of the earth 20  
 On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.

The voice of my education said to me  
 He must be killed,  
 For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are venomous.

And voices in me said, If you were a man  
 You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But I must confess how I liked him,  
 How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my water-trough  
 And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankful,  
 Into the burning bowels of this earth. 30

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?  
 Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?  
 Was it humility, to feel so honoured?  
 I felt so honoured.

And yet those voices:  
*If you were not afraid, you would kill him!*

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,  
 But even so, honoured still more  
 That he should seek my hospitality  
 From out the dark door of the secret earth.

40

He drank enough  
 And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,  
 And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,  
 Seeming to lick his lips,  
 And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,  
 And slowly turned his head,  
 And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,  
 Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round  
 And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face.

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,  
 And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther,  
 A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black hole,  
 Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after,  
 Overcame me now his back was turned.

50

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,  
 I picked up a clumsy log  
 And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,  
 But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in undignified haste,  
 Writhed like lightning, and was gone  
 Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,  
 At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

60

And immediately I regretted it.  
 I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!  
 I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education.

And I thought of the albatross,  
 And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,  
 Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,  
 Now due to be crowned again.

70

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords  
 Of life.  
 And I have something to expiate;  
 A pettiness.

## ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
 But being too happy in thine happiness,—  
 That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,  
 In some melodious plot  
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

10

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
 And purple-stainèd mouth;  
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
 And leaden-eyed despairs,  
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
 Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
 Already with thee! tender is the night,



And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;  
     But here there is no light,  
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
     Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
 But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet  
     Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
     White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
     Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
     And mid-May's eldest child,  
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
     The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

50

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
     To take into the air my quiet breath;  
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
     To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
     While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
     In such an ecstasy!  
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
     To thy high requiem become a sod.

60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
 No hungry generations tread thee down;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
     In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
     Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
     She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
     The same that oft-times hath  
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
     Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

70

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
     As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.  
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
     Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
     Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
     In the next valley-glades:  
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
     Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

80

## PHILOMELA

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Hark! ah the nightingale—  
 The tawny-throated!  
 Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!  
 What triumph! hark!—what pain!  
 O wanderer from a Grecian shore,  
 Still, after many years, in distant lands,  
 Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain  
 That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain—  
     Say, will it never heal?  
 And can this fragrant lawn  
 With its cool trees, and night,  
 And the sweet, tranquil Thames,  
 And moonshine, and the dew,  
 To thy racked heart and brain  
     Afford no balm?

10

Dost thou to-night behold  
 Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,  
 The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?  
 Dost thou again peruse  
 With hot cheeks and seared eyes  
 The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?

20

Dost thou once more assay  
 Thy flight, and feel come over thee,  
 Poor fugitive, the feathery change  
 Once more, and once more seem to make resound  
 With love and hate, triumph and agony,  
 Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?  
     Listen, Eugenia—  
 How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!  
     Again—thou hearest?  
 Eternal passion!  
 Eternal pain!

30

## PHILOMELA

JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888- )

Procne, Philomela, and Itylus,  
 Your names are liquid, your improbable tale  
 Is recited in the classic numbers of the nightingale.  
 Ah, but our numbers are not felicitous,  
 It goes not liquidly for us.

Perched on a Roman ilex, and duly apostrophized,  
 The nightingale descanted unto Ovid;  
 She has even appeared to the Teutons, the swilled and gravid;  
 At Fontainebleau it may be the bird was gallicized;  
 Never was she baptized.

10

To England came Philomela with her pain,  
 Fleeing the hawk her husband; querulous ghost,  
 She wanders when he sits heavy on his roost,  
 Utters herself in the original again,  
 The untranslatable refrain.

Not to these shores she came! this other Thrace,  
 Environ barbarous to the royal Attic;  
 How could her delicate dirge run democratic,  
 Delivered in a cloudless boundless public place  
 To an inordinate race?

20

I pernoctated with the Oxford students once,  
 And in the quadrangles, in the cloisters, on the Cher,  
 Precociously knocked at antique doors ajar,  
 Fatuously touched the hems of the hierophants,  
 Sick of my dissonance.

I went out to Bagley Wood, I climbed the hill;  
 Even the moon had slanted off in a twinkling,  
 I heard the sepulchral owl and a few bells tinkling,  
 There was no more villainous day to unfulfil,  
 The diuturnity was still.

30

Up from the darkest wood where Philomela sat,  
 Her fairy numbers issued. What then ailed me?  
 My ears are called capacious but they failed me,  
 Her classics registered a little flat!  
 I rose, and venomously spat.

Philomela, Philomela, lover of song,  
 I am in despair if we may make us worthy,  
 A bantering breed sophisticated and swarthy;  
 Unto more beautiful, persistently more young  
 Thy fabulous provinces belong.

40

## "WHEN TO THE SESSIONS OF SWEET SILENT THOUGHT"

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought  
 I summon up remembrance of things past,  
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:  
 Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,

For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
 And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,  
 And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:  
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,  
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
 The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,  
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.  
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
 All losses are restored and sorrows end.

10

## MY LOST YOUTH

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

Often I think of the beautiful town  
 That is seated by the sea;  
 Often in thought go up and down  
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
 And my youth comes back to me.  
 And a verse of a Lapland song  
 Is haunting my memory still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees, 10  
 And catch, in sudden gleams,  
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
 And islands that were the Hesperides  
 Of all my boyish dreams.  
 And the burden of that old song,  
 It murmurs and whispers still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free; 20  
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.  
 And the voice of that wayward song  
 Is singing and saying still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
 And the fort upon the hill;  
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar, 30  
 The drumbeat repeated o'er and o'er,  
 And the bugle wild and shrill.  
 And the music of that old song  
 Throbs in my memory still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,  
 How it thundered o'er the tide!  
 And the dead captains, as they lay  
 In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil 40  
 bay  
 Where they in battle died.  
 And the sound of that mournful song  
 Goes through me with a thrill:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
 The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
 And the friendships old and the early loves  
 Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of  
 doves  
 In quiet neighborhoods. 50  
 And the verse of that sweet old song,  
 It flutters and murmurs still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
 thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that  
dart

Across the schoolboy's brain;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song 60  
Sings on, and is never still:

"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

There are things of which I may not  
speak;

There are dreams that cannot die;  
There are thoughts that make the strong  
heart weak,

And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
And a mist before the eye.

And the words of that fatal song  
Come over me like a chill: 70

"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet,  
When I visit the dear old town;  
But the native air is pure and sweet,  
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-  
known street,

As they balance up and down,  
Are singing the beautiful song,  
Are sighing and whispering still:

"A boy's will is the wind's will, 80  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,  
And with joy that is almost pain  
My heart goes back to wander there,  
And among the dreams of the days that  
were,

I find my lost youth again.  
And the strange and beautiful song,  
Sings on, and is never still:

"A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long  
thoughts." 90

## FERN HILL

DYLAN THOMAS (1914-1953)

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs  
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,  
The night above the dingle starry,  
Time let me hail and climb  
Golden in the heydays of his eyes,  
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns  
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves  
Trail with daisies and barley  
Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns 10  
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,  
In the sun that is young once only,  
Time let me play and be  
Golden in the mercy of his means,  
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves  
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,  
And the sabbath rang slowly  
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay-  
 Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air 20  
     And playing, lovely and watery  
     And fire green as grass.  
     And nightly under the simple stars  
 As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,  
 All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars  
     Flying with the ricks, and the horses  
     Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white  
 With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all  
     Shining, it was Adam and maiden, 30  
     The sky gathered again  
     And the sun grew round that very day.  
 So it must have been after the birth of the simple light  
 In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm  
     Out of the whinnying green stable  
     On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house  
 Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long  
     In the sun born over and over,  
     I ran my heedless ways, 40  
     My wishes raced through the house-high hay  
 And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows  
 In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs  
     Before the children green and golden  
     Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me  
 Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,  
     In the moon that is always rising,  
     Nor that riding to sleep  
     I should hear him fly with the high fields 50  
 And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.  
 Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,  
     Time held me green and dying  
     Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

## PIANO

D. H. LAWRENCE (1885-1930)

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;  
 Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see  
 A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings  
 And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song  
 Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong  
 To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside  
 And hymns in the cozy parlor, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamor  
 With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour 10  
 Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast  
 Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

## THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

|                                       |                                      |    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| Oh, slow to smite and swift to spare, | Thy task is done; the bond are free: |    |
| Gentle and merciful and just!         | We bear thee to an honored grave,    | 10 |
| Who, in the fear of God, didst bear   | Whose proudest monument shall be     |    |
| The sword of power, a nation's trust! | The broken fetters of the slave.     |    |

|                                     |                                          |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| In sorrow by thy bier we stand,     | Pure was thy life; its bloody close      |
| Amid the awe that hushes all,       | Hath placed thee with the sons of light, |
| And speak the anguish of a land     | Among the noble host of those            |
| That shook with horror at thy fall. | Who perished in the cause of Right.      |

## WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

### I

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! 10  
 O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free my soul.

### 3

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house near the whitewash'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.

## 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.

20

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.

30

## 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, 40  
 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,

50



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.) 60  
 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 you 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. 70

## 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? 80

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, 91  
 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, 100  
 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, 110  
 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 throb'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.

120

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.

130

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.*

140

*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.*

150

*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.*

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.

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 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.

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.

200

## AN IRISH AIRMAN FORESEES HIS DEATH

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)

I know that I shall meet my fate  
 Somewhere among the clouds above;  
 Those that I fight I do not hate,  
 Those that I guard I do not love;  
 My country is Kiltartan Cross,  
 My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,  
 No likely end could bring them loss  
 Or leave them happier than before.  
 Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,  
 Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,  
 A lonely impulse of delight  
 Drove to this tumult in the clouds;  
 I balanced all, brought all to mind,  
 The years to come seemed waste of breath,  
 A waste of breath the years behind  
 In balance with this life, this death.

10

## HIGH FLIGHT

JOHN GILLESPIE MAGEE (1922-1941)

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
 And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
 Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth  
 Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things  
 You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung  
 High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
 I've chased the shouting wind along and flung  
 My eager craft through footless halls of air.  
 Up, up the long delirious, burning blue  
 I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,  
 Where never lark, or even eagle, flew;  
 And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
 The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
 Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

10

## THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AERODROME

STEPHEN SPENDER (1909- )

More beautiful and soft than any moth  
 With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path  
 Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines  
 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.

10

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.

20

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 that dying sky,  
 Religion stands, the church blocking the sun.

30

## STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

Motions and Means, on land and sea at war  
 With old poetic feeling, not for this,  
 Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!  
 Nor shall your presence, howsoe'er it mar  
 The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar  
 To the Mind's gaining that prophetic sense  
 Of future change, that point of vision, whence

May be discovered what in soul ye are.  
 In spite of all that beauty may disown  
 In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace  
 Her lawful offspring in Man's art; and Time,  
 Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,  
 Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown  
 Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

10

## THE LOCOMOTIVE

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

I like to see it lap the miles,  
 And lick the valleys up,  
 And stop to feed itself at tanks;  
 And then, prodigious, step

To fit its sides, and crawl between,  
 Complaining all the while  
 In horrid, hooting stanza;  
 Then chase itself down hill

10

Around a pile of mountains,  
 And, supercilious, peer  
 In shanties by the sides of roads;  
 And then a quarry pare

And neigh like Boanerges;  
 Then, punctual as a star,  
 Stop—docile and omnipotent—  
 At its own stable door.

## TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

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,  
 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.

10

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,

20

(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.

## THE EXPRESS

STEPHEN SPENDER (1909- )

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. 10  
 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.  
 Steaming 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. 20  
 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.

## CARGOES

JOHN MASEFIELD (1887- )

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,  
 Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,  
 With a cargo of ivory,  
 And apes and peacocks,  
 Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.



Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,  
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,  
With a cargo of diamonds,  
Emeralds, amethysts,  
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack  
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,  
With a cargo of Tyne coal,  
Road-rails, pig-lead,  
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

### *iii. The Poem as Picture*

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#### THE EAGLE

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE SEPT. 3, 1802

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

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, theatres, 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 splendour, 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!

10

“WE SAW THE SWALLOWS GATHERING IN THE SKY”

(*From* MODERN LOVE)

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909)

We saw the swallows gathering in the sky,  
And in the osier-isle we heard them noise.  
We had not to look back on summer joys,  
Or forward to a summer of bright dye:

But in the largeness of the evening earth  
 Our spirits grew as we went side by side.  
 The hour became her husband and my bride.  
 Love, that had robbed us so, thus blessed our dearth!  
 The pilgrims of the year waxed very loud  
 In multitudinous chatterings, as the flood  
 Full brown came from the West, and like pale blood  
 Expanded to the upper crimson cloud.  
 Love, that had robbed us of immortal things,  
 This little moment mercifully gave,  
 Where I have seen across the twilight wave  
 The swan sail with her young beneath her wings.

10

## ODE TO THE WEST WIND

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

### I

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 wingéd 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 odours plain and hill:

10

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

### II

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 æry surge,  
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

20

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: oh, hear!

## III

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

30

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae'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

40

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

## IV

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

50

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.

## V

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!

60

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?

70

## THE CITY IN THE SEA

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

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.

10

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 wreathed friezes intertwine  
 The viol, the violet, and the vine.

20

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 30  
 Yawn level with the luminous waves;  
 But not the riches there that lie  
 In each idol's diamond eye,—  
 Not the gayly-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! 41

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, 50  
 Down, down that town shall settle hence,  
 Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
 Shall do it reverence.

## THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

The blessed damozel leaned out  
 From the gold bar of Heaven;  
 Her eyes were deeper than the depth  
 Of waters stilled at even;  
 She had three lilies in her hand,  
 And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,  
 No wrought flowers did adorn,  
 But a white rose of Mary's gift,  
 For service meetly worn; 10  
 Her hair that lay along her back  
 Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day  
 One of God's choristers;  
 The wonder was not yet quite gone  
 From that still look of hers;  
 Albeit, to them she left, her day  
 Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.  
 . . . Yet now, and in this place, 20  
 Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair  
 Fell all about my face. . . .  
 Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.  
 The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house  
 That she was standing on;  
 By God built over the sheer depth  
 The which is Space begun;  
 So high, that looking downward thence  
 She scarce could see the sun. 30

It lies in Heaven, across the flood  
 Of ether, as a bridge.  
 Beneath, the tides of day and night  
 With flame and darkness ridge  
 The void, as low as where this earth  
 Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met  
 'Mid deathless love's acclaims,  
 Spoke evermore among themselves  
 Their heart-remembered names; 40  
 And the souls mounting up to God  
 Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped  
 Out of the circling charm;  
 Until her bosom must have made  
 The bar she leaned on warm,  
 And the lilies lay as if asleep  
 Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw  
 Time like a pulse shake fierce 50  
 Through all the world. Her gaze still  
 strove  
 Within the gulf to pierce  
 Its path; and now she spoke as when  
 The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon  
 Was like a little feather  
 Fluttering far down the gulf; and now  
 She spoke through the still weather.  
 Her voice was like the voice the stars  
 Had when they sang together. 60

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,  
 Strove not her accents there,  
 Fain to be hearkened? When those bells  
 Possessed the mid-day air,  
 Strove not her steps to reach my side  
 Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,  
 For he will come," she said.  
 "Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,  
 Lord, Lord, has he not prayed? 70  
 Are not two prayers a perfect strength?  
 And shall I feel afraid?"

"When round his head the aureole clings,  
And he is clothed in white,  
I'll take his hand and go with him  
To the deep wells of light;  
As unto a stream we will step down,  
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,  
Occult, withheld, untrod, 80  
Whose lamps are stirred continually  
With prayer sent up to God;  
And see our old prayers, granted, melt  
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of  
That living mystic tree  
Within whose secret growth the Dove  
Is sometimes felt to be,  
While every leaf that His plumes touch  
Saith His Name audibly. 90

"And I myself will teach to him,  
I myself, lying so,  
The songs I sing here; which his voice  
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,  
And find some knowledge at each pause,  
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!  
Yea, one wast thou with me,  
That once of old. But shall God lift  
To endless unity 100  
The soul whose likeness with thy soul  
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves  
Where the lady Mary is,  
With her five handmaidens, whose names  
Are five sweet symphonies,  
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,  
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks  
And foreheads garlanded; 110  
Into the fine cloth white like flame  
Weaving the golden thread,  
To fashion the birth-robcs for them  
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:  
Then will I lay my cheek  
To his, and tell about our love,  
Not once abashed or weak:  
And the dear Mother will approve  
My pride, and let me speak. 120

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,  
To him round whom all souls  
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads  
Bowed with their aureoles:  
And angels meeting us shall sing  
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord  
Thus much for him and me:—  
Only to live as once on earth  
With Love,—only to be, 130  
As then awhile, for ever now  
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,  
Less sad of speech than mild,—  
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.  
The light thrilled towards her, filled  
With angels in strong level flight.  
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path  
Was vague in distant spheres: 140  
And then she cast her arms along  
The golden barriers,  
And laid her face between her hands,  
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

## LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

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, 10  
 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.

## THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The tide rises, the tide falls,<br/>         The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;<br/>         Along the sea-sands damp and brown<br/>         The traveller hastens toward the town,<br/>         And the tide rises, the tide falls.</p> <p>Darkness settles on roofs and walls,<br/>         But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;<br/>         The little waves, with their soft, white<br/>         hands,</p> | <p>Efface the footprints in the sands,<br/>         And the tide rises, the tide falls. 10</p> <p>The morning breaks; the steeds in their<br/>         stalls<br/>         Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls;<br/>         The day returns, but nevermore<br/>         Returns the traveller to the shore,<br/>         And the tide rises, the tide falls.</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## THE DARKLING THRUSH

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>I leaned upon a coppice gate<br/>         When Frost was specter-gray,<br/>         And Winter's dregs made desolate<br/>         The weakening eye of day.<br/>         The tangled bine-stems scored the sky<br/>         Like strings from broken lyres,<br/>         And all mankind that haunted night<br/>         Had sought their household fires.</p> <p>The land's sharp features seemed to be<br/>         The Century's corpse outleant; 10<br/>         His crypt the cloudy canopy,<br/>         The wind his death-lament.<br/>         The ancient pulse of germ and birth<br/>         Was shrunken hard and dry,<br/>         And every spirit upon earth<br/>         Seemed fervorless as I.</p> | <p>At once a voice burst forth among<br/>         The bleak twigs overhead<br/>         In a full-hearted evensong<br/>         Of joy illimited; 20<br/>         An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,<br/>         In blast-beruffled plume,<br/>         Had chosen thus to fling his soul<br/>         Upon the growing gloom.</p> <p>So little cause for carolings<br/>         Of such ecstatic sound<br/>         Was written on terrestrial things<br/>         Afar or nigh around,<br/>         That I could think there trembled through<br/>         His happy good-night air 30<br/>         Some blessed hope, whereof he knew<br/>         And I was unaware.</p> <p><i>Dec. 31, 1900</i></p> |
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## NEUTRAL TONES

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

We stood by a pond that winter day,  
 And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,  
 And a few leaves lay on the starving sod,  
 —They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove  
 Over tedious riddles solved years ago;  
 And some words played between us to and fro  
 On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the dearest thing  
 Alive enough to have strength to die;  
 And a grin of bitterness swept thereby  
 Like an ominous bird a-wing. . . .

10

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,  
 And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me  
 Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,  
 And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

## MIRAGE

R. P. BLACKMUR (1904- )

The wind was in another country, and  
 the day had gathered to its heart of noon  
 the sum of silence, heat, and stricken time.  
 Not a ripple spread. The sea mirrored  
 perfectly all the nothing in the sky.  
 We had to walk about to keep our eyes  
 from seeing nothing, and our hearts from  
 stopping

at nothing. Then most suddenly we saw  
 horizon on horizon lifting up  
 out of the sea's edge a shining mountain  
 sun-yellow and sea-green; against it surf  
 flung spray and spume into the miles of  
 sky.  
 Somebody said mirage, and it was gone,  
 but there I have been living ever since.

## YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892- )

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

10

And now at Kermanshah the gate  
 Dark empty and the withered grass  
 And through the twilight now the late  
 Few travellers 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

20

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

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

30 The shadow of the night comes on . . .

## ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

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?

10

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!

20

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.

30

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 seashore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
 And, little town, thy streets forevermore  
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

40

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.

50

## WINTER LANDSCAPE

JOHN BERRYMAN (1914- )

The three men coming down the winter hill  
 In brown, with tall poles and a pack of hounds  
 At heel, through the arrangement of the trees,  
 Past the five figures at the burning straw,  
 Returning cold and silent to their town,

Returning to the drifted snow, the rink  
 Lively with children, to the older men,  
 The long companions they can never reach,  
 The blue light, men with ladders, by the church  
 The sledge and shadow in the twilit street,

10

Are not aware that in the sandy time  
 To come, the evil waste of history  
 Outstretched, they will be seen upon the brow  
 Of that same hill: when all their company  
 Will have been irrecoverably lost,

These men, this particular three in brown  
 Witnessed by birds will keep the scene and say  
 By their configuration with the trees,  
 The small bridge, the red houses and the fire,  
 What place, what time, what morning occasion

20

Sent them into the wood, a pack of hounds  
 At heel and the tall poles upon their shoulders,  
 Thence to return as now we see them and  
 Ankle-deep in snow down the winter hill  
 Descend, while three birds watch and the fourth flies.

## MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS

W. H. AUDEN (1907- )

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.

10

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.

## THE RIDER VICTORY

EDWIN MUIR (1887- )

The rider victory reins his horse  
 Midway across the empty bridge  
 As if head-tall he had met a wall.  
 Yet there was nothing there at all,  
 No bodiless barrier, ghostly ridge  
 To check the charger in his course  
 So suddenly, you'd think he'd fall.

Suspended, steed and rider stare,  
 Leaping on air and legendary.  
 In front the waiting kingdom lies,  
 The bridge and all the roads are free.  
 But halted in implacable air  
 Rider and horse with stony eyes  
 Uprear their motionless statuary.

10

## MY AUNT

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894)

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!  
 Long years have o'er her flown;  
 Yet still she strains the aching clasp  
 That binds her virgin zone;  
 I know it hurts her,—though she looks  
 As cheerful as she can;  
 Her waist is ampler than her life,  
 For life is but a span.

My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!  
 Her hair is almost gray;  
 Why will she train that winter curl  
 In such a spring-like way?  
 How can she lay her glasses down,  
 And say she reads as well,  
 When, through a double convex lens,  
 She just makes out to spell?

10

Her father,—grandpapa! forgive  
 This erring lip its smiles,—  
 Vowed she should make the finest girl  
 Within a hundred miles; 20  
 He sent her to a stylish school;  
 'Twas in her thirteenth June;  
 And with her, as the rules required,  
 "Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,  
 To make her straight and tall;  
 They laced her up, they starved her down,  
 To make her light and small;  
 They pinched her feet, they singed her  
 hair,  
 They screwed it up with pins;— 30  
 O never mortal suffered more  
 In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,  
 My grandsire brought her back;  
 (By daylight, lest some, rabid youth  
 Might follow on the track;)  
 "Ah!" said my grandsire, as he shook  
 Some powder in his pan,  
 "What could this lovely creature do  
 Against a desperate man!" 40

Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,  
 Nor bandit cavalcade,  
 Tore from the trembling father's arms  
 His all-accomplished maid.  
 For her how happy had it been!  
 And Heaven had spared to me  
 To see one sad, ungathered rose  
 On my ancestral tree.

## FOR A DEAD LADY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935)

No more with overflowing light  
 Shall fill the eyes that now are faded,  
 Nor shall another's fringe with night  
 Their woman-hidden world as they did.  
 No more shall quiver down the days  
 The flowing wonder of her ways,  
 Whereof no language may requite  
 The shifting and the many-shaded.

The grace, divine, definitive,  
 Clings only as a faint forestalling; 10  
 The laugh that love could not forgive  
 Is hushed, and answers to no calling;

The forehead and the little ears  
 Have gone where Saturn keeps the years;  
 The breast where roses could not live  
 Has done with rising and with falling.

The beauty, shattered by the laws  
 That have creation in their keeping,  
 No longer trembles at applause,  
 Or over children that are sleeping; 20  
 And we who delve in beauty's lore  
 Know all that we have known before  
 Of what inexorable cause  
 Makes Time so vicious in his reaping.

## HERE LIES A LADY

JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888- )

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.

10

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may thole,  
 But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and mourning,  
 In love and great honor we bade God rest her soul  
 After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

## LEDA AND THE SWAN

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push  
 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?  
 And how can body, laid in that white rush,  
 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there  
 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower  
 And Agamemnon dead.

10

Being so caught up,  
 So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
 Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

## SOLDIERS BATHING

F. T. PRINCE (1912- )

The sea at evening moves across the sand.  
 Under a reddening sky I watch the freedom of a band  
 Of soldiers who belong to me. Stripped bare  
 For bathing in the sea, they shout and run in the warm air;  
 Their flesh, worn by the trade of war, revives  
 And my mind towards the meaning of it strives.

All's pathos now. The body that was gross,  
 Rank, ravening, disgusting in the act or in repose,  
 All fever, filth and sweat, its bestial strength  
 And bestial decay, by pain and labor grows at length  
 Fragile and luminous. Poor bare forked animal,  
 Conscious of his desires and needs and flesh that rise and fall,  
 Stands in the soft air, tasting after toil

10

The sweetness of his nakedness: letting the sea-waves coil  
 Their frothy tongues about his feet, forgets  
 His hatred of the war, its terrible pressure that begets  
 That machinery of death and slavery,  
 Each being a slave and making slaves of others; finds that he  
 Remembers his proud freedom in a game,  
 Mocking himself; and comically mimics fear and shame.

20

He plays with death and animality.  
 And, reading in the shadows of his pallid flesh, I see  
 The idea of Michelangelo's cartoon  
 Of soldiers bathing, breaking off before they were half done  
 At some sortie of the enemy, an episode  
 Of the Pisan wars with Florence. I remember how he showed  
 Their muscular limbs that clamber from the water  
 And heads that turn across the shoulder, eager for the slaughter,  
 Forgetful of their bodies that are bare  
 And hot to buckle on and use the weapons lying there.  
 —And I think too of the theme another found  
 When, shadowing men's bodies on a sinister red ground—  
 Was it Ucello or Pollaiuolo?—  
 Painted a naked battle: warriors, straddled, hacked the foe,  
 Dug their bare toes into the soil and slew  
 The brother-naked man who lay between their feet and drew  
 His lips back from his teeth in a grimace.

30

They were Italians who knew war's sorrow and disgrace  
 And showed the thing suspended, stripped. A theme  
 Born out of the experience of that horrible extreme  
 Of war beneath a sky where the air flows  
 With *Lachrimae Christi*. For that rage, that bitterness, those blows  
 That hatred of the slain, what could it be  
 But indirectly or directly a commentary  
 On the Crucifixion? and the picture burns  
 With indignation and pity and despair by turns  
 Because it is the obverse of the scene  
 Where Christ hangs murdered, stripped, upon the Cross.  
 I mean,  
 That is the explanation of its rage.

40

And we too have our bitterness and pity that engage  
 Blood, spirit in this war. But night begins,  
 Night of the mind: who nowadays is conscious of our sins?  
 Though every human deed concerns our blood,  
 And even we must know what nobody has understood,  
 That some great love is over all we do  
 And that is what has driven us to fury, for so few  
 Can suffer all the terror of that love:

50

The terror of that love has set us spinning in this groove  
Greasy with our blood.

These dry themselves and dress,  
Resume their shirts, forget the fright and shame of nakedness.  
Because to love is terrible we prefer  
The freedom of our crimes; yet, as I drink the dusky air,  
I feel a strange delight that fills me full,  
Strange gratitude, as if evil itself were beautiful,  
And kiss the wound in thought, while in the west  
I watch a streak of red that might have issued from Christ's breast.



## *iv. The Poem as Drama*

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### "I DIED FOR BEAUTY"

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

I died for beauty, but was scarce  
Adjusted in the tomb,  
When one who died for truth was lain  
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?  
"For beauty," I replied.

"And I for truth,—the two are one;  
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,  
We talked between the rooms, 10  
Until the moss had reached our lips,  
And covered up our names.

### NEW YEAR'S EVE

THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

"I have finished another year," said God,  
"In grey, green, white, and brown;  
I have strewn the leaf upon the sod,  
Sealed up the worm within the clod,  
And let the last sun down."

"And what's the good of it?" I said,  
"What reasons made you call  
From formless void this earth we tread,  
When nine-and-ninety can be read 10  
Why nought should be at all?"

"Yea, Sire; why shaped you us, 'who in  
This tabernacle groan'—  
If ever a joy be found herein,  
Such joy no man had wished to win  
If he had never known!"

Then he: "My labours—logicless—  
You may explain; not I:  
Sense-sealed I have wrought, without a  
guess  
That I evolved a Consciousness  
To ask for reasons why. 20

"Strange that ephemeral creatures who  
By my own ordering are,  
Should see the shortness of my view,  
Use ethic tests I never knew,  
Or made provision for!"

He sank to raptness as of yore,  
And opening New Year's Day  
Wove it by rote as theretofore,  
And went on working evermore  
In his unweeting way. 30

# "IS MY TEAM PLOUGHING"

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936)

"Is my team ploughing,  
That I was used to drive  
And hear the harness jingle  
When I was man alive?"

Aye, the horses trample,  
The harness jingles now;  
No change though you lie under  
The land you used to plough.

"Is football playing  
Along the river shore,  
With lads to chase the leather,  
Now I stand up no more?"

Aye, the ball is flying,  
The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper  
Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?"

20

Aye, she lies down lightly,  
She lies not down to weep:  
Your girl is well contented.  
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

10 "Is my friend hearty,  
Now I am thin and pine;  
And has he found to sleep in  
A better bed than mine?"

Aye, lad, I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart.  
Never ask me whose.

30

## PIAZZA PIECE

JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888- )

—I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying  
To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small  
And listen to an old man not at all;  
They want the young men's whispering and sighing.  
But see the roses on your trellis dying  
And hear the spectral singing of the moon—  
For I must have my lovely lady soon.  
I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.  
—I am a lady young in beauty waiting  
Until my true love comes, and then we kiss.  
But what gray man among the vines is this  
Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream?  
Back from my trellis, sir, before I scream!  
I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

10

# "SINCE THERE'S NO HELP . . ."

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)

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 for ever, 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, 10  
 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 might'st him yet recover.

## "I WILL NOT LET THEE GO"

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844-1930)

|                                             |                                          |    |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----|
| I will not let thee go.                     | With all their million eyes,             |    |
| Ends all our month-long love in this?       | I dare not let thee go.                  | 20 |
| Can it be summed up so,                     |                                          |    |
| Quit in a single kiss?                      | I will not let thee go.                  |    |
| I will not let thee go.                     | Have we not chid the changeeful moon,    |    |
|                                             | Now rising late, and now                 |    |
| I will not let thee go.                     | Because she set too soon,                |    |
| If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds, | And shall I let thee go?                 |    |
| As the soft south can blow                  |                                          |    |
| And toss the feathered seeds,               | I will not let thee go.                  |    |
| Then might I let thee go. 10                | Have not the young flowers been content, |    |
|                                             | Plucked ere their buds could blow,       |    |
| I will not let thee go.                     | To seal our sacrament?                   |    |
| Had not the great sun seen, I might;        | I cannot let thee go. 30                 |    |
| Or were he reckoned slow                    |                                          |    |
| To bring the false to light,                | I will not let thee go.                  |    |
| Then might I let thee go.                   | I hold thee by too many bands:           |    |
|                                             | Thou sayest farewell, and lo!            |    |
| I will not let thee go.                     | I have thee by the hands,                |    |
| The stars that crowd the summer skies       | And will not let thee go.                |    |
| Have watched us so below                    |                                          |    |

## SONG

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

|                                |                                 |    |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----|
| Sweetest love, I do not go     | Yesternight the Sun went hence  |    |
| For weariness of thee,         | And yet is here today,          | 10 |
| Nor in hope the world can show | He hath no desire nor sense,    |    |
| A fitter love for me;          | Nor half so short a way;        |    |
| But since that I               | Then fear not me,               |    |
| Must die at last, 'tis best    | But believe that I shall make   |    |
| Thus to use myself in jest     | Speedier journeys, since I take |    |
| By feigned deaths to die.      | More wings and spurs than he.   |    |

O how feeble is man's power,  
That if good fortune fall,  
Cannot add another hour,  
Nor a lost hour recall!

But come bad chance,  
And we join to't our strength,  
And we teach it art and length,  
Itself o'er us t' advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,  
But sigh'st my soul away;  
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,  
My life's blood doth decay.

It cannot be  
That thou lov'st me, as thou say'st; 30  
If in thine my life thou waste,  
20 That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart  
Forethink me any ill,  
Destiny may take thy part  
And may thy fears fulfil;

But think that we  
Are but turn'd aside to sleep.  
They who one another keep  
Alive, ne'er parted be. 40

## THE GOOD-MORROW

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

I wonder by my troth what thou and I  
Did till we loved? were we not weaned till then?  
But sucked on country pleasures childishy?  
Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?  
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.  
If ever any beauty I did see,  
Which I desired and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good morrow to our waking souls,  
Which watch not one another out of fear;  
For love all love of other sights controls, 10  
And makes one little room an everywhere.  
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown,  
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,  
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;  
Where can we find two better hemispheres  
Without sharp North, without declining West?  
Whatever dies was not mixt equally;  
If our two loves be one, or thou and I 20  
Love so alike that none do slacken, none can die.

## THE FUNERAL

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

Who ever comes to shroud me, do not harm,  
 Nor question much  
 That subtle wreath of hair, which crowns my arm;  
 The mystery, the sign you must not touch,  
     For 'tis my outward Soul,  
 Viceroy to that, which then to heaven being gone,  
     Will leave this to control,  
 And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall  
     Through every part,  
 Can tie those parts, and make me one of all,  
 These hairs, which upward grew, and strength and art  
     Have from a better brain,  
 Can better do it. Except she meant that I  
     By this should know my pain,  
 As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemn'd to die.

10

What ere she meant by it, bury it with me,  
     For since I am  
 Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry  
 If into others' hands these reliques came.  
     As 'twas humility  
 To afford to it all that a Soul can do,  
     So, 'tis some bravery,  
 That, since you would save none of me, I bury some of you.

20

## TO HIS COY MISTRESS

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

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.

20

But at my back I always hear  
 Time's wingèd 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

10

That long preserved virginity,  
 And your quaint honor turn to dust,  
 And into ashes all my lust. 30  
 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 am'rous birds of prey,  
 Rather at once our time devour,  
 Than languish in his slow-chapped power.  
 Let us roll all our strength, and all 41  
 Our sweetness, up into one ball;  
 And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
 Through the iron gates of life.  
 Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
 Stand still, yet we will make him run.

## THE CONSTANT LOVER

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642)

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: 10  
 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.

## AN ODE

MATTHEW PRIOR (1664-1721)

The merchant, to secure his treasure,  
 Conveys it in a borrowed name.  
 Euphelia serves to grace my measure;  
 But Chloe is my real flame.

My softest verse, my darling lyre,  
 Upon Euphelia's toilet lay;  
 When Chloe noted her desire,  
 That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise;  
 But with my numbers mix my sighs:  
 And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise, 11  
 I fix my soul on Chloe's eyes.

Fair Chloe blushed: Euphelia frowned:  
 I sung and gazed: I played and trembled:  
 And Venus to the Loves around  
 Remark'd, how ill we all dissembled.

## PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

The rain set early in to-night,  
 The sullen wind was soon awake,  
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,  
 And did its worst to vex the lake,  
 I listened with heart fit to break.

When glided in Porphyria; straight  
 She shut the cold out and the storm,  
 And kneeled and made the cheerless grate  
 Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;  
 Which done, she rose, and from her form

Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,  
 And laid her soiled gloves by, untied  
 Her hat and let the damp hair fall, 13  
 And, last, she sat down by my side  
 And called me. When no voice replied,  
 She put my arm about her waist,  
 And made her smooth white shoulder  
 bare,  
 And all her yellow hair displaced,  
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,  
 And spread o'er all her yellow hair,  
 Murmuring how she loved me—she 21  
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,  
 To set its struggling passion free  
 From pride, and vainer ties dis sever,  
 And give herself to me for ever.  
 But passion sometimes would prevail,  
 Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain  
 A sudden thought of one so pale  
 For love of her, and all in vain;  
 So, she was come through wind and rain.  
 Be sure I looked up at her eyes 31  
 Happy and proud; at last I knew  
 Porphyria worshipped me; surprise  
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew  
 While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,  
 Perfectly pure and good: I found  
 A thing to do, and all her hair  
 In one long yellow string I wound  
 Three times her little throat around, 40  
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;  
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.  
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
 I warily oped her lids; again  
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.  
 And I untightened next the tress  
 About her neck; her cheek once more  
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:  
 I propped her head up as before,  
 Only, this time *my* shoulder bore 50  
 Her head, which droops upon it still:  
 The smiling rosy little head,  
 So glad it has its utmost will,  
 That all it scorned at once is fled,  
 And I, its love, am gained instead!  
 Porphyria's love: she guessed not how  
 Her darling one wish would be heard.  
 And thus we sit together now,  
 And all night long we have not stirred,  
 And yet God has not said a word! 60

## MY LAST DUCHESS

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

SCENE: 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 20  
 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 favour 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, 30  
 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 40  
 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 50  
 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!

## ULYSSES

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
 Match'd with an aged 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 enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10  
 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 honour'd 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 untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20  
 For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
 As tho' 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 gray spirit yearning in desire 30  
 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 labour, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40  
 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 toil'd, 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 hath yet his honour 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. 50

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.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
 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.

60

70

## SPRING AND FALL: TO A YOUNG CHILD

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-1889)

Márgarét, are you grieving  
 Over Goldengrove unleaving?  
 Léaves, like the things of man, you  
 With your fresh thoughts care for, can  
 you?  
 Ah! 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: 10  
 Sorrow's springs áre the same.  
 Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed  
 What heart heard of, ghost guessed:  
 It is the blight man was born for,  
 It is Margaret you mourn for.

## TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936)

The time you won your town the race  
 We chaired you through the market-place;  
 Man and boy stood cheering by,  
 And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,  
 Shoulder-high we bring you home,  
 And set you at your threshold down,  
 Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away  
 From fields where glory does not stay, 10  
 And early though the laurel grows  
 It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut  
 Cannot see the record cut,

And silence sounds no worse than cheers  
 After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout  
 Of lads that wore their honors out,  
 Runners whom renown outran  
 And the name died before the man. 20

So set, before its echoes fade,  
 The fleet foot on the sill of shade,  
 And hold to the low lintel up  
 The still-defended challenge cup.

And round that early-laurelled head  
 Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,  
 And find unwithered on its curls  
 The garland briefer than a girl's.

## THE LISTENERS

WALTER DE LA MARE (1873- )

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,  
 Knocking on the moonlit door;  
 And his horse in the silence champed the  
 grasses  
 Of the forest's ferny floor.  
 And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
 Above the Traveler's head:  
 And he smote upon the door again a second  
 time;  
 "Is there anybody there?" he said.  
 But no one descended to the Traveler;  
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill 10  
 Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,  
 Where he stood perplexed and still.  
 But only a host of phantom listeners  
 That dwelt in the lone house then  
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moon-  
 light  
 To that voice from the world of men:  
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on  
 the dark stair  
 That goes down to the empty hall,

Harkening in an air stirred and shaken  
 By the lonely Traveler's call. 20  
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
 Their stillness answering his cry,  
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark  
 turf,  
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky;  
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
 Louder, and lifted his head:—  
 "Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
 That I kept my word," he said.  
 Never the least stir made the listeners,  
 Though every word he spake 30  
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of  
 the still house  
 From the one man left awake:  
 Aye, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
 And the sound of iron on stone,  
 And how the silence surged softly back-  
 ward,  
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

## PATTERNS

AMY LOWELL (1874-1925)

I walk down the garden paths,  
 And all the daffodils  
 Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.  
 I walk down the patterned garden-paths  
 In my stiff, brocaded gown.  
 With my powdered hair and jeweled fan,  
 I too am a rare  
 Pattern. As I wander down  
 The garden paths.  
 My dress is richly figured, 10  
 And the train  
 Makes a pink and silver stain  
 On the gravel, and the thrift  
 Of the borders.  
 Just a plate of current fashion,  
 Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned  
 shoes.

Not a softness anywhere about me,  
 Only whalebone and brocade.  
 And I sink on a seat in the shade  
 Of a lime tree. For my passion 20  
 Wars against the stiff brocade.  
 The daffodils and squills  
 Flutter in the breeze  
 As they please.  
 And I weep;  
 For the lime-tree is in blossom  
 And one small flower has dropped upon  
 my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops  
 In the marble fountain  
 Comes down the garden-paths. 30  
 The dripping never stops.

Underneath my stiffened gown  
 Is the softness of a woman bathing in a  
     marble basin,  
 A basin in the midst of hedges grown  
 So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,  
 But she guesses he is near,  
 And the sliding of the water  
 Seems the stroking of a dear  
 Hand upon her. 39  
 What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!  
 I should like to see it lying in a heap upon  
     the ground.  
 All the pink and silver crumpled up on  
     the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran  
     along the paths,  
 And he would stumble after,  
 Bewildered by my laughter.  
 I should see the sun flashing from his  
     sword-hilt and the buckles on his  
     shoes.  
 I would choose  
 To lead him in a maze along the patterned  
     paths,  
 A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-  
     booted lover.  
 Till he caught me in the shade, 50  
 And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised  
     my body as he clasped me,  
 Aching, melting, unafraid.  
 With the shadows of the leaves and the  
     sundrops,  
 And the plopping of the waterdrops,  
 All about us in the open afternoon—  
 I am very like to swoon  
 With the weight of this brocade,  
 For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom  
 In my bosom 60  
 Is a letter I have hid.  
 It was brought to me this morning by a  
     rider from the Duke.  
 "Madam, we regret to inform you that  
     Lord Hartwell  
 Died in action Thursday se'nnight."  
 As I read it in the white, morning sun-  
     light,

The letters squirmed like snakes.  
 "Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.  
 "No," I told him.

"See that the messenger takes some re-  
     freshment.

"No, no answer." 70

And I walked into the garden,  
 Up and down the patterned paths,  
 In my stiff, correct brocade.  
 The blue and yellow flowers stood up  
     proudly in the sun,

Each one.  
 I stood upright too,  
 Held rigid to the pattern  
 By the stiffness of my gown;  
 Up and down I walked,  
 Up and down. 80

In a month he would have been my hus-  
     band.

In a month, here, underneath this lime,  
 We would have broke the pattern;  
 He for me, and I for him,  
 He as Colonel, I as Lady,  
 On this shady seat.  
 He had a whim  
 That sunlight carried blessing.  
 And I answered, "It shall be as you have  
     said."

Now he is dead. 90

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk  
 Up and down  
 The patterned garden-paths  
 In my stiff, brocaded gown.  
 The squills and daffodils  
 Will give place to pillared roses, and to  
     asters, and to snow.

I shall go  
 Up and down  
 In my gown.  
 Gorgeously arrayed, 100  
 Boned and stayed.

And the softness of my body will be  
     guarded from embrace

By each button, hook, and lace.  
 For the man who should loose me is dead,  
 Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,  
 In a pattern called a war.  
 Christ! What are patterns for?

## MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935)

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, <sup>11</sup>  
 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. <sup>20</sup>

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 <sup>30</sup>

Assuredly did not, he paced away,  
 And with his hand extended paused again:

"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: <sup>39</sup>

"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—  
 For auld lange 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 was  
 done. <sup>50</sup>

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 be-  
 low—

Where strangers would have shut the  
 many doors

That many friends had opened long ago.

## *v. The Poem as Analogy*

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### ARS POETICA

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892- )

|                                                                                    |                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A poem should be palpable and mute<br>As a globed fruit                            | Leaving, as the moon behind the winter<br>leaves,<br>Memory by memory the mind— |
| Dumb<br>As old medallions to the thumb                                             | A poem should be motionless in time<br>As the moon climbs                       |
| Silent as the sleeve-worn stone<br>Of casement ledges where the moss has<br>grown— | A poem should be equal to:<br>Not true                                          |
| A poem should be wordless<br>As the flight of birds                                | For all the history of grief<br>An empty doorway and a maple leaf 20            |
| A poem should be motionless in time<br>As the moon climbs 10                       | For love<br>The leaning grasses and two lights above<br>the sea—                |
| Leaving, as the moon releases<br>Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,           | A poem should not mean<br>But be.                                               |

### THREE SONNETS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

#### SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;

10

Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

## SONNET 33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
 Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;  
 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
 With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
 And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
 Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:  
 Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
 With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;  
 But, out, alack! he was but one hour mine,  
 The region cloud hath masked him from me now.  
 Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;  
 Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

10

## SONNET 73

That time of year thou may'st in me behold  
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
 Bare ruined 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,  
 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong.  
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

10

"MY LOVE IS LIKE TO ICE . . ."

(*From AMORETTI*)

EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

My Love is like to ice, and I to fire:  
 How comes it then that this her cold so great  
 Is not dissolved through my so hot desire,  
 But harder grows the more I her entreat?  
 Or how comes it that my exceeding heat

Is not allayed by her heart-frozen cold,  
 But that I burn much more in boiling sweat,  
 And feel my flames augmented manifold?  
 What more miraculous thing may be told,  
 That fire, which all things melts, should harden ice, 10  
 And ice, which is congeal'd with senseless cold,  
 Should kindle fire by wonderful device?  
 Such is the power of love in gentle mind,  
 That it can alter all the course of kind.

## THE CANONIZATION

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,  
 Or chide my palsy, or my gout,  
 My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout;  
 With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,  
 Take you a course, get you a place,  
 Observe his honor, or his grace;  
 Or the king's real, or his stampèd face  
 Contemplate; what you will, approve,  
 So you will let me love.

Alas! alas! who's injured by my love? 10  
 What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?  
 Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?  
 When did my colds a forward spring remove?  
 When did the heats which my veins fill  
 Add one more to the plaguy bill?  
 Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still  
 Litigious men, which quarrels move,  
 Though she and I do love.

Call's what you will, we are made such by love;  
 Call her one, me another fly; 20  
 We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,  
 And we in us find th'eagle and the dove.  
 The phoenix riddle hath more wit  
 By us; we two being one, are it;  
 So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.  
 We die and rise the same, and prove  
 Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,  
 And if unfit for tomb or hearse  
 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse; 30



And if no piece of chronicle we prove,  
 We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;  
 As well a well-wrought urn becomes  
 The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,  
 And by these hymns all shall approve  
 Us canonized for love;

And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend love  
 Made one another's hermitage;  
 You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;  
 Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove  
 Into the glasses of your eyes  
 (So made such mirrors, and such spies,  
 That they did all to you epitomize)  
 Countries, towns, courts, beg from above  
 A pattern of your love."

40

## A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

As virtuous men pass mildly away,  
 And whisper to their souls to go,  
 Whilst some of their sad friends do say,  
 "The breath goes now," and some say,  
 "No,"

So let us melt and make no noise,  
 No tear-floods nor sigh-tempests move;  
 'Twere profanation of our joys  
 To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and  
 fears;  
 Men reckon what it did and meant; 10  
 But trepidation of the spheres,  
 Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love,  
 Whose soul is sense, cannot admit  
 Absence, because it doth remove  
 Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refin'd  
 That ourselves know not what it is,

Interassurèd of the mind, 19  
 Care less eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls, therefore, which are one,  
 Though I must go, endure not yet  
 A breach, but an expansion,  
 Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so  
 As stiff twin compasses are two;  
 Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show  
 To move, but doth if th' other do.

And though it in the center sit,  
 Yet when the other far doth roam, 30  
 It leans and hearkens after it,  
 And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
 Like th' other foot, obliquely run;  
 Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
 And makes me end where I begun.

## THE DEFINITION OF LOVE

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

My Love is of a birth as rare  
 As 'tis, for object, strange and high:  
 It was begotten by Despair  
 Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone  
 Could show me so divine a thing,  
 Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown  
 But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive  
 Where my extended soul is fixt,  
 But Fate does iron wedges drive,  
 And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye does see  
 Two perfect loves; nor lets them close:  
 Their union would her ruin be,  
 And her tyrannic power depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel  
 Us as the distant poles have placed,  
 (Though love's whole world on us doth  
 wheel)

Not by themselves to be embraced. 20

Unless the giddy heaven fall,  
 And earth some new convulsion tear;  
 And, us to join, the world should all  
 Be cramped into a planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique may well  
 Themselves in every angle greet:  
 But ours, so truly parallel,  
 Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,  
 But Fate so enviously debars, 30  
 Is the conjunction of the mind,  
 And opposition of the stars.

## "THERE IS A GARDEN IN HER FACE"

THOMAS CAMPION (1567-1620)

There is a garden in her face  
 Where roses and white lilies grow;  
 A heavenly paradise is that place  
 Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.

There cherries grow which none may  
 buy,  
 Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose  
 Of orient pearl a double row,  
 Which when her lovely laughter shows, 9

They look like rose-buds filled with snow;  
 Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,  
 Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still,  
 Her brows like bended bows do stand,  
 Threatening with piercing frowns to kill  
 All that attempt, with eye or hand,  
 Those sacred cherries to come nigh  
 Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

## TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1634)

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,  
 Old Time is still a-flying:  
 And this same flower that smiles to-day,  
 To-morrow 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; 10  
 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.

## TO HELEN

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

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

Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home  
 To the glory that was Greece  
 And the grandeur that was Rome. 10

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,

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!

## TO MARGUERITE

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

### I.

#### *Isolation*

We were apart; yet, day by day,  
 I bade my heart more constant be.  
 I bade it keep the world away,  
 And grow a home for only thee;  
 Nor fear'd but thy love likewise grew,  
 Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known,  
 What far too soon, alas! I learn'd—  
 The heart can bind itself alone,  
 And faith may oft be unreturn'd. 10  
 Self-sway'd our feelings ebb and swell—  
 Thou lov'st no more;—Farewell! Fare-  
 well!

Farewell!—and thou, thou lonely heart,  
 Which never yet without remorse  
 Even for a moment didst depart  
 From thy remote and spheréd course  
 To haunt the place where passions reign—  
 Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame  
 Which Luna felt, that summer-night, 20  
 Flash through her pure immortal frame,

When she forsook the starry height  
 To hang over Endymion's sleep  
 Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep.

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved  
 How vain a thing is mortal love,  
 Wandering in Heaven, far removed.  
 But thou hast long had place to prove  
 This truth—to prove, and make thine  
 own:

"Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone." 30

Or, if not quite alone, yet they  
 Which touch thee are unmating things—  
 Ocean and clouds and night and day;  
 Lorn autumns and triumphant springs,  
 And life, and others' joy and pain,  
 And love, if love, of happier men.

Of happier men—for they, at least,  
 Have *dream'd* two human hearts might  
 blend

In one, and were through faith released  
 From isolation without end 40  
 Prolong'd; nor knew, although not less  
 Alone than thou, their loneliness.

## 2.

Yes: in the sea of life enisled,  
 With echoing straits between us thrown.  
 Dotting the shoreless watery wild,  
 We mortal millions live *alone*.  
 The islands feel the enclaspings flow,  
 And then their endless bounds they know.

O then a longing like despair  
 Is to their farthest caverns sent!  
 For surely once, they feel, we were  
 Parts of a single continent.  
 Now round us spreads the watery plain—  
 O might our margins meet again!

But when the moon their hollows lights,  
 And they are swept by balms of spring,  
 And in their glens, on starry nights,  
 The nightingales divinely sing; 10  
 And lovely notes, from shore to shore,  
 Across the sounds and channels pour;

Who ordered that their longing's fire 19  
 Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?  
 Who renders vain their deep desire?—  
 A god, a god their severance ruled;  
 And bade betwixt their shores to be  
 The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

"HOW DO I LOVE THEE. . . ."

(*From SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE*)

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806–1861)

SONNET 43

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 everyday's  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
 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.

10

"THUS PITEOUSLY LOVE CLOSED. . . ."

(*From MODERN LOVE*)

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909)

Thus piteously Love closed what he begat:  
 The union of this ever-diverse pair!  
 These two were rapid falcons in a snare,  
 Condemned to do the fitting of the bat.  
 Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,

They wandered once; clear as the dew on flowers:  
 But they fed not on the advancing hours:  
 Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.  
 Then each applied to each that fatal knife,  
 Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.  
 Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul  
 When hot for certainties in this our life!—  
 In tragic hints here see what evermore  
 Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,  
 Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,  
 To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

10

"SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE. . . ."

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819-1861)

Say not the struggle nought availeth,  
 The labour and the wounds are vain,  
 The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
 And as things have been, things remain.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
 Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;  
 It may be, in yon smoke concealed,  
 Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,  
 And, but for you, possess the field.

And not by eastern windows only,  
 When daylight comes, comes in the  
 light,  
 In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
 But westward, look, the land is bright.

AUTUMNUS

JOSHUA SYLVESTER (1563-1618)

When the leaves in autumn wither,  
 With a tawny tanned face,  
 Warped and wrinkled-up together,  
 The year's late beauty to disgrace:

There thy life's glass may'st thou find thee,  
 Green now, gray now, gone anon;  
 Leaving (worldling) of thine own,  
 Neither fruit, nor leaf behind thee.

VIRTUE

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
 The bridal of the earth and sky;  
 The dew shall weep thy fall tonight,  
 For thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
 A box where sweets compacted lie;  
 My music shows ye have your closes,  
 And all must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave  
 Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;  
 Thy root is ever in its grave,  
 And thou must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
 Like seasoned timber, never gives;  
 But though the whole world turn to coal,  
 Then chiefly lives.

## TO DAFFODILS

ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)

Fair daffodils, we weep to see

You haste away so soon:

As yet the early-rising sun

Has not attain'd his noon.

Stay, stay,

Until the hasting day

Has run

But to the even-song;

And, having pray'd together, we

Will go with you along. 10

We have short time to stay, as you.

We have as short a Spring;

As quick a growth to meet decay,

As you, or any thing.

We die,

As your hours do, and dry

Away,

Like to the Summer's rain;

Or as the pearls of morning's dew

Ne'er to be found again. 20

## THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832)

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,

Hid in this silent, dull retreat,

Untouched thy honeyed blossoms blow,

Unseen thy little branches greet:

No roving foot shall crush thee here,

No busy hand provoke a tear.

By Nature's self in white arrayed,

She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,

And planted here the guardian shade,

And sent soft waters murmuring by; 10

Thus quietly thy summer goes,

Thy days declining to repose.

Smit with those charms that must decay,

I grieve to see your future doom;

They died—nor were those flowers more

gay,

The flowers that did in Eden bloom;

Unpyting frosts and autumn's power

Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

From morning suns and evening dews

At first thy little being came: 20

If nothing once, you nothing lose,

For when you die you are the same;

The space between is but an hour,

The frail duration of a flower.

## THE ROBIN

GEORGE DANIEL (1616-1657)

Poor bird! I do not envy thee;

Pleased in the gentle melody

Of thy own song.

Let crabbèd winter silence all

The wingèd choir; he never shall

Chain up thy tongue:

Poor innocent:

When I would please myself, I look on  
thee;And guess some sparks of that felicity,  
That self-content. 10

When the bleak face of winter spreads

The earth, and violates the meads

Of all their pride;

When sapless trees and flowers are fled,

Back to their causes, and lie dead

To all beside:

I see thee set

Bidding defiance to the bitter air,

Upon a withered spray; by cold made bare,

And drooping yet. 20

There, full in notes, to ravish all

My earth, I wonder what to call

My dullness; when

I hear thee, pretty creature, bring

Thy better odes of praise, and sing,

To puzzle men:

Poor pious elf!

I am instructed by thy harmony,

To sing the time's uncertainty,

Safe in myself. 30

Poor redbreast, carol out thy lay,  
And teach us mortals what to say.

Here cease the choir  
Of airy choristers; no more  
Mingle your notes; but catch a store  
From her sweet lyre;

You are but weak,  
Mere summer chanters; you have neither  
wing  
Nor voice, in winter. Pretty redbreast,  
sing,  
What I would speak.

40

## TO A WATERFOWL

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

Whither, midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,  
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue  
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,  
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed oceanside?

10

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—  
The desert and illimitable air—  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,  
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near.

20

And soon that toil shall end;  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,  
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,  
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shalt not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone  
Will lead my steps aright.

30

## DAYS

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

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 pleachéd 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. 11

## THE BOURNE

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

Underneath the growing grass,  
Underneath the living flowers,  
Deeper than the sound of showers:  
There we shall not count the hours  
By the shadows as they pass.

Youth and health will be but vain,  
Beauty reckoned of no worth:  
There a very little girth  
Can hold round what once the earth  
Seemed too narrow to contain. 10

## I. M.: MARGARITAE SORORI

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY (1849-1903)

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;  
And from the west,  
Where the sun, his day's work ended,  
Lingers as in content,  
There falls on the old, grey city  
An influence luminous and serene,  
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends  
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires  
Shine, and are changed. In the valley 10  
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,  
Closing his benediction,  
Sinks, and the darkening air

Thrills with a sense of the triumphing  
night—  
Night with her train of stars  
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!  
My task accomplished and the long day  
done,  
My wages taken, and in my heart  
Some late lark singing, 20  
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,  
The sundown splendid and serene,  
Death.

## DIRGE IN WOODS

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

A wind sways the pines,  
And below  
Not a breath of wild air;  
Still as the mosses that glow  
On the flooring and over the lines  
Of the roots here and there.  
The pine-tree drops its dead;  
They are quiet, as under the sea.

Overhead, overhead  
Rushes life in a race, 10  
As the clouds the clouds chase;  
And we go,  
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,  
Even we,  
Even so.



## THE CONDEMNED

(For L. O.)

P. K. PAGE (1917- )

In separate cells they tapped the forbidden message.  
 Even the wide-eared warden could never hear  
 their miniature conversation  
 though he slipped the bolt of his hearing and walked the passage.

Then feeling the walls would dissolve with love they planned  
 the inevitable and leisurely excavation;  
 tap grew into chip behind the bed  
 as darkness hid the activities of the hand.

In an area a cigarette could light, everything lived.  
 The intricate machinery of the head  
 stopped and the heart's attention  
 increased the circumference of what they loved.

10

Then as the wall grew thin they wore their hopes  
 inwardly like a name they must never mention;  
 the riots of the skin were still to listen  
 for the warden's silent black-and-white approach.

And as their fingers groped and came together  
 it was so suddenly tender in that prison  
 birds might have sung from water—just as if  
 two mouths meeting and melting had become each other.

20

Later the whole hand grasped and the ultimate escape  
 plunging through velvet to an earth so stiff  
 their footfall left no mark  
 though their feet felt sharp, resuming use and shape.

Their lungs, in all that air, filled like balloons,  
 pastel and luminous against the dark:  
 no angels could have had more grace  
 in a children's heaven full of clouds and moons.

But light destroyed their splendour, all their soft  
 movements jerked to woodcuts and the lace  
 of their imagination atrophied.  
 Their stark identities—all they had left—

30

were mirrored upon fence and parish hall  
 and plastered on the staring countryside  
 till each became a terror and a face  
 and everywhere they went was nowhere at all.

## BIRCHES

ROBERT FROST (1874- )

When I see birches bend to left and right  
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.  
 Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them  
 Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
 After a rain. They click upon themselves  
 As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
 As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.  
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells  
 Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—  
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.  
 They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,  
 And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed  
 So low for long, they never right themselves:  
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods  
 Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground  
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair  
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.  
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in  
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm  
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them  
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows—  
 Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,  
 Whose only play was what he found himself,  
 Summer or winter, and could play alone.  
 One by one he subdued his father's trees  
 By riding them down over and over again  
 Until he took the stiffness out of them,  
 And not one but hung limp, not one was left  
 For him to conquer. He learned all there was  
 To learn about not launching out too soon  
 And so not carrying the tree away  
 Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise  
 To the top branches, climbing carefully  
 With the same pains you use to fill a cup  
 Up to the brim, and even above the brim.  
 Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,  
 Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.  
 So was I once myself a swinger of birches.  
 And so I dream of going back to be.  
 It's when I'm weary of considerations,  
 And life is too much like a pathless wood  
 Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs

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Broken across it, and one eye is weeping  
 From a twig's having lashed across it open.  
 I'd like to get away from earth awhile  
 And then come back to it and begin over.  
 May no fate willfully misunderstand me  
 And half grant what I wish and snatch me away  
 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:  
 I don't know where it's likely to go better.  
 I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,  
 And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk  
*Toward* heaven, till the tree could bear no more,  
 But dipped its top and set me down again.  
 That would be good both going and coming back.  
 One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

50

## TREE AT MY WINDOW

ROBERT FROST (1874- )

Tree at my window, window tree,  
 My sash is lowered when night comes on;  
 But let there never be curtain drawn  
 Between you and me.

Vague dream-head lifted out of the  
 ground,  
 And thing next most diffuse to cloud,  
 Not all your light tongues talking aloud  
 Could be profound.

But tree, I have seen you taken and tossed,  
 And if you have seen me when I slept, <sup>10</sup>  
 You have seen me when I was taken and  
 swept  
 And all but lost.

That day she put our heads together,  
 Fate had her imagination about her,  
 Your head so much concerned with outer,  
 Mine with inner, weather.

## THE FALLING OUT

R. W. STALLMAN (1911- )

It's land the ocean longs for:  
 What seawaves seek is shore  
 To share in the outgoing.  
 But shore from sea divides.  
 That's why an undertowing  
 Stirs these seacove tides.

When shore drew back to bay  
 It changed the seacoast's face:  
 Some falling out took place.

It was the land gave way.  
 What happened was the ocean  
 Asked for more devotion.

I've known the quest and ache  
 Of land-tormented lake,  
 Of shallows closed about  
 Where once land opened out.  
 Where water falls the shock  
 Occurs because of rock.

10

## *vi. The Poem as Mood*

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### THE PIPER

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

Piping down the valleys wild,  
Piping songs of pleasant glee,  
On a cloud I saw a child,  
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"  
So I piped with merry cheer.  
"Piper, pipe that song again;"  
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;  
Sing thy songs of happy cheer:" 10

So I sang the same again,  
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write  
In a book, that all may read."  
So he vanished from my sight,  
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,  
And I stained the water clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear. 20

### GOD'S GRANDEUR

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-1898)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell; the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; 10  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

## "LOVELIEST OF TREES . . ."

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936)

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. 10

## "WESTERN WIND, WHEN WILT THOU BLOW"

ANONYMOUS (16TH CENTURY)

Western wind, when wilt thou blow,  
The small rain down can rain?  
Christ, if my love were in my arms  
And I in my bed again!

## "ADIEU; FAREWELL EARTH'S BLISS"

THOMAS NASHE (1567-1601)

Adieu; farewell earth's bliss,  
This world uncertain is:  
Fond are life's lustful joys,  
Death proves them all but toys.  
None from his darts can fly:  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,  
Gold cannot buy you health;  
Physic himself must fade;  
All things to end are made;  
The plague full swift goes by;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower,  
Which wrinkles will devour:  
Brightness falls from the air;  
Queens have died young and fair;  
Dust hath closed Helen's eye;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave:  
Worms feed on Hector brave;  
Swords may not fight with fate:  
Earth still holds ope her gate.  
Come, come, the bells do cry;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord have mercy on us!

Wit with his wantonness,  
Tasteth death's bitterness. 30  
Hell's executioner  
Hath no ears for to hear  
What vain art can reply;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord have mercy on us!

Haste therefore each degree  
To welcome destiny:  
Heaven is our heritage,  
Earth but a player's stage.  
Mount we unto the sky; 40  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord have mercy on us!

# "WHEN I HAVE FEARS . . ."

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,  
 Before high-pilèd books, in characterly,  
 Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;  
 When I behold, upon the night's starred face,  
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
 And think that I may never live to trace  
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
 That I shall never look upon thee more,  
 Never have relish in the faery power  
 Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore  
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think,  
 Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

10

## THE WOODSPURGE

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <p>The wind flapped loose, the wind was<br/>         still,<br/>         Shaken out dead from tree and hill:<br/>         I had walked on at the wind's will,—<br/>         I sat now, for the wind was still.</p> | <p>My eyes, wide open, had the run<br/>         Of some ten weeds to fix upon;<br/>         Among those few, out of the sun,<br/>         The woodspurge flowered, three cups in<br/>         one.</p> | <p>10</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Between my knees my forehead was,—<br/>         My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!<br/>         My hair was over in the grass,<br/>         My naked ears heard the day pass.</p> | <p>From perfect grief there need not be<br/>         Wisdom or even memory:<br/>         One thing then learnt remains to me,—<br/>         The woodspurge has a cup of three.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

# "I HEAR AN ARMY CHARGING . . ."

JAMES JOYCE (1882-1941)

I hear an army charging upon the land,  
 And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees:  
 Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,  
 Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night their battle-name:  
 I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.  
 They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,  
 Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair:

They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.

10

My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?

My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?

## FUTILITY

WILFRED OWEN (1893-1918)

Move him in the sun—

Gently its touch awoke him once,

At home, whispering of fields unsown.

Always it woke him, even in France

Until this morning and this snow.

If anything might rouse him now

The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds,—

Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.

Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides, 10

Full-nerved—still warm—too hard to stir?

Was it for this the clay grew tall?

—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil

To break earth's sleep at all?

## THE LAST FRONTIER

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER (1886-1950)

Having passed over the world,

And seen three seas and two mountains,

He came to the last frontier.

On a hilltop

There were two men making a hole in the ground:

And beside it, his own dead body lay.

The thin man stroked his beard,

And wondered if the grave was deep enough;

The fat man sweated and dug,

And longed for a glass of beer.

10

Meantime his body lay there,

In a shabby suit, on a bed of wet leaves.

And the clouds of the evening, blown from beyond the world,

Swung lightly past his face;

But he waited until

The body was dropped and the earth shovelled deep upon it:

The lean man put a cross,

The fat man stumped off home.

Then he went back from the last frontier

To the countries he had known years ago;

20

To the palaces of night and the peaks ringed with fire,

Without hope.

## *vii. The Poem as Satire*

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### MINIVER CHEEVY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935)

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,  
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;  
He wept that he was ever born,  
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the Medici,  
Albeit he had never seen one;  
He would have sinned incessantly  
Could he have been one.

20

Miniver loved the days of old  
When swords were bright and steeds  
were prancing;  
The vision of a warrior bold  
Would set him dancing.

Miniver cursed the commonplace  
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;  
He missed the medieval grace  
Of iron clothing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,  
And dreamed, and rested from his  
labors;  
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,  
And Priam's neighbors.

10

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,  
But sore annoyed was he without it;  
Miniver thought, and thought, and  
thought,  
And thought about it.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown  
That made so many a name so fragrant;  
He mourned Romance, now on the town,  
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,  
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;  
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,  
And kept on drinking.

31

### NEWSREEL

C. DAY LEWIS (1904- )

Enter the dream-house, brothers and sisters, leaving  
Your debts asleep, your history at the door:  
This is the home for heroes, and this loving  
Darkness a fur you can afford.

Fish in their tank electrically heated  
Nose without envy the glass wall: for them  
Clerk, spy, nurse, killer, prince, the great and the defeated,  
Move in a mute day-dream.



Bathed in this common source, you gape incurious  
 At what your active hours have willed—  
 Sleep-walking on that silver wall, the furious  
 Sick shapes and pregnant fancies of your world.

10

There is the mayor opening the oyster season:  
 A society wedding: the autumn hats look swell:  
 An old crock's race, and a politician  
 In fishing-waders to prove that all is well.

Oh, look at the warplanes! Screaming hysteric treble  
 In the long power-dive, like gannets they fall steep.  
 But what are they to trouble—  
 These silver shadows to trouble your watery, womb-deep sleep?

20

See the big guns, rising, groping, erected  
 To plant death in your world's soft womb.  
 Fire-bud, smoke-blossom, iron seed projected—  
 Are these exotics? They will grow nearer home:

Grow nearer home--and out of the dream-house stumbling  
 One night into a strangling air and the flung  
 Rags of children and thunder of stone niagaras tumbling,  
 You'll know you slept too long.

## THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN

*(To JS/07/M/378  
 This Marble Monument  
 Is Erected by the State)*

W. H. AUDEN (1907— )

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be  
 One against whom there was no official complaint,  
 And all the reports on his conduct agree  
 That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,  
 For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.  
 Except for the War till the day he retired  
 He worked in a factory and never got fired,  
 But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.  
 Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,  
 For his Union reports that he paid his dues,  
 (Our report on his Union shows it was sound)  
 And our Social Psychology workers found  
 That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.  
 The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day  
 And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.

10

Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,  
 And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.  
 Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare  
 He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan  
 And had everything necessary to the Modern Man, 20  
 A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.  
 Our researchers into Public Opinion are content  
 That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;  
 When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.  
 He was married and added five children to the population,  
 Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation,  
 And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.  
 Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:  
 Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

## DIRGE

KENNETH FEARING (1902- )

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 liqui-  
 dated rails—

Dénouement to dénouement, he took a personal pride in the certain, certain way he  
 lived his own, private life, 10  
 but nevertheless, they shut off his gas; nevertheless, the bank foreclosed; neverthe-  
 less, 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,  
 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, 20

With who the hell are you at the corner of his casket, and where the hell 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.

## TO A SINISTER POTATO

PETER VIERECK (1916- )

O vast earth-apple, waiting to be fried,  
Of all life's starers the most many-eyed,  
What furtive purpose hatched you long ago  
In Indiana or in Idaho?

In Indiana and in Idaho  
Snug underground, the great potatoes  
grow,  
Puffed up with secret paranoias unguessed  
By all the duped and starch-fed Middle  
West.

Like coiled-up springs or like a will-to-  
power,  
The fat and earthy lurkers bide their hour,  
The silent watchers of our raucous show  
In Indiana or in Idaho.

"They think us dull, a food and not a  
flower.

Wait! We'll outshine all roses in our  
hour.

Not wholesomeness but mania swells us so  
In Indiana and in Idaho.

"In each Kiwanis Club on every plate,  
So bland and health-exuding do we wait  
That Indiana never, never knows  
How much we envy stars and hate the  
rose." 20

Some doom will strike (as all potatoes  
know)

When—once too often mashed in  
Idaho—

From its cocoon the drabbest of earth's  
powers

Rises and is a star.

And shines.

And lours.

## ON THE VANITY OF EARTHLY GREATNESS

ARTHUR GUITERMAN (1871- )

The tusks that clashed in mighty brawls  
Of mastodons, are billiard balls.

The grizzly bear whose potent hug  
Was feared by all, is now a rug.

The sword of Charlemagne the Just  
Is ferric oxide, known as rust.

Great Cæsar's bust is on the shelf,  
And I don't feel so well myself!

## "NEXT TO OF COURSE GOD . . ."

E. E. CUMMINGS (1894- )

"next to of course god america i  
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh  
say can you see by the dawn's early my  
country 'tis of centuries come and go  
and are no more what of it we should worry

in every language even deafanddumb  
 thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorrry  
 by jingo by gee by gosh by gum  
 why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-  
 iful than these heroic happy dead  
 who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter  
 they did not stop to think they died instead  
 then shall the voice of liberty be mute?"

10

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water.

## THE LATEST DECALOGUE

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819-1861)

Thou shalt have one God only; who  
 Would be at the expense of two?  
 No graven images may be  
 Worshipped, except the currency:  
 Swear not at all; for, for thy curse  
 Thine enemy is none the worse:  
 At church on Sunday to attend  
 Will serve to keep the world thy friend:  
 Honour thy parents; that is, all  
 From whom advancement may befall: 10  
 Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive  
 Officially to keep alive:

Do not adultery commit;  
 Advantage rarely comes of it:  
 Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,  
 When it's so lucrative to cheat:  
 Bear not false witness; let the lie  
 Have time on its own wings to fly:  
 Thou shalt not covet; but tradition  
 Approves all forms of competition. 20  
 The sum of all is, thou shalt love,  
 If any body, God above:  
 At any rate shall never labour  
 More than thyself to love thy neighbor.

## HEAVEN

RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915)

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,  
 Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)  
 Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,  
 Each secret fishy hope or fear.  
 Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;  
 But is there anything Beyond?  
 This life cannot be All, they swear,  
 For how unpleasant, if it were!  
 One may not doubt that, somehow, Good  
 Shall come of Water and of Mud; 10  
 And, sure, the reverent eye must see  
 A purpose in Liquidity.  
 We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
 The future is not Wholly Dry.  
 Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—  
 Not here the appointed End, not here!  
 But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
 Is wetter water, slimier slime!

And there (they trust) there swimmeth  
 One  
 Who swam ere rivers were begun, 20  
 Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
 Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;  
 And under that Almighty Fin,  
 The littlest fish may enter in.  
 Oh! never fly conceals a hook,  
 Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,  
 But more than mundane weeds are there,  
 And mud, celestially fair;  
 Fat caterpillars drift around,  
 And Paradisal grubs are found; 30  
 Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
 And the worm that never dies.  
 And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
 There shall be no more land, say fish.

## WHITE CHRISTMAS

W. R. RODGERS (1911- )

Punctually at Christmas the soft plush  
Of sentiment snows down, embosoms all  
The sharp and pointed shapes of venom,  
shawls

The hills and hides the shocking holes of  
this

Uneven world of want and wealth,  
cushions

With cosy wish like cotton-wool the cool  
Arm's-length interstices of caste and class,  
And into obese folds subtracts from sight  
All truculent acts, bleeding the world  
white.

Punctually that glib pair, Peace and Good-  
will, 10

Emerges royally to take the air,  
Collect the bows, assimilate the smiles,  
Of waiting men. It is a genial time;  
Angels, like stalactites, descend from  
heaven;

Bishops distribute their own weight in  
words,

Congratulate the poor on Christlike lack;  
And the member for the constituency

Feeds the five thousand, and has plenty  
back.

Punctually, to-night, in old stone circles  
Of set reunion, families stiffly sit 20

And listen: this is the night and this the  
happy time

When the tinned milk of human kindness  
is

Upheld and holed by radio-appeal:  
Hushed are hurrying heels on hard roads,  
And every parlour's a pink pond of light  
To the cold and travelling man going by  
In the dark, without a bark or a bite.

But punctually to-morrow you will see  
All this silent and dissembling world  
Of stilted sentiment suddenly melt 30  
Into mush and watery welter of words  
Beneath the warm and moving traffic of  
feet and actual fact. Over the stark plain  
The silted mill-chimneys once again spread  
Their sackcloth and ashes, a flowing mane  
Of repentance for the false day that's fled.

## *viii. The Poem and Its Parody*

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### THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593)

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountains 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,      10  
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.      20

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.

### THE NYMPH'S REPLY

SIR WALTER RALEGH (1552–1618)

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;      10  
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.      20

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.

## "COME LIVE WITH ME AND BE MY LOVE"

C. DAY LEWIS (1904- )

Come, live with me and be my love,  
 And we will all the pleasures prove  
 Of peace and plenty, bed and board,  
 That chance employment may afford.

Care on thy maiden brow shall put  
 A wreath of wrinkles, and thy foot  
 Be shod with pain: not silken dress  
 But toil shall tire thy loveliness.

10

I'll handle dainties on the docks  
 And thou shalt read of summer frocks:  
 At evening by the sour canals  
 We'll hope to hear some madrigals.

Hunger shall make thy modest zone  
 And cheat fond death of all but bone—  
 If these delights thy mind may move,  
 Then live with me and be my love.

## THE ODYSSEY

ANDREW LANG (1844-1912)

As one that for a weary space has lain  
 Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine,  
 In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,  
 Where that Aææan isle forgets the main,  
 And only the low lutes of love complain,  
 And only shadows of wan lovers pine;  
 As such an one were glad to know the brine  
 Salt on his lips, and the large air again—

So gladly, from the songs of modern speech  
 Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free  
 Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers;  
 And, through the music of the languid hours,  
 They hear like ocean on a western beach  
 The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

10

## "NEARING AGAIN THE LEGENDARY ISLE"

C. DAY LEWIS (1904- )

Nearing again the legendary isle  
 Where sirens sang and mariners were skinned,  
 We wonder now what was there to beguile  
 That such stout fellows left their bones behind.

Those chorus-girls are surely past their prime,  
 Voices grow shrill and paint is wearing thin,  
 Lips that sealed up the sense from gnawing time  
 Now beg the favor with a graveyard grin.

We have no flesh to spare and they can't bite,  
 Hunger and sweat have stripped us to the bone;  
 A skeleton crew we toil upon the tide  
 And mock the theme-song meant to lure us on:

10

No need to stop the ears, avert the eyes  
 From purple rhetoric of evening skies.

## THE SIRENS

JOHN MANIFOLD (1915- )

Odysseus heard the sirens; they were singing  
 Music by Wolf and Weinberger and Morley  
 About a region where the swans go winging,  
 Vines are in colour, girls are growing surely

Into nubility, and pylons bringing  
 Leisure and power to farms that live securely  
 Without a landlord. Still, his eyes were stinging  
 With salt and seablink, and the ropes hurt sorely.

Odysseus saw the sirens; they were charming,  
 Blonde, with snub breasts and little neat posteriors,  
 But could not take his mind off the alarming

10

Weather report, his mutineers in irons,  
 The radio failing; it was bloody serious.  
 In twenty minutes he forgot the sirens.

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## SEA-FEVER

JOHN MASEFIELD (1887- )

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
 And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,  
 And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
 And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
 Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
 And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
 And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life,  
 To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
 And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

9



## SEA-CHILL

ARTHUR GUITERMAN (1871- )

*When Mrs. John Masefield and her husband, the author of "I Must Go Down to the Seas Again," arrived here on a liner, she said to a reporter, "It was too uppy-downy, and Mr. Masefield was ill."—News item.*

I must go down to the seas again, where the billows romp and reel,  
So all I ask is a large ship that rides on an even keel,  
And a mild breeze and a broad deck with a slight list to leeward,  
And a clean chair in a snug nook and a nice, kind steward.

I must go down to the seas again, the sport of wind and tide,  
As the gray wave and the green wave play leapfrog over the side.  
And all I want is a glassy calm with a bone-dry scupper,  
A good book and a warm rug and a light, plain supper.

I must go down to the seas again, though there I'm a total loss,  
And can't say which is worst, the pitch, the plunge, the roll, the toss.      10  
But all I ask is a safe retreat in a bar well tended,  
And a soft berth and a smooth course till the long trip's ended.



## II. *The Poem and the Creative Process*

*Any reaction to stimulus may be causally explained; but the creative act, which is the absolute antithesis of mere reaction, will for ever elude the human understanding.*

—CARL GUSTAV JUNG

*What is this borderland of dream and logic, of fantasy and reason, where the roots and tentacles of mind and personality float and drift into the sudden shaping of a flash resulting in a scheme, a form, a design, an invention, a machine, an image, a song, a symphony, a drama, a poem? There are those who believe they know—and those who hope they may yet know.*

—CARL SANDBURG



## *i. The Origins of Poetry*

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### WHAT IS A POET?

(From the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*)

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

What is a Poet? . . . He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves;—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement. . . .

The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves.

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## POETRY AND THE POET

ELIZABETH DREW (1887-

. . . There are almost as many definitions of poetry as there are poets and critics who have written about it. The trouble with most of them is that they tend to be so abstract and nebulous. "Poetry is a spirit . . . it comes we know not whence." "Poetry is an intuition into the hidden nature of things." "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." "Poetry is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred." "Poetry is a continuous substance or energy." "Poetry is a glimpse of the divine." But whatever poetry is, it is not something else. It is not religion, or philosophy, or aesthetics, or science, or knowledge. It is poetry. And poetry, as "Q" said, is the stuff poets have written. This again, however, is the snake swallowing its own tail; it does not get us very much further. It again only reminds us that poetry is something unlike anything else, and something difficult to define. It is in the same class of definition as Emily Dickinson's—"If I read a book . . . and I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry . . . is there any other way?"

Ultimately, perhaps, there *is* no other way of knowing. That is, poetry is a particular stimulus, which provides a certain kind of response in the right sort of reader. And the whole business of criticism is an effort to try and discover what the nature of that stimulus is, and what the nature of that response is and what makes the right sort of reader.

Abstractions do not help us: they cannot supply the answer to that immediate and practical question: what is the difference between

Wake: the silver dusk returning  
Up the beach of darkness brims

and "Wake, the sun is rising"? Or between

So when you or I are made  
A fable, song or fleeting shade;  
All love, all liking, all delight  
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.

and "When we die, our love will end"?

The verses and the bare statements have the same meaning; they are different ways of conveying the same sense or thought or idea. That is clear; and it is equally clear that that is all they do have in common. Beyond that, at once we feel that in the poetry we are in a different world from that of the prose statements. It is different in two ways. First, *its mode of experiencing the thought or idea or subject or material presented to it, is different*; and secondly, *the words in which the experience is communicated are different*. In those two facts lie the whole theory and practice of poetry.

The raw material of poetry is human experience: all poetry is made from that. Not only from rare and subtle and mysterious and spiritual and abstract and esoteric experiences, but from all and every form of human experience. As Wordsworth says: "it is the honorable characteristic of poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind." Poetry is made from birth and death, from

childhood, youth, and old age; from love, jealousy, ambition, faith, cruelty, kindness, rage, loyalty, laughter; from the solid commonplaces on which all living is based, and the most subtle and recondite mood and movement of the individual personality; from the ecstasy of the mystic and the rape of the lock; from the fall of man, and an idiot boy; from a rainbow and a rabbit; from *la belle dame sans merci* and the servant girl coming downstairs in the morning.

But the poet apprehends and interprets this general experience in ways which belong to him alone.

## 2.

On a certain October day in the year 1816, Charles Cowden Clarke told his young friend John Keats that he had been lent a copy of Chapman's translation of Homer, and he asked Keats to come and explore it with him that evening. Keats went, and the two friends read on through the night till dawn, not beginning at the beginning and working through the epics, but picking out what Cowden Clarke calls "the famousest passages," or "looking into" it, as Keats himself expressed it. Then the young medical student walked back to his own home in another part of London as the day was breaking. When Cowden Clarke came down to a late breakfast next morning at 10 o'clock he found on the table an envelope in Keats's handwriting. Inside was a sheet of paper containing a sonnet:

Much have I travell'd 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-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:  
Yet could I never judge what men might mean  
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 wond'ring eyes  
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

These two young men had had a common experience the night before. They had read a book together. Cowden Clarke has left a description of that evening in prose. Keats has left a poem. We should surely be able to discover something of what is vital to the nature of poetry and the poet by a contrast of the two methods of communication and an examination of the particular character of each.

## 3.

They have one great point of similarity. With both, the experience has become *words*. It is no longer the actual reading of a book which Charles Cowden Clarke shared with John Keats. Both the prose and the poetry are collections of words, and everything which we as readers receive from reading them, reaches us through the words the writers have chosen.

Cowden Clarke tells us the facts of the matter as they appeared to him.

"A beautiful copy of the folio edition of Chapman's translation of Homer had been lent me. It was the property of Mr. Alsager, the gentleman who for years had contributed no small share of celebrity to the great reputation of the *Times* newspaper by the masterly manner in which he conducted the money-market department of that journal. . . .

"Well, then, we were put in possession of the Homer of Chapman, and to work we went, turning to some of the "famous" passages, as we had scrappily known them in Pope's version. . . ."

Then follows an account of some of the passages,\* and of the arrival of the sonnet next morning.

Now let us read the sonnet again and see how the matter appeared to Keats. Again we are in that world we have already visited. What *is* its peculiar quality? We have said that within it, we are always conscious of two things. First, that the way in which the poet has seen and felt the experience is different from that in which the ordinary man sees and feels experience. It is different, first of all, because instead of being a diffused and general impression of loosely related objects and events, it is a synthesis, in which whatever is significant and eternal in the experience is present, and from which whatever is insignificant and temporal has been excluded. The actual scene and the actual sequence of events in it have been excluded, but the heart and core of its emotional reality to the poet has been seized upon by some mysterious power, revealed in all its riches, and unified into a splendid isolation. And this revelation is made in a particular way. It is not achieved by analysis or argument or statement or description. It is created directly by the poetic vision, and the essence of the poetic vision is that it embodies itself always in the form of symbols. In one complete act of apprehension, Keats embodies the heart and core of that experience with Cowden Clarke into the central symbol of a voyage of discovery. He at once challenges our attention and raises the pitch of the experience which we are to share to a different level, by the first line:

*Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold.*

At once we are far away from Mr. Alsager and his masterly conduct of the money-market department in the London *Times*: from Cowden Clarke, too, and the very slightly patronizing way in which he pointed out the finest passages to his young friend. Reading Homer is no longer concerned with a certain copy of the book in a particular time and place. It is part of the adventures of the poet's personality in the whole world of books.

At once, too, we become conscious of the second great difference between the world of poetry and the world of statement. *The words are different.* Just as the poet has seen and felt the experience in a special way, so he uses his medium of interpreting and communicating the experience in a special way. Words are no longer merely the means of *conveying* facts. They are concerned to *suggest the quality* of those facts. They are no longer *practical*: they are *evocative*. Here they are required to communicate the quality which the poet discerns in his beloved world of books and reading, and all the richness, the rareness, the colour, the sovereign power which dwell for him in the atmosphere of that world, he incarnates in the two words he uses to suggest it, *the realms of gold*. All its associations with romance, with poetry, with the medieval flavour he loved, with Greek myth, and Apollo, the Greek God of song and sunrise,

\* Two of the passages may be found on pp. 769-771. [Editors' note]



he packed into his description of the islands in those golden realms, *which bards in fealty to Apollo hold*.

And now the central symbol of the poet's voyage of discovery among books is enlarged and enriched by the creation of new images and a swelling and intensification of the emotion. The atmosphere of excited exploration is changed to that of triumphant achievement. Words loaded with atmosphere and colour give place to those clear direct monosyllables, *I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold*. And finally we are swept forward to see and feel those two marvellous symbols of the living spirit of discovery, which form the sestet of the sonnet. As we read of Cortez, too, the unity of the imagery throughout is strengthened by the echo of the "realms of gold" in the first line. For the realms of gold, besides being Keats's creation of a name for the world of reading, is the literal translation of "el dorado," the mythical land the conquistadors set out to find, and the greatest of the conquistadors was Cortez.<sup>1</sup>

By that act of apprehension, indeed, which the poetic vision of Keats achieved from all the materials which that experience presented to it, and by the language which gave it form, is created in fourteen lines of verse, a new world. A world in which the original experience he shared with Cowden Clarke—the actual experience of spending a night in reading a book, no longer exists. Instead of a scene in which the actors were Charles Cowden Clarke and John Keats and Mr. Alsager's copy of Chapman's Homer, there is a world, contained within the confines of an abstract shape of fourteen lines, in which romance and Eldorado and Greece, Homer and Apollo, Chapman and Cortez and the poet himself, Darien and the empyrean, all harmonize into one exquisite unity of being.

#### 4.

How poetry comes to the poet is a mystery. The idea of the Muse is an obvious symbol of the fact which all creators have felt to be true—that inspiration is a reality. Something of what Mozart describes in one of his letters happens to every artist.

"When I am feeling well and in good humour . . . thoughts come in swarms and with marvellous ease. . . . Once I catch my air, another comes soon to join the first, according to the requirements of the whole composition. . . . Then my mind kindles—the work grows—I keep hearing it and bring it out more and more clearly, and the composition ends by being completely executed in my mind, however long it may be."

*Something*, which is usually called the imagination, comes to the poet which not only sharpens and intensifies all the faculties he shares in common with his fellow men, but creates a new function of his mind which they do not possess. It is a function which enables the poet to release his imprisoned and chafing vitality in the particular form it needs to take, that is, in the poetic act. Keats describes himself, when the creative passion is upon him, as living under an everlasting restraint, never relieved except when he was composing. Wordsworth calls it a passion and a power, by which we "see into the life of things." This must be what Keats means, too, when he declares that a poet is the most unpoetical thing in existence because he has no identity, he is continually filling some other body, and thus partaking of experience in unfamiliar modes. When he is possessed by the need to write poetry, the poet only exists with

<sup>1</sup> See *Studies in Keats*. J. Middleton Murry.

great difficulty and distress in the actual and factual world about him. His mind is not functioning in that world: he is a stranger there. For the passion and the power generate in him "unknown modes of being." And it is this sense of unknown modes of being, this faculty for revealing things to the mind in relationships which are hidden in normal experience, which is the innermost secret of poetic genius. The poet, as Wordsworth again says, rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life which is in him, but besides the passion of perception which that joy brings him, is that particular power of synthesizing perceptions which other men lack: that power of conceiving experiences in the terms of something else; of seizing and communicating analogies; of creating symbol, image, metaphor; and of associating in this way different levels and kinds of experience (such as exploring and Homer and astronomy and reading books), so that their conjunction, by some mysterious intellectual and emotional chemistry, creates a new quality of experience, a new "mode of being" which was not there before, and which is unlike anything else.

The working of this power is a mystery. It remains a mystery even when its results have been minutely examined. For instance, it so happens that we have the actual clues to all the associations on which the creative passion of Keats seized, and on which it worked when he was composing the famous sonnet. We can guess why it was that Homer and astronomy and Cortez and Darien thronged his mind together,<sup>2</sup> and it is possible to work out in a small way the same process which has already been recreated so brilliantly by J. Livingston Lowes in regard to *The Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*.

As Keats walked home through the quiet streets, with the stars fading out into the dawn, he may well have had his imagination kindled to an image of "a watcher of the skies," but this may have been helped by a particular memory of the past. A few years before, when Keats had left school, he had won a prize. It was an introduction to astronomy by a man called Bonnycastle. One of the chapters is called "Of the new Planets and other discoveries." The author was fond of lightening his discourses with passages from the poets, and one of these passages was definitely one of those "famous passages" from Homer (in Pope's translation) which Cowden Clarke mentions—the shipwreck of Ulysses in the fifth book. He said Keats gave one of his "delighted stares" as they read the description together—evidently remembering the stilted version of it quoted by Bonnycastle. And so we get the image of the poet as he discovers the "demesne" of Homer:

like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken.

We can trace, too, something of the working of Keats's mind as it found the famous simile of Cortez and Darien. It is a recollection from a passage in Robertson's *History of America*. The associations of that evening must have made Keats re-live in memory much of his school-days at Enfield. The headmaster of the school was Cowden Clarke's father; the Bonnycastle was a school prize, Keats and Cowden Clarke had made friends over poetry, and we have his direct testimony that Robertson's *History* was one of Keats's favorite books in the school library. It was a small jump, as his mind busied itself with ideas of books and discoveries, from Bonnycastle and astronomy, to Robertson and Darien. In that book he had read

<sup>2</sup> See *Essays and Studies of the English Association*—vol. XVI, for a much fuller account of this.

"The isthmus of Darien is not above sixty miles in breadth, but this neck of land . . . is stretched by a chain of lofty mountains . . . which render it a barrier of solidity sufficient to resist the impulses of two opposite oceans. . . .

"At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of the steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, and advanced alone to the summit, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, returned thanks to God. . . . His followers, observing his transports of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation and gratitude."

Why Keats confused Cortez and Balboa we do not know, but we can make a guess. It may have been that immediately before the passage in Robertson of Balboa discovering the Pacific, is a description of a Spanish expedition in which Cortez figures: or it may have been that, as we know from Leigh Hunt, Keats had seen the portrait of Cortez by Titian, and had been greatly impressed by the eyes—the "eagle eyes" which appeared in the later version of the poem.

The only other change Keats made was to alter the line "*Yet could I never judge what men could mean*" to "*Yet did I never breathe its pure serene*," an echo from Dante which definitely links with the idea of the empyrean and the watcher of the skies.

The picture of Cortez' men owed something to *The Rape of Lucrece*:

Enchanted Tarquin answers with surmise  
In silent wonder of still gazing eyes.

### 5.

Here we can catch a glimpse of the poetic process; of the unifying harmonizing power over material which the poet possesses. A poem is a synthesis of memoried impressions, which the average liver of life leaves in their original chaotic state. "Life is like a blind and limitless expanse of sky, for ever dividing into tiny drops of circumstance that rain down, thick and fast, a ceaseless, meaningless drip. Art is like the dauntless plastic force that builds up stubborn amorphous substance cell by cell into the frail geometry of a shell." Into the deep well of our subconscious memory go all the impressions and reminiscences and facts which fall upon our minds and senses and emotions. And there in general they lie, a huddled sleeping company; or they come out straggling and inchoate, the mere tricks of disconnected association. But the poet, with the fire of his imagination, reminds these scraps of memorized litter into new-welded living form, pouring them into a fresh mould, and stamping them with the new bright impress of his own vitality. Poetry and life differ, just as coal and diamonds differ, though the basis of both is exactly the same substance.

The poet remains a man as other men. He is not a mixture of a prophet, a seer, a priest and a medicine man. He may be any manner of man: as moral as Tennyson, as pagan as Keats; as classic as Housman, as romantic as Swinburne; as optimistic as Browning, as pessimistic as Hardy; as mystic as Blake, as practical as Pope; as subtle as de la Mare, as simple as Herrick. The experience he uses as a starting point may be anything: a story, a mood, a moment, an incident, a character, a comment. It may be high or low, grave or gay, steady or fleeting. But whatever it is, it will begin by

stirring within him that ferment of excitement, that mysterious working of the glands or the nerve centres or whatever it is which we call inspiration. The sense of inspiration itself is incommunicable. That passion of "burning with mental bliss" as a modern poet has called it, cannot be transferred, any more than a love poem can communicate the passion of love. The communicable part of the experience, the part with which criticism can concern itself, is that which can be, and is, embodied in words. *Poetry is a special use of words.*

## 6.

Obviously, poetry is impossible without words. A dumb poet, a mute inglorious Milton, is a contradiction in terms. We may say loosely that a sunset or a pretty woman is a perfect poem, but we mean nothing by that except that we consider the sunset or the woman a beautiful thing. We may say of someone that he or she has the mind of a poet, but all we mean is that he or she is sensitive or subtle above the average. Poetry is the communication of experience through the medium of language used in a certain way. We have already said that the poet's use of language is evocative, not practical. The poet does not find words to project the "plain sense" of the experience he wishes to express. He finds words to express the whole infinitely complicated business of its happening *to him*: the emotions it aroused, the sensations which accompanied it, the atmosphere it created, the memories it awakened. And that not vaguely, but the exact tone and shade and composition of all these things. This evocative, suggestive value of words is an essential of poetry, but it is a quality which poetry shares with a great deal of prose. When we read in Dorothy Wordsworth's journal \* that the daffodils "tossed and reeled and danced and seemed as if they verily laughed in the wind," there is no distinction between the way in which she uses language to express her experience, and the way her brother uses it to express the same experience as he saw and felt it.

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.

\* Dorothy Wordsworth, in her journal for April 15, 1802, records the episode as follows:

"It was a threatening, misty morning, but mild. . . . 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. . . . When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few 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 turn-pike 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. . . ." [Quoted by the editors from *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by E. de Selincourt (London: Macmillan Co., 1941), I, 131-132.]

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.

10

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.

20

In the same way a great deal of the prose of Virginia Woolf is the prose of a poet. That is, the way she apprehends experience, both in its intensity and its subtlety, and in the power she has of revealing "unknown modes of being" through her creation and association of images, is the way of a poet. Her "thought" is "poetic thought": but her medium of expression is prose. There is one essential difference in the use of language which is present in Keats's sonnet and in Wordsworth's poem, which is absent from Dorothy Wordsworth and Virginia Woolf. It is the element of *sustained, unified organic rhythm*. This sounds an ugly and clumsy description, perhaps, but it is not possible to simplify it. Prose has its rhythms no less than verse, so to say that poetry is rhythmical language is not enough. It is not enough to say that poetry possesses a regular rhythm, since much free verse does not possess it, and is none the less poetry for that. It is a rhythm which only arises when experience has been conceived in a certain way, at a certain pitch and with a certain tension. Poetry is a use of words which creates a living organism, which builds up a unique harmony of being in which this rhythm—both in its larger sense of the general design, movement or flow of the poetic thought, and in its more limited sense of the sound pattern—is always an essential and intrinsic part.

#### [EDITORS' NOTE]

#### From CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Of the several passages cited by Clarke as having delighted Keats and himself that night, two will perhaps suffice here. The first, called by Clarke "the prodigious description of Neptune's passage to the Achive ships," shows Neptune deciding to interfere in a naval battle on behalf of the Greeks:

[Neptune] sat aloft on th' utmost top of shady Samothrace,  
 And view'd the fight. His chosen seat stood in so brave a place,  
 That Priam's city, the Achive ships, all Ida, did appear  
 To his full view; who from the sea was therefore seated there.

He took such ruth to see the Greeks by Troy sustain such ill,  
 And, mightily incens'd with Jove, stoop'd straight from that steep hill,  
 That shook as he flew off, so hard his parting press'd the height.  
 The woods, and all the great hills near, trembled beneath the weight  
 Of his immortal moving feet. Three steps he only took,  
 Before he far-off Ægas reach'd, but, with the fourth, it shook 10  
 With his dread entry. In the depth of those seas he did hold  
 His bright and glorious palace, built of never-rusting gold;  
 And there arriv'd, he put in coach his brazen-footed steeds,  
 All golden-maned, and pac'd with wings; and all in golden weeds  
 He cloth'd himself. The golden scourge, most elegantly done,  
 He took, and mounted to his seat; and then the God begun  
 To drive his chariot through the waves. From whirlpits ev'ry way  
 The whales exulted under him, and knew their king; the sea  
 For joy did open; and, his horse so swift and lightly flew,  
 The under axletree of brass no drop of water drew; 20  
 And thus these deathless coursers brought their king to th' Achive ships.

[Chapman's *Iliad*, Bk. XIII, ll. 11-31. Edited by  
 Richard Hooper (London, 1865).]

Of the second passage Clarke writes: "One scene I could not fail to introduce him to—the shipwreck of Ulysses, . . . where Ulysses is cast up on the shores of Phæacia, and I had the reward of one of his delightful stares. . . ." Ulysses, having lost his ship in a tempest, has been struggling in the water for two days when he at last catches sight of "an unhop'd for shore" but one which presents such difficulties that he is almost in despair:

A curs'd surge 'gainst a cutting rock impell'd  
 His naked body, which it gash'd and tore,  
 And had his bones broke, if but one sea more  
 Had cast him on it. But She prompted him,  
 That never fail'd, and bade him no more swim  
 Still off and on, but boldly force the shore,  
 And hug the rock that him so rudely tore;  
 Which he with both hands sigh'd and clasp'd, till past  
 The billow's rage was; when 'scap'd, back so fast 10  
 The rock repuls'd it, that it reft his hold,  
 Sucking him from it, and far back he rolled.  
 And as the polypus that (forc'd from home  
 Amidst the soft seas, and near rough land come  
 For shelter 'gainst the storms that beat on her  
 At open sea, as she abroad doth err)  
 A deal of gravel, and sharp little stones,  
 Needfully gathers in her hollow bones,  
 So he forc'd hither by the sharper ill,  
 Shunning the smoother, where he best hop'd, still 20  
 The worst succeeded; for the cruel friend,  
 To which he cling'd for succour, off did rend  
 From his broad hands the soaked flesh so sore,  
 That off he fell . . .

Finally he succeeds in getting ashore at the mouth of a stream:

Then forth he came, his knees falt'ring, both  
His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth  
His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath  
Spent to all use, and down he sunk to death.  
The sea had soak'd his heart through; all his veins  
His toils had rack'd t' a labouring woman's pains.  
Dead weary was he. . . .

[Chapman's *Odyssey*, Bk. V, ll. 561-583; 608-614. Edited  
by Richard Hooper (London, 1874).]

*From POPE'S HOMER*

The account of Ulysses' struggles as given in Alexander Pope's version, which was the one that Keats had previously known, runs as follows:

. . . a monstrous wave upbore  
The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore:  
Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,  
But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul.  
Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,  
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung;  
Till the huge surf roll'd off: then, backward sweep  
The reflux tides, and plunge him in the deep.  
As when the polypus, from forth his cave  
Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave,  
His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands;  
So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands. . . .

10

That moment, fainting as he touch'd the shore,  
He dropp'd his sinewy arms: his knees no more  
Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld:  
His swoln heart heaved: his bloated body swell'd:  
From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran;  
And lost in lassitude lay all the man,  
Deprived of voice, of motion, and of breath;  
The soul scarce waking in the arms of death. . . .

20

[Pope's *Odyssey*, Home Library ed. (A. L. Burt, n.d.).]

*From THE FIGURE A POEM MAKES*

ROBERT FROST (1875- )

. . . It should be of the pleasure of a poem itself to tell how it can. The figure a poem makes. It begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love. No one can really hold that the ecstasy should be static and stand still in one place. It begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life—not

necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion. It has denouement. It has an outcome that though unforeseen was predestined from the first image of the original mood—and indeed from the very mood. It is but a trick poem and no poem at all if the best of it was thought of first and saved for the last. It finds its own name as it goes and discovers the best waiting for it in some final phrase at once wise and sad—the happy-sad blend of the drinking song.

No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader. For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew. I am in a place, a situation, as if I had materialized from cloud or risen out of the ground. There is a glad recognition of the long lost and the rest follows. Step by step the wonder of unexpected supply keeps growing. The impressions most useful to my purpose seem always those I was unaware of and so made no note of at the time when taken, and the conclusion is come to that like giants we are always hurling experience ahead of us to pave the future with against the day when we may want to strike a line of purpose across it for somewhere. The line will have the more charm for not being mechanically straight. We enjoy the straight crookedness of a good walking stick. . . .

Scholars and artists thrown together are often annoyed at the puzzle of where they differ. Both work from knowledge; but I suspect they differ most importantly in the way their knowledge is come by. Scholars get theirs with conscientious thoroughness along projected lines of logic; poets theirs cavalierly and as it happens in and out of books. They stick to nothing deliberately, but let what will stick to them like burrs where they walk in the fields. No acquirement is on assignment, or even self-assignment. Knowledge of the second kind is much more available in the wild free ways of wit and art. A schoolboy may be defined as one who can tell you what he knows in the order in which he learned it. The artist must value himself as he snatches a thing from some previous order in time and space into a new order with not so much as a ligature clinging to it of the old place where it was organic. . . .

## ROBERT FROST: A TIME TO LISTEN

REGINALD L. COOK (1903- )

What Henry James said of Ivan Turgenev is certainly true of Robert Frost. "He was the richest, the most delightful, of talkers, and his face, his person, his temper, the thoroughness with which he had been equipped for human intercourse, make in the memory of his friends, an image which is completed, but not thrown into the shade, by his literary distinction." Frost belongs with the interesting talkers. . . .

One reason why he talks so well is because his big frame is perfectly relaxed. He possesses the harmonious physical and mental co-ordination of a natural athlete whose poise is the result of relaxation. As his body relaxes, his mind flexes. Inward restraint counterpoises outer enthusiasm and inner enthusiasm counterbalances outer restraint. . . .

. . . His voice, sauntering along at an unhurried clip, expresses an amiable and sensitive personality in an idiom that is more colloquial than urbane. One night we were in the kitchen of his farmhouse in South Shaftsbury, Vermont, and he read from the little blue-bound books in which he puts his new poems. It had been a day of drizzling rain, and mist still hovered in the bottom lands. He tilted his chair against



the enamel sink, the fire untended, dying, and read "The Leaf-treader," "Departmental," "The Vindictives," and "The White-tailed Hornet." Outside a pheasant squawked several times, and it was in this setting that I heard the rise and fall of that tone-sensitive voice. It is one of the easiest voices to listen to I ever heard.

He is also one of the easiest persons with whom to talk that I have ever known. It is true, as a friend of mine says in idiom, "he'll stay there talking until the last dog is dead." But what he says is good listening. "I have an endless resourcefulness to change my ground," he says, and it is this endless resourcefulness which animates the talk. Now he is talking about glass shirts, soon it will be water witches or dowsers, and there will be no end to the surprise topics. Much of what he is saying deserves to be remembered. . . .

In the range of his talk what he has to say about the writing of poems is memorable. Poetry has been one of the really important things to him. He has given all he had to give to the writing of it. Once he described to me the time when he thought he had first caught what he was after. It was in the lines from "My Butterfly":

The gray grass is scarce dappled with the snow;  
Its two banks have not shut upon the river.

And he described the feeling he had when he knew that he had come through in those lines. "It's a funny thing," he said with intense feeling in his voice, "like tears inside."

For twenty years I have listened to Frost and from these talks gathered a kind of *ars poetica*. When I asked him once if a poem originated in an intuitive impulse, he shrugged off the word "intuitive" as apparently esoteric. He did not approve of ascribing mystifying terms to the writing of poems. When he has a good co-ordination of body, mind, and spirit—an optimum condition certainly—he feels what he describes as "a funny sort of command" over words; "a nice kind of summons." In these moods the poem gets started and develops from "ecstasy at some surprise in the mind." He gets a "clue" and is drawn on by what he calls "a gatherer."

Once he explained the genesis of the poem "Departmental." "How did you come to write it?" I inquired.

"You mean what it *rides* on?" And, without awaiting a reply, he continued: "A queer feeling or mood toward something, and then fulfils it." By *it* he means, of course, the mood toward something. While he was living at Key West in the winter of 1935, the sight of an ant and a moth on a table suggested the basic idea already latent in his mind, and being in a responsive mood he started his poem and went through with it. In his manuscript copy there were crossed-out lines and interlineations; but he had carried it through to its "triumphal intention." The greatest satisfaction comes, he feels, when you can say: "Here is a poem that is a triumphal intention, that bore right through and dismissed itself." The "triumphal intention" is the source of his delight: it is the consummation of "the pure emergence [of the poem] from the logic of the thing." But "the pure emergence" is not necessarily in a straight line; it is more like following stepping-stones across a field in a kind of straight-crookedness. What is memorable in the writing is the "resolved perplexity." There is so much more suspense in perplexity than in preconceived ends. Can he fetch it off? Can he resolve it? "Aye, there's the leverage!"

In the making of form his organic method is diametrically the opposite of Poe's method as illustrated in "The Philosophy of Composition." \* He considers the prepared

\* See p. 802. [Editors' note]

and outlined piece of art suspect. "If it is thought out first and expressed last, I dismiss it," he says with finality. He does not write with the end in mind and then attempt to make things fit it. Instead, he proceeds, in Benjamin Franklin's words, "regularly from things known to things unknown, distinctly and clearly without confusion." After the poem finds its direction in the first line, it rides on its own impulse. "Like a piece of ice on a hot stove, the poem must ride on its own melting," he says. He does not try to wrench out the significance of the experience inherent in the poetic impulse; he tries only to release it. From its origin in the mood, which committed the poet, until the final line is set down, the poem unfolds organically, like a leaf from a bud.

He does not keep a notebook; he deprecates keeping one. The tendency for the writer with a notebook is to put down his thought finished or unfinished, and there it is. Frost depends upon memory and recall. The only freedom, as he says, is the freedom of his materials, and he realizes this freedom by apt recalls from past experience. And to make sure that he does not always turn backward, he welcomes enough of the new to freshen, not to stifle, his thought. If what attracts his attention has any real significance, he believes that it will stay in his mind, and by turning to it now and then he can develop it further. Part of the pleasure of lecturing or conversing or writing is to take up one of these unfinished thoughts and unfold it a little further. It provides the elements of surprise and freshness to the audience as much as to the poet. Apparently for him to write is to finish a thought and, in the main, he prefers to keep unfolding these thoughts rather than prematurely closing them. Some have been growing since he was a very young man.

He has counseled "build soil," and I think he follows his own line of thought. He has turned thought back and back again, until the tilth of him is "sweating-full" and "drips" poetry and wisdom. The poems he writes are really produced from observed data that may go ten or twenty or more years deep in his life. He tells how Wilfred Wilson Gibson, whom he had known in England, used to search every nook and cranny for poetic materials. This has not been the way he has worked. He has not set out deliberately to write about this or that; he has not "worked up" something to write about. His sharp eyes have picked up the things which his unhurried mind has absorbed at leisure. And he has been content to wait patiently for experience to settle. In consequence his poems have not been the product of superficial retinal glances. They have been the product of the longest meditation he could give them. He has written only under a compelling and controlled impulse. Until the composing mood came, he has been well satisfied to gloat "on things of this world."

One estimates the success of Frost's organic method by the tenacity with which he clings to the coattails of his inspiration. To insure a successful outcome, there must be no letting-go but a steady holding-on. It is a dauntless and an exhilarating method and has, among other advantages, the one of suspense or surprise. Intense is the suspense as the poet follows through to a dimly perceived but ultimate fulfilment of his expression. "The best of a poem," he says, "is when you first make it, the curve that it takes, the shape, the run, the flow, and then you can come back to it."

In form a poem is a limited number of sentences. These sentences lie in the poem like a little set of boxes in a Japanese puzzle-box. The limitation in the number of sentences gives the poem an advantage over any other literary form. He prefers the compactness of integrated sentences to the diffusiveness of Walt Whitman and the free-verse writers. He remarks satirically, "We used to say that the beauty of poetry

was that it helped you to remember it. Free verse is better; you can remake it." And even more sharply he says, "Writing free verse is like playing tennis with the net down."

The source of the poetic sentences consists in seeing likenesses in life which are brought together through metaphor. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," he says, is the product of several thoughts brought together. Different lines represent different time intervals in his life. The opposite of what he really believes about metaphor comes out in the following ironical blast at the contemporary obscurantists: "It has been lately found that it is harder to make a disconnection than a connection. The universe is not a continuity; it is a discontinuity. When you write a poem, your first object ought to be to put something into it that nobody can connect with anything else. When you have done that, you have elation. You used to get your fun out of the expression of a poem. The new-fashioned way is to enjoy the theory on which it is written."

These sentences that the poet uses are very important. An effective sentence must have the quality of memorableness, for it should be "a thing caught whole by the ear as spoken." To write a poem is to go "a-sentencing," and what he likes is "the singing of the sentences into the form." The following eleven lines from "Happiness Makes Up in Height for What It Lacks in Length" illustrates what he means by a poetic sentence.

Oh, stormy stormy world,  
The days you were not swirled  
Around with mist and cloud,  
Or wrapped as in a shroud,  
And the sun's brilliant ball  
Was not in part or all  
Obscured from mortal view—  
Were days so very few  
I can but wonder whence  
I get the lasting sense  
Of so much warmth and light.

He thinks that the worst thing you can feel about a poem is that the sentences have been stretched or squeezed, and the worst is to squeeze them. He prefers the natural, cursive quality and the easy flow in Shakespeare to the "hot, tight, and cramped" sonnets of Rossetti. He tries to find the point of balance between sluggishness where, as he says, things "creak," and glibness, where one says more than should properly be said. The poet should never squeeze or cheat or do violence to the sentence. Nor should he alter it from what it should be by nature. The trouble with the poet, like the average human being, is that he indulges a tendency to be sweet to himself. For the poet the only hope is to divest himself of the last ego. He is too frequently the victim of self-deception and likes to believe that what he does is just right. Addressing these self-deceivers, Frost says, "You've got to get the self-love out of a poem and transform the love into a bleak honesty."

Each poetic sentence does double duty. It "conveys one meaning by word and syntax, another by the tone of voice it indicates. In irony, the tone indicated contradicts the words." Thus a poem is "saying one thing and meaning another—a form of honest duplicity." Most writers have just one tone—a tone of statement. Others try to vary this tone by lengthening or shortening the poetic sentences. Frost has, however, varied

this tone by using dramatic images of speech. A dramatic image of speech is simply the precise tone of voice by which the meaning in the words is communicated. He adheres to the regular metrical patterns, but he varies the regularity by the "tones of voice." These voice-tones are to be taken not as dialect but as accent. Words he calls "a kind of notation and writing-down of the voice," and he associates the origin of style with the "observing ear." It is "picked up," he says, "by the observing ear." He defines it as "the texture of the tones of the speaking voice. One has it as a visitation."

A poem is not only a set or assortment of poetic sentences; it is also a set or assortment of dramatic images of speech. For example, the following stanza from Christina Rossetti's "Uphill" contains dramatic images of speech:

Does the road wind uphill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?  
From morn to night, my friend.

And the following quotation from his own "Blueberries" contains a very successful dramatic image in the last sentence.

There had been some berries—but those were all gone.  
He didn't say where they had been. He went on:  
I'm sure—I'm sure—as polite as could be.

A real intensity inheres in the dramatic expression which would vary twenty end-stop lines. When the poet succeeds in varying the tones of the phrases, the poem grows intense with dramatic expression. The height of poetry consists in the dramatic give-and-take. Drama, he believes, is the capstone of poetry. In the lyric the dramatic give-and-take is within one's self and not between two people, as in the dramatic dialogue. Because of the voice-tones in his poems, he calls them "talk-songs." And he says of himself, "I am on one of the scales between two things—intoning and talking. I bear a little more toward talking."

To my inquiry as to how he tests a new poem, he replied that, first, he must have a right kind of feeling about it—a kind of feeling that what he writes is good. He must feel "in form" like a baseball pitcher. Second, he appraises the poem critically in order to make sure that he is not being too nice to himself. He sets the poem against all he knows—against the masters, technique, experience, to make sure that it is all right. The poem must be interesting, but the poet must be careful about being too interested in himself. "We are more interesting to ourselves than we have a right to be," he explained. The two characteristics in writing that he stresses are interest and accuracy, and the latter especially in the use of words. Two qualities of a good poem are honesty and integrity; its tests are brilliance (in the sense of originality) and validity (in the sense of strong as opposed to the invalid). The height of the great poet is his performance, and in great poetry there is something of the quality of ice forming where the crystals ramify in beautiful patterns. That is to say, the performance consists in blending beautiful lines and thoughts.

Robert Frost's talk, like his poetry, is the crystallization of what in himself he essentially is—a wise, neighborly man, rooted and seasoned in New England soil and climate, who possesses the two most cherishable gifts of a writer: creative thought and a personal idiom. It will be a long time before the determined tone of his voice fades

from earshot when he says: "I like clarification of idea; I like to see the issues drawn," or "I stand against arrogance of the rights of the law," or when he says in a tone of quiet certainty, "What I like to see is nobility." Like Emerson, he speaks the thought that suggests itself and, like Thoreau, he listens behind him for his wit, and thus shows new proportions to the problem and sets the inquirer thinking anew. A rare, uninhibited talker is this poet, who, like Socrates, lightens a peripatetic talk with extempore flashes of responsive wit.

## KUBLA KHAN: OR A VISION IN A DREAM

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

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 sinu-  
ous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing  
tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. 11

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 tur-  
moil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were  
breathing 18

A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:  
Amid whose swift half-intermittent 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 momentarily 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! 30

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, 40  
Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive with 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! 50  
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.

## A NOTE ON THE ORIGIN OF "KUBLA KHAN"

When "Kubla Khan" was first published in 1816, Coleridge prefaced it with an account of its origin:

The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity [Lord Byron], and, as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed poetic merits.

In the summer of the year 1797, the author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in *Purchas's Pilgrimage*: "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed within a wall." The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions; without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter.

In an undated manuscript Coleridge elsewhere described his state at the time of writing the poem as "a sort of Reverie, brought on by two grains of Opium, taken to check a dysentery."

John Livingston Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927) has tracked down, in the wide range of Coleridge's reading, the origin of nearly every image and most of the phrases used in the poem—a most fascinating journey of discovery in the land of the poetic imagination. But neither the enchantment of the poem nor its meaning can be accounted for by the simple facts that Coleridge sometimes used opium and had always been an omnivorous reader.

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"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME" \*

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

My first thought was, he lied in every word,  
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye  
Askance to watch the working of his lie

\* See Edgar's Song in *Lear*. [*Browning's note*]

On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford  
 Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored  
 Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?  
 What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare  
 All travelers who might find him posted there,  
 And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh  
 Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph  
 For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

10

If at his counsel I should turn aside  
 Into that ominous tract which, all agree,  
 Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly  
 I did turn as he pointed: neither pride  
 Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,  
 So much as gladness that some end might be.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,  
 What with my search drawn out through years, my hope  
 Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope  
 With that obstreperous joy success would bring,  
 I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring  
 My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

20

As when a sick man very near to death  
 Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end  
 The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend,  
 And hears one bid the other go, draw breath  
 Freelier outside, ("since all is o'er," he saith,  
 "And the blow fallen no grieving can amend;")

30

While some discuss if near the other graves  
 Be room enough for this, and when a day  
 Suits best for carrying the corpse away,  
 With care about the banners, scarves and staves:  
 And still the man hears all, and only craves  
 He may not shame such tender love and stay.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,  
 Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ  
 So many times among "The Band"—to wit,  
 The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed  
 Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,  
 And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

40

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,  
 That hateful cripple, out of his highway  
 Into the path he pointed. All the day

Had been a dreary one at best, and dim  
 Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim  
 Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found  
 Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,  
 Than, pausing to throw backward a last view  
 O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; gray plain all round:  
 Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.  
 I might go on; nought else remained to do.

50

So, on I went. I think I never saw  
 Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:  
 For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!  
 But cockle, spurge, according to their law  
 Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,  
 You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

60

No! penury, inertness and grimace,  
 In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See  
 Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,  
 "It nothing skills: I cannot help my case:  
 'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,  
 Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk  
 Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents  
 Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents  
 In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to baulk  
 All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute must walk  
 Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

70

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair  
 In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud  
 Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.  
 One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,  
 Stood stupefied, however he came there:  
 Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know,  
 With that red gaunt and colloped neck astrain,  
 And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;  
 Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe;  
 I never saw a brute I hated so;  
 He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

80

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.  
 As a man calls for wine before he fights,  
 I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,



Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.  
 Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art:  
 One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

90

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face  
 Beneath its garniture of curly gold,  
 Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold  
 An arm in mine to fix me to the place,  
 That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!  
 Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands  
 Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.  
 What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.  
 Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands  
 Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands  
 Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

100

Better this present than a past like that;  
 Back therefore to my darkening path again!  
 No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.  
 Will the night send a howlet or a bat?  
 I asked: when something on the dismal flat  
 Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

A sudden little river crossed my path  
 As unexpected as a serpent comes.  
 No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;  
 This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath  
 For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath  
 Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

110

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,  
 Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;  
 Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit  
 Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:  
 The river which had done them all the wrong,  
 Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

120

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared  
 To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,  
 Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek  
 For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!  
 —It may have been a water-rat I speared,  
 But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.  
 Now for a better country. Vain presage!  
 Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage,

Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank  
 Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,  
 Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage— 130

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.  
 What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?  
 No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,  
 None out of it. Mad brewage set to work  
 Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk  
 Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!  
 What bad use was that engine for, that wheel, 140  
 Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel  
 Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air  
 Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,  
 Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,  
 Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth  
 Desperate and done with; (so a fool finds mirth,  
 Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood  
 Changes and off he goes!) within a rood—  
 Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth. 150

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim,  
 Now patches where some leanness of the soil's  
 Broke into moss or substances like boils;  
 Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him  
 Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim  
 Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

And just as far as ever from the end!  
 Nought in the distance but the evening, nought  
 To point my footstep further! At the thought,  
 A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend, 160  
 Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned  
 That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,  
 'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place  
 All round to mountains—with such name to grace  
 Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.  
 How thus they had surprised me,—solve it you!  
 How to get from them was no clearer case.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick  
 Of mischief happened to me, God knows when— 170  
 In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,

Progress this way. When, in the very nick  
 Of giving up, one time more, came a click  
 As when a trap shuts—you're inside the den!

Burningly it came on me all at once,  
 This was the place! those two hills on the right,  
 Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;  
 While to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,  
 Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,  
 After a life spent training for the sight!

180

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?  
 The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,  
 Built of brown stone, without a counterpart  
 In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf  
 Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf  
 He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day  
 Came back again for that! before it left,  
 The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:  
 The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,  
 Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—  
 "Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"

190

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled  
 Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears,  
 Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—  
 How such a one was strong, and such was bold,  
 And such was fortunate, yet each of old  
 Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met  
 To view the last of me, a living frame  
 For one more picture! in a sheet of flame  
 I saw them and I knew them all. And yet  
 Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set  
 And blew. "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*"

200

## SOURCES OF ROBERT BROWNING'S "CHILDE ROLAND"

Browning always insisted that his poem had its source in the song sung by Edgar, the Fool in Shakespeare's *King Lear*:

Childe Rowland to the dark tower came;  
 His word was still—Fie, foh, and fum,  
 I smell the blood of a British man. [III, iv, 171-3]

On one occasion Browning admitted that other ingredients had been "a tower which [he] once saw in the Carrara Mountains, a painting which caught his eye years later in Paris; and the figure of a horse in the tapestry in his own drawing-room" [Mrs. S.

Orr: *Handbook to the Works of Browning* (1886), p. 266n.]. In an article describing a visit to the poet, the Rev. J. W. Chadwick also mentions this tapestry:

Upon the lengthwise wall of the room . . . was a long, wide band of tapestry, on which I thought I recognized the miserable horse of Childe Roland's pilgrimage;—

One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,  
 Stood stupefied, however he came there:  
 Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

I asked Mr. Browning if the beast of the tapestry was the beast of the poem; and he said yes, and descanted somewhat on his lean monstrosity. But only a Browning could have evolved the stanzas of the poem from the woven image. I further asked him if he had said that he only wrote *Childe Roland* for its realistic imagery, without any moral purpose . . . and he protested he never had. . . . [Quoted in H. E. Scudder: *Complete Poetical Works of Browning* (1895), p. 1020.]

Browning, 35 years after writing the poem, gave this account of its origin:

'T was like this: one year . . . I had been very lazy; I resolved that I would write something every day. Well, the first day I wrote about some roses, suggested by a magnificent basket that some one had sent my wife. [This poem was "Women and Roses".] The next day [January 2, 1852] Childe Roland came upon me as a kind of dream. I had to write it, then and there, and I finished it the same day, I believe. But it was simply that I had to do it. I did not know then what I meant beyond that, and I'm sure I don't know now. But I am very fond of it. [Quoted in W. C. DeVane: *A Browning Handbook* (Crofts, 1935), p. 204.]

During his lifetime, Browning consistently disassociated himself from the various allegorical interpretations of the poem put forward by admirers. Once when he was asked if he agreed with a certain interpretation he said: "Oh, no, not at all. Understand, I don't repudiate it, either. I only mean I was conscious of no allegorical intention in writing it." [Quoted by DeVane, *loc. cit.*] On another similar occasion he described the poem as "only a fantasy," and on still another, when J. W. Chadwick asked "if constancy to an ideal—'He that endureth to the end shall be saved'—was not a sufficient understanding of the central purpose of the poem, he [Browning] said, 'Yes, just about that.'" [Quoted by Scudder, *loc. cit.*]

But in all matters concerning his poems and his personal life Browning was a consistently reticent man. (For example, see his poems "At the 'Mermaid,'" "House," and "Shop.") As a result, students of Browning have not been content with Browning's own statements about the origins of "Childe Roland." The two most valuable conjectures on the subject are Harold Golder's "Browning's *Childe Roland*," *PMLA*, 39:963-978 (Dec., 1924) and W. C. DeVane's "The Landscape of Browning's *Childe Roland*," *PMLA*, 40:426-432 (June, 1925). Accepting Browning's statements as indicating the *conscious* sources of the poem, these scholars undertook the task of "establishing a subconscious connection between Edgar's maudlin words and the material from which Browning obviously drew," as Golder puts it; or, in DeVane's words, of finding "for the sources of *Childe Roland* materials so familiar to Browning at the impressionable time of his life as to have become a part of his mental character."

Because Browning usually composed his poems slowly and deliberately, whereas "Childe Roland" was written in one day during a powerful creative drive, the prob-

ability seems to be that some psychic experience such as a "dream" or "fantasy," to use Browning's own words, was indeed at the source. (Golder reminds us that Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" also took its origin in a fragment of reading and that it, too, displays a great richness of details and association drawn upon subconsciously from wide reading and experience.) In a dream not only would the pictorial quality be powerful and vivid but it would overwhelm logical connections between the shifting scenes. Moreover, the subconscious mind in its wide ranging would tap resources which the conscious mind might fail to recognize.

It is well known that the chief part of Browning's education and very considerable erudition came from his eager reading of books in his father's large and well-chosen library. Golder and DeVane, therefore, turned their attention to the books that Browning probably or certainly read as a child.

Golder investigated the literature of nursery tales, legends, and romances, and uncovered some remarkable parallels—without, admittedly, proving beyond cavil that Browning actually did read the particular tales—or, rather, editions of the tales—employed by Golder. The "fie, foh, fum, I smell the blood" doggerel of Edgar's song is found in such nursery tales as *Hop-o'-my-Thumb*, *Jack and the Bean-stalk*, and *Jack the Giant Killer* in editions with which Browning might well have been familiar, and would form associations which could lie below the conscious mature mind. The fusing of details in these stories gives such ingredients as defiance of power (e.g., giants), adventurous and dangerous travel through desolate landscape, an equivocal guide, and a trumpet suspended before a gate with an inscription:

"Whoever can this trumpet blow,  
Shall soon the giant overthrow,  
And break the black enchantment straight,  
So all shall be in happy state."

"Jack had no sooner read this inscription, but he blew the trumpet."

Other material woven into the fabric of associations probably came from chivalric legends and romances: the difficulties and failures in the search for the Grail, the guides—sometimes frauds and sometimes magicians—consulted by errant knights at cross-roads, the supernatural aspects of landscape, the fear of failure and hope of success, the horn or trumpet sounded in challenge, etc. For instance, in *The Seven Champions of Christendom* there are many enchanted towers, strange landscapes, magic horns, etc. Among the specially noteworthy episodes is one describing St. George coming to a desolate land:

Osmond, a necromancer, wrought the destruction . . . for by his magic arts and damned charms, he raised from the earth a mighty tower, the mortar whereof he mingled with virgin's blood, wherein are such enchantments wrought, that the light of the sun and the brightness of the skies are quenched, and the earth blasted with a terrible vapour and black mist that ascended from the tower, whereby a general darkness overspread our land, the compass of twenty-four leagues, so this country is clean wasted and destroyed.

In his ride through the darkness of the enchanted valley St. George crosses a river as black as pitch, while about his head fly monstrous birds. From other episodes in *The Seven Champions* Golder quotes additional striking similarities.

On the other hand, W. C. DeVane concentrates his attention on a single book not only definitely known to have been read by Browning as a child, but one on which Browning's opinion is known. On the fly-leaf of the book—Gerard de Lairese's *The Art of Painting in All its Branches* (London, 1778)—Browning wrote in 1874:

I read this book more often and with greater delight when I was a child than any other: and still remember the main of it most gratefully for the good I seem to have got from the prints and wonderful text.

DeVane contends that "the young Browning's ideas of the horrible in landscape" were fashioned by a chapter in Lairese's book entitled "Of Things Deformed and Broken, Falsely called Painter-like."

"In *Childe Roland* the landscape is everything, and through it Browning is trying to create in us an impression of horror that he himself has once experienced . . . and it was Lairese who dictated, though sometimes in a faint and disguised speech, the landscape that the line from *Lear* conjured up in the poet's mind."

Lairese's discussion of "things . . . falsely called painter-like" is given in the form of an imaginary "walk" undertaken to discover a landscape replete with ugly details:

. . . a piece with deformed trees, widely branched and leaved, and disorderly spreading from east towards west, crooked bodied, old and rent, full of knots and hollowness; also grounds without roads or ways, sharp hills, and monstrous mountains filling the offscap, rough or ruined buildings with their parts lying up and down in confusion; likewise muddy brooks, a gloomy sky, abounding with heavy clouds; the field furnished with lean cattle and vagabonds or gypsies: such a piece, I say, is not to be called a fine landscape. Can any one, without reason, assert him to be a painter-like object, who appears as a lame and dirty beggar, cloathed in rags, splay-footed, bound about the head with a nasty clout, having a skin as yellow as a baked pudding, killing vermin; or in fine, any such paltry figure?

In his imaginary "walk" Lairese describes coming into a country so "strange" and "desolate," "without paths or roads, that I knew not where to walk"; and after passing a ruined and shattered temple he crosses "a morass abounding with vermin" and comes upon "a small rivulet full of big and little clods of earth and pebbles." The whole region was one of "muddy water, decayed and broken stones, pieces of wood, barren shrubs and bushes, rough grounds, toads, snakes, etc." At length he comes into a region

full of open hollows and cuts, over-run here and there, with moss and barren shrubs. On the right side was a deep morassy valley . . . and on the left appeared an inaccessible ruined building, like an heap of stone, swarming with adders, snakes and other venomous creatures. Behind me, the ground was so uneven, full of ups and downs and pathless, that I thought it impossible to get from the place.

In other regions encountered during his "walk" he finds that "everything is excessively mouldered, fouled, and over-run with wild plants and shrubs," and even oaks "which had been thunder-struck; the stem cleft from top to bottom."

After quoting these several passages, DeVane urges caution: ". . . in spite of the similarity of detail, it would be a mistake to insist too strongly upon it. . . . The

background of sharp hill and scalped mountain, the little river, the starved ignoble nature, the lean cattle, the roadless land . . . —these things were never thought of as having an outside source, chiefly because they had become so much a part of Browning's imaginative experience that he thought they had always been his own. And yet . . . it is not the detail that finally convinces us, but rather the tone of such a passage as the following, taken from near the end of the 'walk':"

It was here so lonesome and gastly, that I was seized with a cold sweat; wherefore I mended my pace, in order to get out of it; and being got to the other side, and ten or twelve paces from it, I found myself again at the lake before-mentioned; near which lay a shattered tomb, with the corpse half tumbled out. The head and one arm rested on a large root of a tree lying near it; the lid was almost slid off, and just on the totter, and a snake, from underneath, was creeping into the tomb. A sight frightful indeed.

"It is such passages as these," DeVane comments, "that must have impressed themselves indelibly upon the mind of the growing Browning."

Both Golder and DeVane are well aware that their uncovering of such material as has been quoted above does not in any way "explain" the imaginative power of the poem. There are hundreds or thousands of persons who in their impressionable years have been exposed to the same or comparable materials but who remained incapable of synthesizing the mass of details, consciously or unconsciously, into a powerful work of art. The similarities, however striking they may seem, are still less remarkable than the differences wrought by the creative processes of the poet's mind.

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## ii. *The Composition of Poetry*

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### HOW A POEM IS MADE

C. DAY LEWIS (1905- )

Children look down upon the morning-gray  
Tissue of mist that veils a valley's lap:  
Their fingers itch to tear it and unwrap  
The flags, the roundabouts, the gala day.  
They watch the spring rise inexhaustibly—  
A breathing thread out of the eddied sand,  
Sufficient to their day: but half their mind  
Is on the sailed and glittering estuary.  
Fondly we wish their mist might never break,  
Knowing it hides so much that best were hidden:  
We'd chain them by the spring, lest it should broaden  
For them into a quicksand and a wreck.  
But they slip through our fingers like the source,  
Like mist, like time that has flagged out their course.

The seed of this poem was a strong feeling I had about my own two children. It is a feeling most parents have, at one time or another—a feeling of sadness that their children must grow up, must leave their protection and go out into the dangerous and difficult world. When you are young, you sometimes resent your parents having that feeling: you *want* to grow up and be independent.

Now, if you look at the poem again, you'll see there are two themes, or subjects, in it—the original one, my *own* feeling, which comes out in the last six lines; and the *children's* feeling of impatience and expectation, which comes out in the first eight. These two themes are intended to balance and contrast with each other.

Before I actually start writing a poem, I often find a line of verse comes into my head—a line which gives me a clue to the theme and pattern which the poem will develop: a sort of key-line. When I sat down to begin this sonnet, such a line of verse at once came into my head. That line (it is the only one I didn't have to work for) was "The flags, the roundabouts, the gala day." I thought about this line, and saw that it was an image of a fête or a fair, the sort of thing a child looks forward to; obviously, it symbolized (that is, "stood for") the grown-up world which a child is so impatient to enter. The idea of *impatience* then added some more lines—the first three. Here, the early-morning mist covering the valley represents the veil which the children wish to tear away, as they would tear the tissue paper off a birthday present—the veil which shuts them off from the grown-up world. The image came out of my memory, recalled from a day several years ago when I was taking my children to school in Devonshire, and we paused at the top of a hill and saw the whole of the valley below covered with



mist: I remembered thinking at the time that it looked like tissue paper, but I'd forgotten all about the incident until I began to write this poem.

Next, I wanted a second image-sequence, as a variation on the theme expressed in the first four lines. You'll find it in lines 5 to 8—the picture of a spring bubbling up out of the earth, and the children bending down to watch its “breathing thread.” The word “breathing” gives you a clue to the meaning of this passage: the spring represents life near its source, *young* life; and the children are only half satisfied with it; “half their mind” is looking forward to the time when their life will have broadened out, as a stream broadens into an estuary, and become more important and exciting. The image of the spring, like that of the mist, came out of my memory: it was a particular spring, near a country house in Ireland, which used to fascinate me as a child; I remember spending hours watching it, wondering how such a tiny thread of water managed to force its way out of the earth.

Next, the other theme had to be started—the *parents'* feeling about the children going out into the world. Notice that, although this theme was the original seed of the poem, it now occupies a relatively small space (lines 9 to 12): it often happens, when you are writing a poem, that you find the poem turning out quite differently from what you expected—in other words, you don't know what a poem is going to be like till you have gone some way with the composing of it; indeed, to a certain extent, a poem *composes itself*. Lines 9–12 say, quite simply, “We grownups wish the mist of childhood might never break for our children, because, when it does, they'll see the world is not such a pleasant place as they imagined. We'd like to chain them to their childhood, to save them from being hurt ('a quicksand and a wreck') as everyone must sometimes be hurt by life when he grows up.” But the poem couldn't end like that, could it? After all, a parent can't really prevent his children growing up, even if it was right for him to try and do so—which it isn't. So, in the last two lines, I describe how children grow independent of their parents, slipping away from them like mist or water (“the source”) slips through one's fingers: they must fend for themselves, run their own race—and time has already “flagged out their course.”

I wonder whether you have noticed something about those last six lines. Except for the quicksand and the wreck there are no new images in them. Even the phrase “flagged out their course” (which, by the way, is another memory-image of mine, derived from a two-mile steeplechase I ran in as a boy of fourteen)—even this phrase echoes “the flags” of line 4. Instead of using new images, I have repeated those of the first eight lines—mist, the spring, the estuary (“lest it should *broaden* For them into a quicksand and a wreck”), the flags. . . . [An] important part is played in poetry by repetition. It is not only words and phrases, but also images, which can be repeated. And they are repeated in this poem, so that you can see the two main themes from a number of different angles, just as you can see many different reflections of yourself if you walk down a corridor of mirrors.

Lastly, what I have told you about the sources of these particular images will help you to understand how a poem grows. The seed of this poem took root in my mind. Then, without my being aware of it, it somehow attracted to itself several experiences I had had at quite different periods of my life and forgotten about. It got hold of a Devonshire mist, an Irish spring, and a steeplechase course in Dorset; it added an estuary with yachts sailing on it (I still don't know where that last picture came from): and, when I began to write the poem, these four images rose out of my mind all ready to illustrate the theme. . . .

## THE MAKING OF A POEM

STEPHEN SPENDER (1909- )

*Apology*

It would be inexcusable to discuss my own way of writing poetry unless I were able to relate this to a wider view of the problems which poets attempt to solve when they sit down at a desk or table to write, or walk around composing their poems in their heads. There is a danger of my appearing to put across my own experiences as the general rule, when every poet's way of going about his work and his experience of being a poet are different, and when my own poetry may not be good enough to lend my example any authority.

Yet the writing of poetry is an activity which makes certain demands of attention on the poet and which requires that he should have certain qualifications of ear, vision, imagination, memory and so on. He should be able to think in images, he should have as great a mastery of language as a painter has over his palette, even if the range of his language be very limited. All this means that, in ordinary society, a poet has to adapt himself, more or less consciously, to the demands of his vocation, and hence the peculiarities of poets and the condition of inspiration which many people have said is near to madness. One poet's example is only his adaptation of his personality to the demands of poetry, but if it is clearly stated it may help us to understand other poets, and even something of poetry.

Today we lack very much a whole view of poetry, and have instead many one-sided views of certain aspects of poetry which have been advertised as the only aims which poets should attempt. Movements such as free verse, imagism, surrealism, expressionism, personalism and so on, tend to make people think that poetry is simply a matter of not writing in metre or rhyme, or of free association, or of thinking in images, or of a kind of drawing room madness (surrealism) which corresponds to drawing room communism. Here is a string of ideas: Night, dark, stars, immensity, blue, voluptuous, clinging, columns, clouds, moon, sickle, harvest, vast camp fire, hell. Is this poetry? A lot of strings of words almost as simple as this are set down on the backs of envelopes and posted off to editors or to poets by the vast army of amateurs who think that to be illogical is to be poetic, with that fond question. Thus I hope that this discussion of how poets work will imply a wider and completer view of poets.

*Concentration*

The problem of creative writing is essentially one of concentration, and the supposed eccentricities of poets are usually due to mechanical habits or rituals developed in order to concentrate. Concentration, of course, for the purpose of writing poetry, is different from the kind of concentration required for working out a sum. It is a focussing of the attention in a special way, so that the poet is aware of all the implications and possible developments of his idea, just as one might say that a plant was not concentrating on developing mechanically in one direction, but in many directions, towards the warmth and light with its leaves, and towards the water with its roots, all at the same time.

Schiller liked to have a smell of rotten apples, concealed beneath the lid of his desk, under his nose when he was composing poetry. Walter de la Mare has told me that he must smoke when writing. Auden drinks endless cups of tea. Coffee is my own addiction, besides smoking a great deal, which I hardly ever do except when I am writing. I notice also that as I attain a greater concentration, this tends to make me forget the

taste of the cigarette in my mouth, and then I have a desire to smoke two or even three cigarettes at a time, in order that the sensation from the outside may penetrate through the wall of concentration which I have built round myself.

For goodness sake, though, do not think that rotten apples or cigarettes or tea have anything to do with the quality of the work of a Schiller, a de la Mare, or an Auden. They are a part of a concentration which has already been attained rather than the causes of concentration. De la Mare once said to me that he thought the desire to smoke when writing poetry arose from a need, not of a stimulus, but to canalize a distracting leak of his attention away from his writing towards the distraction which is always present in one's environment. Concentration may be disturbed by someone whistling in the street or the ticking of a clock. There is always a slight tendency of the body to sabotage the attention of the mind by providing some distraction. If this need for distraction can be directed into one channel—such as the odor of rotten apples or the taste of tobacco or tea—then other distractions outside oneself are put out of competition.

Another possible explanation is that the concentrated effort of writing poetry is a spiritual activity which makes one completely forget, for the time being, that one has a body. It is a disturbance of the balance of body and mind and for this reason one needs a kind of anchor of sensation with the physical world. Hence the craving for a scent or taste or even, sometimes, for sexual activity. Poets speak of the necessity of writing poetry rather than of a liking for doing it. It is spiritual compulsion, a straining of the mind to attain heights surrounded by abysses and it cannot be entirely happy, for in the most important sense, the only reward worth having is absolutely denied: for, however confident a poet may be, he is never quite sure that all his energy is not misdirected nor that what he is writing is great poetry. At the moment when art attains its highest attainment it reaches beyond its medium of words or paints or music, and the artist finds himself realizing that these instruments are inadequate to the spirit of what he is trying to say.

Different poets concentrate in different ways. In my own mind I make a sharp distinction between two types of concentration: one is immediate and complete, the other is plodding and only completed by stages. Some poets write immediately works which, when they are written, scarcely need revision. Others write their poems by stages, feeling their way from rough draft to rough draft, until finally, after many revisions, they have produced a result which may seem to have very little connection with their early sketches.

These two opposite processes are vividly illustrated in two examples drawn from music: Mozart and Beethoven. Mozart thought out symphonies, quartets, even scenes from operas, entirely in his head—often on a journey or perhaps while dealing with pressing problems—and then he transcribed them, in their completeness, onto paper. Beethoven wrote fragments of themes in notebooks which he kept beside him, working on and developing them over years. Often his first ideas were of a clumsiness which makes scholars marvel how he could, at the end, have developed from them such miraculous results.

Thus genius works in different ways to achieve its ends. But although the Mozartian type of genius is the more brilliant and dazzling, genius, unlike virtuosity, is judged by greatness of result, not by brilliance of performance. The result must be the fullest development in a created æsthetic form of an original moment of insight, and it does not matter whether genius devotes a lifetime to producing a small result if that result be immortal. The difference between two types of genius is that one type (the Mo-

zartian) is able to plumb the greatest depths of his own experience by the tremendous effort of a moment, the other (the Beethovenian) must dig deeper and deeper into his consciousness, layer by layer. What counts in either case is the vision which sees and pursues and attains the end; the logic of the artistic purpose.

A poet may be divinely gifted with a lucid and intense and purposive intellect; he may be clumsy and slow; that does not matter, what matters is integrity of purpose and the ability to maintain the purpose without losing oneself. Myself, I am scarcely capable of immediate concentration in poetry. My mind is not clear, my will is weak, I suffer from an excess of ideas and a weak sense of form. For every poem that I begin to write, I think of at least ten which I do not write down at all. For every poem which I do write down, there are seven or eight which I never complete.

The method which I adopt therefore is to write down as many ideas as possible, in however rough a form, in notebooks (I have at least twenty of these, on a shelf beside my desk, going back over fifteen years). I then make use of some of the sketches and discard others.

The best way of explaining how I develop the rough ideas which I use, is to take an example. Here is a Notebook begun in 1944. About a hundred pages of it are covered with writing, and from this have emerged about six poems. Each idea, when it first occurs, is given a number. Sometimes the ideas do not get beyond one line. For example No. 3 (never developed) is the one line:—

A language of flesh and roses.

I shall return to this line in a few pages, when I speak of inspiration. For the moment, I turn to No. 13, because here is an idea which has been developed to its conclusion. The first sketch begins thus:—

- a) There are some days when the sea lies like a harp  
 Stretched flat beneath the cliffs. The waves  
 Like wires burn with the sun's copper glow  
                                   [all the murmuring blue  
                                           every silent]

Between whose spaces every image  
 Of sky [field and] hedge and field and boat  
 Dwells like the huge face of the afternoon.  
 [Lies]

When the heat grows tired, the afternoon  
 Out of the land may breathe a sigh  
 [Across the wires like a hand. They vibrate  
 With]  
 Which moves across those wires like a soft hand  
 [Then the vibration]  
 Between whose spaces the vibration holds  
 Every bird-cry, dog's bark, man-shout  
 And creak of rollock from the land and sky  
 With all the music of the afternoon.

Obviously these lines are attempts to sketch out an idea which exists clearly enough on some level of the mind where it yet eludes the attempt to state it. At this stage, a poem is like a face which one seems to be able to visualize clearly in the eye of memory.

but when one examines it mentally or tries to think it out, feature by feature, it seems to fade.

The idea of this poem is a vision of the sea. The faith of the poet is that if this vision is clearly stated it will be significant. The vision is of the sea stretched under a cliff. On top of the cliff there are fields, hedges, houses. Horses draw carts along lanes, dogs bark far inland, bells ring in the distance. The shore seems laden with hedges, roses, horses and men, all high above the sea, on a very fine summer day when the ocean seems to reflect and absorb the shore. Then the small strung-out glittering waves of the sea lying under the shore are like the strings of a harp which catch the sunlight. Between these strings lies the reflection of the shore. Butterflies are wafted out over the waves, which they mistake for the fields of the chalky landscape, searching them for flowers. On a day such as this, the land, reflected in the sea, appears to enter into the sea, as though it lies under it, like Atlantis. The wires of the harp are like a seen music fusing seascape and landscape.

Looking at this vision in another way, it obviously has symbolic value. The sea represents death and eternity, the land represents the brief life of the summer and of one human generation which passes into the sea of eternity. But let me here say at once that although the poet may be conscious of this aspect of his vision, it is exactly what he wants to avoid stating, or even being too concerned with. His job is to recreate his vision, and let it speak its moral for itself. The poet must distinguish clearly in his own mind between that which most definitely must be said and that which must not be said. The unsaid inner meaning is revealed in the music and the tonality of the poem, and the poet is conscious of it in his knowledge that a certain tone of voice, a certain rhythm, are necessary.

In the next twenty versions of the poem I felt my way towards the clarification of the seen picture, the music and the inner feeling. In the first version quoted above there is the phrase in the second and third lines

The waves  
Like wires burn with the sun's copper glow.

This phrase fuses the image of the sea with the idea of music, and it is therefore a key-phrase, because the theme of the poem is the fusion of the land with the sea. Here, then, are several versions of these one and a quarter lines, in the order in which they were written:—

- b) The waves are wires  
Burning as with the secret song of fires
- c) The day burns in the trembling wires  
With a vast music golden in the eyes
- d) The day glows on its trembling wires  
Singing a golden music in the eyes
- e) The day glows on its burning wires  
Like waves of music golden to the eyes.
- f) Afternoon burns upon its wires  
Lines of music dazzling the eyes

- g) Afternoon gilds its tingling wires  
To a visual silent music of the eyes

In the final version, these two lines appear as in the following stanza:—

- h) There are some days the happy ocean lies  
Like an unfingered harp, below the land.

Afternoon gilds all the silent wires  
Into a burning music of the eyes.

On mirroring paths between those fine-strung fires  
The shore, laden with roses, horses, spires,  
Wanders in water, imaged above ribbed sand.

### *Inspiration*

The hard work evinced in these examples, which are only a fraction of the work put into the whole poem, may cause the reader to wonder whether there is no such thing as inspiration, or whether it is merely Stephen Spender who is uninspired. The answer is that everything in poetry is work except inspiration, whether this work is achieved at one swift stroke, as Mozart wrote his music, or whether it is a slow process of evolution from stage to stage. Here again, I have to qualify the word "work," as I qualified the word "concentration": the work on a line of poetry may take the form of putting a version aside for a few days, weeks or years, and then taking it up again, when it may be found that the line has, in the interval of time, almost rewritten itself.

Inspiration is the beginning of a poem and it is also its final goal. It is the first idea which drops into the poet's mind and it is the final idea which he at last achieves in words. In between this start and this winning post there is the hard race, the sweat and toil.

Paul Valéry speaks of the "*une ligne donnée*" of a poem. One line is given to the poet by God or by nature, the rest he has to discover for himself.

My own experience of inspiration is certainly that of a line or a phrase or a word or sometimes something still vague, a dim cloud of an idea which I feel must be condensed into a shower of words. The peculiarity of the key word or line is that it does not merely attract, as, say, the word "braggadocio" attracts. It occurs in what seems to be an active, male, germinal form as though it were the centre of a statement requiring a beginning and an end, and as though it had an impulse in a certain direction. Here are examples:—

A language of flesh and roses

This phrase (not very satisfactory in itself) brings to my mind a whole series of experiences and the idea of a poem which I shall perhaps write some years hence. I was standing in the corridor of a train passing through the Black Country. I saw a landscape of pits and pitheads, artificial mountains, jagged yellow wounds in the earth, everything transformed as though by the toil of an enormous animal or giant tearing up the earth in search of prey or treasure. Oddly enough, a stranger next to me in the corridor echoed my inmost thought. He said: "Everything there is man-made." At this moment the line flashed into my head

A language of flesh and roses.

The sequence of my thought was as follows: the industrial landscape which seems by now a routine and act of God which enslaves both employers and workers who serve and profit by it, is actually the expression of man's will. Men willed it to be so, and the pitheads, slag-heaps and the ghastly disregard of anything but the pursuit of wealth, are a symbol of modern man's mind. In other words, the world which we create—the world of slums and telegrams and newspapers—is a kind of language of our inner wishes and thoughts. Although this is so, it is obviously a language which has got outside our control. It is a confused language, an irresponsible senile gibberish. This thought greatly distressed me, and I started thinking that if the phenomena created by humanity are really like words in a language, what kind of language do we really aspire to? All this sequence of thought flashed into my mind with the answer which came before the question: *A language of flesh and roses.*

I hope this example will give the reader some idea of what I mean by inspiration. Now the line, which I shall not repeat again, is a way of thinking imaginatively. If the line embodies some of the ideas which I have related above, these ideas must be further made clear in other lines. That is the terrifying challenge of poetry. Can I think out the logic of images? How easy it is to explain here the poem that I would have liked to write! How difficult it would be to write it. For writing it would imply living my way through the imaged experience of all these ideas, which here are mere abstractions, and such an effort of imaginative experience requires a lifetime of patience and watching.

Here is an example of a cloudy form of thought germinated by the word *cross*, which is the key word of the poem which exists formlessly in my mind. Recently my wife had a son. On the first day that I visited her after the boy's birth, I went by bus to the hospital. Passing through the streets on the top of the bus, they all seemed very clean, and the thought occurred to me that everything was prepared for our child. Past generations have toiled so that any child born today inherits, with his generation, cities, streets, organization, the most elaborate machinery for living. Everything has been provided for him by people dead long before he was born. Then, naturally enough, sadder thoughts colored this picture for me, and I reflected how he also inherited vast maladjustments, vast human wrongs. Then I thought of the child as like a pin-point of present existence, the moment incarnate, in whom the whole of the past, and all possible futures *cross*. This word *cross* somehow suggested the whole situation to me of a child born into the world and also of the form of a poem about his situation. When the word *cross* appeared in the poem, the idea of the past should give place to the idea of the future and it should be apparent that the *cross* in which present and future meet is the secret of an individual human existence. And here again, the unspoken secret which lies beyond the poem, the moral significance of other meanings of the word "cross" begins to glow with its virtue that should never be said and yet should shine through every image in the poem.

This account of inspiration is probably weak beside the accounts that other poets might give. I am writing of my own experience, and my own inspiration seems to me like the faintest flash of insight into the nature of reality beside that of other poets whom I can think of. However, it is possible that I describe here a kind of experience which, however slight it may be, is far truer to the real poetic experience than Aldous Huxley's account of how a young poet writes poetry in his novel *Time Must Have a Stop*. It is hard to imagine anything more self-conscious and unpoetic than Mr. Huxley's account.

*Memory*

If the art of concentrating in a particular way is the discipline necessary for poetry to reveal itself, memory exercised in a particular way is the natural gift of poetic genius. The poet, above all else, is a person who never forgets certain sense-impressions which he has experienced and which he can re-live again and again as though with all their original freshness.

All poets have this highly developed sensitive apparatus of memory, and they are usually aware of experiences which happened to them at the earliest age and which retain their pristine significance throughout life. The meeting of Dante and Beatrice when the poet was only nine years of age is the experience which became a symbol in Dante's mind around which the *Divine Comedy* crystallized. The experience of nature which forms the subject of Wordsworth's poetry was an extension of a childhood vision of "natural presences" which surrounded the boy Wordsworth. And his decision in later life to live in the Lake District was a decision to return to the scene of these childhood memories which were the most important experiences in his poetry. There is evidence for the importance of this kind of memory in all the creative arts, and the argument certainly applies to prose which is creative. Sir Osbert Sitwell has told me that his book *Before the Bombardment*, which contains an extremely civilized and satiric account of the social life of Scarborough before and during the last war, was based on his observations of life in that resort before he had reached the age of twelve.

It therefore is not surprising that although I have no memory for telephone numbers, addresses, faces and where I have put this morning's correspondence, I have a perfect memory for the sensation of certain experiences which are crystallized for me around certain associations. I could demonstrate this from my own life by the overwhelming nature of associations which, suddenly aroused, have carried me back so completely into the past, particularly into my childhood, that I have lost all sense of the present time and place. But the best proofs of this power of memory are found in the odd lines of poems written in note books fifteen years ago. A few fragments of unfinished poems enable me to enter immediately into the experiences from which they were derived, the circumstances in which they were written, and the unwritten feelings in the poem that were projected but never put into words.

. . . Knowledge of a full sun  
That runs up his big sky, above  
The hill, then in those trees and throws  
His smiling on the turf.

That is an incomplete idea of fifteen years ago, and I remember exactly a balcony of a house facing a road, and, on the other side of the road, pine trees, beyond which lay the sea. Every morning the sun sprang up, first of all above the horizon of the sea, then it climbed to the tops of the trees and shone on my window. And this memory connects with the sun that shines through my window in London now in spring and early summer. So that the memory is not exactly a memory. It is more like one prong upon which a whole calendar of similar experiences happening throughout years collect. A memory once clearly stated ceases to be a memory, it becomes perpetually present, because every time we experience something which recalls it, the clear and lucid original experience imposes its formal beauty on the new experiences. It is thus no longer a memory but an experience lived through again and again.



Turning over these old note books, my eye catches some lines, in a projected long poem, which immediately re-shape themselves into the following short portrait of a woman's face:—

Her eyes are gleaming fish  
Caught in her nervous face, as if in a net.  
Her hair is wild and fair, haloing her cheeks  
Like a fantastic flare of Southern sun.  
There is madness in her cherishing her children.  
Sometimes, perhaps a single time in years,  
Her wandering fingers stoop to arrange some flowers—  
Then in her hands her whole life stops and weeps.

It is perhaps true to say that memory is the faculty of poetry, because the imagination itself is an exercise of memory. There is nothing we imagine which we do not already know. And our ability to imagine is our ability to remember what we have already once experienced and to apply it to some different situation. Thus the greatest poets are those with memories so great that they extend beyond their strongest experiences to their minutest observations of people and things far outside their own self-centredness (the weakness of memory is its self-centredness: hence the narcissistic nature of most poetry).

Here I can detect my own greatest weakness. My memory is defective and self-centred. I lack the confidence in using it to create situations outside myself, although I believe that, in theory, there are very few situations in life which a poet should not be able to imagine, because it is a fact that most poets have experienced almost every situation in life. I do not mean by this that a poet who writes about a Polar Expedition has actually been to the North Pole. I mean, though, that he has been cold, hungry, etc., so that it is possible for him by remembering imaginatively his own felt experiences to know what it is like to explore the North Pole. That is where I fail. I cannot write about going to the North Pole.

### *Faith*

It is evident that a faith in their vocation, mystical in intensity, sustains poets. There are many illustrations from the lives of poets to show this, and Shakespeare's sonnets are full of expressions of his faith in the immortality of his lines.

From my experience I can clarify the nature of this faith. When I was nine, we went to the Lake District, and there my parents read me some of the poems of Wordsworth. My sense of the sacredness of the task of poetry began then, and I have always felt that a poet's was a sacred vocation, like a saint's. Since I was nine, I have wanted to be various things, for example, Prime Minister (when I was twelve). Like some other poets I am attracted by the life of power and the life of action, but I am still more repelled by them. Power involves forcing oneself upon the attention of historians by doing things and occupying offices which are, in themselves, important, so that what is truly powerful is not the soul of a so-called powerful and prominent man but the position which he fills and the things which he does. Similarly, the life of "action" which seems so very positive is, in fact, a selective, even a negative, kind of life. A man of action does one thing or several things because he does not do something else. Usually men who do very spectacular things fail completely to do the ordinary things which fill the lives of most normal people, and which would be far

more heroic and spectacular, perhaps, if they did not happen to be done by many people. Thus in practice the life of action has always seemed to me an act of cutting oneself off from life.

Although it is true that poets are vain and ambitious, their vanity and ambition is of the purest kind attainable in this world, for the saint renounces ambition. They are ambitious to be accepted for what they ultimately are as revealed by their inmost experiences, their finest perceptions, their deepest feelings, their uttermost sense of truth, in their poetry. They cannot cheat about these things, because the quality of their own being is revealed not in the noble sentiments which their poetry expresses, but in sensibility, control of language, rhythm and music, things which cannot be attained by a vote of confidence from an electorate, or by the office of Poet Laureate. Of course, work is tremendously important, but, in poetry, even the greatest labor can only serve to reveal the intrinsic qualities of soul of the poet as he really is.

Since there can be no cheating, the poet, like the saint, stands in all his works before the bar of a perpetual day of judgment. His vanity of course is pleased by success, though even success may contribute to his understanding that popularity does not confer on him the favorable judgment of all the ages which he seeks. For what does it mean to be praised by one's own age, which is soaked in crimes and stupidity, except perhaps that future ages, wise where we are foolish, will see him as a typical expression of this age's crimes and stupidity? Nor is lack of success a guarantee of great poetry, though there are some who pretend that it is. Nor can the critics, at any rate beyond a certain limited point of technical judgment, be trusted.

The poet's faith is therefore, firstly, a mystique of vocation, secondly, a faith in his own truth, combined with his own devotion to a task. There can really be no greater faith than the confidence that one is doing one's utmost to fulfil one's high vocation, and it is this that has inspired all the greatest poets. At the same time this faith is coupled with a deep humility because one knows that, ultimately, judgment does not rest with oneself. All one can do is to achieve nakedness, to be what one is with all one's faculties and perceptions, strengthened by all the skill which one can acquire, and then to stand before the judgment of time.

In my notebooks, I find the following Prose Poem, which expresses these thoughts:

Bring me peace bring me power bring me assurance. Let me reach the bright day, the high chair, the plain desk, where my hand at last controls the words, where anxiety no longer undermines me. If I don't reach these I'm thrown to the wolves, I'm a restless animal wandering from place to place, from experience to experience.

Give me the humility and the judgment to live alone with the deep and rich satisfaction of my own creating: not to be thrown into doubt by a word of spite or disapproval.

In the last analysis don't mind whether your work is good or bad so long as it has the completeness, the enormity of the whole world which you love.

### *Song*

Inspiration and song are the irreducible final qualities of a poet which makes his vocation different from all others. Inspiration is an experience in which a line or an idea is given to one, and perhaps also a state of mind in which one writes one's best poetry. Song is far more difficult to define. It is the music which a poem as yet unthought of will assume, the empty womb of poetry for ever in the poet's consciousness, waiting for the fertilizing seed.

Sometimes, when I lie in a state of half-waking half-sleeping, I am conscious of a

stream of words which seem to pass through my mind, without their having a meaning, but they have a sound, a sound of passion, or a sound recalling poetry that I know. Again sometimes when I am writing, the music of the words I am trying to shape takes me far beyond the words, I am aware of a rhythm, a dance, a fury, which is as yet empty of words.

In these observations, I have said little about headaches, midnight oil, pints of beer or of claret, love affairs, and so on, which are supposed to be stations on the journeys of poets through life. There is no doubt that writing poetry, when a poem appears to succeed, results in an intense physical excitement, a sense of release and ecstasy. On the other hand, I dread writing poetry, for, I suppose, the following reasons: a poem is a terrible journey, a painful effort of concentrating the imagination; words are an extremely difficult medium to use, and sometimes when one has spent days trying to say a thing clearly one finds that one has only said it dully; above all, the writing of a poem brings one face to face with one's own personality with all its familiar and clumsy limitations. In every other phase of existence, one can exercise the orthodoxy of a conventional routine: one can be polite to one's friends, one can get through the day at the office, one can pose, one can draw attention to one's position in society, one is—in a word—dealing with men. In poetry, one is wrestling with a god.

Usually, when I have completed a poem, I think "this is my best poem," and I wish to publish it at once. This is partly because I only write when I have something new to say, which seems more worth while than what I have said before, partly because optimism about my present and future makes me despise my past. A few days after I have finished a poem, I relegate it to the past of all my other wasted efforts, all the books I do not wish to open.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure I have got from poems that I have written is when I have heard some lines quoted which I have not at once recognized. And I have thought "how good and how interesting," before I have realized that they are my own.

In common with other creative writers I pretend that I am not, and I am, exceedingly affected by unsympathetic criticism, whilst praise usually makes me suspect that the reviewer does not know what he is talking about. Why are writers so sensitive to criticism? Partly, because it is their business to be sensitive, and they are sensitive about this as about other things. Partly, because every serious creative writer is really in his heart concerned with reputation and not with success (the most successful writer I have known, Sir Hugh Walpole, was far and away the most unhappy about his reputation, because the "highbrows" did not like him). Again, I suspect that every writer is secretly writing for *someone*, probably for a parent or teacher who did not believe in him in childhood. The critic who refuses to "understand" immediately becomes identified with this person, and the understanding of many admirers only adds to the writer's secret bitterness if this one refusal persists.

Gradually one realizes that there is always this someone who will not like one's work. Then, perhaps, literature becomes a humble exercise of faith in being all that one can be in one's art, of being more than oneself, expecting little, but with a faith in the mystery of poetry which gradually expands into a faith in the mysterious service of truth.

Yet what failures there are! And how much mud sticks to one; mud not thrown by other people but acquired in the course of earning one's living, answering or not answering the letters which one receives, supporting or not supporting public causes. All one can hope is that this mud is composed of little grains of sand which will produce pearls.

## THE RAVEN

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.  
" 'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.

10

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,  
" 'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door;—  
Darkness there, and nothing more.

20

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"  
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"  
Merely this and nothing more.

30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon I heard again a tapping somewhat louder than before.  
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—  
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—  
'Tis the wind and nothing more!"

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not an instant stopped or stayed he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—  
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

40

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
 Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore—  
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
 Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
 With such name as "Nevermore."

50

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only  
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
 Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered "Other friends have flown before—  
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
 Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

60

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store  
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—  
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
 Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

70

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,  
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
 Swung by angels whose faint foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee

80

Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!  
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
 Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
 On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
 Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

90

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
 By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—  
 "Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
 Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"

100

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore."

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
 And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
 Shall be lifted—nevermore!

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

. . . Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or aural comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place,—“Of the innu-

merable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the authorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps—the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in the ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *bistrò*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven," as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *anything* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by

elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe" (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect:—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul*—*not* of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from anything here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subsequence to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*.



Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of the application of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary: the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a *human* being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non-reasoning* creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself—"Of all

melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death—was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious—"When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally it is beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore."—I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying at every turn the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application*. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore"—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself—by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote) but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the *expected* "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query—that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer—that in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve the uttermost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!  
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."  
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover—and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing.* The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic—the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short: the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their *combination into stanza*; nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window, was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in the wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of Pallas being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

Not the *least obeisance made he*—not a moment stopped or stayed he,  
*But with mien of lord or lady*, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:—

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling  
 By the *grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore*,  
 "Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven* thou," I said, "art sure no craven,  
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore—  
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"  
 Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear discourse so plainly  
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
*Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—*  
*Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,*  
 With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness:—this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees anything even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*—which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration,

in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

"Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take thy form from off my door!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen:

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,  
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;  
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore.

### iii. *The Revision of Poetry*

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## THE TIGER

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

#### [ORIGINAL DRAFT]

1. Tyger Tyger burning bright  
In the forests of the night  
What immortal hand & eye  
or  
~~Could~~ frame thy fearful symmetry  
~~Dare~~
2. ~~In what~~ distant deeps or skies  
~~Burnt in~~  
~~Burnt the~~ fire of thine eyes  
~~The cruel~~  
On what wings dare he aspire  
What the hand dare sieze the fire
2. [Revised]  
~~Burnt in distant deeps or skies~~  
~~The cruel fire of thine eyes~~  
~~Could heart descend or wings aspire~~  
~~What the hand dare sieze the fire~~
3. And what shoulder & what art  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart  
And when thy heart began to beat  
What dread hand & what dread feet  
  
~~Could fetch it from the furnace deep~~  
~~And in thy horrid ribs dare steep~~  
~~In the well of sanguine woe~~  
~~In what clay & in what mould~~  
~~Were thy eyes of fury roll'd~~
4. ~~What~~ the hammer ~~what~~ the chain  
~~Where~~ ~~—where~~

#### [FINAL VERSION]

1. Tiger! Tiger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
2. 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?
3. And what shoulder, and what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat, 11  
What dread hand? and what dread  
feet?
4. What the hammer? what the chain?

[ORIGINAL DRAFT]

In what furnace was thy brain  
 What the anvil What the arm  
                                           arm  
                                           grasp  
                                           clasp  
                                   dread grasp  
 Could its deadly terrors clasp  
 Dare                                   grasp  
                                           clasp

[FINAL VERSION]

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

5. And ~~did he laugh~~ his work to see  
dare he ~~smile~~  
~~laugh~~

3. ~~What the shoulder what the knee~~  
~~ankle~~

Did he who made the lamb make thee  
Dare  
When the stars threw down their  
spears  
And waterd heaven with their tears

6. **Tyger Tyger burning bright**  
In the forests of the night  
What immortal hand & eye  
Dare ~~form~~ thy fearful symmetry  
frame

5. When the stars threw down their  
spears,  
And water'd heaven with their tears,  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make  
thee? 20

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

## THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

## JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

**I**

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!  
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,  
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told  
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
Like pious incense from a censer old,  
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,  
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

## 2

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man; 10  
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
 And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
 The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,  
 Imprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:  
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
 To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

## 3

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20  
 Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;  
 But no—already had his deathbell rung:  
 The joys of all his life were said and sung:  
 His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:  
 Another way he went, and soon among  
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

## 4

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;  
 And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,  
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30  
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:  
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:  
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
 Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

## 5

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
 Numerous as shadows haunting faerily  
 The brain, new stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay 40  
 Of old romance. These let us wish away,  
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
 On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,  
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

## 6

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,  
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
 And soft adorings from their loves receive  
 Upon the honeyed middle of the night,



If ceremonies due they did aright;  
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white;  
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

50

## 7

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:  
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
 She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,  
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
 Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain  
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,  
 And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,  
 But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere:  
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

60

## 8

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,  
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:  
 The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs  
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort  
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;  
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
 Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amorn,  
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

70

## 9

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,  
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire  
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen;  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

80

## 10

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,  
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl  
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,  
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

90

## 11

Ah, happy chance! the agèd creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland:  
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place:  
 "They are all here tonight, the whole blood-thirsty race!"

## 12

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;  
 He had a fever late, and in the fit  
 He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:  
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
 More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!  
 Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,  
 We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,  
 And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;  
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

## 13

He followed through a lowly archèd way,  
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,  
 And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"  
 He found him in a little moonlight room,  
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.  
 "Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,  
 "O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom  
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

## 14

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—  
 Yet men will murder upon holy days:  
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,  
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,  
 To venture so: it fills me with amaze  
 To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!  
 God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays  
 This very night: good angels her deceive!  
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

## 15

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an agèd crone  
 Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,

As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

## 16

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,  
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose  
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:  
 "A cruel man and impious thou art: 140  
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream  
 Alone with her good angels, far apart  
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem  
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

## 17

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"  
 Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace  
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face:  
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears; 150  
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
 And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

## 18

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,  
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
 Were never missed."—Thus plaining, doth she bring  
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160  
 That Angela gives a promise she will do  
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

## 19

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
 Him in a closet, of such privacy  
 That he might see her beauty unespied,  
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
 While legioned faeries paced the coverlet,  
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
 Never on such a night have lovers met, 170  
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## 20

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:  
 "All cates and dainties shall be storèd there  
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame  
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,  
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
 Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer  
 The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

180

## 21

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.  
 The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;  
 The dame returned, and whispered in his ear  
 To follow her; with agèd eyes aghast  
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,  
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;  
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.  
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

## 22

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,  
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,  
 Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:  
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
 She turned, and down the agèd gossip led  
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

190

## 23

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:  
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin  
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:  
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side;  
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

200

## 24

A casement high and triple-arched there was,  
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries  
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,

210

Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;  
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,  
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

## 25

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst, 220  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,  
 Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

## 26

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,  
 Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;  
 Unclops her warmèd jewels one by one;  
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees  
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees: 230  
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,  
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## 27

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,  
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,  
 Until the popped warmth of sleep oppressed  
 Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
 Blissfully havened both from joy and pain; 240  
 Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;  
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

## 28

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,  
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,  
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced  
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
 And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,  
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250  
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,  
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

## 29

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
 A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon  
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—  
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,  
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—  
 The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

260

## 30

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
 In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,  
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;  
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferred  
 From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,  
 From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

270

## 31

These delicacies he heaped with glowing hand  
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
 Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand  
 In the retired quiet of the night,  
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—  
 "And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,  
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

## 32

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm  
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
 By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm  
 Impossible to melt as icèd stream:  
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:  
 It seemed he never, never could redeem  
 From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;  
 So mused awhile, entoled in woofèd phantasies.

280

## 33

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,  
 He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence called, "La belle dame sans merci:"

290

Close to her ear touching the melody;—  
 Wherewith disturbed, she utter'd a soft moan:  
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly  
 Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

## 34

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
 There was a painful change, that nigh expelled 300  
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;  
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
 Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,  
 Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

## 35

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now  
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;  
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear: 310  
 How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!  
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
 Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

## 36

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far  
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
 Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;  
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320  
 Blendeth its odor with the violet,—  
 Solution sweet: meantime the frost wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

## 37

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet.  
 "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"  
 'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:  
 "No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!  
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.  
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring? 330  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—  
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

## 38

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?  
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil-dyed?  
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.  
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest,  
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

340

## 39

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,  
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
 Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—  
 The bloated wassailers will never heed;—  
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
 Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:  
 Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,  
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

350

## 40

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found;  
 In all the house was heard no human sound.  
 A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;  
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,  
 Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;  
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

360

## 41

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;  
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch they glide,  
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
 With a huge empty flagon by his side:  
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,  
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—  
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;  
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

## 42

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago  
 These lovers fled away into the storm.  
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
 And all his warrior-guests with shade and form

370



Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
 Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old  
 Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;  
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
 For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

## FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS OF KEATS' "THE EVE OF ST. AGNES"

There exists, in Keats' own handwriting, a manuscript which is almost certainly the first working draft of the poem, complete except for the first seven stanzas. The original work sheets of these seven stanzas have not been found, but a close friend, Richard Woodhouse Jr., made a copy of the whole poem when its first draft was completed. Some changes were made in this draft before the poem appeared in print. [For a complete and fascinating analysis of all the versions of the poem the indispensable study is M. R. Ridley's *Keats' Craftsmanship: A Study in Poetic Development* (Oxford, 1933).] It is from Woodhouse's transcript of the first draft that the following versions of stanzas 3-6 are derived:

(stanza 3)

. . . harsh penance on St. Agnes's Eve:  
 Another way he turn'd; and soon among  
 Black ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' souls to grieve.

(stanza 3a—not used in final version)

But there are ears may hear sweet melodies,  
 And there are eyes to brighten festivals,  
 And there are feet for nimble minstrelsies,  
 And many a lip that for the red wine calls—  
 Follow, then follow to the illumin'd halls,  
 Follow me youth—and leave the Eremite—  
 Give him a tear—then trophied banneral  
 And many a brilliant tasseling of light  
 Shall droop from archèd ways this high Baronial night.

(stanza 4)

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft,  
 And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide  
 From hurry to and fro—and now aloft,  
 The silver snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;  
 The level chambers ready with their pride  
 Seem'd anxious to receive a thousand guests:  
 The carvèd angels ever eager-eyed  
 Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
 With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

## POETRY

(stanza 5)

At length step in the argent revelers  
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array;  
 Ah what are they? the idle pulse scarce stirs,  
 The muse should never make the spirit gay;  
 Away, bright dulness, laughing fools away,—  
 And let me tell of one sweet lady there  
 Whose heart had brooded all that wintry day  
 On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,  
 As she had heard old Dames full many times declare.

(stanza 6)

. . . soft adorings of their loves receive . . .  
 And lay supine their beauties lily white. . .

(stanza 6a)

For some unknown reason this stanza was omitted from the published version, even though it was apparently written late. Woodhouse saw it for the first time on Sunday, Sept. 12, 1819, when Keats visited him with a fair copy of the poem. Writing to his friend John Taylor, Woodhouse goes on: "He [Keats] has made trifling alterations, inserted an additional stanza early in the poem to make the *legend* more intelligible, and correspondent with what afterwards takes place, particularly with respect to the supper & the playing on the Lute. . . ." [See H. E. Rollins, ed., *The Keats Circle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 91.]

'Twas said her future lord would there appear  
 Offering as sacrifice—all in the dream—  
 Delicious food even to her lips brought near:  
 Viands and wine and fruit and sugar'd cream,  
 To touch her palate with the fine extreme  
 Or relish: then soft music heard; and then  
 More pleasures followed in a dizzy stream  
 Palpable almost: then to wake again  
 Warm in the virgin morn, no weeping Magdalen.

[From here on the manuscript in Keats' own handwriting is being followed. Since it is impossible to reproduce in type a much-revised handwritten draft, some modifications have been made in the reproduction for the purpose of making the revisions intelligible in print. Keats' hurried slips in spelling are retained.]

(stanza 8)

She danc'd along with vague uneager <sup>eyes</sup> look  
~~Her anxious lips full pulp'd with rosy thoughts~~  
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short  
 hallowed <sup>she sighs</sup>  
 The hour was near at hand—~~and~~  
 Amid the Timbrels, and the throng'd ressort

Of Whispersers in anger or in sport—  
 'Mid Looks of Love, defiance, hate and scorn;  
     Hoodwink'd      faery  
~~She was hoodwink'd~~ with fancy—all a mort  
 Save to St. Agnes and her Lambs unshorn  
 And all the Bliss to be before tomorrow morn

(stanza 9)

~~So purposing each moment to retire~~  
~~She lingered fearful who might~~  
 She lingered still—meantime across the Moors  
 Had come young Porphyro with heart afire  
     Beside  
     Within the Portal Doors  
 For Madeline. ~~Most piteous he implores~~  
~~St~~ Buttress'd from Moonlight stands he and implores  
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours  
     and worship all unseen  
 That he might gaze—~~or speak, or kneel~~  
 Perchance speak,—kneel—touch—kiss—in sooth such things have been.

(stanza 22)

~~There secreted~~  
~~Scarc~~ had old Angela the Stair ~~case~~ found  
     Swan  
 Ere Madeline, like an affrighted Bird  
~~Flew past her~~  
     Old An  
~~Scarc~~ had  
 With faulting hand upon the Ballustrad  
 Old Angela was feeling for the Stair  
 When Madeline St. Agnes charmed Maid  
     missioned  
 Rose like a spirit ~~to her~~ unaware  
     With silver  
~~And with her~~ taper's light and gentle care  
~~Guided her~~  
     down      led  
 She turn'd and ~~led~~ the aged gossip ~~down~~  
 To ~~the~~ a save level matting—now prepare  
 Young Porphyro a-gazing on that Bed  
 She comes she comes again like ring dove fray'd and fled.

(stanzas 24 and 25)

[In his discussion of stanzas 24 and 25, Professor M. R. Ridley gives invaluable guidance through the complex creative process. The following quotations are taken from *Keats' Craftsmanship* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 149 ff.]

"For showing Keats the pure craftsman delighting in his mastery of his craft these next two stanzas are unequalled in the poem. There is no emotional stress to distract,

no excitement of action to hurry him. He is quietly setting his stage for the climax, and he can take his time over making it as richly perfect as it can be made."

## (stanza 24)

~~A Casement~~ ~~sh'd~~ ~~tripple~~ ~~archd~~ ~~and~~ ~~diamonded~~  
~~With many~~ ~~coloured~~ ~~glass~~ ~~fronted~~ ~~the~~ ~~Moon~~  
~~In midst of~~ ~~which~~ ~~a~~ ~~shilded~~ ~~scutcheon~~ ~~shed~~  
~~High~~ ~~blushing~~ ~~gules:~~ ~~upon~~ ~~she~~ ~~kneel'd~~ ~~saintly~~ ~~down~~  
~~And~~ ~~inly~~ ~~prayed~~ ~~for~~ ~~grace~~ ~~and~~ ~~heavenly~~ ~~boon~~  
~~The~~ ~~blood~~ ~~red~~ ~~gules~~ ~~fell~~ ~~on~~ ~~her~~ ~~silver~~ ~~cross~~  
~~And~~ ~~her~~ ~~white~~ ~~(est)~~ ~~hands~~ ~~devout~~  
There was  
A Casement ~~tripple~~ ~~archd~~ ~~and~~ ~~high~~  
All ~~garlanded~~ ~~with~~ ~~carven~~ ~~imageries~~  
Of ~~fruits~~ ~~&~~ ~~trailing~~ ~~flowers~~ ~~and~~ ~~sunny~~ ~~corn~~  
ears parchd  
A Casement high and tripple archd there was  
All gardneded with carven imageries  
Of fruits and flowers and bunches of knot grass;  
And diamonded with panes of quaint device  
Innumerable of stains and splendid dies  
As is the tiger moths <sup>sunset</sup> ~~rich~~ ~~deep~~ ~~damaeked~~ ~~wings~~  
~~As is the wing of evening tiger moths;~~  
~~And in the midst 'mong~~ ~~man~~ ~~heraldries~~  
~~And~~ ~~dim~~ ~~twilight~~ ~~twilight~~ ~~saints~~ ~~and~~ ~~dim~~ ~~emblasonings~~  
A shielded scutcheon blushd with Blood of Queens & Kings

## (stanza 25)

Full on this Casement shone the wintry moon  
~~And~~ ~~threw~~ ~~red~~ ~~gules~~ ~~on~~ ~~Madelines~~ ~~fair~~ ~~face~~  
As down she kneel'd for heavens grace and boon  
~~And~~ ~~rose~~ ~~with~~ ~~red~~ ~~bloom~~ ~~on~~ ~~her~~ ~~hands~~ ~~together~~  
~~Tinging~~ ~~her~~ ~~pious~~ ~~hands~~ ~~together~~ ~~prest~~  
~~And~~ ~~silver~~ ~~cross~~ ~~soft~~ ~~Amethyst~~  
~~And~~ ~~on~~ ~~her~~ ~~hair~~ ~~a~~ ~~glory~~ ~~like~~ ~~a~~ ~~Saint's~~  
~~Shee~~ ~~seem'd~~ ~~like~~ ~~an~~ ~~immortal~~ ~~angel~~ ~~dress~~  
~~Save~~ ~~wings~~, ~~for~~ ~~heaven~~—~~Porphyro~~ ~~grew~~ ~~faint~~  
~~She~~ ~~knelt~~ ~~too~~ ~~pure~~ ~~a~~ ~~thing~~, ~~too~~ ~~free~~ ~~from~~ ~~motal~~ ~~taint~~

"He remembers [Professor Ridley goes on] the arched windows and the stained glass from Mrs. Radcliffe and possibly the *deux escharboncles* from Blanche fleur's

chamber; \* and he starts with a kind of fluent rough sketch.

A Casement ach'd

But let us make it bigger (? for more light and a better display of glass) and also more defined in outline; so

A Casement tripple archd and diamonded

(we notice that instinct for line, always strong in Keats, which gives first the outline of the window and then fills it with the intersecting tracery of the leading)

With many coloured glass fronted the Moon  
In midst ~~of which~~ wereof a shielded scutcheon shed  
High blushing gules, upon

But, before the gules is shed on her, Madeline, who was left at the door, must be brought forward; so *upon* is deleted and a colon goes in after gules; and pictures from Mrs. Radcliffe come back to him; in one of which he remembers somewhere a silver cross which will catch the light:

High blushing gules: she kneeled saintly down  
And inly prayed for grace and heavenly boon;  
The blood red gules fell on her silver cross  
And her white hands devout

(with, I think, an experimental change of *her white* into *whitest*).

"Well, there at least is some of the material in the rough; but it will not do as it stands, if only for the purely technical reason that *down* will only rhyme with *moon* and *boon* if one is Burns. And apart from that there is a fumbling of touch in the repetition of *gules*. But most of the material is much too good to let go. So Keats takes it all to pieces, like a man making the stained-glass window of which he is talking, and begins to put the fragments together in a different design. And first he decides that Madeline had better be postponed till the next stanza. He will indulge himself with the luxury of a piece of pure description and give himself ample room for the development of the window and the moonlight. He starts by elaborating the window:

A Casement tipple archd and high

presumably going to end *there was* but he concludes that this had better come at the beginning, and we get

There was  
A Casement tipple archd and high  
All garlanded with carven imageries  
Of fruits & trailing flowers and sunny corn

which is excellent except that it does not rhyme; so *trailing* goes out and the line is completed with *ears parchd* ready to rhyme with the first line when the latter was transposed. But the transposition is not made, because there suddenly recurs to him a

\* The references are to Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and a French translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Filocolo*. The presumption is that Keats was drawing upon his memories of scenes in these stories. [Editors' note]

word ('knot-grass') from a passage which he had marked in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*<sup>1</sup> that will rhyme with the first line as he first had it in mind. So he starts all over again.

A Casement high and tripple archd there was  
 All gardneded [*he is in a hurry now*] with carven imageries  
 Of fruits and flowers and bunches of knot grass;  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device  
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dies  
 As is the wing of evening tiger moths;  
 And in the midst 'mong ~~man~~ thousand heraldries  
 And dim twilight

At this point he sees how to give emphasis to both *dim* and *twilight* by separating them, and so cancels them to write

And twilight saints and dim emblasonings  
 A shielded scutcheon blusht with Blood of Queens and Kings

But now the sixth line is left hanging unrhymed. He makes a minor alteration in the seventh line, so that it starts *In midst whereoft*; then he feels that the line about the stains and dies, even though he is half-conscious that it is a reminiscence, is a fine line in itself, and that the line which follows, even apart from the easily secured rhyme, will not at present take the weight of its predecessor. So for the final touch for his stanza he begins the operation which makes of the tiger moths and their wings one of the richest of even his opulent lines. He first deletes it altogether and starts

As is the tiger moths rich<sup>2</sup>

no, let us have both a more significant word and an alliteration

deep damasked wings

and then the force of association is too much for him; the splendid and innumerable dies when he first met them were the hues of sunset, and he acknowledges his debt by writing *sunset* for *damasked*, and so for the moment left the stanza, for once, we may hope, well satisfied. In the second draft he diminished the over-emphatic *s*'s of the third line by writing *fruit*, went back to the simpler *And in the midst*, and, surely rightly, reinstated *damasked*.

"Keats is now ready to work into his design the other pieces that are left over, and, as he is no longer trying to compress into one stanza the material of two, he has space to develop the second part of his picture, the moonlight and Madeline. The impression of cold can be maintained by the moon being *wintry*, and the picture of Madeline complete instead of a sketch.

Full on this Casement shone the wintry moon  
 And threw red gules on Madelines fair face

<sup>1</sup> See Act III, Sc. ii, 329.

<sup>2</sup> *rich* is the accepted reading, but I am not happy about it: the initial letter is not like Keats' initial *r*, and the two that follow are more like *ci* than *ic* (though that is not unlike Keats in a hurry).

*Red* is redundant and becomes first *warm* and then *rich* (carried over from the deletion in the last stanza); *face* suffers from all possible disabilities; it suggests no feasible rhyme except *grace* which cannot be deferred till the fourth line; it is feebly Leigh Huntian; and in any case we do not want the heroine red in the face, even though by the operation of lunar cosmetics; so alter it to *breast*, and we have:

Full on this Casement shone the wintry moon  
And threw rich gules on Madelines fair breast  
As down she kneel'd for heavens grace and boon  
Tinging her pious hands together prest  
And silver cross

But the fourth line is not satisfactory, and also it occurs to him that the window of innumerable stains seems incapable of transmitting anything but gules, which is both illogical and dull; so he gets to work on the fourth line, and after a deal of experimentation, of which the stages are obscure, we arrive, with a dubious rhyme, at the end of the fifth line

Rose bloom fell on her hands together prest<sup>3</sup>  
And on her silver cross soft Amethyst  
And on her hair a glory like a Saint's—  
~~She seem'd like an immortal angel drest~~  
                silvery angel newly drest,  
Save wings for heaven—Porphyro grew faint  
She knelt too pure a thing, too free from mortal taint—

And the stanza is tidied up by the deletion of the final *s* of *Saint's*. In the second draft Keats reverted to the much happier first thought of *warm*, and changed the rather inhuman and metallic silver angel to *a splendid angel*."

<sup>3</sup> What exactly happened with this line is hard to determine. What we find in the draft, as nearly as print can represent it, is the following:

~~And rose with red bloom fell on her hands together~~  
~~Tinging her pious hands together prest~~

The results of the first alteration were meant I think to be

Tinging with red her hands together prest

the second

And rose bloom on her hands together prest

**the third**

Rose bloom fell on her hands together prest

but this does not at all account for the firm deletion of the first *together* and I cannot make any combination of the words before us that will make a line with *together* omitted. And one cannot help wondering, though it would upset the idea that Keats was wanting more varied colour, whether *rose* did not start life as a verb, in contrast to *down she kneeld*.

There is one interesting small point, which indicates the rapidity with which Keats wrote when composing. In line 7 as altered there is clearly an *a* wanted before silvery. And Keats omitted it because he thought it was there. The *d* of *seem'd* is not only badly made, but widely spaced from the rest of the word, and Keats' eye was caught by it as he re-wrote the line and took it for the *a* that was needed.

(stanza 26)

But soon his heart revives—her prayers said  
 She lays aside her veil—pearled  
 strips her hair of all its wreathed pearl—  
 Unclasps her bosom jewels  
 And twists it in one knot upon her head

But soon his heart revives—her prayers(ing) done,  
 Of all her its wreathed pearl she strips her hair  
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one  
 Loosens her bursting boddice from her  
 her Boddice lace string  
 her Boddice and her bosom bare  
 her  
 Loosens her fragrant boddice and doth bare  
 Her

26

Anon  
 But soon his heart revives—her praying done  
 Of all its wreathed pearl her hair she frees  
 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one  
 by degrees  
 Loosens her fragrant boddice: and down slips  
 to her knees  
 Her sweet attire falls light creeps down by  
 creeps rusteling to her knees  
 Mermaid in sea weed  
 Half hidden like a Syren of the Sea  
 And more melodious dreaming  
 She stands awhile in thought, and sees  
 In fancy fair Saint Agnes in her bed  
 But dares not look behind or all the charm is fled dead

[Professor Ridley continues:]

"But soon his heart revives—her prayers said

And now Keats addresses himself to the delicate business of getting Madeline undressed. He probably, as Mr. W. T. Arnold pointed out, called to his aid a passage in Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*:

And as a lovely maiden, pure and chaste,  
 With naked ivory neck, a gown unlaced,  
 Within her chamber, when the day is fled,  
 Makes poor her garments to enrich her bed:  
 First she puts off her lily-silken gown,  
 That shrinks for sorrow as she lays it down;  
 Her breasts all bare, her kirtle slipping down,  
 . . . . .  
 Prepares for sweetest rest.



though I am not clear that there is anything very specific there by way of parallel except the *unlaced* and the *slipping down* and the latter could at least as well have been derived from a visual as from a literary memory. However, with whatever memories, Keats begins:

She lays aside her veil

But this is the first that we have heard of a veil, and anyway it is not important, so cut it out and try

She strips her hair of all its wreathed pearl

and then try this the other way round,

its pearled wreath

and go on

Unclassps her bosom jewels

but this (apart from the awkwardness of *bosom* as an adjective) is going too fast and leaves the hair unfinished, so delete it and write

And twists it in one knot upon her head

But Keats now knows that he is getting well out of his depth, so the whole thing disappears and he starts again, having made up his mind we may suppose that in this unfamiliar region the only thing for it is rigorous compression:

But soon his heart revives—her prayers done

(changed first, to avoid the awkward dissyllable, into *her prayers soon done* and then into *her praying done*)

~~Sh~~ Of all ~~her~~ its wreathed pearl she strips her hair  
Unclassps her warmed jewels one by one

So far so good; but now comes a desperate moment which can only be indicated by an attempt to represent the agitations of the draft:

~~her bursting~~  
Loosens ~~her boddice from her~~  
~~her Boddice lace string~~  
~~her Boddice and her bosom bare~~  
her

One can almost see Keats arriving, at the fourth attempt and with clenched teeth, at the end of the line and a rhyme for *hair*, even though grammar has been sacrificed to get there; and hear the sigh with which he writes the final and undeleted *her* but refuses to write *Boddice* for the fourth time. At this point he turns the page and tries the line again, this time with happier success:

Loosens her fragrant boddice and doth bare  
Her

But by now it is time for a new attempt, and after an idle moment of recuperation, in which he goes back and counts the stanzas he has written, he numbers <sup>4</sup> this one (the first he has numbered since he started) and advances to the attack once more.

Anon  
 But soon his heart revives—her praying done  
 Of all its wreathed pearl her hair she strips  
 Uncasps her warmed jewels one by one  
 Loosens her fragrant boddice: and down slips  
 Her sweet attire

At any rate we are once for all done with the boddice; but Keats finds himself stuck in the middle of a line when he wants to be at the end of it; so he alters *and down slips* to *to her knees*, which allows him to hold the verb up as long as he wishes, makes the consequential alteration of *frees* for *strips* in the second line, and takes up line 5 again. First he tries

Her sweet attire falls light  
 and then  
 creeps down by  
 which was presumably to continue  
 slow degrees  
 when it occurs to him to put the degrees earlier and the knees here, and he arrives at

Loosens her fragrant boddice: by degrees  
 Her sweet attire creeps rusteling to her knees  
 Half hidden like a Syren of the Sea  
 And more melodious

But he finds that associations have run away with him, since there is no point in Madeline being either more or less melodious than a Syren (unless he had for the moment intentions of making her rather than Porphyro sing like Mrs. Radcliffe's damsels); so

Half hidden like a Mermaid in sea weed  
 She stands awhile in thought; and sees

the line being then completed by the insertion of *dreaming* before *thought*,

In fancy fair Saint Agnes in her bed  
 But dares not look behind or all the charm is—~~fled~~ dead

In the second draft the *praying* is specified as *vespers*, the attire becomes *rich* instead of *sweet*, the seventh line opens

Pensive awhile she dreams awake

and *fled* comes in again for *dead*.

<sup>4</sup> The numbering of this stanza (26) and of the only other which he numbered (33), coinciding as it does with that of the printed text, indicates that Keats had cut out the 'additional' stanza between III and IV more or less as soon as it was written.

"There at last, after all the difficulties, is Madeline rather summarily undressed, and she is left shivering in the midst of her discarded raiment with no hint of Mother Bunch's clean shift or any other shift.\* But all the King's horses and men will not drag Keats back over this stricken field again, and, nightdress or no nightdress, Madeline must be got safely into bed as rapidly as may be."

(stanza 27)

~~Then stepping forth she slips~~  
~~The charm fled not—she did not look behind—~~  
~~But~~ Soon trembling in her soft and chilly nest  
~~She lay and had not seen her~~  
~~She lay, and as and till the poppied warmth of sleep—~~  
 She lay, in sort of wakeful swoon perplex  
 Util the poppied warmth of sleep oppress  
 Her soothed Limbs, and Soul fatigued away;  
 Flown like a thought until the morrow day;  
 Blissfully havend both from joy and pain  
 Clasp'd ~~shut clasp'd~~  
~~Shut~~ like a Missal where swart paynims pray—  
~~Dead to~~ Blinded alike from Sunshine and from rain  
~~close~~ shut  
 As though a rose should ~~shut~~ and be a bud again

[Professor Ridley continues:]

"Then stepping forth she slips

deleted at once;

The charm fled not—she did not look behind;  
 Soon trembling in her soft and chilly nest

('chilly'; no wonder).

At this point it seems better to give up the first line altogether, so it is cancelled and we start with the second, and go on

She lay and had not seen her

also cancelled;

She lay ~~and as~~ and till the poppied warmth of sleep

also cancelled; but it has contained an idea which is retained:

She lay, in sort of wakeful swoon perplex

and this only requires transposition to serve

In sort of wakeful swoon perplex she lay  
 Util the poppied warmth of sleep oppress  
 Her soothed Limbs, and Soul fatigued away;

\* In a previous passage Professor Ridley has suggested that Keats might have used a chapbook entitled *Mother Bunches Closet newly broke open* as a source for some of the details regarding the observances prescribed for girls who followed the St. Agnes' Eve ritual. In this chapbook occurs this passage: "at night before thou goest to bed put on the best shift thou hast. . . ." [Editors' note.]



Of candied ~~fruits~~ ~~sweets~~ ~~sweets with~~ and plumb and gourd  
apple Quince

With jellies soother than the ~~dairy~~ <sup>creamed</sup> curd

And lucent syrups ~~smooth~~ <sup>tinct</sup> with ~~cinnamon~~ <sup>cinnamon</sup> [?]

~~And sugar'd dates from that o'er Euphrates fard~~

~~in Brigantine transferr'd~~

Manna and daites in Bragine ~~wild transferr'd~~

~~and Manna~~

~~And Manna wild and Brigantine~~

~~sugar'd dates transferr'd~~

argosy

~~In Brigantine from Fez~~

From fez ~~and~~ spiced dainties every one

~~glutted~~

From ~~wealthy~~ Sa\marchand to cedard lebanon  
silken

(stanzas 35-37)

Keats' first draft of these stanzas and his subsequent alterations of them displeased some of his friends—particularly Richard Woodhouse. In his letter to John Taylor, already quoted in part on page 822, Woodhouse wrote:

There was another alteration, which I abused for "a full hour by the *Temple* clock." You know if a thing has a decent side, I generally look no further—As the Poem was orig'y written, *we* innocent ones (ladies & myself) might very well have supposed that Porphyro, when acquainted with Madeline's love for him, & when "he arose, Etherial flush'd &c. &c (turn to it) set himself at once to persuade her to go off with him, & succeeded & went over the "Dartmoor black" (now changed for some other place) to be married, in right honest and sober wise. But, as it is now altered, as soon as M. has confessed her love, P. winds by degrees his arm round her, presses breast to breast, and acts all the acts of a bonâ fide husband, while she fancies she is only playing the part of a Wife in a dream. This alteration is of about three stanzas; and tho' there are no improper expressions but all is left to inference, and tho' profanely speaking, the Interest on the reader's imagination is greatly heightened, yet I do apprehend it will render the poem unfit for ladies, & indeed scarcely to be mentioned to them among the "things that are."—He says he does not want ladies to read his poetry: that he writes for men, & that if in the former poem there was an opening for a doubt what took place, it was his fault for not writing clearly and comprehensively—that he sh'd despise a man who would be such an eunuch in sentiment as to leave a maid, with that Character about her, in such a situation: & sho'd despise himself to write about it &c &c &c—and all this sort of Keats-like rhodomontade. [Rollins, *op. cit.*, p. 92.]

Woodhouse seems to imply that Keats had written some other and more explicit stanzas at this point in the poem; but, if so, the objectors triumphed over the poet, for no such stanzas now exist.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

[1833 VERSION]

## PART THE FIRST.

On either side the river lie  
 Long fields of barley and of rye,  
 That clothe the wold, and meet the sky.  
 And thro' the field the road runs by  
     To manytowered Camelot.  
 The yellowleavèd waterlily,  
 The greensheathèd daffodilly,  
 Tremble in the water chilly,  
     Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver, 10  
 The sunbeam-showers break and quiver  
 In the stream that runneth ever  
 By the island in the river,  
     Flowing down to Camelot.  
 Four gray walls and four gray towers  
 Overlook a space of flowers,  
 And the silent isle imbowers  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,  
 The reaper, reaping late and early, 20  
 Hears her ever chanting cheerly,  
 Like an angel, singing clearly,  
     O'er the stream of Camelot.  
 Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,  
 Beneath the moon, the reaper weary  
 Listening whispers, "'tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott."

The little isle is all inrailed  
 With a rose-fence, and overtrailed  
 With roses: by the marge unhailed 30  
 The shallop flitteth silkensailed,  
     Skimming down to Camelot.  
 A pearlgarland winds her head:  
 She leaneth on a velvet bed,  
 Full royally apparellèd,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

[1842 VERSION]

## PART I

On either side the river lie  
 Long fields of barley and of rye,  
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
 And through the field the road runs by  
     To many-towered Camelot;  
 And up and down the people go,  
 Gazing where the lilies blow  
 Round an island there below,  
     The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10  
 Little breezes dusk and shiver  
 Through the wave that runs for ever  
 By the island in the river  
     Flowing down to Camelot.  
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
 Overlook a space of flowers,  
 And the silent isle imbowers  
     The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled, 20  
 Slide the heavy barges trailed  
 By slow horses; and unhailed  
 The shallop flitteth silken-sailed  
     Skimming down to Camelot;  
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
     The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early 30  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
     Down to towered Camelot;  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott."

## [1833 VERSION]

## PART THE SECOND.

No time hath she to sport and play:  
 A charmèd web she weaves away.  
 A curse is on her, if she stay  
 Her weaving, either night or day, 40  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be;  
 Therefore she weaveth steadily,  
 Therefore no other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

She lives with little joy or fear.  
 Over the water, running near,  
 The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.  
 Before her hangs a mirror clear, 50  
     Reflecting towered Camelot.  
 And, as the mazy web she whirls,  
 She sees the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market-girls,  
     Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,  
 Or longhaired page, in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to towered Camelot.  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue, 60  
 The knights come riding, two and two.  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights:  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
     And music, came from Camelot.  
 Or, when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers, lately wed: 70  
 "I am half-sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART THE THIRD.

A bowshot from her bower-eaves.  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves:  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
     Of bold Sir Lancelot.

## [1842 VERSION]

## PART II

There she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colors gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay 40  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near 50  
     Winding down to Camelot;  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
     Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-haired page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to towered Camelot;  
 And sometimes through the mirror blue 60  
 The knights come riding two and two:  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often through the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
     And music, went to Camelot;  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed; 70  
 "I am half sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling through the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
     Of bold Sir Lancelot.

## [1833 VERSION]

A redcross knight for ever kneeled  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden galaxy.  
The bridle-bells rang merrily,  
As he rode down from Camelot.  
And, from his blazoned baldric slung,  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And, as he rode, his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather, 90  
Thickjewelled shone the saddle-leather.  
The helmet, and the helmet-feather  
Burned like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down from Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over green Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed.  
On burnished hooves his warhorse trode.  
From underneath his helmet flowed 101  
His coalblack curls, as on he rode,  
As he rode down from Camelot.  
From the bank, and from the river,  
He flashed into the crystal mirror,  
"Tirra lirra, tirra lirra,"  
Sang Sir Launcelot.

She left the web: she left the loom:  
She made three paces thro' the room:  
She saw the waterflower bloom: 110  
She saw the helmet and the plume:  
She looked down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web, and floated wide,  
The mirror cracked from side to side,  
"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART THE FOURTH.

In the stormy eastwind straining  
The pale-yellow woods were waning,

## [1842 VERSION]

A red-cross knight for ever kneeled  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot;  
And from his blazoned baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armor rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burned like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot;  
As often through the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;  
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flowed  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flashed into the crystal mirror,  
"Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces through the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She looked down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror cracked from side to side;  
"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,



## [1833 VERSION]

The broad stream in his banks  
 complaining,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
 Over towered Camelot:  
 Outside the isle a shallow boat  
 Beneath a willow lay afloat,  
 Below the carven stern she wrote,  
 THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight.  
 All raimented in snowy white  
 That loosely flew, (her zone in sight,  
 Clasped with one blinding diamond  
 bright,)  
 Her wide eyes fixed on Camelot,  
 Though the squally eastwind keenly 131  
 Blew, with folded arms serenely  
 By the water stood the queenly  
 Lady of Shalott.

With a steady, stony glance—  
 Like some bold seer in a trance,  
 Beholding all his own mischance,  
 Mute, with a glassy countenance—  
 She looked down to Camelot.  
 It was the closing of the day, 140  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay,  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam,  
 By creeks and outfalls far from home,  
 Rising and dropping with the foam,  
 From dying swans wild warblings come,  
 Blown shoreward; so to Camelot  
 Still as the boathead wound along  
 The willowy hills and fields among, 150  
 They heard her chanting her deathsong,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,  
 She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
 Till her eyes were darkened wholly,  
 And her smooth face sharpened slowly  
 Turned to towered Camelot:

## [1842 VERSION]

The broad stream in his banks  
 complaining,  
 Heavily the low sky raining  
 Over towered Camelot;  
 Down she came and found a boat  
 Beneath a willow left afloat,  
 And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

[This whole stanza was  
 omitted from the  
 1842 version.]

And down the river's dim expanse  
 Like some bold seer in a trance,  
 Seeing all his own mischance—  
 With a glassy countenance  
 Did she look to Camelot.  
 And at the closing of the day  
 She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
 The broad stream bore her far away,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying robed in snowy white  
 That loosely flew to left and right—  
 The leaves upon her falling light—  
 Through the noises of the night  
 She floated down to Camelot;  
 And as the boat-head wound along  
 The willowy hills and fields among,  
 They heard her singing her last song,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
 Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
 Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
 And her eyes were darkened wholly,  
 Turned to towered Camelot.

## [1833 VERSION]

For ere she reached upon the tide  
 The first house by the waterside,  
 Singing in her song she died,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
 By gardenwall and gallery,  
 A pale, pale corpse she floated by,  
 Deadcold, between the houses high,  
     Dead into towered Camelot.  
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
 To the plankèd wharfage came:  
 Below the stern they read her name,  
     "The Lady of Shalott." 170

They crossed themselves, their stars they  
     blest,  
 Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest.  
 There lay a parchment on her breast,  
 That puzzled more than all the rest,  
     The wellfed wits at Camelot.  
*"The web was woven curiously  
 The charm is broken utterly,  
 Draw near and fear not—this is I,  
     The Lady of Shalott."*

## [1842 VERSION]

For ere she reached upon the tide  
 The first house by the water-side,  
 Singing in her song she died,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
 By garden-wall and gallery,  
 A gleaming shape she floated by,  
 Dead-pale between the houses high,  
     Silent into Camelot.  
 Out upon the wharfs they came,  
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
 And round the prow they read her name,  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
 And in the lighted palace near  
 Died the sound of royal cheer;  
 And they crossed themselves for fear,  
     All the knights at Camelot;  
 But Lancelot mused a little space;  
 He said, "She has a lovely face;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
     The Lady of Shalott."

## STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

ROBERT FROST (1875- )

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.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

10

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.

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.

~~The stunning horses think it queer~~  
To <sup>collect</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>horse</sup> ~~house~~ <sup>must</sup> ~~stop~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>woods</sup> ~~house~~ <sup>and frozen</sup> ~~stop~~ <sup>lake</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~darkest~~ <sup>evening</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~year~~

She <sup>her</sup> ~~He~~ gives harness bells a shake:  
To ask if there is some mistake  
The only other sounds <sup>the</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>sweep</sup>  
Of easy wind and <sup>downy</sup> ~~fast~~ flake.

The woods are lovely dark and deep  
But I have promises to keep  
~~That I have miles to go before I sleep~~  
And miles to go before I sleep  
And miles to go before I sleep

# ON FROST'S "STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING" \*

JOHN HOLMES (1904- )

This facsimile <sup>1</sup> 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 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

\* See also the essay by Earl Daniels on p. 875. <sup>1</sup> On p. 839.

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 one 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.

### A NOTE BY THE EDITORS

In a letter to Charles Madison, dated February 26, 1950, Frost confesses "the trade secret" about the writing of the last stanza of "Stopping by Woods." The poet says that he wrote the third line of the stanza "in such a way as to call for another stanza when I didn't want another stanza and didn't have another stanza in me, but with great presence of mind and a sense of what a good boy I was I instantly struck the line out and made my exit with a repeat end." [See Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren: *Understanding Poetry* (Holt, rev. ed., 1950).]

The first "And miles to go before I sleep" was therefore originally written as the fourth line of the stanza—with the crossed-out line, ending first in "shake" and then in "miles," the one that called for another stanza. Repeating the line "And miles to go before I sleep" not only solved for Frost a technical problem but gave him a sense of triumphant satisfaction at a "resolved perplexity" and "pure emergence from the logic of the thing"—to use his own words. See "Robert Frost: A Time to Listen," by Reginald L. Cook, pp. 772-777.

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## THE LATER YEATS

HERBERT READ (1893- )

There is no doubt that Yeats was influenced, and influenced for the good, by the technique of some of his juniors, notably by Ezra Pound.

The change can best be examined in an early poem which Yeats actually rewrote in his later manner. "The Sorrow of Love" was originally published in 1893; as late as the 1912 edition of the *Poems* and perhaps later, it read as follows:

The quarrel of the sparrows in the eaves,  
The full round moon and the star-laden sky,  
And the loud song of the ever-singing leaves,  
Had hid away earth's old and weary cry.

And then you came with those red mournful lips  
And with you came the whole of the world's tears  
And all the trouble of her labouring ships,  
And all the trouble of her myriad years.

And now the sparrows warring in the eaves  
The curd-pale moon, the white stars in the sky,  
And the loud chaunting of the unquiet leaves,  
Are shaken with earth's old and weary cry.

In the 1933 edition of the *Collected Poems* this poem has been rewritten and reads as follows:

The brawling of a sparrow in the eaves  
 The brilliant moon and all the milky sky,  
 And all that famous harmony of leaves,  
 Had blotted out man's image and his cry.

A girl arose that had red mournful lips  
 And seemed the greatness of the world in tears,  
 Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships  
 And proud as Priam murdered with his peers;

Arose, and on the instant clamorous eaves,  
 A climbing moon upon an empty sky,  
 And all that lamentation of the leaves,  
 Could but compose man's image and his cry.

The change, it will be seen, is very drastic, but is it altogether a change for the good? It is, let us observe, in the first place, a change of diction and not of structure; and that is true of all the changes that occurred in Yeats's verse. "All the revisions I have made," Yeats once said to me, "have been in the direction of making my poems less poetic." His aim, therefore, has been very much the same as Wordsworth's—to get rid of "the inane and gaudy phraseology" of an outworn poetic tradition. The suggestion I wish to put forward is that diction and structure are so closely related in the generation of a poem, that you cannot fundamentally change the one without changing the other. But before elaborating that suggestion, let us look at the actual changes which Yeats made in the poem quoted.

Line 1.—*Brawling* is substituted for *quarrel*. In itself I do not think the word is any improvement, but the change is necessitated by a change in line 2; *quarrel* would not go well with *brilliant*, whereas *brawling* provides a good alliterative and assonantal match. *Sparrows* becomes singular—a gain in precision.

Line 2.—*full round* was perhaps felt to be a commonplace epithet, but is *brilliant* any better? It is rather vaguer. But this change is perhaps in its turn dictated by the change from *star-laden* to *milky*. *Star-laden* is a very early-Yeatsian, Celtic twilight epithet of just the kind the poet presumably wanted to get rid of; and since a brilliant moon will cancel out the stars, *milky* becomes a more expressive (incidentally a metaphorical) epithet.

Line 3.—*ever-singing* was probably felt to be a cliché, and *loud* is not very exact for the sound of leaves. But *famous harmony* seems to me to be a vaguer and weaker substitute; it is a dead phrase, without any inherent poetic tone. In fact, it is prose.

Line 4.—A completely new image is substituted. *Earth's old and weary cry* was probably felt to be a false and indefinite metaphor. *Blotted* is a gain in sound value, and links alliteratively with *brawling* and *brilliant*; it has an onomatopœic value, and provides a much-needed acceleration of the rhythm.

Line 5.—A definite image of a girl is substituted for the vague *you*; *arose* gives alliteration with *red*.

Line 6.—*the whole of the world's tears* was perhaps felt to be rather a ridiculous image; the new image is more precise, but still difficult to visualize.

Lines 7 and 8.—A completely new image is substituted. The repetition of *And all the trouble of her* was probably felt to be banal, and *myriad years* to be a cliché. The introduction of well-known classical allusions is a gain in precision and in the emotional surplus attaching to legendary names.

Line 9.—The refrain motive of the sparrows in the eaves is dropped—it is a romantic device, and two such devices in one quatrain were felt to be a little too much. The introduction of a time element, *on the instant*, adds dramatic force to the poem. *Clamorous* is a good sonorous word, if a little too emphatic for the noise made by a single sparrow; but it provides alliteration with *climbing*, *lamentation*, *leaves*, *could*, *compose* and *cry*.

Line 10.—The fresh and effective *curd-pale* had to be dropped, since the moon had become brilliant in the first verse; for the same reason the white stars had to be excluded. *Climbing*, though it sounds well enough, is rather commonplace, and *empty* is banal.

Line 11.—*Loud* must be dropped to agree with the first verse; *chaunting* is an artificial metaphor. The new line has a forceful alliterative movement. But I doubt if a "modern" poet would use a word like *lamentation* in connection with *leaves*; it is almost a cliché.

Line 12.—The changes are largely dictated by the new form of line 4, and by the desire for alliteration. But *compose* involves a process difficult to visualize, and the line as a whole does not bring the poem to such a definite and inevitable conclusion as in the first version.

These are analytical notes, and perhaps on a reckoning the plus and minus of it all cancels out. It is necessary, in the end, to compare the synthetic feeling of the two versions, and here one can only state a personal reaction. My own is definitely in favour of the earlier version. In spite of the romantic diction against which Yeats rightly reacted, I feel that it produces a unity of effect which, romantic as it is, is superior in force to the more definite, more classical diction of the later version. For the truth is, that the poem in essence and inception is irradicably romantic, and had better retain its romantic diction and imagery. As it is, the new version has a patchy effect. The old suit may have been shabby, but it was of a good cut and an even tone; the patches of new classical cloth are too obvious and too disjointed.

This image, with a little stretching, will serve for my objection to Yeats's later verse (but naturally it is only an objection on the highest plane of technical criticism—the kind of criticism that poets exchange between themselves, and which is not meant for laymen). Though he makes his poems out of the latest suitings, all of good classical (or, which comes to the same thing) modernist cloth, the cut is still romantic.

I dreamed as in my bed I lay,  
All night's fathomless wisdom come,  
That I had shorn my locks away  
And laid them on Love's lettered tomb:  
But something bore them out of sight  
In a great tumult of the air,  
And after nailed upon the night  
Berenice's burning hair.

The gesture here, in spite of its precision, is still romantic; and such poems stand out, luxuriant in the pruned orchard of the later verse. The pruning has produced a larger fruit, a clearer thought; but the effect is rather bleak, the prose of scientific culture rather than the poetry of natural growth. A complete change of spirit requires a change of form; of structure as well as of diction. And though one or two poems, such as "Byzantium," seem to promise the necessary developments, Yeats remained to the end faithful to the spirit of another age.



### III. *The Poem and the Reader*

*Every reader is necessarily a critic, good or bad; to neglect careful technical criticism is to deny the poem a fair hearing; hasty decision often produces sentimental judgment, and sometimes the hasty reader even accuses the poet of sentimentality, whereas the fault lies in his own inadequate response. The fullest appreciation of poetry or of any art may require as much training and effort as the appreciation of mathematics, and the effort is justified by the additional delight.*

—MICHAEL ROBERTS



## HOW TO CRITICIZE A POEM

(*In the Manner of Certain Contemporary Critics*)

THEODORE SPENCER (1902-1949)

I

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 equilibrated organs of apperception 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; he *prepares* us for it. In his profound analysis of the two varieties of mensural 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 limitations: 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 signal-

ize 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.

## EMOTIONAL QUALITY IN POETRY

F. R. LEAVIS (1895-- )

## HERACLITUS

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you  
were dead,

They brought me bitter news to hear and  
bitter tears to shed.

I wept as I remembered how often you  
and I

Had tired the sun with talking and sent  
him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old  
Carian guest,

A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago  
at rest,

Still are thy pleasant voices, thy night-  
ingales, awake;

For Death, he taketh all away, but them  
he cannot take.

—WILLIAM JOHNSON CORY  
(1823-1892)

## PROUD MAISIE

Proud Maisie is in the wood,  
Walking so early;

Sweet Robin sits on the bush  
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,  
When shall I marry me?"

"When six braw gentlemen  
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,  
Birdie, say truly?"

"The grey-headed sexton  
That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone  
Shall light thee steady;

The owl from the steeple sing  
Welcome, proud lady."

—SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

When we look at "Heraclitus" we see that the directly emotional and personal insistence distinguishing it is associated with an absence of core or substance: the poem seems to be all emotional comment, the alleged justifying situation, the subject of comment, being represented by loosely evocative generalities, about which the poet feels vaguely if "intensely" (the "intensity" of this kind of thing is conditioned by vagueness). Again, the emotion seems to be out there on the page, whereas in reading "Proud Maisie" we never seem to be offered emotions as such; the emotion develops and defines itself as we grasp the dramatic elements the poem does offer—the data it presents (that is the effect) with emotional "disinterestedness." For "disinterestedness" we can substitute "impersonality," with which term we introduce a critical topic of the first importance.

Someone may comment that, on the one hand, for Scott, whose poetic impulse clearly came not from any inescapable pang experienced in his immediately personal life, but from an interest in ballads and in the ballad-convention, the impersonality of his poem was an easy achievement, while, on the other hand, absence of impersonality in the handling of poignant emotion needn't be accompanied by the self-cherishing emotionality, the wallowing complaisance, of "Heraclitus." These matters can be carried further, and the essential distinctions given force, only by close and varied reference to the concrete. Here is a contrast analogous to the last, but a contrast in which the "impersonal" poem unmistakably derives from a seismic personal experience, while the obviously emotional poem is not suspect, like "Heraclitus," of being a mere indulgence in the sweets of poignancy:

- (a) A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears:  
She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;  
She neither hears nor sees;  
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,  
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

—[WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)]

- (b) Break, break, break,  
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.  
  
O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!  
  
And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill:  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!  
  
Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

—[ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)]

No one can doubt that Wordsworth wrote his poem because of something profoundly and involuntarily suffered—suffered as a personal calamity, but the experience has been so impersonalized that the effect, as much as that of "Proud Maisie," is one of bare and disinterested presentment. Again, though the working this time doesn't so obviously prompt to a diagrammatic schematization, the emotional power is generated between juxtaposed opposites. It is generated between the two stanzas, or between the states represented by the stanzas: "she was, she is not"—the statement seems almost as bare and simple as that. But the statement is concrete, and once the reading has been completed the whole poem is seen to be a complex organization, charged with a subtle life. In retrospect the first stanza takes on new significance:

A slumber did my spirit seal;  
I had no human fears

—the full force of that *human* comes out: the conditions of the human situation are inescapable and there is a certain *hubris* in the security of forgetful bliss. Again, the *human* enhances the ironic force of *thing* in the next line:

She seemed a thing that could not feel  
The touch of earthly years.

In the second stanza she *is* a thing—a thing that, along with the rocks and stones and trees with which she is

Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,

cannot in reality feel the touch of earthly years and enjoys a real immunity from death. The *diurnal*, chosen apparently for its scientific nakedness and reinforcing as it does that stating bareness with which the diction and tone express the brutal finality of the fact, has actually, at the same time, a potent evocative force: it puts the fact in an astronomical setting and evokes the vast inexorable regularity of the planetary motions, the effect being analogous to that of the enclosing morning-night contrast of "Proud Maisie."

In "Break, break, break" we again have the poem that offers emotion directly—the poem in which the emotion seems to be "out there" on the page. If we read the poem aloud the emotion, in full force from the opening, asserts itself in the plangency of tone and movement that is compelled upon us. We do not, however, this time feel moved to a dismissing judgment. The poet is clearly one of distinguished gift, we cannot doubt that behind the poem there is a genuinely personal urgency, and we are not ready to accuse him of being moved primarily by the enjoyment of being poignantly moved—though we *can* very readily imagine a rendering of the poem that should betray too much enjoyment of the poignancy.

And here, in this last suggestion, we glimpse a way of getting beyond a neutrally descriptive account of the differences between the two poems. We can say that Wordsworth's poem is a securer kind of achievement. If someone should comment that to make it a point against a poem that it lends itself more readily to abuse is to assume a great deal, it will perhaps be best not to take up the challenge directly, but to advance another proposition: an emotional *habitus* answering to the mode of "Break, break, break" would need to be regarded critically. The poet, we can say, whose habitual mode—whose emotional habit—was represented by that poem would not only

be very limited; we should expect to find him noticeably given to certain weaknesses and vices. Further, the reader who cannot see that Tennyson's poem, with all its distinction and refinement, yields a satisfaction inferior in kind to that represented by Wordsworth, cannot securely appreciate the highest poetic achievement at its true worth and is not very likely to be at all strong or sure in the kind of judgment that discriminates between "Break, break, break" and "Heraclitus."

## AN INTERPRETATION OF ROBERT HERRICK'S "UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES"

EARL DANIELS (1893- )

### UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

When as in silks my Julia goes,  
Then, then, me thinks, how sweetly flows  
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see  
That brave vibration, each way free;  
O how that glittering taketh me!

—ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)

Superficially, the poem is obvious to the point of seeming to deprecate analysis, not to be worth it. A pretty girl moves through six lines, for a moment only catches an observer's eye, passes, and is gone. So slight is the impact of the experience that he writes not about the girl but about her clothes. Costume is defined by silks, and each stanza is centered in a single quality of silk in movement, and in light (*liquefaction*, line 3, and *glittering*, line 6). The positions of these words in the last lines of each stanza should be noted and, more particularly, the increased sharpness lent to *glittering* by the necessity, here, of pronunciation in two syllables only: the vowel sound of an acute and pointed short *i* is closed tightly in by consonants, *g* and *t* in one syllable, *tr* and *ng* in the other. The stab of that word, a superb mine-eyes-dazzle effect, suggests the poem is not so simple as it seems: that Julia-in-clothes is more important than clothes, the apparent subject; that the observer is more deeply moved than he wants a careless reader to suppose, possibly than he himself knows.

Attention to sound and movement reveals the implications of the single word *glittering* to be a clue worth following. The poem is Julia and Julia's clothes. But each stanza contains lines (I, 2; II, 1, 3) which turn to the observer, and seem to hint in sound and movement at a central ironic contrast between the states of mind of the observer and the girl. The Julia lines flow, as easy and as liquid as the smooth silks which dress and conceal a lovely body. But the observer lines throb unevenly; they start and stop; they image the excitement and disturbance of the poet. It may not be too farfetched to wonder if they are not symbol for the quickened beating of a heart, the surprised catch of breath, in the presence of beauty, especially beauty of a woman. An attentive reader now begins to understand it is not Julia's clothes but Julia herself who is the subject of the poem; and the poem begins to grow and to take on new richness of meaning. To be especially noted is the contrast in stanza I between lines 1 and 2: in line 1, word ripples into word, sound into sound, the caesural pause is so slight



as to be almost not noticeable; in line 2, the opening repetition of "then, then," where each word must be distinctly separated by pauses, where vowels are imbedded between inescapable consonants, announces a change, farther stressed by the parenthetical "me thinks." (Even the parenthesis plays its part here.) Only as this line, toward the end, moves to Julia and her costume does it begin to glide, to be liquefied again. The point is Julia moves through the poem serene, untouched; she may not even know the poet has so much as seen her. But he is in a different situation, for though he is ostensibly doing nothing more than writing a pretty lyric about a pretty dress, yet he reveals, in the sound, the movement, the pace of his words, how deeply he has been stirred by what seems so unimportant.

This makes for a basic ironic contrast, central to the poem: the ironic contrast between the girl and the man. Is it the irony of man (male) set over against woman (female)—a contrast as old as the Garden of Eden itself—or is it the profounder suggestion of the situation of man (not *a man*) in the presence of beauty—beauty here, as so often, being symbolized by a woman? I am reasonably certain that by implication and suggestion, by the subtlest of overtones, both ideas are in their way present, contributing rich values for a poem too often looked upon as too slight for serious consideration. Herrick has too long suffered from that kind of treatment.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF THOMAS CAREW'S "A SONG"

MARK VAN DOREN (1894- )

### 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 do 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; 10  
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  
Fixèd become, as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west  
The Phoenix builds her spicy nest;  
For unto you at last she flies,  
And in your fragrant bosom dies. 20

—THOMAS CAREW (1598?–1639?)

In the five stanzas of this formal song a lover pays five compliments to his lady. She is not named; nor does the song itself have any name except this noncommittal one which begins, casually enough, with the indefinite article: "A Song"—as if any lover, anywhere or at any time, might be understood to have seized a musical instrument of some sort and, looking into his lady's eyes, strummed it five times as he sang five answers to five questions which she or someone else has asked. It is not necessarily she who has put the questions. Perhaps she is perfectly silent, smiling as she listens; or she may not be here at all; she may indeed not exist, though we should prefer to think she does. The questions may well be the lover's own, which he has invented for the sake of their answers. They are rhetorical; they assist statement.

The five statements to which they lead are all, if one pleases, extravagant. Where does Jove, the king of the universe, send roses when they fade? Into your beauty, where they sleep. What is the destination, if any, of the sunlight's particles? Your hair, which they were created to adorn. Where does the nightingale fly when she stops singing? Into your throat, where she continues to sing until another season returns. Where do falling stars go? Into your eyes, as into the place for which they were intended. Where does the phoenix, that fabulous Arabian bird which lives forever by alternately burning itself and rising newborn from the ashes, build its nest upon which this act of immortality may be accomplished? In your bosom, of course.

Doubtless it is the extravagance of the compliments at which the lady smiles. Yet she is pleased, for she knows that her lover is trying to be absolute in the expression of his love. The things he says are true for him because he loves her without qualification. If to an indifferent person they would sound exaggerated or fantastic, he trusts her not to find them so; he counts on her to understand, as of course he understands, that overstatement is adoration's natural language. Only too much love is love enough; or rather, only too strong a statement is strong at all. The exact truth about her, supposing it could be put into words, would be inadequate to his purpose, which is to suggest that this after all is the exact truth—for him, anyway. He too smiles as he sings, watching his lady's eyes for signs that she measures the playful force with which he overstates his case. Absolute eloquence is the minimum effect at which he aims. All or nothing, as with any lover in the world, is the motto of his words and music.

But whereas he is like any other lover in his feeling he is different in his art. He is formal to what might seem a fault if we did not become aware of the resources he is using. We might let the matter go with conventional terms, or hum some current song; he explores nature, science, and myth in search of symbols which will carry his meaning. And he composes his poem with the utmost care for its structure, metrically and otherwise. The five stanzas are highly regular in their rhythm, and each of them strictly honors a pattern of syntax as well as a pattern of rhyme. Each first line begins with "Ask me no more," and each third line with *For*. The punctuation almost never varies. The rhyme scheme is the couplet scheme; and yet it is proper that the poem should appear as stanzas, as quatrains, for each set of four lines, with its asking and its answering couplet, is complete in itself, bringing the poem to a pause from which it will start again.

When it starts again, will it be any farther along? Is the poem aiming to be more than a series of statements—five, as it happens, and this is the number of the fingers on the hand that strokes the instrument whence the music comes—strung as stationary beads are strung, one after another on the string? Or is there movement in the whole? Does the poem climb? Does it reach a conclusion? Does it have a climax?

A progression appears if we consider the successive stanzas in terms of the activity, or the amount of activity, each describes. The first stanza, for example, contains no activity at all. Nothing could be quieter than the act, if it is an act, of sleeping in one's cause as the oak sleeps in the acorn or the rose in its seed, its root, waiting patiently to become itself. If this is an act, it must be done in a deep place out of time's reach; for cause itself is not a temporal thing. The place, indeed, is as deep as the lady's beauty, which is an *orient* deep. A famous word, sufficient in itself to have created Carew's reputation. For it suggests many things: the East, the brilliant spaces out of which suns rise, radiance itself, and the more general idea of source or origin—wells or fountains out of which come forth again whatever things have descended into them, or life which can be where death once was. Yet the tangible activity is nil. All is potentiality, and the sweet promise of more in place of less. Nor is the promise lightly stated: Jove is the agent of its fulfilment, and his name alliterates powerfully, decisively, with *June*.

The second stanza, breaking the trance of the first, sets things in motion, but small things, and indeed the smallest we can conceive. Atoms of light are finer than even the motes we watch dancing in a sunbeam; yet those motes will do for an image, particularly if we think of them as golden, as gold dust floating. The irregular accents we hear in the word *whither* are in the interest of what now is to be achieved: our sense of irreducible, indivisible, and all but invisible particles of matter set free—"whither do stray"—to wander where they will. Their will, in fact, is to wander toward that place of which their creator was thinking when he ground them up so light and fine. They are to settle upon my lady's already golden hair, where they will be noticed only as perfection is noticed, gracing what once seemed, yet only seemed, to be sufficiently beautiful without it.

The third stanza follows a larger creature to its destination. The nightingale, which sounds as well as is seen—where is its song continued after music's season closes? For such a singer cannot really cease; something must keep her voice warm and sweet, ready to be heard again. And here the poet runs a risk. For his answer, which is that the bird flies into his lady's throat and remains there, could be grotesque or painful if he did not know how to manage the reader's responses. He manages them, among other ways too mysterious to understand, by the word *dividing* and by the alliteration of *winters* with *warm*. *Dividing* is a musical term of Carew's century, the seventeenth, and refers to the art of descendant, or singing in harmony, or performing in parts. It is a technical term for the miracle by which the many divisions of a song melt finally into one sweet thing, the song itself. The lady's throat, like the whole body of the nightingale, is where music may be said to live, singing for its own pleasure, making sound or no sound as it chooses; wintering, or waiting, in the warmth of its own notes until it chooses to sing so that all may hear. The lady is speaking or singing now; the nightingale will sing in May; but both are the same in idea, and it is in fact idea that entertains us here, not fact, not feathers, not vocal cords, not flesh in any form, nor even any audible sound. Again it is the promise of sound, the certainty that music remains possible, which reassures us after the disappearance of the nightingale. She has not disappeared after all, any more than the flowers of Jove can be said to have died, or the atoms of day to have wandered nowhere.

The fourth stanza reaches far into the universe—a dark universe, too, for now it is the dead of night—and sees the most startling of all movements. Stars fall. And where? Into my lady's eyes, where the quietest of verbs is found for what they do. They *sit*, fixed as proper stars are fixed, in the spheres which an old astronomy assumed

were there to contain them. These spheres made music, too, grander than that of the nightingale; but the poem, though it lets us think of this, says nothing further about it. Our attention is upon the lady's eyes, which are bright not merely as stars are bright in the conventional comparison, but happy in their brightness because they are the home to which celestial wanderers have come. Once more the image of motion has given way to the image of rest; the moving object has plunged into the medium best fitted to receive it and henceforth to display it.

In the final stanza the mythical phoenix, more potent to our imagination than even the brightest star, plunges also to her rest. But it is not the rest of death. It is a rest after which action will commence again as life recommences in new birth. Nor does it matter where this happens. East or west is immaterial now; we remember *orient* in the third line of the poem, but we are far away from even the remotest east, as we are far away from any west. The phoenix, searching for that spicy place where she can seem to die and yet not die, speeds unerringly to my lady's fragrant bosom, whence she will spring into future flight that contrasts with the quiet power, stated itself so noiselessly in stanza one, exerted by the causes of things. The poem returns to its beginning; draws a circle back through the world of atoms, birds, and stars; and enters, so to speak, itself.

The lady, meanwhile, has not moved, nor has the rhythm of the song abandoned its stateliness, its all but monotonous march of heavy and light syllables, its iambic walk which only in the fifth, seventh, ninth, twelfth, and sixteenth lines shifts momentarily into trochaic. Nor has the singer for one instant relaxed the formality of his smile. He has never become personal. He has kept his mind among metaphysical things, letting science and philosophy do his work of praise. But it was not praise either; it was compliment, which is more intimate and fanciful a thing. The lady never deserved this much. Or did she? The music says she did, and so does the gravity which still lingers in the lover's face. She deserved all that words can say when words refer to the greatest and highest things in the world: immortal things, whose home she is. *Dies* is the last word of the poem, yet death is the last thing it suggests. If any love can last forever, this love will. If any poem can, then this one must.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF JOHN KEATS' "ODE ON MELANCHOLY"

RALPH D. EBERLY

### ODE ON MELANCHOLY

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist  
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed  
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
 Nor let the beetle nor the death-moth be  
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;  
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
 Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

20

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
 Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
 Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

30

—JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

This poem is constructed like contrapuntal music. Two "meanings," like melodies in counterpoint, run throughout the whole ode, harmonizing with each other, contrasting with each other, and qualifying each other.

The surface theme urges one not to turn to death or to the agents of death, lest these things "drown the wakeful anguish of the soul." Instead, when beset by melancholy, let him turn to beautiful objects—a flower, an iridescent wave, or a beloved woman—and reflect how quickly such things must perish. Thus only can he feel the full power of melancholy.

If this meaning were satisfactory, the search for a contrapuntal theme might be regarded as a mere exercise of ingenuity. But this reading is not satisfactory. Taken in these terms alone, the poem seems to assume that a person would want to induce, rather than to avoid, the most acute form of melancholy. Surely many readers would condemn such an assumption on the ground of sentimentality, and declare the poem a decadent invitation to an emotional orgy. But most readers will agree that the poem does not submit itself to this hostile judgment.

The implications of the ode, carried by image-suggestions, actually reverse the superficial meaning. The poem begins with a repudiation of traditional "graveyard" sentimentality, on the grounds that melancholy so induced causes stupefaction, dulling or obliterating genuine experience. The opening phrase, "No, no! go not to Lethe," is richly significant; the poisons, the death-moth, the downy owl all suggest not only death itself, but also the benumbing self-dramatization, a kind of life-in-death, that attends sentimental melancholy. The double force of darkness and ghostliness in the phrase "shade to shade," together with the adverb *drowsily* in line 9, reinforces the idea of stupefaction. In line 10 the reason for the repudiation of spiritual opiates becomes overt with the words, "drown the *wakeful* anguish of the soul."

In the second stanza, melancholy is specifically referred to for the first time. The terms of the reference (lines 11-14) are revealing: the "melancholy fit" falls from heaven like rain, soothing, cooling, life-giving: in simile it "fosters the droop-headed flowers." Melancholy, then, is not a pointless gloom, but an element necessary to the keen awareness of beauty, and even of life itself.

The remainder of the second stanza and the whole of the third stanza declare that the essence of melancholy is to be found in the contemplation of beautiful things. "Beauty . . . must die," Joy's "hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu," pleasure turns to poison even while one tastes it. An alert person, alive to transience, finds delight the saddest of all experience. Melancholy has become a "veil'd" goddess, inseparable sister of Delight: the true worshipper of one must necessarily be a devotee of the other also. But this image reads two ways; the implication is clear that if one refuses to recognize Melancholy, he cannot know Delight. The image in lines 27-28 reaffirms the intention of the poem: melancholy is "seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine." But only this strong-tongued person can taste Joy! How can one savor a grape, pray, unless he bursts it against his palate and thus releases its juices? Note the word *strenuous*: Keats insists that the vigorous, fearless acceptance of experience is the key to rich living. This is a far cry from maudlin, sentimental melancholy.

It is not to be assumed that the ode, by declaring melancholy a necessary element of the experience of joy, thereby reduces melancholy to a non-entity. Far from it! Melancholy and Delight are co-equal goddesses: two equally important phases of the same thing. Though the melancholy fit *fosters* life, it is also intimately associated with death: it falls *weeping* from heaven "and hides the green hill in an April *shroud*." The phrase, "April shroud," with its associations of life and of death, epitomizes the poem: It makes melancholy a symbol of the interrelation between life and death. The ironic ending of the poem clarifies this interrelation. Since the person who is really alive will know the brevity of life and its joys, the melancholy awareness of death will claim him as a "cloudy trophy"; but this very awareness will sharpen his appreciation of joy and make him, of all men, relish life most.

## TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE'S "ULALUME"

### ULALUME—A BALLAD

The skies they were ashen and sober;  
The leaves they were crispèd and sere—  
The leaves they were withering and  
sere:  
It was night in the lonesome October  
Of my most immemorial year:  
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,  
In the misty mid region of Weir—  
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,  
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of  
Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic, 10  
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—  
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.  
These were days when my heart was  
volcanic  
As the scoriac rivers that roll—  
As the lavas that restlessly roll  
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek  
In the ultimate climes of the Pole—  
That groan as they roll down Mount  
Yaanek  
In the realms of the Boreal Pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober 20  
But our thoughts they were palsied and  
sere—

Our memories were treacherous and  
sere;

For we knew not the month was October,  
And we marked not the night of the  
year

(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)—

We noted not the dim lake of Auber  
(Though once we had journeyed down  
here)—

We remembered not the dank tarn of  
Auber,

Nor the ghoulish-woodland of  
Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent 30  
And star-dials pointed to morn—  
As the star-dials hinted of morn—

At the end of our path a liquescent  
And nebulous lustre was born,

Out of which a miraculous crescent

Arose with a duplicate horn—

Astarte's bediamonded crescent

Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said: "She is warmer than Dian;

She rolls through an ether of sighs—

She revels in a region of sighs. 41

She has seen that the tears are not dry on  
These cheeks, where the worm never  
dies,

And has come past the stars of the Lion,  
To point us the path to the skies—

To the Lethean peace of the skies—

Come up, in despite of the Lion,

To shine on us with her bright eyes—

Come up through the lair of the Lion,  
With love in her luminous eyes." 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,  
Said: "Sadly this star I mistrust—

Her pallor I strangely mistrust:

Ah, hasten!—ah, let us not linger!

Ah, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."

In terror she spoke, letting sink her  
Wings till they trailed in the dust—

In agony sobbed, letting sink her  
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—

Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied: "This is nothing but dreaming:  
Let us on by this tremulous light! 62

Let us bathe in this crystalline light!

Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming

With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—

See!—it flickers up the sky through the  
night!

Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,

And be sure it will lead us aright—

We surely may trust to a gleaming,

That cannot but guide us aright, 70

Since it flickers up to Heaven through  
the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,

And tempted her out of her gloom—

And conquered her scruples and gloom;

And we passed to the end of the vista,

But were stopped by the door of a  
tomb—

By the door of a legended tomb;

And I said: "What is written, sweet sister,

On the door of this legended tomb?"

She replied: "Ulalume—Ulalume!—

'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!" 81

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober

As the leaves that were crisped and  
sere—

As the leaves that were withering and  
sere;

And I cried: "It was surely October

On *this* very night of last year

That I journeyed—I journeyed down  
here!—

That I brought a dread burden down  
here—

On this night of all nights in the year,

Ah, what demon hath tempted me here?

Well I know, now, this dim lake of  
Auber— 91

This misty mid region of Weir—

Well I know, now, this dank tarn of  
Auber,

This ghoulish-woodland of  
Weir."

Said we, then—the two, then: "Ah, can it  
Have been that the woodlandish  
ghouls—

The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—  
 To bar up our way and to ban it  
 From the secret that lies in these  
     wolds—  
 From the thing that lies hidden in these  
     wolds—

100

Have drawn up the spectre of a planet  
 From the limbo of lunar souls—  
 This sinfully scintillant planet  
 From the Hell of the planetary souls?"

—EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

# 1. THOMAS O. MABBOTT (1898- )

The story and symbolism are consistent throughout, though the effect is not wholly dependent on complete understanding of them. According to tradition, Poe conceived the poem after a walk to the cemetery at Mamaroneck. He almost certainly had in mind a poem by Elizabeth Oakes Smith, which he quoted and praised in *Godey's* for December, 1845 (Harrison's edition, 13:92), called "The Summons Answered." In it three revellers are stopped by a hand beckoning from the tomb of the wife of one of them. In Poe's poem the protagonist (for as in the allegory of the "House of Usher," the brother and sister, the soul and the body, are united) walks through a strange landscape. It is in October, the month of hope, on a particular night—which must be All Souls' Eve, when the dead have power. They are led by the brilliant planet Venus, her crescent shape distinctly seen, and as in Poe's early poem "Evening Star," the star of love is preferred to the colder moon, who presides over the dead. Venus has just come through Leo, a sign unfavorable to her. The heart of the protagonist has suffered as if a volcano in eruption, like the recently found antarctic Mt. Erebus, here called Yaanek, as Lovecraft pointed out. The derivation of Yaanek is uncertain. The best suggestions are that it is connected with Gehenna, or that it comes from an Arabic swear word of uncertain meaning. Poe might have picked the latter up in polyglot New York. Campbell said the French sometimes use Boreal for the South Pole. "Immemorial" has, as its primary meaning, "hard to recall."

I have been puzzled by Aldous Huxley's remark about the "walloping rhythm" of the poem in his essay, "The Vulgarity of Poe." Most cultivated Englishmen of our day, if they emphasized rhymes, would probably produce a bumpy effect. But Poe was a Southerner, and in his day, a century ago, I believe cultivated British and American speech was less clipped. The voice of Saintsbury is clear in my memory. He had no trace of American accent, yet his speech differed from American speech less than that of my younger English friends. A misinterpretation of the rhythm might spoil the alliance of mood and music; the "Londonderry Air," played as a dance tune, conveys little of the haunting quality we otherwise associate with it. Poe himself, we know, did not emphasize the rhymes when reading "The Raven." If one reads "Ulalume" as if prose, there is no difficulty to my ear. It seems like the lapping of a river against a shore, steady, quiet, but resistless. This alone is intended to convey the mood, and it does so for many readers; but Woodberry has pointed out that full appreciation comes rarely to those who have never experienced combined physical exhaustion and gloomy brooding.

Aside from the mood there are two underlying layers of the poem, the fable and a personal idea of the poet.

In the fable, the speaker, filled with hope of love, which the soul mistrusts, proceeds through a "misty mid-region" of Weir—Robert Walter Weir (1803-1889), the most celebrated painter of the Hudson River school, and the name may also suggest a trap. Nearby is the tarn of Auber—Daniel François Esprit Auber (1782-1871), the



French composer whose *Lac des Fées* was popular after 1839. In this land of glamor and enchantment, the speaker is halted by the tomb of his beloved, which seems to mean "Light in wailing." The reality of the loss of the beloved breaks the enchantment, hope of eradication of the memory of the lost love through a new love is patently unreal. In the last stanza, which is integral to the poem, the question is asked whether the false hope is yet from the merciful ghouls, who of course do not harm the living.

The personal idea is the realization of a real or prospective widower that another marriage will not make all right with the world. No wonder that Mrs. Whitman asked Poe to omit the last stanza, nor that the gallant Virginian, when engaged to Mrs. Shelton, refused to discuss the meaning of "Ulalume."

[I am of course indebted to many scholars for parts of the interpretations above combined, among them Campbell, Lavery, J. O. Bailey, and Nell Moore. In revising the article, 1952, a new explanation of Weir has been adopted from Lewis Leary, *Explicator* 6:4 (Feb. 1948).—T.O.M.]

## 2. ROY P. BASLER (1906- )

The central problem—object-love versus subject-love—which underlies the story "Ligeia" [see p. 277] provides the key to another form of the same fable in "Ulalume." The general symbolism of conflict has been recognized by many readers and has been described by Edwin Markham as a struggle between "an ignoble passion and the memory of an ideal love," in which comment one may take exception chiefly to the word "ignoble." A more explicit psychological description would be that the poem narrates the struggle between a feared new passion for a flesh-and-blood woman and an old worship of an ideal image that is perfectly safe because separated long since from its objective reality. In the final stanza of the poem Poe comes as near as he could within the framework of an essentially Platonic idealism to unravelling the psychological mystery which many an idealist, from Buddha and Plato to Emerson and Whitman, has pondered and answered in his own way: namely, that the dream world of the psyche (the unconscious) holds the secret that love's object, however "real," is but the symbol of the soul.

Ulalume in death is the compensating symbol of the lover's psyche, and the lover's obsession is that he cannot love except in terms of this absolute ideal. Hence, the tomb is the inevitable destination of the lover's quest, to which his psyche leads him in order to prevent a spiritual disillusionment far more unbearable than his frustration. For, if the lover finds a second object of desire satisfying, not only is the absoluteness of the one symbol (Ulalume) challenged, but also the absolute power of the psyche itself. The ghouls (*i.e.*, desires, but please note that they are "the pitiful, the merciful"), unable to resurrect Ulalume, have drawn up a supposedly false image of love "from the Hell of the planetary souls" in a futile effort to forestall the lover's discovery that love again leads inevitably to death and the tomb. This new love, however, frightens the lover's psyche because Ulalume has once been accepted as the only, absolute symbol of love, and because, perhaps, in death Ulalume satisfies the psyche as an absolute symbol even better than she had in life.

The poem thus symbolizes the human personality's quest for fulfillment in love. Frustrated by the death of the loved one, the lover seeks again, but finds his way leading down the same familiar "alley" toward the inevitable frustration at the tomb. So, sooner or later, love must come to death, and since the power of the psyche lies in self-

illusionment to avoid the fatal discovery of its own secret—the nothingness of its dream—the psyche warns against the new love and in desperation brings the lover to the tomb which represents the only full and final consummation of the spirit's flame.

It should be noted that in the last stanza both phases of the lover (the *I* and the *psyche*) speak in unison for the first time to ask the kindly question: Did the "merciful ghouls" try to cheat us of the sad self-knowledge that our love can find its perfect answer only in death? To this question the poem has already given an unequivocal affirmative answer.

The symbolism may be traced by stanzas in the following steps: (1) the realm of the unconscious, blighted by frustration and haunted by old desires that cling to buried love; (2) repressed, volcanic emotion, with familiar contrast of fire and ice; (3) rationalization preparatory to a new quest, complicated by a deep awareness that this region (experience) has been traversed before to a futile end; (4) recognition of a new love, warm and romantic; (5) conflict between the new and the old, with the new gaining in power in spite of unfavorable "signs"; (6) fear of a second frustration and disappointment; (7) rationalization of the fear; (8) consummation, symbolic, in which the tomb represents the final goal of love, death; (9) discovery of the meaning of this symbolic consummation, that self can find fulfillment only in death; (10) resignation, with "I" and "psyche" in full accord that the meaning of their quest lies beyond the door of the tomb in death, but asking then the meaning of love in life—is it to keep us from the dread discovery that absolute fulfillment means annihilation?

That Poe recognized a temporary alternative solution to the earthly quest of the lover is indicated in the symbolic phantasy "Eleanora," but in that story of guilty capitulation to unreal "reality," the psyche's quest is abandoned and the lover's sanity and strength of passion are represented in the concluding paragraphs as merely the obverse side of his psychic treason and weakness. Poe's most profound insight, like that of Freud in later years, came when he looked into the depths of soul sickness and symbolized in archetypal image the struggle of life and death in man's soul.

## DOVER BEACH REVISITED

THEODORE MORRISON (1901- )

### 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-blanch'd 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 Ægean, 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.

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The Sea of Faith  
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.  
 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.

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—MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Early in the year 1939 a certain Professor of Educational Psychology, occupying a well-paid chair at a large endowed university, conceived a plot. From his desk in the imposing Hall of the Social Sciences where the Research Institute in Education was housed he had long burned with resentment against teachers of literature, especially against English departments. It seemed to him that the professors of English stood square across the path of his major professional ambition. His great desire in life was to introduce into the study, the teaching, the critical evaluation of literature some of the systematic method, some of the "objective procedure" as he liked to call it, some of the certainty of result which he believed to be characteristic of the physical sciences. "You make such a fetish of science," a colleague once said to him, "why aren't you a chemist?"—a question that annoyed him deeply.

If such a poem as Milton's "Lycidas" has a value—and most English teachers, even to-day, would start with that as a cardinal fact—then that value must be measurable and expressible in terms that do not shift and change from moment to moment and person to person with every subjective whim. They would agree, these teachers of literature, these professors of English, that the value of the poem is in some sense objective; they would never agree to undertake any objective procedure to determine what that value is. They would not clearly define what they meant by achievement in the study of literature, and they bridled and snorted when anyone else attempted to define it. He remembered what had happened when he had once been incautious enough to suggest to a professor of English in his own college that it might be possible

to establish norms for the appreciation of Milton. The fellow had simply exploded into a peal of histrionic laughter and then had tried to wither him with an equally histrionic look of incredulity and disgust.

He would like to see what would happen if the teachers of English were forced or lured, by some scheme or other, into a public exposure of their position. It would put them in the light of intellectual charlatanism, nothing less . . . and suddenly Professor Chartly (for so he was nicknamed) began to see his way.

It was a simple plan that popped into his head, simple yet bold and practical. It was a challenge that could not be refused. A strategically placed friend in one of the large educational foundations could be counted on: there would be money for clerical expenses, for travel if need be. He took his pipe from his pocket, filled it, and began to puff exultantly. To-morrow he must broach the scheme to one or two colleagues; to-night, over cheese and beer, would not be too soon. He reached for the telephone.

The plan that he unfolded to his associates that evening aroused considerable skepticism at first, but gradually they succumbed to his enthusiasm. A number of well-known professors of literature at representative colleges up and down the land would be asked to write a critical evaluation of a poem prominent enough to form part of the standard reading in all large English courses. They would be asked to state the criteria on which they based their judgment. When all the answers had been received the whole dossier would be sent to a moderator, a trusted elder statesman of education, known everywhere for his dignity, liberality of intelligence, and long experience. He would be asked to make a preliminary examination of all the documents and to determine from the point of view of a teacher of literature whether they provided any basis for a common understanding. The moderator would then forward all the documents to Professor Chartly, who would make what in his own mind he was frank to call a more scientific analysis. Then the jaws of the trap would be ready to spring.

Once the conspirators had agreed on their plot their first difficulty came in the choice of a poem. Suffice it to say that someone eventually hit on Arnold's "Dover Beach," and the suggestion withstood all attack. "Dover Beach" was universally known, almost universally praised; it was remote enough so that contemporary jealousies and cults were not seriously involved, yet near enough not to call for any special expertness, historical or linguistic, as a prerequisite for judgment; it was generally given credit for skill as a work of art, yet it contained also, in its author's own phrase, a "criticism of life."

Rapidly in the days following the first meeting the representative teachers were chosen and invited to participate in the plan. Professional courtesy seemed to require the inclusion of an Arnold expert. But the one selected excused himself from producing a value judgment of "Dover Beach" on the ground that he was busy investigating a fresh clue to the identity of "Marguerite." He had evidence that the woman in question, after the episode hinted at in the famous poems, had married her deceased sister's husband, thus perhaps affecting Arnold's views on a social question about which he had said a good deal in his prose writings. The expert pointed out that he had been given a half-year's leave of absence and a research grant to pursue the shadow of Marguerite through Europe, wherever it might lead him. If only war did not break out he hoped to complete this research and solve one of the vexing problems that had always confronted Arnold's biographers. His energies would be too much engaged in this special investigation to deal justly with the more general questions raised by Professor Chartly's invitation. But he asked to be kept informed, since the results of the experiment could not fail to be of interest to him.

After a few hitches and delays from other quarters, the scheme was ripe. The requests were mailed out, and the Professor of Educational Psychology sat back in grim confidence to await the outcome.

It chanced that the first of the representative teachers who received and answered Professor Chartly's letter was thought of on his own campus as giving off a distinct though not unpleasant odor of the ivory tower. He would have resented the imputation himself. At forty-five Bradley Dewing was handsome in a somewhat speciously virile style, graying at the temples, but still well-knit and active. He prided himself on being able to beat most of his students at tennis; once a year he would play the third or fourth man on the varsity and go down to creditable defeat with some elegiac phrases on the ravages of time. He thought of himself as a man of the world; it was well for his contentment, which was seldom visibly ruffled, that he never heard the class mimic reproducing at a fraternity house or beer parlor his manner of saying: "After all, gentlemen, it is pure poetry that lasts. We must never forget the staying power of pure art." The class mimic never represents the whole of class opinion but he can usually make everyone within earshot laugh.

Professor Dewing could remember clearly what his own teachers had said about "Dover Beach" in the days when he was a freshman in college himself, phrases rounded with distant professorial unction: faith and doubt in the Victorian era; disturbing influence of Darwin on religious belief; Browning the optimist; Tennyson coming up with firm faith after a long struggle in the waters of doubt; Matthew Arnold, prophet of skepticism. How would "Dover Beach" stack up now as a poem? Pull Arnold down from the shelf and find out.

Ah, yes, how the familiar phrases came back. The sea is calm, the tide is full, the cliffs of England stand. . . . And then the lines he particularly liked:

Come to the window, sweet is the night air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd 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 . . .

Good poetry, that! No one could mistake it. Onomatopoeia was a relatively cheap effect most of the time. Poe, for instance: "And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain." Anyone could put a string of s's together and make them rustle. But these lines in "Dover Beach" were different. The onomatopoeia was involved in the whole scene, and it in turn involved the whole rhythmical movement of the verse, not the mere noise made by the consonants or vowels as such. The pauses—only, listen, draw back, fling, begin, cease—how they infused a subdued melancholy into the moonlit panorama at the same time that they gave it the utmost physical reality by suggesting the endless iteration of the waves! And then the phrase "With tremulous cadence slow" coming as yet one more touch, one "fine excess," when it seemed that every phrase and pause the scene could bear had already been lavished on it: that was Miltonic, Virgilian.

But the rest of the poem?

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd . . .

Of course Arnold had evoked the whole scene only to bring before us this metaphor of faith in its ebb-tide. But that did not save the figure from triteness and from an even more fatal vagueness. Everything in second-rate poetry is compared to the sea: love is as deep, grief as salty, passion as turbulent. The sea may look like a bright girdle sometimes, though Professor Dewing did not think it particularly impressive to say so. And in what sense is *faith* a bright girdle? Is it the function of faith to embrace, to bind, to hold up a petticoat, or what? And what is the faith that Arnold has in mind? The poet evokes no precise concept of it. He throws us the simple, undifferentiated word, unites its loose emotional connotations with those of the sea, and leaves the whole matter there. And the concluding figure of "Dover Beach":

we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Splendid in itself, this memorable image. But the sea had been forgotten now; the darkling plain had displaced the figure from which the whole poem tacitly promised to evolve. It would not have been so if John Donne had been the craftsman. A single bold yet accurate analogy, with constantly developing implications, would have served him for the whole poem.

Thus mused Professor Dewing, the lines of his verdict taking shape in his head. A critic of poetry of course was not at liberty to pass judgment on a poet's thought; he could only judge whether, in treating of the thought or sensibility he had received from his age, the poet had produced a satisfactory work of art. Arnold, Professor Dewing felt, had not been able to escape from the didactic tone or from a certain commonness and vagueness of expression. With deep personal misgivings about his position in a world both socially and spiritually barbarous, he had sought an image for his emotion, and had found it in the sea—a natural phenomenon still obscured by the drappings of conventional beauty and used by all manner of poets to express all manner of feelings. "Dover Beach" would always remain notable, Professor Dewing decided, as an expression of Victorian sensibility. It contained lines of ever memorable poetic skill. But it could not, he felt, be accepted as a uniformly satisfactory example of poetic art.

It was occasionally a source of wonder to those about him just why Professor Oliver Twitchell spent so much time and eloquence urging that man's lower nature must be repressed, his animal instincts kept in bounds by the exertion of the higher will. To the casual observer, Professor Twitchell himself did not seem to possess much animal nature. It seemed incredible that a desperate struggle with powerful bestial passions might be going on at any moment within his own slight frame, behind his delicate white face in which the most prominent feature was the octagonal glasses that focused his eyes on the outside world. Professor Twitchell was a good deal given to discipleship but not much to friendship. He had himself been a disciple of the great Irving Babbitt, and he attracted a small number of disciples among his own more earnest students. But no one knew him well. Only one of his colleagues, who took a somewhat sardonic interest in the mysteries of human nature, possessed a possible clue to the

origin of his efforts to repress man's lower nature and vindicate his higher. This colleague had wormed his way sufficiently into Oliver Twitchell's confidence to learn about his family, which he did not often mention. Professor Twitchell, it turned out, had come of decidedly unacademic stock. One of his brothers was the chief salesman for a company that made domestic fire-alarm appliances. At a moment's notice he would whip out a sample from his bag or pocket, plug it into the nearest electric outlet, and while the bystanders waited in terrified suspense, would explain that in the dead of night, if the house caught fire, the thing would go off with a whoop loud enough to warn the soundest sleeper. Lined up with his whole string of brothers and sisters, all older than he, all abounding in spirits, Professor Twitchell looked like the runt of the litter. His colleague decided that he must have had a very hard childhood, and that it was not his own animal nature that he needed so constantly to repress, but his family's.

Whatever the reasons, Professor Twitchell felt no reality in the teaching of literature except as he could extract from it definitions and illustrations of man's moral struggle in the world. For him recent history had been a history of intellectual confusion and degradation, and hence of social confusion and degradation. Western thought had fallen into a heresy. It had failed to maintain the fundamental grounds of a true humanism. It had blurred the distinction between man, God, and nature. Under the influence of the sciences, it had set up a monism in which the moral as well as the physical constitution of man was included within nature and the laws of nature. It had, therefore, exalted man as naturally good, and exalted the free expression of all his impulses. What were the results of this heresy? An age, complained Professor Twitchell bitterly, in which young women talked about sexual perversions at the dinner table; an age in which everyone agreed that society was in dissolution and insisted on the privilege of being dissolute; an age without any common standards of value in morals or art; an age, in short, without discipline, without self-restraint in private life or public.

Oliver Twitchell when he received Professor Chartly's envelope sat down with a strong favorable predisposition toward his task. He accepted wholeheartedly Arnold's attitude toward literature: the demand that poetry should be serious, that it should present us with a criticism of life, that it should be measured by standards not merely personal, but in some sense *real*.

"Dover Beach" had become Arnold's best-known poem, admired as his masterpiece. It would surely contain, therefore, a distillation of his attitude. Professor Twitchell pulled down his copy of Arnold and began to read and as he read he felt himself overtaken by surprised misgiving. The poem began well enough. The allusion to Sophocles, who had heard the sound of the retreating tide by the Ægean centuries ago, admirably prepared the groundwork of high seriousness for a poem which would culminate in a real criticism of human experience. But did the poem so culminate? It was true that the world

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain

if one meant the world as the worldling knows it, the man who conducts his life by unreflective natural impulse. Such a man will soon enough encounter the disappointments of ambition, the instability of all bonds and ties founded on nothing firmer than passion or self-interest. But this incertitude of the world, to a true disciple of culture,

should become a means of self-discipline. It should lead him to ask how life may be purified and ennobled, how we may by wisdom and self-restraint oppose to the accidents of the world a true human culture based on the exertion of a higher will. No call to such a positive moral will, Professor Twitchell reluctantly discovered, can be heard in "Dover Beach." Man is an ignorant soldier struggling confusedly in a blind battle. Was this the culminating truth that Arnold the poet had given men in his masterpiece? Professor Twitchell sadly revised his value-judgment of the poem. He could not feel that in his most widely admired performance Arnold had seen life steadily or seen it whole; rather he had seen it only on its worldly side, and seen it under an aspect of terror. "Dover Beach" would always be justly respected for its poetic art, but the famous lines on Sophocles better exemplified the poet as a critic of life.

As a novelist still referred to in his late thirties as "young" and "promising," Rudolph Mole found himself in a curious relation toward his academic colleagues. He wrote for the public, not for the learned journals; hence he was spared the necessity of becoming a pedant. At the same time the more lucrative fruits of pedantry were denied to him by his quiet exclusion from the guild. Younger men sweating for promotion, living in shabby genteel poverty on yearly appointments, their childless wives mimicking their academic shop-talk in bluestocking phrases, would look up from the stacks of five-by-three cards on which they were constantly accumulating notes and references, and would say to him, "You don't realize how lucky you are, teaching composition. You aren't expected to know anything." Sometimes an older colleague, who had passed through several stages of the mysteries of preferment, would belittle professional scholarship to him with an elaborate show of graciousness and envy, "We are all just pedants," he would say. "You teach the students what they really want and need." Rudolph noticed that the self-confessed pedant went busily on publishing monographs and being promoted, while he himself remained, year by year, the English Department's most eminent poor relation.

He was not embittered. His dealings with students were pleasant and interesting. There was a sense of reality and purpose in trying to elicit from them a better expression of their thoughts, trying to increase their understanding of the literary crafts. He could attack their minds on any front he chose, and he could follow his intellectual hobbies as freely as he liked, without being confined to the artificial boundaries of a professional field of learning.

Freud, for example. When Professor Chartly and his accomplices decided that a teacher of creative writing should be included in their scheme and chose Rudolph Mole for the post, they happened to catch him at the height of his enthusiasm for Freud. Not that he expected to psychoanalyze authors through their works; that, he avowed, was not his purpose. You can't deduce the specific secrets of a man's life, he would cheerfully admit, by trying to fit his works into the text-book patterns of complexes and psychoses. The critic, in any case, is interested only in the man to the extent that he is involved in his work. But everyone agrees, Rudolph maintained, that the man is involved in his work. Some part of the psychic constitution of the author finds expression in every line that he writes. We can't understand the work unless we can understand the psychic traits that have gained expression in it. We may never be able to trace back these traits to their ultimate sources and causes, probably buried deep in the author's childhood. But we need to gain as much light on them as we can, since they appear in the work we are trying to apprehend, and determine its character. This



is what criticism has always sought to do. Freud simply brings new light to the old task.

Rudolph was fortunate enough at the outset to pick up at the college bookstore a copy of Mr. Lionel Trilling's recent study of Matthew Arnold. In this volume he found much of his work already done for him. A footnote to Mr. Trilling's text, citing evidence from Professors Tinker and Lowry, made it clear that "Dover Beach" may well have been written in 1850, some seventeen years before it was first published. This, for Rudolph's purposes, was a priceless discovery. It meant that all the traditional talk about the poem was largely null and void. The poem was not a repercussion of the bombshell that Darwin dropped on the religious sensibilities of the Victorians. It was far more deeply personal and individual than that. Perhaps when Arnold published it his own sense of what it expressed or how it would be understood had changed. But clearly the poem came into being as an expression of what Arnold felt to be the particular kind of affection and passion he needed from a woman. It was a love poem, and took its place with utmost naturalness, once the clue had been given, in the group of similar and related poems addressed to "Marguerite." \* Mr. Trilling summed up in a fine sentence one strain in these poems, and the principal strain in "Dover Beach," when he wrote that for Arnold "fidelity is a word relevant only to those lovers who see the world as a place of sorrow and in their common suffering require the comfort of constancy."

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world . . .  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light . . .

The point was unmistakable. And from the whole group of poems to which "Dover Beach" belonged, a sketch of Arnold as an erotic personality could be derived. The question whether a "real Marguerite" existed was an idle one, for the traits that found expression in the poems were at least "real" enough to produce the poems and to determine their character.

And what an odd spectacle it made, the self-expressed character of Arnold as a lover! The ordinary degree of aggressiveness, the normal joy of conquest and possession, seemed to be wholly absent from him. The love he asked for was essentially a protective love, sisterly or motherly; in its unavoidable ingredient of passion he felt a constant danger, which repelled and unsettled him. He addressed Marguerite as "My sister!" He avowed and deplored his own womanish fits of instability:

I too have wish'd, no woman more,  
This starting, feverish heart, away.

He emphasized his nervous anguish and contrary impulses. He was a "teas'd o'erlabour'd heart," "an aimless unallay'd Desire." He could not break through his fundamental isolation and submerge himself in another human soul, and he believed that all men shared this plight:

Yes: in the sea of life enis'l'd,  
With echoing straits between us thrown,  
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,  
We mortal millions live *alone*.

\* Two of these poems may be found on pp. 735-736 of this book. [Editors' note]

He never "without remorse" allowed himself

To haunt the place where passions reign,

yet it was clear that whether he had ever succeeded in giving himself up wholeheartedly to a passion, he had wanted to. There could hardly be a more telltale phrase than "Once-long'd-for storms of love."

In short much more illumination fell on "Dover Beach" from certain other verses of Arnold's than from Darwin and all his commentators:

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts  
Wounded by men, by Fortune tried,  
Outwearied with their lonely parts,  
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear;  
Their lot was but to weep and moan.  
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,  
For neither could subsist alone!

Here was the nub. "Dover Beach" grew directly from and repeated the same emotion, but no doubt generalized and enlarged this emotion, sweeping into one intense and far-reaching conviction of insecurity not only Arnold's personal fortunes in love, but the social and religious faith of the world he lived in. That much could be said for the traditional interpretation.

Of course, as Mr. Trilling did not fail to mention, anguished love affairs, harassed by mysterious inner incompatibilities, formed a well-established literary convention. But the fundamental sense of insecurity in "Dover Beach" was too genuine, too often repeated in other works, to be written off altogether to that account. The same sense of insecurity, the same need for some rock of protection, cried out again and again, not merely in Arnold's love poems but in his elegies, reflective pieces, and fragments of epic as well. Whenever Arnold produced a genuine and striking burst of poetry, with the stamp of true self-expression on it, he seemed always to be in the dumps. Everywhere dejection, confusion, weakness, contention of soul. No adequate cause could be found in the events of Arnold's life for such an acute sense of incertitude; it must have been of psychic origin. Only in one line of effort this fundamental insecurity did not hamper, sadden, or depress him, and that was in the free play of his intelligence as a critic of letters and society. Even there, if it did not hamper his efforts, it directed them. Arnold valiantly tried to erect a barrier of culture against the chaos and squalor of society, against the contentiousness of men. What was this barrier but an elaborate protective device?

The origin of the psychic pattern that expressed itself in Arnold's poems could probably never be discovered. No doubt the influence that Arnold's father exercised over his emotions and his thinking, even though Arnold rebelled to the extent at least of casting off his father's religious beliefs, was of great importance. But much more would have to be known to give a definite clue—more than ever could be known. Arnold was secure from any attempt to spy out the heart of his mystery. But if criticism could not discover the cause, it could assess the result, and could do so (thought Rudolph Mole) with greater understanding by an attempt, with up-to-date psychological aid, to delve a little deeper into the essential traits that manifested themselves in that result.

In 1917 Reuben Hale, a young instructor in a Western college, had lost his job and done time in the penitentiary for speaking against conscription and for organizing pacifist demonstrations. In the twenties he had lost two more academic posts for his sympathies with Soviet Russia and his inability to forget his Marxist principles while teaching literature. His contentious, eager, lovable, exasperating temperament tried the patience of one college administration after another. As he advanced into middle age, and his growing family suffered repeated upheavals, his friends began to fear that his robust quarrels with established order would leave him a penniless outcast at fifty. Then he was invited to take a flattering post at a girls' college known for its liberality of views. The connection proved surprisingly durable; in fact it became Professor Hale's turn to be apprehensive. He began to be morally alarmed at his own security, to fear that the bourgeois system which he had attacked so valiantly had somehow outwitted him and betrayed him into allegiance. When the C.I.O. made its initial drive and seemed to be carrying everything before it, he did his best to unseat himself again by rushing joyfully to the nearest picket lines and getting himself photographed by an alert press. Even this expedient failed, and he reconciled himself, not without wonder, to apparent academic permanence.

On winter afternoons his voice could be heard booming out through the closed door of his study to girls who came to consult him on all manner of subjects, from the merits of Plekhanov as a Marxist critic to their own most personal dilemmas. They called him Ben; he called them Smith, Jones, and Robinson. He never relaxed his cheerful bombardment of the milieu into which they were born, and of the larger social structure which made bourgeois wealth, bourgeois art, morals, and religion possible. But when a sophomore found herself pregnant it was to Professor Hale that she came for advice. Should she have an abortion or go through with it and heroically bear the social stigma? And it was Professor Hale who kept the affair from the Dean's office and the newspapers, sought out the boy, persuaded the young couple that they were desperately in love with each other, and that pending the revolution a respectable marriage would be the most prudent course, not to say the happiest.

James Joyce remarks of one of his characters that she dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat. Professor Hale's critical methods were comparably simple and direct. Literature, like the other arts, is in form and substance a product of society, and reflects the structure of society. The structure of society is a class structure: it is conditioned by the mode of production of goods, and by the legal conventions of ownership and control by which the ruling class keeps itself in power and endows itself with the necessary freedom to exploit men and materials for profit. A healthy literature, in a society so constituted, can exist only if writers perceive the essential economic problem and ally themselves firmly with the working class.

Anyone could see the trouble with Arnold. His intelligence revealed to him the chaos that disrupted the society about him; the selfishness and brutality of the ruling class; the ugliness of the world which the industrial revolution had created, and which imperialism and "liberalism" were extending. Arnold was at his best in his critical satire of this world and of the ignorance of those who governed it. But his intelligence far outran his will, and his defect of will finally blinded his intelligence. He was too much a child of his class to disown it and fight his way to a workable remedy for social injustice. He caught a true vision of himself and of his times as standing between "two worlds, one dead, one powerless to be born." But he had not courage or stomach enough to lend his own powers to the birth struggle. Had he thrown in his sympathies unreservedly with the working class, and labored for the inescapable revolution, "Dover

Beach" would not have ended in pessimism and confusion. It would have ended in a cheerful, strenuous, and hopeful call to action. But Arnold could not divorce himself from the world of polite letters, of education, of culture, into which he had been born. He did his best to purify them, to make them into an instrument for the reform of society. But instinctively he knew that "culture" as he understood the term was not a social force in the world around him. Instinctively he knew that what he loved was doomed to defeat. And so "Dover Beach" ended in a futile plea for protection against the hideousness of the darkling plain and the confused alarms of struggle and flight.

Professor Chartly's envelope brought Reuben Hale his best opportunity since the first C.I.O. picket lines to vindicate his critical and social principles. He plunged into his answer with complete zest.

When Peter Lee Prampton agreed to act as moderator in Professor Chartly's experiment he congratulated himself that this would be his last great academic chore. He had enjoyed his career of scholarship and teaching, no man ever more keenly. But now it was drawing to an end. He was loaded with honors from two continents. The universities of Germany, France, and Britain had first laid their formative hands on his learning and cultivation, then given their most coveted recognition to its fruits. But the honor and the glory seemed a little vague on the June morning when the expressman brought into his library the sizable package of papers which Professor Chartly had boxed and shipped to him. He had kept all his life a certain simplicity of heart. At seventy-four he could still tote a pack with an easy endurance that humiliated men of forty. Now he found himself giving in more and more completely to a lust for trout. Half a century of hastily snatched vacations in Cape Breton or the Scottish Highlands had never allowed him really to fill up that hollow craving to find a wild stream and fish it which would sometimes rise in his throat even in the midst of a lecture.

Well, there would be time left before he died. And meanwhile here was this business of "Dover Beach." Matthew Arnold during one of his American lecture tours had been entertained by neighbors of the Pramptons. Peter Lee Prampton's father had dined with the great man, and had repeated his conversation and imitated his accent at the family table. Peter himself, as a boy of nineteen or so, had gone to hear Arnold lecture. That, he thought with a smile, was probably a good deal more than could be said for any of these poor hacks who had taken Professor Chartly's bait.

At the thought of Arnold he could still hear the carriage wheels grate on the pebbly road as he had driven, fifty odd years ago, to the lecture in town, the prospective Mrs. Prampton beside him. His fishing rod lay under the seat. He chuckled out loud as he remembered how a pound-and-a-half trout had jumped in the pool under the clattering planks of a bridge, and how he had pulled up the horse, jumped out, and tried a cast while Miss Osgood sat scolding in the carriage and shivering in the autumn air. They had been just a little late reaching the lecture, but the trout, wrapped in damp leaves, lay safely beside the rod.

It was queer that "Dover Beach" had not come more recently into his mind. Now that he turned his thoughts in that direction the poem was there in its entirety, waiting to be put on again like a coat that one has worn many times with pleasure and accidentally neglected for a while.

The Sea of Faith was once, too, at the full.

How those old Victorian battles had raged about the Prampton table when he was a boy! How the names of Arnold, Huxley, Darwin, Carlyle, Morris, Ruskin had been

pelted back and forth by the excited disputants! *Literature and Dogma, God and the Bible, Culture and Anarchy*. The familiar titles brought an odd image into his mind: the tall figure of his father stretching up to turn on the gas lamps in the evening as the family sat down to dinner; the terrific pop of the pilot light as it exploded into a net of white flame, shaped like a little beehive; the buzz and whine of a jet turned up too high.

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 . . .

Peter Lee Prampton shivered in the warmth of his sunny library, shivered with that flash of perception into the past which sometimes enables a man to see how all that has happened in his life, for good or ill, turned on the narrowest edge of chance. He lived again in the world of dreams that his own youth had spread before him, a world truly various, beautiful, and new; full of promise, adventure, and liberty of choice, based on the opportunities which his father's wealth provided, and holding out the prospect of a smooth advance into a distinguished career. Then, within six months, a lavish demonstration that the world has neither certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain: his mother's death by cancer, his father's financial overthrow and suicide, the ruin of his own smooth hopes and the prospect instead of a long, hampered, and obscure fight toward his perhaps impossible ambition. He lived again through the night hours when he had tramped out with himself the youthful question whether he could hold Miss Osgood to her promise in the face of such reversals. And he did not forget how she took his long-sleepless face between her hands, kissed him, and smiled away his anxiety with unsteady lips. Surely everyone discovers at some time or other that the world is not a place of certitude; surely everyone cries out to some other human being for the fidelity which alone can make it so. What more could be asked of a poet than to take so profound and universal an experience and turn it into lines that could still speak long after he and his age were dead?

The best of it was that no one could miss the human feeling, the cry from the heart, in "Dover Beach"; it spoke so clearly and eloquently, in a language everyone could understand, in a form classically pure and simple. Or did it? Who could tell what any job-lot of academicians might be trusted to see or fail to see? And this assortment in Chartly's package might be a queer kettle of fish! Peter Lee Prampton had lived through the *Yellow Book* days of Art for Art's sake; he had read the muckrakers, and watched the rise of the Marxists and the Freudians. Could "Dover Beach" be condemned as unsympathetic with labor? Could a neurosis or a complex be discovered in it? His heart sank at the sharp sudden conviction that indeed these and worse discoveries about the poem might be seriously advanced. Well, he had always tried to go on the principle that every school of criticism should be free to exercise any sincere claim on men's interest and attention which it could win for itself. When he actually applied himself to the contents of Professor Chartly's bale he would be as charitable as he could, as receptive to light from any quarter as he could bring himself to be.

But the task could wait. He felt the need of a period of adjustment before he could approach it with reasonable equanimity. And in the meanwhile he could indulge himself in some long-needed editorial work on his dry-fly book.

## ON WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY'S "INVICTUS"

HERBERT MARSHALL McLuhan (1911- )

## INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,  
 Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
 I thank whatever gods may be  
 For my unconquerable soul.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
 Looms but the horror of the shade, 10  
 And yet the menace of the years  
 Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
 Under the bludgeonings of chance  
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
 How charged with punishments the  
 scroll,  
 I am the master of my fate:  
 I am the captain of my soul.  
 —WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY (1849-1903)

Henley is a by-product of that notorious coarsening of sensibility which develops in England with the patriotic verse of Tennyson. He is the link between the noisy inanity of "Bury the great duke" and the pathic patriotics of Kipling and Newbolt. Like Tennyson and Kipling, his interests were split between rebellious estheticism, which links them with the diabolics of Byron and Swinburne (Henley wrote *Hawthorn and Lavender*), and a pose of aggressive nationalism laughable in its crudity and basic insincerity.

"Invictus" unites both the pose of the "diabolical" esthete and the pose of the rugged Englishman. Of course, its rhetorical credo goes beyond the stoical *Courage* of Sir James Barrie (who was Henley's disciple) in its angry and inverted theology. Barrie substituted whimsy for theology.

Henley provides himself with a Satanic backdrop as he comes forward to announce his own virtues. (The image is vaguely nautical, evoking the common notion of man's wayfaring. But the main suggestion of *Pit* is that of hell-trap. This is reinforced by *Clutch*.) He is appealing oratorically for the sympathetic admiration of an audience which he well understands. Almost every line contains a hard-bitten cliché which propels the "thought" along to the shrill double emphasis on "I" in the last two lines.

Verse of this sort has no internal organization. It doesn't hang together by a poetic action, which always manifests itself in the interaction of the language and metaphors, but simply by an *external* appeal to audience assumptions. (Contrast it in this respect with a genuinely successful poem such as Hardy's "Neutral Tones" [see p. 709] or consider how the superficially rhetorical credo of Tennyson's "Ulysses" [see p. 724] succeeds as poetry by reason of the original pressures in the rhythms of its language and the adequacy of the dramatic situation from which it grows.) The lines

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
 Looms but the horror of the shade,

are the least foolish of the whole series of hyperboles. There is a crude sort of surprise intended in calling this life hell and the next a relief. The only example of restraint or tension in the entire poem is in the *but* of that second line.

For their full effect one has to imagine these verses being recited by an actor employing extreme gestures and the utmost emphasis of delivery. The setting for the drama is Hell and Judgment, the posture is defiance, the imagery banal, the effect that of a terrified man screwing his courage to the sticking point.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF FROST'S "STOPPING BY WOODS . . ."

EARL DANIELS (1893- )

. . . If you are one of those taught to approach the presence of the poem in quest of vital lesson, of profound comment on man and the universe, the answer is, *Don't*. Here should be no halfway measures, no reducing the urge to philosophy by half, no gradual tapering-off. You may, after all, rest comfortable in the assurance that if philosophy and morals are present in any vital way, they will make themselves felt without your conscious searching for them, insistent on their share in your awareness of the complete poem.

The way of a group of college freshmen with a poem of Robert Frost illustrates how deadly this concern about morals may be. Here is the poem.

### *STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING*

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.  
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.

—ROBERT FROST (1874- )

Here are some interpretations by freshmen who were supposed to be better-than-average students.

a) In this poem the underlying thought seems to be that of suicide. . . . The last four lines of the poem indicate that the person decides he has more work to do on earth before he dies in order to fulfill a promise of some kind.

b) A man who has promised to leave town after committing some crime, and has been told "to get going and don't stop." The line, "The darkest evening of the year," might mean the disgrace he has brought on himself; and, "I have promises to keep," may mean he has promised to get out of the country.

c) If he didn't mention that the owner of the woods lived in the village, I would say he was talking about the life he has yet to live before he meets his Maker.

d) It deals with the thought of eternal rest. . . . But then the subject is brought back to reality with the thought of the things he has yet to do, and the rest of his life he has yet to spend.

e) It may represent one who is tired of life's hardships, and is tempted to drop by the wayside in some secluded retreat, but who must press on since he has many years of work ahead and many obligations to fulfill before such rest may be his.

f) Almost every day we find ourselves faced with the lures of temptation. We realize that we ought to keep on our way, yet the temptation to stay where all is peaceful and quiet is often too great for us to resist. While we are here in college we are often tempted to do the easiest thing. That is, to neglect our studies and to run around and have a good time. However we know that there are promises to be kept and obligations to be filled. We have been sent here by our parents for the purpose of receiving an education, and there is no doubt that our duty is to do all in our power to take advantage of this opportunity.

g) I am a college man. I am taking a pre-med course. I am away from home. I am open to temptations that college may offer me. Am I to take advantage of their owner's absence to sit and gaze in his woods—to take advantage of being away from my parents to stop by the wayside and admire the beautiful sirens? Or, am I to be a second Ulysses and have sufficient will power to overcome these temptations? Am I to stop where there is "easy wind and downy flake"—to sit back in my chair, just to dream and forget all hardships? Or am I to heed the impatience of the horse and the warning of the harness bell—to awaken to my will calling for me to go on? True, it is dark now, and I cannot see well, but do I not remember the vows that I have made—to go through at all costs? Yes, I must go through those long miles of roads rougher than I can imagine, before I call for time out.

Comments *f* and *g* are especially nauseous misunderstandings, and they represent the cardinal sin of personal application. To make a poem mean privately, to ourselves alone, to look first for directions about *our* life and *our* problems—no going wrong can be more abysmally bad. Like the old hocus-pocus magic-formula way in which the Bible used to be consulted, you put your question, open the book at random, drop an equally random finger on the page, and there you are—provided you are ingenious enough in twisting words to meet special situations and personal needs. The method is equally unintelligent with the Bible and with poetry, and to resort to it is to proclaim oneself part of an intellectual underworld of superstition and ignorance. The poet's message, so far as he has a message for the individual, is a message to the individual not in his private and peculiar selfhood, but in his representative capacity as a normal human being, as a man; it is part of the universality of the poet's speaking.

If facile talk about appreciation, concern with peripheral things, and preoccupation with morals and the meaning of life are heresies, what is sound doctrine in the reading of poetry? What is orthodox? What is a right approach to Frost's poem, or to any poem? The simple, natural approach, the easiest way. What is obvious in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is that the poet has had a perfectly everyday experi-



ence. On a snow-filled winter's afternoon, he has come to a patch of woodland; for no reason, save that he simply and unashamedly likes to, he has stopped, just to watch the woods fill up with snow. That is the experience, the start of the poem, which, from such an unassuming start, got itself written because *the poet enjoyed the experience*, remembered it, and something made him want to try to put it in words, *just for fun: the poem is a record of experience to be shared with a reader*, who must take it at this simple face value if he is to read the poem as it should be read. Most poems probably begin much like this. And if someone says, "It may never have happened to Frost; he may have imagined it all," the answer is that in literature and the arts there is no essential difference between experience in actuality and experience in imagination; both are the stuff of poems, in the broadest sense of the term, *experience*. It is really very little a reader's business whether a writer is using memory or imagination, so long as the reality of the result is not affected. Frost may, indeed, have imagined it all, so far as we have a right to know, or care.

But why should a poet want to share experience, if he has nothing "important" to say, no "lesson" to teach, if he is not intent on "improving society," and "bettering the conditions of the human race"? Like so many facts, this is a mystery, hid in elemental human nature. Men do act this way: human nature prompts them to want to tell others what has happened to them. All conversation is built on that ancient formula, "Have you heard this one?" The questioner hopes "this one" has not been heard, so that he can go on and tell his story, enjoy sharing his experience.

The woman in the parable is a case in point. She had lost her money. It is not significant that she went on an orgy of spring cleaning, turning the house upside down, or that she found her money. But when she found it, and this is the important thing, her next move was to give a party, inviting friends and neighbors for miles around, just that they might rejoice with her because she had found what had been lost: in other words, that they might share her experience. So the poet, though tangibilities like money may not be involved. Something emotionally stirring has happened, and he makes a poem, which is his invitation to his friends and neighbors to rejoice with him. How ungracious of the friends and neighbors of the woman, if they had hunted for lessons in the experience, emphasized, perhaps, the moral that in the future she must be more careful about her money, suggested it was all an illustration of the guidance of a good providence, enabling her to recover her fortune—or any other testimony a dyed-in-the-wool moralist might strain to discover. They had been invited to a party; the woman didn't want lessons; she wanted them to have a good time with her. No less ungracious is the reader who would deduce moral teaching from "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," and from many other poems, when what the poet wants is that we should have a good time at his party, along with him, because he, in the first place, had a good time with his experience. Such sharing is the request every good poet makes of his readers, and it leads straight to an idea at the heart of all poetry, the irrefragable cornerstone on which poetry rests. That idea, the center of this book, is that *poetry, reduced to its simplest, is only experience*. Experience moved the poet; he enjoyed it, and wanted to put it down on paper, as experience and nothing else, partly because writing is a self-contained action which is fun for the writer, partly because he wanted the reader to enjoy the experience with him. If we are to learn to read, we must begin with elemental, irreducible facts like this.

Of course poetry can be, often is, profound and philosophical, probing below surfaces, reaching far down to the depths of the spirit, anxious about Life, and Death, what is before Life, and after Death. In his *De Rerum Natura* (Of the Nature of

Things), Lucretius wrote thousands of lines devoted to the origin of the universe, to man's nature and his place within his world. He wrote a poem, which has lived for more than nineteen hundred years, admittedly one of the great things of all literatures. Milton set himself, in *Paradise Lost*, to

assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

And whatever we may think of the success with which he resolved his problem, his poem is one of the few supremely great poems so far given to the world.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF T. S. ELIOT'S "THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK"

CLEANTH BROOKS (1906— ) and ROBERT PENN WARREN (1905— )

### THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

*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.*

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherised 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.

10

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

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.

20

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.

30

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.

40

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?

50

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?

60

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? . . .

70

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.

80

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."

90

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:

100

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 mean, at all."

110

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 . . .

120

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.

130

—T. S. ELIOT (1888— )

This poem is a dramatic monologue. As in Tennyson's "Ulysses" (p. 724) or Amy Lowell's "Patterns" (p. 727), a person utters a speech that implies his story and reveals his character. The implication of the story is fairly clear in the poems by Tennyson and Amy Lowell and the revelation is fairly simple, but in both the reader must depend to some extent upon his imagination to fill in what is unsaid. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" the reader must assume even more responsibility for filling in the unsaid. For one thing, the events are not as fully indicated in Eliot's poem as in the others, but for another and more important thing, the continuity is not as clear. In neither "Ulysses" nor "Patterns" are the transitions always strictly logical. Sometimes the speaker moves from one aspect of the subject to another by a process of association. One thing suggests another in the flow of consciousness. But the transitions in Prufrock's utterance are more violent, at first glance more unjustifiable. But can we make sense of them? Is the poem a mere jumble?

It is obviously not a mere jumble, for upon early reading a general impression of Prufrock comes through. He is a middle-aged man, somewhat over-sensitive and timid, yearning and procrastinating, fearful that life has passed him by and yet somehow resigned to the fact, very much a creature of his world of drawing rooms and yet feeling a vague dissatisfaction with that world. But only a closer inspection will give us the full significance of many details in the poem and permit us to realize the implications of the whole poem. To make this inspection, let us take up points in their order.

Who is the "you" of the poem? It is the same "you" who appears in many other poems, the generalized reader. But in this poem, the "you" is a little more—the person to whom Prufrock wishes to make his revelation, to tell his secret. In the end we shall return to this question.

The time is evening, when the "you" is invited to make the visit, and this evening world becomes more and more important as the poem proceeds. It is a world of neither night nor day. Twilight is the atmosphere of the poem. It is an evening "Like a patient etherised upon a table," and with this image the twilight world becomes also the world of twilight in another way, the realm between life and death. Here, too, enters the notion of a sick world, the atmosphere of the operating room: and we can say that, in one sense, Prufrock is performing an operation, or at least making a clinical examination. (The patient, however, is himself as well as his world.) He is seeking the answer to a question—the "overwhelming question," which the "you" must not ask about but can understand only by making his visit, by seeing Prufrock's world.

To reach Prufrock's proper world, the "you" must pass through a slum section of sinister streets. This provides the setting for Prufrock's world, a contrast that becomes more important later in the poem, but which for the moment points up the triviality of the conversation of the women upon whom we suddenly come. This is not to say that the subject of their conversation is trivial. On the contrary, the subject, Michelangelo, is in contrast with the triviality of the women, for he, a man of violent personality and an artist of epic grandeur, and furthermore an almost typical figure of the great creative period of the Renaissance, would scarcely be at home with the women of Prufrock's world.

With lines 15 to 22 we find more of the twilight atmosphere of the poem. But there is some development here, for the settling down of the smoke and fog tends to emphasize the isolation of the drawing room from the outside world. In addition, the image of the housecat falling asleep involves the relaxed, aimless quality of Prufrock's world.

In the next section (lines 23–34) two new motifs enter the poem, the motif of time and that of appearance-and-reality. For the first, there will be time for some great, as yet unnamed, decision to settle the "overwhelming question"—for the "visions and revisions." The word *vision* here is important, for it implies the possibility of some fundamental insight, a flash of truth, a glimpse of beauty. Mystics, saint, seers, poets have "visions." But this word is played off against *revision*, with its implication of the second thought, the calculated change, etc. For the second motif of this section, we see that Prufrock prepares a mask for the world. He cannot face the world directly, there is a need for disguise.

What this need is, does not yet emerge, but in the next section (lines 37–48) we see that the disguise is prompted by fear of the mocking, inimical eyes of the world that will avidly note all defects and failings. And here, too, the time motif changes its emphasis. In the section before, there was enough time to allow for postponement of vital decision, but now mixed with that idea is the idea of the closing in of time, of

age. With this sense of the closing in of time, and with the fear, does Prufrock dare disturb the universe with the significant question?

The next three sections (lines 49-69) further explain why Prufrock may not disturb the universe. First, he himself belongs to that world, and therefore it would be a presumption for him to criticize it. On what grounds could he, the perfect product of that world, enervated by its sense of fatuity, offer a judgment against it? Second, he fears the world, and again the inimical eyes appear. This fear would prevent him from changing his "days and ways."

The last of these three sections (lines 62-69) has the same outline, as it were, as the other two: I have known this world, etc., therefore, how should I presume? But the content is new, the arms and the perfume, and cannot be accounted for as merely details of the Prufrock world. After all, the poem is called a "love song," and there has been no love story thus far. Now, not a woman, but women enter significantly. Prufrock is attracted by the sight of the bare arms, by the whiff of perfume, but in the midst of the lines recording the romantic attraction, we find the more realistic observation put as a parenthesis:

But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!

Is this a mere observation, or does it indicate something about Prufrock? The fact that the observation of the "real" arms is put in contrast with the "romantic" arms, modifies the attraction: against the attraction there is a hint of revulsion, a hint of neurotic repudiation of the real, the physical. In the face of this situation, how should Prufrock "begin"?

The next five lines (70-74), which are a kind of interpolation, develops the "love" motif. Prufrock remembers having passed through the mean streets and slums, as in the opening of the poem, and having seen the lonely men there, the old derelicts and discards of society. Why is this recollection relevant here? Why does it come now into Prufrock's mind, and into the poem? Prufrock, too, is a lonely man, a derelict and a discard, and he suddenly feels an identification with those other lonely men. But at the same time his condition is in contrast to theirs. They are lonely because of poverty, bad luck, sickness, or age, while Prufrock is lonely because of some shrinking from, and repudiation of, life.

This reading is supported by the lines about the ragged claws. The claws come as a kind of embodiment of blind appetite, the opposite end of the scale from the over-refined and neurotic existence of Prufrock. But Prufrock, in his despair, would prefer that life of the claws, no matter how low and rudimentary, merely because it *is* life and is purposeful. Both the glimpse of the slum and of the primitive sea-floor are in contrast with the Prufrock world; and we may notice how, with line 70, a flat, prosaic rhythm appears, very different from the fluent, relaxed rhythm characteristic of the rest of the poem.

With line 75, we return to the drawing room and the etherized, peaceful twilight world in which Prufrock does not have the strength to force the "crisis," the overwhelming question. The motif that dominates the section is the time motif, the sense of physical decay and impending death, the sense of there being, not too much time, but not enough time. In this sense of time having run out Prufrock's agony now seems of no account; it has led to nothing. He admits that he is no prophet, no announcer of a new dispensation like John the Baptist. And in the reference to John the Baptist we catch also an allusion to the love story, for the prophet's death was demanded by

Salome because he had rejected her love: Prufrock too, has rejected love, but not because he is a prophet with a burning message and faith. He is merely a product of his world, where even Death is a kind of footman who holds the coat and snickers at the slightly ridiculous guest. Even Prufrock's death will lack dignity and meaning.

In the two sections from line 87 to line 110 Prufrock asks would it have been worth it, even if he had forced the crisis. But what would the crisis have been? It seems to involve the love story, it involves some understanding with a woman. We have an allusion to Marvell's love poem "To His Coy Mistress" (p. 721) in the line "To have squeezed the universe into a ball." Marvell's lovers would squeeze up their strength and sweetness into a supreme moment, but with Prufrock it is the universe which is to be rolled toward the "overwhelming question." In other words, with Prufrock it is not merely the personal relationship, but the meaning of the world, of life, that is involved. But the two are to be somehow related: the personal relationship cannot be significant if life is without significance.

Prufrock, if he had been able to force the crisis, would have seemed, he feels, like Lazarus come from the dead. Let us examine what is implied in the allusion. There are two characters by this name in the Bible. One is the beggar (*Luke*, 16) who lay at the rich man's gate, and the other is the brother of Mary and Martha who died and was raised by Jesus (*John*, 11). When the first Lazarus died he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, while the rich man was sent to hell. The rich man, seeing Lazarus happy, asked that Lazarus be sent to give him water. When Abraham replied that this was impossible, the rich man asked that at least Lazarus be sent to warn the rich man's five brothers that they might not come to hell for their lack of charity. Abraham replied that the brothers already had the prophets.

And he [the rich man] said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

And he [Abraham] said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

So both references involve a return from the dead, and we may say that elements of both are suggested by the allusion. To return from the dead would be for Prufrock to awaken from his meaningless existence. To tell all, as related to the raising of Lazarus by Jesus, would be to tell what it is like to be dead, to report the horror. In relation to the other Lazarus story, to tell all would mean to utter the warning to repentance. The story of the beggar Lazarus seems to have a little more weight in the allusion than the story of the other Lazarus. The warning from Prufrock, like that given to the rich men by the beggar Lazarus, would not be heeded by the lady of the drawing room; she simply would not understand what Prufrock was talking about if he should raise the "overwhelming question." (Neither of the Biblical stories gives an exact parallel to Prufrock's situation, for in the one from the *Gospel of John* the importance of the risen Lazarus to the living is not stressed, and in the one from the *Gospel of Luke*, the dead man, unlike Prufrock, is called back from bliss to the world. But the general import of the allusion is clear, and that is what matters.)

With the realization that even if he had had the strength to raise the question the lady would not have understood him, Prufrock is struck by his own inadequacy. He is not Prince Hamlet (lines 111-120). Hamlet suffered doubt and despair. Hamlet brought an "overwhelming question" to Ophelia, who could not understand what he meant. Hamlet postponed decisive action. But there the parallel ends. Hamlet strug-



gled grandly and passionately with his problem. He was not a victim of neurotic shrinking and timidity. The world he confronted was evil and violent, it was not twilight and relaxed. The play *Hamlet*, like the work of Michelangelo, belongs to a great creative period in history, and the mere reference evokes that world in contrast to Prufrock's world. Prufrock, with sad self-irony, sees all this, and knows that if he corresponds to any character in the play it is to the sententious, empty, old Polonius, the sycophantic Rosenkrantz, or the silly, foppish Osric. Perhaps—though there is no fool in *Hamlet*—to the fool, that stock character of many Elizabethan tragedies.

So with line 121 we see Prufrock resigned to his rôle, resigned to the fact that he will never raise the overwhelming question, resigned to the fact of age which has overtaken his postponements. With this reference to the motif of time, we see him as an aging man on the beach wistfully watching the girls, who have no attention to spare for him. Suddenly this scene is transformed into a vision of beauty and vitality, in contrast to the world Prufrock has inhabited. The girls become mermaids, as it were, riding triumphantly and effortlessly seaward into their natural creative element. (We may notice how this refers also to the sea of the ragged claws: the brute vitality and the vision of beauty are both aspects of the sea, the life-source.)

The concluding reference to the mermaids (lines 129-31) gives us a kind of odd reversion to Prufrock's original situation: he has "lingered," not in the drawing-room surrounded by the women talking of Michelangelo, but in the "chambers of the sea," surrounded by "sea-girls." But such an experience can occur only in dream: "human voices wake us. . . ." And to wake is to return to the human world—is to suffocate and die: ". . . and we drown."

The concluding image thus summarizes brilliantly Prufrock's character and his plight: he can immerse himself in the life-giving sea only in dream, and even in that dream, it is essentially his passive, negative self that is projected: *he* does not ride "seaward on the waves"; he lingers in the "chambers"—he is wreathed by the "sea-girls." Yet, though he cannot live in the sea, or in a romantic dream of the sea, his desiccated "human" world suffocates him. He is a fish out of water indeed.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF E. E. CUMMINGS' "ANYONE LIVED IN A PRETTY HOW TOWN"

THE EDITORS

### *ANYONE LIVED IN A PRETTY HOW TOWN*

anyone lived in a pretty how town  
(with up so floating many bells down)  
spring summer autumn winter  
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

children guessed (but only a few  
and down they forgot as up they grew  
autumn winter spring summer) 11  
that noone loved him more by more

Women and men (both little and small) .  
cared for anyone not at all  
they sowed their isn't they reaped their  
same  
sun moon stars rain

when by now and tree by leaf  
she laughed his joy she cried his grief  
bird by snow and stir by still  
anyone's any was all to her

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| someones married their everyones<br>laughed their cryings and did their dance<br>(sleep wake hope and then) they<br>said their nevers they slept their dream 20<br><br>stars rain sun moon<br>(and only the snow can begin to explain<br>how children are apt to forget to<br>remember<br>with up so floating many bells down)<br><br>one day anyone died i guess<br>(and noone stooped to kiss his face) | busy folk buried them side by side<br>little by little and was by was<br><br>all by all and deep by deep<br>and more by more they dream their sleep<br>noone and anyone earth by april 31<br>wish by spirit and if by yes.<br><br>Women and men (both dong and ding)<br>summer autumn winter spring<br>reaped their sowing and went their came<br>sun moon stars rain<br><br>—E. E. CUMMINGS (1894— ) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

This poem, apparently obscure nonsense, is rich in meanings; and though it may appear difficult at first glance, it is actually very simple to understand. Cummings uses language "reflexively," every word being counterpointed against another. At the literal level of the language there is a narrative plot, a miniature short story. What makes the poem seem so strange or seemingly incomprehensible is its uncommon arrangement of common words, its wrenched syntax, and its coining of new words from old ones by reconverting their dictionary meaning and usage.

Cummings's case study is a certain anonymous fellow, a citizen of How \* Town. The town disowns him. Why? Well, for one thing their conventions are shocked by his unconventional way of life. He simply does not conform. Of course they don't care for Mr. Anyone because they "cared for anyone not at all" (line 6): they care only selfishly for themselves alone. These people "both little [*i.e.*, children] and small" (5) are small spiritually; which is why "*noone* loved him more by more" (12). And socially he didn't count because "anyone" married "noone." As for Miss "noone," she "loved him more by more." The non-lovers are the Someones who "married their everyones" (17). They play the social game, which is why they are Someones, but in conforming like "everyones" they have lost out in living, in loving life for its own sake. These Someones and Everyones do the conventional things in the conventional ways, and their life is a deadness and a monotony—"sleep wake hope and then"—because they live not at all spontaneously. And that is what sets them apart from Mr. Anyone. They "*did* their dance" (18), whereas he "*danced* his did" (4). They "*said* their nevers" (20), said their neverthelesses, talked about what they didn't do and made excuses; whereas he "*sang* his didn't" (4). In short, "*anyone lived.*" For him How Town was "pretty how town," beautiful; beautiful "with up so floating many bells down"—life in both its up's and down's, it was all singsong to him. Anyone and Noone lived happily forever in the point-present now—not in How Town so much

\* The dictionary lists eight variant meanings for the word *how*, and all eight reverberate throughout the poem. Cummings uses the word as a noun. In the noun-sense the word means manner or method. But the meanings of *how* as adverb equally apply:—1. In what manner or way; 2. to what number or degree; 3. in what state or condition; 4. for what reason; 5. with what meaning, to what effect; 6. at what price, how dear; and 7. *how* meaning "what," as how about it? How Town is the conventional town of conformity to convention, where what counts is social manner or method, social degree, state or condition. In How Town what counts is how you do it, and the price is dear. In the sense of *how* as "why," the question asked by the poem is what meaning has this way of life?

as in Now Town. She loved him "by now and tree by leaf" (13), all of him by every part of him: "anyone's any [thing] was all to her" (16). She "laughed his joy she cried his grief" (14); whereas the Someones married to their Everyones "laughed [at] their cryings" (18); their marriage is no marriage, merely an empty form. Even in death the lovers "dream their sleep" (30), belong to eternity and are reborn ("earth by april"); whereas the non-lovers even while living seem dead—"they slept their dream" (20). Caring "for anyone not at all / they sowed their isn't they reaped their same" (6-8). Their routine clocked existence repeats itself through the cycles of time—"autumn winter spring summer"—with one season the same as another and later generations repeating the same old stenciled way of life (stanza 9). Time passes, mechanical time clocked by "sun moon stars rain" (lines 8 and 36), with the variant—"stars rain sun moon" (21)—to indicate the passing of time. The life of Someones and Everyones is never punctuated by memorable moments. No comma halts these "busy folk." And their children repeat the same blurred, indiscriminate, humdrum existence; they too "went their came" (35), wasting their coming by their busy going. Thus the bells, symbolizing Time, sound to them only as "dong and ding" (33), which is as dead men hear it, hollow; whereas to Mr. Anyone the bells sang, and he danced his life in lilt with them. Himself childlike in spontaneity, "children guessed" *how to live*, by his example—"but only a few / and down they forgot as up they grew" (9-10). Living is by loving, and loving is by losing oneself in another:

little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep  
and more by more they dream their sleep  
noone and anyone

But like Someones and Everyones, children become time-busy and "forget to remember" how to live, how to love. And that is how it goes in How to Live Town. The day Anyone died (stanza 7) "noone stooped to kiss his face."



## NOTES AND QUESTIONS

### I: The Poem

#### i. The Poem as Narrative

*A ballad is a short narrative told lyrically. This restricted meaning of the term "ballad" is rather recent, that is, since the 18th century. The two main types of ballads are the folk ballad, traditional English and Scottish songs that were handed down orally, and the literary ballad. The ballad is a later form of poetry than primitive song; the ballad is dramatic in form.*

*The traditional ballad measure is the quatrain with alternating 4 and 3 beats per line. This regularized stanza is frequently used in the imitative literary ballad, as in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" provides an innovation on the standard form. See also A. E. Housman's "Is My Team Ploughing," p. 718.*

#### 651. THE THREE RAVENS ANONYMOUS

Only lines 9-15 are spoken by the ravens. Who speaks in the rest of the poem? Should the material in lines 16-23 have been cast into dialogue form? What effect has the refrain?

#### 651. THE TWA CORBIES ANONYMOUS

"The Three Ravens" and "The Twa Corbies" provide two different versions of the same story. How does the behavior of the knight's hound, hawk, and "lady fair" in the second poem differ from that in the first? Is the conclusion of "The Three Ravens" better than that of "The Twa Corbies"? Why, or why not? What effect is achieved by having the birds serve as narrators and commentators? More of this poem is cast into the speech of the birds than in "The Three Ravens." How does this affect the emotions aroused by the poem?

#### 652. THE FALCON ANONYMOUS

Who is the speaker in the poem? Compare the use of a bird, hound, and lady in this poem with their use in the two preceding poems.

#### 652. SIR PATRICK SPENS ANONYMOUS

In longer versions of this ballad the purpose of the voyage is said to be to bring back the king's daughter from Norway. This version concentrates upon the orders and the shipwreck, the heart of the tragedy. Is anything important lost by the omission of this "background"—or omission of transitions between the scenes which make up the poem? Can it be said that even if the "facts" are skimmed, the emotional consequences are fully revealed? Why is the picture in lines 43-44 better than a prose statement such as: "And in the sea Sir Patrick and his men were drowned"? Why are the forebodings in lines 23-28 effective as a narrative device? What irony is suggested by the poet's selection of the blood-red wine, cork-heeled shoes, the fans, and the combs as details to mention? Is any contrast implied between Sir Patrick and the Scots lords? What is the effect of the repetition in lines 33, 37, 41?

#### 653. THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL ANONYMOUS

Is there any connection between the mother's words in the fourth stanza and the return of the sons? What is the character of the mother? How is repetition used to heighten the emotional effect in the poem?

Compare the mixture of exposition and dialogue in this poem with that in "Sir Patrick Spens."

### 653. THE UNQUIET GRAVE ANONYMOUS

Unlike the preceding ballads which combine narration and dialogue, this poem is cast entirely into dialogue. Identify the speakers. Is there any reason for the use of the third person—"she"—in the fourth line rather than the second person—"you"? What is the theme of the poem? Could the lover be said to be courting death at the grave of his beloved? How appropriate is the flower symbol of line 23 in suggesting that death is natural and to be accepted unrepiningly? Is the idea of resurrection in heaven also implicit in the symbol? How successful are the opening two lines of the poem in establishing the mood of the poem?

### 654. BONNY BARBARA ALLAN ANONYMOUS

As in "The Unquiet Grave," we have in this poem a dialogue between two lovers—but here the dialogue is set in a framework of exposition. What are some of the other differences? Are the characters of the protagonists revealed progressively, or all at once? How convincing is the ending?

### 654. BARBARA ALLEN'S CRUELTY ANONYMOUS

Compare this version of this famous ballad with the preceding version. Which is the better poem? Explain why.

### 655. THE TWA BROTHERS ANONYMOUS

Compare the structure of this poem with that of "Bonny Barbara Allan" and "Edward." Is the question-and-answer method used effectively? Do we learn anything of the father, mother, and sister by the answers made by Sir John? Is the repetition in the form of both questions and answers significant? What effect is achieved by the variation in phrasing of both question and answer in the final stanza?

### 656. EDWARD ANONYMOUS

Although the preceding ballads have used some question-and-answer dialogue,

this is the first to rely entirely upon this method of presentation. Is this a gain or a loss? Could the preceding ballads have used this method as effectively, or is it effective mainly because of the "surprise ending"? Why is Edward *sad* (4)? Are the terms he applies to his hawk and horse really applicable to his father as he now sees him retrospectively? What is shown of the mother's character by each successive question? How is the ending—surprise though it is—prepared for by what is revealed of the mother by her attitude during the conversation? For example, what is shown by her dismissing the horse as *auld* and only one of many? What is achieved by the rather elaborate use of refrain and repetition?

### 657. LORD RANDAL ANONYMOUS

How does the question-and-answer method in this poem compare with that in "Edward"? How does the parallelism of form in each stanza build to a cumulative effect? What is achieved by the surprise variation in the last line of the last stanza, as compared with the repetition in the other stanzas? Does this last line change, in retrospect, the meaning of the phrase "weary wi' hunting"? In this poem do we learn progressively more about the characters—as we did in "Edward"—or merely more about the situation? Should the balladist have told us *why* Lord Randal was poisoned? Would the emotional effect be increased if we knew? Would the stimulus to the imagination? Compare this ballad with the last four stanzas of "The Twa Brothers."

### 657. La BELLE DAME SANS MERCI JOHN KEATS

Title, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*: the beautiful lady without pity. 18, *fragrant zone*: girdle of flowers. 19, *as: i.e., as if*. 32, *kisses four*: In a joking letter to his brother when enclosing the poem Keats wrote: "Why four kisses . . . why . . . because . . . I was obliged to choose an even number that both eyes might have fair play. . . . I think two a piece quite sufficient. Suppose I had seven; there would have been three and a half a piece—a very awkward affair. . . ."

Note that there are two speakers in the poem. At what point does the first speaker give place to the second? What parallel is

established between the situation or plight of the knight and the season and setting? How does Keats make the one serve as a commentary upon the other? How justify the circular form of the poem, its ending returning us to its beginning?

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is, as other critics have pointed out, the poem *par excellence* of romantic disillusionment. The lady in the meads appears to be "a fery's child": she lives in an elfin grot and she feeds on manna dew. Is she something more? Is she the symbol of what we long for—perfection in beauty, love, and warm devotion?

The crux of Keats' poem is the conflict between ideals or dreams and fact, between illusions and reality. The poem evokes this theme by its contrast of moods. Hawthorne's treatment of a similar theme is his short story: "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (p. 89). Major Molineux, in some ways is to the boy in Hawthorne's story what the lady in the meads is to the knight-at-arms. Compare and point out the differences between Hawthorne's story and Keats' poem.

#### 658. LA BELLE DAME SAN MERCI ROLFE HUMPHRIES

How justify the title of this poem? Humphries' poem, by its very title, is asking for comparison with Keats' famous ballad. How do the two poems differ in situation, in mood, in theme, and in form? What kinship has the situation in Humphries' poem with the situation in Keats' poem? In both poems the narrator is stripped of illusions. Keats' "lady in the meads" exposes into the mysterious woman of Humphries' ballad, the woman of the knight's burden: "Who is the third who always walks beside you?" As symbol, what is her identity? What does this poem mean? Could Humphries' poem have been constructed, like Keats', in circular form?

How do these two poems resemble the folk ballads, and how do they differ from that genre?

#### 659. THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

12, *Eftsoons*: Forthw 76, *vespers*: Probably means simply "evenings," rather than "evening prayers." meaning seems to be that the bird per for nine con-

secutive evenings—and remained all night. The murder would therefore be that of a creature who had for a time shared the sailors' home. [See the remarks by Arthur Dickson, *Explicator*, VI, 5 (June, 1948).] 184, *gossameres*: filmy spider-webs which float in the air. 211, *nether tip*: In discussing this famous astronomical "error" Professor J. L. Lowes has shown that Coleridge could have cited scientific authority for this remark. The strange phenomenon was twice reported by responsible astronomers in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, a publication of which Coleridge was an ardent reader. [See *The Road to Xanadu* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), pp. 180, 510.] 314, *fire-flags*: the aurora australis, perhaps. 489, *rood*: Cross. 535, *ivy-tod*: ivy bush.

What effect is achieved by the device of the detained Wedding Guest? What is significant about the Guest's question in lines 79-81? Part I of the poem sets the stage and provides necessary exposition leading up to the confession of the crime and sin—the shooting of the Albatross. What exactly does each of the other six parts contribute to the unfolding of the narrative? How many of the Seven Parts end with a stanza mentioning the Albatross? What is significant about this repetition? About the exceptions? What is the "theme" of the poem? What does the Albatross symbolize?

Is the Mariner a representative of the type of man who is a spiritual isolationist, unaware of the oneness of life? (See lines 232-235.) This interpretation is suggested by Louise Schutz Boas [*Explicator*, II, 7 (May, 1944)], who contends that when the Mariner feels kinship with the watersnakes he frees himself from the evil of isolationism, and that when he feels compulsion to tell his story to selected listeners, he is motivated by the desire to assert his feeling of being a part of God's universe. Do you agree with this interpretation? William Wordsworth, close friend of Coleridge, said in a note appended to the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* that Coleridge was conscious that the poem contained defects and had wished to omit it from further editions of *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth says he prevailed upon Coleridge to allow it to remain, and then continues:

The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the controul of super-

natural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural: secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon: thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated. Yet the Poem contains many delicate touches of passion, and indeed the passion is every where true to nature; a great number of the stanzas present beautiful images, and are expressed with unusual felicity of language; and the versification, though the metre is itself unfit for long poems, is harmonious and artfully varied, exhibiting the utmost powers of that metre, and every variety of which it is capable. It therefore appeared to me that these several merits (the first of which, namely that of the passion, is of the highest kind,) gave to the Poem a value which is not often possessed by better Poems. On this account I requested of my Friend to permit me to republish it.

How valid are Wordsworth's praise and censure of the poem? What characteristics of the folk ballad are found in Coleridge's poem?

Coleridge himself once wrote: "The romance-writer possesses an unlimited power over situations; but he must scrupulously make his characters act in congruity with them. Let him work *physical* wonders only, and we will be content to dream with him for a while; but by the first *moral* miracle which he attempts he disgusts us and awakens us." That the physical events in the *Ancient Mariner* are improbable no one will deny. But does the poem abide by Coleridge's own insistence upon truth to

human nature, truth to the constitution of the universe—but especially psychological truth? In other words, while the incidents are those of fantasy, are the theme and characterization those of truth?

## 675. THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

WILLIAM MORRIS

43, Poitiers: site of defeat of French in 1356 by the heavily outnumbered English.

47, Gascon frontier: At this time Gascony was held by the English. 51, those six men: the judges in witchcraft trials. 52, Chatelet: a prison in Paris. 55-56, my weak hands . . . wim: an allusion to the "trial by water." If the accused sank he was innocent; if not, he was guilty. 61, St. George: patron saint of England. 153, fitt: canto, division of a narrative poem.

How successfully does Morris create setting and mood for this poem of the ambush of the English Robert de Marny by the French Godmar? What part in the poem is play by the rain and the haystack? Does the narrator compress his story too much—at is, does he omit any necessary information? How effective is the use of repetition? The use of dialogue? What is indicated by the phrase "gag me Robert" (line 10)? Do the characters of the three principal emerge clearly? How much weight should be placed on Jehane's fear of damnation (line 48) as influencing her decision? What is suggested in Godmar's remark (lines 154-155)? Is the narrator impersonal in his presentation? How does this narrative poem compare with a folk ballad?

## ii. The Poem as Subject and Theme

### 679. RAIN AT NIGHT

HELEN HOYT

Compare the description of rain in this poem with that in "Woodyards in Rain." Which is the more vivid? Why? The second poem employs more frequent reference to feelings than the first. Is "Woodyards in Rain" therefore lacking in emotion? "Rain at Night" has a definite theme; does "Woodyards in Rain"? Does either poem appeal to "stock responses"—that is, does

either depend upon recalling in the reader conventional sensations, sentiments, or ideas? Is "Rain at Night" how effective is the use of contrast? The use of rhyme? The general of language?

### 680. STILL FALLS THE RAIN

EDITH WELLS

The Raid, 1940: The series of German air raids on London, during which thousands were killed. 2, Dark as the world:



refers to the defensive blackouts of the city's lights, as well as its metaphorical meaning. 9, *Potter's Field*: burial place of paupers, criminals, and unidentified bodies. 26-27, *O Ile leape up . . . firmament*: See Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*. These words are spoken by Faustus in his final hour. He has sold his soul to the devil in return for power and pleasure in this world, and the time has now come to pay his half of the bargain.

Compare this poem with the two preceding poems in subject, treatment, imagery, and symbolism. Are the three poets speaking of the same thing in their use of the term "rain"?

### 681. A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER WALT WHITMAN

In this poem, does Whitman's interest lie in a peculiar biological phenomenon observable on the Atlantic coast—that of spiders floating on long filaments out to sea—or does it lie in himself as representative of mankind? How successful is the analogy between the isolated, helpless, exploring spider and the detached, musing, venturing soul? How does the very movement of lines 4 and 5 suggest the unreeling or outthrusting of the spider's filaments? What is suggested by the fact that the sentence started in line 6 is not syntactically complete? How many examples of parallel structure are to be found in the poem? How do these parallels relate to the analogy between spider and soul? What would be the difference if the *noiseless* of line 1 followed the word *patient*—or if *noiseless* were replaced by its synonym *silent*? What effect is accomplished by the use of the hard "c" sounds in *ductile*, *anchor*, and *catch*? Compare with the "l" sounds in lines 4 and 5.

### 681. THE SPIDER HOLDS A SILVER BALL EMILY DICKINSON

In her mature years Emily Dickinson seldom left her house and garden, but she, also, was moved to poetic reflection by a spider—of the kind most familiar to her. How does her attitude differ from that of Whitman on the subject? What are the characteristics of the imagery she uses? Would the poem be "improved" if Miss Dickinson had used normal rhymes instead

of consonance (*i.e.*, repetition of sounds in the consonants but not in the vowels)? Is it possible to read this poem not as a description of the activities and fate of a spider, but as a symbol of human life?

### 682. SNAKE D. H. LAWRENCE

66, *the albatross*: see Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner" (p. 659).

This poem has the same "subject" as Emily Dickinson's poem "The Snake" (p. 681)—but what is the difference in theme? In mood? How much in each poem could be called description? Is Lawrence's poem the more "dramatic"? How appropriate in their contexts are Dickinson's "It wrinkled, and was gone" and Lawrence's "convulsed in undignified haste"? Explain. What other examples of diction in each poem seem particularly effective? Is symbolism present in either poem? Is there any similarity in the feeling towards snakes expressed in the two poems?

### 684. ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE JOHN KEATS

2, *hemlock*: a poisonous plant which produces death by paralysis. 4, *Lethæ*: river of forgetfulness in Hades. 7, *Dryad*: wood-nymph. 13, *Flora*: goddess of flowers, here used for the flowers themselves. 14, *Provençal*: a kingdom of medieval France, famous for its troubadours. 16, *Hippocrene*: fountain of the Muses on Mt. Helicon. 32, *pards*: leopards. Bacchus, god of wine, was sometimes represented in a chariot drawn by panthers or leopards. 33, *viewless*: invisible. 43, *embalmèd*: full of balm or perfume. 51, *Darkling*: in the dark. 67, *alien corn*: see *Ruth* 2. The corn was "alien" because Ruth had come to Judah from her native country of Moab. 68-70, *Charm'd . . . forlorn*: In early versions these lines read as follows: "Charmed the wide casements, opening on the foam / Of keelless seas, in fairy lands forlorn."

Discuss this poem as a reverie, as a poem on life and death, as a poem on the role of the imagination in life and art.

### 686. PHILOMELA MATTHEW ARNOLD

21, *thy dumb sister*: Procne, in the version Arnold followed. 27, *Daulis*: in Thrace. 27, *Cephissian vale*: valley of the river

Cephissus. 28, *Eugenia*: an imaginary companion.

The legend which forms the basis of this poem appears in several variants, but the essentials of the most usual version may be summarized as follows: The King of Thrace, Tereus, married Procne, an Athenian. Afterwards he fell in love with Procne's sister, Philomela, ravished her, and then cut out her tongue so that the rape could not be told. Philomela, however, found means through needlework ("the too clear web" of line 21) to inform Procne of the deed. Thereupon the two sisters killed Procne's infant son, Itylus, and served the flesh to Tereus, the father, as food. In indignation, the gods changed Procne into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale whose song forever bemoans the murdered child, and Tereus into a hawk forever pursuing the sisters. Arnold's version differs in that Procne is the victim of Tereus, who had wearied of her as his wife and who wished to silence her and pretend she was dead to enable him to marry Philomela.

## 686. PHILOMELA

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

What differences emerge in the subject and treatment of the three poems on a nightingale? In the first two poems, for instance, *mood* (i.e., atmosphere) predominates; in the third, *tone*. What is this tone—that is, what is the speaker's attitude towards his own situation?

Although Greek myth is the surface subject of Ransom's poem—he addresses "Procne, Philomela, and Itylus"—his "hidden" subject is modern poetry and modern life: Whereas "The nightingale descanted unto Ovid," today no nightingale descants—no myth inspires us now. What is the attitude of the speaker in the poem towards the nightingale legend? What characteristics of the modern world—especially of America—make the legend an "improbable tale"? What is meant by the lines "Ah, but our numbers are not felicitous,/ It goes not liquidly for us"? Why does the speaker seem to despair of our "inordinate race"? What is intended by the reference to America as "this other Thrace," and by the contrasting phrase "royal Attic"? How would you reply to the question "How could her delicate dirge run democratic?" Does the speaker long for the "fabulous provinces," or reject them, or reveal an

ironic combination of yearning and dismissal?

## 687. "WHEN TO THE SESSIONS . . ." WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

4, *dear time's waste*: precious time wasted in seeking what he did not find. 6, *dateless*: without end, without a time fixed for termination. 8, *expense*: passing away—also cost in time. 10, *tell*: count.

How consistently does Shakespeare employ terms and metaphors drawn from legal language? How does this usage contribute to the tone of the poem?

## 688. MY LOST YOUTH

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

1, *the beautiful town*: Portland, Maine, where Longfellow was born. 13, *the Hesperides*: the island on which was the garden containing the golden apples, guarded by the daughters of Hesperus. 37, *sea-fight*: the American *Enterprise* and the British *Boxer* fought off Portland harbor in 1813, both captains being killed. The boy Longfellow attended the double funeral.

How justify the present sequence of stanzas? Is there any schemework informing the ordering of scenes and details? Does this poem recall the past or recreate the past? Is it a sentimental poem? Is the emotion or sentiment expressed in excess of the motivating situation? Is the refrain successful in its purpose? Why, or why not?

## 689. FERN HILL

DYLAN THOMAS

3, *dingle*: wooded valley. 8, *daisies and barley*: usual in harvest festival decorations in Wales. 30, *Adam and maiden*: the allusion is to the time immediately after the creation of Adam and Eve, and of animals (horses) newly created out of earth by the hand of God.

This poem, like Longfellow's, expresses a nostalgic yearning for lost youth, its freshness and its richness. But, as in many recent poems, the expository statements are simply omitted, forcing the reader to infer the "background" from slight hints. The poet is remembering boyhood days and nights on a Welsh farm. The sensations, activities, feelings of that past time are, throughout, so fused with the emotions and thoughts

of the poet's present maturity that the texture of the poem is richly complex. In other words, this is not a poem of simple recall. Compare the tone of "Fern Hill" with that of "My Lost Youth." Notice the interweaving of such words as time, sun, moon, green, golden—and of such details as those involving birds and animals. Is verbal repetition used successfully? Does it serve a similar function in this poem to that served by the refrain in Longfellow's? Are the near-echoes in such phrases as "once below a time" and "happy as the grass was green" [*cf.*, "once upon a time" and "happy as the day was long"] effective devices in this poem? Why does the personification of Time as a Pied Piper (*cf.*, lines 42-45) seem particularly appropriate in a poem on this subject and theme? What use does Thomas make of symbolism?

## 690. PIANO

D. H. LAWRENCE

Compare this poem with the two preceding poems in terms of the feelings and attitudes of the poets. What does the contrast between the "tinkling piano" and "the great black piano appassionato" dramatize? In what way is the theme of this poem different from that of the two preceding poems?

## 691. WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

WALT WHITMAN

1, *lilacs*: Lilacs were in bloom at Whitman's Brooklyn home when Lincoln was shot in Washington on April 15, 1865. 32, *journeys a coffin*: A funeral train carried Lincoln's body to his home at Springfield, Illinois, stopping at the chief cities along the way. The burial took place on May 4. 121, *companions*: Whitman is distinguishing between awareness of the particular fact of Lincoln's individual death and awareness of the meaning of death in general.

Although this poem says little of Lincoln's achievement and does not even mention his name, it is generally conceded to be one of the greatest of elegies and the greatest poetic tribute to Lincoln. What characteristics of the traditional elegy are revealed in the poem? How does Whitman attempt to extend the emotion from the merely personal to the national, from the death of

one man to the common fate of all men? What do the three symbols—the star, the lilac, and the song of the thrush—each represent? Show how Whitman interweaves these symbols throughout the poem—after each is introduced successively in sections 2, 3, and 4—in a kind of thematic organization which unifies the entire poem. How does section 13—which brings together the three symbols or motifs—serve as a transitional section between the preceding lamentation for the death of the man Lincoln and the following consolation in the thought that only the physical body dies? Explain how section 16 associates all three symbols simultaneously with Lincoln and with Whitman's elegy. In what ways does Whitman employ parallelism and the periodic sentence as devices for binding together his "catalogues" of specific details?

## 697. AN IRISH AIRMAN FORESEES HIS DEATH

W. B. YEATS

How does Yeats communicate the "lonely impulse of delight" which was at least part of the motive for the speaker's becoming an airman? What is the theme of this poem? What is the mood? How does the poet employ *contrast* throughout the poem to culminate in the phrase "this life, this death"?

## 697. HIGH FLIGHT

JOHN GILLESPIE MAGEE

The writer of this sonnet was born in China of American missionary parents. He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in October, 1940; in December, 1941 he was killed on active service in Britain. The sonnet was found written on the back of an envelope.

Explain how the poet communicates his sense of exhilaration in flying. Are the last three lines a fitting conclusion? Why, or why not?

## 698. THE LANDSCAPE NEAR AN AERODROME

STEPHEN SPENDER

In this poem Spender's interest is obviously not focussed upon communicating a sense of flight, but nevertheless he uses such sensations for his own purposes. Explain how. What is Spender's theme? Compare this poem with Wordsworth's sonnet "Com-

posed upon Westminster Bridge" (p. 702) for another and quite different description of an urban scene, and with Spender's own "The Express" (p. 700) for another example of his use of the mechanical phenomena of modern urban life.

## 698. STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In what sense is this a poem on "steamboats, viaducts, and railways"? What is the poet's attitude towards these new inventions—which is what they were in 1833 when the poem was published? What is the theme of the poem? How suitable is the sonnet form? Is this a good poem? Why, or why not?

## 699. THE LOCOMOTIVE

EMILY DICKINSON

14. *Boanerges*: literally "sons of thunder," a name applied by Jesus to two vociferous preachers among his followers. See *Mark* 3:17.

In the preceding poem Wordsworth seemed of the opinion that certain phenomena of the machine age were "at war with old poetic feeling." Does Miss Dickinson share this view? What is the tone of her poem? Is the basic metaphor that of the locomotive as horse or as dragon, or a fusion of both? Are the actions attributed to the locomotive arranged in any special sequence, or could they be rearranged in another order without serious effect?

## 699. TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER

WALT WHITMAN

Unlike Miss Dickinson's poem, Whitman's offers not only description and emotion but also symbolic meaning or theme. Several interpretations of the symbolism have been advanced—that the locomotive represents the American people, modern cultural progress, and Whitman's own poetry. What phrases or ideas seem to support these three possibilities? Is the poem enriched or merely confused by this complexity? Does Whitman successfully fuse the precise details of the locomotive—e.g., cylindric body, side bars, headlight—

with his metaphorical epithets such as "Fierce-throated beauty!" and the abstractions of his symbolic generalizations? Is the phrase in the title, "in Winter," shown to be relevant?

## 700. THE EXPRESS

STEPHEN SPENDER

How does the tone of this poem compare with that of Whitman's or Miss Dickinson's? Which poem presents the most precise, most vivid, most emotionalized picture of a locomotive? What does Spender achieve by his repetition of "p" and "t" sounds in the opening lines? Contrast the metrical pattern of these lines with that in lines 8-9, for instance. What accounts for the shift from specific details like gasworks and cemeteries to allegorical abstractions like "eras of wild happiness" and "beyond the crest of the world"? Can the poem be read with the Express as a symbol of the "social revolution," with its slow start in the Manifesto of Marx and Engels in 1848, its growing movement and strength, with its progress culminating in a kind of universal Utopia? In this reading *Edinburgh* and *Rome* would suggest the Presbyterian (Protestant) and Roman Catholic assurances of the good life, which would be surpassed by that achieved through revolutionary social reform; the *comet* moving musically would suggest universal harmony, perhaps "music of the spheres"; the "honey buds" would connote a Utopian "land of milk and honey." Would such a reading "destroy" the pleasure found in the poem as simple description or picture? Why, or why not? (The fact that Stephen Spender is known to have been an ardent sympathizer with radical social reform does not prove the symbolic reading of his poem.)

## 700. CARGOES

JOHN MASEFIELD

What allegory is intended by the three pictures in the poem? In the final picture, which is set in opposition to the first two, what phrase discloses the poet's attitude? Is the impression you retain from the poem predominantly one of a series of pictures or of a theme advanced by the poet? Explain.

iii. *The Poem as Picture*

*The poems in this section render in poetic medium a portrait or a landscape; and some of them are related to particular paintings or sculptures. They are all predominantly imagistic and pictorial, recreating by concrete sensual imagery a scene, object, or person. Some of them are landscape poems presenting a perspective from some special point of view, not unlike that employed in landscape paintings. All these poems have subject and theme, some of them are dramatic, and they might also be classified accordingly under the one category or the other, but the category under which they are now grouped serves best to point up the primary attribute of these poems as pictures.*

## 702. THE EAGLE

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

In the first stanza, is the observer above, below, or beside the eagle? Where is he in the second stanza? Would the poem be as successful if three 2-line stanzas were used? Does the metre of line 6 suit the sense of the line? Explain why the phrases "he stands" and "he falls" are effectively placed. Is there a "theme" in this poem?

702. COMPOSED UPON  
WESTMINSTER BRIDGE  
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Is this a generalized or particularized picture of a city? Explain. What is the poet's attitude towards his subject? How does the poet use both contrast and comparison? What is the effect of line 12, which mentions the only thing in the picture that moves? Why would this line be less effective if it occurred in the first eight lines rather than in the last six?

Show how the sonnet by Wordsworth resembles yet differs from the following extract from the *Journal* of his sister Dorothy, describing the same occasion: "We left London on Saturday morning at half past five or six. . . . We mounted the Dover Coach at Charing Cross. It was a beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river, and a multitude of little boats, made a most beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge. The houses were not overhung by their cloud of smoke, and they were spread out endlessly, yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a fierce light, that there was something like the purity of one of nature's own grand spectacles."

702. "WE SAW THE SWALLOWS  
GATHERING IN THE SKY."

GEORGE MEREDITH

This is No. 47 of a sequence of fifty 16-line "sonnets" depicting the tragic break-

up of a marriage between two highly-strung, imaginative persons. The narrator is the husband. (See also the last sonnet of the series—"Thus Piteously Love Closed . . ." p. 736.) Compare this poem in mood with Hardy's "Neutral Tones" (p. 709).

## 703. ODE TO THE WEST WIND

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

21, Maenad: female worshiper of Bacchus.

32, Baiae's bay: in Campania, Italy.

In the first three sections of the ode Shelley pictures the West Wind in its effect upon leaves, clouds, and waves. Are the details in each section coherently related? Does Shelley interrelate the leaves, clouds, and waves? What function is performed by Section IV? In line 53 Shelley petitions the Wind to lift him "as a wave, a leaf, a cloud," but in Section V the imagery seems related to only one of these three. Is Shelley guilty of bad workmanship? Why, or why not? Is the West Wind employed as a symbol? Of what?

## 705. THE CITY IN THE SEA

EDGAR ALLAN POE

The original title of this poem was "The Doomed City," changed to "The City of Sin," and finally to its present title. The vast lore of sunken cities—e.g., Atlantis—undoubtedly contributed to the creation of Poe's phantom city in its stagnant sea, together with Scriptural allusions to Babylon, Gomorrah, and Tyre. The doom pronounced against Tyre, in chapters 26-28 of *Ezekiel*, presents some especially striking parallels.

## 706. THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

1, damozel: Rossetti uses a variant of the Old French word from which *damsel* also comes. 9, Mary's: The Virgin Mary's. 10, meetly: fittingly, suitably. 13, Herseemed:

It seemed to her. 19, (To one . . . : Parentheses are used to indicate a shift to the viewpoint of the lover on earth. 54, The stars sang: The Ptolemaic astronomy taught that the stars and planets make music as they move about the earth in their concentric spheres. Cf. *Job* 38:7—"When the morning stars sang together. . . ." 86, That living mystic tree: "the tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month" (*Revelation* 22:2). 87, Dove: the Holy Spirit. 107-8, Cecily . . . Rosalys: five saints. 126, citherns and citoles: medieval stringed instruments.

Rossetti also painted a picture bearing the same title as this poem and on the same subject. Sir Hall Caine reported that Rossetti's poem was motivated by Poe's "The Raven" (p. 800) and quoted Rossetti as saying: "I saw that Poe had done the utmost possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and so I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven."

Is the tone of the poem spiritual or sensuous? Explain. Who is describing the damozel and the setting? Why does the medievalism suggested in language and setting seem appropriate? Would this poem be as effective if the earthly lover did not appear in it? Compare this poem pictorially with the poems by Holmes (p. 712), Robinson (p. 713), and Ransom (p. 713) and with Poe's "The Raven" (p. 800).

## 707. LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT GEORGE MEREDITH

1, Lucifer: The name given to the "morning star" and sometimes also to the "evening star"—both designations for the planet Venus. From the Biblical passage—"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning," (*Isaiah* 14:12)—the name Lucifer came to be interpreted as that of Satan before his fall. Milton's *Paradise Lost* contains an account of the battle between the heavenly hosts against the rebelling angels, led by the archangel Lucifer, and the subsequent expulsion from heaven and incarceration in hell. 8, planet: the literal meaning of the word *planet* is "wandering," as contrasted with the "fixed" stars. Meredith's use of "Lucifer" as both the name of the planet and of the rebel archangel is obviously more appropriate than if he had used "Satan" or any other of his many

names. 10, Awe, i.e., God. But the word *God* connotes "goodness," whereas Lucifer recognizes only Power.

How successfully does Meredith create his global picture? Are such details as those in lines 4 and 5 necessary? Why? What new aspect of the Deity does Satan discover? Is Meredith merely refurbishing an old religious myth, or is he making a comment on the nature of the universe? What dramatic quality appears in the poem? The word *unalterable* is often considered the keyword of the poem. Note that it is also the longest word in the poem. How are its vowel and consonant sounds related to those of the other words in the same line?

## 708. THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Of the 15 lines in this poem, nine of them end with the same rhyme. What effect is achieved by this? What is achieved by the repetition of the title as the last line in each of the three stanzas? What is the tone of the poem?

## 708. THE DARKLING THRUSH THOMAS HARDY

1, coppice: small woods. 5, bine-stems: hop-stems. 10, Century's corpse: the poem is dated on the last day of the 19th century.

How does the diction in the first stanza prepare for the metaphor in lines 9-12? How do the figures of speech in lines 5-6 serve both as contrast and preparation for the third stanza? Comment on the appropriateness of *fervorless* (16) and *terrestrial* (27). Compare this poem with Bryant's "To a Waterfowl" (p. 739).

## 709. NEUTRAL TONES THOMAS HARDY

Does the title describe the landscape, the mood of the speaker, or both? Does the speaker have a listener? Is the last stanza an effective conclusion? Why? What does the mental picture of that wintry scene come to symbolize? How do the specific details of that scene—gray leaves, white sun, dead smile, etc.—contribute to the symbolic meaning?

## 709. MIRAGE

R. P. BLACKMUR

For the observers in "Mirage" the time is desolate noon because it is a time without movement or change. It is a "stricken time" because myth and dream are discredited. Only the speaker of the poem believes in the shared vision, the miraculous mirage. To the observers, the perspective is devoid of movement; the flux of things has stopped; their hearts are maimed by the nothingness of the world before them. What appears as change is but a mirage: a shining mountain rising from the sea in a spume-filled sky. "Somebody said mirage, and it was gone." The deadness and emptiness of the world remain, and that is our world of reality. Only a dream brings about change, and a dream is mere illusion, "but there I have been living ever since." Why so? Why does he alone believe in what he knows to be nonexistent?

Blackmur's poem is built upon the contrast of immobility (lines 1-8) and mobility (lines 8-14). Study this poem in relation to Rossetti's "Woodspurge" (p. 746), where images of *space* define, as here, a moment of *time*. In both poems time is fixed to one moment, whereas in MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell" the space images create the sense of time's cycles.

## 709. YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Is the picture created in this poem of the coming on of night as the earth turns from west to east as vivid and meaningful as the somewhat similar picture in Meredith's sonnet, "Lucifer in Starlight," on p. 707? Justify your answer. How consistently does MacLeish liken the oncoming of night to a rising of flood waters? Why does the poet change the rhythm in the last stanza? What is the theme of the poem? Is "the shadow of the night" used symbolically? Why does the poet address himself to "Andrew Marvell"? (See the poem by Marvell on p. 721.)

## 710. ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

JOHN KEATS

41, brede: embroidery, frieze.

The actual urn inspiring Keats has been identified as the Towneley vase, but in any case his imagination, contemplating the urn, attains for a moment a vision of truth and

reality. What are the several group pictures on the urn? In what sense can the urn express "a flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme"? What is suggested by the term "Cold Pastoral"? What does Keats seem to believe about the relation between art and life?

What is meant by the enigmatic proposition "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty"? Is it addressed to the reader of the poem or to the figures on the urn? Justify your answer. What is suggested by the poet's awareness of the desolate town, "emptied of this folk"?

The statuary forms on the urn are forever fixed in timeless immobility. Their ecstasy is arrested in pure present immediacy, motionless in a frozen moment. The imagined action immobilized on the urn is the moment just before fulfillment (l. 15ff.). Contrast this poem with the following poems which also depict an arrested action or an action felt with similar pure present immediacy: Muir's "The Rider Victory" (p. 712), Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" (p. 714), and MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell" (p. 709).

## 711. WINTER LANDSCAPE

JOHN BERRYMAN

This poem is based on the painting "The Hunters in the Snow" by Pieter Breughel, the 16th century Flemish painter. In what way is the theme of the poem comparable to that of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (p. 710)? Is it significant that the entire poem is composed of a single sentence? What use is made of repetition in the poem? Compare this poem with Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts," which is based on another of Breughel's paintings.

## 712. MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS

W. H. AUDEN

A painting presents simultaneously details that in a poem can be presented only consecutively. Auden's poem as painting is not the same, of course, as an actual painting; the poem communicates or expresses a meaning in a way peculiar to the literary arts. What the painter means by his painting he must express by painting it; what the poet means by his poem is expressed by concrete images but frequently also by direct communication or statement. What is there in Auden's poem that could not appear in an actual painting? Single out these aspects. Is it necessary to acquaint oneself first of all

with Breughel's "Landscape With the Fall of Icarus" before comprehending Auden's poem? Does the poem exist in its own right as poem apart from its inspirational source? Breughel's "Icarus" is at the Brussels Museum of the Fine Arts; hence the title "Musée des Beaux Arts" (Museum of the Fine Arts).

What does "the miraculous birth" refer to? And "the dreadful martyrdom [that] must run its course"? The fall of Icarus is epitomized by Auden's phrase as "the forsaken cry." What other event does "the forsaken cry" bring to mind? Both Greek and Christian allusions appear in the poem.

## 712. THE RIDER VICTORY EDWIN MUIR

The sculptor has caught steed and rider at the moment of a plunge halting their movement in the fixed moment now. The poet regards them imaginatively as though they were still free to plunge. Why do they hesitate? Why is the charger called *legendary*? Is his name, *Victory*, ironic? What is the implied meaning of "stony eyes"? And, in sum, what is the hidden meaning of this poem?

## 712. MY AUNT OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

What creates the light tone of this poem? Would the lightness be possible if the poem were written from the point of view of the aunt?

## 713. FOR A DEAD LADY EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

How does Robinson use contrast to suggest the "shifting and many-shaded" qualities of the lady's character? Is her character wholly admirable? Does the poem raise any of the larger issues of life and death in general?

## 713. HERE LIES A LADY JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Is this poem in its treatment of subject "romantic," sentimental, or ironical? Define the poet's treatment of subject, style or tone, and theme. Here the dead lady remains, we may suppose, in her coffin just before burial, or perhaps just after the funeral, but in either event she remains very much alive. What do we learn about her way of life from her way of death?

What is revealed by the singsong style of line 2? Why was the lady "lucky" in her dying (line 14)?

How many voices or styles has the speaker of Ransom's poem? For instance, the matter-of-factness in the final line of the final stanza; or the final line in stanza 3. Is the speaker's voice here the voice of a friend, a doctor, or a poet? What pose does he take in the opening line of stanza 4? Trace the shifts in tone. Look in your dictionary for the definition of *batos* and illustrate by examples in this poem. How does Ransom's style itself evoke a meaning?

What does the inquiry about the lady's fevered activity symbolize: "What was she making?" (line 7) Or the answer: "Why, nothing" (7)? What is the symbolic intention of "old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds" (8)?

## 714. LEDA AND THE SWAN W. B. YEATS

Zeus, in the form of a swan, ravished Leda, who eventually brought forth two eggs, from one of which came Castor and Clytemnestra, from the other Pollux and Helen. Helen became responsible for the destruction of Troy by fire (see line 10); Clytemnestra murdered her husband Agamemnon (line 11) upon his return from the Trojan War. In Yeats's cyclical theory of history, the visitation of Leda by Zeus symbolized the beginnings of classical civilization, paralleling the Virgin Mary and her dove—the Annunciation that ushered in the Christian cycle. Yeats once admitted that he had begun the poem with this symbolic conception in mind, "but as I wrote, bird and lady took such possession of the scene that all politics went out of it." (See Michelangelo's painting of Leda, a colored reproduction of which Yeats possessed.)

Is Yeats's "Leda and the Swan" more than a vivid description of a mythical event? What knowledge was engendered "in the loins" "Before the indifferent beak could let her drop"? What theme does this translate into? Does any of the author's own original conception remain? Any of his original symbolism? What accounts for changes in original intention or conception, whereby the finished work differs considerably from the projected groundplan? Rhyme, for instance? Yeats, incidentally, is a master in the functional use of "eye-rhyme," "ghost-rhyme," or half-rhymes, such as here in *up* and *drop*. What purpose does



this half-rhyme serve in the context of that final stanza?

Notice that the poem is a sonnet with the conventional two-part division, octave and sestet, with the sestet rhyming *e, f, g, e, f, g*. Yet it also breaks away from the conventional form. Compare with the structure of sonnets by Shakespeare (pp. 687, 730); by Wordsworth (pp. 698, 702); by Meredith (pp. 702, 707, 736).

#### 714. SOLDIERS BATHING

F. T. PRINCE

**24. Michelangelo's cartoon:** The reference is to the "Bathing Soldiers" scene from the "Battle of Cascina." **33, Ucello or Pollaiuolo:** Paolo Ucello (1397-1475) and Antonio Pollaiuolo (1429-1498) are Italian painters. Pollaiuolo, who was also a sculptor and engraver, has left not only an engraving entitled "The Battle of the Nudes" but also a bas-relief on the same

subject. **45, Lachrimae Christi:** Christ's tears.

Why is the contrast between the nakedness of the bathing soldiers and the machinery of war an effective one? Does the speaker refer to the painters to remind himself that men fought when the "machinery" was at a minimum, or for some other reason? What attitude towards their subject was held by the painters, according to the speaker? What, according to him, has caused our modern attitude to be different? Is love a "terror" to us because it involves responsibilities, a willingness to sacrifice ourselves, etc., which we refuse to assume? What is the "freedom" accompanying crimes and sin that does not accompany virtue and love? How many times is the word "freedom" used in the poem? What is meant by "the fright and shame of nakedness"? Does the speaker seem to find a symbolic meaning in the "streak of red" in line 66?

### iv. The Poem as Drama

Poems may be described as "dramatic" when they present scenes as in a drama or, again, when they stage an intrigue or plot. The epithet "dramatic" applies also to poems in which the narrator addresses himself to a second person, a listener whose attitude is expressed (as in the dialogue poem of A. E. Housman: "Is My Team Ploughing") or merely implied. An example of this last kind, with a silent listener, is Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess." The narrator's speech in Alfred Tennyson's "Ulysses" is public speech; in John Donne's "The Good-Morrow" it is private song. The woman addressed in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" does not reply, but we know her mind. Chloë, in Matthew Prior's "Ode," listens in silence while the narrator, a double lover, sings Euphelia's praise instead. In Robinson's "Mr. Flood's Party" and T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (see p. 878) the listeners are the self-same persons who speak the poems.

The poems of Donne and Eliot are dramatic, however, not merely because a listener is implied. They are dramatic in several senses of the poem as drama. The primary definition of "dramatic" is found in poems whose meaning is discovered through a dramatic process. Such poems (Donne's and Eliot's, for example) convey the impression of our going through the process of a mind thinking, arguing a point or proposition, arriving by skillful chess procedure at every next move. A dramatic poem is any poem that creates an "illusion of thought in action." It is the poem that forces us to participate in the shifting thought-processes of the speaker or narrator.

#### 717. "I DIED FOR BEAUTY"

EMILY DICKINSON

Compare this poem with Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (p. 710), especially lines 49-50.

#### 717. NEW YEAR'S EVE

THOMAS HARDY

**11-12, who in This tabernacle groan:** See II Corinthians 5:4. The allusion is to man's "earthly house" as contrasted with

the "building of God . . . eternal in the heavens." 30, *unweeting*: (archaic) unknown, unaware.

What does Hardy gain by using the dialogue form? What is the effect of the Biblical phrase in lines 11-12? Of the archaism "unweeting" in line 30? What is the theme of the poem? What is the tone?

# 718. "IS MY TEAM PLOUGHING"

A. E. HOUSMAN

Why is it that this dead man asks questions of the living? Other dead men do not stir from their graves; what stirs this one? Is this dramatic dialogue meaningful, or is it merely the device of the poet for evolving an ironic plot? The irony is rather obvious: "No change though you lie under / The land you used to plough." And the irony, too, in "Now I stand up no more"; but are the repetitions of the phrase "stand up" (in lines 15 and 16) merely technically clever parallelisms, or are they *morally* as well as ironically significant? Was the dead man, when he lived, a better man morally than his "friend"? How can this inference be proven? The living, like the dead, "lie down." Only "The goal stands up"—and the keeper (God?). But perhaps this dead man rises only in the mind of his friend? Is this psychological interpretation of the drama founded on what the poem defines as fact?

Why does the friend try to stop the dead man's questions?—"Be still, my lad, and sleep." Was the dead man formerly the village goalkeeper? The question and answer form of this poem suggests comparison with such traditional ballads as "Edward" and "Lord Randal." (See pages 656-657.) Compare it also with "The Unquiet Grave" (p. 653).

# 718. PIAZZA PIECE

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

In what ways is this sonnet an innovation on the conventional sonnet? Its form, obviously, is based upon a contrast. Is the voice of the "gentleman in a dustcoat" different in tone and style from the voice of the "lady young in beauty waiting"? What does the repeated burden of the first and final lines of the sestet tell us about the possibilities for fulfillment of the lady's expectation and hope? The word *waiting* tumbles into line 10, and in the final *waiting* the sense is suspended. Why is that

word located as the end word of each line? The word *want* (line 4) has the double meaning of "desire" and "lacking." How are these meanings played upon in the final scene? Why is it that the roses on her trellis are dying? And, finally, what do the characters of this dialogue represent?

With Ransom's sonnet compare Drayton's "Since there's no help." What similarity exists between these poems in their octaves, and what differences can you define in their sestets?

# 718. "SINCE THERE'S NO HELP . . ."

MICHAEL DRAYTON

The lover here says one thing and means the opposite. What is the ambiguity in "kiss and part"? In "Shake hands *for ever*"? And in "thou might'st him yet recover"? And the woman he bids farewell to, what is her stand in this matter? How is her attitude indicated?

# 719. "I WILL NOT LET THEE GO."

ROBERT BRIDGES

What basis of comparison has this poem with the preceding sonnet by Drayton? Is Bridges' poem "dramatic"? What is accomplished by using the same line as the first in every stanza? By varying the last lines of the stanzas? Are the references to natural phenomena—wind, sun, stars, etc.—arranged in a significant order? Explain.

# 719. SONG ("SWEETEST LOVE . . .")

JOHN DONNE

7, *use*: accustom, practice.

Compare this poem with Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" (p. 733) on the same subject. How does Donne's expression of the *oneness* of true lovers in this poem compare with that in the following poem "The Good-Morrow," and "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning"?

# 720. THE GOOD-MORROW

JOHN DONNE

4, *seven sleepers' den*: a reference to the legend of the seven youths from Ephesus who hid in a cave about 250 A.D. to escape persecution as Christians and then slept for about two centuries before emerging in a world where Christianity was now honored.

18, *other: i.e., others*; the plural without *s* was common in Donne's time. 17, *hemispheres*: half spheres, which together make one sphere; the sphere was considered to be the perfect shape. 19, *was not mixt equally*: A perfect mixture of the four elements—earth, air, fire, water—produced immortality. 21, *none can die*: If the form is perfect (a sphere) and the mixture perfect, the product (the union of the lovers) is immortal.

What is the theme of this poem? How are the images of new adulthood, new morning, and new world related to this theme? Compare the image (in lines 15-17) of the lovers' discovering their respective worlds or hemispheres in each other's eyes with the image in lines 39-44 of Donne's "The Canonization" (p. 732).

## 721. THE FUNERAL

JOHN DONNE

9, *sinewy thread my brain*: the spinal cord, nervous system. 20, *reliques*: relics are objects venerated because of their association with a saint or other sacred personage. 23, *bravery*: bravado.

What are the principal images used in this poem? What is the tone of the speaker?

## 721. TO HIS COY MISTRESS

ANDREW MARVELL

7, *Humber*: Marvell lived in Hull, on the Humber river. 10, *conversion of the Jews*: used to suggest a future time almost inconceivably remote and unlikely. 11, *vegetable*: placidly growing like a plant—as contrasted with "am'rous birds of prey" in line 38. 44, *gates of life*: the reference may be to the womb and birth passage.

What are the three stages of the lover's argument? What is the dominant tone of each? How does the imagery differ in each of the three sections of the poem? Why are images of vast time and space used in the first section? How do they relate to the image of time in line 22 and image of a narrow and restricted space in line 26? Show how Marvell sometimes employs overstatement, sometimes understatement. Is the theme of the poem broader than that of a lover's petition to his mistress? Compare this poem with Archibald MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell" (p. 709).

## 722. AN ODE

MATTHEW PRIOR

Does the conventionalism in language and the regularity in structure and rhythm conceal a real emotion—or is the whole artificial? What is indicated by the reactions of Chloe and Euphelia in line 13? By the word "trembled" in line 14? What is the theme of this poem? To whom does the speaker address himself?

## 722. PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

ROBERT BROWNING

What is suggested of Porphyria's character by lines 16-19, 21-25? What is suggested by the fact that only after a number of actions on entering the cottage does she, "last," sit down by the lover's side? What is suggested of the lover's character by lines 42-44, 47-48, 53-55? To whom is the lover speaking? How does Browning use contrast for dramatic effect?

## 723. MY LAST DUCHESS

ROBERT BROWNING

3, *Frà Pandolf*: an imaginary painter. 45, *I gave commands*: When asked if this passage meant that the Duchess was put to death, Browning at first said yes, but then added "or he might have had her shut up in a convent." In any event she was, of course, now dead, or the Duke would be unable to marry again. 56, *Claus of Innsbruck*: an imaginary sculptor.

To whom is the Duke speaking? What is to be inferred about the listener's character and behavior by the Duke's responses (see lines 12-13, 43, 53-54)? What is suggested of the character of the Duchess by lines 40-41? What is the function of the art treasures—such as the painting and the bronze statue—in the poem? What is the effect of our discovering, at the end of the poem, that the Duke is arranging a second marriage? What is the tone of the poem? What is the verse form? What are the similarities and differences between this dramatic monologue and "Porphyria's Lover"?

## 724. ULYSSES

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

10, *rainy Hyades*: a group of stars, in the constellation Taurus, believed to cause rainy weather.

Ulysses, one of the Greek leaders in the Trojan War, and a ten-years' wanderer afterwards (see Homer's *Odyssey*), is shown here some time after he finally reached home. To whom is he speaking? In what mood? What is his character? Is it wholly admirable? What are his attitudes towards his wife, his son, his people? Two contrasting interpretations seem possible. First, Ulysses may be a man unwilling to subside into complacent dotage, just "killing time," when he might yet, if he tried, do "some work of noble note," seek "a newer world," and so on. Second, Ulysses may be a man who shrugs off his duties and responsibilities, leaving them to others, in order to indulge his selfish yearning for new adventures and new knowledge—since there is no indication that he will return from this proposed journey "beyond the sunset" in order to help others benefit from the different discoveries he expects to make. The one view is, in short, that Ulysses is an individualist rightly pursuing his own salvation and interests, whereas the other is that Ulysses is a self-indulgent globetrotter who shirks his social obligations. [It should be stated that Tennyson would strongly repudiate this second view. He himself said of the poem (written soon after the death of his close friend Hallam) that it gave "the feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." How far should a writer's "intention," even when definitely known, govern the interpretation and judgment of a poem?] Compare "Ulysses" with the preceding dramatic monologues by Browning. Is there any dramatic conflict in "Ulysses"?

726. SPRING AND FALL:  
TO A YOUNG CHILD  
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

2, *Goldengrove*: a grove where autumn leaves are golden. The word expresses childhood fancy and wonderment. 8, *wanwood*: a word coined by the poet to express the pale and sickly appearance of the grove losing its leaves. *Wan-* is a prefix (similar to *dis-* or *un-*) and, as adjective, it means gloomy, dark, or pale, or sad. 8, *leafmeal*: another coined word, the idea being leaf by leaf or "piecemeal." It suggests the passing of time, life's departure. 8, *worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie*: cf. *Revelations*: 10: 10-11. ". . . and there fell a great star from heaven . . . and it fell upon the third

part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; / And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." As *wanwood* suggests *wormwood*, so too it carries the burden of *wanhope*. And *leafmeal* relates to *leafmold*, which feeds growth in following seasons. 9, And yet you will weep and know why: the accented word *will* pitches the meaning to "yet you will *to* weep and *to* know why." The poem pivots on this meaning. 13, *ghost*: spirit.

What is "the blight man was born for"? List the words in the poem connotative of sadness—in *leaves* (transposed into a verb), for instance. The poem divides into four parts; what are they? Could the final line be relocated earlier in the poem? Why not? What prepares for it? What is the relationship between the metrics of the poem and what is said? "Sorrow's springs" equates with fall, and autumn's leaves with "things of man." And Goldengrove, the woods in autumn, is dispossessed of its precious gold (gold, a thing of man). What does *blight* (line 14) attach to? What, in fact, does Margaret mourn for? And how is what she mourns for symbolized? Why is it that when "heart grows older / It will come to such sights colder / By and by"? For what reason will Margaret *then* not "spare a sigh"?

726. TO AN ATHLETE DYING  
YOUNG  
A. E. HOUSMAN

Who is speaking? To whom? Are the parallels between the youth's dying and his running, between the funeral and a victory parade, consistently maintained? How is the race between time and fame (lines 19-20) related to the theme of the poem? How does the tone help prevent the poem from lapsing into sentimentality? What are some of the principal symbols in the poem?

727. THE LISTENERS  
WALTER DE LA MARE

The literal Traveler knocks on the door, but nobody answers. There is nobody there to answer, except some "phantom listeners." So much for the literal Traveler; but who is the allegorical Traveler and who are these "phantom listeners"? Their stillness, he feels, *answers* his cry (line 22). The

Traveler's eyes are gray; the door of the house is moonlit; its windowsill, like the sky, is leaf-fringed; and its dark stair goes down to an empty hall filled with invisible forms who, ghost-like, utter no sound. What is the allegorical meaning of all this? Is it possible to prove any single interpretation? What does this fable *mean*? As many things as there are readers?

## 727. PATTERNS

AMY LOWELL

What is the evidence that this poem is set in the 18th century? Is the narrator speaking or *thinking* the words of the poem? Although we are not informed of the cause of the woman's state of mind until the poem is more than half read, are there any foreshadowings that prepare us? Why is it psychologically convincing that a grieving woman might very well think of her garden and her gown in the manner shown? How many different kinds of "patterns" appear in the poem? Are there any forces, named or implicit, opposed to the various patterns? Trace the chronological pattern throughout the poem, the sequence

of past, present, future. What is the theme of the poem? What are some of the symbols used? What use is made of repetition?

## 729. MR. FLOOD'S PARTY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

8, Tilbury Town: The name Robinson used in his poems for Gardiner, Maine. 11, the poet says: See the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, stanza 7. 20, like Roland's ghost: This has been explained in different ways. One explanation is that the allusion is to the ending of Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" (see p. 778). Another is that the reference is to Roland, the famous knight of medieval romance—and more particularly to Roland sounding his horn in the pass of Roncesvalles to summon Charlemagne and his army from the valley below. Whichever is right, Robinson's purpose is clear—to invoke a combination of incongruity and relevance, comedy and pathos, in a suggestive ambivalence.

What other examples of a similar nature are employed by the poet? Compare the tone of this poem with that of "Miniver Cheevy" by the same poet (p. 748).

v. *The Poem as Analogy*

*The poems in this section create their meanings by comparisons between one thing and another, as in Spenser's "My love is like to ice, and I to fire." The comparison in the poem is not concealed; on the contrary, it is clearly stated. The whole poem, in terms of structure, is neither more nor less than an analogy. All poetry is of course made of comparisons—"simple or complex, open or concealed. The richness of poetry," to quote Mr. J. Isaacs, "is obtained by mixing or interweaving or juxtaposing these comparisons. The mixture is either a mechanical mixture or a chemical mixture: when the mechanical becomes chemical the explosion takes place. That is the difference between prose and poetry. In prose all comparisons are simple and uncompounded. In poetry all metaphors are mixed metaphors."*

## 730. ARS POETICA

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

Divide the poem into its three parts. In part one the first couplet contains an abstract statement in the first line followed by a concrete image as illustration: "a globed fruit." What other couplets in the poem use this same pattern?

How many of the images are circular objects, or objects suggesting a curve? Lines 9 and 10 are repeated in lines 15 and 16. Can you justify the repetition of this couplet? Has the statement contained in the couplet anything to do with the reason for repeating this burden as refrain?

The title means, of course, *the art of poetry*. What are the three qualities a poem should possess, according to MacLeish? Does his *own* poem contain all three?

## 730. THREE SONNETS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

730. "SHALL I COMPARE THEE . . ." 7, every fair from fair: every beauty from its beauty. 8, untrimm'd: stripped, despoiled. 9, owest: ownest.

731. "FULL MANY A GLORIOUS MORNING . . ." 12, region cloud: cloud of the upper air.

731. "THAT TIME OF YEAR . . ." 12, Consumed . . . nourished by: Choked by the ashes of the wood that has fed the fire.

In the first of these sonnets, is the person addressed *compared* with a summer's day? What is the paradox involved in the basic analogy? Why is it that her "eternal summer shall not fade" (line 8)? That "it shall not fade" is redundant since her summer is, the poet says, "eternal,"—but what makes her summer "eternal"?

Compare the various analogies employed in these three sonnets. Which seems to be the most successful poem? Explain. Compare the themes of the three poems.

731. "MY LOVE IS LIKE TO ICE . . ."  
EDMUND SPENSER

Spenser's "Amoretti" is a sequence of love sonnets addressed to Elizabeth Boyle during the poet's courtship of her. Whereas Elizabeth Browning's love sonnet (p. 736) presents definitions, Spenser's poem defines love by metaphor, by concrete analogy. Here a single analogy suffices. How is the conclusion (lines 13-14) prepared for?

732. THE CANONIZATION  
JOHN DONNE

7, stamped face: on coins. The contrast suggested is between a career at court and a career in business. 15, plaguy bill: the weekly list of persons who died of the plague. 22, eagle and the dove: symbols of strength and purity, respectively. 23, phoenix: a legendary bird, symbol of immortality, which lived a thousand years, burned itself to death in a nest of spices, and rose new-born from its own ashes. 30, legend: a term applied in Donne's day to the biographical account of a saint's life. It contrasts with "sonnets" (l. 32), frequently used in series by lovers—e.g., Spenser's *Amoretti*, etc.—to "chronicle" the "history" of their love. 33, becomes: suits.

The fundamental analogy on which the poem is built is between lovers and holy anchorites who renounce the secular, practical world for a better one—but the better world for the lovers is one of love, not piety. To whom does the speaker address himself? How does the tone of his remarks change through the first three stanzas? How important in the poem is the symbol of the phoenix? Could the lovers be said to die

to the mundane world in order to rise to a new and better one of their own? Note that in the closing lines of the poem the lovers are said to gain the whole world—"countries, towns, courts." Why, according to the speaker, will other lovers pray to them for assistance?

733. A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING  
JOHN DONNE

9, Moving of th' earth: either earthquakes or the motion of the earth around the sun according to the new Copernican astronomy—both alarming to Donne's contemporaries. 11, trepidation of the spheres: a concept from the old Ptolemaic astronomy, referring to the motion of the outermost sphere (that of the fixed stars) believed to cause the "innocent" or harmless variation in the date of the equinox. 13, sublunary: below the sphere of the moon—that is, on earth—all is imperfect and mortal; above it, throughout the spheres, all is perfect, immortal, immutable. 16, elemented: constituted, composed. 26, stiff twin compasses: a pair of dividers. 35, just: perfect.

The poem opens on a comparison between the manner of dying and the manner of loving, and the comparison is based upon a concealed pun—a pun on the idea of dying as the equivalent of loving, as the verb *to die* in the Elizabethan period sometimes carried the meaning of "the act of love-making." In what way is this comparison echoed in the remaining seven stanzas? How is the defining theme of the metaphysical poets, the theme of two in one, embodied in Donne's famous compass analogy in lines 21-36? And how again in the following poem, "The Definition of Love" (lines 25-28) by Andrew Marvell.

734. THE DEFINITION OF LOVE  
ANDREW MARVELL

14, close: unite. 24, planisphere: a map of the globe projected on a plane or flat surface. The opposite poles of the earth could be united only if the round globe was "compressed" into a flat two-dimensional disc. 31-32, conjunction . . . opposition: terms from astrology. Stars in conjunction are close together in the sky and unite their influence; in opposition they are far apart and the influences clash. 32, the stars: used also in the sense of "Fate."

Donne's poem (above) depicts the union of lovers, united even in their division. Marvell's poem shows, as it were, the other side of the coin. In both poems an idea is embodied in astronomical and mathematical imagery.

Marvell's lovers share a "conjunction of the mind" (line 31), but also an "opposition of the stars" (line 32); the lover is thus divided in his union with his beloved. For what reason is their union in flesh an impossibility? What is his conception of love? And hers? How is the final line prepared for? Explain line 19: "love's whole world on us doth wheel." Why then "Two perfect loves" (line 14)? Notice that the "act of love-making" is *abstractly* imaged, not sensuously so, in the ironic definition of his Love:

It was begotten by Despair  
Upon Impossibility.

734. "THERE IS A GARDEN IN HER FACE"

THOMAS CAMPION

7, "Cherry ripe": the cry of London street vendors.

734. TO THE VIRGINS . . .

ROBERT HERRICK

Compare this poem with "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell, p. 721.

735. TO HELEN

EDGAR ALLAN POE

2, *Nicaean*: various conjectures have been offered about the meaning of this term, but none has won universal acceptance. 7, *hyacinth*: a common Homeric adjective, usually meaning "golden." 16, *Psyche*: the soul.

Poe stated that the poem was addressed to Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard and commemorated "the first purely ideal love of my soul." Mrs. Stanard died in 1824, when Poe was in his middle teens. What is the subject of the poem? Is Poe describing Helen or his own "awakening" to several aspects of his own nature? In their first version, lines 9-10 read as follows: "To the beauty of fair Greece / And the grandeur of old Rome." Explain why these lines are inferior to the final version.

735. TO MARGUERITE.

(1) ISOLATION

(2) "YES: IN THE SEA OF LIFE ENISLED"

MATTHEW ARNOLD

20, *Luna*: the moon-goddess. 23, *Endymion*: a beautiful youth kissed by the moon as he lay asleep on Mount Latmus.

In Switzerland during 1848-9 Arnold fell in love with a French girl but parted from her. How much of the feelings expressed are personal, and how much fictional, cannot be determined.

In poem No. 1 is the emotion expressed before it has been adequately prepared for? What grounds are there for arguing that poem No. 1 is inferior to poem No. 2? Compare "Dover Beach" (see p. 862) with "To Marguerite," particularly lines 7-12 in poem No. 2. The "Sea of Faith" in "Dover Beach" is here the "sea of life." What is it unites or *enisles* us in the sea? What is fully meant by *unplumb'd* and *estranging* in the final image? Is the imaged situation in this poem an adequate one for the evoked idea and emotion?

736. "HOW DO I LOVE THEE . . ."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

*Sonnets from the Portuguese*, a sequence of sonnets about the poet's own life and love for Robert Browning, was published anonymously. The phrase "from the Portuguese" was used in an attempt to disguise the personal element in what pretended to be a translation. Are the intangibles and abstractions by which the poet tries to express the degree or intensity of her love successful in communicating sincerity of emotion? Would simpler, concrete images and analogies have been more convincing? Defend your opinion. Compare this poem with Marvell's "The Definition of Love" (p. 734), a poem on a very similar theme. Also with Spenser's sonnet on p. 731.

736. "THUS PITEOUSLY LOVE CLOSED . . ."

GEORGE MEREDITH

This is the fiftieth and concluding poem in the sequence "Modern Love." See the note (on p. 897) to Meredith's "We Saw the Swallows Gathering. . . ."

In subject (the "union of this ever-diverse pair") Meredith's poem bears resemblance

to the Donne and Marvell poems discussed above. This poem, however, is a short story or novel compressed into sonnet form. Is it "dramatic" in the sense that Donne and Marvell are dramatic, namely in the sense of the drama of a mind thinking through an argument, a process of thought spinning upon a premise?

Where is the speaker situated? Why the phrase "buried day" (line 8)? What is suggested in the contrasted images of *falcon* and *bat* (lines 3, 4)? Is this poem a true sonnet? Explain.

### 737. "SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE . . ."

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

What is gained (or lost) by the shift from the analogy with war to the analogy with the sea? What is the *struggle* referred to? In line 8, does the phrase "but for you" mean "that only you are left on the field to fight on," or "that your comrades would now be victorious on the field if you had helped"? Does the ambiguity weaken or strengthen the poem? Is the tone of the poem one of hope or despair?

### 737. AUTUMNUS

JOSHUA SYLVESTER

What is the analogy? Here a leaf, personified, images man's plight. Is personification employed in the following poem by Herbert? Whereas Herbert's "Virtue" presents three images by analogy, Sylvester's poem makes use of only one. The marvel here is how Sylvester has put to the utmost use his single analogy.

### 737. VIRTUE

GEORGE HERBERT

Herbert refers to three things for provoking reflection upon the commonplace: the impermanence of life. A contradiction or "reversal" sets the third line in each stanza turning upon or against the opening couplet, with the final line presenting an analogy. There is the same "turnabout" in stanza 4, but this one is unexpected. How has it been prepared for nevertheless?

### 738. TO DAFFODILS

ROBERT HERRICK

8, even-song: evening church service.

Are the analogies between the daffodils and human beings convincing? What other

analogies are used? Compare the treatment of life's transience in this poem with that in the poem by Freneau which follows. Compare also Wordsworth's poem on daffodils, pp. 768-769.

### 738. THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE

PHILIP FRENEAU

What basis for analogy exists between Freneau's poem and Herrick's "To Daffodils"? What are the differences between this poem and Shakespeare's sonnets, or Spenser's sonnet (pp. 730, 731)? Is this poem "sentimental"—any more so than Herrick's?

### 738. THE ROBIN

GEORGE DANIEL

What grounds has the speaker for contentment (lines 7-10)? Why is the robin fit emblem of the poet's plight? What, in fact, *is* the poet's plight? Does he become sentimental about his situation? Or about the bird used as analogy? Does the poem belie the modest conclusion (lines 39-40)? How much sympathy from the reader is asked for by this poem? For instance:

I hear thee, pretty creature, bring  
Thy better odes of praise, and sing,  
To puzzle men. . . .

Does a robin, one might ask, perform in the miraculous manner here described? Is the symbol in excess of the literal situation? Do we readily assent in sympathy with the *poetic* situation? But if we are hard naturalists demanding a *realistic* situation, what then happens to the analogy in this poem? We acquiesce momentarily, suspending belief until the motion-picture ends, but what remains once the lights are turned on? Fact or fancy?

### 739. TO A WATERFOWL

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

Here, as in Daniel's "The Robin," man and bird are compared. One difference is that in Daniel's lyric it is not every man that is compared with the particular bird but man as poet. Is the comparison in Bryant's eulogy of the waterfowl more subtle than Daniel's address to the robin? Does Bryant's poem end, "legitimately," with the sixth stanza? Is there any shift in the point of time and view, in stanza 7: "Thou'rt gone. . . ."



## 740. DAYS

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Is the fundamental image in the poem—that of a procession—consistently maintained? Why does Emerson call the Days “muffled and dumb” (line 2)? How does this phrase, in conjunction with their offering of gifts (line 5), help to explain the *hypocritic* attribute in the opening line? What is the theme of the poem?

## 740. THE BOURNE

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

What use does the poet make of images of space, if any? Is there any metaphor in the poem?

## 740. I. M. MARGARITAE SORORI

W. E. HENLEY

The title means “In Memoriam: to his sister Margaret.”

How complete is the analogy between the sun and the man in the third stanza? Does the detail of “wages taken” apply to the sun as well as to the man? Why is *sundown* (line 22) superior to *sunset*?

## 741. THE CONDEMNED

P. K. PAGE

In a manner not too unlike that of Kafka in “A Hunger-Artist” (p. 312), this poem uses an apparently “realistic” narrative framework to produce an allegorical effect. One possible interpretation relates the “realistic” details to the coming together of two lovers—the first faint indications of

the rise of love between them, the tentative physical contact, the glow of acknowledged love, followed by the disillusion under the light of everyday living. Another finds a possibly broader meaning in the poem—the allegory is that of the relationship of any one individual to others: each individual, isolated in his unique cell of body and soul, must try to establish communication and union with another, but eventually all will be forced back into solipsism, into their own “stark identities—all they had left.” How successful is the analogy of the prison? What is possibly symbolized by the warden? How effective is the imagery in the poem? Comment on the use of rhyme and near-rhyme. Compare this poem with Poe’s “The City in the Sea” (p. 705).

## 742. BIRCHES

ROBERT FROST

Trace through the poem the alternation between the imaginative and the logical or scientific approaches to the subject matter. In what way are the birch trees employed as a symbol? Discuss the simile in lines 44-47. What verse-form does Frost use?

## 743. TREE AT MY WINDOW

ROBERT FROST

Explain “Vague dream-head” (line 5). The talk of the tree, says the speaker, could not be profound. Is his own speech profound, meaningful? Does stanza 3 indicate a theory about the source of poetic profundity? At what point does the analogy between tree and man begin in this poem? How is the analogy *structurally* the poem?

## vi. The Poem as Mood

In these poems an emotion or mood is evoked, the thought or idea is subordinated to the evoked mood or feeling, and the connection of images within the poem is psychological rather than logical, though in some instances both kinds of unification are present. In Nashe's "Adieu; farewell earth's bliss," for example, one part of the poem relates to another psychologically in terms of contrasted moods, these shifts in moods constituting "a psychological progression" rather than a logical one.

The poems in this section evoke moods ranging from joy, as in Blake's "The Piper," to sorrow, in Nashe's "Adieu; farewell earth's bliss"; from nostalgia and wonderment, in Housman's "Loveliest of trees," to desperate longing, in "Western wind"; from a mood of bitter resentment, in Owen's "Futility," to hurt bewilderment, in Joyce's "I hear an army charging."

## 744. GOD'S GRANDEUR

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Is this simply a poem of exalted wonder, or are other moods present also? What manifestations of the "grandeur" are suggested by line 2? By line 3? What reason does Hopkins suggest that may account for modern disregard of the deity (line 4)? What has happened to the world? To man? How does Hopkins use the night-morning image to suggest that man's abuse of the soil will not last? Is the word *foil* (line 2) borrowed from metalworking or from fencing, or both? Is it related to *rod* in line 4? What is the meaning of *spent* (line 9)? Why is the world described as *bent* (13)? What effect is obtained by repetition of words and sounds in lines 5, 6, and 7? By the interjection *ah!* in the last line of the poem?

## 745. "LOVELIEST OF TREES . . ."

A. E. HOUSMAN

Does the second stanza provide contrast? How is the final stanza prepared for by the mathematics of lines 5-8? Is the cherry actually "hung with snow"? Or is it that the cherry wears white petals that appear as a mass of snow? Is the season winter or spring? Is there any allegorical intention in the final phrase: "hung with snow" (line 12)? Or in "Eastertide" (line 4)?

745. "WESTERN WIND, WHEN  
WILT THOU BLOW"

ANONYMOUS

How does the cry for rain relate to the mood of loneliness? The poem is built upon an analogy. Can you define it? The romantic invocation to the wind contrasts with the realistic cry. But what has the wind to do with the lover's plight?

745. "ADIEU; FAREWELL EARTH'S  
BLISS"

THOMAS NASHE

4, Fond: Foolish. 14, Helen: the Helen over whom the Trojan War was fought. 23, Hector: a son of King Priam, and the bravest of the Trojan heroes. 36, degree: social rank.

What feature of human life is evaluated in each stanza? Is the mood of the poem one of regret or of anticipation? What is meant by: "Brightness falls from the air" (line 17)? And by: "Earth still holds open her gate" (line 25)?

The mood of the poem is evoked by its falling rhythm, the same "falling" meter that Hopkins uses in his "Spring and Fall" (see pp. 726 and 904). Again, this poem is notable in the history of poetry because of its structure. It is constructed of parallel images, and the images are disconnected one from another. No logic links them. Their "connection" is but *felt*—felt psychologically. Their sequence is interchangeable in terms of logic, and yet their sequence *seems* "inevitable." Examine this principle in stanza 3, for instance. Compare the method of construction in Dylan Thomas's "Fern Hill" (p. 689). Contrast Nashe's poem with Housman's "Loveliest of Trees," (p. 745) to see at once the difference. This point is important, for you cannot properly appreciate or judge Nashe's poem by the same standards as Housman's.

## 746. "WHEN I HAVE FEARS . . ."

JOHN KEATS

Do lines 5-8 serve to advance the thought beyond lines 1-4, or merely to repeat it? What is suggested by the phrase "magic hand of chance" (line 8)? How does *unreflecting* (line 12) relate to *think* (line

13)? Is the image in lines 12-13 an effective conclusion? Why? Define the poet's mood or moods through the poem.

#### 746. THE WOODSPURGE DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

How does this poem use imagery to evoke a psychological state of mind? The time of the poem is the moment just after the movement of the wind has stopped. What has stopped is time. Time has stopped because the lover has lost his beloved. The poet creates this idea by symbol: "The wind flapped loose." Rossetti's image converts invisible wind into something visible, tangible, plastic. Like the wind, the beloved lies still, torn loose from him who had "walked on at the wind's will"; like the wind, she has been "Shaken out dead from tree and hill" (line 2). It is as though her death has paralyzed Nature.

The first stanza presents the scene as a painter would paint it. (Rossetti was himself a painter, and the founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of painters. Some of his paintings are analogies of his poems.) The influence of sculpture on Rossetti is evidenced in the second stanza of "The Woodspurge." The sculptured posture of the lover signifies his grief. The range of his view is restricted to a small space, and the time is restricted to a single moment. It is a moment of his perception of the woodspurge flowering "three cups in one." It is a moment of grief, and, at the same time, it is a moment of insight, if not wisdom, sprung from his grief, flowering like the woodspurge from the weeds. It is the moment of "perfect grief" because of this flowering, this insight which is his consolation for the lost beloved: "The woodspurge has a cup of three." This symbol resists paraphrase, but, according to one interpretation, a trinity of relationship is suggested—a mystic identity between Nature, the lost beloved, and the grief-stricken lover seems symbolized by the three-cupped woodspurge. Has the woodspurge flowered before his eyes, or is it that it was always there but had not been noticed until now? The ambiguity of lines 11-12 is purposeful: "The woodspurge flowered." One wonders why "ten weeds"? Can you explain the meaning of: "My naked ears heard the day pass"?

Contrast the mood in this poem with those in the poems on daffodils by Herrick and Wordsworth (pp. 738, 768).

#### 746. "I HEAR AN ARMY CHARGING . . ."

JAMES JOYCE

What justifies the nightmare atmosphere of this poem? Could the final two lines just as well open the poem as close it? Do they explain the dream? What answer is there to the rhetorical question: "My heart, have you no wisdom to despair?" This poem, consciously or unconsciously, echoes Freudian symbolism. Examples? What is the motivating situation? Is the emotion expressed here excessive? Contrast the mood of Joyce's poem with that of Rossetti's "The Woodspurge."

#### 747. FUTILITY WILFRED OWEN

W. B. Yeats' private opinion of Owen's poetry—"unworthy of the poet's corner of a country newspaper"—is refuted by the fact of Owen's importance in modern poetry, his achievement in two or three poems ("Futility" being one of these), and the acclaim he receives from other poets or critics. At his worst, Owen is imitative of Keats, but the war (World War I, in which Owen was killed—just two weeks before the Armistice), as Louis MacNeice says, "dissolved the Keats in Owen and made him a far finer poet than he would—probably—otherwise have been. . . ." Yeats' label—"He is all blood, dirt & sucked sugar stick"—is unfair both to the man and his poetic talent. "Futility" has the blood and dirt in it, but where is the "sugar stick"?

If Owen is traditionally poetic in imagery and epithets, he is nevertheless an innovator in technique, particularly in experiments in rhyme. Auden and other poets have studied Owen, whose "Futility" provides an early model of the use of consonance and assonance in place of conventional "true-rhyme." (An example of true or perfect rhyme is: *snow/ know*.) In "consonantal rhyme" there is a felt agreement or consonance of sounds in the syllables following the vowels of different words. (An example of consonance: *seeds/ sides*.) In assonance there is a felt identity in the vowel sounds of different words. (Example: *sun/ once*.) "Futility" employs all three types of rhyming: *sun/ once; unsown/ know* (assonance); *once/ France; seeds/ sides; star/ stir; tall/ toil* (consonance); *snow/ know; tall/ all* (true-

rhyme). Furthermore, it employs internal rhyme by the assonance of the vowel *o* in such words as *awoke* (lines 2, 4, and 9); and in *now* and *rouse* (line 5). These cross-patterns bind the words of the poem together, and subtly so. The point is worth making because the poem that does not seem to rhyme is for many readers no poem at all. If the rhymes in this poem are ambiguous, so is the metre and the meaning. What is the poet saying?

Why is the sun called "the kind old sun"? In what ways is the sun *kind*? Why are sunbeams given the epithet *fatuous*? Is

the basic conceit or conceptual idea of the poem *fatuous* or ironic? Romantic or naturalistic, fantasy or fact? What is the mood of the poem?

#### 747. THE LAST FRONTIER

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

What is meant by "the last frontier"? In mood and theme what resemblance has Fletcher's poem to Owen's "Futility"? And in mood and portrayal of characters what resemblance has it to Crane's short story "The Uprturned Face" (see p. 52)?

### vii. The Poem as Satire

#### 748. MINIVER CHEEVY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

11, *Thebes*: Greek city famous in the Peloponnesian and other wars. 11, *Camelot*: King Arthur's capital. 12, *Priam*: king of Troy during the Trojan War. 17, *Medici*: A family in Florence during the Renaissance, famous both for their patronage of art and learning and for some unsavory activities.

What effect is achieved by the use of shorter lines to conclude each stanza? Is the subject of the poem an individual or a type?

#### 748. NEWSREEL

C. DAY LEWIS

Is this a satire on moviegoers only? Why is the comparison between the moviehouse and an aquarium tank an effective one? What is achieved by the repetition in lines 19-20, and in 24-25? What is the theme of the poem?

#### 749. THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN

W. H. AUDEN

Is an individual or a society being satirized? Is the time the present or the future? Explain. Comment on the connection between line 4, lines 20-24, and 28-29. Explain the change of rhythm that begins in line 14. Compare the theme and tone of this poem with those of the two preceding poems. Compare also with Cummings' "Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town" (p. 885).

#### 750. DIRGE

KENNETH FEARING

Define the activities, values, way of life, and the death of the stereotype whose dirge is here sung. What is suggested by the indication that the pall-bearers are strangers to one another and indifferent to the deceased? What is achieved by the use of such words as *wow*, *blooie*, *zowie*, *bong*, etc.? Compare this satire with the others preceding it. Can you justify the form of this poem as in keeping with its subject?

#### 751. TO A SINISTER POTATO

PETER VIERECK

1, *earth-apple*: the French term for potato, *pomme de terre*, literally means "apple of earth."

What indicates that the poet is using the potato symbolically? What does the "sinister potato" symbolize? Comment on *lours* (in the last line of the poem).

#### 751. ON THE VANITY OF EARTHLY GREATNESS

ARTHUR GUITERMAN

Is there any logic in the selection of mastodon, Charlemagne, grizzly bear, and Caesar? Should there be any necessarily? Would other examples have served as well as the four selected? Explain.

#### 751. "NEXT TO OF COURSE GOD"

E. E. CUMMINGS

What effect is achieved by the omission of capitalization and punctuation? By the

fragmentary phrases? By the last line? Is it significant that the poem is written as a sonnet?

## 752. THE LATEST DECALOGUE

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

Compare the Ten Commandments—*Exodus* 20:3-17; *Deuteronomy* 5:7-21. Is the attitude shown in this poem one of mockery, cynicism, grief, or wrath? Explain.

## 752. HEAVEN

RUPERT BROOKE

There are many literary echoes in this poem—e.g., compare lines 9-10 with the following from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, "O, yet we trust that somehow good/Will be the final goal of ill." Is the impact of

Brooke's poem much reduced even if the echoes are not positively identified? Why, or why not? What is the target of Brooke's satire?

## 753. WHITE CHRISTMAS

W. R. RODGERS

18, Feeds the five thousand: Refers to the miracle of the loaves and fishes; see *Mark* 6:35-44.

Compare this satirical comment on one aspect of modern Christian culture with that in Clough's "The Latest Decalogue." Which displays the greater emotion? Explain. What is achieved by the repetition of "punctually" at the beginning of each stanza? Comment on the diction and imagery of the poem.

## viii. The Poem and Its Parody

## 754. THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

What characteristics of the pastoral convention are employed by Marlowe? What is the tone of the poem? How effective is "The Nymph's Reply" of Raleigh's poem?

## 755. "COME LIVE WITH ME AND BE MY LOVE"

C. DAY LEWIS

Why does Lewis single out for parody the most famous of Elizabethan pastorals? Is it not because Marlowe's poem represents the most familiar and perfect example of "pure" poetry, of Art disengaged from Life? Lewis's mockery of Marlowe's theme of "the invitation to love"—the literary device which that poem initiated and which has persisted down to our own time—is intended as a criticism of the tradition of "pure" poetry. To Lewis, "The Passionate Shepherd" expresses the escapism of the poet of middle-class culture into a world of make-believe. His satire is directed against all poets who fashion a poetry of escape.

From the opening invitation to take an emotional trip to Arcadia we are shocked back to the reality

Of peace and plenty, bed and board,  
That chance employment may afford.

The literary and social satire of Marlowe's facile optimism mocks at every word its counterpart. The ironies point to the intention of the parody: the irony in the prettiness of "dainties" and the mock alliteration (line 5); the irony in "thou shalt not read [in advertisements] of summer frocks" (a humorous play on the original rhyme); the ironic disparity between pastoral and city life in the grotesque comedy of "madrigals" "by the sour canals" (a biting commentary on a civilization of shepherds in overalls); the grim pun on the word "tire" (line 12)—a word often used in Elizabethan times for "attire" or "dress"; the grating discords of the parody as contrasted with the liquid music of the original; the mockery of the pure paintbox method of Marlowe, which Lewis discards in the last stanzas for the bald facts:

Hunger shall make thy modest zone  
And cheat fond death of all but bone.

For the modern shepherd there is no escape; the modern poet, Lewis insists, must face realities.

In what way does Lewis's answer to Marlowe resemble Raleigh's? In what way does it differ?

755. "NEARING AGAIN THE  
LEGENDARY ISLE"

C. DAY LEWIS

This poem is not a parody of the preceding poem by Lang, but the two poems do offer sharply contrasting attitudes towards similar subject matter. Define these attitudes. Contrast the two poems also with the following poem by Manifold, and with Keats' "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" (p. 763).

## 756. THE SIRENS

JOHN MANIFOLD

2, Wolf, Weinberger, Morley: Hugo Wolf (1860-1903), German composer; Jaromir Weinberger (1896- ), Czech composer; and Thomas Morley (1557-1603), English composer.

What is the theme of this poem? What is its tone? Is the poet mocking Homer or commenting on modern life?

## II: The Poem and the Creative Process

## 762. POETRY AND THE POET

ELIZABETH DREW

762, 9. "Q": Sir Arthur Quiller Couch (1863-1944), British professor, critic, and novelist. 763, 5. *la belle dame sans merci*: See the poem, by John Keats, on p. 657.

Though Elizabeth Drew focusses her discussion on poetry, her account of how the imaginative or creative mind operates on experience to produce literature is equally applicable to other forms of literary art, in prose as well as poetry. What are some of the similarities and differences between the factual and the literary expression of the experiences described in turn first by Clarke and Keats; by Dorothy Wordsworth and William Wordsworth; by Clarke and Dorothy Wordsworth; by Keats and William Wordsworth? (Note that in the two prose accounts some material has been omitted from the text because of irrelevancy, but even of what remains the two poets chose to ignore some material included by the two prose writers.) What kind of information do the poets consider irrelevant—and why?

763. ON FIRST LOOKING INTO  
CHAPMAN'S HOMER

JOHN KEATS

4, Apollo: the god of poetry. 8, Chapman: George Chapman (1559?-1634), poet and dramatist. His translation of the *Iliad* was first published in 1611, the *Odyssey* in 1614-15. The book Keats read with Clarke was a folio edition of 1616.

Explain the effectiveness of the imagery of space and movement in the octave or first eight lines of the sonnet in contrast with that of space and immobility in the sestet.

Why do you suppose Keats ended his poem with the image of Cortez rather than with that of the "watcher of the skies," even though stellar space is more "unlimited" than even the great Pacific? Why is the final version of line 7—"Yet never did I breathe its pure serene"—much better than the first version—"Yet could I never judge what men could mean"? The words *realm*, *fealty*, and *demesne* suggest medieval feudalism rather than ancient Greece; are they therefore inappropriate in the diction of the poem? It was Balboa, not Cortez, who discovered the Pacific. Does the error in fact affect the value of the poem? If not, why not?

768. "I WANDERED LONELY AS A  
CLOUD"

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Dorothy Wordsworth's journal shows that the poet was *not* alone at the time of seeing the daffodils. What dramatic effect is achieved by the poet's depicting himself as a lonely figure? From a study of the epithets applied to the daffodils and to the poet, show how the dramatization is accomplished. Why does the poet personify the daffodils? Compare the vowel sounds in lines 1 and 2 with those, for instance, in lines 23 and 24. Explain the difference in effect. Does the last stanza "draw a moral" or does it extend the experience being presented?

## 769. CHAPMAN'S HOMER

1, Samothrace: an island in the Aegean Sea, northeast of Troy. 3, Priam's city: Priam was king of Troy. 3, Achive: *i.e.*, Greek. 3, Ida: mountain near Troy. 10, Aegae: Neptune's palace was located in the

depths of the sea near Ægae, a city on the Corinthian Gulf in Greece. 770, 25, Phacacia: the Homeric island of Scheria, supposedly modern Corfu. 4, She: Pallas Athene, powerful Greek goddess, patron of Ulysses.

In his translation of the *Iliad* Chapman uses a fourteen-syllable line, rhyming in couplets; in his *Odyssey* he uses ten-syllable couplets—basically the same form Pope used a little over a hundred years later. What are the weaknesses and strengths of each? It is possible that the *golden* and *gold* epithets applied to Neptune found an echo in Keats' phrase: *realms of gold*. Compare and contrast the kind of diction and use of detail in the descriptions by Chapman and Pope of Ulysses' adventure.

### 777. KUBLA KHAN S. T. COLERIDGE

Does the visionary or dream origin of this poem affect its value? (If you think it does, would you say the same thing about a mathematical or chemical discovery in a dream? Such discoveries are part of the history of science. But only good poets and good scientists have dreams that turn out to be good poetry or good science.) Does the last section of the poem (lines 37 ff.) suggest that the poem is partly about the creative power of music and of song, the ability of poetry to recreate the wondrous but lost world of Kubla Khan? Comment on the shifts in rhythm in the poem, the use of repetition, and the character of the imagery. Can you reduce this poem to any theme or meaning?

### 778. "CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME" ROBERT BROWNING

Title: "Childe" is a title of gentility. 68, bents: "bent" is a kind of grass. 114, bespate: spattered. 135, mews: an enclosure, den, etc. 142, Tophet: outer darkness, hell. 160, Apollyon: destroying angel, the Devil. 161, dragon-penned: dragon-feathered; "pen" is (now) archaic for quill or feather. 202, slug-horn: trumpet.

Is this poem a dream told by the dreamer on awakening, or is it a narrative of an experience told to a listener afterwards, or is it a kind of "stream of consciousness" taking place as Roland rides along? Various interpretations of the poem have been

made, depending on the answers to such questions as: What does the Tower represent? Who is the "hoary cripple"? Is he the figure of Death telling the reluctant individual that "this is where you turn off," so to speak—and therefore all Roland has left is to attempt an unfaltering and brave death? (In this interpretation the squat tower becomes the grave or crypt.) Is the cripple the Devil, leading men astray from the true path? (By this view the tower becomes the gates of hell.) Is the cripple, on the other hand, a beneficent figure, desiring to help the stalwart traveller? Are the regions through which Roland passes arranged in a significant sequence—each an area revealing signs of death from different causes (starvation, violence, torture, disease, etc.)?

What do we learn of Roland's character? What do you suppose happened after the "slug-horn's" challenge rang out? Does it matter that we are not enlightened? Does a knowledge of the probable sources of the poem help us understand its meaning?

For another poem inspired by the poet's reading, see the discussion of the writing of Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (pp. 762-767).

### 800. THE RAVEN

EDGAR ALLAN POE

41, Pallas: Pallas Athene, Greek goddess of wisdom. 47, Plutonian: Pluto was king of the Underworld. 82, nepenthe: a drug to relieve pain or sorrow. 89, balm in Gilead: see *Jeremiah* 8:22. 93, Aidenn: Eden, with spelling altered for the sake of the rhyme. 106, lamplight . . . shadow: bracket candleabra were in Poe's day sometimes attached to a wall above the door.

Compare this poem with Rossetti's "The Blessed Damsel" (p. 706) and the note to that poem on pp. 897-898.

### 810. THE TIGER

WILLIAM BLAKE

Who is the speaker in the poem? What is his attitude? Is this a description of a tiger, or is the tiger a symbol? If so, of what? In the process of creating his poem, as shown in the two drafts, did Blake revise his ideas as he wrote or merely strive for greater power and economy in expression? What ideas or phrases which appear in the original draft are omitted in the final version? Comment on these omissions.

## III: The Poem and the Reader

847. HOW TO CRITICIZE A POEM  
THEODORE SPENCER

What qualities in the methods and language of some contemporary critics does Spencer burlesque? Notice the errors in the allusions to *Oedipus Rex*, the *Iliad*, and the *Aeneid*. What other similar errors does Spencer introduce?

856. ODE ON MELANCHOLY  
JOHN KEATS

1, *Lethæ*: river of forgetfulness in Hades. 2ff., *Wolf's-bane*, etc.: things traditionally associated with melancholy. 4. *Proserpine*: the daughter of Demeter (goddess of earth) and of Jupiter. She was abducted by Pluto, king of the underworld, to be his queen, and as such become one

of the deities of death. 7, *Psyche*: soul. 8, *mysteries*: here used in its meaning of the rites or practices of an esoteric cult. 17, *globed peonies*: the petals of a mature, apparently perfect peony can "collapse" all at once if shaken.

862. DOVER BEACH REVISITED  
THEODORE MORRISON

What types of critics are represented by Charty, Dewing, Twitchell, Mole, Hale, and Prampton? Is there significance in the passages singled out for special thought by each of them? What is the point of view of the author himself? Is the ending inconclusive? Why, or why not? Does the answer depend upon what kind of critic you yourself are? What is your opinion of Arnold's poem?



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