

'Lost Love' and the Memory of War

Matthew Betts

Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat
Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost.

Paradise Lost, Book IX¹

Among the verses collected in Thomas Hardy's *Satires of Circumstance* (1914) is a short lyric whose title sums up the elegiac theme for which the poet became known in his later years: 'Lost Love'. The speaker of the poem is a 'soul-sick' woman who tries to win back her remote beloved's affection by playing 'my sweet old airs' and singing 'my songs once more', only to find that he 'goes his way, / And shuts a distant door'.² In November 1919, five years after the appearance of Hardy's verse, Edward Marsh included a poem under the same title by the recently demobilised, twenty-four-year-old Robert Graves in his third *Georgian Poetry* anthology, a volume which was dedicated to Hardy. The following month Graves published the lyric in his own short pamphlet collection *Treasure Box*, before reprinting it a year or so later in *The Pier-Glass* (1921) and then including it in each of his subsequent volumes of collected verse over the next fifty years. Whereas Hardy's 'Lost Love' stages a domestic drama in miniature, Graves's poem is set in a kind of no man's land and centres on a lone, grief-stricken figure whose seemingly limitless powers of perception serve only to magnify the absence of the 'love' he has unaccountably 'lost'.³

LOST LOVE

His eyes are quickened so with grief,
He can watch a grass or leaf
Every instant grow; he can
Clearly through a flint wall see,

Or watch the startled spirit flee
From the throat of a dead man.

Across two counties he can hear
And catch your words before you speak.
The woodlouse or the maggot's weak
Clamour rings in his sad ear,
And noise so slight it would surpass
Credence – drinking sound of grass,
Worm talk, clashing jaws of moth
Chumbling holes in cloth;
The groan of ants who undertake
Gigantic loads for honour's sake
(Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin);
Whir of spiders when they spin,
And minute whispering, mumbling, sighs
Of idle grubs and flies.

This man is quickened so with grief,
He wanders god-like or like thief
Inside and out, below, above,
Without relief seeking lost love.

While the title 'Lost Love' denotes separation, its constitutive words are not just alliterative, they are literally half the same – a parallel which reflects the idea that love is always shadowed by the possibility of its loss (as Graves himself asserted in later poems like 'Pure Death'),⁴ just as loss is necessarily grounded in a prior experience of love. However, one of the most striking differences between Graves's poem and the one Hardy published in the first year of the war is that the younger poet's 'Lost Love' contains no mention of a beloved at all. Though highlighted in the title (and, in another moment of mirroring, its pregnant repetition in the final line) as the subject of the lyric, the love that has been lost in this instance remains pointedly unspecified and, therefore, doubly distant. In the place of a remembered beloved, the reader is left with a stark sense of what Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* calls 'the old horror come back – to want and want and not to

have'.⁵ The stress may fall spondaically on both parts of the poem's title-phrase, but 'lost' would seem to be the operative word here.

What is the significance of this omission? In his wartime essay 'Mourning and Melancholia', published a couple of years before Graves's poem in 1917, Freud argues that a strongly felt absence which resists conscious identification is symptomatic of pathological melancholia rather than 'natural' mourning; a condition in which the ego attempts to counter its loss by identifying with the missing object so that it becomes internalised and, as a result, 'withdrawn from consciousness'.⁶ Like Freud's melancholia patient, the anonymous figure in Graves's lyric shows no sign of consciously knowing what the love he has lost actually is and neither, for that matter, does the poem itself. An obsessive study in the effect rather than the cause of bereavement, 'Lost Love' appears to be just as cut off from its protagonist's mysterious object of desire as he is. D. N. G. Carter places 'Lost Love' among 'The poems occasioned by Graves's first marriage',⁷ while Richard Perceval Graves has suggested that the poem may be a response to the death in battle of Graves's officer friend David Thomas in March 1916 and, more likely still, his estrangement the following year from his beloved Charterhouse companion G. H. Johnstone.⁸ This is plausible but, as Proust's fictional alter-ego observes in a remark worthy of Freud, 'The most exclusive love for a person is always a love for something else'.⁹ Three years Graves's junior, Johnstone in particular seems to have represented a Romantic ideal of childhood purity for the poet; an ideal which he celebrated in early lyrics like 'Babylon' and which he struggled to hold on to for sustenance, first at his oppressive boarding school and then – with ever greater difficulty – during his years of combat. By extension, it could be argued that the protagonist of 'Lost Love' is just as likely to be in quest of this half-remembered, half-imagined sense of pre-War innocence and certainty (or the 'happy art and faith' Graves later refers to in 'Recalling War')¹⁰ as he is for any one particular beloved.

Nietzsche (whose poems Graves read in the trenches) once said

it was easier to ‘put together an approximation of a tree’ than to ‘see a tree exactly and entire’.¹¹ The temptation, as with Graves’s early work in general, is to read ‘Lost Love’ in the mode of his mature Goddess-haunted poetry where, outwardly at least, intense grief is seldom unrelated to the vicissitudes of romantic love. The poem could of course be just what it initially appears to be: a verse about the loss of a longed-for other. Indeed, its central trope of heightened perception is a familiar one from the literature of courtly love. In *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, for example, Berowne extravagantly declares that love ‘gives to every power a double power, / Above their functions and their offices’.¹² But it’s not so much love as the loss of love that grants Graves’s protagonist his ‘double power’, making him more akin to the desolate speaker of Tennyson’s ‘Maud’ than Shakespeare’s witty, self-serving nobleman:¹³

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye, –

That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!

Whereas Dante is cured of his blindness by love’s presence in the form of the otherwise blindingly beautiful Beatrice in *Paradiso* 26, Graves’s and Tennyson’s central figures are made eagle-eyed by love’s absence, albeit to very different ends. For the narrator of ‘Maud’ the hitherto unnoticed ‘little things’ of material existence are a source of wonder, but for the protagonist of ‘Lost Love’ they become grotesque enlargements of a world drained of meaning. This inversion of the courtly lover’s powers brings the question of the missing love object in Graves’s poem back into focus and serves as a reminder that there is nothing in the text which

unequivocally suggests that the ‘love’ alluded to in the title is romantic love *per se*, however much the author’s reputation as a love poet might point us in that direction. Although Graves included ‘Lost Love’ in his late anthology *Poems About Love* (1969), he first reprinted it almost half a century earlier in his fourth full-length collection *The Pier-Glass*, a book which drew directly on the war trauma he had attempted (with only partial success) to repress in his previous volume *Country Sentiment* (1920). As Graves put it in a letter to Edmund Blunden dated 10 March 1921, *The Pier-Glass* can be understood as: ‘half a reaction against shellshock by indulging in a sort of dementia praecox (the medical name for John Clare’s ailment) of fantastic day dreams, [...] half as an attempt to stand up to the damned disease & write an account of it’.¹⁴ Since ‘Lost Love’ conspicuously makes no reference to a specific love-relationship and reads more like a phantasmagorical nightmare than a ‘fantastic daydream’, it could, in the light of these remarks, be as much an oblique ‘account’ of shellshock as a metaphor for heartbreak.

In *All’s Well That Ends Well* the vital elder statesman Lafew voices the commonplace that ‘excessive grief’ is ‘the enemy to the living’.¹⁵ Invoking the same received idea, but from the opposite side of the coin, the deathly Mortimer in *Henry VI, Part I* describes his ‘weak shoulders, overborne with burdening grief’.¹⁶ By way of contrast, Graves’s ‘Lost Love’ presents a man who is jarringly ‘quickened’ rather than deadened by grief’s burden. Read one way, the idea might seem straightforward enough: he has simply been left raw, or ‘cut to the quick’, by a particularly painful experience. But the eye-catching verb ‘quickened’ has more positive connotations than such a cursory reading allows and, in this context, obviously means ‘give life or vigour to; rouse; animate; stimulate’ (*OED*). Shakespeare frequently makes use of the word in this sense, as for example when Cleopatra expresses her desire to ‘quicken’ the beleaguered Antony ‘with kissing’, while Milton’s Satan urges his flagging followers to think of themselves as ‘self-begot, self-raised / By our own quickening power’.¹⁷ Shelley ends ‘Ode to the West Wind’ with the Dantean

image of ‘dead thoughts’ being driven ‘over the universe / Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth’ and Yeats, in his purgatorial ‘The Cold Heaven’ (published three years before Graves’s lyric), chillingly envisions ‘the ghost’ that ‘begins to quicken’ at the moment of bodily death.¹⁸ In *Ash Wednesday* Eliot describes ‘the weak spirit’ as it ‘quickens to rebel / [...] Quickens to recover’ and, more recently, Seamus Heaney has deployed the word to memorable effect in the final line of his poem ‘Oysters’, with its speaker embracing the ‘tang’ of sensory experience in the hope that it ‘Might quicken me all into verb, pure verb’.¹⁹ When Graves imagines a figure *quickened* by grief in ‘Lost Love’, then, he is picturing a man who is not just hyper-sensitised by the ordeal of loss, as we might expect, but also actively invested with energy from a particularly unlikely source.

This arresting conceit underlies the poem’s characteristically Gravesian topsy-turvy, through-the-looking-glass feel and places it at a distinct angle to other verses on ostensibly similar themes. If the lyric’s late off-centred rhyme of ‘grief’ and ‘relief’ brings to mind the lines that open the second section of ‘Dejection: an Ode’ (as well as Blake’s ‘On Another’s Sorrow’ and Christina Rossetti’s ‘Hope in Grief’),²⁰ its startling vision of grief’s potentially galvanising power (hinted at in the earlier rhyme of ‘grief’ and ‘leaf’) is a far cry from the ‘stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief’ of Coleridge’s great conversation poem.²¹ But what are the implications of this strange reversal at the heart of ‘Lost Love’? For one thing, it suggests that the protagonist must have been in some way lifeless (or at any rate less-than-quickened) before his grief took hold, possibly in the sense that he was not fully alive to the fact that he actually *had* something to lose in the first place. Like Hardy’s rueful speaker in ‘The Self-Unseeing’, the figure in Graves’s lyric was presumably ‘looking away’ when the enigmatic lost object was still in his possession;²² which would also mean, paradoxically, it was never in his possession to begin with (as Borges put it: ‘one loses only what one never really had’).²³ From a psychoanalytic standpoint, this implied neglect may signify the kind of ambivalence Freud

identified as one of the preconditions of melancholia, whereby the patient reproaches himself for ‘having been [...] responsible for the loss of the love-object, of having wanted that loss’.²⁴ The idea of a grief that vitalises rather vitiates is of course nothing if not ambivalent and, while ‘Lost Love’ contains no outright instances of self-reproach, there is something undeniably self-punitive about its monomaniacal subject’s hopeless search.

In no way, then, is Graves’s grimly single-minded protagonist in possession of the ‘quickened, multiple consciousness’ that Pater ecstatically hymns in his influential conclusion to *The Renaissance*.²⁵ The essential powerlessness of this apparently all-powerful figure is perhaps signalled in the triple repetition of the unstressed verb ‘can’ in the first seven lines of ‘Lost Love’ (he can do anything, it seems, except recover the object of his affections). Graves’s use of the word at the end of line 3 is particularly telling in this respect, since it constitutes the only unstressed line-ending in the poem. In this way ‘Lost Love’ establishes its ironic slant early on by formally undercutting its own Berowne-like rhetorical emphasis on the boundless abilities of its subject. The conspicuous imperfect rhyme of ‘can’ and ‘man’ (also striking for being one of two embedded rhymes in a poem otherwise dominated by rhyming couplets) similarly suggests that, for all his uncanny perceptual feats, the central figure is ultimately ‘unmann’d’, to use Lady Macbeth’s barbed word, by the loss he has suffered.²⁶ The iambic and anapaestic forward thrust of lines 1 and 2 seems to correspond with the protagonist’s quickened state, but the rhythm slows down (as it does in the lyric’s final section) to a deliberate trochaic pulse punctuated by a caesura in line 3:

/ _ / _ / | _ _
Every instant grow; he can

as if to emphasise the moment-by-moment perception of plant growth. Although the subject’s ‘mind swings by a grass blade’, as Pound puts it in Canto LXXXIII of his *Pisan* sequence,²⁷ this

image of new life is hardly redemptory in 'Lost Love' – a poem D. N. G. Carter has penetratingly described as a 'parody of rebirth'.²⁸ Indeed, following on as it does from the reference to 'grief', Graves's representation of burgeoning vegetation feels like a precursor to the April lilacs that would emerge from Eliot's waste land three years later.

'Lost Love's' key word 'quicken'd' also has a scriptural resonance and looms especially large in Psalms, where it often occurs in a comparably double-edged context. For example, Psalm 71: 20: 'Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth'. The psalmist's notion here of a God who both quickens and 'shewe[s] great and sore troubles' in equal measure is partially paralleled (and possibly inherent) in Graves's own secular sense of a quickening grief in 'Lost Love'. It is also very much in line with his later putative belief that 'the Goddess destroys only to quicken',²⁹ a statement which, contrary to the author's long-term Shelley aversion, loosely recalls the destructive-generative imagery at the end of 'Ode to the West Wind'. Although Graves was 'all against being overwhelmed',³⁰ as Lionel Trilling observed, he also seems to have been possessed by the idea that states of desolation like the ones described in 'Lost Love' and certain passages of *The White Goddess* are, up to a point, an unavoidable part of any fully lived life – and a poet's life in particular (as 'The Cool Web' makes clear, we 'Retreat from too much joy or too much fear' at our own peril, even if madness lies at the other extreme).³¹ For Erich Auerbach this kind of fatalistic attitude goes to the heart of the Old Testament, where 'Humiliation and elevation go far deeper and far higher than in Homer, and [...] belong basically together'.³² Given that the biblical dimension of 'quicken'd' is particularly salient in the light of Graves's strict Christian upbringing, it's hard not to wonder whether the curiously bracing grief that animates 'Lost Love's' lone figure might not have something to do with a loss of orthodox faith of the kind the poet himself experienced in the years leading up to and spanning the War. With this in mind,

Graves's nameless 'love' may be closer in spirit to George Herbert's use of the word with a capital 'L' as a stand-in for 'God' in his lyric beginning 'Love bade me welcome' than it is to the once-'true' romantic love of Hardy's homonymous elegy.

It's apt that the 'startled spirit' of the dead man should 'flee' its bodily confines at the end of the poem's first section since this ghostly exit marks the beginning of the protagonist's descent into an underworld which – though fantastically out of proportion – is brutally biological rather than classical or Christian. It's a scene that brings to mind Coleridge's description of the Ancient Mariner guiltily watching the bodies of his shipmates:³³

Their souls did from their bodies fly, –
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whiz of my cross-bow!

Given that Graves felt he had been 'turned into a murderer by his participation in the war',³⁴ the figure of the dead man in 'Lost Love' can be viewed – much like the Mariner's deceased crew – as an unsettling amalgam of the poet's comrades and his victims. The image of the corpse's 'throat' (which may be an allusion to David Thomas's fatal throat wound), meanwhile, has acoustic associations and signals a point of transition from the visual acrobatics described in the opening lines to the auditory emphasis of the lyric's central section.³⁵ Hugh Haughton has argued that the ghosts in Graves's early poetry often represent 'the continuing presence or reappearance of the traumatic past'.³⁶ In keeping with this idea, the dead man's apparition in 'Lost Love' seems to usher war's phantasmal presence (or 'weak clamour') into the poem. In a cacophonous sentence spanning twelve lines, Graves compiles an almost Whitmanian list of ordinarily imperceptible noises, including the oddly disturbing 'drinking sound of grass', 'clashing jaws of moth' and the mechanistic 'Whir of spiders when they spin'. Sensitivity to sound is of course one of the chief symptoms of shellshock and it seems no accident that 'Lost Love's' churning

subterranean landscape also features soldierly ants struggling beneath ‘Gigantic loads for honour’s sake’ along with ‘idle grubs and flies’ which, in this context, may correspond to troops – both young (grub-like) and fully grown – idly waiting for battle. Ted Hughes, in poems like ‘To Paint a Water Lily’ (composed when he was still writing, as Edna Longley puts it, under the influence of ‘Graves the craftsman’),³⁷ would draw more explicit parallels between the natural world and modern warfare.³⁸

[...]observe the air’s dragonfly
That eats meat, that bullets by

Or stands in space to take aim;
Others as dangerous comb the hum

Under the trees. There are battle-shouts
And death-cries everywhere hereabouts

But inaudible [...].

They are, however, audible in ‘Lost Love’, a poem which also recalls Hughes’s great predecessor John Clare who, in the lyric beginning ‘I hid my love when young’, wrote of ‘The flye’s buzz’ that ‘turned a lion’s roar’.³⁹

As well as describing a certain kind of ‘double power’, to quote Berowne again, Graves’s poem contains various instances of formal and theoretical doubling, from its use of (mostly) rhyming couplets to its repetition of certain words (like ‘lost’, ‘love’, ‘quicken’d’, ‘grief’, ‘grass’, ‘man’) and the chain of conceptual oppositions (‘god-like or like thief / Inside and out, below, above’) with which it draws to a close. Writing about *Ulysses*, Edmund Wilson once said: ‘There is tremendous vitality in Joyce, but very little movement’,⁴⁰ by which he meant, of course, very little storytelling momentum. The same is true of ‘Lost Love’, which has all the sickly, restless vitality of a high fever but no obvious narrative, or even thematic, development. As we might expect

from the poet who would go on to tell ‘one story and one story only’, Graves here expresses one particularly suggestive idea (that the protagonist’s senses have been weirdly invigorated by an unidentified loss) and then, Stravinsky-like, obsessively repeats it over and over again in different figurations; a strategy which serves to deepen rather than deplete its original strangeness. Citing Graves’s use of the term ‘rhythmic mesmerism’ in *On English Poetry* (1922) and drawing on the language of psychoanalysis, Fran Brearton has argued that repetition is fundamental to the poet’s distinctive voice, which she describes as ‘uncanny’ in ‘its compulsion to repeat, and its underlying fear of a hidden menace’.⁴¹ In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which was published the year after ‘Lost Love’, Freud suggests that the neurotic unconsciously repeats distressing moments from the past in a bid to make them more manageable, just as children use repetitive play in order to imaginatively ‘master’ events that have made a strong impression on them.⁴² However, after encountering shellshock victims like Graves who dreamed repeatedly about their traumatic war experiences without in any way ‘working through’ them, Freud was prompted to develop his theory of repetition by introducing the problematic notion of *Todestrieb*, or the death drive. Whereas Freudian *Eros* ‘pursues the goal of maximizing the complexity of life’, *Thanatos* or the death instinct is ‘charged with the task of causing animate organisms to revert to an inanimate state’.⁴³ By repeating an unpleasurable experience the subject gains a kind of access to the ultimate unpleasurable experience (or non-experience) of death and its promise of an end, as Keats puts it in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, to ‘the weariness, the fever, and the fret’ of everyday life.⁴⁴

Since the figure in Graves’s poem apparently pursues his fruitless search as a way of repeating, rather than remembering, the trauma of his loss (and since, crucially, he does so ‘without relief’), it seems reasonable – from a Freudian perspective at least – to suggest that, regardless of whatever it was he originally lost, the object of his quest is actually the grave itself. With its earthy images of insect life, plant growth and, in particular, the body of a

‘dead man’, ‘Lost Love’ is as heavy with overtones of death and decomposition (or ‘Worm talk’) as any Beckett scenario. Significantly, the noun ‘man’ is used twice in the poem, first in relation to the corpse mentioned in line 6 and then, towards the end, as a reference to the subject himself (who is otherwise referred to by the pronoun ‘he’) – another example of mirroring that suggests the protagonist may also be dead, even as he is (like Yeats’s ghost in ‘The Cold Heaven’) emphatically quickened. In the lyric’s closing lines Graves describes him as both ‘god-like’ and ‘like thief’ (the reverse positioning of the word ‘like’ in each of these phrases subtly emphasises the opposition Graves is setting up), an almost paradoxical combination which evokes the perpetually quickened figure of Hermes or Mercury, god of thieves, who moves freely between Hades and the land of the living (‘Inside and out, below, above’). Jay Winter has provided an account of the First World War soldier-poet which is similarly reminiscent of the fleet-footed messenger god: ‘He ventured into the domain of the sacred, the no man’s land between the living and the dead, and acted as an interlocutor between communities in mourning’.⁴⁵ Although Graves didn’t write ‘Lost Love’ as a soldier poet (by that time he had come to the conclusion that ‘war poetry [was] played out’⁴⁶ and claimed to be ‘finished with the Fusilier kind of poem’⁴⁷), the text’s violent, death-haunted imagery certainly makes it feel closer to a war poem than a love lyric. In later years, with the development of the Goddess myth, the subject of love would come to be, among other things, Graves’s foremost vehicle for communicating the incommunicable realities of what he had experienced on the battlefield between 1914 and 1918. As Brearton has argued, the distinction between love and war in his mature poems is ‘arbitrary, since the Gravesian notion of the Muse is in part a response to war and violence’.⁴⁸ By the same token, in ‘Lost Love’ Graves effectively refracts the memory of war through the lens of the love lyric, rendering it strange once more and delivering precisely that ‘shock of the real thing’ that Egdell Rickword found lacking in the poet’s more direct war poems.⁴⁹ As well as being one of his most

powerful and formally accomplished early works, then, this lyric also represents one of the first examples of Graves's capacity to remember war most fully and without reduction when speaking, ostensibly at least, in the language of love. In this sense 'Lost Love' charts not only a loss but also a discovery.

Matthew Betts was awarded a PhD for his thesis on Robert Graves from the University of York, where he has also taught British and American literature.

NOTES

¹ John Milton, *The Major Works*, ed. by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 542.

² Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Michael Irwin (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2002), p. 299.

³ Robert Graves, *Complete Poems*, I, ed. by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward (Manchester: Carcanet, 1995), p. 68.

⁴ 'We looked, we loved, and therewith instantly / Death became terrible to you and me.' *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁵ Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, ed. by Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 272.

⁶ Sigmund Freud, *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, trans. by Shaun Whiteside (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 205.

⁷ D. N. G. Carter, *Robert Graves: The Lasting Poetic Achievement* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 62.

⁸ Richard Perceval Graves, *Robert Graves: The Assault Heroic 1895–1926* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), p. 225.

⁹ Marcel Proust, *Within a Budding Grove*, trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (London: Vintage, 2005), p. 477.

¹⁰ Robert Graves, *Complete Poems*, II, ed. by Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward (Manchester: Carcanet, 1997), pp. 91–92.

¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 115.

¹² *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 3, in *The Arden Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan (London: Thomson Learning, 2001), p. 760. All quotations from Shakespeare are from this edition.

¹³ Alfred Tennyson, *The Major Works*, ed. Adam Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 338.

¹⁴ Robert Graves, *Complete Poems*, I, p. 363.

¹⁵ *All's Well that Ends Well*, I. 1, *Complete Works*, p. 91.

¹⁶ *Henry VI, Part 1*, II. 5, *ibid.*, p. 476.

¹⁷ *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 15, *ibid.*, p. 153; Milton, *The Major Works*, p. 467.

¹⁸ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Major Works*, ed. by Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 414; W. B. Yeats, *Yeats's Poems*, ed. by A. Norman Jeffares (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1996), p. 227.

¹⁹ T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), p. 94; Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), p. 146.

²⁰ 'Can I see another's grief, / And not seek for kind relief?', William Blake, *Complete Writings*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 122; 'Tell me not that death of grief / Is the only sure relief', Christina Rossetti, *Complete Poems*, ed. by Betty S. Flowers and R. W. Crump (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 664.

²¹ 'A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief, / Which finds no natural outlet, no relief', in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Major Works*, ed. by H. J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 113.

²² Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 315.

²³ See 'A New Refutation of Time' in Jorge Luis Borges, *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922-1986*, ed. by Eliot Weinberger, trans. by Esther Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine and Eliot Weinberger (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 323.

²⁴ *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia*, pp. 210–11.

²⁵ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*, ed. by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 153.

²⁶ *Macbeth*, III. 4, *Complete Works*, p. 787.

²⁷ Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 547.

²⁸ Carter, *Robert Graves: The Lasting Poetic Achievement*, p. 154.

²⁹ Robert Graves, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*, ed. by Grevel Lindop (London: Faber, 1999), p. 425.

³⁰ See 'A Ramble on Graves' in Lionel Trilling, *A Gathering of Fugitives* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), p. 29.

³¹ Robert Graves, *Complete Poems*, I, p. 323.

³² See ‘Odysseus’s Scar’ in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 18.

³³ Coleridge, *The Major Works*, p. 53.

³⁴ Martin Seymour Smith, *Robert Graves: His Life and Work* (London: Paladin Grafton Books, 1987), p. 95.

³⁵ According to Moshe Barasch, in medieval Christian iconography the soul was often represented as ‘a small creature [...] emerging from the mouth’ of the dead. See ‘The Departing Soul: The Long Life of a Medieval Creation’, *Artibus et Historiae*, 26, 52 (2005), pp. 13–28. I am grateful to Dunstan Ward for alerting me to this possible connection.

³⁶ Hugh Haughton, ‘Graves and Ghosts’, *Gravesiana*, 3, no. 3 (Summer 2012), p. 456.

³⁷ Edna Longley, ‘Rough Magnificence’, *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 5254 (12 December 2003), 3–4.

³⁸ Ted Hughes, *Collected Poems*, ed. by Paul Keegan (London: Faber, 2003), pp. 70–71.

³⁹ John Clare, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Geoffrey Summerfield (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 353.

⁴⁰ Edmund Wilson, *Axel’s Castle* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1964), p. 168.

⁴¹ Fran Brearton, ‘Robert Graves and *The White Goddess*’, in *Proceedings of the British Academy, Volume 131, 2004 Lectures*, ed. by P. J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 298–300.

⁴² Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, trans. by John Reddick (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 55.

⁴³ See ‘The Ego and the Id’ (1923), *ibid.*, pp. 130–31.

⁴⁴ John Keats, *The Poems*, ed. by Gerald Bullett (London: Everyman, 1992), p. 201.

⁴⁵ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 221.

⁴⁶ Graves to Edmund Blunden, 12 July 1919, *In Broken Images: Selected Letters of Robert Graves 1914–1946*, ed. by Paul O’Prey (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 113.

⁴⁷ Graves to Edward Marsh, 10 January 1919, quoted by Dominic Hibberd in ‘“The Patchwork Flag” (1918): An Unrecorded Book by Robert Graves’, *Review of English Studies*, new series, XLI, 164 (1990), 526.

⁴⁸ Fran Brearton, *The Great War in Irish Poetry: W. B. Yeats to Michael Longley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 275.

⁴⁹ See Michael Schmidt, 'Takes on Graves', *Gravesiana*, 3, no. 3 (Summer 2012), 405.