

1-1

7#  
#115

# CONNECTICUT REVIEW

Volume X, No.1

Summer 1987

CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES

## Grief and Transfiguration in Tennyson's "In Memoriam"

FLORENCE BOOS

Elegies confront what may be our species' central problem: was Lucretius right that "it matters not a whit (of a dead person) whether he has been born into life at any other time, when immortal death has taken away his mortal life?" (867-69). Death extinguishes identity, and often inspires survivors with fear; more urgently, it seems to negate the very purpose of the lives they still retain. The death of deeply loved persons especially ruptures immediate happiness and its wider metaphysical projections, and this rupture is most poignant when it is "untimely" – when the dead person was young.

Tennyson's "In Memoriam" is perhaps the fullest unravelling in English literature of the many levels of such loss. Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais" mourned the early death of fellow poets, but their grief is more generic: it questions more the durability of the elegists' own identity and achievements than it mourns specific persons. Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" meditates on the death of a representative "youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown" whose identity is relatively diffuse ("nor farther seek his merits to disclose"), and whose loss is assuaged by orthodox assurances of final rest within "the bosom of his Father and his God." Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" represents death as a limiting case of personal diminution ("The things which I have seen I now can see no more"), which is ultimately transcended by a "philosophic mind," which discerns within "the meanest flower that blows . . . /Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

What happens, however, when the loss is immediate and irreversible, not abstract and diffuse? Or when the elegist resists the doctrinal and philosophical comforts of a well-worn genre?

One might have expected a Victorian poet to attempt the description of such loss. Victorian economic, historical, and scientific study of cycles of development confirmed the inevitability of decay, and Victorian intellectuals felt impelled to question the orthodox religious beliefs of their Protestant culture. At the same time, industrial blight devastated the countryside and testified to the depersonalization of rapid social change. In partial response, the Victorian middle-class cultivated family ties with self-conscious urgency, and Victorian poets brooded on social and familial relationships and threatened identity as well as romantic love. In 1830 at least sixteen per cent of all children of the middle class died before the age of five, (Banks 194) and the median age of death remained between forty and fifty to the end of the century, so few Victorians lived to maturity without witnessing the death of several members of their family and immediate circle. In these conditions, one might expect poets concerned on the one hand with social and religious issues, and on the other with the development of individual states of consciousness, to attempt a poetic reexamination of the implications of personal grief.

---

*Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 52242.*

Recently Philippe Aries, whose *L'Homme devant la mort* (1977) appeared in a 1982 English translation as *The Hour of Our Death*, has attempted to outline an ambitious social and intellectual history of death. Aries' methodology is as questionable as it is bold: he purports to span a thousand years and all of Western culture, and infers the attitudes of an entire population toward death from examinations of funeral customs, monuments, wills, letters, and biographies. He minimizes the relevance of economic conditions, conflates different social classes, selects most of his examples from France, and assumes that the 'meanings' he imposes on past observances of mourning are those which they held for their participants. Despite these deficiencies (or perhaps because of them), Aries' models become more recognizable as he approaches the recent past of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Several of his descriptions of nineteenth century attitudes towards death offer recognizable analogues of the apparent intentions and emotional force behind Tennyson's "In Memoriam:"

The fear of death, born of the fantasies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was transferred from the self to the other, the loved one. . . . But what the survivors mourned was no longer the face of dying but the physical separation from the deceased. . . .

The nineteenth century saw the triumph of another image of the beyond. The next world becomes the scene of the reunion of those whom death has separated but who have never accepted this separation: a re-creation of the affections of earth, purged of their dross, assured of eternity. It is the paradise of Christians or the astral world of spiritualists and psychics. But it is also the world of the memories of nonbelievers and freethinkers who deny the reality of life after death. In the piety of their love, they preserve the memories of their departed with an intensity equal to the realistic after-life of Christians or psychics. The difference in doctrine between these two groups may be great, but it becomes negligible in the practice of what may be called the cult of death. They have all built the same castle, in the image of earthy homes, where they will be united – in dream or in reality, who knows? – with those whom they have never ceased to love (610-11).

If Aries is right, Tennyson's grief may in this sense be an acute, highly particular instance of a wider cultural response, and his expression of loss at its most personal, also most representative. The poet's fidelity to his dead love, his "love's dumb cry defying change," would become for him, as for others, the only force capable of arresting "(t)he steps of Time – the shocks of Chance – The blows of Death" (95).

Since the publication of Freud's "On Mourning and Melancholia" in 1917, several other twentieth-century psychologists have also studied 'stages' of mourning. All concur in stressing the restorative effects of openly acknowledged and extended – 'Tennysonian' – grief. Freud initially postulated a need for the bereaved person gradually to displace his or her emotions from the object to the self:

. . . the existence of the lost object is psychically prolonged. Each single one of the memories and expectations for which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it. . . . The fact is, that when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again (245).

In "A Short Study of the Development of the Libido" (1924), Karl Abraham describes the result of mourning as the ability to feel, "The loved object is not gone, for now I carry it within myself and can never lose it," (437) and in *Death and the Family: The*

*Importance of Mourning* (1974), Lily Pincus elaborates this idea:

Once the task of internalization has been achieved, the dependence on the external presence diminishes and the bereaved becomes able to draw on memories, happy or unhappy, and to share these with others, making it possible to talk, think, or feel about the dead person (127).

She also defines what she considers two processes which facilitate this 'internalization': 'idealization,' which is especially heightened in initial grief (46), and 'identification,' which is present in all bereavement (120). Both these processes are prominent features of Tennyson's response to Hallam's loss in "In Memoriam."

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's *On Death and Dying* (1969) and John Bowlby's *Loss* (1980) both provide alternative analyses of mourning which offer clear parallels to the mental states of "In Memoriam." Kubler-Ross outlines six "stages" through which she believes dying persons pass – "denial and isolation," "anger," "bargaining," "depression," "acceptance," and "hope" – and also attempts to apply these to the emotions of those who survive them. Bowlby describes four "phases":

1. . . . numbing that usually lasts from only a few hours to a week and may be interrupted by outbursts of extremely intense distress and/or anger.
2. . . . yearning and searching for the lost figure lasting some months and sometimes for years.
3. . . . disorganization and despair.
4. . . . greater or less degree of reorganization (85).

Tennyson's poetic persona *does* seem to experience such "phases," and the poem's conclusion to reflect Bowlby's observation that the sorrow of bereavement "undergoes a slow change of form as the months and years pass," though "the original relationship continues to fill a central role in a bereaved person's emotional life" (85). According to Bowlby, many mourners experience "illusions (visual, auditory, or tactile, or a sense of presence) or hallucinations of a dead spouse" (97) and Bowlby argues further, in contrast to Freud's characterization of mourning as *detachment* from memories of the dead, that:

. . . for many widows and widowers it is precisely because they are willing for their feelings of attachment to the dead spouse to persist that their sense of identity is preserved and they become able to organize their lives along lines they find meaningful (98).

Compare the experience of Tennyson's poetic persona in section 95 of "In Memoriam," in which his union with Hallam's spirit provides a vision of shared existence in eternity which will sustain him throughout the remainder of the poem, and enables him to regain a tempered version of his original faith. In the remainder of the paper, I will sketch in more detail several parallels between Tennyson's poem and Bowlby's account.

According to Bowlby, several circumstances may pathologically deepen and extend "healthy" grief. Among these are: a recent death in the immediate family which has been insufficiently mourned; several recent losses in close succession; and an ambivalent relationship between the survivor and the deceased. Hallam's death occurred two-and-a-half years after the death of Tennyson's violent father, in a period of severe financial and practical strain for Tennyson, during which the physical and mental ill-health of siblings and his own uncertain future caused him acute anxiety (Ricks). Nevertheless, his poem reveals almost all of the signs of what Bowlby categorizes as "healthy" (rather than

“disordered”) mourning. Comparison of Bowlby’s “phases” with a rough ordering of the sections according to the sequence of composition thus contrasts sharply with contemporary charges that the poem records morbidly protracted grief.

Undated sections of the poem which Tennyson added later expand the account of his reactions, and provide more meditative considerations of grief; they do not, unlike Rossetti’s alterations of the sequence of “The House of Life,” distort its essential biographical sequence of grief (Boos). Tennyson’s final result testifies on the one hand to the immediacy, depth, and altruism of his original responses to his friend’s death, and on the other to his ability to fashion his grief into a deeper accommodation to the force of death. The poem becomes both means and witness of Tennyson’s creative and successful completion of a process of “yearning and search,” in which the offices of memory and affection come to render intelligible, if not acceptable, the death of his friend. He reinterprets their friendship as a type for familial love; evokes scenes of a shared common past; and projects a counterfactually shared future. After he has reassimilated his friend’s physical appearance and character in dreams, speech, verse, and memory, he is finally rewarded with an immanent, all-consoling presence.

Among circumstances which may mitigate the initial shock of loss, Kubler-Ross, Bowlby, and others list the following: the survivors should learn the news from someone they love or trust; they should be able to view the body; and they should have assurance that the body has been securely cared for. Tennyson learned of Hallam’s death from a brief account sent by Hallam’s uncle (Shatto and Shaw 8); Hallam died far from Tennyson, in a foreign country; his sudden death from “apoplexy” was mysterious and disturbing; and his body had to make a rough ocean journey before it could be buried.

In their variorum edition of *In Memoriam* Susan Shatto and Miriam Shaw attempt to impose a chronological ordering on the sections of the poem written between 1833 and 1840 (8-11). According to their reconstruction, sections 9, 17, and 18 were the first completed, and were later expanded into the ship-sections 9-18. Tennyson has already passed Bowlby’s phase of “numbness and denial” in section 9: he recognizes the irreversible nature of his loss, and yearns to bid his friend farewell, as he was unable to do in life. Their “love” evokes almost every familial relationship:

Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love;  
  
My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widowed race be run;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me. . . . (sts. 3b, 4)

Only in these early sections is Hallam invoked by name, as the poet anxiously recalls “my lost Arthur’s loved remains” to England in 17:

Week after week: the days go by:  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love. . . .  
  
So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widowed race be run. (sts. 2b, 5)

Section 18 brings the long-awaited ritual of safe burial, and a last fantasy of physical restoration:

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land. . . .  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest. . . . (sts. 1, 2)  
Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing through his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me. . . . (st. 4)

The very intensity of this desire to sacrifice himself goads the poet to a self-consciousness which anticipates the poem's resolution:

That (life) dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again. (XVIII)

The remaining four-and-a-half sections which Shatto and Shaw assign to 1834 are 28, 30, 31, 32, and the first 11 stanzas of 85 (10-11). Bowlby remarks that anniversaries or holidays often renew the occasion for grief (158); the earliest section of "In Memoriam"'s Christmas sequence (28; the others are 30, 78, and 104-106) records the poet's sense of alienation from sensory phenomena and certitudes of his past life:

Four voices of four hamlets round. . . .  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound. . . . (st. 2)  
This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wished no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again. . . . (st. 4)

Yet the sound of the bells also evokes his boyhood, and with it, a suggestion of continuity and a controlling order:

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controlled me when a boy;  
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule. (St. 5)

Tennyson's mood is more tranquil as he recalls his family's Christmas memories of the dead:

Our voices took a higher range:  
Once more we sang: 'They do not die  
Nor lose their wonted sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change. . . . (30; st. 6)

According to Bowlby, the ability to share grief with others is a significant mark of

recovery (199-200), and recognition that others have shared a kindred grief is indeed essential to the poem's resolution. In the last of the lyrics apparently composed before the end of 1834, stanzas 1-11 of section 85, Tennyson attempts to answer questions put by a kindly friend, and asks whether "love for him ha(s) drained/My capabilities of love." The question remains for now unanswered, except for the famous assertion that 'Tis better to have loved and lost,/ Than never to have loved at all" (st. 1). He does, however, begin to console himself with thoughts of Hallam's transcendence:

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there; . . . (st. 6)

Yet he asserts this apotheosis will not diminish the bond between them:

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O scared essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul! (st. 9)

I felt and feel, though left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine; . . . (st. 11)

Later additions to this section refer to "(an) image comforting the mind, . . . a strength reserved" (st. 13), and the rest of the poem essentially confirms and celebrates this immanent presence. The next 26 sections, composed between 1834 and 1843, prepare for the epiphany of Hallam's visitation in section 95 (Shatto and Shaw 11-14) and the last-composed stanzas, including most of the poem's final sections, celebrate the reinterpretation of his original sorrow which this mystical vision provides. I will briefly mention a few ways in which the poet prepares for the epiphany of 95, and analyze how this identification transforms the poet's final images of his friend.

Eleven sections of the poem, completed in a notebook which Tennyson kept from 1834 to 1838 (Shatto and Shaw 11), closely parallel Bowlby's third and fourth stages of "yearning and search" and "reorganization." In 21, the poet vindicates his elegy as a means of continued communion: "I sing to him that rests below." He is again convinced in 41 of Hallam's apotheosis, and wishes only

That I could wing my will with might  
To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee. (st.3)

Passages from 42 and 44 confirm this rather abstract transfiguration, for which this life establishes certain rudiments:

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the section birth of Death. (st. 4)

Tennyson is conscious that he is now "dwarfed" and "dimly characterized" (61) in comparison to his friend, but offers his "love" (and presumably his poetry) as a widow's mite:

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more. (st. 3)

The second Christmas poem, 78, is written during this period. The poet notices a gradual ebbing of open grief, but eventually interprets this apparent lapse into apathy ("O last regret, regret can die!") as a kind stasis:

Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry. (st. 5)

Bowlby records the remark of a woman interviewed about the death of her husband five years before, "Mourning never ends: only as time goes on it erupts less frequently" (101).

Of the fifteen sections contained in a notebook which Tennyson kept from 1837-40, several expand ideas of earlier sections (1, 3, and 48); or extend Tennyson's reflections on the apparent lack of order or design in the universe (34). Section 46 ends with one of the poem's gathering references to an empyrean entity:

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far;  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge. (st. 4)

In 51, Tennyson considers the consequences of Hallam's presence, including the quaint problem that a godlike Hallam will view his petty sins (Shatto and Shaw 11). The solution is "There must be wisdom [and presumably forgiveness] with great Death," so it is no longer oppressive that "The dead shall look me through and through" (st. 3). The section ends with still another invocation to a kindly, solicitous, and numinous spirit:

Be near us when we climb or fall:  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all. (st. 4)

Bowlby's phase of "yearning and search" may include actual cries or calls to the dead. In sections 90 and 91, Tennyson addresses his dead friend:

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:  
Whatever changes the years have wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee. (90; st. 6)

Come: not in watches of the night,  
but where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light. (91; st. 4)

Hallam's subsequent advent occurs at night, but it prefigures the imagery of dawn and renewal which dominates the poem's final sections.

Central to one's understanding of "In Memoriam" is the interpretation of section 95, in itself a complex poem. Its mildly sexual associations and supernatural intensity seem to embarrass some readers, for Tennyson doesn't record

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARY



what it *might* be like *were* Hallam to return, but presents his *actual* return as one of the central experiences of his own life. Bereaved persons often experience a sense that the dead person has returned to them – sometimes in dreams, and sometimes accompanied by waking sensory illusions and hallucinations. Forty-seven per cent of a group of widows and widowers in one study described such experiences, most found them comforting, and some cherished them (Bowlby 97). As in “In Memoriam,” the revenant is often perceived both within the self and as a companion, and its visitation may paradoxically be part of the formation of a new life (Bowlby 98).

Section 95 opens in a scene of summer dusk, whose luminous fertility, murmuring brook, and peaceful crickets suggest the ebb and flow of generation, and whose muted haze prefigures the indeterminate nature of an encounter too elusive for analysis. The lights of the family house are extinguished one by one, and Tennyson rereads his friend’s letter in the gathering dark.

And strangely on the silence broke  
The silent-speaking words, and strange  
Was love’s dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth. . . . (st. 7)

So word by word, and line by line  
The dead man touched me from the past,  
And all at once it seemed at last  
The living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirled  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Aeonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time – the shocks of Chance –  
The blows of Death. . . . (st. 9-11)

He and Hallam are suddenly one united being, part of “The deep pulsations of the world.” The pronouns of the earlier version referred even more directly to Hallam – “His living soul,” “mine in his was wound.”

Like other mystical experiences, at any rate, this one is ineffable:

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame,  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or even for intellect to reach  
In memory that which I became. . . . (st. 12)

Tennyson later described such *experiences* (plural) in prose:

. . . individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life. This might . . . be the state which St. Paul describes, “Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell” (Shatto and Shaw 253-54).

The return of Tennyson’s friend was apparently only one of his experiences of what Freud’s friend Romain Rolland called an “oceanic feeling.” The quotation is also interesting for

its use of the phrase "out of . . . body," often used to describe the inner experience of people who have returned from the edge of death.

The poet's yearning is platonically erotic, as well as religious after the manner of Vaughan's night-vision of eternity as

. . . a great ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm as it was bright;  
And ranged beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,  
Driven by the spheres,  
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world  
And all her train were hurled. . . . ("The World")

More distantly, it might be compared with Spenser's release from Mutabilitie, to

. . . that same time when no more Change shall be,  
But steadfast rest of all things firmly stayd  
Upon the pillours of Eternity. . . . (Canto VIII, st. 2).

Earlier, evidence of his friend's presence has been partial, but this advent is so complete that it need never recur; a repetition might even diminish its significance. Physical extinction has lost its terror, for human beings can share a love beyond death, and there follows a spiritual as well as natural dawn:

A breeze . . .  
flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said  
'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day. (st. 14-16)

The poet thenceforth carries his knowledge of this super'natural' union as part of his own 'nature' he is mortal and immortal, and he will not be alone.

Later-composed sections reflect a growing acceptance of processes of renewal and change (Shatto and Shaw 15).

ot all regret: the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone;  
And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine: . . . . (st. 3)

The memory of Hallam seems to confirm the future:

. . . less of sorrow lives in me,  
For days of happy commune dead;  
Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be. (st. 4)

Section 124 testifies to the primal powers of memory and emotion – "love's dumb cry defying change" in 95 – and of a sense of purpose and coherence which Tennyson called "faith:"

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice 'believe no more' . . . .

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answered 'I have felt!' (sts. 3 and 4)

Eventually, the spirit of Hallam recedes again into the "hands" of divinity:

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach through nature, molding men. (st. 6)

The transparently erotic qualities of this mystical vision simultaneously evoke the simple love of a child for its parent:

Known and unknown; human; divine;  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine; . . . . (st. 2)

Compare Donne's apostrophe of Death in Holy Sonnet 10:

. . . one short sleep past . . . Death, thou shalt die.

Hallam has now become Tennyson's personal divinity, his daimon, guide and redeemer:

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
Loved deeper, darker understood;  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee. (st. 3)

Compare John 14:2, 3:

I go to prepare a place for you. And . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

The poem's final vision of Hallam in section 130 is utterly numinous:

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
I hear thee where the waters run;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair. (st. 1)

What had been Hallam is now a spirit of abstract energy and light. His "fairness" remains, but 'he' is otherwise as indefinable as the spirit of Shelley's "The Cloud":

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
But though I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less:  
  
My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now;  
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more. (sts. 2 and 3)

By sheer force of poetic desire, Tennyson elevates pathetic fallacy to literal truth. His Hallamized "nature" becomes a diffusely human expression and projection of the poet's hopes for love and fidelity:

Far off art thou, but ever night;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice:  
I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee though I die. (st. 4)

Ultimately, "In Memoriam" is not a commemoration of the poet's dead friend, but of Tennyson's own grief and recovery. One learns little from it of the unique human identity, now vanished, of the twenty-three year old Arthur Henry Hallam. Other modes of composition may in fact be more suitable for this purpose: compare Xenophon's portrait of Socrates, Mill's respectful account of his father, or Eliot's fictional recreation of her father in the figures of Adam Bede and Caleb Garth.

More generally, there may be something both abstract and restrictive about much of Victorian poetic memorialization. "Rugby Chapel" includes a tribute to Arnold's father, and parts of "The Ring and the Book" commemorate Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Several of Hopkins' sonnets and short lyrics – among them "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire," and "Spring and Fall" – brood on the destructive force of nature. But where is an extended poem of grief for a dead child, mother, or husband? Most famous Victorian poets were male, of course, and wrote their best work as young men, on subjects of identity more than loss; even anticipations of the latter tended to merge into mediations on the former.

Tennyson's work is only a partial exception to this pattern. But his efforts to reconcile the inherent inconsistencies of grief and consolation offer, at their best, a moving expression of the paradox that the best way to 'recover' from grief is to cherish the memory of the person grieved. Tennyson's metaphysical vision of redemption retains at least a penumbra of human presence – voice and face, hope and desire, continuity and affection – and his search for this vision traverses recognizable stages of our common human experience of grief and loss. Unlike Wordsworth's "meanest flower," or the star of Shelley's "Adonais," "In Memoriam"'s union between the poet and his once-human Hallam still evokes some lingering sense of the separate selves that were. More than other formal Victorian attempts to confront death – "Childe Roland," "The Wreck of the Deutschland," "Empedocles on Etna" – "In Memoriam" records a plausible process of reflective bereavement, which attempts to sublimate the consciousness lost in an idealized projection of consciousness that still may be regained. In the process, the face of the transfigured Hallam who "standeth in the rising sun" becomes platonically blurred, but this paradox only reflects the superposition of darkness and transcendence which all elegies record, and none resolves.

## WORKS CITED

- Abraham, Karl. "A Short Study of the Development of the Libido." In *Selected Papers*. London: Hogarth Press, 1924. 437.
- Aries, Philippe. *The Hour of Our Death*. Trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Random House, 1982. 610-11.
- Banks, J.O. *Prosperity and Parenthood: A Study of Family Planning Among the Victorian Middle Classes*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954. 194.
- Boos, Florence. *Poetry of Dante G. Rossetti*. The Hague: Mouton, 1976. Ch. 1, "Style in the House of Life," Section B and fns. 3 and 6.
- Bowlby, John. *Loss*. New York: Basic Books, 1980. 85.
- Freud, Sigmund. "On Mourning and Melancholia." In *Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. James Trachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953-66, Vol. 14. 245.
- Lucretius. *De Rerum Natura*, Book III, II. 867-69.
- Pincus, Lily. *Death and the Family: The Importance of Mourning*. New York: Random House, 1974. 127.
- Ricks, Christopher. *Tennyson*. New York: Collier, 1972, Ch. 1-5.
- Shatto, Susan and Marion Shaw, eds. *Tennyson: In Memoriam*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982. 8.
- Spanser, Edmund. *Mutabilitie Canto VIII*, st. 2.