

to the lake of reason or the history of logic, since, obsessed with one idea, "His extreme of logic would be illogical." He therefore represents the element of unreason breaking through the imposed order of reason, and serves as a double demonstration of the defeat of reason. Reality is not reasonable; reason only makes tentative formulations about it which, when they become rigid and restrictive, round the circle to that extreme which is unreason.

Section XV, as the poem's finale, resumes its major theme of the feasibility of the good life, despite attendant evil, in the physical world. "The greatest poverty is not to live/ In a physical world" because there is no other. It is despair of fulfillment within the physical world that creates the supernatural ideal:

Sad men made angels of the sun, and of  
The moon they made their own attendant ghosts,  
Which led them back to angels, after death. (*CP*, p. 137)

On the contrary, the good of earth is that it is perfectly suited to human desire,

. . . as, desire for day  
Accomplished in the immensely flashing East,  
Desire for rest, in that descending sea  
Of dark, which in its very darkening  
Is rest and silence spreading into sleep. (*CP*, p. 137)

The ghostly consummations of the dead are pathetically contrasted with the "rotund emotions" of the living. Like the shades of the Classical underworld, or like the ghosts of "Large Red Man Reading," they "would have wept to step barefoot into reality" (*CP*, p. 423). The consummation of reality dissipates the impulse to abstract thought of the "metaphysicals," who "Lie sprawling in majors of the August heat." The "metaphysicals"—or those given to the kind of abstract reasoning that leads to the idea of a supernatural

paradise, as opposed to the "non-physical people" who are in paradise and can feel little or nothing—are so satisfied by the physical world and the "rotund emotions" therein that they know nothing of paradise. This, then, is the affirmation of a belief in a good life within the conditions of a "physical world," "the thesis scrivened in delight." But its discovery did not lie with the physical eye and ear; it was rather the imagination working on the data of the sense and dealing with "all the ill it sees," and "all the evil sound," that brought the mind into accord with the conditions of life in a "physical world." The imaginative metamorphoses through which the accord is brought about, the various versions of the self and the sensuous world, may therefore be described as "metaphysical changes." They are the imagination's revelations of reality and are all the metaphysic necessary "in living as and where we live."

### "Man Carrying Thing" (*CP*, p. 350)

The psychological process illustrated here seems to concern the poet's composition of the poem rather than the reader's apprehension of it, but could conceivably concern both. The poem must not make itself immediately available to the intelligence. Rather, one apprehends the general outline of it first; that of a brown ("brune") figure, for example, whose details and significance ("Identity") we cannot make out. What he carries remains mysterious even to our most urgently needy ("necessitous") attempts to perceive it. These uncertain details are "secondary"—the certain whole being primary—they are the first hints of meaning that must be given time to accumulate, like the first flakes of a snow storm. Such meaning is opposed to meaning that is immediately obvious; the "horror" is a horror of the easily obvious. We must struggle with our thoughts till dawn to arrive at meaning that is difficult to grasp clearly, and which is therefore worth making obvious.