

J·D·H·L·S

Journal of D. H. Lawrence Studies

Citation details

Title: **“MESSAGE OVER THE WINDOW GLASS”: THE WINDOW MOTIF IN D. H. LAWRENCE’S EARLY POETRY**

Author: TINA FERRIS

Source: *Journal of the D. H. Lawrence Society*, vol. 6.3 (2023)

Pages: 31–60

Copyright: individual author and the D. H. Lawrence Society.
Quotations from Lawrence’s works © The Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli. Extracts and poems from various publications by D. H. Lawrence reprinted by permission of Pollinger Limited (www.pollingerltd.com) on behalf of the Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli.

**A Publication of the
D. H. Lawrence Society of Great Britain**

**“MESSAGE OVER THE WINDOW GLASS”:
THE WINDOW MOTIF IN D. H. LAWRENCE’S
EARLY POETRY**

TINA FERRIS

A forlorn sense of alienation and detachment is engendered by staring through glass. Windows encourage self-contemplation or daydreaming. They provide opportunities to reminisce about the past or offer glimpses of the future by artistically framing what is most desired or dreaded. John Worthen remarks that young D. H. Lawrence had adopted the idea “of the artist’s supposed capacity for staying outside events, ‘uncaught by life’, watching but uninvolved” and that his aloofness probably occurred “for the very reason that he *was* so sharply observing”.¹ This constant scrutiny manifests itself through abundant window symbolism featured in over two dozen of Lawrence’s early poems, up to and including some written for *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1917). As Lawrence hesitated at the crossroads of his personal and professional life, he pondered which path to take, which window afforded his best view.

Young Lawrence “At the Window”

Lawrence’s ‘At the Window’ (c. autumn 1909) is selected as a core text that depicts a lone young man, insightful and creatively ambitious, standing at the window, seeking a new direction: a theme that Lawrence develops through other window poems, thereby creating a sequence (à la Holly Laird).² Three autobiographical poems serve as backdrops: ‘From a College Window’ (pre-1908), ‘After School’ (February 1909) and ‘Dream-Confused’ (c. November 1909). These poems were written during and shortly after Lawrence attended Nottingham University College (1906 to 1908), acquiring a teacher’s degree. He “entered College in a mood of

wistful anticipation. He felt it might be a step into a fuller life ... contact with things that were vitally alive. In this he was acutely disappointed".³

'From a College Window' gives us a glimpse of privileged scholars safely ensconced within the ivory tower of the college library. The student gazing out of the window is admiring the campus view of sleepy lime-trees and how "the lawn, in soft blue shade" keeps the "daisy-froth quiescent, softly in thrall" (*IPoems* 7). Lawns at this time were generally associated with upper-class estates. The repetition of "soft" highlights the manicured life of the gentry who could afford to sport bookish minds. Yet the poet is also aware of the busy work-a-day world of people passing along the pavement with "shadows at their feet / Going left and right", the "Remote ... beggar's cough" and the exchange of coins, which is nevertheless within hearing range. The window's aspect suggests that education will spare us that harsh fate, but the hint of reality instead bursts the bubble and introduces an undeniable self-doubt. The student may claim to "sit absolved, assured I am better off / Beyond a world I never want to join", but do we believe him? Who is providing the assurance? Questions linger. Can education provide the security of a liveable wage, and are the costs worth it? Is the separation from his working-class roots an improvement, and is the poet really guilt-free having noticed the beggar?

Attention is drawn to the outer world rather than to academic studies that keep students quietly enslaved like the "daisy-froth ... in thrall" (*IPoems* 7). Daisy, meaning "day's eye", is a type of sunflower; and the "blue shade" prevents flowers from fully blooming. Likewise blue-blooded students require challenges of worldly experience to thrive. Lawrence, although deeply curious, "set no store on knowledge for its own sake".⁴ Worthen cites an early version of the poem that depicts students scoffing "like gods in the window seat / Uplifted in wisdom, half amused by the play in the street" and concludes, "Lawrence had learned enough about himself by 1907 to know that he was no 'god' looking down, however tempting the pose was. He was going to have to earn his living: he

could not be cut off from the world”.⁵ The safety of the library was mere illusion bolstered by the idyllic and contrived view of the campus lawn.

In ‘After School’ a teacher trudges homeward among “a confusion of mud, and sand, and mortar” from “a little half-built street” (*3Poems* 1410), after a long day at the Davidson Road Boys’ School in Croydon. Lawrence was said frequently to begrudge “having to spend the freshest hours of the day in school when he wanted to be doing the work he was urged to do from within”.⁶ Hence he feels smothered and “despoiled by school, a mere blossomless husk—” (1410), discarded like part of the messy construction site. Around the same time, Lawrence describes having “to cross a piece of wild waste land on my way to school – land where the grass is wild and trodden into mud – where the brick-layer’s hammer chinks, chinks the funeral bell of my piece of waste land” (*IL* 121). The poem and letter predate the battlefields of World War I (1914–18) and T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922), but both writers were influenced by the chivalric lore of Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*.⁷ Laird notes, “highly romantic effects of language – often evoking Arthurian legend – can be found in many of Lawrence’s manuscript poems, but were mostly edited out when published”.⁸ (‘Snap-Dragon’ [mid-1911] contains a remaining example by using “My Grail” in a sexual context: “My heart’s red measure in her cup” that opens new “windows of discovery” while covering over “windows of my mind” [*1Poems* 85–6]). The Grail becomes a portal, a way out of the mental wasteland. Likewise, ‘After School’ is also suggestive of Arthurian quests for the Holy Grail to restore the health of the wounded Fisher King and thereby revive the barren landscape. Lawrence’s schoolteacher, like Eliot’s “Son of man” who can speak only via a “heap of broken images”,⁹ was picking a way across the modern frontier of an expanding city. Lawrence would later write of his “terror of this new world which is coming into being on top of us” and is always felt at “the edge of a town, where the land is being broken under the advance of houses” (*TI* 223). The opening urban scene is set in opposition to the rest of the poem that calls upon

Arcadian domestic and star imagery framed within a glowing window, an idyllic life just out of reach. Additionally, Lawrence was likely making a bible reference: "He poureth contempt on princes and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way" (Psalms cvii. 40). "[M]y piece of waste land" implies that Lawrence felt kinship to Robert Browning's Childe Roland in seeing himself as a noble wanderer.¹⁰

Amid this wilderness, the teacher looks downward and sees a reflection that "like mellow moonlight gleamed on the water / In the deep cart-ruts" (*3Poems* 1411), jolting him out of the rut of his routine. The light-source is a lamp in a window that's lit "as a moon in mist", and he watches the blissful couple inside. The man "Looked up, and the words moved like a smile from his lips". The woman

Leans over to read his work, and her dark head dips
 Deep into the heart of the light, the centre of a star,
 ...
 She turned and kissed him, and his eyes were the soul of the
 star,
 ...
 And I, in immeasurable night, looked on from afar,—afar!

The teacher occupies the black void of outer space, a distant voyeur of the procreative binary stars at the heart of the cosmos. If 'From a College Window' represented Lawrence's fears, 'After School' thus epitomises his desires as observed from outside the window. Although Lawrence was juggling relationships with several women by 1910, including his childhood sweetheart Jessie Chambers and fellow teacher Louie Burrows, what he wanted most was to have a small home with a loving wife who supported his writing. When Lawrence witnessed a couple "laughing in the firelight" on one of his walks down the road, he told Louie, "I do wish we also had a hearth" (*IL* 326). He would lament: "What a penniless set we are. Oh, that house in the country! Where on the map of Fate is it?" (*IL*

305). And where was his path out of the wasteland? Where was his Grail cup?

‘Dream-Confused’ (as ‘Wakened’ in ‘Night Songs’) attempts to provide some relief when moonlight steals into the poet’s bedroom. It opens:

Is that the moon
At the window so big and red?
No-one in the room?
No-one near the bed? (*IPoems* 8).

Amit Chaudhuri lists ‘Dream-Confused’ as one of several moon poems, where his overly harsh criticism finds the images “are reduced to decorative status ... not so much poetic evocations of the moon, but a regular gallery or shopwindow of moons which we pass and stare at. Lawrence, as collage-maker, shopping for material and for pictures”.¹¹ Chaudhuri makes some interesting points about metaphor and the poetic techniques of collage versus superimposition, but the red moon in ‘Dream-Confused’ plays a central role in the poem’s plot and sexually charged imagery. The stylistic simplicity of the first two stanzas contrasts with the “confus[ion]” generated in the remainder of the poem. The poet conjures a lunar mistress who eagerly flutters down her own ruddy light-beam toward him: “Listen, her shoon / Palpitating down the stair! / —Or a beat of wings at the window there?”. It might be tempting for modernists, like poet/scholar Tom Paulin,¹² also to criticise the archaic use of “shoon” over “shoes”; but deeper consideration reveals the silliness of a moon wearing shoes, while “her shoon”, sounding like “shine” or “shone” and rhyming with “moon”, provides a quaint and intentional fairytale flair. Focus is on the music of words as well as the image. We are told to “Listen” to the heart-like palpitation and beating of feet and wings. A lunar angel “from far abysses” kisses him “warm on the mouth”. Confusion sets in upon waking as the Cinderella-moon goes all shy and retreats, hiding behind a veil of clouds: “And now the moon / Goes clouded,

having misunderstood". Mixed signals muddle the dream: a passionate "red" moon shines with purity. The encounter fades and the prince is left slipperless!

Holly Laird argues that "the poet's hallucinatory dialogue" of this period touches "on a more profound problem, as Lawrence's effort to define himself in relation to 'thou' merges with the more difficult task of confronting nothingness".¹³ She adds that each personal encounter is "more raw, less explained, more groping in verse than it could ever be in Lawrence's novels. What is not told in the spaces within and between poems enlarges the emptiness that confronts the poet".¹⁴ When the moon departs, darkness pours back into the room; and the poet is alone in his bed again: "slowly back in my blood / My kisses are sinking, soon / To be under the flood" (*1 Poems* 9). It is the moon that controls the tides. Laird points out that unlike the earlier version 'Dream-Confused [1]', the last line of the final poem "ends not in 'rest', but in the awakened memory that 'we misunderstood'".¹⁵ The plural "we" implies variously that Moon and poet misunderstood each other, a clashing response of body and mind, or perhaps, as Christopher Pollnitz suggests, "someone did enter his room" or he theirs (*3 Poems* 1738),¹⁶ making it "hard to gauge ... the proportions of fantasy and actual experience" (xc). Either way, there are strong yearnings for physical and emotional connection. The earliest variant 'Dream [1]' declares, "*my breasts* are lit up with two *answering* kisses" but then ends with "kisses sinking *unanswered* in *my breast*" (1424, emphasis added). More confusion arises amidst this hazy dream-state as we try to sort out who asked and who answered, whose breast/s are lit and extinguished, and who was kissing whom. A few months later Lawrence concludes, "what we all want, madly, is human contact ... transference of feeling" (*IL* 154). The take-away is that intimacy, while essential, is risky and difficult.

Lawrence's letters from 1909 show him yearning to be "grown up" (*IL* 122, 128) and on the leading edge of the modern movement, describing his aesthetic as "uncomfortable" and forward thinking: "at the tip of the years" (124). In addition, he was concerned about the

quick passage of time and his slow progress. Lawrence was starting to have some publication success, but it didn't contribute much financially as he was constantly short of funds. This hindered any plans to marry. He would later impatiently complain, "Literature is disgustingly slow" (210) and "This transacting of literary business makes me sick. I have no faith in myself at the end" (161). Typical of any young graduate, establishing his career and personal ties dominated the correspondence. He sought connection with friends, colleagues, or his own font of creativity. Lawrence confesses, "I dwell on things, and read my own promises of life in them" (128). This brings us to 'At the Window', which opens with attentive trees sharing a private joke at sunset. The feeling is that time grows short as autumn winds stir things into motion:

The pine-trees bend to listen to the autumn wind as it mutters
 Something which sets the black poplars ashake with hysterical
 laughter;
 As slowly the house of day is closing its eastern shutters.
 (*IPoems* 67)

Eastern skies do darken first at sundown. The window looks out over a distant graveyard adding to the pensive mood: end of day, end of year, end of life. The passage of time is palpable.

Originally published in *The English Review* (April 1910),¹⁷ 'At the Window [2]' was the last of a group of five poems called 'Night Songs' (and followed the erotic dream of 'Wakened', an early variant of 'Dream-Confused'). The second stanza of 'At the Window [2]' introduces a "pallid assembly of tomb-stones" fading down the valley, and "timid ghosts, like lovers come faltering up the hill / To hover disconsolate at the end of the lamp-lit alley".¹⁸ The initial imagery of this version, composed *before* his mother became ill (August 1910), opens up new possible interpretations. It may have related to suspicions that a writer's life conflicted with supporting a family, hence the trees' "hysterical laughter" at the mad hubris of wanting both. Lawrence, at 24 years of age, was indecisive about his

future, confronted as he was with the daily classroom drudgery of trying to illuminate the minds of reluctant boys for a small but steady wage, while his own creativity dimmed like feeble gas-lamps at twilight. Meanwhile the poem's timid lovers, "faltering" and "disconsolate", are sadly approaching a dead-end alley like many of his own relationships. One dream or the other faced the grave.

After his mother's death from cancer in December 1910, the graveyard takes on a literal significance in the *Amores* (1916) revision ('At the Window [3]'):

... clustered tomb-stones recede,
Winding about their dimness the mist's grey cerements, after
The street lamps in the darkness have suddenly started to bleed.
(*3Poems* 1681)

The bleeding gas-lamps allude to his mother's illness, as well as to his wounded heart and a loss of human connection. Amid his depression, he tells Louie, "So I've had the gas lighted. I wish I might light myself at your abundant life" (*IL* 202). Pollnitz notes that Lawrence shifted the order away from 'Night Songs' to associate 'At the Window' with Lydia's death and his other poems of grief (*2Poems* 864).¹⁹ Hence ghostly lovers are recast as misty graveclothes to reflect his expanded concerns. Laird points out that the window now functions as "a mirror on emptiness".²⁰ Lawrence appears to be borrowing the landscape's sentience from 'At the Window' while waiting for cancer to end his mother's agony:

I sit hour after hour in the bedroom, for I am chief nurse, watching her – and sometimes I turn to look out of the window at the bright wet cabbages in the garden, and the horses in the field beyond, and the church-tower small as a black dice on the hill ... and I find myself apostrophising the landscape 'So that's what you mean, is it?' – and under the mobile shadowy change of expression, like smiles, on the countryside, there seems to lie the cast of eternal suffering. (*IL* 192).

The evolution of stanza 3 (from early variants to final form) gradually moves away from a self-contained viewpoint. The ‘Night Songs’ poet hears the sensuous whisper of leaves from the “sibilant night’s strange mouth” as he sits “in the two-roomed darkness behind the eye’s window”.²¹ The involuted line lets readers peek at a divided mind and soul as the poet ponders his future. This internal conflict is projected outward in ‘At the Window [3]’, where the now-grieving poet seeks guidance: “the face that leans from the silence, intent, with two dark-filled eyes / That watch for ever earnestly from behind the window glass” (*3Poems* 1681). By distancing himself still further, the poet achieves near universality in the lilting final form, while the focus remains beyond the window. We strain along with the poet to glean nature’s counsel:

The leaves fly over the window, and utter a word as they pass
To the face that gazes outwards, watching for night to waft a
Meaning or a message over the window glass. (*1Poems* 67).

Any conjecture about the poem’s autobiographical nature shouldn’t conflict with the images contained within the poem itself, of someone at the window seeking validation, consolation, or answers to life-questions.

‘At the Window [2]’ contains a fourth stanza that doesn’t add much, so it’s easy to see why Lawrence deleted it in the process of melding the poem with grief. Although it is interesting that it reverts to the opening pines that were whispering to the quaking poplars. The last line features “pine-trees gasping for fear—?”.²² Since pines are symbols of male fertility, the line may recall the ghostly “disconsolate” lovers of the same version and mating concerns. Alternatively, I am reminded of Ovid’s cautionary ‘Story of Phaethon’ with its daughters of the sun god turned into poplar tree-nymphs (the weeping Heliades), whose “lips kept calling *Mother!*” and the epitaph carved on the headstone: “Here Phaethon lies, / Who drove his father’s chariot: if he did not / Hold it, at least he fell in splendid daring”.²³ It’s a safe bet that young Lawrence, who hailed

from the coal mining town of Eastwood, was mindful of the possibility of literary failure, even as he audaciously attempted to take the reins meant for poetic sun gods. Hence, by this whimsical interpretation of the abandoned ending, “fear” is left as a question that floats in air like a Greek chorus, joining the “Leaves in the wind’s procession”.²⁴

According to Jessie Chambers, “After his mother’s death Lawrence was like a rudderless ship – ‘a leaf blown in the wind’ – was his favourite simile for himself”.²⁵ While the loss of his mother created a whirlwind of chaos for young Lawrence, it ultimately was liberating. He would not have to live up to anyone’s expectations but his own. Lawrence had broken up with Jessie in August and impulsively proposed to Louie Burrows (well-liked by his possessive mother) only a few days before Lydia’s death.²⁶ With grim determination, he writes, “My heart winces to the echo of my mother’s pulse ... This surcharge of grief makes me determine to be happy” (*IL* 195). His new coping strategy was to trust Fate: “Tragedy is like strong acid – it dissolves away all but the very gold of truth ... I suppose it’s fate. What life has set in progress, life can’t arrest: There is nothing to do but ... smash up the old Idea ... and to find in the emptiness a new presence” (248). Lawrence broke off his engagement to Louie fourteen months later and resigned his teaching post the same month. Recurring illness had resulted in an altered perspective that made the ticking clock grow even louder.²⁷ Lawrence, watching leaves fly across the window like the pages of his life, would faithfully follow wherever the winds blew.

Grief and maladies: “like one wafted feather”

Windows, however, become opaque in stormy darkness. They might transport the soul to an idealised heaven or pinpoint imperfections in the glass. Still, windows offer hope that disorder, like the weather, is transient. Worthen points out that, for Lawrence, a writing career was “an extraordinarily courageous and potentially crippling choice” that resulted in “actually breaking down in himself the barriers to

experience which his upbringing had created”.²⁸ In ‘Elegy’ and ‘Malade’, Lawrence confronts changes beyond his control and evokes a healthy psychological and philosophical response through poetic expression. Thus the poems themselves become windows that look onto the author’s, as well as our own, vulnerability to the doldrums of grief and illness.

‘Elegy’ (mid 1911–1912) is a lovely poem addressed to Lawrence’s mother, Lydia. It opens by declaring that the “immense and rosy” sun “Must have sunk and become extinct / The night you closed your eyes for ever against me” (*IPoems* 155).²⁹ “Against” is a curious word choice that evokes both hostility and caressiveness, as if angry at her passing while holding her tightly against him at the moment of death. His days are now joyless:

Grey days, and wan, drie dawnings
Since then, with fritter of flowers—
Day wearies me with its ostentation and fawnings. (156)

The lines are a frank encapsulation of funerals and condolences as seen through the lens of grief: pale, bloodless mornings (as well as a weak acceptance of the loss) conveyed by the sharp jabs of “wan, drie dawnings”. Lawrence follows with the pithy “fritter of flowers”, or funeral wreaths that inevitably wilt and drop their petals, suggesting the shortness of life (frittered away) and the tatter of emotions shredded by death. The young poet is wearied by the “ostentation and fawnings” that make a public showcase of private grief.

Nights become the poet’s refuge as, in isolation, he gazes out of the “great dark glittery window, / The bubble hemming this empty existence with lights” (*IPoems* 156). Worthen notes: “The vision of the bubble night shows how the appeal of darkness and death remained strong and recurring”.³⁰ Only through this star-filled window can Lawrence commune with his mother’s spirit in the poem’s most lyrical pair of lines, entwining two sets of alliteration: “Like a breath in a bubble spinning / Brushing the stars, goes my

soul, that skims the bounds like a swallow!”. Although he has a desire to be on the other side of the glass joining her in death, the window acts as a protective barrier that balloons heavenward. Not so far-fetched considering that nineteenth century windowpanes were constructed of flattened blown-glass.³¹ The poet’s soul reaches out into the glittering night where it’s uplifted like the fork-tailed swallow, a messenger of spring. According to Egyptian mythology, “Isis changed into a swallow at night, circling Osiris’s coffin with cries of lamentation until the return of the Sun, a symbol of the eternal homecoming and a herald of resurrection”.³² The swallow is a hopeful omen that the “extinct” *sun* from the opening stanza will be reignited, and (its homophone) the *son* will be reunited with his own spark of life: “I can look through / The film of the bubble night, to where you are. / Through the film I can almost touch you” (156). A son’s last glancing kiss to his mother is granted within this evanescently magical space where he “skims the bounds” in a crystalline teardrop. The letting go is made even more poignant since ‘Elegy’ is the second poem (following ‘Moonrise’) in *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1917), Lawrence’s epithalamium to his wife, Frieda.

‘Malade’ (c. February 1910) describes “Grey days” of another sort, when the body falls ill, rebelling against intruding microbes or viruses. Lawrence describes the open-windowed sickroom as “the hollow rind of a fruit, a gourd / Scooped out and bare” (*IPoems* 76). It’s as if time stands still while he occupies this microcosm of a cavernous gourd. The dreary scene contains only one possibly comforting detail: “sick grapes on the chair by the bed”. Due to the popularity of “The Grape-Cure”,³³ postulated by Dr. Jean-Charles Herpin in 1860, it was a common British custom to bring grapes for the sick rather than flowers. Grapes were nutritious, hydrating, didn’t need refrigeration, and could be easily nibbled upon by the infirm. They were also imported fruit, and the expense made them a thoughtful and welcomed gift. So, despite the lonely convalescence, someone cared enough to send grapes. If the poet’s mood turns the grapes temporarily sour, it’s due to being a reminder of his

vulnerability, taunting him from the bedside as they both “lie prone”. Lawrence would later write, “The grape is swart, the avenues dusky and tendrilled, subtly prehensile” (‘Grapes’, *IPoems* 238). Perhaps he already considered grapes as old-world rejuvenators, “globed in Egyptian darkness” and placed within his tomb-like room.

The convalescent’s only companion is a spider, prepared for death by having “Folded in its legs as in a bed” (‘Malade’, *IPoems* 76). Spider legs are extended by bodily fluids pumped from the heart and so the legs curl up when spiders die. The poet, likewise, withdraws undercover. Together they are “watching where there is nothing to see but dusky walls”. The only sounds are endless rain and a mournful clock-like ticking at the open window: “The tassel of the blind swings constantly, tapping the pane / As the air moves in”.³⁴ He bemoans lost potential, asking “if the day outside were mine!”. But the outer world is just a reflection of his illness and vice versa:

... a grey cave, with great grey spider-cloths hanging
 Low from the roof, and the wet dust falling softly from them
 Over the wet dark rocks, the houses, and over
 The spiders with white faces, that scuttle on the floor of the cave!

His current reality is coloured with melancholy: there is no escape for him or the spidery people outside. We are reminded of the claustrophobic inner/outer tropes of ‘Plato’s Allegory of the Cave’,³⁵ as the poet is metaphorically chained to his bed, staring at blank walls and shadow visions.

‘Malade [1]’, an early prose-poem (with irregular line lengths retained), is twice as long as the final poem and contains a sudden midway shift in tone. It still begins in the sickroom where “Raindrops strike, / one after another; sharp silver strokes on the window-pane, / arriving suddenly, startling me” (*3Poems* 1433). The sibilance generated by the rain’s “sharp silver strokes” that strike and startle conjures an image of painful knife thrusts (with a play on pane/pain); and “the air comes hesitating into the room”, as well as into his lungs, one suspects. However, this version takes an optimistic turn as he

imagines: "somewhere the yellow mimosa tassels shake down / a dust like sunbeams". Mimosa flowers (from the fire-adapted silver wattle tree) symbolise sunlight and the certainty "that death is a change and not the total destruction of being".³⁶ The psychological flip hinges on the dusty tassel-pull of the blinds; the light flows in turning the dead dust into luminous flower pollen. Jo Jones points out that although the poet is "physically trapped in his sickroom ... his mind allows him to escape into a creative fantasy".³⁷ The poem ends with the sun returning the world to harmony like an elixir: "Ah, to drink the golden liquor of sunshine!—to put my mouth / to the infinite wine in which the white-bubble stars are floating". There is no fullstop at the end, so the line continues to float off the page with the image evoking a triumphant cosmic toast to renewed health (the "infinite wine" harking back to the "inert" sick-grapes). A sun-filled window becomes the cave mouth offering the freedom of an idealised reality, where "ships hang / from the sky by an amber cloud, reaching for the sea". (Note: Enjambment after "hang" dangles the ships midair.)

Plato's allegory problematically predicts the cave prisoners would not believe their perceptions were distorted. L. D. Clark adds that Plato thought the soul was "forced into the realm of matter, and only total escape back into the ideal could ever cure it of the sickness of exile".³⁸ Lawrence, however, acknowledges the body even when it's sick. In his late essay 'The Real Thing', Lawrence sums up why he chooses to affirm life in the body regardless of its state of being: "What makes life good to me is the sense that, even if I am sick and ill, I am alive, alive to the depths of my soul, and in touch, somewhere in touch with the vivid life of the cosmos" (*LEA* 310). Why should the physical world of the present moment be so rudely discounted? Barry Scherr remarks:

Plato was the great originator of the philosophical attitude that tyrannizes over the blood-consciousness and exalts the mental consciousness ... Thus in December of 1915 (the date of Lawrence's "blood-consciousness letter" to Bertrand Russell)

Lawrence regarded Plato as the major antithetical figure for him to reckon with; but this did not deter Lawrence from adopting the Platonic “stance” of philosopher-poet, nor did it cause Lawrence to lose interest in the metaphysical and transcendental realms.³⁹

These thoughts found their way into Lawrence’s *New Poems* (1919) as the preface ‘Poetry of the Present’:

In the immediate present there is no perfection, no consummation, nothing finished ... The living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past ...

... Here, in this very instant moment, up bubbles the stream of time, out of the wells of futurity, flowing on to the oceans of the past. The source, the issue, the creative quick ... (*1Poems* 646)

Perhaps the philosophical debates with Russell sprinkled throughout their 1915 correspondence even prompted and fed into the 1916 revisions of ‘Malade’, as Lawrence was working out his own Socratic Dialogue.

The free-verse variant, ‘Malade [3]’, ends darkly: “I am choking with creeping, grey confinedness” (*3Poems* 1687). But Pollnitz provides an interim version published in *Amores* (1916) with an additional five-line closing, retained, condensed and modified from ‘Malade [1]’:

But somewhere birds, beside a lake of light, spread wings
Larger than the largest fans, and rise in a stream upwards
And upwards on the sunlight that rains invisible,
So that the birds are like one wafted feather,
Small and ecstatic suspended over a vast spread country.
(‘Malade [2]’, *3Poems* 1931).

Coincidentally, the 12 February 1915 letter to Russell (where Lawrence talks of Plato) also ends with springtime birds, their songs more in tune with the poem’s theme, being “quite rusty and stiff with a winter of disuse” (*2L* 286). Lawrence kept reducing the idealistic

ending, which seems tacked on despite its balanced contrast. Birds and boats have little relation to spiders and gourds – or do they? There is an attempt to juxtapose bird symbolism (representing the heavenly flight of the soul that escapes the earthly body) and the spider's web (that “evokes the fragility of a reality which is no more than illusory and deceptive appearance”).⁴⁰ Buddhist and Hindu mythologies, however, debated whether “the spider wove the fabric of the world, or the veil of illusion which conceals the Supreme Reality”.⁴¹ This Reality dialectic, dividing the Ideal from Shadow, is contained within the “great grey spider-cloths” hanging like a curtain outside the sickroom window and remains even without the bird imagery.

Regardless, Lawrence's French title ‘Malade’ (meaning illness or ill person and associated with Baudelairean decadence by Pollnitz [*3Poems* 1750] and other scholars)⁴² suggests a theme of discord and dissolution. Thus the poem's revisions dwell predominantly on the sickroom rather than escaping into an alternate “prison” of Plato's Ideal Forms.⁴³ Neither was Lawrence satisfied with the finality of being choked by the “grey confinedness”. “[S]omewhere birds ... spread wings” and are released from Plato's Cave. Lawrence's last thoughts on the end-line ultimately arrived at a subtle philosophical shrug: “Ah, but I am ill, and it is still raining, coldly raining!” (*1Poems* 76). Rain suits the grey tone of ‘Malade’, while essentially being regenerative and cleansing. The resulting line is firmly set in time and circumstance rather than Platonic “timelessness” (*STH* 72).⁴⁴ The evolution of ‘Malade’ is an excellent example of Lawrence's shift towards a “poetry of the sheer present” (*1Poems* 647). The final poem feels more honest, more *Pansies*-like in its temporal snapshot of the life-flux's “wind-like transit”. Yet, we are privileged to have opportunities to continue debating the value of both as we witness the abandoned bird ending spread its wings. It turns out, a search of the World Wide Web reveals that the popular sunny version of ‘Malade [2]’ lives on in the public domain, “suspended over a vast spread” Internet.⁴⁵

“Coming Through” the window with Frieda⁴⁶

The above window poems are not exhaustive but represent a sample highlighting their quality, variety and pertinence to some key points in Lawrence’s early life and poetics. Most were written prior to his marriage in 1914.⁴⁷ Sandra Gilbert observes that despite “flashes of a ‘new’ style in even the earliest poems, for Lawrence, the new life (and with it a new style) began most decisively when he met Frieda Weekly-Richthofen” in March 1912.⁴⁸ Some of the earliest composed poems in *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1917) carry over the window motif as a means of detailing the rough start to their elopement and serve as gateways of transition. Lawrence’s introductory ‘Argument’, setting the tone for the collection, states that the couple’s conflict continues “till it reaches some sort of conclusion, they transcend into some condition of blessedness”.⁴⁹ Worthen remarks that the struggles were all “part of the process of making a life together. Just as Lawrence’s writing life was a search for expression ... so the anger and the quarrels were ways for them both to bring their differences and their needs out into the open”.⁵⁰ In this way, windows broaden perspectives or shutter them, create distance or proximity. They can act like two-way mirrors confounding communication or offer a shifting kaleidoscope of colour. Ultimately, windows come to symbolise a womblike confinement and eventual threshold for their relationship.

‘First Morning’ (May–June 1912) sets up the window frame as if it’s a hurdle the couple must clear, or a set of bars they must break through, if they are to escape their tangled past and make a fresh start in the light of a new day:

The night was a failure
but why not—?

In the darkness
with the pale dawn seething at the window
through the black frame

I could not be free,
not free myself from the past, those others—
and our love was a confusion,
... (*IPoems* 165)

The root meaning of “seethe” is to bubble up or boil; but the sun, which is about to overflow the black sill, also reflects the poet’s mental frustration and self-anger. As Worthen says,

The patterns of their lives could not easily be broken ... Frieda had what Lawrence called ‘a genius for living’, and he now began to share a little of her kind of ease and warmth and acceptance. That was a new experience for the intensely conscious and detached person he had always been before.⁵¹

Thus the morning brings a broader perspective for a “proud and blithe” love as the couple ventures outside into open air, hemmed only by a distant mountain range:

As we sit in the sunshine on the seat by the little shrine,
And look at the mountain-walls,
Walls of blue shadow,
And see so near at our feet in the meadow
Myriads of dandelion pappus
Bubbles ravelled in the dark green grass (*IPoems* 165)

The word “ravel” means to fray (like fuzzy imperfections in the meadow’s tapestry) or to tease out from a tangle (as from their knot of failed relationships). Dandelions symbolise both male and female: the sun (in yellow bloom) and the moon (in puffs of white seed). The weight of the previous night has been lifted in the cosmic scale: “It is enough, you are near— / The mountains are balanced” (165). Together they are reborn, declaring themselves “the source” of a potential love that will be dispersed by the wind like dandelion seeds and nurtured by the natural elements. The “little shrine” seems to pay homage to the couple.

'In the Dark' (July 1912) highlights the interplay of light and shadow, as well as the importance of maintaining personal boundaries: "A blotch of *pallor* stirs beneath the high / Square picture-dusk, the window of *dark sky*" (*IPoems* 170, emphasis added). The "seething" sunrise of the previous poem is now a sunset described as a "blotch": a combination of the words "blot" and "botch" that carries a wealth of meanings, from spoiling the night to suggesting a mismanaged blunder or blemished reputation (as in their affair). Twin contrasts of pallor/dark and shadow/shine hint at subsequent themes of individuality: "I will be all the shadow, you the shine" (171). Alan Golding remarks that "Lawrence shows his rare ability to give female anger toward the male a voice, doing so through images of darkness".⁵² The poet is awakened by the sound of tears and asks, "Why have you gone to the window? Why don't you sleep?" to which the woman reveals fears of being eclipsed, "*You cast / A shadow over my breasts ... // ... I give / You armfuls of sunshine, and you won't let me live*" (170–1). He counters with a disarming quip, "Nay, I'm too sleepy!" and she presses, "*You stand before me like ghosts, like a darkness upright*" (171). He points out *her* shadow: "when you cross the street in the sunshine, surely / Your own small night goes with you"; and she responds, "*I dance in the sun, I'm a thing of life ... // ... how cruel you are, you people the sunshine / With shadows*". This struggle to find a balance of oppositional power, as Laird suggests, will "also stave off the desire for perfect echoing, mirror reflection, in which individuality would be lost".⁵³ The woman ensures her integrity will remain intact by her declaration "*let me be myself*". Her inner light refuses to be engulfed by the poet. It's a clear indication, as Worthen remarks, that Lawrence regarded "the independence of both partners within a relationship as a necessary precondition of its survival".⁵⁴ A clash and union of two diverse *beings* is played out in dramatic dialogue.

These forthright love poems constitute a "period of adjustment" leading up to Lawrence's famous 'Gloire De Dijon' (1912).⁵⁵ The name is a classic variety of climbing tea rose (also called Old Glory Rose), which is full of fragrant petals that are a creamy buff-yellow

with pink blush at the folds. The tall vines and large blooms that droop on weak stems have connotations of Briar Rose and Sleeping Beauty (and indeed both of the poem's participants experience a sexual awakening).⁵⁶ It's significant that, as his lover "rises in the morning" to attend her ablutions, the poet "linger[s]" within the poem's framework (*IPoems* 176), establishing a "circumambient" relationship beyond a "kodak snap" (*STH* 165).⁵⁷ The origin of the word "linger" means "to tarry" or "to dwell". The poet does both by pausing to lovingly dwell upon the vision of her body in motion as "her swung breasts / Sway" like dewy roses in full-bloom:

I linger to watch her;
 She spreads the bath-cloth underneath the window
 And the sunbeams catch her
 Glistening white on the shoulders,
 While down her sides the mellow
 Golden shadow glows as
 She stoops to the sponge, ... (*IPoems* 176)

"Stoop" and "stoup" (a basin for holy water) are both words related to "steep". Her bowing down as she "stoops to the sponge" carries melodic alliteration as well as connotations of reverently dipping the sponge into holy water and of soaking her essence like a bracing sun-brewed tea. Gloire De Dijon is after all a *hybrid* tea rose, and the poet's essence also fills the room.

Lawrence's deftly made edits in the second stanza of the early version ('All of Roses', part 2, separated in 1917) resulted in one of the most distinctly Lawrentian lines of the final poem. He changes "rustling" to "sluicing" (*3Poems* 1502, *IPoems* 176), "white, unfolding" to "rain-dishevelled", and "She stirs" to "Concentrates":

... I listen
 For the sluicing of their rain-dishevelled petals,
 In the window full of sunlight
 Concentrates her golden shadow.

Shadow usually diminishes colour, but instead her fair complexion is vibrantly cast in an intensified golden hue. The earlier ending creates interest by depicting a competitive clash of skin as she moves in the sunlight: “And flashes all herself as sunbright / As if roses fought with roses” (*3Poems* 1502). This is transformed to read, “Fold on fold, until it glows as / Mellow as the glory roses” (*1Poems* 176), focusing instead on enfolded petal imagery as her whole body becomes the rose. What an impact these refinements make: capturing the “sluicing” sound of poured water and the lustre of light on the female form as the body folds and unfolds in graceful iambic rhythm like a heartbeat.

Lawrence was painting with words, a carefully layered impasto, à la the series of bath paintings by Impressionists Edgar Degas (1834–1917) and Édouard Manet (1832–1883) or the Post-Impressionists Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) and Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947); artists introduced to Britain during the influential 1910 exhibition, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, at the Grafton Gallery in London.⁵⁸ Although the French modern art movement was met with controversy, it was championed by the Bloomsbury Group who, with “its network of contacts”, adopted their aesthetic “more or less as a religion”.⁵⁹ Lawrence borrowed Impressionistic trends for his poetry. Bonnard in particular had a penchant for picture-within-picture compositions of modern life using windows, doors and mirrors – his wife serving as model. His famous “Intimist” nudes attending to their toilet with light reflected in vivid colour include *Nude at Tub* (1903), *Nude Against the Light* (c. 1908), *Woman Crouching in a Tub* (1912), *Bathing Woman, Seen from the Back* (c. 1919) and *Nude at the Window* (c. 1922). Perhaps Lawrence believed, as did Cézanne, that “Light is not something that can be reproduced, it must be represented by something else, by colours”.⁶⁰

In all three love poems (‘First Morning’, ‘In the Dark’, and ‘Gloire De Dijon’) Lawrence is, at last, a participant on the same side of the glass as his focus of interest. Keith Sagar notes that his meeting Frieda and “departure from England freed him from the pressures which had retarded his development ... The success of his marriage

is achieved by breaking through old dead ideas and life-modes".⁶¹ After 'Gloire De Dijon', with its pinnacle of connection in rosy "silhouette against the window" (an abandoned phrase from 'All of Roses', *3Poems* 1502),⁶² Lawrence's reliance on windows as a poetic device, that previously isolated writer and subject, fades away. Like the vision he glimpses from "afar" in 'After School', he had found his helpmate, his polestar. Frieda was someone who would gladly "tramp" about the world with him, joining the search for a "fresh current of life, that has no tang and no taint" (*IL* 247).⁶³ The mature Lawrence, as represented in his poetry collection *Look! We Have Come Through!* and beyond, would become more confident and less passive as he engaged with life more directly. While the study of Lawrence's early poetry reveals his creative development as a major poet, the power of his later verse shouldn't negate the gems to be found among his juvenilia.

Toward the end of his life, Lawrence painted a 10.5 x 13.8 inch watercolour titled *The Coal-black Smith* (1928; see the cover of this journal number) that visually revisited the window motif. Based on a bawdy European folksong about a "nasty, husky, dusky, musty, fusty, coal blacksmith" who pursues his lady love through various paired animal transformations, Earl Brewster records that Lawrence seemed pleased by the witty lyrics of 'The Two Magicians' and wished to paint it:

Oh, she looked out of the window,
As white as any milk,
But he looked in the window
As black as any silk.⁶⁴

The painting shows two figures resembling Frieda and a Lawrentian collier: a golden-haired lady and a black-haired smith with a grimy face. The blacksmith admires the lady from beneath the open cottage window, and the lady seems pleased by the attention. Lawrence's painting illustrates several of the magical shape-shifting verses containing a duck and water dog, a hare and greyhound, a fly and spider. The song typically has two endings: either the lady turns into

“a corpse all in the ground” and the blacksmith becomes the “cold, dark clay” that “smothers her all around”, or she turns into a bed and he becomes a coverlet and thereby “gain[s] her maidenhead”.⁶⁵ The song has roots stretching back to origin myths and ancient Celtic folklore and was sung in the spirit of mutual flirtatious innuendo rather than harassment. Each version contains a mating-dance chase followed by a potential romantic climax to the saucy repartee. The first ending depicts a lifetime together consummated only in death (as in *la petite mort* or “the little death” of the ego following sex; euphemism for orgasm). In the second, the lady stops the stand-off by choosing to take the form of an inviting bed, since the “lusty smith became her love, / for all her mighty pride”.⁶⁶

Swinging back to ‘At the Window’, we view Lawrence as a perceptive young poet (or lusty wordsmith, perhaps), associating himself with scenes dramatised in the framework of his windows much like paintings that shift and change moods. Laird believes that “Although each poem has its own integrity, Lawrence had no interest in creating the perfect poem; he wanted something as incomplete, vexed, fluid as himself, the fleeting gestures and episodic pieces of his inner story”; and she emphasises that his poetry should “be examined, then, not only in relation to each other, but in relation to the developing narrative”.⁶⁷ Moreover, these window poems contribute to a literary tradition exemplified by Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) and Carl Sandburg (1878–1967).⁶⁸ Lawrence’s windows acted as metaphysical time portals into past or future events, but the motif lost significance after he dedicated himself to living in the ever mutable “quick of Time” (*1Poems* 647). James Jarrett says, “It does not finally matter whether he ‘has a philosophy’ or not ... nearly everything [Lawrence] wrote was a step, tentative or sure, toward a more satisfactory understanding of the universe and of man’s place in it”.⁶⁹ Lawrence would continue probing life’s mysteries like a prophet reading the leaves that “waft a / Meaning or a message over the window glass” (67). We, in turn, can read his poems collectively as they spread across the page and rise before the mind’s eye “like one wafted feather” (*3Poems* 1931).

¹ John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 145, 147.

² Holly A. Laird, *Self and Sequence: The Poetry of D. H. Lawrence* (Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1988): Lawrence's "poems acquire power and significance cumulatively as they gather in sequences ... acquire greater implication when placed in the larger drama" (10).

³ Jessie Chambers, *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1980), 76.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵ Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years*, 196–7.

⁶ Chambers, *Personal Record*, 89. See also "school trammels me and makes me feel as if I can't breathe" (*IL* 302) and 'The Schoolmaster [1]' (Part 3): "I carry my anger sullenly 'cross these waste lands, / For tomorrow will pour them all back, the school hours I detest" (*3Poems* 1484). However, Lawrence was a dedicated teacher and depicted good days in 'The Best of School' (mid-1911) and 'Dreams Old and Nascent/Old' (spring 1909), also with window motifs.

⁷ Lawrence referenced "Malory's King Arthur" in a 1910 essay, 'Rachel Annand Taylor' (*STH* 145). Regarding Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* see also *2L* 492 n. 4, and "the ridiculous Malory, with his Grails and his chivalries" (495).

⁸ Laird, *Self and Sequence*, 76.

⁹ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, ll. 20–2 in *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*, 2nd Edition, eds Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair (New York: Norton, 1988), 492.

¹⁰ Chambers, *Personal Record*, 115. By 1908 Browning was a favourite of Lawrence, having read the *Pocket Volume of Selections from Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (Smith, Elder, & Co.). It included 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came', concerning a wasteland Grail quest.

¹¹ Amit Chaudhuri, *D. H. Lawrence and 'Difference'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 92.

¹² Tom Paulin, 'Introduction', *D. H. Lawrence: Poems Selected by Tom Paulin* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), ix. Paulin remarks that while the opening of 'Dream-Confused' "begins with a confident series of questions", it then "loses energy" as the "archaic 'shoon' and the arguably obtrusive 'palpitating' pull the poem into a conventional frame".

¹³ Laird, *Self and Sequence*, 72.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Ibid., 186.

¹⁶ Pollnitz notes: “The moon was full on [Jessie Chamber’s] 27–28 November visit to London and Croydon; after retiring in the early hours of Sunday, [Jessie] thought she heard ‘a knock on the door’ of *her* room” (*3Poems* 1738).

¹⁷ D. H. Lawrence, ‘Night Songs’, *The English Review*, Vol. 5 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1910), 4–8. This variant is designated as ‘At the Window [2]’, although it falls “outside the line of transmission” and isn’t included in the Cambridge collection (*3Poems* 1928). Archival scan from the Hathi Trust Digital Library, sourced from University of California: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b2935697&view=1up&seq=22>.

¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁹ In *Amores* (New York: Huebsch, 1916), ‘At the Window’ is preceded by the elegiacal poems ‘The End’, ‘The Bride’, ‘The Virgin Mother’, and followed by ‘Drunk’, ‘Sorrow’, ‘Dolor of Autumn’, ‘The Inheritance’, ‘Silence’, ‘Listening’ and ‘Brooding Grief’.

²⁰ Laird, *Self and Sequence*, 71.

²¹ Lawrence, ‘Night Songs’, 7.

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Ovid, trans. Rolfe Humphries, ‘The Story of Phaethon’, *Metamorphoses* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955), 39, 38.

²⁴ Lawrence, ‘Night Songs’, 8. Lawrence had a tendency to draw from Greco-Roman tragedies: “When I get sore, I always fly to the Greek tragedies: they make one feel sufficiently fatalistic” (*IL* 235).

²⁵ Chambers, *Personal Record*, 184.

²⁶ Referring to the Jessie break-up: “I have muddled my love affairs most ridiculously and most maddeningly” (*IL* 187) and Lydia’s blessing for Louie: “Well – if you think you’d be happy with her – yes” (197). See also ‘Last Words to Miriam’ (Dec. 1910) for window/hymen analogy: “had I but pierced with the thorned / Full anguish, perhaps had been cast / In a lovely illumined mesh / Like a painted window; the best / Fire passed through your flesh, / Undrossed it, and left it blest / In clean new awareness” (*1Poems* 75).

²⁷ Doctors advised Lawrence not to marry, and he admits to Louie “my health is so precarious ... seeing I mustn’t teach, I shall have a struggle to keep myself. I will not drag on an engagement – so I ask you to dismiss me ... It’s a miserable business, and the fault is all mine” (*IL* 361); and “Today I have sent in my resignation to Croydon. I don’t want that to be dragging on any longer” (*IL* 370).

²⁸ Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years*, 150–1.

²⁹ See also 'Everlasting Flowers: For a Dead Mother' (1912). He sees for both: "How you sit in the throne of my eyes / At peace, and look out of the windows / In glad surprise" (*IPoems* 184).

³⁰ Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years*, 321.

³¹ Xiao Situ, 'Emily Dickinson's Windows', *Experiences: Terra Foundation Essays* (Vol. 4), ed. Alexander Nemerov (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2017), 52–74. Situ says that nineteenth-century blown window glass "manages to crystallize in its translucent body the living pulse of the past" (62).

³² Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, trans. John Buchanan-Brown, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 952.

³³ The early 1900's gave rise to deluxe resorts and spas endorsing miraculous "Grape Cures" in Germany, France, and Italy based on Dr. Jean-Charles Herpin's research, 'Grapes Considered as Medicine or Medication by Grapes: Grape Cure' ('*Cura Dell'uva, Traubenkur*', 1860). Modern science is revisiting the benefits of red grapes due to concentrations of the antioxidant resveratrol.

³⁴ "I am just convalescent from a sickness. I have been laid up in bed for some days, watching the tassel of the blind swinging endlessly and mournfully across the grey wet sky" (*IL* 155).

³⁵ The Cave Allegory comes from the lessons of Socrates depicted in Plato's *Republic*, in particular the 'Theory of Forms'. Lawrence writes in 'The Future of the Novel': "Plato's Dialogues, too, are queer little novels", calling it the "greatest pity in the world, when philosophy and fiction got split" (*STH* 154).

³⁶ *Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, 657.

³⁷ Jo Jones, 'On Decadence, Decay and "Pure Flowers of Dark Corruption": D. H. Lawrence and Baudelaire', *JDHLS* 6. 1 (2021), 67–81 72.

³⁸ L. D. Clark, *Dark Night of the Body* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1964), 120–1.

³⁹ Barry Scherr, *D. H. Lawrence's Response to Plato* (New York: Lang Publishing, 1996), 61–2. By December 8, 1915, Lawrence was reading the anthropologic mythology of James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and *Totemism and Exogamy*. He wrote to Russell that it seemed to confirm "what I believed when I was about twenty—that there is another seat of consciousness than the brain and the nerve system: there is a blood-consciousness which exists in us independently ... One lives, knows, and

has one's being in the blood ... one half of life, belonging to the darkness" (2L 470).

⁴⁰ *Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, 904.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² See Susan Reid, 'D. H. Lawrence's Elephant Poems: Poetry and Prose Poetry, Texts and Contexts, From 1915–1929', *JDLHS* 5.3 (2020), 174–209: 'Malade [1]' "with its echoes of the rainy-day and spider imagery of 'Spleen' (No. 161 in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*), bears striking resemblance to Baudelaire's prose poems in *Paris Spleen*" (201). See also Jones, 'D. H. Lawrence and Baudelaire': "Baudelairean poetics provided Lawrence with the tools he needed to express the sickness he found in his own body and map it onto that dissolution which he saw in his wartime surroundings" (73).

⁴³ Lawrence writes "the shell, the form of life, is a prison to the life" (2L 285). Scherr notes that "while Lawrence wanted to smash 'the hard, unloving, impervious shell' of a deathly society, Plato was the prime representative of 'the confined life' of that society": *D. H. Lawrence's Response to Plato*, 46.

⁴⁴ Many of the philosophical ideas that Lawrence was hammering out at this time were poured into *Study of Thomas Hardy* (begun 1914, published posthumously 1936). Regarding Eternal Ideals: "to single out one cycle, one moment, and to exclude from this moment all context, and to make this moment timeless, this is ... what Plato does. So that their absolute Truth, their geometric Truth, is only true in timelessness" (*STH* 72).

⁴⁵ The Project Gutenberg Website contains access to all the poems from *Amores* (New York: Huebsch, 1916), including 'Malade [2]' and 'At the Window [3]', a public domain source allowing early versions to proliferate across the Internet. 'The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Amores*, by D.H. Lawrence' #22531 (2007): <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/22531/22531-h/22531-h.htm#link2H_4_0037>.

⁴⁶ Like the title of the film *Coming Through* (1988), about D. H. and Frieda Lawrence, I am playing with the title of his third volume of poems *Look! We Have Come Through!*

⁴⁷ The exception is a later cluster of poems centred on animals or insects. My assertion is based on Reloy Garcia and James Karabatsos, eds, *A Concordance to the Poetry of D. H. Lawrence* (Lincoln, NB: U of Nebraska P, 1970), a computerised search of *Complete Poems*, eds Pinto and Roberts (New York: Viking Press, 1964), 483. In addition to other early window poems mentioned elsewhere, see also 'On the March' (c. 1908), 'End of

Another Home Holiday' (autumn 1909), 'Love on the Farm' (November 1909), 'Ballad of Another Ophelia' (autumn 1910), 'Endless Anxiety' (c. November 1910), 'In Church' (c. November–December 1910), 'Excursion Train' (c. December 1910), 'Coldness in Love' (c. early 1911), 'A White Blossom' (c. summer 1911), 'Love Storm' (c. summer 1911–1913) and 'Pear-Blossom' (c. April 1912).

⁴⁸ Sandra Gilbert, *Acts of Attention* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1972), 73. Pollnitz confirms Lawrence began "to experiment with a new style, 'formless' but 'so truthful' (*IL* 405–6)" soon after meeting Frieda in 1912 (*2Poems* 679).

⁴⁹ D. H. Lawrence, *Look! We Have Come Through!* (Marazion, Cornwall: The Ark Press, 1959), 19. See also note in *2Poems*, 941.

⁵⁰ Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years*, 412.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 407.

⁵² Alan Golding, 'Lawrence and Recent American Poetry', *The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence*, eds Michael Squires and Keith Cushman (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1990), 187–206, 199.

⁵³ Laird, *Self and Sequence*, 91.

⁵⁴ Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years*, 416.

⁵⁵ Tennessee Williams's play *Period of Adjustment* (1960) resonates by featuring discord between newlyweds.

⁵⁶ Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years*: "Lawrence mythologised [Frieda] as soon as he got to know her; she was the sleeping beauty whom he could release from imprisonment" (387). However, Lawrence most likely had less sexual experience.

⁵⁷ Lawrence writes how Cézanne "begins to see more than the All-seeing Eye of humanity can possibly see, kodak-wise ... What art has got to do, and will go on doing, is to reveal things in their different relationships" (*STH* 166).

⁵⁸ I would like to thank the editorial readers for their helpful suggestions, especially the tip about the similarities of 'Gloire De Dijon' to paintings by Pierre Bonnard. That led to reflections on Lawrence's essay 'Art and Morality', his interpretation of Cézanne's paintings, and Post-Impressionist philosophy (*STH* 163–8). Additionally, Degas was primarily a figurative painter interested in private moments of everyday life. Samples of his bathing women include *Woman at the Tub* (c. 1883), *After the Bath* (c. 1883), *Woman in a Tub* (1885–86) and *The Tub* (1886). See also Manet's *Woman in a Tub* (1878) and Cézanne's *La Toilette* (1885–1890).

⁵⁹ Belinda Thomson, *Post Impressionism: Movements in Modern Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 60–1.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁶¹ Keith Sagar, *Art for Life's Sake* (Nottingham: Critical, Cultural and Communications Press, 2011), 65.

⁶² Early variant of 'Gloire De Dijon' (Part 2 in 'All of Roses', broken into three poems in 1917).

⁶³ Lawrence to Burrows: "I feel as if I would like to turn tramp ... and wander till I forget the weedy creek of life I've been bred in" (*IL* 247).

⁶⁴ Keith Sagar, *D. H. Lawrence's Paintings* (London: Chaucer Press, 2003), 100–1.

⁶⁵ Reinhard Zierke, 'The Two Magicians', Website: *Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music*: <<https://mainlynorfolk.info/lloyd/songs/thetwomagicians.html>>. Modern variations play with the ending, including a gender-bending lady turning into a man, and vice versa: "So he became a bonny lass/ And she took him where he stood": Daniel Womack, Performed by Empty Hats, 'The Two Magicians', Track 7 on non-labeled CD-R *The Hat Came Back* (2000).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Laird, *Self and Sequence*, 9, 11.

⁶⁸ Situ, 'Emily Dickinson's Windows': Emily lived a secluded life at the Dickinson Homestead, containing roughly 75 exterior windows (52) that Situ remarks, "functioned like a magic lens" when writing from a window-facing desk (55–6) and inspired many of her poems (*e.g.*, 'I taste a liquor never brewed –', 'Before I got my Eye put out –', 'The Angle of a Landscape –', 'I heard a Fly buzz—when I died –', 'They called me to the Window, for', 'I dwell in Possibility –', 'By my Window have I for Scenery' and 'It sounded as if the Streets were running'). Carl Sandburg samples include 'At a Window', 'Window', and 'Street Window'.

⁶⁹ James L. Jarrett, 'D. H. Lawrence and Bertrand Russell', in *D. H. Lawrence: A Miscellany*, ed. Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1959), 178–9.



Figure 1: William Morris, *Queen Guenevere and Isoude Les Blanchés Mains* (1862). Stained glass. Bradford Art Gallery. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.