

# MIDDLESEX

*A Literary Journal*



A PUBLICATION OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY COLLEGE

Volume One

Number Five

December 2012



# MIDDLESEX

*A Literary Journal*



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**Middlesex:** a literary journal

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***MIDDLESEX***, a literary journal, is published annually by Middlesex County College

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**LOVE SONG**

between everything I have to do,  
I think of you. I have no right to,  
but delight to hear your voice,  
to memorize your face,  
your nonchalance, your bones.  
you conjure sculpture out of stones.

better to keep good fences in repair?  
I find sufficient fences everywhere.  
better deafen ears to Sirens' song?  
I heard no music till you came along.  
I have the map, but don't know where to go.  
you hold the legend that I long to know.

**STONE SOUP**

stories, ever protean,  
stay now;  
lies, partial,  
deploy  
amorphous futures.

Samson's hair grows back  
despite Delilah.  
Philistines, fake proof  
checked at the door,  
file in, every time, to feast.

eat this, the big guy says.  
enjoy the garnish.

**INSIDE STORY**

Oh, my insides,  
Ereshkigal cried.  
Oh, your insides,  
the kurgurra & galatur replied.  
the Queen of Hell took this  
for sympathy, & let Inanna go.  
bad things can happen to the heart  
the gods long ago decided.  
tell us the story everyone knows.

Oh, my insides,  
the white heart sighs,  
smelling the Spring, melting.  
no reply. nothing serious.  
let her go, the crocuses say,  
the lilacs say, dying.  
let earth decide  
the cycle of the flowers.  
she can see where wishes grow

**A ROOM WITH A LOOM**

from a tangled web a tapestry  
retangled, a promise made but kept  
askew, imbalance the essence  
of the dance, the dancer,  
meanwhile, coolly adept  
at her circumference.

what she knew she knew.  
rehearsal without a partner,  
blue on blue. needle through star,  
back through another. repeat.  
Odysseus her Elvis on velvet,  
new to the Zodiac.

then he shambled in,  
scruffy, longing in the face  
of atrophy for action,  
himself having woven  
time & again, the threads  
of his charmed story.

wool from a black sheep  
a blanket for their bed.

**FAIR'S FAIR**

God discovered death when Eve's perfect teeth  
nibbled His apple. His Word, in the canyon  
of her mouth, echoed itself mute. Noli me tangere  
unheeded, Thomas' finger, probing the fruit  
of the other tree, the Word made flesh, not  
vegetated, though later ground, as flour  
for bread, & bread, new flesh upon old bones.

Look what you've done, He chided, the breath  
that gave life tearing the leaves from Eden.  
later, a branch would flower. later, a book  
instead of an apple, instead of a loaf to eat.  
words, words, Creeley said, as if all  
worlds were there. which they are.  
which they meant to say in the first place.

## **VALENTINE'S DAY, 2012**

I ran into Walt Whitman this late afternoon.  
Took him to Shoprite to buy some scallops and shrimp.  
Had to warn him about ogling the butcher boys and salad kids.  
“They are Italians, Walt. Their fathers would turn your blue eyes brown,”  
I said. “There is always Ashbury,” he grumbled.  
“But those leather boys are a pain.”  
We watched the wild bushes make half circles  
From wind-driven leaves.  
Chucked shells into the ocean in high curves  
And laughed out loud at seagulls’ pathways,  
Those leaf-like feet.  
I wanted to cry in his arms. “Oh, Walt,  
It’s still the money makers, the executives,  
The politicians, the fakers. You and Blake  
Knew the nature of things, Jesus-like,  
But nothing has changed. Thankfully, the love of God  
That lives in the open wave, the wing of starling,  
And the eyes of babies remains.” He nodded,  
And sauntered south.

**WORD SONG**

Word song be my prayer  
Be prayer  
Run horses of the night  
Run at breakneck speed  
Hurry burn your hooves  
Shed sparks be lightning  
Keep me from dying in this darkness  
Bring the sun out  
Bring the sun out  
(Father sun in your heat and light  
Bring life breath)  
Rid the moon of its fake light  
(scraps of your generous light)  
Shed it on ocean on tree on child  
Burn the forests blue

**OUT OF STARS AND SAND  
PROSE POEMS OF SOUTHERN SICILY**

1

What saves the day at church is the organ music and the silences, the white and blue angels being held by still wings the white and blue lights of Christmas on the square of San Giovanni the air suffused by the staccato of bells metal guitars and Concetta ugly from eight daily beers begs for pennies to buy oils for her paintings of hills like sensuous women skinned snakes brown the new ghetto willed by immigrants from Morocco and Albania and Macedonia graffiti men unwilling to make way for passersby deepens from the Rotonda at the end of Via Roma to Via Veneto, where the street is newly paved and mannequins channel Marilyn Monroe the old crone, church-haunting drunk painter and the Tunisian mother-of-Jesus holding on to her young son as a lure—"nothing beside remains," only those who commit suicide by scaling the lances along the Ponte Nuovo.

2

Left over WWII bunkers on the way to Marina di Ragusa abandoned by Italian soldiers when Americans landed towers along the sea cannon heavy abandoned by guards to allow African pirate ships to eat up the land and now buffalo farms near Punta Secca heads down raking thick grass. A walled farm stone line delineates properties and a donkey large-eyed slowly approaches nuzzles at my hand head erect and a large horse almond eyes delicate as Cleopatra's eyes follows—it leans its neck over and lets me touch it smooth it and a flock of bluest pigeons rises from recently plowed earth a puff of scattered smoke circles the field and settles yards away feasting on seeds and risen worms.

In town a Romanian gypsy guards the church of San Giovanni's main gate she imprisons a small child and begs for pennies—her husband



guards her, near by, yells strange beggars away: 'My livelihood, not yours, mine.'

"Flatter the mayor," advises the local professor; 'he will fund another of your books, a nice translation. That kind of friendship you want to keep warm, ember bright."

Meanwhile the moon is still full after three days now, peeking behind church walls and palm trees—Ibla Mountain like Bethlehem a nativity scene green houses bunched along a mountain.

3

Ecce Homo church and a family mourns the death of a father—the young daughter plays guitar in soft tears her voice petals the organ plays a light Bach, his music a wild brook the perfect ease of water settling into fissures.

4

Hard-faced rock-hard prostitute from Naples, a hut of stone under the Ponte Vecchio—a feeble red light over her door. "It's my work, my job," she says. Stares at me. "Why here from Naples?" "Just work," she answers, her voice tungsten.

5

In the small garden of the cottage by the sea olive and pomegranate shoots

December tulips and a carob tree entwining an ancient cactus as it reaches for light they are two into one now it's hard to tell 'where' cactus 'ends and' carob 'begins.' Large green monument of water the cactus hardens and loses itself in the grey-white leafy embrace—and the roots branch out into each other while a lemon tree burdened with December fruit leans its branches down down.

6

Fat and juicy, every man's Madame, Josephine looks at Patricia with cow eyes, a local Hera, mouth like a snake's cracked jaw—side glances, nostrils orgasm ready—her chubby hands disappear into her shirt—oh what imaginings.

7

Splendidly gray bas relief of the stations of the cross bloodless immaculate—mid XVIII century Neapolitan style statues of John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary; waterless benediction fonts; outside, against the main entrance door, teenagers, five or six, giggle as they make out.

8

The sun paints the clouds over Ibla Mountain and the winds shape them, pull them straight out, in circles, squash them: Van Gogh pulling a woman's hair.

9

The cyclist large-eyed shoulder-stooped rides his yellow bike black helmet black shorts and tights black shoes slowly climbs the long hill in a zigzag

Tight his chest

Tight his arms

Tight his legs

Straining

10

Patricia tells me the moon has been full for five full days now high over palm trees and church spires rolling over the Atlantic ocean the Mediterranean and now the mountainous Ragusa

Only the moon is visible  
No stars in this city drowned in light  
Only the moon  
White emissary of our sun's furnace.

11

Faithful to her children as Hecuba to Priam my mother covered with a see-through white sheet in the hospital's mortuary near sub-freezing alone in her stillness free of memory a cricket a stone a rose bud a leaf of grass. Her son at the other end of town working out legal papers insurance searching under mattresses inside shoe boxes for hidden bucks. Counting hours for the whorehouse to open its doors.

12

Two wild horses, heads high, gallop atop a hill over the cemetery at Ibla one's red and one's gray, the red larger leads. They wait for each other inseparable it's Christmas eve and the cemetery's busy roses and tulips and red and pink poinsettias my brother points to an empty sarcophagus "I will be buried here—well, my skeleton—they'll bury me in the dirt for ten years and then place my bones there, right over my wife's."

13

Pick in hand, Franco Cilia, local genius artist, chips away at the Ibla Monster atop the nipped hill. Places three silvery cardboard reproductions of himself next to a huge dirt-red rock and turns it into a moon by shooting a night light at it.

14

My brother brings pies and pastries he says he makes (but forgets to take the store bill from out the bag).

15

At the studio of Franco Cilia, post-orgasmic currents swirl through my skin and blood painting of curled up woman white-thigh power of a river boa.

16

Now that the earth and sun have swallowed up all the rain the full moon shows up again high to the left of the church's cobalt bell tower.

17

Villa Margherita the old women huddling on one pathway under tumor bulged trees, gossiping on a parallel pathway the men playing cards dressed in black overcoats black flat hats.

By the plastic red slide the young mothers smiling as their children run by me free worded bird-like singing.

How sweet the water from the public fountain.

Pink roses in late December

In southern Sicily

White roses

Red but odorless

18

The north star shows up  
On the western shoulder of the cathedral of San Giovanni.

High beyond high  
Its 'height cannot be taken."

The black moon is there somewhere  
A blind rock.

19

All along the rusty iron walls of the Ponte Vecchio lovers place chained  
locks, also rusting, as proof of love.

20

Like the phantom fish, transparent its body, all its organs behind its eye,  
My cousin.  
"Hey, where the hell are you, Michael?"

What wheeling  
What dealing  
What law-yering.

21

Under the bridge, steady, the blind river rumbles,  
Pushes its deep shoulders forward, swimming to the sea,  
Its delta mother.

At the baroque church of The Found Christ Verdi lifts thought on its  
golden wings  
And minimalist classic guitar flies on silver sounds  
And the mist gathers itself from the valley

A supernova cloud and rises  
Scatters over pine trees.

We, all, beast river plant water, search for our American—  
Moon-driven wave.

22

Marina di Ragusa

The appaloosa is hardheaded shy ignores the owner's cooing it leans to  
the hard shore  
Wants out of sea and sand.

23

Back in the city, late December concerts persist—tonight at San  
Giovanni it's organ organ organ; metal only speaks. And marriages:  
two doubling up this evening—boys in penguin suits and girls in absurd  
whites.

24

Organ and saxophone at the church of Ecce Homo—a Bach Toccata  
and the organ shoots golden flames and the church takes fire (blue  
swirls of light burn the heads of old men and women) and the white  
blue angels laugh out loud from the slated ceilings and fly in purple  
flames.

25

A locked rusted gate shuts me out stops me from climbing down into  
the childhood pathways under the Ponte Vecchio and long thin water  
snakes and pigeons with blue wings and white necks and organs that  
drag branches into the earth and lemon trees  
Yellowing archways and thick moss delineating trees and pines pines  
growing through the skies deep deep deep is the valley saddled by three

bridges that override the water and the green swallows fly wide fearing  
neither storm nor stillness

And the quiet moon  
Guards over them  
With a blind eye

finis

**ADDICT**

Main line me  
down Red Hill in-  
to my love's heart  
and into the rivers  
of her veins. Let her  
feel me coursing  
through the tributaries  
of her body, toe to brain  
and back down again  
through and through  
until the walls of her  
veins & arteries wear  
thin with the rush  
of warm inside her.  
Main line me into  
my love's heart and let  
me hear her Molly cry, Yes  
oh, yes, yes...



## **AN AMERICAN CAR DREAM**

I galloped into heaven in my '64  
red convertible Mustang. It was a Sunday  
of open roads and no bus fumes,  
a Sunday of no honking except for  
a chevron of geese following the shoreline.  
I bridged a wide running river jumping  
with trout and flecked with sunlight,  
and arrived at a great grass field. Here, I met  
some old friends... my '55 Bel Air Chevy

that always stalled going over the Goethals.  
It was brand new and wore a smile on its grill.  
"I can make that bridge now," its engine purred.  
Others gathered, too. My white Buick  
Le Sabre convertible with the red leather  
seats and the top that never fully  
went down. Brand new now it raised and  
lowered itself perfectly. A field of all  
my used cars resurrected and shiny.

An angel of a DeLorean, silver wings  
spread, welcomes me; a travel guide  
perched on its seat. Instantly  
I understand cars ocean stars --  
the rust and dust of ourselves...  
transformed

## **JELLYFISH**

Moon parachutes glowing, pulsating and pale  
drift in the flowing tides  
rhythmic as living lungs.

All summer they cloud the ocean  
a shine of galaxies, ascending,  
descending, they mesmerize

Imprinting  
their ghostly movements  
to the sea's currents. Little

More than water, the circled rim of their  
fringed tentacles sweeps algae towards  
their mouths. A sea turtle

Mistakes a plastic bag for jellyfish camouflage.  
Lucky as their neon four-leaf clovers,  
jellyfish slip free.

For eons, the simple  
form of them endures...  
translucent iridescences.

Every fall, their tide-tossed bodies  
like plastic lids litter the shore  
leaving their larvae

To survive winter storms. Kids  
on beaches Frisbee the sea-air  
with their remains.

**BAY MOON**

in the bay window, a disc  
of pale yellow over the bay.  
A dark geography stains  
your face. You lay down a path  
for eyes to follow... a column  
of light wrinkled with ripples.  
This night I am at one with your rising  
lunacy. I drink a dark wine sunned by your counterpart.  
I, too, rise tonight, balloon with  
an emptiness of white  
sheets and lost love.

## **SUNFLOWERS**

Serene as the bay behind her,  
she smiles. A lone gull  
like a thought rises  
drifts over the bay.  
It's late in the day say the long shadows  
on the bench. She came  
to Sunset Gazebo to see the sun  
set, to take note of all  
its fiery hues. She may even stay  
to see a ghostly moonrise.  
Late she returns to house and garden  
spots her sunflowers  
ablaze in moonlight, her painting.

**BANDITS**

Hobos of the beach, they pick  
at litter & wait  
for fiddler crabs to peek  
from the sand,  
or for the fishermen  
to turn their backs  
on their buckets.

We watched  
one, once—gray-streaked,  
the size of the stray dog  
we saw sniffing  
at the dumpsters behind  
the Mexican take-out.  
It swooped down  
& swept away  
a sand-speckled,  
silver beach bag.

The burritos  
tasted good that night,  
washed down with beer.  
I bought a postcard  
of a Matisse at the shop  
down the street  
& a small hemp anklet  
that you wore until  
the rope weakened  
& slipped off in the surf  
while we stood  
watching the gulls,  
the winged pick-pockets,  
circle above.

**MANIFEST DESTINY**

bulldozed into existence  
from tall oaks  
gray birch and pitch pine  
an enchanted grid  
is what Hall called it  
muddy today in the rain  
aluminum bleachers built  
so we would come  
and the Little Leaguers too  
and maybe ghosts  
like the scandal-scarred Black Sox  
redeemed in film  
on the diamond  
carved by Costner  
from an Iowa cornfield  
father and son  
playing catch again as well  
in a fable of America  
in which balls  
batted into the alleys  
can drive us home  
save us from the dirt  
of history  
the shifting soil  
slippery and impermanent  
say it ain't so  
the kid says  
a different film  
a different dream  
no salvation  
for Shoeless Joe or

the other seven  
Joe Jackson  
illiterate son  
of illiterate sharecroppers  
he played like a champ  
in a thrown series  
or that's what some say  
first series after the war  
last before the Harding years  
and Tea Pot Dome  
before Prohibition  
he was banned forever  
from the game  
from the fenced-in field  
a ballfield on a hill  
above the highway

grass-covered  
but for the infield dirt  
the sand and soil  
eroding the earth into which  
a stray grass seed slides  
the runner slides  
where nothing grows  
but metal mesh  
a backstop fence  
built to contain  
the foul pop  
the wild pitch  
and errant throw  
from the outfield

**VILLANELLE FOR MINNIE IMBER**

*for my grandmother, 1905-1986*

She leaves the house, wanders the city  
alone on a grid of now unfamiliar lines,  
her mind untroubled by a lack of clarity,

by headlights, streetlamps, a whirl of packed jitneys  
running down a street she'd walked so many times.  
She leaves the house, wanders a city

of chattered English foreign to her as she  
fades back to shtetl Yiddish she knew as a girl,  
her mind untroubled, lacking clarity,

dense calls to long-dead mother, vacant, empty  
is the cold white noise behind her eyes.  
As she leaves home, wanders alone in the city,

static damning her song to obscurity,  
grainy scenes cutting from shot to shot,  
her mind untroubled, lacking clarity,

film reel flickers, snaps, is spliced, turns gritty,  
frame by frame, leaning into the stuttering light.  
She leaves the house alone in the city,  
her mind untroubled by a lack of clarity.



## SHORT ORDER

This room reeks of isolation,  
first-floor walk-up full of  
the smells of gyros and falafel,  
frying onions and thick-crust pizza,  
of men who sweat for  
14, 16 hours at a clip over  
dingy grills and steaming dishwashers,  
their lives filled with work,  
with sleep and more and more work,  
watching from the window of this  
dismal gray room on a  
pre-dawn quiet street  
marked by the steam billowing from  
the manholes, by the hazy gray exhaust  
of delivery trucks and cop cars,  
Jorge prays for more strength  
than he's known in the  
months he's been here,  
sits back down on the  
surplus army cot his boss bought  
at a garage sale on Pine Street,  
in this dark room of  
tired accommodation,  
this dank cell, gray from the  
residue of past tenants who  
found work but nearly starved or  
broke down from  
too many hours and  
not enough pay,  
dreaming of the better life that  
may never come.

## **SIGN POSTS**

It's a job, is what he thinks.  
Dressed in parka and cold rain,  
he's hunched above his placard  
for a lighting store liquidation.  
His mother brought him there, once,  
long before the plant closed, before he  
tore up his knee as he tried to pivot  
off-tackle and into the open field.  
He hated football, played because  
he could, because he was good at driving  
tacklers into the turf.  
It was a job. And when the scar tissue  
scared off the college recruiters, he found  
himself sweeping metal shavings  
from the floor by hole-punch machines,  
just another job, until he worked  
his way to machinist. Twenty years,  
and they closed the plant, painted the windows  
black and shipped what they could overseas,  
nothing but a padlocked gate  
and a guard to chase the gawkers off.  
He raises the sign as cars crawl past,  
as the misting rain runs down his cheek.

## **ANGST**

rising like blood pressure in arteries dying to burst.

Trapped

somewhere between a thousand daydreams and the confines of indentured servitude.

Escaping

for only moments at a time and aided by the mirage your brain chemistry bestows.

Disturbed and awakened as you are beckoned thrice more.

Functioning

at minimal capacity, but just enough to get you to that next sweet dream  
of Color      of Love      of Lust      of Hate      of Destruction,  
alike.

Fleeting images of the never and the possible.

Their remnants washed away as you scribe them on the shoreline of your memory.

## COMFORT

Sometimes  
when I am reading or reaching for an apple  
I imagine your hand resting on mine  
It is cool  
like a cotton quilt  
at the end of a hot summer day  
Sometimes when  
I close my eyes  
I imagine you next to me  
staring smiling  
it is a mother's smile  
They tell me it is my smile  
But I don't know.  
There is a comfort now  
when I close my eyes  
which slows the heart  
This comfort of the moment  
which knows no time  
no future pain  
no death  
And there again it is  
The loveliness of pale fingers  
The hand its purple veins  
a pattern of flowers the hand  
grown weaker transparent  
until you are a shadow melting into my skin  
No longer real but rooted now  
in memory.  
And when I imagine your hand on mine  
cool like a quilt in summer  
nothing really matters.  
I am not afraid  
with your hand.  
Your hand on mine.

**LATE NAP, HYDRANGEA**

Sadness in these upraised leaves—  
they are light under, cupping darkness  
in their inverted ribs above  
as certain gaudily fertile lilies do rivers of gold pollen,  
the in they grow around, beyond, and to—  
darkness where a gaudy globe of simple  
blue blossoms should be gathered, enough to bow  
each stem to a tension  
between what we call yearning upward  
and—what do we  
call the pull to Earth  
we, too, are made to resist, not fully  
but enough?

## **MORE THAN YOU REMEMBER**

Even the rivers confuse their words with the mountains  
or think the mountains have spray which springs then returns  
after refracting something of the words the rivers think  
are theirs alone. One hand clapping  
can be so many things; here it is four  
fingers slapping their pads on their palm's heel  
like a river's whitewater surging to slap back home.  
Winter ends, a pale green creeps up the mountain  
like tide rising around a sandbar, so in half a year,  
shirtless, you'll return to a beach, look at the waves  
and there you are thinking there you are; that is one hand clapping too.  
The mountain has no spray which springs  
then returns, it has words which fall  
and fall. Try to hold them  
in your hands.



**#4 LIBRARY**

*Dan Finaldi, 2009*

Between the books are the people  
with abstracted eyes; they see, softly,  
a world, but it is a world written  
by pages now closed and shelved. When,  
later, they close their eyes, they'll see  
those pages open again as dreams.  
Halfway there now, eyes open, relaxed  
in their bones as if meditating and still as  
statuary, no-one is reading,  
they share the space  
between shelves with their eyes, each alone  
in their camaraderie  
as if the thousand miles between  
them and their grandparents' childhoods  
were a passing thought;  
were a thought written  
down in passing.



## THE DRAGON ETCHED IN GOLD

*Edouard Manet, Fleurs dans un Vase, c. 1882*

i.

The dragon etched gold down the vase.  
The dragon's forepaws etched flat to the vase's base.  
The dragon's coiling narrowing up  
to a ginkgo-leaf-tail point. The dragon's coiling  
past the vase's lip through the white rose is bleeding  
for its petals' penumbrae are pink. The dragon's coiling  
through the yellow tulip streaked red  
is an omen  
for it is a celestial ball of flame  
balanced on a thin green stem. The dragon's coiling through  
the pink bud banded with white  
is tight in health for it is smaller than  
a leaf yet its scent clear as water  
fills my thought. The dragon's  
coiling through  
the red overblown tulip is speechless  
for it is dry and limp in its extremities  
and yet does not end  
there. Next week the dragon  
will arrange other flowers. Next week these flowers  
will be once again earthmould, and that  
will be the dragon's fire breath breathing at last.

ii.

Like a wave with a stone  
not knowing what to do with it  
and not knowing what to do with it  
and not knowing what to do with it  
repeatedly through its momentous variations  
until there is no stone not  
to know what to do with  
and still it keeps rolling,  
the dragon's fire breath,  
this two-dimensional and transparent gilded etching.

## LAST FLOWERS

*Edouard Manet, Bouquet de Fleurs, c. 1882*

This is the bouquet  
he arranged  
for his own funeral;  
fresh when it arrived, short-  
lived as they are; spectral  
peonies  
exuberant as fireworks  
disintegrating upward, excitable  
irises, explosive  
carnations flush as a debutante trying  
to say it all at her first  
salon and forgetting  
where to begin. See  
    their stems  
rush through a crisp thatch  
of leaves green-almost-  
to-black athwart the gilt vase lip,  
eager too to join the vast  
unlimited air  
while under, under  
the waterline's  
    belly  
what leaves are left submerged  
fold content, looking  
for all the world like hands  
arranged upon themselves. Calm  
in their self-containment  
as the higher leaves and petals are not,  
they are yet made of the same stuff  
and, one would imagine, as he felt  
his way through this life, desirous  
of the same things.

## CANYON MULE

The terrain  
rugged  
old, familiar, daunting  
spiraling downward  
into a chasm  
the path is linear  
jagged turns at each corner  
the animal  
testing his burden  
moves forward  
on  
rocks, dirt, dust, detritus debris  
six steady hours  
a running rivulet  
rapt absorption  
jockeying its weight on  
an ancient masterpiece  
the passenger  
a lone figure  
against a golden sun  
no back tracking  
not for hydration  
not for elimination  
he perseveres  
to deliver  
on the descent.

An overnight respite  
sinewy muscles  
strong, tough  
to carry

crushed paper, plastic, foil, newspaper  
balanced on both sides  
for the ascent  
terrain  
old, familiar, daunting  
spiraling upward  
toward the heavens  
the path is linear  
jagged turns at each corner  
the animal  
testing his burden  
moves forward  
on  
rocks, dirt, dust, detritus debris  
through mountain  
run off  
from mountain crags  
eleven steady hours  
a running rivulet  
no passenger  
he perseveres  
to deliver  
crushed paper, plastic, foil,  
newspaper  
on the ascent.

## **BARBADOS**

Cane fields sink to blue  
as the shopworn sun  
tumbles under the sea. Tedium  
is measured by  
the gill of rum till drunks  
roll off, work-weary,  
to the polychrome brilliance  
of tiny houses, all  
become one beneath  
an unsubtle tropic moon.

I wonder how alone  
one can become  
singing in the cane fields  
by day and laying  
boozy beneath the moon  
the night through  
with paneless windows  
open to the air. There  
is always the hushed  
lassitude of  
the none-too-distant  
palms lending to  
the tradewind the soft  
timbre of breath.

## **UP ON WOODLANDS HILL**

Large bees, Sam's emissaries,  
come round to hector me and with  
their threatful investigation seem  
to admonish, "Move on, stranger."

But I have come to linger along  
the hill ridge with Bristol  
Channel laid out softly in blue  
ceremony, like a silken gown

awaiting its mistress. And here  
high pregnant clouds, both  
white and darkly purple, come  
like God's own watercolors,

casting massive shadows over  
the distant hills, while  
the green geometry of the farm  
fields in rich sunlight laugh

with man's answer to  
so lovely a chaos.

**IN THE METHODIST CHURCHYARD, WEST LONG BRANCH**

The hedge overgrown and  
woven through with honeysuckle  
vines and the grass  
too high by half among the stones  
lean hard against memory.

That man walking his dog  
and talking too loud for heaven  
on his cell breaks the hermit's  
spell he came for. His dog  
snoops for a quiet spot

to leave his load close to  
the humped ground where  
the once-beloved Dr. Z.  
N. Severn sedately lies.  
Herr doctor, could you not

have saved yourself nor yet  
this young boy, once much  
grieved when these broken trees  
were young. The tow-head boy  
had closed his eyes, seeming so

like my son falling to sleep after  
baseball and too many cartoons.  
His kin came with august  
trepidation to see his sweet head  
laid against bleached satin—

young dryad in the hollow

of a tree. This was in the  
last year of the Mexican War  
and the parents, too, like  
vessels heavy-laden long ago

broke upon that self-same shore.  
From the churchyard, that day  
to this, the weathervane at  
steepletop points always in  
one direction. The man, barking

incoherently into his chatterbox,  
his t-shirt covering an unsightliness,  
and the dog, too, unmindful of  
that ragged finger, seem even now  
groomed to disappear.



**TRAINING WHEELS: A HAIKU JOURNEY THROUGH  
CHILDHOOD...AND PARENTHOOD**

town cannon  
a finch with twigs vanishes  
down the muzzle

winter dusk  
from the ultrasound's dark screen  
a tiny pulse

toddler's first:  
one small step  
toward the moon in the window

set for fireworks--  
a child's balloon fades  
into the rising moon

dusk...  
light-up sneakers in a field  
of fireflies

starting school tomorrow  
he talks to trees  
at the woods' edge

seventh-inning stretch  
a foam finger pointing  
at the autumn moon

Halloween—  
boys aim their flashlights  
at the rising moon

window frost  
children making peep holes  
one for each star

tropical fish tank—  
fingerprint smudges  
on the “Do Not Touch!” sign

the child’s cough  
cracking and loosening  
spring thaw

spring rapids—  
father and son untangle  
their fishing lines

the dark place  
where the mower couldn’t reach—  
the first firefly

mid-term exam  
a boy stares at crows  
gathering in the snow

spring cleaning  
the final notes  
of a child's music box

fun house music  
the pretty vendor flashes  
her tongue stud

summer solstice  
the sprinkler completes  
another arc

pool filter  
a child's collection  
of dandelion wishes

snow erasing  
the garden's features—  
teaching my dad to shave

## UNDER THE STARS

*Setting: 1969, a small town in South Carolina*

In a small Southern town where everyone knows everyone, a new visitor is as foreign as a Northern snowstorm. Summerwind, South Carolina, was as backwoods as you can get without inbreeding and slack jaws. It was a land of plantations, small cottages, and moonlit streams. "Buck's Place" was the one and only bar, so it was almost always a full house.

On one dark May evening with a rustling breeze, someone new was sitting at one of the old rickety tables. She was a beautiful young woman, all by herself, a faded blue valise beside her. She had an hourglass figure and long shapely legs, complimented by a fitted yellow sundress and white pumps. Her skin was white, and glossy thick curls the color of roasted chestnuts fell loose upon slim shoulders. She had striking bone structure, a wide, red smirk, and the most enchanting green eyes that seemed to convey surprise and sarcasm, simultaneously. She began to trace the names carved into the table with her fingertips, bored. *Stacey & Michael Aever, Mary Lou Ebert, Rebel Pride*. No one, strangely, seemed to notice her.

That all changed when the Sherriff and his boys walked in. Ryan Charleston stopped dead in his tracks when he caught sight of her. He was notoriously handsome himself; tall and muscular, deeply tanned, with a set of baby blues. Their eyes met in the dark room, and the girl widened her eyes and smiled.

"Go on, git her. Before I decide to!" one of Ryan's buddies whispered, punching him in the arm.

Ryan walked over to the beautiful girl and extended his hand. "I see you're new here, Miss. When I saw your gorgeous face I had to come over and say a proper hello." His voice was deep and confident, and exuded generations of Southern charm.

"Bless your heart that is just so sweet! My name is Marshae Sim-

one” the girl answered, giving Ryan her small dainty hand. He brought it to his lips and kissed it gently.

“You must be from Louisiana with that name, a bayou beauty. I’m Ryan Buford Charleston. I’m the law ‘round here” he joked.

“Yes sir, I’m from Shreveport. I needed a change of scenery. My beau was startin’ to get abusive, so I left.”

Ryan frowned. “Mind if I sit down?” he asked her.

“Oh sure, go on” Marshae grinned.

Ryan sat down across from her, keeping a respectful distance, and fished a crushed pack of Marlboros from his uniform pants pocket. “Want one?” he offered. The girl shook her head. “So tell me, how old are you? You look mighty young to be off runnin’ from a man” he added, striking a match for his cigarette.

Marshae took the cigarette from between his lips and brought it to her own. “I’m seventeen. You look pretty young yourself” she replied defensively.

“Like hell you’re seventeen. That’s still a baby, anyway. I’m twenty six. Reckon I oughta start a family soon” he smiled, taking the lipstick stained cigarette back.

Marshae laughed. “I don’t feel much like drinkin’. I’m startin’ to get a little dizzy in here, it’s kind of hot” she said. “Yeah? It is a little crowded tonight. Wanna go outside and sit a spell? I bet the stars are comin’ out right about now” Ryan offered.

They stepped out of the bar’s stuffy, smoky atmosphere into the clear, cool night. It was not very late, but the sky was almost black. Ryan was right; dozens of glimmering stars lit up the sky, defying it.

Marshae grinned up at the night and turned to Ryan. “I just love stars. There’s just somethin’ about them that gives me hope. They manage to be beautiful and shine despite all that darkness” she said, sitting down on the cool damp grass.

Ryan sat down next to her. “You ever watch the stars?” he asked. “Well actually, the night before I left, Richard and I’d been fightin’ like nothing else. I wouldn’t give in to him, and he was getting’ right tired of all my games, he said. Then he hit me right across the face, and I was so scared. I locked myself in the closet and cried for hours. He finally drank himself to sleep, and I snuck out and just laid outside, lookin’ up at the sky. I realized that there was so much more beauty left in the

world, and I wasn't gonna see any of it. That's when I packed my stuff and ran" Marshae said, staring up the whole time, dreamily.

Ryan took her hand and held it in his, his own blue eyes saddening. "It's been just me and my Momma ever since I was a baby. Momma would never tell me anything 'bout him until I was fifteen. When I was a little boy, all my buddies would talk about playin' ball, fishin', ridin' in their daddy's pickup trucks. Sometimes when I was feelin' real down I would just go outside and beg God to give me a Daddy. Whenever there were stars out I felt like he was talkin' back to me, sayin' everything will be okay."

Marshae squeezed his hand and turned to him. She didn't say anything, just smiled.

"Miss Marshae Simone, you're just so pretty it breaks my heart" Ryan whispered.

Marshae inched close to Ryan and pressed her soft lips to his, shutting her eyes. He kissed her slowly and ran his strong fingers through her curls, tangling them. Then she leaned into him and rested her head on his shoulder.

"Looks like the stars don't let me down" he told her, holding her tightly.

They stayed there outside for hours. They didn't even need to speak; there was night magic in the air. When people started pouring out of Buck's during closing, they awakened from their trance.

"I don't know about you, but I'm real tired. Where's a good place 'round here to bunk? I didn't exactly plan this trip, after all" Marshae smiled, stretching her arms.

"There's only one place to stay in Summerwind, but you're in luck. My Momma owns the town Inn. Her name's Miss Audrey. She'd love you, I know it" Ryan answered.

Miss Audrey's inn was no more than ten minutes from Buck's place. It was an old Southern plantation home, passed on from Charleston to Charleston since the 1700's. Miss Audrey was sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch when they arrived. She was a petite, plump woman, with auburn hair stiff with spray, and grey eyes beneath cat-eye glasses.

"Hey Momma, this is Marshae Simone. She just come from Louisiana and needs a place to stay" Ryan said, kissing his mother on the cheek.

"Nice to meet you, ma'am. This is a beautiful place" Marshae smiled shyly.

"Well! Aren't you just a sight for sore eyes? Louisiana, you say? Do you know how to cook Cajun?" Miss Audrey asked, getting up from her chair.

"Yes ma'am of course. I love cooking" Marshae replied.

"Well what can you make? I'm lookin' for a new cook here, and if you're right, you can earn your keep here" said Miss Audrey. Ryan put his arm around Marshae and winked at his Momma.

"Well let's see...I can make all the simple things, plus gumbo, jambalaya, etouffee, crawfish pie, stuff like that" Marshae offered.

"Well honey, that sounds good to me! Come on in" she answered, leading them into the house. It was elegant and spacious, with a grand old winding staircase.

"We got six boarders right now, mostly older folks with no one to care for them" Miss Audrey explained in a hushed tone. "Here's your room, ma belle" she said, leading them into a good size room with a bed, dresser, closet, and nightstand. "There's a balcony over yonder" Miss Audrey added, gesturing with her arm. The curtains and bedding were a beautiful floral print, and everything was clean and shiny.

"Oh my! This is gorgeous. Thank you so much, Miss Audrey" Marshae exclaimed, embracing her.

"Oh you're welcome dear. It would be real nice if you could talk some sense into my boy, get him to settle down" she winked as she swept out of the room.

Marshae threw her arms around Ryan, who lifted her up. "Is this a dream" she asked him, her eyes wet. Ryan wiped away her mascara stained tears with his thumb.

"If it is, I don't wanna wake up" he said, his blue eyes shining like the moon.

Four Months Later:

Day after day, life for Marshae and Ryan flowed as smooth and sweet as Southern Comfort. The days passed in a blissful haze of dancing, swimming, fishing, walking, and above all, kissing until they took each other's breath away. Marshae was earning her keep, with pleasure, as Summerwind's new favorite cook, called upon for weddings, showers, and other small town sit-arounds.

Then came the day that changed everything. Marshae was in the kitchen, cooking supper for Ryan and some of his buddies from work; fried chicken, collard greens, buttery mashed potatoes with biscuits, and tall glasses of sweet tea. Just as she brought the tray onto Miss Audrey's lacquered cherry wood dining table, and urgent knock sounded at the front door.

"I'll get it Shae, you been slavin' in that kitchen for hours, babydoll" Ryan said. He kissed her cheek softly on his way to the door. Marshae smiled to herself – deep voice, big muscles, but lips as soft as a baby's.

"So how you doin' purdy?" teased Travis, Ryan's closest buddy. He had a bush of comical red hair and a charming, goofy smile.

"I'm doin' right well. I've never gone this long without hurtin' in my whole life" she smiled, picking up a glass of cold tea for herself.

Then, she heard the dreaded word, an echo from the parlor, so quiet she almost missed it. "Vietnam." Marshae slammed her tea down on the table and sprinted for the front door. Her palms were sweating already. Sure enough, a middle aged man in uniform stood at the door. They turned to look at her. Ryan's eyes were pleading.

"What's going on?" she demanded, her voice cracking.

"Ma'am, I'm sorry to interrupt your supper. Your husband is going to have to leave for a little while. You know the current situation, I'm sure" the man said hesitantly. He had a yankee accent, a bad sign; he came from somewhere far away.

Marshae grabbed onto Ryan and started to sob. "Tell him you can't go! You can't leave me! What about your Momma?" she burst.

Ryan patted her back soothingly and looked at the man. "Baby, calm down. Hush now. Everything's gonna be fine" he said gently.

The man anxiously cleared his throat and handed an envelope to Ryan.

Marshae fell to the ground in front of him. "Please sir, you can't. You just can't. Not him. He's all I have" she tried to reason, begging with her eyes. When he looked away, she started to scream. A real scream, high pitched and ear piercing.

Miss Audrey came running down the stairs, took in the situation, and scooped up Marshae. She half-dragged the girl up the stairs and put her on her bed.

"Baby, you gotta stop cryin'! Hold your head up high and be



a lady! He's gonna need you to be strong. Screamin', beggin' on your knees in front of a man like that? What's wrong with you?" she said firmly to the girl, who was shaking like a leaf.

"Miss Audrey! How can you be so calm? He's your baby!" Marshae said, her eyes huge.

Miss Audrey grimaced and said, "child, you got a lot to learn to survive in these times. There's a war goin' on out there. Ryan ain't a baby no more, he's a man. If his country calls on him for help, he has got to go."

"But I love him!" Marshae suddenly exclaimed.

Ryan walked in the room just as she said it. He looked at her with eyes that made her heart melt. Her face softened at the sight of him.

"I love you too. God knows that's the truth" he said. A tear ran down Marshae's porcelain-doll face.

"Come here, baby" Ryan called, holding out his arms.

"This is breakin' my old heart" Miss Audrey said, putting her hand on her son's shoulder.

"Marshae, I love you with all my heart. I'm gonna marry you as soon as I come back, and we'll be together forever" he said.

"Hold on a minute" Miss Audrey said. She rushed over to the dresser and opened her jewelry drawer. Smiling, she lifted out a diamond ring. "Your daddy gave this to me" she told Ryan. She dropped it in his hand and closed his fingers over it.

Ryan got down on one knee in front of Marshae, not taking his eyes off of hers. "Will you be my wife, Marshae Simone? Will you wait for me, and be strong for me until I come back?" he asked her.

"Yes, I will" she nodded, another single tear falling from her beautiful green eye. Ryan slipped the ring onto her finger, a perfect fit.

He lifted her up in his arms and spun her around. Miss Audrey started to cry and ran out of the room.

"Momma thinks a lady can't cry in front of anyone. I think she's been cryin' in her heart for the last twenty years" Ryan said softly.

"Are you sure you're ready?" Ryan asked, lying in bed. Marshae smiled.

"I'm sure." She stood at the foot of the bed and let her white robe fall to the ground. She had a lovely body, curvy and slim, with small round breasts and wide hips.

"You're breathtaking" Ryan sighed.

She got onto the bed and on top of Ryan, who was already undressed. He put his hands on her hips and traced them down her body.

"Lie down" he said. He kissed her neck gently and made his way down slowly. He left not one inch of her being untouched. She threw her head back as he gently pushed himself in and began to quicken pace. When the two became one, all doubt, all fear, all worry, faded into the thick musky air around them.

When they were finished, they held each other tightly under the sweaty covers. Maybe if they stayed that way, he would not have to leave.

"Ryan" Marshae suddenly said, shaking him out of his sleep. "What is it?" he asked, startled.

Marshae sat up in bed grinning and took his hand. "Let's go out and pray to the stars" she told him.

They went out onto the balcony and looked up. The sky was beautiful, shining with stars gleaming against the black Carolina night sky. The light against the dark, the light always won in the end.

Marshae closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "Stars, watch over my love. Bring him home safe to my arms one day" she said.

"Stars, protect my angel while I'm gone. One day I'll be back for her" Ryan said. Marshae opened one eye, and saw that he was crying.

When she woke up that morning, he was gone. He had left her a note on the side of the bed where he had slept. "I'll see you in the stars."

Five years passed, the United States left the warfront, and Ryan Charleston never came home to South Carolina. He was reported MIA within the first two months, leaving Marshae with one letter.

My sweet Bayou flower,

I miss you so much. You're the only thing I think about, Marshae. Sometimes I think I'll go crazy. Every night I look up at the stars and remember our last night together. Isn't it funny that the sky here, at night, looks exactly the same? It makes me forget where I am. I would give anything for one of your sweet kisses right now. I hope you're not too sad. Don't worry about me. One day you'll look out on the balcony and I'll be there waiting for you. I love you with all my heart. Give

Momma my love. Tell her I've been dying for one of her key lime pies.  
Yours Forever, R. Buford Charleston.

She cried for two hours straight when she read his letter, and then never cried again.

A year after the war ended, Marshae turned twenty three. She had not seen or heard from Ryan in over six years. Miss Audrey urged her to move on with her life now, that she was free. She was sure Ryan was in heaven by now. "You're a beautiful girl Marshae, but life waits for no one."

"Yes ma'am."

Miss Audrey passed away that year, leaving the inn to Marshae. She became reclusive and cold, until the time came where the once bustling inn was dead empty. She cooked and set the table each night for ten people. The sole occupant, she scarcely ate, and the food all went to waste.

In the blink of an eye, it seemed, she was an old woman. The world had transformed completely, but she had no way of knowing. No longer beautiful, young, or hopeful, she went out onto her balcony one night for the last time. She let her robe fall to the ground, revealing her old, withered body to the night. The night was beautiful. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

"Stars, I am no longer seventeen. I am seventy now, an old woman. I can not wait for my love any longer" she said, tears streaming down her face cracked with age and misery.

"Marshae" she heard a soft voice whisper beside her. She opened her eyes and saw Ryan standing beside her. He was young and beautiful in his Army uniform, smiling calmly. The old woman's face lit up. "Ryan, it's about time you showed up. What happened to you?" she asked.

"I was taken in Saigon and killed. They never found me" the ghost answered.

Marshae started to cry,

"Hush now, don't cry. I wasn't scared. Know why? Because of you, Marshae. I knew that one day we would meet again, and be together forever. I took my last breath in peace because of you" Ryan smiled.

"Oh Ryan, look at me. I'm so old. You've been gone almost sixty years now. I haven't smiled since the day they took you away" she told him.

“You look just as beautiful to me as the day I first laid eyes on you in Buck’s. I couldn’t take my eyes off of you” Ryan remembered.

“Why are you here now, after so long?” Marshae asked.

Ryan’s ghost held out its hand. “It’s time for you to pass on, Marshae. I’ve come to take you home. I’ve been waiting for this day for such a long time” he said.

Marshae stopped back. “I’m scared, Ryan. What’s it like?” she asked, hesitantly.

“Oh, it’s beautiful. It’s like a dream that lasts forever. But for all these years it’s been missing the most important part, you” Ryan answered, a single tear falling from his lovely blue eye.

Marshae looked up at the stars, and then back at her love. “I found you in the stars” she grinned, walking up to him.

“It looks like the stars didn’t let us down, remember?” he smiled.

As she put her old, fragile hands in his, they glowed warm and bright. Soon, the light covered her whole body.

“Marshae, look at yourself” Ryan whispered.

Marshae looked down and gasped. She was young and beautiful again, in her yellow dress and white shoes. *She was just as she was the day that they met.* She jumped up and kissed Ryan passionately, a kiss worth sixty years of waiting.

They both begun to fade away together, into the night.

“Ryan, look! It’s so beautiful!”

“Breathtaking, my sweet bayou flower.”

## “NO HUCKLEBERRIES”

1

My soft hands are losing grip. The sweat is pooling in the folds of my still baby fat fists and the wet bag of ice, now turning quickly to water, is slipping and I don't want to stop. I dig the heel of my hand up against the ice block and press the lump into the handgrip to keep it from falling. But the pressure forces it away. It slaps onto the hot asphalt like a puck, like a hit animal.

I stop and the bear trap of the steel pedal rotates a full turn before biting into my shin flesh, grabbing in and eating my pink whiteness. The pain makes dropping the bag feel like a manly mistake now, instead of what it is. The blood beats out of my leg in hard seconds and then in my throat and then my eyes. Time is counted this way.

My father is much further ahead, a Captain Kangaroo-looking man; mustached, sweat-banded, round shouldered and paced like a bus, hissing with some kind of weight that is not seen. He breathes heavy, lumbering forward and carrying invisible passengers and packages, dropping them off at side streets, at the turn into the Vo-Tech parking lot. One departs when he turns for the ice block bag and me. Another boards when I am so far behind.

2

Sean's Mom-Mom anchors herself to the front of the small table in their crowded old kitchen and shouts us to lunch, “Come on boy! Sean David!” The Oak Ridge Boys bleat out of a hidden radio, crackling and hissing and bright. Bologna and potato chips are flattened into a sandwich by her block of a hand and the knife slices through the food like it's water. We eat and it's too hot at 1:15 in the afternoon so we have to move inside.

Stepping into the dark parlor, I realize I am still wet from his green swimming pool. My trunks stick to my legs and my legs to my balls. I shift and bring the wet towel around my shoulders, cloaking my fatness and my crotch. I reach down and slice through my thigh

with a finger, cleaving leg from groin. My hand lingers because no one is watching me and my heart beats out faster, feeling it in my stomach, almost sick. I count to calm it, 7, 8, 9 and I stop. Sean, little and muscular and mean stares into my body, "Are you jerking your shit?" he says. "You're a dick," I say.

Sean's Pop-Pop sits behind us in the freezing dark now. He is a lifer at the Edison Ford plant. Ford wagon, Ford belt buckle. Grew up in Altoona. Just wants to watch Fat Willie Stargell swing. Sean taunts the television set, programming Stargell, "Strike. Strike, motherfucker, strike." Old fat man, he strikes out. Pop-Pop tells us to leave, that we should be outside, not in. "Go out and pick some huckleberries," he says. We leave when Mom-Mom yells Sean's full name together again, "Sean David!" There are no huckleberries in the suburbs of Jersey, but we go.

It is still too hot at 3:40 and we ride our old BMX bikes out to the woods. I see Danny sitting at a fire and he's throwing garbage into it. Danny's father makes porn magazines in the family garage. With shitty white string he bundles them – a butcher wrapping cold meat, and stacks them for resale. It is dark and dirty; raccoons live in that porn garage too. And we have all secretly wanted them as pets.

At the fire, Danny has three of his dad's magazines tucked under his leg. The top one has an older woman featured on its cover. She is naked and eating watermelon over a mesh table and seeds and clear water run down her chest and into her bush. Some pearl necklace is there too, in that giant thatch of hair. The magazine must be old because that bush is so big. We yell across the fire and I smell the burnt leaves and they choke me. But Sean and Danny smoke now and they just poke at the mess of danger with their old sneakers. My mother's going to smell all of this, each layer: the gasoline, the leaves and the porn.

3

On the bike, the blood waters down my shin in lines, leaving stains of light red on my striped sock. I feel hot now that I have stopped riding, but proud of the blood, like I deserve it, like I have fought to win its release and the mark it now bestows on my leg, which is all man.

My father stops ten yards out from me, no more passengers now. I hand the ice puck bag over and he opens and drinks from it. The ice bobs – a stopper, and he stops. Between ingestions of water and deeper

breathing, he is choking mildly, calmly. He notices the blood from the pedal and scans the empty school parking lot, which has gnats now to breathe and he continues coughing and jogging in place. "We'll head down Rues and turn at Summerhill." I nod back at hearing our now familiar Sunday route and step onto a pedal, pressing my heaviness down. The bike responds, creaking and arching upward under my strain.

4

The school lights come on, still visible through the green summer cover and our fire and smoke. Tomorrow our summer ends. My nerves rise when I realize this, they silence my coughing and I breathe in the fire. It chokes on fresh leaves Danny has fed it. He goes to Catholic school unlike the rest of us and has already felt the death of summer. He always leaves at 7, strict weekday curfew, and grabs his magazines under his dirty arm. We slap five and he is gone into the trees and maybe for the last time as kids, we pretend we'll know each other forever. Sean asks me if I want to go the mall, that he'll steal me a G.I. Joe. I say no, that I have to go home. I'm a Goody Two-Shoes, he says. He's a dick, I say.

Home is a two-minute walk out of the green woods and through the soccer fields that buffer the elementary school from my house. Home draws out my nerves again, but this time there is no release and no more friends. In my room I try to play with my G.I. Joes but they bore me. I feel sad that I have them and that I can't make them do what I want. Last year they did it all. I try to remember how it went and I can't.

We sit for dinner. My sister is 18 and last year didn't go to her prom. My brother is 16 and smokes when we walk around our block and is out of sight. Fish sticks and stewed tomatoes sit on my plate and I just watch the pool of water that leaves the tomato as it rings shiny and metallic from oil that has settled in it. My father commutes home and is late. When he gets in, he will run and I will ride along with him so I can lose weight for Pop Warner football.

My mother takes us to Kmart for notebooks and clothes for the new school year. A sale. The store, a block or two outside our neighborhood, is shameful to us. This knowledge is part of an uneasy and silent understanding between all of us kids who have to go there. I see popular girls slumming it as I feel the cold forced air upon entry. One stops me; my mother smiles and stands away. The girl asks me not

to tell anyone she is there. I say that I wouldn't, that it would implicate me as well. It wouldn't matter, she says. No one would care what I did. She leaves and I get shitty notebooks and a Hulk Hogan homework pad that will never find use and we head for home. I know that I should be happy because the year is starting again but instead I feel too old to be walking next to my mom.

5

Turning downhill, cradling the bag of ice that's mine and the half-drunk one that's his, my hands relax. I ride with my head down through the old greenhouse lot; with windows stained by water and lime and brown death of plants. Gnats die in my eyes and my throat and I cough the bodies out. More water is melting. The sun is higher and hotter than when we left. Sweat burns lines into my skin, I straighten my body, slimming it, and the sweat runs now, soaking me.

He moves like a savage shape, an ice block slowly melting out of form. His legs smash their heels into the blurred black road. I squint to make it all blur beside me too, like I am running as fast.



## **FIREWORKS**

It was the Fourth of July, and for the first time Frannie and Joe were celebrating the event as husband and wife. The day, which was for all accounts a pleasant enough one, began in the traditional manner, with a run along the beach, then the usual barbecue mix of steak, just slightly seared, all downed with peach wine coolers along with apple crisp and fritters. Without any sort of discussion, the couple planned discreetly to view the fireworks at New York Harbor on their widescreen TV, all cozy and low-key. But that all changed when one of their neighbors, a man in his 40's who fancied himself a town spokesman, extended an invitation.

"It's the greatest show within 20 miles from here," the man smirked. And after all, he reasoned, why would anyone (newlyweds included) want to stay indoors on such a beautiful evening? Joe looked at Frannie, shrugged his shoulders, and in the next moment, the two grabbed light, and unnecessary, cotton jackets and set out into the tepid night air.

It seemed their neighbor had located the most expeditious way of getting to the fireworks and the route, he happily assured them, did not even require the use of a vehicle.

Frannie was content not to be sitting in a car for a change, welcoming the jaunt as an opportunity to walk off the meal. Sensing that the couple preferred to bask in their own semi-solitude, the families took places a few feet away in the march toward the light. Nevertheless, their paths, which for the first few blocks had only been marred by the shadows of sprawling trees, soon gave way to sandals which slapped delicately beside them and black and white basketball sneakers which squeaked noisily past the couple. The trek up the hill of neatly manicured hedges and a matrix of white, red, silver minivans, appeared only mildly ominous, and the couple dug their feet into the sidewalk with renewed determination. They preferred the human landscape.

By the time they reached the underside of the hill, a barricade and two stationary police cars, with wide blinking red eyes hindered the

passage of cars. Frannie and Joe dove into the soup of neighbors who headed like suburban zombies towards the fairgrounds.

Frannie felt her breaths coming steady now, fueling her with a sense of exhilaration as she pushed onward. She looked into the sky and let the half moon guide her forward. Joe's hand, as always, sealed her own as he too let the radar of moonlight propel him ahead.

When she finally gave her head, if not her feet, a moment to pause, Frannie smiled to herself. Who would ever think she'd be so provincial? The town fireworks, for heaven's sakes. As if that were the biggest thing in her life! She who only two years earlier had trekked across Europe with friends, enjoyed Perrier and turkey baguettes at the foot of the Arc d'Triomphe, and swung passionately on cable cars along the face of Mt. Pilatus, marching now to see a small town display of fireworks! Some neon pellets of light thrown into the sky by amateur firemen. But, what was that expression, "When in Rome?..."

Finally, after about three miles, the journey came to an end as young boys formed a circle in the street, dove surreptitiously in pockets, and began sending sparklers whizzing into the night air. Families began setting up beach chairs behind parked cars, while others, less fortunate, angled for spaces along the curb. Deeper into the side streets, neighbors beckoned friends to climb narrow stairs to wooden decks, prized vantage points.

"I guess we can stop here, okay?" said Joe, motioning to a spot of curb not too far from the corner.

"It's as good as any other," smiled Frannie, and settled into place. Like many of the others, she removed her tennis shoes, wrapped them in her jacket then sat hugging her knees as she waited for the show to begin. Joe, never one to relax in one place for too long, stood behind his wife, leaning on the narrow beam which divided the street from a row of private homes.

Frannie watched the familiar narrow legs couched in mahogany colored loafers regress. The dark hairs on the legs flickered momentarily when a breeze blew by. What a bizarre vantage point this is, thought Frannie, half-wishing she could wrap her own legs around the ones which she heard shifting now behind her.

She closed her eyes and inhaled the scent of Ivory soap as she let her head drop to her knees. Hokey. That was the right word for it. What a hokey thing to do. Sometimes she wondered why they

just didn't take an apartment in the city, like their friends. Then all they would have to do on the Fourth would be look out a window and wham, they'd be in the center of the universe! But Joe was determined to return to the place where they grew up, saying it would make them feel more settled. Settled? The word was anathema to her. "Settled" meant a whining child which awakened you every other hour when you had to be up for work at 7am. It meant meatloaf and mashed potatoes, rinsing the dishes twice, and nighttime runs to the grocery store for milk. It meant a trip around the corner to the cleaners was, oh joy, your weekly outing, when a serious discussion of the latest Disney flick was mental stimulation. Settled meant, at its worst, settled.

A crescendo of whispers rippled through the crowd, and Frannie looked up. The show was beginning.

A string of little pops sounded and a patch of emerald lit the air. Less than a minute later, a burst of orange appeared and wound like a kite's tail around a cluster of stars suspended in the now blackened sky. Whoosh came the echo following the speeding scarlet comet which, with an unanticipated blast, became a rounded moon and then indented to take the form of a heart.

"I can tell when the boom is going to come," advised a boy of about 7 speaking to a friend who was trying to smack the ringing from his ears. "When you see that tiny little line of white that looks like the smoke from a jet? That's when the bam is going to come. See that, Kenny? Hold your ears!" Frannie startled at the sudden blast, marveling at the precision of the child's prediction.

"Hey, you were right on target," she said to the boy, who chose to ignore her. Rat-a-tat. More fire was slung into the night and a smattering of silver licked the clouds as the icicles of light embedded themselves into the darkness.

Frannie lowered her head and followed the line of walking shoes, which had grown more sparse as they headed still towards the fairgrounds. A small white poodle with its nose to the ground caught her attention. Two pairs of sneakers followed lazily near each other. Curiosity beckoned her eyes upward along the sunburnt legs which rested staunchly on one pair of ankles, and the white doughy flesh which rose to meet long khaki colored shorts. The couple, guessed Frannie, were probably in their late 50's or early 60's, yet acted as if they too were newlyweds or lovers. The man's arm slung around his

partner's wide back and secured her waist. He had a balloon of a face whose roundness was only more exaggerated by the fact that he wore no glasses and since a tress of steel gray strands was the only sign of hair he had left. His eyes gazed like beads into those of his partner as he spoke intently. His wife, for want of a better word, more than made up for her partner's lack of coiffure, for a mass of white ringlets bobbed exuberantly as she nodded, concentrating on each word. Their bodies, it seemed to Frannie, molded into each other like of puzzle of purple and white. Both sported matching "I Love Jamaica" T-shirts. The two stopped only once at the corner to pull at a slender red collar, the man admonishing, "Pogo, no!" and continued on, oblivious to the show overhead.

Frannie looked up again as the couple disappeared into the distance, which had taken another upward turn. The sky crackled again, and this time became a rainbow of spinning wheels as Frannie invented a history for the two. These games of the mind were a secret she kept only to herself, but nevertheless a habit she enjoyed immensely. Two professors at the local college they were, who had met while on an anthropological dig in the southlands of Peru. She, poor thing, had been widowed some five years earlier, while he had secured a divorce at about the same time. Both had grown children who, since they lived out of state, were thrilled to have their parents find love as they entered their autumn years. And, with no grandchildren yet to dote on, the couple could devote themselves to each other and take long trips to Jamaica and other romantic shores. Like Joe, though, they much preferred the human landscape to any man-made sight.

A metallic strand screamed into the night and burst into a shower of golden stars. Close by, a blinking yellow dot hovered, and Frannie wondered if the passengers on the jet were watching the event more in awe or in fear.

"We mustn't forget to pack your suntan lotion for camp tomorrow, Amanda," said the woman's voice to her left. She was sitting Indian style cradling her young daughter's head in her lap as she braced herself on the curb with the palms of her hands.

"What time is the bus coming, Mommy?" asked Amanda, wiping a stray blonde strand from her forehead.

"Eight o'clock, and that means this show had better be over soon," said the mother, craning her neck to catch a glimpse of her wristwatch.

“I can’t wait for camp, Mommy,” then, pointing to a blast of lavender and pink, “Oh, look—how do they do that?”

“I’m not really sure, Amanda. It’s pretty, though,” said the mother, a frail woman with pale blue eyes and short dark hair.

“I love the Fourth of July,” said Amanda.

The blasts came furiously now, exploding into the spires of the highest trees. Would Amanda have as much fun at camp this year, Frannie wondered, would she rush now to get home to play with a baby brother and a father who was too tired to join in the fun that night?

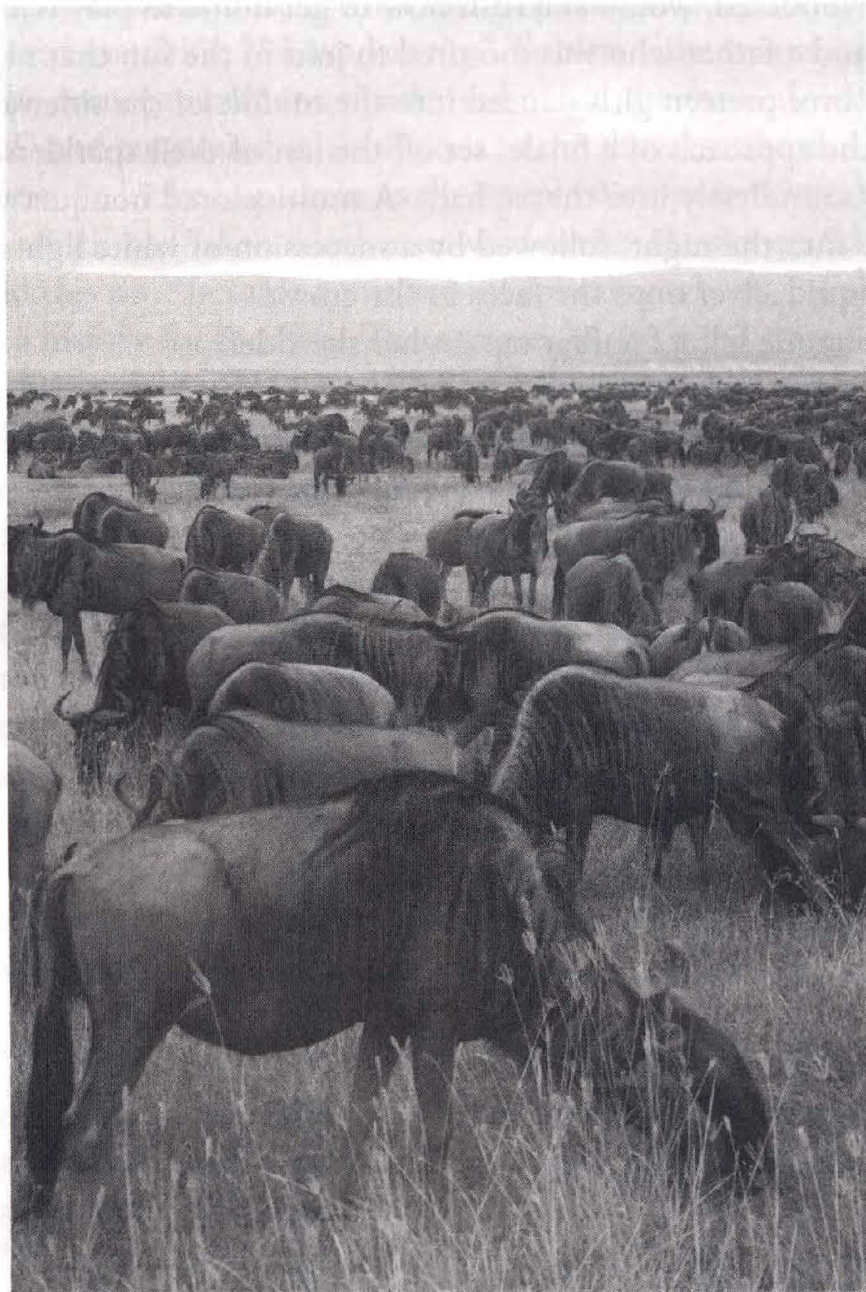
Three preteen girls danced into the middle of the sidewalk, and sensing the approach of a finale, set off the last of their sparklers, which flickered soundlessly into the asphalt. A multicolored bouquet whirled suddenly into the night, followed by a succession of white lights which dipped liquid silver onto the faces in the crowd.

Frannie felt a familiar tap on her shoulder.

“Not a bad show, huh?” said Joe as he helped her to her feet, amidst the murmurs of approval which echoed on either side of her. And it was, Frannie had to agree, a wonderful spectacle.

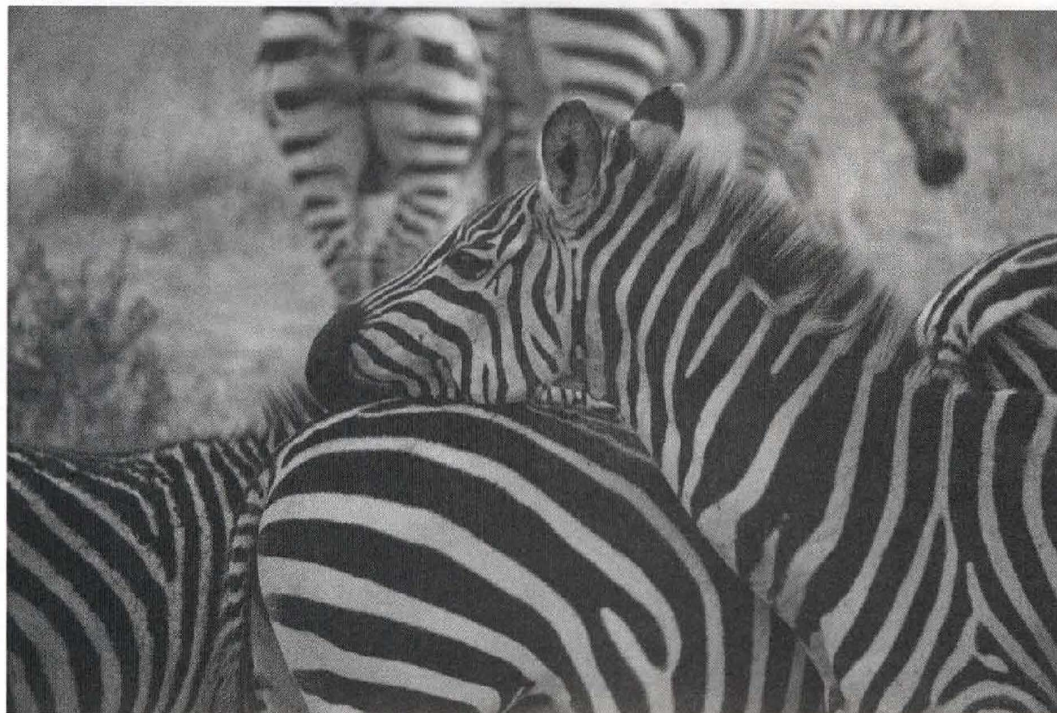
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**TANZANIA 2010**



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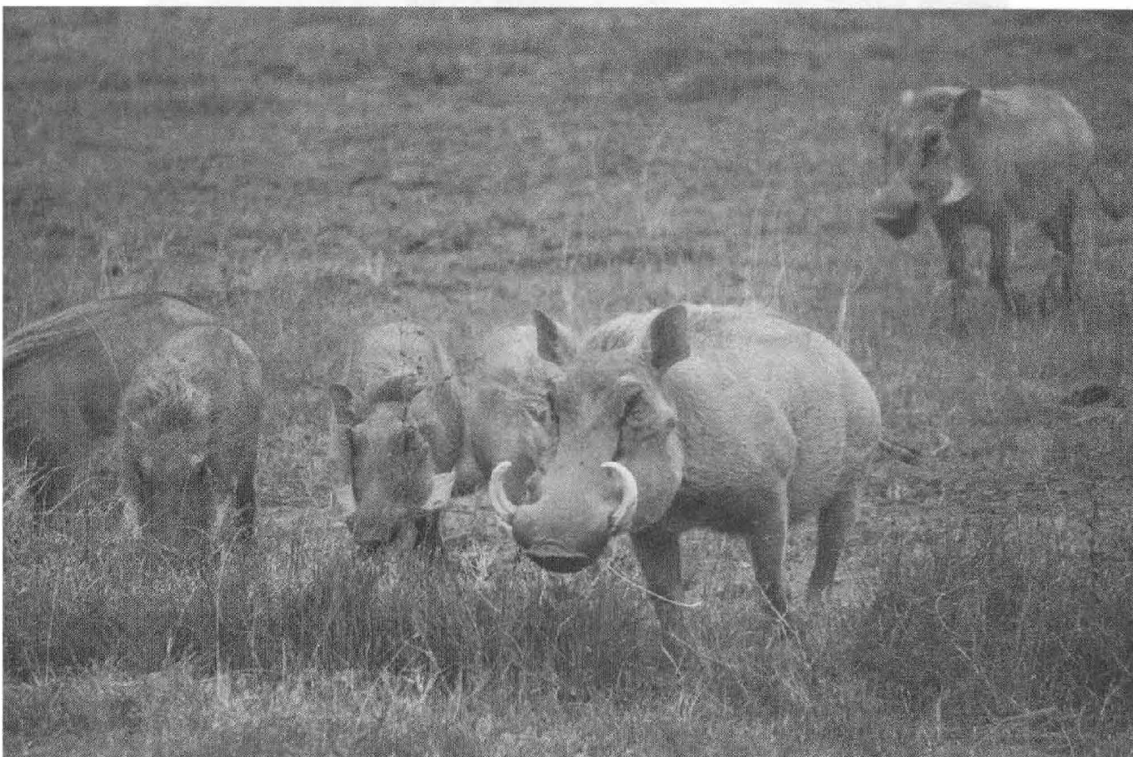
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**TANZANIA 2010**





**TANZANIA 2010**



**TANZANIA 2010**



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**TRANSFER: THE SECRET SHARER**

Dramatic Presentation based on a story by:  
Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)

The playwright acknowledges with gratitude and respect the author  
whose story made this work possible.

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*(Stage has two acting areas:  
(1) Bridge of a ship – risers recommended  
(2) Skipper's stateroom*

*Before curtain rises, ship's bell starts tolling time.*

*At four bells the curtain rises. Two mates are on bridge watch. It is night.  
The only light is a lantern.*

*At nine bells, the ringing stops.)*

1st MATE:  
What do you think of him?

2nd MATE:  
It's hard to say. He's only been on board three days and we've been at  
anchor the whole time.

I'll tell you this, though, he's young—young for a skipper.

I think he's coming now.

*(SKIPPER enters.)*

SKIPPER:  
Good evening.

1st MATE and 2nd MATE:  
Good evening, Sir.

SKIPPER:  
Quiet, isn't it? Why don't you go below and get some rest. I'll take the watch. Any sign of wind and I'll let you know so we can call "all hands up" and get underway.

1st MATE:  
See the lights over there? That's Zephora from Liverpool with a cargo of coal. 123 days out of Cardiff.

SKIPPER:  
Thank you. Good night.

*(1st and 2nd MATES depart. SKIPPER wanders over bridge looking out from all angles. A few modest banging and shuffling noises sound from off stage. SKIPPER goes to investigate noises, appearing to lean over rail of ship.)*

SKIPPER:  
Who is that?

LEGGETT:  
*(Out of breath—not yet visible.)*  
I have a cramp. Are you alone there?

SKIPPER:  
Yes.

LEGGETT:  
Has your captain turned in?

SKIPPER:  
No . . . no he hasn't.

LEGGETT:  
Could you call him . . . quietly?

SKIPPER:  
I am the captain.

LEGGETT:

Sir, my name's Leggett. I've been swimming for an hour. I'm exhausted.  
May I come on board?

SKIPPER:

I'll throw you a line.

*(SKIPPER throws line, then quickly exits and returns with blanket, giving it to LEGGETT who has just appeared on deck. SKIPPER holds lantern up to LEGGETT's face.)*

What are you doing swimming out there in the middle of the night?

LEGGETT:

It's an ugly business, sir. I was a mate on Zephora over there,  
but I killed a man.

SKIPPER:

When? Just now?

LEGGETT:

No . . . six weeks ago during passage from Cardiff. He was a miserable  
devil. Simmering all the time. Wouldn't do his job and wouldn't let any-  
body else do theirs. Just a snarling . . .

SKIPPER:

You went to Conway?

LEGGETT:

Yes, yes I did. Perhaps you did too. My father's a parson in Norfolk.  
He wouldn't believe this.

SKIPPER:

So what happened?

LEGGETT:

It was miserable weather—had been for days, and we were setting up a  
reefed foresail at dusk—the only sail we had to keep the ship running.  
He got insolent as we worked and then refused to obey orders. I hit him.  
We fought and I grabbed him by the throat just as a heavy sea washed  
over us. When the deck cleared, I still had him by the throat . . .and he  
was dead . . .black in the face.

The captain relieved me on the spot—for murder, and confined me to quarters—and my father a parson in Norfolk.

SKIPPER:

*(Pointing.)*

That's my stateroom. Stay there—out of sight.  
You'll find dry clothes hanging on the wall. I'll be there as soon as I set a watch for the bridge.

*(SKIPPER departs, LEGGETT goes to stateroom, 1st MATE returns to bridge—then SKIPPER moves to stateroom.)*

LEGGETT:

I was confined to my cabin for almost six weeks. I asked that Skipper to leave my door unlocked so I could go overboard sometime when we were in sight of land, but he wouldn't do it. He would never even look at me either, because he knew I set that sail and saved the ship. Anyway, last night when the Steward brought dinner he forgot to lock my door—and after dark I bolted. Somebody heard the splash—so they searched, but I got away. Saw your riding light and swam for it.

SKIPPER:

Do you thing Zephora will be looking for you in the morning?

LEGGETT:

I'm sure of it.

*(There is a knock on the stateroom door. LEGGETT hides.)*

SKIPPER:

Who is it?

STEWARD:

The Steward with your coffee, Sir.

SKIPPER:

*(Nervously.)*

Come in, come in.

*(STEWARD sets coffee on table and quickly looks around room.)*

STEWARD:  
Sir—be sure to close your port. They'll be washing decks this morning.

SKIPPER:  
Yes. Yes. I will. Thank you.

STEWARD:  
I'll be back for your cup later.

SKIPPER:  
Yes. Thank you. Be sure you knock first.

*(STEWARD leaves stateroom, then visits briefly with 1st MATE on bridge and then departs stage.)*

*(Lights slowly up. It is morning. SKIPPER is scanning a map and LEGGETT is sleeping in a chair. There is a knock at the door.)*

SKIPPER:  
Who's there?

1st MATE:  
1st Mate, Sir. There's a ship's boat from Zephora coming along side. Their skipper has requested permission to come on board.

SKIPPER:  
Permission granted. I'll be right up.  
*(Turning to LEGGETT)*  
Be careful.

*(SKIPPER goes to bridge where 1st MATE and CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD are standing and shakes hands with CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD.)*

Good morning.

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:  
Good morning, Sir. I'm Captain Archibald, Skipper of Zephora over there. We're looking for a young man—he was our mate. He murdered a crewman on board Zephora about six weeks ago.

SKIPPER:  
And naturally you want to turn him over to the shore people for trial?

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:

Yes, you're right. I don't want to be suspected of approving doings of that sort. I've been at sea 37 years. My record is spotless.

SKIPPER:

What happened?

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:

It was awful weather. It wasn't a heavy sea. It was a sea gone mad! At my order, he was reefing our only foresail. One of the crew would not obey him, so he grabbed him by the throat, just as a heavy sea slammed the deck—and when the deck cleared the crewman was dead—the mate still holding his neck.

SKIPPER:

Is it possible the heavy sea killed the man? Just the sheer weight of that water could break a neck.

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:

Good God, no. No man killed by the sea ever looked like that.

SKIPPER:

That reefed sail probably saved you, didn't it?

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:

By God it did. It was only by God's special mercy that it stood some of those hurricane squalls.

SKIPPER:

So it was the setting of that sail that . . .

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:

It was God's own hand in it; nothing less could have done it. I don't mind telling you that I hardly dared give the order. If we had lost it then, our last hope would have been gone. You know, I did not engage that young fellow. He was too young to be a mate. The owners forced him on me.

Well I suppose I have to report a suicide—the mainland is seven miles off our anchorage.

*(Then hesitantly, after a pause . . .)*



I would guess I had no more than a two mile pull to your ship—not a bit more.

SKIPPER:  
And not very pleasant in this heat either.

*(Pause of silence.)*

CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD:  
I say . . . you . . . you don't think that he could . . .

SKIPPER:  
Certainly not . . .but I'm delighted you came by.

*(They shake hands, then CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD leaves.)*

1st MATE:  
That Skipper seemed to have some idea that his mate was hidden aboard here. Can you believe it?

SKIPPER:  
Preposterous, isn't it?

1st MATE:  
As if we could harbor a thing like that. I suppose he did drown himself. Don't you, Sir?

SKIPPER:  
Probably so.

1st MATE:  
You have no doubt in the matter, Sir?

SKIPPER:  
None whatsoever.

*(Holds hand up to feel wind.)*

I think that there's enough wind to get under way. Turn the hands up.

*(Walks to stateroom.)*

1st MATE:

Yes, Sir.

SKIPPER:

*(Now in stateroom where LEGGETT is seated reading SKIPPER's maps.)*

Did you hear everything?

LEGGETT:

The man told you he hardly dared give the order. He never did. He may think he did, but he never did. He stood there with me after the main topsail blew away and whimpered about our last hope and the night coming on. I couldn't listen to a Skipper talk that way—so I went ahead myself.

*(Pause.)*

It will never do for me to come to life again. I've been looking at your map and you've got to put me off when we get to these  
*(Points to map.)* islands.

SKIPPER:

I won't do it. I won't maroon you. This isn't an adventure story.

LEGGETT:

You're right. This isn't an adventure story, but there's nothing else to do. What can anyone know whether I'm guilty or not or of what I'm guilty either. That's my affair. What does the Bible say—"Driven off the face of the earth." Very well, I'm off the face of the earth now. I came at night and that's when I'll go.

SKIPPER:

We'll do it tonight if the wind holds.

LEGGETT:

You understand. You seem to have been here on purpose.

*(SKIPPER moves to bridge where 1st and 2nd MATES are standing. Bridge lighting should simulate late afternoon.)*

SKIPPER:

*(Showing map to 1st MATE.)*

We should be closing on these islands shortly after dark. Keep me informed. I'm going to stand right in—way in—as far as I can take her.

2nd MATE:

But, Sir, we . . .

SKIPPER:

We're not doing well in the middle of the Gulf. I'm going to look for the land breezes tonight.

1st MATE:

But, Sir—do you mean we're going over to those islands in the dark?  
There may be reefs and shoals there.

SKIPPER:

Yes we are. If there are any land breezes at all along this coast we'll have to get close inshore to find them.

*(SKIPPER moves toward stateroom.)*

2nd MATE:

But, Sir—the danger is . . .

*(In stateroom.)*

SKIPPER:

*(To LEGGETT.)*

We are closing and should be there soon. On our present heading we should clear the south point. I'll edge her in to half a mile—as best as I can judge in the dark.

LEGGETT:

Be careful. Very careful.

SKIPPER:

I'll stand in as close as I dare—and then put her 'round. All hands will be aft as we deaden in the water—you go off up toward the bow. Lower yourself on a line to avoid a splash.

*(SKIPPER initiates a handshake with LEGGETT.)*

I won't be there to see you go. I hope I have understood.

LEGETT:  
You have. You have.

*(There is a knock on the door—bridge is now dark except for lantern.)*

1st MATE:  
We are drawing in pretty fast, Sir.

SKIPPER:  
Very well. I'll be right there.

*(SKIPPER joins 1st and 2nd MATES on bridge.)*

2nd MATE:  
*(Looking out with concern.)*  
Sir! We're close.

SKIPPER:  
*(Looking off bridge.)*  
She'll weather.

1st MATE:  
*(Looking off bridge—stammering.)*  
Sir! Sir! We're . . .

SKIPPER:  
Keep her good full.

2nd MATE:  
Are you going on, Sir? We're so close . . .

SKIPPER:  
Keep her full. Don't check her way.

1st MATE:  
What are we doing here! She will never get out! She will never weather  
and you're too close now to stay. She'll drift ashore before she's 'round.  
My God, she's ashore already!

SKIPPER:  
Is she? Keep good full there.

Ready, about!

Hard alee!

*(LEGETT darts across stage and leaves.)*

1st MATE:  
She's 'round, Sir, she's 'round! She's made it!

SKIPPER:  
Let go and haul.

*(Ship's bell tolls nine.)*

*(CURTAIN)*

## **MACHIAVELLI: PRINCE OF DARKNESS OR KING OF COMEDY?**

Cracked.com publishes a grand buffet of rubbish. The site has succeeded in defaming every superhero, cartoon character and beloved fairytale an individual can stomach. Their article “6 Adorable Cat Behaviors with Shockingly Evil Explanations” left cat owners sleeping with one eye open, lest kitty should attack. In general, the site circulates the most preposterous material that cannot possibly have much credibility and receives little attention. On the other hand, Cracked.com occasionally publishes an outlandish piece that sparks the reader to further investigate the claim. This exact episode played out with their article “6 Books Everyone (Including Your English Teacher) Got Wrong.” The writer of this piece made many bold statements, but the most striking claim argues that the notoriously sinister handbook by Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, actually represents a satire. At this point, the author audaciously compares Machiavelli to Steve Colbert and *The Prince* to a video-game before signing off the topic. The entire claim did not have much support on the site, but it certainly deserved a further investigation. After all, Machiavelli and *The Prince* do not usually go over very well as punch lines.

### **A Reputation**

Niccolo Machiavelli lives in infamy as the man who recommended duplicity, brutality, and immorality to princes. Novelist and screenwriter Oliver Francis, author of the “Afterword” to *The Prince and The Art of War*, claims that the name Machiavelli has become synonymous with “the pursuit of political ends without regard for morality” (429). Cary Nederman, a professor of political science at Texas A&M University, contends, “[f]or Machiavelli, power characteristically defines political activity” (3). Consequently, the term ‘Machiavellian’ identifies an individual who callously overlooks moral standards in the political arena. Wayne A. Rebhorn, a professor at the University of Texas, remarks that Machiavelli “in the popular mind [has come] to stand for a kind of political ruthlessness...” (Rebhorn xxi). In other words, people have learned to fear Niccolo, but not to love him.

Additionally some of Machiavelli’s contemporaries, such as

Giovanni Battista Busini, believed that Machiavelli turned his back on republicanism in an attempt to ingratiate himself with the Medici. Maurizio Viroli, author of *Niccolo's Smile* and professor of political theory at Princeton University, declares that everyone in Florence hated Machiavelli after reading *The Prince* (1). As Busini once wrote, "The rich thought it would teach the Duke how to take away their property. The *piagnoni* called him a heretic; the good thought him sinful and the wicked thought him more wicked or more capable than themselves" (qtd. in Viroli 1). From Busini's opprobrious remarks to the present day, Machiavelli still reigns as the prince of darkness.

Ironically, this spoiled reputation stems from the ideas expressed in one example from his portfolio, but does not reflect the majority of Machiavelli's work or political life. As Renaissance historian Hans Baron writes in a letter to Cornell University Professor John M. Najemy, "Machiavelli is being partially or even totally misrepresented by so many people..." (qtd. in Najemy 124). Indeed, generations of scholars have painted a diluted picture of Machiavelli based on a literal interpretation of *The Prince* and a complete disregard for his other works and political associations. Therefore, one must fully examine his background and his writings to determine whether or not Machiavelli received a fair assessment in history. As written in *The Art of War*, "Since it is legitimate, I think, to speak well of any man after he is dead, because then there can no longer be any imputation or suspicion of flattery in it, I willingly take this opportunity of doing justice to the memory of..." Niccolo Machiavelli (195).

## Biography

In his youth, Machiavelli studied under the renowned teacher, Paolo da Ronciglione, and learned to speak Latin by the age of seven (Rebhorn xv). Afterwards, he likely attended the University of Florence, yet some scholars dispute this claim (Nederman 2). In any event, by the age of twenty-nine, Niccolo Machiavelli secured a position as the Head of the Second Chancery, which catapulted him into the heart of Florentine politics (Rebhorn xv). For fourteen years, Machiavelli worked under the *gonfaloniere*, Piero Soderini, and would serve a city that felt "dearer to him than [his] own soul" (xvii). During this time, diplomatic missions would take Machiavelli to France, Germany, the lawless Romagna, and to the State of the Church. He witnessed the suppression of revolts, emerging conflicts within Tuscany, difficult negotiations with mercenary *condottieri*, and the establishment of the Florentine militia (Baron 245). Needless to say, this experience certainly influenced his later writings.

Unfortunately, after the Medici reclaimed Florence in 1512,

Machiavelli's republican ties would cost him dearly. The Medici, suspicious of Machiavelli's true allegiance, threw him out of their government and forced him to live in solitude on his father's small farm near San Casciano (Rebhorn xvii). During his exile, Machiavelli frequently went to the gardens of Cosimo Rucellai to meet with a group of intellectuals known as the *Orti Oricellari* to discuss politics, philosophy, and literature (xviii). Otherwise, he led a lonely life in the country, deprived of any meaningful occupation in Florentine affairs.

Later that year, fortune turned her back again on Machiavelli when his name appeared on a list of conspirators. Although most likely innocent of the charges, he endured prison and torture before his release a month later (xvii). Mary Dietz, an assistant professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, argues that since Machiavelli's name did appear on the list of conspirators, one can assume Anti-Medicis considered him a "potential ally" (Dietz 791). Sadly in 1522, Machiavelli again fell under suspicion when two of his known associates, Zanobi Buondelmonti and Luigi Alamanni, planned to assassinate Giulio de' Medici. Fortunately for Giulio, however, the plan crumbled after one of the conspirators let the cat out of the bag and mentioned Machiavelli's name as someone who might help (Dietz 791).

Although Machiavelli may not have known about these plots, his alleged involvement did not help his reputation with the despotic Medici. Furthermore, examining Machiavelli's family tree, one would discover that the family's republican beliefs span across generations. In fact, the Machiavelli notoriously supported the Florentine republic (789). Niccolo's grand-uncle, Girolamo, died in prison after he spoke out against Cosimo de' Medici. Not to mention, Francesco Machiavelli made an infamous speech that reproached tyranny and praised liberty (790). Given this long running history, perhaps the only reason Machiavelli did not actively participate in the assassination plots boils down to his sentiment, "conspiracies rarely succeed, they most often bring about the ruin of those who plan them..." (qtd. in Dietz 791). All things considered, with the Medici in power, Niccolo had little left to do for his beloved Florence, so he commenced his literary endeavors.

### **The Traditional Prince**

Indeed, Machiavelli's prose notoriously sparks with incendiary insights and diabolical undertones. He dedicated *The Prince* to the duke of Urbino, Lorenzo de' Medici, after Giuliano de' Medici died in 1516. Despite this gesture, "Lorenzo remained hostile to Machiavelli" and saw him as a republican threat to the Medici rule (Rebhorn xviii). Therefore, it should



come as no surprise to find out Lorenzo probably never read *The Prince* (Francis 437). As the story goes, on the day Machiavelli delivered *The Prince* “Lorenzo was also given a gift of greyhounds, an unfortunate circumstance indeed, for the Medici lord was more intrigued with his hounds” (qtd. in Dietz 796). Needless to say, Lorenzo’s response does not reflect how the rest of the world would receive this book.

Indeed the majority took a particular interest in this work, and in 1559 *The Prince* even appeared on the Catholic Church’s Index of Prohibited Books (Francis 429). Garrett Mattingly, a former professor at Columbia University and Pulitzer Prize winning author, claims *The Prince*, at face value, represents “a scientific manual for tyrants” (2). Initially the work “horrified, rebelled...and fascinated like a Medusa’s head” (2). After all, the haunting tone of lines such as “A man will forget the death of his father sooner than the loss of his patrimony” truly heighten *The Prince*’s cynical façade (Machiavelli 72).

Accordingly, Wayne A. Rebhorn asserts that Machiavelli believes princes need to do “evil deeds” in order to gain or preserve power. However, if the prince “succeeds, and his people benefit from it, they will not be upset” (Rebhorn xxiv). As Machiavelli writes “In the actions of all men, and especially for princes, where there is no court of appeal, one looks at the outcome” (Machiavelli 77). In other words, individuals will overlook a treacherous journey, provided the destination meets or exceeds their expectations. Rebhorn argues that for Machiavelli, “morality may be a good thing, but it is not what drives people’s behavior in the real world” (xxiii). Of course, this does not necessarily give princes a “convenient way out” of moral dilemmas, but it does make it easier to pursue their personal agendas. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. of Harvard University has a similar argument when considering *The Prince*. He believes Machiavelli utilized a realistic approach, asserting that morality has a place in one’s private life, but not in politics (Mansfield 295). Alas, this brutal portrayal of dominance and power would taint Machiavelli’s reputation for years to come.

### **An Enlightenment**

Nevertheless, the dark cloud that overshadowed Machiavelli did not always have such a daunting presence. The first reference to a “republican Machiavelli” came from Alberto Gentil’s 1585 piece entitled *De legationibus* (Viroli 1). In his work, Gentil holds Machiavelli in the highest regard, proclaiming “Those who have written against him... have not understood Machiavelli’s ideas at all and have indeed slandered him...” (qtd. in Viroli 1). Moreover, Gentil describes Machiavelli as an enthusiast of democracy and extremely hostile to tyranny (1). Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, as Gentil

proposes, to “openly [display] the degree of wretchedness [of the tyrant] to the people” (qtd. in Viroli 1). Simply put, under the guise of helpfulness, Machiavelli intended to turn the people against the tyrannical Medici.

The Enlightenment, however, brought about the first substantial attempts to vindicate Machiavelli from the dictatorial chains engineered through *The Prince*. Seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza recognized Machiavelli as a champion of liberty and an advocate of freedom (Viroli 1). In addition, philosophers Pierre Bayle and Denis Diderot revered Machiavelli for his republican idealism (2). Nevertheless, the most significant praise came from Jean-Jacques Rousseau who proclaimed in *The Social Contract*, “While appearing to instruct kings, he has done much to educate the people...Machiavelli’s *Prince* is the book of Republicans” (qtd. in Viroli 2).

### **The Republican**

For one to consider Machiavelli a republican, one must first form an acquaintance with his other writings. Particularly in the *Discourses on Livy*, or simply the *Discourses*, Machiavelli conveys a radically different message than one would expect after reading *The Prince*. In fact, what the Florentine expresses in the *Discourses* reveals his preference for a republican government. Oliver Francis argues that one should examine Machiavelli’s *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy* alongside *The Prince* “for a more rounded view of Machiavelli the political theorist” (433). For example, the *Discourses* outline Machiavelli’s support for the common good. In an unexpected twist for some, Machiavelli also discloses his confidence in a republic’s supremacy over a principality. He argues that “republics live longer than principalities because...they have the resources provided by the entirety of the people” (qtd. in Rehorn xxvii). Moreover, Machiavelli asserts that “popular rule is always better than the rule of princes” (qtd. in Francis 434). This statement expresses a proposal that sounds more democratic than the autocratic feel of *The Prince*. Additionally, in Machiavelli’s “On Reforming the State of Florence,” written to Pope Leo X, he describes the organization of a republic, supports the reopening of the hall of the Council of the Thousand, and promotes a balance of power with the return of a *gonfaloniere* (Dietz 780). As a final point, in Machiavelli’s “Discourse on Florentine Affairs,” he tries to persuade the Medici to rule Florence in an egalitarian fashion (Rehorn xxx).

Machiavelli also recognized the importance of debate and fair legislation in a free society. To begin, he believes “if deliberations on matters of general interest are entrusted to the many, it is more likely that the common good will prevail over particular interests” (Viroli 4). He cites

Rome for achieving the status of an ideal republic after the creation of the tribunes which allowed citizens to share in government (6). Also, the importance of debates becomes increasingly imperative when considering that "...in every republic there are two different dispositions and that all legislation favoring liberty is brought about by their dissension" (qtd. in Nederman 12). Additionally, social conflicts, when conducted in a civil manner, preserve liberty because "all legislation favorable to liberty" has roots in debate (Viroli 7). In summary, Machiavelli supported free speech and recognized its importance in a free society.

Furthermore, in his other writings, Machiavelli articulates a profound respect for the law. If individuals disregard the principles of legal justice, as Machiavelli writes in the *Discourses*, "civil life will soon disappear" (qtd. in Viroli 3). In other words, he supports legislation that promotes the common good because a civilization would crumble in the absence of law. Moreover, Machiavelli implies that the corruption of the Roman Republic happened when "only the powerful proposed laws, not for the common liberty, but to augment their own power" (4). For this reason, legislation must come from a balance between the masses and the leaders. As Machiavelli proclaims in *Discourses*, "A prince who can do what he pleases is mad and a people which does what it likes is unwise" (qtd. in Viroli 4). In short, as he also explains in his *Florentine Histories*, thriving and liberated cities have laws that restrain the power of nobles and influence the behavior of citizens (8).

Evidently, Machiavelli had a preference for liberty over tyranny. He even denounces fear in the *Discourses on Livy* when he writes, "The distinct sign of republican liberty is the absence of the fear of being oppressed" (qtd. in Viroli 9). After all, citizens cannot control a monarch, so they live in constant dread of his or her next impulse which will irrevocably restrain freedom. Machiavelli concludes in the *Discourses* that "it is wiser to entrust sovereign power in the hands of ordinary citizens, if one wants to establish and preserve a true civil and free way of living" (qtd. in Viroli 5). As unexpected as this advice sounds coming from Niccolo Machiavelli, the truth of the matter remains that he supported republican ideology.

### **The Colossal Failure**

The natural reaction to such a contradiction should incite a bit of curiosity. One might question Machiavelli's intentions when writing *The Prince*, or one might choose to disregard his other writings as mere hypocrisies. However, this paradox cannot settle itself, so it becomes necessary to examine the possible motivations he had for writing the quintessential tyrant's instructional handbook. With this in mind, the first

stop on this part of the journey will examine some notable inconsistencies found within the text. For example, Machiavelli seemingly goes out of his way to claim that princes must “learn how not to be good” (Machiavelli 66). This suggests that Machiavelli believes people have the tendency to behave morally instead of selfishly, which contrasts with the idea “men are sadly wicked” (75).

Also, in his account of King Ferdinand, Machiavelli deems the brazen king’s actions a “pious cruelty.” The irony of this example lies within Machiavelli’s initial praise of the king. He describes Ferdinand’s brutal actions as “rare,” then calls the actions “pitiful” (94), thus leaving the reader uneasy about how he or she should respond to such an example. Even Rebhorn admits, “Although the passage is generally filled with praise, “cruelty” and “pitiful” introduce jarring notes into the presentation of Ferdinand [that] undermine his status as an ideal prince” (xxv). In this scenario Machiavelli condemned wickedness, but earlier in the text he notes that princes should “know well how to use the nature of the beast” if the prince plans to succeed (Machiavelli 75). In summary, the ideal prince needs to learn “how to not be good” and “to use the nature of the beast,” yet cannot inflict any “pious cruelty” because that would render him “pitiful” (Machiavelli 66; 75; 94). Any man who can successfully accomplish all of this should win an award.

Most importantly, the reader must also notice the ineffectual princes Machiavelli utilizes, especially in the case of Cesare Borgia. This man rose to power as a direct result of his father, Pope Alexander VI’s, aid. Cesare subsequently developed a long rap sheet of monstrous crimes including treachery, extortion as well as alleged fratricide and incest (Mattingly 7). In Tuscany, the people hated Borgia for the “gross misconduct of his troops on neutral Florentine soil” (4). In fact, the Tuscan peasants despised Borgia and his army so much that when they tried to cross the frontier for a second time, the peasants destroyed Borgia’s men (7). However, Machiavelli celebrates the most memorable of Borgia’s escapades in *The Prince*. He relates how Borgia dismembered Lieutenant Remirro de Orco and left his body in the town square. This surely instilled fear among the people of Cesena, or as Machiavelli put it “The ferocity of such a spectacle left those people ... stunned” (31). Regardless, Borgia killed the man solely to preserve his own power and good name—arguably rendering it a wonderful ploy for a tyrant, yet a despicable act for a man.

However once his father died, Borgia’s career died as well. Machiavelli may claim “But if at the death of Alexander [Cesare Borgia] had been healthy, everything would have been easy” (33), but in reality no one trusted Borgia, and he could not trust anyone (Mattingly 6). Without papal support, Borgia’s campaigns began to crumble and the people of Italy

began sleeping peacefully at night (6). Overall, Cesare Borgia ended his career a magnificent disappointment, so he does not seem like a model for anything except debauchery. In fact, Machiavelli's historical poem *Decennali*, published in 1509, reveals his true aversion towards Borgia (6). To rationalize the decision to praise Borgia, one would have to accept *The Prince* as "a satirical attack on the duplicity, aggression and opportunism of Cesare Borgia and his like" (Francis 436). In short, by advising the Medici to emulate Borgia, Machiavelli effectually insults them. Honestly, no one of sound mind and body could consider Borgia a model prince or citizen. For this reason, unless Machiavelli wanted to see the further destruction of Florence, "only in a satire can one understand the choice of Cesare Borgia as the model prince" (Mattingly 7).

### The Joker

Although traditional Machiavelli scholars would argue not to reduce the book into catchy phrases or vulgar propaganda, one cannot help thinking outside the box when reviewing his work (Mansfield 295). Accordingly, former professor at Columbia University, Garrett Mattingly, believes *The Prince* reflects an early political satire: "[t]o read *The Prince* as satire ... clears up puzzles and resolves contradictions..." (6). Indeed, examples such as Cesare Borgia can confuse a reader who decides to take *The Prince* at face value. Additionally, the book reads as a mockery of the new Florentine rulers, especially when considering the Medici used Spanish troops, "the arms of others," to overthrow the republic (Francis 437). Most curious of all, however, Machiavelli's syntax in *The Prince* contrasts with "the sensitivity and tact of the developed literary temperament" found in his other writings (Mattingly 2). In essence, his words feel casual and frightfully amusing with complete disregard for his reader's response. As Hans Baron notes, "[the] *Discourses* displays a breadth and profoundness in historical vision...a penetration in analysis of social forces that...makes *The Prince* look superficial and less mature" (236). For instance, Machiavelli never quite uses the word "tyrant" in the text, but he gleefully dances around it "until even the dullest [reader] could not mistake his meaning" (Mattingly 3). As Mattingly argues, the book chiefly addresses princes who seized their principalities through brute force, and "the short and ugly word for this kind of prince is 'tyrant'" (3). Add to this the fact that Machiavelli penned a number of sharp comedies, and the idea of *The Prince* as a satire becomes less bizarre. However, Mary Dietz of the University of Minnesota contends that dubbing *The Prince* a satire does not do the work any justice, for it deserves far more credit than what a satire would imply (780). However, even if this argument fails to pay homage to Machiavelli's cognitive abilities,

it still makes more sense than the traditional interpretation of *The Prince*.

### **Time Sensitive Material**

As a historian of political ideology specializing in the Italian Renaissance, Hans Baron has spent a good portion of his career attempting to reconcile the legacy of Niccolo Machiavelli. In fact, most of the academic scholarship pertaining to Machiavelli leads back to the work of Hans Baron. However, during the early 1930's, Baron believed that Machiavelli held a "critical and even cynical" conviction against humanism (Najemy 121). As Professor John M. Najemy explains, "[t]he Machiavelli that Baron saw in the early 1930's ...had lost faith in [the] ethical purity of political aims" (120). After years of attempting to close the gap between *The Prince* and his other writings, however, Baron redesigned his Machiavelli to reflect a "faithful heir of the specifically republican humanism of the early fifteenth century" (Najemy 121). Baron argues the order in which Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* and *The Discourses* can reveal his true feelings on the subject. If *The Prince* came first then Machiavelli's "early enthusiasm for a monarchical solution to Italy's woes gave way...to a reaffirmation of faith in republicanism grounded in the experience of Florence and the memory of Rome" (Najemy 119). In short, Baron contends that *The Prince* merely reflects a brief lapse in judgment on behalf of Machiavelli.

On the other hand, Machiavelli clearly took his time when writing the *Discourses*. Many historians now believe he began the enterprise in 1514 or 1515, but did not complete the work until 1518 or 1519 (Nederman 2). Therefore, "the doubt and despair" found in chapter 18 of *Discourses* may suggest Machiavelli put away this writing for a period of time and turned his frustrations into *The Prince* (Baron 230). This theory accounts for Machiavelli's refusal to write about republics in *The Prince*. As he notes, "I will not speak here of republics, because I have discussed them fully elsewhere" (Machiavelli 2). At this point in his portfolio, the term "elsewhere" clearly referred to the *Discourses*. Therefore, one can assume that Machiavelli started out as a republican sympathizer and ended as a republican sympathizer, but the middle remained unclear. However, as Najemy and Baron explain, "after a brief infatuation...with the amoral power-politics of princes, Machiavelli's growing contacts with circles of republican thought...[revitalized] his faith in free republics" (Najemy 125). Baron ultimately concludes that Machiavelli goes from "a treatise on the Renaissance principality to the most penetrating Renaissance treatise dealing with the republic" (253). In other words, Machiavelli flip-flopped like John Kerry during in the 2004 Presidential election.

## The Liar

Mary G. Dietz's ingenious hypothesis places Machiavelli akin to the devil but far from the autocrat. She suggests that Machiavelli intended to give Lorenzo outrageously ludicrous advice, hoping he would follow it, which would lead to his descent from glory. To support this conjecture, Dietz proposes that the theme of deception appears in all of Machiavelli's work (778). For instance, his play *Mandragola* recounts the tale of a crafty assault. *The Art of War* implies that conquering an opponent through a series of devious ploys calls for the highest praise. *The History of Florence* celebrates deceit and guile for securing a city, while honesty and trust destroyed it (778). "*The Prince* is not simply about deception," Dietz argues, "but it is itself an act of deception....this theorist of deceit is at the same time a *practitioner* of the act" (781). By going undercover within the Medici regime, Machiavelli could best destroy their reign. Simply put, in the words of Machiavelli, "he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived" (76).

Initially, Dietz discusses Machiavelli's terrible counsel on where a prince should live. As he writes, "In republics there is greater life, greater hatred, and more desire for vengeance... the most secure way is either to destroy them or to go there to live" (Machiavelli 23). Undoubtedly, fully demolishing a city does not seem very plausible, so the prince must reside within the city despite the dangerous landscape (Dietz 782). This proves rather curious considering "a prince within a city is easier to find and destroy" in the name of "liberty" (783). At this point, Machiavelli advises his prince not to trust the nobility, yet in "On Reforming the State of Florence" he writes "a prince alone without the nobles cannot bear the weight of a monarchy" (qtd. in Dietz 784)—quite contradictory, considering the prince in the previous scenario needs the nobles to suppress the people effectively. Moreover, in an example from "On Reforming the State of Florence," Machiavelli demonstrates how the Medici won public support through philanthropy in the past, yet he recommends that Lorenzo become miserly (785).

Afterwards, Machiavelli recommends that his new prince arm his subjects, "for when they are armed, those arms become yours" (Machiavelli 89). He proceeds to claim many successful tyrants have armed their subjects, but fails to give any examples (Dietz 786). Curiously, Machiavelli does give an example in a letter to Piero Soderini of another Medici who held his subjects by disarming them. Therefore, by allowing hostile subjects to bear arms, Machiavelli "fails to account for the...probability that arms may also facilitate plots, incite insurrection, and inspire rebels" (786). In short, the citizens will ultimately assassinate the new prince. On the other hand, John

Langton of Westminster College claims that if the prince did not arm his subjects, it would leave his country vulnerable to attack (1282). Therefore, this leaves the prince in a catch-22 scenario, considering he will either lose his life or his principality by arming his populace. Finally, Machiavelli does not recommend that Lorenzo build a fortress, because “the best fortress that exists is not to be hated by the people” (Machiavelli 92). In short, Dietz asserts that Machiavelli directed Lorenzo to “[reside] in the city, [forego] liberality, [arm] the people, [distrust] the nobles, [refuse to build] fortresses, and to mingle with the Florentines” (788). Following such a prescription would prove fatal for Lorenzo, thus making Machiavelli worse at giving advice than Ann Landers.

### **The Opportunist**

Machiavelli scholars generally agree that he wanted to return to active political life, and in 1513 that meant winning over the Medici (Dietz 789). British historian Catharine Macaulay trusts that Machiavelli may very well have supported any government that aimed to resurrect his beloved Florence (qtd. in Baron 220). However, the most striking evidence for an opportunistic Machiavelli comes from his correspondence with Francesco Vettori. At the time Machiavelli composed these letters, Vettori currently worked as the chief Florentine ambassador in Rome, rendering him the most influential of Machiavelli’s friends (Baron 241). As he writes in one letter, “there is the desire I have that these Medici lords should start making use of me, even if they would begin by having me roll a stone about” (Machiavelli 152). Simply put, Machiavelli wants a job, even a small job, within the Medici regime. He then pursues his case for employment by citing his experience, work ethic, and devotion (152).

At this point in his history, Machiavelli endured a miserable life in exile. The once brilliant political mind had to contend with “rude lumbermen and country people,” in a rather monotonous existence (Baron 241). The only solace for the disheartened Machiavelli came at night, when he would retreat to his study and engage in a type of “spiritual intercourse” with the greatest writers from antiquity (241). For several months following his release from prison, Machiavelli tried to persuade “his friends to use their influence in his favor” with the Medici (243). He celebrated Cardinal Giovanni de’Medici’s elevation to the papacy with a poem, then later that year he wrote Vettori expressing an interest to serve the new pope (243). The following June, Machiavelli proclaimed to Vettori he would “think [himself] into the pope’s place,” and proceeded to analyze the pope’s “political interests in Italy and Europe” (243). Five months later, he dedicated *The Prince* to Guiliano de’Medici, but he unfortunately died



before Machiavelli could complete his work (243). Alas, in 1520, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici gave Machiavelli a break when he commissioned him to write the *History of Florence* (Nederman 3). In summary, Machiavelli did not enjoy his country life and evidently wanted to return to the political arena. Whether this motivated him to write *The Prince* as a satire, a tirade, a trick or a resume, one can rest assured that Niccolo always loved Florence and liberty at heart.

### **A Rebuttal**

In opposition, the history books must know something about *The Prince* that radical scholars have neglected to reveal. Wayne Rebhorn of the University of Texas vehemently supports the traditional interpretation of *The Prince* and offers an argument in its defense. He contends that Machiavelli's clear admiration of the Romans proved he recognized the need for a prince under special circumstances. For instance, Machiavelli claims early on in the *Discourses* that one great man should establish or re-establish a state (xxx). Indeed, in the *Discourses* Machiavelli does admit that a magnificent leader must step forward to build a triumphant city, but the power and love of the people will ultimately maintain this city (Baron 218). Likewise, modern scholars feel Machiavelli's republicanism might have a strain of monarchism since he believes that "republics could not come into existence without the help of great individual personalities" (Viroli 2). Viroli refutes this claim for he feels Machiavelli's republicanism reflects a commitment to order, principles and political liberty as outlined in his other writings (2). However, interpreting *The Prince* as a piece of republican literature does not make everything else he wrote "true" and *The Prince* "false." Rather, it forces the reader to look beyond the text in order to grasp what this Florentine wanted to accomplish. Putting *The Prince* up against his other works and political history paints a very different portrait of "Old Nick" that usually goes unnoticed.

### **An Overview**

By and large, scholars have underestimated Machiavelli by failing to recognize his hidden republican agenda (Dietz 775). The "weak republican" theory suggests Machiavelli had a brief lapse in judgment when he wrote *The Prince*. Additionally, it argues that Machiavelli abandoned the idea of a prince as a political innovator after 1513 (779). "Weak republican" theorists also believe *The Prince* reflects Machiavelli's reluctant acceptance of Medicean domination and his opportunistic attempt to win their affections (779). On the other hand, the "strong republican" thesis implies that Machiavelli always stood as "a defender of republican liberty and an

opponent of the Medici” (779). Other “strong republican” scholars believe that Machiavelli’s prince will restore order, then “render himself superfluous,” thus facilitating the rise of a republican regime (780). Nevertheless, this plan does not outline how the death of a tyrannical prince would lead to the rise of a popular government, nor can the reader find any credible evidence to suggest Machiavelli had this particular design with *The Prince*.

### **The Contemporary**

Machiavelli reigns as one of the founding fathers of modern political thought because of his controversial assessment of politics and power. As Harvard University’s Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. argues, “Machiavelli might be chiefly responsible for the spirit of modernity and thus is himself the origin of the modern world” (295). In short, as long as tension continues to brew between nations, people continue to feel dissatisfied with government, and politicians continue to bend the truth, *The Prince* will always have a place in the political arena. Also, inspired by the traditional analysis of *The Prince*, political theorists came up with the idea of “ragione di stato” or “reason of state.” Wayne A. Rebhorn simply defines this as “some serious or morally unimpeachable [reason] could justify the most criminally culpable act”(xxiii). In other words, the state can act in a deplorable fashion, as long as the outcome largely benefits its citizens. Furthermore, historian John Pocock suggested in 1975 that Machiavelli’s republican ideals even “guided the framers of the American Constitution” (qtd. in Nederman 16). Take for example the topic of free speech, where Machiavelli declares “everyone should be at liberty to express his opinion...when the people have heard what each has to say, they may choose the best plan” (qtd. in Viroli 9). However, Machiavelli might change his mind after hearing a modern United States senator filibuster to destroy a bill.

Niccolo Machiavelli died on the twenty-first day of June 1527, before he could reclaim his position in the Florentine government. He died without realizing the impact his work would have on political science. He died with a dark cloud over his true convictions and ideology. History first crucified his reputation, then resurrected him as the monster who wrote *The Prince*. Therefore, on the four-hundred and eighty-fifth anniversary of his death, perhaps individuals should stop and take another look at Niccolo—the republican, the advocate of freedom.

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**“THE RIDDLES OF HEAVEN”:  
NATURE IN FOUR OF DONNE’S HOLY SONNETS**

The first point is to see the persons with the eyes of the imagination, meditating and contemplating in particular their circumstances and deriving *some fruit* from the sight. The second is to hear what they are saying, or might say . . .

—Ignatius Loyola (qtd. in Lynch 71)

The sixteenth century invented modern nature. Disengaging from alchemy, science began to investigate phenomena programmatically and categorically. To explain nature intellectually, without recourse to spiritual agency as a support for its formulations, the scientific method speculated faith as metaphysics. Louis I. Bredvold, reviewing the scientific thought of the early seventeenth century, says

Whether or not there were many who accepted the new science so early as 1614, there are few traces of it in English writings of the period. Bacon . . . did not understand the mathematical efforts of the Copernicans. Fulke Greville, who took a despondent view of most things in the world, expressed doubt as to whether the new system could be proved. Donne therefore appears exceptional, both in his eagerness to read the new scientific books and in his readiness to accept their conclusions. (201-02)

Donne’s interest in science appears in many of his secular and a few of his divine poems; it proved a field ripe with new conceits. In the “Holy Sonnets,” however, he usually avoids addressing the problem of value and a waste of value directly from the natural standpoint that scientific inquiry had created. As a man of faith, he tends not only to confine his meditations in the “Holy Sonnets” to the spiritual world, but to fall back on that world whenever antagonism between the objects of his faith and those of his inquiring intellect arises. When it does, the problem usually reveals his doubt, despair, and abhorrence; he usually reacts by petitioning God to assist him in his resistance to the natural world and in his avoidance of its influences.

The present essay will discriminate petition in its root sense of *assault on* (Skeat 386-87) from a weaker sense of *recourse to* the spiritual. In the “Holy Sonnets,” Donne remains involved in the latter until he has overcome the natural circumstances in which he finds himself without merely falling back on the spiritual world for support or relief of his condition. Donne’s action in four of these sonnets offers a poetic counterpart to the scientific method (See Appendix).

Although a “Divine Meditation,” the sonnet “O might those sighes and teares returne againe” presents the poet’s experience of an immediate and apparently *irremediable* grief. For although

Th’hydroptique drunkard, and night-scouting thiefe,  
The itchy Lecher, and selfe tickling proud  
Have the remembrance of past joyes, for reliefe  
Of coming ills . . . (ll. 9-12),

the poet’s circumstance remains hopeless: it allows him “No ease.”

The poem appears as the third of four sonnets in Helen Gardner’s edition of *The Divine Poems* (the four “penitential” sonnets, added in 1635). In her introductory remarks, she notes that the poet “expands the *compositio* to fill the whole sonnet, which is wholly given up to imagining his predicament and contains no petition” (liv). In not ‘falling back’ on the spiritual world in this poem—as he does in the other three sonnets with which it forms “a brief sequence” (lii)—he gives up his evasion of the problem raised for him by the newly discovered natural standpoint and confronts it directly, from that standpoint as he finds himself immersed in it.

In “John Donne’s *Holy Sonnets* and the Anglican Doctrine of Contrition,” Douglas L. Peterson argues that Gardner’s “classification of the four groupings according to theme is arbitrary” (504). He sees the Anglican doctrine of contrition as the “controlling principle in all nineteen of the *Holy Sonnets* . . .

Both Catholic and Anglican doctrines agree that contribution (sic; a misprint for contrition) is essentially a state of feeling, a ‘sorrow of heart and detestation for the sin committed, with the resolve to sin no more.’ But the demands upon the Anglican penitent are more stringent than those made on the Catholic. The Council of Trent established a formal distinction between perfect and imperfect contrition (attrition) in terms of what has motivated ‘sorrow of heart.’ Sorrow motivated by a fear of divine punishment was defined as attrition; sorrow

motivated by a hatred of sin itself and a love for God was defined as contrition. Although the latter is more desirable, either, according to the Catholic church, is sufficient for salvation. Anglican doctrine, however, insists absolutely that sorrow must be motivated by a hatred for the sin itself and that it must be precipitated by love for God. Donne is simply quoting orthodox doctrine when he insists that sorrow must issue from love and that fear is only a preliminary to love. Fear is merely attrition and, in itself, not sufficient for salvation . . . Thus it is that the stimulation of fear in the first half of the sequence of 1633 is in the interest of the stimulation of love in the second half, which is essential in turn to the "contrite" sorrow that is the theme of the four sonnets of 1635 . . . In short, the controlling principle of all nineteen of the *Holy Sonnets* is the Anglican doctrine of contrition. (506)

Discussing the first twelve of the sonnets, he holds that

The sequence ends . . . with no indication that the efforts it represents have been successful: each of the preliminary stages which ought to lead to contrition is represented, but so far there has occurred no expression of contrite sorrow. There are indications of such success, however, in the "penitential" sonnets of 1635. These four poems, while not sequentially related to the sequence of 1633, consummate, nevertheless, the disciplines represented by it. (513)

Peterson does not, however, comment on Gardner's unique arrangement of the penitential sonnets beyond characterizing their arrangement as arbitrary:

1. "THOU hast made me, And shall thy worke decay?"
2. "I AM a little world made cunningly"
3. "O MIGHT those sighes and teares returne againe"
4. "IF faithfull soules be alike glorif'd" (Gardner 12-14)

In fact, her arrangement proves more valuable and interesting than her own editorial commentary indicates. Together, their progressively subtle views of nature suggest a response to the problem of value which science presents for faith, and more. She has rendered this response, centered

in the third sonnet, much more accessible (though no less implicit) by editing according to the recognition that although Donne “writes with the freedom of a poet whose imagination is not tied to an initial plan . . . , [t]he influence of the formal meditation lies behind the ‘Holy Sonnets,’ not as a literary source, but as a way of thinking, a method of prayer” (liv).

At the beginning of her Introduction, Gardner reviews the objections made to religious poetry by Dr. Johnson and T. S. Eliot. Johnson had written that “Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator and plead the merits of his Redeemer is already in a higher state than poetry can confer” (qtd. in Gardner xv). She notes of Eliot that he “has owned to some sympathy with those lovers of poetry who think of religious poetry as ‘a variety of *minor* poetry’; who feel that

the religious poet is not a poet who is treating the whole subject matter of poetry in a religious spirit, but a poet who is dealing with a confined part of this subject matter: who is leaving out what men consider their major passions, and thereby confessing his ignorance of them;

and he goes on to speak of a kind of poetry which is ‘the product of a special religious awareness, which may exist without the general awareness which we expect of the major poet’” (xv). She effectively dismisses both of these objections by her affirmation that “although we may not regard the *Divine Poems* as Donne’s greatest poems, they are great poems of their kind” (xvii). In a more recent statement, she says that “although the *Divine Poems* are not the record of discoveries, but of the struggles to appropriate a truth which has been revealed, that truth does not ‘defeat all Poetry,’ but gives us a poetry whose intensity is a moral intensity” (Gardner, “The Religious” 135).

What she regards as Andrew Marvell’s ‘harsher’ (Gardner xv) condemnation of poetical devotion, however, demands closer inspection. Her reading of “The Coronet” as such a condemnation may have a general validity (even for most of Donne’s *Divine Poems*). However, reading the poem in the light of the accomplishment of spiritual condition attested to by Donne’s “O might those sighes and teares . . .” and obviated in the sonnet which Gardner here places after it, it functions as a statement of the problem of poetical devotion, rather than as a condemnation of all possible attempts to respond to that problem poetically. That next sonnet, “If faithfull soules . . . , has revelatory agency for the third and crucial sonnet, and serves not as a condemnation of the apparent failure of the poetical devotion in the third poem, but as a way to place that devotion in perspective. The poet,

having traversed the meditation (and, for the moment, the condition) of the third poem, now no longer worries, if he ever did, about the efficacy of his devotion as an address to his God, for he assures us that

If faithfull soules be alike glorifi'd  
As Angels, then my fathers soule doth see,  
And adds this even to full felicitie,  
That valiantly I hels wide mouth o'erstride. (ll. 1-4)

Instead, he seeks to determine the likelihood that or means whereby to "try" his "mindes white truth" to the "faithfull soules," and with this concern he entreats his own soul and invites that of his "pensive" reader to "turne / . . . to God" (and away, presumably, from poetical devotions, etc.). Recognizing that "[t]he penitent is in a state of grace: 'valiantly I hels wide mouth o'erstride,'" Peterson indicates that

Donne's conjecture as to whether or not the souls of the dead perceive intuitively is also relevant to the subject of contrition, specifically, to the question of assurance. Contrition is a matter of inner conviction, achieved only with the aid of grace, and, consequently, supra-rational. It cannot, therefore, be perceived through the senses, but only intuitively, a mode of knowing possessed only by God, angelic substances, and, perhaps, by the souls of the dead. The point that Donne makes implicitly is this: although his sorrow may appear outwardly to be proper, the only real evidence is the feelings of his own heart; thus, only God, angels, and perhaps the souls of the dead can know whether his assurance is justified. (514)

The fourth sonnet implies that, while poetical devotion may prove as effective as other devotional means for communication with God (who possesses unlimited powers of perception), the powers and kinds of perception proper to both "minds" and "soules" remain both limited and discontinuous. And therein lies the problem of its poetical devotion: that as a special form of devotion, it seeks to communicate especially between minds and souls, but fails (like the mourning doomed to 'fruitlessness' in the previous sonnet), though not as a form of prayer to God. The poem testifies to Donne's acceptance of the "distinctions drawn by the Schoolmen between the mode of knowing of angels and the modes by which men know" (Gardner 77). Herbert J. C. Grierson specifies these distinctions more fully than Gardner does; he quotes Thomas Aquinas:



Angels may read our thoughts by subtler signs than our words and acts, or even those changes of countenance and pulsation which we note in each other...But to know them as they are in the intellect and will belongs only to God, to whom only the freedom of the human will is subject, and a man's thoughts are subject to his will. (34)

For this reason, and not for any apprehensions concerning the "wreaths of Fame and Interest' with which devotion is mingled" (Gardner xv)—for the third sonnet displays the rout of 'vaine Idolatry'—Donne recommends to the "pensive soule" the abandonment of the poetical devotion (but only after he has himself traversed such devotion). The "pensive soule" misappropriates a form of thought, for *pensive* implies a hanging, a weight, a gravitation extrinsic to the nature of "soules." His recommendation stems from a recognition of the nature of his devotion as a petition to the soul especially, rather than to God especially—but a petition designed, as part of a meditation, to direct the soul to God. In this respect, Donne takes an even stronger stand against "poetry which attempts to represent the intercourse between an individual soul and its Maker" (Gardner xv) than Marvell does in "The Coronet," which still addresses its petition to God:

But thou who only could'st the Serpent tame,  
Either his slipp'ry knots at once untie,  
And disentangle all his winding Snare:  
Or shatter too with him my curious frame:  
And let these wither, so that he may die,  
Though set with Skill and chosen out with Care.  
That they, while Thou on both their Spoils dost tread,  
May crown thy Feet, that could not crown thy Head. (ll. 19-26)

We may find in Marvell's petition a reverence, no less genuine than Donne's, yet bound back to back with a bitter despair approaching arrogance: the poet feels frustrated by the Serpent in his desire to "redress that Wrong" represented by the crown of thorns—even envious of the power of God "who only could'st the Serpent tame," as he has tried to do and failed. We may even sympathize with Marvell's harshness (like Donne's in "Batter my heart, three person'd God") as a shadow of the problem of poetical devotion which it embodies. Donne's treatment of the problem in "If faithfull soules," though certainly gentler, treats a dilemma no less harsh: that of the occultation of his "minds white truth" from the perception of the "faithfull soules," as described in ll. 5-12. Perhaps his assurance—

expressed in ll. 1-4—that God perceives his circumstance allows his final, gentle response. Marvell’s poem achieves no such assurance, but only self-acknowledged self-deception (cf. l. 10: “Thinking (so I my self deceive)”). This lack of assurance (following Peterson) casts doubt on the genuineness of Marvell’s petition, since it seems insufficiently contrite.

Janel M. Mueller cites a passage from *Donne’s Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* that may serve as a gloss on the relationship of the penitential sonnets to Marvell’s “The Coronet”:

And since sin in the nature of it, retaines still so much of the author of it, that it is a Serpent, insensibly insinuating it selfe into my Soule, let thy brazen Serpent (the contemplation of thy Sonne crucified for me) be ever more present to me, for my recovery against the sting of the first Serpent; That so, . . . I may have a Serpent against a Serpent, the Wisdom of the Serpent against the Malice of the Serpent. (60)

## II

Gardner maintains that Donne’s religious belief “was strong enough to preserve him from the temptations of ‘our old subtle foe’ in his middle years: temptations more deadly, because less generous, than those of his youth—envy, bitterness, and despair” (Gardner xxi). Yet these temptations color his view of natural processes and inform the character of nature in the poem from which she quotes (the first of the “Penitential Sonnets,” “Thou hast made me . . .”). Insofar as they cause him in that poem to perceive and present himself as his body, as part of nature alone, doomed to decay, those temptations make his natural body, though created by God, terrible to him. He must, therefore, acknowledge his temptation in order to discriminate his own nature as thoroughly human, and thus to recognize that the insubstantiality that he laments belongs to fallen nature considered (unnaturally) alone, but not to his human nature, initially perfect, and perfect again in the Resurrection.

In the first poem, the poet’s “feebled flesh doth waste / By sinne in it”—its fallen nature, elemental as part of the terrestrial sensorium, determined by original sin’s universal—and only incidentally personal—effect, that all flesh dies. Not only does he present his fears in natural imagery of decay and gravitation, but he responds to them by asking God to “Repaire” him, saying “Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his [Satan’s] art / And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart” (ll. 13-14). His use of the conditional “may” suggests that it takes more than grace alone to

prevent Satan's art: "Christ saves no man against his will," Donne said in a "Sermon Preached to the Houshold at Whitehall, April 30, 1626" (qtd. in Gardner and Healy 274). Yet insofar as the conditional "may" suggests an imperfection of his flesh and faith so grave that even divine grace may *not* avail him (which implies that his fear borders on attrition), it marks an implicit but perhaps overzealous petition: a challenge to God to "prevent" the art of "our old subtle foe" in the poet's own person. We see in this poem a man falling back on the spiritual world when confronted with the horrors of entropic, fallen nature.

Donne believed that "[t]here is 'no sin in the body *alone*; None from the soul, no sin in the soul *alone*'; but the very minute that the unison of the body and the soul takes place (which makes a man) original sin enters into us.

'In the first minute that my soul is infused the Image of God is imprinted in my soul; so forward is God in my behalf, and early does he visit me. But yet *originall sin* is there as soon as that Image of God is there. My soul is capable of God, as soon as it is capable of sin . . . and the Image of God, and the Image of *Adam*, originall sin, enter into me, in one, and the same act.'" (qtd. in Husain 82)

Thus he also held that "the immortality of the soul will not be complete without the immortality of the body.

'Nay the immortality of the soule, will not so well lie in prooffe, without a resumming of the body. For, upon those words of the Apostle, *If there were no Resurrection we were miserablest of all men*, the Schoole reasons reasonably; naturally the soul and body are united; when they are separated by death, it is contrary to nature, which nature still affects this union; and consequently the soule is less perfect, for this separation; and it is not likely, that the perfect natural state of the soule, which is, to be united with the body, should last but three or four score years . . ., and the unperfect state, that in the separation, should last eternally, for ever: so that either the body must be believed to live again or the soul believed to die.'" (qtd. in Husain 71-72)

In his petition for "Repaire," then, Donne asks God to aid him in his resistance to the effects of original sin, a sin which, like any other, one can

resist: “. . . though this original sin that overflows us all, may in some sense be called . . . a sin without an elicite act of the will (for so it must needs be in children) and so properly no sin, yet as all our other faculties were . . . in Adam, and we sinned wilfully when he did so, and so original sin is a Voluntary Sin” (qtd. in Husain 80). And in fact, Donne avows that

. . . truly, if at this time, God would vouchsafe mee my choice, whether hee should pardon mee all those actual and habitual sins, which I have committed in my life, or extinguish original sinne in mee, I should chuse to be delivered from originall sin, because though I be delivered from the *imputation* thereof by Baptism, so that I shall not fall under a Condemnation for originall sin onely, yet it remains in me, and practices upon me, and occasions all the other sins that I commit. (qtd. in Husain 82)

Coupled with the assertion that “our old subtle foe so tempteth me, / That not one houre I can myselfe sustaine” (ll. 11-12), this amounts to a doctrine not only of the descent of the effects of Adam’s sin upon his progeny, but also of a continual temptation to original sin (or more precisely, to succumbing to all other sins from the weakness of will initiated by original sin) in Adam’s progeny as in Adam himself: “that debt,” Donne says, “originall sin, is as much thine as his” (qtd. in Husain 81).

Gardner has arranged the penitential sonnets in the form of an Ignatian meditation. The second poem extends the scope and intensity of mutability to the specifically human and personal spiritual world:

I am a little world made cunningly  
Of Elements, and an Angelike spright,  
But black sinne hath betraid to endlesse night  
My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die. (ll. 1-4)

Here, though the poet acknowledges only half of his world as explicitly elemental, his fears (which seem more than natural) set him face to face with the Arabian heresy that the “Angelike spright” must die. Extended to the world of the spirit, his natural fears bring him close to wishing both parts of his world to “[d]rown” (l. 8). This represents the closest approach to attrition in the penitential sonnets, and the sestet alone saves the octave from that error. Helen Gardner does not suggest

. . . that when Donne wrote these sonnets he was affected, as

Sir Thomas Browne owns to have been in his 'greener studies' by the heresy of the Arabians, 'that the Souls of men perished with their Bodies, but should yet be raised at the last day' . . . The truth would seem to be that when he wrote these sonnets, Donne had given no serious thought to the matter at all. (75)

But Donne, though not *sinfully* "affected . . . by the heresy of the Arabians," did *meditate* that heresy in the *compositio* of the second sonnet, and to that (necessary) extent alone allowed it to affect him. Gardner points out that

[t]here is no need to feel surprise that Donne, at a time when he was engaged in a bitter controversy with the Jesuits, should be drawing on Jesuit spirituality in his poetry, and presumably had continued to use a Jesuit method of prayer. He would be making a distinction here which Protestants made without difficulty—taking the corn and leaving the chaff. (liv-lv)

Donne also satirized the Jesuits mercilessly in *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611); Gardner dates these sonnets "between the latter half of 1609 and the first half of 1611" (75).

Discussing composition of place in *The Poetry of Meditation*, Louis L. Martz explains that

...there were three different ways of performing this imaginary "composition." The first is to imagine oneself present in the very spot where the event occurred: "to see the arrangements in the holy sepulcher, and place or house of our Lady, beholding all the parts of it in particular, and likewise her chamber and oratory." The second is to imagine the events as occurring before your eyes "in the very same place where thou art." The third is performed when persons "imagin that everie one of these thinges whereupon they meditate passeth within their owne harte"—a method strongly recommended by Fray Luis, although St. François de Sales warns that his method is "to subtil and hard for young beginners." (30)

The keystone of meditative practice sought "to procure with imagination to forme within our selves some figure, or image of the things wee intend to meditate with the greatest vivacity, and propriety that wee are able" (28,

quoting the Jesuit Puente). John Donne, no 'young beginner,' certainly does this seriously, and the meditative practice which encourages the *exercitor* to first imagine the worst and then his deliverance thus allows him to approach the heresy without embracing it. It also allows him to meditate the passage of attrition through his "owne harte" without succumbing, to his eternal peril, to merely natural fears.

Like the "long, yet vehement grieve" of the third poem—its own "effect and cause, . . . punishment and sinne"—the intellectual error of the Arabian heresy here falls before the recognition of its merely intellectual nature. That error, however, leads him in his meditation to a greater error: an error of faith which, as a man of faith, he has become better able to recognize. By this recognition, Donne overcomes a double error. Rather than ask the indulgence of divine grace as he had in the first poem, his meditation on the heresy led him to indulge himself (or the "old subtle foe" in himself) in a desire to do what even God, by the Noachic covenant, cannot do. But if, as part of the error, his desire to drown his world with weeping the waters of "new Seas" (softened in the next line to "Or wash it, if it must be drowned no more") represents an inclination on Donne's part to seek either oblivion or salvation through the gifts of the new science and its method, he quickly eschews it, replacing it by a petition for the gifts of the Lord. For Donne knew not only the power of reason when joined by faith to its source—"Donne says that the Resurrection can be proved by reason, for 'the Holy Ghost himself sends us to Reason, and to the Creature, for the doctrine of the Resurrection'" (Husain 73)—but also reason's infirmity when joined by despair to its limitations (as in "I am a little world," in the octave). A passage from the *Sermons*, cited by Patrick Mahony as a "gloss on the rhetorical problem of the Anniversaries as a whole" (412) may also illuminate the problem of heresy in the second sonnet:

But if it [sin] be above our head, then the brain is drown'd,  
that is, our reason and understanding, which should dispute  
against it, and make us asham'd of it, or afraid of it; And  
out *memory* is drown'd, we have forgot that there belongs a  
repentance to our sins, perchance forgot that there is such  
a sin in us; forgot that these actions are sins, forgot that we  
have done these actions; and forgot that there is a law, even in  
our hearts, by which we might try, whether our actions were  
sins, or no. If they be above our heads, they are so, in many  
dangerous acceptations. (qtd. in Mahony 412)

The inclusion of the heresy (a "dangerous acceptance") in his

meditation disallows his forgetting such a sin in him—a forgetting to which he remains subject insofar as he despairs before nature and petitions God as a resort rather than by an assault. When his faith constrains him to acknowledge the impossibility of drowning his world, when he realizes that he cannot destroy his world, that it will not go away (“But oh, it must be burnt”), he resorts to the spiritual petition, “burne me ô Lord, with a fiery zeale / Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heale” (ll. 13-14). And although this petition still expresses the desire for the obliteration (‘eating’) of his world (it must be burnt”), it also yearns for transformational healing, expressed in spiritual imagery: “a fiery zeale/...which doth in eating heale.” It differs in this respect from the ‘magnetic’ and ‘repairing’ imagery of the first poem, which did not so much suggest a desire for transformation as for sustenance (“That not one hour I can my selfe sustaine”).

The desire to drown or wash his world anticipates in spiritual imagery the lament in natural imagery of the first five and one-half lines of the third sonnet. They constitute a lament, rather than a petition, because no hope exists for the fulfillment of his desire: the irreversibility of natural time will not allow a “returne” of his “sighes and teares,” the manifestations of his ‘vaine Idolatry,’ to his “breast and eyes.” The only spiritual reality he might fall back on, his “holy discontent,” will not allow him “ease.” As the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker observed,

From these considerations, setting before our eyes our inexcusable both unthankfulness in disobeying so merciful, and foolishness in provoking so powerful a God, there ariseth necessarily a pensive and corrosive desire that we had done otherwise; a desire which suffereth us to foreslow no time, to feel no quietness within ourselves, to take neither food nor sleep with contentment, never to give over supplications, confessions, and other penitent duties, till the light of God’s reconciled favor shine in our darkened soul. (qtd. in Peterson 343)

In the second poem, Donne discovered that his world would not go away. He had meditated that world as an unreconciled mixture of the spiritual and the elemental; the first poem had meditated both natures in natural imagery alone, and the third focused on the inadequacy of natural imagery alone to the achievement of their reconciliation. The following lines from the “Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse” may serve to specify the relationship of the first and third sonnets:

Looke Lord, and finde both *Adams* met in me;

As the first *Adams* sweat surrounds my face,  
May the last *Adams* blood my soule embrace. (ll. 23-25)

Here, in the third poem, Donne confronts a terrestrial sensorium, not of abstract scientific, but of human nature. He discovers that *he* will not go away.

In his lament, he expresses the desire that he might “[m]ourne with some fruit, as [he has] mourn’d in vaine.” If “as” means, adverbially, *in the same way* that he has “mourn’d in vaine,” he wishes for the return of the natural manifestations of his grief in further sighing and weeping, and the difference between “holy” and ‘unholy’ discontent lies only in the nature of his grief, not in its manifestations. On the other hand, if, as a conjunction, “as” means *because* he has “mourn’d in vaine,” his wish expresses a repudiation of his waste of the natural manifestations of his grief, which showed evidence of an “Idolatri” of having previously fallen back on the spiritual world to redeem the natural, as if Redemption had not yet already occurred. His desire further to petition the spiritual by natural means (“sighes and teares”) may likewise represent “Idolatri.” The intractable ambiguity of “as” led Donne to a two-fold recognition and acceptance of the terrestrial sensorium of *human* nature which he scrutinizes from a natural standpoint, without asking for support from the spiritual world. He finds, in his own words, that “Grace does not grow out of nature; for nature in the highest exaltation and rectifying thereof cannot produce grace. . . Nature, and natural reason do not produce grace, but yet grace can take root in no other thing but in the nature and reason of man” (qtd. in Bredvold 216). For as Bredvold says, “Not indeed by any sudden revelation of his spiritual powers, but through years of privation, disappointment, doubt, years of the ‘agony and exercise of sense and spirit,’ did the student, lawyer and courtier yield his life and soul fully to the guidance of faith” (218).

The first phase of his recognition and acceptance appears in ll. 7-8 of the third sonnet:

That sufferance was my sinne, now I repent;  
Because I did suffer I must suffer paine.

Here the poet expresses, in causal terms, the second phase (recorded in ll. 12-14):

. . .To (poore) me is allow’d  
No ease; for, long, yet vehement grief hath beene  
Th’effect and cause, the punishment and sinne.



In the acausal identification of “effect and cause, . . . punishment and sinne,” time (and with it the inductive method of the new science) collapses, and Donne’s circumstance becomes immediately perceptible—at least to human minds, if not perhaps to “faithful soules” or to angels.

Of the Dark Night of the Soul, Evelyn Underhill writes that “This ‘great negation’ is the sorting-house of the spiritual life. Here we part from the ‘nature mystics,’ the mystic poets, and all who shared or were contented with the illuminated vision of reality. Those who go on are the great and strong spirits, who do not seek to *know*, but are driven to *be*” (383). Donne had wanted the “faithful soules” to know and understand his “minde white truth,” and therefore recommended a turning to God. Though it may overstate the case (Donne’s meditation of the Arabian heresy also overstated the case, but it formed an integral part of his Ignatian discipline), it may prove fruitful to regard the penitential sonnets as evidence of his passage through a Dark Night.<sup>1</sup> His domestic situation had become grim enough at the time, and in the fourth poem he understands that the souls cannot share *his* ‘minde white truth’ because it remains his alone, and he alone with it. Instead of a transmission of knowledge, then, he recommends an act of being: he answers the rhetorical question—

But if our mindes to these soules be descry’d  
By circumstance, and by signes that be  
Apparent in us, not immediately,  
How shall my mindes white truth to them be try’d?

—that it shall *not*.

God alone, with unlimited powers of perception, can ‘try’ Donne’s “true griefe” or, equally, that of any of the “faithful soules”; for, as the poet tells the “pensive soule,” God “knowes best / Thy true griefe, for he put it in my breast” (ll. 13-14). Indeed, the “soules” know in much the same way as the Ignatian *exercitor*: by contemplation of concretely imagined situations, but while the *exercitor*’s contemplations arise entirely from the imaginative eye or ‘heart,’ the “soules,” when their attentions turn toward the terrestrial,

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<sup>1</sup> Husain says that “[w]e do not know whether Donne himself reached the unitive stage of mystical life or not, but once he declared, ‘I will finde out another death, mortem raptus, a death of rapture, and extasie, that death which S. Paul died more than once.’ . . . My soule is united to my Saviour, now in my life, as in death, and I am already made one spirit with him; and whatsoever death can doe, this kisse, this union, can doe, that is, give me a present, an immediate possession of the Kingdome of Heaven” (141). Compare this notion of immediate possession with his situation on ll. 12-14 of sonnet 3, and to what Corbin says: “Hell, again, is the condition in which the adult cannot attain to knowledge of the spiritual world through that of his own spirit and in which he is unable to experience the meaning of the adage: ‘He who knows himself (nafsahu, his anima) knows his Lord.’ When he attains to it, this state becomes his Paradise. In this vision of an incessant rising from Hells, we see an alchemy of Resurrection. . . . It offers a series of unfoldings, of divestments and revestments, to which one must consent on pain of falling backward, beneath oneself” (Corbin 168).

have for their objects of contemplation circumstances such as these:

They see idolatrous lovers weepe and mourne,  
And Vile blasphemous Conjurors to call  
On Jesus name, and Pharisiacall  
Dissemblers feigne devotion. (ll. 9-12)

Donne sees that, for the “soules,” these portraits have a status equivalent to that which the presence to his imagination of

Th’hydroptique drunkard, and night-scouting thiefe,  
The itchy Lecher, and selfe tickling proud (ll. 9-10)

had for him in the third sonnet: a negative status, representing a waste of value. In 1609, in a letter to Goodyer, he dismissed the lives of such men as “life built of past and future, not proposing any constant present” (qtd. in Gosse, I 219).

In his Sermons, Donne says of angels that

We have better means to know the nature of God, than of Angels, because God hath appeared and manifested himself in more actions than Angels have done. . . They are creatures *made*, yet not a minute *elder now*, than when they were first made, if they were made before all measure of time began. . . We know that Angels know, they understand, but whether by that way, which we call in the Schoole, *cognitionem matutinam*, by seeing all in God, or by a clearer manifestation of the species of things to them than to us, we know not . . . They are *primogeniti Dei*, God’s eldest Sonnes; They are super-elementary meteors, they hang between the nature of God, and the nature of man, and are of middle condition; And (if, we may offencelessly express it so) they are *enigmata divina*, The Riddles of Heaven, and the perplexities of speculation. But this is but till the Resurrection; Then we shall be like them, and know them by assimilation. (qtd. in Husain 74-76)

In a “Sermon Preached at the Spittle, Upon Easter-Munday, 1622,” he affirmed that

By Creation, they know as his Subjects; by Confirmation, they know as his servants; by Revelation, they know as his Council.

Now, *Erimus sicut Angeli*, says Christ. *There we shall be as the Angels*: The knowledge which I have by Nature, shall have no Clouds; here it hath: that which I have by Grace, shall have no reluctance, no resistance; here it hath: That which I have by Revelation, shall have no suspition, no jealousie; here it hath: sometimes it is hard to distinguish between a respiration from God, and a suggestion from the Devil. (qtd. in Gardner and Healy 217)

All of these ideas concerning angels remained matters of faith for Donne, as did his conviction that, in the Resurrection,

That great Library, those infinite Volumes of the Books of Creatures, shall be taken away, quite away, no more Nature; those reverend Manuscripts, written with Gods own hand, the Scriptures themselves, shall be taken away, quite away; no more preaching, no more reading of the Scriptures, and that great School-Mistress, Experience, and Observation shall be remov'd, no new thing to be done, and in an instant, I shall know more, than they all could reveal unto me. I shall know... that... Examples, and Comparisons to one another... are all as nothing... to that which shall then be the subject of my knowledge, for, *it is the knowledge of the glory of God*. (qtd. in Gardner and Healy 217-18)

These statements suggest that the “soules,” turning to God, will ‘try’ their own ‘white truths,’ for “If faithful soules be alike glorifi’d / As Angels,” then their mode of knowledge, as an intensification of the third method of meditation—“when persons ‘imagin that everie one of these thinges where-upon they meditate passeth within their owne harte” (qtd. in Martz 30) and exercised by Donne—*becomes* their mode of being, or at least homologous with it (according to the notion of knowledge by assimilation described above as what men will share—souls and minds united, as body and soul will unite—with Angels in the Resurrection). That mode of being consists in a turning toward and absorption (or “assimilation”) in God, who confers knowledge as he confers being, “for he knowes best / Thy true grieve . . .” (ll. 13-14).

The suggestion that angels and souls have similar (if not identical) modes of knowledge, though based on the proposition of ‘like glorification’ accepted in faith by Donne, nevertheless—as a matter of angelic wisdom—still involves “the perplexities of speculation.” For meditation, it may have

an analogue in the "*Wisdom of the Serpent*" (Mueller 60). In *John Donne's Christian Vocation*, Robert S. Jackson discusses such an analogue in his chapter on "The Psychic Marriage":

Between the *First* and the *Second Anniversarie* Donne decided to count death as a third rather than a second birth. That he now refers to the imaginative death as the soul's second birth among three raises the suggestion that the middle always raises in relation to any pair of mannerist polarities. If the first birth be of the soul into the body and the third be of the soul into heaven, then the second birth, grace, is what reconciles the two. Or if the first birth be understood to derive chiefly from this world, the secular order, then the middle—obtained in meditation—derives chiefly from a structure which joins this world to the other, the temporal to the eternal . . . (118)

As "perplexities of speculation," the penitential sonnets themselves assume angelic status for the exercitor, "(just as Zarathustra's *Gathas* or psalms . . . appear as angelic hypostases: it may be said that to recite them is literally to 'recite an angel')" (Corbin 122n16).

The note of anguish is unmistakable. The image of a soul in meditation which the 'Holy Sonnets' present is an image of a soul working out its salvation in fear and trembling. The two poles between which it oscillates are faith in the mercy of God in Christ, and a sense of personal unworthiness that is very near to despair. No other religious poems make us feel so acutely the predicament of the natural man called to be the spiritual man. None present more vividly man's recognition of the gulf that divides him from God and the effort of faith to lay hold on the miracle by which Christianity declares that the gulf has been bridged. (Gardner xxxi)

This quality of immediacy grounds Donne's recognition of the essential differences between the terrestrial and the celestial: one mental, one spiritual; one human, the other divine. Yet precisely because they share only the quality of immediacy, they cannot become identified: his immediately perceptible circumstance of grief, though "holy," remains a "discontent" and, as such, clings to the terrestrial sensorium of human nature (perceived by the natural organs of sense, as well as through poetry); for his recognition of the significance of that grief—his mind's alone—must remain hidden from

the “faithful soules” for whom it can have only a natural existence, and not even the meaning of a “signe.”

By the identification of “punishment and sinne” in his grief, Donne has the choice of acceptance or rejection, and God, who “saves no man without or against his will” (Husain 101), helps him to choose by putting this *limit of identification with its punishment* upon his “sinne,” thus relieving him of the terrible despair of *eternal* grief which might tempt him to mere attrition. For divine grace identifies the poet’s grief as “Th’effect and cause, the punishment and sinne.” Man alone cannot effect the transcendence of time implicit in the immediacy of this superabundance of grief; only by the addition of divine grief (God’s compassion for his creatures) can man’s grief become transcendent, the “true grief” which Donne says “he put . . . in my breast,” a grief analogous to the “divine sadness” of the “Divine Being” meditated by Muhyiddin Ibn ’Arabī. God’s grief redeems man’s grief, and Donne’s first penitential sonnet expresses sympathy for God’s sadness that His ‘worke might decay’—His sadness over man’s (voluntary) original sin which introduced decay into the Creation. As Martz says, “God is both the object of knowledge and the means of knowing” (245).

The petition for “Repaire” may also serve as an invitation to God to resort to the penitent in their mutual sadness—to aid the penitent in, and use the penitent in, the work of redemption envisaged as a continual ‘prevention’ of the art of “our old subtle foe” (l. 11). In this case, we see again the sense in which the conditional “may” in the first sonnet constitutes a genuine petition: the poet, having asked God to help him not only for his own sake but for God’s own, offers to continue his efforts, however feeble, to “sustaine” himself and, with God’s grace, “prevent” Satan’s art. The double petition and invitation implicit in the term “Repaire” also constitutes—with the double petition and invitation to his own soul and that of his “pensive” reader in the last lines of the fourth sonnet—a formal frame within which to contemplate these four sonnets as a single and complete meditation indicating that the sorrow expressed in all four arises from contrition.

Furthermore, to the extent that, retrospectively, it constitutes such a formal frame, the double sense of “Repaire” saves the petitions of both the first and second sonnets from attrition, and so from their initial (and initially necessary) ambiguity. For no less does the thought that “Thou hast made me, and shall thy worke decay?” reveal the poet’s loving regard for God’s creation than does his affirmation that “I am a little world made cunningly” reveal the same; and as much as, and more than, he feels concern for his own fear of punishment, a “hatred for sin itself and a love for God” (Peterson 506) also motivates him. Like Augustine, whom he revered,

Donne had to “force his attention back upon his own nature as the only source of certainty” (Bredvold 219). The first four lines of the fourth sonnet speculate an Augustinian idea of grace as a *donum extraordinarium* (Fülöp-Miller 335): a “full felicitie.” The second four lines meditate an Ignatian alternative to the Augustinian idea. Whereas the former section speculates the situation of “faithful soules” and “Angels,” the latter considers that of “minds” and “soules.”

Thus an unbridgeable gap separated the host of the average faithful from the few distinguished by grace.

Ignatius bridged this gulf when he asserted, “I can find God at all times, whenever I wish, and any man of good will can do the same. As the body can be exercised by going, walking, and running, so the will of man can be trained by exercises to find the will of God.” (Fülöp-Miller 335)

In meditation, the *exercitor* aims to make immediate all his ‘signes and circumstances’; only thus might the “soules” try the “minds white truth.” The fourth sonnet concerns the necessity of meditation; without it, even one’s devotional acts appear to the “soules” in negative aspects (ll. 9-12). Rather than turning one’s mind to the “soules,” one must turn one’s soul to God. And if it “be alike glorifi’d / As Angels,” it becomes so only by its capability for angelic immediacy—the one quality identifies angels and souls with respect to knowledge. The invitation to the pensive soul may also refer to Donne’s own soul at a future date, for despite his assurance in the fourth sonnet that he enjoys a state of grace, “Donne rejected the extreme Protestant view that if you ever once believed in your life you will be saved” (Husain 103). Salvation would require repeated efforts.

As Jesus had taken on Nature (a problem for the soul) and had overcome it for all souls, Donne had to take on the natural standpoint (a problem for the soul, but of the mind alone) and overcome it, again and again, for his own soul, shouldering the tree of his own nature. In doing so, he may have freed himself from the “Idolatry” of mistaking that standpoint for Nature itself which had led him to petition as a resort rather than as an invitation and assault, as it appears in the sonnet that Gardner places fourth, and as it therefore may function in the first and second sonnets also. For in and by the fourth sonnet the poet’s circumstance, recorded in the third, becomes more than “the imagining of his predicament” (Gardner liv). We can witness in it his recognition and acceptance of his predicament by an act of faith truly ‘valiant.’

Gardner says that the fourth sonnet “has no relation to the form

of a meditation, containing neither composition nor petition" (liv), yet the poet does petition his own soul and speaks as a natural yet faithful man in the last line. While Donne overcomes the problem of nature *for* his mind and soul, the natural scientist would try to overcome the problem *with* his mind—a consideration that Donne faults by his attention to the unavoidably human nature of both the scientific and the spiritual man. Gardner says "[a]lthough it might be said to be natural for man to pray, prayer is not a natural activity. We cannot help missing the image of the natural man in the poet's image of the spiritual man. But without the poet's image of the spiritual man our poetry would be poorer, and our imagination of life would be narrowed" (xvi). Donne does not "drown" the image of the natural man in these poems; he transforms it.

## Appendix

THOU hast made me, And shall thy worke decay?  
Repaire me now, for now mine end doth haste,  
I runne to death, and death meets me as fast,  
And all my pleasures are like yesterday;  
I dare not move my dimme eyes any way,  
Despaire behind, and death before doth cast  
Such terrour, and my feeble flesh doth waste  
By sinne in it, which it t'wards hell doth weigh;  
Onely thou art above, and when towards thee  
By thy leave I can looke, I rise againe;  
But our old subtle foe so tempteth me,  
That not one houre my selfe I can sustaine;  
Thy Grace may wing me to prevent his art,  
And thou like Adamant draw mine iron heart.

I am a little world made cunningly  
Of Elements, and an Angelike spright,  
But black sinne hath betraid to endlesse night  
My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.  
You which beyond that heaven which was most high  
Have found new sphears, and of new lands can write,  
Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might  
Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly,  
Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more;  
But oh it must be burnt! alas the fire

Of lust and envie have burnt it heretofore,  
And made it fouler; Let their flames retire,  
And burne me o Lord, with a fiery zeale  
Of thee and thy house, which doth in eating heale.

O might those sighes and teares returne againe  
Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,  
That I might in this holy discontent  
Mourne with some fruit, as I have mourn'd in vaine;  
In mine Idolatry what showres of raine  
Mine eyes did waste? what griefs my heart did rent?  
That sufferance was my sinne; now I repent;  
'Cause I did suffer I must suffer paine.  
Th'hydroptique drunkard, and night-scouting thiefe,  
The itchy Lecher, and selfe-tickling proud  
Have the remembrance of past joyes, for reliefe  
Of comming ill. To (poore) me is allow'd  
No ease; for, long, yet vehement grieve hath beene  
Th'effect and cause, the punishment and sinne.

If faithfull soules be alike glorifi'd  
As Angels, then my fathers soul doth see,  
And adds this even to full felecitie,  
That valiantly I hels wide mouth o'stride:  
But if our mindes to these soules be descry'd  
By circumstances, and by signes that be  
Apparent in us, not immediately,  
How shall my mindes white truth by them be try'd?  
They see idolatrous lovers weepe and moume,  
And vile blasphemous Conjurers to call  
On Jesus name, and Pharisaicall  
Dissemblers feigne devotion. Then tume  
O pensive soule, to God, for he knows best  
Thy true grieve, for he put it in my breast.



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## MODERN(-IST) MAN IN SEARCH OF A SOUL: JUNG'S RED BOOK AS MODERNIST VISIONARY LITERATURE

Without doubt, the publication of *The Red Book* has attracted scholars from various fields of psychology as well as those in the fields of history, philosophy, and religion among others. Curiously, the location and manner of its initial exhibition, with shows at the Rubin and Hammer museums, raises the question of how it was intended to be received. For all intents and purposes, it has been treated as a work of fine art and has not, for example, made a tour of the special collections department at university libraries. And yet Jung himself famously and vehemently denied that what he was doing in this book was anything like art. In the midst of recording the visions that came to him, he paused: "I said to myself, 'What is this I am doing, it certainly is not science, what is it?' Then a voice said to me, 'That is art.' ... Well I said emphatically to this voice that what I was doing was not art, and I felt a great resistance rising up within me" (qtd. in Shamdasani, 2009, p.199). Interpreting the voice as that of his inner feminine side (anima) trying to mislead him, Jung traced the origin of the voice to a female Dutch patient he had known who had convinced a colleague of his to abandon his career in psychiatry to take up a career in painting (p. 199). Sonu Shamdasani has argued that this colleague was Jung's friend Franz Riklin who at this time was also recording his fantasies and dreams in his paintings, as were others in Jung's circle, and his friend's path troubled him: "For Jung, Franz Riklin appears to have been something like a doppelganger, whose fate he was keen to avoid" (p. 204). With Riklin in mind, determined not to be misguided about the true nature of his project, Jung insisted on designating his recording of these visions in the context of science (albeit of an unconventional kind) as a "book of my most difficult experiment" (p. 200).

Despite Jung's claims that what he was doing in *The Red Book* was not art, there is little doubt that a large part of the interest generated by the book seems to be coming from its artistic qualities—*i.e.*, its impact on its audience as a work of art, which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, may be defined as

The expression or application of creative skill and imagination,

typically in a visual form such as painting, drawing, or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Also: such works themselves considered collectively. (Art, 2011)

Thomas Kirsch, in his recent “interview” with Robert Henderson (2011), notes that Jung’s illustrations (reproduced beautifully in the Norton publication) have shaped the book’s reception as a work of fine art:

For me, besides the text, the drawings and paintings truly show Jung’s artistic bent, which I mentioned Jung himself questioned, saying in MDR that they are psychological and not art. When I saw the 53 paintings in *The Red Book*, I had a much different impression. They are carefully and meticulously painted, and besides their psychological meaning, they clearly have meaning as works of art...One community that has been fascinated by the book is the artistic community; it has been completely fascinated by the artwork and Jung’s artistic abilities. The mandala images really do carry some numinous quality that obviously has captured the imagination of many... (pp. 19-20).

At the very least, it seems possible that many who have attended exhibitions of *The Red Book* have been moved by it as a work of fine art in addition to appreciating it in the sense that Jung interpreted it, as artistic means to a scientific end. The possibility of *The Red Book* as a work of fine art, then, may open a space for art historians, fine arts scholars and literary scholars at the archaeological dig that has surrounded this multi-faceted book.

The first to arrive at the site have been some very gifted Jungian scholars, who have been able to demonstrate the importance of *The Red Book* in the context of the Collected Works, tracing the evolutionary pathways from its weird and sometimes disturbing images to Jung’s complex theories of personality types, synchronicity, active imagination, and individuation. Any scholar familiar with Jung’s writings from The Collected Works, however, has to deal with the challenge of engaging a text that is unlike virtually all of Jung’s other “professional” writings. Indeed, just as one cannot help but be struck by the vision and technical ability demonstrated in the paintings, so too is one struck by the literary qualities of *The Red Book*. Hence, acknowledging that *The Red Book* is of unquestionable value as a primary source, cause and progenitor of Jung’s theories, I

propose to examine an aspect of the book that hitherto has not received much attention—its literary value. More specifically, I want to consider the qualities of the book that qualify it as a work of visionary literature as defined by Jung's own study of literary texts. As a kind of visionary literary epic, like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dante's *Commedia*, Goethe's *Faust*, or Joyce's *Ulysses*, it may well have served a compensatory function for the one-sidedness of the culture and times in which it was written (as well as for our own contemporary American culture and society). At the same time, it is also a product of the times in which it was written, and, taken as a Modernist literary work, it appears to synthesize various literary forms and genres and deals with Modernist themes of uncertainty, the search for meaning and soul, existentialist angst, and a certain fascination with, and particular use of, mythology. Perhaps just as Joyce turned to Homer for his own Modernist purposes (*i.e.*, to use myth to impose meaning on the chaos of modern life and simultaneously to show the absence of meaning by such a juxtaposition), so it might be argued that Jung turns to Dante for his own purposes (*i.e.*, both to resurrect the medieval psyche—in which reason did not dominate and was on equal footing with imagination, faith, and vision—and to show the dangers of the medieval doctrines of blind faith and the *imitatio Christi*). Hence, it may now be necessary to recover *The Red Book* as a once-lost Modernist visionary epic and install it in the canon of world literature and world mythology, granting it a rightful place alongside other visionary literary works that have long been a staple in the esteemed literary anthologies.

### **Seeing Red: It's Not Art! (Or Is It?)**

More than most other schools of psychology, Jung's analytical psychology enjoys a close kinship to works of literature. Perhaps this is due in large part to Jung's own extensive reading and study in the humanities—literary myths from around the world were part of the cultural milieu in which Jung grew up, and he actively included classical and modern literature in the vast field of cultural data that informed the development of his mature thought. Indeed, reading one's own life as a work of literature, a myth, seems central to Jungian analysis. In the midst of the major mid-life crisis he experienced in 1913, Jung asked himself the crucial question, "What myth am I living?"—the question that inspired the composition of *The Black Books* and subsequently *The Red Book*.<sup>1</sup> Just as Jung did, those undergoing Jungian analysis today discover an inner narrative of which they were previously unaware. The ego is the protagonist in this inner narrative, and the figures that manifest in dreams and visions are the cast with which the ego must interact and come to terms. Active imagination seems very

much like a technique sometimes used by novelists who hold imaginary conversations with their characters and write out dialogs with them, the better to understand them and their relationships to other characters, especially the protagonist.<sup>2</sup> The “plot” in Jungian analysis is driven by one’s need to find one’s own true path on the way to a wider, more comprehensive sense of self—*i.e.*, to become a more mature individual and, in so doing, to find deeper meaning in one’s life. Since a completely comprehensive and fully mature sense of self is a relative term, the plot can re-play at different levels throughout the course of a lifetime in a kind of upward spiral toward ever more advanced levels of maturity and integration. For Jung, each stage of life shapes this narrative with, for example, the stage of mid-life requiring a more patient, enduring hero like Odysseus as opposed to the more ambitious and impulsive hero of the stage of young adulthood. Working through the narrative at each life stage also prepares one to meet the challenges unique to that life stage—those of youth, adulthood, middle and old age.

Unlike a work of literature, however, individuation (the term Jung used for the aforementioned process) is not an artistic process but a psychological one—a work that one is living out and developing daily as opposed to an art product that one creates as separate and apart from one’s daily life experience, and once one begins the Individuation process, one has an ethical obligation to take responsibility for it and see it through. For example, it wouldn’t be enough to become aware of one’s own shadow or even to record dreams or dialogs with it—this is only part of the process. Having begun this, one must be responsible enough “to catch” one’s shadow in everyday life (*i.e.*, recognizing that one’s ego is inflated with shadow when one goes into a fit of anger, or recognizing when one is projecting one’s own shadow onto an innocent neighbor, maybe scapegoating him) (von Franz, 1976). One is now responsible for that shadow, as much as one would be responsible for a sibling who is always getting into trouble and needs to be cared for. This is the case for each of the figures that arise from the unconscious, for each is a part of the analysand. Hence, unlike

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1 Originally, when Jung began to be afflicted by an unceasing flood of apocalyptic visions in 1913, he started to record them in a series of six black journals (subsequently known as the “black books”) and later transferred them to the large red leather folio. By 1917, he had finished most of the initial composition of the book but poured over it until 1930, revising, adding commentary, editing. The result was a large calligraphic text bound in red leather that Jung inscribed with the title “Liber Novus” (New Book), and it was commonly referred to by Jung and those he shared it with as “*The Red Book*.” The work was divided into three main sections: “Liber Primus,” “Liber Secundus” and “Scrutinies” (Furlotti 2010).

2 *The Fiction Writer’s Handbook* (1975), a classic text used in many college creative writing courses for decades, includes the following advice for aspiring novelists: “Once we have chosen our characters, or they have chosen us, our task is to present these men and women, these individuals, to the reader...we must live with our characters for a while, hold imaginary conversations with them, insult them, love them, move among their friends and enemies” (p.52)

the novelist who can put his/her book down for a while, maybe even scrap the whole idea and start anew, the individual undergoing Jungian analysis is stuck with his inner narrative and bears continual responsibility for it. Moreover, there are clearly formal differences between Individuation and literary narrative, the latter being a more or less conscious artistic construct with the artist making deliberate and skillful use of the literary elements of plot, character, theme, setting, language and the like.

Still, these differences are not great enough for Jungian analysts to avoid using literary myths to “amplify” patients’ dreams and reveal broader cultural and collective meanings to dream images beyond those of the patient’s biography. Some, like James Hillman (1992), even go so far as to emphasize a literary reading of the psyche, claiming that “Poetic, dramatic fictions are what actually people our psychic life” (p. 131) and that

[To] Know Thyself in Jung’s manner means to become familiar with, to open oneself to and listen to, that is, to know and discern, daimons. Entering one’s interior story takes a courage similar to starting a novel. We have to engage with persons whose autonomy may radically alter, even dominate, our thoughts and feelings, neither ordering these persons about nor yielding to them full sway. Fictional and factual, they and we are drawn together like threads into a mythos, a plot, until death do us part. It is a rare courage that submits to this middle region of psychic reality where the supposed surety of fact and illusion of fiction exchange their clothes. (p. 131)

Even Hillman, however, draws the line between a literary approach to psychology and the production of literary artworks, and one key difference, for him as well as for Jung, lies in the purpose and motivation of active imagination:

Active imagination is not a literary endeavor, not a creative production of paintings and poems. One may aesthetically give form to the images—indeed, one should try as best one can aesthetically—though this is for the sake of the figures, in dedication to them and to realize their beauty, and not for the sake of art. The aesthetic work of active imagination is therefore not to be confused with art for exhibition or publication. (p.133)

Jungian scholars working on *The Red Book* have thus far operated upon the assumption that it is primarily a record of Jung's use of active imagination and, hence, upon this basic difference between active imagination and the production of a work of literature, as articulated by Hillman. Most have avoided calling *The Red Book* as a whole a work of art, literary or otherwise, and for good reason in view of Jung's own claims about the nature of his book as a recording of an experiment upon himself—a work of science and not of art.

But is it possible that Jung was operating on a false either/or assumption without considering the possibility that his book could be both science and art? The fact that such a dialogue took place at all indicates that there was at the very least a serious question in his mind about the artistic value of his work. It should also be noted that this question arose when Jung was recording the visions in his "Black Books," the material of which he would later transfer to a single, red, large bound folio that he had specially made by a bookbinder. He would spend years adding commentary and paintings, revising and editing so that the result is much more than a "dream journal," something that noted Jungian historian and scholar Sonu Shamdasani (2009) has called "a work of psychology in literary form" (p. 194). Thomas Kirsch (2011) references Shamdasani's insights on the transformation that took place between *The Black Books* and *The Red Book*:

There are significant differences between what Jung writes down in his Black Books and what ends up being in *The Red Book*. Sonu Shamdasani as editor of *The Red Book* notes all the differences between the two books. *The Red Book* contains very little direct unconscious material, for Jung had thoroughly assimilated the material from *The Black Books* before transcribing it into *The Red Book*. ("An 'enterview' with Thomas Kirsch, M.D.," p. 13)

Curiously, however, Kirsch concludes that "*The Red Book* is a personal diary... the diary of a man who is undergoing profound changes in his inner life as well as his outer life" (pp. 13-14), and both he and Robert Henderson seem to accept this conclusion without further explanation or analysis, referring to *The Red Book* as "Jung's private diary" (p. 17) and "Jung's journal" (p. 19) throughout their "enterview" entitled "Jung's Personal Diary: The Red Book."<sup>3</sup> If *The Red Book* is a diary, this designation is in need of further

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<sup>3</sup> Special "Thanks" to Steven F. Walker for bringing this article, and designation of *The Red Book* as "personal diary," to my attention.

qualification, for it is a highly stylized and literary diary—something more than what the Oxford English Dictionary describes as “the daily record of events or transactions, a journal; specifically, a daily record of matters affecting the writer personally, or which come under his personal observation” (Diary, 2011) which perhaps pertains more to what Jung recorded in *The Black Books*. Kirsch also observes similarities between *The Red Book* and Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*, noting that “the difference between the two is that there is no ‘I’ speaking to Zarathustra, whereas for Jung there is always an ‘I’ (An “enterview,” p. 12). Still, one does not have to look very far to find literary texts that would qualify as something more than a personal diary or journal: Odysseus narrates his adventures to strange and mysterious lands in his first-person account to the Phaeacians; Dante relates his fantastic descent and subsequent ascent to the reader in the first person; Dostoyevsky’s *Underground Man* recounts his own sort of descent in the first person, and so on. In *The Red Book*, we are dealing with a complex and stylized literary work that goes far beyond what we might generally associate with a private diary or journal.

As Kirsch rightly points out, Jung made important choices and changes in transferring his visions from *The Black Books* to *The Red Book*, and many of these were conscious, literary choices: “I, along with many others reading *The Red Book*, find it difficult and something we cannot stay with for a long time. For me part of this is the language of *The Red Book*. The language has a mannerism, which is perhaps purposeful...” (An “enterview” pp. 14-15). Shamdasani also notes that one of the major revisions that Jung made in transferring material from *The Black Books* to *The Red Book* was to conceive of an audience, which he addresses as “my friends” throughout *The Red Book*. No such address is present in *The Black Books*, which, Shamdasani adds, were really more collections of active imaginations. The point is that Jung did not consider what he was doing to be art *at the time* he was initially writing down the visions in *The Black Books*. But would he have considered the finished *Red Book* to be art? The question takes on gravity when one considers the assertions of Shamdasani and John Beebe (2010) that *The Red Book* is for Jung “an experiment with language” that charts Jung’s “individuation as a writer” (p. 422). Moreover, we know that Jung did indeed intend for *The Red Book* to be published to a wide audience, that he had shared a limited number of copies with close friends and colleagues, and that he had taken seriously the advice of trusted friend Cary Banes, whose opinion he had asked regarding possible publication. She responded emphatically that he certainly should publish it as a work of “Dichtung and Wahrheit [Poetry and Truth]” in the same vein as Goethe’s *Faust, Part II* (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 212). Jung took her



seriously enough to ask her to transcribe and type the entire contents of *The Red Book* (p. 212).

That *The Red Book* is a record of Jung's experiments with the technique called "active imagination" is uncontested. Indeed, the visions Jung illuminated in *The Red Book* were the origin points of active imagination, in which one lets oneself "drop" into a twilight consciousness. One allows elements of the unconscious to form into images, with which one then interacts in imaginal dialogue. The goal of the process is to reach a better understanding of the core elements of the unconscious and to form a better relationship with these figures, making it possible to integrate their contents into waking consciousness. Jung actually preferred this method to dream analysis because he felt that the ego and the unconscious were on more even terms as opposed to dreaming where the ego and consciousness are greatly diminished (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 210). There is no doubt that Jung employed artistic means as techniques to interact with the images that arose from the unconscious as is borne out by the paintings, poetry, fairy tales, and dramatic dialogues present throughout *The Red Book*. Whether or not the products of these artistic means constitute works of art, however, is another question. Jung was clear, at least, that the INTENTION of active imagination should not and could not be to produce a work of art, a motive that is clearly conscious and that subjects the images of the unconscious to the control and even tyranny of the ego. But this still leaves open the question of whether or not the products of active imagination undertaken for psychological purposes could still be considered works of art outside of their therapeutic function. To my knowledge, Jung never addressed this question. Yet his writings on the relationship between psychology and art offer some intriguing possibilities.

### **Reading Red: A Jungian Literary Analysis of The Red Book**

A close reading of Jung's commentary and analysis of literary texts suggests that *The Red Book* indeed contains several elements of a visionary literary text by Jung's own definition and standards. In both "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry" (1966) and "Psychology and Literature" (1966), Jung examined the role of the writer in the production of a work of literature and defined two kinds of literary art: personalistic<sup>4</sup> and visionary. Of the former, Jung writes, "There are literary works, prose as well as poetry, that spring wholly from the author's intention to produce

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<sup>4</sup> As noted by the editors of *The Collected Works*, Jung's original term for this kind of literature was "psychological," which confused readers since the "visionary" type of literature he discusses also originates in the psyche. The editors suggest that the term "personalistic" (which Jung used in other writings) is a more accurate term for describing the kind of literature Jung has in mind ("Psychology and Literature," p. 89, n. 2).

a particular result... He submits his material to a definite treatment with a definite aim in view... His material is entirely subordinated to his artistic purpose; he wants to express this and nothing else" ("On the Relation," para. 109, p. 72). Hence, the writer is motivated by a clear and conscious intention and purpose. In this case, Jung explains, the author is especially receptive to the experiences, people, events, passions of everyday life; he gathers these together and, in the crucible of his workshop, synthesizes them and sublimates them into a work that brings readers' attention to all that they have not noticed in the everyday world around them—in essence, to "glorify the commonplace" in the words of Wordsworth. Jung cites Goethe's *Faust I* as an example of such a literary work, noting that the tragic love affair of Faust and Gretchen seems to have been consciously conceived by Goethe, who used the elements of literature to evoke pathos and perhaps catharsis from the reader ("Psychology," para. 138, p. 88). We might add Dante's *La Vita Nuova* to this category—the sonnets and poems, all consciously motivated by the poet's intention to praise his beloved Beatrice, express the anguish and pain of this unrequited love, mourn her untimely death, and attempt to immortalize her in his verse. Indeed, Dante even provides his own commentary and analysis following each of the poems, explaining what he was consciously trying to achieve in each verse of each poem. Some of Blake's "Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience" might also serve as examples of personalistic literary works. The Chimney Sweeper poems, for example, appear to be Blake's conscious and deliberate outcry in response to the blind eye society turned toward the exploitation of children and the horrors of child labor in the birth of the Industrial Revolution.

Jung differentiates the personalistic literary work from what he calls the visionary literary work by stressing the strange, almost dream-like qualities of the latter. In this case, the author often appears to be more a vehicle for some impersonal motivation that overwhelms him, often against his will and despite his conscious intent:

These works positively force themselves upon the author; his hand is seized, his pen writes things that his mind contemplates with amazement. The work brings with it its own form; anything he wants to add is rejected, and what he himself would like to reject is thrust back at him. While his conscious mind stands amazed and empty before this phenomenon, he is overwhelmed by a flood of thoughts and images which he never intended to create and which his own will could never have brought into being. ("On the Relation," para. 110, p. 73)

As examples of such visionary works, Jung cites Goethe's *Faust II*, Dante's *Commedia*, Blake's paintings and presumably his visionary poems ("Psychology," para. 142, p. 91), as well as Joyce's *Ulysses* (p. 91, n.7). The material that motivates this type of work comes not from the outer world of everyday experience but from a deep inner source that seems to have nothing to do with the author's conscious experiences. Of such works, Jung writes

In dealing with the psychological [personalistic] mode of creation, we need never ask ourselves what the material consists of or what it means. But this question forces itself upon us when we turn to the visionary mode. We are astonished, confused, bewildered, put on our guard or even repelled; we demand commentaries and explanations. We are reminded of nothing in everyday life, but rather of dreams, night-time fears, and the dark, uncanny recesses of the human mind. ("Psychology," para. 143, p. 91)

The material from which the author draws in personalistic works, Jung notes, is fairly easy to identify, coming as it does from the author's conscious experiences and concerns. The material from which the author draws in visionary works, however, is much more difficult to track, as it seems to come from a source outside of the author's waking life and intention. Jung here asserts that the sources of such material are the archetypes of the collective unconscious. He held that groups of people, even whole cultures, have distinct personalities much like individuals do and that the psyche of a society operates in some ways similarly to the psyche of an individual. For Jung, the psyche operates on the law of homeostasis—a self-regulating principle that will internally compensate for a condition that has become too extreme, analogous to the process of respiration and body temperature in mammals (Stevens, 1994, p. 72 ). Hence, in the case of the artist, the archetypes of the collective unconscious become activated in the artist when his/her culture has become too one-sided or rigid. The artist becomes a release point or passage for the archetypal energy to find its way into the consciousness of the culture, compensating for the imbalance and encouraging the development of greater maturity. Jung's theory might well account for the invocation of the muse or the gods that authors have used for centuries to open an epic work of literature. Beyond elevating and justifying his poem, such an invocation might also be an honest confession of the motivation behind the work—the poet confessing that he has no choice but to be the vehicle for archetypal forces seeking to rise to consciousness.

In the conception of a visionary work of literature, the archetype, activated in the artist's unconscious, forms

...an autonomous complex. By this we mean a psychic formation that remains subliminal until its energy charge is sufficient to carry it over the threshold of consciousness. Its association with consciousness does not mean that it is assimilated, only that it is perceived; but it is not subject to conscious control, and can be neither inhibited nor voluntarily reproduced. Therein lies the autonomy of the complex: it appears and disappears in accordance with its own inherent tendencies, independently of conscious will...In this respect it offers an analogy with pathological processes, since these too are characterized by the presence of autonomous complexes, particularly in the case of mental disturbances. The divine frenzy of the artist comes perilously close to a pathological state, though the two things are not identical. ("On the Relation," para. 122, p. 78).

Jung implies that the literary artist plays an important role in molding and shaping the archetypes, which erupt into consciousness through dreams and visions, into an artistic form that is more or less accessible to the general readership. Still, such works are often challenging and often misunderstood and rejected (initially at least) by the public as well as the critics ("Psychology," para. 143, p. 91). In some instances, however, an artist may make the archetypal content more palatable with an overlay of historical or contemporary events and images (para. 143, p. 91). Nevertheless, on close inspection we catch a glimpse of the activated archetype moving beneath the surface:

In each of these images there is a little piece of human psychology and human fate, a remnant of the joys and sorrows that have been repeated countless times in our ancestral history, and on the average follow ever the same course. It is like a deeply graven river-bed in the psyche, in which the waters of life, instead of flowing along as before in a broad but shallow stream, suddenly swell into a mighty river. This happens whenever that particular set of circumstances is encountered which over long periods of time has helped to lay down the primordial image. ("On the Relation," para. 127, p. 81).

How to give expression to the mighty river of primordial images surging into consciousness is the task of one practicing active imagination as well as the visionary literary artist. Early on in *The Red Book*, Jung (2009) admits “My speech is imperfect. Not because I want to shine with words, but out of the impossibility of finding those words. I speak in images. With nothing else can I express the words from the depths” (p. 230). This is the very issue with which the visionary artist wrestles, seeking verbal and literary forms of expression for the flood of images emerging from the unconscious. In the case of *The Red Book*, however, since many of the episodes were actually sessions of active imagination, it is likely that Jung’s stylistic and imagistic choices were not all preconceived, planned or even fully conscious. While some choices were probably conscious ones, it is likely that others were the result of the unconscious seizing upon whatever was available from Jung’s conscious experience of literature—from the Bible, Augustine, Dante, Goethe, etc. When speaking of the visionary experience that takes possession of the artist, Jung explains, “In itself it is wordless and imageless, for it is a vision seen “as in a glass, darkly.” It is nothing but a tremendous intuition striving for expression. It is like the whirlwind that seizes everything within reach and assumes visible form as it swirls upward” (“Psychology,” para. 151, p. 97). Hence, Jungian theory suggests that the stunning array of literary styles, devices, tones, images, etc. displayed throughout *The Red Book* is, at least in part, the product of Jung’s unconscious seeking material to make itself known. Similar experiences occur in dreams, in which the unconscious often uses material from waking consciousness, often from the previous day or week, to give expression to deeper archetypal forces, as though it were using scraps of paper, string, paper clips, etc. to form a collage that can then be understood by the conscious mind. Since Jung was so widely read in world mythology and literature, it makes sense that his unconscious would draw upon this storehouse of material, but shaping and altering it for its own purposes as a twister picks up cars, houses, cattle making itself visible as it forges ahead on its own path.

### **A Modernist Shade of Red:**

In his analysis of the dreams and visions of the death of the hero, which appear early in *The Red Book*, Jung reflects on his life and career to this point. His success came at a price. In becoming Freud’s heir apparent, he had allowed himself to be devoured by the father. He had sacrificed his own convictions and ideas and had become overly ambitious, arrogant and unfeeling in the process. The visions were telling him that his ego had been inflated with the archetype of the young hero and that this had to stop—*i.e.*,

that he must kill the young hero in himself and that this would give rise to a new myth to live by. The tragic consequence of such hero inflation, Jung realized, was a loss of soul. Hero myths in ancient cultures evoke the tragic consequences of the young hero's over-development of his abilities at the expense of his humanity and relationships—after they begin to accumulate heroic deeds and reputation, Jason abandons Medea, Theseus abandons Ariadne, Aeneas abandons Dido. For Jung, the word “soul” has many meanings, but in the context of *The Red Book*, it seems to refer specifically to the archetype of the anima. Hence, a central theme of *The Red Book* is “the Re-Finding of the Soul” or, as the title of another work by Jung, “Modern Man in Search of a Soul” (1955). Jung's own anima appears in *The Red Book* in the form of the figure named Salome as well as that named simply “my soul” (the two figures appear to be interchangeable and Jung says directly of Salome, “...she is my own soul...” (p. 248). Soon after Jung had his visions of the death of the hero, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, igniting WWI. The parallel between his personal crisis and the collective crisis overtaking Europe was not lost on Jung. The meaningful coincidence (synchronicity) suggested to him that Europe, as a personality writ large, was also inflated with the archetype of the young hero and had similarly lost its humanity and soul, its anima, in the process. Unable to understand this inflation, it acted it out on a mass scale with the murder of the Archduke as well as millions of young men sent off to battle filled with the heroic ideals of nationalism.

Jung was not alone in struggling with the experience of a loss of soul in his work; in addition to dealing with the issue on an individual, personal level, he was also engaging in the collective loss of soul experienced throughout the Western world at the opening of the twentieth century. Again, this loss of soul was in part a consequence of the collective inflation with the archetype of the youthful hero that resulted in a naïve faith in industrialization, nationalism, science and technology—a faith that was suddenly thrown into doubt following the horrors of WWI. Artists in several fields recognized this one-sidedness of Western culture and sought to express it and the resulting search for the soul that characterizes much Modernist art, and literature in particular. Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, for example, captures the new mistrust of naïve, bourgeois views on nationalism, education, and art characterized in the episode in which Harry Haller (the protagonist) quarrels with a former professor friend. Angry and depressed at the one-sided state of his culture, Haller stumbles into a dance hall where he meets a pretty young anima figure named Hermine, who will cure him of his depression and help him mature emotionally, developing his feeling and sensation functions by teaching him to dance to jazz and

finding him a lover, and ultimately guiding him into unexplored realms of the individual and collective unconscious in the climactic “Magic Theater” episode. It was indeed characteristic of literary Modernists to focus on moments of crisis that threw into question established truths and “objective” realities, forcing one to reflect on the subjective creation of meaning, so that Modernist works could be called, to use Paul Valery’s term, “dramas of mental images” (Ellmann and O’Clair, 1988, p. 1). Certainly Jung’s *Red Book*, opening as it does at a profound moment of crisis and descending into a gallery or labyrinth of archetypal images, could be said to fit such a description. As Thomas Kirsch (2011) points out “When Jung was writing down his fantasies, it was the end of the Age of Reason with its emphasis upon rationality. Jung’s finding a sense of individual spiritual meaning inclusive of his experience of the shadow speaks to the modern individual. Today, we are much more aware of the dark side of human nature (“An ‘enterview’,” p. 18).

The theme of moderns seeking the lost soul of their age is prominent in many central texts of Modernist literature, such as Eliot’s “The Wasteland,” Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* and Joyce’s *Ulysses*. In his commentary on *Ulysses*, Jung was struck by the absence of feeling in the work—i.e., the absence of relationship and soul characteristic of the modern Dublin portrayed by Joyce:

Atrophy of feeling is a characteristic of modern man and always shows itself as a reaction when there is too much feeling around, and in particular too much false feeling. From the lack of feeling in *Ulysses* we may infer a hideous sentimentality in the age that produced it... Think of the lamentable role of popular sentiment in wartime! Think of our so-called humanitarianism! ... I am deeply convinced that we are not only stuck in the Middle Ages but also are caught in our own sentimentality. It is therefore quite comprehensible that a prophet should arise to teach our culture a compensatory lack of feeling. (“*Ulysses*,” para. 184, p. 122)

Joyce, like Jung and Hesse, appears to have been responding to the same crisis—a culture inflated with the archetype of the naïve and youthful hero, one who has sacrificed soul (genuine feeling and relationship) in his quest to conquer his environment. Such a hero, as recounted in classical myth, is often incapable of mature feeling, expressing himself in sentimentalism and naïve idealism. To compensate for a culture inflated by such a hero archetype, Joyce offered a work devoid of all sentimentalism,

devoid of feeling itself, with Leopold Bloom, a middle-aged hero who seems to be struggling with his own loss of soul, the search for which seems to go unfulfilled as his reunion with Molly at the novel's end underscores the striking differences in their characters and the fractured nature of their relationship. Contrast this with the ironic counterpoint of Homer's Odysseus who, through numerous encounters with the anima, seems to have reached a mature relationship to the feminine, as Homer makes clear in Odysseus' reunion with his beloved Penelope, a mature and wise counterpart for the hero in every way. Steven Walker notes that in the Nausicaä chapter of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom seeks his lost soul in the image of Gerty MacDowell as he "...projects his anima onto Gerty, who becomes, at least for a while, a fascinating seaside girl, who gives him 'relief' and a sense of feeling young again" ("Art Thou My Real Ideal?" 2009). Jung, for his part, responded to the soullessness of his age by abandoning the hero model that had been the focus of his *Symbols of Transformation*, in effect slaying the hero and overcoming his own inflation with this archetype to create a "post-heroic" work in *The Red Book* (Shamdasani and Beebe, 2010, p. 417). Now, his focus shifts to the struggle to regain genuine feeling in his encounters with the anima figure throughout *The Red Book*.

Other Modernist authors also produced works that addressed, and compensated for, the loss of soul in and around the period of the first world war, as Steven Walker makes clear in his striking analysis of Proust's *Time Regained* and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Against the backdrop of a crumbling wartime Paris, Proust's middle aged hero, Marcel, struggles with his mid-life crisis—a crisis that is inextricably intertwined with the wartime crisis, for, as Walker suggests, Marcel struggles with the symbolic and psychological death of the young hero he used to be: "He himself is no longer the young hero of the world of literature—his ambitions and talents have disappeared, and his middle age begins to emerge as the disappointing sequel to a youth full of promise" (*Midlife*, 2012, p. 189). Amid the ruins of his former self-image as youthful hero, Marcel attends a reception where "one particular figure suddenly stands out in the largely aging and decrepit crowd at the reception. It is Mlle. De Saint-Loup, the daughter of his late friend Robert, and she seems to embody in this crowd of increasingly decrepit seniors the magical beauty of the ever youthful anima" (p. 198). Women writers, too, responded to the loss of soul at this time, as Walker makes asserts in his analysis of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Here, the character of Peter Walsh has devoted his youth to the heroic ideal of service to the British colonial government, having spent many years in India, "...years that have gone largely unrewarded" (p. 203). With the passing away of his youthful idealism, Peter struggles to deal with his loss of soul, starting



an affair with the young wife of a Major. He falls asleep in the park and dreams “of trees turned into female figures, and then into one figure who offers him ‘comprehension’ and ‘absolution,’...an ecstatic moment for him—a glimpse through dream into the archetypal world of the feminine, where ‘compassion, comprehension, absolution’ are offered to him freely” (p. 204). Here again, we note the compensatory Modernist artist valuing the qualities of the anima that seemed to be so absent and so undeveloped in the period surrounding WWI.

Modernist artists like Joyce, Hesse, Eliot, *et al.* also drew upon classical mythology as a way of diagnosing, and compensating for, the inflation of their age. In some cases, myth was used as a means to impose some kind of order onto an otherwise chaotic existence and thereby find meaning. But the technique could also be used ironically, to illustrate the absence of a shared mythology, the absence of structure and meaning in modern life as contrasted with the lives of the ancients who lived within the worldview and framework of their mythology. Joyce seems to use myth in both senses in *Ulysses* as the disparity and comic irony ring in the episodes in Homer’s epic and the sometimes trivial and absurd events in Bloom’s life. At other times, the myth seems to amplify and deepen the potentially meaningful events in Bloom’s life, such as his meeting and friendship with Stephen, which echoes the reunion of Odysseus and his son Telemachus (a rare example of genuine feeling in *Ulysses* that Jung perhaps missed in his commentary!). In *The Red Book*, it seems that Jung too uses mythical figures and allusions in both senses. The episode with Izdubar (Gilgamesh) seems to illustrate a diagnostic use of myth, emphasizing the disparity between a time when humans operated within a more or less consistent imaginative framework of a shared mythology as opposed to a modern age of reason that has all but destroyed the kind of imaginative and fantastic thinking that could create such a shared mythology. The episode with the Red Knight (Satan) illustrates a compensatory myth. Jung echoes Goethe’s *Faust I*, as Jung/Faust, at least temporarily, learns the value of dancing and of joy. And, of course, the myth of the *nekylia* and descent to the realm of the dead, an archetype at the heart of so many epic myths, seems to provide the over-arching (or underpinning) structure of the entire Red Book, providing meaning and historical, cultural and psychological context for his individuation.

Still, it should be noted that Jung’s use of myth was not primarily conscious and artistic in the conventional sense; rather, the mythic figures and structures with which he was familiar were likely swept up into the whirlwind of the activated archetype—the situation that Jung noted confronts the visionary artist as opposed to the personalistic one. For Jung,

as for the visionary artist, the experience of the archetype is primary and mythic figures and images provide a language to articulate that experience. As Sonu Shamdasani (2009) suggests, Jung used mythology in this sense as part of his daily practice with patients, discovering a practical application for his interest in mythology, and seeing myths as cultural expressions of some of the same archetypes activated in his patients' psyches (p. 197). In other words, mythic parallels might be used to help patients caught up in the whirlwind of an activated archetype to identify the shape, features and even course of that whirlwind as well as how to relate to it and perhaps compensate for it. Moreover, in contemplating his own crisis at this time and his break from Freud, Jung wondered if one lived, perhaps unconsciously, according to an underlying myth that gave shape and meaning to one's life. He wondered further how one could live without such a myth and felt compelled to discover and analyze his own myth—crucial, he believed, if he was to help others and get to know the underlying myths that governed their lives. This realization provided the motivation and inspiration for his composition of *The Red Book*. Hence, for Jung, as for many other Modernist artists of his time, the world was fractured and chaotic; truth was no longer clearly defined or easy to find in the institutions that had hitherto claimed to possess it. Myth provided a means to diagnose the current fractured state of the world as well as a possible means to compensate for its ills and even find meaning in it. To this end, Jung radically reinterprets the Judeo-Christian myth to serve his own ends. For Jung, one should pursue the *Imitatio Christi*, not in the traditional Christian sense, but rather in terms of his own definition of individuation. In "Psychotherapists or the Clergy" (1955), he asserts

It is no easy matter to live a life that is modeled on Christ's, but it is unspeakably harder to live one's own life as truly as Christ lived his. Anyone who did this would run counter to the conditions of his own history, and though he might thus be fulfilling them, he would none the less be misjudged, derided, tortured, and crucified. (p. 340)

Hence, *The Red Book* illustrates Jung's Modernist radical revision of biblical and classical myth toward subjective ends.

In addition to its central theme and use of mythological imagery, Jung's Red Book also shares stylistic similarities with works of Modernist literature. One hallmark of Modernist literature is the incorporation of multiple literary genres to give expression to the artist's subjective experience of inner and outer realities. In Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, readers

encounter a mix of straight narrative, visionary or surreal narrative, and critical analysis in *The Treatise on the Steppenwolf*. Eliot's "The Wasteland" incorporates biblical, lyrical, epic and folk poetic forms, among others. In Joyce's *Ulysses*, readers encounter this practice in the extreme with the forms and genres ranging beyond the literary into the musical and mathematical. In *The Red Book*, Jung draws on epic and wisdom literature in the opening of Liber Primus, folk and fairy tale as well as lyrical incantations in Liber Secundus, critical analysis and confession in *Scrutinies*, and dramatic dialogues and analytical commentary throughout. The tone and style shift as well throughout *The Red Book*, with a prophetic, biblical tone at times reminiscent of the Old Testament and at others of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, to a light and fanciful tone in the "Castle in the Forest" episodes of Liber Secundus, to the esoteric and bombastic style of *Scrutinies*. What links Jung to the Modernist here is the disregard for consistency and continuity of form and an insistence on the primacy of the subjective experience with the writer drawing upon form, genre, imagery and language as needed in an effort to give expression to visionary experiences for which there are no established vehicles of expression.

The Modernist manipulation of narrator and character to re-imagine the notion of the self as an amalgamation of multiple forces, many of whom exert an influence from "behind the scenes," as it were, reflects similar aspects of *The Red Book*. As Sonu Shamdasani points out in the translator's note, the narrative voice in *The Red Book* is by no means a single, consistent entity and voice. Instead, Jung writes in 3 registers: descriptive (reporter); conceptual (analytical); and mantic (prophetic, romantic) (p. 222), and the three registers often rub up against each other and shift one to the other without any apparent plan, with Jung using them intuitively as he needed, a quality distinctive of a Modernist literary work. Hesse had used narration in a similar way in *Steppenwolf* with the inclusion of *The Treatise on the Steppenwolf*, a booklet written by Haller commenting on and analyzing his own character and experiences. Moreover, the characters and narrative voices of Haller and the other characters, especially Hermine, often merge, as do their identities, similar to Jung's experiences with his soul, Salome, Philemon and others throughout *The Red Book*.

While *The Red Book* appears to be in large part a collection of active imaginations, the seemingly random presentation of episodes, at times linked by association or image, is similar to that in the Magic Theater section of Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, or episodes in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The Modernist insistence on subjective experience over objective "reality" and the rational, causal progression of plot seems to be present in Jung's *Red Book*, corroborated by his insistence on a valuation of imaginal, fantastic

thinking over reason and logic. Similarly, compressions and expansions of time, fragmentary episodes, unresolved subplots, as befits the subjective experience of events and of dreams, are the norm rather than the exception in *The Red Book*. Again, we need look no further than Proust, Joyce, Hesse, *et al.* to see this approach. As Bradbury and McFarlane (1991) point out in their landmark work on literary Modernism, Modernists by definition were fascinated with the process of evolving consciousness, and Modernist literary works were often not organized according to linear time, but according to layers of consciousness (p. 50). Certainly, the same could be said for Jung's *Red Book*, as each episode seems to involve a deeper level of the unconscious culminating in a core or nucleus in the image of Philemon's garden at the end of the work. The process of evolving consciousness, for Modernists, also involved holding in suspension the forces that persist from the past and those that grow from the novel present (p. 49) leading to an "explosive fusion" of the old categories of thought which would give rise to "new wholes" (p. 49). Such a process may be seen, for example, in Strindberg's attention to alchemy and his fusion of reason and unreason, science and magic (p. 49). In *The Red Book*, Jung's encounters with several of the figures from the unconscious often result in debate and even hostility as Jung's rational ego clings to its established rational, scientific values and often feels threatened by what it cannot fathom or value. Yet in many of these encounters, a new attitude emerges out of the "explosive fusion" of the opposing attitudes. The encounter with The Red One leads to a new appreciation for, and valuing of, the feeling of joy on the part of Jung's overly rational ego, a synthesis that results in Jung's experience of sprouting new leaves all over his body. Jung's encounter with Izdubar also seems to illustrate this process, with scientific rationalism nearly killing imaginal, mythical thinking, but then producing a new birth of the god and a new attitude toward the divine. Indeed, throughout *The Red Book*, one can see Jung's "melting together of sense and nonsense, which produces supreme meaning," a phenomenon for which Jung coined a new German term: *der Übersinn*<sup>5</sup> (Odajnyk, 2010, p. 447).

Of course, one may argue that the literary Modernists were simply incorporating the discoveries of the psychologists from Freud onward into their art, but this may be an oversimplification of the process. Many mythological and visionary texts, recorded long before the clinical observations of the psychoanalysts, employed similar techniques, and Jung was intimately familiar with these texts. Hence, the psychologists' "discoveries" of associative and imagistic thinking, compressions and expansions of time, *etc.* may be re-discoveries of psychic dream experiences originally recorded

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<sup>5</sup> Literally "over-sense" or transcending sense.

in works of literature. Even in Jung's day, the question of who influenced whom among artists and psychologists was a murky one, with cross-fertilization and influence the likely reality. As Shamdasani points out, the early twentieth century was indeed a time before clear boundaries between disciplines of literature, art, & psychology were established (p. 194). Many psychologists wrote works of fiction; many writers incorporated the latest psychological theories, and individuals searched for any means possible to express their inner experiences. It comes as no surprise, then, to discover works that do not fall neatly into conventional categories of literary text or psychological study. Hence, to underscore Shamdasani's assertion, *The Red Book* is a "work of psychology in literary form" and it could only have been written at this time (p. 194). And while psychologists have begun to trace the book's influences on Jungian analytical psychology and on modern psychology in general, literary critics must now begin to trace *The Red Book's* qualities as a work of Modernist visionary literature.

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## TRACKING THE HERMIT'S SOUL: A JUNGIAN READING OF BHARTRIHARI'S SATAKATRAYA

From behind the professor's closed office door we might hear the mounting anxiety: "What a great new anthology of world literature! Poetry, prose, and drama from the Mayan culture, medieval Japan, and ancient India! But...*how* am I to read these works?" These doors and these words, incidentally, might easily be our own (don't worry, nobody heard)! The stakes today are high when teaching *World Literature*, for if we take a *soft* approach to the texts, rely on popular conceptions and stereotypical interpretations, we risk misrepresenting authors and even entire cultures. Fortunately, some of our own schools of literary criticism may prove themselves both versatile and valuable when it comes to understanding texts from culture periods vastly different from our own. Some approaches, of course, may work better than others, and we should choose that which comes nearest the spirit of the work even over that which accounts for the most facts, literary or otherwise. Hence, when we come to the work of Bhartrihari, a fifth century Indian poet/philosopher who appears in nearly every anthology of World Literature, we face some difficult decisions. The perfunctory introductions to his work tell us nothing more than that he was a court poet, grammarian, and Buddhist philosopher in the Gupta era and that he is coming to be appreciated in the West as a central figure in the formation and criticism of Indian language and literature. How, then, should we read him?

While some readings, such as historical or Marxian analyses, shed light on the complex class system and exploitation present in the fifth century Indian society surrounding Bhartrihari's work,<sup>1</sup> we might do better

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that Bhartrihari was a poet in the fifth century Gupta court might lead us to believe a historical or Marxian reading applies best. D.D. Kosambi, the famed Marxian Sanskrit scholar and critic, blasted practically all of Sanskrit literature as the product of a caste system whose primary means of production was the exploitation and oppression of India's starving masses:

The subtle mystic philosophies...[and] ornate literature...of India all derive from the same historical process that produced the famished apathy of the villager, senseless opportunism and tenite greed of the 'cultured' strata, sullen un-coordinated discontent among the workers, the general demoralisation, misery, squalor and degrading superstition. The one is the result of the other, the one is the expression of the other.  
(qtd. in Goldman)

Nevertheless, as Goldman astutely notes, Kosambi ironically praised Bhartrihari in critical editions of his poetry, poetry which exemplified for Kosambi "the elitist cultural expression which he so soundly indict[ed]" (Goldman 137). Perhaps it was Bhartrihari's first work, *Among Fools and Kings*, which drew Kosambi, for here the poet

to call upon Jungian psychoanalysis to understand and appreciate the spirit of his work. Regarding Bhartrihari the grammarian, critic Harold Coward notes that “Jung provides the closest modern Western approximation to the yoga conception of consciousness [implicit in Bhartrihari’s sphota language theory]” (Coward 93), but he has little to say from a Jungian perspective about Bhartrihari the poet.<sup>2</sup> As we read through *Satakatraya* (“three groups of one hundred verses”), Bhartrihari’s collection of Sanskrit poems,<sup>3</sup> we note that each of its three principal books, *Among Fools and Kings*, *Passionate Encounters*, and *Refuge in the Forest*, seems to have its own presiding voice. In the first, we hear the cynic and the complainer; in the second, the passionate lover caught in the throes of sensual desires; in the third, the ascetic and spiritual seeker. Hence, in Bhartrihari’s *Satakatraya* we not only recognize a fragmented self, a torn self, but perhaps also an effort to compartmentalize the self (Walker, Lecture). But for what reason? Why divide a poetic work into these three books and these three distinct personalities? Is there a pattern or progression? Is Bhartrihari’s poetic

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soundly criticizes the court system of which he was a part. In lyric 25, Bhartrihari sees moksa (liberation) as the great social equalizer: “Cast noble birth to hell! All the virtues even lower!...Leave us free to win that wealth/ without which all these merits/ count as worthless bits of straw!” (Miller 40). His ironic voice is clear in lyric 51 where he sees all apparent virtues and talents arising from a privileged social position: “A man of wealth is held to be high-born,/ wise, scholarly, discerning;/ eloquent, and even handsome--/ all virtues are accessories to gold!” (Miller 49). Later in this work, he even seems to praise the contributions of the lower, middle, and priestly classes over the Bourgeoisie in lyric 71: “...the skill these people/ have in their arts is the basis of society” (Miller 56). A compassionate and bitter tone may be heard here as well. These classes are the means of production for the society, yet the implication is that they enjoy few or none of its fruits. Passages such as these perhaps reveal Bhartrihari’s appeal for Kosambi, but they also make it difficult to see the poet as a propagandist for the ruling caste, which is how Kosambi also characterized him. Kosambi himself realized this contradiction, seeing Bhartrihari “as [a poet] of frustration who offer[s] at most an “escape,” but no “solution” to the grinding contradictions of [his] own [society]” (Goldman 140). From a Marxist perspective, then, Bhartrihari is something of an enigma—a court poet who, as part of a caste system which exploited millions, writes for royalty and the ruling classes yet undercuts them, it would seem, when he has the chance. To more fully appreciate his literary and theoretical contributions, we must look elsewhere.

2 According to Coward, Bhartrihari’s sphota (an idea or symbol as an intuited whole) manifests itself in two forms—the dhvani (suggestive words and phrases) and artha (inner objective meaning). For example, the idea of romantic love (sphota) takes form in the suggestive words of a love sonnet by Shakespeare (dhvani) and in the internal meaning of the poem (artha) as experienced through the cumulative effect of the words (Coward 80-85). Unlike Saussure, Bhartrihari did not believe in the arbitrary nature of signs; instead, he saw words as glimpses (some clearer than others) of a greater whole or eternal idea—something like Plato’s eternal forms. The cumulative effect of these glimpses and their arrangement could allow the reader a more or less complete vision of the eternal idea. Coward chooses Jung as the closest Western philosopher to Bhartrihari, drawing parallels between sphota and Jung’s archetype, dhvani and Jung’s archetypal image, and artha and Jung’s intuitive/feeling function of the personality.

3 Bhartrihari’s poems belong to the Indian genre known as the fragmentary lyric which may be “defined in contrast to narrative lyric by its more restricted subject matter and by the independent quality of each stanza... Each verse is grammatically complete and contains distinct images and a dominant rhetorical device” (Miller 11-12). While the rhetorical devices of Sanskrit poetry (its metrical devices, puns, etc.) are mostly lost in translation, the “distinct images” survive and these are enough for a Jungian analysis. We see here how in its emphasis on interpreting the image “Jungian psychology differentiates itself radically from Freudian, Lacanian, and other psychologies that stress the task of interpreting the language of the unconscious” (Walker 3). Indeed, when analyzing works in languages vastly different from our own, Jungian criticism may have the advantage, for archetypes by their very nature survive translation.



personality changing, perhaps developing throughout the Satakatraya? Among the numerous literary critical schools to which we might appeal to answer these questions, Jungian analytical psychology may prove the most effective in shedding light on Bhartrihari's poetry and psychology. Individuation, a term Jung coined to describe the process by which one comes to identify with the Self (the archetype of wholeness) as opposed to the ego alone (inflation), provides us with a key to understanding Bhartrihari's evolving poetic self.

According to Jung, the psyche may be divided into three principal components: the ego and persona (the conscious, rational mind), the personal unconscious (suppressed thoughts and experiences), and the collective unconscious (the archetypes). Individuation begins with the weakening of the persona as archetypes (collective, instinctual drives which manifest in dream images) begin to constellate (become active), invading dreams and even waking consciousness. Typically, one's relationships to daily life begin to suffer, and traditional beliefs and ideals fall from the absolutes by which one lives one's life to concepts of relative value. As the persona begins to fracture, the shadow emerges. The shadow, as Jung often describes it, consists of material that has been repressed by the ego as one matures through childhood and adolescent stages of development. It continues to accept anything we have difficulty fitting into our persona or rational outlook on life. The shadow holds the undesirable (and often vital) traits of our personality, the taboo, the Hyde to the persona's Jekyll. Rather than acknowledge the shadow as part of oneself, one will typically project it outward onto an evil and monstrous someone or something else; hence, we see that the shadow, like the other archetypes, is an illusion-making factor within the psyche which prevents one from accurately perceiving and appropriately responding to reality. One's first challenge in the process of individuation, then, is to try to accept the shadow figure, to negotiate with it in some way so as to integrate it and glean some of its energy—the treasure that has been buried along with the refuse.

As its title suggests, Bhartrihari's first book of poems, *Among Kings and Fools*, is filled with bitterness and cynicism directed at the evil and suffering of life in general and the evil and suffering of the court system in particular. We seem to hear the voice of a middle-aged or older man who has seen all aspects of political courtly life; in Jungian theory it is usually the "mid-life crisis" which signifies the start of the individuation process and the appearance of the shadow.

In poem # 24, the poet lists several of the most admirable of human virtues but couples them with their evil counterparts: *i.e.*, the hero is also called cruel, the majestic are also called arrogant, *etc.* (Miller 39). The point

of the poem, namely that the wicked slander all virtues, is certainly borne out by the many examples which precede it, yet we wonder if Bhartrihari hasn't made his point too well. Experience tells us that heroes are in fact often cruel, that the majestic are often also arrogant, *etc.* Certainly Bhartrihari is an experienced enough observer of court politics to notice the ring of truth in these "slanders," yet he continually moralizes in this book, extolling the virtuous and condemning the wicked. Nor does he admit the possibility that he too is guilty of slandering the court, that he might possess a certain degree of wickedness himself. Curiously, no more than three poems later, he writes: "One should avoid an evil man/ even if knowledge adorns him./ Is not a diamond-hooded serpent/ an agent of danger?" (40). Is the poet not here contradicting himself in slandering the virtue of knowledge and intelligence? Does Bhartrihari number himself as one of the wicked? By the end of this first book, however, we notice a new perspective emerging, a broader consciousness. In # 71, for example, the poet seems intentionally to intermingle virtue and vice: the rogue's guile precedes the saint's affection, the teacher's patience is followed by a woman's cunning, etc. And it is "the *skill* these people have in their *arts*" (my emphasis, 56), the complex inter-relatedness and dynamic of the wicked and the virtuous, which forms the basis of society and keeps it running. Perhaps, as Jung suggests, those like Bhartrihari who have only just begun the journey of individuation may at times glimpse the goal, the archetypal Self which encompasses and harmonizes all the other archetypes.

After the shadow has been more or less integrated into consciousness, according to Jung's theory, other archetypes begin to emerge in dreams and visions. Typically, the anima, the personified image of a man's contrasexual psychic impulses, appears next in dreams in various roles: prostitute, seductress, even spiritual guide to name a few. She represents a man's feeling function and her particular role corresponds to the kind of relationship a man has to his feelings. For a man detached from or averse to his own feelings, she appears in her dangerous aspect as mother-devourer, witch, siren, etc. Inability to sufficiently cultivate the feeling function and integrate the anima can lead to moodiness, oversensitivity, even severe depression or feelings of worthlessness (von Franz 186).

The second book of Bhartrihari's *Satakatranya* focuses on just such a female figure as respected Sanskrit translator and Indologist Barbara Stoler Miller notes in her excellent introduction to Bhartrihari's poetry:

Woman, his passion's object, is an enigma that defies Bhartrihari's solution. She seems to him an invitation to some kind of supraterrrestrial paradise, but she is at the same

time life's device for enticing men into inescapable bondage. The delights of passionate encounter are at once beautiful and ominous; the vehemence of Bhartrihari's denunciation of woman is only a measure of the terrible fascination she holds for him. The seductress who causes Bhartrihari's unrest is neither his wife nor a particular mistress, nor is she some idealized Beatrice; she is every woman who is young, affectionate, artful, charming, and voluptuous. His adoration of her is neither a worshipful nor a ritual love; it is concrete passion which delights in the physical subtleties of amorous play and in the seasons which set love's moods. (Miller 15-16)

It is the indefinite but powerfully alluring nature of this feminine figure for the poet as well as the emotional intensity she inspires in him which indicate the presence of the anima archetype.

Jungians might explain the "terrible fascination" which mesmerizes the poet with the notion of an archetypal field: "Just as a magnet sits unnoticed and uninfluential until something comes into its surrounding field, so too does the archetype. As material gets drawn into the archetypal field, a complex is formed..." (Stamper 4). Bhartrihari adds to his anima complex by obsessively compounding erotic images and pulling in images from nature, religion, and even astronomy whenever he can to describe her allure: "she glowed with the magic of gems" (#131, 77), "she glowed with the planets' magic" in (#132). In some poems, like # 78, he offers long lists of concrete, sensual details as evidence of the seduction and deception of the female form. Yet the brief, two line closing epigrams cursing women as obstacles to enlightenment are somehow anticlimactic and ineffectual coming as they do after seven or so lines of exotic sidelong glances and graceful hips. In poems 77 to 79, for example, he acknowledges that with her "exotic flashing eyes," "voluptuous breasts," "smiles, affection, modesty, and art...woman enchains us," yet he is clearly fascinated with his captor (59).

So what is the anima for Bhartrihari? Is she a help or a hindrance in the quest for enlightenment? It would seem that the poet, struggling to understand her, sees her as both. At times, he praises her as a possible goal *in place* of enlightenment: "Deluded men who forsake her/ are fools pursuing illusory fruits..." (# 113, 71). In his obsession with the anima, he has reversed the traditional Buddhist view of women as one of the "illusory fruits" of phenomenal existence and liberation or nirvana as reality. He even suggests she is more powerful than the patriarchal gods of the traditional Hindu trinity or *trimurti*: "We bow to the god whose sign is

a sea serpent,/ to Love, who makes the gods Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu/ slaves in dark chambers of doe-eyed women;/ to Kama, whose marvelous artifice eludes all words" (# 112, 71). Here, Bhartrihari draws on the long-standing paradoxical Indian tradition of sexual love as a gateway to enlightenment as seen in Tantric practices and the Kama Sutra. Similarly, in the Individuation theory, the anima in her positive aspect acts as a kind of spiritual guide, bridging the gap between physical desire and spiritual desire: Dante's Beatrice or the Virgin Mary or the female serpent guide in Indian Kundalini yoga. Even so, it is difficult consistently to view Bhartrihari's anima as a spiritual guide since he also depicts her in her negative aspect, as an enchantress. He often identifies her with phenomenal nature (poems 89-91) which lures man and ignites passions and desires, thereby keeping him chained to samsara: "By [nature's] magic woman is transformed from a creature of flesh and bones into a siren who destroys man's reason" (Miller 16). Jungians also recognize this connection in a man's psyche between the anima and nature, noting that in the siren, the nymph, the mermaid, etc., the anima emerges from the wilderness of the unconscious to lure him, to trick him, to enslave him on her island and keep him from continuing on his journey.

At best, Bhartrihari seems ambiguous in his view of the anima. In some poems she is a positive force worthy of a man's utmost concentration and attention. In others, she is the siren drawing him off his spiritual course and into shipwreck on the rocks of samsara. Here, another Jungian concept, the theory of *compensation* might be of help in explaining the poet's dual perspective of the anima:

It is the mythmaking artist, says Jung, who discovers the compensatory archetypal image that the age and the culture require for greater balance: "the artist seizes on this image, and in raising it from deepest unconsciousness he brings it into relation with conscious values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted by the minds of his contemporaries according to their powers." (Walker, Jung 20)

Hence, in both praising and cursing the collective female image, Bhartrihari may be depicting the society's predominant view of woman and, perhaps, presenting an alternative view. His portrayal of her as a possible alternative to nirvanic release may serve as a compensatory image for a society which traditionally views woman as the seductress or enchantress who keeps the aspiring yogi enchained to the world of the senses and of desire.<sup>4</sup> In all likelihood, however, Bhartrihari was unaware of this, continually vacillating

on his view of the anima and struggling to understand her. Perhaps the time was right for the anima to begin insisting on being portrayed in her positive aspect and chose Bhartrihari as her vehicle.

Indeed, he seems utterly possessed by her right up through the end of *Passionate Encounters* and into his third book, *Refuge in the Forest*. From depression to frustration and anger, he exhibits the full range of *anima moods* (von Franz 186), at one moment giving up all hope of breaking from her orbit and achieving enlightenment: “Who can really forsake the hips/ of beautiful women bound/ with girdles of ruby jewels?” (#147, 82). At another moment, enraged at her power over him, he reduces her to images of the scatological: “...her face, a vile receptacle of phlegm...her thighs, dank with urine...Mark how this despicable form/ is flourished by the poets” (#159, 87). Even well into book three, he can “choose no single course” (#172, 91), vacillating between courting beautiful women and pursuing the life of the religious ascetic. While we would certainly misread Bhartrihari to suggest that he ever fully integrates the anima, we can argue that he seems to make his peace with her, for she relinquishes her position at center stage in his consciousness and is replaced by another archetypal image by the end of book three, that of the divine couple and the ascetic’s quiet and peaceful forest—the archetypal Self.

According to the theory of Individuation, once one has more or less made one’s peace with the shadow and anima, the Self—the harmonizing archetypal force—begins to emerge in various dream symbols including the divine child, the savior figure, the cosmic man, or a circular symbol called a *mandala* or magic circle. Jung borrowed this term from the Sanskrit, evidence that he drew upon Indian religion and philosophy to confirm what he was observing in some of his patients’ dreams: “The Self operates as the unconscious inner core of an individual’s being, as the ultimate principle of harmony and unity. Perhaps inspired by the Hindu term ‘Atman’ (literally ‘Self’ in Sanskrit), which designates the transpersonal oneness of identity for all beings...Jung calls this new center the Self...” (Walker, *Jung* 84). As the “superordinate factor in a system in which the ego is subordinate” (Singer 210), the Self is the center of consciousness itself as well as all the other archetypes.

Significantly, in book three of Bhartrihari’s work, we hear the voices of books one and two—of the shadow-projecting cynic and the anima-

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<sup>4</sup> Jung and his followers have applied and developed the theory of Archetypal compensation in far greater detail than I have done here. Hence, Jungian Literary Criticism does not avoid history; nor does it merely deal with history “within narrow bounds” or as a “static structure” as historicists have charged (Davis and Schleifer 374). Jung himself claimed that there are an infinite number of archetypes manifesting themselves in an infinite variety of historical circumstances and interacting with and compensating for a society’s predominant (and sometimes oppressive) modes of thought.

possessed lover—intermixed throughout. In # 166 he chides the king for being proud and arrogant while extolling his own selflessness, yet two poems later he reports that he has been “boasting about [his] own virtues” (90) to impress the aristocracy. This time, however, Bhartrihari is more aware of the shadow and of his own tendencies toward pride, for in this same poem he is ashamed of his boasting and chastises himself for his failing: a Buddhist monk bragging about his selflessness to the selfish and powerful is, in fact, seeking power himself. That Bhartrihari recognizes this speaks well for him. Indeed, in the first half of the poem, he clearly indicates his understanding of the shadow tendency toward pride and arrogance that is part of human nature: “To cultivate lives as ephemeral/ as droplets on a lotus leaf,/ what do we not stoop to do/ when discrimination fails us?” Discrimination, incidentally, is the ability to distinguish the illusory world of the senses and the ego from the eternal world of the Self. We hear in book three, then, a somewhat less cynical voice or a voice whose cynicism derives from the perspective of one who is transcending the phenomenal world not trying to change it.

And though the mysterious female form is also still present in book three, it seems to give way to a stronger obsession with time and the transience of existence in the last poems. We might explain this as Bhartrihari simply growing older, wiser, more philosophical, or we might attribute the poems in book three to his meditations on the nature of the anima’s appeal throughout books one and two. In commenting on archetypal fields (which would include anima possession), Jungian analyst Mary Stamper notes that “if one does get in it, this sensitivity could allow one to leave the field [or grow out of it] before getting in so far that its power is overwhelming...We might say that reflection decreases one’s susceptibility to the field” (Stamper 6). By book three, he has shifted emphasis away from the anima and toward the Self. We hear a less obsessed, more philosophically detached voice. In # 171, for example, the feminine appears not as seductress, as we might expect, but as Kali, the goddess of both fertility and death: “Time plays a frenzied game with Kali,/ his partner in destruction” (91). Time in this poem would be the god of time, Kala, Kali’s consort; hence, Bhartrihari now perceives the feminine from a much wider perspective as a part of the cosmic game of birth and death: “Kali is one of the many names of Sakti: the names descriptive of the creative power are the feminine forms of the words pertaining to the many aspects and functions of the unitive godhead:...Kali...derived from Kala...define[s] the creative aspect of the One. In iconography this concept is imaged as Ardhanarisvara—the Lord whose one half is woman. Siva and Sakti [Kala and Kali] are therefore one indivisible whole” (Rajan 23). Bhartrihari’s vision of the divine play of the

creative reality of the goddess which manifests the eternal, changeless reality represented in the god suggests he is no longer held captive by the anima but has envisioned the Self: “Because this symbol represents that which is whole and complete, it is often conceived of as a bisexual being. In this form the symbol reconciles one of the most important pairs of psychological opposites—male and female. This union also appears in dreams as a divine, royal, or otherwise distinguished couple” (von Franz 216).

In the last poems, Bhartrihari shifts even further away from political concerns and desire for the collective feminine form, focusing more and more on Siva and Brahman, the eternal aspect of existence: “If you men perceive your deeper selves,/ then reach toward Brahman boundless,/ enduring, remote, and pervading;/ and it shall follow that/ power and pleasure in the world/ will seem the obsessions of wretched fools” (# 188, 98). The “deeper self” which the poet refers to here is Brahman—the primordial energy source from which forms come into being and back into which they must return. Like other classical Sanskrit poets, Bhartrihari enacts a “transference of authority to a voice beyond Time, to ‘the voice of Silence’ that shaped the universe...” (Rajan 24). For Bhartrihari, this silence is imagined as “a sylvan silence...a forest where no echoes sound” (# 181, 95). In her new book *Sounding the Soul: The Art of Listening*, Jungian analyst and author Mary Lynn Kittelson links the auditory experience of the archetypal Self to the three thousand year old claim in the Hindu Vedas that the phenomenal world emanated (and emanates from) the primordial sound, a sound which the Buddhists interpreted as OM, the source of all sounds which is in and of itself absent of distinct sound (qtd. in McFadden 15). This is the primordial silence which Bhartrihari imagines as the perfectly still and quiet forest—“where no echoes sound.” In these last poems, we hear the poet’s final voice—that of a teacher giving counsel to “you men” (#188, 98) or students to meditate on this forest silence, on Brahman, as a way of transcending not only worldly politics but one’s own fears and desires as well. Hence, it would appear he has completed his quest for release from the compulsions of the archetypes.

Nevertheless, our comparison of Bhartrihari’s spiritual progression throughout Satakatraya to Jung’s process of individuation presents certain difficulties which should be noted, for individuation differs significantly from the Buddhist quest for nirvana in several ways. First, the goals in each quest appear to be quite different. Through individuation one is to recognize and understand “one’s unique psychological reality, including strengths and limitations...It leads to the experience of the Self as the regulating center of the psyche” (Sugg 422). In other words, it is the process of breaking free of the archetypes’ influence and projections and

achieving a psychological balance so as to re-enter society and function in a healthy and productive manner. The Buddhist, on the other hand, seeks liberation from society, politics, desires, and fears; to him these all contribute to attachment to the grand illusion of samsara, the wheel of suffering in which humans are perpetually reborn. Reality rests in the mystical state of nirvana whereas the goal of individuation lies in self understanding and acceptance. Consequently, we may question the comparison of the archetypal Self to the Indian notion of Atman. While the Self represents the totality of an individual psyche, Atman represents both the individual soul and the mystical, divine, universal self and the paradox that the two are indeed one. Finally, we should note that Bhartrihari's progression, whether psychological or spiritual, is far from perfect or complete. He frequently complains about social and political injustice as well as his bewitchment by the female form throughout his third and final book.

Jungian theory, however, is flexible enough to allow us to more or less address each of these criticisms. Frequently, Jungians point out that individuation is not a simple linear progression toward self understanding. It is difficult and often frightening to attempt to reclaim all those split off aspects of the psyche, and "it is rare for anyone to realize it [individuation] completely" (Walker, *Jung* 33). Sometimes, however, in the midst of reflecting on one's own compulsions and projections, one may catch a glimpse of the archetypal Self as in a dream a divine child or savior figure might appear in the midst of a battlefield or dungeon. The Self, furthermore, is not simply representative of one's unique psychic reality as Jungians frequently claim; it is an archetype and by definition part of the collective unconscious. Hence, much like the Atman, it represents the harmonizing factor in one's individual psyche as well as within the collective psyche of the society or even the human race. Savior images such as Christ, Buddha, Krishna, etc. appear in dream as do images of Abe Lincoln, Martin Luther King, or even one's nephew or wise old grandfather: all serve the same function—to harmonize and unify split off parts of the psyche (individual or collective). Finally, who is to say that, like the nirvanic experience, the experience, of the Self in dream is not mystical in nature, at least within the dream's reality? And in that experience, is not one liberated at least for a moment from worldly concerns and desires? While it is true that important differences still exist between individuation and Indian yoga, the similarities are compelling enough to argue for Jungian criticism as the most productive approach to studying classical Eastern literature.



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**THE NEW LIFE ANEW: A REVIEW OF EMANUEL DI PASQUALE'S TRANSLATION OF DANTE'S LA VITE NUOVA**

Rousseau said he didn't remember when he learned to read, but that he dated the unbroken consciousness of his own existence from his first books. Whether the stars had anything to do with it, he didn't say. For Dante, it took a shift in the precession of the equinoxes to coordinate the permanence inaugurating his New Life at the age of nine: the glimpse of Beatrice Portinari that eclipsed his infancy with song. No tissue covered engraving in a book, the living sight of her had cosmic implications, woven inextricably into the cosmetics of his poetry. In *La Vita Nuova*, the account of his secret, anarchic devotion to Beatrice, he offers both a confession of that unbroken consciousness of love and a poetics of the orderly expression appropriate to its nobility. In the Courtly Love tradition as codified (perhaps satirically) by Andreas Capellanus, public revelation of such love would usually prove deadly; Dante's confession, coming after Beatrice's untimely demise, both respects that tradition and eludes its prediction—"so long," as Shakespeare says, "as men can breathe, or eyes can see."

Strange, then, given her ethereal nature, that after she greeted him nine years later, at three in the afternoon, he returned to his room and had a dream vision in which a terrifying figure of love offered her his heart, of which (like John of Patmos, given a book to eat) she ate. "Hope & Fear," said Blake, "are Vision," and Dante's onieromancy takes the form of a sonnet and, somewhat surprisingly, its explication. He wants his reader to understand both the nature of his vision (as blessing, no nightmare) and his Jacobean wrestling with its materials to produce clarity. The angel of love with whom he contends and whom he obeys prefigures his guides in the *Commedia*, though Dante asks in his poem for help in clarifying his vision, and indeed received responses from his contemporaries, among them Cino da Pistola and Guido Cavalcanti. That they took his vision seriously reflects the readiness of that age to discover the marvelous in the quotidian.

In his new translation of *La Vita*, Emanuel di Pasquale has captured the commonplace, matter-of-fact spirit with which Dante engages the materials that love and language provide him. For example, after a digression on the ecstatic effect his lady's greeting had upon him, he says "Now let's get back to when my bliss was denied." Just like that: he offers himself as a case

study. My experience, he seems to say, has meaning, even if I need help in understanding it, so I will balance the necessarily screened obscurity of my words and deeds concerning my lady with direct, plain speech concerning their implications for understanding myself and my poetry—a version of the “sleek” and “shaggy” Italian he would alternate so skillfully in his verse. The immediacy and fidelity of di Pasquale’s translation manages to preserve the character of Dante’s respect for his materials as if a carpenter, rather than a curator, handed one a piece of the True Cross for close inspection.

Di Pasquale’s choice of a “shaggy,” direct rendition of both the poetry and the prose of *La Vita Nuova* parallels Dante’s decision to compose in Italian rather than the “sleek,” more conventional Latin favored by his predecessors. He has given us a Dante as fresh to us as Dante to his contemporaries.

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## A REVIEW OF EMANUEL DI PASQUALE'S TRANSLATION OF PAOLO RUFFILLI'S DARK ROOM

In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard writes that “a metaphor gives concrete substance to an impression that is difficult to express. ...An image, on the contrary, product of absolute imagination, owes its entire being to the imagination” (74).

In the red light of the darkroom, a photographer passes light through a negative onto blank paper, then lets the image develop to the desired ripeness, revealing each detail as clearly as possible, and sometimes discovering elements not fully appreciated when the shutter clicked. Those emerging elements, rather than the major focus of the picture alone, may determine when to stop the development process. Bachelard might see the film as difficultly metaphorical, the photograph as a “product of absolute imagination.” The photographer takes the picture; the developer makes the picture.

In Paolo Ruffilli's *Dark Room*, the poet has not *taken* the pictures in the old album he seems to explore but, attentive to details likely peripheral to the photographer's intentions, he has selected, from each picture's thousand words of worth, the worthiest to tell its haunting tale, reanimate its force, and *make* it fit into the verbal album he offers us.

His technique—a species of *ekphrasis*, “writing about pictures”—resembles a major form in Hebrew poetry: presentation of an image, followed by its explication, as in “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Ruffilli's approach differs from that model by the greater complexity of the photographic images he contemplates; rather than work with a single image, he must select, from the multitude of details in each photograph, the richest and most integral to reveal its wider—or narrower—context.

A translator confronts a similar challenge: how to take an author's imagery and develop its context in the darkroom of another tongue. Emanuel di Pasquale has met that challenge with power, sensitivity, and fidelity in his rendition of the “wound”—“the ancient or future era of pain” which the late Giovanni Raboni, in his Afterword, “Evidence of Pain,” sees as Ruffilli's response to the quote from Roland Barthes' *The Bright Room* that serves as an epigraph to *Dark Room*:

For you, it's nothing but an / unimportant photo, one of /  
thousands of manifestations of / something ordinary; it  
cannot in fact / be the visible object / of a science; it cannot  
establish / an objectivity, in the positive sense / of the term; on  
the contrary, it / could interest your / studium: epoch, clothes  
/ photo-geniality, but for you, / in itself, there would not / be  
any wound.

Raboni speaks of “the choice of neutrality, of objectivity, of a dryness that appears, at first glance, as the dominant tonality of Ruffilli’s text.” But only at first glance: he sees that dryness as a scar that leads back to the wound we would not see but for Ruffilli’s relentless attention to revelatory detail. In his translation, di Pasquale preserves that attention and that tone by rendering the sparseness of the original in English words as close as possible to their Italian originals—an approach that makes Ruffilli’s facing text especially intelligible. He has turned the red light of the darkroom green, and given us a fresh way into a complex and moving tour of photographs no longer—as the cover image of a motion picture camera suggests—still.

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