their source is implied in wisps of notation that amount to velleities. Not only is the central, driving anguish of *A Shropshire Lad* left undeveloped—an emotional motif constantly insisted on yet ultimately unearned—but one consequence of Housman's fear of openly realizing the essential feelings underlying the anguish is the blight of sentimentality. Even his highly accomplished verse technique may militate against a dangerous poetry of self-exploration. The simple patterns (mostly alternating rhymes, or couplets arranged in quatrains or longer stanzas, or comparable variations) are reminiscent of folk ballads and other folksongs. They encourage a defensive reliance on conventional situations and stock feelings: song effects that summon up a whole tradition in which deep subjectivity was unnecessary.

Admittedly, a poet can use such traditional simple forms very powerfully—Dickinson, Yeats, and MacDiarmid, for instance, provide splendid examples. Housman, however, rides with the forms he employs, going for uncomplex notes of emotional music that will emphasize a single tonality. That he often does so beautifully is a joy, and it is not denigration to suggest that his work falls short of its promise as a developed sequence. Very likely he would have done violence to his own dazzling but lesser genius had he tried to carry his effort, exhausting as he confessed it was—and beyond doubt threatening—any further.

2. Hardy's *Poems of 1912–13*

Despite his occasional notoriously bad passages, Hardy's intensity of vision takes him in *Poems of 1912–13* where the consistently polished Housman could never go. The laurels for the first developed British sequence, however uneven, belong to the grand old poet-novelist. His elegiac grouping of twenty-one poems, written when he was in his seventies, anticipated Yeats's civil-war sequences by a decade. The poems grapple with the complexities of personal disaster in a way typical of many sequences, by establishing equilibrium, in the manner we have discussed earlier, among various intense states of awareness without absolutely replacing one state by another. Hence the carping by some critics that Hardy should have preserved the contents of first publication (eighteen poems ending with the visionary "The Phantom Horsewoman" rather than with the more distanced and desolate "The Spell of the Rose," "St Launce's Revisited," and "Where the Picnic Was") is at best misleading. In fact, the opening poem, "The Going," telegraphs the final form of the sequence quite satisfactorily; in no sense are our expectations betrayed.

Essentially an elegy on the death of Hardy's first wife, the sequence

is nevertheless not an avowal of simple grief. Nor is it an exercise in consoling oneself, eventually, by Tennysonian philosophical speculation or by the healing power of nature, time, or new love—whatever the biographical "facts" of Hardy's relationship to the one soon to become his second wife. The motivating pressure within the poems is the effect on the poet of the death of a woman once passionately loved but estranged for many years. The abrupt ending by her death of all chance for communication has generated a disturbing set of memories of earlier tenderness. It has also aroused a desperate need to fix the causes, quality, and ultimate meaning of a love that promised so much yet ended in appalling distance. Throughout the sequence certain basic tones are intermingled: vivid dismay, intolerable remorse, yearning to undo the past, loving compassion, intensely focused recollection of romantic excitement and joy, and that more distanced, desolate acquiescence in an essentially bleak reality we have already noted.

The first poem projects the affective complex of the whole work. Also, it sketches the motivating situation, central preoccupations, and psychological course of the sequence, with the concomitant changes of scene. Here and throughout, Hardy's gifts as a novelist for capturing the gist of scenes, characters, and incidents stand him in good stead. "The Going" is unusual among opening poems for the way it quickly suggests the nature of the whole sequence. It is therefore worth analyzing rather fully. Although not as finely successful as some of the other poems—notably "The Voice" (poem 9), "After a Journey" (poem 13), and "The Phantom Horsewoman" (poem 18)—it is a key poem in the sequence's structure, together with "At Castle Boterel" (poem 16) and "Where the Picnic Was" (poem 21).

"The Going" divides logically into three pairs of stanzas. The first pair treats the actual death; the second, the lost wife's haunting of the poet's imagination; the third, the estrangement between them that death has made irreversible. The motivating pressure in the sequence is to undo that irreversibility, to re-establish a communion lost since the couple's early days of love: logically a plain impossibility, psychologically an absolute necessity. The absurdity and the sheer emotional need combine to give the work its peculiar force, and Hardy's narrative skill aids him enormously in creating the illusion of a heartbroken ghost and her equally heartbroken survivor striving to re-create, together, the sources of their love that—once recovered in memory and repossessed in its original sensuous ambience—will free them both of their accumulated marital disappointment and sense of guilt. (It is interesting to compare *Poems of 1912–13* with Yeats's Crazy Jane poems some two decades later, and especially with the complex psychological realities implied in "Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment" and developed in "Crazy Jane and Jack the

Journeyman." Hardy at his best is taking us into the same arena as Crazy Jane's, of the struggle toward self-transcendence through love and its commitments—no matter the inevitable contradictions and obstacles. Perhaps we can speak of the search for clarity in the most intimate aspects of life as one of the tremendous ultimate goals of modern art: certainly, such works as these are brilliantly exploratory towards this end. The affective tensions of the true sequence are essential to the effort, which also informs weaker structures like Henley's and Housman's without being able to do much more than simply indicating a direction or general state of feeling.)

Hardy's narrative instinct helps him give his sequence a grounding in literal places. His search for a renewal of love will take him back to where it began, and so the explicit narrative element in the sequence is a journey to Cornwall. It is sketched for the first time in the fourth stanza of "The Going" (the weakest stanza in the poem and yet resonant with adjectives, mostly participial, of strong psychic flavor):

> You were she who abode
> By those red-veined rocks far West,
> You were the swan-necked one who rode
> Along the beetling Beeny Crest,
> And, reining nigh me,
> Would muse and eye me,
> While Life unrolled us its very best.[2]

The stanza immediately following explicitly connects the hope for love's renewal to such a journey. In ruefully asking why the thought never occurred to "us" while there was yet time, the poem is at the same time projecting the future narrative course of the sequence:

> Why, then, latterly did we not speak,
> Did we not think of those days long dead,
> And ere your vanishing strive to seek
> That time's renewal? We might have said,
> "In this bright spring weather
> We'll visit together
> Those places that once we visited."

Did we claim, however parenthetically, that the *fourth* stanza is the poem's weakest? Surely the fifth too clamors for that distinction—and yet it has its redemptive surge of genuine remorse. Hardy is not squeamish when he feels he has to spell something out, particularly if it

2. Our text of reference for *Poems of 1912–13* is Thomas Hardy, *The Complete Poems*, ed. James Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1978).

has an expository function. There is no point in defending—as opposed to just allowing for its inevitable presence—writing like this. We have been given, despite some violence to the ear, a projection not only of the work's narrative course but also of the characters of its two protagonists and the motives underlying the poet's imaginative undertaking. The other stanzas are considerably richer poetically although not without their awkward forcings of language and rhythm. For instance, the intimate, gently reproachful lines of the first stanza are addressed directly to the dead woman—not, "Why did she give no hint that night" but:

> Why did you give no hint that night
> That quickly after the morrow's dawn,
> And calmly, as if indifferent quite,
> You would close your term here, up and be gone
> Where I could not follow
> With wing of swallow
> To gain one glimpse of you ever anon!

The effect, of course, is of actual communion with the dead woman. Almost half the poems in the sequence are similar, with the poet addressing her, or her ghost speaking to him ("The Haunter," "His Visitor," "The Spell of the Rose"). The mode of direct address is thus absolutely reciprocal with the poet's need for communication, or at the least "To gain one glimpse of you ever anon!" There are also indications in this opening stanza of the state of their relationship at the end of her life. In retrospect, the reproach to the dead woman for quitting life so suddenly, without warning, does not quite conceal the bitter sense that her dying, in its mute finality, had been deliberate: her last, decisive expression of estrangement.

If in the first stanza the phrase "as if indifferent quite" has an ominous, reproachful ring, the second stanza presents the other side of the coin—self-reproach—as well:

> Never to bid good-bye,
> Or lip me the softest call,
> Or utter a wish for a word, while I
> Saw morning harden upon the wall,
> Unmoved, unknowing
> That your great going
> Had place that moment, and altered all.

Hardy achieves much in this superb stanza. First, he captures the atmosphere of sweet, loving intercourse in "lip me the softest call." The

phrase serves as a transition between the memory of the wife's coldness ("as if indifferent quite") and that of the original dream of what the couple's life together would be. The dream is evoked in the fourth stanza's vision of her as "the swan-necked one" and of a superlative existence to come—"While life unrolled us its very best." At the same time, the second stanza's most powerful image—"I / Saw morning harden upon the wall"—suggests the indifference of inexorable fatality to human wishes. Finally, the husband's self-characterization implied in the line "Unmoved, unknowing" (the squinting modifiers here attach both to "I" and to "morning") is reciprocal with his wife's supposed indifference to him even at her death. In the context of the poem, especially its last stanza, and the sequence, words that in other elegiac settings would be absolutely trite—"your great going / Had place that moment, and altered all"—prove remarkably successful. For by the poem's end we find that, given the quality of the marriage, the wife's death might not have been expected to have such an impact. Moreover, the rest of the sequence is devoted to undoing her "great going."

The third stanza prepares us for the supernatural poems to come: "The Haunter," "The Voice," "His Visitor," and the reprise poem, "The Spell of the Rose." It also foreshadows the speaker's coming pursuit of the woman's phantom, which finds fruition in "After a Journey," "At Castle Boterel," "Places," and "The Phantom Horsewoman":

> Why do you make me leave the house
> And think for a breath it is you I see
> At the end of the alley of bending boughs
> Where so often at dusk you used to be;
> Till in darkening dankness
> The yawning blankness
> Of the perspective sickens me!

In its own terms, within a context of continued reproach, this stanza balances a moment of false elation with an even deeper depression. Complicating elements include the sense of compulsion—"*make* me leave the house"—the compelling need for the phantom truly to be there, the implied familiarity and domesticity of the scene—"where so often at dusk you used to be"—and the real, utter emptiness of a landscape in which she is no longer present.

The poem then turns to the landscape—the "red-veined rocks far West"—where she *was* once so dynamically present and to the tentative suggestion of seeking together "That time's renewal." Then, in the last stanza, there is a momentary attempt to dissipate all the pain of the ruefully questioning longing and disturbance and would-be communion through fatalistic musing, and the failure of that attempt:

> Well, well! All's past amend,
> Unchangeable. It must go.
> I seem but a dead man held on end
> To sink down soon. . . . O you could not know
> That such swift fleeing
> No soul foreseeing—
> Not even I—would undo me so!

Resolution of the knot of feelings will not come through philosophizing but through arrival at some altered state of realization. In the sequence this will happen much further on: in the thirteenth poem, "After a Journey," and the sixteenth, "At Castle Boterel." Meanwhile, the first poem ends in a welter of acute loss that is confronted helplessly.

Here we may pause to take preliminary stock. The modern reader will have to come to terms with Hardy's "old-fashioned" style. It is almost verbose, almost affectedly literary, and the phrasing can suddenly turn trite or banal or gauche. And yet the language is intimate and dramatic, a rush of active life-feeling that catches the speaker's turmoil directly and unmistakably. The varied stanza forms Hardy employs—another kind of "old-fashioned" contrivance—provide a sort of emotional control, channeling the torrent of words into a simple repetitive patterning that allows considerable metrical flexibility. The result is a paradoxically combined formality and immediacy of effect, appropriate to the profound seriousness of the poems and to their intensely private subjectivity. The implied "story" of the marriage that ended with the wife's death, and the progression in the sequence toward a psychological reversal that is almost a triumph over reality, demand such a combination.

It is characteristic that one of the climactic poems in the lyrical structure of *Poems of 1912–13* uses a stanzaic pattern that places awkward strains on Hardy's diction but whose unselfconsciously confiding simplicity of manner makes it infinitely graceful. "At Castle Boterel," which comes toward the end of *Poems of 1912–13*, is the point of resolution toward which the sequence strives. Here a moment of sweet companionability, which occurred early in the relationship, is recovered and placed in a perspective lacking in the intense turmoil of the magnificent thirteenth poem, "After a Journey":

> As I drive to the junction of lane and highway,
> And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,
> I look behind at the fading byway,
> And see on its slope, now glistening wet,
> Distinctly yet
>
> Myself and a girlish form benighted
> In dry March weather. We climb the road

Beside a chaise. We had just alighted
To ease the sturdy pony's load
When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we talked of
Matters not much, nor to what it led,—
Something that life will not be balked of
Without rude reason till hope is dead,
And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever
A time of such quality, since or before,
In that hill's story? To one mind never,
Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-sore,
By thousands more.

Thus the first four stanzas of this quietly decisive poem. In itself the passage merely confides the remembered, hardly melodramatic moment from the past we have mentioned. Nothing could be plainer, or more unpretentiously and sweetly cherishing, than the language used to evoke this moment. It is so unspectacular that one may well ask: "Why should we consider the passage a special point in the sequence?" Unlike such other pieces as "The Voice" and "After a Journey"—both of which we shall take up shortly—"At Castle Boterel" is not an overwhelming poem. Yet in it the searching memory behind the sequence has found an epiphany that fulfills the wish uttered in the first poem, "to seek / That time's renewal" in "Those places that once we visited." The impossible wish has become a prophecy. The place of "At Castle Boterel" in the sequence has given the poem special power. Various preceding poems, in particular "The Going" and "I Found Her Out There," have prepared us for its denouement of realization by stressing the depth of the young bride's homesickness for her native Cornwall. In the latter poem the widower, who had taken her to his inland home after marriage, imagines that

Yet her shade, maybe,
Will creep underground
Till it catch the sound
Of that western sea . . .

Still further on in the sequence, three poems ("The Voice," "After a Journey," and "Beeny Cliff") show the speaker being lured by the illusion of his wife's voice and presence back to the Cornwall she had loved with a childlike, unshakable natural devotion. Those three poems, and

others accompanying them, build a haunted atmosphere of psychological complexity—the speaker's compulsion to return to *her* places in Cornwall and somehow rejoin her there and make things right again—for it was taking her from those places that had spoiled her life. To him, at least, it seems so, and it seems also that he had inadvertently neglected her needs just as he had not realized how close she was to death at the time described in "The Going."

What happens in "At Castle Boterel," then, is that the quest to set things right succeeds in the repossession of their early joy together in the everyday world of *her* loved Cornwall. After the distraught intensity of remorse, grief, nostalgia, and desire to remake the past in preceding poems, the almost matter-of-fact tone of "At Castle Boterel" has enormous impact. One moment of remembered literal experience—here, a clear, pure moment of shared love—serves to fulfil the speaker's passion to recall the irrevocable and undo the ineluctable. He brings the woman back to life in a place most congenial to her; there is no failure of understanding between them; he is the fully sensitive husband and lover he should have become after that remembered moment.

The way that this transcendent moment emerges is a marvel of poetic modulation. It happens within the speaker's gloomy present life, well symbolized in the line "And the drizzle bedrenches the wagonette." The couple's suffering, at the center of so much of the sequence, is present as a context or frame for the happy moment he has dreamed his way back into, in that long-ago spring with its "dry March weather." It is not replaced but displaced; its pressure remains, giving the poem even more vibrancy than the happy memory alone would contain. But that memory is vibrant anyway, even without this counter-pressure. The whole atmosphere is charged with delight of a special, humanly satisfying kind: laboring up the hill together, the pony's gentleness, the earnest conversation, the sense of an enchanted minute of incomparable "quality."

The moment of triumph is a moment of respite from the anguish of "The Voice" and "After a Journey." The ninth poem, "The Voice," comes between two "ghost" poems in which the dead woman speaks: "The Haunter" and "His Visitor." The first of these is a poignant attempt to tell the grieving man that "If he but sigh since my loss befell him / Straight to his side I go"; it represents loving forgiveness of all the times he did not wish her with him:

Tell him a faithful one is doing
All that love can do
Still that his path may be worth pursuing,
And to bring peace thereto.

That this imaginative attempt is a failure is clear from "The Voice" and "His Visitor." As in "The Going," the woman "much missed" calls him forth from the house, but now he imagines her as

> Saying that now you are not as you were
> When you had changed from the one who was all to me,
> But as at first, when our day was fair.

Yet the element of delusion may be paramount; he knows really that she has been "dissolved to wan wistlessness," but the intense desire that it not be so draws him after her:

> Thus I; faltering forward,
> Leaves around me falling,
> Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,
> And the woman calling.

"His Visitor," a weaker poem, supposes the end of her haunting; there is no place for her in "this re-decked dwelling":

> I feel too uneasy at the contrasts I behold,
> And I make again for Mellstock to return here never,
> And rejoin the roomy silence, and the mute and manifold
> Souls of old.

At this point in the sequence, then, the stage is set for a journey; if the poet is to repossess the essence of her being it must be somewhere away from a house that no longer suggests her presence. It is, in fact, not at "Mellstock" (a reference to the cemetery at Stinsford) but in Cornwall, the locale of the twelfth poem, "A Dream or No," and in the past. "A Dream or No" has the narrative function of alerting us to the change of scene of the next six poems:

> Does there even a place like Saint-Juliot exist?
> Or a Vallency Valley
> With stream and leafed alley,
> Or Beeny, or Bos with its flounce flinging mist?

"After a Journey," the thirteenth poem, is placed at Pentargan Bay and opens with a vision of her as she was "forty years ago":

> Where you will next be there's no knowing,
> Facing round about me everywhere,
> With your nut-coloured hair,
> And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going.

Yet by the end the emphasis is on their mutual frailty and on her inevitable vanishing. The last lines are the heartbroken reciprocal to his hope in "The Voice" that she is telling him she is again "as at first, when our day was fair." Except for the effect of padding the phrase "though Life lours" gives, the last lines of "After a Journey" are masterful:

> Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
> The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again!
> I am just the same as when
> Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

The anguish of the loss of that time cannot be undone; and even "At Castle Boterel" itself, like most of the rest of the sequence, ends in a tone of resigned fatalism. One more poem that follows it, however—"The Phantom Horsewoman"—insists on the speaker's unfading "vision" of his "ghost-girl-rider" as she was "when first eyed." In this poem the speaker deliberately divides his own nature. He speaks of himself in both the first and third persons, thus distancing himself from his own keenest state of openness and apologizing for it as a kind of madness. "Queer are the ways of a man I know," the poem begins, and goes on to describe the "man's" condition of "careworn craze." What Hardy does here is very much like what Tennyson does with his protagonist in *Maud*. He deliberately avoids suggesting that the affects of the poem reflect personal states of his own. His supposed speaker (in this one poem only—but the effort at detachment is crucial) cuts himself off from full responsibility for the obsessive states, whether misery-wracked or momentarily transcendent, that the sequence has hitherto summoned up. And indeed, all the poems reach beyond the speakers in them. Their real transcendence lies in the way they hold their contending emotional energies in a marvelously sensitized, continuously probing system of interacting memory, will, self-torment, and tentative distancing.

To recapitulate: The sequence begins elegiacally, with grief and remorse (complicated in ways we have suggested) dominating the first seven poems. The key poems in this first movement are "The Going" and "I Found Her Out There." These poems establish the empirical situation of the marriage gone wrong as well as the wife's unexpected death, which is felt as a last gesture of rebuke as well as a painful shock. The ensuing three poems constitute the heart of the five-poem second movement ("The Haunter" through "A Dream or No")—a sense of the wife replying, as it were, in a counter-thrust concentrated in "The Voice": "Woman much missed, how you call to me . . ." In this second group the wife's essential self, loving after all, returns to the living world to lure her husband into understanding. He is to be aroused to search back through

the past for tokens of the way their life felt to her. "A Dream or No," following the relatively easy irony of "A Circular"—with its fashions forcibly reminding the "legal representative" of his dead wife's presence—introduces the motif of an actual journey back to her places. Images from the past surface of the "Fair-eyed and white-shouldered, broad-browed and brown-tressed" maiden, but in an atmosphere of considerable ambivalence about the accuracy of the memory and the usefulness of revisiting her Cornwall.

In the splendid third group, "After a Journey" (poem 13) through "Places" (poem 17) and the transitional eighteenth poem, "The Phantom Horsewoman," the search occurs and succeeds. It is marked by an eerie insistence, a supernatural imagery that objectifies the speaker's full agony of frustration as he is "led" to pursue "her" to the loved haunts of her youth. The third movement is a complex one. Within its headlong plunge of yearning despair it nevertheless holds intact the brilliantly conceived vision of "At Castle Boterel." That vision has itself been prepared for by the paradoxical "Beeny Cliff," which combines a bright memory with a bitter sense of the abyss of death. The movement is further complicated by the braking effects of the fourteenth and seventeenth poems, "A Death-Day Recalled" and "Places." These present an irony directly engaged with the main psychological effort of the sequence: to repossess the wife's world, her sense of life in the places she loved. Had Hardy written in the tradition of the pastoral elegy, he might have transmuted her into the indwelling divinity of these places or, at the least, conjured up a landscape in mourning for her. But this is a more tough-minded apprehension of death's finality, and the landscape remains unheeding—uttering no "dimmest note of dirge." The places care nothing for her any longer—what, and *who*, is one more lost young woman to this or that Cornish town or strip of beach or mountainside? Indeed, what importance have they to the speaker either, apart from her? It was she alone, in life and in her visionary reappearance, who animated them. Without the girl remembered in her "air-blue gown" ("The Voice"), with her "nut-coloured hair, / And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going" ("After a Journey"), they are nothing. "Places" sums it all up in its closing stanzas:

Nobody calls to mind that here
Upon Boterel Hill, where the waggoners skid,
With cheeks whose airy flush outbid
Fresh fruit in bloom, and free of fear,
She cantered down, as if she must fall
(Though she never did),
To the charm of all.

Nay: one there is to whom these things,
That nobody else's mind calls back,
Have a savour that scenes in being lack,
And a presence more than the actual brings;
To whom to-day is beneaped and stale,
And its urgent clack
But a vapid tale.

There is one, then, who remembers and is able to set the young woman before us as she was; who is so haunted by the vision out of the past that external reality fades beside it. "The Phantom Horsewoman" expands on this inner vision, rounding off the third movement and initiating the closing one. As we have mentioned, the poem abruptly displaces the sequence's major continuity of voice, and a new first-person speaker here disclaims responsibility for the disordered state—"Queer are the ways of a man I know." The shift helps break carefully developed dramatic reciprocities into independent emotional and psychic energies. Their final balance is an open play among the tonalities and intensities indicated from the start and only partly controlled by the self-lacerating clarity of the intelligence assaulted by them at every turn.

The sequence does not end with "The Phantom Horsewoman." The change in speaker modulates into "The Spell of the Rose," in which the dead woman speaks again. Unlike her manifestations in the earlier haunting poems, however, she can only trace the growth of the estrangement and, poignantly, is ignorant

. . . whether, after I was called
to be a ghost, he, as of old,
Gave me his heart anew!

In the twentieth poem, "St Launce's Revisited," and the last, "Where the Picnic Was," her spirit vanishes entirely. Both poems end with the stress on her distance from him; in the first, the poet balances a wistful hope that, although the inn at St Launce's where he stopped so many years ago is now staffed by strangers, perhaps all is still as it used to be in her home on the coast. The poem ends in utter desolation:

Why waste thought,
When I knew them vanished
Under earth; yea, banished
Ever into nought!

"St Launce's Revisited" serves a narrative function similar to "A Dream or No," only now the speaker is traveling away from "that place in the

West" ("Dream"), or at least no longer heading toward "the faces shoreward" ("St Launce's"). With "Where the Picnic Was" we are presumably back at Max Gate and on the Dorset, rather than Cornish, coast. The contrast with the Cornish scenes is as strong as that between the fourth and sixth stanzas of "The Going," between his vision of her as the "swan-necked one who rode / Along the beetling Beeny Crest" and the grim acquiescence and insight of the last stanza:

> Well, well! All's past amend,
> Unchangeable. It must go.
> I seem but a dead man held on end
> To sink down soon. . . .

So, too, "Where the Picnic Was" ends with a similar desolation (rather marred by the phrase "urban roar"):

> Yes, I am here
> Just as last year,
> And the sea breathes brine
> From its strange straight line
> Up hither, the same
> As when we four came.
> —But two have wandered far
> From this grassy rise
> Into urban roar
> Where no picnics are,
> And one—has shut her eyes
> For evermore

Poems of 1912–13, then, is very close to a modern sequence in important ways despite the strong narrative dimension. It is more than a mere series of poems linked tonally and by a shared context, although Hardy criticism tends to single out certain poems in it for discussion and ignore its character as a moving structure. The coherence of the work as a total structure lies in its powerful push toward self-discovery against the terrible odds—the self-discovery here consisting of the recovery of one's most generously empathic possibilities. To reconstruct a self that will meet the demands of a vision of what was once possible, to redirect fate by cultivating an obsession one fears may be at the pitch of madness, and to hold the new stasis fast while absolutely alert to the dead emptiness in which one is actually trapped—that is the effort in *Poems of 1912–13.* Memory and need supply the passionate language rooted in this effort; and the "ghost-girl-rider," whose voice and fleeting image appear in so many guises and circumstances throughout the sequence,

draws the language through its dynamic movement in search of a point of perfect control.

No one would quarrel with the singling out of individual poems in a sequence for special attention. Certainly "After a Journey" (one of the poems any reader might well recall if asked to list the most beautiful, or most moving, lyric poems in the language) stands by itself in a quite real sense. But then there is another sense, also quite real, in which it surges in the context of the whole sequence. For instance, it echoes, enriches, and redirects the spirit of "The Going," addressing the lost wife with a grief and ardor beyond what the opening poem was in a position to do. We cannot recognize the reciprocities between these two poems without becoming aware of the affects building up from poem to poem in the sequence. As a clue to the organic structure of sequences, the relationship between "The Going" and "After a Journey"—each gaining fuller dimension from the other and from its specific placement in the whole work—is one important touchstone in *Poems of 1912–13.*