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VICTORIAN ELEGY IN THE AGE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Literatures in English

written under the direction of

Jonah Siegel

and approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October 2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Victorian Elegy in the Age of Photography

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This dissertation argues that nineteenth-century elegiac literature and photography exist in a surprisingly close, interconstitutive relationship that enables elegy to continue to redress loss in a culture where the proliferation of images threatens to subsume the work of mourning. The project builds on important scholarship in the history of science and technology in order to demonstrate the troubled role of elegy's fascination with visual media in the nineteenth century. I identify a pervasive ambivalence about how to visualize the deceased that shapes major elegies by Alfred Tennyson, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Thomas Hardy — works that both desire and resist the photographic technologies they imagine. In Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, for example, the poet evokes a medium that will allow him to see Hallam, but he disavows the images themselves as inadequate consolations. Furthermore, I argue that Tennyson's great poems of light and loss, "Tithon" and "Tithonus," are concerned with the same paradox of visualizing absence that the scientist John William Draper describes as "tithonicity," which he defines as the imponderable force responsible for the creation and destruction of photographs. In another poignant instance, Rossetti's destruction of photographic portraits of his late wife, Elizabeth Siddal, reveals a fearful ambivalence about reproducibility instantiated textually in the elegiac sections of *The House of Life*. In the age of photography, elegy's

conventional aspiration to mourn and commemorate the dead is not only reshaped as a struggle to reconcile what remains with what cannot return, but the ambivalence towards the beloved's residual image becomes increasingly acute in verses consumed with traces, outlines, and other signs of loss that the age of photography makes visible. For this reason, I understand photography as a dynamic site—as much cultural as technical. Drawing on recent revisions to the history of photography's origins in the nineteenth century, I offer an account of Victorian elegy's vexed relationship with this technology as it develops between the anticipations of photography in Romanticism and the emergent motion pictures of early Modernism.

Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips
 So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes
 That image sleep in death, upon that form
 Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
 Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
 Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
 Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,
 And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
 It is a woe too "deep for tears," when all
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

--Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Alastor"

You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing.
 I saw everything.
 I saw the hospital, I'm sure of it.
 The hospital in Hiroshima exists.
 How could I not have seen it?
 You didn't see the hospital in Hiroshima.
 You saw nothing in Hiroshima.
 Four times at the museum.
 What museum in Hiroshima?
 Four times at the museum in Hiroshima.
 I saw people walking around.
 People walk around, lost in thought, among the photographs, the reconstructions, for lack
 of anything else. The photographs, the photographs, for lack of anything else. The
 explanations, for lack of anything else. Four times at the museum in Hiroshima. I
 watched the people. I myself, lost in thought, looked at the scorched metal. The twisted
 metal. Metal made as vulnerable as flesh. I saw the bouquet of bottle caps.
 Who would have thought?
 Human flesh, suspended, as if still alive, its agony still fresh.

--*Hiroshima Mon Amour*

Acknowledgements

Many scholars, librarians, archivists, and curators have generously contributed to the work of this dissertation. However, without the intellectual guidance, thoughtfulness, and kindness of Jonah Siegel, I would not have been able to write this project. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to my committee members, Dianne Sadoff and Carolyn Williams, who have pushed my thinking and writing forward. My external reader, Geoffrey Batchen, has been generous enough to participate from New Zealand, and his work on photography has influenced much of my thinking about the medium. John Kucich provided helpful and encouraging feedback for the chapters that have become articles.

My grandparents, Peter and Dr. Roberta Markman, have been the two most significant and supportive figures in my education. Their love brought me into the world of art and ideas when I was a child, and it continues to shape my work. Riccardo Capoferro, Nellickal Jacob, Scott Trudell, Michael Hardy, and especially Julie Camarda have all been dear friends to me at Rutgers and helpful interlocutors. My parents, Gary, Glynis, and Deena, have expressed their care and interest throughout my time in graduate school, and for that I am very thankful.

The A. W. Mellon Foundation and the Daniel Francis Howard Travel Fellowship provided valuable support for research in England. My first chapter is forthcoming in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, and a version of the third chapter will be published in *Victorian Studies*.

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Introduction

Some of the most influential theorists of photography were Victorian poets. Their elegies about personal loss and mourning address cultural transformations catalyzed by the rapid media innovations of the period. As a literary genre, elegy has traditionally been thought to perform the work of mourning by consoling the speaker and envisioning a way forward without the deceased. Through burial, the dead person is effectively removed from the visual field, and the elegy replaces that absent body with a text that memorializes him or her. However, beginning with its invention in the early nineteenth century, photography's unique ability to make visible both the presence and absence of the deceased threatens to inhibit elegy's work of mourning. Elegy responds to these technological and aesthetic advances with interest and ambivalence, developing a language to confront a medium itself shaped by the poet's word as much as the camera's lens.

To insist on the fundamental connections between literature and photography in the Victorians' media ecology is to challenge conventional histories of photography that are founded on a technological determinism.¹ By focusing attention on the desires and imaginative drives that make the medium possible, recent work in visual studies has demonstrated that the invention of photography is more than just a technical event. However, this scholarship has tended to obscure the importance of literature, especially poetry, in understanding the context of the nineteenth-century visual imagination. This dissertation locates what I call the language of photography specifically in the genre of

elegy, which allows me to follow a line of development from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poetry in the 1830s through Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The House of Life* sonnets of the 1860s and 1870s to Thomas Hardy's elegiac *Poems of 1912-13*. Constellated together, these works show that a condition of elegy in the age of photography is a newly difficult adumbration of both the presence and absence of the lost object. Victorian elegies compose a relationship between the present and the past through the language of photography that details the remnants, traces, and contiguities of residual figures.

This dissertation contends that any complete history of mourning in the age of mechanical reproduction must account for the nuanced and intensely metaphorical language of Victorian elegy that engages with these technological developments. However, there is no current study that brings together the topics of Victorian elegy, mourning, and photography in spite of a growing body of scholarship on Victorian literature's significant involvement with the medium. Nancy Armstrong, Jennifer Green-Lewis, and Daniel Novak have studied the Victorian novel to consider the intersection between literature and photography in the context of realism.² Turning toward verse, Helen Groth examines the role of photographic illustration in the production and circulation of Victorian poetry that focuses on literary nostalgia, but her study does not address elegy or the work of mourning. Moreover, literary scholars who study elegy have tended to neglect the intermedial aspects of the genre. In fact, notable critics such as Peter Sacks, W. David Shaw, and recently Diana Fuss, all insist on the power of language to perform the work of mourning in ways that other media cannot replicate. Critical work that typically brings together the topics of photography, literature, and mourning is more often found in Holocaust studies where scholars grapple with the distinctive ethical and

aesthetic problems that attend that historical period.³

This reticence of literary scholars to discuss the role of elegy in photography's history and development is all the more surprising because the bearing of language on photography has been a recurrent source of interest for the medium's most influential critics. When Susan Sontag asserts photography's mournful nature in *On Photography* by calling it an "elegiac art, a twilight art," she quickly moves to consider the ethics of looking at a photograph that necessitate a certain kind of language. Her stated concern is the depiction of political violence when she famously writes, "Photographs cannot create a moral position, but they can reinforce one—and can help build a nascent one" (17). Merely looking at a photograph does not constitute understanding, and Sontag continues, "What determines the possibility of being affected morally by photographs is the existence of a relevant political consciousness" (19). This is a consciousness shaped not only by images but also by language and the imaginative work that comes with engaging different forms of art. In her final work on this subject, *Regarding the Pain of Others*—a book that has an epigraph taken from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*—Sontag emphasizes the limitations of seeing the pain and trauma of war that we can never know without direct experience. In Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, the importance of language for photography is made all the more clear; for the medium to serve as an elegiac art, the mourner must find the right words to accompany it. In Barthes's case, his entire book is driven by the desire to find consolation in a photograph of his late mother that is purposefully not reproduced. Even though this crucial relationship between photography and loss has been studied from numerous critical angles, the significance of the language

that critics such as Sontag and Barthes emphasize has never been traced back to one of its major points of origination—the Victorian elegy.

Photography gives Victorian poets a new insight into the work of mourning, but from the perspective of the elegists studied in this dissertation, the photograph cannot supplant the poem to articulate the mourner's sorrow or provide consolation for the beloved's loss. Moreover, these poets are often troubled by how the photograph can inhibit the work of mourning, and we see their fascination with the medium paired with their resistance in acts that include the destruction of images and the creation of others. For this reason, my dissertation places archival objects next to elegiac texts to demonstrate the troubled relationships between the poems and the photographs. These objects consistently prove elusive and inadequate, requiring me to theorize the relationship elided by contingency or purposeful subversion.

My first chapter, "Arthur Hallam's Spirit Photograph and Tennyson's Elegiac Trace," begins with such an archival fragment: the forgotten anecdote of Tennyson viewing a spirit photograph of his dear friend and asking, "Is that Arthur?" I restate the poet's question by asking what it means for the poet to imagine a photograph of someone who died before the medium's invention in 1839. I go on to argue that Tennyson was grappling in his earliest poetry with what I term the elegiac trace, a material and imaginative connection between the text and its referents that links elegy to photography. I broaden my understanding of this trace by using C. S. Peirce's semiotic term, indexicality, which he defines as a sign that bears a relation of cause or effect with what it signifies. Commonly overlooked by scholars, Tennyson's ambitious 1833 poem, "The Miller's Daughter," presents a forlorn speaker desperate to connect with his lost beloved

through indexical traces and remains that he develops throughout the poem using the language of photography. Later in the century, readers of this poem try to locate and photograph its setting, but Tennyson dismisses these efforts, writing that the imaginative work of art cannot be photographed. My argument turns on the elegist's paradoxical disavowal of photography in a poem that imagines such a technology, culminating with the spirit photograph of Hallam, a topic further developed in the next chapter.

In the second chapter, "Tennyson's Tithonicity," I demonstrate how the elegiac trace functions in Tennyson's early poems about Hallam's loss and in his great 1850 elegy, *In Memoriam*. Tennyson's desire to touch Hallam, manifested as a yearning for an indexical connection to him, marks a fundamental change in the elegy's techniques of mourning. By insisting on such a connection, however, Tennyson discovers his language is inadequate to realize his desire. For this reason, the poem imagines a perfect medium that preserves the imaginative possibilities of poetry even though the elegist insists on physical, sensory contact with Hallam. The poet fantasizes about the possibilities offered by visual technologies such as photography, but Tennyson's early experiments with this medium in his poem, "Tithonus," struggle with the perverse consequences of summoning an image that should remain lost. Tennyson's troubled desire for this medium in "Tithonus" resembles the scientific theory of his contemporary, John William Draper, who claims all photography is the effect of "tithonicity." Draper explains that tithonic rays, an imponderable force, create photographs but also cause images to fade. Draper's theory seizes on an instance of the interrelation between science and aesthetics as it defines photography in terms of loss. In an attempt to reverse the kind of metaphor central to Draper, Tennyson imagines Hallam as a perfect type, impossible to see because

he continues to evolve, thus immune to the tithonic effects of photography. Hallam's figure at the conclusion of *In Memoriam*, however, uncannily resembles the strangely denatured form of Tithonus in perpetual decay—a conflict the elegy, with its troubled faith in the perfect medium, never resolves.

No art movement has been more associated with early photography than Pre-Raphaelitism, whose precision and detail in painting and drawing is often compared to that enabled by the camera's resolution when it is not directly traced to the emergence of the technology. My third chapter, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Bad Photographs," begins with Rossetti's anxieties about the medium that led him to destroy photographs of his wife, Elizabeth Siddal, because he claims they do not resemble her. The destruction of the portraits is in stark contrast to Rossetti's intense efforts to preserve Siddal's artwork in a photographic album that he created after her death. Study of these remarkable yet forgotten materials led me to uncover Rossetti's concealment of Siddal's image in an overpainted photograph. Photography challenges Rossetti's desire for control but offers the possibility of retaining the image of the beloved. To understand the threat and promise of photography, I turn to Rossetti's elegiac sonnet sequence, *The House of Life*, which struggles with how to live in the wake of inevitable loss. In the four "Willowwood" sonnets, Rossetti formalizes a metaphor for the return of the speaker's beloved in a pool of water that I read as a metaphor for photographic reproduction. This return exhibits features characteristic of the elegy in the age of photography: even as the speaker wishes for the beloved's presence, he orchestrates her loss to keep her from view.

My fourth chapter, "Thomas Hardy's Persistent Vision," reads the *Poems of 1912-13* that elegize the passing of his wife, Emma, by contrasting their unconventional

form and structure with the moving images that fascinated the Victorians in early cinema. Scholarship has focused on the ways in which these elegies are analogous to the cinema, and criticism has tended to look past how Hardy's poetry calls attention to both the photograph and cinema's insufficiency to mourn the beloved's loss or make her present. In the elegies, Emma rides, drives, and moves from one line to the next, creating a motion within the poems that chafes against the speaker's grief. The verses put Emma in and out of view, flitting between the visible and the off-frame with the vitality and quickness of a gait that belies her absence. Hardy, however, frames this movement as a projection by his speaker, whose desire for the beloved to return proves irreconcilable with her death. In the distance between Hardy's understated wish to see the beloved again and the reality of his loss, the poetic voice describes movements that no photographic technology—moving or still—can capture and make visible.

My dissertation recovers the neglected history of Victorian poets' ambivalence towards photography by reading elegy's sublimated longing for technologies of mourning that resemble photography and fantasize beyond it. A technology is shaped as much by resistance as use. However, the history of photography has suffered from a critical blind spot that occludes the frustrated dreams and wishes of elegists whose theories of and metaphors for the medium often questioned its dangerous consequences for mourning the dead. Archival objects evidence these anxieties, but they remain inaccessible to cultural and media historians who do not view them in the context of literary history. My project goes beyond articulating an analogical relationship between photography and elegy to demonstrate the emergence of a language that results from the convergence of the two.

This is the language of a visual culture searching for new forms of consolation in the images and technologies that Victorian elegies at once desire and fear.

¹ The phrase “technological determinism” is notoriously difficult to define and often used as a pejorative in media studies. At issue is the extent to which a technology such as photography drives historical and cultural change. Friedrich Kittler’s work on media theory has often been seen as representative of this approach. For example, in *Optical Media*, Kittler gives a history of photography’s development in the early nineteenth century that finds the daguerreotype developing out of the lithographic process (127). However, Talbot’s paper negative process, the calotype, stems from a different origin, which in turn gives rise to the film roll and the cinema. When Kittler does address the medium’s relationship with literature, he relies on a problematic analogy: “Against the backdrop of photography, literature therefore no longer simply produces inner pictures for the *camera obscura* that Hoffmann’s solitary romantic readers became; rather, it begins to create objective and consistent visual leitmotifs that could easily be filmed” (139). Needless to say, Kittler does not have the abstruse images of Victorian poetry in mind. Furthermore, when Kittler considers the resistance to photography by a writer such as Edgar Allan Poe, he explains the analogy in one of his stories that involves a haunted portrait: “As soon as Poe’s fictional painting is completed, the painter’s beloved drops dead. Media analysis can only emphasize once again how historical phantasms and collective symbols. . . are directly based on technologies”(140). For an alternative to this technical approach, see W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark Hansen’s “Introduction” that emphasizes the cultural and aesthetic forces at play in any act of mediation.

² This is by no means to suggest the relationship between mourning and photography has not been thought of in the context of Victorian literature. See, for example, Carol Mavor’s *Pleasures Taken* that addresses Lewis Carroll’s photography. Also, there is a growing body of scholarship that is interested in the many aspects of photography’s relationship with literature: see Rugg for a study of photography and autobiography. Much of this interdisciplinary work has addressed American literature in particular: see Goodwin, Meehan, and M. Williams. Also see Burrows and his introduction that engages directly with Armstrong’s thesis about realist fiction and photographic representation. Hansom collects critical essays that examine the place of photography in Modernist literature.

³ Marianne Hirsch’s *The Generation of Postmemory* and Eric Santner’s *Stranded Objects*, among many other studies, have considered the role of the photograph in the work of mourning that takes place in postwar literature. A flurry of scholarly activity has approached the problems of trauma, war, and melancholy in the wake of 9/11. See, for example, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett.

Chapter 1

Arthur Hallam's Spirit Photograph and Tennyson's Elegiac Trace

Mrs. Jesse was keen on psychophotography, which was then in its infancy. She had recently been photographed in Clifton, and the shadowy figure of a man had appeared behind her on the negative when it was developed. She thought it had a look of Arthur Hallam. I recall the photograph shown and studied by a group at Farringford. Alfred Tennyson was one of the group; he walked through the French windows of the drawing-room, and, meeting Anne Thackeray on the lawn, said to her as if in a dream, 'Is that Arthur?'

--Blanche Warre Cornish

Blanche Warre Cornish's 1921-22 tripartite memoir, "Memories of Tennyson," begins in 1869 when she meets the poet by way of her parents' friendship with Tennyson's neighbor, the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron (145) (Figure 1).¹ The photograph that Cornish recalls as "psychophotography" is one instance of a trend in Victorian England of spirit photography that was first practiced around 1872 after it was imported from America, where William Mumler had developed it (Tucker 68; Doyle 2: 128).² Reactions to these spirit photographs took various forms: while some viewers regarded them as a credible medium for communication with the dead, their detractors saw them as deliberate acts of deception. Others employed photography's spectral qualities for entertainment, such as the London Stereoscopic Company that had marketed photographs of angels, fairies, and ghosts for their customers' amusement in the 1860s (Ch  roux 45-53). By the time the "shadowy figure of a man" appears beside Arthur Hallam's erstwhile fianc  , Mrs. Jesse, Tennyson's sister, the practice had been subject to public intrigue and scandal as a part of broader and contentious Victorian debates about

the status of photography as art or document.³ The already surreal qualities of Cornish's anecdote are amplified by Tennyson's question, "Is that Arthur?," which entertains the possibility of Hallam being present in a visible, spectral form while unrecognized by his beloved friend.

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a personal conversation which had been interrupted by my arrival was resumed. The elder lady had a deep, serious voice, and she attracted me at once by her fine blue expressive eyes, which still gave forth light, though set in a deep-lined face. She had a well-cut profile; dark bandeaux of hair fell with delicate curves on each side of her brown face; they were streaked with grey. She had once been Arthur Hallam's *fiancée*, Emily Tennyson. To everything Anne Thackeray was saying in her gentle reflective way about life and its contradictions she replied with a strong Lincolnshire accent, "I know that; I have felt that." She added in a deep melodious tone, just like Horatio Tennyson's, "I have felt averything; I know averything. I don't want any new emotion. I know what it is to feel like a stoän."

Emily Tennyson had married in 1841. There is a characteristic letter printed in *Memoirs* of the time which conveys a sense of the feeling about Arthur Hallam which still pervaded his circle eight years after his death:

What do you think? Emily Tennyson—I can hardly even now believe it—Emily Tennyson is actually now going to be married—and to whom after such a man as Arthur Hallam?—to a Captain Jesse in the Royal Navy, not a gentleman of astounding talents or one would try to get over it, but all that one hears is that he is R.N. Julia Hallam always considered her quite as her own sister; she regarded her as a kind of nun; Emily had felt Arthur's death so much it had even injured her health. Uncle Hallam never contemplated her marrying again. For myself I had such a romantic admiration for her, looked at her with such pity, that all my feeling is *bouleversé*.*

In the days that followed at Farringford Mrs. Jesse's part in the circle was often racy. She was absorbed in her dog and in her raven, another pet which appeared at luncheon daily on her wrist; it was fed on raw meat, which had to be cut up in her presence. She was always ready with a *réplique*, quip, or a pun for her nephews. When wit of this kind went on one day my sister said to Tennyson, "Isn't it like Shakespeare?" And he replied, "Yes, and the worse joke the better." Mrs. Jesse was keen on psychophotography, which was then in its infancy. She had recently been photographed in Clifton, and the shadowy figure of a man had appeared behind her on the negative when it was developed. She thought it had a look of Arthur Hallam. I recall the photograph shown and studied by a group at Farringford. Alfred Tennyson was one of the group; he walked through the French windows of the drawing-room, and, meeting Anne Thackeray on the lawn, said to her as if in a dream, "Is that Arthur?"

All confided in this trusted friend and caught fresh vitality from her, and when she left Freshwater Mrs. Jesse said in deep tones, "We are flat as flounders."

* A paper in *Blackwood's Magazine* which appeared in 1894, after Mrs. Jesse's death, shows her to have been a true daughter of the Tennyson race, for she had a terse and beautiful English expression in letter writing. Her granddaughter, Miss Tennyson Jesse, was already well known in literature before the Great War, and conspicuous in service in the W.A.A.C.

Figure 1. A photograph of *The London Mercury* clipping of the spirit photograph anecdote included in Richard Eustace Jesse's *Annales Tennysoniani*. Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire County Council.

While the study of Victorian photography and literature has tended to focus attention on the realist novel and sometimes has attended to Tennyson's involvement with Julia Margaret Cameron in the 1870s, this chapter will show that photography is relevant for reading Tennyson's early poetry as well as the poet's representation of his process of mourning for Hallam.⁴ This chapter will demonstrate the ways that Hallam's spirit photograph participates in the emergence of a dramatic cultural transformation catalyzed by the reproducible image and its relationship with Victorian elegy.

Recent scholarship on Victorian spiritualism has established that spirit photographs exemplify photography's dialectical tendency to mediate between authenticity and contrivance.⁵ In the case of Hallam's photograph, the elegiac afterlife of the subject extends the image's metaphorical value well beyond the history of photography and its occult manifestations. My argument is that this spirit photograph evidences the convergence of a traditionally literary genre, elegy, with a unique mode of technological reproduction, photography, in a way that is characteristic of Tennyson's verse. "As if in a dream," Cornish writes in her description of Tennyson's response, which frames the poet walking out through a window of his storied residence into a world where photography might transform wishes into realities. The anecdote expresses the wish half-recognized for a new technology to make contact with the dead. The group at Farringford studies the image, suggesting both their hesitance to identify Hallam in the photograph as well as a desire for photography to conjure the dead through a chemical process.

Tennyson's complex reaction depends on a link between photography and elegy within Victorian culture that has not received sufficient attention from scholars of either

the poetry or photography. One obvious reason for this failure is the historical fact of photography's 1839 invention several years after Hallam's death and Tennyson's early poetry. However, recent theorists of the medium have opened up the possibility of thinking about photography's emergence as more than just a technical event. Eduardo Cadava and Geoffrey Batchen examine the desires and cultural drives that were conditions for the invention. In his reading of Walter Benjamin's dialectical image of history, Cadava claims that the "language of photography" exists well before the photographic invention, originating with the ancient desire to read the stars, to translate the visual image into language. What Cadava means by the "language of photography" is a metaphor for the conflation of light with language to represent a past that will vanish as soon as it is perceived (*Words* 85). Batchen, the other theorist developing this approach to photography, has emphasized the significance of photography's roots in a combination of the Greek words *phos*, meaning light, and *graphie*, meaning writing, drawing, or delineation (*Burning* 101). In Batchen's history, photography emerges from an "epistemological dilemma" to mediate between "culture and nature, transience and fixity, space and time." The "paradoxical coalition" of light with writing is manifested in the "pencil of nature" and "words of light," which are both phrases that the Victorian inventor William Henry Fox Talbot used to describe the new medium. Given the significance of language for the medium identified by these historians, it is not unreasonable to suggest that we are still discovering the connections that exist between literary form and the Victorian photographic imaginary.

We see the necessity of the imagination in photography's earliest images when movement blurs the subject and makes it impossible to photograph anything other than a

static object. The blur is a crucial reminder of an image that remains beyond the medium's ability to represent.⁶ This is why Benjamin tells us in both "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and in his "Little History of Photography" that the last vestige of aura resides in the human countenance when it is associated with the blur and imprecision of Victorian photographs at a stage in their development that required prolonged exposure times during which the human being "grew into the picture" ("Little History" 280). In these nascent images, we see the impossibility of clearly viewing the past; however, the presence of a human figure, no matter how shadowy, provokes identification. Photography's power to outline the forms and contingencies of an arrested, irretrievable moment directs our attention to both the simultaneous presence and absence of the photographed object. Like Hallam's spirit photograph, the unseen details of the figure are left to the scrutiny, prejudice, and imagination of the viewer.

The photographic image manifests a relationship between light and language that is also vitally important for Victorian elegy, the literary genre charged with coming to terms with the disappearance, loss, and remains of the dead.⁷ Victorian elegy often defies generic categories and traditional forms to reimagine the work of mourning in a culture undergoing rapid technological change. Cornish gives us two opportunities to reflect on the photographic imaginary and the elegiac in Tennyson's poetry. I have already cited the anecdote about Hallam's spirit photograph with its attendant hopefulness as well as its uncertainty about the possibilities of photography to place one in relation to the dead. Elsewhere in her text Cornish quotes Tennyson's comments about a photographer who wants to discover the location of his early 1832 poem, "The Miller's Daughter." Tennyson derides the photographer for not recognizing that the poem's location is

imaginary. While photography visualizes the material possibilities for contact Tennyson desires to realize in poetic form, it sacrifices literary elegy's unique ability to imagine the deceased rather than to see him in an image. The image ultimately threatens to reify an inert specter of the deceased, thereby overshadowing the imaginative capabilities of language to mediate the spirit. What we might describe, following W. J. T. Mitchell, as the poet's iconophobia informs his constant ambivalence about the relationship between the photographic image and elegy.⁸ Even in his earliest elegiac poems, however, Tennyson is working with what we could usefully call the language of photography, suggesting not that the ambivalence arises as a response to technological change but that the emergent technology itself is a way of working through an issue of longer standing.⁹ The age of photography marks a change in the elegy from a form concerned with mourning the disappearance of the deceased to one that now struggles with what can remain -- a problem central to even quite an early work, such as "The Miller's Daughter," a text to which I will return at the end of this chapter.

Tennyson adumbrates a relationship between the present and the past through language that details the remnants, traces, and contiguities of residual figures. What emerge are elegies that envision images through poetic form, but that do not manifest those images visually. Tennyson anticipates Benjamin by recognizing the affective risk of attempting to achieve a clear view of a past that only reveals itself in flits and flashes. The poet wants to find a way to connect with his past, especially to elements as dear to him as Hallam. However, what is lost can only be traced in the light and shadow of what remains.

Photography as Elegy

Elegy not only remembers the deceased; it has to imagine a way forward without him.¹⁰ Photography's unique ability to make visible both the presence and absence of the deceased threatens to stymie elegy's work of mourning by creating a reproducible specter of the dead. In the context of the Victorians' pervasive culture of mourning, the previously unseen worlds that photography brought into view in 1839 offered new hope that the dead could return in some form to the physical world or, more astonishingly, proof that they had not yet left it. To make sense of this medium required a negotiation of what was a function of reality and what was made possible solely through the process of representation offered by a new technology.¹¹

It is photography's ability to secure the image of what was once before the camera's lens that fascinates Victorians with the possibilities of the medium's power to retain or bring back what would otherwise be lost. In this sense, spirit photographs are an exaggeration of the memorial function evident in the most mundane family portraits.¹² Critics have identified this crucial feature of photography as the indexical relationship between the objects photography represents in the reproducible image and the objects outside of it in reality. The index, which has emerged as a key semiotic term for twentieth-century writers on photography, simultaneously describes the traces of what remains and suggests a history of what has been lost.¹³ The concept is originally described by the American philosopher C. S. Peirce, who identifies the index broadly as a sign or representation that bears a relation of cause or effect to what it signifies. An index, Peirce suggested, has a "dynamical (including spatial) connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses or memory of the person for

whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand” (107-08). What Peirce calls “the senses or memory” create a nexus between the index and its objects by identifying contiguity among referents. Peirce gives a number of examples, among them: “I see a man with a rolling gait. This is a probable indication that he is a sailor.” To identify the indexical relationship enables us to see how subjects transform and what they leave behind.¹⁴ For example, the handprints in the Lascaux cave have an indexical relationship to the people who lived in a culture all but lost to us.

Photography makes it possible to invest all objects with indexical significance and create a traceable relationship with the subject who will inevitably disappear. As Batchen writes on memorial photographs,

Photography is privileged within modern culture because, unlike other systems of representation, the camera does more than just see the world; it is also touched by the world. . . . Photographs are therefore designated as indexical signs, images produced as a consequence of being directly affected by the objects to which they refer. (*Forget* 31)

Batchen describes the pairing of the memorial photograph with other media as a doubled indexicality. For example, vernacular photographs of the deceased often put a physical remnant of the body, such as a lock of hair, in close proximity to the image.¹⁵ For Batchen, this practice signifies the limitations of photographs in memorializing the dead (*Forget* 74-76). At the same time as photography frames iconically and indexically the objects secured by the image, it also signifies the loss of that moment to time. By putting a physical remnant of the body next to its indexical representation, the mourner attempts to reinforce the indexical presence of the subject. However, the need for doubled indexicality in memorial practices suggests that photographs cannot conjure subjects on their own.

There is no more influential work on the relationship between mourning and photography than Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, which develops the language of photography to form a new kind of elegy. For Barthes, photography's indexicality is unique because of its temporal relationship to the photographic subject; however, to make sense of this indexicality requires the use of language. Barthes wants to understand why one particular photograph of his recently deceased mother wounds him in a way that so many others do not. Barthes does not use Peirce's term, but he clearly draws on the photograph's indexical nature when he names the element that effects this wounding the "punctum," that which articulates what he calls the "*that-has-been*" (77). As Tom Gunning contends, however, indexicality is not synonymous with the punctum because the photograph makes "us imagine something else, something behind it, before it, somewhere in relation to it" (*Index* 35).¹⁶ The punctum is what establishes a fundamental relationship between the photograph and its viewer of the sort that allows Barthes to locate in the image a kind of "umbilical cord" to his mother.¹⁷ Barthes describes this sense as a kind of "madness" because the photograph is so much more than an object of representation. As the critic writes,

Here is where the madness is, for until this day no representation could assure me of the past of a thing except by intermediaries; but with the Photograph, my certainty is immediate: no one in the world can undecieve me. The Photograph then becomes a bizarre *medium*, a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception, true on the level of time: a temporal hallucination, so to speak, a modest, *shared* hallucination (on the one hand 'it is not there,' on the other 'but it has indeed been'): a mad image, chafed by reality. (115)

This hallucination requires the viewer's projection to recognize what "has indeed been" by imagining or tracing what no longer exists. As Barthes describes earlier in the book, the punctum is both what actually lies in the photograph and what he reads into it. For

this reason, Barthes writes, “I may know better a photograph I remember than a photograph I am looking at . . .” (53). In other words, to love a photograph means both to see and to imagine. Language enables Barthes to situate the Winter Garden photograph in history and in time, to love both his mother and the image of her.¹⁸ However, neither the photograph nor the elegist's language is adequate to recreate his mother: they can only facilitate a hallucination that runs aground when confronted with the reality of Barthes's loss. Nonetheless, this "mad image" enables a vital connection to the lost mother by creating a friction between her absence and her presence insisted on by a photograph that has been “chafed by reality.” In this way, the photograph's semiotic qualities, the indexical and the iconic, engage with the powerful faculties of the imagination to create an extraordinary object of representation. The photograph as elegy presents the image of the deceased, but it also impels the elegist to imagine her outside of the image through the language of photography.

Tennyson's Spiritualism and Indexicality

In Hallam's spirit photograph, the group at Farringford views a subject who could never be photographed but who nonetheless remains present for his mourners. In this way, Tennyson's reaction to the photograph in Cornish's account resembles Barthes's treatment of the Winter Garden photograph. The negotiation between the real and the imagined — a mediation that Barthes has in mind with punctum — is one instance of the ways in which Tennyson and his contemporaries struggled with the elegiac desires of spirit photography. The Hallam image shows how the madness of spirit photographs, indeed of all photographs, is disruptive to the mourner because of the inherent ontological

instability entailed in their existence: a quality not so different from the one Barthes associated with photography of a more apparently mundane sort. A liminal space opens for the mourner where technology seems to validate the imagined, metaphorical truth of an image that seems to become literal, to become, that is, the very reality the form should only access as an index.

Spiritualists want more than the hallucination Barthes finds in the photograph: they want the total negation of their loss, which entails denying the very temporality that the photograph represents. But to insist on a material resurrection is to diminish the imagination that values the power of metaphor over dubious spirit emanations. For Tennyson, the imagination resides in language, not the image. In one account of Tennyson's spiritualism, we find him considering indexicality in order to define this relationship between the real and the imagined. The story of Tennyson's participation in spiritualism at Freshwater is told by Ella Coltman, a relative of Julia Duckworth, who recalls her time there in an 1888 diary recently brought to light by the archival work of Michael Millgate.¹⁹ In the first “scéance” Coltman mentions, she describes Tennyson as “very anxious to prove spiritualism true. He says he prayed for years to see his Father after death, but in vain” (5). When Coltman actually witnesses Tennyson at a séance, the affect of “the bard” is noticeably different from that of a solemn mourner: “At times the grave expression changes & his whole face brims over with enjoyment & amusement, creased all over with pleasure. He is delightfully naïve & boyish in the way he enjoys himself” (10).

Coltman's account foregrounds a characteristic vacillation between belief and doubt on the poet's part that is also reflected in his puzzled response to the Hallam spirit

photograph. The poet laureate's "constantly changing" expression is described as both a mournful "sad far-off look," and as that of a boy "twinkling with fun," when he conjures a specter that summons the suggestively maternal "Macmahoonney" to the table (11). At first the spirit identifies itself as "Molly," who Tennyson initially thinks might be "Molly McGhee," the imaginative heroine from his poem "Tomorrow" (11 n.36). It turns out that the spirit is "Molly Macmahoonney." Coltman writes, "his pity for Molly Macmahoonney was half comical, half pathetic" (11). When Coltman's companion, Mary, questions the existence of spirits, Tennyson rebukes her and claims, "This is the lowest order of all manifestations." Tennyson implies that the séance's authenticity is undermined by its own performativity:

"I do not mean by this 'seeing ghosts', for I do not know of any authentic case of 'materialization of form' — although I cannot say that there is no such thing." Such materialization at spiritualist scéances he thinks is usually ocular deception or humbug. His explanation of table-rapping is that "the universe is full of disembodied spirits flying hither & thither & that their outlet into human existence is by contact with life in human beings". As long as the contact lasts they can exist under human conditions & make themselves understood. (11-12)

The séance fails to perform the necessary mediation between the real and the imagined. At first, Tennyson rejects the idea of ghosts that materialize in recognizably iconic forms; at the same time, he theorizes that there must be some possibility for the spirit world to touch the living. He calls this possibility "contact," which requires a living person to mediate the spirit's communication. However, communication does not occur through haptic or ocular sensations but within the living where the spirit finds not only expression but also understanding. Of course, from Tennyson's point of view, poets are an ideal medium for this communication. This recalls Shelley's description of poets in *A Defence of Poetry* as "hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration," but in Tennyson's case,

Romantic idealism does not satisfy the conditions for the contact he desires. He wants to apprehend the spirit and identify it with a name.

Tennyson is looking for a medium that can indexically yoke the real and the imagined to overcome the “ridiculous aspect” and communicate with the “unseen” world that is nonetheless present. The poet’s sense of his liminal position manifests both in his affect and his desire; in an attempt to find a new way into this realm, he oscillates between finding the occult practices necessary for contact ridiculous and essential. To communicate with the “spirit world” requires a perfect medium that can render a form where “the bodiless & expressionless can for some brief moments find body and expression through us” (Coltman 12). The search for this indexical form is guided by Tennyson’s reading of Swedenborg, whose visions were popular in spiritualist circles and among many seminal literary figures of the nineteenth century (Owen 14, 19-27). Swedenborg’s voluminous discussions of the spiritual order identify two concurrent worlds, the reality experienced by the living and the world of the spirits; he explains the relationship between these two worlds in terms of “correspondences.” These “correspondences” between the body and the spirit are another way for Tennyson to conceive of physical traces and their relationship to the imagination. And indeed, as Jason Rudy has pointed out, Tennyson underlines passages in Swedenborg that deal with the “blur” between the body and the spirit (175). In the margin of his edition, the poet asks, “What is the nature of the ‘substantial body’ . . . in which the soul is clothed after death?”²⁰ Coltman shows us that even at the end of Tennyson’s creative life, he still desires forms that will allow him to make contact with an imagined world that has an indexical connection to his own by finding this form in the language of photography.

Photography and Imagination

From her very first visit to Freshwater during the Christmas holidays of 1869-70, when the poet was sixty-one years old, Blanche Warre Cornish depicts Tennyson's mourning for Hallam's 1833 death as continuous. The reaction to the spirit photograph is but one instance of that persistent sorrow that undergirds the poet's emotional life and creative work. Tennyson's interrelated thoughts about spiritualism, photography, and poetry share a common fixation on how to trace the relationship between reality and the imagination. In one conversation, Tennyson addresses the complexity of the relationship in an instance of the failure of its recognition,

'I am being driven mad by the way people publish all manner of things about me that haven't the very faintest foundation. I am told by a gentleman who goes into Lincolnshire to take photographs of the scenes of my youth that this mill was the original of the mill in the *Miller's Daughter* and that oak was the *Talking Oak*. Never anything of the sort. Why do they give me no credit for *any* imagination? The power of poetical creation seems totally ignored now. All this modern realism is hateful; there seems nothing but vulgarity everywhere. No man with imagination can be tied down to any one thing for his ideas. Turner was an imaginative painter, and how absurd it would be to *account* for all his works! There *may* be special suggestions.' (267)

While Tennyson rejects the Lincolnshire photographer because he understands the creation of "The Miller's Daughter" as the synthetic result of the imagination without any direct reference to a physical location, he entertains the physical possibility of Hallam's spectral return because the spirit image traces Hallam's form. The fallacy of the Lincolnshire photographer is the assumption that Tennyson's poems originate in reality rather than the imagination. For Tennyson, the Hallam photograph and the Lincolnshire photographs represent two different kinds of images. The spirit photograph relies on both indexicality and imagination to conjure the lost subject whereas the Lincolnshire photographer abjures the imagination in favor of a literal origin. Photography, like the

séance Coltman recounts, offers Tennyson a means for touching the past, but he does not accept it as a representation of an unmediated reality. The veracity of photography, like spiritualism, lies in the metaphorical relationship it is able to establish between indexicality and imagination that can faintly adumbrate the lost object but not reproduce it.

Even though Tennyson sees photography as a potential threat to poetry, the medium also offers a way to connect a physical reality to the imagination, and he is not willing to foreclose on the possibilities the photograph offers.²¹ We find in Tennyson's comments about the medium a struggle to discern a convergence between indexicality and imagination similar to the one that shapes Barthes's elegiac punctum. Tennyson's work with the language of photography includes his famous collaboration with Julia Margaret Cameron, who supplements his poems with images. However, even with these images, a deep sense of loss is palpable. Not only did Cameron make portraits of Tennyson, and stage others as illustrations of the poet's work, but she was also responsible for images of Tennyson's family, including those of his late son, Lionel, which were collected by the poet and served as objects of mourning in the last years of his life.²² Several of these images show young Lionel costumed in the fictional role of Marquis de St. Cast for Cameron's 1869 production of *Payable on Demand* at Freshwater (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Julia Margaret Cameron. Lionel Tennyson as Marquis de St. Cast. 1869. Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire County Council.

Cameron saw Lionel develop into a man, which an 1874 portrait clearly shows: the former boy actor now wears the earnest garb of a gentleman (Figure 3). But sorrow suffuses this collection of photographs, which includes Cameron's 1872 post-mortem photograph of her great-niece, Adeline Grace Clogstoun, who lies prostrate on white bedding made luminous by the camera's overexposure and soft focus (Figure 4). Below the albumen print, Cameron identifies the photograph as "the sacred and lovely remains of my little adopted child." This solemn inscription makes explicit what Tennyson must have seen in the photographs of his son after Lionel's unexpected death at sea in April 1886: the remains of a child whose mirthful image defies his absence.



Figure 3. Julia Margaret Cameron. Lionel Tennyson. 1874. Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire County Council.

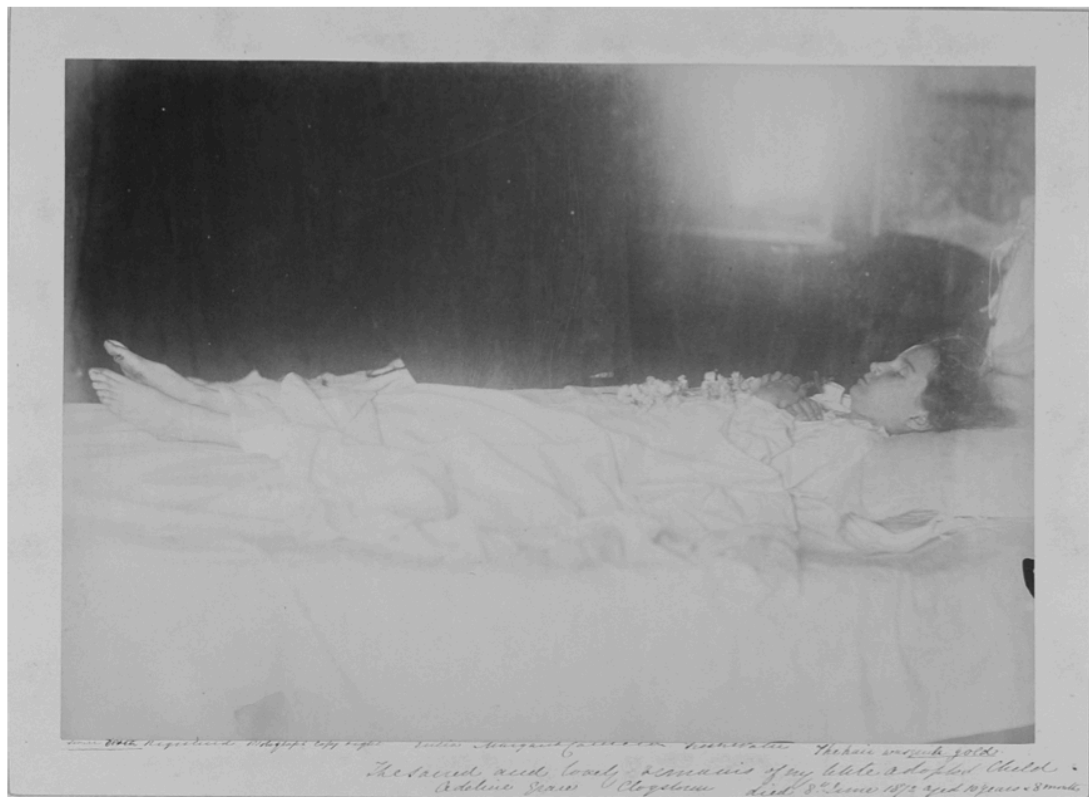


Figure 4. Julia Margaret Cameron. Adeline Grace Clogstoun. 1872. Tennyson Research Centre, Lincolnshire County Council.

Impossible as it may be to know what Tennyson saw in these pictures of Lionel, we should not miss the conceptual significance of how Tennyson's comments about "The Miller's Daughter" in the 1870s are part of an uncanny timeline that extends back to the early work of the 1830s as well as forward to Cameron's photographs of the poet's late son. In Cornish's anecdote, Tennyson is looking back on a course of technological development that allows him to frame the relationship between his early involvement with the language of photography and the later photographic illustrations of "The Miller's Daughter." A critical blind spot has occluded the connections between Tennyson's early work and photography, although Batchen's interest in the metaphorical and imaginative

qualities of photography now makes possible the project of bringing the two together.

Batchen historicizes a desire to photograph that predates the invention of the medium in 1839 to the 1790s (*Burning* 57), which he explains in terms of what he calls the "concept metaphors" of the Romantic imagination that redefine the relationship between nature and human subjectivity, thus creating new possibilities for representation (*Burning* 62).

What Batchen identifies is the desire for nature to draw itself and create fixed impressions through forms of light that record nature's agency as manifested in the hands of a human operator, a medium like the Aeolian harp, but with light in the place of wind. I want to suggest that in order to understand the relationship between photography and imagination during the nascence of the medium, it will be helpful to look anew at how Tennyson's poetry of the 1830s redefined the terms of Romanticism. In his seminal 1831 essay on Tennyson, Arthur Hallam defines his friend's work as the "poetry of sensation." The concept is traced to Tennyson's Romantic predecessors, namely Shelley and Keats, whom Hallam claims "lived in a world of images" where their emotions corresponded with their sensations of the outward world (186). Tennyson's vividness of description and feeling is an expression of inward conditions that are formed by metaphorical details like the landscape.²³ The poetry's emphasis on inner experience explains Tennyson's resistance to the reified photographic image that would impose the precision of realistic detail on the imagined description that emerges from within the poet and characterizes his early poetry.²⁴

Tennyson desires a poetic form in the 1830s that can mediate between the imagination and the physical world that attends to the expectation of inevitable loss evident in these poems, what Herbert Tucker calls the poet's sense of "doom."²⁵ In the

1833 edition of *Poems*, which includes the first version of “The Miller’s Daughter,” loss permeates nearly every verse, from the pitiful death wishes of “New-Year’s Eve” and “The Death of the Old Year” to the subtle elisions of “The Lotos-Eaters.” This early work develops an interest in memories and traces to conceive of how the dead remain connected to the living through representation. It is the nature of spectrality that it derives its identity from the traces of a material referent. The specter is traced to its material origins by identifying the contiguities of what remains with the adumbration of what has disappeared. For Tennyson, these traces are found in the landscape where both the body and the past are buried. The challenge for the poet is to create a relationship between the landscape and the text that mediates between indexicality and imagination to trace the latencies of residual forms. A most illustrative example of this problem is found in the work that develops during the long period of mourning that begins immediately after Tennyson learns of Hallam’s death. The tortuous problem for Tennyson is the proximity to Hallam evident in the 1833 verses that thematize the unreachable horizon of “Ulysses” and the unrelenting distance between lovers in the landscape of “Tithon.”

These are sorrowful, aggrieved responses to loss that try to find solace in variations of elegiac form that struggle with the liminal position between presence and absence. These poems describe an inexorable paradox that follows from trying to possess a thing that has disappeared or is forever displaced, a paradox that recurs frequently in the work composed from the 1830s to the 1850s. Tennyson wants to conjure an impossible medium for elegy, one that has an indexical relationship to the world at the same time as it is resistant to the loss defined by the indexical disjunction between the sign and the object. We see the devastating consequences of this desire in “Tithon” where morbid

immortality results in a nightmarish preservation of life. Tithon's damning question admonishes the desire for eternal life, including an eternal image or shape: "Why should a man desire in any shape / To vary from his kind, or beat the roads / Of life, beyond the goal of ordinance / Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?" (ll. 20-23). Artistic representation can incarnate the image of a lost soul, but Tennyson is never able to commit fully to any medium as a means for elegizing Hallam because he cannot reconcile his own perverse yet essentially human desire for Hallam "To vary from his kind" and return in some form. Instead, the poet intermittently exceeds the limits of his poetry by referring the reader to the physical world at the same time as he consigns his poems to the imagination. The elegist moves both towards and away from the text, adumbrating a simultaneous presence and absence with the suggestion of an image that never materializes.

The Language of Photography in "The Miller's Daughter"

The underlying desire for Hallam to return in Tennyson's mournful verse is contiguous with the poet's earlier project of evading loss. We can imagine the devastating grief that followed from the death of his actual friend by considering that Tennyson had already been at work on trying to mitigate loss with the language of photography in "The Miller's Daughter," published in 1832 before Hallam's death and heavily revised in 1842.²⁶ In the poem, a speaker retells falling in love with his wife, Alice, and the story of their marriage, but the narration of this union is inflected with a near constant anxiety that he will lose her. Even before he first sees Alice, the poet presents him as preoccupied with oblivion. We learn the speaker's sense that his love for Alice "dispelled the fear /

That I should die an early death” (ll. 89-90). But the fear of his own death becomes a fear that he will lose what he loves. Early on we are told that “There’s somewhat flows to us in life, / But more is taken quite away” (ll. 21-22). The conviction in these lines that we lose what we love turns towards a remedy that would circumvent Alice’s loss. What follows is the imperative to “Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife, / That we may die the self-same day” (ll. 23-24). Remarkably, it is not Alice’s death that seems to concern the speaker but rather his experience of losing her. He wishes for the end of mourning by not living, but the very impotence of this desire framed as a wish, a prayer, belies the will required to execute it. To guard against prematurely losing Alice, the speaker makes her a ubiquitous presence in the landscape, although the poem raises the possibility that Alice is already dead, implying a melancholic inability to acknowledge what has been lost. To control the terms of her loss, the speaker repeatedly traces an indexical relationship between his wife and her surroundings to keep her present in some form: every figure in the poem becomes a trace of Alice. In this way, “The Miller’s Daughter” is evidence of Tennyson’s desire to develop the imagination’s relationship with the physical world by drawing on configurations of space and time through what I have been calling the language of photography that predates the medium’s debut in 1839.²⁷

The poem struggles to forge indexical connections between language and the physical world at the same time the text disavows these connections because the speaker wants to recover the past in the present. James Knowles quotes Tennyson saying, “It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called the ‘passion of the past.’ And it is so always with me now; it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the picture and the past, and not the immediate to-day in which I move” (170). The poet

wants to remain in a perpetual state of desire for a time and location from which he is continuously displaced, which means that the vision that moves him can never be fixed in an image. In this way, Tennyson uses physical distance to blur the spatial and temporal dimensions of experience where a material dualism transforms into a spiritual unity (Joseph, *Weaver* 58-59). The spiritual unity is made possible by the poet's paradoxical desire to be near something by moving away from it, which can only occur in the confusion of this material dualism that conflates imagination with reality. The problem is described as a kind of self-conscious hypertrophic longing by his Cambridge friend, James Spedding: "[Tennyson is] a man always discontented with the Present till it has become the Past, and then he yearns towards it, and not only worships it, but is discontented because it is past" (qtd. in Brookfield 268). Tennyson's note to "The Miller's Daughter" is simultaneously specific and vague: it is "No particular mill" he has in mind, although he writes, "but if I thought at all of any mill it was that of Trumpington, near Cambridge" (qtd. in Ricks, *Poems* 1: 406). This indeterminacy about the poem's location is reflected in the desire it engenders within its readers to locate its origins and photograph it. Writing in 1895 for *Atalanta*, Cuming Walters wants to seek out the exact location of the mill set in picturesque Lincolnshire. Walters wishes "to carry the process of identification to an extreme," and he thinks he can locate the poem because the text's "descriptions of Lincolnshire scenery are of almost photographic precision" (164).²⁸ Similarly, George Napier seeks the location of the mill near Cambridge in his 1889 *The Homes and Haunts of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. Walters and Napier mistake Tennyson's elegiac trace for an actual place, which is why in "The Miller's Daughter" we see the underpinnings for a poetic form that will be described as photographic by its late

Victorian readers. However, to identify the language of photography at work in the poem does not mean the poem can be reduced to a photograph. This elegiac text draws on its indeterminacy to upset any certain identification of its origins either in the world or the imagination.

The poem's evasive indeterminacy similarly confuses the reader's ability to discern the distance between life and death. This difficulty begins with the first lines: "I see the wealthy miller yet, / His double chin, his portly size, / And who that knew him could forget / The busy wrinkles round his eyes?" (ll. 1-4). This is not merely a recollection of the corpulent miller. The vision of the body concludes, "So healthy, sound, and clear and whole, / His memory scarce can make me sad" (ll. 15-16). The speaker looks back at a dead man who nonetheless remains present. This is Tennyson's manifest desire for a subject to be both present and absent. The very first line, "I see the wealthy miller yet," puts the poem in the present tense and stresses the continuous visibility of the miller with the resilient adverb, "yet." Details proliferate throughout the introductory stanzas where memories are transformed into the presence of verbal images characteristic of the idyll. In the third stanza, the speaker resolves to Alice that "we must die," although her father's life after death in the poem's first lines seemingly defies that resolution (l. 18). Throughout the poem, the speaker's address to Alice signifies that she too could be dead. In "The Miller's Daughter," the alternation between recollection and present address disorients the clear demarcation between life and death.

The poem indexically traces the disappeared or deceased subject back to her body in order to keep her present. After the vision of the miller, the poem's speaker, an aged lover, retells the story of his relationship with Alice that begins with the day he first saw

her. What at first appears to be the story of his love becomes recognizable as his history of loss. Beside a pool of water near the mill, the young speaker fishes and recollects, “A love-song I had somewhere read, / An echo from a measured strain, / Beat time to nothing in my head / From some odd corner of the brain” (ll. 65-68). This song haunts the young speaker as he remains silent, sung only inside his head, though it repeats again and again. But this mental activity is disrupted by a vision:

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watched the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck. (ll. 73-80)

The speaker’s love traces the outline of Alice’s luminous form as it is reflected on the beck, thus creating an indexical relationship between her and the surrounding landscape. The figure of the “beauteous form” redoubles the problem of separating the living from the dead suggested earlier in the poem in the representation of the miller; the degree of proximity in space and time between the speaker and Alice remains uncertain. “Reflex” suggests a spectral reflection, yet what antecedent is indexical to the image? The figure of Alice at her casement will return after this stanza as the object of reflection and the locus of desire. In the following stanza, the speaker remarks,

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light. (ll. 81-88)

The speaker forms a relationship between Alice and the landscape in order to keep alive the vision of her he promises not to lose. After the trout leaps up in the 1842 version, the speaker “watched the little circles die”; Tennyson’s melancholic lover fixates on the loss and disfiguration that attend all acts of figuration. However, what coincides with the loss of one figure, the trout, is the presence of another, Alice. The speaker desires to keep her form alive, so he makes Alice contiguous with the features of the landscape.

The ability to transplant Alice into the landscape relies on an aperture of vision — in this case the window — working with figures of reflection, the “reflex,” to form an indexical sign.²⁹ What occurs in “The Miller’s Daughter” involves a complex circuit of specularity and projection whereby Alice becomes antecedent to every referent in the poem. In short, Alice can be found everywhere in “The Miller’s Daughter.” What may seem like the speaker’s projection of Alice outward onto the landscape is countered by Alice’s own reflection, “the reflex” that manifests on the beck’s surface. This ubiquity tracks back to the indeterminacy of the poem regarding life and death, past and present. In “Mariana,” the spectral qualities of the forlorn woman’s existence stem from her inability to find anyone else anywhere near her; everywhere she looks, she finds only herself. In the “The Miller’s Daughter,” every figure of the poem is a trace of Alice.

The speaker’s desire to fuse Alice with the landscape is yet another instance of Tennyson’s desire to look back towards something he can never touch. In Walters’s article on the poem, he identifies the beck as the one that passes through the mill at Stockworth and the garden at Somersby Rectory (170). He recalls that this is the same brook that captivated Tennyson as a boy and that Arthur Hallam “had seen it and loved it, as the poet tell us in ‘In Memoriam’; but this is the only time that the Beck is associated

with a mournful memory” (171). During his idyllic sojourn, Walters discovers that “[t]he blitheness of the brook becomes contagious, and it is easy to understand how it suggested so many bright stories suited for the poet’s theme” (171). It is within this picturesque scene that Tennyson formulates a method for visualizing loss. Christopher Ricks contextualizes “The Miller’s Daughter” among the other “Daughter” poems in relation to Tennyson’s personal losses. Ricks explains, “Faced with a past that had little serenity and much more bitterness than love, Tennyson would take a soulful bounding leap into an imaginary future from which he could look back upon an imaginary past” (101).³⁰ This imaginary future, however, has the attendant dangers of looking at the beck only to see a mirror of the self, much like the Lady of Shalott before her mirror cracks, which is why Tennyson works to incorporate the imaginary into the physical landscape.

The speaker lingers in these moments of retrospective experience near the mill: looking at the mill pool, looking up at Alice’s window, or recalling the forget-me-not that foretells a remembered loss. Alice is repeatedly viewed through her window: sometimes she is seen spinning and other times only her shadow is visible through the blind (ll. 121-28). This distance between lovers is maintained either physically or emotionally throughout much of the poem. The moment the speaker and Alice do converse and their love is realized, she dies, at least to these moments of figuration. He implores Alice to “Look through mine eyes with thine” (l. 215). The speaker desires to share his vision with Alice, even though this imperative retains a fundamental ambiguity. Does he imagine Alice external to him looking at his eyes, or does he implore her to look out of his eyes from within him? If one can see the same thing as another, then the two perspectives are the same, but we never see the world from Alice’s perspective in this

poem. It is the speaker's work of mourning that incorporates the lost object into the self, but it threatens to become a melancholic inability to ever consider the subject lost in the first place.

The speaker moves from fusing Alice with the landscape to joining her to himself in an effort to negate his loss. In the 1842 version, even the untimely death of their child remains opaque; the child is vaguely identified as "an outward breathing type" (l. 226). The diction suggests that the child is more a figure for Alice than for its own personhood. In this sense, the death of the child also portends Alice's death, yet it is quickly transfigured from a loss into a fusion:

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss had brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,
With farther lookings on. . . . (ll. 223-31)

What we see in these lines is a continuous alternation between indices, which allows the loss of the child to be a measure of gain for the speaker. Throughout the poem, Alice is configured as a part of the mill, and her elegiac trace allows Tennyson's speaker to evade acknowledging the loss of his family. This is why the figure of the seemingly unrelated trout becomes a metonym for Alice herself. The ubiquity of Alice in every figure of the landscape disrupts the relationship between her material form and its specular reflections. In this confusion, the indeterminate objects of the landscape and the seemingly disconnected lives of subjects allow the landscape to become Alice— even the speaker seems to become her. What follows is the conjuration of Alice as light itself like the

Aurora of “Tithon.” In the final configuration of the poem’s last stanza, the direct tropological connection between the casement and the beck’s reflex makes Alice and the speaker part of the landscape.

Given the poem’s insistence on the power of its landscape to embody subjects, it makes perfect sense that the Lincolnshire photographer Tennyson derides would be in search of an *actual* mill. This poem marks a grave in Trumpington where the elegiac trace affirms that someone has actually been lost. However, the confusion of subjects and objects is not without its consequences. By binding the poem to the physical landscape, Tennyson troubles the imagination because the poem is now rooted in a discoverable place. However, just as soon as the poem becomes antecedent to the landscape, it loses the speaker and Alice to a desiccated wasteland: “On the chalk-hill the bearded grass / Is dry and dewless. Let us go” (ll. 245-46). In effect, this leaves the poem open to readers like Walters, who might feel compelled to locate this place and photograph it. Tennyson remains tied to the actual place in the landscape as well. “The Miller’s Daughter” conflates the landscape with the speaker’s inner state; in turn, the poem invests itself in physical objects by using what Marshall McLuhan not so anachronistically calls Tennyson’s “movie-camera eye” (280).³¹ These objects of the landscape are indexical to the lost subjects of the poem. However, the Lincolnshire photographer does not have the power to make visible the subjects that “The Miller’s Daughter” buries. Instead, the photographer can only record their absence. Looking back on Tennyson’s paradox, the Lincolnshire photographer envisions exactly what the poet desires — “the picture and the past” that can never be touched or even seen. However, it still remains possible to imagine, and this is what the poem provokes from its readers.

"Strange friend, past, present, and to be"

The attempt to incorporate the subject into both a text and a landscape in "The Miller's Daughter" prefigures Tennyson's mourning after the loss of Hallam. *In Memoriam* struggles to forge a similar connection between the poet's internal condition and the world outside of himself, and significantly the desire to remain proximate to Hallam uses the language of photography to be physically near him. However, any visible image of Hallam threatens to stymie the imaginative possibilities of the poet's language, and by the conclusion of the poem, the elegist transforms the various visions of Hallam into the sounds and rhythms that only poetic form can represent. We end up with an elegy burning with desire for photography but unable to consummate that desire in an image.

Take, for example, section ninety-five of *In Memoriam*, where Tennyson comes into contact with Hallam in a flash of light sparked by the friction between Hallam's corporeal absence and the presence of his figurative remains. The scene begins with Tennyson on the lawn at his family's home in Somersby remembering the time when Hallam had visited in 1830. Hallam had written to a friend at Cambridge that "If I die I hope to be buried here: for never in my life, I think, have I loved a place more. I feel a new element of being within me" (*Letters* 360).³² Hallam's actual grave is located far away in Clevedon, but Tennyson is not looking to find his body. At this point in the elegy, the hope for Hallam's literal return has vanished and the desire for an alternative means of contacting Hallam has come into focus. The poet enters into a vision on the lawn after an evening in the company of others who leave him to "read / Of that glad year which once had been, / In those fallen leaves which kept their green, / The noble letters of the

dead” (95 ll. 21-24). The leaves are a metaphor for the incantation of the elegist’s verse that “strangely” conjures something “strange” in the following stanza. Hallam, of course, is that strange thing who emerges from Tennyson’s reading of his letters that pun on the fallen leaves:

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, (95 ll. 33-36)

The flash is a figure for both fantastic illumination and immediate evanescence in a touch that cannot last any longer than a moment.³³ This flash comes from the powerful Romantic trope that M. H. Abrams calls the “experience of eternity in a moment”(385) and what Wordsworth describes in *The Prelude* as "visionary power" with "objects recognised / In flashes” (1805, V ll. 628-29). Tennyson successfully draws on the figure of the flash to make contact with Hallam, although he had tried to use this trope in previous sections to no avail.³⁴ Unlike these other attempts, this flash is preceded by an act of reading the landscape Hallam loved in order to summon the “living soul” through the poet’s verse.

When Tennyson reads the letters on the lawn, he finds an indexical connection between the place of memory at Somersby and Hallam’s spirit that exists elsewhere. Language mediates this contact by conducting the poet’s desire for Hallam into a tangible form that he touches in his elegy. Like a flash of light, this contact remains tenuous and momentary, but in the penultimate section of the elegy, we find a conclusive vision of this work:

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. (130 ll. 1-4)

Here Tennyson writes Hallam's image with the light of the sun, but he cannot guess what he sees in the stanza that follows. Hallam remains beyond the visible field, shrouded in a synaesthetic light that can only be heard in the breeze, the rushing of the water, and the rustle of the poet's language. Defying even the movement of time, Hallam is a "Strange friend, past, present, and to be; / Loved deeplier, darklier understood" (129 ll. 9-10). Like Alice's ubiquitous figure in "The Miller's Daughter," Tennyson finds Hallam's traces everywhere by drawing on the language of photography, writing with light, to adumbrate the presence of a figure that can no longer be seen and has not yet fully developed. For this reason, at the conclusion of Tennyson's masterful elegy, the contiguity of the index is supplanted by a spirit that stands in the sun, a figure that we must look away from to see.

In spite of Tennyson's resistance to viewing Hallam's spirit directly, the uncanny image manifests in a spirit photograph that makes visible a shadowy afterimage of this brilliant form. Still, though Cornish references this image of Hallam, the archive fails to produce it.³⁵ In spite of the ekphrastic hope that the anecdote offers us, the spirit photograph remains extant only in language — a nice metaphor for Tennyson's photography. Grief finds expression and attenuation in the kind of tortuous, inconsolable mourning that even Freud finally had to recognize as unending because never complete. Tennyson sees a possibility for the photograph to work with elegy, yet he also perceives the threat of sacrificing the imagination that creates the necessary, unbridgeable distance between the present and the past. Photographic indexicality both challenges and reaffirms the mourner's relationship to the lost object, and Tennyson is never comfortable with

letting it work independently of an imagination that always suggests through language more than the image can show.

Tennyson's vital development of photography's language has been not unsurprisingly neglected by even some of his finest readers. In her 1923 parody, *Freshwater*, Virginia Woolf looks to Tennyson's photographic collaborator, Julia Margaret Cameron, as an alternative elegist, one without the inconsolable, maudlin grief that characterizes the bard's recurrent mourning for Hallam in *In Memoriam*. Woolf reads Cameron's photographs of her own grief-stricken mother, Julia Duckworth, as elegy, and she uses these images to construct albums that play an important role in her creative process (Humm 21-63). In contrast to Cameron's images, Woolf parodies Tennyson's *In Memoriam* when she insinuates Tennyson's erotic interest in Hallam, but her humor hardly negates the poet's loss. Even though Woolf shows how Tennyson's mourning has become a kind of conventional prop for the poet in his later years, she does not deny its gravity. In the play, Hallam figures as Tennyson's dirty secret and a persistent Victorian specter. Woolf is in a position to parody Tennyson's mourning for Hallam, yet when Woolf casts her gaze backwards, she reinforces the significance of Tennyson's mourning for her own creative life.

The superficial parody of her Victorian relatives evident in *Freshwater* could be taken to mean that Woolf simply wants to expunge Tennyson's sentimentality and melancholy from her past. But instead of looking away from her family and her artistic heritage, she uses photography to see what is lost. As she looks back at these images of her Victorian origins, the past continues to develop in the present, which is, of course, a recurrent motif in Woolf's writing. Woolf sees the connection between photography and

elegy, but she is unwilling to commit to the Victorian elegiac form even though her work is indebted to this tradition. In the age of photography, Woolf understands that the elegiac form is radically transformed by a past that continues to linger in the persistence of images; it remains unclear whether or not she recognizes her debt to Tennyson for this realization. In an ironic moment characteristic of the misprision sometimes said to be attendant on all literary influence, Woolf struggles with a question that she shares with her Victorian counterpart. In the diary she kept in the course of the composition of *To the Lighthouse*, a work deeply shaped by its involvement with mothers, spectrality, and the Victorians, Woolf tries to name the form this new work is taking. "I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant 'novel'," she writes inconclusively: "A New -- by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?" (34).

¹ The "Memories" were originally published in the *London Mercury* and then reprinted in Littell's *Living Age* for an American readership. The abridged "Memories" are again reprinted in Norman Page's anthology of Tennyson memoirs. However, Page does not include the section that recalls the spirit photograph of Hallam, which might explain why this anecdote has all but disappeared from the Tennyson biography. A. S. Byatt alludes to this anecdote briefly in her novella *The Conjugal Angel*, when one of the mediums who tries to summon Hallam dismisses the authenticity of a spirit photograph taken at Bristol (285).

² In his history of spirit photography, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle dates the first occurrence in England to 1861. Cornish uses the term, "psychophotography," rather than spirit photography to describe the picture. A psychophotograph captures an image on a photosensitive surface by mental exertion. In this way, Hallam's image could be an externalization of Emily Jesse's mental image of Hallam instead of his spirit's emanation. In either case, the image described uses the pictorial idiom of spirit photography, and it is possible that Cornish anachronistically applies the term "psychophotography" to an anecdote she recalls from the previous century.

³ Cornish recalls that the spirit photograph was taken in Clifton, Bristol. John Beattie was one of the most prominent spirit photographers active at the time and place described in the anecdote (Coates 41). A retired photographer, Beattie deconstructed the spirit images of Frederick Hudson, a galvanizing figure in spiritualist circles, and he revealed Hudson as a fraud (Fischer 30). Beattie's careful investigation of Hudson prompted Beattie's own involvement with spirit photography, and he quickly became a central figure in the authentication of spirit images. Remarkably, Beattie turned from the skeptical

investigator to the avid practitioner of spirit photography. Unlike Hudson's photographs that often depict lifelike apparitions, Beattie's spirit photographs "reveal a kind of luminous vapor developing into more complex forms, until eventually images of specters become recognizable" (Fischer 33). Even more remarkably, in his 1873 "Philosophy of Spirit-Photography," Beattie claims these are not "'photographs of spirits'" but "'photographs by spirits'" (qtd. in Fischer 33).

⁴ See Novak, Green-Lewis, and N. Armstrong for work on the Victorian novel and photography. See Kreilkamp, Groth, Mandell, and Smith for scholarship on Victorian poetry and photography. For Tennyson's collaboration with Cameron, see Joseph (Weaver), Olsen, Hill, Chapman, and Groth.

⁵ Arguments have focused on how spirit photographs represent "the iconic accuracy and recognizability of photographic likeness and at the same time the transparency and insubstantiality of ghosts," a complex and contradictory condition that ultimately demonstrates "the fundamentally uncanny quality of photography" in what Tom Gunning describes as the medium's ability to capture a "specter-like double" ("Phantom" 47). For scholarship on spirit photography, see Cadwallader, Chéroux, Harvey, Jolly, Jennifer Tucker 65-125, Ellenbogen, Warner, and Kaplan.

⁶ Henry Mayhew's 1861 "Statement of a Photographic Man" offers a telling anecdote of the blur's importance for Victorians. The huckster offers his customers portraits that are entirely black, of other people, or otherwise indecipherable, but most leave satisfied as they privilege the trace they see in the photograph above their own likeness. For example, the photographer recalls, "I had one fellow for a half-guinea portrait, and he was from Woolwich, and I made him come three times, like a lamb, and he stood pipes and 'bacca, and it was a thundering bad one after all. He was delighted, and he swears now it's the best he ever had took, for it don't fade, but will stop black to the end of the world; though he remarks that I deceived him in one thing, for it don't come out bright" (206). See Novak 48-49 for the relationship between Mayhew's photographer and realism.

⁷ On the Victorians and mourning, see Wheeler, Dever, Curl, Richardson, Hotz, and Gray.

⁸ On, "iconophobia," see Mitchell, who defines the term in dialectical relation to iconophilia (3).

⁹ The nineteenth century sees the introduction of numerous recording technologies that North claims originate in language (5). The development of these technologies is part of a larger epistemology that seeks new forms of understanding and expression in the age of mechanical reproduction.

¹⁰ Sacks's seminal, transhistorical study, *The English Elegy*, is still the most successful Freudian analysis of the work of mourning in elegy. For Freud, mourning results in the eventual substitution of the lost person with the presence of another, but melancholia signifies the narcissistic inability to move past this loss by continuing to fixate on the deceased. For Sacks, the expression of sorrow in elegy counteracts the sublimation of loss that characterizes melancholia. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud considers how the ego embodies what Clewell calls a "history of lost attachments" that is necessary for the very formation of the subject (56-65). In this formulation, the mourner must work through his loss by questioning what of the deceased can remain and what he must acknowledge as irretrievable. In this way, language serves a vital function not only for the elegiac poet's questioning but also for all mourners. The simultaneous desire to fixate on the lost object

as well as move away from it challenges any strict differentiation of mourning from melancholia. Recent transhistorical studies of elegy include Kennedy and Weisman. For elegy and the problem of language, see Shaw. For the relationship between elegy and gender, see Zeiger. Cavitch writes a compelling study of elegy's nexus with politics and national identity. For work on twentieth-century elegy, see Ramazani, who claims that Modernism creates anti-elegy, a form that copes with the melancholy suffered by inconsolable loss (1-2). For a discussion of how the photograph shuttles between mourning and melancholia, see Woodward 117. Creekmur considers the work of mourning in two novels that thematize photography and loss. For the cultural interplay between Victorian mourning and elegy, see Rosenberg.

¹¹ Sconce terms these technologies "haunted media," a phrase that describes the interconstitutive relationship between media and culture (25-28).

¹² For the intricacies of the family portrait in relation to memorialization, see Hirsch.

¹³ Elkins argues that the index has been misappropriated and misunderstood by theorists of photography. My emphasis on the trace instead of indexicality confronts Elkins's concerns by appealing to the imagination. For a detailed elaboration of the use of the index in recent years, see Krauss, Metz, Damisch, and Hauser 57-104.

¹⁴ An important point of contention within visual studies centers on how indexicality can be useful for historicizing trauma. We might cite in this context the efforts of scholars of the Holocaust's visual culture to understand the limits of photography's ability to represent the catastrophe of the Nazi genocide. For a powerful argument about how the imaginative viewing of photography enables one to confront the atrocities at Auschwitz, see Didi-Huberman.

¹⁵ See Lutz for a detailed description of Victorian mourning relics in relation to indexicality.

¹⁶ Gunning argues that "indexicality" is not an adequate term to describe the operations of photography, especially from the point of view of both Barthes and André Bazin. Gunning is concerned with how "a photograph puts us in the presence of something, that it possesses an ontology rather than a semiotics" (*Index* 35). Gunning wants to show how digital technologies are an extension of the photographic medium rather than a break from it; in this way, both signify indexicality to make "truth claims" about what they represent. However, Gunning is not satisfied with the ability for either indexicality or iconicity to describe photography's special power to depict objects. I think that some of Gunning's questions in his essay can be answered by considering how the poetic imagination transacts with the medium. Therefore, indexicality is an important term for thinking about how photography works, although it is limited in its capacity to describe the imaginative function that Barthes calls "punctum." This is why I use the trace to describe the elegiac qualities of photography that go far beyond the semiotics of indexicality.

¹⁷ For an imaginative and useful reading of the "umbilical cord" metaphor in Barthes, see Mavor 129-61. For Barthes's love of the photograph, see Cadava and Cortés-Rocca.

¹⁸ See Prosser 19-52 for a reading of *Camera Lucida* as a palinode of Barthes's earlier critical positions. Prosser makes an important connection between the photograph's ability to represent the inarticulable and the text's Buddhism. Fried's essay situates the punctum in a tradition of anti-theatricality.

¹⁹ There is a shortage of evidence for Tennyson's life-long interest in spiritualism because of a purposeful elision on the part of his son, Hallam, and his wife, Emily. See Elliott for additional information about these excisions and Tennyson's interest in spiritualism. Circumstantial evidence suggests Tennyson's interest in spirit photography. A "Mr. A. Tennyson" is listed as a subscriber to a thirty-fourth anniversary celebration of spiritualism in honor of Mr. Hudson advertised on page 237 of the April 14, 1882 issue of the preeminent spiritualist journal, the *Medium and Daybreak*. Frederick Hudson's spirit photography and the scandals it generated were at the center of debates about the authenticity of these practices.

²⁰ These notes appear in Tennyson's 1844 edition of Swedenborg's *On the Intercourse of the Soul and the Body*, although the inscription is not definitively in the poet's hand. Tennyson's query returns to the struggle to formalize the appropriate medium for contacting an indefinite form that at once exists in the imagination as well as the physical, material world. See Meehan for the relationship between Swedenborg and photography in Emerson. Also, see Krauss's "Tracing Nadar" for another instance of the relationship between Swedenborg and photography.

²¹ See Wood for the trepidation that photographic realism engenders in nineteenth-century poetry.

²² For the intricacies of this collaboration see Groth 148-84 and C. Armstrong 361-421. For the many portraits of Lionel taken by Cameron in Tennyson's possession, see the archival deposit at the Tennyson Research Centre in Lincoln, England as well as Joseph's discussion of Rejlander's family portrait (*Weaver* 217-19).

²³ See Lourie 23 for a reading of Tennyson's pathological, psychological introversion in relation to Shelley's philosophical subjectivism.

²⁴ Isobel Armstrong's claim that Tennyson's poetry changes fundamentally when he turns from the poetry of sensation in the 1830s to the highly descriptive verse of the 1840s aligns with the development of Victorian photography, which she implies when she derides the poet's loss of nerve as a loss of imagination: "Detail proliferates in the effort to fix and picture. Signification becomes the effect of external detail. The pretty Tennyson, always latent, emerges" (95). Armstrong's diction -- "fix," "picture," "latent" - suggests the photographic qualities of the poet's transformation, though photography's influence on the poetry is never addressed in her account.

²⁵ See Herbert Tucker's landmark study *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism* for Tennyson's sense of inevitable doom that underlies his entire career.

²⁶ Although the poem has received little attention from recent critics, it was widely circulated in British and American periodicals after its original publication in the 1833 collection of *Poems* (Ledbetter 178). Tennyson's many revisions to the poem have been explained as a response to the censure he received for its "tender imagery" and "ludicrous associations" (Green 682, 692).

²⁷ See Kroll for a discussion of Tennyson's desire to both record and remake history though his relationship with the landscape.

²⁸ See Walters's monograph *In Tennyson Land* for an illustration of the mill and brief commentary on the poem (73-77). In another attempt to locate a poem, Walters remarks, "Would that the pen-photograph of 'Locksley Hall' were but half as clear, and the doubts as to where and what that Hall is would be speedily set at rest" (19). The phrase "pen-

photograph,” not uncommon in the period, makes for a fascinating conceptual instrument. “Photography” remediates language by creating the possibility for writing to have the indexical qualities of a photograph; if described with the appropriate degree of clarity, Walters believes the poem’s actual setting could be authenticated.

²⁹ For the metaphorical significance of the Victorian casement and the mirror in Tennyson's oeuvre, see Joseph, "Victorian Frames."

³⁰ “The Gardener’s Daughter” thematizes many of the concerns with temporality and distance found in “The Miller’s Daughter.” For an extensive reading of the poem, see Herbert Tucker 278-302. Christ reads this poem as a “screen memory” for Hallam’s death (138).

³¹ This can also be articulated as Tennyson’s characteristic use of what Ruskin calls the “pathetic fallacy,” which he identifies in *Maud*.

³² For the importance of Hallam’s visit to Somersby and the formation of his relationship with Emily Tennyson, see Blocksidge 131-34. Rosenberg points out the connection between Somersby in section ninety-five and Tennyson’s earlier recollection of Hallam at Somersby in section eighty-nine when the poet quotes his friend (57-59).

³³ See Flint for how the flash works as a figure for memory in the Victorian photographic imaginary. Flash photography does not develop until the 1860s, over a decade after the publication of *In Memoriam*, although the desire for artificial light to reduce exposure times and to allow work in dark environments originates with the first photographers.

³⁴ In section forty-one the poet desires “To leap the grades of life and light, / And flash at once, my friend, to thee” (41 ll. 11-12). Fearful that he has lost all connection with Hallam, Tennyson struggles to find a trope that will reconnect him. Again, he envisions the flash for this purpose in section forty-four with “A little flash, a mystic hint” that might create such a connection (44 l. 8).

³⁵ A search of Emily Jesse's correspondence at the Tennyson Research Centre did not turn up any leads to the whereabouts of the image. However, in Richard Eustace Russell Jesse's first volume of his self-compiled *Annales Tennysoniani*, there is a clipping of Cornish's spirit photograph anecdote from the *London Mercury*.

Chapter Two

Tennyson's Tithonicity

"By the way," said my host, "a volume Mr. Fisher Unwin is issuing would, I believe, interest you: it is to be called 'Tennyson and his Friends.' It will contain about two dozen of those men who were foremost in the group that surrounded him."

"Not including Hallam; I fear he died before photography became an art, did he not?"

"Yes, I think the bust by Chantrey is the only likeness we can include of the hero of 'In Memoriam,'" said Mr. Cameron. (G. W. *Studio* 89)

In Unwin's 1893 publication, *Tennyson and his Friends*, Hallam's bust is reproduced through the process of photogravure to memorialize the poet and his retinue in an illustrated commemorative book. Sir Francis Chantrey made the bust after Hallam's death, and the sculpture now resides at Trinity College in Cambridge where Hallam and Tennyson met as undergraduates in the late 1820s (Figure 5). According to Mr. Cameron, Julia Margaret Cameron's son, the bust is "the only likeness" of Hallam that exists. While few in number, portraits of Hallam do survive, although they have been found to be poor resemblances of the young intellectual (Blocksidge 263). A review of Unwin's volume in *The Nation* finds a similar deficiency in "Chantrey's somewhat commonplace and smug-looking bust of Hallam" (356).¹ However, in his interview with *The Studio* magazine, Mr. Cameron presumes to know what the hero of *In Memoriam* looks like because he has seen—and perhaps taken—the photograph of the posthumous sculpture.² By photographing the bust of Hallam, Mr. Cameron thinks he has found the "likeness" of a man who died in 1833, six years before the debut of photography.³ Photography has conferred on this object an indexical connection to Hallam even though the bust was never present in Hallam's life, leading Cameron to the remarkable claim that the photograph of the bust by Chantrey is a photograph of Arthur Hallam.



Figure 5. Sir Francis Chantrey. Bust of Arthur Hallam. 1837.

Cameron's knowing comment is all the more puzzling for how it seems to dismiss the central problem of *In Memoriam*, which is that Hallam cannot be clearly seen in any medium.⁴ Tennyson cannot settle on any image of his dear friend throughout the one hundred and thirty-three sections of the poem (including the prologue and epilogue). In one instance that comes near the end of the elegy, Tennyson dreams of Hallam's veiled statue supplicated by maidens. Though covered, Tennyson can immediately recognize "The shape of him I loved, and love / For ever" (103 ll. 14-15). However, even when Tennyson thinks he sees Hallam, he can never be sure if it is actually him or his fantastical projection. Take section 92, for example, when the poet experiences the spiritual presentiment that Hallam is on the verge of appearing to him: "If any vision should reveal / Thy likeness, I might count it vain / As but the canker of the brain" (92 ll. 1-3). Coming right before the moment of contact in the climatic flash of section 95, Tennyson asks then answers what such a "likeness" might resemble: "I shall not see thee. Dare I say / No spirit ever brake the band / That stays him from the native land / Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?" (93 ll. 1-4). The question is answered that "No visual shade of some one lost, / But he, the Spirit himself, may come / Where all the nerve of sense is numb / Spirit to Spirit, / Ghost to Ghost" (93 ll. 5-8). The nature of this spirit's return is the subject of frequent rumination and doubt throughout the poem, concluding with the epithalamion where Tennyson settles on Hallam's enduring poetic image that he is "a noble type / Appearing ere the times were ripe, / That friend of mine who lives in God" (ll. 138-40). To live in God is to become part of the *imago dei*, the face of God, and that is an image that cannot be viewed by men.

Therefore, Hallam's image at the conclusion of the elegy appears to be the antithesis of the photograph that Cameron identifies as the "hero" of *In Memoriam*. However, when Cameron looks at the photograph of Chantrey's bust, he thinks it is a suitable likeness not just of Hallam but also of his specific role in the elegy. In short, Cameron conflates the photograph with the image that concludes *In Memoriam*, an image that would seem to defy any visualization. Perhaps acutely sensitive to Tennyson's desire for a photograph of Hallam that I discussed in the previous chapter, Cameron recognizes the elegy's underlying fascination and resistance to the photographic medium, causing him to view this "noble type" as a kind of photograph in development.

Indeed, the struggle to understand and to represent Hallam's form after death characterizes Tennyson's elegiac work, beginning with the first words he read describing the young man's premature death in October 1833. In a letter from Hallam's uncle, Tennyson read, "Your friend, Sir, and my much loved nephew, Arthur Hallam, is no more--it has pleased God, to remove him from this his first scene of Existence, to that better World, for which he was Created" (qtd. in Ricks 107). The paradox for Hallam to be at once "no more" as well as removed "to that better World" motivates the elegist to resolve what kind of form or material could satisfy its terms. Tennyson, grief-stricken and deeply mournful, found himself unable to reconcile Hallam's absence with what he thought might be his presence in some better world beyond the visible field.⁵ The anxiety over this dilemma can be found in the poetry written soon after Hallam's death. In "Tithon," Tennyson considers the consequences that befall a mortal who tries to deny the transformative power of death. Haunted by Tithonus's eternal image, Tennyson develops a figure for his elegy that will not succumb to infinite decay. Hallam seems to become the

dialectical opposite of Tithonus: instead of infinite decay, the “noble type” of man becomes a figure for perpetual development.

In this chapter, I show how Tennyson’s fear of an eternal image in “Tithonus” complements the scientific theory of John William Draper, who claims that all photography is the effect of “tithonicity.” “Tithonus” and tithonicity posit the difficult and frequently unnoticed relationship between light and loss that undergirds the Victorian understanding of photography as a technology of mourning. By bringing Draper and Tennyson together, I show how the figure of Tithonus becomes an important metaphor in the age of photography for the troubling endurance of an image in perpetual decay. *In Memoriam* rejects any such image of Hallam, fearing that it will make him vulnerable to the harm we see in “Tithonus.” The elegy, however, draws on figures of light in order to imagine the form of what Hallam becomes as he develops. My argument complicates a dialectical opposition between Hallam and Tithonus; it turns on how *In Memoriam* creates an image of Hallam that, in fact, has deep affinities with the disfigured form of Tithonus. When we read Hallam’s figure of light in concert with Tithonus’s figure in darkness, we find that Draper’s tithonic effect articulates the dialectical image Tennyson creates to mourn and remember his beloved friend.

Draper’s Theory of Tithonicity

In the 1840s, shortly after the public announcement of photography in 1839, Dr. Draper, a researcher at New York University, identified a force that was responsible for photography and named it “tithonicity.” In Greek mythology, Tithonus asks for eternal life to stay forever with his lovely Goddess of the dawn, Aurora. However, making one of

the greatest mistakes of all time, Aurora fails to grant Tithonus eternal youth, leaving his body to decay until only his voice remains.⁶ Although it's often ignored in the history of photography, Draper's theory of tithonicity is a telling example of how a Victorian scientist struggled to define photography's mysterious processes by invoking the literary imagination of his time.⁷ His theory of "tithonicity" shows us how Victorian art and science are part of one "single interlocking field of knowledge and practice" (Crary 9). Draper is one of the first theorists to discover light's relationship with loss manifest in the photographic medium, thereby using literature to shape his scientific understanding of the photograph's susceptibility to material decay.

A persistent anxiety recurs throughout nineteenth-century photographic discourse that fixates on the imminent fading of photographs. In the first years of the new medium, scientists like Draper experimented with how light and other energies resulted in the photographic process. Early photographs were highly susceptible to fading and decay, but the reasons for this chemical sensitivity were not well understood. The technical discussions on this topic by Victorian photographers and theorists are frequent and complex, resulting in numerous published articles and books with techniques and guidance about how to ensure the image's longevity.⁸ Robert Hunt, a British scientist researching photography, addresses this problem in a chapter "On Fixing Photographic Pictures" from his monograph, *A Manual on Photography*:

The power of destroying the susceptibility of a photographic surface, to change by the further action of light, when the picture is completed by its influence, is absolutely necessary for the perfection of the art. Various plans have been suggested for accomplishing this, which have attended with very different results; few, if any, of the materials used producing the required effect, and, at the same time, leaving the picture impaired. (50)

Sensitive to the medium's volatility, Hunt identifies fixation as the power to arrest the destructive process that results in the image. "Perfection of the art" requires a control of light's decomposing force and then the stabilization of the image so that it does not continue to decay. In order to describe how photographs are both created and destroyed by light in this way, Draper contends that tithonicity is a chemical force existing independently from other "imponderables" such as light, heat, and electricity. The tithonic ray and the light ray accompany each other in all their movements; however, when the two rays fall onto a light-sensitive surface "the [tithonic] chemical rays sink into it . . . and lose all their forces, and the rays of light are left alone" (Draper 454). Draper argues, "Photographic results thus resulting from the reposing of the chemical rays on the sensitive surface are not however in themselves durable, as will be shown in this paper, for the rays escape away under some new form" (454). Therefore, the leeching of the tithonic ray into this "new form" explains why photographs fade from view like the body of Tithonus. Draper continues his work with tithonicity for over two decades until the 1860s when he revises his theory in response to the discovery of an electromagnetic spectrum.

For those twenty years, Draper insists on using Tithonus, a poetical figure, to explain the energy that creates photographs.⁹ In an introductory lecture to chemistry, he argues that the literary imagination underlies his empirical discoveries: "It is the attribute of modern science that it gathers around it all those poetical feelings and forms which arise from whatever is far-reaching and true" (2). In spite of Draper's insistence on the value of these "poetical feelings" for scientific discovery, his choice to name photography's imponderable energy a "tithonic ray" was challenged by his

contemporaries for its unscientific nomenclature. Hunt, who was studying the forces of actinism—the property by which light or other radiation causes chemical change—objected to Draper’s poetic terminology. Hunt warns, “The adoption of the ideas and the proposed nomenclature of Dr. Draper will involve a very complex inquiry in extricable difficulty” (“Experiments” 271). He urged Draper to call his new imponderable ray “energia” or “helioplaston” rather than “some fancied analogy between the loves of two poetical creations of the ancients.” In *Researches on Light*, Hunt thinks the term, tithonicity, was “badly chosen . . . and certainly not at all in accordance with Lavoisier’s principle of nomenclature, which teaches, that the *word* should give birth to the *idea*, the idea depict the *fact*” (277). Lavoisier advocated in the late eighteenth century for a new system to name the compounds that would indicate their chemical composition and replace convoluted phrases, but for Draper, the power of tithonicity lies precisely in its mythological origin.

By appealing to the mythology of Tithonus, Draper develops his understanding of photography and its intermedial relationship to other elegiac art forms. In an early paper on the subject, he draws on the myth to explain photography’s mournful tradition:

The fact and the fable agree pretty well, and indeed the playful coincidence might be carried much further. The powers of photography, which bring architectural remains and the forms of statuary so beautifully and impressively before us, might seem to be prefigured by the speaking image of the son of Tithonus and Aurora that was to be seen in the deserts of Egypt. And besides this, such words as Tithonoscope, Tithonometer, Tithonography, Tithonic effect, and Diatithonesence, are musical in an English ear. In this paper I shall therefore use the term Tithonicity and its derivatives in the same manner that we use electricity and its derivatives. (455)

Draper takes pleasure in the “playful coincidence” by seizing on the interrelation of science and aesthetics, “fact and the fable,” to develop a theory of photography that traces

the medium back to Aurora and Tithonus's son, Memnon's, "speaking image." The ancient Colossi of Memnon near Thebes are described by Draper as a kind of solar musical instrument that give voice to Aurora's lament. It was reported in the first century AD by a number of classical writers that the Colossi would sing at dawn, although they have long since been silent after the Romans augmented their structure. In the mythology, Aurora's light touches the Colossi dedicated to her young, princely son who Achilles slayed in his assault on Troy (Pearsall 237). Draper sees the Colossi as "speaking image[s]" that prefigure photography by serving as a medium for the expression of Aurora's elegiac song for her dead son. Therefore, all of Aurora's light carries with it the transmission of her sorrow; it takes expressive form and can be heard when it comes into contact with the Colossi. From Draper's point of view, tithonic rays carry a similar meaning that accompanies all of their movements. He theorizes that tithonic rays leave their residual trace when a photograph is created; for this reason, every photograph is a metaphorical instantiation of Tithonus. Irrespective of whatever superficial image appears on its surface, the photographic image is always the trace of Tithonus in the process of his eternal decay.¹⁰

"Tithonus": Aging in the Eternal Image

Tennyson's nuanced understanding of Tithonus as a figure for mourning can elaborate tithonicity's underlying metaphor for loss in the age of photography. The "tithonic effect" insists on seeing a chemical change through the lens of a mythological figure latent in every photographic image. In this way, tithonicity describes the consequences of a desire as much as it does a scientific theory. To capture and fix the

photograph, the medium must harness the power of light that threatens to destroy the image in a simultaneous act of creation. In this process, the desire for permanence confronts the realities of material deterioration, leaving us with the same question that W. David Shaw asks of Tennyson's "Tithonus": "[I]f what endures is inhuman and what is human dies, is it ever possible to combine sensuous immediacy with permanence? Is it ever possible for the beauty and nobility in life to triumph over time?" ("Tithonus" 276). In Draper's formulation of the medium, neither a human life nor a photograph can exist without the promise of its own fundamental transformation from visibility to evanescence. Residing within the substance of every fixed photograph is a susceptibility to light that will eventually destroy the image. Tennyson looks to Tithonus to consider what it would mean to defy the physics of time and the inevitability of death by creating a different kind of image. Commencing with the first poem "Tithon" in 1833, Tennyson would later revise it in 1860 as "Tithonus"—ten years after the publication of *In Memoriam* in 1850.¹¹ These two poems bracket Tennyson's wish for an image in the wake of Hallam's death that could somehow defy his death. However, in Tennyson's literary experiments, the immortal body of Tithonus becomes stricken through with eternal pain, suffering the devastating consequences of trying to remain with the beloved for eternity. "Tithonus" desires and fears an image that could reside proximate to the godhead, an image that would seem to negate loss but also lead to the decimated immortal's wish for total annihilation.

Readers of "Tithonus" often concentrate on his voice and overlook his troubling body. Major studies attend to the poem's form as a dramatic monologue and Tithonus's agency in spite of his abject state. Two of the poem's most astute readers, Herbert Tucker

and Cornelia Pearsall, consider how Tithonus derives power from his ability to verbalize his predicament and petition Aurora for some form of redress through poetic language. Pearsall addresses the value of masculine beauty in the context of Tennyson's Hellenism and the Victorians' gendered understanding of the lyric (241, 269). On this reading, Tithonus's transformation into a disembodied voice marks his metamorphosis as a poet. Similarly, Tucker considers his creative agency, remarking, "although linear time has left all Tithonus was in ashes, it has also left him a self" (248). However, Tucker remains agnostic and untroubled about the paradox of Tithonus's image. These readings hear Tithonus's words but look away from his disfigured form.

Tithonus's paradoxical image insists on his iconicity as well as defies any visual representation of it. He must endure his body's infinite decay demanded by the Gods' cruel regime of visibility that strangely defies representation:

Me only cruel immortality
 Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,
 Far folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn. (ll. 1-10)

What does a figure that can be eternally consumed look like? Tithonus is "a gray shadow once a man" who is left "maim'd" by the hours who waste him after he is granted immortality. He is "marr'd," and his dissolution positions him opposite to the spectacle of his lover, Aurora, "To dwell in presence of immortal youth, / Immortal age beside immortal youth" (ll. 21-23). Eternal youth is easily visualized; this is the unchanging countenance of Dorian Gray, who maintains his image at the expense of his soul that sickens on the sequestered canvas. It is the bust by Chantrey that breaks apart, inflexible to time. Immortal age is impossible to visualize. We know the form old age takes as it

wrecks and wrinkles the body, but Tithonus's suffering reorders the very expectations of what we can identify as a life form. His decomposition transcends the withering of a body reduced to its most basic atomic structure. No image can represent what Tithonus resembles as he continues to dissolve, yet he paradoxically continues to be present. The *imago dei* defies visual representation because of its creative power, making it a primary site of iconophobia as well as intrigue (Mitchell 31). He reaches an apotheosis when he resembles the form of the godhead; however, his perverse immortality bars him from resembling the man who once glowed with a Goddess. For eternity, he observes Aurora without end but at the expense of a young, beautiful body to express his erotic desire for her. His subjection to Aurora's spectacle is the tyranny of an eye that can no longer find itself reflected in the physical world. In Elaine Scarry's formulation of the body in pain, the torturer aims to deprive his victim of language, dealing the final blow that destroys his world; conversely, Tithonus is violently alive with language but denied what we might recognize as a body.

Tithonus's poetic language serves as a medium for the *imago dei* at the expense of his unbecoming form: a form that is not itself the *imago dei* but that bolsters the light of Aurora to give human form and shape to the world every morning. From that "dark world" where both Tithonus was born and from which Aurora emanates, the speaker's poetic gaze mediates both the goddess's enlivened metaphorical body as well as his own paradoxical dissolution.

Alas! for this gray shadow once a man—
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
 To his great heart none other than a God!
 I asked thee, 'Give me immortality.'
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
 But thy strong Hours indignant worked their wills,
 And beat me down and marred and wasted me,
 And though they could not end me, left me maimed
 To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,
 And all I was, in ashes. ... (ll. 11-23)

Tennyson uses indexical figures to describe the relationship between Tithonus and his previous corporeal form. “Ash” is a primary material of transfiguration that returns the human subject to his Promethean origins. In this way, “ash” explains his simultaneous dissolution and regeneration that leads him to implore Aurora to “Let me go; take back thy gift,” but isn’t being all “in ashes” synonymous with the death that speaker desires? Tithonus, however, cannot die because he continues to perceive his lover through a disembodied gaze every morning; in a perverse variation on the conventional aubade, he reunites with her in a daily act of self-abnegation. Diana Fuss addresses the aubade in the context of elegy, writing, “For the one who wakes alone, dawn marks the assumption of irredeemable and nearly indescribable losses—losses not darkly anticipated but painfully resumed with each successive sunrise” (99). Fuss does not mention “Tithonus” in her study, but Tennyson’s poem reverses her terms of presence and absence as a function of loss: for the immortal man who wakes with his lover, dawn marks the painful and anticipated cycle of his decay in the company of her light.

Tithonus’s sacrificial mediation makes Aurora’s spectacle possible. His ability to see Aurora’s ascension reveals why the Goddess cannot take back the gift that she depends on for her own personified form. As she breaks through the heavens to illuminate the new day, Tithonus describes her entrance in the virtuosic terms of reanimation: “. . . From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure, / And bosom

beating with a heart renew'd. / Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom, / Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine" (ll. 35-38). This verse is the labor of Tithonus who describes a natural force all but indifferent to his plight. With his description of her, his love for her, Aurora, Goddess of the dawn, becomes a perfect body at the expense of the man who no longer has a definable form outside of his language. He voices his lament, recalling again how his language constructs her body: "Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm / With kisses balmier than half-operating buds / Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd / Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet, / Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing, / While Ilion like a mist rose into towers" (ll. 58-63). By giving Aurora a body through his own ekphrasis, Tithonus maintains her presence even in the long periods of day and night that signify her absence, which he mourns until morning returns.

The paradox of Tithonus's unbecoming form cannot be resolved by the poem because "Tithonus" disrupts the very premise that vision is rooted in the body. Hans Belting writes, "Our bodies themselves constitute a place, a locus, where the images we receive leave behind an invisible trace. The perception of these images involves exposure to pictorial media, which not only guide our attention in a technical sense, but also shape the memory that the images assume within us. We see images with our corporeal organs" (38). The body is a primary site of perception that enables the formation of the image through its mediation of the object. If Belting is correct that images are formed by the bodies that perceive them, then what are we to make of Tithonus, who lacks the corporeal organs not only for sight but also for existence? And what material inscribes the invisible trace of Tithonus if not his formless body? In some versions of the myth, Tithonus

eventually transforms into a grasshopper, a figure for the poet's song. Tennyson carefully avoids this conclusion, favoring instead a poem that makes vivid the dilemma of the wasting image. Draper, however, answers the conundrum of Tithonus's paradoxical image not by looking to his linguistic power, but instead, the scientist concentrates on the problem of his strange corporeal form. Rather than a figure for the poet, Draper sees him as an icon for the force that cannot be fixed by the photographic image, yet this imponderable force makes the medium possible: Tithonus is, quite ironically, the power that creates what Lady Elizabeth Eastlake calls "the perfect medium" of photographic reproduction.¹² Read together, Tennyson's "Tithonus" and Draper's tithonicity suggest a theory of Victorian photography that puts loss in relationship to light by appealing to the language of poetry.

In Memoriam and the Tithonic Effect

In Tennyson's early work of the 1830s, a palpable desire to create an indexical connection between the lost object and the landscape can be found in poems such as "The Miller's Daughter" that fixate on the elegiac trace. "Tithon" was composed only two years later in 1833, and the 1860 publication of "Tithonus" demonstrates the continuity of the poet's concern with how to treat loss in an age when photographic technology seems to offer a potentially injurious form of immortality. The anxieties about an eternal image of the beloved surface in Tennyson's major elegy, *In Memoriam*, which imagines Arthur Hallam's reappearance in a variety of forms and media. One of the major innovations of *In Memoriam* is the elegy's overwhelming desire to use language to generate light that will touch Hallam and illuminate his form. In a recent study, Barri Gold has argued that

the poem's numerous figures of light are part of Tennyson's "thermodynamic solution" whereby the poet conjectures a means of consolation through physics in response to the entropic decay of the universe.¹³ On this reading, Hallam becomes a diffusive form that resolves the poem's deep anxieties about the imminent destruction of the world and the human race. However, even this solution tends to look past the ways in which the poem fails to achieve what it desires. Christopher Craft has called the elegy "a desiring machine whose first motive is the reproduction of lost Hallam" (98).¹⁴ The poem's capacity for this desire is so great because "It keeps its desire by keeping its desire desiring" (Craft 98). *In Memoriam* frequently uses figures of light to imagine media that will transcend the poet's language by allowing him to touch his beloved friend. However, the poet never settles on a medium that would realize his desire for a perfect reproduction. Instead of a body in infinite decay, Tennyson imagines Hallam's body in perpetual development: proximate to the godhead, Hallam's unknowable yet "noble type" resides with the perfection of the *imago dei* that no medium can imagine. However, what would at first seem to be a dialectical relationship between Hallam's image in perpetual development and Tithonus in perpetual decay becomes an untenable resemblance for the elegist. To address the abiding worry that his elegiac work is somehow destructive or harmful, Tennyson must reject all reproductions of Hallam. At the same, however, he imagines Hallam's developing form by drawing on figures of light, coming dangerously close to creating an image with this light. In this sense, the poem is often on the verge of developing a latent image of Hallam traced by light—an image that, by definition, would be a photograph. *In Memoriam* both desires such an image and rejects it, acutely afraid of

how a photograph could make Hallam vulnerable to the destructive power of light that acts on Tithonus.

The impotence of language to console Tennyson's grief engenders the desire for an alternate medium that can provide relief. The usual methods for consolation and memorialization are inadequate in the face of Hallam's irreparable loss. Early in the elegy, Tennyson remarks on the power of his language to perform his work of mourning. By putting his grief into language, the poet worries that he will both reveal and conceal the "the soul within," meaning that he will not fully articulate the true nature of his sorrow (5 l. 4). Moreover, by writing the elegy, he is concerned that this will turn into a "sad mechanic exercise, / like dull narcotic, numbing pain" (5. ll. 7-8). "Measured language" risks betraying the intensity of feeling that cannot be wrestled into a disciplined poetic form; Tennyson illustrates this concern with the metaphor of "words, like weeds. . . / Like coarsest clothes against the cold: / But that large grief which these enfold / Is given outline and no more" (5 ll. 9-12). Frustrated with his poetry's failure to convey the magnitude of Hallam's loss, the poet moves forward in an effort to find something beyond language that might adequately address his emotions. He goes to Hallam's house on Wimpole Street in the hope of discovering some means of connection to him:

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Door, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,

And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day. (7 ll. 1-12)

The place that once prompted the excitement in Tennyson's heart has become a space of vacancy and darkness. The poet "creeps" to it, searching for a monument or memorial to locate Hallam and finding only blankness. By describing himself as a "guilty thing" the poet emphasizes the shame he feels at being unable to reconcile his desire for Hallam's touch with the stark reality of his loss. The effects of light Tennyson experiences exacerbate the perceived hostility of this house during his visit at the break of dawn. His realizes that Hallam is "far away" when the sound and sight of life on the street amplifies the ghastly emptiness he feels. In the next few sections, the poet looks again to language for relief, what he calls the "poor flower of poesy"—the medium Hallam loved—which Tennyson will plant on his tomb so "That if it can it there may bloom, / Or dying, there at least may die" (8 ll. 22-24). But this renewed hope for verse quickly turns to despair when Tennyson imagines the corpse's return from Vienna. His feelings become more severe with the violent alternation between "calm despair" and "wild unrest," leading him to wonder if this is just the illusion of feeling that masks numbness (16 l. 2). Worried that he is delirious, the poem moves towards a resolution in the next sections, imagining that a beacon of light will guide Hallam back to Tennyson: "My blessing, like a line of light, / Is on the waters day and night, / And like a beacon guards thee home" (17 ll. 10-12). Recalling the prologue where God is analogized to "A beam in darkness," this simile in section 17 stokes Tennyson's desire for light as a vehicle of physical contact, and the elegy increasingly turns to light as a figure of mediation between him and his beloved friend (l. 24).

To touch Hallam, to clasp his hand again, requires a language that brings light to the darkness that has made Hallam formless. Death, “the Shadow feared of man,” has “spread his mantle dark and cold, / And wrapt thee formless in the fold,” taking Hallam to a place where Tennyson “could not see” (22 ll. 12, 14-15). Accordingly, the light of the flash that culminates in the moment of contact in section 95 develops over the course of the poem. In section 41, Tennyson continues to struggle with the conception of Hallam’s form, remarking that “thou art turned to something strange, / And I have lost the links that bound / Thy changes; here upon the ground, / No more partaker of thy change” (41 ll. 5-8). The poet’s frustration that he cannot summon or contact Hallam’s leads to a wish: “That I could wing my will with might / To leap the grades of life and light, / And flash at once, my friend, to thee” (41 ll. 10-12). The flash emerges here as the trope that will achieve the elegist’s desire for touch. Conceived in this fantasy of “will” and “might” that can wield a figure of light, the flash appears again three sections later in section 44 when Tennyson imagines Hallam in the afterlife: Hallam becomes “more and more” but Tennyson is worried that he has forgotten the “tone and tint” of his former life. To assuage the worry that their friendship has vanished from memory, he wonders if “perhaps the hoarding sense / Gives out at times (he knows not whence) / A little flash, a mystic hint” (44 ll. 2, 5, 6-8). Again, we see here how the flash serves as a mediatory figure to connect Tennyson with Hallam in spite of his spirit being so strange and far away. These figures of light, however, prove especially difficult for the elegist to control. In section 95, when Tennyson experiences the touch of the dead man from the past and “the living soul was flash’d,” the vision quickly evanesces in a moment of profound enervation: “At length my trance / Was cancell’d, stricken thro’ with doubt” (95 ll. 36,

43-44). Barri Gold remarks that the poem's "developing theme of light, which was previously marked by loss—attaches increasingly to the capacity to generate or change" (54). This change, however, is often punctuated by loss or the incapacity to fully control these luminous moments of contact.

If Tennyson's elegy describes loss in what Gold calls "distinctly thermodynamic terms," *In Memoriam* also calls attention to the deforming power of light that has a significant role in the early photographic discourse that includes Draper's theory of tithonicity (*Thermo* 54). The language that is employed by Victorians to describe light's force in photography can help us to understand Tennyson's difficulty with making light work for *In Memoriam*. William Henry Fox Talbot's groundbreaking 1844 photo book, *The Pencil of Nature*, posits a new lexicon to describe light's agency that is mediated by the photograph. Instead of seeing the medium as a strictly mechanical process, Talbot claims that photography enables nature to express itself.¹⁵ In this sense, the photographer is only an operator, not the creator of the image. Talbot writes of his "photogenic drawings" that they are "impressed by the agency of Light alone, without any aid whatever from the artist's pencil . . . They are impressed by Nature's hand; and what they want as yet of delicacy and finish of execution arises chiefly from our want of sufficient knowledge of her laws" (n. page). I mention Talbot's language to place Tennyson's inability to control light in the context of photography's development, especially in terms of how the poet conceives of light's agency in the elegy. Tennyson keeps confronting the same dilemma: he thinks that light can serve as a medium for contact, yet he does not know the extent to which this medium might entail a loss of control. Moreover, when light does serve to touch Hallam such as the climatic flash of section 95, the poet doubts

whether or not these figures are representative of light's agency or merely the effect of his own projection.

Unable to create the reproduction of Hallam that he desires by drawing on figures of light, Tennyson's verse collapses in a fit of doubt and uncertainty after the initial flashes of sections 41 and 44. In the throes of sorrow and disenchantment, he gropes for Hallam and implores some nameless addressee to "Be near me when my light is low, / When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick / And tingle; and the heart is sick, / And all the wheels of Being slow" (50 ll. 1-4). Here Tennyson himself resembles the deranged form of Tithonus by describing the symptoms of his enervation as a body in decay. He is "racked with pangs," and time is "a maniac scattering dust, / And Life, a Fury slinging flame"(50 ll. 5-8). The final stanza describes Tennyson fading away; desperate for companionship and feeling very alone, he worries that he will be consumed by darkness: "Be near me when I fade away, / To point the term of human strife, / And on the low dark verge of life / The twilight of eternal day" (50 ll. 13-16). Beleaguered and powerless, Tennyson must summon his language to make Hallam present, but we find the poet in a crib at the close of section 54. Hysterical, the final stanza reverts to the pre-linguistic cries of infancy:

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry. (54 ll. 17-20)

The poet-infant struggles to shape his cries into a language that will conjure up the light he desires. Regressing from man to infant is another version of the body's dissolution that we find in "Tithonus"; however, unlike that lucid immortal, the infant has no words to reach Hallam.

Of course, the poet does have language to describe his dilemma; Tennyson's problem is not that he is without language or even without light but that he fails to make Hallam present. We find a similar desire for light and language to assuage loss in Freud's 1905 text, *Three Essays on the theory of sexuality*, where he conjectures that anxiety in children "is originally nothing other than expression of the fact that they are feeling the loss of the person they love" (147). In the 1920 edition, Freud appends an anecdote that describes how children generate light by using their words:

For this explanation of the origin of infantile anxiety I have to thank a three-year-old boy whom I once heard calling out of a dark room: 'Auntie, speak to me! I'm frightened because it's so dark.' His aunt answered him: 'What good would that do? You can't see me.' 'That doesn't matter,' replied the child, 'if anyone speaks, it gets light.' Thus what he was afraid of was not the dark, but the absence of someone he loved; and he could feel sure of being soothed as soon as he had evidence of that person's presence. (224 n. 7)

The three-year-old can achieve synesthetic comfort by hearing his aunt's voice that brings him light, but there can be no such voice from the dead. *In Memoriam*, however, does see the light from the "noble letters of the dead" that spark the conductive flash in section 95. In this way, the cries of the infant in section 54 find their relief in the light effects the elegy stages. For Tennyson, however, this light poses a paradox that never finds resolution in the poem. What the poet desires is a continuous light and not merely the fleeting moments of illumination that occur in a flash. The paradox is that he needs language to create this light, and when this language becomes more than a cry, it threatens to articulate the doubt that troubles many of the poem's verses.

These cries obfuscate the knowledge that light itself threatens to deform Hallam, which is why the poet cloaks him in darkness. In one of several instances throughout the poem, Tennyson imagines viewing Hallam's face:

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
 To those that watch it more and more,
 A likeness, hardly seen before,
 Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
 His darkness beautiful with thee. (74 ll. 1-12)

The medium of this imagined picture is never specified, but the “likeness” that develops in the first stanza’s simile has the uncanny quality of a photograph. Much like Barthes’s “punctum” that is best seen by looking away from the image, the features of this face “hardly seen before” emerge after death to reveal Hallam’s unspeakable value. Even though Tennyson does not destroy this image, the last stanza of this section ends with much “unsaid.” Kept out of the light, the image is shrouded in the metaphor of death’s “darkness.” In section 96, we learn that this darkness does not oppose God’s light, but rather is an aspect of the “Power.../ which makes the darkness and the light, / And dwells not in the light alone” (96 ll. 18-20). The dialectical configuration of light and darkness together upsets the elegy’s equation of light with contact and darkness with loss. By covering Hallam’s face in darkness, Tennyson consigns him to develop as a part of the *imago dei*. When he returns to Cambridge to view Hallam’s rooms, he recalls seeing in Hallam’s face the development of an unspeakable type: “...we saw / The God within him light his face, / And seem to lift the form, and glow / In azure orbits heavenly-wise; / And over those ethereal eyes / The bar of Michael Angelo” (87 ll. 35-40). Tennyson describes this virtuous feature of Hallam’s face as “the broad bar of frontal bone over the eyes of

Michael Angelo” that suggests the talents, memories, and curiosity of a gifted intellectual. But like all images of Hallam that appear in the elegy, his other features go without description. Denied a true “likeness,” Tennyson frequently sublimates any image that would reveal Hallam’s resemblance to other men, favoring instead the conjuration of Hallam as light alone.

Tennyson elevates Hallam to the unseen view of the *imago dei* in an equation that sets him proximate to Aurora in “Tithonus.” Hallam cannot appear in any earthly medium that would make his image vulnerable to decay and the deforming power of light. Instead, Tennyson imagines him as incorporated into a power that cannot be viewed or even described. When Tennyson looks for Hallam’s face near the conclusion of the poem, he finds the reflection of his own “on the depths of death there swims / The reflex of a human face” (108 ll. 11-12). The poet takes solace in the fact that he cannot see Hallam; he has rejected every reproduction of his image in favor of his unseen perfection. When he returns to Hallam’s house on Wimpole Street, the dark house welcomes a different kind of mourner from the one who despaired in section 7 that there was nobody present to greet him:

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more; the city sleeps;
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
 And bright the friendship of thine eye;
 And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine hand. (119 ll. 1-12)

Hallam's imagined hand reaches out from the "light-blue land of early dawn," the light of Aurora. The uncanny quality of this scene stems from the allusion to the touch and taste that Tithonus describes when he remembers Aurora's "lucid outline" (l. 53). Tennyson has turned Hallam into a God of light and darkness, what Tithonus calls Aurora's "rosy shadow"; in turn, Tennyson has placed himself in the position of Tithonus. This dynamic becomes all the more visible in section 122 when the poet wants to "feel once more" the intensity of contact with Hallam. He wants him to "be with me now, / And enter in at breast and brow, / Till all my blood, a fuller wave, / Be quickened with a livelier breath" (122 ll. 10-14). It is that "former flash of joy" in section 95 that Tennyson has in mind to feel Hallam again. In spite of the imminent destruction of the world that he imagines in the next section vis-à-vis Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, Tennyson believes that he will reunite with Hallam. Returning again to the metaphor of the infant in the crib, he finds the language to generate the light he needs to be in Hallam's presence. Indeed, in section 130, Hallam's "voice is on the rolling air," and he remains present with Tennyson: "I have thee still, and I rejoice; / I prosper, circled with thy voice; / I shall not lose thee though I die" (130 ll. 1, 14-16).

In an act of recognition that must be quickly sublimated, Tennyson revels in the sacrifice of his tithonic body for Hallam's incorporation as light itself. Hallam "standest in the rising sun," the light of Aurora, and becomes a voice that cannot be heard: both his sound and image are mediated through Tennyson's language as the poet's body decays. The poet looks forward to his death when he will be incorporated into the same light as Hallam. However, none of this imagery in the final sections of *In Memoriam* answers the central problem it poses in light of the decay that Tithonus suffers in another instance of a

poem that imagines the lover as a force of light. There is no consolation in the economy of loss that afflicts Tithonus: to possess the lover past death requires the sacrifice of the body for her. *In Memoriam* has imagined qualities of light that are dangerously close to the equation between light and loss that we see in “Tithonus,” and this light cannot be controlled by Tennyson. The elegy needs to insure that Hallam’s diffusive afterlife will never fall victim to tithonicity. However, throughout the elegy, Hallam remains latent in the light; always on the verge of becoming visible, his form emerges in the flashes of light that allow Tennyson to touch him. But this configuration endangers Hallam by making him vulnerable to an image drawn by light: a metaphor nicely evidenced by the bust of Chantrey that casts Hallam, “the hero of *In Memoriam*,” as the gorgon’s victim, frozen in a fading photograph.

¹ Not all viewers found the bust as displeasing as *The Nation*, and its photograph was frequently reproduced in commemorative editions. In Alfred Gatty’s 1894 *A Key to Lord Tennyson’s “In Memoriam,”* he recalls approaching Hallam’s surviving sister, Lady Lennard, for a portrait of her brother: “I have received from this lady the gift of a copy of the volume known as the ‘Remains in Verse and Prose of Arthur Henry Hallam,’ edited by his father, and which was privately printed. The interest of its contents was much enhanced to me by there being a portrait of Arthur from a bust by Chantrey, which Lady Lennard considers most like her brother, and therefore suitable as a frontispiece to my book” (xxvi).

² The images of Tennyson’s circle in Unwin’s book are mostly comprised of photographs taken by either Julia Margaret Cameron or her son, H. H. Hay Cameron. There are also five portraits by G. F. Watts. It is unclear who photographed the bust, but it might very well have been Hay Cameron.

³ Timothy Stevens notes that Chantrey’s careful process of composition led to works that were revered for their accuracy: “To find a characteristic pose and expression he began by watching his sitters informally. . . . With the aid of a *camera lucida* devised by his friend the scientist William Wollaston, he made three drawings—profile, three-quarters, and full face—from which the workshop prepared a basic clay model.” *An Edition of the Ledger of Sir Francis Chantrey* published by Alison Yarrington indicates that Henry Hallam, Arthur’s father, ordered the bust from Chantrey in May 1834, and it was delivered in February 7, 1837 (259b).

⁴ Shaw situates the problem of mediation in terms of the generic tradition of elegy by pointing out that Tennyson denies Hallam any medium for representation: Milton and

Shelley both give the deceased “a dwelling place in nature” but Tennyson “transgresses this convention by turning Hallam into ‘some diffusive power,’ vaguely immanent...but already assuming the same sublime relation to all created things as the nameless God of Israel, who transcends nature and all words about Him...Instead of allowing the well-loved Hallam to make a lovely world more lovely, Tennyson seldom introduces any middle ground between grotesque infernal signs like the yew tree and the dark house (which are all body but no soul) and sublime diffusive powers (which are all spirit but no body), continually struggling to escape the constraints of ‘matter-moulded forms’” (*Paradox* 217-18).

⁵ The struggle to resolve the paradox of Hallam’s form engenders within the poet a deep attraction as well as repulsion to images. The history of images in the Western canon reveals a similar dialectical relationship between the sanctity of the icon and the anxieties of iconoclasm. These fears are a part of the much more expansive and fraught relationship between the word and the image that theorists such as W. J. T. Mitchell trace back to Plato. Tennyson’s iconophobia resembles the fears shared by other artists who ruminate on the threat to the imagination that reproducible technologies pose. Photography terrified Baudelaire, who thought the medium cruel. The poet famously remarks, “These masses demanded an ideal that would conform to their aspirations and the nature of their temperament . . . Their prayers were granted by a vengeful god, and Daguerre became his prophet.” Benjamin calls attention to Baudelaire’s rejection of photography for an imaginative purpose; the new medium should not enter the “region of the intangible, the imaginative” (qtd. in Benjamin “On Some Motifs” 186).

⁶ Draper summarizes the myth: “Tithonus was a beautiful youth whom Aurora fell in love with and married in heaven. The Fates had made him immortal but unlike his bride, in the course of events he became feeble and decrepit, and losing all his strength was rocked to sleep in a cradle. The goddess, pitying his condition, metamorphosed him into a grasshopper” (455).

⁷ The scientists Susan Barger and William White explain Draper’s analogy for tithonicity (64). For an extensive analysis of Draper’s theories and their technical roots in relation to Victorian scientific discourse, see Hentschel. Sarah Kate Gillespie’s article on “John William Draper and the Reception of Early Scientific Photography” examines his use of the daguerreotype to study the forces of light (her book on this subject is forthcoming from MIT Press). Most historians have focused on Draper’s groundbreaking efforts to daguerreotype the human face and the moon.

⁸ See recent work by Henderson on Herschel’s theory of light and its decomposing effects (127). Schaaf 45-74 details the correspondence between Herschel and Talbot about the development of the calotype and the difficulties of fixing the image.

⁹ Draper’s experiments are concerned with the forces that act on a particular material. “Diatithonescence” is the permeability of a substance to tithonic rays. For example, Draper reports that writing paper is far more permeable to tithonic rays than plate glass.

¹⁰ A 1950 biography of Draper contrasts his confidence in science with Tennyson’s skepticism: “The other half of Draper bowed down before Fate, in its nineteenth-century guise of scientific determinism. Unlike Tennyson groping in the darkness, Draper never beat his fists against the decrees of science (as he took them to be). But time and again he

ignored their implications. It was his way of crossing the tight rope from Wesleyanism to Darwinism” (Fleming 42).

¹¹ See Shaw “Tithonus” and Hughes for detailed explanations of Tennyson’s process of transforming “Tithon” into “Tithonus” and for the influence of *In Memoriam* on this work. Hughes claims that one of the most significant changes is the forceful language adopted in the 1860 version of “Tithonus”; these revisions enhance its quality as a dramatic monologue (Hughes 84). See Harris for a discussion of Tithonus’s corporeal metamorphosis as a wasting body.

¹² The phrase suggests the medium’s powerful capacity for capturing the minute details of a particular likeness. In her 1857 essay, “Photography,” Lady Elizabeth Eastlake finds that although deficient as an art, photography is a “perfect medium” for mechanical reproduction (65). The phrase is used in a number of other periodical articles to describe the medium’s evolving technological refinement.

¹³ Tennyson’s elegiac work is in a dialogue with the broader scientific and technological discourses of the period. In her influential reading, Isobel Armstrong finds *In Memoriam* grappling with evolutionary science and Victorian theology that comprises the poem’s “myth of geology”(252).

¹⁴ Craft reads this desire within the queer context of Tennyson’s passion for Hallam. He writes, “*In Memoriam* is more than a machine for the sublimation, management, or erasure of male homosexual desire. It is, rather, the site of a continuing problematization: a problematization not merely of desire between men but also of the desire, very urgent in the elegy, to speak it” (85). Craft sees the work of the poem as a sublimation and revision of that desire. The closeness between sexual desire and the desire for a medium amplifies Tennyson’s imperative for a tactile encounter with Hallam. However, Craft’s argument does not attend to the relationship between mediation and erotic desire—a central problem for this elegy. See also Nunokawa for the sublimation of sexual desire in the elegy.

¹⁵ One of the central tenets of Talbot’s “sciagraphic” process is that “Light and shadow are mutually defining—each is produced by the other’s absence—yet there is something paradoxical about Talbot’s oscillation between the terms in juxtaposing the phrases ‘made by light’ and ‘fixing a shadow.’ Talbot equates two concepts that seem to be opposite or inverses of each other” (Saltz 74). See Stevenson for Talbot’s theory of the latent image and the broader discourse of scientific discovery, especially the geological discoveries that concern Tennyson (95).

Chapter 3

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Bad Photographs

Twenty-four sonnets into the 1870 edition of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The House of Life*, a woman comes to the speaker from the depths of a woodside well. Over the course of the four-sonnet sequence the poet titled "Willowwood," the speaker leans down to kiss her before she vanishes back into the abyss. Recently, Isobel Armstrong has argued that this figure can be read as a photograph in development: an attempt by Rossetti to fix and bring back to life the image of a woman raised from the dead. Armstrong encourages us to notice how the process of photography is imagined in material terms. "The physics of reflection," she argues in this compelling piece, "is not an illusion, it is a material event. The 'photographic' act of the virtual image, though virtual, is a fact of 'touching'" (467). Still, in spite of her strong claim that such a forceful image makes physical contact possible, Armstrong insists that the object "cannot be retrieved" or "dissociated from the water or medium in which it appears" (468).

The account of photography that underpins Armstrong's argument participates in a line of critical thought that identifies a material, indexical relationship between the medium and what it represents. Critics such as André Bazin, Roland Barthes, and Walter Benjamin remind us of the fact that for all of its virtual qualities, a photograph is the physical trace of the light an object or human life reflects.¹ "No matter how artful the photographer," writes Benjamin, "no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an irresistible compulsion to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, the here and now, with which reality has, so to speak, seared through the image-character

of the photograph, to find the inconspicuous place where, within the suchness [*Sosein*] of that long-past minute, the future nests still today—and so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it” (276-77). In “Willowwood,” Rossetti asks if it is possible to reconcile this Orphic desire to retrieve the past and make a lost person present with the fact that photography can never offer the return of the original, material subject. While the medium’s powerfully mimetic qualities give the illusion of presence and connection, Rossetti admonishes the speaker’s desire for contact. Despite the appearance of the woman’s form, the developing image in “Willowwood” is a hallucination of presence that should not be mistaken for the lost beloved. In what follows, I will develop Armstrong’s insight about the photographic aspect of the poem into an account of the place of photography in Victorian elegy in order to explain how the struggle to control the process of photographic reproduction can itself become part of the work of mourning. My analysis will address how the photograph fails to console the mourner, how it allows for a complex recognition of the nature of loss, and most particularly how Rossetti’s loss of his wife, Elizabeth Siddal, shaped his fraught use of the medium.

While alert to the influence of photographic reproductions on Rossetti and his fellow Pre-Raphaelite artists, scholars have often looked past the disturbing terms in which this avant-garde movement conceived of the photograph’s power.² Even in William Bell Scott’s well-known claim that “the seed of the flower of Pre-Raphaelism was photography,” we may find reasons to pause. “The seriousness and honesty of motive,” he goes on, “the unerring fatalism of the sun’s action, as well as the perfection of the impression on the eye, was what it aspired to” (1:251).³ Scott’s description rings true when we find an attempt to emulate the camera’s perfection in the fine brush strokes

and fastidious details that make John Everett Millais's 1852 *Ophelia* the very image of Elizabeth Siddal drowning. However, Scott's phrasing also suggests more troubling qualities to be found in the power of light—a force not just unerring, but unerringly *fatal*—that makes all photography possible. The “sun's action” may create a perfect impression, but to speak of “unerring fatalism” is to associate the medium not just with accuracy but with a loss of control; Scott's pun on the fatality of photography captures the medium's unresolvable relationship to destiny and death.

These dynamics are powerfully evident in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's creative, intermedial process of mourning Siddal. In 1862, not long after Siddal delivered a stillborn child, she committed suicide, apparently leaving Rossetti to conceal her damning note from an inquest that improbably ruled the laudanum overdose an accident. Several years after her unexpected death, Rossetti sought consolation in the composition of *The House of Life*, an unconventional elegy that yearns for the presence of the beloved. In writing this sonnet sequence, the poet participated in a long tradition that found solace in words. Addressing language's power in her recent meditation on elegy, Diana Fuss echoes many scholars when she writes, “consolation . . . resides in voice itself” (107).⁴ But in the Victorian period, mourners also, famously, found consolation in photographs. In addition to the many photographs taken from life and cherished after death, vernacular practices such as spirit photography and post-mortem photography emerged in England as part of an effort to see, to remember, and in some degree, to recover the dead.⁵ And so it may not be a surprise, then, that Rossetti created a number of strange photography projects to work through issues unresolved by his poetry. In these projects, Rossetti acknowledges that the artistic failure to make his lost beloved present has become a

creative opportunity.

The control Rossetti exercises over Siddal's image in his paintings and drawings has often been understood by scholars as an attempt to make her conform to an idealized, Beatrician type.⁶ But Rossetti's use of photography to effect this control, especially in the wake of Siddal's death, has not been discussed. Two ambitions characterized Rossetti's project: his attempt to destroy photographic portraits of Siddal and his attempt to photograph her artistic work for elaborate elegiac albums. These actions are not contradictory, but complementary efforts to exercise control over the beloved's loss through a medium that the artist can never fully master. Taken together, these two photographic projects exemplify Rossetti's strategy for redressing loss through the selective concealment and exposure of the beloved, an alternation that I argue is also essential to "Willowwood." The textual and visual negotiations of Siddal's loss are important not only for what they reveal about the artist's mourning, but also for what they demonstrate about the promise and productive failures of photography as an elegiac medium.

Overpainted but Not Retained

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's treatment of his beloved's image in both his verse and in his visual projects moves between two extremes: proliferation and negation. A letter from 1864 illustrates this oscillation when Rossetti justifies sending his correspondent, Georgiana Burne-Jones, photographs of his own sketches instead of portrait photographs of Siddal taken during her lifetime:

The photographs of Lizzie are only from 2 of my sketches. On several occasions when attempts were made to photograph her from life, they were all so bad that

none have been retained. I have given 2 photos: to Green to frame (from 2 different sketches), and told him to send them to you when framed. Will you keep whichever you prefer and give the other to Mrs. W. (3:202)⁷

Rossetti's use of the passive voice carefully avoids the declaration that he has destroyed these "bad" images; in saying that they were not "retained," he leaves open the possibility that they remain extant in another's possession or perhaps in an altered form—though their whereabouts are now unknown. If history, perhaps in the form of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, has not retained these images, it has kept and altered others. We may find a complement to the discarded photographs in an image of Elizabeth Siddal created by Rossetti shortly before her death in 1862. Easily mistaken for a miniature portrait, this overpainted photograph is so precious that it now rests within a case adorned with gold, opal, diamonds, and star sapphires (Figure 6).⁸ As a token of his appreciation, Rossetti gave this consolatory object to Siddal's deathbed nurse, who later sold it to J. Pierpont Morgan. In the hands of the collector, the specially fabricated enclosure was engraved with the story of Rossetti's loss, thus enshrining an image that both conceals and reveals the photograph of Siddal beneath a layer of paint.⁹

Unwilling to let Siddal appear in the grey tones of the original photograph, Rossetti colored the image with gouache, dabbing her cheeks with a rosy pigment to suggest life, in spite of a heavy-lidded pose that has the quality of a picture taken post-mortem. Siddal sits with her hands clasped and arms protruding from beneath many layers and folds of garments that seem stiff enough to bear her up against a background that threatens to submerge her in a watery blue-green.



Figure 6. Attributed to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "Mrs. Rossetti." 1860-61. The Walters Art Museum.

Coloring photographs was a common practice in Victorian England, but rarely was it done with the elaborate care and thoroughness apparent in this image. While the woman's figure remains unerased on the albumen paper, it has been buried beneath opaque color, detectable only by means of sophisticated modern imaging technology. Using a powerful microscope, the viewer can see the faint traces of the albumen revealed by tiny fissures in the pigmented layer. The photograph has not been destroyed, but it has been purposefully refaced; we may say that it has not been "retained."

In deliberately hiding the photograph, Rossetti defies the conventions of his time for coloring an albumen print. An 1859 guide on *How to Colour a Photograph*, after lamenting the lack of technology to produce color photographs, offers painting as an alternative: "to give photographic portraits their full value as *likenesses*—to give them life and individuality—the photographer must have recourse to the art of the painter" (v). In the guide's formulation, the "death-like" grey tones of the photograph are transformed into "the fleshy look of life" by applied color (46). The text proposes remedies for any number of potential defects, including the sitter's undesirable physiognomy (56). However, the guide insists on the necessity of retaining the photograph's "truthfulness" in spite of these corrections (62). An advertisement for "Newman's Photographic Colors" that follows the guidebook promises that the colors "adhere with ease and fulness to the Plate; while, from their transparency, they *colour without hiding* the Photograph, giving a pure, brilliant, and *life-like* effect" (Figure 7).

NEWMAN'S PHOTOGRAPHIC COLORS, FOR THE SILVERED PLATE—GLASS—AND PAPER.

These Colors are *prepared by a peculiar process*, meeting every want of the Photographer. They adhere with ease and fulness to the Plate; while, from their transparency, they *colour without hiding* the Photograph, giving a pure, brilliant, and *life-like* effect.

The following are some of the principal Colors:—

Flesh, Fair, 1, 2	White	Puce	Carnation
Ditto, Dark, 1, 2	Damask	Rose	3 Greys
Lips	Backgrounds	Distance	Silver Grey
Lavender	3 Complexions	Satin White	Violet
Black	Carminé	Plum	Puce
Crimson	4 Yellows	4 Greens	White (Solarization)
Pink	Golden Yellow	3 Browns	Claret
Horizon	Orange	Permant. Scarlet	&c. &c. &c.

In Bottles Sealed and Tied over.



LOCK MAHOGANY BOXES, with Velvet Palette, Brushes, Stumps, Shells, &c., and 36 Colors, £2 2s.; ditto ditto, with 24 Colors, £1 11s. 6d.; ditto ditto, with 18 Colors, £1 5s.; ditto ditto, with 12 Colors, £1.

MAHOGANY BOX, with Brushes, Shells, &c., 9 Colors, 10s. 6d.

ALBATA AND BRASS-BOUND DOVETAILED MAHOGANY BOXES, with extra reserve of Colors, Brushes, Stumps, &c., for hot climates, from £2 2s.

"Newman's Harmonious Coloring, as applied to Photographs," &c., 1s. 2d., post free.

24, SOHO SQUARE, LONDON.

Figure 7. Newman's Photographic Colors Advertisement. 1859.

By altering the photographs of Siddal, Rossetti created a figure situated between two different media, simultaneously exposed and disguised; in doing so, he exerts a tenuous control over the photograph by hiding it from view but also retaining its presence.¹⁰ The issue of artistic control was prominent in Victorian discussions of photography. In her 1857 essay, "Photography," Lady Elizabeth Eastlake asks whether or not "the sun may be considered an artist," reminding her readers that all photography "rests upon the fact of the blackening effects of light upon certain substances, and chiefly upon silver, on which it acts with a decomposing power" (43). For Eastlake, this unwieldy and destructive medium frequently resists the photographer's control and results in failure. Its disappointments include its inability to render chiaroscuro, its distortion of the human face, its limitations at picturing landscapes, and its inability to represent color. For a painter such as Rossetti, these constraints must have contributed to his frustration over Siddal's bad photographs.¹¹ However, there is another element of control the medium threatens to remove from Rossetti's hands: in the words of the guide on coloring photographs, the power "to give . . . life and individuality" to his lost beloved. In his elegiac text, *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes famously develops a vocabulary to address photography's inability to breathe life into its subjects. Barthes names this indeterminate yet vital kind of contingency the "*air*," an element of the photograph that makes visible something other than resemblance (109). "It is by this tenuous umbilical cord that the photographer gives life" (110), Barthes writes, but too often the photograph's silence resounds with emptiness. Perhaps, in Rossetti's eyes, the photographs of Siddal failed to give her life, or they made something visible that he would rather not see. To quote Barthes once more, these photographs might have shown

Rossetti that painful image of “what is dead, what is going to die” (117). The photographs open Siddal’s appearance to a contingency not of Rossetti’s design, perhaps even to that final contingency that is death.

The phobic response indicated by Rossetti’s various acts of concealment suggests that he saw in her pictures something in need of correction. Altering the images in this way, I have been speculating, allowed Rossetti to exert control within a medium that seemed to deny it, and in the face of a loss before which he was helpless. But Rossetti’s corrections reveal his anxiety over how Siddal would be remembered, especially how her posthumous image would be seen by others. Given the controversies surrounding the reception of Rossetti’s work generally, he had reason to be anxious that his depictions of Siddal would be viewed in the context of her unfortunate demise.¹² The attacks on his work culminated with Robert Buchanan’s infamous 1871 invective, “The Fleshly School of Poetry,” which targets the artist’s “trash,” by which is meant the poet’s prurient and indecent representations of women. Buchanan’s text allows us a surprising insight into the interplay of photography and color manifested in the overpainted photograph. In the critic’s formulation, the variegated tints and hues of Rossetti’s work may be virtuosic, but photographic reproductions of his paintings reveal its failings: Rossetti’s skillful use of color, according to Buchanan, distracts viewers from noticing more serious limitations. “Judged by the photographs,” Buchanan writes, “he is an artist who conceives unpleasantly, and draws ill” (336). For Buchanan, this is true of Rossetti’s poetry as well: “the same thinness and transparency of design, the same combination of the simple and grotesque, the same morbid deviation from healthy forms of life, the same sense of weary, wasting, yet exquisite sensuality; nothing virile, nothing tender, nothing completely

sane . . ." (336-37). Photography exposes the truth that Rossetti's colors hide, and what comes to light is bad art and mad women. Buchanan never mentions Elizabeth Siddal directly, although William Fredeman suggests that Rossetti feared the critic knew about the furtive 1869 exhumation of Siddal's coffin to recover the manuscripts for the poems against which "The Fleshly School" inveighs ("Prelude" 421). Still, Buchanan draws on the figure of the female hysteric to support a thinly veiled ad hominem attack against Rossetti's marriage. The depictions in Rossetti's work leave him to wonder "at the kind of women" who "bite, scratch, scream, bubble, munch, sweat, writhe, twist, wiggle, foam, and . . . slaver over their lovers" (343). This fleshly string of predicates not only registers the madness of Rossetti's art but also cruelly evokes the tragedies of his life, especially that part of it associated with his late wife's death. Repeating his accusations again in 1872 with an expanded pamphlet, Buchanan ridicules the "Willowwood" sonnets from *The House of Life* for their "supreme silliness and worthlessness," and quips that the "nameless" house of the elegy's title is "the identical one where the writer found 'Jenny,'" implying that the beloved was a prostitute (61, 64). The vitriolic pamphlet goes so far as to accuse Rossetti's poetry of "wheeling his nuptial couch out into the public streets" (ix). In his rejoinder to Buchanan's first article, Rossetti remonstrates the "personal paltriness" and "pure nonsense" that undergirds the attack, and insists on the imaginative qualities of his art (339). But that art does, nonetheless, selectively reveal the faces of recognizable women such as Siddal. Offended by how Rossetti exhibits the intimacies of his life through his work, Buchanan attempts to wrestle power away from the artist by exposing the depravity and sickness of his poems and images. However, even though Buchanan thinks he sees the unpleasant truth behind Rossetti's colors, he remains blind to the

careful acts of concealment that define the artist's work and their role in his mourning of Siddal.

Rossetti illustrates the play of power and exposure in "The Portrait," a sonnet from *The House of Life* describing the composition of a picture that will reveal the most sanctified aspects of the subject, her "inner self the perfect whole." This picture promises to uncover the individual's true face—her surface and her depth—in a condition of perfection, invulnerable to time, decay, and coercion. Impelled by a desire to create an image that will "praise her name," the artist calls on Love, the personified "Lord of all compassionate control," to reveal her beauty. But, at the sonnet's volta, the speaker claims the beloved's image very much as his own:

Lo! it is done. Above the enthroning throat
The mouth's mould testifies of voice and kiss,
The shadowed eyes remember and foresee.
Her face is made her shrine. Let all men note
That in all year (O Love, thy gift is this!)
They that would look on her must come to me. (ll. 9-14)

The artist overpaints the distinctive face of the beloved in the sonnet's final line.

"Compassionate control" becomes manifest in the simultaneous exhibition of her innermost aspects and the removal of her agency. The poem ends with the assertion of the artist's authority over the beloved's image, implying that her true face remains hidden.

Christina Rossetti, one of her brother's most incisive critics, gives us another way to understand his acts of concealment. Her admonitory sonnet from 1856, "In an Artist's Studio," calls attention to the "One face [that] looks out from all his canvasses" (l. 1). This is the "nameless girl" who is represented "Not as she is, but as she fills his dream" (ll. 6, 14). The male artist conceals the woman behind an idealized figure: "He feeds upon her face by day and night"(l.9). His subject rests "just behind those screens" that

paint over her subjection, screens that render her inert and inanimate (l. 3). Most of the sonnet concentrates on the beloved as an idealized type, but Christina excavates the individual face that stands behind the mirror with the authority of a plural pronoun: “We found her hidden” (l. 3). The plural subject of this sentence emphasizes the gravity and alarm of discovery: the transgressions of the artist against his subject coming into full view for a group—and a sister—to rebuke.

The overpainted photograph and these poems reveal a construction by Dante Gabriel so elaborate that straightforward gestures of revelation will not do, or at least will not be final. Not only does Rossetti wish to control the beloved’s exposure, but he also wishes to control her loss. Unable to make her physically present, Rossetti exercises power over her image. Photography would seem to offer the possibility of preserving the face of the absent Siddal, but Rossetti’s control depends on hiding the beloved in such a way that only he can selectively expose her to view. However, as Christina Rossetti’s sonnet makes clear, her brother threatens to bury the very thing he wishes to retain.

Reproduction and Concealment in “Willowwood”

The photographs of Siddal are “bad” because their resemblance threatens to undermine Rossetti’s power over the beloved’s concealment and exposure, a topic theorized most pointedly in his elegy about loss in the age of photography: *The House of Life*. Following Freud’s seminal essay, “Mourning and Melancholia,” Peter Sacks has argued that the process of mourning captured in elegy culminates in a surrender of control over the lost object. *The House of Life*, however, refuses to accept the irretrievable loss of the beloved, and rejects the conventional work of mourning that

Sacks outlines. In doing so, the poems more powerfully recall another Freudian text. In a perverse and counterintuitive strategy, *The House of Life* enacts a continuous cycle of loss and recovery to elegize the beloved, much like the one Freud's grandson, Ernst, famously created when he made his toy appear and disappear to master the absence of his mother.¹³ *The House of Life* sonnet sequence has been notoriously difficult to read because presence and absence, speaker and addressee, expectation and retrospection are frequently impossible to parse.¹⁴ In one sonnet characteristic of this ambiguity, "Life-in-Love," the speaker grasps for the remains of the beloved's "golden hair undimmed in death" to supplement this relic with the presence of a new lover (l. 14). Jerome McGann points out how the second woman present in this sonnet screens the first, making the identification of the pronoun's antecedents impossible (52-55). In this poem and elsewhere, *The House of Life* draws on the melancholy, ambiguity, and self-deception that Jahan Ramazani defines as characteristic of the twentieth-century anti-elegy. Rossetti, however, performs this work in a Victorian anti-elegy that will not cede power over the lost beloved to the contingencies of life and death. The four sonnets of "Willowwood," the original core of the entire elegy, evoke figures of mechanical reproduction to discover how photography can be used to retain control over the beloved's presence and absence.¹⁵

At the center of the "Willowwood" sonnets lies the anti-elegy's darkest secret: for all the lamentation and lovelorn actions these poems stage, their fascination resides in the ways the speaker disguises his hand in making the beloved appear and disappear in the water before him. To do so, he projects his own power over the woman's image onto the personified figure of Love. In the opening lines of "Willowwood," Love has a secret that he will not tell. He sits next to the speaker, looking away, and leaving it to his lute to

make music that will convey “[t]he certain secret thing he had to tell” (l. 5). Love’s music wordlessly mediates the beloved’s presence and absence. If, at the start of “Willowwood,” Love helps the speaker develop the woman’s image in the water that he stoops to kiss, by its middle stages Love will orchestrate her submergence back into its depths. To speak of Love as a separate entity from the speaker, however, is to ignore the speaker’s face behind the mask of Love. The confusion of agency entailed in this alienated manifestation of passion reaches its extreme when the speaker cannot even discern if his beloved’s image in the water is real or virtual.

In “Willowwood,” the speaker is left to understand whether the love-freighted lips at the water’s surface incarnate the lost soul he craves or merely screen his narcissistic rapture. When other figures begin to appear in “Willowwood,” copies of both the speaker and the beloved, he is confronted with the possibility that the woman in the woodside well is another illusory reproduction. After his tears precipitate the woman’s image in the water, the second sonnet multiplies both of their figures into a “dumb throng” standing “aloof” next to every tree: “All mournful forms, for each was I or she, / The shades of those our days that had no tongue” (ll. 7-8). These forms both watch the speaker stoop and kiss the well water, and mirror the speaker and the beloved in a complex specular play:

They looked on us, and knew us and were known;
While fast together, alive from the abyss,
Clung the soul-wrung implacable close kiss;
And pity of self through all made broken moan
Which said, ‘For once, for once, for once alone!’ (ll. 9-13)

The moaning voice tries to defy the many forms’ very presence, but fails. “For once, for once, for once alone!” the moan echoes with irony. Yet the scene remains overpopulated

with the forms that surround the reunion, leaving us to wonder if these specular figures have also emerged from the deep. While voice is given to these grief-stricken forms, the “pity of self” insists on a loneliness within this busy scene, suggesting ultimately that in the illusory *mise en abyme* of “Willowwood,” only one voice exists—only one, only one, only one alone, we might say.

However blurred and obscure, the conflict of “Willowwood” evidently rests on the confrontation between an original and a reproduction: the speaker fixates on the image in the water that he accepts as an embodied presence of his loss, but Love rejects both the bubbling woman and the “mournful forms” as soulless. Love cautions that these reproductions are unreal and disconnected from any original object. He instructs the speaker that his lost beloved would be better off concealed “in sleep till she were dead” than left “wandering” and captive in this desperate scene. If the woman in the water is a metaphor for the photograph, as Isobel Armstrong suggests, then what makes her any different from the mournful forms? The poem does not answer this question; instead, it intensifies the confusion of the original with the reproduction. Speaking of Rossetti’s double works of art, Hillis Miller remarks that the relation between his poetry and visual art is always “a travesty, a misinterpretation, a distorted image in the mirror of the other art” (336). For Miller, devastating and perpetual loss is always hidden behind this mirror, especially the inevitable loss of self (337).¹⁶ Similarly, in the scene of “Willowwood,” the mournful forms, the woman in the water, the speaker’s projection of Love—all the figures of the poem—are the speaker’s distortion of his own loss.

However, lest we think this revelation exposes the poem’s secret, the final sonnet of “Willowwood” silences Love’s caution and gives us the speaker’s metaphor for the

figure he kisses. He compares the slow falling of rose petals that brush together in the wind with the woman who descends back into the water's depths:

So sang he: and as meeting rose and rose
 Together cling through the wind's wellaway
 Nor change at once, yet near the end of day
 The leaves drop loosened where the heart-stain glows,--
 So when the song died did the kiss uncloze;
 And her face fell back drowned and was as grey
 As its grey eyes; and if it ever may
 Meet mine again I know not if Love knows. (ll. 1-8)

This stanza contrasts the glow of rosy hues with the grey tones of loss. The crucial difference between the beloved's presence in the well and the mournful forms lies in the contact between her and the speaker mediated by the water's surface and depth. The kissing, clinging, touching, and chafing of their contact leaves the heart stain, the aura, of a singular event in the aftermath of her loss, but no material trace remains other than the speaker's lines. Furthermore, no mention is made of the forms that reside among the willows. Are they withdrawn with the loss of the original figure or do they tarry like photographs that have no original? Unlike a photograph, no image of the woman or her reproductions has been fixed, though we are left with the latent possibility that she might emerge again from the depths of "Willowwood." Indeed, the poem's troubled temporality—the sense it conveys of a recurring image loop—feels less photographic than proto-cinematic.

All manifestations of the beloved in "Willowwood" obscure her irretrievable loss. In the aftermath of that loss, the powerless speaker concludes that he cannot know if the beloved will return. This lament is contradicted, however, by his subsequent claim to possess "all her soul." Secrets reproduce secrets in the *mise en abyme* of concealment that "Willowwood" stages. An early draft of the poem's final stanza reveals the secret on

which I have been insisting, that the speaker wishes to make the beloved disappear. There is no Love to screen the speaker's desire in this Fitzwilliam holograph draft:

I know that here in Willowwood I fare
 For ever to and fro, but here no spell
~~To find again with her~~ ^{To track my footprints to} the vanished well:
 And in what ~~glades~~ ^{glades} she ~~waits~~ ^{seeks}, and holds her hair
 Aside, and listens to the sunken air,
~~The talking whispering willows know but may not tell.~~
~~The willows & these waters may not tell.~~
~~The whispers of these willows will not tell.~~
 These willows & these waters may not tell.¹⁷

Rossetti's cancelations and emendations expose the poem's spell, the process of concealment and retention it is so eager to put into effect. The speaker's ostensible desire to find the footprints that will lead back to the beloved is given the lie by language that betrays the repetition he enacts: the vanished well, the footprints, the fantasy of her hair. Carefully planned and executed, the speaker has orchestrated her loss many times before. Rossetti put these canceled lines into a fair copy form, but he decided to replace them with Love's embrace of the speaker in the published version of "Willowwood" 4. In that sonnet, Love will not tell the speaker if he will see her face again. In the canceled lines of the Fitzwilliam holograph, the beloved remains missing because of an inexplicable secret that resides with the willows and the waters. He imagines her waiting and then seeking while he searches for her in the poem's thicket. However, the revisions to these lines—and indeed Rossetti's strategy throughout "Willowwood"—identify the speaker's solitary voice as the agent of her loss. He knows her location because he left her there, overwriting her tracks with his own. The lover wishes desperately for the return of the beloved's singular face that he cannot achieve. Under Love's cover, the speaker

accomplishes the loss and recovery of his beloved's image in a paradoxical effort to master illusory reproductions that he cannot reach out and touch.

Christina Rossetti's 1890 response to the poem, "An Echo from Willowwood," reads "Willowwood" with an eye towards the speaker's frustrated desire. She imagines a different kind of contact in "Willowwood," describing the two lovers "Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart" as they look at each other's aspect on the water's surface without Love's mediation. Instead of the speaker looking down and the floating woman looking up, Christina imagines both inhabiting the same perspective. They desire each other, and "[e]ach tasted bitterness which both must drink." They see the limen of the abyss that signifies their loss, and her sonnet makes no attempt to mitigate the parting that "must be." The poem moves in one mournful direction, breaking the repetitive cycle of Dante Gabriel's reproductions:

Lilies upon the surface, deep below
Two wistful faces craving each for each,
Resolute and reluctant without speech:—
A sudden ripple made the faces flow
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:
So those hearts joined, and ah! were parted so. (ll. 9-14)

The sestet of this sonnet takes us below the water's surface to see the wistful desire of two faces craving each other beneath the specular play of rippling illusions on the water's surface. Instead of masking the beloved's concealment in "Willowwood," Christina makes loss an overt condition of her poem. The desire is both "resolute" and "reluctant"; the object of longing appears just as soon as it vanishes in another bitter moment. Christina adduces the secret that the willows, waters, and Love will not tell: hidden deep down beneath the well's surface where images are born, Christina Rossetti acknowledges a reality that her brother's poem denies—these "wistful faces" cannot return.

Finding the Same Mournful Face in the Siddal Album

A revealing image, extant only in a reproduction, takes us from the murky biographical allusions in *The House of Life* to the tensions and difficulties within Dante Gabriel's home where he played the original hiding game with Siddal. Rossetti's ink drawing from the 1850s, "Miss Siddal Hiding a Drawing and Rossetti Finding It," illustrates the work of concealment and exposure in the intimate ambit of their relationship (Figure 8). The picture shows us two wistful faces craving each other's works of art. Under a watchful eye, Siddal conceals her creative work, leaving Rossetti to find it in a stack of paintings. Virginia Surtees reads the drawing as two frames, before and after, illustrating the hiding by Siddal and then the finding by Rossetti (209). But the illustration can also be seen as representing the couple simultaneously hiding their work from each other and trying to find each other's work. The drawing room invites visitors into the Victorian home, where we find Siddal's work displayed, not concealed.

Rossetti's brother and biographer, William Michael, describes the carefully arranged drawing room at 14 Chatham Place one month before Siddal's death as "entirely hung round with her water-colours of poetic subjects . . . This drawing-room was prepared from a design made by Rossetti; trees standing the whole height of the wall, conventionally treated, with stems and fruit of Venetian red, and leaves black, and with yellow stars within a white ring: 'the effect of the whole,' he said, 'will be rather sombre, but I think rich also'" ("Elizabeth" 278). In effect, the meticulously designed drawing room is an inversion of what we find in the overpainted photograph; Rossetti's somber colors create the backdrop to display Siddal's work.

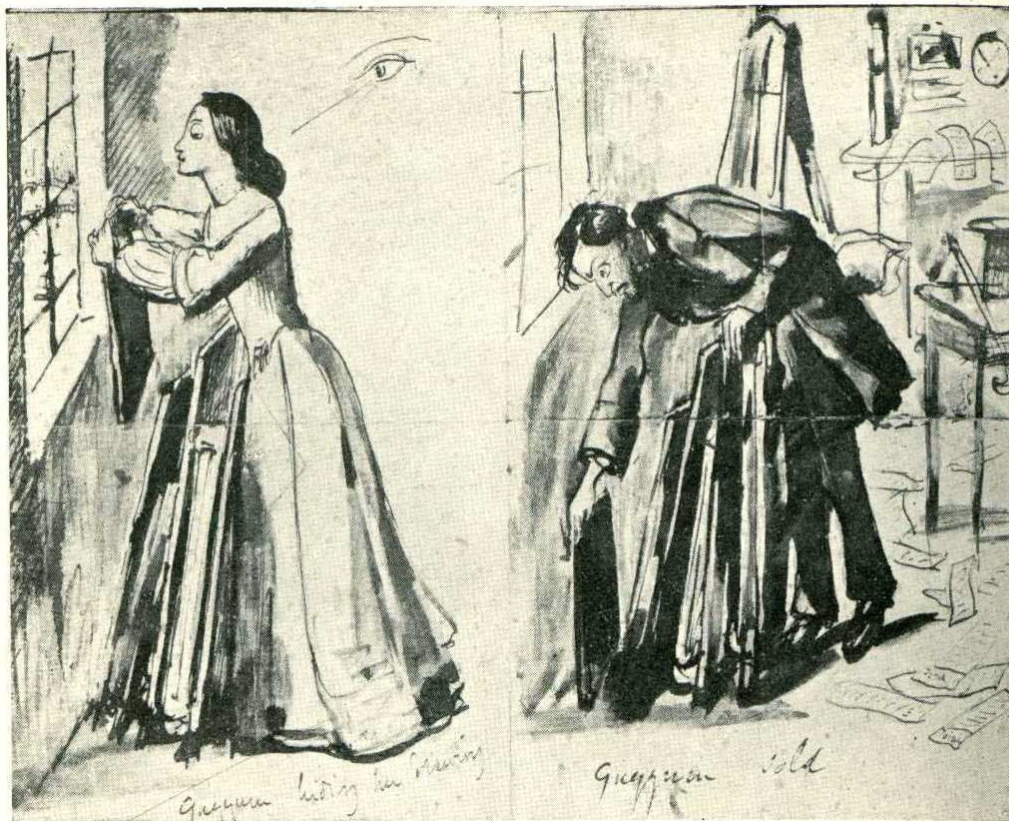


Figure 8. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. "Miss Siddal Hiding a Drawing and Rossetti Finding it." c. 1850s. *Art Journal* (Easter): page 28.

The desire to keep Siddal's art in view continues after her death in 1862 when Rossetti photographed her drawings and paintings in order to retain them.¹⁸ Unlike the bad photographs he elides, this project adopts photography's powers of reproduction to exhibit Siddal's creations. At least four of these folios still exist either intact or in part, but almost no critical attention has been given to them. Each folio demonstrates Rossetti's commitment to preserving Siddal's artwork by reproducing over sixty-nine illustrations and carefully arranging the albumen prints (Figure 9). In the folio held by the Fitzwilliam Museum, two portraits of Siddal by Rossetti introduce the album. She

appears in profile in the first image with her hair neatly combed and her head cast slightly downward, suggesting the pain she had experienced the previous month with the loss of her stillborn child in May 1861 (Figure 10). In the earlier drawing from 1854, Siddal sits next to a table with her eyes closed and hands folded. Her outspread hair sweeps over a pillow to form a curve that seems, given her favored iconography, almost like the half-folded wings of an angel. The ninth board of the folio contains six carefully arranged pictures of the virgin with child (Figure 11). We see in these images a process of composition with some illustrations more finished than others, demonstrating Rossetti's keen interest in Siddal's work as an artist. The project of collecting and photographing her artwork continued after the completion of the albums in November 1866. Rossetti wrote to Charles Eliot Norton in April 1869 to ask for one of Siddal's drawings back, trading photographs for an original after he reports that he has "had all her scraps and scrawls in ink photographed" (4:176). He shares with Norton his desire "to possess the drawing. . . to add to those of hers which are now mine, and which every year teaches me to value more & more as works of genius, even apart from their personal interest to me" (4:175). In this way, photography allows Rossetti to cherish the originals while sharing her work with others. The photographs from life are withdrawn from view because they fail to express Siddal adequately, but the medium's ability to copy artwork enables Rossetti to reveal the products of her imagination.¹⁹ Unable to make the deceased Siddal present, photography offers Rossetti the consolation of reproducing her body of work.

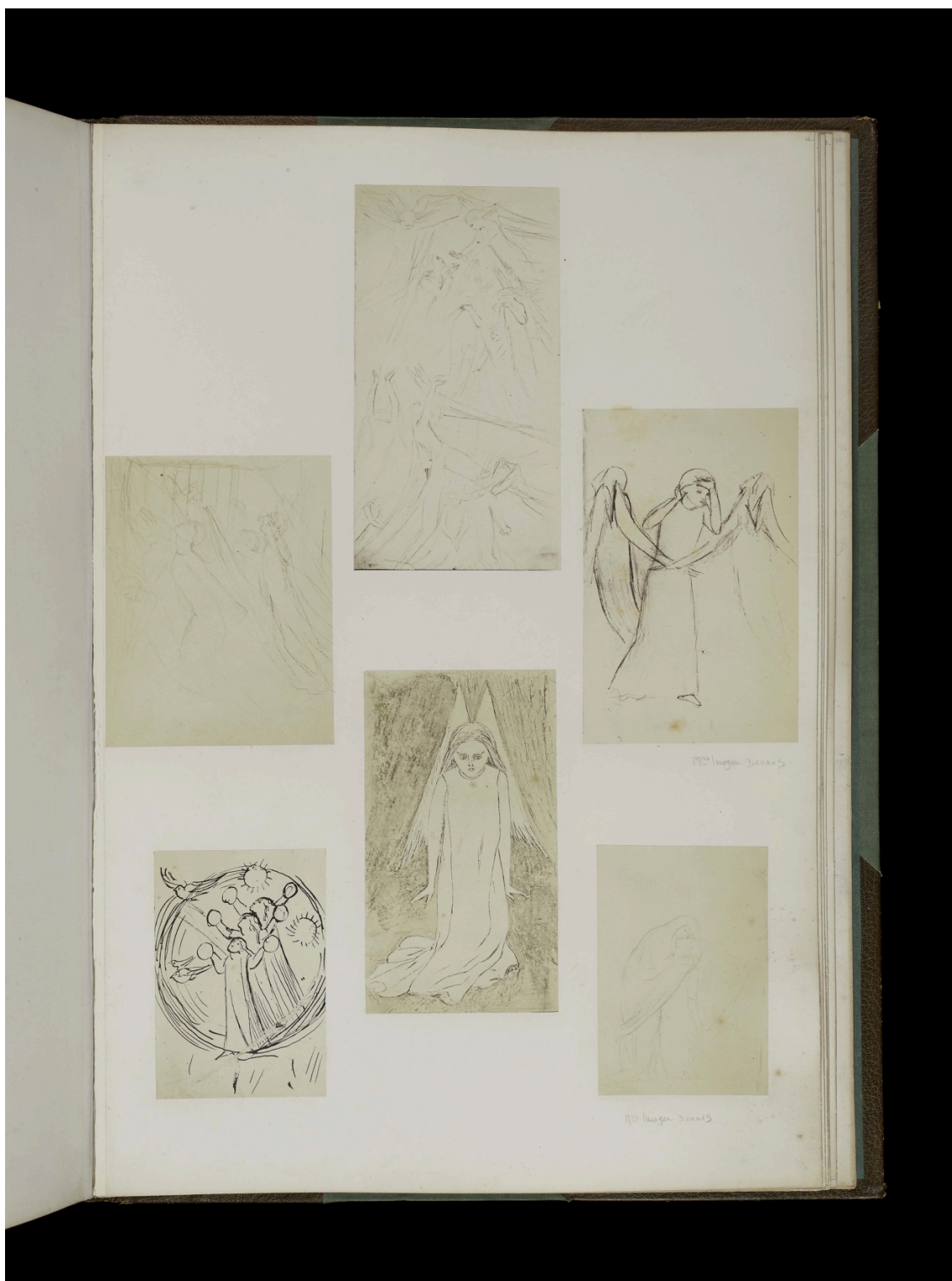


Figure 9. Elizabeth Siddal. Photographs of Siddal's illustrations created by D. G. Rossetti. c. 1866. Fitzwilliam Museum.

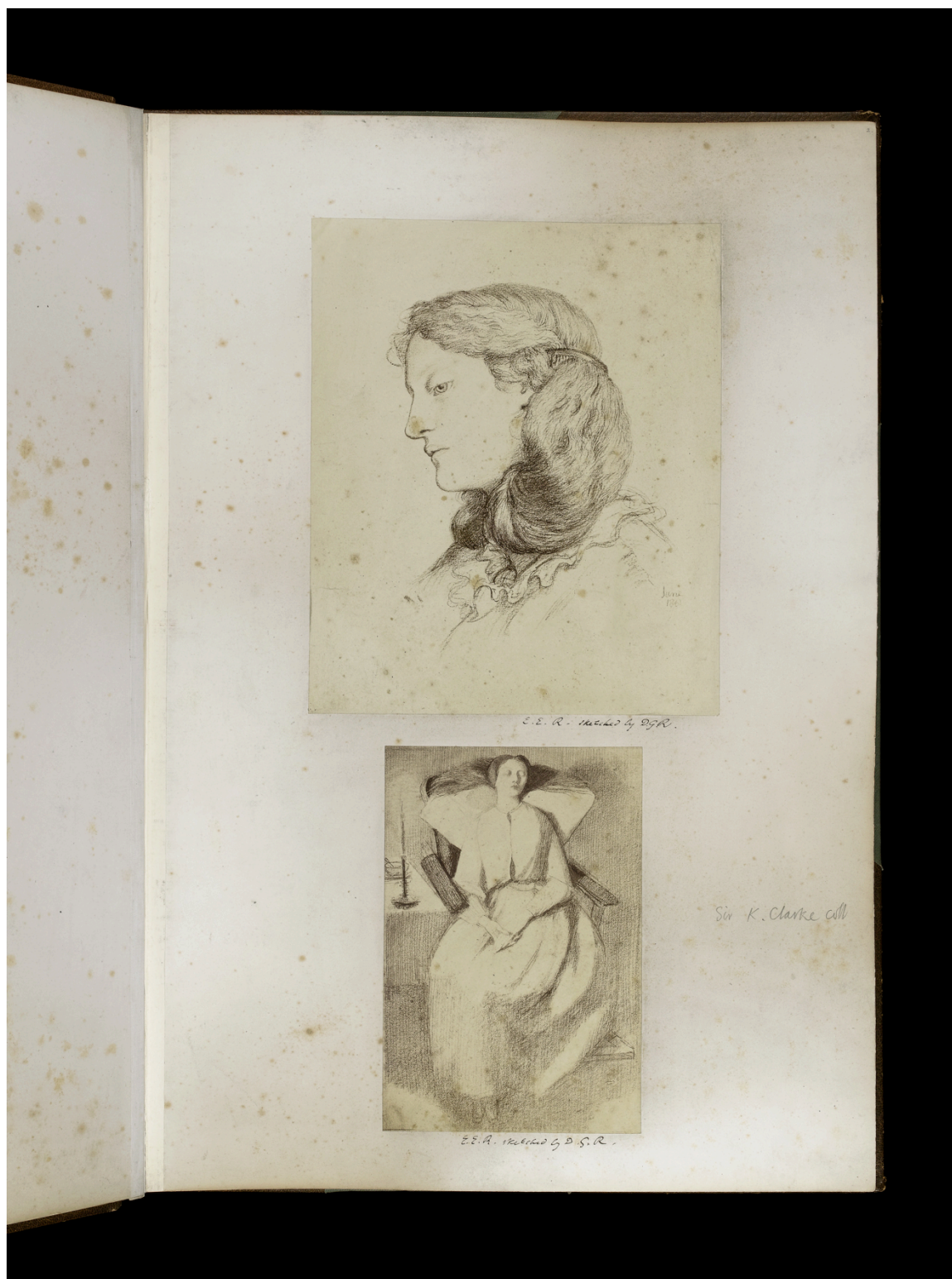


Figure 10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Photographs of illustrations of Elizabeth Siddal. c. 1866. Fitzwilliam Museum.

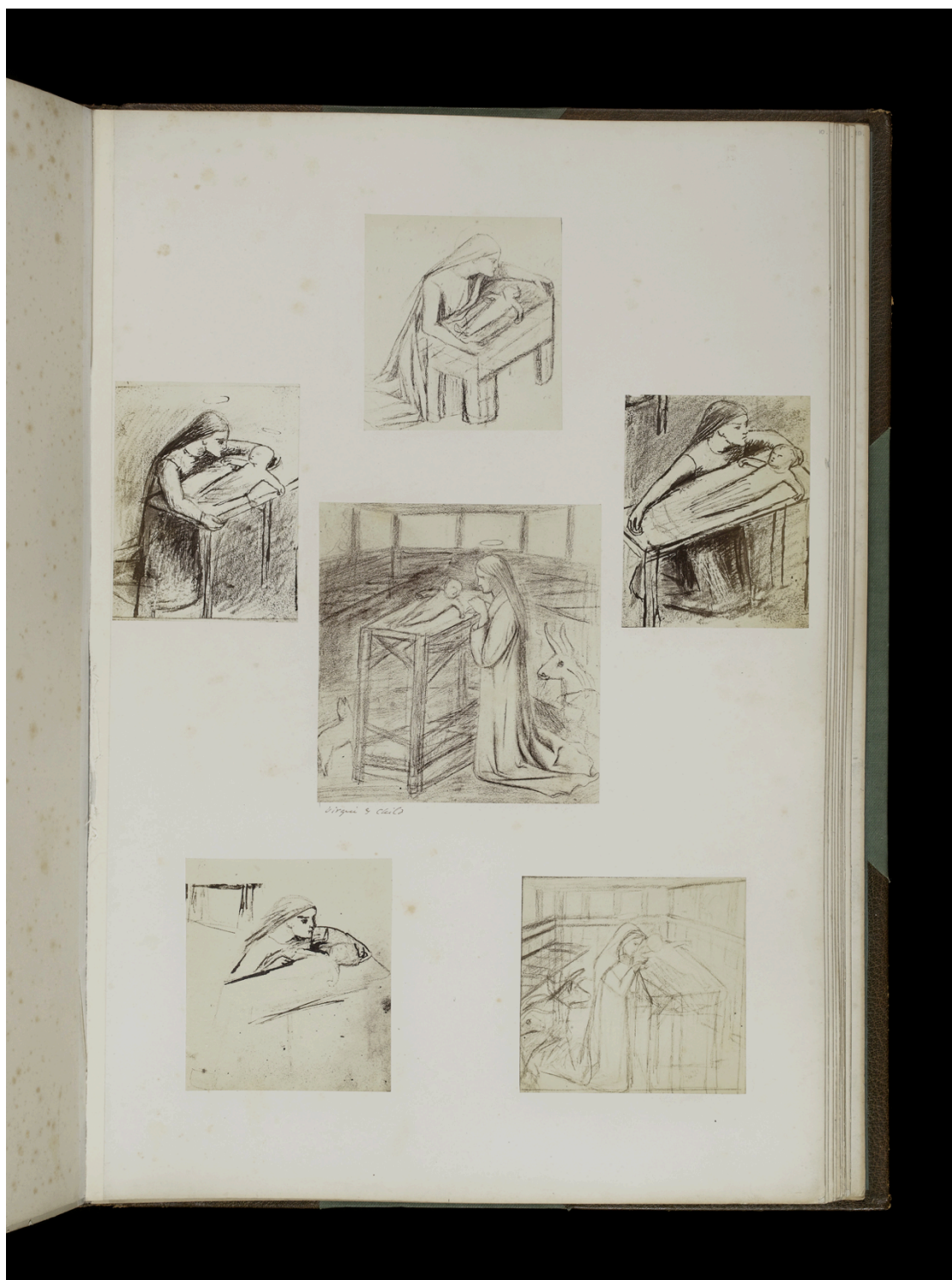


Figure 11. Elizabeth Siddal. Photographs of Siddal's illustrations created by D. G. Rossetti. c. 1866. Fitzwilliam Museum.

In the aftermath of her death, Rossetti left 14 Chatham place, the site of so much grief, and he moved to 16 Cheyne Walk in Chelsea. There, he produced in 1865 a radically different collection of portrait photographs, this time of Jane Burden Morris, William Morris's wife since 1859. Even though these portraits were meant to serve as studies for Rossetti's paintings, the photographs of Morris show that Siddal's death continued to shape his use of the medium. Much like the second woman lurking in many of the sonnets in *The House of Life*, the attention to Morris seems to screen Siddal's haunting absence. Instead of concealing Morris, these images exhibit her face and figure, suggesting a range of attitudes and behaviors. Rossetti finds that he can exert artistic control over the photographic medium by deciding how to reveal Morris to the camera's exposure. John Parsons, an artist and Rossetti's acquaintance, took these photographs in the garden where various animals, including chameleons, a raven, Japanese salamanders, a wombat, kangaroos, and a laughing jackass, were kept in a place that resembled an enchanted forest more than a London dwelling.²⁰ Rossetti's fastidious direction of Morris's body before the camera occurs in the privacy of this fantastic and carefully designed space.²¹ If Rossetti hides Siddal's photographic portraits to exercise control over her face and her loss, he puts Jane Morris in revealing and potentially compromising poses. Indeed, her figure resembles more than anything the intense and awkward gestures of the women in Rossetti's paintings. She tilts her head like a drooping flower in a limp and unnatural pose with her hair tightly pulled up in the back (Figure 12). Her eyes dart upward in a motion that strains against the downward thrust of her head. Other images show a balanced and symmetrical position, but arguably these pictures, which Rossetti used and probably always intended for the composition of his paintings, are even more

disturbing. Elizabeth Helsinger observes that the photographs draw attention to the way Morris's "difficult beauty" is complemented by a silk dress that "reflects light and catches dark shadows in its many folds, themselves providing a study in the fall of drapery that *conceals* the body but offers its own rhythms to accompany the fluent poses she assumes"(163, emphasis added). Helsinger points out that in one image, Rossetti draws over the photograph to trace the outline of these crenulations and in another he retouches her face. However, unlike Siddal's overpainted photograph, the impulse to conceal Morris's face evanesces, and the artist turns his focus away from covering her up, leaving the exposed photograph to be transformed into painting.

The emphasis on Morris's awkward pose and the crinkles of her garments remains when Rossetti paints her as Proserpine, the kidnapped girl who becomes Queen of Hades. Caught between two worlds, Proserpine, of course, stages the most fundamental and continuous pattern of concealment and exposure. Starting in 1872, Rossetti makes eight versions of Proserpine in the aftermath of her having eaten the fateful pomegranate that doomed the girl to return to the underworld—each featuring the likeness of Jane Morris. In the seventh version, Rossetti describes the pregnant moment in an accompanying sonnet inscribed in Italian within the painting and written in English on the frame:

Afar away the light that brings cold cheer
 Unto this wall, --one instant and no more
 Admitted at my distant palace-door.
 Afar the flowers of Enna from this drear
 Dire fruit, which, tasted once, must thrall me here.
 Afar those skies from this Tartarean grey
 That chills me: and afar, how far away,
 The nights that shall be from the days that were. (ll. 1-8)



Figure 12. John Parsons and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Jane Morris," 1865. Victoria and Albert Museum.

From within the well of mourning, Proserpine catches the faint glimmer of another world in the light that reflects on the wall of her captivity. In the sestet of “Proserpine,” her isolation leads her to see that “Afar from mine own self I seem. . .” (l. 9). In this Tartarean grey, a place without color, the goddess lives with the memories of the world that goes on without her. Perhaps speaking from the living world, Proserpine hears this other self tell her, “Woe’s me for thee, unhappy Proserpine!” (l. 14).

In the painting’s eighth version completed only a few days before his death in 1882, Rossetti finds a trace of Elizabeth Siddal. Although the picture still shows Morris’s likeness, the stunning red hair of his dead wife replaces Jane’s coal-black locks. Proserpine, the goddess of concealment and exposure, brings Morris and Siddal together in one figure: Siddal residing in the underworld denied photographic expression, and Morris obsessively posed and exposed. Two faces become one in a painting that accords with the elegiac work in *The House of Life*, for both image and text move to conceal the beloved in order to retain her. Griselda Pollock remarks how critics often see Siddal’s face in Rossetti’s drawings and paintings even when they are looking at another of his models, confusing an idealized type with her face. In this way, our efforts to find Siddal are still frustrated by Rossetti’s elusive efforts to control her. This control, however, was repeatedly undermined by the difficulties Rossetti had with selling and replicating the painting. In a dispute with his dealer over an early version, Rossetti writes, “You state with points of quotation that I wrote you relative to Parsons’s *Proserpine* ‘This *Proserpine* is really bad.’ I never used any words of the sort, nor would they be true from myself or anyone else. You must know that I have *mines* of memory & am always perfectly clear as to what words I have used on all occasions. So far as the picture is a

failure, it is so because I took too much pains with it . . . ” (6: 489).²² Rossetti rejects the very word that he had used to describe the photographs of Siddal; the emphatic quality of his denial underscores the significance of the earlier instance. What he does concede is a failure of artistic control by having exerted too much energy on a work that does not yield the desired result.

Shortly after Rossetti’s death, an article about his estate sale in the *Daily News* reports the scene where the drawing room exhibits *Proserpine* “in that melancholy place, within walls hung with repeated pictures of the same mournful face, with the uncared for trees of the garden looking in and darkening the windows.” These comments consign the artwork to a movement now past and, it appears, soon to be forgotten. About to intrude into the house, the creeping garden threatens to reclaim the haunting obsessions of an artist who could not break free from his compulsion to keep reproducing the same face. Oblivious to the hiding game that continues to unfold in these artworks, the *Daily News* cannot see the traces of the other Proserpine carefully concealed from view in the literal and imaginative spaces of the artist’s home and paintings. Nevertheless, the posthumous sale and dispersion of the art continues the elegiac project Rossetti has set in motion.

The fateful contingencies of photography both challenge and complement Rossetti’s desire for control over his Proserpine and Siddal’s “bad” photographs. In a forgotten cardboard box at the Ashmolean Museum, an incomplete, uncatalogued set of the glass-plate copy negatives for the Siddal album whisper their secrets. In a negative of one of her illustrations that depicts a group of angels, we see beyond the frame cropped and printed for the album (Figure 13). Taped up for reproduction, the edge of Siddal’s illustration meets the world beyond it. The nose of an older Victorian woman pokes the

copy negative's edge. The photographer, we may imagine, attached Siddal's drawing to another glass-plate negative, the one with the woman's image, inadvertently combining two different pictures into one when he photographed them together to create this picture: the first layer, Siddal's drawing, and the layer behind it, the face that emerges from beneath the picture.²³ Refusing concealment, this unknown face appears with the power and authority of an image that defies effacement, as if coming at the drawing to claim ownership. She watches over the angels like the disembodied eye in the wall of Rossetti's "Hiding" illustration, but the imbricated negative reveals her hidden face. When the negative image is digitally inverted from negative to positive, both the woman and the drawing appear positive even though they are opposites (Figure 14). An opaque layer existed behind the negative of the woman to give the appearance of a positive image when it was photographed with the Siddal drawing. The simultaneous appearance of negative with positive conceals and reveals the woman's face, distorting it to the point that we cannot be sure if this is a photograph of an actual woman or a drawing. We may think back to the reproduction and concealment of "Willowwood" in which the poem stages the beloved's disappearance to obfuscate her irretrievable loss, and perhaps we may allow ourselves to read this remarkable negative as a visual metaphor for the very paradox that haunts Rossetti's controlling desire to hide and expose Siddal. Here, let us say, is Elizabeth Siddal's photographic portrait: unwilling to stay concealed in Rossetti's underworld, she returns from Hades.

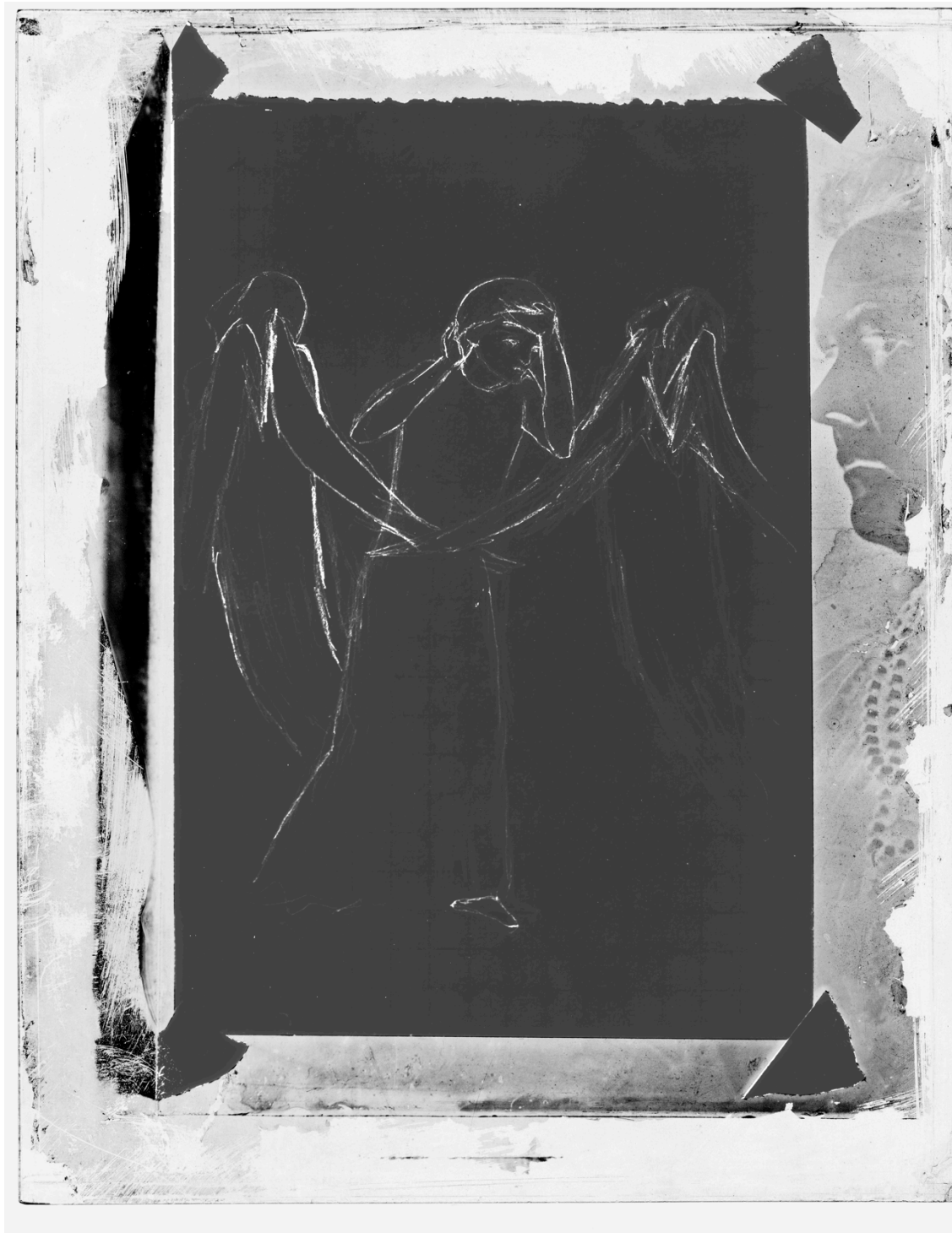


Figure 13. Anon. Negative for the Siddal Album. c. 1860s. Ashmolean Museum.

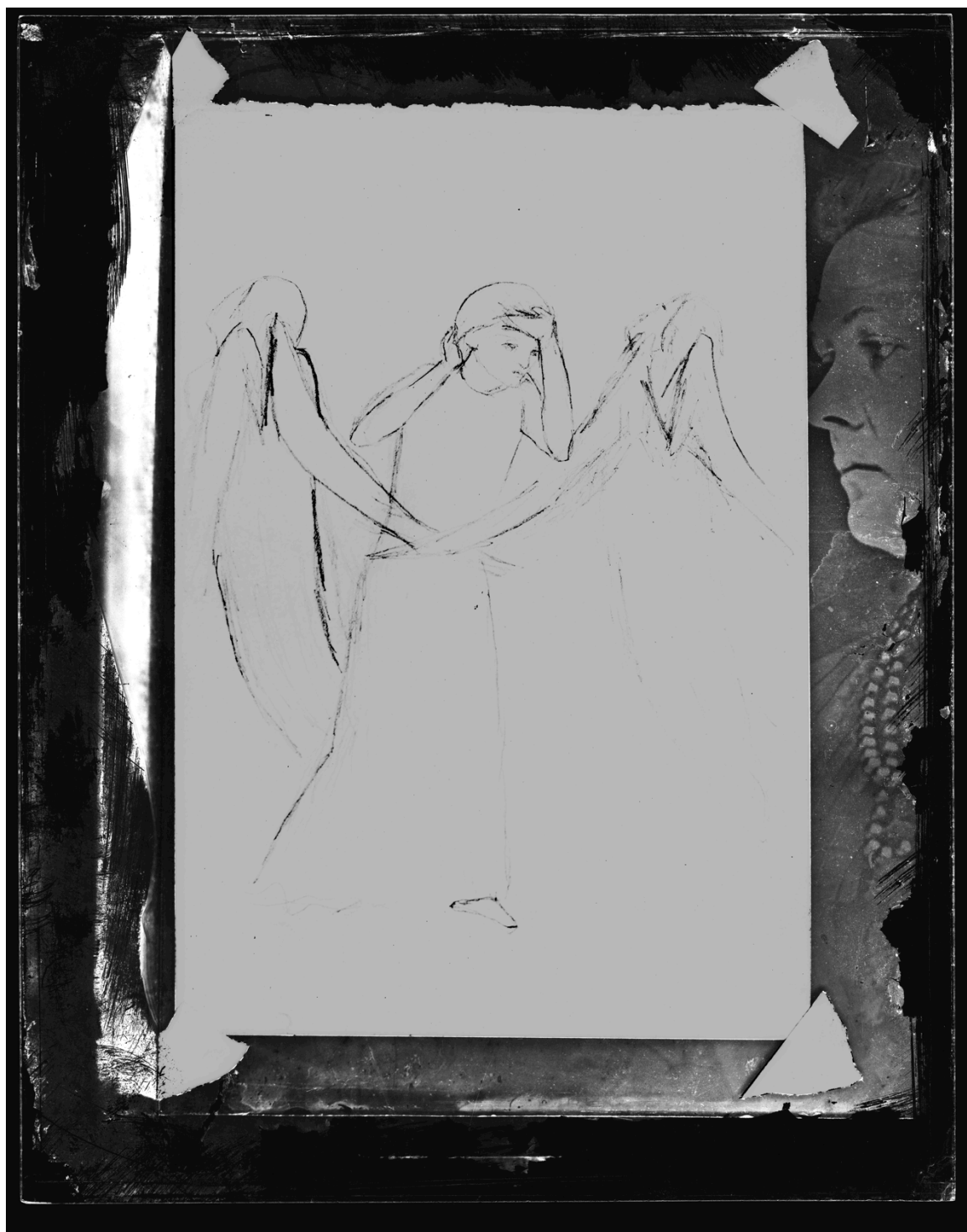


Figure 14. Anon. Digitally Inverted Negative for the Siddal Album. 2014.
Ashmolean Museum.

¹ Margaret Olin addresses what she terms “tactile looking” in her recent book on this topic. Her approach assumes that photography has an innate relationship to the index. For important qualifications on the nature of photography’s indexicality, see Gunning, Elkins, and Metz. For Barthes’s theory of how photography relates to the material trace, see his definition of the “punctum” in *Camera Lucida*. Bazin addresses what he calls photography’s “irrational power” to make us “accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re-presented*, set before us, that is to say, in time and space” (13-14). Writing on the role of the photograph in the work of mourning, Susan Sontag calls the medium an “elegiac art, a twilight art” because “All photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s (or thing’s) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time’s relentless melt” (15).

² See the catalogue for *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848-1875* organized by the National Gallery of Art in Washington and the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, Fall 2010 to Spring 2011. Diane Waggoner identifies an early and late stage of the Pre-Raphaelite movement: Fidelity and precision of detail characterize the early period. The late 1860s mark a shift to explorations of subjective and interior states that develop into Aestheticism (7).

³ See Lindsay Smith for a reading of William Bell Scott’s passage about photography. She argues that Henry Peach Robinson’s combination printing in the early 1860s serves as an example of the similarity between Pre-Raphaelitism and photography in terms of both visual effects and the critical response to these effects (99).

⁴ Sacks argues that the expression of sorrow in language counteracts the sublimation of loss that characterizes melancholia. For elegy and the problem of language, see Shaw. For a discussion of how the photograph shuttles between mourning and melancholia, see Woodward 117.

⁵ See Linkman, Ellenbogen, West, and Batchen for detailed histories of vernacular photography’s relationship with death and mourning.

⁶ See Orlando for Rossetti’s failure to properly value Siddal’s artwork and the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic that revels in dead and fallen women. Also see Beckman and Codell for studies of the Pre-Raphaelite type.

⁷ Correspondence from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Georgiana Burne-Jones, October 21, 1864. She remarks, “The one I kept was from a drawing made shortly after their marriage, when Lizzie was ill, but it is extremely like her and gives the peculiar lustre of her downcast eyes” (3:202 n. 3). Rossetti’s drawings of Siddal were photographed by Lewis Carroll (*Correspondence* 3:124-25).

⁸ The case is not original to the picture. See Dr. G. C. Williamson’s 1907 explanation of the object’s provenance and purchase by J. Pierpont Morgan. See Briggs for the latest research into the object’s provenance and Williamson’s credibility. Unfortunately, the case cannot be removed to see any markings on the back of the photograph that might reveal its identity. The piece was on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington for the recent exhibition, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Art and Design, 1848-1900*, and the catalogue lists the “hand colouring possibly by D. G. Rossetti” (Barringer 12). Bronfen briefly explains how the overpainted photograph of Siddal realizes Rossetti’s vision of her (177).

⁹ The Walters image and another photograph reproduced in Violet Hunt's biography of Siddal are the only known photographs. Hunt acknowledges Siddal's aunt, Mrs. George Button, for permission to reproduce the daguerreotype that she remarks is "the only likeness I have ever seen done from life" (xxvii). Hunt notes the photograph is a facsimile taken by Frederick Hollyer of the daguerreotype. The location of the image in Button's possession in 1932 is not currently known. I am grateful to Jan Marsh for her help with the details of this image.

¹⁰ Surtees notes Rossetti's correspondence with James Anderson Rose about a painted photograph of "The Beloved" (104 n.2). Rossetti instructs Rose to disclose that it is a photograph to potential buyers who might confuse it with a painting. On March 16, 1867, Rossetti writes, "You will see how important it is to me, as it is the only instance in which I ever painted on a photograph and will remain the only one; and were the matter unexplained in this instance, misunderstandings might arise as to the nature of other works of mine" (*Correspondence* 3:517). The whereabouts of this photograph are unknown; however, Rossetti's strange adamancy suggests that the Siddal photograph might be another instance of this practice that the artist wishes to conceal.

¹¹ Rossetti voices his opinion about photography's value as art in a letter to Julia Margaret Cameron: "Photography is not always a trustworthy reporter even in your hands as regards facts:--over the beauty of general effect and arrangement you seem somehow to have acquired a degree of control quite your own" (4:220). Rossetti's "control" implies both the artistic possibilities and mendacity of photography. To exercise control means to defy the facts; by arranging the conditions for beautiful effects, Cameron throws into question the medium's longstanding pretensions of objectivity.

¹² Griselda Pollock warns us against the kind of biographical and critical prejudices that have often guided work on Siddal, especially the temptation to read her life and creative work in terms of Rossetti's art (94, 112-14). But this warning should not dissuade us from seeing the anxiety within Rossetti's response to her death.

¹³ See *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 12-17 for Freud's description of the *fort/da* game that has been especially influential in theorizing photography's relationship with loss.

¹⁴ See Fredeman's "Rossetti's 'In Memoriam'" for an elaboration of these difficulties in the poem's critical reception.

¹⁵ Rossetti revised "Willowwood" and *The House of Life* several times. "Willowwood" is composed in 1868, and first published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1869 (Lewis 119). "Willowwood" is included in the first version of *The House of Life* published in the 1870 *Poems* and again in the revised and expanded 1881 edition. The location of the "Willowwood" sonnets troubles Rossetti throughout his revisions to the poem. In the Penkill proofs from 1869 (held in the Troxell collection at Princeton), Rossetti places the four sonnets at the very beginning of the sequence. For additional composition and publication information, see McGann's editorial commentary in Rossetti's *Poems* 386-87. See Bristow, Helsinger 218-57, and Holmes for recent readings of the elegy.

¹⁶ For an elaboration of mirroring and reflection in Rossetti's poetry, see Riede's chapter, "Romantic Reflections," in *Limits* 128-148. Starzyk connects Rossetti's specularity with photography: "The significance of the photographic method and the mirroring process derives not so much from verisimilitude as from the faithfulness with which the one image or voice echoes the other" (40).

¹⁷ This transcription of the Fitzwilliam manuscript is taken from the Rossetti Archive: <<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/44-1869.fizms.rad.html#p59>>. However, Lewis's variorum edition also documents the changes made between drafts, and there are variations in the transcription (126-27). For example, the third line of the sestet includes "Love" before the word is canceled and replaced with "my": "~~To find again with Love the vanished well:~~ To track Love's my footprints to the vanished well:" (127).

¹⁸ In her significant study of the Siddal legend, Marsh notes the existence of the album that she dates to 1866, and she contextualizes its role in Rossetti's preservation of his wife's work (*Legend* 13-14). For a detailed catalogue of Siddal's poetry and illustrations, see Marsh *Elizabeth*.

¹⁹ Rossetti's employment of photography to reproduce artwork remains an understudied aspect of his oeuvre. He commissions numerous autotypes from Frederick Hollyer, who also took portraits of Jane Morris. See Faxon and Fagan-King for details about this collaboration. Rossetti's correspondence with Frederic Shields documents his interest in technical concerns about photographic exposure and retouching (Faxon "Reputation" 229). See Helsing 302 n. 47 for additional references to Rossetti's interest in the medium.

²⁰ In 1863 Lewis Carroll photographed the Rossetti family in this garden for a remarkable portrait that depicts Dante Gabriel, William Michael, Christina, and their mother. See Knoepfelmacher for the fascinating story of Carroll's concealment of the photographs he took of Dante Gabriel and his drawings.

²¹ Although these images probably predate their romantic liaison, they have been read as evidence of Rossetti's desire for Jane. See Howie, and for the collaboration between Rossetti and Parsons, see Colin Ford.

²² Rossetti exerts great effort to get *Proserpine*, what he called his "doomed picture," to Frederick Leyland, who commissions the seventh version of *Proserpine* now at the Tate (*Correspondence* 6:376). Even by creating multiples of this work, *Proserpine* comes close to total destruction. David Wayne Thomas writes about Rossetti's ambivalence regarding the replication of his paintings that the artist worries will undermine the originality of his aesthetic agency, although Thomas does not address the significant use of photography for this purpose (142).

²³ I am grateful for the expertise of Connie McCabe, senior photograph conservator at the National Gallery of Art, for reviewing this image and explaining how it was created. She also suggested inverting the image in Adobe Photoshop to see what the woman's profile looks like as a positive.

Chapter Four

Thomas Hardy's Persistent Vision

Shortly after Thomas Hardy's estranged wife Emma died on November 27, 1912, the writer turned toward elegizing her by adopting the language of the moving image in his *Poems of 1912-13*. A long tradition of criticism has identified a cinematic quality in Hardy's fiction writing, but this chapter is interested in addressing a topic still underexplored in the reception of the author, one with a substantially clearer chronological basis: the relationship between Hardy's anxieties over early cinema and the elegies composed in the wake of Emma's death. Less than a year after losing her, Hardy sat in a darkened theater for a private afternoon screening of his novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Figure 15). Writing to George Douglas a little over a week later on the mourning stationery he used repeatedly in the year following Emma's death, Hardy reports, "It was a curious production, & I was interested in it as a scientific toy; but I can say nothing as to its relation to, or rendering of, the story" (4: 312).¹ However, despite his reticence about seeing his own story appear on screen, the following month he agreed to let *Far From the Madding Crowd* be adapted for the "picture palaces," and he granted an option for *The Mayor of Casterbridge* to be made into a film.² Several years later in response to an adaptation of *The Return of the Native*, Hardy writes, "The only consideration is of course a commercial one (there being nothing literary in films)" (6: 195).

It is a commonplace in Hardy's biography to note that he gave up novel writing in 1895 with the publication of *Jude the Obscure* and then wrote only poetry until his death

in 1928. Though accurate, this account of Hardy's shift from prose to verse tends to leave out his crucial involvement with the adaptation of his novels into films, and more importantly, his rejection of the cinema as a medium suitable for telling stories. To bring this complex of issues involving narrative and film into critical conversation helps to inform our understanding of Hardy's later poetic productions, and especially the writer's fascination with and resistance to motion pictures in the context of the elegiac work. In the midst of the financial negotiations, film screenings, and correspondence about the emergence of a new technology, we may identify a troubled response to a medium that would fundamentally change how we perform the work of mourning. We find Hardy preoccupied with the desire to make Emma move in his verse at a time when the cinema was putting the entire world in motion. However, it bears saying that in spite of his culture's fascination with this new medium, Hardy never wrote directly about motion pictures in his fiction or poetry: the publication of his final novel, *Jude the Obscure*, took place the same year that the Lumière brothers debuted their cinematograph, but throughout his corpus of over nine-hundred poems, he never once makes direct reference to the medium.

Hardy's critics such as David Lodge, Joan Grundy, and others have found analogies to cinematic technology in his writing, but their readings have tended to look past Hardy's ambivalent treatment of photographic technologies in his poetry. More importantly, they have ignored his nuanced understanding of photography and its relationship with motion pictures.³ Lodge argues that "the cinematic novelist, let us say, is one who imagines and presents his material in primarily visual terms, and whose visualization corresponds in some significant respects to the visual effects characteristic

of film” (248). However, this comparison between Hardy’s literary writing and the movie camera’s eye was, to say the least, not anticipated by the author who saw “nothing literary in films.” Lodge assumes that “cinematic” means adopting the “visual terms” that serve as analogues for the medium, but it is likely more interesting for us to recognize the resistance in an author such as Hardy; to think, that is, of the ways a writer can be “cinematic” by rejecting visual terms or re-imagining the technology rather than trying to reproduce the medium’s visual effects in language.⁴ Still, the evident visuality of the novelist has tended to lead critics such as Lodge and Grundy to use the vocabulary of cinematography in the course of their close readings. In Hardy’s poetry, Grundy looks for the “panorama,” the “sequences,” the “fades” and “dissolves” that characterize his “verbal cinema” and the “imaginatively cinematic” qualities of his art (106).



"Crick's Story Pains Tess." Mrs. Fiske in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"

Figure 15. Film still from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (presumed lost). 1912.

Grundy describes one of the elegies for Emma, “The Phantom Horsewoman,” as the “most compellingly cinematic in character” (112). To say that a poem is cinematic means carrying over the definition of one medium to another, crossing the mechanics of motion pictures with the forms of verse. Grundy formulates this intermedial relationship by appealing to the language of spirits and ghosts in an uncertain manner:

Like his horsewoman, most of Hardy’s images are phantoms. This does not mean that they are spirits: rather they are bodiless imprints of once embodied forms, brought into existence by the mind of the observer. But so too are the images of the cinema—equally, or almost equally thin and bodiless, yet bearing the same relation to actual pre-existent or still existent bodies as Hardy’s phantoms bear. (112)

In Grundy’s account, Hardy’s phantoms are almost “equal” to the cinema because they trace the absence of an object, but her interest is ultimately not in the material history of a specific kind of image or medium but of a certain kind of perception that predates this technology.⁵ It is not apparent why this kind of looking is necessarily cinematic, although there has been a long-standing tradition in Hardy criticism of describing the writer’s depictions of absence as ghostly and therefore of necessity cinematic. As early as 1928, George Elliott finds this same quality in Hardy’s poetry when he writes, “His verse . . . shows human life as a sheer moving-picture, --episodic, grotesque, pathetic, fluttering, ghostly” (283). In both Grundy and Elliott’s accounts, the phantoms in Hardy’s haunting verse register as cinematic because they are moving in spite of being dead and still. However, these critics do not focus their attention on Hardy’s desire for the strange and impossible form that remains still and moves simultaneously, the very form that we find described as an “instant thing” in “The Phantom Horsewoman.” Truly ghostly because it cannot be visualized, Hardy’s repeated depictions of Emma’s moving form express a wish for a medium that cannot be fulfilled. Hardy’s attention to the paradoxes of

movement demonstrate his fascination with an elegiac medium of his own design that cannot be viewed in terms transposed directly either from still or moving photographs.

This chapter offers an account of Hardy's desire for Emma to move again. In his elegies for his late wife, Hardy's language is informed by the emergent technology of early, non-narrative cinema and photography, but this language allows him to transcend the limitations of both media to represent her loss. Acknowledging the complex influence of media means that we must look beyond the analogic language of photography to consider Hardy's productive resistance to technology in his poetry.⁶ In "The Photograph," for example, the poem's speaker burns the image of a woman in order to make her animate. We often find in Hardy's poetry that objects laden with emotional value mediate a mournful speaker's relationship with the lost beloved; this object is usually destroyed or manipulated in order for the speaker to redress his relationship with this absent person. In the *Poems 1912-13*, Emma's moving image is not bound to any particular media object, but rather her form is created from the indexical traces that Hardy finds in the places they once inhabited. Impossible as it may be, the poems desperately want to see Emma move on horseback, and the elegist achieves this desire by invoking the imaginative faculty necessary to mediate her elusive image—an image that neither still photography nor the projected illusions of the cinema can offer him. However, though he is indebted to the photographic images in the visual culture that surrounds him, Hardy desires a form that relies on its own paradoxical failure in order to make the beloved present to him.

Mourning in Motion

Hardy's particular manner of elegizing Emma partakes in a generic tradition of mediating loss in response to the emergent technologies of mourning in Victorian England. At the turn of the twentieth century, Hardy had to confront the inevitable fact that consolation was occurring increasingly through the photographic image that itself was undergoing radical transformation.⁷ Throughout the later half of the nineteenth century, the still photograph had served in a well-established role as memento mori, but the cinema required a new appraisal of how the motion picture could be employed to represent the dead. Early filmmakers and their audiences were fascinated with movement and the possibility of making previously still images come to life by projecting them.⁸ This preoccupation did not begin with the early motion pictures of the late 1890s, but cinema did enable the new expression of a familiar Victorian desire to use photographic technologies to animate the dead in evidence from the first magic lantern shows in the eighteenth century to the spirit photographs of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Lynda Nead has described the motif of the artist's dream common in early films; the trope places the nascent medium in the generic tradition of the gothic novel's depiction of a haunted portrait in which the subject becomes animate and steps out of the painting. In these early films, the artist's dead wife usually emerges from a painting and walks back into life (86). Thomas Edison's "The Artist's Dilemma" and George Méliès's "The Mysterious Portrait" both demonstrate this desire for the wife to emerge from the screen, but in these films the beloved is lost a second time when she cannot remain in the world of the living (Nead 92).⁹ Such stories are not just adaptations of the gothic trope or an expression of an impossible Orphic desire for the beloved's return from the underworld;

they also serve as self-conscious allegories about the limitations of cinema's use as an elegiac medium for contacting the dead. Cinema can replay the beloved's moving image, but it cannot grant a resurrection of her material form; the film must always end with her loss and begin again with her presence in a continuous reviewing.¹⁰

In spite of the medium's limitations, audiences frequently searched early films for the likeness of loved ones who might accidentally appear to them. Nicholas Daly describes spectators eager to see the appearance of their fallen soldiers on reels shot during the Boer War, a practice that continued at home. In one notable instance recounted in the *Photographic Chronicle*, a mother in 1901 shouts at the screen in a moment of recognition, fascination, and heartbreak:¹¹

A pathetic incident recently occurred in the St James's Hall, Manchester. Messrs Edison were showing some scenes of the Whit Monday Sunday School processions in Manchester. Suddenly a woman's voice in the audience was heard to proclaim hysterically, 'There's my Annie!' And it was, but alas! in the interval between the photograph being taken and the day on which the poor mother saw the picture the child had been killed. To the mother the illusion was too real but too transient, and for the time being she simply saw her little one walking serenely behind the banner of her Sunday School in the most natural way imaginable. After this incident hundreds of people from the neighbourhood in which the little girl lived came to see the almost living image of their departed friend. (qtd. in Daly 66)

The wish to see the lost beloved appear on screen is not only to be found in a poignant instance such as this one. It is present in many of the early commentators on the cinema, as they imagine the possibilities whereby the medium might negate the finality of death. In an 1895 review of one of the first demonstrations of the cinematograph in France, an anonymous reviewer writes, "[We] will join color photography to the phonograph, and voila, simultaneously recorded, and then simultaneously reproduced with rigorous exactitude, movement and speech, that is to say life. The day—and it will be tomorrow—

science will have given us an absolute illusion of life. Why not life itself?” (qtd. in Schwartz 10). Louis-Georges Schwartz claims that these early commentators do “not imagine the films of the dead as memorials but rather as the reproduction of the living. In other words, a film of someone who has died brings the person back to life” (10).

The cinema, needless to say, does perform this act of necromancy; it is predicated on a visual illusion that gives only the appearance of life’s motion to the mournful viewer. Moving pictures are comprised of still images, linked to motion by the neurological phenomenon called the persistence of vision, which creates the illusion of a seamless continuity between still frames. When a series of still photographs are placed in rapid succession, the human brain cannot distinguish one still image from another and perceives these discreet frames as a continuous movement. If, as Schwartz suggests, early enthusiasts of cinema thought the medium “made death less absolute” (11), they had to make compatible the desire for movement with the facts of cinema’s technology.¹² The cinematic image alone does not necessarily persuade the spectator of its illusions; to realize the ambitions of early cinema’s commentators the medium must move the emotions of the viewer.¹³ When Annie’s startling movements appear on screen, her mother sees an uncanny form that flutters with life, and yet, the stillness of each photograph that moves through the cinematograph resounds with her death. Movement engages emotions that must reconcile the joy suggested by the recognition of Annie on screen with the unbearable sadness that follows from the acknowledgement of the illusory medium in which she appears.¹⁴

Hardy attends to how a moving image engenders emotion when he animates a photograph by destroying it in a poem from his 1917 volume, *Moments of Vision*. In “The

Photograph,” a cagey speaker lights a woman’s image on fire for reasons that begin to emerge once her portrait is in ashes: a perverse desire to have contact with her lost body motivates the act of immolation. “The Photograph” reads as an elegy for the photographic medium itself as it envisions the transformation of the still photograph into a picture that moves as it physically transforms:

The flame crept up the portrait line by line
As it lay on the coals in the silence of night’s profound,
And over the arm’s incline
And along the marge of the silkwork superfine,
And gnawed at the delicate bosom’s defenceless round.

Then I vented a cry of hurt, and averted my eyes;
The spectacle was one that I could not bear,
To my deep and sad surprise;
But, compelled to heed, I again looked furtivewise
Till the flame had eaten her breasts, and mouth, and hair. (ll. 1-10)

A moving image is developed and comes into view as the flame simultaneously destroys and renders the image “line by line” (l. 1). The speaker never reveals what he hopes to achieve by burning it, although we are told that the picture is a remnant “hid amid packs of years,” and “the deed that had nigh drawn tears / Was done in casual clearance of life’s arrears” (ll.18-19). When the speaker watches the flame consume her image, he begins to feel that he is burning her alive, struck by a “deep and sad surprise” that leads him to look askance and cry out in pain. After the fire has done its work, “nothing was left of the picture unsheathed from the past / But the ashen ghost of the card it had figured on” (ll. 14-15). In the poem’s final stanza, the speaker resolves that in spite of having the feeling that he might have hurt her—indeed, “put her to death”—the actual person depicted has felt nothing. This is not enough, however, to disavow the magical properties of this fetish object. The poem concludes with the speaker musing “if on earth alive / Did she feel a

smart and with vague strange anguish strive? / If In heaven, did she smile at me sadly and shake her head?”(ll. 23-35). This question is prompted by witnessing her features come alive in a simultaneous act of destruction that puzzles the speaker because he cannot separate his desire for the object represented from the woman herself, leaving him to imagine that this destructive act can somehow grant him power over her absence, and most importantly, make that body present at the same time as he discards the picture.

Therefore, the image that develops in “The Photograph” is moving in two senses: it becomes animate and it evokes a complex emotional response on the speaker’s part. The destruction of this hidden image invests it with meaning in spite of the speaker’s claim that this is a “casual clearance”; it is an act laden with desire to touch and harm the body of the absent woman. Moreover, the musings about whether or not the woman is alive or dead, and more significantly, whether or not by touching the image he can touch her, reveals the desire at work in this poem for a particular kind of medium that alters the still image into a moving one. In “The Photograph,” the speaker wants to exceed the limitations of the static image and attain a power that hiding the image has not been able to grant him; the speaker wants the image to move so badly that he is willing to destroy it for the momentary thrill of watching it change before his eyes. The flame burns over the course of the poem’s first three stanzas, consuming the lines of the text, emphasized by cinquains that have a combustive prosody; the uneven line lengths give the effect of the fire’s steady but varied movements as it accelerates and retards on the material both real and imagined.¹⁵

The speaker’s magical thinking about whether or not his actions affect her actual body suggests the intensity of the compulsions at work in this poem that manifest in how

he views her moving image.¹⁶ In the end, to burn an image without a copy consigns it to oblivion. To see this photograph move with the light of the flame means never seeing it again, a pleasure certain to end with his dissatisfaction that it cannot be repeated.

Impossible to rewind or view again, the poem records a unique spectacle, making it distinct from the moving image projected by the cinematograph. The speaker's only hope to see the woman would be to find another image or go out into the world and find her. However, the poem gives no indication that he desires either possibility in the aftermath of destroying her photograph. By having made this image move with the appearance of life, the speaker attempts to master her absence by obliterating the object that provides any trace of her remains.

We see this impulse to destroy media recur in Hardy's poems when mournful and lonely speakers try to summon absent lovers. "The Photograph" is complemented by another poem, "The Torn Letter," from the earlier volume, *Satires of Circumstance*, in which a speaker ruminates on the destruction of a letter. He describes tearing a letter into strips in the seclusion of his dark bedroom, an act that conjures the image of its sender who admonishes him for it. The vision leads him to suffer a "regretful sadness / Which deepened into real remorse"(ll. 11-12), and he collects the strips to patch and mend them, gathering the "words I had sacrificed." Some of the pieces, however, cannot be reassembled, including the most important "clues" such as the name and place of the sender. The speaker says, "I learnt I had missed, by rash unheed, / My track"(ll. 25-26), meaning that he could not trace his way back to the sender whom he desires. "The Photograph" and "The Torn Letter" are both interested in the conjuration of a woman through an act of destruction, but a crucial difference can be seen in how the particular

medium is represented. Both of the speakers in these poems are attentive to a specific form of the trace inscribed in the letter in one poem and the photograph in the other; the differences in media determine the connection the speaker feels toward the absent person. In the spectacle of burning the photograph, the speaker imagines an extraordinary and impossible form of connection between himself and the woman mediated by the image. However, in “The Torn Letter,” the incomplete reconstruction of the epistle underlines the fact that the distance the speaker feels between himself and the sender does not change throughout the poem. The compulsive act of tearing up the paper and then putting it back together, yet another thrilling activity that could be repeated many times, is never imagined as a means of touching the body of the sender. No new desire surfaces in this poem, but the spectacle of the burning photograph does move that speaker to realize his fascination with the woman in the portrait. Granted, the sender’s image does appear to the speaker when the letter is torn, but the vision is described in tentative language: “I seemed to see you in a vision.” “Seeming” is the very thing not happening in the course of the speaker’s pointed fantasy in “The Photograph,” who imagines the image’s subject afflicted by a smarting pain in the aftermath of her destruction. In both of these texts the material that the poem and the speaker use to track an absent, displaced, or otherwise unseen object affects the manner in which the object is recalled and the speaker’s feelings towards it. In this way, the specific medium detailed in the poem constructs the speaker’s relationship to it.¹⁷ However, the speakers’ fantasies in these poems indicate an inability to distinguish between the projection of emotion onto the media and the nature of the media itself.

By destroying media such as the letter and photograph, these speakers invest media objects with power instead of using the sympathetic faculties of their imaginations to reveal the media's illusions. The photographic image in particular is freighted with an indexical connection to the desired object that becomes even more poignant when the woman seems to come alive with movement. However, in Hardy's numerous comments about photography, he worries that the medium's illusions will interfere with the sympathetic vision necessary to mourn loss. In "The Faded Face," another poem from *Moments of Vision*, the speaker's love for a woman develops in the act of looking at her portrait decay, leaving him to exclaim, "Let me mourn, - aye, sorrow-wrung, / Faded Face, / Sorrow-wrung!" (ll. 19-21). This solemn expression in the face of disappearance marks a considerable difference from the troubled speaker of "The Photograph," whose silence about the memories and emotions that motivate his act of destruction suggests that much remains unsaid, unseen, and unmourned in his relationship to the image. Or, perhaps, the speaker discovers new feelings toward the woman in the alteration of her photograph. In any event, merely looking at the image does not constitute understanding.

Hardy discusses the difference between visual recognition and sympathetic identification in his essay, "The Science of Fiction," when he distinguishes "mental tactility" from photographic vision:

A sight for the finer qualities of existence, an ear for the 'still sad music of humanity,' are not to be acquired by the outer senses alone, close as their powers in photography may be. What cannot be discerned by the eye and ear, what may be apprehended only by the mental tactility that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a more accurate delineator of human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of external observation, but without the sympathy. To see in half and quarter views the whole picture, to catch from a few bars the whole tune, is the intuitive power that supplies the would-be story writer with the scientific bases for his pursuit. (318)

Hardy is attracted to the metaphors generated in relation to photographic technology, but repulsed by its actual images that have the power to obscure sympathetic vision. He is one of the few Victorian writers to see the work of fiction in opposition to the “photographic realism” that scholars such as Nancy Armstrong and Daniel Novak have identified as integral to the work of the Victorian novel.¹⁸ Photography has the power to capture the surface of things and replicate them. However, to create art requires a different kind of looking, a vision that can recognize the presence of a deeper truth on the surface of things, informed by the sympathetic imagination referenced in the quote from Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey.” This is not the mimesis of photography, but rather an alternate way of viewing and interpreting the world that infers and intuitively what cannot be made visible, especially missing pieces of fragments. For this reason, Hardy values metonymy for accomplishing the artist’s work by paying attention to the part rather than the whole. In a journal entry from June 3, 1882, Hardy writes that the “seer should watch that pattern among general things which his idiosyncrasy moves him to observe, and describe that alone.” He continues, “This is, quite accurately, a going to Nature; yet the result is no mere photograph, but purely the product of the writer’s own mind.” Sympathy relies on a visual distortion of the photographic image in order to see beyond the visible that occludes love and feeling. In “The Science of Fiction,” Hardy gives the example of an “illiterate woman saying of another poor and haggard woman who had lost her little son years before: ‘You can see the ghost of the child in her face even now’”(319). Her powers of observation are “informed by a living heart.” She is not distracted by the view of photography, but can see the deeper reality latent yet legible on the visible surface.¹⁹ Sensitive to the work of mourning, the perceptive woman identifies the appearance of the

child's lingering presence on the bereft woman's animate face. Sympathy, in this sense, has a significant connection to imagination for how it allows the careful viewer to see the mourner's relationship with the lost beloved irrespective of the medium in which the ghost appears.

Hardy finds a metaphor for mourning informed by a sympathetic speaker, who can perceive a moving image of the beloved in "The Shadow on the Stone." This moving image is a function of the speaker's sympathy and not a particular technology. The poem's speaker sees the cast shadow of the lost beloved appear on a druid stone in the garden that could easily be ignored by an inattentive viewer. In his notebook, Hardy recalls finding the stone and discovering a pile of ashes nearby along with charred bones. It was here that Emma Hardy burned the lovers' letters exchanged between them during the first decades of their engagement and marriage in the 1870s (Maxwell 226). The poem was originally composed in 1913, a year after Emma's death, and the three stanzas detail how the "shifting shadows" projected by a tree with a "rhythmic swing" fall on the stone to create the silhouette of a "well-known head and shoulders":

I thought her behind my back,
 Yea, her I long had learned to lack,
 And I said: 'I am sure you are standing behind me,
 Though how do you get into this old track?'
 And there was no sound but the fall of a leaf
 As a sad response; and to keep down grief
 I would not turn my head to discover
 That there was nothing in my belief.

Yet I wanted to look and see
 That nobody stood at the back of me;
 But I thought once more: 'Nay, I'll not unvision
 A shape which, somehow, there may be.'
 So I went on softly from the glade,
 And left her behind me throwing her shade,
 And she were indeed an apparition-

My head unturned lest my dream should fade. (ll. 9-24)

The speaker is oriented toward the beloved's "old track" in space and time to see the tree's shadow become the moving image of her. To track is to observe this transformation, and that motion engenders the desire to recognize the presence of the beloved in the shadowy image. Unwilling to dispel the illusion, the speaker refuses to look behind him at the leaves "lest my dream should fade." However, to see the tree in the place of the beloved would not ruin the illusion of the projected image because he knows her appearance is dependent on the rhythm of the leaves. He recognizes the chance symmetry of her silhouette appearing before him even though it has an alternate source. Both perceived and imagined, we cannot say the silhouette is exclusively the product of the speaker's own mind; the "sympathetic appreciativeness" of the poem's speaker stems from his recognition of the beloved's manifestation on the stone by an arrangement not entirely of his own design. "Hardy's form of realism," J. Hillis Miller notes, "combines subjectivity and objectivity in contradictory balance which is the basis of his art" (262). In "The Shadow on the Stone" this balance is achieved in an act of vision that acknowledges the continuing presence of the beloved in moving images that surround the mourner. A kind of primeval projection screen, the druid stone reflects a complex image made up of desire, light, and the leaves that move with the rhythm of the wind. The stone is not a blank screen, but rather an object rooted in the history and emotion of a place dear to the speaker's living heart. Driven by the desire to see media objects become the very presence of what they lack, Hardy's speakers call attention to the often-contradictory relationship between perception and material reality. The speaker in "The

Shadow on the Stone” acknowledges this contradiction, but not all of Hardy’s mourners can recognize the difference between their realities and dreams.²⁰

The burned photograph and the torn letter reveal the potential difficulties of emotions conditioned by objects rather than the sympathetic imagination. The photograph is a poignant trace for the mourner, who can be overwhelmed by its illusory presence and confuse it with the lost beloved. But Hardy’s mourners are often more complex than a melancholic who refuses to acknowledge loss; the ambivalent speakers in these poems often struggle with the extent to which they can create an illusion of presence. In the mourning that followed Emma’s death in 1912, Hardy lingered over past experiences and memories, writing a number of poems separate from the 1912-13 elegies that detail his sorrow. In one such example from a 1913 poem, “Looking at a Picture on an Anniversary,” the speaker stares intently at a photograph, wondering if the beloved can somehow hear the questions addressed to her picture:

Though at this query, my dear,
 There in your frame
 Unmoved you still appear,
 You must be thinking the same,
 But keep that look demure
 Just to allure.

And now at length a trace
 I surely vision
 Upon that wistful face
 Of old-time recognition,
 Smiling forth, ‘Yes, as you say,
 It is the day.’

For this one phase of you
 Now left on earth
 This great date must endure
 With pulsings of rebirth?—
 I see them vitalize
 Those two deep eyes!

But if this face I con
 Does not declare
 Consciousness living on
 Still in it, little I care
 To live myself, my dear,
 Love-labouring here! (ll. 7-30)

“Unmoved” yet vitalized, the portrait seems to flicker with life in the face of the speaker’s desire for the photograph to become animate and reply. However, the speaker’s anxiety that this movement is a hallucination threatens to shatter the tenuous vision. Fragile and vulnerable, the image’s power to speak can affirm the mourner’s life or its silence can ruin him. Instead of destroying the image like the speaker in “The Photograph,” this mourner threatens to destroy himself if the picture does not grant his wish. In the speaker’s formulation, the portrait’s movement would prove that his lost beloved still has consciousness, but this assumption only demonstrates the degree to which movement can mask the reality of her absence. Needless to say, a moving image of this woman would not recreate the life he mourns, and this speaker seems to know that. On the day of his anniversary, he creates an illusion that brings them momentarily together. The speaker’s ekphrastic description of this picture coupled with how he makes it speak, creates the effect of her movement even if it ends with no reply.

Hardy’s fascination with the power and failure of media objects to console loss results in an intentional effort by the poet at the end of his life and beyond to destroy old photographs, papers, letters, and manuscripts (Deacon 18). In the immediate aftermath of Hardy’s death on January 11, 1928, “[t]he gardener was ordered to burn clothes and a bundle of newspapers on a bonfire. Hardy’s second wife, Florence Emily, stood by and watched the objects burn. Then she set baskets of letters and papers ablaze, creating a

sizeable bonfire of Hardy's materials. She insisted on burning the objects by herself, and after the fire died down she raked the ashes to be sure that not a single scrap remained" (Deacon 19).²¹ Sensitive to the possibility that this media could be perverted to serve as evidence for the intimacies his life, Hardy does not retain these objects. Indeed, during his life, Hardy had been careful about having his picture taken. His friend, the photographer Hermann Lea, recalls his orders to destroy photographs:

It was at the end of 1904 that I was able to oblige Hardy taking some photographs which he wanted, and at the same time I took another twelve portraits of himself. It was after I had sent him proofs of all these that, in writing to comment on them, he finished by saying: 'My own have rather a new expression, which I have not quite grown accustomed to, but no doubt it is there.' I should mention that we both decided later that the 'the expression' to which he referred was due more to certain effects of lighting than to the point of view, and the negatives and prints were destroyed. (*Camera's Eye* 26)

Hardy makes the point that the "new expression" he sees in these photographs of himself is "no doubt...there." However, this expression is explained as an effect of the lighting, an effect of the medium. The decision to destroy not only the prints but also the negatives of these photographs suggests that in this expression Hardy found something present or absent that he rather not see: whether it was the media itself or the ghost of some unspeakable loss lingering on his face, we cannot know.

A Ghost-Girl-Rider in *Poems of 1912-13*

In the elegies for Emma, the poet pursues the beloved's moving form, tracking her figure over landscapes and geographies first to find her and then to see her fascinating body run on horseback. To succeed in this effort, Hardy looks to the indexical trace that so interests him throughout his literary career. The elegies for Emma begin with an epigraph taken from book four of Virgil's *Aeneid*, "Veteris vestigia flammae" or "ashes

of an old flame,” a phrase with which Dido describes her love for Aeneas as rekindling the feelings she once had for her late husband. Hardy’s elegies track his relationship with Emma from its first days of passion in the 1870s to her death by finding her presence in the landscape they once shared together. The work begins by visiting the physical origins of their relationship to trace the development of their love geographically, but the poems also move inward to express the feelings associated with the beloved. Much like the speaker in “The Shadow on the Stone,” the landscape itself becomes the medium for Hardy’s visions of the lost beloved. The mourner’s development of Emma’s latent presence in these locations generates images that appear both photographic and cinematic in their desire to see the beloved moving, yet he is strongly resistant to any technology that could capture and record her elusive image.

Hardy does not want the cinematic image that Mary Ann Doane has described as the “archival artifact...existing nowhere but in its screening for a spectator in the present” (23). And yet he searches for artifacts throughout the landscape, wishing to make Emma somehow present to him not in front of a screen but in the places inscribed with her trace. This work accords with comments the poet made over forty years earlier in his journal about the artist tracking disappearance:

An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature. Hence clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant besides the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand. (*Life* 116)

Hardy is invested in the mark, trace, and impression formed by the contact that can only occur in the presence and absence of a human being. For this reason, Hardy makes the landscape and its objects the media of his fantasy. In the poems for Emma, the indexical impression enables the elegist to track the beloved not only to evoke memories of her in

particular places but also to create an event that he never witnessed and thus experience new emotions in response to it.

In Hardy's paradoxical work of mourning, Emma is not seen until she has disappeared from view.²² She died three days before her seventy-second birthday in November 1912, and Hardy started writing what would become the *Poems of 1912-13* almost immediately: a cold, estranged marriage became an opportunity not only for sorrow to find expression in verse but to amend the experience of the past. For this reason, Claire Tomalin's recent biography expresses the general sentiment that Hardy "had become a lover in mourning" (18). Jahan Ramazani claims that Hardy fixes Emma in the landscape so that he can "trap" and "control" her; the elegist desires her subservience and evades the painful feelings of guilt and remorse associated with her loss by reanimating her figure (49-61). This reading of Hardy's guilt, which is typical of the criticism, tends to look past the ways in which the mourner's perceptual experience of moving images provides an opportunity to work through the emotions engendered by her irretrievable loss. The elegist emphasizes that neither her movement nor the image of it can be controlled or captured, even if he yearns to see it.

The elegist often fixates on Emma's young, athletic body moving; the attraction to her movement, especially on horseback, is the motivating desire of the entire sequence of the twenty-one poems. She was constantly in motion during her life, riding her beloved mare, Fanny, all over Cornwall, a vision that returns throughout the sequence. This fantasy stems from Hardy's reading of her diaries in the aftermath of her death. In her notebook, "Some Recollections," Emma describes the joyful and "unforgettable experience" of "scampering up and down the hills on my beloved mare alone, wanting no

protection, the rain going down my back often and my hair floating on the wind” (31). She continues, “Fanny and I were one creature, and very happy both of us.” In spite of the speaker’s refrain that the beloved is dead and out of reach, Emma’s body does not remain still throughout the sequence of poems; the poet yearns to conjure up this vision of happiness that Emma herself describes as a freedom that needs no protection—and no Thomas Hardy. The most enduring vision of this moving image occurs in the final poem of the sequence, “The Phantom Horsewoman,” but the movement towards this conclusion begins with the directionless sorrow found in the aftermath of her loss articulated most acutely in the first poem of the sequence, “The Going.” Thinking back to her “reining nigh me,” he remembers her riding along Beeny Crest, and the speaker becomes swollen with regret that they did not revisit Cornwall together in their later years (l. 26). “The Going” registers the language of the missed opportunity, of what could have been, asking “Why then, latterly, did we not speak, / Did we not think of those days long dead, / And ere your vanishing strive to seek / That time’s renewal?” (ll. 29-32). Impossible to amend, the speaker turns back to this past in an effort to renew the vision of the beloved that has vanished from him. The moving image in these elegies rejects conventional media in favor of an alternate illusion that absorbs the poet in a fantasy conducted by the traces of the beloved found in the landscape.

The frustrated temporality of “Your Last Drive” recalls the motion of Emma’s graceful figure by imagining a past event that the speaker never experienced. By watching her move again, the elegist studies her features to see if he can discern how she was moving toward her unexpected death. He recounts Emma’s driving a carriage past the cemetery where she now lies buried in her grave:

I drove not with you.... Yet had I sat
 At your side that eve I should not have seen
 That the countenance I was glancing at
 Had a last-time look in the flickering sheen
 Nor have read the writing upon your face,
 'I go hence soon to my resting-place;" (ll. 13-18)

The speaker fails to extrapolate the portent that moves across Emma's face when he views her in this imagined scene. But even if he had sat with her in the carriage, Hardy laments that he "should not have seen" the suggestion of her impending death. What lies present but undecipherable in her face is "a last-time look in the flickering sheen" of the light reflecting on her face as she moves in the carriage. Often ruminating on what did not occur, Hardy's speaker imagines the past unfolding in exactly the same way even in light of his retrospective knowledge. Compulsively tracing Emma's loss back to these irreversible moments and places in the past, the early poems in the sequence cannot settle on a clear relationship between the imagined past and the present reality of her death.

The elegist feels guilty for impeding the beloved's movement or altering her motion in a way that resulted in her death, which leads him to imagine that Emma continues to move at a "creep." This creeping form emerges in "I Found Her Out There," when Hardy goes out to Cornwall to find her and then brings her back to Dorset. The geographic distances traversed in this poem parallel periods and expanses of time, taking the poet back to the origins of his desire for the beloved. They first met in Cornwall in 1870 when Emma was 29, and Hardy had been assigned to work on a Church restoration at Saint-Juliot. By bringing her to Dorset, the speaker suggests his own guilt for placing her to rest in a "noiseless nest" where "no sea beats near" away from the enchanted places of Cornwall they explored together (ll. 11, 12). These lines are muffled, and the speaker imagines that "She will never be stirred / In her loamy cell / By the waves long

heard / And loved so well” (ll. 13-16). Why would the mourner place the beloved somewhere that fails to console him? The poem’s final stanza reveals the speaker’s strange fantasy of her creeping movement back to Cornwall:

Yet her shade, maybe,
Will creep underground
Till it catch the sound
Of that western sea
As it swells and sobs
Where she once domiciled,
And joy in its throbs
With the heart of a child (ll. 33-40)

The mourner buries her away from the place she loves in the hope that she will travel back to the place of their meeting. In the following poem, “Lament,” the refrain “She is shut, she is shut,” repeats when he thinks about her interment. To be shut is to be in stasis, unable to move or participate. But what is usually a verb, to shut, takes on a strange form as noun, inviting the possibility for movement. The speaker cannot reconcile in these elegies whether or not Emma is moving or still, creeping or shut, silent or poised to speak. The ambiguity of her form denies any clearly discernible image of it, although the poems continue to generate these moments of vision. The continuous movement between past and present, memory and imagination, resists any attempt to settle on what Emma’s underground creep from Dorset to Cornwall might look like as an animated image.

When Emma emerges in the “The Haunter” to speak for herself she remains inaudible and invisible to Hardy—a disembodied voice that laments Hardy’s inability to hear her words. When they could communicate when she was alive, they did not: “Never he sees my faithful phantom / Though he speaks thereto” (ll. 15-16). This phantom “companion[s] him to places / Only dreamers know”(l. 17-18), going “Into old aisles where the past is all to him”(l. 21), but this speaker cannot reach out to Hardy—cannot

make herself heard. She exclaims in a moment of chilling and forceful clarity, “What a good haunter I am, O tell him!” (l. 25). In the poem that follows, “The Voice,” the speaker, creating dialogism between these two poems uncharacteristic of the elegiac tradition, hears Emma’s voice. “The Voice” acknowledges Emma’s call, but wonders what she has become, and asks,

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,
 Standing as when I drew near to the town
 Where you would wait for me: yes, as I knew you then,
 Even to the original air-blue gown! (ll. 5-8)

Emma’s words in the previous poem are not enough to satisfy the speaker’s desire to see her in the location where he remembers the visual pleasure of this erotic scene. He wants to see her in the original, but in the next stanza he wonders if it is only the conventional elegiac conceit that he hears: a breeze confused for a voice. The woman continues to call with leaves falling around the speaker and the “wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,” but even with the loud sounds of the numerous poetic allusions here, it is not clear that Hardy’s wish can be realized—the desire to see the beloved in the present conform with the memory of their past together.

“The Voice” was composed only a month after Emma’s death, and the poem is perhaps one of the clearest examples of the desire that repeats in these verses to find Emma moving. In his efforts to see her, Hardy travels to Cornwall, the origin of their relationship, but he does not find her there. Going to the original site of their meeting at Saint-Juliot, the speaker in “A Dream or No” is confronted with the impossibility of finding her again:

But nought of that maid from Saint-Juliot I see;
 Can she ever have been here,
 And shed her life’s sheen here,

The woman I thought a long housemate with me?

Does there even a place like Saint-Juliot exist?

Or a Vallency Valley

With stream and leafed alley,

Or Been, or Bos with its flounce flinging mist? (ll. 17-24)

Both fascinated and repulsed by the origin of his desire for Emma, the speaker wonders if Saint-Juliot is not “some strange necromancy” for him (l. 2). The inability to find Emma anywhere in the world has now made the world itself seem unreal to him. At the same time he disavows the place, he writes that “There lonely I found her” in the past (l. 10). The fundamental problem recurring from the first poem of the sequence remains the speaker’s inability to see the beloved move in the landscape he revisits.

Emma’s “voiceless ghost” comes into view in “After a Journey,” marking a key moment of transformation in the sequence of poems from the sound of her voice to a vision of her form. Her appearance is conditioned by the speaker’s work of tracking her to this particular place, but he cannot be sure where or how she will appear to him. This ghost is everywhere, moving up and down the cliffs but leaving the speaker to feel “lonely” and “lost” as she moves around him. He wants to know where she will next appear but “there’s no knowing, / Facing round about me everywhere, / With your nut-coloured hair, / And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going” (ll. 5-8). In the previous poems, Emma was nowhere to be found, and now she appears unpredictably after the speaker has successfully “re-entered your olden haunts at last; / Through the years, through the dead scenes I have tracked you” (ll. 9-10). In the next two lines he asks, “What have you now found to say of our past — / Scanned across the dark space wherein I lacked you?” (ll. 11-12). The rhyme on “tracked” and “lacked” reignites the effect of tracing the flame that has burned out. The speaker continues to address himself to the

ghost, remarking, “I see what you are doing,” thinking that she is leading him to the places and spots that were important for their relationship. This is a “thin” ghost that he is “frailly” following until the final stanza:

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see
 The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily;
 Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
 For the stars close their shutters and the dawn whitens hazily,
 Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
 The bringing me here; nay, bring me here again!
 I am just the same as when
 Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers. (ll. 25-32)

This place, Pentargan Bay, mediates Hardy’s contact with the beloved through an aperture of retrospection that begins to close in the final stanza. The metaphor of the stars closing “their shutters” and the dawn whitening creates this opening that will eventually shut out the light of the beloved. However, in spite of her vanishing, the speaker wishes to enact a continuous repetition of the experience by being brought back to the original place. “Bring me here again,” the speaker implores the ghost, so that he can track her absence in the landscape in an effort to find that “flitting” vision of the beloved again and again. In this paradoxical work, the absence of the beloved conducts her presence, and in the repetition of this work—the compulsion that constitutes the most fundamental movement of these elegies—the speaker sees her move again.

Through this closing aperture the speaker fulfills his desire to see Emma move. In “Beeny Cliff,” the poem shuttles between two nodal moments: the loving togetherness of March 1870 and the desperate loneliness of March 1913. Between this forty-three year expanse the speaker travels back and forth, tracking the vision of “the woman riding high above with bright hair flapping free— / The woman whom I love so, and who loyally love me” (ll. 2-3). The long lines of rhyming triplets create the effect of little alternation

or variation. The form is one of certainty and expectation—a symmetry between the memory of Emma riding her horse on Beeny Cliff next to the “opal and sapphire of that wandering western sea” and the speaker’s present moment when he lacks her. The poem ends with a question that reveals the mourner’s anxiety and desire for a particular vision of the beloved:

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that wild weird western shore,
The woman now is—elsewhere—whom the ambling pony bore,
And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will laugh there nevermore. (ll. 13-15)

At the same time as the speaker asks if Emma somehow continues to ride her pony, he denies the possibility by cutting into the third line with the negation of “nevermore” that keeps the triplet intact but violates the vision of her. However, in these elegies, negation catalyzes movement; the speaker enacts his vision of the beloved by promising, fruitlessly, that he actively destroys her figure as he views it.

If “Beeny Cliff” sparks the possibility of seeing Emma ride on that weird shore, the poems continue to drive toward the sight of her movement in “At Castle Boterel,” which directs its vision backward to see another location that Hardy and Emma inhabited together. The poem reveals the techniques for a “phantom sight” to see Emma’s figure by moving away from it:

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,
I look back at it amid the rain
For the very last time; for my sand is sinking,
And I shall traverse old love’s domain
Never again. (ll. 31-35)

Emma’s form diminishes as the speaker moves away until she crosses the vanishing point of his perspective. But again, the beloved does not disappear as we might expect; her image develops as a function of the speaker’s growing distance. For this reason, as he

travels away from Boterel Hill, Emma's figure transforms, leading the speaker to punctuate the vision with the certainty that he will never see it again. In his movement away from her, he finds himself sinking into the very metaphor that he constructs—a quicksand of memory and desire that threatens to subsume him. To "traverse old love's domain," however, requires these very acts of retrospection mediated by tracking the beloved's movement away from him. In the next poem, "Places," the speaker's anxiety over the effacement of these memories and visions becomes especially pronounced:

Nobody calls to mind that here
 Upon Boterel Hill, where the waggoners skid,
 With cheeks whose airy flush outbid
 Fresh fruit in bloom, and free of fear,
 She cantered down, as if she must fall
 (Though she never did),
 To the charm of all.

Nay: one there is to whom these things,
 That nobody else's mind calls back,
 Have a savour that scenes in being lack,
 And a presence more than the actual brings;
 To whom to-day is beneaped and stale
 And its urgent clack
 But a vapid tale. (ll. 15-28)

Emma faultlessly canters down the Hill on horseback while the waggoners lose control of their vehicles. The "presence more than actual" of her moving image meets the poet's enervation and doubt as the lines whittle down their syllables to the stale, vapid tale of a vision that can no longer be found on the hillside. To conjure this vision, however, requires the very lack that allows the retrospective, backward view so important for seeing Emma's form move again. Each time the speaker enacts this vision, he remarks on its fascinating presence, and then punctuates the view with the mournful tones of its disappearance. J. Hillis Miller describes this as the elegy's wave-like rhythm that travels

up and down with an alternating frequency of presence and absence; however, the motions the poems orchestrate are Emma's movements, especially her agility on horseback. Complemented by the metaphor of a ship "beneaped," the strong currents of memory and desire will pull the speaker back from the desolation that strands him in the present.

Startling for its speed, that vision of Emma cantering down Boterel Hill reappears. Her figure comes with a shift in perspective to a third-person speaker in the final and most kinetic poem of the sequence, "The Phantom Horsewoman." The change in narration distances the poet from the beloved object of desire, adding another layer of mediation between the vision reported and the reader. Emma's powerful motion can be heard in these lines, riding up and down the hills, ubiquitous and unbridled:

They say he sees an instant thing
 More clear than to-day,
 A sweet soft scene
 That was once in play
 By that briny green;
 Yes, notes alway
 Warm, real, and keen,
 What his back years bring—
 A phantom of his own figuring. (ll. 10-18)

The mourner is so rapt by this vision—described in the first stanza as a "careworn craze"—that he cannot report what he sees; in a final act of distancing, Hardy divorces himself from the position of the mourner and writes himself firmly into the proximate role of the elegist who mediates this sight unseen. Dennis Taylor comments on the tiered narration that reflects the versification in how the "play of seeming detachment against deep-rooted involvement is suggested by the rhythm with its play of reflective iambic rhythms against hypnotic anapestic rhythms" (157). In viewing the "scene," the phantom

engenders warmth and realness, not just an image for the mourner but an entire world of experience that could be viewed by others. The poem's speaker, however, insists that the vision is confined to the mourner, existing only as a function of "his own figuring."

Critics have agreed, and Hillis Miller remarks, "Emma exists not as an objective ghost which any man might see, but in the poet's mind" (251). Melanie Sexton argues that this "enduring phantom...is still subjective; it will not endure when the poet's brain is dead" (222). However, this emphasis on the psychological aspects of memory tends to look past Hardy's particular interest in the impression such phantoms can make on media shared between us.

Accordingly, Hardy's persistent vision of Emma does not exist within just his own brain but in the aesthetic that inscribes its trace within these lines:

Of this vision of his they might say more:
 Not only there
 Does he see this sight,
 But everywhere
 In his brain- day, night,
 As if on the air
 It were drawn rose bright—
 Yea, far from that shore
 Does he carry this vision of heretofore: (ll. 19-27)

The sight of Emma on horseback detaches from a particular geographic place. The vision is portable, it can be carried, and it exists "everywhere." This stanza gives the impression that Emma's form becomes ubiquitous because it is a projection of the mourner. Invisible to others, only the speaker of the previous poems can see the "instant thing" riding on Boterel Hill or Beeny Cliff, the "phantom of his own figuring." But the mourner's orientation to the lost beloved is further articulated in the next stanza:

A ghost-girl-rider. And though, toil-tried,
 He withers daily,

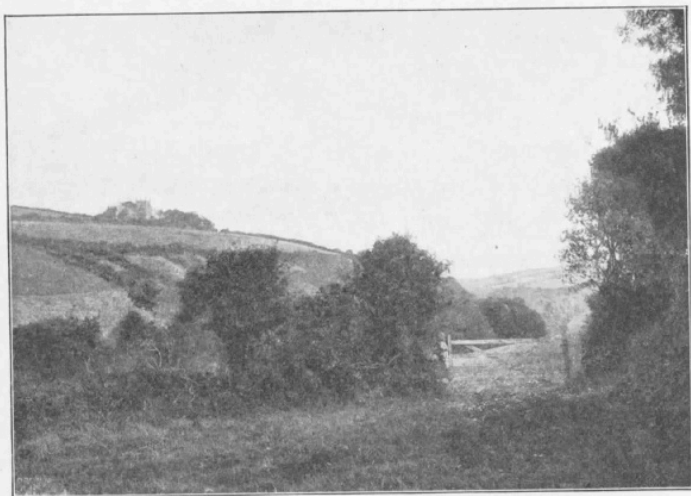
Time touches her not,
 But still she rides gaily
 In his rapt thought
 On that shagged and shaly
 Atlantic spot,
 And as when first eyed
 Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide. (ll. 28-36)

Like the shrinking figure of “Boterel Hill,” this ghost girl’s ride intensifies in proportion to the poet’s destruction. Not just a figment of Hardy’s brain, Emma moves with the lines of this poem. Not to be dismissed for being obvious, the elegy has set into play the vision of Emma on horseback enjoying a freedom that, in her own words, needs no protection. Acutely aware of how images move as a function of their own destruction, Hardy has created an enduring vision of a scene he loves by mediating an invulnerable symmetry between his decay and Emma’s “instant thing” that “time touches...not.” An analogy could be drawn here between a timeless image that replays and the cinematic technology that Grundy finds between these lines. It would be worth pausing, however, to consider how this “sweet soft scene” has called attention to its own resistance to visualization. No clear vision of the girl can come to the reader, but Hardy has—as is so often the case with his writing—given us the places to search for her. If we wish to see Beeny Cliff, Boscastle Harbour, St. Juliot, Castle Boterel, and the other landscapes that make her present, we must go to them with the elegy as our guide to track Hardy’s loss that will always exclude us.

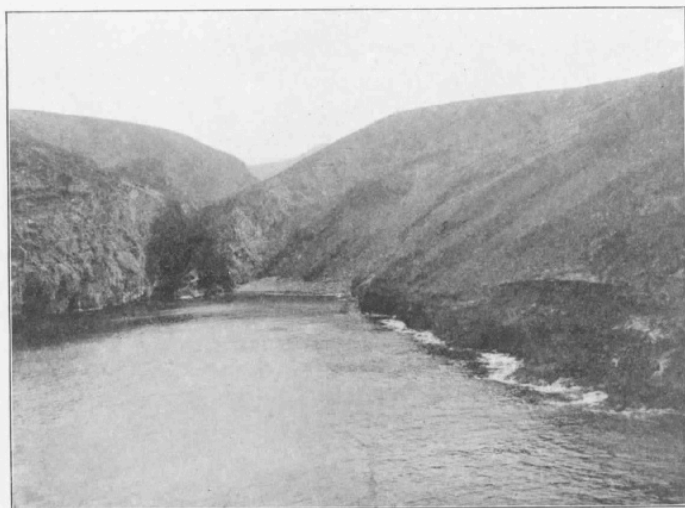
The elegy’s resistance to photography and spectatorship becomes visible in a project that attempted to capture the landscape so crucial for the mourner’s work. Hardy’s friend, Hermann Lea, a photographer, proposed making a book about his novels and poems that would include photographs to illustrate important scenes. In 1913 *Thomas*

Hardy's Wessex was published after numerous negotiations between Lea and Hardy about the suitability of certain photographs to capture the images described in the text. In the chapter on *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Lea identifies a scene from the novel as taken from the rectory at St. Juliot. Crossing over from the novel to biography, Lea remarks, "Mrs. Thomas Hardy before her marriage laid the foundation-stone of the new portions, and conducted the music of the church while living at the rectory here with her sister and brother-in-law" (171). But in the photographs that accompany this description, we see only architectural details, brush, and absence. Adjacent to one picture is a photograph of Pentagran Bay that seems remarkable for its inability to suggest any movement in the whitewater of powerful waves that have been made inert in the diminutive, half-page reproduction (Figure 16). These photographs and others of Beeny Cliff and Boscastle Harbour are suggestive of the illustrations that might have accompanied the *Poems of 1912-13* if *Satires of Circumstance* had been incorporated into the project.²³ These are images of extreme stillness and melancholy, especially when compared to the rhythms and sounds of Hardy's elegies. Marjorie Levinson seems to describe these photographs when she writes, "Hardy's poetry is a melancholy affair. It is melancholy at the level of style. Its objects live ghostly half-lives, the visual counterpart of which might be Eugene Atget's photographs of Paris, products of the same general era as Hardy's" (561). Atget's photographs share Lea's fascination with stillness and absence, an interest in capturing the landscapes and street scenes of a burgeoning modernity in a moment of suspension. Thomas Hardy, however, is a poet of movement whose phantoms do not keep still.

"A PAIR OF BLUE EYES"



133.—ST. JULIOT CHURCH FROM VALLENCY VALLEY.



134.—PENTARGAN BAY.

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Figure 16. Photographs by Hermann Lea of St. Juliot Church and Pentagran Bay from *Thomas Hardy's Wessex*. 1913.

¹ Niemeyer gives a detailed filmography of the lost adaptations and early criticism of the films. T. R. Wright's *Thomas Hardy on Screen* provides additional details on these works. In correspondence about the *Tess* adaptation, Hardy expresses concern that the film would be shot mostly in the United States. The subsequent production of *Far From the Madding Crowd* is filmed mostly in Dorset using Hermann Lea's photographs for *Hardy's Wessex* as a guide. For additional discussion of Hardy's ambivalence about early film adaptations of his novels, see Widdowson.

² Several years later in 1922, he again reluctantly agreed, remarking, "I am not at all anxious to get the *Return of the Native* filmed, unless a very good offer should come along" (6: 172). Film could too easily pervert the novel, "changing [it] from a tragedy to a story in which everything ends happily." Hardy feels a strange ambivalence as the author when he meets the actors who he identifies as his characters for the adaptation of the 1921 *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (Niemeyer 15).

³ Remarkably, the novels selected for adaptation are not the stories where photographs appear. This is especially striking considering how often the mistaken photograph is used as a plot device in early cinema (Trachtenberg 259).

⁴ See Niemeyer for the trouble with cinematic adaptations of Hardy's fiction in spite of its "cinematic" qualities: "The views of these critics all echo Sergei Eisenstein's famous theory that early filmmakers borrowed their visual and storytelling techniques from the great Victorian writers, though Grundy is the only one to acknowledge Eisenstein in her argument. It would logically follow that, as Hardy's novels are widely seen to be cinematic, they would also be highly filmable; however, many critics claim that Hardy's cinematic qualities actually keep his novels from being the source of satisfying films" (35). Eisenstein's 1944 essay, "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today," looks to Dickens's novels to follow a line of development from his Victorian narrative technology to the tropes of visual story telling such as the montage used by Griffith. However, even Eisenstein is at times uncomfortable with his stress on the analogical qualities of his argument: "Analogies and resemblances cannot be pursued too far—they lose conviction and charm. They begin to take on the air of machination or card-tricks. I should be very sorry to lose the conviction of the affinity between Dickens and Griffith, allowing this abundance of common traits to slide into a game of anecdotal semblance of tokens" (213). In a telling moment, however, Eisenstein cites Griffith's 1911 film, "Enoch Arden," in the context of a discussion about Dickens, altogether ignoring the origin of this text as a poem by Tennyson (200-01). Convincing as Eisenstein's genealogy might be, it tends to look past the ways in which Victorian literature troubles visual (especially photographic) adaptation, especially in the tradition of Victorian poetry.

⁵ See J.B. Bullen's *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* for the influence of painting on Hardy. See Berger for a discussion of visuality in Hardy's work that focuses primarily on his fiction. Tom Paulin's *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* considers Hardy's positivism (211).

⁶ We must remember that during the period of Hardy's career still photography gradually developed into the cinema, meaning that these media cannot necessarily be viewed as separate at the turn of the twentieth century in spite of our inclination to see them as distinct. See Gunning's recent essay, "Hand and Eye," which describes the advent of the cinema in England during the 1890s. Following on the thesis of his seminal idea of the

cinema of attractions, he makes the point that this is not narrative cinema. He credits the popular rise of the medium to the short films of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, her 1901 state funeral, and the coverage of the Boer War. His point is that "rather than a medium of stories and stars, cinema at the point of its origin functioned primarily as a technical novelty. 'Animated pictures,' to use a phrase frequently applied to the nascent medium of cinema, offered the latest in a long series of optical devices" (496). For foundational studies of early cinema in Britain, see Barnes and Chanan.

⁷ Richard Armstrong's study on mourning in cinema demonstrates a gap in scholarship for the Victorian legacy of elegy that film inherits. "The failure of words to communicate the ebbs and flows of grief is a recurring theme in this book" (7). He continues, "This book proposes that filmed images offer more astute ways into the experience of grief than words do" (8). See also Paul Coates for the relationship between film and mourning.

⁸ When Victoria died in 1901, her funeral procession was carefully filmed, following the guidelines discussed in periodicals about how best to film the movements of a hearse (Sargeant 3).

⁹ For additional details, see Doane's reading of the "The Artist's Dilemma" 135.

¹⁰ An 1899 supplement, "The Lantern Record," published in *The British Journal of Photography*, remarks on the power of the cinema not only to show movement in forward motion, but also the capacity to "stop at any particular place and instantly reverse, the gearing being perfectly automatic, the simple act of turning the handle controlling it all, for on turning the reverse way, the ordinary gear goes out of action and the reversing movement comes into play."

¹¹ Following from Gunning's argument about the cinema of "attractions," Daly considers how early film did not present the fictional narratives we have come to associate with the medium (65). In spite of the cinema's obvious limitations, early viewers were wildly attracted to its movement. Gunning corrects a frequent misconception that early movies from 1895 to 1907 were narrative when in fact they were far more often short actualities. For Gunning, the cinema of attractions is "less a way of telling stories than as a way of presenting a series of views to an audience, fascinating because of their illusory power." The cinema of attractions demands the viewer's attention by keeping these views moving. Gunning does not address the elegiac or mournful dimensions of early film, but the attraction to movement can also be seen as a fascination with life.

¹² Not all early viewers embraced cinema's attractions. Henri Bergson claims that cinema falsified the representation of movement, leaving out vital details necessary for seeing the world. Bergson's interest in cinema focuses on how it presents a metaphor for thinking through and visualizing the constant change that all bodies experience. He uses the example of a marching regiment to model how its forward movement can be visualized without reducing that movement into a series of still photographs, leading him to write that "form is only a snapshot view of transition" (331). To see the marching regiment's movements, Bergson writes, "He who installs himself in Becoming sees in duration the very reality of things, the fundamental reality." The cinema falsifies this movement because it is founded on an illusion that creates the appearance of movement that is not real. In Bergson's formulation, movement is irreducible and indivisible, and "not comprised of immobility." For this reason, movement can never be reduced to a single frame but must be seen as an ongoing development, thus the cinema cannot capture this

process of becoming. By letting the cinematic apparatus construct our vision of movement, we miss the quintessential aspect of its becoming and fail to see how it transforms over time. This is especially true of the human life. By fixating on life's movements in the cinema, we obfuscate life's transformative power from movement to the stillness of death. See also Laura Mulvey who has remarked on the unsettling nature of this visual paradox that the cinematic "image of human life was necessarily haunted by deception," resulting in the "blurring" of the boundaries between oppositions such as life and death, inorganic and organic, stillness and motion (52). See Gunning "'Arrested' Instant" for a recent reading of Bergson's theory. For the relationship between cinema's duration and indexicality, see Doane.

¹³ This technological evolution of the photograph from still to moving image forgets that even the earliest photographs from the 1830s reproduce motion. Louis Daguerre's 1838 "Boulevard du Temple, Paris" famously records the image of a man's leg and top hat at rest as his boots are blacked even though all of the other people busying about the street are deathly absent in the camera's long exposure (Green-Lewis "Not Fading" 561). In photography's early images, lacunae and blurs adumbrate motion that cannot be made visible in the picture; even in Eadweard Muybridge's 1887 proto-cinematic, instantaneous photographs for *Animal Locomotion*, motion occurs between the spaces of these serialized images, revealing gestures and movements usually unseen such as the eroticism of a woman falling onto a mattress with her genitals in plain view (Smith 92).

¹⁴ Laura Marcus has shown that both movement and emotion are suggested by the Greek word, "kinema," which she argues was "an association central to phenomenological understandings of film spectatorship and to concepts of embodied perception and the embodied viewer at the heart of more recent critical approaches" (5).

¹⁵ Julie Grossman observes that "even the photograph as a physical object is delineated in terms of its passively coming into being, eliding the act and art of taking the picture," but this reading overlooks the kinetic activity of this moving picture that becomes visible when it is set ablaze. Similarly, Desales Harrison writes, "The poem presents itself as burning-in or branding, wherein burning and writing are not distinct acts; it is the flame, moving 'line by line' that traces the poem's progress" (409). Arlene Jackson addresses Hardy's use of the photograph as a figure for the trace.

¹⁶ See the "The Enemy's Portrait" published in the same volume: a speaker buys a painting of his adversary in order to burn it. However, the destruction keeps being deferred, and the painting is left hanging after he dies.

¹⁷ Catherine Maxwell writes, "Hardy typically sees nature as subordinate to the perceiver" (209). This Wordsworthian dynamic allows Maxwell to argue that Hardy's poetry "testifies to the recreative power of imaginative vision over and against the empirical proofs of optical sight" (226). Her vocabulary uses the terminology of the uncanny, the phantasmagoria, and the ghostly, but throughout her readings, she never employs the language of mediation. Maxwell focuses on how Hardy's use of the "prosaic object" goes beyond "its banal everyday self, but is permeated, or even subsumed and displaced, by the history, memories, impressions, or associations that it evokes" (198).

¹⁸ Nancy Armstrong claims that by the 1850s the Victorian novel was changing the reader's relationship with the visual world by describing objects with clarity and precision. Her argument is not that the realist novel mirrors the world but that realism

constructs known and recognizable images of “the real” that become useful as objects. Therefore, she claims, “authors and presumably their readers were predisposed to think photographically before there were many photographs to substantiate the kind of visual description we now associate with literary realism” (126-27). Daniel Novak counters Armstrong’s argument by claiming “photography set the standard for what was *not* real. Photographic fictions. . . defined and produced the impossible and abstract”(6). When photographs appear in Hardy’s novels, their significance is often mistaken, or even worse, they engender strong currents of desire that lead characters astray. In Hardy’s first published novel of 1871, *Desperate Remedies*, the manipulation of a key photograph drives one of the major plot lines because it is read as objective evidence. Moreover, in *A Laodicean*, a trick photograph disrupts the plot when it is mistaken for unimpeachable evidence. In Hardy’s last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, the photograph’s power transforms from its use as a plot device in the two earlier instances to become an object of seduction. The tragic protagonist falls in love with his cousin, Sue Bridehead, when he first sets eyes on her photograph. Jude Fawley sees Sue’s portrait framed by two brass candlesticks on his aunt’s mantelpiece, and he is driven to possess the object that will “haunt” him throughout his life. See Durden for a reading of these instances of misleading photographs in Hardy.

¹⁹ Hardy read Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* with an eye toward these kinds of translucent ghosts. In his February 2, 1915 correspondence with Caleb Saleeby, who had lent him the copy, he remarks, “You will see how much I want to be a Bergsonian (indeed I have for many years). But I fear that his philosophy is, in the bulk, only our old friend Dualism in a new suit of clothes—an ingenious fancy without the real foundation, and more complicated, and therefore less likely. You must not think me a hard-headed rationalist...Half my time (particularly when I write verse) I believe—in the modern use of the word—not only in things that Bergson does, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, &c, &c. But then, I do not believe in these in the old sense of belief any more for that” (5: 79).

²⁰ In Hardy’s short story, “The Imaginative Woman,” published in *Wessex Tales*, a photograph of the fictional poet, Robert Trewe, engenders strong passions in a lonely wife, Ella Marchmill, who comes to fetishize the image during her family’s vacation at his residence. She becomes obsessed with Trewe’s traces, compulsively putting on his clothes and discovering his photograph hidden behind a frame. When she grasps hold of the image, she undresses herself, and then stashes the picture under her pillow to avoid her husband’s detection. In the draft manuscript, Ella rubs the photograph against her body under the bedcovers, using the image as a surrogate for the poet’s body (Ray 174-75). After repeated attempts to meet Trewe, she learns that he has committed suicide, leaving behind a poem, “Lyrics to a Woman Unknown,” which convinces Ella of their deep yet unconsummated relationship. Shortly after attending his funeral, she dies, leaving behind a newborn child. A couple of years after her death, Mr. Marchmill discovers Trewe’s portrait and a lock of his hair that unnerves him when he realizes the uncanny resemblance between Trewe and his boy, who he turns to and shouts, “You are nothing to me!”(79). Mr. Marchmill’s recognition of Trewe’s presence reveals his deficient “mental tactility” that leads him to misread the picture as evidence of an impossible betrayal. A photograph can impregnate desire, but if we are to believe the

story's narrator, the closest Ella Marchmill comes to Trewe occurs under the covers of her lonely bed. Mistaking his wife's contact with an image for the touch of the poet, Mr. Marchmill's fascination seems akin to that of the speaker in "The Photograph" who projects his desire onto the image. Marchmill's reaction is all the more severe when he destroys the relationship with his son because of what he sees in a photograph.

²¹ Deacon looks over the pile of ashes in the biography and tries to find the traces of Hardy's untold love with his cousin, Tryphena Sparks, and the possibility of a bastard child. This so-called "Hardy Boy" is identified in a photograph shown to Tryphena's sister in the very last years of her life. See *Hardy's Vision of Man* 136 for the supposed photograph and the appendix in Gittings. On two different occasions Deacon shows Mrs. Bromell a picture of the young boy and then on the second visit, she shows her the picture of a young man: "Again, the young boy was identified, without pressure, as 'Hardy's son'. On one occasion Mrs. Bromell said 'Hardy's nephew,' but she immediately corrected her own words, saying 'Hardy's son...I always took it to be Hardy's son...He came to see Tryphena'" (Gittings 255). Gittings confirms that there was probably a relationship with Tryphena before he met Emma, but that there is no basis for an illegitimate son with her (226).

²² A number of critics have pointed out the unusual qualities of these poems when considered in the tradition of elegy. Peter Sacks reads a distinct turn away from the conventional consolation found in elegies such as *In Memoriam* and *Adonais* (240). Melissa Zeiger claims these elegies violate the typical subject that defines loss as the sorrow that exist between men in close friendships (43-44). Almost all of Hardy's critics assume that he was estranged from Emma in the years leading up to her death. Jahan Ramazani goes so far as to claim that Hardy's guilt over his neglect of Emma leads him to efface her loss in the elegies (39).

²³ Hardy corresponded with Lea about a subsequent edition of *Thomas Hardy's Wessex* in 1924. He suggested that Lea photograph a watercolor of Tintagel Castle made by Emma (*Letters* 6:281). See also Lea's letters in *Thomas Hardy Through the Camera's Eye*.

Coda

Sidney Martin's Uninvited Photograph

A photograph of Christina Rossetti's 1895 funeral gives us a closing image for mourning in the age of photography, which we have seen often exists in a contingent and complementary relationship with elegy (Figure 17).¹ On January 2nd, after a recent snow, one of the Victorian period's greatest poets was laid to rest in London's Highgate cemetery. In a photograph taken by Sidney Martin, we see the procession of a small and private group of mourners led by Reverend Glendinning Nash. One is recognizable as William Michael Rossetti, brother of Christina and Dante Gabriel, who wears a black skullcap and white beard. Underfoot is the grave of Elizabeth Siddal, shared with other family members, including Christina. By photographing the interment, Sidney Martin joins a long-standing tradition of describing the gravesite that occurs in traditional elegy.² Of course, this is the funeral of a poet who often wrote about death and the afterlife, and the photograph raises the question of how it too can serve in a role usually left for elegiac poems.³ Martin's image constitutes a significant relic not only of the poet's grave but also the expression of mourning in the literary group that gathers around her coffin.⁴

The photographer is described by two members of this group as an interloper at the private event; driven by an unknown desire to record the burial, Martin stands out as an unfamiliar presence mysteriously at work in the cemetery. Henry Thomas Mackenzie Bell, who attended the church service and burial recalls, "As far as I am aware, with the exception of one of two persons unknown to me and whom I had not observed at Christ Church, only her brother and his children accompanied by Mr. Nash, Mr. Watts Dunton,

Miss Lisa Wilson, Mrs. Read and myself were present at the interment at Highgate. Her brother, however, informs me that Mr. Sydney Martin attended of his own accord and took some photographs” (202). Indeed, in a brief reference to this photograph, William Michael remarks, “A gentleman not known to me, Mr. Sidney Martin, attended of his own accord, and took a few photographs of the scene” (*Some* 533). Taken by a photographer working at the margins of the funeral service, the image gives us a view of the liminal period when Christina’s body has not yet been committed to the earth: a small group of mourners appear to merge with those bearing her coffin. The reverend has his back to the camera, and the slow exposure has blurred some of the figures, including a child held in a woman’s arms and another whose face appears disembodied in the dark shadows of the mourners’ black attire.⁵ Bell, presumably one of the subjects in the photograph, describes the scene from his perspective:

A sprinkling of snow had remained on the ground, and, as the closing words of the burial service were read by Mr. Nash, the winter sunshine, gleaming through the leafless branches of some tree to the right, revealed all their delicate tracery, while a robin sang. Then, after some wreaths from those peculiarly dear to her had been placed on the coffin, and the last look had been taken, we left the cemetery. (202)

In Martin’s photograph, it is difficult if not impossible to identify any of the objects that Bell mentions. The robin is nowhere to be found, and when we look to the tree where it might be perched, we see the black circular dots of paper foxing symptomatic of the print’s gradual decay. The leafless branches are recognizable, but we cannot make out the snow. The gleaming light and delicate tracery of the tree branches are faintly suggested on the white Portland stone of the grave markers, especially the elongated shadow of the cross made by the funerary ornament propped up in the foreground between a pair of tombstones.

The robin's song at Christina's burial becomes the predominant metaphorical figure that recurs in the elegiac work written to mourn her death. After he attended the service, Theodore Watts-Dunton composed two elegiac sonnets titled, "The Two Christmastides," which take solace in the robin's profound song:

I.
 On Winter's woof, which scarcely seems of snow,
 But hang translucent, like a virgin's veil,
 O'er headstone monument, and guardian-rail,
 The New Year's sun shines golden—seems to throw
 Upon her coffin-flowers a greeting glow
 From lands she loved to think on—seems to trail
 Love's holy radiance from the very Grail
 O'er those white flowers before they sink below.
 Is that a spirit or bird whose sudden song
 From yonder sunlit tree beside the grave
 Recalls a robin's warble, sweet yet strong,
 Upon a lawn beloved of wind and wave—
 Recalls her "Christmas Robin," ruddy, brave
 Winning the crumbs she throws where black-birds throng?

II.
 In Christmastide of heaven does *she* recall
 Those happy days with Gabriel by the sea,
 Who gathered round him those he loved, when she
 "Must coax the birds to join the festival,"
 And said, "The sea-sweet winds are musical
 With carols from the billows singing free
 Around the groynes, and every shrub and tree
 Seems conscious of the Channel's rise and fall"?
 The coffin lowers, and I can see her now—
 See the loved kindred standing by her side,
 As once I saw them 'neath our Christmas bough—
 And her, that dearer one, who sanctified
 With halo of mother's love our Christmastide—
 And Gabriel too—with peace upon his brow. (219)

The elegy follows in the tradition of the genre by calling attention to the loss of a fellow poet and her creative talents. The scene of her burial becomes a metaphor for this work; the "golden" sun on her coffin and the white flowers that adorn it reflect the light of

Christina's powerful imagination. The robin's warble recalls her verse, and the second sonnet moves to thinking about another incident in which the bird's song is a figure for the poet's voice. Multiple moments are recalled, including an event that took place when Dante Gabriel had invited Christina to a Christmas holiday at Bognor, which Watts describes in a memoir:

"It was while staying at Bognor that I had the best opportunity of observing the kindred traits and sympathies that enlinked together Christina Rossetti and her brother. It was here that I first had an opportunity of observing that strange kind of sympathy between Christina Rossetti and the lower animals, especially birds, and it was in this attitude towards the lower animals that was most strongly seen between brother and sister. Christina had not been at Bognor more than twenty-four hours when the birds, especially the robins and blackbirds, seemed to know her. She said she would coax the birds to join the festival, and so she did. When she fed them, they approached the open window much nearer than they ventured to come when I fed them. One robin, after the morning meal, used to sing to her, and when she left us she sang no more.

And here I cannot help recalling a pathetic incident which occurred at her funeral, where the only two intimate friends who (besides her brother and his children) followed the coffin in the mourning coaches were Miss Lisa Wilson and myself. Just before the coffin was lowered the golden rays of the winter sun fell upon it, and that moment there leapt from a tree beside the grave the joyful song of a bird that the sudden sunshine had reminded of summer, and to me it seemed the voice of that Christmas robin who had greeted her with his song in 1875." (qtd. in Hake 48-49)

The Christmas robin that sings in Highgate cemetery echoes not only this memory of togetherness and intimacy between Christina and Dante Gabriel but also the voice of her poetry that Reverend Nash read aloud as she was buried. In the sestet of Watts's second sonnet, the coffin lowers, but the elegist does not look upon her death. Instead, he is taken back to that tender moment twenty years before in 1875, recalled again by the sounds we cannot hear on that winter day in 1895. Indeed, this is the consolation that the conventional elegy strives to create; the transformation of the deceased into a figure that continues to live on in the world where her family, friends, and readers remain. For this

reason, the elegy does not linger in the aftermath of her death or stay among the dead in the cemetery; instead it imagines how the poet's spirit takes part in something greater—the continuity of the living, natural world.

Sidney Martin's photograph exists as a physical trace of the burial, pointing the way to the poet's gravesite and giving us an alternate view of the event described in Watts's elegy. In the picture, only two people, ostensibly a couple, seem to acknowledge the camera's presence (Figure 18). They are foregrounded by a tombstone and thick vegetation; their position has the quality of the royal subjects in the mirror of Velazquez's *Las Meninas* who stare back at a future viewer (Figure 19). We cannot, of course, be sure of what they are looking at, but these two lack the absorption of the others in attendance. They seem somehow removed from the scene with their gaze fixed on a distant object other than Christina's burial. When the picture is enhanced, the man bears a faint resemblance to Theodore Watts. By his side, it would seem, is the forty-five year old Miss Lisa Wilson, a cherished friend of Christina Rossetti and great admirer of her poetry.⁶ Wilson also composed elegiac verses to mourn the poet's loss. In this moment of exposure, the two elegists look back at the camera. They exist in that moment: aware of the camera's perspective, yet sensitive to the sounds that resound throughout Highgate and that delicate light falling on Christina's coffin that we cannot see. A welcome intrusion, Martin's photograph serves as a remarkable link to this lost scene that we know through Watts's poem and Bell's account. Standing together, Watts and Wilson maintain the position of elegists in the age of photography: in their foreground lies the corpse of their fellow poet whose life they will honor in verse, and in the distance, they see the uninvited camera in the process of creating an image that will remain silent—a view of

their mourning before it is recast into elegy. Taken together, however, the photograph and Watts's poem conjure up the image of that joyful robin who we must imagine just outside of the frame, poised to sing.



Figure 17. Sidney Martin. Funeral of Christina Rossetti. 1895. Ashmolean Museum.



Figure 18. Digitally Enhanced Detail of Sidney Martin's Photograph.



Figure 19. Jesse Hoffman. Christina Rossetti's Grave. 2012.

¹ This photograph was found by the author in a box of uncatalogued materials at the Ashmolean Museum. William Michael Rossetti has autographed the back: "Funeral of Christina Rossetti- Photographed by Sidney Martin / To Alfred Rake with best regards / W. M. Rossetti- July 1898." This same image is reproduced in Angela Thirlwell's *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis*, although it is credited to the collection of Tim McGee (310). Another copy of this photograph was part of the late Professor William Fredeman's personal collection of Pre-Raphaelite materials currently offered for sale by Nudelman Rare Books of Seattle, Washington.

² Thomas Gray's 1751 "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" famously describes the graves of the unremembered dead, including "Some mute inglorious Milton. . ." (l. 59). In Dickens's *Great Expectations*, the novel's first paragraph begins with Pip recalling that "I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones" (9).

³ Samantha Matthews is interested in Dante Gabriel's exhumation of Siddal's coffin, and she makes only a brief mention of Christina's funeral that does not include this photograph, which constitutes its own kind of relic. She argues that "Rather than see the nineteenth-century fetishization of material memorials as a 'barbaric' survival or superstitious aberration, I suggest that we read these relics sympathetically, as emotionally and spiritually resonant embodied texts, circulating in a culture attempting to come to terms with the march of materialism and secularization. The poet's corpse, the grave that contains it and the memorial that marks its location, and designates by metaphorical and literary association the poetic corpus, are the concrete and emotional constructs where these seismic spiritual and phenomenological shifts become measurable" (29-30).

⁴ My approach to thinking about photography's relationship with poetry is notably different from the kind found in Alison Chapman's work on Christina Rossetti. In her study of the poet, she touches on the influence of the medium and borrows Roland Barthes's terminology of the punctum to describe her work: "This study explores how Christina Rossetti wounds us, how despite her obvious referentiality—as photographic, pictorial, biographical, historical and literary subject—she nevertheless slips out of the frame" (23). Chapman never mentions the photograph of Rossetti's funeral, but her interest in photography as a metaphor for the poet's work runs throughout her study. However, her definition tends to involve a set of analogies about the technology and a number of assumptions about photography's mimesis that does not describe the complex ways in which Victorians theorized this medium.

⁵ Even though Martin's photograph is taken much later, the blurred motion of the mourner's moving toward the grave recalls a famous example in the history of photography. Walter Benjamin claims that David Octavius Hill's pictures taken in the Edinburgh Greyfriars cemetery are characteristic of photography's early period, especially "the way his subjects were at home there. And indeed the cemetery itself, in one of Hill's pictures, looks like an interior, a separate closed-off space where the gravestones propped against gable walls rise up from the grass, hollowed out like chimneypieces, with inscriptions inside instead of flames. But this setting could never have been so effective if it had not been chosen on technical grounds. The low light-

sensitivity of the early plates made prolonged exposure outdoors a necessity. . . .The procedure itself caused the subjects to live their way into, rather than out of, the moment; during the long duration of the exposure, they grew into the picture, in the sharpest contrast with appearances in a snapshot. . . . (“Little History” 280).

⁶ See D’Amico for Lisa Wilson’s friendship with Christina Rossetti and other biographical details.

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