5-2022

Wordsworthian Prospect Revolution and the Disciples of Secular Romanticism/Some of My Own

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Starred Papers

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in English

May, 2022

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> We shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affection strengthened and purified.
>
> — *Wordsworth, Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800 (791)*

In 1798, *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* is published anonymously by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Within the collection's first few pages, Wordsworth's "Advertisement" introduces their poetics to the masses as "experiments . . . written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure" (Wordsworth and Coleridge 3). With this deviation from the current contemporary vernacular of published poetry, Wordsworth intentionally extends the enlightening perspective of their prose to the general populace, bridging both a literal and metaphorical gap between the restrictive specificity of scientific observation, and mass availability of individuated experience. Following the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, the prospect of Wordsworth's revolutionary perspective sets the literary stage for a multi-generational discipleship of mind-body (subject-object) synthesis, foreshadowing what will eventually become one of the most influential and enduring doctrines of all Romanticism.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* demonstrates the development of the meaning of the word *prospect* in two primary ways: "Senses relating to the physical action of looking or facing out or forward;" and "Senses relating to looking forward mentally or metaphorically" ("Prospect,

n"). Following this perceptual trend, the philosophical evolution of *prospect poetry* in literature similarly reflects humans' dualistic sense experience, concerning both the objectively physical and subjectively mental aspects of perspective-based knowledge. By the end of the 18th century, and the close of the French Revolution, the Empirical (objective) prospect of European Enlightenment philosophy is again losing popularity and beginning to fall back into public polarization with its Rational (subjective) alternative. Examining the period's evolving connection between imagination and reality in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats, scholars like Firat Karadas often demonstrate a shared transcendence of the subject/object paradox, "and their rejection of such [binary] distinctions as subject-object and metaphorical-literal" (2). Nonetheless, such luminaries ultimately still fail to credit Wordsworth with the greater moral applicability of enlightened secular Romanticism. Through the development of William Wordsworth's secular poetic doctrines during the early period of the British Romantic Era, and the *second generation* discipleship of Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats, the metaphysical relationship between object and subject is forever psycho-functionally expanded by the sublime possibilities of poetic influence. Amidst the philosophically expansive experiences of his youth and adolescence, Wordsworth recognizes something innately rational about the way observational Truth is garnered in the world of individuated human experience. Combined with a pre-established concept of travel narrative, and the catalyst of the French Revolution, he is thereby primed for the creation of a new sort of poetic narrative — infused with the sublime nature of *subjective-objectivity* (perceptive-Truth). Following this popular new principle, Wordsworth soon defines the focus of a new age of reason, one in which the semiotics of the perceived prospect represent an understanding of the viewer, and the viewer's imaginative

impressions similarly impart a better understanding of the prospect. This revolutionary view of the moral intimations of prospect poetry thereby comes to characterize an important niche in the period of second generation Romanticism, creating a legacy of transformational discipleship for which Wordsworth and the young Romantics will never be forgotten.

Concerning the origins of prospect poetry, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* classifies *topographical poetry* in the following way:

> Verse genre characterized by the description of a particular landscape. A subgenre, the prospect poem, details the view from a height. The form was established by John Denham in 1642 with the publication of his poem Cooper's Hill. Topographical poems were at their peak of popularity in the 17th and 18th centuries. ("Topographical Poetry")

With the implications of prospect poetry grounded in the British tradition of topographical poetry, it is important to understand the general period perspective under which John Denham and his contemporaries are writing during the 17th and 18th centuries. This, the age of enlightenment and sensibility, is a time characterized by literature interested in humanism, collectivism, empiricism, rationalism, materialism, determinism, utilitarianism, and Neo-Classical art (Heath 7-10). Relative to such trends, Denham's poem "Cooper's Hill (1642)" can similarly be seen to embody the refined material nationalism of the current contemporary world, especially when viewed through the historical context of the notes by his editor: "[a]s the poem moves from the distant to the near in topographical terms, it moves from indirect to direct commentary on the [European] political situation as it appeared on the eve of the Civil War" (Denham n1). Thematically then, the prospect of the poem reflects the objective interests of the

period in which it was written; more importantly though, as the speaker of the poem stands on top of Cooper's Hill, they describe a world that is disassociated from their own imagination:

> Nor wonder, if (advantag'd in my flight,
> By taking wing from thy auspicious height)
> Through untrac'd ways and airy paths I fly,
> More boundless in my fancy than my eye. (lines 9-12)

While it is evident that the speaker enjoys the extent of the view, Denham's words fail to involve or evoke any detailed emotional impressions of the event; and even with the projection of the poem's narrative perspective to that of a passing bird, there still seems to be no overt internalization of the experience of the prospect. In essence then, the actual feeling of what it is like to be there witnessing the moments mentioned in the poem goes without any further description. Despite this limitation though, such empirically utilitarian depictions continue to characterize what is popular in mainstream poetry for well over a hundred years after Denham's poem is written. Finally, around the middle of the 18th century, "Burke raise[s] questions of the "beautiful" and "sublime" in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, divulging the internal element of the sublime [(imagination can grasp it, but reason can't)]" (Heath 30-31). Calling the nature of objective human sense experience into question, philosophical inquiries such as Edmund Burke's thereby begin to develop as a counter to the current contemporary understanding of Aesthetics found in writing like John Denham's, setting the stage for some revolutionary advancement to the nature of prospect poetry.

Just a few decades later, following the American (1776) and French (1789) Revolutions, a refreshing sense of change and reverie finally brings the spirit of the age to bear in Europe

(Heath 12). Along with the failure of the old monarchy, future Romantic poets seem to take heart in both the energy of reform, and the natural self-righteousness of the classless, rebelling people (Heath 47-48). Especially for Wordsworth, who is present in France for a few years during the onset of the revolution, the emotional experience of the individual becomes a point of much needed focus in the realm of English literature. In the end, "The spirit of the French Revolution had strongly influenced Wordsworth, and he return[s] (1792) to England imbued with the principles of Rousseau and republicanism" ("William Wordsworth"). Shortly thereafter, he proceeds to move up into the country of Dorsetshire with his sister Dorothy, that he might further develop his voice as an emerging British poet. While there, Wordsworth soon forms a relationship with the contemporary poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who is staying relatively close to the Wordsworth's family home; "Together the two poets wr[i]te Lyrical Ballads (1798), in which they s[eek] to use the language of ordinary people in poetry . . . [Ultimately,] the work introduce[s] romanticism into England and bec[o]me[s] a manifesto for romantic poets" ("William Wordsworth"). By reflecting the widely relatable nature of the spirit of the revolution, *Lyrical Ballads* embodies the interests of a whole new class and generation of readers. Contrasting with the lyrical tradition from which the poets are emerging, "[i]t [i]s not primarily descriptive ability but the transforming power of the imagination that interest[s] Wordsworth," and imparting that change in the minds of his readers becomes the primary purpose of his poetry (Coe 26). In such a way, the morally reformative change in perspective that accompanies Wordsworth's radical ideals of the French Revolution is hereby transposed to the new travel narrative of his prospect poetry.

Understanding the progression of Wordsworth's writing as a *new travel narrative* reflects on both the revolutionary accessibility of his innately transformative natural prospects, and Charles Norton Coe's implicative observation that "even in poems that seem to spring entirely from personal observation, his debt to a particular passage in a travel book was sometimes very significant" (23). Before Wordsworth's involvement in the early 19th century, travel narrative is traditionally little more than a collection of mass-produced nature pamphlets, functioning primarily as visually descriptive tour-guides for a more approachable experience of the outdoors. Through his own developments, "[i]nstead of focusing on external 'colours' [sic] and 'forms' that spoke only to the eye, Wordsworth claimed that he had learned to access a deeper truth of feeling that connected him with higher things: 'A presence that disturbs me with the joy / Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused'" (qtd. in Hess 284). Thereby turning inward with his evolving sense of revolution, temporal location, and moral insight, he focuses on conveying the aesthetically accessible objectivity of travel narrative through some of the more enchanting faculties of subjective human experience. In order to relate his morally reformative prospect of the sublime in the natural world, a sort of universal prophet develops as the narrative voice of Wordsworth's poetry. Looking specifically at a description from his poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798," as found within *Lyrical Ballads*, it is obvious that there is something rather transformational happening to Wordsworth during his experience of the environment's natural landmarks:

> . . . Therefore am I still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,

> And mountains; and of all that we behold
> From this green earth; of all the mighty world
> Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,
> And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
> In nature and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being. (lines 102-111)

While he begins here with a general description of his continual love for "the meadows . . . woods . . . mountains . . . [and] green earth" (102-105), Wordsworth goes on to implicate them morally as "The anchor of my purest thoughts" (109), grounded in the "nature and the language of the sense" (108). He further observes that the thought-refining qualities of these landforms are only half-innate to their physical perception, as the uptake of their spatial information in the eyes and ears themselves must necessarily also "half-create" one's imagination of the awe-inspiring qualities of the landscape (106). Morality, as such, appears to Wordsworth as a sort of metamorphosed conception of the wonder of natural things: unique experience leads to edifying thoughts, and concludes in spiritual improvement. With this process in mind, "Coleridge and Wordsworth produce *Ballads*, poetry in the language of the common man, in order to transfer the rational and moral purposes of poetry" (Heath 54). At the time, there is something colloquially transcendent about the concept of a universal-internal experience, as it suggests an indisputable sense of equality amongst all of humankind. In Wordsworth's newfound secular Romanticism, outlined in his "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800," the only thing necessary to elicit such

moral intimations in the general populace is “to throw over them a certain colouring [sic] of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in a [sic] unusual aspect” (791). Through a regular interaction with this universal experience of beauty via such unusual aspects of perception, people eventually become capable of continuous moral self-modification and growth on both an individual and social level. Thereby championing the growth of the public’s imagination, Wordsworth’s new philosophical prospect comes in direct opposition to the consistent objectivity of material-observational experience (the scientific method), and thus with the dominant literary/nationalist philosophy (Empiricism) of the previous period of European writing (“William Wordsworth”).

As Wordsworth actualizes these new ideas of prospect poetry and passion-reformative reality, he eventually goes through a stage of disenchantment over his ever-expanding perspective, focused primarily on his lifelong loss of innocence in exchange for age and experience. Critics like Geoffrey Hartman suggest that there is also a temporary decline in the quality and quantity of his work, beginning around the early-1810s, as most of the personal issues that had characterized his early poems (death, endurance, separation, and abandonment) had already been resolved by this point in his life (329-330). Thereby outgrowing the impetus of his youth, Wordsworth basically begins to feel that he is losing his connection with nature in its capacity as “a mirror of the divine” (Heath 76), for its reflection is only ever more obscured as the sublime awe of nature begins to lose its impact on those, like himself, who have already experienced its extremes. Finding only minimal encouragement from his current contemporary reputation as a poet, inconsistencies surrounding his lost innocence continue to confound Wordsworth's natural sense of transcendent idealism, the greatest of which being the

subject/object paradox (Heath 82). Specific to this traditionally binary contradiction, Wordsworth's words in “The Prospectus” portion of his poem “The Recluse” serve to elucidate some of the issue:

> How exquisitely the individual Mind
> (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
> Of the whole species) to the external World
> Is fitted: --- and how exquisitely, too ---
> Theme this but little heard of among Men,
> The external World is fitted to the Mind;
> And the creation (by no lower name
> Can it be called) which they with blended might
> Accomplish: --- this is our high argument. (lines 816-824)

For Wordsworth, “The external World is [ideally] fitted to the Mind” (821), and thus the object to the subject; but since “The Romantic is constantly becoming, [and] never fully completing even in completion,” the connection can never be fully bridged between the two (Heath 85). Ironically, the observational Truth of the natural world is continuously reliant on the subjective translations of the imagination(s) involved in its creation; as follows, the poet’s mind is only ever “half-conscious” of its own creative process, and thereby always tragically somewhat separate from the expansive world it creates (Heath 77).

Working through this extended period of loss and futility in his life, Wordsworth eventually comes to value reliving his previous passions through recollected contemplation, and even begins to appreciate the awe-filled experiences of those he is closest to as a reminder of the

existence of the sublime in nature. By the early-1820's, he enjoys "considerable success accompanying a reversal in the contemporary critical opinion of his earlier works" (Hartman 330-331); and in his later years, "Wordsworth does not tell his life as a simple narrative in past time but as the present remembrance of things past, in which forms and sensations 'throw back our life'" (qtd. in Abrams 75). As a "redirected primitivist," he again looks "back to the dawn of history for his standard of excellence," this time placing particular emphasis on mankind's personal capabilities of creation and expression (Coe 44). Overall, the enrichment of establishing emotional connections between past experience and the supernaturally expansive world of his ever-enlightening prose is enough to drive Wordsworth with a redefined purpose, and helps to reestablish the legacy of the Romantic approach to Aesthetics.

Though never actually read by the majority of his contemporaries, no work ever comes to state Wordsworth's philosophies of poetry more clearly than his (critically deemed) magnum opus, "The Prelude." First published by Wordsworth's wife in 1850, just a few months after his death, "The Prelude, his long autobiographical poem, was [virtually] completed in 1805" ("William Wordsworth"). Nonetheless, Wordsworth continues to make small revisions to it until the very end of his life, and while he envisions the piece as an introduction to his three part poem "The Recluse," the majority of the epic is unfortunately never finished. As it is, this introductory portion of the poem outlines the scope of Wordsworth's secular Aesthetic and moral philosophies. Particularly in its final lines ("the Prospectus, which celebrates the wedding of man's mind 'to this goodly universe' and the 'creation' of the paradisal [sic] world to be accomplished by their 'blended might'"), Wordsworth scholars like Meyer Howard Abrams find the clearest traces of his theory of poetry (qtd. in Abrams 61). In The Prelude's complex relation

of Aesthetics, morality, and the divine, "physical vision passes into spiritual vision, at least for the transcendental moment of illumination, but this transcendence both begins from and inevitably returns to a pictorial subject position" (Hess 295). Such reformative continuity within Wordsworth's vision of subjective-objectivity is precisely what comes to define the poetics of many of the second generation Romantic poets as well, as it utilizes a universal means of relating the nourishing prospects of the natural world (beauty, morality, and divinity) through the subjectively informative reflections of introspectively pleasurable poetry. An extended metaphor from "The Prelude" illustrates the unique implications of such a supernaturally infinite quality:

> As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
> And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
> The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light ---
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end. (lines 632-640)

The "giddy prospect" of Wordsworth's transcendent poetry thereby resembles "the workings of one mind" (633, 636), divine in its enlightening depiction of unified experience: "first, and last, and midst, and without end" (640). By redefining the boundaries and possibilities of poetic insight in this way, "Wordsworth [breaks] from the picturesque in his shift from an emphasis on visual forms and structures, or the 'mastery of the eye,' to an emphasis on feeling, the mind, and

imagination" (qtd. in Hess 293). Examining the critical contemporary (1798-1800) reception of *Lyrical Ballads*, luminaries like Juan Pellicer tend to support established scholarly conclusions concerning the originality and precedent of Wordsworth's tradition-defining choice of theme: "[t]he implied idea of poetry as a secular religion *is* distinctly modern, and does *not* seem to be a great deal older than Wordsworth, and the changes attendant on this conception of literature *do* seem to merit the word 'revolutionary'" (228-29). With this pioneering marriage of objective natural-observation and subjective emotio-imaginative experience as a hybrid means of espousing greater moral Truth in the world, Wordsworth thereby founds a secular Romantic tradition that is soon to be embraced by his younger contemporaries.

Though Wordsworth (1770-1850) is 22 years older than Percy Shelley (1792-1822) and 25 years older than John Keats (1795-1821), the poetic ideals of these "young" Romantics are based significantly on Wordsworth's rather revolutionary understanding of *prospect poetry*, especially as described in his early publications of *Lyrical Ballads*. Their combined use of everyday experience and supernatural vision as a means of depicting the sublime insights of the natural world can be directly attributed to Wordsworth's observations concerning the morally expansive potential of nature and self-reflective poetic prospects. As published in his "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800," a collection both Shelley and Keats had read extensively by the time of their own first publishing, Wordsworth describes his general theory of poetry with relative ease: "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings . . . [and] never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply" (791). Almost providentially then, in his very first written impression of the "Young Poets" (1816) of second generation Romanticism, the

literary editor and contemporary poet Leigh Hunt recognizes some of the similarities and differences that Shelley and Keats's Romanticism stands for:

> In fact it is wrong to call it a new school, and still more so to represent it as one of innovation, it's only object being to restore the same love of Nature, and of thinking instead of mere talking, which formerly rendered us real poets, and not merely versifying wits, and beadrollers of couplets. (11-12)

These "new [old] school" Romantic poets thereby begin their publishing from amidst the pre-existing influence of Wordsworth, evidenced especially by Hunt's outspoken aspiration to embody the same "love of Nature" and "thinking instead of mere talking" that their precursor himself had demonstrated during his early years of writing (11-12). Alluding to Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800," Hunt demonstrates that "organic sensibility" (love of Nature) is already indicative of young Romantic poets thinking "long and deeply" (instead of merely talking) on the nature of the sublime and beautiful (Wordsworth 791). Indeed, "Hunt and his circle found much to admire in Wordsworth and his *Excursion* [1814]," even going so far as to "rewrite the poem" for their own "series of Cockney Excursions," which aim to reinvigorate the "radical intellectual traditions" of "romantic generosity" that Wordsworth seems to have misplaced during his mid-life "dis-ease [sic] of despondency" (Cox, "Cockney Excursions" 114). Critics point out that "like Hunt and Shelley, Keats expressed ambivalence about Wordsworth, whose great genius had discerned the modern, secular sensibility[,] yet seemed too 'circumscribed' to celebrate either the era's buoyant optimism or its new scientific skepticism in a visionary myth" ("John Keats"). Still, such arguments often overemphasize the confounding influence of Wordsworth's post-*Ballads* poetry, and overlook the enduring impetus of the young

Romantics' initial call to discipleship in *Lyrical Ballads*. In the end, Shelley and Keats find themselves "both attracted to and disappointed in Wordsworth," especially following his post-revolutionary disenchantment (Waldoff 48); yet, both poets continue to celebrate Wordsworth's original vision of empathetically reformative poetry as an ideal in and of itself, and moreover a cause worthy of committing their entire poetic lives to.

Earlier in the same year that Leigh Hunt writes his article "Young Poets," Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) makes his grand entrance into the new Romantic tradition with the publication of his first collection of poetry: "Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude: and Other Poems" (1816). Many of the poems are written in response to the turbulent political debates of the period, and are "perhaps directly inspired by [Wordsworth's] publication of *The Excursion* in 1814" ("Percy Bysshe Shelley"); though no piece more so than Shelley's sonnet "To Wordsworth." During this reverential poem, Shelley mourns the loss of revolutionary conviction in the poetry and lifestyle of his aging predecessor, who has recently begun to demonstrate a political shift from the ideals of a young radical, to the compromise of an aging fundamentalist:

> Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
> Above the blind and battling multitude:
> In honored poverty thy voice did weave
> Songs consecrate to truth and liberty, —
> Deserting these thou leavest me to grieve,
> Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be. (lines 9-14)

While Wordsworth no longer seems to represent the "rock-built refuge" of "honored poverty" that first set him up as an infectious poet prophet of revolutionary enlightenment (9, 11),

Shelley's use of elevated "thy"/"thou" language when referring to the poet (9-14), and his intentional reworking of the final rhyme schemes of the Shakespearian sonnet, demonstrate a certain ambivalence over Wordsworth's recent fundamentalist shift "Above the blind and battling multitude" (10). Nonetheless, it is the youthful radical humanist in Wordsworth that originally conceives of his "Songs consecrate to truth and liberty", so it is precisely through this means of revolutionary reformative thinking that Shelley means to continue Wordsworth's new secular Romantic tradition (12).

Already later that year, Shelley goes on to compose his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (1816), in which he continues to look into the nature of Truth as negotiated between object and subject. The hymn essentially takes the form of a personal plea, calling for the return of "The Spirit of Beauty" (Aesthetics), which Shelley sees as recently vacant from the world of mankind. He furthermore claims that this spirits' presence is what nourishes human thought and existence, and thereby it must become the fully embodied focus of all writing and artistry. A summary of the nature of Shelley's concept of *intellectual beauty* can practically be taken from one stanza alone:

> While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
> Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
> And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
> Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
> I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
> I was not heard—I saw them not—
> When musing deeply on the lot

Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing

All vital things that wake to bring

News of birds and blossoming,—

Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;

I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy! (lines 49-60)

Relating the metaphor of his youth in this way, Shelley suggests that his imagination and poetic sensitivity were first formed through an immersion in nature. More importantly though, he demonstrates that no amount of "pursuing" after the supernatural ("high talk with the departed dead") will serve to bring it forth through force of will (51-52), and that it is only through "musing deeply on the lot of life" that the "shadow" of intellectual beauty and Aesthetic truth will overtake a poet's perspective (55, 59). As if to echo Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800," Shelley, "being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility," upon having "thought long and deeply" on the experiences of his youth, found a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling," brought on from the *intellectual beauty* of reflecting on his internal ecstasy while witnessing the True and supernatural in nature (Wordsworth 791).

Further expanding upon his Wordsworthian philosophies, Shelley eventually completes "A Defence of Poetry" (1821), which inevitably stands as his treatise on the ideal nature of poetry (in much the same way that *The Prelude* does for Wordsworth). The theory of Aesthetics proposed by Shelley's "Defence" is one that still serves to enlighten any close understanding of his verse, as it divulges the overarching purpose behind his vision of poetry. In a portion where he discusses the enduring functions of poets' depictions and representations, Shelley elaborates upon the nature of Aesthetics in poetic linguistics:

> Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts . . . to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. (512)

Speaking of a sort of Aristotelian "good" that exists in "the before unapprehended relations of things," Shelley hereby glorifies the poet's ability to identify the formerly unseen connections between existence, perception, and expression ("A Defense of Poetry" 512). Ideally, the emotional reality inspired by these sublime depictions might eventually expand the common understanding of something that had previously been limited, and thereby break down the barriers of social consciousness in order to invite the growth and prosperity of mankind. While again echoing the phenomenological ideals of Wordsworth, Shelley goes on to summarize the bulk of his "Defense" with an illuminating moral doctrine: "[a]ll things exist as they are perceived: at least in relation to the percipient" (533); so too then, as his predecessor had proposed in "The Recluse": "[t]he external World is fitted to the mind" (Wordsworth 231).

Following close in Shelley's footsteps, John Keats (1795-1821), in the course of his personal letters and lifetime of works, can similarly be seen to have aspired to Wordsworth's ameliorating secular Romanticism, and even further developed it as his own. Keats's theory of poetry is first concisely summarized in a "Letter to George and Tom Keats, January 5, 1818," especially in his description of *negative capability*: "when man is capable of being in

uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" (109). Similar to the concept discussed in Wordsworth's "Prospectus," when the "blended might" of the mind and nature are fixed interchangeably (231), the poet exists in negative capability, and can impart the uncertain awe and excitement of experiencing something True and authentic. Further expressing his "consideration of Wordsworth's genius" in a separate "Letter to J.H. Reynolds, May 3, 1818," Keats goes on to relate that he often find's Wordsworth's humanistic insights to be "deeper" than Milton's, especially in their capacity to awaken the soul to the beneficial knowledge of its own suffering (243-244). However, less than two months later, Keats again writes to his brother Tom, this time regarding his recent disappointment with Wordsworth's ever-changing political interests and otherwise apparent lack of availability during his most recent visit to the area ("Letter to Tom Keats, June 25-27, 1818" 252). Yet, though he clearly shares Shelley's disenchantment over their precursor's recent shift to fundamentalism, Keats continues to meet and discuss his poetry with Wordsworth in the months that follow; recognizing that the elder poet has revolutionized the morally expansive capabilities of poetry, Keats never again seems to stray very far from Wordsworth's influence.

In the same year, Keats goes on to publish his first long poem "Endymion: A Poetic Romance" (1818) as a response to Shelley's "Alastor" (1816), which in itself is published in response to Wordsworth's "Excursion" (1814). Within his heroic couplets, Keats essentially renegotiates the relationship between imagination (ideal) and reality (sense) explored in Shelley's "Alastor," and for the first time brings his own voice firmly into the mythic Romantic discussion of contemporary Aesthetics, culture, and politic reform. Thus, the exegesis of Keats's

"Endymion" comes as a sort of corrective correction, reasserting the power of myth, beauty, and sensual love as the pinnacles of absolute and enduring Truth:

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
> Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
> A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
> Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
> Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
> Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
> Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
> Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
> From our dark spirits . . . (lines 1-13)

Though still upset with Wordsworth's "despondence" from the optimistically radical world of *Lyrical Ballads*, Keats begins his epic poem with the claim, "[a] thing of beauty is a joy forever," suggesting that the elder poet's revolutionary literary insights will still be forever be beneficial to the world ("Endymion: A Poetic Romance" 8, 1). To Keats, it is only through the transformative experience of the sublime in the natural world that people are able to weave enough meaning into their lives to make them worth living. Luckily, this enlightening "shape of beauty" is akin to Shelley's shadow of *intellectual beauty*, as it also helps remove the "pall" from humanity's "dark

spirits," and is otherwise reminiscent of the reformative role that Wordsworth prescribes to all good poetry (Keats 12-13).

Composed in the following year, Keats's ode "To Autumn" (1819) serves as a colloquial depiction of the process of birth, harvest, and maturation, which metaphorically traces the stages of artistic creation as an authorial translation of natural growth, sustenance and renewal. Hereby exemplified in the second stanza of the poem, Keats demonstrates both his ability to reflect the supernatural in nature, and his capacity for identifying empathetically reformative experience:

> Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
> Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
> Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
> Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
> Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
> Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
> Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers . . . (lines 12-18)

Describing the "thee" of "To Autumn" as he does here and elsewhere, Keats essentially imbues the traditional scene of a fall harvest with the sentient spirit-muse of the season of autumn, and further identifies it with the ripened and culminated contentment of modern society during said harvest season (12). More importantly though, Keats recognizes a subjective experience in the life of the common man that carries a shared emotional significance, and literarily re-imagines it with an elevated understanding of the reformative potential of that experience in the surrounding world/culture. For the first time in his odes, "intense experience and mythological vision achieve a poised, dialectical balance within a purely natural context" ("John Keats").

In one further demonstration of his Wordsworthian sense of Romanticism, Keats eventually goes on to publish “Lamia” (1820), his final full-length poem. The tragic plot surrounding the romance of the young man, Lycius, and the beautiful witch, Lamia, suggests that Keats carries many of the same moral assertions as Shelley and Wordsworth, but with further ambiguity as to the nature of their influence. Keats closes the entrancing tale with an event of significant metaphorical warning:

> “Fool! Fool!” repeated he, while his eyes still
> Relented not, nor mov’d; “from every ill
> “Of life have I preserv’d thee to this day,
> “And shall I see thee made a serpent’s prey?”
> Then Lamia breath’d death breath; the sophist’s eye,
> Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
> Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
> As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
> Motion’d him to be silent; vainly so,
> He look’d and look’d again a level—No!
> “A Serpent!” echoed he; no sooner said,
> Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
> And Lycius’ arms were empty of delight,
> As were his limbs of life, from that same night. (lines 295-308)

Demonstrating the responsibility that comes with poetic expression, Keats questions the enduringly moral nature of the sublime and beautiful (Lamia), especially as such recognition

involves both the inconsistency of the human perspective and the potential dangers that can arise from its misleading influences. Sympathies are divided between the appalled rationalist philosopher Apollonius, and the emotionally enchanted hero Lycius: both struggle to recognize the perceived reality of Lamia as the innate ideal of a two sided continuum, leaving her actuality somewhere between the sensual reasoning of her outward appearance, and the critical reasoning of the nature of her soul ("John Keats"). As is evidenced by the text, it is fatal to attempt to separate the sensual life from the life of reason; while empiricism alone tends to be cold and destructive, the extreme pleasures of the senses inevitably prove to be unsustainable on their own as well. In Keats's reasoning, anyone who attempts to divorce these integral parts of the human perspective will inevitably end up like Lycius: unable to permanently exclude reason from his life, he is compelled to face the death of his illusions and inevitably cannot survive it.

From Wordsworth's influence, Shelley and Keats thereby come to see that the mind neither fully invents the reformative world it creates, nor mirrors it exactly as it is. Instead, the author's physical, spiritual, and emotional condition during the process of their perception imbues the imaginative faculties with an illuminating uniqueness, from which even the most usual things come to seem unusual. When combined with the excitement and pressure of the larger prospects of life (nature, religion, love, nationalism, etc.), and the figurative imagination to support their value as they are experienced, these individualized expressions of the natural world have the potential to convey some rather universally inspiring Truth. Resultingly, humanist philosophy's essential role in mass communication and writing is forever solidified, and so too is the place of the writer at the forefront of social reform. By altering the boundaries of poetry's relation to the individual experience of the reader, Wordsworth utilizes an evolving interest in

the revolutionary spirit of the age as a means of connecting with the common man: “Though his poems contain many pictorially accurate details, his avowed purpose was ‘to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*’” (qtd. in Coe 26). This permeability of experience represents the paradoxical opportunity of Wordsworth’s philosopher poet: “one aspiring to convey meaning without faith in either its objectivity or universality; one aspiring to move readers, but at the same time indifferent to the vicissitudes of their tastes; [and] one which abandons the quest for an objectively verifiable truth only to engage in a process of intense contemplation of an elusive human essence” (Moscovici). Thanks to this secularly applicable legacy, and the relative expansions of Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats, *prospect poetry*, Romantic literature, and indeed composition as a whole have been granted a lasting moral framework for their ever-evolving intentions. Though Wordsworth is often “criticized for the unevenness of his poetry, for his rather marked capacity for bathos, and for his transformation from an open-minded liberal to a cramped conservative,” the implications of his early poetic philosophy will continue to influence open-minded readers for generations to come (“William Wordsworth”). Most scholars tend to agree that “Aesthetic theory was marginally developed from the ideals of Romanticism” (Heath 86), and it is largely through those insights that art and meaning have continued to progress to where they are today. British Romanticism thereby holds its revolutionary origins in the secular Aesthetics of the renowned poet William Wordsworth, and through the second generation discipleship of his enlightened Romantic Truth, the world will forever be reshaped according to the imaginations of those who perceive it.

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Some of My Own

by

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Starred Papers

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in English

May, 2022

Starred Paper Committee:
Judith Dorn, Chairperson
Sarah Green
Jennifer Senchea

Table of Contents

Writer's Block and Other Issues

There's something rooted deep inside my heart
That keeps me from putting pen to page —
A dark blot of hopelessness, spilt there by accident,
Which fear itself now fears look in the face.
Not "dark" like the comforting quiet of the night,
With all its unexplored possibilities and appetites,
Nor even the grungy optimism of the color black,
And the ever-present absence it hides in its emptiness.
No, it's something far more unsettling
(Like the pale glow of a gloomy autumn afternoon:
Cold and overbearing in its faded expression of the sun's passage,
With the sweet scent of death whispered lightly on the wind),
A sinking feeling, that sort-of makes one crave escape:
Momentary at first, like the recluse of a good movie or drink,
But in only a short while, you begin to need another cigarette
Before the first one is even half-gone,
And the satisfaction of worldly things becomes
As fleeting as the instance of the first time you tried them.
The way it sedates the senses is almost incapacitating,
And from the vegetable of your mind
You watch yourself going through the motions
Without ever even saying a word —
Active enough to recognize the anguish of failure,
But so severely stunted that you couldn't do anything about it if you tried.
And you do try; you try all the exercises, all the friends, all the therapeutic outlets,
And everything recommended by the pamphlets from AA.
Still, nothing beats lying in bed and
Staring up at the ceiling you hope might one day
Fall and hold you there forever...
Yet, nothing could be worse,
Because the desire to get up is in there somewhere too,
Underneath the skin, where the blood is still warm,
And unlike those meaningless phrases
You occasionally leak out unto the pages of life,
The passion in that river is so much deeper
Than one will ever see while standing on the shore.
Only by diving in, head-first,
Could they ever hope to remember what it was like to be "me",
And only by facing that hole in my heart
Will I ever find the strength to again be truly free.

The World Untold

These flamboyant pedestals on which we stand;
Inflating our egos, themselves in turn,
Do construct their foundations on worldly churn.
And when all too soon, at the mother's demand
These aged dues crack, they crumble to sand.
Yet wherein lies naught, sure a pillar doth yearn
To erect again itself, and therein so learn
That all folly hath wrought from the gravitous land!
Nay to consider the implicit restraints
Donned in accordance to this preface of old.
Though, perhaps to suggest such deviant taints
Would only progress their transient hold
As few can glimpse the dreamy pictured paints
Found just off the platform, in the world untold.

A Spring of False Hope

A spring of false hope,
This failure of winter.
Head down, shoulders forward,
The icy maiden holds her breath,
Silenced in his presence. —
Huddled amongst the pavement,
Dejected mirrors shrink from an aged orb:
A slick reflection of his radiant visage.
The ominous snow-stashes
Lurking beneath their barrows of decay —
Plotting, anticipating the sun's frosty demise.
But his penetrating whispers cuddle close,
The crisp scent of change wound enticingly through his words.
Warm enough for a memory,
Yet too cold for a promise.

Lines of Guidance

A blot of chaos distributes its folly
Upon these wanton lines of guidance;
Mechanized expectations crumble and fade
Before the dark mass of ink and woe.
Something monstrous claws its way out
From beneath an upturned precipice,
Almost as if some great insect were hatching,
Slowly escaping from its watery aphidity.
A crimson sky surrounds this barren birthplace
Caught between two circles of life and death;
In the distance, the shores of possibility gleam
With the promise of a new day,
As the dry winds of change
Filter through the future.

A Toast

A toast,
To the toaster I admire most.
A toast,
To the one that doesn't roast.
A toast,
Which wherein lies the boast,
That in one short toast
I knows't,
She'll brown my bread,
White or post.
And now I,
Being your host,
Do commend thee…
A toast!

Curfew

Silent footsteps
Carry me to the entrance of my childhood home,
Their diligent expression
A mark of the imprudent twilight hour;
Time itself moves more slowly in the echo of their presence,
Keeping pace with the doorknob's cold and calculated rotation.
From amongst this stillness, it's all the more painful
When the hinges begin to whine,
Protesting at the cruelty of their weighted disturbance.
Surely, they know not what they do;
Though their untimely outburst reveals little
To the woman in the living room recliner.
Her calculated gaze sees all within the walls of this domain,
A looming patience not to be tested under the light of a single lamp bulb.
Assessing my presence,
Her expression soon softens the seriousness of her Native skin,
Though not before a delving lecture
Reveals the truth of my tardiness again.
In the end, I guess I should have called,
But she says she'll go easy this time.
The tender figure of timeless understanding,
Le Mona Lisa Teresa,
That wonderful mother of mine.

Biking Fast

I have decided
Here on this bike,
To ride forever
As much as I'd like.
For days here are long
And completely free;
No real trouble in sight,
No worries to see.
But as I continue my joints get weaker,
My spirit grows tired,
And my wild heart meeker.
And all so suddenly
I'm here today,
Long past that stage,
My bikes put away.
I now only recall
My days of biking fast,
Though things press on around me,
I seek only the past…

Death of Adolescence

My neck is haunted
By the shimmer of your lip gloss,
A strawberry apparition
Of life's thrilling intent,
Lost now,
In the specter
Of an unnamed scent,
Reaching out to me
From the flip of your hair:
A turn away motion
That takes me to where
I watch you,
Alone,
Almost as if
You too were a ghost,
At home in this cemetery life,
Dancing on my corpse.

I Run

When I run,
I run because I am tired of walking;
I run to feel the air in my lungs and the earth beneath my feet;
I run in pursuit of the sun in his race across the sky;
I run for the glory of exhaustion and the revels of return;
I run the path less traveled by.
When I run,
I run like a dying deer, who knows only escape;
I run away from home and towards something much less familiar;
I run from my thoughts;
I run from my fears;
And I run from life.
When I run, I run…

Dwelling in The Past

Mine was a Victorian home,
In it we truly lived;
Debauchery and satire built,
Without a fuck to give;

Where gowns and pipes were all we wore,
And days were longing free;
The nights of wonder to adore
With all a priori;

That place, it had not king or queen,
Though oft it housed a few;
Its merriments were bard inspired;
Its borderlines askew.

‘Twas from those parties that we learned
Within our motley ranks,
A tasteful sense of finer things,
And hedonistic rakes.

While some would say we did our worst,
Our best was yet to come;
For from those ashes soon emerged
A future yet undone.

Acid

For only that once
Did I bear witness
To the felicitous fruits
Of life's tantric design,
And from their vibrant nectar
Sipped
On swollen answers
Sought to questions
Long yet to be aligned.

Little Taco Stand

Poor Little Taco Stand,
None do I pity more than thee. —
You sit alone amongst the large,
Your friends they all despise you,
Workers abuse and do refuse your surfaces in full view,
The public only wants you when they feel they need a bite;
Sad but true,
They act much the way rats might. —
Lonely and forgotten,
One day you will close down,
And I alone will miss you,
With all my heart,
My little taco stand of mo-town.

Repressed Reality

I remember
It was much further
Than I'd expected,
That first fall from innocence.
Restlessness assured,
Gravity will teach you,
Even if you'd never wanted to know. —
Something about dollars and cents,
Clothes, cars, phones, and "growing up;"
An experience of a lifetime,
Or so I was told.
But Lo,
What a ruse! —
The hours are quite lousy,
The laws are often lame,
And everything else lies
Somewhere in-between:
"No Trespassing," please,
"Don't Climb On The Statue."
"Stay Off The Grass"!
"No Smoking" in here, you!
Look, don't touch;
Touch, don't feel;
Feel, but whatever you do,
Don't love,
For that is the greatest offense of all!
Try lust instead…
Don't live, exist;
Don't think, do;
Don't resist, cooperate;
And through this repressed reality,
You'll soon find yourself sedate.
Then, everything will work itself out,
And you'll soon work yourself through;
When all the world just falls in line
What else is there to do?

Morning Chapel

And purely by chance
I'd stumbled upon a gathering of most obscure purpose,
Where a faceless mob of passersby had
Collected close in the shadow of a hill.
Wrought of college camaraderie,
Their deviant repugnance found mark
On the mound itself;
Where stood,
Sneering down
From atop its irreverent peak,
A portly sort of preacher
Of most pompous pretensions;
There in the name of God I'm told,
Damning, accusing,
And waving his hands like a wild turkey,
As his "sermon on the mount"
Digressed into the evils of
Pre-marital "mounting." —
A palpable distaste
Emanated back from the mutinous mob,
Who had naught but heedless heckles
For this all-holy sociopath.
New-age nuances hung heavy in their eyes,
And burned like the fire of an unblinking furnace. —
'Twas tension enough to scare even
The sole proponent of our public safety.
He: the lonely representative of a wary institution,
Today, whose only prayer:
Protect us, Lord,
From a lawsuit.

Bird Watching

And who are you
Little morning blue-bird
To awake in me the dreams
Of yesteryear's migration;
What spell are you spinning there
In the grasses of your
Youthful nesting,
Concealed with ribbons
Of lightly-colored Innocence
And Awe?
When will you find me
On the floor here
Beneath you;
A wandering earthworm,
Tempting the unexplored appetites
Of your early-bird existence —
Your song is a symphony of trouble
I cannot place:
A warning I must now ignore —
Somewhere amongst the distractions
Of your spring-sprung plumage,
A fragile heart flutters
With the promise of nature's experience,
And a wonderful mischief
Sparkles out from the orbs
Of your soul;
Slowly, the soft-expanses
Of your fledgling-flight
Expand to include me
In the comfort of your breast,
And the shadow of reason
Soon grows quietly out of the question...

Lust

What angel hath fallen on somber night,
To sprawl beneath the trouble of my eyes?
Without death's hope to rectify thy sight,
I settle to grasp the truth in these lies.

Her contours reflect on inner fire,
Whose passionate blaze doth ignite my soul;
A thirst to quench this impending desire
Rises and threatens to swallow me whole.

The dance continues its reaching intent,
Claws long extended to cradle my life,
And this lone object of my hearts repent
Cages and fosters the lust of my strife.

Ay, when lights are low and makeup heavy,
Tread not in this tide, live life on the levy.

Guillotine: The Final Moments

It’s something about the way
Your chin leaves your neck
That makes me feel so close to you —
Arched back, wings extended,
You hover slowly there over your corpse,
Screaming a silent scream,
Almost as if you’ll never breathe again —
But soon I find your wild-wide eyes,
And amidst their agonized ecstasy
The spirit of emergence promises something more:
(Some stasis in the act of fluidity).
Then, with a subtle, sudden, shift,
Your consciousness collides with the impetus of reality,
Where explosions of fire sever and swell —
Gasping a strained moan, grasping at the cusp,
Struggling against the convulsions of a disembodied torso
As you plead with God for eternal release...
Time soon resumes its forward motion,
And in one final tormented seizure,
At last you still and come to rest —
But the wetness spreads beyond the wound.

Woe to the Grasshopper

Woe to the grasshopper
Who lives in the bush,
Whose vile discourse
Has driven the push
To ravage and range
All which he can change,
Seeking only a life of cush.

Lies

I never told anyone about my doubts,
I guess I just wasn't sure what they'd think;
Opportunity cost, in retrospect.
Then Again,
No hindsight is 20/20;
Seems like a paradox in and of itself,
But who can really be certain.
It's too bad Trust was betrayed
By his best friend,
And Truth, blinded by the eye of the beholder.
Maybe if she hadn't lied,
I'd still be a believer;
These days though,
Faith is only for the religious,
And even the gods tend to disagree.
No, we're on our own in the long run,
And still I wouldn't get my hopes up,
After all, there's no poison like our own —
Those projected second-guesses,
Inserting their venom into perfected perspectives;
Lies though, through and through,
Both for me, and for you.

Jealousy

Thou hateful tang of want and need
That shames my heart's desire;
I curse thy vile, tainted seed
To which all things expire.

For in its tendrils, sick and green
The mind doth grow consumed,
And thicket thoughts support a fiend
That thine own love has bloomed.

Oh Jealousy, what crooked beast
Such mired vines hath wrought,
Why dost thou scheme to take the feast
To 'nother's table brought?

The hunger takes ones senses, quelled,
With thirst oft short in tow,
And to the current logic held,
A virulence bestow.

To hate the love fetched from these ends,
So to my life has sought.
Yet, melancholy realized when
In truth, 'tis seldom taught.

The Folly of Your Opinion

Willst thou reiterate for to my iniquity
That I might alight upon the offense?
I beg thy accusation in all its intensity
To bring the sincerity of my recompense!
But lo if thine argument, wrought with viscosity;
Contends to flourish without some good sense;
That I should fall victim to self-set tenacity
Would likely induce the words I dispense,
And unto thy person, a generous pity,
Bestowed to the folly of your opinion hence.

Disillusions of Life

Life has no magic
Or mystical adventure,
There are no age old quests
Of notable size, great length,
Or glorious prestige,
Nor are there monsters
With fierce intent, large treasures,
Or helpless damsels in need;
Only in the end, when the abominable death
Reveals its toothy maw,
May our defenseless heroes smile and beckon,
For it’s the only adventure they’ve ever saw.

The Eye's Chartreuse Invention

Stark landscape of the eye's chartreuse invention.
'Tis an air of broken morn,
No more,
Inspiring this gentle dew —
As those welling tears of past fears take face;
A majestic fog askew.
Rendering me defenseless…
Yet,
In this deviant chill of
Rosy rising need,
To your fervent self
I now plead
Lapse!
That I at last might escape
Thy beauty pure.
This,
My only weakness,
Can be my only cure.

Fate Guide Me

Oh fortune’s fortuned happenstance
Awake in me the remnant chance
To live the eve your grace bequeathed
And take its furrowed shape complete
With one last dance amongst the stars
To reach those sightless eyes afar.
Then from their dreamy depths I'll trace
The outline of a perfect place
Where we might meet again one day
And teach each other how to say
The words that color every scent,
To taste all that creation's lent,
And how to feel the heart inside —
True to this place will I reside
Till again, at last, she, be by my side.

The Back-Way

But the day is coming when there will be no back roads,
When trails, paths, and routes all move to the city to become highways,
And small-town gravel sheds its grit
To welcome new construction. —
Paved, mapped, and touristed,
The wilderness will be labeled “You Are Here”,
With rest stops every four to five miles;
There’ll be streetlamps on the mountaintops
To light up our night skies,
And spiderwebs of cold iron bridges
To decorate divides.
The traffic will be terrible everywhere at once,
With rush hours lasting six days at a time;
Most animals won’t even cross the pavement anymore —
And those who try go extinct…
Even the waterways will be oiled and driven though,
As streams of unlevied vehicles
Flood their way through the remnants
Of the previously inhabited oceans
(For fishing too has been ‘roaded away).
And that spot you used to go to,
That drive you used to take,
Will finally then cease to be.
On this day,
There will be no way back
To the way that was
The back-way.

Dusk

What is it about sunsets that make us take pause?
Those fast fading furnishings
Of the lives we once lived;
Breathless, and beautiful in their poised epitomes;
Yet cancerous, and terminal,
In the truth of their prime.
Like the comforting wreckage of a ride that never was,
We just can't look away;
Basking in the glory of those divined rays of departure
If not simply for the chance at appreciating their time:
A familiar trace of warmth
On our sun-kissed faces. —
Yet, as this fragrant illness pervades the senses,
We can't help but wonder:
Is it really sympathy we see there on the horizon?
Perhaps there is hope we derive from each other's sadness:
One fading, one growing,
Each with everything to lose…
Or perhaps we're both only dreaming;
Perhaps there's no time like the present
And even then it's already over.
Either way, the night will be here soon,
Promising blankets of darkness, and comfort in the moon.

Loss of Literacy

I give up the façade of quality writing
The structure, the focus, the grammar and all
I give up the papers, the prose, and the posy
The fiction, non-fiction, and all that's involved

I give up this sentencing of paragraphs to death
In punctuated moments of listless despair
I give up the ordered, structured portents
Of rubrics, citations, and classroom affairs

I give up those words that launder my thoughts
With self-serving symbols of life pre-supposed
I give up the concepts in everyone's motives
And open my mind to truth un-imposed

At last I give up; I give up, I give up!
These notions, ideas, and all that I've known
I give, I've lost, my pencil now broken
Defeated yet winning, as soon shall be shown.