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The Maternal Shape of Mourning: A Reconsideration of *Lycidas*

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The poet, who had written elegies on the deaths of Lancelot Andrews and the Marchioness of Winchester, was not moved to verse by the death of his mother. We are not to conclude from this that he did not grieve for her . . . some moments were too private for him to versify, and this was one. (A. N. WILSON, *John Milton* [1983])

Alas that with you, as you reign throughout your glassy world your mother cannot be a portion of your soul! Yet I myself am not less whelm'd with waves; beyond waves coming and going over my unkempt cheeks. (RALPH WIDDRINGTON, Latin Elegy for Edward King, *Justa Edouardo King*, 1638)

In book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, Eve describes to Adam her coming into consciousness and its attendant losses. Initially she resisted him, turning back instead to the pool's reflection of her "smooth wat'ry image." Only when doubly reproved—first by an "invisible voice," and then by Adam—does she assert that "manly grace" exceeds feminine beauty (4:480, 490).¹ Traditionally, this passage has been read from Adam's vantage point: Eve is almost lost before she is recalled from self-absorption to a new attachment and title ("mother of mankind").² It is less clear how Eve construes the transition from one kind of surrender to another. Her description of this experience might usefully be read as an elegy, what Peter Sacks calls a poem of "loss and figuration," for the Eve who preferred her own image to Adam is lost as the language which defines her is discovered.³ For Eve, motherhood is specular, a mirror in which subjecthood is simultaneously identified and distorted.

1. *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 289. All citations from *Paradise Lost* will be by book and line number from this edition, incorporated parenthetically in my text, as will later citations from *Lycidas*, giving line numbers.

2. Christine Froula interprets this passage in light of canon formation and women's indoctrination into patriarchal structures of authority. See "When Eve Reads Milton: Undoing the Critical Economy," *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1983): 321–47.

3. Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore, 1985), p. xii.

In Eve's case, the maternal covers (and subsumes) a prior identity. It is striking how often Milton equates the maternal figure with such covering over or annihilation. In book 10 of *Paradise Lost*, Adam (considering suicide) uses the word 'mother' in a peculiarly anachronistic way: "How gladly would I meet / Mortality my sentence, and be Earth / Insensible, how glad would lay me down / As in my Mother's lap! There I should rest / and sleep secure" (10:775–78). The possessive Adam attaches to the word 'mother' recalls his unique motherlessness, a lack he seems only now to recognize. Eve underscores the emptiness of this imaginary lap in her corresponding threat of abstinence ("yet ere Conception to prevent / The Race unblest, to being yet unbegot" [10:987–88]). Reminding her that consolation depends on future generation, Adam reconciles himself to Eve by covering her degraded image with a new ideal ("mother of mankind"). Adam thus transforms his relationship to the dangers and allures of the "mother's lap" by covering what he most fears: motherhood as absence, as an empty lap that threatens annihilation.

I want to connect Eve's turn from her own reflection in book 4 of *Paradise Lost* to an earlier such loss and return in Milton's poetry—that given voice by the swain in Milton's pastoral elegy, *Lycidas*. Like Eve, the swain is almost swallowed by a world of watery reflection, the intensity of his identification threatening to subsume him until he is directed (by invisible voices) to reidentify himself as "maker." The voice that enables his separation from that landscape has generally been understood to confirm his identity. But like Eve, the swain individuates himself only by splitting himself as a subject, his voice reproved until he can be fitted back into nature and narrative. To be released from materiality in *Lycidas* is to suffer language's loss, for as *Lycidas* escapes from his body at the elegy's end to become all spirit, he is simultaneously transformed from singer to listener, his voice, like his tears, wiped away forever by the exulting angels.

Lycidas was published in November of 1637, that year of deaths including those of Ben Jonson and Edward King. As G. W. Pigman has argued, Renaissance elegies were public poems; David Norbrook reminds us that Milton (apparently not an intimate of King's) may have been prompted to add his poem to the *Justo Edouardo King* in part to compete with a volume published at Oxford shortly after Jonson's death.⁴ Yet even such important correctives have not impeded at-

4. G. W. Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy* (Cambridge, 1985). David Norbrook discusses the collection assembled to honor Jonson and its potential influence on *Lycidas* in "The Politics of Milton's Early Poetry," in *John Milton*, ed. Annabel Patterson (New York and London, 1992), pp. 46–64.

tempts to understand the elegy as “personal” and “autobiographical.” Since Dr. Johnson, critics have contested the sincerity of the elegy and the extent to which it can be understood as an expression of “real grief.” Given the vehemence accompanying such debates, it is puzzling how rarely critics have suggested the relevance of the death of Milton’s mother seven months before the elegy’s publication.⁵

Sarah Milton’s death on April 3, 1637, has been scantily remarked in the literature by and about Milton. Milton mentions it in his *Second Defense of the English People* (1654) with no apparent affect. It is one of two references to his mother in his entire oeuvre. In his *Second Defense* he gives the following account of his origins: “Who I am, then, and whence I come, I shall now disclose. I was born in London, of an honorable family. My father was a man of supreme integrity, my mother a woman of purest reputation, celebrated throughout the neighborhood for her acts of charity. My father destined me in early childhood for the study of literature.”⁶ Here, as elsewhere, Milton associates the “study of literature” with his father. In comparison to copious references to his father’s legacy—gifts, money, talent—his mother is valued by and for others (“a woman of purest reputation”). If she gave anything to Milton, rather than “acts of charity” bestowed to others, he is silent on the subject. Several paragraphs later in the *Second Defense*, Milton mentions her again: “I devoted myself entirely to the study of Greek and Latin writers. . . . When I had occupied five years in this fashion, I became desirous, my mother having died, of seeing foreign parts, especially Italy.”⁷ His mother’s death is represented as an aporia: it forecloses the poet’s “devoted . . . study of Greek and Latin writers” and provokes desire to “see foreign parts.” Critics who mention Sarah Milton’s death tend to position it, as Milton does here, as either a release or an impediment in the young writer’s career. When Milton’s contemporary John Aubrey writes of Sarah Milton in

5. Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (London, 1783), reprinted in C. A. Patrides, ed., *Milton’s Lycidas: The Tradition and the Poem* (Columbia, Mo., 1983), pp. 60–61. Sarah Milton’s death has been discussed in relationship to *Lycidas* in several sources, albeit briefly. William Riley Parker mentions the potential relevance of her death in *Milton: A Biography*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1968), 1:166–67. In *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of Paradise Lost* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), William Kerrigan raises the subject in relation to his discussion of Orpheus and Calliope (p. 179). John Shawcross emphasizes Milton’s liberation following his mother’s death. See *The Self and the World* (Lexington, Ky., 1993), pp. 82–87. Sacks, who to my knowledge treats the subject most fully, does not discuss maternal figuration within the poem, finally emphasizing instead “the authority of the father” (p. 106).

6. *The Complete Prose of John Milton*, ed. Don Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven, Conn., 1953–82), 4:612.

7. *Ibid.*, 4:614.

his *Life* of the poet, it is only to charge her with bequeathing her poor vision to Milton: "His mother had very weake eies, and used spectacles presently after she was thirty yeares old."⁸ In other words, Milton's father gave him vision; his mother gave him its loss.

In Milton's poetry, motherhood is sparsely (and often uncomfortably) presented. When he writes about parents, it is generally of fathers: Jove; the Attendant Spirit; Phoebus Apollo; Michael; Manoa; the biblical patriarchs, and, most important, God in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Several poems suppress the figure of the mother. The "Nativity Ode," for example, excludes Mary as a mother figure. John Carey observes that, in the "Nativity Ode," Milton "alone, even among classical and patristic writers . . . ignores the central naturalness of motherhood."⁹ In *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*, as John Rumrich has recently argued, the maternal is associated with the diabolical powers of Circe and her cult.¹⁰ In *Paradise Lost*, motherhood is materially figured in the grotesque, incestuous conception of Death by Sin, whose "odious offspring . . . breaking violent way / Tore through [her] entrails," distorting her "nether shape" (2.7814). *Samson Agonistes* entirely deletes Samson's mother, important in Judges. Significantly, the most important treatment of the maternal role in Milton's poetry appears in *Paradise Regained*, where Mary is emphasized as the Son's teacher. While Milton's Mary in *Paradise Regained* has been seen to invigorate a limited role, she is necessarily unique, a mother whose motherhood is supernatural.¹¹ Margaret Homans and Marshall Grossman have argued in different contexts that Mary is a conduit between patriarchal powers; according to Grossman, her task is to reproduce "the paternal image, the place on which and in which the father writes his name and reproduces his style."¹² Even including Mary's exceptional role, maternal representation for Milton is persistently problematic, producing both in its presence and absence that tear within the text which Alice Jardine calls a "gynema."¹³ My concern in this article

8. John Aubrey, in *The Early Lives of Milton*, ed. Helen Darbishire (London, 1932), pp. 4–5.

9. *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (London, 1971), p. 100.

10. John Rumrich, *Milton Unbound: Controversy and Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 70–93.

11. Dayton Haskin contrasts the positive portrayal of Mary as patient interpreter in *Paradise Regained* with the omission of the mother (and Manoa's impatient "readings") in *Samson Agonistes*. See *Milton's Burden of Interpretation* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 118–46.

12. Margaret Homans, *Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth Century Women's Writing* (Chicago: 1986), pp. 156–60. Marshall Grossman, "Servile/Sterile/Style: Milton and the Question of Woman," in *Milton and the Idea of Woman*, ed. Julia Walker (Chicago, 1988), p. 155.

13. Alice A. Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), p. 25.

is to explore maternal figuration and disfiguration in *Lycidas*, suggesting that the maternal becomes a site of abjection in the elegy, a place where subjectivity is covered over or comes apart.

DROWNING THE SUBJECT

Most readers of *Lycidas* have seen it as a poem of conflict.¹⁴ Less clear has been the source of that conflict or its consequences. Critics since E. M. W. Tillyard, for example, have agreed that the poem is “autobiographical” without questioning what is understood by that term.¹⁵ The elegy has often been understood to mirror the poet in a moment of “becoming himself,” to borrow Jonathan Goldberg’s phrase; it is thus a portrait of the predictable ambiguities surrounding the choosing of poetry and chastity, perhaps more specifically the choosing of certain kinds of (elevated) poetry over others.¹⁶ A handful of critics, John Shawcross, William Kerrigan, and Sacks among them, have observed that the poet’s life might be understood as concealed and unconscious in *Lycidas*, as in other poems. Sacks, who argues that at the heart of every elegy is the nostalgia for the first loss (separation from the mother’s body), observes that in the months following Sarah Milton’s death this original loss must have been recapitulated for the poet. But for Sacks, as for other critics, Milton’s mother’s death remains extrinsic to the poem—it is not seen as relevant to the elegy’s representations of nature, water, or the “oceanic,” to the inadequacies of the Muses or Calliope, nor to the elegy’s fluctuating sense of what coheres and what comes apart. That is, none of these critics has considered the consequences of mourning a mother for the way the elegy works as a piece of language.

The maternal figure is everywhere in *Lycidas*, in the elegy’s images of moisture and nourishment, its maternal hills and valleys, in the omnipresent images of the sea, as well as in some of the poem’s most pressing questions: What does it mean to create? To nourish or protect? For the maternal landscape here is neither benign nor nurturing; “nature” in *Lycidas* is continually opening up dangerous gulfs or chasms; it is surreal rather than coherent. In the fiction of the elegy, women are subtly or explicitly threatening. One male shepherd mourns another in a landscape pieced together from Theocritus, Virgil, Spenser,

14. See, e.g., J. M. Evans, *The Road from Horton: Looking Backwards in Lycidas* (Victoria, 1983), p. 7; Donald Friedman, “*Lycidas*: The Swain’s Paideia,” *Milton Studies* 3 (1971): 3–34, reprinted in Patrides, ed., p. 281; and Balachandra Rajan, “*Lycidas*: The Shattering of the Leaves,” *Studies in Philology* 64 (1967): 51–64, reprinted in Patrides, ed., p. 267.

15. E. M. W. Tillyard’s influential reading of *Lycidas*, excerpted from his *Milton*, is reprinted in Patrides, ed., pp. 62–67.

16. Jonathan Goldberg, “Dating Milton,” in Patterson, ed. (n. 4 above), p. 26.

and others. Men write poetry and are vulnerable; women sing, give pleasure, and tear men to pieces. Lycidas and the swain have had two jobs: taking care of sheep and writing poetry, and neither occupation admits women. The young men's deliberate exclusion of women signals their higher calling.¹⁷ This is made evident when the swain, despairing that he too might be cut off in the prime of life, complains that he might as well choose earthly pleasures "as others use," such as sporting with Amaryllis in the shade or tangling with Neaera's hair (line 67). Making poetry in this world is contrasted with making love, with sinking down into pleasure represented both as a "shade" and as a "tangle" (lines 68–69). The metonymic reduction of Neaera to a tangle of hair is repeated throughout the elegy in what becomes a dismembering that foregrounds the elegy's most urgent question: What is the body, and how can it be kept intact despite the forces which threaten its annihilation?

Lycidas simultaneously emphasizes and estranges corporeality as part of the elegy's perplexed relationship to the idea of material presence. The poem begins with the swain's "forc't fingers" crushing unready berries. Here, the modifying "forc't" opens a series of questions—Who has forced them? Or is it the fingers that do the forcing? Throughout the elegy, the poem's landscapes and characters are metonymically associated with part or parts of the body. These descriptions are not merely decorative, but (like the initial "forc't") work to challenge the idea of agency. Who acts? Who is acted upon? The poem's catalog of body parts is curiously dehumanizing: the "opening eyelids of the morn," the "shepherd's ear," the "gory visage" of Orpheus, the "trembling ears" of the swain, the "pure eyes" of Jove, the "bellies" of the allegorical sheep, the "blind mouths" of the bad pastors, the "privy paw" of the wolf, the "quaint enaml'd eyes" of the flowers, the "bones" of Lycidas, the "drooping head" of the day star, the "forehead" of the morning sky, the "oozy locks" of the incarnate Lycidas, and the sandal-clad feet of "still morn" in the poem's conclusion. Some suggestive observations have been made about these body parts. John Leonard, for example, links the swain's "trembling ears" to the brutal punishment inflicted on Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton in 1637. Barbara A. Johnson notes the "brooding presence" of "physical nature" in the elegy, suggesting that in 1637 Milton may already have been moving toward a position of mortalism. Recently, Michael Lieb, noting in particular the extent to which Milton in 1645 revised the passage detailing Or-

17. Evans discusses this in relation to the young Milton's anxieties about chastity; he emphasizes, in this connection, Orpheus's fate as a consequence of homosexual love. See Evans, pp. 34–35.

pheus's dismemberment at the hands of the Maenads, sees the elegy participating in Milton's vision of anticipatory *sparagmos*, where dismemberment becomes a necessary condition of poetic expression.¹⁸

What still needs emphasis is the extent to which these motifs of dismemberment and bodily fragments challenge corporeal integrity in the elegy. Lycidas's body is not only missing, but missing in pieces. Perhaps out of anxiety, the swain is most drawn to those parts of the body whose function is to connect and absorb, such as ears, eyes, and mouth. Two of the poem's most striking images—the "blind mouths" of the shepherds castigated by Peter, and the sucking "eyes" of the flowers in the poem's third movement—synesthetically blur vision and orality. Both when the swain is incorporating nature or being incorporated by it, such consumption may be frightening as well as appealing. Nature in *Lycidas* is accused of overincorporating in swallowing Lycidas alive like a sucking mouth (when "the remorseless deep / Closed o're the head of your lov'd Lycidas"); but also of overdetachment, of turning a blind eye (lines 50–51). The landscape sympathetically mourns for Lycidas early in the poem:

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee Shepherd, thee the Woods, and desert Caves,
With wild Thyme and the gadding Vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes mourn.

(Lines 37–41)

But this will fade away ("Shall now no more be seen") once the eye of the poet is no longer there to take it in; the poet's eye not only records the landscape, but also fictively creates it. Dr. Johnson was right, in other words, to charge that there is "no nature" in *Lycidas*, for the elegy understands nature as artifice instead of experience; it is a "seen" as much as a "scene."¹⁹ The swain alternately demands that the natural world empty itself out in sympathy with the dead poet and that Lycidas be distinguished from the landscape which has subsumed him. Boundaries are both searched out and decried, and the poet must separate what threatens indistinction as well as connect what comes apart.

In the opening lines of *Lycidas*, the swain opposes the landscape through his vocation as a poet. His task is to pluck and to shatter; forced or not, his fingers crush the unready berries as they find them.

18. John Leonard, "Trembling Ears: The Historical Moment of *Lycidas*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21 (1991): 59–81; Barbara A. Johnson, "Fiction and Grief: The Pastoral Idiom of Milton's *Lycidas*," *Milton Quarterly* 18 (1984): 72; and Michael Lieb, *Milton and the Culture of Violence* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1994), pp. 46–58.

19. Patrides, ed. (n. 5 above), p. 56.

This unreadiness, so prevalent in Milton's prefaces and introductions, connects untimely utterance and untimely death: the poet must write out of season, premature and unripe, just as Lycidas's death "plucked" him unready from his existence. The self-conscious aggression of the elegist's entrance is important, for he continues to seek out and to discard alternative images for speaking or for writing. Within the logic of the poem, the tropes of nourishing/protecting/consuming are closely allied with mourning and with making poetry. Perhaps no better illustration of this can be found than in the urgent prospectus of the poem's opening stanza:

For *Lycidas* is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young *Lycidas*, and hath not left his peer:
 Who would not sing for *Lycidas*? he knew
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not Float upon his wat'ry bier
 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.
 (Lines 9–14)

Like other metonymic phrases in the elegy, this "melodious tear" is both a pure distillation and an ironic reduction, in this case for the poem itself, which ought to be (and cannot be) only this: singular, succinct, pure—a melodious tear. Two conditions are imaginatively presented at once in these lines: the unendurable condition of weltering "unwept" in a landscape described, in keeping with the poem's dichotomies of moist and sere, as terribly dry ("parching wind"), and the contrary condition of being wept for, sung for, mourned. Against an ocean of saltwater (the "wat'ry bier"), one drop of saltwater ("some melodious tear") is needed, and as yet is missing. What is striking about this passage is how completely it describes an absence, epitomized by the word "unwept." It describes the failure of mourning, what Johnson called "little grief," for the very fear that Lycidas might go unwept throws into question the sufficiency of this elegy, or of any. At this point (line 15) the swain, using the conventional machinery of the pastoral elegy, turns to the Muses to help him, and failure and insufficiency become explicitly connected with maternal withdrawal.

At line 15 the swain invokes the "Sisters of the sacred well," associating them with "denial vain and coy excuse" even as he implores them to "somewhat loudly sweep the string." These sisters are to be replaced by a new subject introduced at line 19: a "gentle muse" who turns to bid peace in the swain's anticipation of his own demise. In a passage about turning, which itself contains a surprising turn, the swain looks ahead to the muse who he hopes one day will give voice to the sorrow of his own death. Startlingly, this muse is presented as a "he":

So may some gentle Muse
 With lucky words favor my destin'd Urn,
And as he passes turn
 And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.
 (Lines 19–22; emphasis mine)

Almost nothing in the literature on *Lycidas* sufficiently explains why this muse is represented as male. Goldberg and Stephen Orgel, for example, remark that this is unusual, but not unique: the muse, they explain, is a poet (inspired by the muse) “and hence male in line 21; earlier examples of the trope are rare, but see Chapman’s use of it in his *Odyssey*, viii. 499–500.”²⁰ Goldberg and Orgel do not connect the maleness of this muse to the prior insufficiency of the “sisters” or question the gender of muses in this or in other of Milton’s poems. Nor do they remark that the pronoun ‘he’ acts out the very turn which it describes. Less frequently glossed than ‘he’ in most editions, the word ‘turn’ had a variety of meanings in the seventeenth century, as it does today; it could mean to rotate or spin, to change condition or course, to tour, to chime in. For the swain, the word is especially important; it describes the distillation of his own life into verse. Unlike Eve’s turn toward her own reflection, the muse’s turn is neither vain nor self-limiting; instead, his “turn” gives grief a voice (“and bid fair peace”). The movement in this passage from “silent sisters” to a gentle muse with “lucky words” marks a well-noted transition in *Lycidas* from silence to poetry, mourning to consolation, identification to individuation. Two things need to be emphasized about this transition. First, it is gendered; the swain (like Eve) must turn away from what Julia Kristeva calls the “semiotic” to prefer “manly grace.” But second, this transition is part of a cycle, not a progress; ultimately the swain will have to turn again.

Lycidas continually demonstrates the extent to which identity consists of a series of such turns and returns. Gender itself (so little remarked in the poem) is a “turn” more than a fixed position, as can be seen in a second image presented early in the poem. Here the swain looks back with nostalgia on his shared past with Lycidas, invoking a traditional image in which nature is explicitly and almost simplistically maternal: “For we were nurst upon the self-same hill / Fed the same flock by fountain, shade and rill.” One critic has observed that male friendship in this vision is mediated by the mother: “A maternal nature established their brotherhood.”²¹ It is true that the “self-same hill” is suggestively associated with maternal succoring: it is here that Lycidas

20. Jonathan Goldberg and Stephen Orgel, eds., *John Milton* (Oxford, 1990), p. 754, line 19.

21. Janet Halley, “Female Autonomy in Milton’s Sexual Politics,” in Walker, ed., p. 240.

and the swain “batten” their flocks with “the fresh dews of night,” learning from its shades and moistures how they themselves can nourish and create. The hill, like the mother’s breast, is the first site of fulfillment, the maternal gift. But for the swain this “self-same hill” is also intended to represent Cambridge, a curious kind of mother (*alma mater*) in which men traditionally nourished only men. These two lines of poetry reiterate the elision for Milton between these two nourishments, the maternal and the academic; in the turn from the word ‘nurst’ to the word ‘fed’ the swain shifts both the subject and source of nourishment to suggest that the “fed” have now become the “feeders.” The shepherds at once identify with their own nursing and revise it as the swain suppresses the mother in his nostalgic idyll and then appropriates her role. The subject may turn longingly back toward his mother, but he must turn his back on her as well to adopt his new vocations: feeding, bidding peace, and writing poetry.

This appropriation and revision of the maternal subject recurs throughout *Lycidas*, sometimes with disturbing effect. In the third movement of the poem the swain exhorts the valleys (once again through the mediation of a male muse, this time “Sicilian”) to throw their flowers onto the hearse of the still-missing *Lycidas*:

And call the Vales, and bid them hither cast
 Their Bells and Flowrets of a thousand hues.
 Ye valleys low where the mild whispers use
 Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks,
 On whose fresh lap the swart Star sparely looks,
 Throw hither all your quaint enamell’d eyes,
 That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
 And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.

(Lines 134–41)

Unlike the hill, which nurses and batters, the valley is faintly grotesque in its animated synesthesia. With its “fresh lap,” “gushing brooks,” “shades,” and “wanton winds,” the valley recalls and renders surreal the maternal lap. Everything runs together here: the flowers are asked to throw their “quaint enamell’d eyes” onto *Lycidas*’s hearse, eyes that have sucked up the valley’s moisture (“honied showers”) in order to become more vivid (“purple”). We are asked to anthropomorphize this landscape, granting it laps and eyes in a passage which, as various critics have noticed, is working to defer acknowledgment that *Lycidas*’s hearse does not contain any body, not even in parts.²² The “fresh

22. Cleanth Brooks and John Edward Hardy, “Essays in Analysis: *Lycidas*,” in *Poems of John Milton* (New York, 1951), reprinted in Patrides, ed., p. 153; Northrop Frye, “Literature and Context: Milton’s *Lycidas*,” in *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York, 1963), reprinted in Patrides, ed., p. 208.

lap” of the valleys is yet another shade or tangle in the poem, a site of enervating power. In their disturbing fecundity, the valleys connect poetry to death; as Sacks observes, flowers in elegies are classically associated with poetic offerings.²³ The exhorted valley can be seen as a version of the lap Adam will long for after the fall; it is a place of “battning,” of sucking up moisture in order to proffer nourishment. But it is also a “shade” or tangle, an ominous lap of pleasure. Mary Nyquist has described the recurring images of “the female lap, and its treacherous capacity to unman and disarm its victim” in Milton’s poetry:

Like the Latin *gremio*, the Anglo-Saxon “lap” can refer either to the bosom or to the area between the waist and the knees on which, most commonly, a child is held. Yet in Renaissance England, the substantive “lap” may have had a more explicitly sexual connotation than we now suppose, one of the obsolete meanings of “lap” cited by the *O.E.D.* being the female pudendum. This is, presumably, one reason that Dalilah’s lap can be described as “lascivious.” The very *topos* we have been discussing, however, turns the lap into what is also metaphorically a lap of pleasure or lap of luxury—a phrase that is, interestingly, still current. Even when not literalized by a female body, this lap of luxury is always associated with women and thus, from a masculinist perspective, with effeminacy.²⁴

Nyquist adds that while “all laps inviting retreat or associated with rest are undoubtedly enervating female laps . . . nature, too, has a lap, a fertile lap that in its capacity to bring forth flowers and vegetation would seem to be both innocent and blessed.” But while “nature’s bounteous lap is in Renaissance texts sharply differentiated from the lap of the temptress . . . because, like Luxuria, nature or the *hortus conclusus* is symbolically female, there is always, inevitably, the possibility of slippage.”²⁵ In *Lycidas*, this “bounteous lap” depletes even as it gives forth. The flowers the valley nourishes, however vibrant—“the white pink, and the pansie freakt with jet / The glowing violet / The musk rose and the well-attir’d woodbine / With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head”—are flowers of mourning; and this “fresh lap” is a valley of death (lines 144–46). The swain must turn away from it (“call . . . hither”) as the elegy does. Appropriately, the catalog of flowers marks the last of the swain’s material consolations. Sacks observes that “the flowers, like the poetic language to which they are so often compared, serve not only as offerings or gestures for respite but also as demarcations separating the living from the dead.”²⁶ In the last part of the

23. Sacks (n. 3 above), p. 19.

24. Mary Nyquist, “Textual Overlapping and Dalilah’s Harlot-Lap,” in *Literary Theory/ Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore, 1986), p. 353.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Sacks, p. 19.

elegy, the swain turns from material loss to imagine Lycidas's translation to spirit. This is the poem's final and most important turn, and once again the maternal is part of what is repudiated. Like the sea, the mother is at once a source of life and a "remorseless deep," the end as well as the origin of subjecthood.

FOREIGN PARTS

In his 1645 epigraph to *Lycidas*, Milton describes the elegy as a "monody" in which "the Author bewails a Learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas." But as critics have long observed, the poem is in no clear sense sung by a single voice. A choir of competing voices enters the elegy long before the notorious eight-line coda, spoken by an unidentified observer who stands apart from the grieving swain and comments on his performance. Phoebus Apollo quiets the rebellious swain at line 75 ("But not the praise, Phoebus repli'd"), reminding him that real glory is to be found in heaven, not on earth. At line 112, Saint Peter sternly castigates the clergy, and one critic believes that the vision offered at line 163 and following ("Look homeward Angel now and melt with ruth") may be spoken by Michael.²⁷ In each instance these voices drown out the absent or silent voices which the swain implores to overtake his song. The poem's silent choir of Nymphs and Muses is at once persistently implored and suggestively silent. If the nymphs "had been in their customary places when they were called, they would surely have tried to save Lycidas."²⁸ But they were absent, and this absence links them to Calliope for the swain:

Ay me, I fondly dream!
 Had ye been there—for what could that have done?
 What could the Muse herself that *Orpheus* bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son
 Whom Universal nature did lament,
 When by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift *Hebrus* to the *Lesbian* shore.

(Lines 56–63)

Readers generally concur that the subject of this passage is Orpheus (the "enchanting son") rather than Calliope, his absent mother. Milton's revision of this passage in 1645 deletes Calliope's name, strengthening and universalizing the connection between mother, Muse, and

27. Stanley Fish, "Lycidas: A Poem Finally Anonymous," *Glyph: Johns Hopkins Textual Studies* 8, reprinted in Patrides, ed. (n. 5 above), pp. 329, 333–36.

28. Brooks and Hardy, p. 145.

absence. In fact, the periphrasis which labels her (“the Muse herself that *Orpheus* bore”) confounds subject and object: the Muse that bore Orpheus? the Muse that Orpheus bore? Who is the “mother” here, muse or poet? The swain’s anger and dependence on the absent Muse have been noted by William Kerrigan: “Orpheus was the Antaeus of poetry. His strength descended from his mother, and when caught in the alien, unmaternal element of the ‘hideous roar,’ he died. Milton’s repeated ‘the Muse herself’ locates the horror of the myth, not primarily in the dismemberment of Orpheus, but in the impotence of the ‘thankless’ Calliope, Muse of epic, the matriarch of his ambition who demands the sacrifice of erotic pleasure but cannot prevent death.”²⁹ Kerrigan argues that Milton’s lifelong fascination with Orpheus is an attempt “to harmonize the conflictual interplay of mother, love, and poetry,” for the “overwhelming fact about the Thracian bard, so obvious that we have tended not to see, in that his mother is his Muse.”³⁰ As Sacks puts it, “The poet has to mourn the loss of *Lycidas* and his own loss of belief in the Muses’ protection, in particular that of Calliope, the mother of Orpheus. This loss is made especially catastrophic by being cast in terms that recapitulate Orpheus’s violent death.”³¹ Sacks and Kerrigan agree to the extent that each sees the “catastrophe” of loss taking its toll on a coherent personality—a swain who is understood to represent Milton as a young poet, and one who identifies with Orpheus throughout the rhythmic undulations of the verse paragraph.

But the coherence that critics accord to Milton’s Calliope passage, as I would prefer to call it, is achieved by smoothing out its syntax, interpreting the passage in light of the consequences it has for Orpheus. Sacks, for example, says “we are thus brought to that crux in mourning: a recapitulated loss of the mother, together with a scenario of castration.”³² My sense is that Milton’s passage makes this “crux” more subtle and less coherent than critics have suggested. The Calliope passage reenacts the impossibility of stable subjecthood. In a brilliant series of turns and elisions, the passage demonstrates how identity is exploded by loss. It begins meditatively; the swain seems almost sorry for scolding the nymphs, recalling that their absence was hardly the problem. “Had ye been there, for what could that have done?” Even if they had been present, the nymphs could not have intervened against the force of that “remorseless deep,” the sucking mouth of the sea. To prove his point, the swain contrasts these lesser nymphs with the most

29. Kerrigan (n. 5 above), p. 179.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

31. Sacks, p. 103.

32. *Ibid.*

powerful figure he can evoke—Calliope, mother of Orpheus: “What could the Muse herself that *Orpheus* bore, / The Muse herself, for her enchanting son[. . . ?]” (lines 58–59). Not even Calliope could intervene when real trouble struck—not even to save her own “enchanting son.” In the swain’s lament, Calliope’s insufficiency becomes complicit in the horrifying murder of Orpheus at the hands of the “rout”—a murder made doubly terrible by the brutal decapitation and dismemberment of the poet: “His gory visage down the stream was sent, / Down the swift *Hebrus* to the *Lesbian* shore” (lines 62–63). Orpheus’s “gory visage” is the violent corollary of Lycidas’s idealized and absent body; it is the ultimate abject in this poem, the face which cannot be faced. Perhaps to defer or to evade it, this passage changes subject with Hebrus’s swiftness. At lines 56 and 57 the swain is still reproaching the neglectful nymphs. Lines 58 and 59 introduce the “Muse herself” twice as subject, but by line 60, the unnamed Calliope has been swallowed by the lament of “universal nature,” whose sorrow counters the inefficacy of those missing, playful nymphs. By line 61, “universal nature” has been supplanted by the Maenads, their “hideous roar” obliterating nature’s lament. At lines 62–63, the passage comes to a figurative head as the Maenads send the gory, decapitated head of Orpheus down to the Lesbian shore. In effect this passage reproduces its central image—dismemberment—tearing apart subject after subject and dispensing with each in turn. The “fond dream” of the swain (a dream of tenderness, identification, and untreacherous mourning) must be relinquished. As in Eve’s description of the scene at the pool in book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, the maternal here is the site at which identity comes apart.

Calliope’s failure—a failure to which Milton returns in greater detail many years later in book 7 of *Paradise Lost*—is complicit in the Maenads’ dismembering violence. Calliope, an “emptie dream,” has withdrawn from her son, exposing him, as the Bard laments, to that “wild Rout that tore the *Thracian* bard . . . till the savage clamor drown’d / Both Harp and Voice; nor could the Muse defend / Her son” (*Paradise Lost* 7:34, 36–38). Here, as in *Lycidas*, the brutal violence done to Orpheus is equated with a drowning—not, as in King’s case, a literal drowning, but with a savage clamor which drowns out Orpheus’s music, “Harp and Voice.” It is this death, the death of music, which the elegy finds most unbearable. We have seen already the connections between poetry and death in the poem’s seductive valleys with their profusion of mourning flowers. This connection is prefigured in the swain’s vision of his own rebirth into language, a vision which meets with instantaneous punishment and death:

But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind *Fury* with th'abhorred shears,
 And slits the thin-spun life.

(Lines 73–76)

Just as the poet is about to “blaze,” he is destroyed by a creature which conflates attributes of the Fates and Furies in one. (The Furies in *The Eumenides* of Aeschylus, we might recall, serve to revenge the unpunished crime of matricide.) This terrible Fury, following so closely on the insufficient Calliope, conflates poetry, motherhood, and annihilation. For it is that “blaze,” homonymic with the *blason* of epideictic verse, which transmutes the poet’s sentence to death. Death is the sine qua non of elegy writing; death, then, produces poetry, but *Lycidas* seems to fear that poetry also produces death. The paradox of *Lycidas*—its most troubling discontinuity—is that in the poem’s metonymic line of voices, each poet must be silenced for there to be a poem at all. For *Lycidas* this means drowning in order to become part of the heavenly choir, entertained by the angels but not necessarily singing with them. For the swain it means finishing his song and proceeding to fresh pastures only to be labeled “uncouth” by the poet who rises up (presumably) beside and above him. Rather than the gentle muse ready to “blaze” his life into fame, to give his voice meaning, this final voice remains dispassionate. This final muse produces a turn which does not offset the terrors of the “urn,” but instead reproduces it.

A good deal of work on mourning and elegy, including work done by feminist critics, has located consolation with the transumption of paternal authority at the elegy’s end. Recently Juliana Schiesari has argued that the cultural work of mourning privileges and confirms the masculine subject, turning loss into a vehicle for self-display. For masculine writers from Petrarch to Freud, mourning is granted legitimacy insofar as “the loss can be idealized into the enabling condition of [the male subject’s] individualistic and otherwise inexplicable genius.”³³ Schiesari argues that for the masculine subject loss enables transcendence, creativity, and poetry, a trajectory not available for the (melancholic) feminine subject. The paradigm which Schiesari identifies is part of the manifest content of *Lycidas*. It is one of the poem’s deepest wishes that mourning and loss can be exchanged for poetry and vision so that the poet can be exempted and valorized by his special status. But finally, mourning does not secure identity for any

33. Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992), p. 93.

of the subjects produced in this poem. Mourning explodes identity rather than shoring it up. This is to say that loss is abjected in *Lycidas* rather than introjected; even in the elegy's conclusion, transcendence is achieved only as the subject is split. Moreover, *Lycidas* demonstrates that the subject is fragmented not only by mourning but also by consolation. What Stanley Fish has called the swain's "effort to resist assimilation" culminates in defeat, as the elegist is finally swallowed by the "blind mouth" of the poem.

ONE HALF OF A GOD

If you reckon correctly, there is shipwreck everywhere.
(Latin epigraph to *Justa Edouardo King*)

In 1632, soon after Milton returned to Hammersmith and, later, Horton ("his father's house") to begin his serious and isolated study of classical literature, he wrote a Latin poem to his father exhorting him to support his son's choice to become a poet. "Do not despise divine poetry, the poet's creation," that son admonishes in "Ad Patrem." Poetry is the "highest strain" of the human voice:

Denique quid vocis modulamen inane iuvabit
Verborum sensusque vacans, numerique loquacis?
Silvestres decet iste chorus, non Orphea, cantus,
Qui tenuit fluvios, et quercubus addidit aures,
Carmine, non cithara, simulacraque functa canendo.
Compulit in lacrymas; habet has a carmine laudes.

(Lines 50–55)

[And now, to sum it all up, what pleasure is there in the inane modulation of the voice without words and meaning and rhythmic eloquence? Such music is good enough for the forest choirs, but not for Orpheus, who by his song—not by his cithara—restrained rivers and gave ears to the oaks, and by his singing stirred the ghosts of the dead to tears. That fame he owes to his song.]

(Hughes, p. 84)

Milton appeals to his father's own vocation as a musician to temper his disregard for poetry:

Nec tu perge, precor, sacras contemnere Musas,
Nec vanas inopesque puta, quarum ipse peritus
Munere mille sonos numeros componis ad aptos,
Millibus et vocem modulis variare canoram
Doctus, Arionii merito sis nominis haeres.
Nunc tibi quid mirum si me genuisse pretam
Contigerit, caro si tam prope sanguine iuncti

Cognatas artes studiumque affine sequamur?
 Ipse volens Phoebus se dispertire duobus,
 Altera dona mihi, dedit altera dona parenti,
 Dividuumque Deum genitorque puerque tenemus.
 (Lines 56–66)

[Do not persist, I beg of you, in your contempt for the sacred Muses, and do not think them futile and worthless whose gift has taught you to harmonize a thousand sounds to fit numbers, and given you skill to vary the voice of the singer with countless modulations, so that you are deservedly the heir of Arion's name. Now, since it is my lot to have been born a poet, why does it seem strange to you that we, who are so closely united by blood, should pursue sister arts and kindred interests? Phoebus himself, wishing to part himself between us two, gave some gifts to me and others to my father; and, father and son, we share the possession of the divided god.]

(Hughes, p. 84)

This remarkable passage rewrites family romance, imagining Phoebus as the mediating godhead (“wishing to share”) who distributes “one lot” of gifts to the father, the other to the son. Milton begins by defending himself through identification: I am a poet just as you are a musician; do not despise me, then, for choosing poetry. But as the passage continues, his identification with his father breaks down, culminating in splitting and division. Phoebus's mediation rends the godhead in two. To be distinct from his father is finally to be partial, halved.

This is the same Phoebus who speaks to “quiet” the agitated swain at line 76 and following in *Lycidas*, assuring him that what finally matters is what is witnessed by “all-judging Jove / As he pronounces lastly on each deed.” Earthly fame may be transient and vulnerable, but heavenly fame is secure; there fame “lives and spreads aloft,” transcendent, erect. The “pure eyes” of Jove will rescue the swain from the “blind Fury” because he is a poet. In “Ad Patrem,” Milton thanks his father for a similar rescue:

Officium cari taceo commune parentis;
 Me poscent maiora. Tuo, pater optime, sumptu
 Cum mihi Romuleae patuit facundia linguae,
 Et Latii veneres, et quae Iovis ora decebant
 Grandia magniloquis elata vocabulo Graiis,
 Addere suasisti quos iactat Gallia flores,
 Et quam degeneri novus Italus ore loquelam
 Fundit, Barbaricos testatis voce tumultus
 Quaeque Palaestinus loquitur mysteria vates.
 (Lines 77–85)

[I will not mention a father's usual generousities, for greater things have a claim on me. It was at your expense, dear father, after I had got the mastery of the language of Romulus and the graces of Latin, and acquired the lofty speech of the magniloquent Greeks, which is fit for the lips of Jove himself, that you persuaded me to add the flowers which France boasts and the eloquence which the modern Italian pours from his degenerate mouth—testifying by his account to the barbarian's wars—and the mysteries uttered by the Palestinian prophet.]

(Hughes, p. 85)

His father, in giving him languages, has equipped him to know “everything that exists.” In a passage which eroticizes science (knowledge) in an unusually Baconian fashion, Milton continues:

Denique quicquid habet caelum, subiectaque caelo
 Terra parens, terraeque et caelo interfluis aer,
 Quicquid et unda tegit, pontique agitabile marmor,
 Per te nosse licet, per te, si nosse libebit.
 Dimotaque venit spectanda scientia nube,
 Nudaque conspicuos inclinat ad oscula vultus,
 Ni fuguisse velim, ni sit libasse molestum.

[And finally, all that heaven contains and earth, our mother, beneath the sky, and the air that flows between earth and heaven, and whatever the waters and the trembling surface of the sea cover, your kindness gives me the means to know, if I care for the knowledge that your kindness offers. From the opening cloud science appears and, naked, she bends her face to my kisses, unless I should wish to run away or unless I should find her engagement irksome.]

(Hughes, pp. 84–85)

The father's gift of knowledge has equipped his son to search and to know—even what is hidden beneath “the trembling surface of the sea cover.” But the son recognizes that this gift may also be a punishment, for absolute knowledge may be perilous. Once again his relationship with his father is mediated, this time by the naked and seductive figure of *Scientia*, whose gifts the poet senses may be “irksome.” The image of naked and bright Science bending for his kisses anticipates the figure of Eve beside the pool. Which is the real face, and which the reflection? Like the division of Milton imagines between father and son (“one half a god”), the image entangles subject and object. Where—in vocation, habitus, and name—does the father leave off and the son begin? Where can the poet find his “turn”?

“Ad Patrem” is generally held to have been written between 1632 and 1636. It probably belongs to the same period as *Lycidas*, and it is useful to read the two poems together in order to see the associations

for Milton between ambition, filial defiance, and loss, as well as the repeated erasure and displacement of a threatening maternal presence. Countering the silent choir of women in *Lycidas*, the elegy offers a series of father figures who listen and/or speak: Damoetas, the tutor who overhears; Saint Peter, Triton, Neptune, Hippotades, Michael, and finally, the Son, each of whom consoles either by speech or by example. It could be argued that these figures represent the poem's "higher strain" and that the swain's assimilation into their choir is a rescue from the more dangerous assimilation threatened by the mother and her agents. As the maternal threatens in *Lycidas* by its capacity to subsume, the elegy's consolation might be interpreted as an "ascent" from the maternal body, a transcendent individuation.

However, I want to suggest that *Lycidas*'s conclusion represents yet another turn, a final connection between poetry and death. The escape from materiality, even for the rescued Lycidas, is simultaneously the end of poetry. Freed from his body, Lycidas is purified, his tears wiped away forever by the attendant angels. But the poem tells us that in Heaven he hears the "unexpressive nuptial song," that he is entertained by the singing society of saints, not that he joins in with their singing. 'Unexpressive' is not a word Milton uses very often; in this case it is experienced as another aporia, a reminder of the music the poem shuts out.³⁴ Lycidas escapes to the realm of the unexpressive, to the place of pure listening, rather than pure singing: "the genius of the shore," he will now guide other poets, but his voice, like his tears, has been forever wiped away.

In the past, the swain and Lycidas shared vocation and avocation; in grief, the swain saw Lycidas as a mirror for his own mortality. In Lycidas's ascent the swain tries to construct a fiction of separation. At line 165, consoled by the choir of voices (Hippotades, Camus, Saint Peter, Michael), the swain suspends the shepherds from their task of weeping:

Weep no more, woeful Shepherds weep no more,
For *Lycidas* your sorrow is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the wat'ry floor,
So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled Ore,
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So *Lycidas*, sunk low, but mounted high . . .
(Lines 165–72)

34. J. B. Leishman points out the rarity of the word 'unexpressive', which he claims was used only two other times in English poetry of this period—once by Milton in the "Nativity Ode," and once by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*. See *Milton's Minor Poems* (Pittsburgh, 1969), p. 341.

Critics have objected that these lines feel “entirely new,” that they represent a radical “disjunction” with the preceding poem.³⁵ Traditionally, this change in tone has been explained theologically: it is “a leap from nature to revelation” or “a dramatization of the infusion of grace.”³⁶ I argue that these lines mark another paradigmatic turn in the elegy. Twice in the final stanzas, “rising” ensures separation from the entangling landscape which has proven so treacherous. Lycidas’s ascent to “the blest Kingdoms,” where he will join “all the Saints above / In solemn troops, and sweet Societies” is a mythic replacement of the body, as well as a cleansing and purification:

So *Lycidas*, sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walk’d the waves,
Where other groves and other streams along,
With *Nectar* pure his oozy Locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial Song,
In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love.

(Lines 172–77)

But where precisely are we to locate Lycidas as a transcendent subject? We know that spirits are not bound by the same laws as mortals; while Lycidas has not left his body behind, he may have dissolved its “exclusive barrs” (*Paradise Lost* 8:625). What is unsettling is that his transcendence also positions him in two places at once: in the “blest Kingdoms” but also on the shore as its “genius,” able to watch “all that wander in that perilous flood”—an eternally vigilant replacement for those absent nymphs. Lycidas has escaped from the landscape which has been so recklessly fluid. But this escape has its cost: at the shore, in the “blest Kingdoms,” he is divided, “one half of a god.”

Lycidas’s divided “rise” is paralleled by another division in the final eight lines of the poem which so puzzlingly step back from the elegy, supplying an unexpected and anonymous commentary on what has taken place:

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th’Oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with Sandals gray;
He touch’t the tender stops of various Quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the Sun has stretch’t out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the Western bay;
At last he rose, and twitch’t his Mantle blue:
Tomorrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.

(Lines 186–93)

35. Fish (n. 26 above), p. 336.

36. See, e.g., the reading offered by Meyer H. Abrams, “Five Types of *Lycidas*,” reprinted in Patrides, ed. (n. 5 above), p. 228; or Friedman (n. 13 above), p. 295.

Against a diurnal backdrop of sinking and falling (the sunset, associated again with death), the swain's rise has often been understood to signify a promotion to a new kind of utterance. But in fact, it would be thirty years before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, years marked for Milton more by poetic silence than by new heights. The concluding coda contains rather than aggrandizes the swain, reducing him to a type and delimiting his poem as generic. This voice is not the "turn" of the "gentle Muse" longed for in the swain's opening lines; instead, it is a voice of judgment and misprision.

It would be reductive to see the consolation of *Lycidas* as the triumph of the symbolic over the imaginary, although I think this is how the elegy is often read. Or if the "Pastures new" at the elegy's close really signify the work of epic, the swain will have to turn again—arguably, back to reclaim those "irksome" maternal Muses. For despite his explicit identification with fathers in his poetry, Milton makes strong and recurrent associations between creativity and the maternal, associations which would be more fully elaborated later in the figure of Urania in *Paradise Lost*.³⁷ Perhaps the maternal must be so strongly suppressed in *Lycidas* because its loss loomed so near. Whatever else it is, then, *Lycidas* may at least in part be an "Ad Matrem," an elegy for Sarah Milton, a woman whom history and biography have reduced to a watery gleam. The turn from his mother's absence toward "foreign parts" exemplifies the turn away that is necessarily a return, the effort to leave loss behind which reduplicates loss wherever it looks. For the mother's death—the "yet once more" and "once more" of the elegy's opening line—is always both a rehearsal and a repetition.

37. We know from a curious anecdote supplied by John Phillips in 1686 that after Milton went blind he associated poetry with lactation: "And hee waking early (as is the use of temperate men) had commonly a good Stock of Verses ready against his Amanuensis came; which if it happened to bee later than ordinary, hee woud complain, Saying *hee wanted to bee milkd.*" See Darbishire, ed. (n. 8 above), p. 33.