

LEN161M1

—

Oral Littérature

Explication de textes

2024-2025

INTRODUCTION

La présente anthologie a été élaborée par l'ensemble des professeurs de littérature du département. Un seul exemplaire vous en sera remis. Il appartient à chaque étudiant d'en prendre soin et d'en connaître tous les textes. L'examen oral de littérature en janvier portera sur l'un des extraits proposés ici. Certains de ces extraits seront étudiés en cours, et ne pourront alors faire l'objet d'une interrogation orale lors de l'examen, afin que vous vous retrouviez tous dans les mêmes conditions de préparation. Au moment des interrogations, il sera considéré que tous les textes de l'anthologie ont été lus et préparés : connaissance du lexique, de l'auteur, du type d'œuvre et de son genre littéraire, voire de certains éléments de contexte. Une bonne préparation de l'épreuve suppose donc un entraînement régulier en cours, une maîtrise de la technique du commentaire de texte, et la lecture éclairée des extraits de l'anthologie. Il est ainsi conseillé de lire les textes avec un dictionnaire, et de prendre des notes (mise en fiches) à partir d'anthologies, de manuels, et des cours de littérature que vous avez suivis jusqu'à présent (CM et TD). Les titres suivants sont des exemples d'ouvrages qui peuvent vous être utiles :

- **Histoire littéraire**

The Norton Anthology of British Literature (vols. 1 and 2).

The Norton Anthology of American Literature.

Françoise Grellet, *Literature in English*, Hachette, 2015.

Marion Wyne-Davies, ed., *The Bloomsbury Guide to English Literature*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1989.

- **Terminologie de l'analyse littéraire**

Françoise Grellet, *A Handbook of Literary Terms. Introduction au vocabulaire littéraire anglais*. Hachette Supérieur, 1996, 2009.

Mireille Quivy, *Glossaire bilingue des termes littéraires, français-anglais*, Ellipses.

J. A. **Cuddon**, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd edition, 1992

- **Méthodologie de l'analyse littéraire**

Claudine Verley, *Lectures critiques en anglais. A Guide to the Critical Reading of Fiction in English*. Ophrys, 1998.

Hélène, Auffret-Boucé, et al. *Figures libres, figures imposées : l'explication de texte en anglais (fiction)*, Hachette Supérieur, 1993.

Martin Stephen, *English Literature, A student Guide*, London: Longman, 1986.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
King James Bible, “Genesis”, Book 1, The Creation	7
King James Bible, “Genesis”, Books 6-9, Noah and the Flood	8
BRITISH LITERATURE	13
Thomas More, Utopia (1516)	13
Shakespeare, Richard III, 1591-92, Act I, scene 1	14
Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II, scene 2	17
A Midsummer Night’s Dream, III, 1, 84-147 (The New Kittredge Shakespeare)	18
Shakespeare, Sonnet 5, 1609	20
Shakespeare, Sonnet 18, 1609	21
Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus, Act I, Scene III (c. 1592.)	21
John Donne, “The Flea” (1633)	24
John Milton, Comus: A Mask (1634)	24
John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 9 (1667)	26
John Bunyan, The Pilgrim’s Progress (1678)	28
George Etherege, The Man of Mode (1676)	30
Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (1681)	32
William Congreve, The Way of the World (1699)	33
Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (1719)	35
Daniel Defoe, The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders (1722)	36
Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal (1729)	37
Samuel Richardson, Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded (1740)	38
Henry Fielding, The Adventures of Joseph Andrew (1742)	39
Thomas Gray, “Elegy in a Country Churchyard” (1751)	40
Laurence Sterne, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1759)	40
Tobias Smollet, The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771)	41
R.B. Sheridan, The School for Scandal (1777)	42
William Blake, The Book Of Urizen, Chapter I, 1794	43
William Blake, “Earth’s Answer”, Songs of Innocence and of Experience, 1794	44
MG. Lewis, The Monk (1796)	45
William Wordsworth, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802”	46
S.T. Coleridge, “Kubla Khan: Or a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment”, 1816	47
William Blake, “Jerusalem” in Milton. A Poem (1808)	48
Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice, 1813	48
John Keats, “O Solitude! If I must with thee dwell’ (1817)	50
John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1820)	50
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus (1818), Chapter V	52
Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (1847), chapter 26	53
Charles Dickens, Hard Times (1854), chapitre 5	54
Thackeray, Vanity Fair (1848)	55
Christina Rossetti, “In an Artist’s Studio” (1856)	56
Christina Rossetti, “Remember” (1862)	56
Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1828-1882], “Body’s Beauty” (1868), Alternately titled: Lady Lilith	56

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), <i>The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> , 1886, Chapter 9. "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative"	57
Thomas Hardy, <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i> (1891)	58
Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest, A Trivial Comedy for Serious People</i> , (1895)	60
Bram Stoker (1847-1912), <i>Dracula</i> , Chapter III, "Jonathan's diary" (1897)	62
Joseph Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (1902)	63
George Bernard Shaw, <i>Pygmalion</i> . (1913)	64
James Joyce, "The Dead" (1914)	66
Virginia Woolf, <i>Flush: A Biography</i> (1933)	68
J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>The Hobbit</i> (1937), chapitre 1	69
Neil M. Gunn, <i>Second Sight</i> (1940)	70
Roald Dahl, "Galloping Foxley", <i>Someone Like You</i> (1953)	71
Samuel Becket, <i>Waiting for Godot</i> (1953)	73
William Golding, <i>Lord of the Flies</i> (1954), chapitre 7	74
Harold Pinter, <i>The Room</i> , 1957	75
Tom Stoppard, <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i> , 1966	78
Angela Carter, "The Fall River Axe Murders" (1987)	80
Philip Larkin, <i>Collected Poems</i> (1988), "To My Wife" (1988)	81
Philip Larkin, "Toads", <i>The Less Deceived</i> , 1955	81
Philip Larkin, "Talking in Bed" (1960), <i>The Whitsun Weddings</i> (1964)	82
Philip Larkin, "Days", <i>The Whitsun Weddings</i> , 1964	82
Philip Larkin, "High Windows", <i>High Windows</i> , 1974	83
Ian McEwan, <i>The Daydreamer</i> (1994)	83
Michèle Roberts, "Mud", <i>Mud: Stories of Sex and Love</i> (2010)	85

AMERICAN LITERATURE

87

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), "The Tell-Tale Heart", short story published in a periodical, <i>The Pioneer</i> , in 1843	87
Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (1850)	88
Walt Whitman, "I hear America Singing," (1860)	90
Henry James, <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> (1881), chapitre 6	90
Emily Dickinson, "My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun -" (c. 1863)	91
Emily Dickinson, "Hope" (1891)	92
Emily Dickinson, "Wild Nights! Wild Nights!" (1891)	92
Stephen Crane, <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> (1895)	92
Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i> (1899)	94
William Faulkner, <i>Sanctuary</i> , incipit (1931)	94
Eugene O'Neill, <i>Mourning Becomes Electra</i> (1931)	95
Tennessee Williams, <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (1947)	97
Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> (1951), chapitre 4	99
Ralph Ellison: <i>Invisible Man</i> (1952)	101
Flannery O'Connor, "The Displaced Person", <i>A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories</i> (1955)	102
Allan Ginsberg [1926-1997], "A Supermarket in California", <i>Howl and Other Poems</i> , 1955	103
Jack Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i> (1957)	103
Raymond Chandler, <i>Playback</i> (1958)	105
Thomas Pynchon, <i>V.</i> , (1963)	106
Sylvia Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i> , (1963)	107
Bob Dylan, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1963-64)	108
Robert Hayden [1913-1980], "Frederick Douglass" (1966)	109

Thom Gunn, “No Speech from the Scaffold” (1975)	109
Raymond Carver, “Popular Mechanics” (1978), What we Talk About When We talk About Love	110
Toni Morrison, Sula, 1980	111
Don DeLillo, Underworld Picador, 1998 (1st published by Scribner in 1997)	111
COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE	113
Henry Lawson, “The Drover’s Wife” (1892)	113
Katherine Mansfield, “Marriage à la Mode”, The Garden Party and Other Stories, 1922.	114
Alice Munro, “Boys and Girls” (1964), Dance of the Happy Shades (1968)	115
Athol Fugard, John Kani, Winston Ntshona, Sizwe Bansi Is Dead (1972)	116
Roger Nash, [1942-], Canada, “Several Excuses for Having Stayed”, 1983	118
Margaret Atwood, “Siren Song”, Poetry, 1974	118
Ben Okri, The Famished Road (1991)	119
Nadine Gordimer, "Loot" in Loot and Other Stories (2003)	120

King James Bible, “Genesis”, Book 1, The Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

King James Bible, “Genesis”, Books 6-9, Noah and the Flood

6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

6:10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

6:14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

6:15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

6:16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

6:17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

6:18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

6:19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

6:20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

6:21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

6:22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

7:1 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

7:2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.

7:3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

7:4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

7:5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

7:6 And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

7:7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

7:8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, 7:9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

7:10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

7:12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

7:13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; 7:14 They, and every beast after

his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

7:15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.

7:16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

7:17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

7:18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

7:19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.

7:20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

7:21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: 7:22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

7:23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.

7:24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

8:1 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; 8:2 The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; 8:3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

8:4 And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

8:5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

8:6 And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 8:7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8:8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 8:9 But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

8:10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 8:11 And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

8:12 And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

8:13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

8:14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

8:15 And God spake unto Noah, saying, 8:16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

8:17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

8:18 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: 8:19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

8:20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

8:22 While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

9:4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

9:5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

9:7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

9:8 And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 9:9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; 9:10 And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

9:11 And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

9:12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 9:13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

9:14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: 9:15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

9:16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

9:17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

9:18 And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan.

BRITISH LITERATURE

Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516)

"Though, to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own that as long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily: not justly, because the best things will fall to the share of the worst men; nor happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even these are not in all respects happy), the rest being left to be absolutely miserable. Therefore, when I reflect on the wise and good constitution of the Utopians, among whom all things are so well governed and with so few laws, where virtue hath its due reward, and yet there is such an equality that every man lives in plenty—when I compare with them so many other nations that are still making new laws, and yet can never bring their constitution to a right regulation; where, notwithstanding every one has his property, yet all the laws that they can invent have not the power either to obtain or preserve it, or even to enable men certainly to distinguish what is their own from what is another's, of which the many lawsuits that every day break out, and are eternally depending, give too plain a demonstration—when, I say, I balance all these things in my thoughts, I grow more favourable to Plato, and do not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things; for so wise a man could not but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation happy; which cannot be obtained so long as there is property, for when every man draws to himself all that he can compass, by one title or another, it must needs follow that, how plentiful soever a nation may be, yet a few dividing the wealth of it among themselves, the rest must fall into indigence. So that there will be two sorts of people among them, who deserve that their fortunes should be interchanged—the former useless, but wicked and ravenous; and the latter, who by their constant industry serve the public more than themselves, sincere and modest men—from whence I am persuaded that till property is taken away, there can be no equitable or just distribution of things, nor can the world be happily governed; for as long as that is maintained, the greatest and the far best part of mankind, will be still oppressed with a load of cares and anxieties. I confess, without taking it quite away, those pressures that lie on a great part of mankind may be made lighter, but they can never be quite removed; for if laws were made to determine at how great an extent in soil, and at how much money, every man must stop—to limit the prince, that he might not grow too great; and to restrain the people, that they might not become too insolent—and that none might factiously aspire to public employments, which ought neither to be sold nor made burdensome by a great expense, since otherwise those that serve in them would be tempted to reimburse themselves by cheats and violence, and it would become necessary to find out rich men for undergoing those employments, which ought rather to be trusted to the wise. These laws, I say, might have such effect as good diet and care might have on a sick man whose recovery is desperate; they might allay and mitigate the disease, but it could never be quite healed, nor the body politic be brought again to a good habit as long as property remains; and it will fall out, as in a complication of diseases, that by applying a remedy to one sore you will provoke another, and that which removes the one ill symptom produces others, while the strengthening one part of the body weakens the rest." "On the contrary," answered I, "it seems to me that men cannot live conveniently where all things are common. How can there be any plenty where every man will excuse himself from labour? for as the hope of gain doth not excite him, so the confidence that he has in other men's industry may make him slothful. If people come to be pinched with want, and yet cannot dispose of anything as their own, what can follow upon this but perpetual sedition and bloodshed, especially when the reverence and authority due to magistrates falls to the ground? for I cannot imagine how that can be kept up among those that are in all things equal to one another." "I do not wonder," said he, "that it appears so to you,

since you have no notion, or at least no right one, of such a constitution; but if you had been in Utopia with me, and had seen their laws and rules, as I did, for the space of five years, in which I lived among them, and during which time I was so delighted with them that indeed I should never have left them if it had not been to make the discovery of that new world to the Europeans, you would then confess that you had never seen a people so well constituted as they." "You will not easily persuade me," said Peter, "that any nation in that new world is better governed than those among us; for as our understandings are not worse than theirs, so our government (if I mistake not) being more ancient, a long practice has helped us to find out many conveniences of life, and some happy chances have discovered other things to us which no man's understanding could ever have invented." "As for the antiquity either of their government or of ours," said he, "you cannot pass a true judgment of it unless you had read their histories; for, if they are to be believed, they had towns among them before these parts were so much as inhabited; and as for those discoveries that have been either hit on by chance or made by ingenious men, these might have happened there as well as here. I do not deny but we are more ingenious than they are, but they exceed us much in industry and application. They knew little concerning us before our arrival among them. They call us all by a general name of 'The nations that lie beyond the equinoctial line;' for their chronicle mentions a shipwreck that was made on their coast twelve hundred years ago, and that some Romans and Egyptians that were in the ship, getting safe ashore, spent the rest of their days amongst them; and such was their ingenuity that from this single opportunity they drew the advantage of learning from those unlooked-for guests, and acquired all the useful arts that were then among the Romans, and which were known to these shipwrecked men; and by the hints that they gave them they themselves found out even some of those arts which they could not fully explain, so happily did they improve that accident of having some of our people cast upon their shore. But if such an accident has at any time brought any from thence into Europe, we have been so far from improving it that we do not so much as remember it, as, in aftertimes perhaps, it will be forgot by our people that I was ever there; for though they, from one such accident, made themselves masters of all the good inventions that were among us, yet I believe it would be long before we should learn or put in practice any of the good institutions that are among them. And this is the true cause of their being better governed and living happier than we, though we come not short of them in point of understanding or outward advantages." Upon this I said to him, "I earnestly beg you would describe that island very particularly to us; be not too short, but set out in order all things relating to their soil, their rivers, their towns, their people, their manners, constitution, laws, and, in a word, all that you imagine we desire to know; and you may well imagine that we desire to know everything concerning them of which we are hitherto ignorant." "I will do it very willingly," said he, "for I have digested the whole matter carefully, but it will take up some time." "Let us go, then," said I, "first and dine, and then we shall have leisure enough." He consented; we went in and dined, and after dinner came back and sat down in the same place. I ordered my servants to take care that none might come and interrupt us, and both Peter and I desired Raphael to be as good as his word. When he saw that we were very intent upon it he paused a little to recollect himself, and began in this manner:—

"The island of Utopia is in the middle two hundred miles broad...

Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1591-92, Act I, scene 1

London. A street.

Enter GLOUCESTER, solus

GLOUCESTER. Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York¹;

¹ **Sun of York:** A blazing sun, adopted by Edward IV in memory of the three suns which appeared the day before the battle of Mortimer's Cross, fought in 1461.

And all the clouds that lour'd² upon our house
 In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
 Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
 Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
 Our stern alarums³ changed to merry meetings,
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
 Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
 And now, instead of mounting barded⁴ steeds⁵
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
 He capers⁶ nimbly in a lady's chamber
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
 But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
 Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
 I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
 To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
 I, that am curtail'd⁷ of this fair proportion,
 Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
 Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
 And that so lamely and unfashionable
 That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
 Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace⁸,
 Have no delight to pass away the time,
 Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
 And descant⁹ on mine own deformity:
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
 I am determined to prove a villain
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
 Plots have I laid, inductions¹⁰ dangerous,
 By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,
 To set my brother Clarence and the king
 In deadly hate the one against the other:
 And if King Edward be as true and just
 As I am subtle, false and treacherous,

² **Lour'd:** Threatened.

³ **Alarums:** calls to arms, as by beat of drum, or trumpet call. Italian *all'arme*, to arms! from Lat. *ad ilia arma*, to those arms! to your arms!

⁴ **Barbed:** armed and harnessed.

⁵ **Steeds:** horses.

⁶ **He,** war, personified as a soldier. **Capers,** dances or leaps like a goat. Lat. *capra*, a she-goat.

⁷ **Curtail'd:** deprived of.

⁸ **Piping time:** The tabor and the pipe were emblems of peace, as opposed to the drum and the fife, emblems of war.

⁹ **Descant:** to comment.

¹⁰ **Inductions:** beginnings

This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up¹¹,
About a prophecy, which says that 'G'
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here
Clarence comes.

¹¹ **Mew'd up**: shut up, imprisoned.

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, scene 2

Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

HAMLET Ay so, God bye to you. Now I am alone.

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit*

*imagination

That from her working all his visage wanned*,

*face paled

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect*,

*in his look

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing?

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? What would he do,

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,

And cleave* the general ear with horrid speech, *split

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound* the ignorant, and amaze indeed

*confuse

The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled* rascal, peak*

*cowardly and sluggish *mope

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

And can say nothing – no, not for a king,

Upon whose property and most dear life

A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain, breaks my pate* across,

*skull

Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,

Tweaks me by th'nose, gives me the lie i' th' throat*

*deep down

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?

Ha, 'swounds*, I should take it, for it cannot be *God's wounds (an oath)

But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall*

*courage

To make oppression bitter, or ere this

I should ha' fatt'd all the region kites*

* scavenging birds

With this slave's offal*. Bloody, bawdy villain! *entrails

Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!

Oh, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,

That I, the son of a dear murderèd*,

*a murdered father

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,

Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,

And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,

A scullion*!

*drab/scullion= low-ranking servants (or prostitutes)

Fie upon't, foh! About, my brains. Hum, I have heard

That guilty creatures sitting at a play

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul, that presently*

*immediately

They have proclaimed their malefactions*;

*evil deeds

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ*. I'll have these players

*voice

Play something like the murder of my father

Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,

I'll tent* him to the quick. If a do blench*,
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
 May be the devil – and the devil hath power
 T'assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and perhaps,
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
 As he is very potent with such spirits,
 Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
 More relative* than this. The play's the thing
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.
Exit

*probe *if he flinches

*relevant, conclusive

A Midsummer Night's Dream, III, 1, 84-147 (The New Kittredge Shakespeare)

QUINCE O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted. Pray, masters! Fly, masters! Help!

1

Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.

PUCK I'll follow you; I'll lead you about a round¹²,
 Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier.
 Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
 A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;

5

And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
 Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. *Exit.*

BOTTOM Why do they run away? This is a knavery¹³ of them to make me afeard.

Enter Snout

SNOUT O Bottom, thou art chang'd! What do I see on thee?

BOTTOM What do you see? You see an ass-head of your own¹⁴, do you?

10

[Exit Snout.]

Enter Quince

QUINCE Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! Thou art translated¹⁵.
Exit.

BOTTOM I see their knavery. This is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I
 will not

stir from this place, do what they can. I will walk up and down here, and will sing,
 that¹⁶

¹² About a round: about in a circuit, as in a wild whirling dance.

¹³ Knavery: trickery

¹⁴ What Bottom means is, "What you think you see on me is merely something that you imagine in your own silly head."

¹⁵ Translated: transformed

¹⁶ That: so that

they shall hear I am not afraid.

[Sings]

The woosel¹⁷ cock so black of hue,

15

With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill¹⁸—

TITANIA [Awaking] What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed?

BOTTOM [Sings]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo¹⁹ gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay²⁰.

20

For, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird²¹? Who would give a bird the lie,
though he cry “cuckoo” never so²²?

25

TITANIA I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.
Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force²³ (perforce) doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

30

BOTTOM Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth,
reason and love keep little company together now-a-days. The more the pity that
some

honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek²⁴, upon occasion.

TITANIA Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM Not so, neither; but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to
serve 35
mine own turn.

TITANIA Out of this wood do not desire to go.
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.

¹⁷ Woosel: blackbird

¹⁸ With little quill: with slender piping note

¹⁹ The cuckoo, who sings a simple song without elaborate modulation.

²⁰ Bottom refers to the old jest which interpreted the sound *cuckoo* as “cuckold”, i.e., the husband of an unfaithful wife.

²¹ Who would apply his mental powers to answering (confuting) so foolish a bird.

²² Never so: ever so much

²³ Thy fair virtue's force: the attractive force of thy gifts of mind and body. *Virtue* does not mean “moral goodness” here, but it is a general term embracing every kind of excellence.

²⁴ Gleek: make a satirical jest

I am a spirit of no common rate,
 The summer still doth tend upon my state²⁵;
 40 And I do love thee. Therefore go with me.
 I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
 And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep²⁶,
 And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
 And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
 45 That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
 Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed.

PEASEBLOSSOM Ready.

COBWEB And I.

MOTH And I.

MUSTARDSEED And I.

ALL Where shall we go?

TITANIA Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.

Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
 Feed him with apricocks and dewberries²⁷,
 With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
 The honey-bags steal from the humblebees,
 And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs²⁸,
 And light them at the fiery glowworm's eyes,
 To have my love to bed and to arise²⁹;
 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
 To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

50

55

Shakespeare, Sonnet 5, 1609

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
 The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
 Will play the tyrants to the very same
 And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
 For never-resting time leads summer on
 To hideous winter, and confounds him there;

²⁵ Summer is always in attendance as a member of my train of followers.

²⁶ Precious stones were thought to be produced in the depths of the sea.

²⁷ Apricocks: apricots; dewberries: a kind of blackberry

²⁸ Crop their waxen thighs: trim off their thighs packed with wax

²⁹ To attend my love when he goes to bed and when he rises.

Sap checked with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness every where:
Then were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 18, 1609

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, Act I, Scene III (c. 1592.)

Mephistophilis. Now, Faustus, what would'st thou have me to do?

Faust. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

Meph. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave
No more than he commands must we perform.

35

Faust. Did not he charge thee to appear to me? 40

Meph. No, I came hither of mine own accord.

Faust. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak.

Meph. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*;

For when we hear one rack the name of God,

Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ, 45

We fly in hope to get his glorious soul;

Nor will we come, unless he use such means

Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd:

Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring

Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity, 50

And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.

Faust. So Faustus hath

Already done; and holds this principle,

There is no chief but only Belzebub,

To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself. 55

This word "damnation" terrifies not him,

For he confounds hell in Elysium;

His ghost be with the old philosophers!

But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,

Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord? 60

Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.

Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?

Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God.

Faust. How comes it then that he is Prince of devils?

Meph. O, by aspiring pride and insolence; 65

For which God threw him from the face of Heaven.

Faust. And what are you that you live with Lucifer?

Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,

Conspir'd against our God with Lucifer,
 And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer. 70
Faust. Where are you damn'd?
Meph. In hell.
Faust. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?
Meph. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.
 Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God, 75
 And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,
 Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
 In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
 O Faustus! leave these frivolous demands,
 Which strike a terror to my fainting soul. 80
Faust. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate
 For being depriv'd of the joys of Heaven?
 Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
 And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
 Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer: 85
 Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death
 By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
 Say he surrenders up to him his soul,
 So he will spare him four and twenty years,
 Letting him live in all voluptuousness; 90
 Having thee ever to attend on me;
 To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
 To tell me whatsoever I demand,
 To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
 And always be obedient to my will. 95
 Go and return to mighty Lucifer,
 And meet me in my study at midnight,

And then resolve me of thy master's mind.

Meph. I will, Faustus. *Exit.*

John Donne, "The Flea" (1633)

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, nay more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that, self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thy self, nor me the weaker now;
'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be:
Just so much honor, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

John Milton, *Comus: A Mask* (1634)

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS appears with his rabble, and the LADY set in an enchanted chair; to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,

675

Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
 And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
 Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
 Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind 680
 With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
 Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
 Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
 Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures 685
 That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
 When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
 Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
 And first behold this cordial julep here,
 That flames and dances in his crystal bounds, 690
 With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
 Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
 In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
 Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
 To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst. 695
 Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
 And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
 For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
 But you invert the covenants of her trust,
 And harshly deal, like an ill borrower, 700
 With that which you received on other terms,
 Scorning the unexempt condition
 By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
 Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
 That have been tired all day without repast, 705
 And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
 This will restore all soon.
Lady. 'T will not, false traitor!
 'T will not restore the truth and honesty
 That thou has banished from thy tongue with lies. 710
 Was this the cottage and the safe abode
 Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects' are these,
 These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
 Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
 Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence 715
 With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
 And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
 With lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
 Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None 720
 But such as are good men can give good things;
 And that which is not good is not delicious
 To a well-governed and wise appetite.
Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
 To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur, 725

And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
 Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence
 Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
 With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
 Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks, 730
 Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
 But all to please and sate the curious taste?
 And set to work millions of spinning worms,
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
 To deck her sons; and, that no corner might 735
 Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
 She hatched the all-worshiped ore and precious gems,
 To store here children with. If all the world
 Should in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
 Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze, 740
 The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised
 Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
 And we should serve him as a grudging master,
 As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
 And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons, 745
 Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
 And strangled with her waste fertility:
 The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes;
 The herds would over-multitude their lords;

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 9 (1667)

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed

 In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve 4
 95
 Addressed his way—not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
 Circular base of rising folds, that towered
 Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head

 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes; 5
 00
 With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
 Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
 Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape
 And lovely; never since the serpent kind

Lovelier—not those that in Illyria changed 5
05
 Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
 In Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline, was seen,
 He with Olympias, this with her who bore
 Scipio, the height of Rome. With tract oblique 5
10
 At first, as one who sought access but feared
 To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
 As when a ship, by skillful steersman wrought
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail, 5
15
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her eye. She, busied, heard the sound
 Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
 To such disport before her through the field 5
20
 From every beast, more duteous at her call
 Than at Circean call the herd disguised.
 He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
 But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed
 His turret crest and sleek enamelled neck, 5
25
 Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she
 trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad

Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air, 5
 30
 His fraudulent temptation thus began:—
 “Wonder not, sovereign mistress (if perhaps
 Thou canst who art sole wonder), much less arm
 Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
 Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze 5
 35
 Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore, 5
 40
 With ravishment beheld—there best beheld
 Where universally admired. But here,
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,

John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)

Then I saw in my dream, that when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair³⁰. It is kept all the year long. It beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is lighter than vanity, Psa. 62:9; and also because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is vanity; as is the saying of the wise, "All that cometh is vanity." Eccl. 11:8; see also 1:2-14; 2:11-17; Isa. 40:17.

This fair is no new-erected business but a thing of ancient standing. I will show you the original of it.

Almost five thousand years ago there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are: and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made, that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived

³⁰ *Vanity-Fair* - For this allegory of the world's pleasures Bunyan probably draws on his knowledge of the great annual fair held in Stourbridge near Cambridge ; it had its own "Court of Piepowder" (*Pieds pouldreux*, dusty feet) to try offences committed in the fair. "Here is a court of justice always open from morning till night, where the mayor of Cambridge, or his deputy, sits as judge" (Nichols, *Bibliographia Topographia Britannica*, 1790, v. 82).

here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore, at this fair are all such merchandise sold as houses, lands, trades, places, honors, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures; and delights of all sorts, as harlots, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And moreover, at this fair there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.

Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false-swearers, and that of a blood-red color.

And, as in other fairs of less moment, there are the several rows and streets³¹ under their proper names, where such and such wares are vended; so here, likewise, you have the proper places, rows, streets, (namely, countries and kingdoms,) where the wares of this fair are soonest to be found. Here is the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold. But, as in other fairs, some one commodity is as the chief of all the fair; so the ware of Rome and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this fair; only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat.

Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town, where this lusty fair is kept; and he that will go to the city, and yet not go through this town, "must needs go out of the world." 1 Cor. 4:10. The Prince of princes himself, when here, went through this town to his own country, and that upon a fair-day too; yea, and, as I think, it was Beelzebub, the chief lord of this fair, that invited him to buy of his vanities, yea, would have made him lord of the fair, would he but have done him reverence as he went through the town. Yea, because he was such a person of honor, Beelzebub had him from street to street, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time, that he might, if possible, allure that blessed One to cheapen and buy some of his vanities; but he had no mind to the merchandise, and therefore left the town, without laying out so much as one farthing upon these vanities. Matt. 4:8,9; Luke 4:5-7. This fair, therefore, is an ancient thing, of long standing, and a very great fair.

Now, these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did; but behold, even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved; and the town itself, as it were, in a hubbub about them, and that for several reasons: for,

First, The Pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair made a great gazing upon them: some said they were fools; 1 Cor. 4:9,10; some, they were bedlams³²; and some, they were outlandish men.

Secondly, And as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan³³; but they that kept the fair were the men of this world: so that from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the other. 1 Cor. 2:7,8.

Thirdly, But that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was, that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity," Psa. 119:37, and look upward, signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven. Phil. 3: 20,21.

³¹ *Several rows and streets* – Again, the naming of rows of stalls after countries might be borrowed from Stourbridge Fair, where different groups of foreign merchants were represented.

³² *Bedlams* - Lunatics : from the hospital of St Mary of Bethlehem, used as an asylum.

³³ *The language of Canaan* – The special features of Puritan speech were often ridiculed, especially by the writers of comedy (e.g. Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair*).

One chanced, mockingly, beholding the carriage of the men, to say unto them, "What will ye buy?" But they, looking gravely upon him, said, "We buy the truth." Prov. 23:23. At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last, things came to an hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded. Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take those men into examination about whom the fair was almost overturned.

George Etherege, *The Man of Mode* (1676)

Enter SIR FOPLING FLUTTER, with his PAGE after him

SIR FOPLING: Page, wait without. Madam [*to LADY TOWNLEY*], I kiss your hands. I see yesterday was nothing of chance; the *belles assemblées* form themselves here every day. Lady [*to EMILIA*], your servant. Dorimant, let me embrace thee; without lying, I have not met with any of my acquaintance who retain so much of Paris as thou dost—the very air thou hadst when the marquis mistook thee i' th' *Tuileries*, and cried, He! Chevalier! and then begged thy pardon.

DORIMANT: I would fain wear in fashion as long as I can, sir; 'tis a thing to be valued in men as well as baubles.

SIR FOPLING: Thou art a man of wit, and understandest the town; prithee let thee and I be intimate, there is no living without making some good man the confidant of our pleasures.

DORIMANT: 'Tis true! but there is no man so improper for such a business as I am.

SIR FOPLING: Prithee, why hast thou so modest an opinion of thyself?

DORIMANT: Why, first, I could never keep a secret in my life, and then there is no charm so infallibly makes me fall in love with a woman as my knowing a friend loves her. I deal honestly with you.

SIR FOPLING: Thy humour's very gallant, or let me perish; I knew a French count so like thee.

LADY TOWNLEY: Wit, I perceive, has more power over you than beauty, Sir Fopling, else you would not have let this lady stand so long neglected.

SIR FOPLING: [*to EMILIA*]. A thousand pardons, madam; some civilities due, of course, upon the meeting a long absent friend. The *éclat* of so much beauty, I confess, ought to have charmed me sooner.

EMILIA: The brilliant of so much good language, sir, has much more power than the little beauty I can boast.

SIR FOPLING: I never saw anything prettier than this high work on your *point d'Espagne*.

EMILIA: 'Tis not so rich as *point de Venise*.—

SIR FOPLING: Not altogether, but looks cooler, and is more proper for the season. Dorimant, is not that Medley?

DORIMANT: The same, sir.

SIR FOPLING: Forgive me, sir; in this *embarras* of civilities I could not come to have you in my arms sooner. You understand an equipage the best of any man in town, I hear.

MEDLEY: By my own, you would not guess it.

SIR FOPLING: There are critics who do not write, sir.

MEDLEY: Our peevish poets will scarce allow it.

SIR FOPLING: Damn 'em, they'll allow no man wit who does not play the fool like themselves, and show it! Have you taken notice of the *calèche* I brought over?

MEDLEY: Oh, yes! It has quite another air than the English makes.

SIR FOPLING: 'Tis as easily known from an English tumbril as an Inns of Court man is from one of us.

DORIMANT: Truly, there is a *bel-air* in *calèches* as well as men.

MEDLEY: But there are few so delicate to observe it.

SIR FOPLING: The world is generally very *grossier* here, indeed.

LADY TOWNLEY: He's very fine.

EMILIA: Extreme proper.

SIR FOPLING: A slight suit I made to appear in at my first arrival, not worthy your consideration, ladies.

DORIMANT: The pantaloons are very well mounted.

SIR FOPLING: The tassels are new and pretty.

MEDLEY: I never saw a coat better cut.

SIR FOPLING: It makes me show long-waisted, and, I think, slender.

DORIMANT: That's the shape our ladies dote on.

MEDLEY: Your breech, though, is a handful too high in my eye, Sir Fopling.

SIR FOPLING: Peace, Medley; I have wished it lower a thousand times, but a pox on't, 'twill not be.

LADY TOWNLEY: His gloves are well fringed, large and graceful.

SIR FOPLING: I was always eminent for being *bien-ganté*.

EMILIA: He wears nothing but what are originals of the most famous hands in Paris.

SIR FOPLING: You are in the right, madam.

LADY TOWNLEY: The suit?

SIR FOPLING: Barroy.

EMILIA: The garniture?

SIR FOPLING: Le Gras.

MEDLEY: The shoes?

SIR FOPLING: Piccat.

DORIMANT: The periwig?

SIR FOPLING: Chedreux.

LADY TOWNLEY and EMILIA: The gloves?

SIR FOPLING: Orangerie: you know the smell, ladies. Dorimant, I could find in my heart for an amusement to have a gallantry with some of our English ladies.

DORIMANT: 'Tis a thing no less necessary to confirm the reputation of your wit than a duel will be to satisfy the town of your courage.

SIR FOPLING: Here was a woman yesterday—

DORIMANT: Mistress Loveit.

SIR FOPLING: You have named her.

DORIMANT: You cannot pitch on a better for your purpose.

SIR FOPLING: Prithee, what is she?

DORIMANT: A person of quality, and one who has a rest of reputation enough to make the conquest considerable. Besides, I hear she likes you too.

SIR FOPLING: Methought she seemed, though, very reserved and uneasy all the time I entertained her. "Their tawdry clothes, pulvilios, essences; their chedreux perruques and their vanities."

DORIMANT: Grimace and affection. You will see her i' th' Mall to-night.

SIR FOPLING: Prithee let thee and I take the air together.

DORIMANT: I am engaged to Medley, but I'll meet you at St. James's and give you some information upon the which you may regulate your proceedings.

SIR FOPLING: All the world will be in the Park to-night: ladies, 'twere pity to keep so much beauty longer within doors and rob the Ring of all those charms that should adorn it.—Hey, page. [*enter PAGE, and goes out again*] See that all my people be ready. Dorimant, *au revoir*!

Exit SIR FOPLING

Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" (1681)

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast;
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart;
For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

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

William Congreve, *The Way of the World* (1699)

MRS. MILLAMANT, MIRABELL.

MILLAMANT.

[...] Ah, I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

MIRABELL.

Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other till after grace?

MILLAMANT.

Ah, don't be impertinent. My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay, adieu. My morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *sommeils du matin*, adieu. I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible—positively, Mirabell, I'll lie a-bed in a morning as long as I please.

MIRABELL.

Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

MILLAMANT.

Ah! Idle creature, get up when you will. And d'ye hear, I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

MIRABELL.

Names?

MILLAMANT.

Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that. Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis; nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never be seen there together again, as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well-bred. Let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

MIRABELL.

Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

MILLAMANT.

Trifles; as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please, and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance, or to be intimate with fools, because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humour, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

MIRABELL.

Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions:—that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

MILLAMANT.

You have free leave: propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

MIRABELL.

I thank you. *Imprimis*, then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confidant or intimate of your own sex; no she-friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you a *fop-scrambling* to the play in a mask, then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out, and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

MILLAMANT.

Detestable *imprimis*! I go to the play in a mask!

MIRABELL.

Item, I article, that you continue to like your own face as long as I shall, and while it passes current with me, that you endeavour not to new-coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled skins and I know not what—hog's bones, hare's gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewomen in what-d'ye-call-it court. *Item*, I shut my doors against all bawds with baskets, and pennyworths of muslin, china, fans, atlases, etc. *Item*, when you shall be breeding—

MILLAMANT.

Ah, name it not!

MIRABELL.

Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavours—

MILLAMANT.

Odious endeavours!

MIRABELL.

I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, till you mould my boy's head like a sugar-loaf, and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the tea-table I submit; but with proviso, that you exceed not in your province, but restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks, as tea, chocolate, and coffee. As likewise to genuine and authorised tea-table talk, such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth. But that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which, I banish all foreign forces, all auxiliaries to the tea-table, as orange-brandy, all aniseed, cinnamon, citron, and Barbadoes waters, together with ratafia and the most noble spirit of claret. But for cowslip-wine, poppy-water, and all dormitives, those I allow. These provisos admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

MILLAMANT.

Oh, horrid provisos! Filthy strong waters! I toast fellows, odious men! I hate your odious provisos.

MIRABELL.

Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? And here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)

It happened one day, about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen on the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition. I listened, I looked round me, but I could hear nothing, nor see anything; I went up to a rising ground to look farther; I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one; I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the print of a foot—toes, heel, and every part of a foot. How it came thither I knew not, nor could I in the least imagine; but after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man. Nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes my affrighted imagination represented things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange, unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.

When I came to my castle (for so I think I called it ever after this), I fled into it like one pursued. Whether I went over by the ladder, as first contrived, or went in at the hole in the rock, which I had called a door, I cannot remember; no, nor could I remember the next morning, for never frightened hare fled to cover, or fox to earth, with more terror of mind than I to this retreat.

I slept none that night; the farther I was from the occasion of my fright, the greater my apprehensions were, which is something contrary to the nature of such things, and especially to the usual practice of all creatures in fear; but I was so embarrassed with my own frightful ideas of the thing, that I formed nothing but dismal imaginations to myself, even though I was now a great way off. Sometimes I fancied it must be the devil, and reason joined in with me in this supposition, for how

should any other thing in human shape come into the place? Where was the vessel that brought them? What marks were there of any other footstep? And how was it possible a man should come there? But then, to think that Satan should take human shape upon him in such a place, where there could be no manner of occasion for it, but to leave the print of his foot behind him, and that even for no purpose too, for he could not be sure I should see it—this was an amusement the other way. I considered that the devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrified me than this of the single print of a foot; that as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple as to leave a mark in a place where it was ten thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not, and in the sand too, which the first surge of the sea, upon a high wind, would have defaced entirely. All this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself and with all the notions we usually entertain of the subtlety of the devil.

Daniel Defoe, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (1722)

It concerns the story in hand very little to enter into the further particulars of the family, or of myself, for the five years that I lived with this husband, only to observe that I had two children by him, and that at the end of five years he died. He had been really a very good husband to me, and we lived very agreeably together; but as he had not received much from them, and had in the little time he lived acquired no great matters, so my circumstances were not great, nor was I much mended by the match. Indeed, I had preserved the elder brother's bonds to me, to pay 500 £, which he offered me for my consent to marry his brother; and this, with what I had saved of the money he formerly gave me, about as much more by my husband, left me a widow with about 1200 £ in my pocket.

My two children were, indeed, taken happily off my hands by my husband's father and mother, and that, by the way, was all they got by Mrs. Betty.

I confess I was not suitably affected with the loss of my husband, nor indeed can I say that I ever loved him as I ought to have done, or as was proportionable to the good usage I had from him, for he was a tender, kind, good-humoured man as any woman could desire; but his brother being so always in my sight, at least while we were in the country, was a continual snare to me, and I never was in bed with my husband but I wished myself in the arms of his brother; and though his brother never offered me the least kindness that way after our marriage, but carried it just as a brother out to do, yet it was impossible for me to do so to him; in short, I committed adultery and incest with him every day in my desires, which, without doubt, was as effectually criminal in the nature of the guilt as if I had actually done it.

Before my husband died his elder brother was married, and we, being then removed to London, were written to by the old lady to come and be at the wedding. My husband went, but I pretended indisposition, and that I could not possibly travel, so I stayed behind; for, in short, I could not bear the sight of his being given to another woman, though I knew I was never to have him myself.

I was now, as above, left loose to the world, and being still young and handsome, as everybody said of me, and I assure you I thought myself so, and with a tolerable fortune in my pocket, I put no small value upon myself. I was courted by several very considerable tradesmen, and particularly very warmly by one, a linen-draper, at whose house, after my husband's death, I took a lodging, his sister being my acquaintance. Here I had all the liberty and all the opportunity to be gay and appear in company that I could desire, my landlord's sister being one of the maddest, gayest things alive, and not so much mistress of her virtue as I thought at first she had been. She brought me into a world of wild company, and even brought home several persons, such as she liked well enough to gratify, to see her pretty widow, so she was pleased to call me, and that name I got in a little time in public. Now, as fame and fools make an assembly, I was here wonderfully caressed, had abundance of admirers, and such as called themselves lovers; but I found not one fair proposal among them all. As for their common design, that I understood too well to be drawn into any more snares of that kind. The case was altered

with me: I had money in my pocket, and had nothing to say to them. I had been tricked once by that cheat called love, but the game was over; I was resolved now to be married or nothing, and to be well married or not at all.

Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal* (1729)

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants: who as they grow up either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and, therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in the computation. It is true, a child just dropped from its dam may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most not above the value of 2 shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us! sacrificing the poor innocent babes I doubt more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couples who are able to maintain their own children, although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom; but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remains one hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born: the question therefore is, how this number shall be reared and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed [...]

I do therefore humbly offer it to *public consideration*, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males, which is more than we allow to *sheep, black cattle, or swine*, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, *a circumstance not much regarded by our savages*, therefore, *one male* will be sufficient to serve *four females*. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year old be offered in sale to the *persons of quality, and fortune*, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to

let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in *winter*.

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* (1740)

LETTER I

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I have great trouble, and some comfort, to acquaint you with. The trouble is, that my good lady died of the illness I mentioned to you, and left us all much grieved for the loss of her; for she was a dear good lady, and kind to all us her servants. Much I feared, that as I was taken by her ladyship to wait upon her person, I should be quite destitute again, and forced to return to you and my poor mother, who have enough to do to maintain yourselves; and, as my lady's goodness had put me to write and cast accounts, and made me a little expert at my needle, and otherwise qualified above my degree, it was not every family that could have found a place that your poor Pamela was fit for: but God, whose graciousness to us we have so often experienced at a pinch, put it into my good lady's heart, on her death-bed, just an hour before she expired, to recommend to my young master all her servants, one by one; and when it came to my turn to be recommended, (for I was sobbing and crying at her pillow) she could only say, My dear son!—and so broke off a little; and then recovering—Remember my poor Pamela—And these were some of her last words! O how my eyes run—Don't wonder to see the paper so blotted.

Well, but God's will must be done!—And so comes the comfort, that I shall not be obliged to return back to be a clog upon my dear parents! For my master said, I will take care of you all, my good maidens; and for you, Pamela, (and took me by the hand; yes, he took my hand before them all,) for my dear mother's sake, I will be a friend to you, and you shall take care of my linen. God bless him! and pray with me, my dear father and mother, for a blessing upon him, for he has given mourning and a year's wages to all my lady's servants; and I having no wages as yet, my lady having said she should do for me as I deserved, ordered the housekeeper to give me mourning with the rest; and gave me with his own hand four golden guineas, and some silver, which were in my old lady's pocket when she died; and said, if I was a good girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be a friend to me, for his mother's sake. And so I send you these four guineas for your comfort; for Providence will not let me want: And so you may pay some old debt with part, and keep the other part to comfort you both. If I get more, I am sure it is my duty, and it shall be my care, to love and cherish you both; for you have loved and cherished me, when I could do nothing for myself. I send them by John, our footman, who goes your way: but he does not know what he carries; because I seal them up in one of the little pill-boxes, which my lady had, wrapt close in paper, that they mayn't chink; and be sure don't open it before him.

I know, dear father and mother, I must give you both grief and pleasure; and so I will only say, Pray for your Pamela; who will ever be

Your most dutiful DAUGHTER.

I have been scared out of my senses; for just now, as I was folding up this letter in my late lady's dressing-room, in comes my young master! Good sirs! how was I frightened! I went to hide the letter in my bosom; and he, seeing me tremble, said, smiling, To whom have you been writing, Pamela?—I said, in my confusion, Pray your honour forgive me!—Only to my father and mother. He said, Well then, let me see how you are come on in your writing! O how ashamed I was!—He took it, without saying more, and read it quite through, and then gave it me again;—and I said, Pray your honour forgive me!—Yet I

know not for what: for he was always dutiful to his parents; and why should he be angry that I was so to mine? And indeed he was not angry; for he took me by the hand, and said, You are a good girl, Pamela, to be kind to your aged father and mother. I am not angry with you for writing such innocent matters as these: though you ought to be wary what tales you send out of a family.—Be faithful and diligent; and do as you should do, and I like you the better for this. And then he said, Why, Pamela, you write a very pretty hand, and spell tolerably too. I see my good mother's care in your learning has not been thrown away upon you. She used to say you loved reading; you may look into any of her books, to improve yourself, so you take care of them. To be sure I did nothing but courtesy and cry, and was all in confusion, at his goodness. Indeed he is the best of gentlemen, I think! But I am making another long letter: So will only add to it, that I shall ever be Your dutiful daughter, PAMELA ANDREWS.

Henry Fielding, *The Adventures of Joseph Andrew* (1742)

The thief who had been knocked down had now recovered himself; and both together fell to belabouring poor Joseph with their sticks, till they were convinced they had put an end to his miserable being: they then stripped him entirely naked, threw him into a ditch, and departed with their booty.

The poor wretch, who lay motionless a long time, just began to recover his senses as a stage-coach came by. The postillion, hearing a man's groans, stopt his horses, and told the coachman he was certain there was a dead man lying in the ditch, for he heard him groan. "Go on, sirrah," says the coachman; "we are confounded late, and have no time to look after dead men." A lady, who heard what the postillion said, and likewise heard the groan, called eagerly to the coachman to stop and see what was the matter. Upon which he bid the postillion alight, and look into the ditch. He did so, and returned, "that there was a man sitting upright, as naked as ever he was born."—"O J—sus!" cried the lady; "a naked man! Dear coachman, drive on and leave him." Upon this the gentlemen got out of the coach; and Joseph begged them to have mercy upon him: for that he had been robbed and almost beaten to death. "Robbed!" cries an old gentleman: "let us make all the haste imaginable, or we shall be robbed too." A young man who belonged to the law answered, "He wished they had passed by without taking any notice; but that now they might be proved to have been last in his company; if he should die they might be called to some account for his murder. He therefore thought it advisable to save the poor creature's life, for their own sakes, if possible; at least, if he died, to prevent the jury's finding that they fled for it. He was therefore of opinion to take the man into the coach, and carry him to the next inn." The lady insisted, "That he should not come into the coach. That if they lifted him in, she would herself alight: for she had rather stay in that place to all eternity than ride with a naked man." The coachman objected, "That he could not suffer him to be taken in unless somebody would pay a shilling for his carriage the four miles." Which the two gentlemen refused to do. But the lawyer, who was afraid of some mischief happening to himself, if the wretch was left behind in that condition, saying no man could be too cautious in these matters, and that he remembered very extraordinary cases in the books, threatened the coachman, and bid him deny taking him up at his peril; for that, if he died, he should be indicted for his murder; and if he lived, and brought an action against him, he would willingly take a brief in it. These words had a sensible effect on the coachman, who was well acquainted with the person who spoke them; and the old gentleman above mentioned, thinking the naked man would afford him frequent opportunities of showing his wit to the lady, offered to join with the company in giving a mug of beer for his fare; till, partly alarmed by the threats of the one, and partly by the promises of the other, and being perhaps a little moved with compassion at the poor creature's condition, who stood bleeding and shivering with the cold, he at length agreed; and Joseph was now advancing to the coach, where, seeing the lady, who held the sticks of her fan before her eyes, he absolutely refused, miserable as he was, to enter, unless he was furnished with sufficient covering to prevent giving the least offence to decency—so perfectly modest was this young man; such mighty

effects had the spotless example of the amiable Pamela, and the excellent sermons of Mr Adams, wrought upon him.

Thomas Gray, “Elegy in a Country Churchyard” (1751)

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759)

Imagine to yourself a little squat, uncourtly figure of a Doctor Slop, of about four feet and a half perpendicular height, with a breadth of back, and a sesquipedality of belly, which might have done honour to a serjeant in the horse-guards.

Such were the out-lines of Dr. Slop's figure, which—if you have read Hogarth's analysis of beauty, and if you have not, I wish you would;—you must know, may as certainly be caricatured, and conveyed to the mind by three strokes as three hundred.

Imagine such a one,—for such, I say, were the outlines of Dr. Slop's figure, coming slowly along, foot by foot, waddling thro' the dirt upon the vertebrae of a little diminutive pony, of a pretty colour—but of strength,—alack!—scarce able to have made an amble of it, under such a fardel, had the roads been in an ambling condition.—They were not.—Imagine to yourself, Obadiah mounted

upon a strong monster of a coach-horse, pricked into a full gallop, and making all practicable speed the adverse way.

Pray, Sir, let me interest you a moment in this description.

Had Dr. Slop beheld Obadiah a mile off, posting in a narrow lane directly towards him, at that monstrous rate,—splashing and plunging like a devil thro' thick and thin, as he approached, would not such a phaenomenon, with such a vortex of mud and water moving along with it, round its axis,—have been a subject of juster apprehension to Dr. Slop in his situation, than the worst of Whiston's comets?—To say nothing of the Nucleus; that is, of Obadiah and the coach-horse.—In my idea, the vortex alone of 'em was enough to have involved and carried, if not the doctor, at least the doctor's pony, quite away with it. What then do you think must the terror and hydrophobia of Dr. Slop have been, when you read (which you are just going to do) that he was advancing thus warily along towards Shandy-Hall, and had approached to within sixty yards of it, and within five yards of a sudden turn, made by an acute angle of the garden-wall,—and in the dirtiest part of a dirty lane,—when Obadiah and his coach-horse turned the corner, rapid, furious,—pop,—full upon him!—Nothing, I think, in nature, can be supposed more terrible than such a rencounter,—so imprompt! so ill prepared to stand the shock of it as Dr. Slop was.

What could Dr. Slop do?—he crossed himself + —Pugh!—but the doctor, Sir, was a Papist.—No matter; he had better have kept hold of the pummel.—He had so;—nay, as it happened, he had better have done nothing at all; for in crossing himself he let go his whip,—and in attempting to save his whip betwixt his knee and his saddle's skirt, as it slipped, he lost his stirrup,—in losing which he lost his seat;—and in the multitude of all these losses (which, by the bye, shews what little advantage there is in crossing) the unfortunate doctor lost his presence of mind. So that without waiting for Obadiah's onset, he left his pony to its destiny, tumbling off it diagonally, something in the stile and manner of a pack of wool, and without any other consequence from the fall, save that of being left (as it would have been) with the broadest part of him sunk about twelve inches deep in the mire.

Obadiah pull'd off his cap twice to Dr. Slop;—once as he was falling,—and then again when he saw him seated.—Ill-timed complaisance;—had not the fellow better have stopped his horse, and got off and help'd him?—Sir, he did all that his situation would allow;—but the Momentum of the coach-horse was so great, that Obadiah could not do it all at once; he rode in a circle three times round Dr. Slop, before he could fully accomplish it any how;—and at the last, when he did stop his beast, 'twas done with such an explosion of mud, that Obadiah had better have been a league off. In short, never was a Dr. Slop so beluted, and so transubstantiated, since that affair came into fashion.

Tobias Smollet, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771)

To Dr LEWIS.

HOT WELL, April 20.

I understand your hint. There are mysteries in physic, as well as in religion; which we of the profane have no right to investigate—A man must not presume to use his reason, unless he has studied the categories, and can chop logic by mode and figure—Between friends, I think every man of tolerable parts ought, at my time of day, to be both physician and lawyer, as far as his own constitution and property are concerned. For my own part, I have had an hospital these fourteen years within myself, and studied my own case with the most painful attention; consequently may be supposed to know something of the matter, although I have not taken regular courses of physiology et cetera et cetera.—In short, I have for some time been of opinion (no offence, dear Doctor) that the sum of all your medical discoveries amounts to this, that the more you study the less you know.—I have read all that has been written on the Hot Wells, and what I can collect from the whole, is, that the water contains nothing but a little salt, and calcarious earth, mixed in such inconsiderable proportion, as can have very

little, if any, effect on the animal economy. This being the case, I think the man deserves to be fitted with a cap and bells, who for such a paltry advantage as this spring affords, sacrifices his precious time, which might be employed in taking more effectual remedies, and exposes himself to the dirt, the stench, the chilling blasts, and perpetual rains, that render this place to me intolerable. If these waters, from a small degree of astringency, are of some service in the diabetes, diarrhoea, and night sweats, when the secretions are too much increased, must not they do harm in the same proportion, where the humours are obstructed, as in the asthma, scurvy, gout and dropsy?—Now we talk of the dropsy, here is a strange fantastical oddity, one of your brethren, who harangues every day in the Pump-room, as if he was hired to give lectures on all subjects whatsoever—I know not what to make of him—Sometimes he makes shrewd remarks; at other times he talks like the greatest simpleton in nature—He has read a great deal; but without method or judgment, and digested nothing. He believes everything he has read; especially if it has any thing of the marvellous in it and his conversation is a surprising hotch-potch of erudition and extravagance. He told me t’other day, with great confidence, that my case was dropsical; or, as he called it, leucophlegmatic: A sure sign, that his want of experience is equal to his presumption—for, you know, there is nothing analogous to the dropsy in my disorder—I wish those impertinent fellows, with their ricketty understandings, would keep their advice for those that ask it. Dropsy, indeed! Sure I have not lived to the age of fifty-five, and had such experience of my own disorder, and consulted you and other eminent physicians, so often, and so long, to be undeceived by such a—But, without all doubt, the man is mad; and, therefore, what he says is of no consequence. I had, yesterday, a visit from Higgins, who came hither under the terror of your threats, and brought me in a present a brace of hares, which he owned he took in my ground; and I could not persuade the fellow that he did wrong, or that I would ever prosecute him for poaching—I must desire you will wink hard at the practices of this rascallion, otherwise I shall be plagued with his presents, which cost me more than they are worth.—If I could wonder at any thing Fitzowen does, I should be surprized at his assurance in desiring you to solicit my vote for him at the next election for the county: for him, who opposed me, on the like occasion, with the most illiberal competition. You may tell him civilly, that I beg to be excused. Direct your next for me at Bath, whither I propose to remove to-morrow; not only on my own account, but for the sake of my niece, Liddy, who is like to relapse. The poor creature fell into a fit yesterday, while I was cheapening a pair of spectacles, with a Jew-pedlar. I am afraid there is something still lurking in that little heart of hers, which I hope a change of objects will remove. Let me know what you think of this half-witted Doctor’s impertinent, ridiculous, and absurd notion of my disorder—So far from being dropsical, I am as lank in the belly as a grey-hound; and, by measuring my ankle with a pack-thread, I find the swelling subsides every day. From such doctors, good Lord deliver us!—I have not yet taken any lodgings in Bath; because there we can be accommodated at a minute’s warning, and I shall choose for myself—I need not say your directions for drinking and bathing will be agreeable to,

Dear Lewis, Yours ever,

MAT. BRAMBLE

P.S. I forgot to tell you, that my right ankle pits, a symptom, as I take it, of its being oedematous, not leucophlegmatic.

R.B. Sheridan, *The School for Scandal* (1777)

Enter MRS. CANDOUR

MRS. CANDOUR. My dear Lady Sneerwell how have you been this Century? I have never seen you tho' I have heard of you very often.—Mr. Surface—the World says scandalous things of you—but indeed it is no matter what the world says, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

SURFACE. Just so, indeed, Ma'am.

MRS. CANDOUR. Ah Maria Child—what ! is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance; I presume—The Town talks of nothing else——

MARIA. I am very sorry, Ma'am, the Town has so little to do.

MRS. CANDOUR. True, true, Child; but there's no stopping people's Tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it—as I indeed was to learn from the same quarter that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately so well as could be wish'd.

MARIA. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

MRS. CANDOUR. Very true, Child; but what's to be done? People will talk—there's no preventing it.—why it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filagree Flirt. But, Lord! there is no minding what one hears; tho' to be sure I had this from very good authority.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous.

MRS. CANDOUR. So they are Child—shameful! shameful! but the world is so censorious no character escapes. Lord, now! who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week just as she was stepping into a Postchaise with her Dancing-master.

MARIA. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for the Report.

MRS. CANDOUR. Oh, no foundation in the world I dare swear; no more probably than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino—tho' to be sure that matter was never rightly clear'd up.

SURFACE. The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

MARIA. 'Tis so but in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

MRS. CANDOUR. To be sure they are; Tale Bearers are as bad as the Tale makers—'tis an old observation and a very true one—but what's to be done as I said before—how will you prevent People from talking—to-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife—like the rest of their acquaintance—she likewise hinted that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her Dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner—at the same time Miss Tattle, who was by affirm'd, that Lord Buffalo had discover'd his Lady at a house of no extraordinary Fame—and that Sir Harry Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar Provocation. But—Lord! do you think I would report these Things—No, no! Tale Bearers as I said before are just as bad as the tale-makers.

SURFACE. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your Forbearance and good nature—

MRS. CANDOUR. I confess Mr. Surface I cannot bear to hear People traduced behind their Backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintances I own I always love to think the best—by the bye I hope 'tis not true that your Brother is absolutely ruin'd—

SURFACE. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, Ma'am—

MRS. CANDOUR. Ah! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his Spirits—everybody almost is in the same way—Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week; so, if Charles is undone, He'll find half his Acquaintance ruin'd too, and that, you know, is a consolation—

SURFACE. Doubtless, Ma'am—a very great one.

William Blake, *The Book Of Urizen*, Chapter I, 1794

1. Lo, a shadow of horror is risen
In Eternity! Unknown, unprolific!
Self-clos'd, all-repelling: what Demon
Hath form'd this abominable void
This soul-shudd'ring vacuum?--Some said
"It is Urizen", But unknown, abstracted
Brooding secret, the dark power hid.

2. Times on times he divided, & measur'd
Space by space in his ninefold darkness
Unseen, unknown! changes appear'd
In his desolate mountains rifted furious
By the black winds of perturbation

3. For he strove in battles dire
In unseen confusions with shapes
Bred from his forsaken wilderness,
Of beast, bird, fish, serpent & element
Combustion, blast, vapour and cloud.

4. Dark revolving in silent activity:
Unseen in tormenting passions;
An activity unknown and horrible;
A self-contemplating shadow,
In enormous labours occupied

5. But Eternals beheld his vast forests
Age on ages he lay, clos'd, unknown
Brooding shut in the deep; all avoid
The petrific abominable chaos

6. His cold horrors silent, dark Urizen
Prepar'd: his ten thousands of thunders
Rang'd in gloom'd array stretch out across
The dread world, & the rolling of wheels
As of swelling seas, sound in his clouds
In his hills of stor'd snows, in his mountains
Of hail & ice; voices of terror,
Are heard, like thunders of autumn,
When the cloud blazes over the harvests.

William Blake, "Earth's Answer", *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, 1794

Earth rais'd up her head,
From the darkness dread & drear.
Her light fled:
Stony dread!
And her locks cover'd with grey despair.

Prison'd on watry shore
Starry Jealousy does keep my den
Cold and hoar
Weeping o'er
I hear the Father of the ancient men

Selfish father of men
Cruel, jealous, selfish fear
Can delight
Chain'd in night
The virgins of youth and morning bear.

Does spring hide its joy
When buds and blossoms grow?
Does the sower?
Sow by night?
Or the plowman in darkness plow?

Break this heavy chain,
That does freeze my bones around
Selfish! vain!
Eternal bane!
That free Love with bondage bound.

MG. Lewis, *The Monk* (1796)

It was almost two o'clock before the lustful monk ventured to bend his steps towards Antonia's dwelling. It has been already mentioned that the abbey was at no great distance from the strada di San Iago. He reached the house unobserved. Here he stopped, and hesitated for a moment. He reflected on the enormity of the crime, the consequences of a discovery, and the probability, after what had passed, of Elvira's suspecting him to be her daughter's ravisher. On the other hand it was suggested that she could do no more than suspect; that no proofs of his guilt could be produced; that it would seem impossible for the rape to have been committed without Antonia's knowing when, where, or by whom; and finally, he believed that his fame was too firmly established to be shaken by the unsupported accusations of two unknown women. This latter argument was perfectly false. He knew not how uncertain is the air of popular applause, and that a moment suffices to make him to-day the detestation of the world, who yesterday was its idol. The result of the monk's deliberations was that he should proceed in his enterprise. He ascended the steps leading to the house. No sooner did he touch the door with the silver myrtle than it flew open, and presented him with a free passage. He entered, and the door closed after him of its own accord.

Guided by the moon-beams, he proceeded up the stair-case with slow and cautious steps. He looked round him every moment with apprehension and anxiety. He saw a spy in every shadow, and heard a voice in every murmur of the night-breeze. Consciousness of the guilty business on which he was employed appalled his heart, and rendered it more timid than a woman's. Yet still he proceeded. He reached the door of Antonia's chamber. He stopped, and listened. All was hushed within. The total

silence persuaded him that his intended victim was retired to rest, and he ventured to lift up the latch. The door was fastened, and resisted his efforts. But no sooner was it touched by the talisman than the bolt flew back. The ravisher stepped on, and found himself in the chamber where slept the innocent girl, unconscious how dangerous a visitor was drawing near her couch. The door closed after him, and the bolt shot again into its fastening.

Ambrosio advanced with precaution. He took care that not a board should creak under his foot, and held in his breath as he approached the bed. His first attention was to perform the magic ceremony, as Matilda had charged him: he breathed thrice upon the silver myrtle, pronounced over it Antonia's name, and laid it upon her pillow. The effects which it had already produced permitted not his doubting its success in prolonging the slumbers of his devoted mistress. No sooner was the enchantment performed than he considered her to be absolutely in his power, and his eyes flashed with lust and impatience. He now ventured to cast a glance upon the sleeping beauty. A single lamp, burning before the statue of St. Rosolia, shed a faint light through the room, and permitted him to examine all the charms of the lovely object before him. The heat of the weather had obliged her to throw off part of the bed-clothes. Those which still covered her Ambrosio's insolent hand hastened to remove. She lay with her cheek reclining upon one ivory arm: the other rested on the side of the bed with graceful indolence. A few tresses of her hair had escaped from beneath the muslin which confined the rest, and fell carelessly over her bosom, as it heaved with slow and regular suspiration. The warm air had spread her cheek with a higher colour than usual. A smile inexpressibly sweet played round her ripe and coral lips, from which every now and then escaped a gentle sigh, or an half-pronounced sentence. An air of enchanting innocence and candour pervaded her whole form; and there was a sort of modesty in her very nakedness, which added fresh stings to the desires of the lustful monk

He remained for some moments devouring those charms with his eyes which soon were to be subjected to his ill-regulated passions. Her mouth half-opened seem to solicit a kiss: he bent over her: he joined his lips to hers, and drew in the fragrance of her breath with rapture. This momentary pleasure increased his longing for still greater. His desires were raised to that frantic height by which brutes are agitated. He resolved not to delay for one instant longer the accomplishment of his wishes, and hastily proceeded to tear off those garments which impeded the gratification of his lust.

William Wordsworth, "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802"

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

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

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

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves;
 Where was heard the mingled measure
 From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
 A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw;
 It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora.
 Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

William Blake, "Jerusalem" in *Milton. A Poem* (1808)

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

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

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

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

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 1813

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and moreover for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did."

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him farther, and he continued:

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am

convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's foot-stool, that she said, 'Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry.—Chuse properly, chuse a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond any thing I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father, (who, however, may live many years longer,) I could not satisfy myself without resolving to chuse a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents. which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, Sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without farther loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, Sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal.—You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so.—Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins very gravely—"but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of

Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. 'This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled.' And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her,

"When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on this subject I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

John Keats, "O Solitude! If I must with thee dwell" (1817)

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,-
Nature's observatory - whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
'Mongst boughs pavillion'd, where the deer's swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
Whose words are images of thoughts refin'd,
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820)

I.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
«Beauty is truth, truth beauty,»- that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818), Chapter V

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishments of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning: the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

[How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep in horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching

and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the daemoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.]

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointments; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847), chapter 26

After Jane's aborted wedding with Rochester: the discovery of Bertha Mason, the "mad woman in the attic"

Still holding me fast, he left the church: the three gentlemen came after. At the front door of the hall we found the carriage.

"Take it back to the coach-house, John," said Mr. Rochester coolly; "it will not be wanted to-day."

At our entrance, Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, Sophie, Leah, advanced to meet and greet us.

"To the right-about—every soul!" cried the master; "away with your congratulations! Who wants them? Not I!—they are fifteen years too late!"

He passed on and ascended the stairs, still holding my hand, and still beckoning the gentlemen to follow him, which they did. We mounted the first staircase, passed up the gallery, proceeded to the third storey: the low, black door, opened by Mr. Rochester's master-key, admitted us to the tapestried room, with its great bed and its pictorial cabinet.

"You know this place, Mason," said our guide; "she bit and stabbed you here."

He lifted the hangings from the wall, uncovering the second door: this, too, he opened. In a room without a window, there burnt a fire guarded by a high and strong fender, and a lamp suspended from the ceiling by a chain. Grace Poole bent over the fire, apparently cooking something in a saucepan. In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.

"Good-morrow, Mrs. Poole!" said Mr. Rochester. "How are you? and how is your charge to-day?"

"We're tolerable, sir, I thank you," replied Grace, lifting the boiling mess carefully on to the hob: "rather snappish, but not 'rageous.'"

A fierce cry seemed to give the lie to her favourable report: the clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind-feet.

"Ah! sir, she sees you!" exclaimed Grace: "you'd better not stay."

"Only a few moments, Grace: you must allow me a few moments."

"Take care then, sir!—for God's sake, take care!"

The maniac bellowed: she parted her shaggy locks from her visage, and gazed wildly at her visitors. I recognised well that purple face,—those bloated features. Mrs. Poole advanced.

"Keep out of the way," said Mr. Rochester, thrusting her aside: "she has no knife now, I suppose, and I'm on my guard."

"One never knows what she has, sir: she is so cunning: it is not in mortal discretion to fathom her craft."

"We had better leave her," whispered Mason.

"Go to the devil!" was his brother-in-law's recommendation.

"Ware!" cried Grace. The three gentlemen retreated simultaneously. Mr. Rochester flung me behind him: the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously, and laid her teeth to his cheek: they struggled. She was a big woman, in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent besides: she showed virile force in the contest—more than once she almost throttled him, athletic as he was. He could have settled her with a well-planted blow; but he would not strike: he would only wrestle. At last he mastered her arms; Grace Poole gave him a cord, and he pinioned them behind her: with more rope, which was at hand, he bound her to a chair. The operation was performed amidst the fiercest yells and the most convulsive plunges. Mr. Rochester then turned to the spectators: he looked at them with a smile both acrid and desolate.

"That is *my wife*," said he. "Such is the sole conjugal embrace I am ever to know—such are the endearments which are to solace my leisure hours! And *this* is what I wished to have" (laying his hand on my shoulder): "this young girl, who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon, I wanted her just as a change after that fierce ragout. Wood and Briggs, look at the difference! Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder—this face with that mask—this form with that bulk; then judge me, priest of the gospel and man of the law, and remember with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged! Off with you now. I must shut up my prize."

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854), chapitre 5

THE KEYNOTE

Coketown, to which Messrs. Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the key-note, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world,

and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there—as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done—they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1848)

'You don't mean that, Amelia?' William said, sadly. 'You don't mean that these words, uttered in a hurried moment, are to weigh against a whole life's devotion. I think that George's memory has not been injured by the way in which I have dealt with it, and if we are come to bandying reproaches, I at least merit none from his widow and the mother of his son. Reflect, afterwards when—when you are at leisure, and your conscience will withdraw this accusation. It does even now.' Amelia held down her head.

'It is not that speech of yesterday,' he continued, 'which moves you. That is but the pretext, Amelia, or I have loved you and watched you for fifteen years in vain. Have I not learned in that time to read all your feelings, and look into your thoughts? I know what your heart is capable of: it can cling faithfully to a recollection, and cherish a fancy; but it can't feel such an attachment as mine deserves to mate with, and such as I would have won from a woman more generous than you. No, you are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you. I knew all along that the prize I had set my life on was not worth the winning; that I was a fool, with fond fancies, too, bartering away my all of truth and ardour against your little feeble remnant of love. I will bargain no more: I withdraw. I find no fault with you. You are very good-natured, and have done your best; but you couldn't—you couldn't reach up to the height of the attachment which I bore you, and which a loftier soul than yours might have been proud to share. Good-bye, Amelia! I have watched your struggle. Let it end. We are both weary of it.'

Amelia stood scared and silent as William thus suddenly broke the chain by which she held him, and declared his independence and superiority. He had placed himself at her feet so long that the poor little woman had been accustomed to trample upon him. She didn't wish to marry him but she wished to keep him. She wished to give him nothing, but that he should give her all. It is a bargain not unfrequently levied in love.

William's sally had quite broken and cast her down. *Her* assault was long since over and beaten back.

'Am I to understand then,—that you are going—away,—William?' she said.

He gave a sad laugh. 'I went once before,' he said, 'and came back after twelve years. We were young then, Amelia. Good-bye. I have spent enough of my life at this play.'

Christina Rossetti, “In an Artist’s Studio” (1856)

One face looks out from all his canvases,
One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans:
We found her hidden just behind those screens,
That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
A nameless girl in freshest summer-greens,
A saint, an angel — every canvas means
The same one meaning, neither more or less.
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
And she with true kind eyes looks back on him,
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;
Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

Christina Rossetti, “Remember” (1862)

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

**Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1828-1882], “Body’s Beauty” (1868), Alternately titled:
Lady Lilith**

Of Adam’s first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
That, ere the snake’s, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.

And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886, Chapter 9. "Dr. Lanyon's Narrative"

These particulars struck me, I confess, disagreeably; and as I followed him into the bright light of the consulting-room, I kept my hand ready on my weapon. Here, at last, I had a chance of clearly seeing him. I had never set eyes on him before, so much was certain. He was small, as I have said; I was struck besides with the shocking expression of his face, with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution, and—last but not least—with the odd, subjective disturbance caused by his neighbourhood. This bore some resemblance to incipient rigour, and was accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse. At the time, I set it down to some idiosyncratic, personal distaste, and merely wondered at the acuteness of the symptoms; but I have since had reason to believe the cause to lie much deeper in the nature of man, and to turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred.

This person (who had thus, from the first moment of his entrance, struck in me what I can only describe as a disgusting curiosity) was dressed in a fashion that would have made an ordinary person laughable; his clothes, that is to say, although they were of rich and sober fabric, were enormously too large for him in every measurement—the trousers hanging on his legs and rolled up to keep them from the ground, the waist of the coat below his haunches, and the collar sprawling wide upon his shoulders. Strange to relate, this ludicrous accoutrement was far from moving me to laughter. Rather, as there was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced me—something seizing, surprising, and revolting—this fresh disparity seemed but to fit in with and to reinforce it; so that to my interest in the man's nature and character, there was added a curiosity as to his origin, his life, his fortune and status in the world.

These observations, though they have taken so great a space to be set down in, were yet the work of a few seconds. My visitor was, indeed, on fire with sombre excitement.

"Have you got it?" he cried. "Have you got it?" And so lively was his impatience that he even laid his hand upon my arm and sought to shake me.

I put him back, conscious at his touch of a certain icy pang along my blood. "Come, sir," said I. "You forget that I have not yet the pleasure of your acquaintance. Be seated, if you please." And I showed him an example, and sat down myself in my customary seat and with as fair an imitation of my ordinary manner to a patient, as the lateness of the hour, the nature of my pre-occupations, and the horror I had of my visitor, would suffer me to muster.

"I beg your pardon, Dr. Lanyon," he replied civilly enough. "What you say is very well founded; and my impatience has shown its heels to my politeness. I come here at the instance of your colleague, Dr. Henry Jekyll, on a piece of business of some moment; and I understood..." He paused and put his

hand to his throat, and I could see, in spite of his collected manner, that he was wrestling against the approaches of the hysteria—"I understood, a drawer..."

But here I took pity on my visitor's suspense, and some perhaps on my own growing curiosity.

"There it is, sir," said I, pointing to the drawer, where it lay on the floor behind a table and still covered with the sheet.

He sprang to it, and then paused, and laid his hand upon his heart: I could hear his teeth grate with the convulsive action of his jaws; and his face was so ghastly to see that I grew alarmed both for his life and reason.

"Compose yourself," said I.

He turned a dreadful smile to me, and as if with the decision of despair, plucked away the sheet. At sight of the contents, he uttered one loud sob of such immense relief that I sat petrified. And the next moment, in a voice that was already fairly well under control, "Have you a graduated glass?" he asked.

I rose from my place with something of an effort and gave him what he asked.

He thanked me with a smiling nod, measured out a few minims of the red tincture and added one of the powders. The mixture, which was at first of a reddish hue, began, in proportion as the crystals melted, to brighten in colour, to effervesce audibly, and to throw off small fumes of vapour. Suddenly and at the same moment, the ebullition ceased and the compound changed to a dark purple, which faded again more slowly to a watery green. My visitor, who had watched these metamorphoses with a keen eye, smiled, set down the glass upon the table, and then turned and looked upon me with an air of scrutiny.

"And now," said he, "to settle what remains. Will you be wise? Will you be guided? Will you suffer me to take this glass in my hand and to go forth from your house without further parley? or has the greed of curiosity too much command of you? Think before you answer, for it shall be done as you decide. As you decide, you shall be left as you were before, and neither richer nor wiser, unless the sense of service rendered to a man in mortal distress may be counted as a kind of riches of the soul. Or, if you shall so prefer to choose, a new province of knowledge and new avenues to fame and power shall be laid open to you, here, in this room, upon the instant; and your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan."

["Sir," said I, affecting a coolness that I was far from truly possessing, "you speak enigmas, and you will perhaps not wonder that I hear you with no very strong impression of belief. But I have gone too far in the way of inexplicable services to pause before I see the end."

"It is well," replied my visitor. "Lanyon, you remember your vows: what follows is under the seal of our profession. And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine, you who have derided your superiors—behold!"

He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; and as I looked there came, I thought, a change—he seemed to swell—his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter—and the next moment, I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arm raised to shield me from that prodigy, my mind submerged in terror.

"O God!" I screamed, and "O God!" again and again; for there before my eyes—pale and shaken, and half-fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death—there stood Henry Jekyll!

HASTIE LANYON

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891)

Twice wronged by Alec D'Urberville, Tess was driven to murder him. She now finds herself at Stonehenge with Angel Clare, who had abandoned her when she confessed her affair with Alec, but has now come back repentant. It is her last moment of liberty before she is arrested and hanged

To walk across country without much regard to roads was not new to Tess, and she showed her old agility in the performance. The intercepting city, ancient Melchester, they were obliged to pass through in order to take advantage of the town bridge for crossing a large river that obstructed them. It was about midnight when they went along the deserted streets, lighted fitfully by the few lamps, keeping off the pavement that it might not echo their footsteps. The graceful pile of cathedral architecture rose dimly on their left hand, but it was lost upon them now. Once out of the town they followed the turnpike-road, which after a few miles plunged across an open plain.

Though the sky was dense with cloud, a diffused light from some fragment of a moon had hitherto helped them a little. But the moon had now sunk, the clouds seemed to settle almost on their heads, and the night grew as dark as a cave. However, they found their way along, keeping as much on the turf as possible that their tread might not resound, which it was easy to do, there being no hedge or fence of any kind. All around was open loneliness and black solitude, over which a stiff breeze blew.

They had proceeded thus gropingly two or three miles further when on a sudden Clare became conscious of some vast erection close in his front, rising sheer from the grass. They had almost struck themselves against it.

"What monstrous place is this?" said Angel.

"It hums," said she. "Hearken!"

He listened. The wind, playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp. No other sound came from it, and lifting his hand and advancing a step or two, Clare felt the vertical surface of the structure. It seemed to be of solid stone, without joint or moulding. Carrying his fingers onward he found that what he had come in contact with was a colossal rectangular pillar; by stretching out his left hand he could feel a similar one adjoining. At an indefinite height overhead something made the black sky blacker, which had the semblance of a vast architrave uniting the pillars horizontally. They carefully entered beneath and between; the surfaces echoed their soft rustle; but they seemed to be still out of doors. The place was roofless. Tess drew her breath fearfully, and Angel, perplexed, said —

"What can it be?"

Feeling sideways they encountered another tower-like pillar, square and uncompromising as the first; beyond it another and another. The place was all doors and pillars, some connected above by continuous architraves.

"A very Temple of the Winds," he said.

The next pillar was isolated; others composed a trilithon; others were prostrate, their flanks forming a causeway wide enough for a carriage; and it was soon obvious that they made up a forest of monoliths grouped upon the grassy expanse of the plain. The couple advanced further into this pavilion of the night till they stood in its midst.

"It is Stonehenge!" said Clare.

"The heathen temple, you mean?"

"Yes. Older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles! Well, what shall we do, darling? We may find shelter further on."

But Tess, really tired by this time, flung herself upon an oblong slab that lay close at hand, and was sheltered from the wind by a pillar. Owing to the action of the sun during the preceding day, the stone was warm and dry, in comforting contrast to the rough and chill grass around, which had damped her skirts and shoes.

"I don't want to go any further, Angel," she said, stretching out her hand for his. "Can't we bide here?"

"I fear not. This spot is visible for miles by day, although it does not seem so now."

"One of my mother's people was a shepherd hereabouts, now I think of it. And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home."
He knelt down beside her outstretched form, and put his lips upon hers.

**Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*,
A Trivial Comedy for Serious People, (1895)**

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [Pencil and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady Bracknell. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady Bracknell. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack. [After some hesitation.] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

Jack. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

Lady Bracknell. [Makes a note in her book.] In land, or in investments?

Jack. In investments, chiefly.

Lady Bracknell. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

Jack. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

Lady Bracknell. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

Jack. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

Lady Bracknell. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

Jack. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

Lady Bracknell. Ah, nowadays that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

Jack. 149.

Lady Bracknell. [Shaking her head.] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

Jack. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

Lady Bracknell. [Sternly.] Both, if necessary, I presume. What are your politics?

Jack. Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.

Lady Bracknell. Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

Jack. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady Bracknell. Found!

Jack. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

Lady Bracknell. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

Jack. [Gravely.] In a hand-bag.

Lady Bracknell. A hand-bag?

Jack. [Very seriously.] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

Lady Bracknell. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

Jack. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

Lady Bracknell. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady Bracknell. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognised position in good society.

Jack. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

Lady Bracknell. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

Jack. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[**Lady Bracknell** sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

Bram Stoker (1847-1912), *Dracula*, Chapter III, “Jonathan’s diary” (1897)

Later the morning of 16 May.—God preserve my sanity, for to this I am reduced. Safety and the assurance of safety are things of the past. Whilst I live on here there is but one thing to hope for, that I may not go mad, if, indeed, I be not mad already. If I be sane, then surely it is maddening to think that of all the foul things that lurk in this hateful place the Count is the least dreadful to me, that to him alone I can look for safety, even though this be only whilst I can serve his purpose. Great God! Merciful God, let me be calm, for out of that way lies madness indeed. I begin to get new lights on certain things which have puzzled me. Up to now I never quite knew what Shakespeare meant when he made Hamlet say:—

My tablets! Quick, my tablets!

‘Tis meet that I put it down,” etc.,

for now, feeling as though my own brain were unhinged or as if the shock had come which must end in its undoing, I turn to my diary for repose. The habit of entering accurately must help to soothe me.

The Count’s mysterious warning frightened me at the time. It frightens me more now when I think of it, for in the future he has a fearful hold upon me. I shall fear to doubt what he may say!

When I had written in my diary and had fortunately replaced the book and pen in my pocket I felt sleepy. The Count’s warning came into my mind, but I took pleasure in disobeying it. The sense of sleep was upon me, and with it the obstinacy which sleep brings as outrider. The soft moonlight soothed, and the wide expanse without gave a sense of freedom which refreshed me. I determined not to return tonight to the gloom-haunted rooms, but to sleep here, where, of old, ladies had sat and sung and lived sweet lives whilst their gentle breasts were sad for their menfolk away in the midst of remorseless wars. I drew a great couch out of its place near the corner, so that as I lay, I could look at the lovely view to east and south, and unthinking of and uncaring for the dust, composed myself for sleep.

[I suppose I must have fallen asleep. I hope so, but I fear, for all that followed was startlingly real—so real that now sitting here in the broad, full sunlight of the morning, I cannot in the least believe that it was all sleep.

I was not alone. The room was the same, unchanged in any way since I came into it. I could see along the floor, in the brilliant moonlight, my own footsteps marked where I had disturbed the long accumulation of dust. In the moonlight opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them, they threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me, and looked at me for some time, and then whispered together. Two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes, that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina’s eyes and cause her pain, but it is the truth. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed—such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water glasses when played on by a cunning hand. The fair girl shook her head coquettishly, and the other two urged her on.] One said:—

‘Go on! You are first, and we shall follow. Yours’ is the right to begin.’ The other added—

'He is young and strong. There are kisses for us all.'] I lay quiet, looking out from under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood.

I was afraid to raise my eyelids, but looked out and saw perfectly under the lashes. The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed to fasten on my throat. Then she paused, and I could hear the churning sound of her tongue as it licked her teeth and lips, and I could feel the hot breath on my neck. Then the skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer—nearer. I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the super sensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited—waited with beating heart.

But at that instant, another sensation swept through me as quick as lightning. I was conscious of the presence of the Count, and of his being as if lapped in a storm of fury. As my eyes opened involuntarily I saw his strong hand grasp the slender neck of the fair woman and with giant's power draw it back, the blue eyes transformed with fury, the white teeth champing with rage, and the fair cheeks blazing red with passion. But the Count! Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even to the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell fire blazed behind them. His face was deathly pale, and the lines of it were hard like drawn wires. The thick eyebrows that met over the nose now seemed like a heaving bar of white-hot metal. With a fierce sweep of his arm, he hurled the woman from him, and then motioned to the others, as though he were beating them back. It was the same imperious gesture that I had seen used to the wolves. In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper seemed to cut through the air and then ring round the room as he said:—

'How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you'll have to deal with me.'

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

"Kurtz discoursed. A voice! a voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart. Oh, he struggled! he struggled! The wastes of his weary brain were haunted by shadowy images now -- images of wealth and fame revolving obsequiously round his unextinguishable gift of noble and lofty expression. My Intended, my station, my career, my ideas -- these were the subjects for the occasional utterances of elevated sentiments. The shade of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham, whose fate it was to be buried presently in the mould of primeval earth. But both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of that soul satiated with primitive emotions, avid of lying fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power.

"Sometimes he was contemptibly childish. He desired to have kings meet him at railway-stations on his return from some ghastly Nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things. 'You show them you have in you something that is really profitable, and then there will be no limits to the

recognition of your ability,' he would say. 'Of course you must take care of the motives -- right motives -- always.' The long reaches that were like one and the same reach, monotonous bends that were exactly alike, slipped past the steamer with their multitude of secular trees looking patiently after this grimy fragment of another world, the forerunner of change, of conquest, of trade, of massacres, of blessings. I looked ahead -- piloting. 'Close the shutter,' said Kurtz suddenly one day; 'I can't bear to look at this.' I did so. There was a silence. 'Oh, but I will wring your heart yet!' he cried at the invisible wilderness.

"We broke down -- as I had expected -- and had to lie up for repairs at the head of an island. This delay was the first thing that shook Kurtz's confidence. One morning he gave me a packet of papers and a photograph -- the lot tied together with a shoe-string. 'Keep this for me,' he said. 'This noxious fool' (meaning the manager) 'is capable of prying into my boxes when I am not looking.' In the afternoon I saw him. He was lying on his back with closed eyes, and I withdrew quietly, but I heard him mutter, 'Live rightly, die, die . . .' I listened. There was nothing more. Was he rehearsing some speech in his sleep, or was it a fragment of a phrase from some newspaper article? He had been writing for the papers and meant to do so again, 'for the furthering of my ideas. It's a duty.'

"His was an impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines. But I had not much time to give him, because I was helping the engine-driver to take to pieces the leaky cylinders, to straighten a bent connecting-rod, and in other such matters. I lived in an infernal mess of rust, filings, nuts, bolts, spanners, hammers, ratchet-drills -- things I abominate, because I don't get on with them. I tended the little forge we fortunately had aboard; I toiled wearily in a wretched scrap-heap -- unless I had the shakes too bad to stand.

"One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, 'I am lying here in the dark waiting for death.' The light was within a foot of his eyes. I forced myself to murmur, 'Oh, nonsense!' and stood over him as if transfixed.

"Anything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see again. Oh, I wasn't touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror -- of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision -- he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath:

"The horror! The horror!"

"I blew the candle out and left the cabin. The pilgrims were dining in the mess-room, and I took my place opposite the manager, who lifted his eyes to give me a questioning glance, which I successfully ignored. He leaned back, serene, with that peculiar smile of his sealing the unexpressed depths of his meanness. A continuous shower of small flies streamed upon the lamp, upon the cloth, upon our hands and faces. Suddenly the manager's boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt:

"Mistah Kurtz -- he dead."

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*. (1913)

HIGGINS [*rising hastily and running to Mrs. Higgins*] Here she is, mother. [*He stands on tiptoe and makes signs over his mother's head to Eliza to indicate to her which lady is her hostess*].

Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite flustered. Guided by Higgins's signals, she comes to Mrs. Higgins with studied grace.

LIZA [*speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone*] How do you do, Mrs. Higgins? [*She gasps slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite successful*]. Mr. Higgins told me I might come.

MRS. HIGGINS [*cordially*] Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you.

PICKERING. How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

LIZA [*shaking hands with him*] Colonel Pickering, is it not?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. I feel sure we have met before, Miss Doolittle. I remember your eyes.

LIZA. How do you do? [*She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins*].

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*introducing*] My daughter Clara.

LIZA. How do you do?

CLARA [*impulsively*] How do you do? [*She sits down on the ottoman beside Eliza, devouring her with her eyes*].

FREDDY [*coming to their side of the ottoman*] I've certainly had the pleasure.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*introducing*] My son Freddy.

LIZA. How do you do?

Freddy bows and sits down in the Elizabethan chair, infatuated.

HIGGINS [*suddenly*] By George, yes: it all comes back to me! [*They stare at him*]. Covent Garden! [*Lamentably*] What a damned thing!

MRS. HIGGINS. Henry, please! [*He is about to sit on the edge of the table*]. Don't sit on my writing-table: you'll break it.

HIGGINS [*sulkily*] Sorry.

He goes to the divan, stumbling into the fender and over the fire-irons on his way; extricating himself with muttered imprecations; and finishing his disastrous journey by throwing himself so impatiently on the divan that he almost breaks it. Mrs. Higgins looks at him, but controls herself and says nothing.

A long and painful pause ensues.

MRS. HIGGINS [*at last, conversationally*] Will it rain, do you think?

LIZA. The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.

FREDDY. Ha! ha! how awfully funny!

LIZA. What is wrong with that, young man? I bet I got it right.

FREDDY. Killing!

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. I'm sure I hope it won't turn cold. There's so much influenza about. It runs right through our whole family regularly every spring.

LIZA [*darkly*] My aunt died of influenza: so they said.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*clicks her tongue sympathetically*]!!!

LIZA [*in the same tragic tone*] But it's my belief they done the old woman in.

MRS. HIGGINS [*puzzled*] Done her in?

LIZA. Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*startled*] Dear me!

LIZA [*piling up the indictment*] What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. What does doing her in mean?

HIGGINS [*hastily*] Oh, that's the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*to Eliza, horrified*] You surely don't believe that your aunt was killed?

LIZA. Do I not! Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. But it can't have been right for your father to pour spirits down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

LIZA. Not her. Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. Do you mean that he drank?

LIZA. Drank! My word! Something chronic.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL. How dreadful for you!

LIZA. Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see. But then he did not keep it up regular. [*Cheerfully*] On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. There's lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. [*Now quite at her ease*] You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. [*To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter*] Here! what are you sniggering at?

FREDDY. The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.

LIZA. If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? [*To Higgins*] Have I said anything I oughtn't?

MRS. HIGGINS [*interposing*] Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

LIZA. Well, that's a mercy, anyhow. [*Expansively*] What I always say is—

HIGGINS [*rising and looking at his watch*] Ahem!

LIZA [*looking round at him; taking the hint; and rising*] Well: I must go. [*They all rise. Freddy goes to the door*]. So pleased to have met you. Good-bye. [*She shakes hands with Mrs. Higgins*].

MRS. HIGGINS. Good-bye.

LIZA. Good-bye, Colonel Pickering.

PICKERING. Good-bye, Miss Doolittle. [*They shake hands*].

LIZA [*nodding to the others*] Good-bye, all.

FREDDY [*opening the door for her*] Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so—

LIZA. Walk! Not bloody likely. [*Sensation*]. I am going in a taxi. [*She goes out*].

Pickering gasps and sits down. Freddy goes out on the balcony to catch another glimpse of Eliza.

James Joyce, "The Dead" (1914)

Gabriel had not gone to the door with the others. He was in a dark part of the hall gazing up the staircase. A woman was standing near the top of the first flight, in the shadow also. He could not see her face but he could see the terra-cotta and salmon-pink panels of her skirt which the shadow made appear black and white. It was his wife. She was leaning on the banisters, listening to something. Gabriel was surprised at her stillness and strained his ear to listen also. But he could hear little save the noise of laughter and dispute on the front steps, a few chords struck on the piano and a few notes of a man's voice singing.

He stood still in the gloom of the hall, trying to catch the air that the voice was singing and gazing up at his wife. There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. Her blue felt hat would show off the bronze of her hair against the darkness and the dark panels of her skirt would show off the light ones. Distant Music he would call the picture if he were a painter.

The hall-door was closed; and Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia and Mary Jane came down the hall, still laughing.

"Well, isn't Freddy terrible?" said Mary Jane. "He's really terrible."

Gabriel said nothing but pointed up the stairs towards where his wife was standing. Now that the hall-door was closed the voice and the piano could be heard more clearly. Gabriel held up his hand for them to be silent. The song seemed to be in the old Irish tonality and the singer seemed uncertain both of his words and of his voice. The voice, made plaintive by distance and by the singer's hoarseness, faintly illuminated the cadence of the air with words expressing grief:

O, the rain falls on my heavy locks

And the dew wets my skin

My babe lies cold...

"O," exclaimed Mary Jane. "It's Bartell D'Arcy singing and he wouldn't sing all the night. O, I'll get him to sing a song before he goes."

"O, do, Mary Jane," said Aunt Kate.

Mary Jane brushed past the others and ran to the staircase, but before she reached it the singing stopped and the piano was closed abruptly.

"O, what a pity!" she cried. "Is he coming down, Gretta?"

Gabriel heard his wife answer yes and saw her come down towards them. A few steps behind her were Mr. Bartell D'Arcy and Miss O'Callaghan.

"O, Mr. D'Arcy," cried Mary Jane, "it's downright mean of you to break off like that when we were all in raptures listening to you."

"I have been at him all the evening," said Miss O'Callaghan, "and Mrs. Conroy, too, and he told us he had a dreadful cold and couldn't sing."

"O, Mr. D'Arcy," said Aunt Kate, "now that was a great fib to tell."

"Can't you see that I'm as hoarse as a crow?" said Mr. D'Arcy roughly.

He went into the pantry hastily and put on his overcoat. The others, taken aback by his rude speech, could find nothing to say. Aunt Kate wrinkled her brows and made signs to the others to drop the subject. Mr. D'Arcy stood swathing his neck carefully and frowning.

"It's the weather," said Aunt Julia, after a pause.

"Yes, everybody has colds," said Aunt Kate readily, "everybody."

"They say," said Mary Jane, "we haven't had snow like it for thirty years; and I read this morning in the newspapers that the snow is general all over Ireland."

"I love the look of snow," said Aunt Julia sadly.

"So do I," said Miss O'Callaghan. "I think Christmas is never really Christmas unless we have the snow on the ground."

"But poor Mr. D'Arcy doesn't like the snow," said Aunt Kate, smiling.

Mr. D'Arcy came from the pantry, fully swathed and buttoned, and in a repentant tone told them the history of his cold. Everyone gave him advice and said it was a great pity and urged him to be very careful of his throat in the night air. Gabriel watched his wife, who did not join in the conversation. She was standing right under the dusty fanlight and the flame of the gas lit up the rich bronze of her hair, which he had seen her drying at the fire a few days before. She was in the same attitude and seemed unaware of the talk about her. At last she turned towards them and Gabriel saw that there was colour on her cheeks and that her eyes were shining. A sudden tide of joy went leaping out of his heart.

"Mr. D'Arcy," she said, "what is the name of that song you were singing?"

"It's called 'The Lass of Aughrim,'" said Mr. D'Arcy, "but I couldn't remember it properly. Why? Do you know it?"

"The Lass of Aughrim," she repeated. "I couldn't think of the name."

"It's a very nice air," said Mary Jane. "I'm sorry you were not in voice tonight."

"Now, Mary Jane," said Aunt Kate, "don't annoy Mr. D'Arcy. I won't have him annoyed."

Seeing that all were ready to start she shepherded them to the door, where good-night was said:

"Well, good-night, Aunt Kate, and thanks for the pleasant evening."

"Good-night, Gabriel. Good-night, Gretta!"

"Good-night, Aunt Kate, and thanks ever so much. Goodnight, Aunt Julia."
"O, good-night, Gretta, I didn't see you."
"Good-night, Mr. D'Arcy. Good-night, Miss O'Callaghan."
"Good-night, Miss Morkan."
"Good-night, again."
"Good-night, all. Safe home."
"Good-night. Good night."

Virginia Woolf, *Flush: A Biography* (1933)

Flush is the fictional biography based on real facts of Flush, the dog of Victorian poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In this excerpt, he is offered to Elizabeth Barrett by her friend, another Victorian writer, Mary Russell Mitford. The action takes place in London, in Miss Barrett's family home

Very slowly, very dimly, with much sniffing and pawing, Flush by degrees distinguished the outlines of several articles of furniture. That huge object by the window was perhaps a wardrobe. Next to it stood, conceivably, a chest of drawers. In the middle of the room swam up to the surface what seemed to be a table with a ring round it; and then the vague amorphous shapes of armchair and table emerged. But everything was disguised. On top of the wardrobe stood three white busts; the chest of drawers was surmounted by a bookcase; the bookcase was pasted over with crimson merino; the washing-table had a coronal of shelves upon it; on top of the shelves that were on top of the washing-table stood two more busts. Nothing in the room was itself; everything was something else. Even the window-blind was not a simple muslin blind; it was a painted fabric [1] with a design of castles and gateways and groves of trees, and there were several peasants taking a walk. Looking-glasses further distorted these already distorted objects so that there seemed to be ten busts of ten poets instead of five; four tables instead of two. And suddenly there was a more terrifying confusion still. Suddenly Flush saw staring back at him from a hole in the wall another dog with bright eyes flashing, and tongue lolling! He paused amazed. He advanced in awe.

Thus advancing, thus withdrawing, Flush scarcely heard, save as the distant drone of wind among the tree-tops, the murmur and patter of voices talking. He pursued his investigations, cautiously, nervously, as an explorer in a forest softly advances his foot, uncertain whether that shadow is a lion, or that root a cobra. At last, however, he was aware of huge objects in commotion over him; and, unstrung as he was by the experiences of the past hour, he hid himself, trembling, behind a screen. The voices ceased. A door shut. For one instant he paused, bewildered, unstrung. Then with a pounce as of clawed tigers memory fell upon him. He felt himself alone--deserted. He rushed to the door. It was shut. He pawed, he listened. He heard footsteps descending. He knew them for the familiar footsteps of his mistress. They stopped. But no--on they went, down they went. Miss Mitford was slowly, was heavily, was reluctantly descending the stairs. And as she went, as he heard her footsteps fade, panic seized upon him. Door after door shut in his face as Miss Mitford went downstairs; they shut on freedom; on fields; on hares; on grass; on his adored, his venerated mistress--on the dear old woman who had washed him and beaten him and fed him from her own plate when she had none too much to eat herself--on all he had known of happiness and love and human goodness! There! The front door slammed. He was alone. She had deserted him.

Then such a wave of despair and anguish overwhelmed him, the irrevocableness and implacability of fate so smote him, that he lifted up his head and howled aloud. A voice said "Flush." He did not hear it. "Flush," it repeated a second time. He started. He had thought himself alone. He turned. Was there something alive in the room with him? Was there something on the sofa? In the wild hope that this being, whatever it was, might open the door, that he might still rush after Miss Mitford

and find her--that this was some game of hide-and-seek such as they used to play in the greenhouse at home--Flush darted to the sofa.

"Oh, Flush!" said Miss Barrett. For the first time she looked him in the face. For the first time Flush looked at the lady lying on the sofa.

Each was surprised. Heavy curls hung down on either side of Miss Barrett's face; large bright eyes shone out; a large mouth smiled. Heavy ears hung down on either side of Flush's face; his eyes, too, were large and bright: his mouth was wide. There was a likeness between them. As they gazed at each other each felt: Here am I--and then each felt: But how different! Hers was the pale worn face of an invalid, cut off from air, light, freedom. His was the warm ruddy face of a young animal; instinct with health and energy. Broken asunder, yet made in the same mould, could it be that each completed what was dormant in the other? She might have been--all that; and he--But no. Between them lay the widest gulf that can separate one being from another. She spoke. He was dumb. She was woman; he was dog. Thus closely united, thus immensely divided, they gazed at each other. Then with one bound Flush sprang on to the sofa and laid himself where he was to lie for ever after--on the rug at Miss Barrett's feet.

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (1937), chapitre 1

AN UNEXPECTED PARTY

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats — the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill — The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it — and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.

This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. The Bagginses had lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him. This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained — well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end.

The mother of our particular hobbit — what is a hobbit? I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of the Big People, as they call us. They are (or were) a

little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded Dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to

disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it). Now you know enough to go on with. As I was saying, the mother of this hobbit — of Bilbo Baggins, that is — was the famous Belladonna Took, one of the three remarkable daughters of the Old Took, head of the hobbits who lived across The Water, the small river that ran at the foot of The Hill. It was often said (in other families) that long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife. That was, of course, absurd, but certainly there was still something not entirely hobbitlike about them, and once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up; but the fact remained that the Tookes were not as respectable as the Bagginses, though they were undoubtedly richer.

Not that Belladonna Took ever had any adventures after she became Mrs. Bungo Baggins. Bungo, that was Bilbo's father, built the most luxurious hobbit-hole for her (and partly with her money) that was to be found either under The Hill or over The Hill or across The Water, and there they remained to the end of their days. Still it is probable that Bilbo, her only son, although he looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father, got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out. The chance never arrived, until Bilbo Baggins was grown up, being about fifty years old or so, and living in the beautiful hobbit-hole built by his father, which I have just described for you, until he had in fact apparently settled down immovably.

Neil M. Gunn, *Second Sight* (1940)

The young man was eagerly watching the hill-tops and could not tell her what had happened.

"Did he miss the first time?"

"Yes." Then he added. "Or may be he tried for a second one."

They stood there for a long time, but neither Harry nor Alick appeared.

"Perhaps he wounded him," said Donald.

Helen's face winced, as she asked what that would mean.

"When you wound a beast, you have to follow him", explained Donald, until you kill him!"

"Will that take time?"

"It all depends. If he is badly wounded it mightn't take so long, but sometimes you may have to follow him into another forest."

"But you must get him?"

"If you can."

Helen nodded. Pain and death, pain and death. From the hills, from the moors. The incoming surge hurt and frightened her. Not to-day! cried her spirit. Oh, not to-day!

"Does the wounded beast just run on?" she asked calmly.

"If he is badly wounded, he falls out soon. He tries to find a place. Then you stalk him there."

"And the others run on and desert him?"

"Not always. Often another stag or two will stay with him and keep guard."

"Do they?" asked Helen, heartened.

"Yes," said Donald.

They were silent for a long time. Running deer, lovely running deer. Her sympathies were with the deer and not with the hunters. This was like a betrayal, a betrayal of Harry, of all her men, the hunters that came over horizon after primeval horizon, through dark ages and medieval ages, into the

September sun of this day she was alive in.

[As she shifted her stance, she glanced at Donald. His eyes never left a certain point in the hills. He had the keen concentrated expression of the hunter, the eyebrows gathered a little over far-sighted eyes. Ruthless, she thought.

And all at once she was struck by something terrifying in the aspect of man, something she had never experienced before, that separated man from her, some dark force of the spirit, that could grip male flesh. Donald never moved. He looked as if he could stand like that for ever.

The moment's sensation carried within it its own visual image—an aspect of man, a man's questing head, potent and mythological. Deep in her it would remain for ever.

For here was Helen, Helen Marway, in the bright sun, running with the invisible deer, running beyond men, in the light.]

Not pain, not death, not potent mythological faces—but light and the hooves of the running deer.

Until she felt in herself the dreadful cleavage, the awful balancing, pull and counter-pull, passion and ecstasy, between dark and light.

“There they are,” said Donald.

Roald Dahl, “Gallop Foxley”, *Someone Like You* (1953)

I

Five days a week, for thirty-six years, I have travelled the eight-twelve train to the City. It is never unduly crowded, and it takes me right in to Cannon Street Station, only an eleven and a half minute walk from the door of my office in Austin Friars. I have always liked the process of commuting; every phase of the little journey is a pleasure to me. There is a regularity about it that is agreeable and comforting to a person of habit, and in addition, it serves as a sort of slipway along which I am gently but firmly launched⁴ into the waters of daily business routine. Ours is a smallish country station and only nineteen or twenty people gather there to catch the eight-twelve. We are a group that rarely changes, and when occasionally a new face appears on the platform it causes a certain disclamatory, protestant ripple, like a new bird in a cage of canaries. But normally, when I arrive in the morning with my usual four minutes to spare, there they all are, these good, solid, steadfast people, standing in their right places with their right umbrellas and hats and ties and faces and their newspapers under their arms, as unchanged and unchangeable through the years as the furniture in my own living-room, I like that. I like also my corner seat by the window and reading *The Times* to the noise and motion of the train. This part of it lasts thirty-two minutes and it seems to soothe both my brain and my fretful old body like a good long massage. Believe me, there's nothing like routine and regularity for preserving one's peace of mind. I have now made this morning journey nearly ten thousand times in all, and I enjoy it more and more every day. Also (irrelevant, but interesting), I have become a sort of clock. I can tell at once if we are running two, three, or four minutes late, and I never have to look up to know which station we are stopped at. The walk at the other end from Cannon Street to my office is neither too long nor too short – a healthy little perambulation along streets crowded with fellow commuters all proceeding to their places of work on the same orderly schedule as myself. It gives me a sense of assurance to be moving among these dependable, dignified people who stick to their jobs and don't go gadding about all over the world. Their lives, like my own, are regulated nicely by the minute hand of an accurate watch, and very often our paths cross at the same times and places on the street each day. For example, as I turn the corner into St Swithin's Lane, I invariably come head on with a genteel middle-aged lady who wears silver pince-nez and carries a black brief-case in her hand – a first-rate accountant, I should say, or possibly an executive in the textile industry. When I cross over Threadneedle Street by the traffic lights, nine times out of ten I pass a gentleman who wears a different

garden flower in his buttonhole each day. He dresses in black trousers and grey spats and is clearly a punctual and meticulous person, probably a banker, or perhaps a solicitor like myself; and several times in the last twenty-five years, as we have hurried past one another across the street, our eyes have met in a fleeting glance of mutual approval and respect. At least half the faces I pass on this little walk are now familiar to me. And good faces they are too, my kind of faces, my kind of people – sound, sedulous, businesslike folk with none of that restlessness and glittering eye about them that you see in all these so-called clever types who want to tip the world upside-down with their Labour Governments and socialised medicines and all the rest of it. So you can see that I am, in every sense of the words, a contented commuter or would it be more accurate to say that I was a contented commuter? At the time when I wrote the little autobiographical sketch you have just read – intending to circulate it among the staff of my office as an exhortation and an example – I was giving a perfectly true account of my feelings. But that was a whole week ago, and since then something rather peculiar has happened.

II

As a matter of fact, it started to happen last Tuesday, the very morning that I was carrying the rough draft up to Town in my pocket; and this, to me, was so timely and coincidental that I can only believe it to have been the work of God. God had read my little essay and he had said to himself, “This man Perkins is becoming over-complacent. It is high time I taught him a lesson.” I honestly believe that’s what happened. As I say, it was last Tuesday, the Tuesday after Easter, a warm yellow spring morning, and I was striding on to the platform of our small country station with *The Times* tucked under my arm and the draft of “The Contented Commuter” in my pocket, when I immediately became aware that something was wrong. I could actually feel that curious little ripple of protest running along the ranks of my fellow commuters. I stopped and glanced around. The stranger was standing plumb in the middle of the platform, feet apart and arms folded, looking for all the world as though he owned the whole place. He was a biggish, thickset man, and even from behind he somehow managed to convey a powerful impression of arrogance and oil. Very definitely, he was not one of us. He carried a cane instead of an umbrella, his shoes were brown instead of black, the grey hat was cocked at a ridiculous angle, and in one way and another there seemed to be an excess of silk and polish about his person. More than this I did not care to observe. I walked straight past him with my face to the sky, adding, I sincerely hope, a touch of real frost to an atmosphere that was already cool. The train came in. And now, try if you can to imagine my horror when the new man actually followed me into my own compartment! Nobody had done this to me for fifteen years. My colleagues always respect my seniority. One of my special little pleasures is to have the place to myself for at least one, sometimes two or even three stations. But here, if you please, was this fellow, this stranger, straddling the seat opposite and blowing his nose and rustling the *Daily Mail* and lighting a disgusting pipe. I lowered my *Times* and stole a glance at his face. I suppose he was about the same age as me – sixty-two or three – but he had one of those unpleasantly handsome, brown, leathery countenances that you see nowadays in advertisements for men’s shirts – the lion shooter and the polo player and the Everest climber and the tropical explorer and the racing yachtsman all rolled into one; dark eyebrows, steely eyes, strong white teeth clamping the stem of a pipe. Personally, I mistrust all handsome men. The superficial pleasures of this life come too easily to them, and they seem to walk the world as though they themselves were personally responsible for their own good looks. I don’t mind a woman being pretty! That’s different. But in a man, I’m sorry, but somehow or other I find it downright offensive. Anyway, here was this one sitting right opposite me in the carriage, and I was looking at him over the top of my *Times* when suddenly he glanced up and our eyes met. “D’you mind the pipe?” he asked, holding it up in his fingers. That was all he said. But the sound of his voice had a sudden and extraordinary effect upon me. In fact, I think I jumped. Then I sort of froze up and sat staring at him for at least a minute before I got a hold of myself and made an answer, “This is a smoker,” I said, “so you may do as you please.” “I just thought I’d ask.” There it was again, that curiously crisp, familiar voice, clipping its words and spitting them out very hard and small like a little quick-firing gun shooting out raspberry seeds. Where had I

heard it before? And why did every word seem to strike upon some tiny tender spot far back in my memory? Good heavens, I thought. Pull yourself together. What sort of nonsense is this? The stranger returned to his paper. I pretended to do the same. But by this time I was properly put out and I couldn't concentrate at all. Instead, I kept stealing glances at him over the top of the editorial page. It was really an intolerable face, vulgarly, almost lasciviously handsome, with an oily salacious sheen all over the skin. But had I or had I not seen it before some time in my life? I began to think I had, because now, even when I looked at it I felt a peculiar kind of discomfort that I cannot quite describe – something to do with pain and with violence, perhaps even with fear. We spoke no more during the journey, but you can well imagine that by then my whole routine had been thoroughly upset. My day was ruined; and more than one of my clerks at the office felt the sharper edge of my tongue, particularly after luncheon when my digestion started acting up on me as well.

The next morning...

Samuel Becket, *Waiting for Godot* (1953)

Silence. They put on their hats.

ESTRAGON: Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!

VLADIMIR: *(to Pozzo)*. Tell him to think.

POZZO: Give him his hat.

VLADIMIR: His hat?

POZZO: He can't think without his hat.

VLADIMIR: *(to Estragon)*. Give him his hat.

ESTRAGON: Me! After what he did to me! Never!

VLADIMIR: I'll give it to him.

He does not move.

ESTRAGON: *(to Pozzo)*. Tell him to go and fetch it.

POZZO: It's better to give it to him.

VLADIMIR: I'll give it to him.

He picks up the hat and tenders it at arm's length to Lucky, who does not move.

POZZO: You must put it on his head.

ESTRAGON: *(to Pozzo)*. Tell him to take it.

POZZO: It's better to put it on his head.

VLADIMIR: I'll put it on his head.

He goes round behind Lucky, approaches him cautiously, puts the hat on his head and recoils smartly. Lucky does not move. Silence.

ESTRAGON: What's he waiting for?

POZZO: Stand back! *(Vladimir and Estragon move away from Lucky. Pozzo jerks the rope. Lucky looks at Pozzo.)* Think, pig! *(Pause. Lucky begins to dance.)* Stop! *(Lucky stops.)* Forward! *(Lucky advances.)* Stop! *(Lucky stops.)* Think!

Silence.

LUCKY: On the other hand with regard to—

POZZO: Stop! *(Lucky stops.)* Back! *(Lucky moves back.)* Stop! *(Lucky stops.)* Turn! *(Lucky turns towards auditorium.)* Think!

During Lucky's tirade the others react as follows.

1) Vladimir and Estragon all attention, Pozzo dejected and disgusted.

2) Vladimir and Estragon begin to protest, Pozzo's sufferings increase.

3) Vladimir and Estragon attentive again, Pozzo more and more agitated and groaning.

4) Vladimir and Estragon protest violently. Pozzo jumps up, pulls on the rope. General outcry. Lucky pulls on the rope, staggers, shouts his text. All three throw themselves on Lucky who struggles and shouts his text.

LUCKY: Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaquaqu with white beard quaquaquaquaqu outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labors left unfinished crowned by the Acacacademy of Anthropopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard it is established beyond all doubt all other doubt than that which clings to the labors of men that as a result of the labors unfinished of Testew and Cunard it is established as hereinafter but not so fast for reasons unknown that as a result of the public works of Puncher and Wattmann it is established beyond all doubt that in view of the labors of Fartov and Belcher left unfinished for reasons unknown of Testew and Cunard left unfinished it is established what many deny that man in Possy of Testew and Cunard that man in Essy that man in short that man in brief in spite of the strides of alimentation and defecation wastes and pines wastes and pines and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding gliding conating camogie skating tennis of all kinds dying flying sports of all sorts autumn summer winter winter tennis of all kinds hockey of all sorts penicillin and succedanea in a word I resume flying gliding golf over nine and eighteen holes tennis of all sorts in a word for reasons unknown in Feckham Peckham Fulham Clapham namely concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown but time will tell fades away I resume Fulham Clapham in a word the dead loss per head since the death of Bishop Berkeley being to the tune of one inch four ounce per head approximately by and large more or less to the nearest decimal good measure round figures stark naked in the stockinged feet in Connemara in a word for reasons unknown no matter what matter the facts are there and considering what is more much more grave that in the light of the labors lost of Steinweg and Peterman it appears what is more much more grave that in the light the light the light of the labors lost of Steinweg and Peterman that in the plains in the mountains by the seas by the rivers running water running fire the air is the same and then the earth namely the air and then the earth in the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas alas in the year of their Lord six hundred and something the air the earth the sea the earth abode of stones in the great deeps the great cold on sea on land and in the air I resume for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis the facts are there but time will tell I resume alas alas on on in short in fine on on abode of stones who can doubt it I resume but not so fast I resume the skull fading fading fading and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis on on the beard the flames the tears the stones so blue so calm alas alas on on the skull the skull the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the labors abandoned left unfinished graver still abode of stones in a word I resume alas alas abandoned unfinished the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the skull alas the stones Cunard (*mêlée, final vociferations*) . . . tennis . . . the stones . . . so calm . . . Cunard . . . unfinished . . .

POZZO: His hat!

Vladimir seizes Lucky's hat.

Silence of Lucky. He falls. Silence. Panting of the victors.

William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (1954), chapitre 7

Roger called from the coverts.

“Come and see!” The ground was turned over near the pig-run and there were droppings that

steamed. Jack bent down to them as though he loved them. “Ralph—we need meat even if we are hunting the other thing.” “If you mean going the right way, we’ll hunt.” They set off again, the hunters bunched a little by fear of the mentioned beast, while Jack quested ahead. They went more slowly than Ralph had bargained for; yet in a way he was glad to loiter, cradling his spear. Jack came up against some emergency of his craft and soon the procession stopped. Ralph leaned against a tree and at once the daydreams came swarming up. Jack was in charge of the hunt and there would be time to get to the mountain— Once, following his father from Chatham to Devonport, they had lived in a cottage on the edge of the moors. In the succession of houses that Ralph had known, this one stood out with particular clarity because after that house he had been sent away to school. Mummy had still been with them and Daddy had come home every day. Wild ponies came to the stone walls at the bottom of the garden, and it had snowed. Just behind the cottage there was a sort of shed and you could lie up there, watching the flakes swirl past. You could see the damp spot where each flake died; then you could mark the first flake that lay down without melting and watch the whole ground turn white. You could go indoors when you were cold and look out of the window, past the bright copper kettle and the plate with the little blue men —

When you went to bed there was a bowl of cornflakes with sugar and cream. And the books — they stood on the shelf by the bed, leaning together with always two or three laid flat on top because he had not bothered to put them back properly. They were dog-eared and scratched. There was the bright, shining one about Topsy and Mopsy that he never read because it was about two girls; there was the one about the Magician which you read with a kind of tied-down terror, skipping page twenty-seven with the awful picture of the spider; there was a book about people who had dug things up, Egyptian things; there was the *Boy's Book of Trains*, *The Boy's Book of Ships*. Vividly they came before him; he could have reached up and touched them, could feel the weight and slow slide with which the *Mammoth Book for Boys* would come out and slither down... Everything was all right; everything was good-humoured and friendly.

The bushes crashed ahead of them. Boys flung themselves wildly from the pig track and scrabbled in the creepers, screaming. Ralph saw Jack nudged aside and fall. Then there was a creature bounding along the pig track toward him, with tusks gleaming and an intimidating grunt.

Harold Pinter, *The Room*, 1957

Scene: A room in a large house. A door down right. A gas-fire down left. A gas-stove and sink, up left. A window up centre. A table and chairs, centre. A rocking chair, left centre. The foot of a double-bed protrudes from alcove, up right.

BERT is at the table, wearing a cap, a magazine propped in front of him. ROSE is at the stove.

ROSE. Here you are. This'll keep the cold out.

She places bacon and eggs on a plate, turns off the gas and takes the plate to the table.

It's very cold out, I can tell you. It's murder.

She returns to the stove and pours water from the kettle into the teapot, turns off the gas and brings the teapot to the table, pours salt and sauce on the plate and cuts two slices of bread. BERT begins to eat.

That's right. You eat that. You'll need it. You can feel it in here. Still, the room keeps warm. It's better than the basement, anyway.

She butters the bread.

I don't know how they live down there. It's asking for trouble. Go on. Eat it up. It'll do you good.

She goes to the sink, wipes a cup and saucer and brings them to the table.

If you want to go out you might as well have something inside you. Because you'll feel it when you get out.

She pours milk into the cup.

Just now I looked out of the window. It was enough for me. There wasn't a soul about. Can you hear the wind?

She sits in the rocking-chair.

I've never seen who it is. Who is it? Who lives down there? I'll have to ask. I mean, you might as well know, Bert. But whoever it is, it can't be too cosy.

Pause.

I think it's changed hands since I was last there. I didn't see who moved in then. I mean the first time it was taken.

Pause.

Anyway, I think they've gone now.

Pause.

But I think someone else has gone in now. I wouldn't like to live in that basement. Did you ever see the walls? They were running. This is all right for me. Go on, Bert. Have a bit more bread.

She goes to the table and cuts a slice of bread.

I'll have some cocoa on when you come back.

She goes to the window and settles the curtain.

No, this room's all right for me. I mean, you know where you are. When it's cold, for instance.

She goes to the table.

What about the rasher? Was it all right? It was a good one, I know, but not as good as the last lot I got in. It's the weather.

She goes to the rocking-chair, and sits.

Anyway, I haven't been out. I haven't been so well. I didn't feel up to it. Still, I'm much better today. I don't know about you though. I don't know whether you ought to go out. I mean, you shouldn't, straight after you've been laid up. Still. Don't worry, Bert. You go. You won't be long.

She rocks.

It's good you were up here, I can tell you. It's good you weren't down there, in the basement. That's no joke. Oh, I've left the tea. I've left the tea standing.

She goes to the table and pours tea into the cup.

No, it's not bad. Nice weak tea. Lovely weak tea. Here you are. Drink it down. I'll wait for mine. Anyway, I'll have it a bit stronger.

She takes a plate to the sink and leaves it.

Those walls would have finished you off. I don't know who lives down there now. Whoever it is, they're taking a big chance. Maybe they're foreigners.

She goes to the rocking-chair and sits.

I'd have pulled you through.

Pause.

There isn't room for two down there anyway. I think there was one first, before he moved out. Maybe they've got two now.

She rocks.

If ever they ask you, Bert, I'm quite happy where I am. We're quiet, we're all right. You're happy up here. It's not far up either, when you come in from outside. And we're not bothered. And nobody bothers us.

Pause.

I don't know why you have to go out. Couldn't you run it down tomorrow? I could put the fire in later. You could sit by the fire. That's what you like, Bert, of an evening. It'll be dark in a minute as well, soon.

She rocks.

It gets dark now.

She rises and pours out tea at the table.

I made plenty. Go on.

She sits at the table.

You looked out today? It's got ice on the roads. Oh, I know you can drive. I'm not saying you can't drive. I mentioned to Mr. Kidd this morning that you'd be doing a run today. I told him you hadn't been too grand, but I said, still, he's a marvellous driver. I wouldn't mind what time, where, nothing, Bert. You know how to drive. I told him.

She wraps her cardigan about her.

But it's cold. It's really cold today, chilly. I'll have you some nice cocoa on for when you get back.

She rises, goes to the window, and looks out.

It's quiet. Be coming on for dark. There's no one about.

She stands, looking.

Wait a minute.

Pause.

I wonder who that is.

Pause.

No. I thought I saw someone.

Pause.

No.

She drops the curtain.

You know what though? It looks a bit better. It's not so windy. You'd better put on your thick jersey.

She goes to the rocking-chair, sits and rocks.

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, 1966

B. [ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN are two minor characters in Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Here they are lost in Tom

Stoppard's 1966 rewriting of Hamlet.]

ROS. What are you playing at?

GUIL. Words, words. They're all we have to go on.

(Pause.)

ROS. Shouldn't we be doing something constructive ?

GUIL. What did you have in mind ? ... A short, blunt human pyramid... ?

ROS. We could go.

GUIL. Where?

ROS. After him1.

GUIL. Why? They've got us placed now – if we start moving around, we'll all be chasing each other all night.

(Hiatus.)

ROS (at footlights): How very intriguing! (Turns.) I feel like a spectator – an appalling prospect. The only thing that makes it

bearable is the irrational belief that somebody interesting will come on in a minute....

GUIL. See anyone?

ROS. No. You?

GUIL. No. (At footlights.) What a fine persecution – to be kept intrigued without ever quite being enlightened ... (Pause.)
We've had no practice.
ROS. We could play at questions.
GUIL. What good would that do?
ROS. Practice!
GUIL. Statement! One-love.
ROS. Cheating!
GUIL. How?
ROS. I hadn't started yet?
GUIL. Statement. Two-love.
ROS. Are you counting that?
GUIL. What?
ROS. Are you counting that?
GUIL. Foul. No repetitions. Three-love. First game to ...
ROS. I'm not going to play if you're going to be like that.
GUIL. Whose serve?
ROS. Hah?
GUIL. Foul. No grunts. Love-one.
ROS. Whose go?
GUIL. Why?
ROS. Why not?
GUIL. What for?
ROS. Foul. No synonyms. One-all.
GUIL. What in God's name is going on?
ROS. Foul. No rhetoric. Two-one.
GUIL. What does it all add up to?
ROS. Can't you guess?
GUIL. Were you addressing me?
ROS. Is there anyone else?
GUIL. Who?
ROS. How would I know?
GUIL. Why do you ask?
ROS. Are you serious?
GUIL. Was that rhetoric?
ROS. No.
GUIL. Statement! Two-all. Game point.
ROS. What's the matter with you today?
GUIL. When?
ROS. What?
GUIL. Are you deaf?
ROS. Am I dead?
GUIL. Yes or no?
ROS. Is there a choice?
GUIL. Is there a God?
ROS. Foul! No non sequiturs, three—two, one game all.

Angela Carter, “The Fall River Axe Murders” (1987)

Lizzie Boden with an axe
Gave her father forty whacks
When she saw what she had done
She gave her mother forty one
Children’s rhyme

Early in the morning of the fourth of August, 1892.

Hot, hot, hot ... very early in the morning, before the factory whistle, but, even at this hour, everything shimmers and quivers under the attack of the white, furious sun already high in the still air.

Its inhabitants have never come to terms with these hot, humid summers – for it is the humidity more than the heat that makes them intolerable; the weather clings like a low fever you cannot shake off. The Indians who lived here first had the sense to take off their buckskins when hot weather came and sit up to their necks in ponds; not so the descendants of the industrious, self-mortifying saints who imported the Protestant ethic wholesale into a country intended for the siesta and are proud, proud! of flying in the face of nature. In most latitudes with summers like these, everything slows down, then. You stay all day in penumbra behind drawn blinds and closed shutters; you wear clothes loose enough to make your own breeze to cool yourself when you infrequently move. But the ultimate decade of the last century finds us at the high point of hard work, here; all will soon be bustle, men will go out into the furnace of the morning well wrapped up in flannel underclothes, linen shirts, vests and coats and trousers of sturdy woollen cloth, and they garrotte themselves with neckties, too, they think it is so virtuous to be uncomfortable.

And today it is the middle of a heat-wave; so early in the morning and the mercury has touched the middle eighties, already, and shows no sign of slowing down its headlong ascent.

As far as clothes were concerned, women only appeared to get off more lightly. On this morning, when, after breakfast and the performance of a few household duties, Lizzie Borden will murder her parents, she will, on rising, don a simple cotton frock – but, under that, went a long, starched cotton petticoat; another short, starched cotton petticoat; long drawers; woollen stockings; a chemise; and a whalebone corset that took her viscera in a stern hand and squeezed them very tightly. She also strapped a heavy linen napkin between her legs because she was menstruating.

In all these clothes, out of sorts and nauseous as she was, in this dementing heat, her belly in a vice, she will heat up a flat-iron on a stove and press handkerchiefs with the heated iron until it is time for her to go down to the cellar woodpile to collect the hatchet with which our imagination – ‘Lizzie Borden with an axe’ – always equips her, just as we always visualise St Catherine rolling along her wheel, the emblem of her passion.

Soon, in just as many clothes as Miss Lizzie wears, if less fine, Bridget, the servant girl, will slop kerosene on a sheet of last night’s newspaper crumpled with a stick or two of kindling. When the fire settles down, she will cook breakfast; the fire will keep her suffocating company as she washes up afterwards.

In a serge suit, one look at which would be enough to bring you out in prickly heat, Old Borden will perambulate the perspiring town, truffling for money like a pig until he will return home mid-morning to keep a pressing appointment with destiny.

But nobody here is up and about, yet; it is still early morning, before the factory whistle, the perfect stillness of hot weather, a sky already white, the shadowless light of New England like blows from the eye of God, and the sea, white, and the river, white.

If we have largely forgotten the physical discomforts of the itching, oppressive garments of the past and the corrosive effects of perpetual physical discomfort on the nerves, then we have mercifully forgotten, too, the smells of the past, the domestic odours – ill-washed flesh; infrequently changed underwear; chamber-pots; slop-pails; inadequately plumbed privies; rotting food; unattended teeth; and the streets are no fresher than indoors, the omnipresent acidity of horse piss and dung, drains, sudden stench of old death from butchers' shops, the amniotic horror of the fishmonger.

You would drench your handkerchief with eau de cologne and press it to your nose. You would splash yourself with parma violet so that the reek of fleshly decay you always carried with you was overlaid by that of the embalming parlour. You would abhor the air you breathed.

Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems* (1988), 'To My Wife' (1988)

Choice of you shuts up that peacock-fan
The future was, in which temptingly spread
All that elaborative nature can.
Matchless potential! but unlimited
Only so long as I elected nothing;
Simply to choose stopped all ways up but one,
And sent the tease-birds from the bushes flapping.
No future now. I and you now, alone.

So for your face I have exchanged all faces,
For your few properties bargained the brisk
Baggage, the mask-and-magic-man's regalia.
Now you become my boredom and my failure,
Another way of suffering, a risk,
A heavier-than-air hypostasis.

Philip Larkin, "Toads", *The Less Deceived*, 1955

Why should I let the toad *work*
Squat on my life?
Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork
and drive the brute off?
Six days of the week it soils
With its sickening poison-
Just for paying a few bills!
That's out of proportion.

Lots of folk live on their wits:
 Lecturers, lispers,
 Losels, loblolly-men, louts-
 They don't end as paupers;
 Lots of folk live up lanes
 With fires in a bucket,
 Eat windfalls and tinned sardines-
 They seem to like it.
 Their nippers have got bare feet,
 Their unspeakable wives
 Are skinny as whippets-and yet
 No one actually starves.
 Ah, were I courageous enough
 To shout *Stuff your pension!*
 But I know, all too well, that's the stuff
 That dreams are made on:
 For something sufficiently toad-like
 Squats in me, too;
 Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,
 And cold as snow,
 And will never allow me to blarney
 My way to getting
 The fame and the girl and the money
 All at one sitting.
 I don't say, one bodies the other
 One's spiritual truth;
 But I do say it's hard to lose either,
 When you have both.

Philip Larkin, "Talking in Bed" (1960), *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964)

Talking in bed ought to be easiest,
 Lying together there goes back so far,
 An emblem of two people being honest.
 Yet more and more time passes silently.
 Outside, the wind's incomplete unrest
 Builds and disperses clouds in the sky,
 And dark towns heap up on the horizon.
 None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why
 At this unique distance from isolation
 It becomes still more difficult to find
 Words at once true and kind,
 Or not untrue and not unkind.

Philip Larkin, "Days", *The Whitsun Weddings*, 1964

What are days for?
Days are where we live.
They come, they wake us
Time and time over.
They are to be happy in:
Where can we live but days?

Ah, solving that question
Brings the priest and the doctor
In their long coats
Running over the fields.

Philip Larkin, “High Windows”, *High Windows*, 1974

When I see a couple of kids
And guess he’s fucking her and she’s
Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm,
I know this is paradise

Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives—
Bonds and gestures pushed to one side
Like an outdated combine harvester,
And everyone young going down the long slide

To happiness, endlessly. I wonder if
Anyone looked at me, forty years back,
And thought, *That’ll be the life;*
No God any more, or sweating in the dark

About hell and that, or having to hide
What you think of the priest. He
And his lot will all go down the long slide
Like free bloody birds. And immediately

Rather than words comes the thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.

Ian McEwan, *The Daydreamer* (1994)

The Cat

It was just one such afternoon, a Tuesday as it happened, four o’clock and already the light fading, curtains drawn and lights on, when Peter eased himself on to the carpet where William lay before a bright fire whose flames were curling round a fat elm log. Down the chimney came the moan of the freezing wind as it whipped across the rooftops. Peter had sprinted from the bus stop with Kate to

keep warm. Now he was safely indoors with his old friend who was pretending to be younger than his years by rolling on to his back and letting his front paws flop helplessly. He wanted his chest tickled. As Peter began to move his fingers lightly through the fur, the rumbling noise grew louder, so loud that every bone in the old cat's body rattled. And then, William stretched out a paw to Peter's fingers and tried to draw them up higher. Peter let the cat guide his hand.

'Do you want me to tickle your chin?' he murmured. But no. The cat wanted to be touched right at the base of his throat. Peter felt something hard there. It moved from side to side when he touched it. Something had got trapped in the fur. Peter propped himself on an elbow in order to investigate. He parted the fur. At first he thought he was looking at a piece of jewellery, a little silver tag. But there was no chain, and as he poked and peered he saw that it was not metal at all, but polished bone, oval and flattened in the centre, and most curiously of all, that it was attached to William Cat's skin. The piece of bone fitted well between his forefinger and thumb. He tightened his grip and gave a tug. William Cat's purr grew even louder. Peter pulled again, downwards, and this time he felt something give.

Looking down through the fur, and parting it with the tips of his fingers, he saw that he had opened up a small slit in the cat's skin. It was as if he were holding the handle of a zip. Again he pulled, and now there was a dark opening two inches long. William Cat's purr was coming from in there. Perhaps, Peter thought, I'll see his heart beating. A paw was gently pushing against his fingers again. William Cat wanted him to go on.

And this is what he did. He unzipped the whole cat from throat to tail. Peter wanted to part the skin to peep inside. But he did not wish to appear nosy. He was just about to call out to Kate when there was a movement, a stirring inside the cat, and from the opening in the fur there came a faint pink glow which grew brighter. And suddenly, out of William Cat climbed a, well, a thing, a creature. But Peter was not certain that it was really there to touch, for it seemed to be made entirely of light. And while it did not have whiskers or a tail, or a purr, or even fur, or four legs, everything about it seemed to say 'cat'. It was the very essence of the word, the heart of the idea. It was a quiet, slinky, curvy fold of pink and purple light, and it was climbing out of the cat.

'You must be William's spirit,' Peter said aloud. 'Or are you a ghost?'

The light made no sound, but it understood. It seemed to say, without actually speaking the words, that it was both these things, and much more besides.

When it was clear of the cat, which continued to lie on its back on the carpet in front of the re, the cat spirit drifted into the air, and floated up to Peter's shoulder where it settled. Peter was not frightened. He felt the glow of the spirit on his cheek. And then the light drifted behind his head, out of sight. He felt it touch his neck and a warm shudder ran down his back. The cat spirit took hold of something knobbly at the top of his spine and drew it down, right down his back, and as his own body opened up, he felt the cool air of the room tickle the warmth of his insides.

It was the oddest thing, to climb out of your body, just step out of it and leave it lying on the carpet like a shirt you had just taken o. Peter saw his own glow, which was purple and the purest white. The two spirits hovered in the air facing each other. And then Peter suddenly knew what he wanted to do, what he had to do. He floated towards William Cat and hovered. The body stood open, like a door, and it looked so inviting, so welcoming. He dropped down and stepped inside. How ne it was, to dress yourself as a cat. It was not squelchy, as he thought all insides must be. It was dry and warm. He lay on his back and slipped his arms into William's front legs. Then he wiggled his legs into William's back legs. His head fitted perfectly inside the cat's head. He glanced across at his own body just in time to see William Cat's spirit disappear inside.

Using his paws, Peter was able to zip himself up easily. He stood, and took a few steps. What a delight, to walk on four soft white paws. He could see his whiskers springing out from the sides of his face, and he felt his tail curling behind him. His tread was light, and his fur was like the most comfortable of old woollen jumpers. As his pleasure in being a cat grew, his heart swelled, and a tingling sensation deep in his throat became so strong that he could actually hear himself. Peter was purring. He was Peter Cat, and over there, was William Boy.

Every morning I walked in to work at the university from a nearby village where I rented a room from a sad widow. I was a widow myself, in a manner of speaking (I'd run off and left my husband), but you wouldn't have known it to look at me unless you thought all women of thirty five were in mourning. Black clothes were fashionable at that time: we all wore them. I strode in my long black mackintosh along the muddy roads edged by fields, into the great park, and thence, following a footpath, to my place of work. Every morning I laced up my shoes; flat black suede brogues, with a thick dimpled rubber sole, a pointed triangular toe, just two eyelets, and a black lace thin as a string of liquorice that I tied into a sharp bow. My mother frequently scolded me for my childishness: you see everything in terms of food and eating. Those black suede shoes, when I'd spotted them, furry and glistening in the shop, had indeed seemed good enough to eat. At night, when I walked back to my lodgings, to my small front bedroom in my landlady's cramped modern house, my shoes sat by the side of my single bed while I ate my bowl of spaghetti and drank my wine, and then I'd lift the shoes up, one after the other, wipe and brush them tenderly, scrape and fiddle off, with the tip of a knife, the caked mud that clotted them. Crusts clunked down, pale and dried. I liked knowing that earlier I'd left my traces along the road, that my footsteps had imprinted the scars of water-glinting gravel, the muddy ruts. In these depressions I could have cast reliefs of rubber, of plaster, of wax. I always liked seeing others' footprints, the tracks of their journeys. I liked taking a bit of the road surface home with me.

It's true I was childish. I wanted too much of everything; too much pleasure; my mouth opened to the world to kiss it and take it in. Children want to eat the world. It's a way of knowing. Touch the world. Stroke it, grasp it, pick it up, cram it into your mouth. Children who can't yet talk don't understand metaphor; they want mud; the real thing. As a child I made mud pies, sitting outside Dad's shed on his allotment. I watched him dig his vegetable plot; turning over the earth with his spade. Don't dig too deep, he said to me years later, when he realised I could talk: a spit's just right. One spit at a time, going from left to right; row after row; like writing. Worms like commas wriggled up and I gave them lifts in Dad's barrow. Sometimes I chopped the worms in half with Dad's spade to see if both halves still wriggled. I know it was cruel, but I like to know what things are made of and how they work. I prodded at my husband as I prodded earth and earthworms: let me love you; and he complained: don't dig too deep. Mud on my father's allotment held china and tin shards of memory, an agricultural past, and it held the repeated imprint of my thumb, the press of our Wellingtons. Now churchyard mud holds Dad, and Mum too. They're baked in a holy mud pie; beaks sticking up out of the mud crust, mud blackbirds still warbling hymns at me. They've rotted to good compost inside me. I fork them up from time to time. I turn them over gently. Like leaf mould. Like the leaves of a book.

I flicked over the leaves of my story so far, felt at a loss, determined to begin my story again, took the job in eastern England. Most mornings, all through that autumn and winter when I lived with the gentle widow, I left her house to walk in to work, rather than hitching a lift, and it rained. Fine drizzle wetted my face. The ploughed fields formed long ripples of mud, as though they were a beach abandoned by the retreating tide. The sky gleamed opal and pearl, and white mist like mohair threaded the thorny black hedgerows. I marched along the muddy side of the gravelled road, its surface broken and roughed up, following the length of the field; one field after another; a soft strobe of mud; my eyes levelling with the deep furrows, the turned, buttery earth. When the fog dispersed, the sun burst out: each clod sparkled, cast a tiny precise shadow; the field glittered, shapes of pale brown and purple and coffee and black broken up, gleaming like chocolate; tilted blocks that stretched far away; and a fringe of hairy elms on the horizon. I passed a pink-washed farm, a clump of cottages with kitchen gardens neat as Dad's, ruled with dotted lines of leeks. I studied the tall knobbed twists of turquoise Brussels

sprouts; the pure pale green of cabbages, tight-waisted and frilly; about to bolt. (I'd bolted; donned my black suede shoes and run away.) Yes I could have eaten a handful of earth, dry-damp-delicious in my mouth, and I could have eaten the long woven hedges and the bright grass and the black thorns glossy as silver. I wanted to lick all of it, taste it and swallow it and be one with it. And then, dissolving, I wasn't myself, I wasn't myself any more. I'd gone. I was just part of the mud, fresh in the rain and the sun and I was fed by the world, mouth open, full, churning with joy. [...]

AMERICAN LITERATURE

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), “The Tell-Tale Heart”, short story published in a periodical, *The Pioneer*, in 1843

TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

[It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he has passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch’s minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back—but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness, (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out—”Who’s there?”

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening;—just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief—oh, no!—it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself—“It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor,” or “It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to feel the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, at length a simple dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man’s face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the sense?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)

CHAPTER I THE PRISON-DOOR

A throng of bearded men, in sad-coloured garments and grey steeple-crowned hats, inter-mixed with women, some wearing hoods, and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes.

The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognised it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison. In accordance with this rule it may safely be assumed that the forefathers of Boston had built the first prison-house somewhere in the Vicinity of Cornhill, almost as seasonably as they marked out the first burial-ground, on Isaac Johnson's lot, and round about his grave, which subsequently became the nucleus of all the congregated sepulchres in the old churchyard of King's Chapel. Certain it is that, some fifteen or twenty years after the settlement of the town, the wooden jail was already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the ponderous iron-work of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era. Before this ugly

edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pig-weed, apple-pern, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilised society, a prison. But on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-hush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him.

This rose-bush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in history; but whether it had merely survived out of the stern old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that originally overshadowed it, or whether, as there is far authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson as she entered the prison-door, we shall not take upon us to determine. Finding it so directly on the threshold of our narrative, which is now about to issue from that inauspicious portal, we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers, and present it to the reader. It may serve, let us hope, to symbolise some sweet moral blossom that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow.

CHAPTER XVIII

A FLOOD OF SUNSHINE

‘Let us not look back,’ answered Hester Prynne. ‘The past is gone! Wherefore should we linger upon it now? See! With this symbol I undo it all, and make it as if it had never been!’ So speaking, she undid the clasp that fastened the scarlet letter, and, taking it from her bosom, threw it to a distance among the withered leaves. The mystic token alighted on the hither verge of the stream. With a hand’s-breadth further flight, it would have fallen into the water, and have given the little brook another woe to carry onward, besides the unintelligible tale which it still kept murmuring about. But there lay the embroidered letter, glittering like a lost jewel, which some ill-fated wanderer might pick up, and thenceforth be haunted by strange phantoms of guilt, sinkings of the heart, and unaccountable misfortune. The stigma gone, Hester heaved a long, deep sigh, in which the burden of shame and anguish departed from her spirit. O exquisite relief! She had not known the weight until she felt the freedom! By another impulse, she took off the formal cap that confined her hair, and down it fell upon her shoulders, dark and rich, with at once a shadow and a light in its abundance, and imparting the charm of softness to her features. There played around her mouth, and beamed out of her eyes, a radiant and tender smile, that seemed gushing from the very heart of womanhood. A crimson flush was glowing on her cheek, that had been long so pale. Her sex, her youth, and the whole richness of her beauty, came back from what men call the irrevocable past, and clustered themselves with her maiden hope, and a happiness before unknown, within the magic circle of this hour. And, as if the gloom of the earth and sky had been but the effluence of these two mortal hearts, it vanished with their sorrow. All at once, as with a sudden smile of heaven, forth burst the sunshine, pouring a very flood into the obscure forest, gladdening each green leaf, transmuting the yellow fallen ones to gold, and gleaming adown the gray trunks of the solemn trees. The objects that had made a shadow hitherto, embodied the brightness now. The course of the little brook might be traced by its merry gleam afar into the wood’s heart of mystery, which had become a mystery of joy. Such was the sympathy of Nature—that wild, heathen Nature of the forest, never subjugated by human law, nor illumined by higher truth—with the bliss of these two spirits! Love, whether newly-born, or aroused from a death-like slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester’s eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale’s!

Walt Whitman, "I hear America Singing," (1860)

I hear America Singing
I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe
and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off
work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the
deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing
as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the
morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at
work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young
fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), chapitre 6

Isabel Archer was a young person of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active. It had been her fortune to possess a finer mind than most of the persons among whom her lot was cast; to have a larger perception of surrounding facts and to care for knowledge that was tinged with the unfamiliar. It is true that among her contemporaries she passed for a young woman of extraordinary profundity; for these excellent people never withheld their admiration from a reach of intellect of which they themselves were not conscious, and spoke of Isabel as a prodigy of learning, a creature reported to have read the classic authors--in translations. Her paternal aunt, Mrs. Varian, once spread the rumour that Isabel was writing a book--Mrs. Varian having a reverence for books, and averred that the girl would distinguish herself in print.

Mrs. Varian thought highly of literature, for which she entertained that esteem that is connected with a sense of privation. Her own large house, remarkable for its assortment of mosaic tables and decorated ceilings, was unfurnished with a library, and in the way of printed volumes contained nothing but half a dozen novels in paper on a shelf in the apartment of one of the Miss Varians. Practically, Mrs. Varian's acquaintance with literature was confined to *The New York Interviewer*; as she very justly said, after you had read the *Interviewer* you had lost all faith in culture. Her tendency, with this, was rather to keep the *Interviewer* out of the way of her daughters; she was determined to bring them up properly, and they read nothing at all. Her impression with regard to Isabel's labours was quite illusory; the girl had never attempted to write a book and had no desire for the laurels of authorship.

She had no talent for expression and too little of the consciousness of genius; she only had a general idea that people were right when they treated her as if she were rather superior. Whether or no she were superior, people were right in admiring her if they thought her so; for it seemed to her often that her mind moved more quickly than theirs, and this encouraged an impatience that might easily be confounded with superiority. It may be affirmed without delay that Isabel was probably very liable to

the sin of self-esteem; she often surveyed with complacency the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; she treated herself to occasions of homage.

Meanwhile her errors and delusions were frequently such as a biographer interested in preserving the dignity of his subject must shrink from specifying. Her thoughts were a tangle of vague outlines which had never been corrected by the judgement of people speaking with authority. In matters of opinion she had had her own way, and it had led her into a thousand ridiculous zigzags. At moments she discovered she was grotesquely wrong, and then she treated herself to a week of passionate humility. After this she held her head higher than ever again; for it was of no use, she had an unquenchable desire to think well of herself. She had a theory that it was only under this provision life was worth living; that one should be one of the best, should be conscious of a fine organisation (she couldn't help knowing her organisation was fine), should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom, of happy impulse, of inspiration gracefully chronic. It was almost as unnecessary to cultivate doubt of one's self as to cultivate doubt of one's best friend: one should try to be one's own best friend and to give one's self, in this manner, distinguished company.

Emily Dickinson, "My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun -" (c. 1863)

My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun -
In Corners - till a Day
The Owner passed - identified -
And carried Me away -

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods -
And now We hunt the Doe -
And every time I speak for Him
The Mountains straight reply -

And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the Valley glow -
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let it's pleasure through -

And when at Night - Our good Day done -
I guard My Master's Head -
'Tis better than the Eider Duck's
Deep Pillow - to have shared -

To foe of His - I'm deadly foe -
None stir the second time -
On whom I lay a Yellow Eye -
Or an emphatic Thumb -

Though I than He - may longer live
He longer must - than I -
For I have but the power to kill,
Without - the power to die -

Emily Dickinson, “Hope” (1891)

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Emily Dickinson, “Wild Nights! Wild Nights!” (1891)

Wild nights - Wild nights!
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile - the winds -
To a Heart in port -
Done with the Compass -
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden -
Ah - the Sea!
Might I but moor - tonight -
In thee!

Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)

The youth cringed as if discovered in a crime. By heavens, they had won after all! The imbecile line had remained and become victors. He could hear cheering.

He lifted himself upon his toes and looked in the direction of the fight. A yellow fog lay wallowing on the treetops. From beneath it came the clatter of musketry. Hoarse cries told of an advance.

He turned away amazed and angry. He felt that he had been wronged.

He had fled, he told himself, because annihilation approached. He had done a good part in saving himself, who was a little piece of the army. He had considered the time, he said, to be one in which it was the duty of every little piece to rescue itself if possible. Later the officers could fit the little pieces together again, and make a battle front. If none of the little pieces were wise enough to save themselves from the flurry of death at such a time, why, then, where would be the army? It was all plain that he had proceeded according to very correct and commendable rules. His actions had been sagacious things. They had been full of strategy. They were the work of a master's legs.

Thoughts of his comrades came to him. The brittle blue line had withstood the blows and won. He grew bitter over it. It seemed that the blind ignorance and stupidity of those little pieces had betrayed him. He had been overturned and crushed by their lack of sense in holding the position, when intelligent deliberation would have convinced them that it was impossible. He, the enlightened man who looks afar in the dark, had fled because of his superior perceptions and knowledge. He felt a great anger against his comrades. He knew it could be proved that they had been fools.

He wondered what they would remark when later he appeared in camp. His mind heard howls of derision. Their density would not enable them to understand his sharper point of view.

He began to pity himself acutely. He was ill used. He was trodden beneath the feet of an iron injustice. He had proceeded with wisdom and from the most righteous motives under heaven's blue only to be frustrated by hateful circumstances.

A dull, animal-like rebellion against his fellows, war in the abstract, and fate grew within him. He shambled along with bowed head, his brain in a tumult of agony and despair. When he looked loweringly up, quivering at each sound, his eyes had the expression of those of a criminal who thinks his guilt little and his punishment great, and knows that he can find no words.

He went from the fields into a thick woods, as if resolved to bury himself. He wished to get out of hearing of the crackling shots which were to him like voices.

The ground was cluttered with vines and bushes, and the trees grew close and spread out like bouquets. He was obliged to force his way with much noise. The creepers, catching against his legs, cried out harshly as their sprays were torn from the barks of trees. The swishing saplings tried to make known his presence to the world. He could not conciliate the forest. As he made his way, it was always calling out protestations. When he separated embraces of trees and vines the disturbed foliages waved their arms and turned their face leaves toward him. He dreaded lest these noisy motions and cries should bring men to look at him. So he went far, seeking dark and intricate places.

After a time the sound of musketry grew faint and the cannon boomed in the distance. The sun, suddenly apparent, blazed among the trees. The insects were making rhythmical noises. They seemed to be grinding their teeth in unison. A woodpecker stuck his impudent head around the side of a tree. A bird flew on lighthearted wing.

Off was the rumble of death. It seemed now that Nature had no ears.

This landscape gave him assurance. A fair field holding life. It was the religion of peace. It would die if its timid eyes were compelled to see blood. He conceived Nature to be a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy.

He threw a pine cone at a jovial squirrel, and he ran with chattering fear. High in a treetop he stopped, and, poking his head cautiously from behind a branch, looked down with an air of trepidation.

The youth felt triumphant at this exhibition. There was the law, he said. Nature had given him a sign. The squirrel, immediately upon recognizing danger, had taken to his legs without ado. He did not stand stolidly baring his furry belly to the missile, and die with an upward glance at the sympathetic heavens. On the contrary, he had fled as fast as his legs could carry him; and he was but an ordinary squirrel, too—doubtless no philosopher of his race. The youth wended, feeling that Nature was of his mind. She re-enforced his argument with proofs that lived where the sun shone.

Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)

Edna had attempted all summer to learn to swim. She had received instructions from both the men and women; in some instances from the children. Robert had pursued a system of lessons almost daily; and he was nearly at the point of discouragement in realizing the futility of his efforts. A certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water, unless there was a hand near by that might reach out and reassure her.

But that night she was like the little tottering, stumbling, clutching child, who of a sudden realizes its powers, and walks for the first time alone, boldly and with over-confidence. She could have shouted for joy. She did shout for joy, as with a sweeping stroke or two she lifted her body to the surface of the water.

A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before.

Her unlooked-for achievement was the subject of wonder, applause, and admiration. Each one congratulated himself that his special teachings had accomplished this desired end.

"How easy it is!" she thought. "It is nothing," she said aloud; "why did I not discover before that it was nothing. Think of the time I have lost splashing about like a baby!" She would not join the groups in their sports and bouts, but intoxicated with her newly conquered power, she swam out alone.

She turned her face seaward to gather in an impression of space and solitude, which the vast expanse of water, meeting and melting with the moonlit sky, conveyed to her excited fancy. As she swam she seemed to be reaching out for the unlimited in which to lose herself.

Once she turned and looked toward the shore, toward the people she had left there. She had not gone any great distance—that is, what would have been a great distance for an experienced swimmer. But to her unaccustomed vision the stretch of water behind her assumed the aspect of a barrier which her unaided strength would never be able to overcome.

A quick vision of death smote her soul, and for a second of time appalled and enfeebled her senses. But by an effort she rallied her staggering faculties and managed to regain the land.

She made no mention of her encounter with death and her flash of terror, except to say to her husband, "I thought I should have perished out there alone."

"You were not so very far, my dear; I was watching you," he told her.

William Faulkner, *Sanctuary*, incipit (1931)

I

From beyond the screen of bushes which surrounded the spring, Popeye watched the man drinking. A faint path led from the road to the spring. Popeye watched the man, a tall, thin man, hatless, in worn gray flannel trousers and carrying a tweed coat over his arm-- emerge from the path and kneel to drink from the spring.

The spring welled up at the root of a beech tree and flowed away upon a bottom of whorled and waved sand. It was surrounded by a thick growth of cane and brier, of cypress and gum in which broken sunlight lay sourceless. Somewhere, hidden and secret yet nearby, a bird sang three notes and ceased.

In the spring the drinking man leaned his face to the broken and myriad reflection of his own drinking. When he rose up he saw among them the scattered reflection of Popeye's straw hat, though he had heard no sound. He saw, facing him across the spring, a man of under size, his hands in his coat pockets, a cigarette slanted from his chin. His suit was black, with a tight, high-waisted coat. His trousers were rolled once and caked with mud above mud-caked shoes. His face had a queer, bloodless color, as

though seen by electric light; against the sunny silence, in his slanted straw hat and his slightly akimbo arms, he had that vicious depthless quality of stamped tin.

Behind him the bird sang again, three bars in monotonous repetition: a sound meaningless and profound out of a suspirant and peaceful following silence which seemed to isolate the spot, and out of which a moment later came the sound of an automobile passing along a road and dying away.

The drinking man knelt beside the spring.

"You've got a pistol in that pocket, I suppose," he said.

Across the spring Popeye appeared to contemplate him with two knobs of soft black rubber. "I'm asking you," Popeye said. "What's that in your pocket?"

The other man's coat was still across his arm. He lifted his other hand toward the coat, out of one pocket of which protruded a crushed felt hat, from the other a book.

"Which pocket?" he said.

"Don't show me," Popeye said. "Tell me."

The other man stopped his hand. "It's a book."

"What book?" Popeye said.

"Just a book. The kind that people read. Some people do."

"Do you read books?" Popeye said.

The other man's hand was frozen above the coat. Across the spring they looked at one another. The cigarette wreathed its faint plume across Popeye's face, one side of his face squinted against the smoke like a mask carved into two simultaneous expressions.

From his hip pocket Popeye took a soiled handkerchief and spread it upon his heels. Then he squatted, facing the man across the spring. That was about four o'clock on an afternoon in May. They squatted so, facing one another across the spring, for two hours. Now and then the bird sang back in the swamp, as though it were worked by a clock; twice more invisible automobiles passed along the highroad and died away. Again the bird sang.

"And of course you don't know the name of it," the man across the spring said. "I don't suppose you'd know a bird at all, without it was singing in a cage in a hotel lounge, or cost four dollars on a plate." Popeye said nothing. He squatted in his tight black suit, his right-hand coat pocket sagging compactly against his flank, twisting and pinching cigarettes in his little, doll-like hands, spitting into the spring. His skin had a dead, dark pallor. His nose was faintly aquiline, and he had no chin at all. His face just went away, like the face of a wax doll set too near a hot fire and for gotten.

Eugene O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931)

(SCENE--Ezra Mannon's bedroom. A big four-poster bed is at rear, center, the foot front, the head against the rear wall. A small stand, with a candle on it, is by the head of the bed on the left. To the left of the stand is a door leading into Christine's room. The door is open. In the left wall are two windows. At left, front, is a table with a lamp on it and a chair beside it. In the right wall, front, is a door leading to the hall. Further back, against the wall, is a bureau.

None of these details can be discerned at first because the room is in darkness, except for what moonlight filters feebly through the shutters. It is around dawn of the following morning.

Christine's form can be made out, a pale ghost in the darkness, as she slips slowly and stealthily from the bed. She tiptoes to the table, left front, and picks up a light-colored dressing-gown that is flung over the chair and puts it on. She stands listening for some sound from the bed. A pause. Then Mannon's voice comes suddenly from the bed, dull and lifeless.

MANNON--Christine.

CHRISTINE--(*starts violently--in a strained voice*) Yes.

MANNON--Must be near daybreak, isn't it?

CHRISTINE--Yes. It is beginning to get gray.

MANNON--What made you jump when I spoke? Is my voice so strange to you?

CHRISTINE--I thought you were asleep.

MANNON--I haven't been able to sleep. I've been lying here thinking. What makes you so uneasy?

CHRISTINE--I haven't been able to sleep either.

MANNON--You slunk out of bed so quietly.

CHRISTINE--I didn't want to wake you.

MANNON--(*bitterly*) Couldn't you bear it--lying close to me?

CHRISTINE--I didn't want to disturb you by tossing around.

MANNON--We'd better light the light and talk a while.

CHRISTINE--(*with dread*) I don't want to talk! I prefer the dark.

MANNON--I want to see you. (*He takes matches from the stand by the bed and lights the candle on it. Christine hastily sits down in the chair by the table, pushing it so she sits facing left, front, with her face turned three-quarters away from him. He pushes his back up against the head of the bed in a half sitting position. His face, with the flickering candle light on its side, has a grim, bitter expression.*) You like the dark where you can't see your old man of a husband, is that it?

CHRISTINE--I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Ezra. If you are going to say stupid things, I'll go in my own room. (*She gets to her feet but keeps her face turned away from him.*)

MANNON--Wait! (*then a note of pleading in his voice*) Don't go. I don't want to be alone. (*She sits again in the same position as before. He goes on humbly.*) I didn't mean to say those things. I guess there's bitterness inside me--my own cussedness, maybe--and sometimes it gets out before I can stop it.

CHRISTINE--You have always been bitter.

MANNON--Before we married?

CHRISTINE--I don't remember.

MANNON--You don't want to remember you ever loved me!

CHRISTINE--(*tense*) I don't want to talk of the past! (*abruptly changing the subject*) Did you hear Vinnie the first part of the night? She was pacing up and down before the house like a sentry guarding you. She didn't go to bed until two. I heard the clock strike.

MANNON--There is one who loves me, at least! (*then after a pause*) I feel strange, Christine.

CHRISTINE--You mean--your heart? You don't think you are going to be--taken ill, do you?

MANNON--(*harshly*) No! (*a pause--then accusingly*) Is that what you're waiting for? Is that why you were so willing to give yourself tonight? Were you hoping--?

CHRISTINE--(*springing up*) Ezra! Stop talking like that! I can't stand it! (*She moves as if to go into her own room.*)

MANNON--Wait! I'm sorry I said that. (*Then, as she sits down again, he goes on gloomily.*) It isn't my heart. It's something uneasy troubling my mind--as if something in me was listening, watching, waiting for something to happen.

CHRISTINE--Waiting for what to happen?

MANNON--I don't know. (*A pause--then he goes on somberly.*) This house is not my house. This is not my room nor my bed. They are empty--waiting for someone to move in! And you are not my wife! You are waiting for something!

CHRISTINE--(*beginning to snap under the strain--jumps to her feet again*) What would I be waiting for?

MANNON--For death--to set you free!

CHRISTINE--Leave me alone! Stop nagging at me with your crazy suspicions! (*then anger and hatred come into her voice*) Not your wife! You acted as if I were your wife--your property--not so long ago!

MANNON--(*with bitter scorn*) Your body? What are bodies to me? I've seen too many rotting in the sun to make grass greener! Ashes to ashes, dirt to dirt! Is that your notion of love? Do you think I married

a body? *(then, as if all the bitterness and hurt in him had suddenly burst its dam)* You were lying to me tonight as you've always lied! You were only pretending love! You let me take you as if you were a nigger slave I'd bought at auction! You made me appear a lustful beast in my own eyes!--as you've always done since our first marriage night! I would feel cleaner now if I had gone to a brothel! I would feel more honor between myself and life!

CHRISTINE--*(in a stifled voice)* Look out, Ezra! I won't stand--

MANNON--*(with a harsh laugh)* And I had hoped my homecoming would mark a new beginning--new love between us! I told you my secret feelings. I tore my insides out for you--thinking you'd understand! By God, I'm an old fool!

CHRISTINE--*(her voice grown strident)* Did you think you could make me weak--make me forget all the years? Oh no, Ezra! It's too late! *(Then her voice changes, as if she had suddenly resolved on a course of action, and becomes deliberately taunting.)* You want the truth? You've guessed it! You've used me, you've given me children, but I've never once been yours! I never could be! And whose fault is it? I loved you when I married you! I wanted to give myself! But you made me so I couldn't give! You filled me with disgust!

MANNON--*(furiously)* You say that to me! *(then trying to calm himself--stammers)* No! Be quiet! We mustn't fight! I mustn't lose my temper! It will bring on--!

CHRISTINE--*(goading him with calculating cruelty)* Oh, no! You needn't adopt that pitiful tone! You wanted the truth and you're going to hear it now!

MANNON--*(frightened--almost pleading)* Be quiet, Christine!

CHRISTINE--I've lied about everything! I lied about Captain Brant! He is Marie Brantôme's son! And it was I he came to see, not Vinnie! I made him come!

MANNON--*(seized with fury)* You dared--! You--! The son of that--!

CHRISTINE--Yes, I dared! And all my trips to New York weren't to visit Father but to be with Adam! He's gentle and tender, he's everything you've never been. He's what I've longed for all these years with you--a lover! I love him! So now you know the truth!

MANNON--*(in a frenzy--struggling to get out of bed)* You--you whore--I'll kill you! *(Suddenly he falls back, groaning, doubled up on his left side, with intense pain.)*

CHRISTINE--*(with savage satisfaction)* Ah! *(She hurries through the doorway into her room and immediately returns with a small box in her hand. He is facing away from her door, and, even if the intense pain left him any perception, he could not notice her departure and return, she moves so silently.)*

MANNON--*(gaspingly)* Quick--medicine!

CHRISTINE--*(turned away from him, takes a pellet from the box, asking tensely as she does so)* Where is your medicine?

MANNON--On the stand! Hurry!

CHRISTINE--Wait. I have it now. *(She pretends to take something from the stand by the head of the bed--then holds out the pellet and a glass of water which is on the stand.)* Here. *(He turns to her, groaning and opens his mouth. She puts the pellet on his tongue and presses the glass of water to his lips.)* Now drink.

MANNON--*(takes a swallow of water--then suddenly a wild look of terror comes over his face. He gasps)* That's not--my medicine! *(She shrinks back to the table, the hand with the box held out behind her, as if seeking a hiding place. Her fingers release the box on the table top and she brings her hand in front of her as if instinctively impelled to prove to him she has nothing. His eyes are fixed on her in a terrible accusing glare. He tries to call for help but his voice fades to a wheezy whisper.)* Help! Vinnie! *(He falls back in a coma, breathing stertorously. Christine stares at him fascinatedly--then starts with terror as she hears a noise from the hall and frantically snatches up the box from the table and holds it behind her back, turning to face the door as it opens and Lavinia appears in the doorway. She is dressed as at the end of Act Three, in nightgown, wrapper and slippers. She stands, dazed and frightened and hesitating, as if she had just awakened.)*

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947)

[The bathroom door opens a little.]

BLANCHE [*looking out*]: Is the coast clear?
 STELLA: Yes, Blanche. [*To Eunice*] Tell her how well she's looking.
 BLANCHE: Please close the curtains before I come out.
 STELLA: They're closed.
 STANLEY: --How many for you?
 PABLO: --Two.
 STEVE: --Three. [*Blanche appears in the amber tinge of the door. She has a tragic radiance in her red satin robe following the sculptural lines of her body. The "Varsouviana" rises audibly as Blanche enters the bedroom.*]
 BLANCHE [*with faintly hysterical vivacity*]: I have just washed my hair.
 STELLA: Did you?
 BLANCHE: I'm not sure I got the soap out.
 EUNICE: Such fine hair!
 BLANCHE [*accepting the compliment*]: It's a problem. Didn't I get a call?
 STELLA: Who from, Blanche?
 BLANCHE: Shep Huntleigh....
 STELLA: Why, not yet, honey!
 BLANCHE: How strange! I-- [*At the sound of Blanche's voice Mitch's arm supporting his cards has sagged and his gaze is dissolved into space. Stanley slaps him on the shoulder.*]
 STANLEY: Hey, Mitch, come to! [*The sound of this new voice shocks Blanche. She makes a shocked gesture, forming his name with her lips. Stella nods and looks quickly away. Blanche stands quite still for some moments-- the silver-backed mirror in her hand and a look of sorrowful perplexity as though all human experience shows on her face. Blanche finally speaks but with sudden hysteria.*]
 BLANCHE: What's going on here? [*She turns from Stella to Eunice and back to Stella. Her rising voice penetrates the concentration of the game. Mitch ducks his head lower but Stanley shoves back his chair as if about to rise. Steve places a restraining hand on his arm.*]
 BLANCHE [*continuing*]: What's happened here? I want an explanation of what's happened here.
 STELLA [*agonizingly*]: Hush! Hush!
 EUNICE: Hush! Hush! Honey.
 STELLA: Please, Blanche.
 BLANCHE: Why are you looking at me like that? Is something wrong with me?
 EUNICE: You look wonderful, Blanche. Don't she look wonderful?
 STELLA: Yes.
 EUNICE: I understand you are going on a trip.
 STELLA: Yes, Blanche is. She's going on a vacation.
 EUNICE: I'm green with envy.
 BLANCHE: Help me, help me get dressed!
 STELLA [*banding her dress*]: Is this what you—
 BLANCHE: Yes, it will do! I'm anxious to get out of here--this place is a trap!
 EUNICE: What a pretty blue jacket.
 STELLA: It's lilac colored.
 BLANCHE: You're both mistaken. It's Delia Robbia blue. The blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures. Are these grapes washed? [*She fingers the bunch of grapes which Eunice had brought in.*]
 EUNICE: Huh?
 BLANCHE: Washed, I said. Are they washed?
 EUNICE: They're from the French Market.
 BLANCHE: That doesn't mean they've been washed.
 [*The cathedral bells chime*]
 Those cathedral bells--they're the only clean thing in the Quarter. Well, I'm going now. I'm ready to go.
 EUNICE [*whispering*]: She's going to walk out before they get here.
 STELLA: Wait, Blanche.

BLANCHE: I don't want to pass in front of those men.

EUNICE: Then wait'll the game breaks up.

STELLA: Sit down and... [*Blanche turns weakly, hesitantly about. She lets them push her into a chair.*]

BLANCHE: I can smell the sea air. The rest of my time I'm going to spend on the sea. And when I die, I'm going to die on the sea. You know what I shall die of? [*She plucks a grape*] I shall die of eating an unwashed grape one day out on the ocean. I will die--with my hand in the hand of some nice-looking ship's doctor, a very young one with a small blond mustache and a big silver watch. "Poor lady," they'll say, "the quinine did her no good. That unwashed grape has transported her soul to heaven." [*The cathedral chimes are heard*] And I'll be buried at sea sewn up in a clean white sack and dropped overboard--at noon--in the blaze of summer--and into an ocean as blue as [*Chimes again*] my first lover's eyes! [*A Doctor and a Matron have appeared around the corner of the building and climbed the steps to the porch. The gravity of their profession is exaggerated--the unmistakable aura of the state institution with its cynical detachment. The Doctor rings the doorbell. The murmur of the game is interrupted.*]

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1951), chapitre 4

I leaf again and again through these miserable memories, and keep asking myself, was it then, in the glitter of that remote summer, that the rift in my life began; or was my excessive desire for that child only the first evidence of an inherent singularity? When I try to analyze my own cravings, motives, actions and so forth, I surrender to a sort of retrospective imagination which feeds the analytic faculty with boundless alternatives and which causes each visualized route to fork and re-fork without end in the maddeningly complex prospect of my past. I am convinced, however, that in a certain magic and fateful way *Lolita* began with Annabel. I also know that the shock of Annabel's death consolidated the frustration of that nightmare summer, made of it a permanent obstacle to any further romance throughout the cold years of my youth. The spiritual and the physical had been blended in us with a perfection that must remain incomprehensible to the matter-of-fact, crude, standard-brained youngsters of today. Long after her death I felt her thoughts floating through mine. Long before we met we had had the same dreams. We compared notes. We found strange affinities. The same June of the same year (1919) a stray canary had fluttered into her house and mine, in two widely separated countries. Oh, *Lolita*, had you loved me thus! I have reserved for the conclusion of my "Annabel" phase the account of our unsuccessful first tryst. One night, she managed to deceive the vicious vigilance of her family. In a nervous and slender-leaved mimosa grove at the back of their villa we found a perch on the ruins of a low stone wall. Through the darkness and the tender trees we could see the arabesques of lighted windows which, touched up by the colored inks of sensitive memory, appear to me now like playing cards — presumably because a bridge game was keeping the enemy busy. She trembled and twitched as I kissed the corner of her parted lips and the hot lobe of her ear. A cluster of stars palely glowed above us, between the silhouettes of long thin leaves; that vibrant sky seemed as naked as she was under her light frock. I saw her face in the sky, strangely distinct, as if it emitted a faint radiance of its own. Her legs, her lovely live legs, were not too close together, and when my hand located what it sought, a dreamy and eerie expression, half-pleasure, half-pain, came over those childish features. She sat a little higher than I, and whenever in her solitary ecstasy she was led to kiss me, her head would bend with a sleepy, soft, drooping movement that was almost woeful, and her bare knees caught and compressed my wrist, and slackened again; and her quivering mouth, distorted by the acidity of some mysterious potion, with a sibilant intake of breath came near to my face. She would try to relieve the pain of love by first roughly rubbing her dry lips against mine; then my darling would draw away with a nervous toss of her hair, and then again come darkly near and let me feed on her open mouth, while with a generosity that was ready to offer her everything, my heart, my throat, my entrails, I have her to hold in her awkward fist the scepter of my passion. I recall the scent of some kind of toilet powder — I

believe she stole it from her mother's Spanish maid — a sweetish, lowly, musky perfume. It mingled with her own biscuity odor, and my senses were suddenly filled to the brim; a sudden commotion in a nearby bush prevented them from overflowing—and as we drew away from each other, and with aching veins attended to what was probably a prowling cat, there came from the house her mother's voice calling her, with a rising frantic note — and Dr. Cooper ponderously limped out into the garden. But that mimosa grove — the haze of stars, the tingle, the flame, the honey-dew, and the ache remained with me, and that little girl with her seaside limbs and ardent tongue haunted me ever since — until at last, twenty-four years later, I broke her spell by incarnating her in another.

Chapitre 29

The door of the lighted bathroom stood ajar; in addition to that, a skeleton glow came through the Venetian blind from the outside arclights; these intercrossed rays penetrated the darkness of the bedroom and revealed the following situation. Clothed in one of her old nightgowns, my Lolita lay on her side with her back to me, in the middle of the bed. Her lightly veiled body and bare limbs formed a Z. She had put both pillows under her dark tousled head; a band of pale light crossed her top vertebrae. I seemed to have shed my clothes and slipped into pajamas with the kind of fantastic instantaneousness which is implied when in a cinematographic scene the process of changing is cut; and I had already placed my knee on the edge of the bed when Lolita turned her head and stared at me through the striped shadows. Now this was something the intruder had not expected. The whole pill-spiel (a rather sordid affair, *entre nous* soit dit) had had for object a fastness of sleep that a whole regiment would not have disturbed, and here she was staring at me, and thickly calling me "Barbara." Barbara, wearing my pajamas which were much too tight for her, remained poised motionless over the little sleep-talker. Softly, with a hopeless sigh, Dolly turned away, resuming her initial position. For at least two minutes I waited and strained on the brink, like that tailor with his homemade parachute forty years ago when about to jump from the Eiffel Tower. Her faint breathing had the rhythm of sleep. Finally I heaved myself onto my narrow margin of bed, stealthily pulled at the odds and ends of sheets piled up to the south of my stone-cold heels — and Lolita lifted her head and gaped at me. As I learned later from a helpful pharmacist, the purple pill did not even belong to the big and noble family of barbiturates, and though it might have induced sleep in a neurotic who believed it to be a potent drug, it was too mild a sedative to affect for any length of time a wary, albeit weary, nymphet. Whether the Ramsdale doctor was a charlatan or a shrewd old rogue, does not, and did not, really matter. What mattered, was that I had been deceived. When Lolita opened her eyes again, I realized that whether or not the drug might work later in the night, the security I had relied upon was a sham one. Slowly her head turned away and dropped onto her unfair amount of pillow. I lay quite still on my brink, peering at her rumpled hair, at the glimmer of nymphet flesh, where half a haunch and half a shoulder dimly showed, and trying to gauge the depth of her sleep by the rate of her respiration. Some time passed, nothing changed, and I decided I might risk getting a little closer to that lovely and maddening glimmer; but hardly had I moved into its warm purlieu than her breathing was suspended, and I had the odious feeling that little Dolores was wide awake and would explode in screams if I touched her with any part of my wretchedness. Please, reader: no matter your exasperation with the tenderhearted, morbidly sensitive, infinitely circumspect hero of my book, do not skip these essential pages! Imagine me; I shall not exist if you do not imagine me; try to discern the doe in me, trembling in the forest of my own iniquity; let's even smile a little. After all, there is no harm in smiling. For instance (I almost wrote "frinstance"), I had no place to rest my head, and a fit of heartburn (they call those fries "French," *grand Dieu!*) was added to my discomfort.

Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man* (1952)

Prologue

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids -- and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination -- indeed, everything and anything except me.

Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of a bio-chemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. Then too, you're constantly being bumped against by those of poor vision. Or again, you often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren't simply a phantom in other people's minds. Say, a figure in a nightmare which the sleeper tries with all his strength to destroy. It's when you feel like this that, out of resentment, you begin to bump people back. And, let me confess, you feel that way most of the time. You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you. And, alas, it's seldom successful.

One night I accidentally bumped into a man, and perhaps because of the near darkness he saw me and called me an insulting name. I sprang at him, seized his coat lapels and demanded that he apologize. He was a tall blond man, and as my face came close to his he looked insolently out of his blue eyes and cursed me, his breath hot in my face as he struggled. I pulled his chin down sharp upon the crown of my head, butting him as I had seen the West Indians do, and I felt his flesh tear and the blood gush out, and I yelled, "Apologize! Apologize!" But he continued to curse and struggle, and I butted him again and again until he went down heavily, on his knees, profusely bleeding. I kicked him repeatedly, in a frenzy because he still uttered insults though his lips were frothy with blood. Oh yes, I kicked him! And in my outrage I got out my knife and prepared to slit his throat, right there beneath the lamplight in the deserted street, holding him by the collar with one hand, and opening the knife with my teeth -- when it occurred to me that the man had not seen me, actually; that he, as far as he knew, was in the midst of a walking nightmare! And I stopped the blade, slicing the air as I pushed him away, letting him fall back to the street. I stared at him hard as the lights of a car stabbed through the darkness. He lay there, moaning on the asphalt; a man almost killed by a phantom. It unnerved me. I was both disgusted and ashamed. I was like a drunken man myself, wavering about on weakened legs. Then I was amused. Something in this man's thick head had sprung out and beaten him within an inch of his life. I began to laugh at this crazy discovery. Would he have awakened at the point of death? Would Death himself have freed him for wakeful living? But I didn't linger. I ran away into the dark, laughing so hard I feared I might rupture myself. The next day I saw his picture in the *Daily News*, beneath a caption stating that he had been "mugged." Poor fool, poor blind fool, I thought with sincere compassion, mugged by an invisible man!

Flannery O'Connor, "The Displaced Person", *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories* (1955)

The peacock was following Mrs. Shortley up the road to the hill where she meant to stand. Moving one behind the other, they looked like a complete procession. Her arms were folded and as she mounted the prominence, she might have been the giant wife of the countryside, come out at some sign of danger to see what the trouble was. She stood on two tremendous legs, with the grand self-confidence of a mountain, and rose, up narrowing bulges of granite, to two icy-blue points of light that pierced forward, surveying everything. She ignored the white afternoon sun which was creeping behind a ragged wall of cloud as if it pretended to be an intruder and cast her gaze down the red-clay road that turned off from the highway.

The peacock stopped just behind her, his tail—glittering green-gold and blue in the sunlight—lifted just enough so that it would not touch the ground. It flowed out on either side like a floating train and his head on the long blue reed-like neck was drawn back as if his attention were fixed in the distance on something no one else could see.

Mrs. Shortley was watching a black car turn through the gate from the highway. Over by the toolshed, about fifteen feet away, the two Negroes, Astor and Sulk, had stopped work to watch. They were hidden by a mulberry tree but Mrs. Shortley knew they were there.

Mrs. McIntyre was coming down the steps of her house to meet the car. She had on her largest smile but Mrs. Shortley, even from her distance, could detect a nervous slide in it. These people who were coming were only hired help, like the Shortleys themselves or the Negroes. Yet here was the owner of the place out to welcome them. Here she was, wearing her best clothes and a string of beads, and now bounding forward with her mouth stretched.

The car stopped at the walk just as she did and the priest was the first to get out. He was a long-legged black-suited old man with a white hat on and a collar that he wore backwards, which, Mrs. Shortley knew, was what priests did who wanted to be known as priests. It was this priest who had arranged for these people to come here. He opened the back door of the car and out jumped two children, a boy and a girl, and then, stepping more slowly, a woman in brown, shaped like a peanut. Then the front door opened and out stepped the man, the Displaced Person. He was short and a little sway-backed and wore gold-rimmed spectacles.

Mrs. Shortley's vision narrowed on him and then widened to include the woman and the two children in a group picture. The first thing that struck her as very peculiar was that they looked like other people. Every time she had seen them in her imagination, the image she had got was of the three bears, walking single file, with wooden shoes on like Dutchmen and sailor hats and bright coats with a lot of buttons. But the woman had on a dress she might have worn herself and the children were dressed like anybody from around. The man had on khaki pants and a blue shirt. Suddenly, as Mrs. McIntyre held out her hand to him, he bobbed down from the waist and kissed it.

Mrs. Shortley jerked her own hand up toward her mouth and then after a second brought it down and rubbed it vigorously on her seat. If Mr. Shortley had tried to kiss her hand, Mrs. McIntyre would have knocked him into the middle of next week, but then Mr. Shortley wouldn't have kissed her hand anyway. He didn't have time to mess around.

She looked closer, squinting. The boy was in the center of the group, talking. He was supposed to speak the most English because he had learned some in Poland and so he was to listen to his father's Polish and say it in English and then listen to Mrs. McIntyre's English and say that in Polish. The priest had told Mrs. McIntyre his name was Rudolph and he was twelve and the girl's name was Sledgewig and she was nine. Sledgewig sounded to Mrs. Shortley like something you would name a bug, or vice versa, as if you named a boy Bollweevil. All of them's last name was something that only they themselves and

the priest could pronounce. All she could make out of it was Gobblehook. She and Mrs. McIntyre had been calling them the Gobblehooks all week while they got ready for them.

Allan Ginsberg [1926-1997], “A Supermarket in California”, *Howl and Other Poems*, 1955

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman, for I walked down the streets under the trees with a headache self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!
What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the avocados, babies in the tomatoes! --- and you, Garcia Lorca, what were you doing down by the watermelons?
I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber, poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the grocery boys.
I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the pork chops? What price bananas? Are you my Angel?
I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans following you, and followed in my imagination by the store detective.
We strode down the open corridors together in our solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen delicacy, and never passing the cashier.
Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close in an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?
(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the supermarket and feel absurd.)
Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be lonely.
Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?
Ah, dear father, graybeard, lonely old courage-teacher, what America did you have when Charon quit poling his ferry and you got out on a smoking bank and stood watching the boat disappear on the black waters of Lethe?

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1957)

I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up. I had just gotten over a serious illness that I won't bother to talk about, except that it had something to do with the miserably weary split-up and my feeling that everything was dead. With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road. Before that I'd often dreamed of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off. Dean is the perfect guy for the road because he actually was born on the road, when his parents were passing through Salt Lake City in 1926, in a jalopy, on their way to Los Angeles. First reports of him came to me through Chad King, who'd shown me a few letters from him written in a New Mexico reform school. I was tremendously interested in the letters because they so naively and sweetly asked Chad to teach him all about Nietzsche and all the wonderful intellectual things that Chad knew. At one point Carlo and I talked about the letters and wondered if we would ever meet the strange Dean Moriarty. This is all far back, when Dean was not the way he is

today, when he was a young jailkid shrouded in mystery. Then news came that Dean was out of reform school and was coming to New York for the first time; also there was talk that he had just married a girl called Marylou.

One day I was hanging around the campus and Chad and Tim Gray told me Dean was staying in a cold-water pad in East Harlem, the Spanish Harlem. Dean had arrived the night before, the first time in New York, with his beautiful little sharp chick Marylou; they got off the Greyhound bus at 50th Street and cut around the corner looking for a place to eat and went right in Hector's, and since then Hector's cafeteria has always been a big symbol of New York for Dean. They spent money on beautiful big glazed cakes and creampuffs.

All this time Dean was telling Marylou things like this: «Now, darling, here we are in New York and although I haven't quite told you everything that I was thinking about when we crossed Missouri and especially at the point when we passed the Booneville reformatory which reminded me of my jail problem, it is absolutely necessary now to postpone all those leftover things concerning our personal lovethings and at once begin thinking of specific worklife plans . . .» and so on in the way that he had in those early days.

I went to the cold-water flat with the boys, and Dean came to the door in his shorts. Marylou was jumping off the couch; Dean had dispatched the occupant of the apartment to the kitchen, probably to make coffee, while he proceeded with his loveproblems, for to him sex was the one and only holy and important thing in life, although he had to sweat and curse to make a living and so on. You saw that in the way he stood bobbing his head, always looking down, nodding, like a young boxer to instructions, to make you think he was listening to every word, throwing in a thousand «Yeses» and «That's rights.» My first impression of Dean was of a young Gene Autry - trim, thin-hipped, blueeyed, with a real Oklahoma accent - a sideburned hero of the snowy West. In fact he'd just been working on a ranch, Ed Wall's in Colorado, before marrying Marylou and coming East. Marylou was a pretty blonde with immense ringlets of hair like a sea of golden tresses; she sat there on the edge of the couch with her hands hanging in her lap and her smoky blue country eyes fixed in a wide stare because she was in an evil gray New York pad that she'd heard about back West, and waiting like a longbodied emaciated Modigliani surrealist woman in a serious room. But, outside of being a sweet little girl, she was awfully dumb and capable of doing horrible things. That night we all drank beer and pulled wrists and talked till dawn, and in the morning, while we sat around dumbly smoking butts from ashtrays in the gray light of a gloomy day, Dean got up nervously, paced around, thinking, and decided the thing to do was to have Marylou make breakfast and sweep the floor. «In other words we've got to get on the ball, darling, what I'm saying, otherwise it'll be fluctuating and lack of true knowledge or crystallization of our plans.» Then I went away.

During the following week he confided in Chad King that he absolutely had to learn how to write from him; Chad said I was a writer and he should come to me for advice. Meanwhile Dean had gotten a job in a parking lot, had a fight with Marylou in their Hoboken apartment - God knows why they went there - and she was so mad and so down deep vindictive that she reported to the police some false trumped-up hysterical crazy charge, and Dean had to lam from Hoboken. So he had no place to live. He came right out to Paterson, New Jersey, where I was living with my aunt, and one night while I was studying there was a knock on the door, and there was Dean, bowing, shuffling obsequiously in the dark of the hall, and saying, «Hello, you remember me - Dean Moriarty? I've come to ask you to show me how to write.»

«And where's Marylou?» I asked, and Dean said she'd apparently whored a few dollars together and gone back to Denver - »the whore!» So we went out to have a few beers because we couldn't talk like we wanted to talk in front of my aunt, who sat in the living room reading her paper. She took one look at Dean and decided that he was a madman.

In the bar I told Dean, «Hell, man, I know very well you didn't come to me only to want to become a writer, and after all what do I really know about it except you've got to stick to it with the energy of a benny addict.» And he said, «Yes, of course, I know exactly what you mean and in fact all

those problems have occurred to me, but the thing that I want is the realization of those factors that should one depend on Schopenhauer's dichotomy for any inwardly realized . . .» and so on in that way, things I understood not a bit and he himself didn't. In those days he really didn't know what he was talking about; that is to say, he was a young jaillid all hung-up on the wonderful possibilities of becoming a real intellectual, and he liked to talk in the tone and using the words, but in a jumbled way, that he had heard from «real intellectuals» - although, mind you, he wasn't so naive as that in all other things, and it took him just a few months with Carlo Marx to become completely in there with all the terms and jargon. Nonetheless we understood each other on other levels of madness, and I agreed that he could stay at my house till he found a job and furthermore we agreed to go out West sometime. That was the winter of 1947.

One night when Dean ate supper at my house - he already had the parking-lot job in New York - he leaned over my shoulder as I typed rapidly away and said, «Come on man, those girls won't wait, make it fast.»

I said, «Hold on just a minute, I'll be right with you soon as I finish this chapter,» and it was one of the best chapters in the book. Then I dressed and off we flew to New York to meet some girls. As we rode in the bus in the weird phosphorescent void of the Lincoln Tunnel we leaned on each other with fingers waving and yelled and talked excitedly, and I was beginning to get the bug like Dean. He was simply a youth tremendously excited with life, and though he was a con-man, he was only conning because he wanted so much to live and to get involved with people who would otherwise pay no attention to him. He was conning me and I knew it (for room and board and «howto-write,» etc.), and he knew I knew (this has been the basis of our relationship), but I didn't care and we got along fine - no pestering, no catering; we tiptoed around each other like heartbreaking new friends. I began to learn from him as much as he probably learned from me. As far as my work was concerned he said, «Go ahead, everything you do is great.» He watched over my shoulder as I wrote stories, yelling, «Yes! That's right! Wow! Man!» and «Phew!» and wiped his face with his handkerchief. «Man, wow, there's so many things to do, so many things to write! How to even begin to get it all down and without modified restraints and all hung-up on like literary inhibitions and grammatical fears . . .»

«That's right, man, now you're talking.» And a kind of holy lightning I saw flashing from his excitement and his visions, which he described so torrentially that people in buses looked around to see the «overexcited nut.» In the West he'd spent a third of his time in the poolhall, a third in jail, and a third in the public library. They'd seen him rushing eagerly down the winter streets, bareheaded, carrying books to the poolhall, or climbing trees to get into the attics of buddies where he spent days reading or hiding from the law.

We went to New York - I forget what the situation was, two colored girls - there were no girls there; they were supposed to meet him in a diner and didn't show up. We went to his parking lot where he had a few things to do - change his clothes in the shack in back and spruce up a bit in front of a cracked mirror and so on, and then we took off. And that was the night Dean met Carlo Marx. A tremendous thing happened when Dean met Carlo Marx. Two keen minds that they are, they took to each other at the drop of a hat. Two piercing eyes glanced into two piercing eyes - the holy conman with the shining mind, and the sorrowful poetic con-man with the dark mind that is Carlo Marx. From that moment on I saw very little of Dean, and I was a little sorry too. Their energies met headon, I was a lout compared, I couldn't keep up with them.

Raymond Chandler, *Playback* (1958)

The first sensation was that if anybody spoke harshly to me I should burst out crying. The second, that the room was too small for my head. The front of the head was a long way from the back,

the sides were an enormous distance apart, in spite of which a dull throbbing beat from temple to temple. Distance means nothing nowadays.

The third sensation was that somewhere not far off an insistent whining noise went on. The fourth and last was that ice water was running down my back. The cover of a day bed proved that I had been lying on my face, if I still had one. I rolled over gently and sat up and a rattling noise ended in a thump. What rattled and thumped was a knotted towel full of melting ice cubes. Somebody who loved me very much had put them on the back of my head. Somebody who loved me less had bashed in the back of my skull. It could have been the same person. People have moods.

I got up on my feet and lunged for my hip. The wallet was there in the left pocket, but the flap was unbuttoned. I went through it. Nothing was gone. It had yielded its information, but that was no secret any more. My suitcase stood open on the stand at the foot of the day bed. So I was home in my own quarters.

I reached a mirror and looked at the face. It seemed familiar. I went to the door and opened it. The whining noise was louder. Right in front of me was a fattish man leaning against the railing. He was a middle-sized fat man and the fat didn't look flabby. He wore glasses and large ears under a dull gray felt hat. The collar of his topcoat was turned up. His hands were in the pockets of his coat. The hair that showed at the sides of his head was battleship gray. He looked durable. Most fat men do. The light from the open door behind me bounced back from his glasses. He had a small pipe in his mouth, the kind they call a toy bulldog. I was still foggy but something about him bothered me.

Thomas Pynchon, V., (1963)

Christmas Eve, 1955, sneakers and big cowboy hat, happened to pass through Norfolk, Virginia. Given to sentimental impulses, he thought he'd look in on the Sailor's Grave, his old tin can's tavern on East Main Street. He got there by way of the Arcade, at the East Main end of which sat an old street singer with a guitar and an empty Sterno can for donations. Out in the street a chief yeoman was trying to urinate in the gas tank of a '54 Packard Patrician and five or six seamen apprentice were standing around giving encouragement. The old man was singing, in a fine, firm baritone:

"Every night is Christmas Eve on old East Main,
Sailors and their sweethearts all agree.

Neon signs of red and green
Shine upon the friendly scene,
Welcoming you in from off the sea.
Santa's bag is filled with all your dreams come true:
Nickel beers that sparkle like champagne,
Barmaids who all love to screw,
All of them reminding you
It's Christmas Eve on old East Main."

"Yay chief," yelled a seaman deuce. Profane rounded the corner. With its usual lack of warning, East Main was on him.

Since his discharge from the Navy Profane had been road-laboring and when there wasn't work just traveling, up and down the east coast like a yo-yo; and this had been going on for maybe a year and a half. After that long of more named pavements than he'd care to count, Profane had grown a little leery of streets, especially streets like this. They had in fact all fused into a single abstracted Street, which come the full moon he would have nightmares about: East Main, a ghetto for Drunken Sailors nobody knew what to Do With, sprang on your nerves with all the abruptness of a normal night's dream turning to nightmare. Dog into wolf, light into twilight, emptiness into waiting presence, here were your underage Marine barfing in the street, barmaid with a ship's propeller tattooed on each buttock, one potential berserk studying the best technique for jumping through a plate glass window (when to scream Geronimo? before or after the glass breaks?), a drunken deck ape crying back in the alley because last time the SP's caught him like this they put him in a strait jacket. Underfoot, now and again, came vibration in the sidewalk from an SP streetlights away, beating out a Hey Rube with his night stick; overhead, turning everybody's face green and ugly, shone mercury-vapor lamps, receding in an asymmetric V to the east where it's dark and there are no more bars.

Arriving at the Sailor's Grave, Profane found a small fight in progress between sailors and jarheads. He stood in the doorway a moment watching; then realizing he had one foot in the Grave anyway, dived out of the way of the fight, and lay more or less doggo near the brass rail.

Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*, (1963)

A fine drizzle started drifting down from the grey sky, and I grew very depressed.

I couldn't find my father anywhere.

Low, shaggy clouds scudded over that part of the horizon where the sea lay, behind the marshes and the beach shanty settlements, and raindrops darkened the black mackintosh I had bought that morning. A clammy dampness sank through to my skin.

I had asked the salesgirl, 'Is it water-repellent?'

And she had said, 'No raincoat is ever *water-repellent*. It's showerproofed.'

And when I asked her what showerproofed was, she told me I had better buy an umbrella.

But I hadn't enough money for an umbrella. What with bus fare in and out of Boston and peanuts and newspapers and abnormal psychology books and trips to my old home town by the sea, my New York fund was almost exhausted.

I had decided that when there was no more money in my bank account I would do it, and that morning I'd spent the last of it on the black raincoat.

Then I saw my father's gravestone.

It was crowded right up by another gravestone, head to head, the way people are crowded in a charity ward when there isn't enough space. The stone was of a molded pink marble, like tinned salmon, and all there was on it was my father's name and, under it, two dates, separated by a little dash.

At the foot of the stone I arranged the rainy armful of azaleas I had picked from a bush at the gateway of the graveyard. Then my legs folded under me, and I sat down in the sopping grass. I couldn't understand why I was crying so hard.

Then I remembered that I had never cried for my father's death.

My mother hadn't cried either. She had just smiled and said what a merciful thing it was for him he had died, because if he had lived he would have been crippled and an invalid for life, and he couldn't have stood that, he would rather have died than had that happen.

I laid my face to the smooth face of the marble and howled my loss into the cold salt rain.

Bob Dylan, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1963-64)

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who that it's namin'
For the loser now will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside and it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is rapidly agin'
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is rapidly fadin'

And the first one now will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'

Robert Hayden [1913-1980], "Frederick Douglass" (1966)

When it is finally ours, this freedom, this liberty, this beautiful
and terrible thing, needful to man as air,
usable as earth; when it belongs at last to all,
when it is truly instinct, brain matter, diastole, systole,
reflex action; when it is finally won; when it is more
than the gaudy mumbo jumbo of politicians:
this man, this Douglass, this former slave, this Negro
beaten to his knees, exiled, visioning a world
where none is lonely, none hunted, alien,
this man, superb in love and logic, this man
shall be remembered. Oh, not with statues' rhetoric,
not with legends and poems and wreaths of bronze alone,
but with the lives grown out of his life, the lives
fleshing his dream of the beautiful, needful thing.

Thom Gunn, "No Speech from the Scaffold" (1975)

There will be no speech from
the scaffold, the scene must
be its own commentary.
The glossy chipped
surface of the block is like
something for kitchen use.
And the masked man with his
chopper: we know him: he
works in a warehouse nearby.
Last, the prisoner, he
is pale, he walks through
the dewy grass, nodding
a goodbye to acquaintances.
There will be no speech. And we
have forgotten his offense.
What he did is, now,
immaterial. It is the
execution that matters, or,

rather, it is his conduct
as he rests there, while
he is still a human.

Raymond Carver, “Popular Mechanics” (1978), *What we Talk About When We talk About Love*

Early that day the weather turned and the snow was melting into dirty water. Streaks of it ran down from the little shoulder-high window that faced the backyard. Cars slushed by on the street outside, where it was getting dark. But it was getting dark on the inside too.

He was in the bedroom pushing clothes into a suitcase when she came to the door.

I'm glad you're leaving! I'm glad you're leaving! she said. Do you hear?

He kept on putting his things into the suitcase.

Son of a bitch! I'm so glad you're leaving! She began to cry. You can't even look me in the face, can you?

Then she noticed the baby's picture on the bed and picked it up.

He looked at her and she wiped her eyes and stared at him before turning and going back to the living room.

Bring that back, he said.

Just get your things and get out, she said.

He did not answer. He fastened the suitcase, put on his coat, looked around the bedroom before turning off the light. Then he went out to the living room.

She stood in the doorway of the little kitchen, holding the baby.

I want the baby, he said.

Are you crazy?

No, but I want the baby. I'll get someone to come for his things.

You're not touching this baby, she said. The baby had begun to cry and she uncovered the blanket from around his head.

Oh, oh, she said, looking at the baby.

He moved toward her.

For God's sake! she said. She took a step back into the kitchen.

I want the baby.

Get out of here!

She turned and tried to hold the baby over in a corner behind the stove.

But he came up. He reached across the stove and tightened his hands on the baby.

Let go of him, he said.

Get away, get away! she cried.

The baby was red-faced and screaming. In the scuffle they knocked down a flowerpot that hung behind the stove. He crowded her into the wall then, trying to break her grip. He held onto the baby and pushed with all his weight.

Let go of him, he said.

Don't, she said. You're hurting the baby, she said.

I'm not hurting the baby, he said.

The kitchen window gave no light. In the near dark he worked on her fisted fingers with one hand and with the other hand he gripped the screaming baby up under an arm near the shoulder.

She felt her fingers being forced open. She felt the baby going from her.

No! she screamed just as her hands came loose.

She would have it, this baby. She grabbed for the baby's other arm. She caught the baby around the wrist and leaned back.

But he would not let go. He felt the baby slipping out of his hands and he pulled back very hard.

In this manner, the issue was decided.

Toni Morrison, *Sula*, 1980

In that place, where they tore the nightshade and blackberry patches from their roots to make room for the Medallion City Golf Course, there was once a neighborhood. It stood in the hills above the valley town of Medallion and spread all the way to the river. It is called the suburbs now, but when black people lived there it was called the Bottom. One road, shaded by beeches, oaks, maples and chestnuts, connected it to the valley. The beeches are gone now, and so are the pear trees where children sat and yelled down through the blossoms to passerby. Generous funds have been allotted to level the stripped and faded buildings that clutter the road from Medallion up to the golf course. They are going to raze the Time and a Half Pool Hall, where feet in long tan shoes once pointed down from chair rungs. A steel ball will knock to dust Irene's Palace of Cosmetology, where women used to lean their heads back on sink trays and doze while Irene lathered Nu Nile into their hair. Men in khaki work clothes will pry loose the slats of Reba's Grill, where the owner cooked in her hat because she couldn't remember the ingredients without it.

There will be nothing left of the Bottom (the footbridge that crossed the river is already gone), but perhaps it is just as well, since it wasn't a town anyway: just a neighborhood where on quiet days people in valley houses could hear singing sometimes, banjos sometimes, and, if a valley man happened to have business up in those hills—collecting rent or insurance payments—he might see a dark woman in a flowered dress doing a bit of cakewalk, a bit of black bottom, a bit of “messing around” to the lively notes of a mouth organ. Her bare feet would raise the saffron dust that floated down on the coveralls and bunion-split shoes of the man breathing music in and out of his harmonica. The black people watching her would laugh and rub their knees, and it would be easy for the valley man to hear the laughter and not notice the adult pain that rested somewhere under the eyelids, somewhere under their head rags and soft felt hats, somewhere in the palm of the hand, somewhere behind the frayed lapels, somewhere in the sinew's curve. He'd have to stand in the back of Greater Saint Matthews' and let the tenor's voice dress him in silk, or touch the hands of the spoon carvers (who had not worked in eight years) and let the fingers that danced on wood kiss his skin. Otherwise the pain would escape him even though the laughter was part of the pain.

A shucking, knee-slapping, wet-eyed laughter that could even describe and explain how they came to be where they were.

Don DeLillo, *Underworld* Picador, 1998 (1st published by Scribner in 1997)

He speaks in your voice, American, and there's a shine in his eye that's halfway hopeful.

It's a school day, sure, but he's nowhere near the classroom. He wants to be here instead, standing in the shadow of this old rust-hulk of a structure, and it's hard to blame him - this metropolis of steel and concrete and flaky paint and cropped grass and enormous Chesterfield packs aslant on the scoreboards, a couple of cigarettes jutting from each.

Longing on a large scale is what makes history. This is just a kid with a local yearning but he is part of an assembling crowd, anonymous thousands off the buses and trains, people in narrow columns tramping over the swing bridge above the river, and even if they are not a migration or a revolution, some vast shaking of the soul, they bring with them the body heat of a great city and their

own small reveries and desperations, the unseen something that haunts the day - men in fedoras and sailors on shore leave, the stray tumble of their thoughts, going to a game.

The sky is low and gray, the roily gray of sliding surf.

He stands at the curbstone with the others. He is the youngest, at fourteen, and you know he's flat broke by the edgy leaning look he hangs on his body. He has never done this before and he doesn't know any of the others and only two or three of them seem to know each other but they can't do this thing singly or in pairs so they have found one another by means of sidy looks that detect the fellow foolhard and here they stand, black kids and white kids up from the subways or off the local Harlem streets, lean shadows, bandidos, fifteen in all, and according to topical legend maybe four will get through for every one that's caught.

They are waiting nervously for the ticket holders to clear the turnstiles, the last loose cluster of fans, the stragglers and loiterers. They watch the late-arriving taxis from downtown and the brilliantined men stepping dapper to the windows, policy bankers and supper club swells and Broadway hotshots, high aura'd, picking lint off their mohair sleeves. They stand at the curb and watch without seeming to look, wearing the sourish air of corner hangabouts. All the hubbub has died down, the pregame babble and swirl, vendors working the jammed sidewalks waving scorecards and pennants and calling out in ancient singsong, scraggy men hustling buttons and caps, all dispersed now, gone to their roomlets in the beaten streets.

They are at the curbstone, waiting. Their eyes are going grim, sending oout less light. Somebody takes his hand out of his pockets. They are waiting and then they go, one of them goes, a mick who shouts *Geronimo*.

COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE

Henry Lawson, "The Drover's Wife" (1892)

The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.

Bush all around - bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilisation - a shanty on the main road.

The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.

Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly one of them yells: "Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"

The gaunt, sun-browned bushwoman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.

"Where is it?"

"Here! Gone in the wood-heap," yells the eldest boy - a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. "Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!"

"Tommy, come here, or you'll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!"

The youngster comes reluctantly, carrying a stick bigger than himself. Then he yells, triumphantly:

"There it goes - under the house!" and darts away with club uplifted. At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake. He is a moment late, however, and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs just as the end of its tail disappears. Almost at the same moment the boy's club comes down and skins the aforesaid nose. Alligator takes small notice of this, and proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him.

The drover's wife makes the children stand together near the dog-house while she watches for the snake. She gets two small dishes of milk and sets them down near the wall to tempt it to come out; but an hour goes by and it does not show itself.

It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming. The children must be brought inside. She will not take them into the house, for she knows the snake is there, and may at any moment come up through a crack in the rough slab floor; so she carries several armfuls of firewood into the kitchen, and then takes the children there. The kitchen has no floor - or, rather, an earthen one - called a "ground floor" in this part of the bush. There is a large, roughly-made table in the centre of the place. She brings the children in, and makes them get on this table. They are two boys and two girls - mere babies. She gives some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into house, and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes - expecting to see or lay or hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children, and sits down beside it to watch all night.

She has an eye on the corner, and a green sapling club laid in readiness on the dresser by her side; also her sewing basket and a copy of the *Young Ladies' Journal*. She has brought the dog into the room.

Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he'll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.

His mother asks him how many times she has told not to swear.

He has his club with him under the bedclothes, and Jacky protests:

"Mummy! Tommy's skinnin' me alive wif his club. Make him take it out."

Tommy: "Shet up you little ---! D'yer want to be bit with the snake?"

Katherine Mansfield, “Marriage à la Mode”, *The Garden Party and Other Stories*, 1922.

On his way to the station William remembered with a fresh pang of disappointment that he was taking nothing down to the kiddies. Poor little chaps! It was hard lines on them. Their first words always were as they ran to greet him, “What have you got for me, daddy?” and he had nothing. He would have to buy them some sweets at the station. But that was what he had done for the past four Saturdays; their faces had fallen last time when they saw the same old boxes produced again.

And Paddy had said, “I had red ribbing on mine *bee-fore!*”

And Johnny had said, “It’s always pink on mine. I hate pink.”

But what was William to do? The affair wasn’t so easily settled. In the old days, of course, he would have taken a taxi off to a decent toyshop and chosen them something in five minutes. But nowadays they had Russian toys, French toys, Serbian toys—toys from God knows where. It was over a year since Isabel had scrapped the old donkeys and engines and so on because they were so “dreadfully sentimental” and “so appallingly bad for the babies’ sense of form.”

“It’s so important,” the new Isabel had explained, “that they should like the right things from the very beginning. It saves so much time later on. Really, if the poor pets have to spend their infant years staring at these horrors, one can imagine them growing up and asking to be taken to the Royal Academy.”

And she spoke as though a visit to the Royal Academy was certain immediate death to any one...

“Well, I don’t know,” said William slowly. “When I was their age I used to go to bed hugging an old towel with a knot in it.”

The new Isabel looked at him, her eyes narrowed, her lips apart.

“*Dear William!* I’m sure you did!” She laughed in the new way.

Sweets it would have to be, however, thought William gloomily, fishing in his pocket for change for the taxi-man. And he saw the kiddies handing the boxes round—they were awfully generous little chaps—while Isabel’s precious friends didn’t hesitate to help themselves...

What about fruit? William hovered before a stall just inside the station. What about a melon each? Would they have to share that, too? Or a pineapple, for Pad, and a melon for Johnny? Isabel’s friends could hardly go sneaking up to the nursery at the children’s meal-times. All the same, as he bought the melon William had a horrible vision of one of Isabel’s young poets lapping up a slice, for some reason, behind the nursery door.

With his two very awkward parcels he strode off to his train. The platform was crowded, the train was in. Doors banged open and shut. There came such a loud hissing from the engine that people looked dazed as they scurried to and fro. William made straight for a first-class smoker, stowed away his suitcase and parcels, and taking a huge wad of papers out of his inner pocket, he flung down in the corner and began to read.

“Our client moreover is positive...We are inclined to reconsider...in the event of—” Ah, that was better. William pressed back his flattened hair and stretched his legs across the carriage floor. The familiar dull gnawing in his breast quietened down. “With regard to our decision—” He took out a blue pencil and scored a paragraph slowly.

Two men came in, stepped across him, and made for the farther corner. A young fellow swung his golf clubs into the rack and sat down opposite. The train gave a gentle lurch, they were off. William glanced up and saw the hot, bright station slipping away. A red-faced girl raced along by the carriages, there was something strained and almost desperate in the way she waved and called. "Hysterical!" thought William dully. Then a greasy, black-faced workman at the end of the platform grinned at the passing train. And William thought, "A filthy life!" and went back to his papers.

When he looked up again there were fields, and beasts standing for shelter under the dark trees. A wide river, with naked children splashing in the shallows, glided into sight and was gone again. The sky shone pale, and one bird drifted high like a dark fleck in a jewel.

"We have examined our client's correspondence files..." The last sentence he had read echoed in his mind. "We have examined ..." William hung on to that sentence, but it was no good; it snapped in the middle, and the fields, the sky, the sailing bird, the water, all said, "Isabel." The same thing happened every Saturday afternoon. When he was on his way to meet Isabel there began those countless imaginary meetings. She was at the station, standing just a little apart from everybody else; she was sitting in the open taxi outside; she was at the garden gate; walking across the parched grass; at the door, or just inside the hall.

And her clear, light voice said, "It's William," or "Hillo, William!" or "So William has come!" He touched her cool hand, her cool cheek.

The exquisite freshness of Isabel! When he had been a little boy, it was his delight to run into the garden after a shower of rain and shake the rose-bush over him. Isabel was that rose-bush, petal-soft, sparkling and cool. And he was still that little boy. But there was no running into the garden now, no laughing and shaking. The dull, persistent gnawing in his breast started again. He drew up his legs, tossed the papers aside, and shut his eyes.

"What is it, Isabel? What is it?" he said tenderly. They were in their bedroom in the new house. Isabel sat on a painted stool before the dressing-table that was strewn with little black and green boxes.

"What is what, William?" And she bent forward, and her fine light hair fell over her cheeks.

"Ah, you know!" He stood in the middle of the room and he felt a stranger. At that Isabel wheeled round quickly and faced him.

"Oh, William!" she cried imploringly, and she held up the hair-brush: "Please! Please don't be so dreadfully stuffy and—tragic. You're always saying or looking or hinting that I've changed. Just because I've got to know really congenial people, and go about more, and am frightfully keen on—on everything, you behave as though I'd—" Isabel tossed back her hair and laughed—"killed our love or something. It's so awfully absurd"—she bit her lip—"and it's so maddening, William. Even this new house and the servants you grudge me."

But the imbecile thing, the absolutely extraordinary thing was that he hadn't the slightest idea that Isabel wasn't as happy as he. God, what blindness! He hadn't the remotest notion in those days that she really hated that inconvenient little house, that she thought the fat Nanny was ruining the babies, that she was desperately lonely, pining for new people and new music and pictures and so on. If they hadn't gone to that studio party at Moira Morrison's—if Moira Morrison hadn't said as they were leaving, "I'm going to rescue your wife, selfish man. She's like an exquisite little Titania"—if Isabel hadn't gone with Moira to Paris—if— if...

Alice Munro, "Boys and Girls" (1964), *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968)

It was an odd thing to see my mother down at the barn. She did not often come out of the house unless it was to do something – hang out the wash or dig potatoes in the garden. She looked out of place, with her bare lumpy legs, not touched by the sun, her apron still on and damp across the stomach from the supper dishes. Her hair was tied up in a kerchief, wisps of it falling out. She would tie her hair up like this in the morning, saying she did not have time to do it properly, and it would stay tied up all day. It was true, too; she really did not have time. These days our back porch was piled with baskets of peaches and grapes and pears, bought in town, and onions and tomatoes and cucumbers grown at home, all waiting to be made into jelly and jam and preserves, pickles and chili sauce. In the kitchen there was a fire in the stove all day, jars clinked in boiling water, sometimes a cheesecloth bag was strung on a pole between two chairs straining blue-back grape pulp for jelly. I was given jobs to do and I would sit at the table peeling peaches that had been soaked in hot water, or cutting up onions, my eyes smarting and streaming. As soon as I was done I ran out of the house, trying to get out of earshot before my mother thought of what she wanted me to do next. I hated the hot dark kitchen in summer, the green blinds and the flypapers, the same old oilcloth table and wavy mirror and bumpy linoleum. My mother was too tired and preoccupied to talk to me, she had no heart to tell about the Normal School Graduation Dance; sweat trickled over her face and she was always counting under breath, pointing at jars, dumping cups of sugar. It seemed to me that work in the house was endless, dreary, and peculiarly depressing; work done out of doors, and in my father's service, was ritualistically important.

I wheeled the tank up to the barn, where it was kept, and I heard my mother saying, "Wait till Laird gets a little bigger, then you'll have a real help."

What my father said I did not hear. I was pleased by the way he stood listening, politely as he would to a salesman or a stranger, but with an air of wanting to get on with his real work. I felt my mother had no business down here and I wanted him to feel the same way. What did she mean about Laird? He was no help to anybody. Where was he now? Swinging himself sick on the swing, going around in circles, or trying to catch caterpillars. He never once stayed with me till I was finished.

"And then I can use her more in the house," I heard my mother say. She had a dead-quiet regretful way of talking about me that always made me uneasy. "I just get my back turned and she runs off. It's not like I had a girl in the family at all."

I went and sat on a feed bag in the corner of the barn, not wanting to appear when this conversation was going on. My mother, I felt, was not to be trusted. She was kinder than my father and more easily fooled, but you could not depend on her, and the real reasons for the things she said and did were not to be known. She loved me, and she sat up late at night making a dress of the difficult style I wanted, for me to wear when school started, but she was also my enemy. She was always plotting. She was plotting now to get me to stay in the house more, although she knew I hated it (because she knew I hated it) and keep me from working for my father. It seemed to me she would do this simply out of perversity, and to try her power. It did not occur to me that she could be lonely, or jealous. No grown-up could be; they were too fortunate. I sat and kicked my heels monotonously against a feed bag, raising dust, and did not come out till she was gone.

At any rate, I did not expect my father to pay any attention to what she said. Who could imagine Laird doing my work – Laird remembering the padlock and cleaning out the watering dishes with a leaf on the end of a stick, or even wheeling the tank without it tumbling over? It showed how little my mother knew about the way things really were.

Athol Fugard, John Kani, *Winston Ntshona, Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* (1972)

Buntu has persuaded Sizwe to use the pass book belonging to the dead man, Robert Zwelinzima

MAN (*after a pause*) I'll try it, Buntu.

BUNTU Of course you must, if you want to stay alive.

MAN Yes, but Sizwe Bansi is dead.

BUNTU What about Robert Zwelinzima then? That poor bastard I pissed on out there in the dark. So *he's* alive again. Bloody miracle, man.

Look, if someone was to offer me the things I wanted most in my life, the things that would make me, my wife, and my child happy, in exchange for the name Buntu... you think I wouldn't swop?

MAN Are you sure, Buntu?

BUNTU (*examining the question seriously*) If there was just me... I mean, if I was alone, if I didn't have anyone to worry about or look after except myself... maybe then I'd be prepared to pay some sort of price for a little pride. But if I had a wife and four children wasting away their one and only life in the dust and poverty of Ciskeian Independence... if I had four children waiting for me, their father, to do something about their lives... *ag*, no, Sizwe.

MAN Robert, Buntu.

BUNTU (*angry*) All right! Robert, John, Athol, Winston... Shit on names, man! To hell with them if in exchange you can get a piece of bread for your stomach and a blanket in winter. Understand me, brother, I'm not saying that pride isn't a way for us. What I'm saying is shit on our pride if we only bluff ourselves that we are men.

Take your name back, Sizwe Bansi, if it's so important to you. But next time you hear a white man say 'John' to you, don't say '*Ja, Baas?*' And next time the bloody white man says to you, a man, Boy, come here,' don't run to him and lick his arse like we all do. Face him and tell him: 'White man. I'm a Man!' *Ag, kake!* We're bluffing ourselves.

It's like my father's hat. Special hat, man! Carefully wrapped in plastic on top of the wardrobe in his room. God help the child who so much as touches it! Sunday it goes on his head, and a man, full of dignity, a man I respect, walks down the street. White man stops him: 'Come here, kaffir!' What does he do?

(*Buntu whips the imaginary hat off his head and crumples it in his hands as he adopts a fawning, servile pose in front of the white man.*)

'What is it, Baas?'

If that is what you call pride, then shit on it! Take mine and give me food for my children.

(*Pause*)

Look, brother, Robert Zwelinzima, that poor bastard out there in the alleyway, if there *are* ghosts, he is smiling tonight. He is here, with us, and he's saying: 'Good luck, Sizwe! I hope it works.' He's a brother, man.

MAN For how long, Buntu?

BUNTU How long? For as long as you can stay out of trouble. Trouble will mean police station, then fingerprints off to Pretoria to check on previous convictions... and when they do that... Sizwe Bansi will live again and you will have had it.

Roger Nash, [1942-], Canada, “Several Excuses for Having Stayed”, 1983

I knew I just shouldn't stay. But the butter
in her eyes melted over my shoes
when I started to walk away. Then the gate
fumbled free from under my hand
and went to earth in the rockery.

I knew I shouldn't step in. The empty sofa
creaked like a snare. There was a flash
of gunshots from her hair as the light
ricocheted around it; and geese
in the print of the wall took faded light.

I knew I shouldn't sit down. But each pear
on the table stuttered its speckles of brown,
anxious for conversation. Her smile
laced my shoes together, while the sun
pulled me up the glint on a chair.

I knew I shouldn't sit near. But the guitar
on the radio borrowed my hand to steer
glittering chords through her hair. Light
wouldn't let us out of its sight
each beam brought pans on the wall

to brass crescendos. The kitchen was caught
in the fevered throat of a constricted trumpet
its sides gleamed in and flared us together.
We knew we just shouldn't stay. But the sun
wouldn't stop to let us go away.

Margaret Atwood, “Siren Song”, *Poetry*, 1974

This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible:

the song that forces men
to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see the beached skulls

the song nobody knows
because anyone who has heard it
is dead, and the others can't remember.

Shall I tell you the secret
and if I do, will you get me
out of this bird suit?

I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical

with these two feathery maniacs,
I don't enjoy singing
this trio, fatal and valuable.

I will tell the secret to you,
to you, only to you.
Come closer. This song

is a cry for help: Help me!
Only you, only you can,
you are unique

at last. Alas
it is a boring song
but it works every time.

Ben Okri, *The Famished Road* (1991)

In the beginning there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river it was always hungry. In that land of beginnings spirits mingled with the unborn. We could assume numerous forms. Many of us were birds. We knew no boundaries. There was much feasting, playing and sorrowing. We feasted much because of the beautiful terrors of eternity. We played much because we were free. And we borrowed much because there were always those amongst us who had just returned from the world of the living. They had returned inconsolable for all the love they had left behind, all the suffering they hadn't redeemed, all that they hadn't understood, and for all that they had barely begun to learn before they were drawn back to the land of origins.

There were not one amongst us who looked forward to being born. We disliked the rigours of existence, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinths of love, the ignorance of parents, the fact of dying, and the amazing indifference of the Living in the midst of simple beauties of the universe. We feared the heartlessness of human beings, all of whom are born blind, few of whom ever learn to see.

Our king was a wonderful personage who sometimes appeared in the form of a great cat. He had a red beard and eyes of greenish sapphire. He had been born uncountable times and was a legend in all worlds, known by a hundred different names. It never mattered into what circumstances he was born. He always lived the most extraordinary of lives. One could pore over the great invisible books of lifetimes and recognize his genius through the recorded and unrecorded ages. Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, he wrought incomparable achievements from every life. If there is anything in common to all his lives, the essence of his genius, it might be the love of transformation, and the transformation of love into higher realities. [...]

Each new birth was agony for us too, each shock of the raw world. Our cyclical rebellion made us resented by other spirits and ancestors. Disliked in the spirit world and branded amongst the Living, our unwillingness to stay affected all kinds of balances.

With passionate ritual offerings, our parents always tried to induce us to live. They also tried us to reveal where we had hidden the spirit tokens that bound us to the other world. We disdained the offerings and kept our tokens a fierce secret. And we remained indifferent to the long joyless parturition of mothers.

We longed for an early homecoming, to play by the river, in the grasslands, and in the magic caves. We longed to meditate on sunlight and precious stones, and to be joyful in the eternal dew of the spirit. To be born is to come into the world weighted down with strange gifts of the soul, with enigmas and an inextinguishable sense of exile. So it was with me.

How many times had I come and gone through the dreaded gateway? How many times had I been born and died young? And how often to the same parents? I had no idea.

So much of the dust of living was in me. But this time, somewhere in the inter space between the spirit world and the Living, I chose to stay. This meant breaking my pact and outwitting my companions. It wasn't because of the sacrifices, the burnt offerings of oils and yams and palm-nuts, or the blandishments, the short-lived promises of special treatment, or even because of the grief I had caused. It wasn't because of my horror of recognition either. Apart from a mark on my palm I had managed to avoid being discovered. It may have simply been that I had grown tired of coming and going. It is terrible to remain forever in-between. It may also have been that I wanted to taste of this world, to feel it, know it, love it, to make a valuable contribution to it, and to have that sublime mood of eternity in me as I live the life to come. But I sometimes think it was a face that made me want to stay. I wanted to make happy the bruised face of the woman who would become my mother.

When the time arrived for the ceremonies of birth to begin, the fields at the crossroads were brilliant with lovely presences and iridescent beings. Our king led us to the first peak of the seven mountains. He spoke to us for a long time in silence. His cryptic words took flame in us. He loved speeches. With great severity, his sapphire eyes glowing, he said to me:

"You are a mischievous one. You will cause no end of trouble. You have to travel many roads before you find the river of your destiny. This life of yours will be full of riddles. You will be protected and you will never be alone."

We all went down to the great valley. It was an immemorial day of festivals. Wondrous spirits danced around us to the music of gods, uttering golden chants and lapis lazuli incantations to protect our souls across the inter spaces and to prepare us for our first contact with blood and earth. Each one of us made the passage alone. Alone, we had to survive the crossing - survive the flames and the sea, the emergence into illusions. The exile had begun.

Nadine Gordimer, "Loot" in *Loot and Other Stories* (2003)

Once upon our time, there was an earthquake: but this one is the most powerful ever recorded since the invention of the Richter scale made possible for us to measure apocalyptic warnings.

It tipped a continental shelf. These tremblings often cause floods; this colossus did the reverse, drew back the ocean as a vast breath taken. The most secret level of our world lay revealed: the sea-bedded - wrecked ships, facades of houses, ballroom candelabra, toilet bowl, pirate chest, TV screen, mail-coach, aircraft fuselage, canon, marble torso, Kalashnikov, metal carapace of a tourist bus-load, baptismal font, automatic dishwasher, computer, swords sheathed in barnacles, coins turned to stone. The astounded gaze raced among these things; the population who had fled from their toppling houses to the maritime hills, ran down. Where terrestrial crash and bellow had terrified them, there was naked silence. The saliva of the sea glistened upon these objects; it is given that time does not, never did, exist down there where the materiality of the past and the present as they lie has no chronological order, all is one, all is nothing - or all is possessible at once.

People rushed to take; take, take. This was - when, anytime, sometime - valuable, that might be useful, what was this, well someone will know, that must have belonged to the rich, it's mine now, if you don't grab what's over there someone else will, feet slipped and slithered on seaweed and sank in soggy sand, gasping sea-plants gaped at them, no-one remarked there were no fish, the living inhabitants of this unearthing had been swept up and away with the water. The ordinary opportunity of looting shops which was routine to people during the political uprisings was no comparison. Orgiastic joy gave men, women and their children strength to heave out of the slime and sand what they did not know they wanted, quickened their staggering gait as they ranged, and this was more than profiting by happenstance, it was robbing the power of nature before which they had fled helpless. Take, take; while grabbing they were able to forget the wreck of their houses and the loss of time-bound possessions there. They had tattered the silence with their shouts to one another and under these cries like the cries of the absent seagulls they did not hear a distant approach of sound rising as a great wind does. And then the sea came back, engulfed them to add to its treasury.

That is what is known; in television coverage that really had nothing to show but the pewter skin of the depths, in radio interviews with those few infirm, timid or prudent who had not come down from the hills, and in newspaper accounts of bodies that for some reason the sea rejected, washed up down the coast somewhere

But the writer knows something no-one else knows; the sea-change of the imagination.

Now listen, there's a man who has wanted a certain object (what) all his life. He has a lot of - things - some of which his eye falls upon often, so he must be fond of, some of which he doesn't notice, deliberately, that he probably shouldn't have acquired but cannot cast off, there's an art nouveau lamp he reads by, and above his bed-head a Japanese print, a Hokusai, 'The Great Wave', he doesn't really collect oriental stuff, although if it had been on the wall facing him it might have been more than part of the furnishings, it's been out of sight behind his head for years. All these - things - but not the one.

He's a retired man, long divorced, chosen an old but well-appointed villa in the maritime hills as the site from which to turn his back on the assault of the city. A woman from the village cooks and cleans and doesn't bother him with any other communication. It is a life blessedly freed of excitement, he's had enough of that kind of disturbance, pleasurable or not, but the sight from his lookout of what could never have happened, never ever have been vouchsafed, is a kind of command. He is one of those who are racing out over the glistening sea-bed, the past - detritus-treasure, one and the same - stripped bare.

Like all the other looters with whom he doesn't mix, has nothing in common, he races from object to object, turning over the shards of painted china, the sculptures created by destruction,

abandonment and rust, the brine-vintaged wine casks, a plunged racing motorcycle, a dentist's chair, his stride landing on disintegrated human ribs and metatarsals he does not identify. But unlike the others, he takes nothing - until: there, ornate with tresses of orange-brown seaweed, stuck-fast with nacreous shells and crenellations of red coral, is *the* object. (A mirror?) It's as if the impossible is true; he knew that was where it was, beneath the sea, that's why he didn't know what it was, could never find it before. It could be revealed only by something that had never happened, the greatest paroxysm of our earth ever measured on the Richter scale.

He takes it up, the object, the mirror, the sand pours off it, the water that was the only bright glance left to it streams from it, he is taking it back with him, taking possession at last.

And the great wave comes from behind his bed-head and takes him.

His name well-known in the former regime circles in the capital is not among the survivors. Along with him among the skeletons of the latest victims, with the ancient pirates and fishermen, there are those dropped from planes during the dictatorship so that with the accomplice of the sea they would never be found. Who recognized them, that day, where they lie?

No carnation or rose floats.

Full fathom five.