

Apostrophe, or the Lyric Art of Turning Away

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Turn away no more:
Why wilt thou turn away?¹

I. Introduction

Lyric, when it works, works on its audience in a peculiar way. Its effects are not exactly "rhetorical." And so when I claim (as I do in this essay) that where there is lyric there is apostrophe, a corollary of my claim is that apostrophe names not a codified rhetorical device or trope, but a demand that lyric poems lay upon their readers.² The English poet Geoffrey Hill, mulling over the problem of "poetic voice" in a 1981 interview on BBC Radio, made this remark:

... those old distinctions that you get in the Victorian and Romantic observers and auditors—the kinds of distinction that they are trying to draw all the time between a dramatic and a lyric voice—I think in our time inevitably merge. The lyric voice must exist, or must be heard, or has to be heard, or is constrained to be heard, in a dramatic context. (cited in Griffiths, 76)

On this occasion, Hill had in mind the poet's public reading of his own poem, but what he says has broader application. He describes, in fact, the predicament of any reader or listener. Every spoken iteration of a lyric "must be heard" in the dramatic context he refers to. Of course, "dramatic" has some special sense here. A lyric poem is not a script for speaking. Nor is it exactly a staging of speech. Speaking a lyric is only accidentally related to acting. The essay that follows focuses on the figure of apostrophe in order to cast some light on the "dramatic context" that constrains lyric in our time.³

My analysis touches on poems from a range of periods over the last four hundred years, including sixteenth- and seventeenth-century, Victorian,

and mid-twentieth century works. The examples have been gathered from my own itineraries of reading, and considered through a modernist lens. My thesis has a transhistorical reach, though its assumptions are of a late modernist moment. I come to my guiding conception of lyric apostrophe primarily by way of Pound (via an Olson-related anecdote, and Canto 82). What starts as bare intimation gains inductive and genealogical power in the turn to Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." The example of apostrophe in Whitman's mockingbird passage is remarkably original, to the point of idiosyncrasy. Nevertheless, general principles of lyric can be abstracted from it (and reconfirmed even in much older poems, such as Herbert's "Denial," or those of other traditions, such as Celan's "Sprachgitter").

A crucial first step is to distinguish between lyrical and oratorical apostrophe.⁴ In oratorical apostrophe, the orator averts his speech from a "judge" and, in passing, addresses individuals in the audience, opponents perhaps (as Demosthenes to Aeschines, or Cicero to Catiline), or absent others, or even inanimate things ("O sacred traditions of Rome . . .").⁵ Despite this temporary aversion of address, the orator's intent continues to be to interest and persuade whoever is sitting in judgment on a case or argument or plea. Quintilian (51–55) called it a "remarkably effective" lawyerly sort of trick.⁶

All oratorical apostrophe, then, is a kind of address. Conversely, all instances of lyric address turn out to be apostrophe. In a poem, the initial judge or audience appealed to (the explicitly or implicitly addressed "you") is never in fact present or available for persuasion, and so in the moment that lyric speech "turns away" toward another addressee (whether person or nonperson), it cannot turn back again (as in oratorical apostrophe). Any further addressee is also not in a position to hear or to reply (and not simply because it is inanimate); and so no lyric address ever reaches its "you." That is, *every* instance of lyric is coincident with a movement of speech that describes a repeated swerve of longing toward the third.

As for the different kinds of "you," it is not that I fail to recognize or wish to erase the differences (traditionally established) between apostrophe, prosopopoetic address, *exclamatio*, personal address, and address to the reader. These differences are a matter of some importance in the interpretation of a poem's meaning (and hence in interpretive criticism). William Waters's point about the flattening effect of deconstructive ("topological") readings of apostrophe is not trivial: "if all a poem's hailings are equally void of effect and therefore essentially interchangeable" (3), he writes, do we not lose sight of much of what particularizes poems? And do we not lose a criticism that can draw attention to how poems "have been shaped to bear or transmit the specific force of the poem's direction and manner of address" (5)?

It is an objection worth voicing. Nevertheless, by holding faithfully to the oldest sense of apostrophe (Gk. ἀπό, "away" + στρέφ-ειν, "to turn"), something may be gained for poetics that is momentarily held off (though not lost) for interpretation.⁷ The key terms I introduce here—denial, iterability, triadicty—are instruments of poetics.

Waters argues that personal address, rather than apostrophe, is the key literary phenomenon in lyric, and that much of what has been called apostrophe is prosopopoetic address, and hence another sort of problem altogether. When Waters writes (echoing Celan's famous lecture) that address is "the meridian of all discourse, the plumb line without which pragmatics, and so language, are strictly unthinkable" (5), the claim would seem to be incontrovertible. But it should perhaps be said in turn that no poem actually does address a reader, at least not in any ordinary sense of the word "address."

My point is not to deny the very many possible "imaginative positionings a reader can take up with respect to . . . [a poem's] pronouns" (162). As Waters says, the array may well be infinite, and "illimitably nuanced" (162). But I think that if we stay close to a phenomenologically accurate account of the experience of reading and speaking a lyric poem, the alternate concepts introduced here will prove to have greater clarifying power than the quasi-Buberian notion of "encounter" that underwrites address. Although I do not want to deny that lyric in some way navigates "the meridian of all discourse" (i.e., address), I would like to insist upon what an unusual sort of communication it amounts to. That surely was a good part of Celan's point, as can be seen in poems that only with considerable strain will be made to illustrate his best-known prose statements.

Since the address of the "I" is always turning away from an unhearing "you" to a third who might hear, lyric poems confound the transparent referentiality that is quickly possible in ordinary discursive communication. Walter Ong observed in a late essay that, in everyday discourse, "I" and "you" (or their equivalents) are the only words in any language that "do not demand or even tolerate interpretation or hermeneutic."⁸ There is a kind of communicative alignment that is more basic even than interpretation.

But in lyric the "I" and "you" do indeed demand readerly interpretation. A reader can reliably determine, by interpretation, to whom the "Thou" refers in a George Herbert lyric, say, as opposed to the divine address to the everyman "thou" in Pound's Cantos 47 or 81 ("Pull down thy vanity . . ."). He can distinguish this "thou" again from an address "to the reader." And a reader can make sense of the various contexts in *Astrophil and Stella* when the speaker addresses as "thou"—to list only a few—a hack poet (#15), "Absence" (#88), his own sovereign mind (#85), his bed (#98), an unforthcoming messenger (#92), the Thames (#103), or Stella herself (#68).

In everyday circumstances, all speakers will immediately align themselves in any communicative exchange in which the words "I" and "you" appear. Lyric puts that sort of alignment on hold, since "you" does not answer. Lyric apostrophe turns the speaker of this special kind of "instance of discourse containing 'I' toward another sort of vocal alignment."⁹ It is best to call this alignment an attunement rather than a meeting or encounter, since no one answers.

Lyric speech, turned away, seeks a third, but not to be its "you," nor to be its audience. This third is never one who will, from the place of "you," answer. S/he is one, wholly potential (and hence neither present nor absent), who will attune the instance of his or her own speaking to the lyric's representation of speech. "The third" designates the possibility, introduced in the moment of speaking the poem, that another will take it up, that it will have a further instantiation. The third might well be the self-same reader or speaker at a later moment, but whoever s/he may be, the third is its future.

II. Key Terms

Spokenness. One aim of my argument is to draw together the discursive, stylistic (or figurative), and auditory dimensions of lyric which, though experienced as a unity by any engaged reader, are held apart, if not outright severed, in most scholarly discussions. A basic supposition, then, is that a lyric poem's text calls to be *spoken* (i.e., read aloud, pronounced, intoned: that "spokenness" includes possibilities such as subvocal speaking and intent listening). Almost all poems written since the time of Archilochus and Sappho are textual representations of speech.

The poem, though it is text, must be spoken, iterated as speech, for another, another "me," to hear ("another" in this sentence may be broadly construed). The requirement of iteration *as speech* constitutes the difference between lyric apostrophe, and apostrophe and address as it has been used in journalism, advertising, second-person novelistic narratives, etc.

Allen Grossman leads the way here when he writes, in a subsection of his *Summa Lyrica*:

In order to read the poem, it is necessary for the voice of the reader to become conscious of its own interestedness . . . Stress is the soul element, the point of entrance of the interest of the reader . . . [22.6].

Grossman's point—that one must "inhabit" the "I" of a lyric and speak it as such, rather than passively and optically reading it from the perspective of a "you"—is crucial.¹⁰ A lyric needs to be spoken in order for its discursive, stylistic, and auditory dimensions to come together, and for the possibility of readerly attunement to be set in play.¹¹

The speaker makes the poem happen audibly—but is not identical with the “I,” much less a stand-in for the author. The speech of the “I” and the lyric discourse it belongs to will turn out differently in every new iteration (this register of difference, even where close to imperceptible, accounts for a large part of what continues to be interesting about the best lyric poems).

Denial. The claim I make for apostrophe follows from the premise that address in lyric is always and necessarily denied. By “denial,” I mean the nonresponse of the “you” as a structural feature of lyric. In George Herbert’s poem of that name (see the discussion in section III), the word stands for a psychological state as well, and a certain “imaginative positioning” vis-à-vis the “thou.” But the historically contingent nuances of the feeling that Herbert attempts to represent in “Denial,” though they continue to resonate (and not only in the devotional tradition), are less important to my argument than the basic fact that organizes his poem: that the “you” does not, cannot, must not answer.

Iterability. The spoken or intoned quality of lyric is always bound up with iterability. This iterability is not only that which belongs to signs (hence of substitutive tropes, language as automatic system, the inhuman quality of the linguistic, etc.). It is an iterability that operates at the level of discourse (i.e., of sentences) and of the spoken as well. “Indicators” are the element enabling iterability at the level of discourse [see the discussion in section IV].

Triadicity. The possibilities of lyric depend entirely on the formal emptiness of the pronouns “I” and “you.” By virtue of the indicators, a denied and iterated address opens triadically into a future of spokenness.

In many of the best-known pictures of lyric, we will find that the “I,” despite making an address to a “you,” is doomed to soliloquize or is otherwise walled-off; that the “I” is taken always to refer ultimately (even through personae) to the author; that the “you” is taken to refer to the reader; that the “you” is supposed to hear (or overhear) the speech of the “I”; that the “I” is supposed to speak only once, and without the agency of the reader.

In a triadic theory, we will find that lyric can only be instantiated if spoken, and spoken for the hearing of another; that the “I” is formally empty, hence inhabitable by any speaker regardless of its contextual referent; that the “you” is also formally empty, its referent interpretable, its function—to be unreachable by address—making it cipher-like; that the “I,” and the discourse containing it will be understood and pronounced somewhat differently with each spoken iteration.¹²

Whitman’s “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” [1860] is my main exhibit of triadicity, to be set against dyadic address poems like “To You” and “Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand” (Whitman, as Waters notes, the “most insistent of all poets when it comes to hailing the reader” [7]).¹³ In “Out of the Cradle,” Whitman gives apostrophe an origin in natural,

even cosmic, longing. Apostrophe is the figure that represents awakening (to a lyric vocation), but more than that it is the figure that awakens. That song of longing, unable to reach its addressee, turns away to a third. The third—reader/listener become poet/speaker—repeats the apostrophe, at which instant the first apostrophe folds into succeeding ones. Both the compositional and the readerly situations are triadic.

One of the three vertices of "Out of the Cradle" is a male mockingbird singing to its lost mate:

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping
upon the sea!

O troubled reflection in the sea!

O throat! O throbbing heart!

And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night. (183)

The second point of the poem's triangle is the ocean, the "fierce old mother" who receives the futile song and sends back, "privately," "the word . . . of all songs" (death). Its third vertex is the soul of the young boy who actually hears (and "translates") the bird's song, along with the ocean's word, and is awakened "to know what I am for."

The young poet has been initiated by the bird's singing into the family language of apostrophe, and responds in kind:

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)

Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? Or is it
really to me? (183)

The lines that, if taken out of context, seem like prosopopoetic address or *exclamatio* turn out to be something stranger: the poet has attributed speech to a bird that addresses its lost mate; and this re-created bird has sung a scattershot series of always turning addresses to the also unanswering saliences of scene and emotional moment. The bird "really" sings, as the boy's speech suggests, to the third:

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting
me,

O solitary me listening, never shall I cease
perpetuating you . . . (184)

Perpetuation. The third is always a "projected me": another speaker projected out of the poem's past, and its having-been-spoken. The third is the poem's future. The iterability of "denial" binds the stylistic swerve of lyric speech that brought forth the poem to the swerve of readerly speaking

"perpetuates" (in Whitman's word) the poem's existence in time. Still, the relation between composition and iteration does not amount to a call-answer, address-response pattern.

The swerve of readerly speaking retraces the swerve of writerly style, but when the speaker "perpetuates" the poem, the priority is reversed—since it is only possible to know (as speaker) the latter through the former. The turn to a third is entrained, as it were, in the lyric; but each new iteration of it will be different, a slightly different "fetch" of sound and meaning [see the discussion in section V].

Style. A fable of triadicty and the lyric impulse can be found in Charles Olson's account of conversations with Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in 1946. Following one afternoon visit, Olson described a moment in which he heard "the sudden explosion of Pound's voice" in a chanted, improvised proto-poem. The anecdote tells of a turn of speech out of everyday conversation and into apostrophe:

Pound, as always so instantly gracious, was quick to suggest [the guard] have a cigarette as I was opening a package to give one to Pound. The guard declined, and with that Pound says, CHAW CUT PLUG. And repeated it, CHAW CUT PLUG. Explaining to the guard he meant that's the only thing he guessed the guard did. The sudden explosion of Pound's voice in this phrase was quite total to me. It was the poet making sounds, trying them out to see if they warmed his ear. (50)

As in a tableau vivant of lyric, Pound turns away from Olson to address the guard. The "you" is implied: "(you) CHAW (you) CUT (you) PLUG." Pound's phrase "addresses" the guard, then, but not in a way that he is able or willing to answer.¹⁴ Instead it turns back to Olson, as an utterance that could either be taken as a rhetorical appeal to fellow feeling (as though Olson were his real audience), or as an expression of pure style (in which case, already a text, this speech averts itself from any possible local response or answer).¹⁵

The phrase "CHAW CUT PLUG" describes or names the repetitive actions involved in chewing tobacco. It does so by means of verbs alone, remarkably precise ones. The rhythm too is striking, in a phrase of nearly equally stressed monosyllables, probably because of the much longer duration of "CHAW," the roughly equivalent durations of "CUT" and "PLUG," and the assonance of the latter two syllables. Stylistic, or signature, voice "explodes" (and Olson transcribes the phrase all capitals) in a turning from a "you" toward a third. Lyric style is the torque that individuates speech as it slips free of the address-and-response structure of ordinary communicative situations, and at the same time differentiates itself from all previous such turnings. In this example, we can see how apostrophe may be as much an engine of style as an emblem of it.

Attunement. Doesn't the fact of language, of signs, necessarily and already imply a third? Lyric builds its structures in the face of another possibility proceeding from this "fact": that any given utterance will not be taken up, not heard, and (as is most often the case) not spoken again. Denial, and turning away, are constitutive of lyric speech. "Perpetuation" cannot be automatic. Difficulty needs to be overcome; but there is also a principle of freedom at the heart of it. The duller sort of turning away is always as likely an outcome as is the most brilliantly sympathetic.

The swerve of poetic speech away from an unanswering "you" makes for readerly difficulty. But what is this difficulty? Except in extreme cases (highly mannered diction and syntax, say), it is not the surprise of style itself. Poets as different as Herbert and Celan have gestured toward it instead with the metaphor of attunement.

By attunement, I do not mean a writerly calibration of "tone" for oratorical and communicative ends. Nor do I refer to the unrepresentable meeting of subjectivities that Martin Buber called the I-thou relation. Attunement is a way that the text of a lyric invites a speaking being to travel along. The semiotic possibilities of language become attuned to context and occasion as a speaker pronounces, and differentially sounds or intones, the syllables in the sequence constituting a sentence; and to do that he or she must speak for the hearing of another.

I set the concept of attunement against the supposition that lyric offers the possibility of "encounter," or "response" to, another.¹⁶ Buber's fine aphorism "The word 'I' is the true shibboleth of mankind" (65) will not help us to read any lyric. Likewise, Waters's interest in lyric address is grounded in the assumption that the poem's use of "you" hails some other who responds to the "I." It is not a "you," however, but another "projected me" who will speak the poem and attune his speaking to its represented speech.

It is *because* lyric removes itself from the address-and-response situation of communication (into the after-vacancies of which words always vanish) that it holds the power of attunement. It is not a matter of simply falling into line with the author's way of meaning, his intentions, etc. Attunement is a vocal acknowledgment that these iterable words and phrases, these ways of addressing another, these crossings of sense and syllable stress, though coming from elsewhere, can have meaning for me, that I am prepared to speak them, that I desire to mean something by them.¹⁷

"Attunement" was given a famous formulation in Paul Celan's "Meridian" speech of 1960. He wrote: "[lyric poems are] paths on which language becomes voice. They are encounters, paths from a voice to a listening You . . ." [Waldrop, 53] (In the original German: *Wege, auf denen die Sprache stimmhaft wird, es sind Begegnungen, Wege einer Stimme zu einem wahrnehmenden Du . . .* [201]) *Stimmhaft* is a linguistic term that means "voiced." Literally, its sense is "voice-like." In its close relation to a constellation of words

including *Stimme* (voice), *stimmen* (to bet true; to tune), and *Stimmung* (mood), we can see how *stimmhaft* and its cognates lead us to the English cluster (active in Herbert's "Denial") that includes "attuned," "attunement," "tone," "intonation."

The problem with translating *die Sprache stimmhaft wird* as "language becomes voice" (or Felstiner's "language gets a voice" [412]) is that it suggests that the "voicing" of a poem somehow dissolves its own mediacy, or perhaps even brings an "I" before a "listening You . . ." Although Celan was more careful with this problem than his translators, it is also the case that in his better-known prose statements, if not in the poems themselves, he always imagines a dyadic lyric (an encounter or "conversation" between an "I" and a "you").¹⁸ In his "Meridian" speech, moreover, Celan obscures the difference between the "listening You" that the spokenness of the poem finds a path to, on the one hand, and the "you" named and addressed in any particular poem.

Amending Celan's translators slightly then, I concur that lyric poems are ways along which language becomes *voice-like*, or through which speech comes into a special kind of attunement. Departing from Waters's (Celan-inspired) metaphor of the meridian of address, I would suggest that the linked concepts I have put forward—denial, iterability, triadicty—allow us to deal more flexibly with the general fact of linguistic mediacy, and also to be better aware of the myriad ways that lyric poems exploit the formal emptiness of the personal pronouns.

III. "Denial" and the Turnings of Apostrophe

George Herbert's "Denial" [1633] is a lyric that represents an address to the Creator. Its speaker gets no response. According to doctrine, the denial should be followed, ultimately, by atonement. If we read the poems of *The Temple* in the order that Herbert arranged them, we will see that denial is only a temporary stop along the believer's path. Nevertheless, it is possible to read "Denial" in a wholly secular light, as a work that because of theological proscriptions is extremely sensitive to problems of representation that pertain to all versions of lyric. What can it tell us about lyric denial?

Devotional lyric is nearly indistinguishable from prayer. Prayer enacts (or, in a loose sense, "performs") an address to the divine thou. But that primary I-thou relation, even supposing it to have been achieved, *cannot* be represented. Devotional lyric can neither represent that relation, nor make it happen. The "denial" is built-in, and there are no exceptions to the divine non-response. That is what makes it a lyric, and not a prayer. Of course, some Herbert lyrics do represent a *dialogue* between "Love" and the soul; and the extraordinary sonnet "Prayer (I)" finishes, for good reason, with the plain phrase "something understood" (44). But if almost all

of his poems picture that primary relation as a desideratum, none claims to represent it as "something achieved."

What the devotional lyric *can* do is set forth a failed or frustrated approach to the divine thou. Herbert's "I," refused hearing by his Creator, turns elsewhere. The metrical frame of the poem is organized accordingly. The last word of each stanza floats free, with the chime of completing rhyme only returning in the last stanza's plea:

When my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent ears;
Then was my heart broken, as was my verse:
My breast was full of fears
And disorder:

My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,
Did fly asunder:
Each took his way; some would to pleasures go,
Some to the wars and thunder
Of alarms.

As good go anywhere, they say,
As to benumb
Both knees and heart, in crying night and day,
Come, come, my God, O come,
But no hearing.

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue
To cry to thee,
And then not hear it crying! All day long
My heart was in my knee,
But no hearing.

Therefore my soul lay out of sight,
Untuned, unstrung:
My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipped blossom, hung
Discontented.

O cheer and tune my heartless breast,
Defer no time;
That so thy favours granting my request,
They and my mind may chime,
And mend my rhyme. [69-70]

The representation of failure makes possible, even in this deeply religious lyric, a compensatory, mortal attunement.

Prosopopoeia here, interestingly, does not take the form of address, but in the way that it follows upon the main "denied" address is emblematic of how the turnings of apostrophe find their way into every sort of lyric. In the space between stanzas 1 and 2 above, Herbert represents a dramatic aversion of the speaking "I" from the "thou": "My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow, / Did fly asunder . . ." This is the point at which the poem wavers in its single-minded address to the Creator. By the third stanza above the speaker clearly is addressing some (mortal) third, not apologizing to his Maker for his propensity to distraction. The figure personifies the speaker's "thoughts": his soul's intent, having lost its directedness, moves back into the variousness and differentiation of worldly concerns. It then represents those splintered and single thoughts as speaking with the unity of a "they": "As good go anywhere, they say . . ."

On first consideration, that "as good go anywhere" seems profoundly deprecatory of all the possible worldly places that thoughts and sentences can go; but, then again, these lines tell of the generic predicament of anyone who speaks a lyric. The lyric "I" and its represented thoughts, its sentences, its power of address, will get no hearing from the "thou." This text has no alternative but to "go," by way of iteration, where it can—to the third, in all its human distractedness and imperfection. My reading runs somewhat against Herbert's sense, insofar as Christian attunement can only be achieved by turning towards God. I suppose, on the other hand, that attunement is an experience of finite, earthly reading and speaking, and that "denial" is a necessary condition of it.

Devotional lyric descends from the great Abrahamic tradition, and from the literariness of the monotheistic religions of the Book, whose deity is everywhere and nowhere, who may be addressed but never pinned down to a particular location or interaction.¹⁹ The European lyric is also, in its earliest manifestations, a poetry of writing (if not, yet, of the book). Devotional lyric, a form that points to its own iterability and relative lack of context, provides us with a model of apostrophe—of an address that is a turning away from the "you"—relevant to all lyric poems.

Griffiths suggests that Victorian poets, who had become used to the economic and social conditions that created a remote audience of readers, were, more than their predecessors, fascinated by the problem of "the printed voice" (a phrase that Browning employed in *The Ring and The Book* to describe a trial that allowed the submission of written depositions, but no lawyerly oratory.) But long before the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe produced an "abstraction of audience," poets had exploited the doubleness of lyric. The Elizabethan court poets, for example, brilliantly played the fixity of the written lyric against its unpredictable return

as speech. This play, as we will see, depended on an awareness of the class of words called indicators.

IV. Indicators in Lyric: "... *el tú de mi canción*"

The particles that twentieth-century linguists call "indicators" or "shifters" (including "this," "that," "here," and "there," as well as the personal pronouns) are the most mask-like of words. They are perfectly inhabitable, and perfectly vacatable, by any speaker. Émile Benveniste bracketed the metaphysical reference of the first and second person pronouns singular when he asked, "What is the 'reality' to which *I* or *you* refers?":

Only a "reality of discourse" that is something quite singular. *I* can only be defined in terms of "locutions," not in objective terms, as is possible for a nominal sign. *I* signifies "the person who utters the present instance of discourse containing '*I*.'" By definition an instance is unique[,] and valid only in its uniqueness. . . . This constant and necessary reference to the instance of discourse constitutes the move that unites *I/you* with a series of "indicators" that, because of their form and their combinatorial possibilities, belong to different classes. Some are pronouns, some adverbs, still others, adverbial locutions. . . . *This* will be the object designated through demonstration that is simultaneous with the present instance of discourse containing *I*. [218-89]

The indicators really do "shift" depending on who is speaking. There could be no discursive communication without them. But once unmoored from, or at least loosened with respect to, "the present instance of discourse," their shifting quality is what allows the lyric "I" to make its peculiar appeal to a third.²⁰

The mercurial "*tú*" in a pair of Antonio Machado's sly "*Proverbios y cantares*" [1917-30] shows how the referents of personal pronouns will necessarily shift depending on who speaks them, or on who one imagines speaks them:

No es el yo fundamental
eso que busca el poeta,
sino el tú esencial. [185]

It's not the true
I the poet's after:
it's the *you*. [Paterson, 33]

Con el tú de mi canción,
no te aludo compañero;
ese tú soy yo. [189]

But that you in my song
 doesn't mean you, pal;
 no—that's me. [Paterson, 33]

These proverbs at first seem to make fun of the poet's solipsism; and then to mock the reader's. The joke turns on the shifting referent of the indicators. One becomes aware as well that "the present instance of discourse containing 'I'" is something of a mirage here. It is possible to speak the "I" of this poetic discourse—to instantiate it in an always slightly different version of itself; or, in Whitman's word, to perpetuate it—but it is not possible both to perpetuate and to answer.

Indicators are also the key ingredient in Sidney's sonnet #58 [written c. 1582], a curious poem with two formal apostrophes (including a figure that could be either prosopopoetic address or *exclamatio*). Astrophil, in the hopes of softening his intransigent beloved, has asked her to read out loud to him some verse that anatomizes "all his woes." The speech—which is only ever alluded to—has a despairing "might," but the presence of Stella as she reads the poem instead delights her lover. That is, "[by] pronouncing grace," the face and voice of his beloved triumph over the merely discursive strength of the poem's woeful speech:

Doubt there hath bene, when with his golden chaine
 The Oratour so farre men's harts doth bind,
 That no pace else their guided steps can find
 But as he them more short or slacke doth raine,
 Whether with words this sovereignty he gaine,
 Cloth'd with fine tropes, with strongest reasons lin'd,
 Or else pronouncing grace, wherewith his mind
 Prints his own lively forme in rudest braine.
 Now judge by this: in piercing phrases late,
 Th'anatomy of all my woes I wrate;
 Stella's sweet breath the same to me did reed.
 O voice, O face, maugre my speeche's might
 Which wooed wo, most ravishing delight
 Even those sad words in sad me did breed. [25]

Astrophil makes a very light claim to his own "sad words": hence the poem's knowing playfulness with regard to its iterability. If we accept the story about his offstage "speeche," we cannot help but notice the function of indicators in *this* poem as well.

The rhetorical triumph of Stella's "pronouncing grace" appears to be decisive. The poet imagines a situation in which the lovers encounter one another ("Stella's sweet breath the same to me did reed"). But the

mock-rhetorical situation of sonnet 58 cannot do more than allude to it. The ravishing delight felt by Astrophil in the presence of this particular woman can *never* belong to a reader's experience.

The prosopopoetic address (or *exclamatio*) in l. 12—"O voice, O face . . ."—in effect works to acknowledge that impossibility. Its naming of the abstractions of "voice" and "face" celebrates the unabstractable singularity of Astrophil's beloved, her irreducibility to the text she has inspired. "Voice" and "face," like the other implied "you" (the one asked to judge), do not answer. And so "voice" and "face" name not an experience of immediacy, but the source of this stylistic swerve (i.e., of the *exclamatio* or prosopopoetic address itself, understood as style). They name the denial that is the condition of lyric.

Sidney's poem rather strongly suggests that the categories of rhetoric are inadequate to describe lyric effects, and that lyric apostrophe is not just one device in the repertoire of "the Oratour." Nevertheless, the art of rhetoric is his point of reference. If we jump to discussions of poetics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, we will find that *conversation* is much more likely to be the model for lyric speech.

V. Attunement and Turns of Speech

In one of his letters (to Sidney Cox, 19 Jan. 1914), Robert Frost explains how the intonation of "sentence sound" is the hinge that connects lyric and conversation.²¹ According to Frost, we hear the intonation of our time and place in conversation, and then mimic it. But conversation isn't just something one listens to—one participates in it. In conversation, an utterance is given a certain contour of pitch and stress by being addressed to another's hearing.

Differential syllable stress is, in English, one of the main vocal instruments (pauses and pitch are the others) by which the reader's mind and body interpret the significance of the poem's lines and sentences. It was the basis for Gerard Manley Hopkins's "sprung rhythm" prosody. As Hopkins thought of it, the reader must do the "fetching out" of meaning as s/he reads aloud, the voice "treading and dwelling" on certain syllables (256). His note to "The Wreck of the Deutschland" [1876–89, exact date uncertain] advises: "And so throughout let the stress be made to fetch out both the strength of the syllables and the meaning and feeling of the words." Hopkins's choice of verb should remind us of the tall nun of stanza 19 who, at the crux of the storm, "has one fetch in her"—has the energy and courage to call out "O Christ, Christ, come quickly."

For a reader too, the "fetching out" of sound and meaning is premised on the agency and intentionality of speech. But this intellectual freedom

immediately runs into constraint. If we recall Paul Valéry's phenomenological definition, poetry is "a hesitation between sound & sense."²² Hesitation, starting over, strain—the strain of directedness and resistance—happens in the rereading of an English poem as the reader decides where to place stress, and how to make sense, phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence. And yet, the strain as a speaker attunes his voice to the language of lyric is not just symptomatic of semantic difficulty (considerable in any Hopkins poem). It is also the difficulty of attuning one's speaking to an address that turns from a "you."

Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art" [1976] is just the sort of poem Hopkins had in mind. It asks the reader, by speaking it, to "fetch out" the meanings of words and sentences as they stray in and out of metricality. In the last stanza there is an "I," an unresponsive "you" who appears to be a lover, an impossibly remote audience, and a "you" who is the writer split in herself:

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster. [178]

The first "you," by structural necessity, denies the "I," and yet a parenthetical and self-conscious remark—"the joking voice, a gesture / I love"—is also thrown out, not to the split "you" (also unresponsive), but to another "you," the poem's notional audience. Denied once more, the "I" turns to address herself. But in lyric, all addresses are denied (even self-address), which is to say all are doomed to invite their own iteration.

It is in its iterability as *speech* that Bishop's poem best shows the workings of what I have called lyric apostrophe. In a traditional rhetorical sense, this last stanza contains three addresses and two apostrophes. But the concluding lines of the villanelle won't even make sense unless the reader/speaker makes certain decisions about where emphatic stress should fall. The various turnings of thwarted address are what guide a reader/speaker as she moves through the various intonational difficulties of the poem:

x / x / x \ / / x / x
the art of losing's not too hard to master
B B B B B

x x / \ x / \ / x / x
though it may look like || (*Write it!*) || like disaster.
B B B B B

Those spontaneous words, bent by style to the point of manneredness, are not going to the addressed heart. As in Herbert's poem, since the "you" does not reply, they go elsewhere. They will require from the one speaking the poem certain attunements—an interpretive fetch of the styled phrases and sentences of the stanza in the light of what they are *about*, as well as an intonational turn toward the hearing and hearkening of a third that such speaking presupposes.

VI. Modernist Apostrophe

If we take it to be a rhetorical device, or, more narrowly, to be the device of prosopopoetic address, apostrophe will be a somewhat rare (if by no means extinct) figure in twentieth-century poetry. If, on the other hand, we look for poems structured by an awareness of the limits and possibilities of denial, iterability, and triadicity, we will find "apostrophe" to be much more prevalent. My argument has its origin in modernist re-imaginings of the lyric tradition, and of lyric in general. I suppose that apostrophe is basic to the structure of a text that "speaks" by being spoken.

Questions about the interrelation of printed and spoken lyric, and about how to distinguish lyric speech from rhetorical modes of speaking, do not have an exclusively modern provenance. But a "modernist" inflection of such questions—different, say, from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century curiosity about the visual vs. the auditory dimensions of poems, or from nineteenth century interest in personae—was first sounded in the early part of the twentieth century. It came with a spreading knowledge of signs (disseminated through the writings of Peirce and Saussure) and of the antimetaphysical implications of semiotic theory. A certain kind of readerly stance also comes out of late modernist concerns. This reader/speaker takes up lyric in such a way as to acknowledge his or her own finitude with respect to discursive and literary traditions, and to the historical and lived contexts determining intelligibility or meaningfulness. This reader acknowledges the impossibility of full explicitness, and of immediate responsiveness.

In Paul Celan's "*Sprachgitter*" [1959], prosopopoetic address turns enigmatically into "personal" address. Celan deploys both figures to represent a movement of the mediate intelligence or soul toward an uncertain attunement in speech. Soon after composing it, Celan remarked to a friend: "[*'Sprachgitter'*] voices both the difficulty of all speaking (to one another) and at the same time its structure" (letter to Rudolf Hirsch, 26 July 1958). And some years later, he summed up its theme this way: "only 'distanced' can any reader understand me . . . always grasping only the grilled bars between us" (1966 interview with Hugo Huppert [Felstiner, 107–08]).

I take the address of the third stanza ("*Iris*, Schwimmerin . . .") to be the key figure in the poem. As in the other instances of prosopopoetic

address we have seen, this figure gives a name to the cause or source of its own swerve toward the third—a “you” that does not answer. If there is some ambiguity as to whether “*Iris*, Schwimmerin . . .” (like “O voice, O face . . .” or “O throat! O throbbing heart!”) is prosopopoetic address or *exclamatio*, that ambiguity is concordant with the speaker’s (or speakers’) evident uncertainty about the reach of address:

SPRACHGITTER

Augenrund zwischen den Stäben.

Flimmertier Lid
rudert nach oben,
gibt einen Blick frei.
Iris, Schwimmerin, traumlos und trüb:
der Himmel, herzgrau, muß nah sein.

Schräg, in der eisernen Tülle,
der blakende Span.
Am Lichtsinn
errätst du die Seele.

(Wär ich wie du. Wärest du wie ich.
Standen wir nicht
unter *einem* Passat?
Wir sind Fremde.)

Die Fliesen. Darauf,
dicht beieinander, die beiden
herzgrauen Lachen:
zwei
Mundvoll Schweigen.²⁴

The most pertinent sense of the noun “iris” is the same in both English and German: a “flat circular coloured membrane behind the cornea of the eye, with a circular opening—the pupil—at its center” (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*). The detail that presses the name “Iris” toward its mythological namesake—goddess of the rainbow and a messenger of the gods—is the unremarkable fact that in most human faces one encounters *two* irises, not a single one. The iris, then, modulates between being organ of the eye, and a bringer of messages. But this iris, unlike the rainbow goddess, is a “swimmer,” and the light quality of the poem is not at all rainbow-like. It is gray, or rather, heart-gray [*herzgrau*].

Gray that is, except where the "*Lichtsinn*"—a neologistic compound that suggests both "sense of light" and "light of meaning"—passes through the watery "heartgray" and one soul catches sight of another. In which case, communicated understanding, as light through cloud, creates an iridescence. The rainbow goddess haunts the last stanza too. In its final image-complex, the heart-gray *Lachen* of two eyes (even spilled out anywhere) allows for the continuing possibility of an iridescence of meaning. Nevertheless, the guiding image of the poem is more discouraging than that: for the sense that discerns light in the dark center (or pupil) of the iris is not a human sense, or not uniquely human. Light also smolders in the blackness of any wild creature's eye (as *Tier* [animal] in the compound noun *Flimmertier* suggests).

The address to "Iris," more than most personifications of inanimate objects, perplexes our categories. "You"—the iris of the eye—divine [*Errätst*] the soul in another by seeing the iris of the other's eye responding to the light, responding to the movements of "your" own eye. What I see, and respond to, in an encounter with "you" is the iris, "swimming" in the orb of the eye. So to address the iris as "you" is hardly a flight of fancy, or a pathetic fallacy, since the way to the "you" is through (if not identical with) the eye. It hardly makes sense to speak of attributing a face or voice to something—the iris—that already is the most immediate and yet non-transparent (*traumlos und trüb* [dreamless and cloudy]) index of the person. And it is not the iris *as thing* that is addressed: it is the iris as "you." Moreover, this sensitive, circular membrane appears as index of a person only by the fact of its responsiveness to the addressable "you" that approaches it (as if out of "the sky"). We could not really find a *visual* passage through to another without the "you" that belongs to the "lattice" of language/speech.

The relation between the first and second "you" in "*Sprachgitter*" is of course far from clear. The address to the iris in the first half of the poem could be understood as a kind of appeal to the later "you." It might also be possible to consider the address to the second "you" in light of a turn basic to every communicative act. In that case, the apostrophe to the second "you" signals the necessity that all speaking and listening (between an "I" and a "you") abstract itself from the lattice or mesh of language (or network of nerve and membrane) that makes communication possible. Speakers align themselves in speech, that is, with an "I" and a "you," by averting awareness from the impersonal sign systems that underlie and organize both language and "immediate" personal presence.

Nevertheless, the poem was composed to be spoken. And as fascinating and disturbing as the image of a language "grille" or "mesh" may be, the poem never dispenses with the most basic possibilities of apostrophe (which I have called denial, iterability, triadicity). No less in a poem written after the twentieth century's "linguistic turn" than in a seventeenth-century devotional song, it is the denial of address that turns lyric speech toward

a third. A reader interpreting the theme of "Sprachgitter" to be the failure of communication does not thereby close down the poem's future, its iterability, the possibility that a third will speak it. I take "*zwei/Mundvoll Schweigen*" [two mouthsfull of silence] to be a "heartgray" image of lyric attunement. The reader/speaker of the poem comes to it by letting go the religious ideal of unmediated encounter—the hope that two might stand under "*einem Passat*" like a portal opening from "I" to "you"—as much as the fear that an iron and inhuman language necessarily "speaks" us.

A passage from Canto 82 (publ. 1948; one of the *Pisan Cantos* that Pound would have been revising for publication at the time of Olson's visit) demonstrates the importance of apostrophe as a compositional principle in his long poem. The Whitman of this sequence is imagined as a poet whose words have not found an audience in his own time and place. After more than a decade of his own cultural and economic polemic going unnoticed, and after his arrest for treason by the U.S. government, the much aggrieved Pound considers the nonreception of the "exotic" Whitman to be further proof of a failing in American civilization. When he deplores the "impenetrable/crystalline, indestructible/ignorance of locality," it is a jibe at provincialism:

The news was quicker in Troy's time
a match on Cnidos, a glow worm on Mitylene,
Till forty years since, Reithmuller indignant:
"Fvy! In Tdaenmarck efen dh'beasantz gnow him,"
meaning Whitman, exotic, still suspect
four miles from Camden. [546]

The twentieth-century poet has not always been able to tell the difference between the "denial" that is constitutive of lyric, and his own neglect. That is to say, questions having to do with reception and commercial success cannot help but be all the more vexed in the case of an art form that represents speech turning away from all immediate interlocutors.

The first lines of the passage above proceed in what seems to be a narrative third person that compares the dispersal of modern poetic reputation unfavorably to the beacon-transmission of news in the ancient world. Using the pseudo-connective "Till," the sentence then turns to the professorial figure of Reithmuller, who ("forty years since" but otherwise without verb tense) expresses indignation at the case of Whitman.²⁵ His remark, transcribed so as to represent heavily accented English, presumably represents an address to his American students, including the young Pound.

The Reithmuller passage is a representative one. It shows how Pound, throughout this and the other *Pisan Cantos*, exploits, from repeatedly shifting starting points, the architectural possibilities of *sequences* of

lyric address. These are phrases written to be spoken. Though not (in an "expressive" sense) lyrical, they—as much as the "loneliness of death" passage that follows—turn away from the implied "you," and toward a third who will project that "me," and so perpetuate it. To do that, he must attune his speaking to its (odd) sound and its (old European but critically sure) sense. An impersonation, yes, but a lyric impersonation, and so one implicated in a turning of speech.

In a characteristic tic that we have already seen in the "CHAW CUT PLUG" fable, Pound explains the meaning of Reithmuller's utterance. I take this inclination to explain, even where it is a rather minimal explanation, to be a nod to meaning and sentence sound (since the sentence can't be spoken, even in a funny accent, without some access to sense and context). For all that, explanation can't keep up. Both address and explanation belong to a sequence of apostrophes; and the poem immediately turns again:

O troubled reflection
O Throat, O throbbing heart [546]

Pound's placement of two lines of *exclamatio* from "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" sketches a reading of Whitman (the one developed in section II above).²⁶ This Whitman is not a naïve singer of immediacy, but a poet of apostrophe, whose free verse represents—emblematically for Pound—the longing swerve of lyric speech toward a third, as well as the possibilities and demands of attunement in speech. Pound repeats the Whitman mockingbird's *exclamatio*, and follows it with a prosopopoetic address of his own (to "Gea Terra"):

How drawn, O GEA TERRA,
what draws as thou drawest
till one sink into thee by an arm's width
embracing thee. Drawest,
truly thou drawest. [546]

"O troubled reflection . . ." and "O GEA TERRA" are both instances of apostrophe in the most widely accepted sense of that term. But both belong as well to a sequence ordered by the lyric possibilities of "turning away" (hence by denial, iterability, triadicty). In order to read through this sequence, a reader must as he speaks it continuously turn the text away from the "you" of one phrase and context toward the "you" of the next: Reithmuller's students, the reader of Canto 82, the missing mate of the mockingbird, the listening boy of the same poem, the reader of "Out of the Cradle," the earth goddess, and so on. As in every one of the later Cantos, a multiplicity of addressees. But with every turn, every shift in address, the speaking "I" is denied. Not

only does each new address turn from its "you" to a third, but each such turn is discontinuous with the others in the series. In traditional lyric, all that will perpetuate (but not guarantee or finalize) the poetic text is a reader's speaking of it. In this modernist version of lyric, a reader's speaking of the sequence of apostrophes will make a unity of them, and of the whole Canto, only fleetingly. To attune one's speaking, for a time, to Pound's text amounts (*a fortiori*) to an acknowledgment of one's finitude with respect to the historical and discursive contexts of words and meanings.

The *Pisan Cantos* have been admired most for their seam of "lyricism," by which is usually meant lines expressive of vulnerability and personal emotion such as the following from the end of Canto 82:

the loneliness of death came upon me
(at 3 P.M., for an instant) [547]

In or out of context, the passage is plangent. Why? Because anyone who speaks it risks experiencing an instance of the possibility expressed in the sentence containing "me." They are lines produced by a "singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me . . ."

The difference, it seems, between the Pound of the *Pisan Cantos* and Whitman (or indeed between Pound and Bishop, or Pound and Celan) resides in the incessant, restless switching of the former's apostrophes and impersonations, such that a reader is most unlikely to take the main device of that poem to be *stylized* address of any sort, even though in its alarmingly kinetic way, attunement is as much sought after by Pound's protean work as by the lyric whose creator/perpetuator endlessly repeats: "Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? Or is it really to me?"

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NOTES

I would like to thank my friend Peter L. Atkinson for reading and responding to this essay at several crucial points in its writing.

1. My epigraph is from Blake's "Introduction" (40) to *Songs of Experience*.
2. A critical and poetic tendency stretching back to the eighteenth century has understood apostrophe primarily as a species of prosopopoeia, the figure that attributes a voice or face to something inanimate or non-human or absent or dead. De Man calls prosopopoeia "the trope of address [and hence] the very figure of the reader and of reading" ("Hypogram and Inscription," 45). Culler's oft-cited study inclines more to the second approach in pointing to the "invisible," unnoticed quality of apostrophe in so many lyric poems otherwise very thoroughly raked over by critics.
3. It will be evident in what follows that I do not suppose the distinction between lyric and "dramatic monologue" to be fundamental, or even especially watertight.

4. Informed literary-historical conjecture makes the emergence of lyric as a genre roughly coeval with the invention of writing. Lyric, among the literary genres, is usually counted closest to song, and successful songs are soon enough attributed to no one singer; nevertheless, it may have been instead the anonymity of writing that gave poets the best opportunity to liberate apostrophe from the circumstances of oratory, and of religious rite, and so to begin to create a tradition of "turning away" in verse. See Waters's discussion, 8–10.

5. Quintilian, 55. On famous instances of classical apostrophe, see Auerbach.

6. The final sestet of Sidney's sonnet 58—see section IV in this essay—alludes explicitly to the classical legal-rhetorical context for apostrophe, with some implied "you" to sit in judgment ("now judge by this . . .").

7. Apostrophe is the name for when "a speaker or writer suddenly stops in his discourse and turns to address pointedly some person or thing, either present or absent" (*OED*). Because of the "turning away" in it, apostrophe should be distinguished from various sorts of direct rhetorical address: exordiums, exhortations, reprehensions, reproofs, comminations, invitations, admonitions, etc. (The source of this list is Roberts.)

Kneale (14–17) surveys English rhetoricians' discussion of *aversio* (as apostrophe has sometimes been called) to find a historical consensus that apostrophe involves "a turn or a diversion" from "a pre-text."

8. Ong writes: "The most radically unambiguous words in any language are the words for 'I' and 'you,' as spoken in direct dialogue. 'I' and 'you,' or their equivalents in any language, do not demand or indeed tolerate interpretation or hermeneutic. . . . When I say 'I' and you fail to connect, I might undertake some manoeuvres, verbal or other, to enable you to 'connect' with me, but I have no way to give you an interpretation or a hermeneutic of what the 'I' might 'mean'" (22).

9. Benveniste's phrase. See discussion in section IV.

10. I have learned a great deal from reading and thinking about parts of *Summa Lyrica*, without being persuaded by the main line of Grossman's argument (i.e., that lyric involves an acknowledgment of "the person" that somehow evades or transcends the violence of "representation").

11. This seems to hold true even for lyrics that, in Waters's words, "hail" the reader (like Keats's "This living hand . . ."). While acknowledging "the strange spell that must grip a reader who accedes to the hailing of the poem and so becomes the intended interlocutor of the dead" [145], I would reply that one cannot simply "accede" to a poem's hailing. Nor does one become an "interlocutor" in any ordinary sense.

12. All of these points, I think, distinguish the concept of triadicity from Mill's famous formulation (as, for example, when he compares lyric to: "the lament of a prisoner in a solitary cell, ourselves listening, unseen, in the next" [540]).

13. Hardy's "Apostrophe to an Old Psalm Tune" [1916] (431) is also relevant. It represents a complex triadic situation: the cumulative effect on a "scathed and memoried man" of a piece of liturgical music performed over the years by different "stirrers of tones." Hardy's apostrophe makes the same turn to a third as the psalm itself (understood as both tune and devotional address) is said, in its various iterations, to have done.

14. Olson's account continues: "But it was the fascist too, as snob, classing the guard. And it was Pound's old spit at America. Add an ounce of courtesy in it, and

you have something like what I mean" (50).

15. In certain respects, Pound's outburst is closer to oratorical apostrophe. Even in the moment, it does not separate itself off entirely from the possibility of response. The older poet, after a pause, "explains" to the guard the meaning of his outburst.

16. A sampling of passages on the Buberian "ethical" dimension of lyric poetry (or of poems by particular lyric poets) from recent critical essays:

Grossman: "In speaking [any lyric] the speaker of the poem reacquires selfhood by serious reciprocity with another self" (258).

Grogan: "[The poems of W. S. Graham] make us ask disconcerting questions about who speaks, who is being addressed, and what sort of response we are responsible for" (211).

Sullivan: "Such poems [as Robin Blaser's, or Emily Dickinson's, with an indefinite addressee] cannot be contained in their historical moment and necessarily implicate readers in their second person addresses: they implicitly call into question the way we answer the needs of living persons whose phrases have gotten through to us" (107).

17. This concept, though altered by time and a different context of application, was first suggested to me by reading Stanley Cavell. See his discussion of "attunement in criteria" in *The Claim of Reason*.

18. For example, see this passage from "The Meridian": "The poem intends another, needs this other, needs an opposite. It goes toward it, bespeaks it. / For the poem, everything and everybody is a figure of this other toward which it is heading. . . . / . . . [T]he poem becomes conversation—often desperate conversation." Only the space of this conversation can establish what is addressed, can gather it into a 'you' around the naming and speaking I" (Waldrop, 49–50).

19. It is via the devotional tradition, with the Bible as its source, that the "O" so often associated with apostrophe gets imported into the English literary tradition. According to the *OED*, "O" in this usage "stands before a substantive in the vocative relation." The vocative "O" does not occur in Old English, Old High German, or Old Norse, but along with the variant "A" comes into early Middle English of the 12th century out of Latin and Greek by way of translations from the Vulgate. Wyclif [1382] translates the "O" of "O Domine" sometimes as "O," sometimes as "A."

20. The failure to pay attention to the "shifting" quality of indicators in lyric can undergird untenable critical claims about lyric (especially Romantic lyric). Consider Jacobus, for instance, discussing Wordsworth's use of "thou" in the blank verse autobiographical mode to address, at different moments, Coleridge or his sister Dorothy: "In speaking to another, the poet hears himself speak with a unity of sound and voice that comes to stand for consciousness itself. Or to put it another way, to have an imaginary auditor is to fantasize the reproduction of one's speech in another without external mediation or deferral, and so to create the illusion of mastery over the process of signification" (181–82). In this instance, it is the *critic* who has wished away both the text of the poem ("in speaking to another . . .") and its indicators ("the poet hears himself speak").

21. Frost put it this way: "The living part of a poem is the intonation entangled somehow in the syntax idiom and meaning of a sentence. It is only there for those

who have heard it previously in conversation. It is not for us in any Greek or Latin poem because our ears have not been filled with the tones of Greek and Roman talk. It is the most volatile and at the same time important part of poetry. It goes and the language becomes a dead language and the poetry dead poetry. With it go the accents the stresses the delays that are not the property of vowels and syllables but that are shifted at will with the sense" (61).

22. Giorgio Agamben quotes this memorable phrase (109), which he came across in Jakobson's "essays in poetics." In "Linguistics and Poetics" (81), Jakobson cites Valéry's *The Art of Poetry, Collected Works, VII* (New York, 1958), but gives no page number. I have not been able to find the original passage.

23. The system of notation I use here (see Attridge) can only distinguish between three levels of stress, but there are of course finer degrees of difference than that in any emotionally complex utterance.

According to Hopkins's conception of sprung rhythm, the voice should "tread and dwell" on the most important content-words in every phrase. I have scanned the first four lines to show a plausible way of performing them that "fetches out" their sense while staying faithful to their metrical arrangement. The varying beats per line are cued throughout the poem by indentation; and the more abstract arrangements of meter fall into place in accordance with sense. So, for instance, in line 3, "words" should be emphatically stressed, as should "break," even though the two syllables are jammed up against each other without an offbeat between them. And there are stressed words in the "outrider" phrases "Are you!" and "Have you!" and "Do you!" that nevertheless receive a degree of stress somewhat less than emphatic.

24. Michael Hamburger's translation: "LANGUAGE MESH // Eye's roundness between the bars. // Vibratile monad eyelid / propels itself upward, / releases a glance. // Iris, swimmer, dreamless and dreary: / the sky, heart-grey, must be near. // Athwart, in the iron holder, / the smoking splinter. / By its sense of light / you divine the soul. // (If I were like you. If you were like me. / Did we not stand / under *one* trade wind? / We are strangers.) // The flagstones. On them, / close to each other, the two / heart-grey puddles: / two / mouthsfull of silence" (94-95).

John Felstiner's translation: "SPEECH-GRILLE // Eye's round between the bars. // Flittering lid / paddles upward, / breaks a glance free. // Iris, the swimmer, dreamless and drab: / heaven, heartgray, must be near. // Aslant, in the iron socket, / a smoldering chip. By sense of light / you hit on the soul. // (Were I like you. Were you like me. / Did we not stand / under *one* trade wind? We are strangers.) // The flagstones. On them, / close by each other, both / heartgray puddles: / two / mouthfuls of silence" (*Selected*, 107).

25. Richard Henry Riethmuller was German instructor at the University of Pennsylvania 1905-07, and author of *Walt Whitman and the Germans* [1906]. According to Terrell, Whitman was actually living in Camden in 1906, only a few miles from Philadelphia (457-58).

26. Pound had played at a somewhat different game of address thirty years before, in the bratty anxiety-of-influence poem from *Lustra* [1915] called "A Pact," addressed to Whitman as free verse innovator: "I have detested you long enough. / I come to you as a grown child / Who has had a pig-headed father; / I am old enough now to make friends" (90).

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