

### III.

## A Guide to Stevens' Collected Poetry

The following guide covers the complete *Collected Poems*, plus all the poems in *Opus Posthumous* that are of importance. The numbers refer by page to apposite material in the body of this book; the letters a-d pertain to the first through fourth quarters of a given page. An asterisk signifies that the poem is paraphrased on the page indicated.

ACADEMIC DISCOURSE AT HAVANA. "Rouge-Fatima": Stevens has noted that Fatima was one of the most beautiful women in the world, adding that he supposed he put the Rouge on to touch her up.<sup>1</sup> 5c-6c, 107b-108a

ADD THIS TO RHETORIC. 19d, 26b-c

ADULT EPIGRAM. Precision reaches toward the truth of abstraction, of permanence within impermanence. 5b-c

THE AMERICAN SUBLIME. "The mickey mockers/ And plated pairs": cynics with their money grubbing ("plated pairs" for coins). 1a-b, 29b, 30a-b

ANALYSIS OF A THEME. Novel forms exist in time as pure potential, to be realized by the imagination in its inventions and discoveries. The name Blandina figures in Stevens' genealogy as an ancestor born in 1743 (LWS, p. 405).

\*ANATOMY OF MONOTONY. 78

ANECDOTE OF CANNA. The antidote to the solipsism of the purely imaginary is acute observation of the real. Stevens glosses "Now day-break comes" as the return of reality. He wrote the poem while walking around the Capitol in Washington (LWS, p. 464).

ANECDOTE OF MEN BY THE THOUSAND. 54a-c

ANECDOTE OF THE JAR. "Of a port in air" may be read to mean, of the nature of an evanescent entry ("port" for portal) to order in a scene of disorder. 73c-74a

ANECDOTE OF THE PRINCE OF PEACOCKS. The "Berserk" chaos of reality threatens the beauty of the imagined, realm of "The Prince of Peacocks."

\*ANGEL SURROUNDED BY PAYSANS. 186

ANGLAIS MORT À FLORENCE. Stevens writes: "Most people stand by the aid of philosophy, religion and one thing or another, but a strong spirit . . . stands by its own strength. Even such a spirit is subject to degeneration. . . . If men have nothing external to them on which to rely, then, in the event of a collapse of their own spirit, they must naturally turn to the spirit of others" (LWS, p. 348).

ANOTHER WEEPING WOMAN. Death reduces the power of the imagination so that the mourning woman is left, with no defense against grief, confronting a meaningless reality.

ANYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL IF YOU SAY IT IS. The "concubine" is alienated from her environment, Hans is not.

THE APOSTROPHE TO VINCENTINE. A human context transforms "Monotonous earth." 141c-d

ARCADES OF PHILADELPHIA THE PAST. The poem refers to the ancient Palestinian city of Philadelphia. The inhabitants of the Apennine Vallombrosa (of monastic reputation as the former site of a monastery) do not use their five senses and thus can apprehend neither the past nor the present. This sensory impoverishment prevents them from responding to the world or to themselves imaginatively (sounds, speech; i.e., poetry). In face of the sensuous wealth of the present, the past seems fake.

ARRIVAL AT THE WALDORF. 10b-d

\*ARTIFICIAL POPULATIONS. 202

\*AS YOU LEAVE THE ROOM. 203

\*ASIDES ON THE OBOE. 108

ATTEMPT TO DISCOVER LIFE. An attempt to discover the life that the place and the flowers imply by imagining it in terms of the two figures. One should then add Stevens' comment

that the poem prompts the question of "whether the experience of life is in the end worth more than tuppence: dos centavos." *Hermosas* are a variety of roses, San Miguel de los Baños is a Cuban spa (LWS, p. 540).

THE AURORAS OF AUTUMN. The title refers to the aurora borealis, which Stevens could sometimes see from Hartford, and which symbolized for him "a tragic and desolate background" (LWS, p. 852). "Serpent": the flux of time. "Farewell to an idea": the dissolution of a given idea of reality. "Mother": nature, reality. "Father": the cosmic imagination, the creative source. "Innocence": the character of that existence with which we must be reconciled, neither false nor malicious. "Cabin," "room," "house," "festival," "Danes in Denmark": given imaginative integrations of reality. 5d-6c, 9d-10b, 35a-b

AUTUMN REFRAIN. The desolate mood of the autumnal day remains at night to contradict night's poetic associations. 9d-10b

THE BAGATELLES THE MADRIGALS. Trivial thoughts of life's imperfection ("Bagatelles") formed into a poem concerned with abstract generalization ("Madrigals").

BANAL SOJOURN. "The mildew of any late season, of any experience that has grown monotonous as, for instance, the experience of life" (Stevens, LWS, p. 464). 7b-8a

BANJO BOOMER. Life figured in the mulberry against the ground of death—an expression of desire for a little longer to live.

\*BANTAMS IN PINE-WOODS. 67

THE BED OF OLD JOHN ZELLER. John Zeller was Stevens' maternal great grandfather (LWS, pp. 4, 469). 10b-11c

THE BEGINNING. 7d-8a

THE BIRD WITH THE COPPERY, KEEN CLAWS. "Pip" means speck or spot; also the chirping of a bird. "Mort" would here mean both dead, and a great quantity. An "alguazil" is a justice, here a law-giver. The parakeet represents the principle of existence. As pure principle, he lives a more vital life than does the mortal and transitory existence whose inscru-

table, perhaps meaningless laws he applies with his blind, inexorable will.

THE BLUE BUILDINGS IN THE SUMMER AIR. 5d-6b, 125c-126a  
BOTANIST ON ALP (NO. 1) AND (NO. 2). (No. 1), 6c.  
"Claude": Claude Lorrain, the seventeenth-century French painter. (No. 2), its answer, 66b-67a

THE BOUQUET. An object seen through the proliferating imagination.

BOUQUET OF BELLE SCAVOIR. "She" is nature. 171d-172b

BOUQUET OF ROSES IN SUNLIGHT. 26c, 27a-b

THE BRAVE MAN. Dawn as a major statement of confrontation with secular reality.

BURGHERS OF PETTY DEATH. 78a-c

THE CANDLE A SAINT. The night is "green," fertile to the imaginative "madness" of the poet who conceives its abstract image. The "candle" by which the poet works, the imagination, is thus a "saint."

CELLE QUI FÛT HÉAULMIETTE. Representing the return of meaningfulness to the year, "she" is the child of the moon, an imagination as yet incapable, and of the sun, a potent reality. The title refers to Villon's faded "*filie de joie*," who, in this poem, is seasonally reborn.

CERTAIN PHENOMENA OF SOUND. Poetry, "the word," creates its own world.

CHAOS IN MOTION AND NOT IN MOTION. Richter: German painter and book illustrator, 1803-1884. His world and art have become chaotic. 5d-6b, 9d-10a

A CHILD ASLEEP IN ITS OWN LIFE. The old man of (l. 9) exists within the meditation of the old man's universe he has himself imagined. 189b

CHOCORUA TO ITS NEIGHBOR. 94c, 143b-144c

\*A CLEAR DAY AND NO MEMORIES. 202

COLLOQUY WITH A POLISH AUNT. "Imagination is the will of things": 151d-152c. "Voragine": Jacobus de Voragine, thirteenth-century hagiographer, author of the *Legenda Aurea*.

\*THE COMEDIAN AS THE LETTER C. 46

THE COMMON LIFE. A scene that resists the imagination. 129c-d

A COMPLETELY NEW SET OF OBJECTS. A summoning of youthful friends and ancestral figures. The place names are in Pennsylvania. Annual festivals were held on the Schuylkill with canoes and boats lighted at night with Chinese lanterns.<sup>2</sup>

\*CONNOISSEUR OF CHAOS. 104

CONTINUAL CONVERSATION WITH A SILENT MAN. Existence as a chain of interaction. "Turquoise": Imaginative abstraction.

CONTRARY THESES (I). 7d-8a

CONTRARY THESES (II). A vision of the order beyond the transitory seasons.

CONVERSATION WITH THREE WOMEN OF NEW ENGLAND. 25c-d, 170a-c

CORTÈGE FOR ROSENBLOOM. Death is dealt with in a ceremonious assertion of its matter-of-fact nature. Stevens comments: "From time immemorial the philosophers and other scene painters have daubed the sky with dazzle paint. But it all comes down to the proverbial six feet of earth in the end. . . . The ceremonies are amusing. Why not fill the sky with scaffolds and stairs, and go about like genuine realists?" (LWS, p. 223). 63b

COUNTRY WORDS. 163d-164b

THE COUNTRYMAN. Swatara: a stream above Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 196b-197a

\*THE COURSE OF A PARTICULAR. 197

THE CREATIONS OF SOUND. 135c-d

CREDENCES OF SUMMER. Reality in a phase perfectly adequate to the desires of the ego. "Oley" is a valley in eastern Pennsylvania. 10d-11b, 134b-135b

CRUDE FOYER. "Thought" as opposed to "vital metaphor." "Ignorant" here refers to a dearth of imagination, which leaves one at the mercy of reality. 106b-107a

THE CUBAN DOCTOR. The "Indian" is the transitory flux of existence, and, ultimately, death.

CUISINE BOURGEOISE. When general belief collapses we must feed upon our own minds. 5d-6c

THE CURTAINS IN THE HOUSE OF THE METAPHYSICIAN. 9d-10a, 12c-13a

CY EST POURTRAICTE, MADAME STE URSULE, ET LES UNZE MILLE VIERGES. The sensual, as well as the aesthetic, is a worthy aspect of creation.

DANCE OF THE MACABRE MICE. 5d-6b

DEATH OF A SOLDIER. 18b

DEBRIS OF LIFE AND MIND. "Bright red woman": the sun.

DELIGHTFUL EVENING. "Wormy": earthy, natural. 30d-31b

DEPRESSION BEFORE SPRING. 7d-8a

DESCRIPTION WITHOUT PLACE. A major statement of Stevens' poetics. 16a-18a, 25c-26c, 178d-179a, 184b-d

DESIRE & THE OBJECT. Does desire have its origin within or without, or both?

THE DESIRE TO MAKE LOVE IN A PAGODA. The virtue of change; the title is apposite. 151d-152c

DEZEMBRUM. Re-imagining heaven as appropriate to the contemporary.

DINNER BELL IN THE WOODS. Not ideas about the thing but the thing itself. 14a-c

A DISCOVERY OF THOUGHT. 26d-27a

A DISH OF PEACHES IN RUSSIA. The imagination re-creates the Russian's past life, and tears it away from the present.

DISILLUSIONMENT OF TEN O'CLOCK. The vividness of the imagination in the dullness of a pallid reality.

THE DOCTOR OF GENEVA. "Lakes are more reasonable than oceans"—*Esthétique du Mal*, XIV. 133b-134a

\*DOMINATION OF BLACK. 38

THE DOVE IN THE BELLY. 134b-c

THE DOVE IN SPRING. The coming season neither exists as yet nor is totally imaginary.

DRY LOAF. The sense of a time expressed in a metaphor of a place.

\*DUTCH GRAVES IN BUCKS COUNTY. 117

THE DWARF. The dwarf is the ego contracted to its barest self in winter. 7d-8a

EARTHY ANECDOTE. The "clattering" of the animals ordered

by confrontation with the "firecat," representing a given principle of order.

\*THE EMPEROR OF ICE-CREAM. 62

\*ESTHÉTIQUE DU MAL. 122

\*EVENING WITHOUT ANGELS. 80

EXAMINATION OF THE HERO IN A TIME OF WAR. 143b-d; 143d-144c, especially for XII, XV; 108b-110c, especially for XIV.

EXPLANATION. The imagination is concerned with real adornment of reality, not romantic day dreams.

\*EXTRACTS FROM ADDRESSES TO THE ACADEMY OF FINE IDEAS. 110

EXTRAORDINARY REFERENCES. Items of a tradition through reference to which one may gain composure. "Jacomynkje": a figure from Stevens' genealogy (LWS, p. 4). "Tulpehocken": an area of Pennsylvania where Stevens' ancestors, the Zellers, lived (LWS, p. 470).

FABLIAU OF FLORIDA. An embarkation of the imagination on a voyage that seems endless.

A FADING OF THE SUN. The saving power of the imagination "within." Stevens comments: "instead of crying for help to God or to one of the gods, we should look to ourselves for help" (LWS, p. 295).

FAREWELL TO FLORIDA. Leaving the exotic as subject matter for the hard social fact of "men in crowds."

FAREWELL WITHOUT A GUITAR. His poems are left as a final record of his experience of "male reality" and the female imagination which embodies what the ego desires of reality.

\*FINAL SOLILOQUY OF THE INTERIOR PARAMOUR. 192

First Warmth. 203c-204b

A FISH-SCALE SUNRISE. A shift from the imagination to a sensuous apprehension of reality itself. The names are those of friends of Stevens, to whom he wrote that the poem would be a souvenir of the state in which a "bat" they went on left him (LWS, p. 301). 30d-31a

FLORAL DECORATIONS FOR BANANAS. The need for an earthy harmony in which image suits image, decor suits person—an ideal of the good for the secular here-and-now.

FLYER'S FALL. 28a

FORCES, THE WILL, & THE WEATHER. The metaphors for the sensuous reality of the season enhance it: the girl and dog, the nougats, the waiter. This despite lack of abstract ideas about the season. "Peer yellow": the sun.

FROGS EAT BUTTERFLIES. . . . As in the title, the poem describes a nature in which one thing feeds on another in an intradependent whole. For a parallel in poetic method, 38a-b

FROM THE MISERY OF DON JOOST. The death of the body. 34d

FROM THE PACKET OF ANACHARSIS. "Puvis" (the painter, Puvis de Chavannes): the clarity of the idea; "Bloom": the particularity and variety of the world.

GALLANT CHÂTEAU. The order of the "prim" curtains as opposed to the potential disorder of the wind blown ones. 11c-13a

GHOSTS AS COCOONS. Stevens: "The bride is literally 'sun and music' etc.; not so literally, love and happiness. The butcher, seducer, etc. is literally the inept politician, and that sort of thing, and again, not quite so literally, evil and unhappiness. When *Ghosts* was written there was the same profound desire to be released from all our misfortunes that there is today. 'Those to be born': 'the grass is in seed': the people of the future who need to know something of the happiness of life." (LWS, p. 347).

GIGANTOMACHIA. The effect of an "idea of man." 144d-145b

GIRL IN A NIGHTGOWN. Impending social chaos disturbs the peace of time and season (published in 1942).

THE GLASS OF WATER. The imaginative, or metaphysical has its fluctuating states, parallel to the chemical states of the physical, but in the former, the realm of ideas, we may discover what is central to our lives.

GOD IS GOOD. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT. A flight of the imagination, here "brown bird."

A GOLDEN WOMAN IN A SILVER MIRROR. Our lives are the reflections of our egos that we see in reality; but the images thus projected in poetry endure beyond our lives.

THE GOOD MAN HAS NO SHAPE. The idea of the good man in a secular world is made a mockery by death, "Lazarus."

GRAY STONES AND GRAY PIGEONS. Not monuments, but the human imagination, vivifies the religious institution. In the absence of the archbishop, who embodies the idea of the church, the church building is empty of meaning. (Compare *LWS*, pp. 347-48.)

THE GREEN PLANT. The idea of reality endures beyond the decaying season.

GUBBINAL. The world is oppressive beyond any relief the imagination can offer. Gubbins: a contemptuous name formerly given to inhabitants of a certain district in England, said to have been absolute savages.

THE HAND AS A BEING. "Mi-bird": the ego, which flies to its sanguine ("ruddier") encounter with reality. 159a-d

THE HERMITAGE AT THE CENTER. The "end" represented by the wind, and the "beginning" represented by "the desired," come together in the cyclic nature of reality, in which the end is part of the beginning.

HIBISCUS ON THE SLEEPING SHORES. The mind seeks the beauty of the flowers to pass a dull time.

A HIGH-TONED OLD CHRISTIAN WOMAN. Through the imagination one can just as well conceive a universal vision based on pleasures as one based on morality.

HOLIDAY IN REALITY. 168c-169a

HOMUNCULUS ET LA BELLE ÉTOILE. Stevens: "there is a center for every state of confusion. A number of such states are described in the early verses of the poem" (*LWS*, p. 306). The "ultimate Plato" focuses, tranquilizes, rather than resolves. 53d

THE HOUSE WAS QUIET AND THE WORLD WAS CALM. A major discovery of spiritual order. 31d-32a

HOW TO LIVE. WHAT TO DO. 195c-196a

HUMAN ARRANGEMENT. An abstract idea of a center from which the flux of existence proceeds. 5b-c

HYMN FROM A WATERMELON PAVILION. Both reality, "day," and dream, that of the "dark cabin" of the mind, "night," are products of the imagination; both are dreams. Why not,

then, since "rising will not waken," choose the more tangible and various dream of reality, the real watermelon, rather than the imaginary one that is "always purple"?

\*THE IDEA OF ORDER AT KEY WEST. 78

IDIOM OF THE HERO. "Clouds": that which is open to imaginative interpretation.

IMAGO. The imagination creates the national myth. 170b-c

IN A BAD TIME. An apostrophe to the muse of tragedy, that her art make us see the tragic nature of life as it is, and not merely the trappings of tragedy.

IN THE CAROLINAS. 7d-8a

IN THE CLEAR SEASON OF GRAPES. The meaninglessness of the sea does not negate human values; sea, land, and mountains co-exist in a meaningful integration (for example, each man contains the sea within him).

IN THE ELEMENT OF ANTAGONISMS. The world is without presiding spirit, god ("genius"), but an image of man to replace god also seems a mockery.

INDIAN RIVER. The flux of reality in Florida begets no seasonal change.

INFANTA MARINA. The spirit of the sea. "Sleights of sails": "the passing of a sail at a distance on the sea, in sight and out of sight . . . like sleights of hand" (*LWS*, p. 785).

INVECTIVE AGAINST SWANS. The dying summer makes out its testament, while the soul, yearning for something more permanent than ephemeral nature imagery, flies beyond the decaying season to the sky.

THE IRISH CLIFFS OF MOHER. 195c-196a

THE JACK-RABBIT. The buzzard as reminder that life is subject to death.

JASMINE'S BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS UNDERNEATH THE WILLOW. Immediate pleasure in experience, beyond the artificiality of convention, and therefore "idiosyncratic," eccentric, subjective. The "love" here seems sensual, Jasmine enjoying her "titillations" as she "rocks" under Willow, feeling the "fugues and chorals" of her pleasure.

JOUGA. "Ha-cé-me" is the wind who plays his guitar, the sea. After the wind stops, the sea will be like a "great jaguar"

making "a little sound," since the wind will no longer be playing on it.

JULY MOUNTAIN. 185d-186b, 200d-201d

JUMBO. A generalized abstraction representing the imaginatively perceiving ego.

THE LACK OF REPOSE. The young man reads his own tradition into the poet's nontraditional book.

LANDSCAPE WITH BOAT. 10b-11b, 172c-d

\*LARGE RED MAN READING. 163

LAST LOOKS AT THE LILACS. 57d-58a

LATE HYMN FROM THE MYRRH-MOUNTAIN. "Snood": foliage of summer; "Neversink": mountain near Reading, Pennsylvania; "external world": the unadorned reality of winter. "Madanna," in l. 1, is probably a variation on "madane," an obsolete form of "maiden."

THE LATEST FREED MAN. Vidal bought books and paintings in Paris for Stevens and was an amateur painter. Stevens had a self-portrait of Vidal's. Samuel French Morse has indicated that the French phrase is probably from a Vidal letter and in description of his paintings.<sup>3</sup> 10b-11b, 14d-15a

LEBENSWEISHEITSPIELEREI. The death of autumn, the approach of death, reduces people to the essentially human.

LESS AND LESS HUMAN, O SAVAGE SPIRIT. 10b-11b, 124a-125b

LIFE IS MOTION. We live in a present of constant change, of which motion is the essence.

LIKE DECORATIONS IN A NIGGER CEMETERY. A "litter" (see LWS, p. 272) of observations dealing with the conditions of life on Stevens' naturalistic assumptions, the world bare of myth, man's only resort the "decorations" of the imagination. In form, of the variations-on-a-theme type of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." 71c-72a, 23b-d, 6d-7a Stevens comments on twelve of the fifty sections in LWS, pp. 348-50.

LIONS IN SWEDEN. "Dufy's Hamburg": Dufy's illustration of a lion for Apollinaire's "Le Bestiaire ou le Cortège d'Orphée," 1911;<sup>4</sup> Apollinaire's lions are described as unfortunate images, since we now usually associate them merely with zoos. 5d-6c

THE LOAD OF SUGAR-CANE. Each element like another, in a chain of resemblances within the intradependent whole of nature. For a parallel in poetic method, see 38a-b.

\*LOCAL OBJECTS. 200

LONELINESS IN JERSEY CITY. Confrontation with a world incapable of distinguishing between the grace of the deer and the comic clumsiness of the dachshund.

\*LONG AND SLUGGISH LINES. 191

\*LOOKING ACROSS THE FIELDS AND WATCHING THE BIRDS FLY. 189

A LOT OF PEOPLE BATHING IN A STREAM. 35a-b, 196b-197a

LUNAR PARAPHRASE. The light of the moon gives the comforting, but pathetic, illusion of a return to a more peaceful season, a more tranquil era.

LYTTON STRACHEY, ALSO, ENTERS INTO HEAVEN. Understanding such a figure as Lenin, who cannot be understood without the passionate misunderstandings of life, troubles the biographer.

MADAME LA FLEURIE. Death shows that one is not part of, but separate from, nature.

MAN AND BOTTLE. 8a-b

\*MAN CARRYING THING. 135

\*THE MAN ON THE DUMP. 102

THE MAN WHOSE PHARYNX WAS BAD. An expression of desire to break out of a depressing emotional stasis, caused by an indifferent quotidian, through a discovery of some final principle beyond the quotidian, beyond time which, however, "will not relent." 5b-c

\*THE MAN WITH THE BLUE GUITAR. 82

MARTIAL CADENZA. 8d-9a

MEDITATION CELESTIAL & TERRESTRIAL. 7d-8a

MEN MADE OUT OF WORDS. 24d-25a

THE MEN THAT ARE FALLING. The dreamer envisions one engaged in the Spanish Civil War (LWS, p. 798) who, being more than the mythical Christ whose facial impression was miraculously left on the "sudarium," is like the historical Christ who died for love of earth, not heaven. 66c-67c

METAMORPHOSIS. The metamorphosis of summer into

autumn with appropriate deformations and disintegrations of the month names in what Stevens calls a "poem of disintegration" (LWS, p. 753).

**METAPHOR AS DEGENERATION.** Metaphor creates our images of both generation and degeneration, existence, and non-existence. "Swatara": river above Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 164c, 196b-197a

**METAPHORS OF A MAGNIFICO.** 50d-51b

**\*LE MONOCLE DE MON ONCLE.** 38

**MONTRACHET-LE-JARDIN.** An attempt at an ideal of man dissolves into the particulars of reality. 143b-d

**THE MOTIVE FOR METAPHOR.** The imagination's metamorphoses vitalizes reality's "primary noon." 129b-130a, 151d-152c

**MOUNTAINS COVERED WITH CATS.** In contrast with the sameness of the mass, the impotent outcasts, the originals, the innovators, were not at all impotent, as they had seemed to be.

**MOZART, 1935.** 107b-108a

**MRS. ALFRED URUGUAY.** The necessity of imagination for a positive rapport with reality. 16a-17b

**MUD MASTER.** The sun, master of nature, is also master of the mind, which is part of nature.

**NEGATION.** The initially cheerful tone of this assertion of pointless imperfection is an ironic way of approaching a somber truth which we can do no more than bear.

**NEW ENGLAND VERSES.** 23c-d

**THE NEWS AND THE WEATHER.** I. Spring. II. "The deep breath": physical contact with reality. 171d-172b

**\*NO POSSUM, NO SOP, NO TATERS.** 120

**NOMAD EXQUISITE.** The speaker is the "Nomad," wanderer, traveler; in this case, probably he is a tourist. The effect of Florida on his imagination is like the effect of the climate on the proliferating vegetation of Florida.

**NOT IDEAS ABOUT THE THING BUT THE THING ITSELF.** A major statement of the importance of contacting a solid reality beyond the mind. 14a-15d

**NOTE ON MOONLIGHT.** The imagination, "moonlight," pro-

jects the feelings of the ego into reality, creating a subjective variety within its apparent objectivity. 16a-17b

**\*NOTES TOWARD A SUPREME FICTION.** 136

**THE NOVEL.** The lines of italics in the third and fourth stanzas are taken from a letter to Stevens from José Rodríguez-Feo; that in stanza six is from Lorca's "Martino de Santa Olalla," which was quoted by Thomas McGreevy in a letter to Stevens (LWS, p. 617). Varadero is a Cuban beach resort that was frequented by Rodríguez-Feo. The imagination, the "novel," adds its intense reality to the reader's (José's) decaying autumnal scene as he reads it and empathizes with the reader of the novel by Camus. Rodríguez-Feo was at Princeton at this time and thus is pictured as facing a northern autumn while remembering Cuba.

**NUANCES OF A THEME BY WILLIAMS.** 50d-51a

**NUDITY AT THE CAPITAL; NUDITY IN THE COLONIES.** Artlessness conceals; artfulness conceals (see LWS, p. 347).

**NUNS PAINTING WATER-LILIES.** The nuns, through the images ("sproutings") of reality they create, become united with reality. 194a-c

**O FLORIDA, VENEREAL SOIL.** The spirit of Florida pure ("virgin") of "boorish births," should breed ("Venereal") a few things beautiful in themselves.

**OAK LEAVES ARE HANDS.** "Flora Lowzen" represents the principle of metamorphosis which in past times had been figured as "Flora," the seasonal cycle of vegetation, and as the Fates ("Mac Mort," son of death), their twelve limbs resembling a single spider as they weave the course of men's mortality. As the acorn contains the principle of oaks beyond any actual oaks ("unreal"), so she contains the principle of change which informs past and future events.

**OF BRIGHT & BLUE BIRDS & THE GALA SUN.** 106b-107a

**OF HARTFORD IN A PURPLE LIGHT.** 151d-152c

**\*OF HEAVEN CONSIDERED AS A TOMB.** 61

**\*OF MERE BEING.** 204

**\*OF MODERN POETRY.** 107

**OF THE SURFACE OF THINGS.** The "Surface of Things" is the particulars of reality. "The gold tree is blue": the real tree is

imaginary. The moon stands for imagination. The subject is the fluctuation between the imagined and the real.

THE OLD LUTHERAN BELLS AT HOME. The bells are aesthetically meaningful, but as symbols of a "truth," a "sect," seems jangling and meaningless.

AN OLD MAN ASLEEP. The external, as well as the internal, is part of the individual consciousness.

ON AN OLD HORN. The music of poetry is the mind's defense against chaos. (See Stevens' paraphrase, LWS, p. 403.)

ON THE ADEQUACY OF LANDSCAPE. The "Landscape," as opposed to discursive thought about it ("owl"), is adequate for the ego. 134b-d

\*ON THE MANNER OF ADDRESSING CLOUDS. 61

ON THE ROAD HOME. 10b-11b

ON THE WAY TO THE BUS. 185b-c

ONE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE WEST. A human meaning read into nightfall: one associates the dying of day with the yearly death engendered by autumn.

\*AN ORDINARY EVENING IN NEW HAVEN. 167

THE ORDINARY WOMEN. The refreshment that art, in its palace, gives to reality.

OUR STARS COME FROM IRELAND. Tom McGreevy: an Irish poet with whom Stevens corresponded. Part I contains references to his poetry (LWS, p. 608). Swatara and Schuylkill are rivers in Pennsylvania. Mal Bay, Tarbert, and Kerry are places on the western coast of Ireland. Stevens wrote McGreevy in connection with I, "When we look back, at least when I look back, I do not really remember myself but the places in which I lived and things there with which I was familiar" (LWS, p. 608).

THE OWL IN THE SARCOPHAGUS: AN ATTEMPT TO CONTAIN DEATH WITHIN THE MODERN IMAGINATION. The "third form": the last fleeting knowledge of life's flux, of which death is part. Compare 127d-128b.

OWL'S CLOVER. 5d-7a. (See Stevens' long gloss of this poem, LWS, pp. 366-75.)

PAGE FROM A TALE. Substituting for Yeats's secure cabin the vision of Stevens' problematic universe.

PAISANT CHRONICLE. Stevens writes of this poem that "we have to fix abstract objectives and then to conceal the abstract figures in actual appearance" (LWS, p. 489). 143b-d

PALACE OF THE BABIES. The imagination dead to an imagery in which it cannot believe.

\*THE PALTRY NUDE STARTS ON A SPRING VOYAGE. 37

PAROCHIAL THEME. 8c-9a

THE PASTOR CABALLERO. The figure becomes a transcendent form through the improvisation of the imagination.

A PASTORAL NUN. Both "poetry" and "apotheosis" are creative in conceiving "favorable transformations" of reality.

THE PEDIMENT OF APPEARANCE. 10b-c

\*PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER. 69

PHOSPHOR READING BY HIS OWN LIGHT. Phosphor, who projects his ego onto reality, therefore sees nothing of reality and is not a realist. The realist, open to reality, thinks it is the product of his ego after he has perceived it. "Fusky": dark, mysterious.

PIECES. The "sense in sounds" is what they suggest to the imagination because of what we feel about them. 19d-20b

THE PLACE OF THE SOLITAIRES. About the continuous iteration of the cyclic processes of reality, including the "restless iteration" of the mind in its lonely meditation of these processes in "the place of the solitaires." The poem is itself a cycle.

\*THE PLAIN SENSE OF THINGS. 187

THE PLANET ON THE TABLE. His poems were alive to him because they had captured the sense of his existence.

THE PLEASURES OF MERELY CIRCULATING. Stevens comments: "The spectacle of order is so vast that it resembles disorder. . . . But for all the apparent fortuitousness of things, they hold together" (LWS, p. 348). Mrs. Anderson's baby: it is the process, not the result, that matters. 158c-d

THE PLOT AGAINST THE GIANT. Brute reality undone by the beauty of art.

PLOUGHING ON SUNDAY. The poet, on the day devoted to faith, works like Uncle Remus to compose the myths of the continent.



LES PLUS BELLES PAGES. The works of the Saint survive because they do not exist in isolation from the human. (See OP, p. 293 for Stevens' explication.)

THE POEM THAT TOOK THE PLACE OF A MOUNTAIN. 11c-12a

POEM WITH RHYTHMS. The imagination projects the ego into the world.

POEM WRITTEN AT MORNING. 11d-12a, 25c-d

THE POEMS OF OUR CLIMATE. 130d-131d

POESIE ABRUTIE. The greenhouse and the flowers "speak" of the coming strength of the sun. 7d-8a

POETRY IS A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE. Misery, given figuration in poetry, becomes potent. It is like having the strength of a dumb brute at heart ("Corazon"—thus the animal's blood is his, and he tastes it rather than his own spit), which, if it expressed itself, would do so with destructive violence.

POLO PONIES PRACTICING. 8d-9a

A POSTCARD FROM THE VOLCANO. The poet's words of the existence that continues after his severance from it in death, continue to shape our image of that existence.

THE PREJUDICE AGAINST THE PAST. Images seem dead "relics" until they are seen, not as hypotheses about reality, but as projections of the ego.

PRELUDE TO OBJECTS. 144d-145b

PRESENCE OF AN EXTERNAL MASTER OF KNOWLEDGE. A condensation out of "The Sail of Ulysses." 189b

A PRIMITIVE LIKE AN ORB. Minor variation on "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction."

PROLOGUES TO WHAT IS POSSIBLE. I. Approaching the moment of poetic truth in the "boat" of imagination which transcends the "stones" of reality. II. is a description of such a moment. 16a-17b

THE PUBLIC SQUARE. A vision of nothingness. 9d-10a

PUELLA PARVULA. The title: "young girl"—as opposed to "wild bitch." 13b-14a

THE PURE GOOD OF THEORY. I. 143b-d. II. 106d-107a. III., IV. 24d-26c. IV. Lines 7-15: the efforts of the ego, through the imagination, to contact reality, its "element." 85d-86c

QUESTIONS ARE REMARKS. The child sees the freshness of

the world beyond rhetoric. "Red horse": the mother's description of the newly risen sun. 10b-c

A QUIET NORMAL LIFE. The "candle" of imagination, itself a reality, illuminates the reality of here and now. 203d-204b

A RABBIT AS KING OF THE GHOSTS. The rabbit is the expansive ego, the cat, potentially dangerous reality.

THE READER. 9d-10a

\*REALITY IS AN ACTIVITY OF THE MOST AUGUST IMAGINATION. 199

THE RED FERN. The "fern" is the sunrise; the sun is considered as the creative principle beyond its physical manifestations.

THE REGION NOVEMBER. A contemplation of meaningless annihilation perceived in the destroying wind of autumn that is the "critic" of anything meaningful in the "waste" of existence. 9d-10a

REPETITIONS OF A YOUNG CAPTAIN. "Major men": "the pick of young men" (LWS, p. 489). "Giant": the fictive abstraction. 26d-27a, 114b-d

REPLY TO PAPINI. The poet does not proceed by systematic belief, like the Pope; he rather "shares the confusions of intelligence" which are "appropriate to/ The complexities of the world." 24b-d

RE-STATEMENT OF ROMANCE. Ego in relation with responsive ego transcends alien reality.

THE REVOLUTIONISTS STOP FOR ORANGEADE. The need for the artificial in art. 131a-b

\*THE RIVER OF RIVERS IN CONNECTICUT. 196.

\*THE ROCK. 193

SAD STRAINS OF A GAY WALTZ. "See Tea at the Palaz of Hoon. 6c"

SAILING AFTER LUNCH. The poet, an "inappropriate man" in an "unpropitious place," must rid himself of the stale romantic for the fresh romance of confrontation with the actual. (Compare LWS, p. 277.)

THE SAIL OF ULYSSES. The mind in search of the fiction is figured as Ulysess. 157a-158a, 189b

ST. ARMORER'S CHURCH FROM THE OUTSIDE. 119a-120b

\*SAINT JOHN AND THE BACK-ACHE. 165

SEA SURFACE FULL OF CLOUDS. The seascape is: I. calm; II. threatening, windy, then clearing; III. seen at night, then dawn; IV. ominous, then clearing; V. changeable, and again clearing. Each mood of the sea evokes a mood in the viewer, the expression of which culminates in the line of French. 25c-26a, 71d

THE SEARCH FOR SOUND FREE FROM MOTION. The world repeats its sounds, which yet are nicely turned to express its own, nonhuman intelligence, in a way quite equal to the way the "self" uses "the word."

\*THE SENSE OF THE SLEIGHT-OF-HAND MAN. 106

SIX SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPES. 72c-73b. In method, parallel to "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird."

SKETCH OF THE ULTIMATE POLITICIAN. Major man. 143b-d, 144d-145b

SNOW AND STARS. 7d-8a

THE SNOW MAN. The listener beholds "the nothing" that is there. Stevens explains the poem as "an example of the necessity of identifying oneself with reality in order to understand it and enjoy it" (LWS, p. 464). 9d-10c

\*SO-AND-SO RECLINING ON HER COUCH. 121

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SOME FRIENDS FROM PASCAGOULA. A "sovereign image." See the poem "Lions in Sweden." Such images give "ideas of a new and noble order" (LWS, p. 349).

SOMNAMBULISMA. Without the incompleteness inherent in change, life would be static, dead, without particularity for the man of imagination ("scholar"). 65c-66b

SONATINA TO HANS CHRISTIAN. The first "mother": hostile nature; the second: the chaos to which all must return. 9d-10a

SONG OF FIXED ACCORD. The dove is permanently attuned to the ordinary processes of reality. 158c-d

STARS AT TALLAPOOSA. The unearthly abstraction of the stars has its parallel in abstraction in the mind, whose clarity can refresh reality.

STUDY OF IMAGES I. It does no good to contrive images; they occur as our normal manner of perception. 168c-169a

STUDY OF IMAGES II. Things must be joined with their appropriate images to be adequately perceived.

STUDY OF TWO PEARS. 102d-103b

THE SUN THIS MARCH. The end of winter brings reminiscences of spring that make the adjustment to winter more difficult. The rabbi appealed to Stevens as a figure "devoted in the extreme to scholarship and at the same time to making some use of it for human purposes" (LWS, p. 786).

\*SUNDAY MORNING. 63

THE SURPRISES OF THE SUPERHUMAN. The superhuman would surprise us by making things right.

TABLE TALK. 200d-201d

TATTOO. Reality is tattooed on our flesh through the medium of light; and our vision is tattooed on reality.

TEA. A dominance of the imaginative.

TEA AT THE PALAZ OF HOON. Hoon conceives reality as a projection of the imagination.

THEORY. 54b

THINGS OF AUGUST. An attempt to develop a fiction appropriate to August. 55, note 5; 26d-27c

THINKING OF A RELATION BETWEEN THE IMAGES OF METAPHORS. 5b-c

\*THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD. 71

\*THIS SOLITUDE OF CATARACTS. 164

A THOUGHT REVOLVED. 143b-145b

THUNDER BY THE MUSICIAN. The music would have been more appropriate to our time had it ended in groping uncertainty rather than triumphant assurance.

TO AN OLD PHILOSOPHER IN ROME. For the dying Santayana, the imagination transforms Rome into a vision of heaven which yet remains an imaginative version of the real Rome. xi, c.

\*TO THE ONE OF FICTIVE MUSIC. 68

TO THE ROARING WIND. The wind and the poet hover at the point of articulation.

TWO AT NORFOLK. The feeling of the lovers lives beyond death in the feeling of the summer night.

TWO FIGURES IN A DENSE VIOLET NIGHT. "Violet" as allied with the blue of imagination. The woman demands that her

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companion's love-making be imaginative, rather than merely physical.

TWO ILLUSTRATIONS THAT THE WORLD IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT. I. Winter is the image he gives to it; II. such transformations are transitory.

TWO LETTERS. I. 28c-29d; II. 154c-155a

TWO TALES OF LIADOFF. Liadoff's music expresses the town, I. in a flight of fancy, II. in a return to the reality of the town.

TWO VERSIONS OF THE SAME POEM. The slippery "eel" of the ocean, reality (I), refuses to be fixed by the "mould" of the mind (II). Zeller was the family name of Stevens' mother.

THE ULTIMATE POEM IS ABSTRACT. 5b-c

UNITED DAMES OF AMERICA. The aristocratic idea of the singular man, as opposed to the collective "man of the mass" who will "declaim" our collective purpose. 144d-145b

VACANCY IN THE PARK. The reality of the past winter is at an end, and that of the expected spring (l. 2) has not appeared, leaving a vacancy in the present. 7d-8a

VALLEY CANDLE. The candle orders the world, but both as artifact (l. 1) and thing of imagination ("image"), is transitory. 73c-74a

VARIATIONS ON A SUMMER DAY. In form like "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." 18c-19b, 25d-26a

THE VIRGIN CARRYING A LANTERN. The "negress" projects her own imaginative version of the "pious" virgin's situation.

WAVING ADIEU, ADIEU, ADIEU. "Death is absolute" (CP, p. 97—see "The Death of a Soldier"). This being so, we turn to the "ever-jubilant weather" of which Stevens writes: "We are physical beings in a physical world; the weather is one of the things that we enjoy, one of the unphilosophical realities" (LWS, pp. 348-49).

A WEAK MIND IN THE MOUNTAINS. A time of inadequate imagination.

THE WEEPING BURGER. The "burgher," a ghost, "distorts the world" through "excess," thus cloaking the "sorry verities"; yet this makes him yearn more for life, from which he

is severed, and so is "a strange malice" because it is against himself, making him weep.

THE WELL DRESSED MAN WITH A BEARD. 128b-129a

WHAT WE SEE IS WHAT WE THINK. As reality becomes less adequate, imagination becomes more necessary.

WILD DUCKS, PEOPLE AND DISTANCES. In a secular world people, like the weather, comprise an element in which we live.

THE WIND SHIFTS. We read into reality our own human feelings.

WINTER BELLS. A sufficiency of secular good, including that offered by the solemnity and propriety of the church, makes metaphysical speculation ("further thought") superfluous. Stevens says that l. 12 alludes to Descartes (compare Stevens' gloss, LWS, p. 348).

THE WOMAN IN SUNSHINE. The woman as image for the day.

WOMAN LOOKING AT A VASE OF FLOWERS. The inhuman forces of reality are productive of that which is sympathetic to the human. "Owl within": her wisdom.

A WOMAN SINGS A SONG FOR A SOLDIER COME HOME. Integration with the present requires communion with the reality of the present. "His wound": his isolation.

A WORD WITH JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ-FEO. The "grotesque" is the imaginative version of things, not "apparition," but the way they actually appear to the ego. The person named in the title was a literary friend with whom Stevens maintained an important correspondence. 25c-d

THE WORLD AS MEDITATION. The coming of Ulysses in her meditation merges with the coming of the sun in the larger meditation of nature. 189b

WORLD WITHOUT PECULIARITY. Reality is alien until humanized as, in this poem, is the day (ll. 17-18), and the earth in its personification as "humanity."

THE WORMS AT HEAVEN'S GATE. An ironic resurrection of the body.

YELLOW AFTERNOON. "Face/Without eyes": consciousness of a responsive reality. For a parallel relation with reality, see 54a-c.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Kimon Friar and John Malcolm Brinnin, eds. *Modern Poetry, American and British* (New York, 1951), p. 537.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Review of Berks County*, XXIV (Fall, 1959), 108 (caption).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Fuchs, *The Comic Spirit of Wallace Stevens* (Durham, N.C., 1963), p. 150, n. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ramon Guthrie, "Stevens' 'Lions in Sweden,'" *Explicator*, XX (Dec., 1961), Item 32.

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