which has proved unfeasible, but as the "wrangling" of two:
one concerning the imagination, and one Monday's world.
This will be the reality ("its actual stone") of time to come,
and our portion ("bread") in it. We will accept that hard
reality, and take in it what comfort we can. We will forget
other concerns in our daily life, except on occasion, when we
choose to indulge in the exercise of the imagination. So may
this dream evade the "dirty light" of the work-a-day world,
and still coexist with it.

"The Man on the Dump" (CP, p. 261)

The scene is that of nightfall. The setting sun with its
colors, is like a basket of flowers, "a bouquet" placed on the
horizon by the moon, which is "Blanche," white. The poet
gloats ("Ho-ho") over the images to be found on the
"dump" (such as the moon as "Blanche" and the sunset as
"a bouquet"). The days themselves are like daily papers
which bring their contents to the dump, including their daily
sunset ("The bouquets"). The daily advent of the moon, as
well as that of the sun, comes to the dump, along with the
most ordinary things ("the janitor's poems/ Of every day").
These things come to the dump as our stale descriptions of
them. Thus, the days come like old newspapers, and the re-
jected trash of the quotidian comes in terms of "the janitor's
poems." The real, beyond stale descriptions of it, endures in
its freshness. But even as one describes that reality it turns
stale and literary. The "blowing of day," like a wind blowing,
ever fresh as it passes (and perhaps also "blowing" in the
sense of the blooming of day at dawn) may be described as
comparable to a reading of Cornelius Nepos (a Roman his-
torian of the first century B.C.) insofar as his style, presum-
ably, conduces to a fresh and breezy reading. One may com-
pose this or that metaphor in description of the day. The
fact is that one's experience of the day is immediate and
sensuous, not descriptive and literary. The images used to
express this are concrete and sensuous, especially in compari-
son with the literary metaphor about Cornelius Nepos. How
many men and women have copied the ephemeral freshness
("dew") of reality in order to make of it something deco-
orative, merely pretty, something with which to adorn them-
sestelves? One grows tired of such artificiality except as it is
rejected on the dump. Now, in the freshness of spring, with
the flowers blooming, one feels, in that moment of the
present between the stale past and our descriptions of the
immediate moment which will soon become stale, the fresh-
ness of reality itself. As one feels "the purifying change" of
season from the staleness of the old to the freshness of the
new, so one feels the change from our stale images of reality
to immediate perception of reality in the present moment,
before one has a chance to make new images of that reality
which will themselves become stale. One rejects "the trash"
for reality itself. It is in that moment of the immediate
present that one sees reality afresh. It is a quietly dramatic
moment, as if accompanied by the music of bassoons, when
one sees things as they actually are, and the music and moon
rise also indicate a readiness for a new release of the imagina-
tion in description of a bare reality ("the elephant-colorings of
tires"). One's images for things have been stripped away,
and one sees the moon as the moon itself rather than in
terms of metaphor like that of line two (the moon as the
woman Blanche placing a basket of flowers); one sees things
as a man rather than as a literary conception of a man ("an
image of a man"), and the sky is empty of all descriptions of
the sky. One keeps stubbornly making a point of the ordinary
("lard pail"), calling attention to it. It is that which one
believes to be real, which one desires to approach. Could
one, on the contrary, be trapped in solipsism? Could the
real "Be merely oneself?" could the mind be projecting itself
onto reality, making meanings of it as the ear makes meaning
of a meaningless crow's call? Would the song of the night-
gale have such an unpleasant effect on us as that of the crow
(packing the heart, probably, with unpleasant feelings, and
grating on the mind)? Would the ear choose such an ill-
tempered bird as the crow, if it were in fact creating what it
heard? Does one find peace and perfection ("philosopher's honeymoon") on the dump, and, since one does not, would the mind create such an imperfect reality for itself? One does not, conscious of all the trash rejected by reality, utter more sentimental trash that will in turn be rejected ("aptest eve"). One does not try to project mysterious and euphonious nonsense ("invisible priest") onto reality in face of the unpleasant cries of the blackbirds ("blatter of grackles"). One does not "eject" the trash of stale images and "pull the day to pieces" to get at its reality while maintaining a precious estheticism ("stanza my stone"). How does one find one's way back to the place where one first heard about "the truth," here opposed with "The the," the predication of that which is, the particulars of reality itself.

"Connoisseur of Chaos" (CP, p. 215)

This poem makes use of a mock pedanticism which Stevens sometimes employs as a stratagem in his most logically discursive poems (compare, for example, "Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas," CP, p. 252).

The poem begins with two paradoxical propositions. An order imposed on reality distorts it and thus is a "disorder" in that it denies the order of reality as it exists; on the other hand, "A great disorder" like the great disorder of reality, has an order inherent in itself, the order, simply, of that which is. The poem provides illustrations to the effect that the two initial propositions are actually different statements of the same idea.

The second section presents three seemingly paradoxical illustrations. The greenness of spring is blue, the color usually associated in Stevens with the imagination, because the burgeoning of spring stimulates the imagination, and it is also like a burgeoning of the imagination. This is followed by two apparent matters of fact which, in a parallel way, seem paradoxical. Since such paradoxes are merely verbal and in reality resolve into simple matters of fact—since, despite their seeming self-contradiction, or disorderliness, in life such things go on as a matter of routine, there must be, in reality, as opposed to the mind's impositions on it, a law by which opposites are dialectical and resolve into "essential unity." Such a law is pleasant to contemplate, esthetically pleasant in the same way as is a particular in a painting. (Jean Hippolyte Marchand, 1885-1941, was a painter, lithographer, and illustrator who did illustrations for books by Valéry, Claudel, and Jammes.)

The third section begins with the old religious rationale for such unity, but considered only as a dead option. Life and death were a "pretty contrast," esthetically pleasant, when they could be resolved in the idea of god and its corollary idea of immortality. But the facts of contemporary life are too difficult to be handled by a closed, rigid mentality ("squamous," covered with scales, sometimes with reference to a kind of armor and, also, part of the bone structure of the temple), especially such a rigid religious mentality as the "bishops" might exemplify. And yet, beyond the comprehending mind, relation between such opposites as life and death—that is, order—does make itself felt, ephemerally, ambiguously, but with expanding relevance.

Section four works variations on the initial propositions. An old order, like that of the "bishops' books," is an imposition on reality that distorts it. However, this, though true, is trivial, since it is just one fact among all the unrelated facts of which reality consists. B also returns to the initial proposition B. The facts of the weather, the seasons, comprise a great disorder. Should this disorder of the weather, the seasonal cycle, this natural disorder ever become fixed in a stable, powerful, old order ("Plantagener"), it would be a violent order, and thus would be a disorder of reality as it is. This leads back to the initial statement of B: reality as it is in itself comprises an order, which in turn is to say that any imposition on that order of things as they are would be a violent order and therefore disorder, part of the great disorder which is an order. Thus A and B, as was stated at the outset, are one. These ideas are not meant for academic considera-