

stimulating experience than he would have expected. Riddel (p. 101) pertinently observes that "chits" can mean both sprouts and "vouchers for debts incurred"; thus, "the cost of living an every day life" (p. 100). The daughters represent, as consummation of his experience with reality, the harmony with it that he sought. They are the answers to his questions. Thus his tale of quest comes to its end,

. . . muted, mused, and perfectly revolved
 In those portentous accents, syllables,
 And sounds of music coming to accord
 Upon his lap. . . . (VI, ll. 77-80)

The end of his journey finds Crispin back in the same domestic scene where he began, and he is left confronting the world, the same "insoluble lump" (VI, l. 70), admitting as fatalist that the course of his experience, since it is beyond his intelligence, is beyond his control. He sought to see the world beyond imagination ("purple"), and finishes by confronting the world in terms of the consequences of the domestic imagination—his daughters. He has been a comic character, struggling clownishly to come to terms with a world which is as indifferent to his struggle as it is unchangeably benign. Since this is a comic poem, it must, for one thing, have a happy ending. Even "if the anecdote/ Is false" and its reasoning fruitless (VI, ll. 83-85), though Crispin only proves "what he proves/ Is nothing" (VI, ll. 94-95), "what can all this matter since / The relation comes, benignly, to its end?" (VI, ll. 95-96). Happiness is more important than the formulations by which we try to achieve it. (VI, l. 93 should be read: "making quick cures out of the unruliness of life." In the preceding line, "sequestering the fluster" means trying to remove the confusion.) The journey, nevertheless, has not been pointless. He has come to accord with that same world with which he had been in discord at the outset. It is not the world that has changed, it is Crispin who has become adjusted to it. But it is a new adjustment based on a reappréhension of his reality. Thus happily may each man's story end.

"On the Manner of Addressing Clouds" (CP, p. 55)

The clouds are "grammarians" because they elicit speech from men as a grammarian, or philologist, might elicit meaning from a text. They submit meekly to their transitory nature, to their gloomy rendezvous with death ("mortal rendezvous"), and in so doing elicit from men that splendor of speech ("pomps"), that poetry whose power to exalt (a power which, like music, seems to affect the spirit rather than the ear), continues to sustain us. The clouds are "Gloomy" (l. 1): the utterances of the most pessimistic ("Funest," portending death or evil) thinkers and the feelings they evoke are elicited by the clouds, are "the speech of clouds." This speech of their march through the sky recurs as the random ("casual") recurrence of the clouds (keeping "the mortal rendezvous," l. 2) evokes such thought and feeling in their progress throughout the seasons, which are "stale" because they are repetitious, and "mysterious," ultimately, as part of our problematic universe. Such pessimistic utterances as that of the "Funest philosophers" are the poetry of appropriate ("meet") resignation to the nature of the world; this kind of poetry is "responsive" to that nature of which the clouds are part, it is this kind of poetry that provides us spiritual sustenance in face of that nature. This, therefore, is the kind of poetry the clouds should encourage and augment if, in the random, meaningless heavens ("drifting waste"), there is going to be any meaning, which is to say any human meaning, along with the meaningless ("mute bare") magnificence of the sun and moon.

"Of Heaven Considered as a Tomb" (CP, p. 56)

How are we to interpret the dead: men who, since god himself is dead, walk in "the tomb of heaven"—the night sky which is merely sky—with the stars as their lanterns,¹⁴ the