‘THE RESURRECTION OF CHILD HAROLD’:
A TRANSCRIPTION OF NOR, MS6. AND A
RECONSIDERATION OF JOHN CLARE’S
CHILD HAROLD AND RELATED WRITINGS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>xxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: ‘PRISON AMUSEMENTS’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFINEMENT AND THE COMPOSITION OF CHILD HAROLD AND DON JUAN</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN NORTHAMPTON, MS6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: THE RESURRECTION OF CHILD HAROLD</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I THE TEXTUAL HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD AND RELATED MATERIAL</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD. ‘THE SLEEPING BEAUTY’</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III ‘SLEEPING BEAUTY’</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV HOW TO EDIT NOR, MS6?</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: ‘THE JOURNEY HOME’</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I AN ACCOUNT OF NOR, MS6 AND NOR, MS8</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOR, MS6 AND NOR, MS8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III THE NORTHBOROUGH AUTUMNAL SEQUENCE 1841</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV THE PROSE PIECE ‘AUTUMN’ AND THE NORTHBOROUGH AUTUMNAL</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANZAS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V THE SONGS &amp; BALLADS OF NOR, MS6</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF NORTHAMPTON MS6</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF NORTHAMPTON MS6</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II NOTES TO THE TEXT</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A) EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B) SYMBOLS ........................................................................................................... 167

CHAPTER FIVE: TRANSCRIPTION ........................................................................ 168

NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPTION ..................................................................... 285

CHAPTER SIX: A READING OF CHILD HAROLD ........................................... 315

‘SELF - POSITION AND REPOSITION IN NOR, MS6’: A STUDY OF CLARE’S USE OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL VOICE IN CHILD HAROLD AND THE REMAINING CONTENTS OF NOR, MS6 .................................................. 316

CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................... 354

NOTES ............................................................................................................... 361

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................. 419
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 1</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 2</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 3</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 4</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 5</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 6</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 7</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 8</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 9</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 10</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 11</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 12</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 13</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 14</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 15</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 16</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 17</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 18</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 19</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6 Page 20</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 23</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 26</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 27</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 29</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 31</td>
<td></td>
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<td>231</td>
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<td>Page 32</td>
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<td>233</td>
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<td>235</td>
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<td>237</td>
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<td>Page 35</td>
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<td>239</td>
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<td>Page 36</td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>241</td>
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<td>Page 37</td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>243</td>
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<td>Page 38</td>
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<td>245</td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>247</td>
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<td>Page 40</td>
<td></td>
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<td>249</td>
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<td>Page 41</td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>251</td>
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<td>Page 42</td>
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<td>253</td>
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<td>Page 43</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 44</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 45</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 46</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 48</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 49</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 50</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 51</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>271</td>
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<td>Page 52</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Page 53</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 54</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 55</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Manuscript 6</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ABBREVIATIONS

Northampton Manuscript Number 6 = Nor, MS6

Northampton Manuscript Number 8 = Nor, MS8

Bodleian Manuscript Don. a8 = MS Don. a8
ABSTRACT

There is, to date, no facsimile edition of John Clare’s 1841 Folio manuscript, Nor, MS6 or the earlier octavo notebook known as Nor, MS8. My intention in this thesis is to redress this situation by firstly presenting a transcription of the entire contents of Nor, MS6, while secondly incorporating an account of Nor, MS8 and its compositional relationship with Nor, MS6. As a direct result of this transcription I have offered a full account of the layout and sequential order of Nor, MS6, which I go on to argue requires critical commentators to reconsider not only Clare’s long poem Child Harold but the entire contents of this manuscript. My thesis challenges a number of assumptions made about the construction and sequential order of the stanzas which make up Child Harold that have arisen as a result of previous editorial decisions.

Chapter One serves to contextualise the manuscript’s contents within the framework of Clare’s confinement at High Beech asylum in Essex, most particularly the impact of confinement on the growth and development of Clare’s two long poems of 1841, Don Juan and Child Harold.

Chapter Two. This Chapter raises some issues about the responsibility an editor owes to a Folio manuscript such as Nor, MS6. I ask a rhetorical question; ‘How to edit Nor, MS6?’ and explore some of the problems which face the editor of Clare’s later work in the absence of any clear authorial intention. I also offer a Textual and Critical History of the poetry of 1841, which inevitably and not always justifiably, has been centred on
Child Harold and Don Juan. During the course of this history I trace the slow but
discernible development of interest in Clare's asylum poetry written during his first
confinement as it moves from a biographical preoccupation with Clare's insanity to a
more coherent appreciation of its significance.

Chapter Three. This Chapter describes the physical and stylistic characteristics of Nor,
MS6. I offer a detailed account of the makeup of this manuscript at the same time
outlining the differences between Nor, MS6 and Clare's earlier manuscript Nor, MS8.
During the course of this discussion I describe the importance of a number of stanzas
written at home in Northborough after Clare's escape from High Beech and suggest
the impact of freedom on Clare's creative output. I also explore the function and
significance of the Songs and Ballads in the construction of the Child Harold stanzas
and the remaining material of Nor, MS6.

Chapter Four. This Chapter contains notes to the text of the entire contents of Nor,
MS6. I explain the editorial principles behind the transcription and offer a detailed
description of Nor, MS6.

Chapter Five. A transcription of the entire contents of Nor, MS6. The transcription is
accompanied by endnotes and a photographic reproduction of the pages of the original
manuscript held at Northampton.

Chapter Six. 'A Reading of Child Harold'. This Chapter offers a reading of Child
Harold in the context of the remaining material in Nor, MS6. I suggest that there is
evidence of an autobiographical presence in all the writings in Nor, MS6 which
reconstructs or reworks a central autobiographical account of loss, confinement and escape. I go on to argue that although there appear to be three different narratorial personae within the manuscript they are in fact bound together by one dominant speaker. Clare’s obsessive reconstruction of one central account, his relentless quest to find permanence, home, loved woman and a particular truth implicit to these associations would appear to shape and control the contents of his notebook.

**Conclusion.** I briefly consider two opposing contemporary views on the editing of Clare’s poetry and consider the implication these different approaches hold for the contents of Nor, MS6 in particular. I conclude by examining the impact present copyright may have upon new readings of Clare’s work and upon proposed editions of his poetry.
PREFACE

Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne’er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And life’s enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.¹

Child Harold reappeared fifty three years ago with the publication of J. W.
Tibble’s The Poems of John Clare, 2 Vols, (1935).² Ninety four years had elapsed since
Clare conceived his poem and the first public recognition of its existence. There was a
clear attempt in this early interpretation to bring Clare’s unpredictable stanzas to heel
by categorising particular verses according to a predominant theme or mood rather
than imposing upon them a conjectural, sequential or chronological order. Presumably,
with this in mind, Tibble employed specific headings such as ‘The Exile’, ‘Homeless’
and ‘The Return to Northborough’ (avoiding the use of the general title Child Harold)
to accommodate the poem’s rambling construction. Nonetheless, this pioneering
version failed to adequately convey Child Harold’s remarkable creative mobility or to
contextualise the stanzas amongst the remaining material of Nor, MS6.

The most recent version of Child Harold in John Clare: Selected Poems³ (1990)
edited by Geoffrey Summerfield reproduced the fluid and obsessional flow of Clare’s
poem but does not fully explain its irresolution. Perhaps Child Harold does not require
‘resolving’. The fact that it remains clearly unfinished in Nor, MS6 may point to the
fact that Clare had left his poem in this condition because that is how he envisaged it
before his removal to Northampton Asylum in December 1841. Fragments of verse are
not less great or less worthy of consideration because of their brevity or inconclusiveness but they become problematical when subsequent editors do things with them. It would appear that it is has been the editorial control of Clare’s Child Harold and not the poem itself which has initiated some of the difficulties associated with its construction and presentation. Child Harold, resting uncomplainingly alongside the related material of Nor, MS6, has known no other context, and as I shall argue, may require no other.

This thesis seeks to both examine and to identify precisely what stanzas make up Clare’s Child Harold; (should the numbered stanzas found in Nor, MS8 be incorporated into the long poem for example?) It is also my intention to explore how Clare’s ‘incomplete’ Byronic and Burns imitation has been interpreted over the past fifty three years to the extent that it appears greatly ‘altered’ from the original in manuscript. Has Clare’s poem lost some of its ‘fire’ as a result of editorial interference? Does the poem’s inherent ‘enchantment’ still remain ‘sparkling near the brim’ waiting to be discovered if we only choose to read his poem in situ as it has been left to us? How can the editor of Child Harold justify extracting particular or specific stanzas from a poem in manuscript that has only ever been regarded as work in progress? What purpose or value can there be in making speculative claims for a sequential order for Child Harold when there is evidence in Nor, MS6 that even Clare himself was unclear as to what did or did not make up his poem? What editorial principle allows us to even contemplate or envisage the trailing stanzas in Nor, MS6 as work eligible for the composite title, Child Harold at all? How does Clare’s poem relate to the earlier, associated contents of Nor, MS8?
Forty four years of editorial interest has followed J. W. Tibble's version of the poem but no edition as yet, has taken into account the intertextuality of the material in Nor, MS6. Past editors may have been responsible for taking from it some of its original 'vigour' by trespassing on primitive terrain known only to Clare or by handling work which was halted in progress after his escape from High Beech. *Child Harold*, despite its faircopy status, has experienced in a short time, a whole range of what Donald Reiman styled the various 'Ages of Editing' a Romantic text.⁴

Clare's 'Golden Age' witnessed an edition of his poem framed by apologetic notes, biographical material and critical enthusiasm in the hands of J. W. and Anne Tibble. Geoffrey Grigson's edition might well characterise the transition in editing from the 'Golden' to 'Silver Age' in that his version of *Child Harold* in *Poems of John Clare's Madness*⁵ demonstrates a genuine commitment to Clare's asylum work but is also shaped by editorial 'tinkering and patching'. Grigson's edition appears less concerned with establishing the authority of Clare's text than producing an enthusiastic but also highly subjective version of his poem. Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield in *The Later Poems of John Clare*⁶ might be said to represent the so-called 'Brazen Age' where the Romantic editor is perceived as having greater respect for the poet's unamended text than the difficulties his reading public might experience in negotiating erratic and eccentric spelling and punctuation. Eric Robinson and David Powell's version of *Child Harold* in *The Later Poems of John Clare*⁷ (1984), may possibly be said to represent a more 'scientific' approach to the editing of the unamended Clare text, in the tradition of Stillinger.⁸ These editors have tended to break a particular pattern or theory of editing by demonstrating an interest in the process of editorial interpretation. The transcription offered here attempts to combine an interest
in the original or raw manuscript while at the same time seeks to focus attention on the literary, biographical, historical and social characteristics of Nor, MS6 which reflect Clare’s poetic and personal priorities in 1841. There has also been an attempt to justify a clear editorial process.

Six years ago in the Summer of 1993, I visited Northampton Public Library in order to read Clare’s long poem Child Harold in manuscript. I was eager to discover what the fair copy of this poem looked like, intent on finding some explanation for the different editions and interpretations which have become part of its textual history. Like most readers of Child Harold I had been struck initially by its straddling construction and its repetitive narrative. I had been using Geoffrey Grigson’s, Poems of John Clare’s Madness (1949) together with the Oxford edition of The Later Poems of John Clare (1984) edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell as my main sources of reference and throughout the months prior to my visit to Northampton had become intrigued not only by the variety of poetic forms which appeared to make up Clare’s long poem but the wide differences in the way they had been edited. How had Clare envisaged his Child Harold? In what ways had subsequent editors altered or reshaped the only surviving fair copy of his long poem?

What would the fair copy of these rambling stanzas reveal about Clare’s compositional practice in 1841? What lay behind Clare’s decision to construct Child Harold around such diverse and changing rhythms, intermingling the quatrains which make up a number of the poem’s songs with the more complex eight and nine line stanzas? Why had Clare numbered some stanzas and not others? I had also been struck by the difference in the form and the metrical construction between many of the stanzas
of Child Harold and Don Juan and those stanzas which make up Clare’s biblical paraphrases written in the same manuscript. I was particularly keen to read the faircopied stanzas Clare had written on his arrival home at Northborough in the late summer of 1841 after his escape from High Beech asylum in Essex.

An initial reading of Nor, MS6 revealed that some of the contents of the manuscript do not appear in Nor, MS8 but were fair copied by Clare from a catalogue for household furniture and three local newspapers dated June 18th, August 27th and September 3rd 1841. A number of autumn stanzas which I shall refer to as the Northborough autumnal sequence were originally composed along the margins of The Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser and The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury and then subsequently faircopied into Nor, MS6. My intention was to study the sequential order of the poem as Clare had written it in Nor, MS6 looking closely at the relationship between the stanzas Clare had written in confinement and those newer stanzas written during his first taste of freedom. In what ways were the Northborough stanzas different in mood and construction from those believed to have been written at High Beech?

It was soon apparent that the manuscript was not written in one continuous uninterrupted form as implied by Geoffrey Grigson, Eric Robinson and David Powell and that Child Harold was part of a number of pieces of work that Clare had been engaged upon in 1841. It also became clear that although the Child Harold stanzas were neatly written in the first 20 pages of Nor, MS6, after this point there appeared to be a deterioration in presentation together with a change in both the content of the manuscript’s material and its orthography. I began to consider the implications behind
editing such a complex manuscript and to question whether the sequential order suggested by Robinson and Powell in *The Later Poems* or Geoffrey Grigson's edition provided a wholly satisfactory account of what was going on in *Child Harold* or more generally in Nor, MS6 as a whole. A close reading of the remaining contents of the manuscript revealed a common preoccupation with exile, homelessness, loss of loved woman, Mary together with the notion of questing. A substantial number of pages in Nor, MS6 revealed some kind of commentary engaged with precisely these same themes though expressed through differing written forms.

Here began the start of my own voyage through the pages of Nor, MS6 which had commenced with the intention of making a comprehensive reading of *Child Harold* but which ended in an interpretation of the *entire* contents of the manuscript of which *Child Harold* is but a part. If Clare had faircopied the stanzas of his long poem in one uninterrupted sweep and not in the 'clusters' which characterise the poem in manuscript my interest in Nor, MS6 as a text might never have arisen. What intrigued me in 1993 was the tension in the manuscript between compositional and editorial inconsistency and thematic and creative unity. The overwhelming impression one is left with is the strength of the manuscript's idée fixe, and the fact that Clare's priority appeared in this context not so much in attempting to shape a chronological order for the stanzas of *Child Harold* but more in recording and making sense of a number of pivotal personal and psychological priorities relevant to him in 1841.16

It would appear that Clare's response to his exile from home, his separation from loved place, family, friends, patrons and publisher both in Nor, MS8 and Nor, MS6 was to write himself out of restriction into freedom and from lawlessness into an
imaginatively constructed location (which becomes real following his escape from Essex). Both the ‘home’ located in the imagination and real home represent love and truth. The tragic mood which pervades Nor, MS6 reflects the undercurrent of self knowledge which would seem to have reminded Clare even as he wrote that such a quest was ultimately flawed. Clare’s ‘Child’ appreciates the bizarre contradictions of his sojourn:

\[
\text{I trusted fate to ease my world of woes} \\
\text{Seeking loves harbour - where I now sojourn} \\
\text{- But hell is heaven could I cease to mourn}^{18}
\]

Child Harold moves forward in the relentless circular movement characteristic of many traditional ballads and songs, evolving through the recapitulation and reassertion of one main obsession – in this instance, the need to find a ‘home’. The various forms of writing in Nor, MS6 combine to form one cataclysmic impression of what it is to be dispossessed, geographically and psychologically. Nor, MS6 has consistently been appraised for its importance as the only existing fair copy of Child Harold but it is much more than this. The fact that it would appear to be a notebook containing draft work in progress as well as containing fair copied versions of Child Harold and Don Juan requires the reader to acknowledge its instability. In this fundamental respect, Child Harold in Nor, MS6 is not a definitive version but the nearest we have to Clare’s poem at a particular point in its development.

To summarise, the primary aim of this thesis is to offer a transcription of the entire contents of Nor, MS6 with a view to making as comprehensive a reading of Child Harold as possible. My intention is to suggest that the poem should be read alongside the remaining contents of the manuscript and contextualised within it. In the
course of this thesis I engage directly with past editors of Clare’s poetry of 1841, who have chosen to focus on the two long poems contained in Nor, MS6 while tending to neglect the remaining material of this manuscript. J. W and Anne Tibble, Geoffrey Grigson, Geoffrey Summerfield and Eric Robinson and David Powell have implied through their respective editions that Clare’s two long poems Child Harold and Don Juan enjoy a separate existence independent of the remaining material of Nor, MS6. It is with their apparent marginalisation of the manuscript’s related material that I take issue and my thesis will seek to prove the value of a primitive edition of Clare’s 1841 notebook.
INTRODUCTION

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither difficult nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph.

One begins a reading of Nor, MS6 at a point of temporary, elusive resolution. Page one of the manuscript contains three stanzas of a song which describe the speaker’s arrival home after a painful physical and psychological sojourn elsewhere but is followed immediately by the autobiographical account of Clare’s escape from Essex in mid-progress. It is apparent that the first and second songs in Nor, MS6 record events and responses to a particular moment of return which the voice in the prose that follows has not yet encountered. The opening pages of Nor, MS6 unravel a dual experience in which both ‘Child Harold’ and Clare himself appear to be participating in a simultaneous quest for a number of associated goals tantalisingly just beyond their reach. In these early stages of faircopying, Clare would seem to be engaged in an act of creative synthesis between presence and absence, rest and motion, continuity and discontinuity, eternity and temporality. It is possibly this notebook more than any other of Clare’s manuscripts which aligns him most closely to his Romantic contemporaries with their interest in the metaphysics of Time.
As the written material of Nor, MS6 evolves, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish autobiographical fact from fiction. Where exactly is the poet/lover (or Clare himself) if he is neither here at home or there in confinement? Is he still engaged in a thwarted journey or has he reached a reliable point of rest and refuge? Are we to read page 1 of Nor, MS6 as the beginning or the end of a particular story? This is one of a number of instances in the manuscript where the boundaries between opening and closure, beginnings and endings merge to form a series of changing, unreliable perspectives. To read Nor, MS6 is to experience a number of beguiling, dream-like repetitions which construct themselves into a series of uncorroborated personal and fictional events. If the speaker is neither here or there, he is in effect, nowhere, and it is this ‘limbo’ state of nowhereness that conditions the compositional territory of Nor, MS6.

The notion of rootlessness which pervades the 1841 manuscript is contradicted to a degree by two quite detailed and clearly differentiated descriptions of specific locations introduced with some authority in the early pages of the manuscript; the forest and environment of High Beech and the fenland of Northborough. While the accounts of these two places are vivid and accurate (Northborough is identified by the spire of Glinton church, its churchyard, the school walks and drains which make up the fenland. High Beech is associated with a lush and wooded region - Fernhill and the forest of beeches, hornbeams and elms), they each in their own way embody centres of overwhelming absence.
The impression of being neither here or there is explained in part by Clare's ability to become imaginatively mobile when he is in fact physically static. When here becomes non-negotiable because of the absence of 'love home & Mary' Clare and his poet/lover move beyond the present to the there or where of the imagination and memory in order to sustain associations. An example of the complex interplay between different place and altered time may be seen in the second song on page 1 of Nor, MS6. The speaker, as he describes the here which is also the immediate present, simultaneously evokes the past where events used to take place:

Here on the wall with smiling brow
Her picture used to cheer me
Both walls and rooms are naked now
No Marys night to hear me

Both Clare and his poet/lover appear to use specific place as a compass point in order to reorientate themselves but they also reject each reference for failing to offer any continuing or reliable solace. When the speaker in the third stanza of the opening song of Nor, MS6 reflects on the pointlessness of existence in both locations - 'There madness - misery here', to an extent, he justifies his restlessness and the need to continue journeying. Like the gipsies who figure in the account of his escape on page 2 of Nor, MS6, Clare and his speaker comprehend that if there is 'no home' above their heads there is no accountability either. While still 'journeying' in the opening stages of Nor, MS6, Clare as autobiographer can postpone the moment of painful return. The psychological, emotional and physical 'middle ground' which characterises the first four pages of the manuscript in particular, provides the space for creative and human possibility as it does a literal and actual means of 'escape'. Like Byron's stance in Don Juan where 'Between two worlds life hovers like a star / Twixt night and morn, upon
the horizon’s verge’ Clare participates in what George O’Brien in *Hegel on Reason and History: A Contemporary Interpretation* describes as “provisional teleology”. The future as it is described in Nor, MS6, must be continuously negotiated.

‘Middle ground’ might be said to be represented in both Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8. The roadside villages, towns and fields encountered by Clare on his journey home appear fragmented in both manuscripts. This third location is indistinct, unreliable and changing. Many of the places Clare encountered as he travelled the road North and which he describes in the ‘Recolections’ were partly visited at night, twilight or through the disorientation of dehydration, near starvation and exhaustion. ‘I then suddenly forgot which was North or South & though I narrowly examined both ways I could [see] no tree or bush or stone heap that I could recolect I had passed’.

Such details are important to the geographical map of Nor, MS6 because they are stages on Clare’s journey home which serve as points of demarcation between confinement and freedom.

The voice of the opening song in Nor, MS6 is haunted by the perception of his own vagrant condition (together with the increasing awareness of Mary’s own vagrancy) and the trauma of a journey which will never end. A complex account of it is told and retold by differing narrative personae; the autobiographical voice of the longer and fragmented prose passages and the letter; that of the poet hero in *Child Harold* and his alter ego in *Don Juan* and the speaker present in the biblical paraphrases. What strikes the reader as he encounters each of the four differing types of writing in the manuscript is the way each piece mirrors and endorses Clare’s own state of lovelessness, isolation and continuing homelessness. It seems as if it is Clare
the outsider, the orphan and the impotent quester who ultimately influences and motivates the manuscript's entire contents.

The final stanza of the opening song in Nor, MS6 draws attention not only to the two environments (confinement and the madhouse without Mary and Nortborough, also without her) which will act as a backdrop to both Clare and his speaker’s search for self but also emphasises the relentless pursuit of a goal that has already been obliterated. Prophetically, Clare and his Child unveil the outcome of their pursuit of home and Mary in the early pages of the manuscript. Fifty seven pages separate the speaker of the early pages who has ‘lost home & Mary’ and who ‘had no home in early youth’ from the voice who, in the closing stanzas, describes himself as having a ‘heart without a home’. The following stanza written on page 1 of Nor, MS6 describes what will become a continuing circle of unbroken events:

Nor night nor day nor sun nor shade
Week month nor rolling year
Repairs the breach wronged love hath made
There madness - misery here
Lifes lease was lengthened by her smiles
- Are truth & love contrary
No ray of hope my fate beguiles
I've lost love home & Mary

‘What we call the beginning is often the end / And to make an end is to make a beginning’. It is fundamental to a comprehensive reading of Nor, MS6 to appreciate at the outset, that when Clare commenced his manuscript with two songs he says himself he wrote on his arrival home at Northborough and which document the end to one journey, he is also simultaneously embarking upon a new one. What is ambivalent about this new beginning however, is that it concludes, 17 pages later, in precisely the same way as the first journey, with the poet speaker’s arrival home to find loved
woman absent. The contents of Nor, MS6 which separate page 1 and page 17 repeat, redefine, reassert and echo a fundamental statement of loss. The last lines of the three stanzas of the song on page 17 affirm what we have known from the outset; ‘Mary’s absent everywhere’, ‘Mary never once was seen’ and ‘Sweet Mary she is absent still’.

After Clare had composed the stanzas which marked his arrival home to Northborough in the summer of 1841 (pages 17 - 20 of Nor, MS6) it seems as if the need to reconstruct his journey or to assimilate the events of that journey together with its outcome had ceased to become a priority. The absence of Mary from the place with which he had associated her while in confinement seemed to a certain extent to have reduced the potency of her presence in the manuscript. The contents of Nor, MS6 from page 20 to 58 explore the poet / speaker’s solitary condition of exile while contemplating the ways in which he can best accommodate his disconsolate wandering.

The voice of the biblical paraphrases experiences a static existence devoid of both human love or a place to relocate. On page 25 of Nor, MS6 in the paraphrase of ‘David’s Prayer’ the speaker seems to have lost all sense of who or what he is. Mary’s absence has not only removed home and love but has also dramatically reduced the speaker’s perception of himself, ‘Who am I my God & my Lord / & what is my house in thy eye’. After page 20 of the manuscript the poet / speaker has relinquished human optimism for trust in God and his love songs for prophetic biblical paraphrasing. Human love together with the pain of desire would appear to be sublimated in exchange for spiritual reflection and rumination.
The remaining thirty eight pages of Nor, MS6 are characterised by resignation and a degree of emotional detachment. Those energetic, passionate swings towards optimism which tend to characterise the earlier pages of the manuscript are substituted towards the end for a mood of sombre reassessment, contemplation and comparative acceptance of the speaker’s future exile: ‘I am the man that affliction hath seen / By the rod of his wrath sorely scourged have I been’. The scars of his confinement would appear to have never left Clare, finding an echo in the words of Jeremiah: ‘Confinement persecution - the wormwood & gall / My soul hath them still in remembrance the pain / & is humbled within me to feel it again’.

John Clare’s High Beech manuscripts, Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 mark the temporary end to Clare’s experience of enforced hospitalisation while simultaneously documenting the beginning or re-establishment of a different type of confinement - an intense emotional thraldom. (Child Harold ironically describes such thraldom as a form of liberty, suggesting that the very name of Mary saves him from emotional extinction, ‘Mary thy name loved long still keeps me free / Till my lost life becomes a part of thee’). Whereas the pages in Nor, MS8 contain stanzas from Child Harold together with fragmented accounts of the journey out of Essex in transition (from confinement into freedom with all the associations of looking forward to a new beginning), Nor, MS6, faircopied and written in freedom reflects Clare’s tendency to look backwards to a lost edenic past. In Nor, MS6, Clare appears to be reconstructing the events of a previous life in order to make ‘imaginative sense’ of the present. The result of such ‘ordering’ allows Clare an emotional and creative response to his homelessness, homecoming and continuing vagrancy. The fact that this record is contained in a
A young poet talking to an audience of students described the importance of his notebook to the crafting of his poetry. Displaying a battered, well used volume, small enough to hold comfortably in his right hand, he explained that it contained reflections, odd lines, whole verses and one word jottings some of which had been lying unused for up to three years. This record was an indispensable part of his daily ‘luggage’ - relinquished only at night while he slept. He went on to suggest that the contents of his notebook mirrored specific points of personal reference over the past years, some of which he remembered more clearly than others. In conclusion, he drew attention to its importance as a type of diary of impressions which might otherwise have eluded his memory. He valued the fluidity and mobility of his diary’s contents, guarding their ability to transcend clock time while they simultaneously documented moments important to him alone. Such details bound together personal experience and creative observations which although separated by years, lay side by side within the space of a few pages or lines.

A reading of Nor, MS8, the small octavo notebook Clare was using in 1841 both at High Beech asylum and during his escape up the Great York Road from Essex to Northborough offers a similarly unique insight into Clare’s creative practice and self editing methods during this traumatic year. The pages of this manuscript, with their random, often illegible, entries were used by Clare to ‘write up’ the stanzas of Child
Harold and Don Juan, the two long poems he was simultaneously engaged upon in 1841. Clare may have composed directly into this notebook or he may have been making a second draft of original stanzas now no longer in existence or lost. The pages of Nor, MS8 also contain a number of unsent letters, one line fragments, parts of biblical paraphrases together with the disjointed inconsistent lines which form a part of his own account of his escape home to Northborough. Nor, MS8 is what one imagines a notebook to be - a collection of memoranda whose significance and relevance is known only to its owner. Due to its size, there are moments when it seems as though there are neither enough pages or space for Clare to jot down on paper all that his mind holds. Occasionally, he has written a number of stanzas which demonstrate a coherent creative compositional sequence; at other times it appears as if the madness which had dogged him for the last four years of his life surfaces and resurfaces distorting both the content itself and Clare's orthography.

One other, larger notebook known as Nor, MS6 also belonging to the year 1841, provides a different sort of reading experience and it is this manuscript which will be the focus of this thesis. On his arrival home in the late summer, Clare began fair copying the existing material from Nor, MS8 into Nor, MS6. The contrast between the two manuscripts is startling. Whereas Nor, MS8 is generally dark and chaotic, Nor, MS6 is clearer and generally more organised, demonstrating Clare's attempts at collating and editing his work. It is revealing that rather than systematically making a faircopy of the work from page 1 of Nor, MS8, Clare chose instead, to use the first page of Nor, MS6 to faircopy two songs he had written immediately on his arrival home on the 'friday night'. It is worth noting that Clare wrote two stanzas of one song at the back of his copy of Byron, The Complete Works, Including the Suppressed...
Poems (I refer to the first two stanzas of ‘song a’ of Nor, MS6, ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’) together with three other stanzas from Child Harold on his return to Northborough.

Each notebook held different associations for Clare in 1841 as they do for the reader of both manuscripts today. As I have suggested earlier these associations appear to be influenced by a specifically identified location - where Clare was at a particular time and the use he was making of each notebook in these different places. The stanzas of Child Harold in Nor, MS8, which are written on the first four pages of the manuscript, describe the forest and woodland around the asylum. A letter on page 13 of this earlier manuscript was written to Eliza Phillips detailing Clare’s abhorrence of hospitalisation. Clare appears to reaffirm in his own mind that this letter belongs to another existence and location, by his decision not to faircopy it into Nor, MS6; it remains confined in the smaller earlier notebook. A line from this letter reiterates, ironically, what will become the two central preoccupations of Clare in Nor, MS6 - an immediate response to the experience of confinement and defiance of his imprisonment by recalling or ‘remembering’ himself since even his enemies seem to have forgotten him: ‘Having been cooped up in this Hell of a Madhouse till I seem to be disowned by my friends & even forgot by my enemies’. On page 23 of Nor, MS6, Clare’s realisation that self denial precipitates an individual into insanity or cowardice demonstrates the psychological distance he has travelled since his escape from High Beech: ‘Self Identity is one of the first principles in everybodys life & fills up the outline of honest truth in the decision of character’.
Many of the early pages of Nor, MS6 are resonant with a regenerating, emotional intensity. The prose description entitled ‘Autumn’ together with a number of stanzas in the middle of the manuscript indicate the impact a change in location has had upon a man used to confinement. Describing the beauty to be discovered in the ‘ordinary’ after a period of imprisonment Clare draws attention to the dangers of becoming complacent in ‘liberty’: ‘even these meadow arches seem to me something of [the beautifull ? illeg] having been so long a prisoner & shut up in confinement’.20 Whereas Clare is composing, faircopying and recording impressions in Nor, MS8, in Nor, MS6 there is evidence of an attempt to organise these thoughts; his mind synthesising and filtering autobiographical details while he simultaneously fair copied existing material or drafted what appears to be new work. It is striking that the physical distance between High Beech and Northborough appeared to initiate a clearer perspective as regards the experience of hospitalisation. This concentration of Clare’s recent past is important, as despite the change of location from imprisonment to freedom, exile to homecoming, Clare continues to be haunted by loss and dogged by an acute sense of having been widowed, orphaned or abandoned. The speaker in the song written on page 57 - 58 of Nor, MS6 makes it clear that Mary’s absence ‘hath left/ My heart without a home’. In other words, though each manuscript of 1841 represents differing locations and different perspectives they are also, paradoxically, linked by their common experience of dislocation.

Clare’s figurative muse as well as childhood love Mary appears to be a common fixation in both manuscripts. Separated from home at High Beech she became the rationale behind Clare’s bid for escape as the letters of this period indicate.21 Once back at home however, where Clare is forced to negotiate Mary’s absence from the place
which he has always associated her, he accepts that home is no longer a place in which to settle. Writing on page 4 of Nor, MS6 to his ‘dear wife’ whom he would like to believe is Mary Joyce, Clare describes the all too familiar sense of continuing dislocation, ‘I soon began to feel homeless at home & shall bye & bye feel nearly hopeless but not so lonely as I did in Essex’.

The contents of Nor, MS6 represent a complex assimilation of loss. As readers of the manuscript we must work backwards in time with Clare as he reconstructs the events of his homecoming together with the experiences along the roadside. In 1841 he had been a patient at High Beech asylum for four years, long enough to begin to realise that his exile was likely to be permanent. In a letter to his wife Patty in March of the same year, written in the large intrusive capital letters which characterise the early and last years of his madness, Clare recalls home and speaks of his claustrophobic fear of confinement:

Yet To Me ‘There Is No Place Like Home’ - As My Childern Are All Well - To Keep Them So Besure & Keep Them In Good Company & Then They Will Not Only Be Well But Happy - For What Reason They Keep Me Here I Cannot Tell For I Have Been No Otherways Than Well A Couple Of Year’s At The Least & Never Was Very Ill Only Harrassed By Perpetual Bother - & It Would Seem By Keeping Me Here One Year After Another That I Was Destined For The Same Fate Agen & I Would Sooner Be Packed In A Slave Ship For Affrica Then Belong To The Destiny Of Mock Friends & Real Enemies – Honest Men & Modest Women Are My Friends

The first page of the manuscript is dominated by the poet speaker’s notion of vagrancy; (‘I had no home above my head’ and again ‘I had no home in early youth’) but he is also caught up with a philosophical idea of what home represents and an obsession with getting there. Journeying, sojourning, wandering, sailing and walking preoccupy the various speakers of the contents of this manuscript uniting them together in their common quest for a place to set down roots. Nor, MS6 would appear
to document and make coherent the reasons for journeying as opposed to arrival. A reading of the manuscript reveals that there is, in fact, a logic to Clare’s compulsion not only to make an account of his journey but to sustain the momentum of travel even as he writes. I argued at the start that if arrival home is characterised only by bitter disappointment, then it is preferable to keep moving as mobility sustains anticipation and potentiality. Thwarted in his bid to find continuity and meaningful purpose, Clare appears to seek to compensate for his loss by repeatedly reconstructing a journey which is ultimately motivated by desire. Nor, MS6 becomes in many ways a metaphor for Clare’s response to freedom in its resistance to any form of control, regulation or convenient categorisation. In this respect, the manuscript becomes a living representation of Clare’s defiance of rigidity of any sort.

What becomes clear from the first few pages of the manuscript is that clock time and historical facts are, on the whole, incidental to Clare, immured in his self created world. This induced state of forgetfulness sharpens the focus of the past:

So on he lives in glooms & living death
A shade like night forgetting & forgot
Insects that kindle in the springs young breath
Take hold of life & share a brighter lot
Then he the tennant of the hall & Cot
The princely palace too hath been his home
& Gipseys camp when friends would know him not
In midst of wealth a beggar still to roam
Parted from one whose heart was once his home

The manuscript as it develops, becomes a touchstone for stability, for self recognition and relocation of the physical and psychological self. In order to make a comprehensive reading of individual pieces of writing within Nor, MS6 it is necessary to contextualise them within the framework of the manuscript as a whole. It is only by becoming
attuned to the common preoccupations of the entire text that we can begin to fully understand its importance and creative direction. This thesis attempts to put the reader in possession of the manuscript material in full and to read *Child Harold* in the larger context of the related writings with which it is interspersed in Nor, MS6.
CHAPTER ONE

'PRISON AMUSEMENTS'.

CONFINEMENT AND THE COMPOSITION OF CHILD HAROLD AND DON JUAN IN NORTHAMPTON, MS6

Clare was forty three years old in 1841 when he embarked upon the compositional project that would engage his attention for the next seven years. Twenty years earlier he had witnessed the popular success of his collection of verse, Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery, only to experience disappointment and financial despair when his last volume of poems, The Rural Muse published in 1835, failed to make any substantial impression. Clare entered High Beech asylum in 1837, two years after his failed literary enterprise. His physical health badly deteriorated, his mental state fragile and unpredictable, he looked back on his brief acquaintance with fame with bemused cynicism. Clare encapsulated the vagaries of literary popularity and the fickleness of celebrity status in a self-portrait in Child Harold likening its brevity to the loyalty and affections of women. The following stanza suggests the speaker’s disillusionment:

Fame blazed upon me like a comets glare
Fame waned & left me like a fallen star
Because I told the evil what they are
& truth & falshood never wished to mar
My Life hath been a wreck - & I’ve gone far
For peace and truth -& hope- for home & rest
- Like Edens gates - fate throws a constant bar -
Thoughts may o’ertake the sunset in the west
- Man meets no home within a womans breast

Child Harold and Don Juan are first mentioned as a simultaneous, uninterrupted creative exercise in Clare’s correspondence of 1841 and he was still discussing the work which he collectively called ‘Prison Amusements’ as late as 1850. Writing to Willam Knight in July of this year Clare refers to his intense sense of loneliness and the
lack of books, including those in which to write his ‘Prison Amusements’. Unfortunately, there is no clear evidence to indicate whether or not he was continuing to compose verses belonging to Child Harold and Don Juan as late as 1850, but the two long poems are referred to in some detail in a letter Clare wrote two years earlier to Mary Howitt in 1848. In this same letter Clare specifically links Child Harold and Don Juan to the wider title - ‘Prison Amusements’. Describing the therapeutic value that lay in composing stanzas for both long poems, Clare reveals the gradual development of his work in progress:

they grow (Child Harold and Don Juan) imperceptibly into a Vol & then I call it Child Harold of which I wrote much both in Essex & here which I did & do meerely to kill time and whose more proper Title might be 'Prison Amusements'

Clare clearly envisaged the two poems as making up part of a much broader compositional plan, one that may have included a variety of forms of writing; reflections, Hebrew Melodies or religious paraphrases, letters, essays and proverbs. In this respect, Clare’s careful collation of a wide spectrum of his ‘prison’ writing was in keeping with the tradition of the eighteenth century commonplace book, which documented and recorded all of the author’s associated thoughts and ideas. Part of the fascination of Northampton MS6 which is a fair copy of all such associated reflections and compositions which engaged Clare’s interest in the year 1841, is that out of a myriad of different written forms emerges a strikingly consistent voice characterised by its tragic resonance of exile and loss.

Clare had entered High Beech asylum as a patient of Dr. Matthew Allen in 1837 but it was apparently only four ‘silent’ years after he had commenced this confinement that Clare’s two long poems Child Harold and Don Juan make their
appearance in Nor, MS8 like two dazzling meteors in the darkest period of Clare’s creative and personal life. Why Clare only began writing (or making a copy of) *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* together with other work four years into his confinement in 1841 remains unanswered. There is no evidence to date to suggest that Clare was engaged upon the task of composing stanzas belonging to *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* *prior* to his confinement, but it is clear that *after* 1841 *Child Harold* retained a significant hold on his imagination. The idea of Clare’s continued involvement with a variety of writing as late as 1850 is implied by his reference to ‘Prison Amusements’ in the letter to Knight referred to earlier.⁴

The implications behind Clare’s use of this broader title with its connotations of imprisonment are helpful to a study of Nor, MS6 and the editorial history of its contents. It is true to say that Clare perceived much of the poetry composed between 1837 and 1864 as being the offspring of his asylum experience. The two long poems *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* set alongside the remaining material which make up Nor, MS6 represent examples of Clare’s mature work which construct a watershed between the lyricism of the Northborough sonnets (1832 to 1837) and the relentless profusion of Ballads that Clare composed between 1842 and 1864 while a patient at Northampton. *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* begun in earnest in 1841, are as much the products of Clare’s first confinement as they are of his insanity.

Much has been made of the two poems as the result of Clare’s delusions in the asylum years, most particularly his strong identification with Byron and Burns⁵, but there has been little substantial debate on the two poems and their rootedness in Clare’s response to his imprisonment and his identification with a number of Byronic poet -
prisoners together with Cowper’s descriptions of the victims confined to the Bastille in Book V of ‘The Task’. Cowper’s direct reference to the type of enforced exile which tears the prisoner from, ‘th’ endearments of domestic life / And social,’

is clearly registered by Clare in 1841. I want to suggest that Child Harold and Don Juan are the direct products of Clare’s withdrawal from the familial, social and political world which existed beyond the boundaries of High Beech asylum. The environment of Allen’s hospital in its dual function as a protective haven of comparative anonymity as well as restraint may be seen to be a metaphor for the tensions and ambiguities of Clare’s psychological state at this time.

Nowhere is Clare’s ambivalence towards High Beech Asylum more clearly expressed than in the opening stanzas of Child Harold where the poem’s speaker finds the isolation and intimate secrecy of the ‘leaf hid forest’ simultaneously liberating and emotionally paralysing:

How beautifull this hill of fern swells on
So beautifull the chappel peeps between
The hornbeams - with its simple bell - alone
I wander here hid in a palace green
Mary is abscent - but the forest queen
Nature is with me - morning noon & gloaming
I write my poems in these paths unseen
& when among these brakes and beeches roaming
I sigh for truth & home & love & woman

A letter addressed to Mary Joyce dated May 1841, describes precisely the same preoccupations, though it is more despairing of the relentless weighty drag of time which is so much part of the experience of confinement. Possibly, because of the context of this letter - its communication with the muse Mary, it gives us an intensely articulated account of Clare’s numbed, ‘frozen’ psychological condition:
I have been rather poorly I might say ill for 8 or 9 days before haymakeing & to get my self better I went a few evenings on Fern hill & wrote a new Canto of ‘Child Harold’ & now I am better I sat under the Elm trees in old Matthews Homestead Leppits hill where I now am - 2 or 3 evenings & wrote a new canto of Don Juan - merely to pass the time away but nothing seems to shorten it in the least & I fear I shall not be able to wear it away - nature to me seems dead & her very pulse seems frozen to an icicle in the summer sun -

What is evident from Clare’s description of confinement in this letter is his awareness of the ambiguous relationship between compulsive creative activity and emotional sterility. Cut off from his family and friends and severed physically from the landscape he described himself as making up ‘his being’, Clare’s hold on his own identity disintegrated.

No longer certain of who or what he was, Clare increasingly identified with an array of celebrated popular names as if to remind himself that he continued to exist even when living through the borrowed persona of others. A fellow patient at Northampton asylum, William Jerom, writing in August 1864 during the period of Clare’s second confinement, has left a valuable record of Clare’s ‘double life’ during this period of hospitalisation, most particularly his identification with Burns and Byron. Jerom’s account, remarkable for its clarity and detail, indicates that he, like Clare himself, uses the pen to keep the mind focused as well as attempting to mark the ‘lapse of time’. Jerom describes Clare’s penchant for composing in the neighbouring woodlands giving him the title of: ‘the king of the forest’. Jerom also dwells on Clare’s obsession with Burns and Byron and his tendency to take on each poet’s persona:

The pockets of his coat distended with books and newspapers. His principle author was Lord Byron but sometimes he carried about with him a volume of Burns’ poems or perhaps a specimen of his own writings - two of paper and a pencil - whereon to write his thoughts chiefly poems which he wrote in his leisure moments for his mind seemed ever on this drift
In another description, Jerom comments that Clare’s enthusiasm and admiration for certain authors reached such a pitch that he: ‘almost considered himself to represent the idiosyncrasy of those of whom he spoke, “I was Lord Byron” etc’.¹²

There seems no doubt that Clare particularly identified with the difficulties of Byron’s life of exile together with his reputation for promiscuity. Byron’s poetic construction of personal loss, the contradictory consequences of fame, social betrayal and his own experience of thwarted love find an immediate echo in Clare’s first asylum poems. Clare’s perception of his own exile together with his sense of social and emotional exclusion in Child Harold are as dark and as fundamental to his poem’s voyaging as Byron’s Childe Harold. Byron’s reference, (in his notes to Canto III of Childe Harold) to the scenery of Lake Geneva imbuing the mind with, ‘a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity’¹³ is clearly an idea Clare has absorbed into his own long poem. One difference in the experience between Byron’s hero and Clare himself cannot have escaped his notice however. Byron’s ‘Childe’, misfit as he is, is physically mobile, while Clare’s letters written in 1841 return repeatedly to his overwhelming frustration at his enforced ‘captivity’ together with his acute homesickness. Describing High Beech as a community populated by demons, Clare had this to say about his environment in May 1841:

Having been cooped up in this Hell of a Madhouse till I seem to be disowned by my friends & even forgot by my enemies for there is none to accept my challanges which I have from time to time given to the public I am almost mad in waiting for a better place & better company & all to no purpose¹⁴

Two months later Clare’s patience appears to have run out. By mid July he had embarked on the harrowing journey up the Great York Road to Northborough recorded in his, ‘Recolections &c of journey from Essex’.
There were a number of indications during this period that Clare was not handling the strain of enforced separation from his wife, children and home well. He became obsessed with the need to be reunited with his childhood sweetheart and imagined wife Mary Joyce in the countryside of their youthful affection for one another. The letters Clare wrote from High Beech between May until July are haunted by a sense of abandonment. At times, the depth of Clare's homesickness echoes the complaints of a child who is lost or separated from home. Earlier, in April 1841, he begged Patty his wife, to at least write to him to acknowledge, 'that you are so now'. In the same letter, he talks about returning to his wife 'in a day or two'. Clare communicates his despair at the continuing separation from his family with poignant logic:

months have elapsed, and I am still here, away from them, enduring all the miseries of solitude - which every married man must feel, through years of absence and confinement from his own home and family\textsuperscript{15}

In May, writing on this occasion to Mary Joyce who he now considers his 'first wife', he strikes out at those whom he considered had left him to die in anonymity:

I dont care a damn about comeing home now - so you need not flatter yourselves with many expec[ta]tions of seeing [me] nor do I expect you want to see me or you would have contrived to have done it before now\textsuperscript{16}

Clare's sense of bewilderment at separation from his family is vividly apparent in this last letter as is his bitter sense of betrayal that no members of his family wished to visit him. A letter written earlier in the year on the 17th of March conveys his frustration but dogged determination to cope with difficulties. Clare wrote to his wife Patty outlining his confusion and loneliness:
My Situation Here Has Been Even From The Beginning More Then Irksome But I 
Shake Hands With Misfortune & Wear Through The Storm - The Spring Smile’s & 
So Shall I - But Not While I Am Here¹⁷

In yet another letter addressed to his ‘second wife’ Mary Joyce, he appears less willing 
to endure his lot in life venting his exasperation at his loss of freedom:

No one knows how sick I am of this confinement possessing two wives that ought 
to be my own & cannot see either one or the other  if I was in prison for felony I 
could not be served worse than I am - wives used to be allowed to see their husbands 
anywhere - religion forbids their being parted but I have not even religion on my side 
& more’s the pity¹⁸

Eight years later in 1849, Clare wrote to Patty from Northampton asylum and it 
is obvious that the passage of years had in no way lessened his sense of estrangement 
as regards his second incarceration. If anything, the metaphors for confinement have 
become even more bound to an idea of actual imprisonment. In this same letter Clare 
appears more disorientated, perceiving the hospital environment as the ‘English 
Bastile’:

a government Prison where harmless people are trapped and tortured till they die - 
English priestcraft & english bondage more severe than the slavery of Egypt¹⁹ & 
Affrica while the son is tyed up in his manhood from all the best thoughts of his 
childhood bye lying & falshood - not dareing to show love or remembrance for 
Home or home affections living in the world as a prison estranged from all his 
friends²⁰

Clare’s observation that all the thoughts and associations of his childhood are 
held in bondage to the domination of his ‘manhood’ is telling here as is the suggestion 
that he does not dare ‘to show love or remembrance for Home or home’s affections’. 
The act of writing was the sole means of ‘remembrance’ open to him in hospital while 
it also helped close the gap of separation as many of the stanzas of Child Harold 
demonstrate, ‘After long absence how the mind recalls / Pleasing associations of the 
past / Haunts of his youth - thorn hedges & old walls’.²¹ My intention in emphasising
the significance of Clare’s experience of confinement as a backdrop to the composition of Don Juan and Child Harold has primarily been to draw attention to the condition of solitary estrangement (also referred to by Clare in the letter above) in which a number of the Child Harold stanzas and all of Don Juan were conceived. Clare’s two long poems attributed to the year 1841 dominate his creative achievement over the subsequent twenty four years of his life in hospital. This year marked a watershed not only between freedom and the loss of it, or indeed the division between coherence and insanity. It may also be viewed as the year in which Clare severed his past from the present in both his personal and creative life. After the literary flash point of 1841, the year which marked his final sortie into the real world and his documentation of that journey outwards from confinement to freedom, Clare’s poetry relocates itself in the style and tradition of the folk song and ballad thus reverting instinctively it would seem to the communal genres of the oral tradition with which he was so familiar.

It is interesting that throughout the more critical stages of his psychological deterioration Clare returned to a poetic medium which refused to be diminished by lapses in memory, confusion or sophisticated imitation. It could be argued that the mood of anonymity and impotent regret which characterises the ballad and song both in Child Harold and in the later poetry of Clare’s second confinement was suited to the long years of hospitalisation. Those songs and ballads which make up the Knight transcripts and which have been edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell22 lack the tragic resonance and stylistic complexity of Child Harold and Don Juan but they stand as a testimony to Clare’s persistence as a poet, his dogged determination in continuing to listen and to respond to the tunes he heard playing in his head.
The two manuscripts Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 which contain the main body of stanzas which make up his two long poems Child Harold and Don Juan belong to the period up to and including the year 1841. The earlier, crudely written small note book known as Nor, MS8 which Clare was using at High Beech and to which I have already referred, is dated by Clare as 'Feby 1841'. Although it has been widely accepted that this notebook contains work composed and copied in 1841, it is perhaps wise to keep an open mind about the exact dating of work from 1837 to 1841. There is evidence in the first four pages of Nor, MS6 that Clare was acutely disorientated as regards particular dates and years. On page 2 of the manuscript, he begins his account of his arrival home at Northborough by dating his arrival there as July 24th 1841. Seventeen lines later he offers an earlier date, July 19th 1841, going on to describe the earlier details of his escape in Essex. In other words Clare’s work on pages 1 to 4 of Nor, MS6, moves backwards and forwards in time according to the significance of events as they appear to him alone.

At the end of 'Recolections &c of journey from Essex' on page 4 of the manuscript, Clare refuses to accept the fact that his muse and childhood sweetheart Mary Joyce 'had died six years earlier'. In fact Mary Joyce died in 1838. Clare’s unreliability as regards chronological time appeared to be linked to his need to keep her presence and memory at the forefront of his creative motivation. To acknowledge the death of Mary Joyce would be synonymous with the premature death of poetic inspiration or even the ‘killing’ of the poem that had become fundamental to his ‘surviving’ prison existence. Clare’s arrival home at Northborough forced him to negotiate the terrible reality of the permanent and irrevocable absence of Mary Joyce from his present life. Without the truth of her presence in his imagination, or her
physical manifestation in the landscape of home, the impulse to sustain his long poem Child Harold seems to have diminished. After 1841, we do not have access to any more of its stanzas, despite Clare’s reference to the poem as late as 1848.

The material which makes up Nor, MS8, might possibly belong to an earlier period of Clare’s asylum experience. As previously outlined, Clare had been registered as a patient at High Beech in 1837. I return once more to a question I raised at the start, why did Clare commence the project he was to call ‘Prison Amusements’ four years into his confinement at High Beech? Had he been composing Child Harold and Don Juan immediately following his hospitalisation? If so, why does he only begin to talk about his work in 1841? If the sympathetic regime of Matthew Allen permitted Clare to compose in 1841, why had he not taken advantage of the opportunity to write before this date? Importantly, Clare offers evidence as to the persistence of the long poems in his creative life. In the letter addressed to William Knight, written in July 1850, Clare explains that work in relation to the two long poems has been hampered due to the lack of ‘Books or Amusements of any kind’. More significantly, in this same letter, Clare refers directly to his own ‘umbrella’ title for all pieces of work he was engaged upon during confinement, complaining that he has, ‘got nothing to kill time or turn out ‘Prison Amusements’’.23

While Clare does not specifically refer to Child Harold and Don Juan by name in 1850, it is important to acknowledge the continued use of a title which a year earlier had included the two poems. Clare goes on to infer that the few books he did have access to at this time, he had ‘lost somehow or other’.24 It is not clear if Clare is referring to the notebooks now known as Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 but it seems
plausible to assume that the stanzas which make up Child Harold and Don Juan in these manuscripts together with those found in the Bodleian newspapers, may not be the only stanzas he wrote.

Frederick Martin’s account of Clare’s life published in 1865,25 a year after Clare’s death, refers to three specific poems Clare had composed in 1841. There is no evidence that these three individual pieces of work were envisaged by Clare as part of the wider writing project he was calling Child Harold and Don Juan. One such poem, untitled and published in the English Journal dated 15th May 1841 beginning, ‘Maid of Walkherd, meet again’, was, according to Cyrus Redding, styled by Clare as a sonnet. Another poem entitled a ‘Song’ whose first line is ‘By a Cottage near the wood’ was printed in Martin’s Life of John Clare.26 According to Martin, Clare had handed some ‘accidental visitors’ the poem he had written in pencil. If other such stanzas, possibly intended originally by Clare for his ‘Prison Amusements’ left the asylum in a similarly unheralded way is uncertain, but there is a possibility that stanzas for Child Harold and Don Juan might have been given away casually and still remain undetected or may even have been irretrievably lost. The ‘vol’ which contained new cantos for both Child Harold and Don Juan which Clare mentions in his letter to Eliza Phillips in May 184127 could be Nor, MS8 which Clare was using at High Beech and which he appears to have carried with him as he journeyed up the Great York Road home to Northborough.

It is only after Clare’s escape from High Beech that we have clearer evidence as to where and when particular stanzas belonging to Child Harold were written. The key to the background of Clare’s compositional progress after June 1841 is centred on Nor, MS6. What is evident so far is that the two poems of 1841, alongside the remaining
contents of Nor, MS6, stand at a crucial point in Clare’s personal history and his career as a poet. It is tempting to pose a rhetorical question, would Child Harold and Don Juan have been conceived at all in Clare’s freedom? Too much I believe has been made of Clare’s status as a madman, both in past critical commentaries and up to the present, to the detriment of Clare’s literary output during the asylum years. From the moment Martin’s Life was published in 1865 to Geoffrey Grigson and J. W. and Anne Tibble’s editions published in 1949 and 1965 respectively, the emphasis has been on the significance and nature of Clare’s madness.

Reference to late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century asylums has the tendency to distract attention from the quality and substance of the verses which Clare was, importantly writing ‘independently’ for the first time in his career as a poet. Unhampered by editorial interference, feeling lost and to a degree appearing as dead to the world as the poet he once was (or had been made to be), Clare appears to find another more private, poetic self even as he loses a public and less personal persona. We may never know what Clare might have achieved without the blight of madness, but one thing is certain; the freedom from financial pressures together with the degree of anonymity that came with being one of many in an institution, paradoxically allowed Clare a particular type of creative liberty within captivity, in his first confinement at least.

In the summer of 1841, making the most of the liberty he was granted to walk in the wooded environment of High Beech, Clare defiantly ‘broke ranks’ and joined the Great York Road walking the long tortuous journey home to Northborough. Without luggage but carrying his pocket notebook with him, containing the early stanzas of
Child Harold and Don Juan, Clare determined upon going home to be united once and for all with his muse and ‘first wife’ Mary Joyce. Frederick Martin in his Life suggests that this was a well planned bid for freedom. For weeks leading up to his escape he had been more than usually obsessed with the memory of his ‘first ideal love’.

Martin described the warning signs of an impending escape:

Clare was haunted now, wherever he went by the vision of his first ideal love, his ever-sought ‘Mary’. He fancied that she was his wife torn from him by evil spirits and that he was bound to seek her all over the earth.30

He goes on to describe Clare’s obsession to be reunited with Mary Joyce:

In his strange hallucinations, he confounded the real with his ideal spouse. On one occasion the poet handed to Dr. Allen the following piece of poetry which he called a sonnet with the remark that it ‘should be sent to his wife’.

The ‘sonnet’ was ‘The Maid of Walkherd’ and Martin goes on to relate:

Dr Allen told his patient that he thought his verses very beautiful, at which Clare seemed pleased, and expressed his intention to take them home to his wife, his ‘Mary’. The doctor paid little heed to this remark, which however was seriously meant.31

Nor, MS8 contains part of the account of his journey, which was either written immediately on Clare’s return home to Northborough or actually during the journey itself. Work on Child Harold continued immediately on his return home; two songs which are written on page 1 of Nor, MS6 and again on page 6 of the same manuscript are described by Clare in a note as having been written: ‘directly after my return home to Northborough last friday evening the rest of the stanzas & songs were written at Epping Forest’. Once at home, Clare set about making a fair copy of the stanzas from Child Harold and Don Juan in a foolscap volume in which he also eventually included passages of prose, paraphrases and letters.
Clare also found time to compose new work in the late summer of 1841. Two local newspapers both carry along their margins and sometimes across the pages themselves stanzas from *Child Harold* which belong specifically to the late summer and early autumn of this period. I have offered a detailed account of this Northborough autumnal sequence in Chapter Three of the thesis. The Northampton and Bodleian manuscripts represent a unique phase in the editorial history of Clare’s work. Their psychological intensity, together with their autobiographical focus is, in part, due to Clare’s control over his work for perhaps the first time.

It remains a poignant irony that the financial and creative ‘independence’ that Clare repeatedly aspired to in his letters of 1820, was finally achieved in relative obscurity. Denied access to the external landscape with which he was so familiar and which proved the inspiration for his work from 1825 to 1832, Clare discovered a new poetic register in an internal landscape that his imagination and memory invented for him. *Child Harold* in particular, is characterised by a speaker who on page 5 and 6 of Nor, MS6 describes how he survives exile and homesickness by transposing the familiar landscape of the past onto an alien landscape of the present, ‘I’ll be free in a prison & cling to the soil / I’ll cling to the spot where my first love was cherished’. In confinement Clare created his own geographical boundaries and horizons. Daily existence at High Beech and Northampton would seem to have been made endurable by Clare’s ability to allow the memory space to roam. Like Wordsworth in ‘Tintern Abbey’, a type of dual experience came into play where the inward eye held predominance over what was actually physically present. The absence of home and known place was made less difficult through the sweetening influence of the inward eye
to alleviate boredom and weariness by the renovating act of commemorating known place. Wordsworth’s lines perfectly encapsulate Clare’s tendency to commemorate his past:

> Though absent long,
> These forms of beauty have not been to me,
> As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye:
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
> Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet.\(^{33}\)

Moreover, the very act of remembering releases Clare into a new emotionally charged style of dialectic; complex, inward, confessional and despairing.

To summarise Nor, MS6 which initially begins as a fair copy of Clare’s earlier asylum work, appears to include examples of draft work or newly composed pieces of writing. There is little evidence of extensive revision. Those changes or deletions which do exist are mostly confined to those stanzas belonging to the Bodleian manuscripts, Bodleian MS, D a8, which Clare has transcribed into Nor, MS6. Even these revisions are restricted to individual words in a line as opposed to whole lines themselves. Indeed one of the striking characteristics of Clare’s method of composition in 1841 is the absence of corrections or revisions in an early draft. It is also true to say that Clare disliked returning to a piece of work once he had made a first draft even when others felt this work might be improved.\(^{34}\) There is no evidence to suggest that Clare contemplated immediate publication; he appeared to regard the manuscript, including the two long poems, as ongoing work which had not only helped alleviate the tedium of asylum existence but acted also as a therapeutic aid to improved sanity and a sense of general well being.
The reader of *Child Harold* in Nor, MS6 becomes aware of its fluidity and incompleteness. As a consequence of the 'open' characteristics of *Child Harold* in manuscript form, all subsequent editions of Clare’s long poem are inherently conjectural. Janet Todd in her Bibliographical essay\(^{35}\) suggests that no single version of the poem can be a definitive one, and she goes on to say that the editorial problems any editor encounters when offering a version of the poem are typical of the complexities posed by all Clare’s later work.

It is important to remember that the versions of *Child Harold* to which we have access to date, have all taken Clare’s fair copy in Nor, MS6 as their template. There are discrepancies and variations in the use of this template but all previous editors acknowledge their dependence upon Nor, MS6. I offer a critical history of *Child Harold* in the following chapter. The last known fair copy of *Child Harold* however was written in 1841. This is the date we have for Clare’s own recorded grouping of the verses which make up *Child Harold*. It is also the version that includes *all* of the contents which make up Nor, MS6 and which charts Clare’s obsessive preoccupation with the loss of liberty, his dislocation and the emotional sterility which is a direct result of enforced confinement. I shall go on to demonstrate that existing editions draw on other sources to make up such conjectural identity of sequence but with no sanction from Clare’s 1841 text to do so. All previous editions of *Child Harold* represent partial and speculative constructions as the following chapter will demonstrate.
CHAPTER TWO

THE RESURRECTION OF CHILD HAROLD.
Child Harold was resurrected in full in 1949 with the publication of Geoffrey Grigson's, *Poems of John Clare's Madness*. I explained briefly in my Preface that Clare's poem had experienced a partial exhumation in 1935 when J. W. Tibble published a limited number of the *Child Harold* stanzas in his edition of *The Poems of John Clare, 2 Vols.* J. W. Tibble's editing of Clare's long poem was, in a number of respects, typical of the way it would be interpreted over the next fifty years. Both J. W. Tibble and Geoffrey Grigson would appear to have viewed *Child Harold* as unfinished and therefore open to a degree of editorial licence. Neither editor offered any clear editorial justification for their version of Clare's long poem. Prior to the Tibble and Grigson editions, the contents of Nor, MS6, as far as we know, remained hidden from public scrutiny for over a century although precisely where the manuscript lay buried and why remains unclear.

In his Introduction to the 1949 edition, Grigson claimed to have produced a version of *Child Harold* 'never until this book printed in full', though he failed to explain where the manuscript had been interred or to declare precisely which of Clare's 1841 manuscripts had been consulted. Grigson's footnotes refer to 'Northampton MSS' or 'Clare MSS Bodleian Library' only; they do not adequately identify or distinguish the number or code of each manuscript. It was Grigson's edition however, which released Clare's poem into the public domain after an existence bound to a state
of ‘living death’. Child Harold would seem to have shared the fate of its author who was described by John Plummer in an obituary in the *St. James Magazine* dated July 1864 as, ‘living yet dead, dead yet living’. Immediately following Clare’s death, as I shall go on to describe in the following section, there was a flurry of interest in the poetry written at Northampton, during which time it would appear, the contents of Nor, MS6 remained out of public scrutiny, imprisoned in a type of suspended forgetfulness.

Details about the history of the 1841 manuscripts held at Northampton are scarce. A general commentary on the purchase of the Clare manuscripts may be found in *The John Clare Catalogue: The Northampton Public Library*, published in 1964. It would appear that Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 had been obtained sometime between the year of Clare’s death in 1864 and 1938. Nor, MS6 was not listed in the catalogue of exhibits prepared for the Clare Centenary Exhibition in 1893. Why was Clare’s notebook excluded from display? Were the contents of Nor, MS6, considered inappropriate for public scrutiny? Were the stanzas of *Don Juan* in particular so wholly different to the poems of Clare’s second confinement and possibly the public’s perception of Clare’s asylum work that they were best kept out of sight?

The difference between the poetry Clare wrote in his memoranda books and the ‘doggerel’ he produced to order for tobacco as a patient at Northampton is discussed in a letter written to *The Times Literary Supplement* on June 30th 1921 by Mrs Townsend Mayer. This letter describes Clare’s tendency towards secrecy when it came to writing and draws a distinction between composing ‘to order’ and the poetry he produced in privacy, ‘meanwhile he kept his private memorandum book and
doggerel found little room there'. Whatever the reason, the fact that Clare's 1841 notebook remained in seclusion for so long inevitably gave rise to greater publicity for the later asylum verse to the detriment of work composed at High Beech. It was as though Clare's fears for his own lost identity, which are central to the work produced in Essex, had been transferred through the passage of time to his manuscript. Clare's notebook, which contains so much of his autobiographical presence in 1841 would appear to have absorbed the preoccupations and concerns of its writer, slipping out of sight of public view with Clare's removal to Northampton asylum in December 1841.

It is tempting perhaps to view Nor, MS6 as a 'sleeping beauty' waiting to be 'woken' by critical interest or a receptive reading public, but those early editors who have already disturbed the contents of Nor, MS6 by publishing Child Harold have not necessarily broken its spell or provided a clearer picture of its intrinsic beauty. Grigson's edition of Child Harold in 1949 resulted in two misleading assumptions about Clare's poem that persist until today. Firstly, his decision to associate the Child Harold stanzas with the biographical details of Clare's madness has greatly influenced the ways in which the poem has been perceived critically. Johanne Clare, in John Clare and the The Bounds of Circumstance⁶ (1987) for example, is one commentator who believes Clare's asylum work is inferior to the early poetry written at Helpstone and Northborough, going on to declare Clare's asylum poetry 'a retreat into abstraction':

I do not believe that this movement away from the colourful particulars of circumstance into the white light of abstraction represents an advance in profundity or centrality of formal execution upon the work of the early or middle years.⁷
Secondly, Grigson’s use of the generic title Child Harold would suggest a structural continuity to be found in the stanzas which is not reflected in Clare’s faircopy.

Grigson is not the only editor to have used Clare’s title to infer a ‘poem’ as opposed to parts or fragments of a poem which form part of a larger accumulation of material known as Nor, MS6. The five remaining major editions of Child Harold; J. W. Tibble’s 1935 edition, The poems of John Clare. 2 Vols (influential as opposed to offering a full version of the poem); Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield’s, The Later Poems of John Clare, published in 1964; J. W. and Anne Tibble’s 1965 Everyman edition, John Clare: Selected Poems,10 Eric Robinson and David Powell’s 1984 edition, The Later Poems of John Clare: 1837 – 1864, and Geoffrey Summerfield’s 1990 edition, John Clare: Selected Poems11 all suggest a sequential order for Child Harold which does not account for the remaining material which interrupts the poem in Nor, MS6.

Other less substantial versions of Clare’s long poem offer a limited number of stanzas from Child Harold without any clear editorial justification. Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield’s, Clare: New Oxford English Series12 (1966), Elaine Feinstein’s, John Clare: Selected Poems13 (1968), James Reeves’ edition, Selected Poems of John Clare14 (1969), Pierre Leyris, Poemes et Proses de La Folie de John Clare15 (1969), and Merryn and Raymond Williams’ Methuen edition, Selected Poetry of John Clare16 (1986) reproduce greatly reduced versions of Child Harold which reflect neither the sequential order of Clare’s manuscript nor indeed any sense of the context from which their particular selection of stanzas are taken. Eric Robinson and David Powell’s 1984 edition, The Oxford Authors: John Clare17 retains the same sequential order of their
Later Poems, but this particular edition does not include any biblical paraphrases or detailed footnotes.

No single editor of Child Harold has thought fit to reproduce Clare’s faircopy in its entirety, preferring to select, reorganise and reconstruct the contents of Clare’s notebook. The assortment of misreadings of Clare’s fair copy has perpetuated the idea that this long poem is more rambling and repetitive than it actually appears when read in the context of the remaining material contained in Nor, MS6. In the ‘Note on Texts’, which follows the conclusion to John Clare and The Bounds of Circumstance, Johanne Clare expresses concern over the subjectivity of editors when it comes to dealing with the integrity of Clare’s work:

I am concerned by the possibility that by having different critics select and edit passages from the manuscripts to support the evidentiary needs of their own arguments, we will end up with a wild and far too numerous assortment of different readings for one poem; such a scenario will not form the basis for sound and fruitful critical debate and would paradoxically, undermine the very thing everyone is seeking to defend: the integrity of Clare’s poems.\(^\text{18}\)

The decision by past editors to either ignore Clare’s sequential order, including the material that interrupts as well as coexists with Child Harold is all the more surprising when Clare’s own advertisement for all his notebook’s material is taken into account. On page 39 of Nor, MS8 Clare stated quite clearly that he envisaged the entire contents of Nor, MS6 making up one volume. The importance of this advertisement as an indication of Clare’s intention that all the material contained in his notebook should be read together is crucial. Advertising under the guise of ‘Lord Byron’, Clare listed the work he intended to publish ‘shortly’: ‘Songs New Cantos of Child Harold And Scripture Paraphrases additional Hebrew Mel[o]dies -Letters-etc Fragments etc.’
It would appear then, that Clare himself initiated the textual complexity of Nor, MS6 when he decided not only to include a variety of written forms in one manuscript but also to change its use and function from a straightforward fair copy of existing work to a notebook containing drafts of recent composition and work in progress. Pages 4 to 20 of Nor, MS6 clearly suggest that Clare was engaged in self-editing the stanzas he called Child Harold and Don Juan. From page 20 of the manuscript onwards, as I shall go on to describe in detail later, the function of Nor, MS6 changes from an uninterrupted fair copy to a more multifarious compositional project. The fact that Nor, MS6 also contains draft work that is in the process of being revised, (albeit sparingly), requires that an editor intent on interpreting the notebook as a whole should be sensitive to the fact that any single piece of work intended for consideration continues to remain in a state of indeterminacy.

Editors of Clare’s work belonging to the early asylum period between 1837 and 1841 such as Geoffrey Grigson, Eric Robinson and David Powell have tended to approach Nor, MS6 primarily with a view to editing the two long poems Child Harold or Don Juan. When focus has shifted from the two long poems begun at High Beech, editorial interest appears to have been centred on the prose pieces and Hebrew Melodies or paraphrases which also make up the bulk of the remaining material of the manuscript. Anne Tibble edited, ‘The Journey From Essex’ in John Clare: The Journals, Essays and the Journey from Essex, 19 (1980). Margaret Grainger edited the prose piece ‘Autumn’ in The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare, (1983), Mark Storey the letter to ‘Mary Clare – Glinton’ in The Letters of John Clare, (1984) and Eric Robinson and David Powell the biblical paraphrases and fragments of verse.
contained in Nor, MS6 in *The Later Poems of John Clare*, also published in 1984.\textsuperscript{22} Such divisions of labour have possibly distracted attention from the combined force of the entire notebook read as a whole. Nor, MS6, appears to have been continuously plundered for its two long poems, apparently without regard for the more subtle treasures lying alongside them.

Previous editors of selected material from Nor, MS6 have failed to draw attention to the changes in style and creative direction seemingly taking place within it, together with the differing states of the remaining material. It is difficult to prove categorically that there is a change in textual intention linked precisely to page 20, but it is none the less important to acknowledge that four, five line stanzas of the song, ‘Here’s a health unto thee Bonny lassie o’ and the nine line stanza beginning, ‘The blackbird startled from the homestead hedge’ which Clare fair copied onto page 19 of Nor, MS6 were both composed on his arrival home at Northborough in July. I will argue later that page 20 marks an interruption to the fair copy of the stanzas of *Child Harold* that Clare had written before his arrival home, and this break in writing is suggested by a number of stylistic changes. After page 20, Clare no longer fair copies the *Child Harold* stanzas in a sustained way. Similarly, there are no biblical paraphrases before page 20, but after this point in the manuscript, Clare has faircopied all the paraphrases which make up Nor, MS6. Two other details in Nor, MS6 are associated with the natural watershed of the manuscript. Clare’s essay fragments entitled ‘Self Identity’ and the word ‘middling’ together with his longer essay sequence called ‘Autumn’ and his fair copy of *Don Juan* all belong to the second half of the contents of Nor, MS6 from page 20 to page 58.
If the remaining contents of Nor, MS6 after page 20 are only perceived as interruptions to the sequential order of Child Harold, the question of the poem’s straddling inconsistency and incompleteness inevitably dominates discussion. If, however Child Harold is seen as material which assists in the general development or progressive movement of a number of pieces of work evolving together in harmony, then the full importance of Nor, MS6 may be appreciated. I suggest that if Child Harold is read as part of an autobiographical narrative whose mobility is wholly dependent upon the surrounding contents of Nor, MS6 then a comprehensive interpretation of the poem may start to emerge. If Clare’s fluctuating autonomous presence as copier, compositor, diarist, essayist and biblical commentator is acknowledged from the outset, the relationship between the differing pieces of work in Nor, MS6 begins to make itself clearer.

In extracting the Child Harold stanzas from the remaining contents of Nor, MS6 I believe past editors may have been responsible for claiming a particular authorial intention on behalf of Clare that is not implied by the manuscript as a whole. The changing nature of Clare’s fair copy should be a warning to any editor that any version or edition he makes of Child Harold is, as I have suggested earlier, largely conjectural. Indeed I want to argue that the numbered stanzas which make their first appearance on page 24 of Nor, MS8 were not indicated clearly enough by Clare to suggest that they in fact belong to Child Harold at all. The style in which these stanzas are written, often with each word begun in the upper case reflects Clare’s orthography in 1841 but they are not specifically identified as Child Harold. To summarise, Nor, MS6 is only partly a fair copy of Clare’s work in 1841. Child Harold, despite its state
of incompleteness, cohabits the pages with other significant material in Nor, MS6, and once wrenched from its place in the manuscript, becomes as displaced as its author.

While previous editors of Child Harold have neglected the compatibility of this poem with the contents of the manuscript as a whole, one in particular made the decision to rearrange the poem's original order, paring away the songs and ballads from their place alongside the longer eight and nine line pentameter stanzas. Geoffrey Grigson in his otherwise pioneering edition of Clare's asylum poems, Poems of Clare's Madness obviously felt that the mixture of metrically diverse stanzas argued a case for them being separated and read as differing sequences of poems. As this chapter is primarily concerned with tracing the editorial history of Child Harold as well as for arguing a case for its sequential order as it stands in Nor, MS6, I want simply to suggest that the songs and ballads which form Child Harold have a specific function in the poem's progression. Grigson's cuttings and rearrangement of Clare's order of Nor, MS6's material has, to a degree, misrepresented Clare's fair copy version of the poem. The precise function and relevance of the songs and ballads will be explained in the following chapter and as the early publishing history of Nor, MS6 was almost wholly concerned with the editing of Child Harold and Don Juan I want to turn my attention next to developing a clearer picture of the different versions of Child Harold from its first published appearance to the present day.

Geoffrey Grigson's, Poems of John Clare's Madness, J. W. and Anne Tibble's Selected Poems, Eric Robinson and David Powell's, The Later Poems of John Clare, Vol 1 and Geoffrey Summerfield's, John Clare: Selected Poems absorb the numbered stanzas from Nor, MS8 into the identified long poem. In 1908, Arthur Symons in his...
edition of *The Poems of John Clare* included a number of the songs and ballads written in Northampton but did not refer to the work of Clare’s first confinement - *Child Harold, Don Juan* or any other of the contents in Nor, MS6. Symons’ edition remains nonetheless an important bench mark for critical commentary engaged with the asylum poems. After the Symons edition, there was a gap of twenty seven years before J. W. Tibble reproduced some of the stanzas from *Child Harold*, in *The Poems of John Clare*, (1935). This edition reproduced a random and unrepresentative number of stanzas under the speculative headings of, ‘The Exile’, ‘Homeless’, ‘The Return’ - ‘Northborough 1841’ and ‘September Mornings’. There is no evidence of this editor attempting to follow the sequential order of Nor, MS6, but those stanzas grouped under the selected headings demonstrate a clear intention to attribute particular stanzas to the period of composition which took place after Clare’s escape to Northborough. Clare’s song, ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’ for example is placed under the heading, ‘Homeless’. J. W. Tibble offers no footnotes or commentary for the *Child Harold* stanzas.

Fourteen years elapsed before Grigson’s edition in 1949 reproduced the largest and most complete number of *Child Harold* stanzas to date. In 1964, one hundred and twenty three years after Clare had written his long poem, Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield produced an edition which sought to identify clearly which manuscripts had been consulted in order to produce their particular version of the poem. The Oxford edition, *The Later Poems of John Clare*, built upon the stronger academic practice of identifying which draft version of various stanzas belonged to which manuscript, but these editors continued the editorial habit of only reproducing Clare’s two long poems.
Thereafter, editions of *Child Harold* such as Eric Robinson’s and David Powell’s *The Later Poems* and Geoffrey Summerfield’s later Penguin edition of 1990, *The Selected Poems of John Clare*, showed evidence of the manuscripts at Northampton, Peterborough and the Bodleian being used in order to make more comprehensive and textually authoritative editions. Grigson’s editing of Clare’s asylum poetry, including the 1950 edition, *Selected Poems of John Clare*, drew attention to the importance of Clare’s mature work. His illuminating introduction to the 1949 edition has substantially contributed towards a reconsideration of *Child Harold* in the light of Clare’s engagement with the theme of loss of self identity in the poetry of the asylum years. Grigson, particularly in his introduction to the later 1950 edition of *Child Harold*, explored the doubts, inconsistencies and disorder of the stanzas which make up the poem which he considered were an indication of Clare’s achievement as a poet in the years 1841 to 1864. Grigson identified the strength of the last poems, including *Child Harold*, as the product of an ability to stay true to the predominant mood of pessimism of the poetry of the asylum years. There was, as Grigson put it, ‘no failure of nerve, no concealment of such failure under the rhetoric of false heroism’.

What is important about Grigson’s critical assessment of the later work is the attention he draws to the power and uniqueness of Clare’s asylum poetry, enhancing Clare’s status as a Romantic poet, while at the same time allowing access to many of the High Beech poems for the first time. On page v of his introduction to the 1949 edition, Grigson claimed to have included, ‘more than a hundred new poems and to have reprinted seventy - one of the most remarkable of those asylum poems which had been published already’. The title of this edition, *Poems of John Clare’s Madness*
has inevitably shaped a particular response, but Grigson’s access to Clare’s case books at Northampton demonstrated his intention to determine the context in which Clare’s poems were composed. Grigson’s introduction attempts to throw light on a period of Clare’s life, which even in 1949 as Grigson admits, has ‘been left in something of a twilight’. Grigson went on to state an uncompromising belief in the importance of the asylum poetry, with a view to publishing: ‘as many of the asylum poems as are worth publishing either evidentially or for themselves’.

A significant feature of Grigson’s edition is the use he makes of the Northampton and Bodleian manuscripts to determine a more authentic reading of Child Harold (he also included the letter written in 1841 to Eliza Phillips). Poems of John Clare’s Madness includes the work written between 1840 and 1841 (the publishing history of these poems is discussed in detail in the following section) together with the poems of 1841 first published in, The Poems of John Clare, 2 Vols, (1935), also discussed later. It was Grigson’s decision to edit the poems of 1841 according to chronological order which he linked directly to the location in which they were allegedly composed that I most take issue. Child Harold and Don Juan for example are edited under the category of: ‘Poems Written in Epping Forest’, but only the longer eight and nine line pentameter stanzas of Child Harold and Don Juan are included in this section except for seven stanzas belonging to the song, ‘I think of thee’ which are also inexplicably included in this category.

The songs and ballads which Clare also wrote as part of the Child Harold sequence in Nor, MS8 commonly believed to be the notebook used at High Beech are extracted and placed under an independent heading, ‘Poems written after Clare’s return
to Northborough July - December 1841', but Grigson has not included those songs and ballads found along the margins of the Bodleian newspapers which were faircopied into Nor, MS6 on Clare's arrival home under this heading and which share the same period of composition. It is deeply confusing for the reader acquainted with the sequential order of Nor, MS6 to discover the first song which opens Clare's manuscript, 'I've wandered many a weary mile' is placed next to another song, 'What is Love' which was not faircopied by Clare from Nor, MS8 into Nor, MS6. Grigson also places the final song of the manuscript found on page 57, 'In this cold world', next to a song found on page 11. In this same category he decided to include one biblical paraphrase of the 102nd Psalm, 'Lord Hear My Prayer', immediately followed by the stanza, 'Say 'tis autumn now'. Such prescriptive editorial control of Clare's fair copy is misleading as well as inaccurate as Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield point out in their introduction to The Later Poems of John Clare (1964). In his 1950 edition, Selected Poems of John Clare, Grigson has retained the same sequential order as the 1949 edition.

Geoffrey Grigson's introduction with its detailed biographical commentary nonetheless offers a valuable critical consideration of Clare's asylum verse. The fact that he develops a picture of Clare's gradual psychological deterioration from his first few years of confinement to the final years is useful. Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield in their edition, The Later Poems of John Clare, disagree with Grigson's version in a number of important details, which I shall develop more fully in due course.
Possibly the first and most authoritative edition of *Child Harold* was published in 1964, a year before the Everyman version. *The Later Poems of John Clare* edited by Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield marked a welcome foray into the field of Clare scholarship, arguing an important case for Clare's asylum poems to be evaluated in their own right. What is important about this particular edition is the editorial decision to contextualise the later poems within the framework of the asylum manuscripts while simultaneously allowing a more academic appreciation of Clare's work written between 1841 and 1864. The introduction to this edition offers a commentary on the manuscripts which contain the later verse, most particularly the two long poems *Child Harold* and *Don Juan*. Robinson and Summerfield draw attention to the inadequacies of the Grigson edition, commenting on his decision to alter Clare's fair copy without adequate editorial justification together with the general tendency towards inaccuracy in the reading of the asylum poetry. Robinson and Summerfield reprimand Grigson for reaching, 'an all time low for inaccuracy in the readings of Clare's poetry'. They then proceed to identify the claims they make for a more accurate edition. Their first substantial claim was to state that they were intent on publishing, 'Clare exactly as he wrote, preserving his punctuation or lack of it, his capitalization and his spelling'. On page 2 of their introduction they make a number of observations which have a direct bearing upon the argument of this thesis.

Firstly, they talk about the confusion of the woven material implicit to Nor, MS6, suggesting that this might have been caused by Clare's, 'shortage of writing paper'. Secondly, they draw attention to the juxtaposition of material in the manuscript. They acknowledge the remaining contents of the asylum manuscripts, the welter of 'paraphrases, notes, letters' and the journal of Clare's escape from High
Beech, together with an appreciation of the ‘dominant mood’ of this material. Although these editors accept that all of the contents of the Northampton manuscripts juxtaposed alongside Child Harold and Don Juan are ‘illuminating’, they none the less found, ‘it difficult to believe that the reader would be prepared to read Clare in the order presented by the manuscripts’. Later, on the same page, they argue that to reprint the texts as it appears in manuscript would: ‘make too many demands on the reader’s patience; nor would it be in accordance with Clare’s wishes’.

The justification for their editorial decisions may be summarised in the following way. Firstly, they claim to employ minimum rearrangement of Clare’s work, preferring to read, ‘John Clare in his natural state and not John Clare scrubbed and spruced up for inspection by the Board of Guardians’. Secondly, they uphold the necessity of the Songs in the general construction of the poem. They accuse Geoffrey Grigson of being, ‘quite arbitrary in his editing of Child Harold’ on page 7 of their introduction. Robinson and Summerfield are right I believe to question Grigson’s editorial decision to exclude the songs and ballads which are part of Clare’s fair copy of Child Harold in Nor, MS6 and it is important to draw attention once more to Clare’s advertisement for his poems on page 39 of Nor, MS8. Clare suggested that he clearly envisaged the contents of these manuscripts as material for one volume. Clare’s full advertisement reads as follows:

In a short time will be Published
A new Vol of Poems by Lord Byron
Not yet collected in his works
Containing. Songs New Cantos of Child Harold
And Scripture Paraphrases additional Hebrew Mel[o]dies
Letters &c Fragments etc
Grigson’s decision to cut the songs and ballads, according to Robinson and Summerfield, destroys ‘the poem as Clare conceived it’. In the light of the dominating presence of the songs and ballads in Clare’s poem it is difficult to justify Grigson’s editing, even more so without any editorial explanation. I find myself in agreement with Robinson and Summerfield as regards Grigson’s editorial inconsistencies. They comment on Grigson’s apparent misreading of Child Harold:

Mr Grigson has been quite arbitrary in his editing of Child Harold. One or two songs he has included but the bulk of them he has omitted. Yet they are clearly an integral part of the poem.

Robinson and Summerfield’s defence of the importance of retaining the sequential order of Clare’s fair copy which includes the songs located in the position Clare had placed them in Nor, MS6, is echoed by the Tibbles in their editorial note which precedes Child Harold in the Everyman edition of 1965. They observe:

He [Clare] entitled forty one stanzas and some fifteen songs and ballads Child Harold, made abundantly clear that songs were to intersperse stanzas but did not use by any means all the stanzas of the small book, MS8.

Robinson and Summerfield also take issue with Grigson over his decision to use one draft version of a stanza over another. On page 15 of their introduction they accuse Grigson of using a cancelled eight line draft of a stanza. They go on to outline three main differences of editorial approach between themselves and Grigson. Firstly, their reading of particular words or phrases in Nor, MS6 and MS8 differs from Grigson’s. Secondly, they take issue over the precedence given to one version over another though they do not specify in any great detail, which stanzas in particular they are talking about. Thirdly, they disagree with Grigson in his organisation of the sequence or parts of Child Harold. From an objective standpoint, Grigson appears to
envisage the idea of the Canto as a Byronic imitation while Robinson and Summerfield perceive the Canto as suggesting a ‘continuation’.

Despite the fact that there is a very real attempt to identify the characteristics which make up those manuscripts relevant to Clare’s output in 1841, in Robinson and Summerfield’s edition there is no detailed or sustained account of either of the two main sources for their edition, Nor, MS8 and Bodleian, Don. a8. They discuss Peterborough, MS49, now known as MS A62 together with Peterborough MS57 now known as MS D20. On page 12 of the introduction, they tend to be inconsistent in the detail of their accounts of the various manuscripts. They offer only a brief description of Nor, MS8 and on page 13, they describe Nor, MS7, in twenty three lines, on this occasion including specific page references. Robinson and Summerfield conclude their editorial discussion with the statement that it ‘were better to leave Clare as near as possible as we found him’ which wholly precludes the remaining contents of Nor, MS6.

The Tibbles’ Everyman edition of Child Harold, published in 1965, is more noted for its errors in transcription together with its apparent disregard for Clare’s sequential order in Nor, MS6. J. W. and Anne Tibble who explore and evaluate much of Clare’s work from 1820 to 1841 in their John Clare; His life and Poetry published in 1956, fail to adequately explain the textual complexity and lyrical cohesion of Child Harold. They appear bound both here and in their Everyman edition of 1965, to an editorial construction based upon seasonal divisions within the poem though they also focus usefully on the autobiographical element of the poem. Janet Todd, in an article in the The Mary Wollstonecraft Newsletter, also considers the organisation of the Child
Harold stanzas to be linked to a seasonal pattern, 'It may or may not be unfinished, but its organisation seems to be seasonal'.

The sequential order the Tibbles have chosen to employ in the Everyman edition is surprising in the light of the access they had to Clare's manuscripts. Although retaining the songs and ballads within the main body of the poem as Clare has done in Nor, MS6, in contrast to Grigson, there is a marked variation in the sequential order of other stanzas. They include for example one, nine line stanza from Nor, MS8 amongst the Nor, MS6 stanzas with no clear editorial note of explanation. The Tibbles chose to reconstruct the sequential order of the poem according to the poem's seasonal variations, and they justified this editorial procedure by envisaging the poem's order as being possibly shaped by Clare's intention to use the poem as a metaphor for his own life and of the human time span, 'the seasons may be indicative of spring, summer, autumn and winter of his own life and life in general'.

There are editorial inconsistencies within their construction of Child Harold's sequential order. On pages 242 to 243 for example, they intersperse stanzas from Nor, MS8 with those from Nor, MS6, which importantly, Clare had not included into his faircopy. Their decision to edit on a principle of seasonally based composition, creates a problem in terms of when to distinguish between Clare's use of the seasons to represent a particular pastoral mood in the metaphorical sense and his authentic use of the seasons as a backdrop to the poem as in the Northborough autumnal sequence.

The note to their Everyman version of Child Harold states clearly that that they have placed the Spring stanzas at the start of their version, yet the song they have
used to open their version is exactly that which opens the *Child Harold* sequence in Nor, MS6 and which clearly refers to Summer; ‘Summer morning is risen / & to even it wends’, (Nor, MS6 p. 4). The Tibbles readily admit that the order of the incomplete fair copy of Nor, MS6 is not always followed and suggest this fact inevitably makes their version: ‘not at all incontrovertible’.

The later edition of *Child Harold* published in 1984, also edited by Eric Robinson but on this occasion with David Powell as his co-editor, retains the sequential order suggested in Robinson’s earlier edition, but also includes the biblical paraphrases contained in Nor, MS6 and MS8 in a different section. This Oxford edition which follows the order of contents contained in the Nor, MS6 and MS8 and the Bodleian manuscripts as well as retaining most of Clare’s original spelling and grammar, is the most substantial version of the poem to date. The use of footnotes together with cross reference to Byron’s poems and Clare’s *Don Juan* assist a closer study of Clare’s poetry of 1841. Robinson and Powell’s attention to the dating of the psalms and the biblical paraphrases which interrupt Clare’s fair copy of *Child Harold* is useful. The majority of the paraphrases which are placed under the heading of ‘Bodleian Manuscript Don.c.64 and Peterborough Manuscript A 62’ in the Oxford edition from pp. 105 to 158 were fair copied by Clare into Nor, MS6, belonging to the year 1841 and the autumnal visit home to Northborough. The two volumes of *The Later Poems of John Clare* are a collection of all Clare’s later poetry to date.

Geoffrey Summerfield’s version of *Child Harold* as it appears in his edition of *John Clare: Selected Poems* published in 1990 follows the same sequential order of his 1964 edition but it is useful for its decision to attempt to reproduce Clare’s use of
underlining particular stanzas as though to indicate a finished verse or section. Unfortunately, Clare’s habitual use of this method of scoring off a stanza is not adhered to and there has been no distinction made between Clare’s use of the single line and the double line as it is used in Nor, MS6. An editorial note at the end of the Summerfield edition on page 363, explains that all the poems concerned with ‘madhouses’ were; ‘transcribed from Northampton, MSS 6, 8, 9, 10 and 20’. Significantly, Summerfield employs the general title for those poems written in confinement as ‘Prison Amusements’ or Child Harold, which would imply that he regarded Clare’s use of the umbrella title for all the work he was writing in 1841 as important. This last edition which follows the sequential order employed by Clare in Nor, MS6, is a particularly useful one for teaching in school.
Three years into Clare’s confinement at High Beech, the outside world renewed its interest in the psychological and physical condition of John Clare. In 1841 a visit by Cyrus Redding set out to stir the public consciousness into an acknowledgement of Clare’s continued existence. He was not dead, despite a report in 1840 to this effect; he had, it seemed, momentarily slipped into the ‘deep sleep’ of anonymity. After Redding’s visit in May of this year, newspapers and journals began to assign to Clare a further label to his already established reputation as peasant poet. Clare was not only poverty-stricken, he was also mad. When Cyrus Redding visited Clare in the early summer of 1841, subsequently publishing the account in *The English Journal* on the 15th May, he initiated a degree of press coverage. Not only was Clare mad but he was also incarcerated, confined or as the following poem, published in 1841 reports, ‘in bondage’. ‘Go To Epping’, written by ‘A Correspondent’ was published by Effingham Wilson under the general heading of, ‘Poet in Bondage: A Picture of John Clare From A Correspondent, J. Dakis, 1841’ and may be found in a box of press cuttings concerning Clare held at Peterborough Museum. The octave is remarkable for its mood of celebration in which Clare appears as a type of literary icon lost in an actual and metaphorical forest of misapprehension:

![Go to Epping! Will you go
Are you deaf or blind or lame
There the forests trophies grow
There abides the son of Fame
Would you hear the blithe bard’s gladness
Would you see the Poet’s sadness
Falling, fallen into madness
Go – I bid you go!](image)
The reality was somewhat different, as Redding’s article corrected. Redding conveyed the open, green, airy space of the asylum grounds where he discovered Clare working the soil and cultivating the flowers alongside fellow patients. The poet was, evidently, in good spirits and communicative, though there were signs of the terrible homesickness which pervades the contents of Nor, MS6. Redding observed Clare’s acute sense of having been forgotten not only by a public who had once feted him but also by his family and friends, ‘I want to be with my wife and family: there is none of woman here’. Clare also apparently spoke of his loneliness away from his wife while expressing a great desire to go home. The account Redding gave to the public is important for details such as these. The strength of the autobiographical presence in Nor, MS6, which I discuss in detail later in this thesis, is reaffirmed by the similarity between Clare’s mood and preoccupation when he met Redding and the speakers of Nor, MS6.

Redding’s article draws a comparison between Smart and Clare, and at one point Redding sounds like the vehement satirical voice of the speaker in Don Juan. In the process of condemning a society which ignored the two poets of genius, Redding despises those ‘Quacks, imposters, the obscene, who mock nature in posture making’. In the same outburst he upbraids the ‘— parasites of luxury, the panders to bad morals, to the gambling table, the race course and the dog kennel’. Had Redding had access to Clare’s earlier notebook, Nor MS8 even briefly on this visit?

Redding’s account, coming two months before Clare’s escape, is crucial to an understanding of the compositional background to Child Harold. So little is known about Clare during his hospitalisation at High Beech in comparison to the years of
confinement in Northampton, that without the material contained in Nor, MS6 there would be a real gap in the details of Clare's creative life. There is no reference at all to Nor, MS6 or its contents, but Redding's visit resulted in a number of poems belonging to this period finding their way into publication. Ten poems, including Clare's, 'Maid of Walkherd' which is quoted in full are mentioned in Redding's article as though to remind the public of Clare's continuing presence as a poet of merit. The list of poems reads as follows; 'To The Nightingale'; 'Sighing for Retirement'; 'The Forest Maid'; 'On the Neglect of True Merit'; 'The Sequel to John Barleycorn'; 'A Walk in the Forest'; 'To Wordsworth'; 'The Water Lilies' and 'The Frightened Ploughman'.

The poems which Redding lists contain nothing of the tragic sensibility evident in Nor MS6, or the stinging satire and obscenity of Don Juan. There was another crucial consequence of Redding's well meaning intervention to encourage financial support for Clare. The poems which were published in The English Journal gave rise to a misleading perception of what made up the 'asylum poetry' as it came to be known. For over a century Clare's asylum verse, when it was discussed referred almost entirely to poems written in Northampton, thereby excluding Child Harold and Don Juan.

Other poems slipped out of High Beech in 1841. Six poems were published in the English Journal on May 29th 1841. One of the earliest Epping Forest poems to find its way into private hands was, 'By a Cottage near a Wood'. Clare had called it a 'Song', and wrote revealingly at the bottom of the same page that it had been composed, 'while in confinement'. Both this song and another poem, 'Sighing for Retirement' were sent by Clare's doctor, Matthew Allen, to a Worcestershire
clergyman. Another poem, 'The First Meeting' was enclosed in a letter written again by Matthew Allen to P. S. Ackerman on July 7th 1841, eighteen days prior to Clare’s escape. An article in The Yale Gazette published in 1956, explains that the letter, including the poem fell into the hands of Major C. A. Markham who subsequently passed it on to Edmund Blunden in 1922, for his comments. Clare’s poem had been first published in The English Journal, on May 29th, 1841 by Cyrus Redding under the title, ‘The Courtship’. This last poem, like those others published by Redding, together with the Knight transcripts, became recognised as the ‘asylum’ poems. The astonishing range and brilliance of the contents of Nor, MS6 remained, publicly at least, buried until 1935. One hundred and eight years after Clare had written the material contained in Nor, MS6, Child Harold and Don Juan saw the light of day in the edition published by Geoffrey Grigson in 1949. Grigson achieved what no other commentator had done so far. His decision to include some of the stanzas belonging to Nor, MS6 with those poems written at Northampton broadened the perception of Clare’s poetic oeuvre in 1841.

Critical blindness, in the context of Child Harold and Don Juan would appear to persist. A radio broadcast of Clare’s poetry on Radio 4 on Sunday the 23rd November 1997 was almost wholly engaged with Clare’s madness and its causes – explained, in this context, as the result of rejection in love by Mary Joyce. This particular programme failed to mention the two long poems of High Beech – a major achievement of Clare’s maturity. Despite the fact that an extract from Clare’s account of his ‘Journey out of Essex’ was included in the programme, Clare’s Child Harold and Don Juan were ignored.
Before I move on to explore more recent critical responses, it may be useful to consider the reaction to Clare’s published work written at Northampton, as after Redding’s article, there appears to be a gap of approximately ten years before there was any sort of sustained critical engagement with Clare’s poetry. Thomas Inskip, who had known Clare since 1824 was responsible for encouraging interest in Clare’s High Beech and Northampton work. Inskip comprehended Clare’s lyrical genius. In December 1848, seven years after Clare had left High Beech, Inskip wrote to William Knight reflecting on the luminous quality of Child Harold: ‘the stanzas in his [Clare’s] Child Harold are what you describe most poetically, - they are some of the sunbeams on Parnassus aye and of a midday sun’.  

At Northampton, Clare learnt to rely on Knight as his amanuensis. The Knight transcripts in their uniformity and correct grammatical construction include numerous repetitive songs and ballads. While lacking the original virtuoso performance skills of Child Harold, they nonetheless represent an intriguing example of Clare’s compulsion to write poetry. Inskip was shrewd enough to realise that Clare’s asylum work would ‘have its day’. Writing again to Knight in 1847, he advises him to retain every scrap of poetry that he can lay his hands on: ‘Hear this and take heed. Collect every scrap of Clare’s muse, keep them carefully and never squander one piece on the senseless – the tasteless or the worthless’. 11 On the 9th May in 1848, Inskip warns Knight of the need to revise and correct Clare’s work: ‘of those asylum poems which are printed, scarcely one was found in a state in which it could be submitted to the public without more or less a revision or correction’. 12 Editors of Clare’s work owe much to Inskip and Knight not only for their critical perception but also for their foresight in protecting the later asylum verse from destruction. They also demonstrated the type of stoical patience
shown by Taylor in the early publishing years, as he suffered Clare’s wayward compositional habits. In Volume 1 of the Knight transcripts copied from Knight by a ‘Miss Peck’, Knight sounds exactly like Taylor writing to Clare as he waded through ‘January’ in The Shepherd’s Calendar: 13 ‘Some pieces will be found unfinished for Clare will seldom turn his attention to pieces he has been interrupted in’. 14

Much of the Victorian interest in Clare’s asylum work was voyeuristic demonstrating a fascination with Clare’s experience of the asylum. There was also a distracting interest in his ‘peasant’ status developed as a consequence of sentimental accounts of visits to Clare at Northampton asylum by well meaning, if not patronising, fellow authors or visiting American writers. Some of these accounts are predominantly biographical such as Edwin Paxton Hood’s account from Literature of Labour (1851). Hood’s account is a clever combination of biographical detail and astute critical commentary. Clare’s poetry is described by Hood as: ‘pensive utterances of a soul ill at ease from the very frailty of the tabernacle in which it is confined’. 15

It was a later article also by Redding in 1858 in The New Monthly in Fifty Years’ Recollections 16 that reaffirmed the substance and lyrical beauty to be found in Clare’s asylum poetry. Redding referred to Clare’s poem, ‘I am’, endorsing Clare’s active intellectual capacity, dismissing the myth of a bewildered and disorientated mind. Speaking of the cohesion of the poem above he comments on Clare’s undiminishing strengths as a writer:

We have never read any lines in which an unerring intellect was more nobly distinguished. Could the writer be really a bewildered spirit? If so, then are sense and madness much nearer allied than the world generally thinks. 17
This evaluation of Clare’s sonnet which identifies a combination of the rational with
distraction could well apply to the mood and preoccupations of Child Harold.
Redding’s observation, like his 1841 article, was intended as an impassioned plea for
financial support for Clare. Overwhelming concern about money from 1820 to his
confinement at High Beech in 1841, was thought to be the cause of Clare’s illness. The
article was more than just a plea for finances however; this article drew attention to the
quality and range of the asylum verse, thus creating an important benchmark by which
to assess Clare’s poetry from 1841 to 1864.18

Although Redding’s observations do not go as far as praising the asylum verse
over and above Clare’s earlier poetry, he does make a case for his work of 1841 to be
evaluated on its own compositional merit. Redding observed the strength of poetic
feeling that Clare still retained, despite his hospitalisation: ‘these verses show nothing
of his mental complaint, as if the strength of the poetic feeling were beyond the reach
of a common cause to disarrange’.19 A similar view of the richness to be found in the
asylum verse is echoed by Margaret Grainger one hundred and fifty years later in a
Bicentenary comment in The Clare Journal, 1993: ‘I would maintain that Clare’s later
asylum poems speak with more not less insistence, because his vision is born out of a
deep knowledge and eventual loss of the real world.’20

Another record of a visit to Clare by John. R. Plummer in 1861,21 three years
before his death, on this occasion at Northampton asylum, typifies the critical
condescension to which Clare was exposed during his lifetime. Describing the
conditions at Northampton as; ‘pleasant, comfortable and warm’, Plummer offers a
portrait of Clare which highlighted his 'neat, rustic' background and his present 'malady':

Whether Clare will recover from the malady with which he is afflicted, is a matter of doubt; but so many of his friends and benefactors have been removed by the hands of death, that it is perhaps better for him to be as he is, than to waken to reason and find himself amongst a new generation who know, and yet know him not, so little is he in fashion with the present generation.22

The implication here that Clare is held in a trance-like state of living death or waking dream is reiterated by Clare himself in Child Harold,23 but the comment does not do justice to Clare's own self awareness of his separation from the public world outside the confines of the asylum, which contained a reading public with the power to make or break literary reputations.

An obituary written in May 1864 by John Askham who identifies with Clare's status as an 'uneducated poet' is melodramatic in style and mood. Although the account draws attention to Clare's sincerity and truthfulness of style, it is, nonetheless, riddled with unsubtle inferences concerning the ruination of Clare's intellect as a result of madness:

It was with mingled feelings of sorrow and pleasure that I read in last week's Mercury the announcement of the death of John Clare the peasant poet of our country. Sorrow to think that for so many years his bright intellect should have been overclouded with the awful shadow of insanity, and a melancholy pleasure to think that at long last his long night of sorrow and disease was ended in death.24

Askham's comment demonstrates a reluctance to attribute any sort of serious critical analysis of the later asylum verse which to a degree still persists to day. Despite the fact that recent critical commentary is quite prepared to accommodate the fusion between literary genius and insanity as in the case of Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson and
Sylvia Plath, there still remains a fundamental disinclination to discuss the importance of Clare’s asylum poetry.

Thomas Inskip, who Clare had known since 1824, had realised that Clare’s alienation from a reading public left a gap in Clare’s compositional life. What he had failed to identify was that it was precisely the fact that Clare was released from any such obligation to a potential readership that allowed him to move into a position of imaginative and intellectual freedom. The confessional register of the voice of the asylum work of 1841 in particular, demonstrates how comfortable Clare feels as he composes in an atmosphere of ‘solitude and lonely musing’. Adam Phillips in his essay ‘The exposure of John Clare’ in John Clare in Context (1995) discusses Clare’s sensitivity towards the corroding effects of the public exposure of his poetry, drawing attention to Clare’s instinctive distrust of fame. Phillips describes Clare’s fear of being ‘used’, ‘Making himself known - he was there to be stolen from’. One observation in particular that Phillips makes has a direct bearing on the secrecy of composition possibly taking place at High Beech: ‘his fame as a poet could take from him his words - as his editors did, in a different sense, by manicuring his diction’. At High Beech, protected from such exposure, it is feasible that Clare had free rein to pursue the ideas important to him without encroachment by editor or reading public. Free of the pressure of critical intrusion Clare, in 1841, would appear to have relished the ownership of his own language and ideas.

Clare described his habit of writing secretly or furtively in Sketches in The Life of John Clare Written By Himself and addressed to his friend John Taylor Esq, March 1821. ‘I have often absented my self from the whole Sunday, at this time, nor could
the chiming of the bells draw me from my hiding place'. Clare’s dilemma, appeared to stem from a conflict between the desire to be recognised, identified and celebrated as public poet while he simultaneously required the isolation and anonymity of total solitude in which to write. This ambiguity is reflected in an early stanza from Child Harold in Nor, MS6, ‘I write these poems in these paths unseen / & when among these brakes & beeches roaming / I sigh for truth & home & love & woman’. In the freedom which accompanies anonymity there appeared to be a subtle hankering after recognition, though interestingly, the recognition is more clearly aligned to the personal need for human affection and love. The endorsement of his public poetical identity seemed less important to Clare in 1841 than the identification of the private, autobiographical self who sees the company of women as a necessity and the expression of love as vital to his survival. In another early stanza from Child Harold (Nor, MS6, p. 6) Clare’s poet hero sets down his doctrine of love which he states is the rationale behind his daily existence in confinement: ‘Love is the main spring of existence – It / Becomes a soul whereby I live to love’.

What is clear from the majority of critical accounts of Clare’s asylum verse, is the discomfort most commentators felt towards the different register of emotional intensity present in the verse written between 1837 and 1841. Faced with Clare’s ‘changed’ voice, Victorian critics resorted to raking over the details of his social status and medical condition as opposed to interpreting the asylum poetry. An obituary in the Northampton Mercury in May 1864, the day after Clare’s death, reports in a predictable manner of the death of ‘the poor Northampton poet’. This account pays more attention to Clare as a patient at the local asylum than to the merit of his poetry.
Most accounts of Clare’s last work see it as inferior to his early work. The simplicity and rustic qualities of the poetry of 1820 to 1832 was enjoyed for the ‘simple yet appropriate language breathing a pure and reverent spirit, touching with its utter simplicity’. In 1865, Frederick Martin in his Life defended Clare’s uniqueness as a poet and Cherry’s Life and Remains, with its general bias towards Clare’s humble background and the trauma of his personal life, perpetuated critical condescension towards his literary status. Cherry however included a number of the Northampton asylum poems in his account of Clare’s life, even though they are those which had been copied by William Knight.

It was left to the critic writing for The Manchester Guardian in a general assessment of Clare’s work, to draw attention to ‘the prevailing pathos’ of the later work. This last article comments upon the poem ‘The Dying Child’, stating that its author knew ‘nothing more simply pathetic than this in the English Language’. The Nonconformist in February 1873 talked of ‘Clare’s sustained lingering intensity of tone’ which suggests that a number of commentators were beginning to discern something more extraordinary in Clare’s later work. It was not until 1892, however, in an essay included in The Poets and Poetry of The Century that Roden Noel is moved to discuss the singular value of ‘Clare’s ethereal tone’ present in the asylum poems. Noel’s essay denotes a movement towards a more responsible critical assessment of Clare’s later work.
What was the critical response towards Clare’s Northampton verse and the poetry written at High Beech in the early twentieth century? In 1908, Arthur Symon’s introduction to *Poems by John Clare* registered a significant step towards reassessment of the asylum verse. This edition included only those poems written at Northampton but Symons described his eagerness to get to Clare’s original manuscripts because he felt these later poems represented Clare’s ‘lyrical faculty getting free’. Secondly, in the endnotes to the same edition, Symons explains that he had: ‘access to two large volumes of manuscript verse in Clare’s handwriting’, which suggests that as an editor he preferred to work from the original text, though he does not specify what these two volumes contained. Edward Thomas, who shares so much with Clare in the way of ‘seeing’ the natural world also recognised the latent power of the asylum poems, though he was, like Symons, referring to the Northampton poems when he described them in *Feminine Influence on The English Poets* (1910), as Clare’s ‘latest and finest poems’ which ‘leave personifications far behind’.

Critical commentary between 1920 and 1930 mainly concerned itself with Clare’s early poetry. H. J. Massingham reviewing *Poems Chiefly from Manuscript* edited by Blunden in the *Athenaeum* in January 1921, spoke of Clare’s ‘unmistakable core of pure emotion’. Alan Porter in his review of, ‘Madrigals and Chronicles’ in *The Spectator* in August, 1924, begins to carve out a case for Clare’s creative achievement to be viewed in terms of phases, of which the asylum period was one. J. W. and Anne Tibble in 1956 discussed *Child Harold’s* tendency to irresolution in their *John Clare*:
His Life and Poetry, 6 baldly stating their own findings: 'The poem is unfinished. The
cantos are not clear'. 7 It is the poem's construction combined with its tendency to non
closure which would appear to deter them from further analysis of its greatness, though
the Tibbles are clear about Clare's ability to move beyond a purely imitative version of
Byron's poem: 'Clare has plainly forgotten any intention to imitate Byron'. 8 They also
suggest that Clare's poem contains a type of Rousseausque scrutiny with a
corresponding confessional style more akin to the literature of Sensibility. 9

Despite continued critical interest in the poetry of Clare's early years between
1960 and 1970, there remained a reluctance to address the poetry of the asylum years
with any sustained academic or substantial commitment. Harold Bloom in, The
Visionary Company, 10 (1962) chose to discuss Clare's poems, 'I Am' and 'The Vision'
both of which were composed at Northampton. Bloom's chapter argues that Clare was
a shadow of Wordsworth and Blake, endorsing Clare's less significant place in the
canon. Possibly, the reason behind the dearth of critical commentary on the High Beech
poems in particular lies with the unease potential commentators feel towards the
unreliability of the authorial voice of the asylum years as explored by Lynn Pearce in
or indeed the absence of any essential voice at all in the songs and ballads which make
up the Knight transcripts copied between 1842 and 1864.

There remains a degree of nervousness about attempting any comprehensive
analysis of Clare's long poem Child Harold in particular. Commentators have appeared
to be wary of evaluating a poem that refuses to submit to a clear compositional order
or to resolve itself. It has been simpler to bypass the poem as a symbol of Clare's
irresolution in the face of insanity or as a product of his shattered poetic concentration. The influence of Clare’s insanity upon the critical perspective of his later work must not be underestimated; madness presupposes abstraction and abstract ideas refuse categorisation. Ironically, the language of criticism of Clare’s asylum verse takes on the mantle of illusory metaphorical abstraction itself. Johanne Clare in John Clare and The Bounds of Circumstance, (1987) in a meticulous study of Clare’s social, political and psychological boundaries, has little to say about the later poems. For Johanne Clare the poetry of High Beech and Northampton retreats as I have commented upon earlier, into ‘a white light of abstraction’ in which Clare appears only capable of reflecting back on the ruins of his past where he is tormented by regret and failure, unable to break free from his social class.

Such generalisation and over simplification are deeply damaging to the clarity of expression evident in Nor, MS6, where there is real proof of Clare’s defiance towards the restrictions of confinement as well as the final experience of Clare’s own personal form of enclosure, psychological reduction and alienation. Johanne Clare’s argument that the asylum years reveal only Clare’s acute sense of his failure to reach his own potential together with a phase where Clare becomes ‘non social’ does not conform to the strength of the authorial voice in Child Harold who reaches back to the autobiographical self of his peasant roots to find stability and truth.

Something of the brilliance and complexity of Child Harold is sounded in Lynn Pearce’s essay on the polyphonic textual subtleties to be found in Clare’s long poem. Pearce has exposed the fundamental instability of the poem which she argues is the result of the absence of a particularised authorial ‘I’. For Pearce, the poem is important
for the presence of differing social postures which in her argument, negates the presence of the Romantic 'I'. In other instances, Child Harold, like its author, is seen in the shadow of something more substantial or more profound such as Byron's Childe Harold. Mark Storey in an essay delivered to the '14th International Byron Symposium' in Athens in July 1987, maintains that the poem is important for Clare's determination to 'vie for the laurel with Byron'. Storey claims that Clare's loss of his own identity encouraged him not only to imitate Byron's poem but also to submerge himself into Byron's persona almost as a final act of creative suicide. A close reading of Clare's long poem together with a study of its thematic preoccupations and tonal intensity reveals Clare's fascination and engagement with his own autobiographical self as well as an identification with Byron.

Tim Chilcott in A Real World: A Doubting Mind (1965) and Mark Storey in The Poetry of John Clare: A Critical Introduction (1974) go some way to constructing a more significant role for Child Harold as they do for Clare's asylum poetry in general. Chilcott in a detailed and informative chapter on Don Juan and Child Harold concentrates on what he considers to be Clare's change in awareness as well as the continuities of understanding which characterise these two poems. Chilcott's evaluation of the links between Clare's early work and the poetry of the asylum years is useful. He perceives Clare's enduring affection and respect for the ballad tradition learnt in his youth as a fusion of interest between the young and mature Clare. For Chilcott, Clare's poetic achievement in the later years lay in the cyclical return to his reliance on the oral tradition. Chilcott believes that in the first and last instance of Clare's poetic development, Clare resorted to the incorruptible force of the song and ballad as a means of articulating his despair at his separation from home and his
enforced exile. Chilcott's perception of Don Juan and Child Harold as products of a 'shifting disposition of the self' is particularly relevant in this context.18

Mark Storey in his Poetry of John Clare: A Critical Introduction appears to be more ambivalent as regards the importance of Child Harold in Clare's creative and compositional history. He considers the poem to be essentially 'pathetic' with 'distinct shortcomings'.19 Storey identifies the emotional pain evoked in the poem, suggesting that the poem's uniqueness is the result of the immediacy of experience. Storey, like Chilcott, draws attention to the importance of the ballad form upon the construction of Child Harold, observing that the cyclical movement of the poem which had been identified by J. W. and Anne Tibble, derives its origin from the cumulative technique of the ballad. What is interesting about Storey’s chapter on Child Harold, 'The Storm and the Calm', is his belief in the poem’s fundamental seriousness of purpose; its focus and determination. For Storey, however, Child Harold contains limited structural unity, lacking what he describes as 'the necessary Byronic elegance'.20 Storey’s Chapter argues for an acceptance of the power and significance of Child Harold as 'a poem' but he does not consider that Clare was working towards any sustained cohesion.21

It would appear that the way forward to achieving a more sustained and comprehensive appreciation of Clare's later poetry may lie in reappraising the early asylum poems thereby discovering those elements of sophistication and complexity which make up the songs and ballads which characterise the final twenty two years of Clare’s compositional life. Those poems written after 1842 at Northampton were transcribed, revised and edited by Clare’s amanuensis, William Knight. A reading of the
Knight transcripts held at Peterborough, as I have already suggested, leaves the reader with the initial response of a surfeit of ballad and song.

At least forty five songs belonging to Volume 1 of the Knight transcripts are written to different female muses though the name of Mary is hauntingly dominant. It is advisable to take each ballad on its own merit, as Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield outline in their article on John Clare: An Interpretation of Certain Asylum Letters\(^2\) (1962). This article reveals that the roll call of women’s names which permeate the last ballads and songs was not a mechanical list from an impaired memory. Robinson and Summerfield’s study of local parish registers in Northamptonshire clearly identify some of these women as authentic. A cursory glance at the Knight transcripts suggests little of the lyrical intensity or dramatic beauty of the stanzas from Child Harold but they do indicate something important as regards the technique Clare was working with during the asylum years - the persistence of the oral tradition he had been imprinted with in the formative years of his childhood.

Chilcott in A Real World and A Doubting Mind perceives Clare’s instinctive reliance upon the ballad tradition in the last bleak years of literary anonymity as his return to the known roots of the oral tradition of ‘home’ threatened by estrangement, unpredictability and poetic barrenness.\(^3\) In other words, in the sterile creative landscape Clare found himself, he resorted to a diction and dialect that he had always carried around within himself as indispensable poetic luggage, but which he had often been forced into sublimating. A creative process which might have become unintelligible through the erosion of sanity and concentration appeared to hold steady, defiant and intelligible through the reproduction of a verse form characterised by
continuity and ‘timeless validity’. At no point perhaps in Clare’s development as a poet do we see him clutching so tenaciously at what must have appeared as the last bastion of his self knowledge - his compulsion to make ‘rhymes’. The songs and ballads of Northampton are not inferior products of his poetic achievement or a falling off of Clare’s genius as Johanne Clare suggests. Clare was astute enough to understand that faced with failing mental capacity it was safer to work within a tradition which came to him effortlessly and which had been tried and tested.

I have outlined the ways in which different editors have influenced our interpretation of Child Harold and the discomfort critical commentators have demonstrated towards the poem by their reluctance to wrestle with the unfamiliar or ‘independent’ Clare of the later years. In the course of this discussion I hope to have explored how certain myths concerning the value and significance of Clare’s asylum verse have arisen. If those commentators in the past have been guilty of being unwilling or unable to accommodate Clare within the Romantic canon, we must be wary in the present of reinventing another Clare; resurrected, deified and possibly patronised by the rhetoric of defensiveness and political correctness.

If in the past, Clare’s later poetry has been misread or underestimated due to the distraction of Clare’s instability and confinement we may be guilty today of moving towards a new form of sentimentality. Most recent critical commentary such as the collection of Bicentenary essays contained in, John Clare in Context, (1995) brood upon Clare’s marginalisation, his role as poetic misfit requiring defence. There is a marked tendency to claim him as the latest critical novelty. Clare has suffered in the past from under exposure or from the lack of intelligent and sensitive appreciation of
his ‘difference’ or uniqueness in the Romantic canon. It would be a regressive step critically if in the attempt to dignify him we reconstruct something more grotesque; a puppet in the hands of scholarship. In the process of establishing for Clare a permanent place in the academic forum it must not be forgotten that over-preoccupation with notions of Clare’s displacement, marginalisation and misrepresentation may distract attention from the sophistication and subtlety of his work.

That Clare was undoubtedly shaped as a poet primarily through his own perception of himself as excluded is true. That he was, to a certain extent, an outsider, estranged, marginalised is also relevant but he was all of these things up to a point only. Clare was fiercely articulate about his ‘otherness’ as he was about the need for ‘Independence’. We must be wary of fixing Clare in the role of society’s victim or silent defendant unable to speak for his poetic intentions and aspirations. Although Clare himself offers a number of examples of his inability to fit comfortably into social cultural and political norms, so too does he make it abundantly clear that in his childhood at least, the role of isolate and solitary was largely self constructed. The formative years of his apprenticeship as poet were furtive and secretive by choice. Although the year 1841 marked a long voyage into imposed solitariness Clare made the best of a dark and terrible set of circumstances. In those years of his first confinement, which could have been the most damning form of exclusion of all, Clare turned disadvantage into real poetic possibility.

A comparison between the active delight of being able to stand apart from the common crowd which is described in Clare’s autobiographical account, Sketches in
The Life of John Clare By Himself adressed to his friend John Taylor Esq. March 1821. and the lament of exile and loneliness which characterises the work of 1841 demonstrates the degree to which imposed alienation had left its mark. In the early chapters of his autobiography Clare relates how he preferred the isolated or solitary moment, often describing himself on the outside ‘looking in’. Equally he talks enthusiastically about his habit of engagement with the natural world so closely that he would actually lie down in it or be hidden amongst it. In Chapter 3 Clare describes how he hid in the woods instead of attending church, where in a ‘strange stillness’ he watched insects climb up and down the grass stalks for hour upon hour. On page 24 of his Sketches Clare described the cloying sense of ‘sameness’ associated with the cultivated garden commenting on his love of the wild secrecy of heathland. In this instance he demonstrates clearly a Romantic preoccupation with the isolation to be discovered in the natural world:

I liked to work in the fields best, the cultivated sameness of a garden cloyed me I resumed my old employment with pleasure were I woud look on the wild heath, the wide spreading variety of cultured fallow fields, green meadows & [crooked?] brooks & the dark woods waving to the murmering winds these were my delights & here I woud mutter to myself as usual unheard and unnoticed by the sneering clown & conscieited coxcomb, & here my old habits & feelings returnd with redoubled ardour, for they left me while I was a gardener

So fond was Clare of being alone that he relates in Chapter 2 that his mother: ‘was feign to force me into company for the neighbours had assurd her mind into the fact that I was no better than crazy’. Elsewhere in the same account Clare is frequently to be found apart from the normal pastimes of youth poring over a book. Even work was perceived as a form of bondage by Clare. The confident enjoyment of the solitary life of the early years is starkly contrasted in Child Harold where Clare presents himself as ‘friendless’ like ‘a shattered bark’ tossed in stormy seas. The far reaching implications
of Clare's exclusion when applied to the asylum years have still to be fully acknowledged. In *Child Harold* the speaker's isolation has been imposed upon him and his alienation from the world at large is complete and drastically permanent. Until commentators are prepared to look more closely and with integrity at the full implications of Clare's last and most devastating experience of social and psychological deracination, we may only have access to a limited view of Clare's personal and creative history. I hope in the following chapters to explore more fully the characteristics of the poetry produced in the first asylum period, only too clearly reminded of Clare's own words on the corruption of a particular type of mystery and beauty inherent to a text that has suffered long neglect over a period of time.

In a letter to H. F. Cary, in November 1827 Clare discussed the beauties of the poetry of Erasmus Darwin, bewildered and astonished at the poet's neglect by the contemporary reading public:

> the neglect is only owing to the Publics finding no path that leads to their beautys - it is something like the case of the *<Knight>* 'Sleeping Beauty' that had remained so long unknown in her pallace of Solitude that the paths which led to it were all choaked up & over grown with trees & brushwood that took the knight errant<such> even a number of years to cut them down ere he could get at his prize & break the spell of solitude that bound her beauty in its almost impenetrable veil -

I have attempted 'to beat a path' to the beauties of Nor, MS6. A voyage or journey which ends in discovery results in both the finding of an ultimate goal and the loss of the impulse which initiated the quest in the first place. My intention in making a reading of *Child Harold* based on its relationship with all the contents of Nor, MS6 makes the task of interpretation rather like that of Clare's knight errant. It is possible to scent the thrill of discovery, to savour the manuscript's possibilities and subtleties while
at the same time to be alert to the dangers of entanglement amongst the complexities, distractions and unresolved structure of Clare's long asylum poem.
iv HOW TO EDIT NOR, MS6?

As I expect the words of the dead are venerably noticed <more then the> which they leve behind let me hope then from you (if my survi[v]er) that my wishes may be complied with in publishing no poems which are against my inclination in any improv'd form what ever but to utterly condemn them to oblivion M.S.S. excepted

if I knew such things I dissaprove of shoud appear in print after my death it woud be the greatest torture possible therfor all you find in these books mark wi a cross are of the above description this is the only thing I wanted to look the books over for & this is a thing which as a friend I hope one day or other you will see acted according to my wishes'

Would Clare have approved of a published edition of the entire contents of his faircopy notebook? What would his reaction have been to a proposed edition of the 1841 manuscript which contained unamended, unrevised material alongside marginalia and his own detailed editorial notes? Clare was twenty - six years old when he wrote to Edward Drury in 1819 outlining above what sounds ostensibly like a premature literary will. The details of this early letter written a year prior to the stunning success of the publication of his Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery reveal the importance Clare attached to his manuscripts in the early stages of his poetic career. A distinct note of defensiveness and anxiety is apparent as he discusses the fate of the draft poetry that he himself was dissatisfied with or apparently did not intend for publication. The letter to Drury would seem to imply that once his work had reached the stage of being written into manuscript, it had attained, in his own mind at least, a more 'finished' form - a type of permanence.

Clare however, was typically ambivalent about the quality or draft status of work in his manuscripts which complicates the editing of his rough or draft work. A note to Taylor in Peterborough, MS9, which accompanies a draft of The Shepherd's
Calendar clearly suggests his willingness on occasions to ‘present’ work for publication even before it was finished. The note comments: ‘I have sent this rough book tis all I have got of the Calendar here & if I should get better you may send it back to finish, if not you must make the best of it’.  

Clare’s words quoted at the start of this Chapter have a habit of haunting the transcriber of his manuscripts. They also act as a timely reminder to the prospective editor of his poetry that one should approach textual decisions not only cautiously but responsibly. It is particularly frustrating for the editor of Clare’s asylum work that there is no clear evidence to suggest what Clare’s intentions were for the manuscripts written at High Beech and Northampton. It is impossible to determine whether or not Child Harold and Don Juan or indeed the related material of Nor, MS6 in a published form would have suited his ‘inclination’. One thing seems certain; despite the fact that Clare’s manuscript escaped Taylor’s ‘slashings’ and improvements in 1841, by the time some of its contents came into public view in 1949 with the publication of Geoffrey Grigson’s Poems of John Clare’s Madness, it had already experienced the type of editorial interpretation, interference and misreadings that characterise its publishing history up to the present time.

Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield in their article, ‘John Taylor’s editing of Clare’s The Shepherd’s Calendar’ warn the reader of Clare’s poetry that the published version of work such as ‘January’ edited by Taylor was not necessarily that intended by Clare himself. Robinson and Summerfield go on to describe what they believe to be Taylor’s ‘crucial failure of sympathy’ when it came to editing long sections of Clare’s work in The Shepherd’s Calendar. They suggest that Taylor’s
criteria for cutting was based upon his fear that certain material was 'too much concerned with sensual pleasure' or implied implicit social or political attitudes. If this is true, then the reader of Clare's manuscripts of 1841 has much to be grateful for. Taylor's cutting of The Shepherd's Calendar, ('A Cottage Evening' was apparently cut from Clare's version of 222 lines to Taylor's 92 lines) causes the editor of Clare's 1841 manuscript to heave a sigh of relief at its primitive condition! The fact that Taylor or any other editor at this time did not have access to either Don Juan or Child Harold as they appear in Nor, MS6 has contributed towards the survival of the text's intrinsic rawness. Both the political satire of Don Juan, together with the ambiguity of Clare's feelings towards his 'two wives' in Child Harold might well have been 'edited out' before publication.

Does sympathetic, responsible editing of Clare's poetry necessarily require as little interference with Clare's manuscripts as possible? Should such an approach uncompromisingly embrace all of Clare's poetry - those poems written prior to his first confinement as well as that written during his hospitalisation from 1841 - 1864? Might there be a case for viewing Clare's asylum poetry in a wholly different interpretative and critical light that allows for a more liberal editing of a primitive Clare text? If the manuscripts which epitomise Clare's early years of health and success appear chaotic, dense and disorganised - a minefield of grammatical error - what must those manuscripts written in the years of Clare's illness be like? The answer is surprising. Nor, MS6, far from conveying the working methods of a broken mind is an example of Clare writing, if not systematically, at least clearly and with purposeful method. William Knight who transcribed those poems written at Northampton left a meticulously neat legacy of copying. It is ironical that debate over the rights and wrongs of presenting a
primitive Clare text which appears to be so preoccupied with the notion of its accessibility to the general reader has been more or less confined to discussion of the early poems. Whatever the choice of editing style however, Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield warn the prospective editor of Clare's work to act cautiously; above all to give attention 'to meaning' and to be alert to what they describe as 'the nuances of Clare's use of dialect and his apparent neglect of contextualised meaning'.

Recent academic debate on the subject of editing Clare's poetry is mostly concerned with questioning the ethics of printing primitive versions of Clare's poetry as opposed to conventionally amended editions. Robert Wells in his review of *John Clare: The Poems of The Middle Period* (1997) represents one side of the critical forum who considers an ungrammatical edition of Clare's poetry presents his work in a freakish light while at the same time nourishing the myth of an illiterate rural poet whose verse is off-putting to the contemporary reader. Hugh Haughton in his introduction to *Clare in Context*, taking a more objective stance, raises the issue of the feasibility and relevance of a primitive edition which could demonstrate Clare's working methods in its originality and complexity. Anne Barton in her article, 'John Clare Reads Lord Byron', supports the idea of a primitive edition of Clare's asylum work, suggesting that a notebook or Folio edition of Nor, MS8 is long overdue. Zachary Leader in his chapter, 'John Taylor and the Poems of John Clare', remains unconvinced like Wells, about the usefulness of primitive Clare texts. In the course of his discussion however, he makes a subtle observation concerning Clare's acceptance of Taylor's revision of his poetry as being only true of those poems written *before* he became ill; 'Clare expected his poems to be revised, or did so until the onset of madness'.
I have already drawn attention to the reluctance of critical commentators to engage in any substantial way with the asylum poetry, and it is true to say that editors of the later poetry appear equally tentative. Such reticence is in part explained by the restrictions imposed by copyright upon the relevant Northampton manuscripts, but there is also the contentiousness surrounding the unresolved nature of much of their contents. The problems linked to the editing of notebook material appear to be tied to the question of its academic usefulness and its potential readership. There is undoubtedly an academic market for an edition of Clare's notebook material as the Bollingen editions of Coleridge's *Marginalia* edited by George Whalley and Kathleen Coburn's editions of Coleridge's *Notebooks* would testify. The idea of publishing the notebook of a Romantic poet such as Shelley's *Esdaile Notebook* in 1948, together with the Erdman edition of Blake's notebook, would suggest that there is a readership interested in following the development of a poet's ideas into early draft poems. The most recent addition to the Oxford Volumes of Clare's poetry edited by Robinson and Powell, with its emphasis on fidelity to Clare's original work indicates that these authors continue to be committed to the unamended Clare text. I return to my initial rhetorical question however, would Clare have felt comfortable with such an edition of his notebook? What constitutes a responsible approach to the editing of Nor, MS6?

Much of the confessional material of Nor, MS6 which characterises its lyrical intensity may well have proved too much for Taylor's, albeit well meaning, political correctness. The disappearance of the manuscript from public scrutiny until the middle of the twentieth century may also suggest that its contents were considered unsuitable or inappropriate for general reading. Nor, MS6 in particular, despite its status as a faircopy of the work Clare was engaged upon in 1841, is a complex mixture of poetry
and prose. One of the decisions which challenges the editor of Nor, MS6 must be the matter of selection. What should be included or excluded from this manuscript when it comes to proposing an edition of its contents? Is it appropriate to combine substantial pieces of poetry which represent Clare’s mature work with fragments of psychoanalysis and private despair? Do such unguarded, self-analytical reflections act as distractions or intruders, interrupting an already convoluted narrative construction? How true to Clare’s original text should the editor of his work be?

Jack Stillinger in: The Texts of Keats’ Poems, Thomas Tanselle in Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures and Donald Reiman in Romantic Texts and Contexts appear to be in agreement about the authority and accuracy of the primary text. Reiman emphasises the primitive text’s autonomy over subsequent reconstructions intimating that other editors and reviewers would find it ‘harder to reject a text that kept as close as possible to a primary authority, so long as the editor was careful in the presentation of that authority’. Reiman also argues for the value of transcribing from the original, suggesting that an accurate text of an original manuscript or an authoritative important edition: ‘will retain its value as primary evidence for the development of a major work’. Thomas Tanselle endorses the historical rather than philosophical approach to editing a primary source. His term for following a single historical version is ‘diplomatic’, which he believes is the only ‘Scholarly’ approach to editing.

The idea of a ‘diplomatic’ Clare text appears to be behind the edition of Clare’s The Midsummer Cushion, edited by Kelsey Thornton and Anne Tibble. The manuscript (dated 1831) from which this edition is transcribed, is an early example of
Clare's ability to edit and organise his work. Although written ten years prior to Nor, MS6, the two documents have much in common in terms of their general condition and purposeful faircopying. In their introduction, these editors comment on Clare's adeptness at organising his own material: 'the resulting manuscript, The Midsummer Cushion shows him [Clare] to have been perfectly capable of editing his work without undue interference'.

Both The Midsummer Cushion and The Rural Muse, also edited by Kelsey Thornton, appear intent on presenting the 'unamended Clare' as far as possible, though an editorial note comments that Clare's own copying errors have been corrected in the latter edition. In his notes to the text of The Rural Muse Kelsey Thornton cites an observation by Arthur Symons in which he claims that the work Clare wrote was infinitely superior to that which 'his editors made him write'. In the case of Nor, MS6, greater sensitivity towards 'truth' of text by past editors could have contributed towards a less problematical reading of its contents. In their decision to give priority to the poetry contained in this asylum manuscript alone, editors have been responsible for the apparent disregard of its related contents.

From the earliest contact with this manuscript, it was clear that any form of reproduction of its contents would somehow show a degree of respect towards all the forms of writing contained within it. A first reading of Nor, MS8 seemed to me to be almost an act of trespass - an intrusion or violation of what is quite clearly an unfinished record of a particularly traumatic personal year. Despite the pruning, organising and 'repointing' of this same material taking place in Nor, MS6, much of its intensity and personal engagement remains intact. The close relationship between the material in Nor, MS6 in particular, may be seen in the way Clare slips from the autobiographical narrative stance into fictional accounts of his journeying, his search for
'Mary' and his permanent state of homelessness. There are occasions in this manuscript where a series of faircopied stanzas of poetry are, without warning, overwhelmed by poignant marginalia. However objective the reader of Nor, MS6 determines to be, intent on dealing with the literary relevance of the text, Clare's presence insists itself into an interpretation of its contents. I discuss what I consider to be the close alignment between personal, autobiographical voice and more public poetical stance more fully later.

Clare appeared to be using his notebook as a vehicle for self-doubt and reappraisal, as if the experiences of the asylum have made him alert to the language of psychology. Nor, MS6 as it evolves, becomes an expression of sexual repression and self-disgust while simultaneously documenting moments of bitter accusation against women, articulated through satirical word play and obscenity in the stanzas of Don Juan. One of the most striking and compulsive characteristics of the mood and tone of the contents of Nor, MS6 is its attempt to sustain rationality, order and objectivity at a time when Clare's existence had reduced itself into isolation, chaos, irrationality and intense subjectivity.

Clare's fears that particular pieces of work that he disapproved of might appear in print after his death were well founded. The earlier sections of this chapter were devoted to a textual and reception history of Nor, MS6 and in particular critical interest in Child Harold. The variety of ways in which this manuscript has been edited demonstrates the vulnerability of the poet's work while it remains unprotected by family or those people with access to immediate knowledge of Clare's intentions for his asylum verse. There are no stanzas marked 'wi a cross' in Nor, MS6, but there is
enough evidence in Peterborough, A62 to suggest that Clare had either fair copied them and therefore 'finished with them' or, as he suggests himself in 1819, simply disapproved of them.27

Clare survived for a further forty five years after he had written his literary 'instructions', dying at Northampton in 1864 without stating his 'final authorial intentions' or giving any indication as to what he would have wished for the future of his asylum poetry. At the time of his death Clare had long gone beyond taking an active interest in the publishing of his work. Any last vestige of authorial intention had been relinquished. William Knight, who as the Knight transcripts testify, meticulously copied the relentless profusion of ballads and songs Clare composed at Northampton, acted as caretaker of his verse. A reader of Clare's manuscripts, familiar with his idiosyncratic style of handwriting and his eccentric use of punctuation, finds it difficult to believe that the late songs written in their even orthography and with faultless spelling are a product of Clare's imagination at all. The 'personality' of Nor, MS6, shaped by and through its author and which as a result appears erratic, ironic and sporadically impulsive, mirrors Clare's personal circumstances as he writes. The Knight transcripts in comparison appear tamed, regulated and enclosed.

It is fortunate that Nor, MS6 contains as much information as it does about Clare's compositional and faircopying methods during the years of his first hospitalisation. Correspondence from Northampton in and around 1849 reveals nothing significant about the details of composition relevant to the period between 1842 to 1864. These later asylum letters, mostly sent to Clare's family and to friends who had not forgotten him, convey a sense of all passion spent - a simplicity - a preoccupation
with the sort of unimportant detail that an exile needs to talk about after years of
separation from home. In a letter to his son Charles on Monday 7th November 1849,
Clare remembers his neighbours, going on to ask after his son’s garden. In the same
letter he remembers briefly the work he has presumably left behind, requesting that
someone should, ‘Take care of my books & M.S.S. till I come -’. There is no talk of
work in progress, corrections or proof reading.28

The contrast between Clare’s letters of 1825 to 1832 and those of 1841 to his
death could not be more marked as regards the details of his publishing history. The
earlier correspondence which passed between Clare and his publisher John Taylor
abound with details of corrections, revision, amendments and improvements together
with the concerns of an author who worries about the delay of proofs in the post or
missing manuscripts.29 After 1837, the year of his enforced retreat into High Beech
asylum in Essex, Clare remains tantalisingly silent about the progress of his work. What
information we do have is connected to Clare’s engagement with a simultaneous
compositional project he himself called, ‘Prison Amusements’. I have outlined the
development of these stanzas in Chapter One together with Clare’s account of their
growth and maturation, but in 1841 Clare confines himself to details about the location
in which his poems were being composed and to whom they were written. There are no
cues as to how Clare envisaged the final shape and content of his notebook known as
Nor, MS6.

The waning of specific details as regards the publishing of his work as early as
1835 may well have resulted from Clare’s disappointment at the failure of The Rural
Muse to sell after its publication. He was also ill and unable to concentrate for any
length of time on any single idea. The spare listless mood which permeates a letter written to an unidentified recipient between 1834 and 1835, demonstrates that sixteen years after his literary 'will' was written, Clare’s creative instincts had, to all extent and purposes, dried up. At the age of forty, ill, overcome by financial anxiety and thwarted literary ambitions, Clare seemed to have lost his way both personally and creatively. The following letter not only reveals his confusion and disorganised state of mind prior to his entry into High Beech but might explain the lack of sustained compositional chronology evident in Nor, MS6 nearly six years later:

I forgot to tell you that I would willingly send a trifle now & then to the paper you mention but I am sorry to say that my writings are in such a disordered state that I am not able to do any thing with them when I was well & a thought struck me I wrote it down on a scrap of paper & when I wished to correct them I stiched these scraps together & found the beginning of even a Sonnet at one end of the book & the end at the other & I was soon so ill that I could do nothing with them though I have been most anxious to do so because I feel they are among the best I have written.30

The distracted and unmotivated tone of this letter makes it all the more extraordinary to witness the transformation of creative purposefulness in evidence in Nor, MS6, though it might explain the mixing of written forms in this manuscript. The notes scribbled amongst its contents reveal a poet attempting to control and organise his work, and the meticulous details of the prose passages suggest a mind in the process of some sort of recovery. Sandwiched between a period of professional disillusionment and the years of near silent insanity which marked the final twenty three years at Northampton, Nor, MS6 stands as a vigorous statement of Clare’s professional survival.

What useful academic purpose lies behind a transcription of the entire contents of Nor, MS6? How can one justify the transcription and interpretation of a manuscript
originally meant for Clare’s own amusement? What additional value can a version of Nor, MS6 in its original sequential order, with all its revisions, corrections insertions and idiosyncratic spelling offer above and beyond existing versions of the text? Tanselle perceives the rough unpolished text as a copy text that is, ‘simply the text most likely to provide an authorial reading - where one cannot otherwise reach a decision’. An entire version of Nor, MS6 true to the sequential order of the manuscript and with its contents intact, appears to me to be the most responsible decision for both the text and the author who was unable or unwilling to state his final intentions. While Clare’s manuscript is a notebook it also includes substantial tracts of poetry which previous editors have thought fit to edit in its primitive state. The fact that no single edition to date appears to fully realise the meaning of the two long poems of 1841 might well be a consequence of disregarding the manuscript’s remaining material of which they are a part.

I hope by now to have begun to establish a sense of the material complexity of Nor, MS6, together with its inherent resistance to comply with conventional editing principles. The contents of a notebook if tampered with, inevitably defy the discipline of convenient editorial methods such as might be found in Merryn and Raymond Williams’ edition, Selected Poetry of John Clare, published in 1986 by Methuen. Firstly, any proposed edition of the contents of Nor, MS6 which relies on chronological order such as the Tibbles’ Everyman edition attempts to do, is fundamentally flawed by Clare’s insistence on inserting his later compositions of 1841 at the very start of the manuscript. In simple terms, Clare commences his fair copy with two songs he tells us himself he composed immediately on his return home and after those stanzas he had composed at High Beech earlier in the same year. There are also six significant remaining
manuscripts belonging to the same period of composition, Peterborough, A62, Bodleian, MS Don c.64, Nor, MS 8, Nor, MS 7 and Bodleian, MS D a8. The Peterborough MS 57, is a copy book containing a number of stanzas from Child Harold. The presence of these manuscripts raises a number of issues as regards which version of a stanza was written first or which might be the ‘original’? How far should the editor dig back to unearth what may be seen to be the earliest or most primitive original form of a particular song or paraphrase?

Secondly, there is the previously ordained chronology chosen by the poet himself. This approach to editing cannot be applied to Clare’s manuscript as the contents of Nor, MS 6 belong to a fair copy only. McGann upholds Bowers’ theory of authorial ownership of intention when he argues for the importance of the fair copy as an example of the manuscript’s latest state of authorial work. Thirdly, there is the final order that the poet himself preferred or was satisfied with, although in this instance McGann agrees that the notion of ‘final authorial intention’ is an editorial construct. It can be argued then that the only existing fair copied version of the contents of Nor, MS 6 is the nearest the editor may come to Clare’s ‘authorial intention’, but it must be remembered that Clare may well have wished to revise or alter the material present in the manuscript or in fact may have done so but such a version is now lost. It would appear that the editor of Nor, MS 6 is left with responsibility of using the material as it stands – either all or nothing.

A notebook edition of the entire contents of Nor, MS 6 can, I believe, begin to offer valuable insights into the study of Clare’s asylum work and how it developed through subsequent drafts in much the same way as the Cornell edition of
Wordsworth's *Home at Grasmere* edited by Beth Darlington. An unabridged transcription of the manuscript would allow for a greater appreciation of the simultaneity of composition taking place in 1841 together with the thematic unity of the entire contents. A reading of the text as a whole allows one to absorb a sense of the text's 'mould' or personality together with the opportunity to interpret individual pieces of writing by reading the contents of Nor, MS6 *in situ* as opposed to them being edited in categories constructed by an editor. Thirdly, a composite reading allows Nor, MS6 to be read as a complex event in what Michael Bakhtin conceives as its socio-historical space. Bakhtin's theory of the literary work as a particularised interchange of a present and past is particularly relevant not only to the reader in the present reading a manuscript bound to a moment in historical time, but to the notion of Nor, MS6 representing a series of 'doubled events'. Jerome McGann's view of the original manuscript as a grid, of the poem's social and historical filiations is also applicable to Clare's manuscript. Fourthly, there is the importance of the manuscript's contents as cumulative representations of journeying, both autobiographically and fictionally through the mobility of the poet speaker.

To date, the contents of Nor, MS6 have been edited in ways that do not reflect the original sequential order or general compositional architecture of the manuscript as Clare left it in 1841. The most substantial piece of editorial work on Nor, MS6 separates the two long poems *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* as well as the biblical paraphrases, disrupting a continuity of purpose evident in Clare's manuscript. Eric Robinson and David Powell in *The Later Poetry of John Clare* include all the biblical paraphrases present in Nor, MS6, but by placing them together in a category of their
own they have dislodged some stanzas from the position in which Clare had placed them.

There is, as I maintained in my Abstract, no existing edition of Clare’s compositional work of 1841 intact in its original form as it exists in Nor, MS6. I am wary of applying the terms ‘original’ text and authorial ‘final text’ within the context of a discussion about Nor, MS6 as this manuscript as I have already argued, includes work Clare had written earlier in draft form from four other ‘original’ sources. Nor, MS6 is a fair copy as opposed to the fair copy of Clare’s work in 1841. It is more than likely pages are missing from Nor, MS6 and MS8, and as a result, the manuscript represents Clare’s work at a particular point during this year. The manuscript’s contents, like Clare’s personal circumstances at this time, appear to be in a state of flux and change. Nor, MS6 is a fusion of faircopied work, draft work and work actually in progress and it is the very existence of this text in all its variation that is compulsive and which I perceive as ‘a means to a means’ and not so much ‘a means to an end’.

My commitment to Nor, MS6 as a whole has been brought about by my engagement with what the contents are saying about Clare himself and his style and method of composition in 1841. I have chosen to work from one of the surviving notebooks belonging to this year in the belief that this text has, in the words of Fredson Bowers, ‘the paramount authority’. Bowers’ uncompromising belief in the value of the original manuscript, or as near to this version as you can get is relevant to the central argument of this study. The M.L.A.’s Center for Scholarly Editions C.S.E. produced an ‘Introductory Statement of Editorial Standards and Guidelines’ also cited by McGann, endorses the significance of the original authorial version of a text over
and above subsequent interpretations: ‘It is frequently true that an author’s completed MS. or when the MS. does not survive - the earliest printed edition based on it - reflects the author’s intention more fully than later editions or transcripts’. Although Nor, MS8 is the earlier and therefore most obviously the most primitive or original version of Clare’s 1841 notebook, the fact that Clare has chosen to make a faircopy of its contents suggests his inclination to select and improve. In conditions where the author’s publishing instructions are not involved in the production of his work, the author’s fair copy, which in this instance is Nor, MS6, does not necessarily represent Clare’s final intention but it does represent the latest surviving state of the work.

The motivation behind transcribing this manuscript grew from the intention of making a reading of Child Harold which as I have suggested earlier becomes greatly enhanced when Clare’s long poem is considered in the light of the remaining fragments of prose, biblical paraphrases, reflections and poetry which form this notebook. The underlying principles behind this proposal are to offer an accurate transcription of all its contents and to explicate as substantially as possible their meaning. I have attempted to offer precise annotation together with photofacsimile reproductions which Reiman in Romantic Texts and Contexts describes as a competent method of enhancing the nature and implications of a manuscript. I have also sought to provide an opportunity for the reader of the transcription to consider Clare’s use of language as it alters according to the form of writing that Clare chooses at a particular point in his manuscript. The pages of Nor, MS6 represent a different voice from that which spoke four years earlier or indeed at any other creative point in Clare’s life. It seems as though Clare, in slipping from public attention had thrown off the shard of a previous existence and had grown into another. It is as if he experienced a type of creative and personal resurrection.
Just as Nerval at the point at which his public career had foundered, entered, 'the final and most brilliantly original phase of his autobiographical writing'\textsuperscript{44} so too Clare set about recording in detail his rites of passage from physical and psychological confinement into freedom in the notebook begun at High Beech and suspended at Northborough. The similarities between Nerval and Clare are many\textsuperscript{45} - each man's celebration of their youth and home, together with their obsessive retracing of one single momentous event linked to a loved woman unites them in a similarly envisaged Romantic quest. Clare's response to the lost Eden of his childhood and Nerval's comprehension of his own disinherited paradise\textsuperscript{46} would seem to unite the two men in a psychological voyage for an ideal condition they knew instinctively was beyond their grasp. Possibly, the most compelling aspect of their similarity as writers lies in the use each poet made of the anonymity which accompanied madness. Nerval's occasional and confessional pieces of writing composed around 1851, described by Richard Holmes as 'Promenades', are made up of short stories, critical essays, personal memoirs and autobiographical literary cameos. Despite Nerval's habitual slippage from scholarly objective prose to personal reminiscence, it is, as Holmes points out, the voice of Nerval himself which remains constant throughout, just as Clare's dominates the material of Nor, MS6.

In each case, as the outer margins of their hold on sanity diminished, they attempted to construct an interior existence through which they carved out a means of creative survival. Such survival necessitated total reliance on an inner imaginative life, which by its very nature resulted in a form of self imposed marginalisation more devastating than their social exclusion. Nerval described the outcome of inner, parasitic
nourishment in a letter to George Bell, 'I am feeding off my own substance and do not renew myself'. Clare's obsessive reworking of the central preoccupations of Nor, MS6, resulted in what appeared to be a reduction of self. In attempting to 'renew' himself through the various contents of Nor, MS6 he simultaneously eroded and exhausted the very impulse behind the motivation to write.

The contents of the last thirty eight pages of Nor, MS6, particularly the final poem of the manuscript, 'In this cold world without a home', convey the stark and brutal reality of Clare's self consummation. The images of desolation and homelessness which characterise the final half of Clare's notebook illustrate the total hopelessness of his circumstances in 1841, which as I shall argue in the following Chapters, is demonstrated not only by Clare's orthography but also by the general construction and order of the entire contents of Nor, MS6.
CHAPTER THREE

‘THE JOURNEY HOME’.
AN ACCOUNT OF NOR, MS6 AND NOR, MS8

Northampton MS6 is described in *The Catalogue of The John Clare Collection* in The Northampton Public Library as:

A foolscap volume of poetry and prose written or copied from Nor, MS8 about 1841 after Clare's return to Northborough. 14¾ x 10 ½ 58pp., brown half suede with marbled board.¹

The pages of the manuscript are tightly bound, and contain a fair copy of the two long poems, *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* written in ink which Clare was writing simultaneously in the late spring and summer of 1841. The remaining contents of the manuscript, also written in ink, are made up of a letter, fragments, reflections, scraps, marginalia and biblical paraphrases. Nor, MS6 contains two important pieces of prose; the autobiographical account of Clare's escape from High Beech asylum in Essex entitled, 'Recolections &c of journey from Essex'² and 'Autumn' which has much in common with the material found in the Bodleian manuscripts MS Don. c64 and MS Don. a8.³ Clare's autumnal fragment has been edited by Margaret Grainger in *The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare* (1983)⁴ and more recently by Eric Robinson and David Powell in *John Clare By Himself* (1996).⁵ A number of stanzas from *Child Harold* which appear in Nor, MS6 have been copied from local newspapers that Clare had in his possession on his return to Northborough.⁶

The margins and pages of *The Lincoln Rutland and Stamford Mercury* and *The Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser* dated August and September 1841,
were annotated with a number of stanzas from *Child Harold* which Clare composed in the late summer and autumn of this year. Clare also wrote some biblical paraphrases along these same margins but there is no evidence of any new stanzas from *Don Juan* having been written during this same period. A close reading of the poetry and biblical paraphrases which make up the Bodleian manuscripts in the cramped, perfectly formed miniature hand that Clare used in this instance is a remarkable experience. The predominance of the *Child Harold* stanzas point to the increasing priority Clare was giving to this particular long poem after his arrival home at Northborough. It would appear that 'After long absence' Clare’s arrival home initiated an ambivalent response to a landscape which embodied the contradictory and contrary elements of the ‘fixation’ with his lost muse Mary Joyce. The sense of personal grief and disappointment due to unrequited love which characterises *Child Harold* as a whole is also a reflection of Clare’s own state of mind at this point of private crisis. Irony, satire and cynicism may have appeared out of place in an environment which Clare held to be ‘sacred’.

The earlier octavo notebook known as Nor, MS8 is inscribed, ‘John Clare’s Poems / Feby 1841’. Measuring 6½ x 4¼, it has been rebound in red cloth and contains sixty eight pages. All the contents are written in ink and include parts of *Child Harold* and *Don Juan*, songs and ballads, drafts of letters, the poem ‘Written in A Thunderstorm July 15th 1841’, biblical paraphrases and miscellaneous jottings. Stanzas belonging to *Don Juan* which first appear in Nor, MS8 on page 2 and then from page 6 to 11 are sustained more consistently both here and in Nor, MS6 than those belonging to *Child Harold*. Disjointed and scattered fragments of paraphrase together with brief incomplete lines of prose are interspersed amongst both long poems. Apart from the
Don Juan stanzas there is no evidence of any sort of continuous composition in Nor, MS8 and the prevailing mood and subject of the material are generally more pessimistic than Nor, MS6. Two biblical paraphrases in particular, the 'Song of Deborah' and 'David's Lament' which are to be found scattered throughout the earlier notebook are particularly sombre in tone.

Page 1 of Nor, MS6 carries two untitled songs in keeping with Child Harold and thirty four pages are subsequently given over to stanzas from this poem. The first page of Nor, MS8 on the other hand, suggests each poem's struggle for precedence as Clare has written the title and first stanza for Don Juan and then turned his attention immediately to the writing of two stanzas from Child Harold, ('Many are poets - though they use no pen' and 'Summer morning is risen'). Nor, MS8 contains the only clear example of simultaneous composition where the opening stanzas of Child Harold and Don Juan are twinned fleetingly by their debt to the Byronic voice of satire and pastiche only to subsequently separate and move out into the manuscript as independent poems.

I have explored the growth and development of Don Juan and Child Harold in Chapter One in relation to the impact of Clare's confinement upon his writing but it is important to reaffirm that the opening page of Nor, MS8 represents the two contradictory sides of Clare's 'prison' personality; that of the cynical philanderer and the poet hero engaged in a complex Romantic quest. The voice of the cynic which so dominates the opening stanzas of Nor, MS8 is clearly distrustful of women: 'Their maids - nay wives so innocent & blooming / Cuckold their spouses to seem honest women' but by the opening of Nor, MS6 this has been replaced by the idealist in
search of a selfhood bound irrevocably to loved woman, 'I had no home above my head / My home was love & Mary'.

The presence of the *Don Juan* stanzas in both Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 interrupts the continuity of *Child Harold* and Clare’s inclusion of his other long poem more or less in the centre of Nor, MS6 would also suggest that *Don Juan* was not to be side-lined completely following the return home. It is however, the tortured sensibility of *Child Harold* in his voyage of self discovery as opposed to the calculated mischief of the voice of his alter ego which haunts both manuscripts. It could be argued that Nor, MS6 represents Clare’s self exorcism of the sceptical, Byronic persona only to be replaced by another more confessional, emotionally intense voice more in keeping with Byron’s hero in Canto III of his *Childe Harold* or his confined poets in ‘The Prisoner of Chillon’ and ‘The Lament of Tasso’.

Clare’s correspondence between 1841 and 1850, documented in Mark Storey’s *Letters*, confirms the simultaneous nature of his composition. In a letter addressed to Eliza Phillips which forms a part of the contents of Nor, MS8, and which is dated May 1841, Clare wrote:

> I <have> am now writing a New Canto of Don Juan which I have taken the liberty to dedicate to you in remembrance of Days gone bye & when I have finished it I would send you the vol if I knew how in which is a new Canto of Child Harold also -

I want to draw attention to two features of Nor, MS6 which an editor of Clare’s early asylum poetry must take into account; the strength of the interdependence and creative tension between *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* and the position of this last poem in relation to the remaining material. In Nor, MS8 particularly, the rapid shift from one poem to another initiates a dialogue between ‘vice’ and ‘virtue’. Despite the tonal polarity of the two poems, together with the fact that *Don Juan* is more demonstrably
an example of Clare’s ability in the asylum years to imitate and ventriloquise other famous poetic voices such as Byron and Burns, the poems are integrally linked through a common preoccupation with fidelity or the lack of it, in love and marriage. The fact that Child Harold is obsessed with fidelity and love and a truth implicit to the notion of love while Don Juan appears more preoccupied with the abuse of love and sexual promiscuity intersects a point of tension and contradiction in Clare’s own mind at this particular time and may account for the juggling of material in both manuscripts.

Clare’s inability to sustain either fair copying or any continuous composition in 1841 is quite typical of his writing habits from the earliest period of his life as a poet. In a letter to Octavius Gilchrist written in January 1820, Clare admits to starting a piece of work but failing to finish it: ‘Sunday was a bad day or I shoud have been hapy to gratify Curosity - many Trifles begun but none finished’. The following month in a letter to Markham Sherwill, Clare again remarks on his tendency to compose in erratic spasms. Referring to his poem ‘Solitude’ he reveals it was written: ‘by scraps last summer in all the bustle of hard labour - as to the rest they are all of them the Gingles of this winter.’

Clare’s tendency to move from one idea to another within the space of a few lines is especially relevant to Peterborough MS.A62. In this manuscript he paraphrases ‘Job Chap 41’ while listing a number of authors. He notes Scott’s ‘Ivanhoe’ and ‘Rob Roy’. Later in the same manuscript Clare writes a longer list of the poets he most admires: Wordsworth, Coleridge’s ‘Sybeline Leaves’, Moore’s ‘Lallah Rookh’, Bowles’ ‘Sonnets’, Hurdis’ ‘Village Curate’. There is also a reference to the works of Gray and Collins together with Falconer’s ‘The Shipwreck’. Clare interrupts his
jottings, just as in Nor, MS8, with reflections and fragments of verse. In Peterborough, A62, the naturalist's observation of a plant propels him into composing - 'William found a Cowslip in flower December 12 1841'. Immediately following this reference, there follows three nine line stanzas of a song which belong to Child Harold, beginning with the first two lines of a stanza, 'Thou’rt dearest to my bosom / as thou wilt ever be'.18

In manuscripts dated 1830 there is further evidence of a mind, 'grasshopper like' leaping from the profound to the ordinary within the space of two or three lines. Peterborough, D1319 contains fragments of poetry, prose jottings and scraps alongside rough drafts of 'May 1' and 'May 3' which were printed in The Rural Muse in 1835. Clare’s tendency to alter direction from making short lists of proverbs as in Nor, MS8 to composing a stanza from Child Harold or paraphrasing the Bible would appear to be intrinsic to his working methods as a poet. The Northampton manuscripts Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 although more centred on specific themes and preoccupations than are present in the earlier Peterborough manuscripts, do, none the less, suggest that Clare has continued his habit of dealing with a myriad of thought associations at one time.

A clear example of this ‘fixed’ associative thinking may be seen on page 4 of Nor, MS6 where the account of Clare's journey home is immediately followed by a letter to 'Mary Clare – Glinton', which echoes the observations of the account preceding it. In the autobiographical account of his arrival home after his journey up the Great York Road Clare, reveals his confusion at the absence of Mary Joyce. Disorientated and dislocated, Clare concludes the account in the following way:

but Mary was not there neither could I get any information about her further then the [word? del] old story of her being dead six years ago which might be taken from
a bran new old Newspaper printed a dozen years ago but I took no notice of the
blarney having seen [her ^] myself about a twelvemonth ago alive & well & as young
as ever - so here I am homeless at home & half gratified to feel I can be happy
anywhere

"May none those marks of my sad fate efface
"For they appeal from tyranny to God"

Byron

The intensity of the emotional connections Clare makes in the letter which immediately
follows is remarkable, even to the use of the same phrases. The letter is worth quoting
in full:

My dear Wife
I have written an account of my journey or rather escape from Essex for your
amusement & hope it may [divert?] your leisure hours - I would have told you
before now that I got here to Northborough last friday night but not being able to
see you or to hear where you was I soon began to feel homeless at home & shall bye
& bye feel nearly hopeless but not so lonely as I did in Essex -[I shall be the same ^]
for here I can see Glinton Church & feeling that Mary is safe if not happy & I am
gratified to believe so though my home is no home to me my hopes are not entirely
hopeless while even the memory of Mary lives so near me - God Bless you My dear
Mary give my love to your dear [&?]beautifull family & to your Mother - & believe
me as I ever have been & ever shall be
My dearest Mary
your affectionate Husband
John Clare20

It is the orthography of Nor, MS6, more than any other characteristic which
most clearly indicates the changes in priority between fair copying to composition.
There is a pivotal moment in Nor, MS6 where Clare’s hand for the first time in the
manuscript would seem to act as an indicator for a distinct psychological and creative
turn of direction. On page 20 Clare begins by writing a prose piece which is
characterised by a straightforward observation on the type of country that is most
pleasing to the eye. Although brief, and characteristically, unpunctuated, the close
details which make up the description of ‘greensward’ are described with a fondness
for particularised place quite appropriate to someone who has lacked the opportunity to ‘see’ this place as opposed to ‘imagining’ it. Although I shall refer to this page later in the discussion it is worth quoting the fragment in full:

Closes of greensward & meadow eaten down by cattle about harvest time & pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me mellancholly to look over it & if ever so cheerfull I instantly feel low spirited depressed & wretched - on the contrary pieces of greensward where the hay has been cleared off smooth & green as a bowling green with lakes of water well stocked with fish leaping up in the sunshine & leaving rings widening & quavering on the water with the plunge of a Pike in the weeds daring a host of roach into the clear water slanting now & then towards the top their bellies of silver light in the sunshine - these scenes though I am almost wretched quickly animate my feelings & make me happy as if I was rambling in Paradise & perhaps more so then if I was there where there would still be feves? to trouble us?  

The reader of Nor, MS6 senses something remarkable has worked itself into Clare’s composition There is another alteration to the style and content on page 20. For the first and only occasion in Nor, MS6, Clare writes four four line stanzas where a double space denotes a break between the stanzas. There are two crudely drawn lines to denote the conclusion to the song but it remains untitled with individual stanzas unscored. (Even in Nor, MS8 each stanza has been scored off with a single line). The prose fragment ‘Gass Clouds’ which Clare has written immediately after the untitled song is written in an erratic hand. The fragmentation of ideas together with the features of loose syntax and economy of description would suggest that Clare is engaged in drafting fresh work as opposed to fair copying. The exposed or erratic characteristics of page 20 are typical of Clare’s method of writing in the later years of his life. Inskip, writing to William Knight (Clare’s amanuensis from 1842 to 1850) on the 28th January 1845 reveals a tendency to work hastily and carelessly.
Inskip identified a clear disinclination to revise in a letter to Knight, commenting that Clare’s work would be improved if he ‘tidied’ his work up more thoroughly:

Clare is too careless. I wish you could prevail upon him to take more pains; were he to go over his pieces and amend them a few times, it is wonderful what they would exhibit. His muse is a very delicate, sensitive little body, but he suffers her to hang on his arm, a slattern, her stockings in rolls about her heels and I verily believe her feet not very clean. It was not so in the days when we were young’.23

The contents found on page 20 of Nor, MS6 suggest that Clare was possibly experiencing a creative and psychological ‘sea change’. Brief as they are, both prose fragments convey Clare’s sense of the particular as he savours those pure moments of experience. The eye of the naturalist is present in the first piece of prose where he observes the silver light of sun on the rainbow backs of the fish, and there is, clearly, a personal engagement with his surroundings. Such searching, ‘jewelled’ moments of expression are reminiscent of the lyrical entries of the Natural History Journals.24 The natural history prose fragments in Nor, MS6 convey an intimate interaction with the texture and mood of the countryside and would seem to have reminded Clare at this point in his life as they do the reader of the manuscript today, that his return home to Northborough allowed him a temporary return to the limitless possibilities of the word to convey the uniqueness of a fleeting observation. The untidy orthography which characterises this page might well mark the resurrection of Clare’s poetic voice after its interment in the asylum in 1837.

The condensed detail of the first prose fragment on page 20, together with the precision of the short fragment Clare calls ‘Gass Clouds’,25 written at the bottom of the same page, and in which he describes the similarity between smoke curling from a pipe
and clouds massing as gas clouds in the 'middle sky', stem from a return to a known and familiar landscape. The journey from one location to another could not have offered more contrasting topography. Clare's removal from Essex and his return to Northborough exchanged forest for open fen, undulating hills for flat open spaces and the swell and dip of woodland for wet meadowland.

There are other examples in the manuscript where a change in the quality of ink or nib reveals subtle developments and alterations in mood and task. Pages 1 to 8 for example are written in a clear, fine, neat hand. On page 9 however there is evidence of thicker letter formation or the use of full ink. The spacing between words also becomes wider. On page 12 of Nor, MS6, there appears to be a change in the use of nib or pen. The letters of individual words are more tightly constructed, with sharper alignment of the pen on paper. There appears to be a further change in the use of nib in the last stanza on page 12, where Clare has resorted to a wider less angular construction of letters. On page 14, there are differences in the orthography within the space of six stanzas. The first two lines of the first stanza are more finely or thinly constructed as is the lettering in stanza five compared to the remaining stanzas.

At the top of page 17 there is an example of a nine line stanza where Clare appears to be using an italic nib or at the least forming a sharper more staccato shape to the letters of individual words. In the middle of the same page the lettering in the song, 'O Mary dear three springs have been', becomes more rounded and more widely spaced. On page 19 the first two stanzas suggest the use of the italic style of writing. Page 20 demonstrates larger letter formation with wider spaces between words. Generally speaking the orthography of Nor, MS6 is inconsistent; sometimes firm, clear
and resolute; at other times more sprawling, untidy and frail. Page 58 of Nor, MS6 is notable for the shakiness of its letter formation.

There are some general characteristics evident in Nor, MS6 which influence a reading of its contents. Clare’s use of notes within the body of the text are significant. The three most authoritative notes are found on pages 1, 2 and 43 of the manuscript. The first two references are found in Clare’s autobiographical account of his escape from High Beech. Clare is uncharacteristically pedantic about the insertions of some specific details in this account. The third example may be found on page 43 before an eight line stanza belonging to Don Juan. Clare has written an asterisk with a clear note as to where in the poem as a whole this particular stanza is to be inserted. (See page 147 in the detailed description of Nor, MS6). Clare’s prose in Nor, MS6 shows a disregard for basic rules of punctuation. Paragraphing is random if non-existent and he is economical with the use of apostrophes. The ampersand is used consistently throughout the manuscript.

Importantly, it is not only a dramatic change in the quality of orthography that is relevant to page 20 of the manuscript. There is a striking alteration in tone and content after this page. It would seem that the return home to Northborough had imprinted upon Clare not only a renewed sense of identity but also the first tenuous steps towards a regenerated belief in his own capability as a poet. Pages 4 to 19 of Nor, MS6 are examples of stanzas from Child Harold which have been meticulously copied but which reveal nothing of the confusion and torment which compels the reader in the way it does throughout the description of the ‘journey’ out of Essex. After page 20 however, most particularly in the short prose piece called ‘Self
Identity and in the longer description called, ‘Autumn’, Clare appears to have found a voice he had lost to some extent in the chaotic notes of Nor, MS8 as well as in the pages of fair copying that make up the earlier part of Nor, MS6. In ‘Self Identity’ Clare movingly prompts himself towards a recognition of who he really is. He ironically distances himself from the plight of the madman, who, he suggests, too easily ‘forgets himself’. Those who lose sight of their selfhood, we are reminded, are either madmen or cowards.

In the pages that follow, Clare has faircopied his other long poem Don Juan and the biblical paraphrases. In Nor, MS8, the paraphrases intermingle with stanzas of poetry from Child Harold and Don Juan, but in Nor, MS6 Clare appears to regard these ‘imitations’ as a separate category of composition. We know from details in Martin’s biography of Clare that the activity of paraphrasing was offered to patients in Matthew Allen’s care when they showed signs of extreme agitation or anxiety. Frederick Martin offers a further valuable insight into the importance and relevance of the presence of paraphrases in Nor, MS6. He describes the poet in 1832 and 1833 engaged in the writing of religious verses and attempting paraphrases of the Psalms, Proverbs and significantly, the ‘Book of Job’. Even in 1821 in his Sketches, Clare referred to his deep love of the ‘Book of Job’, describing it as a ‘fine hebrew poem’. In the same observation Clare recalled being able to ‘recite abundance of passages by heart’. Martin includes an anecdote when the local doctor recalled a conversation he remembered having with Clare as they discussed his plans to write a volume of religious verse, ‘not controversial, but simple expositions of the truth proclaimed in the Bible’. Clare also spoke of a book of ballads and sonnets he was engaged in writing. Martin’s observations offer a valuable insight into another reason for Clare’s
persistence in writing the biblical paraphrases alongside his other work in progress. The paraphrases might well have been envisaged as future work for publication.

There are a few further pages of stanzas from *Child Harold* which follow the biblical paraphrases and which are to be found on page 36 of Nor, MS6. These stanzas begin, 'The lightnings vivid flashes - rend the cloud'. Three stanzas of nine lines and one shorter stanza of six lines precede the song which begins, 'The floods come o' er the meadow leas'. This shorter six line stanza is also to be found on the margin of *The Lincoln Chronicle*. 
It may be useful to briefly consider the main characteristics and condition of Nor, MS8 and its relationship with the contents of Nor, MS6. What value does Nor, MS8 have for the editor of Clare’s poem Child Harold or indeed for a reading of Nor, MS6 as a whole? One of the most interesting characteristics of Nor, MS8 is the presence of first or earlier drafts of some of the material found in Nor, MS6 where Clare appears to be using Nor, MS8 to ‘write up’ often very opposed or different types of work. On page 46 for example there are a series of notes related to money Clare has received, dated April 21st 1841, against which he has written three, nine line stanzas beginning, ‘Now melancholly autumn comes anew’. On another page he has written and left unfinished a song ‘Say What is Love’ composed in two line stanzas only. Earlier, on page 21 of the notebook, there are six quatrains of a poem which clearly describe Clare’s hospital experience at High Beech followed immediately by five lines of a blessing which refers to Mary Joyce and Martha Turner Clare. The opening pages of Nor, MS8 where the pages are used vertically and horizontally are much less focused as regards composition and planning than Clare’s later notebook.

Nor, MS8 is important to a study of Clare’s compositional practice in 1841 because of two specific characteristics of its makeup, which not only distinguish the contents of this manuscript from Nor, MS6 but also allow it a unique status. Firstly, there are the stanzas which are numbered by Clare and which are written towards the end of Nor, MS8 on pages 33 to 66 but which are not faircopied by Clare into Nor, MS6. Eric Robinson and David Powell have included these stanzas in their version of
Child Harold in The Later Poems on pages 75 to 88. At no other point in either Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8 when Clare is engaged with the fair copy of Child Harold or Don Juan does he number his stanzas. Why he should decide to do so in Nor, MS8 at this particular point in the manuscript remains uncertain. After very close reading of Child Harold I remain unconvinced that these numbered stanzas necessarily belong to the same poem.\(^1\) Secondly, there is the question over the placing of Clare’s song, ‘Eliza now the summer tells’.\(^2\) In Nor, MS8 this song is placed in the Child Harold sequence after the song ‘Still the forest is around me’; in Nor, MS6 the song on this occasion interrupts the Don Juan sequence though its mood and subject is much more consistent with that of Child Harold. One possible reason for its inclusion in Don Juan might be the lines of the preceding stanza of the same poem ‘- So here’s a health to sweet Eliza Phillips’\(^3\) which might have prompted Clare’s song with the same title.\(^4\)

I want to return first to the problem the numbered stanzas pose for the editor of the poetry of 1841. Are these stanzas which begin in earnest on page 33 of Nor, MS8 to be considered part of the long poem Child Harold? Had Clare possibly envisaged these stanzas as part of another poem or even another Canto? The numbered stanzas appear to be less closely associated with Mary and more with the theme of abandonment and despair such as the stanza on page 28 of Nor, MS8, ‘What Is The Orphan Child Without A Home / That Knows No Fathers Care Or Mothers Love’. As may be seen here, many of the numbered stanzas are written with the first letter of each word written in the upper case. The sequence of numbering is also confused and disordered which allows for less continuity than the Child Harold stanzas in Nor, MS6. To conclude I can find no evidence of any of the numbered stanzas in Nor, MS8 having been given the title or heading of Child Harold.
I described earlier in this chapter how the opening page of Nor, MS8 reveals Clare’s indecision as to which of the two long poems should take precedence. Those stanzas from Child Harold which do appear on the first two pages of the manuscript are placed later in Clare’s fair copy in Nor, MS6, on page 9. When Clare picks up the stanzas from Don Juan once more in Nor, MS8 he writes twenty four continuous stanzas ending with the nine line stanza whose first line is, ‘Now is’nt this canto worth a single pound’. A letter addressed to Eliza Phillips in which Clare bemoans his anonymity as well as his isolation serves as an interlude between the dialogue of the two long poems. After five lines of Clare’s account of his escape from Essex, there follow four stanzas from Child Harold which appear on page 5 of Nor, MS6. Another letter separates the four stanzas from five, four line stanzas entitled, ‘Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841’. Ten stanzas belonging to Child Harold follow some lines of the ‘Reccollections.’ Six four line stanzas, untitled, but whose first verse reads ‘Nigh Leopards hill stands Allens hells’ follow the Child Harold stanzas. These six stanzas are not included by Robinson and Powell in their version of Child Harold and Don Juan in The Later Poems of John Clare despite the fact the stanzas follow one from Child Harold, ‘Cares gather round I snap their chains in two’. Six stanzas of Child Harold are interspersed with biblical paraphrases, some fragments of prayers and a prose fragment. Six further stanzas of Don Juan follow, interrupted by one, nine line stanza from Child Harold. The remaining pages of Nor, MS8 are taken up with both numbered and unnumbered stanzas attributed to Child Harold.

One poignant and revealing personal touch in Nor, MS8 may be found on the page in which Clare has written a note about a visit to Buckhurst Hill Church. What is
particularly interesting about this page is Byron's deleted signature at the bottom of the note.\(^7\) There is another characteristic of Nor, MS8, which is not in evidence in Nor, MS6. Clare has a habit of leaving a number of lines free of words but replaced with a series of crosses. It would seem that Clare had not found the appropriate words here and left the manuscript in this state until he revised or rectified it. This tendency to pause in the middle of composition is evident in the Peterborough, MS. A62, and in a letter written to John Taylor in February 1821 Clare himself refers to his 'gaps': 'your alterations of the last lines of each verse cannot be better so I left them untouched - think of the gap in the marks X X X X & tell me your thoughts of the verse I propose for it'.\(^8\)

Nor, MS8, despite its darkened condition is, like the later notebook, relatively free of revision. One final observation about Nor, MS8 is its haunting and obsessive reminder of Clare's insanity. The lack of any sustained compositional structure in the Child Harold sequences make it far more difficult to unscramble for an editor of Clare's work than the version in Nor, MS6. The fact that Nor, MS8 contains a consistent sequential order of Don Juan however, is important, especially as there are no alterations to this poem as it appears in Nor, MS6. There is, I believe a strong case to be made for transcribing Nor, MS8 in precisely the same way as Nor, MS6. Although the thematic links between the contents of this earlier manuscript is much less pronounced, a transcription of its material would greatly enhance an understanding of Clare's working methods in 1841.

I now want to turn my attention to provide some commentary on the general characteristics of Nor, MS6. In doing so, I intend to distinguish two different areas.
Firstly, I want to look at those sections where Clare is very clearly making a fair copy of his poems and paraphrases. Secondly, I will discuss those parts of Nor, MS6 where there is evidence to suggest that he has interrupted his fair copy to compose. There is, I believe, sufficient evidence to support such a division in the quality of the manuscript's orthography and the general presentation of the work in progress. Pages 1 to 19 of Nor, MS6 for example show evidence of a consistently firm even hand. After page 19, commencing on page 20 as I have suggested earlier, the quality of handwriting deteriorates on those pages where Clare is not engaged in fair copying stanzas from Child Harold or biblical paraphrases. Donald Reiman draws attention to the need to determine possible intention in orthography and punctuation in the editing of Romantic texts.\(^9\) In the case of Nor, MS6 orthography offers substantial clues as to what might have been affecting Clare psychologically as well as creatively both before and after his escape from High Beech.

In Nor, MS6 a deterioration in the quality of orthography appears to be consistent with a corresponding breakdown in concentration. When Clare is engaged in fair copying from another source as in pages 1 to 19, handwriting is legible and presentation clear and clean. The orthography on page 20 when Clare appears to be composing the prose pieces 'Gass Clouds' and the piece on 'meadow lands', is, as I have pointed out earlier, untidy and erratic by contrast. Where ink blotches or marks are in evidence in the manuscript they do not obscure the text. Occasionally, ink marks show through the paper, but this occurs on the right hand side of the paper only.\(^{10}\) Examples of this may be found on pages; 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 20 and 42 as well as page 56. There are two specific examples of faint or faded handwriting such as page 36 and faintness or thinness of script; in this instance the cause might be the result of
sparing use of ink or the fading of ink through ageing or simply the manuscript's exposure to light at some point in its history.

There are 58 pages which make up Nor, MS6, and the quality of these pages is generally very good. The manuscript opens with the two songs Clare wrote at Northborough on his return home. There are three, eight lined stanzas to the song, 'I've wandered many a weary mile' and five, four lined stanzas to the song, 'Here's where Mary loved to be'. As if to reinforce the idea that both songs share a particular moment of importance they are not only placed here at the start of the fair copy of Child Harold side by side but also in the main body of the text again on page 6 and 7. Clare initiates at the start of his fair copy a method of denoting the completion of a stanza with one line scoring off a particular stanza and two lines scoring off a completed poem or canto. In placing the songs quoted above where he does together with the idea of copying his account of his journey out of Essex immediately following these songs, Clare establishes a tone of contradiction and ambivalence early in the manuscript.

This first page is written in a clear even hand. In the song, 'I've wandered many a weary mile', the third line uses the word 'sojourning', as opposed to the verb 'returning' as used by Robinson and Powell in their version. Clare's choice of word 'sojourn' with its connotations of temporality is more suited to the indecisiveness and ambiguity of the poem. The Robinson and Powell edition does not include the two songs at the start of Child Harold but follows the order of Nor, MS6 by inserting them in the main body of the poem as Clare has done again on page 6 of the manuscript. The third stanza of the song 'I've wandered many a weary mile' appears after more lines
from the 'journey'. Such an interruption of the song in Nor, MS8 by the prose describing the 'journey' from Essex, infuses both examples of work in progress with ambiguity. Page 1 of Nor, MS6, which includes Clare's account of his escape, demonstrates vulnerability and disorientation in chronological time. On page 2 for example, the account of his escape includes three lines dated July 24th 1841, bemoaning the absence of Mary on his return home. Clare writes: 'Returned home out of Essex & found no Mary - her & her family are nothing to me now though she herself was once the dearest of all- & how can I forget'.

The subliminal messages of the account are intriguing. Mary, the speaker's haunting muse becomes the rationale for a journey home. Clare also describes himself like a vessel being blown or moved by a wind or force outside himself. He likens his movements to a vessel being 'steered due north' and his journey being all 'plain sailing'. The account shows evidence of Clare experiencing delusions as he wakes in the night, as described on page 2 of Nor, MS6, believing he heard someone say 'Mary'. Page 2 also demonstrates Clare's memory for small detail as he inserts in the account a precise note half way down the page insisting that the note 'be placed at the bottom of the page'. Page 3 carries a sustained account of the escape. Clare’s style of writing with its characteristic lack of punctuation reads as a stream of consciousness articulating isolation and fear of recognition, together with the his obsessive fear of the possibility of his recapture. Yet again, disorientation is in evidence. Half way down page three Clare states that he suddenly 'forgot which was North or South'.

The account documents the extraordinary way Clare haltingly made his way home not so much reading signposts but attempting to feel his way, animal like, by
recognising a tree or a bush or a stone heap. Page 3 also suggests that Clare may have suffered dehydration and certainly indicates moments of near starvation. Clare writes of the road looking 'as stupid as myself'. Clare also refers to his 'two wives': 'I blest my two wives and both their families'. Page 4 carries some compelling indications as to the hard factual lessons Clare had to absorb on his arrival home. Firstly, he refers to Patty his only wife as his 'second' wife, but even this fact he has to be informed of as he does not recognise the woman in the cart who stops to help him. He tragically dismisses this first meeting with his legal wife by focusing on the real reason for his return home to be reunited with 'Mary': 'home is no home to me my hopes are not entirely hopeless while even the memory of Mary lives so near me'.

Clare begins Child Harold with the stanza, 'Many are poets - though they use no pen.' The opening stanzas of Child Harold in Nor, MS8 also commence with this stanza though it is very faded and barely legible. The Ballad 'Summer morning is risen' continues in eight stanzas of four lines each. Four stanzas sit alongside each other on the page. The Child Harold stanzas continue for the next 15 pages in precisely the order to which Robinson and Powell have adhered. On page 17, with the inclusion of the song 'O Mary dear three springs have been' it is possible to detect the start of the fair copying of those stanzas Clare wrote alongside the margins of the newspapers referred to earlier. I believe these stanzas to be the start of a series of stanzas which for convenience sake I will call the Northborough autumnal sequence. Robinson and Powell in the Oxford edition of Child Harold, on pages 63 to 75 have reproduced these particular stanzas. This series of poems which mirror the preoccupations and descriptions of the prose piece 'Autumn', (page 46 of Nor, MS6), belong to a particularly intense period of composition as the Bodleian manuscripts would testify. It
is fascinating to detect some minor revisions taking place as Clare copies the Bodleian stanzas into Northampton, MS6. At the bottom of page 17 in the song whose first line is ‘Tis autumn now & natures scenes’, Clare revises the fourth line of the stanza from, ‘But autumn finds no change in me’ in Nor, MS8 to ‘But nature finds no change in me’ in Nor, MS6. Later on page 18 of Nor, MS6 in the song which begins ‘Tis autumn now and natures scenes’ Clare has deleted the word love from the third line of the second stanza.

On page 36 of Nor, MS6, Clare picks up the poem Child Harold specifically, indicating its title. On page 38 however he begins to fair copy Don Juan which he sustains uninterruptedly until page 43 of the manuscript. Here, he inserts four further stanzas from Don Juan which he insists should be placed ‘between the first and second verses at the beginning of the Poem’.

There are a number of stanzas and biblical paraphrases which form part of the fair copy of *Child Harold* in Nor, MS6 which do not appear in Nor, MS8 and which may be clearly identified with a specific period of composition in the late summer and autumn of 1841 after Clare’s arrival home at Northborough. I shall refer to these stanzas as the Northborough autumnal sequence to distinguish these particular verses from those already composed and transcribed from Nor, MS8. Margaret Grainger has drawn attention to two particular stanzas from *Child Harold* that appear on page 16 of Nor, MS6¹ which she observes ‘are contemporaneous with ‘Autumn’’ but she does not refer to the fifteen stanzas discussed here or the biblical paraphrases. Clare composed his stanzas on two local newspapers while he also drafted a letter across the columns to his doctor, Matthew Allen, in which he movingly recalled the tribulations encountered during his escape and his mood of ‘dullness & disappointment’² on his return to Northborough. These unique verses belong to one specific manuscript held at the Bodleian known as MS Don. a8.

Two songs which Clare places at the start of his fair copy of *Child Harold* in Nor, MS6³ were also composed immediately on Clare’s arrival home at Northborough in the late summer of this year.⁴ The first song Clare called ‘song a’, ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’ and another, ‘song b’, ‘Here’s where Mary loved to be’ already described earlier are also clearly attributed to same period of composition even though these two songs are not overtly autumnal in theme and mood. Clare’s note concerning the exact date of composition of the two songs (Nor, MS6, p. 6) is helpful in as much
as it lends extra weight to the importance of Nor, MS6 as an autobiographical record of the creative and personal events taking place in the autumn of 1841. Unfortunately there is no evidence to determine which verses made up ‘the rest of the stanzas’ he referred to; Clare may have been alluding to the remaining stanzas of Child Harold which make up Nor, MS8 but it is difficult to determine precisely where or when the other Child Harold stanzas were composed, as Clare dated work as having been written at Northborough long after he had left home to take up residence at Northampton asylum. Nor, MS9 for example is an octavo notebook which Clare was using at Northampton in 1850 but page one is inscribed ‘John Clare / Northborough’. Clare may well have been using an old notebook at Northampton, but it is worth remembering Clare’s fixation on particularised place and time which is so central to the early stanzas of Child Harold written during his first confinement. Such ‘petrification’ of time which coincided with a compulsion to relive one eventful moment is described by Peter Marris in his study of Loss and Change as a type of ‘mummification of emotion’. Nine years after Clare had left Northborough for the last time he appeared still bound to home and the associative memories as he composed and faircopied his work into Nor, MS9.

The Northborough autumnal sequence is characterised not only by its nostalgic description of the fens but also by the mood of bitter-sweet remembrance of Mary. While there are a number of further stanzas which appear between pages 11 and 17 of Nor, MS6 which bear a remarkable likeness to the Northborough autumnal sequence (even to the recurrent images of ‘startled blackbird’, the spire of Glinton church and the harvest sun) they do not appear on the newspaper margins and are not specifically identified with this period of composition.
The drafts of verse found on the margins of the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* and *General Advertiser* dated August 27th 1841 and the *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury* dated September 3rd 1841 are believed to be the only examples of their kind in Clare’s compositional history, and the fact that the newspapers are dated contributes valuable information as to Clare’s working life as a poet. The biblical paraphrases which accompany the verse stanzas such as ‘The Lamentations of Jeremiah’ and ‘The New Jerusalem Rev. Chap 21’ simultaneously endorse a tension between Clare’s acknowledgement of the trauma of his past and his sense of incompatibility with the present despite the solace and relief he experiences at being once more on familiar ground. While the Northborough autumnal stanzas, for the most part, articulate Clare’s celebration on his return home to ‘the promised land’, the biblical paraphrases, as I shall go on to demonstrate, reflect upon the more sombre, apocalyptic memories of his recent experience of confinement, separation and alienation from home and family.

Whereas the Northborough stanzas convey a more exuberant appreciation of the local countryside, the paraphrases which accompany them appear at times like pessimistic hauntings intent on reminding him of the brevity and ephemeral nature of his recent ‘sojourn’. It is also true to say that while the biblical paraphrases intersperse and run alongside the Northborough autumnal sequence in MS Don. a8, charting a contradictory response to the first phase of his freedom after confinement, they become separated into different parts of the manuscript as Clare faircopied this material from the Bodleian manuscripts into Nor, MS6. Clare may have felt that the polarity of mood between both forms of writing made them incompatible. Along the margins of the August *Chronicle* for example, Clare has paraphrased ‘Job 39’ with its
stark, apocalyptic imagery together with some verses from ‘The Last Judgment’ from St. Matthew’s Gospel in which he sets in print a reminder of the days of confinement and isolation:

Ye lodged me a stranger - forsaken of all
When naked ye cloathed me nor left me in thrall
I was in prison ye came to me there
& your talk made my bonds unconfined as the air

The poetical stanzas in evidence along the same margins convey a contrasting lightness of mood in which the speaker of the song ‘Here’s a health unto thee bonny lassie o’ celebrates his loved one even as he acknowledges her absence: ‘Here is true love unto thee bonny lassie o / Though absence cold is ours’. What sounds like a show of forced optimism through the lines of this song is translated into a lovingly evoked cameo of autumn in the fens in the nine line stanza which immediately follows, ‘The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge’. The close detail and descriptive beauty here are mirrored into another nine line stanza written near by, ‘Sweet comes the misty morning in september’. Generally, the clarity and precision of both stanzas together with their attention to light, sound and movement are markedly different to the intimidating, old testament metaphors found in Clare’s paraphrase of ‘Job Chap 39’ written on the same page. The shift in conceptualisation between the lines which describe the autumnal dew on grass and fading tints of local woodland, ‘the cobweb draperies run / Beaded with pearls of dew to early day / & o’er the pleachy stubble peeps the sun’ (Nor, MS6, p. 18) and the lines from Job, ‘Of his nostrils is fierce & terrible / He paweth the ground in strength rejoicing / & goeth onward to meet the battle’, (Nor, MS6, p. 52) is markedly different.
A paraphrase of 'The River of the Water of Life - Rev Chap. 22' which was originally written on the margins of the September *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury* and subsequently faircopied onto page 34 of Nor, MS6 ruminates on the homelessness of the sinner and shamed (of which number Clare seems to consider himself as one), 'in the most holy city shall meet with no home / Nor share of the things in this volume of joy'. The paraphrase of 'The Last Judgment' which immediately follows the 'Revelation of St John' (page 35 of Nor, MS6) reaffirms the common experience of vagrancy, describing those righteous people who recognise the poor, hungry and destitute:

Or naked & cloathed thee in part of our wealth  
When saw we thee sick & restored thee to health  
Or in prison came to thee to make thy bonds free

Clare's expressive use of such paraphrases to endorse his own recent predicament endows the work of the Bodleian margins with emotional intensity and contemporary relevance.

What stanzas actually make up the Northborough autumnal sequence? What relevance does a close scrutiny of this particular cluster of verses have to this argument as a whole? What evidence is there to attribute an autumnal theme to these stanzas which differentiate them from those cited by Grainger? The August stanzas found along the margins of *The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Chronicle and General Advertiser* include the stanzas already outlined above. The Oxford edition carries a note to suggest that 'Here's a health unto thee bonny lassie o' is derived from Thomas Lyle's 'Let us haste to Kelvingrove, Bonny lassie o', but there is also clearly an imitation of Burns' song 'Here's to thy health o bonny lassie o' to the tune of Laggan
Burn. Accompanying these stanzas Clare has also written some verses from ‘The Lamentations of Jeremiah’ with its accompanying tone of pessimism. Clare’s paraphrase carries a rememberance of the pain of the speaker’s past combined with a sense of physical and spiritual abandonment: ‘I am the man that affliction hath seen / By the rod of his wrath sorely scourged have I been / He hath turned against me like a vision of night’.

The stanzas which make up the margins of The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury dated September 3rd, comprise three, six line stanzas of the song attributed to Mary, ‘O Mary dear three springs have been’ (page 17 of Nor, MS6) together with three, ten line stanzas of another song, ‘Tis autumn now & natures scenes’ (also page 17 of Nor MS6). There are two further nine line stanzas, ‘What mellowness these harvest days unfold’ and ‘The meadow flags now rustle bleached & dank’ (page 18 of Nor, MS6). These stanzas are once more indicative of Clare’s response to his return home to a countryside mellowing towards seasonal change which his speaker contrasts with his own unwavering constancy, ‘The pleachy fields & yellowing trees / Looses their blooming hues of green / But nature finds no change in me’. The quality of the orthography in these last named stanzas is striking together with the confident placing of the letters and their neat, even alignment.

It is also significant that the paraphrases which accompany the September stanzas in particular are taken from ‘The Revelation of St. John’. This biblical paraphrase with its sense of renewed optimism seem to imply the speaker’s tentative belief in a new beginning:

& I John the most holy city descried
New Jerusalem coming from God to the living  
Adorned for her husband prepared as a bride  
I heard a great voice speaking loud from the heaven.\(^{15}\)

All the Northborough autumnal stanzas, together with the paraphrases written alongside them, are distinct for Clare’s use of a vertical line through the middle of each verse which would appear to either suggest some sort of metrical division in the lines (four syllables on each side of the division) or simply to denote a deletion. Edmund Blunden argued that similar downward strokes which appear in stanzas belonging to contemporary manuscripts such as Peterborough A62 were Clare’s method of indicating that the verse had been deleted or finished with.\(^{16}\) Each stanza is also scored off by a single line, a practice Clare continues to use in Nor, MS6. The other characteristic of Bodleian, MS Don. a8 is the apparent lack of revision and error throughout. There is some evidence of discolouration and ingrained watermarks on the August journal, particularly on the song, ‘Here’s a health unto thee bonny lassie o’ in the second stanza covering the first four lines, but Clare’s handwriting is generally clear and legible in most of the newspapers.

The ease with which Clare has appeared to compose the Northborough stanzas would seem to coincide with a new phase of creative activity. It is possible to sense his compulsion to write in the prolific number of verses he produced in a comparatively short period of time. The autumnal stanzas are faircopied into Nor, MS6 from pages 17 to 19. The following paraphrase from, ‘Job 39’ perfectly encapsulates an impression of the natural world:

Who hath sent out the wild ass free or who  
Hath loosed his weary bonds - whose house I made  
The wilderness - his home the barren land  
The multiplicities of citys are his scorn
The observation here of tracing 'the furrow' carries clear associations with farming while references to 'barren land' and the 'wilderness' suggest a continuing concern with vagrancy. Clare has made subtle revisions to the first four lines of the verse which accompanies the paraphrase, 'Sweet comes the misty morning in september' as he has fair copied the lines into Nor, MS6. (A note accompanies page 18 of the transcription to this effect).

Images of stubbled fields and the early morning mists of autumn, together with the sounds the blackbird makes outside the 'casement window' of the August stanzas convey an immediate and instinctive appreciation of the natural world distinctly absent from those earlier stanzas belonging to Child Harold. The opening stanzas of Nor, MS6, particularly the ballad on page 5, convey a consciousness more enclosed and reduced in psychological as well as physical horizons. In the August margins, clustered together on the same page of The Lincolnshire Chronicle, to the right of the 'blackbird' stanza and beneath the song, 'Here's a health', Clare has written a short fragment of paraphrase taken from the 'Lamentations of Jeremiah', Chapter 3'. While much of the material which makes up this paraphrase is despondent and hopeless the following few lines convey a speaker clinging to a deeply held trust in God's ultimate goodness and echo the sentiment of the song written earlier on page 5 of Nor, MS6:

It is of Gods mercies we are not consumed
Because his compassions fail not - Yet entombed
His love seems to me in the desolate hours
Yet faith shall be new every morning like flowers\textsuperscript{19}

There are four stanzas of a paraphrase taken from St. Matthew’s ‘The Last Judgment’ also written along the August \textit{Chronicle} where Clare also appears to remind himself of the rewards meted out to those who keep their trust in God through difficulty:

\begin{verbatim}
The one from the other he’ll separate then
The wise & the good from lascivious men
The sheep from the goats the good shepherds divide
As gold in the furnace is heated & tried
\end{verbatim}

The superficiality of human love in contrast to the Divine is also commented upon. Paraphrasing ‘Job 39’ verse 13, Clare draws on a comparison between the ostentatious protestations of unflinching love and devotion demonstrated by the ostrich and human fickleness. The female ostrich leaves her eggs to hatch unprotected in open ground, warming them in the soil but oblivious to the immediate danger of the eggs being crushed or smashed. This biblical reference also draws attention to those hearts turned ‘hard’ and ‘strange’ and the crippling effects of estrangement. In this respect, the August \textit{Chronicle} becomes a record of Clare’s bewilderment at feeling a stranger in his own land.

The stanzas found along \textit{The Lincoln Rutland and Stamford Herald} dated September 3\textsuperscript{rd} have much in common with the prose piece ‘Autumn’ found on pages 46 to 48 in Nor, MS6, as Margaret Grainger in \textit{The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare}\textsuperscript{20} pointed out. Grainger suggests that the prose passage was also composed in the autumn of 1841. I intend to explore the similarity between the September stanzas
and the prose piece later in this section. Clare marked his return home to Northborough with a specific reference to a passage of three years in the song ‘O Mary dear three springs have been’. The repetition of ‘three springs’, ‘three summers’ and ‘three blasting winters’ reminds the speaker of Clare’s poem of the gulf of years that has separated him from loved muse. Like Wordsworth in ‘Tintern Abbey’, the passage of time has changed the inward self, though outwardly location remains unaltered. Geoffrey Grigson in his Introduction to Poems of John Clare’s Madness draws attention to the fact that Mary Joyce died in July 1838 and was buried in Glinton Churchyard. Although it is questionable that Clare could recall the anniversary of Mary Joyce’s death, (he had to be reminded of her death on his arrival home at Northborough), it is interesting that the speaker of the song quoted above has grasped the correct time lapse in this instance. The prevailing mood of loss in the song together with the realisation of absolute and irrevocable absence of Mary in the landscape of home, begins to surface. While the August songs seem to articulate the novelty of space and physical mobility suggesting Clare’s enthusiasm for the beauty and regenerative qualities of Nature, the following song composed in September is clearly more bleakly accepting of Mary’s failure to return. Seeking her in vain in ‘the fields and flowers’ the poem’s speaker, like Clare himself, is forced to acknowledge that ‘Marys absent everywhere’. The severity of the truth that Mary is dead is conveyed with the emotional intensity of the traditional song while also reminiscent of the bereavement expressed in ‘The Flitting’ composed at Northborough in 1832:

Tis autumn & the rustling corn
Goes loaded on the creaking wain
I seek her in the early morn
But cannot meet her face again
Sweet Mary she is absent still
& much I fear she ever will
Confronted with the spiritual and physical absence of Mary, the speaker of the poem is forced to negotiate the present and accept what seems to be the death of his raison d'être. One of the revealing characteristics of the stanzas from the Northborough autumnal sequence then is the shifting tendency of the poem's speaker to oscillate between new found confidence and delight in his new environment while simultaneously being reminded of the loved woman's absence from it. The personal and fictional conflict between the desire to be freed from the tyranny of obsession while clinging with a desperate addiction to it infuses the autumnal stanzas with a curious indeterminacy. The complex fusion between denial and obsessive desire which is fundamental to Child Harold as a whole, is re-enacted out in the Northborough sequence. As the speaker in the poem attempts to persuade himself that the healing and consoling influence of the natural world is enough, those same images help to recreate the very human form he wishes most to forget:

Just as the summer keeps the flower
Which spring concealed in hoods of gold
Or unripe harvest met the shower
& made earths blessings manifold
Just so my Mary lives for me
A silent thought for months & years

Even in freedom, Clare is bound in invisible chains to his sentence of obsessive unrequited or unrealised love and insanity. There is a striking example in the August stanzas of this fusion between hope and despair, ecstasy and depression. In the stanza beginning 'The blackbird startled from the homestead hedge' Clare rediscovers his dialectic of 1832. The lyricism of this stanza, its attention to sound and scent of the details around Clare are reminiscent of the bird and animal sonnets he was composing after his move to the cottage at Northborough. Importantly, it is the range of natural
things that move in front of Clare together with his sense of their proximity that strikes one most forcefully. The stanza is worth quoting in full:

The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge
Raindrops & leaves fall yellow as he springs
Such images are natures sweetest pledge
To me there's music in his rustling wings
'Prink prink' he cries & loud the robin sings
The small hawk like a shot drops from the sky
Close to my feet for mice & creeping things
Then swift as thought again he suthers bye & hides among the clouds from the pursueing eye. 25

Alongside this stanza in the same margin there continue to be bleak reminders of Clare's legacy of homesickness, his sensitivity to confinement and his instinctive abhorrence at the thought of physical and mental restrictions. Paraphrasing St. Matthew, and recalling a God who visits those in bondage, Clare reminds himself that he has been set 'free', by the mercies of a God unintimidated by the onslaughts of oppression:

& in the most holy city shall he meet with no home
Nor shine on the things in this volume of joy
He that testifieth this saitheth quickly I come
Even so come Lord Jesus all sin to destroy
The power of Gods love be with all - now - & then & the grace of christ Jesus be with you - Amen. 26

The paraphrases found on the margins of the Mercury dated September 3rd make up the bulk of the Northborough autumnal sequence. They begin with the Poem on 'The Revelation of St John Chap 21st' and continue with verses from 'The New Jerusalem Rev. Chap 21st'. These particular lines shimmer in their imitation of the description of fabled palaces and walls. Clare's lines recreate all the brilliance of the original, relishing the texture and variety of the lists of semiprecious jewels:

The walls of the city were garnished like fire
With all manner of sorts of rich precious stones
The journey up the Great York Road removed Clare not only from physical confinement, but the change in location also released him temporarily from a psychological thraldom where his obsession with the memory and presence of Mary Joyce bound his perception to inward contemplation and reflection more akin to the early eighteenth century melancholy verse of Blair, Gray and Collins. Clare’s contact with the real landscape of home as opposed to that conjured by the memory during his confinement at High Beech opens up, as I suggested earlier, Clare’s horizon. In an apocalyptic sense, quite appropriate to Clare’s engagement with the biblical paraphrases and psalms at this time, his blindness was taken from him and he appears at last to able to see things as they were. Although the speaker in Child Harold, in the early stanzas talks optimistically of the one ‘bright vision of the almighty mind’, the reader of the poem has to wait until Clare’s return to Northborough to see this vision fully expressed.

There can be no doubt that the physical change in location initiated a different poetical perception. The Northborough Autumnal sequence recorded first on the newspaper margins and then in the notebook, Nor, MS6 exchange ‘the leafhid forest - and the lonely shore’ and ‘the dream that never wakes’ of the early stanzas of Child
Harold for ‘full and brimming dykes’ and the mellowness of homesteads and the smell of cottage smoke. Although Mary still frequents the scenes which dominate the Northborough sequence her presence is to a degree assimilated into the landscape. The clarity of the poetic vision in evidence in the song ‘Tis autumn now & natures scenes’ is in contrast to the numbed introspection of the earlier verses composed at High Beech where Clare’s external views are unimportant compared to the gloomy introspective reflections of his imagination. The external view to the speaker of Child Harold in the early verses is important only in that it allows for the right conditions in which to ‘cling to the spot where my first love was cherished’.

Despite the fact that the autumnal stanzas have so much in common with the prose piece entitled ‘Autumn’ also found in Nor, MS6, they are placed apart from the sequence of stanzas belonging to the same period. Clare has made a few revisions to the stanzas as he has fair copied them from the Bodleian newspapers into Nor, MS6. The relevance of the Northborough sequence of stanzas to the general unity of purpose and theme in Nor, MS6 lies in Clare’s continued insistence on a Romantic quest for a lost Edenic vision and the loved woman who frequented this place. The Northborough sequence may be read as a type of ‘swan song’ which would appear to register Clare’s negotiation with the reality of the death of not only Mary but the poetic impulse to write at all. After the stanzas written at Northborough, Clare appears engaged predominantly in the writing of prose in the form of paraphrases or shorter essay fragments, though as the next section demonstrates, in his essay on ‘Autumn’ he sustains much of the imagery and mood he has used in the poetry written during the same period.
There appears to be a strong similarity in tone, mood and language between the prose piece ‘Autumn’ found on page 46 of Nor, MS6 and the Northborough stanzas. The meticulous descriptions of the ‘scarlet’ countryside evident in the prose passage, ‘Autumn’ find an echo in the stanzas which open the autumnal sequence on page 17 where the ‘yellowing’, ‘pleachy’, ‘russet’ surroundings are similarly conveyed. In Autumn, the countryside is characterised by the differing shades of red haws ‘red - black, others brick red & others nearly scarlet like the coats of the fox hunters’.¹

Glinton church as a metaphor for stability and truth is common to both prose piece and poem (it also features in the letter on page 4 - ‘for here I can see Glinton church). On page 11 of Nor, MS6, the speaker of the song refers to Glinton spire as a marker or pointer for the truth of his love for Mary, ‘& by yon spire that points to heaven’. In ‘Autumn’ the spire is discerned towering over ‘the grey willows & dark wallnuts’ of the graveyard. Descriptions of wreckage and tombs washed in a sea of sorrows and earthly woes appear in ‘Autumn’ on page 46 of Nor, MS6 and earlier on page 16 in the stanza which begins ‘So on he lives in glooms & living death’. The pessimistic focus on self which characterises Clare’s paraphrasing of the ‘Lamentations of Jeremiah, Chapter 3’ on pages 50 to 52 of Nor, MS6, are echoed both in the prose passage and the Northborough sequence. Clare describes the trees in Glinton churchyard: ‘like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time - place of green Memorys & gloomy sorrows’. In Child Harold the image
of the churchyard is utilised again on page 17 of Nor, MS6. The poem’s speaker talks of a life beyond death, ‘It looks for joy beyond the wreck of tombs / & in lifes winter keeps loves embers warm’.

In ‘Autumn’, on page 47 of Nor, MS6 Clare conveys an emotional nostalgia for all that is lost, ‘I sigh for what is lost & cannot help it’. In the September song, ‘O Mary dear three springs have been’ (page 17 of Nor, MS6) the speaker echoes a similar sense of loss and ‘absence’. The pervading mood in the song from Child Harold is one of severe emotional and psychological reduction. Life’s joys are lessened through the absence of the loved woman, Mary. In the autumnal song, ‘Tis autumn now and natures scenes’, the description of the ‘pleachy fields’ together with the dark redness of the berries in the hedges simultaneously reminds the speaker of the slowly dying year and his enduring love for Mary:

But nought in me shall find a change
To wrong the angel of my heart
For Mary is my angel still
Through every month & every ill

Stanzas such as ‘Sweet comes the misty morning in september’ and ‘What mellowness these harvest days unfold’ on page 18 of Nor, MS6, imply the speaker’s attempt to resolve his sense of loss by immersing himself in the regenerative and healing properties of the seasons. The speaker in Child Harold observes the delicate autumnal presence of dew on the grass, ‘like net work on the sprey / Or seeded grass the cobwebs draperies run’ (page 18 Nor, MS6). Similarly, in ‘Autumn’, Clare comments on the delights to be discovered on an early morning walk where: ‘The rawky mornings now are often frosty - & the grass & wild herbs are often covered with rime as white as a shower of snow’ (pages 46-47 Nor, MS6).
On page 18 of Nor, MS6, Clare’s language is directly replicated into the autumnal stanza, ‘The meadow flags now rustle bleached & dank’ together with a description of sloes and dewberries shining along the bank. In Autumn, the ‘flaggy fens’ are shaded on each side with ‘white thorn hedges covered with awes of different shades of red’. The bank is encompassed with meadow arches, through which the winter floods ‘tumble through’.

The colours of the meadowlands appear to mellow the poem’s speaker to harmony while Clare the naturalist speaking in the prose passage, basks in his new found physical freedom. Clare describes the solitude and peacefulness of outdoor walks as ‘the very perfection of quiet retirement & comfort’ (page 46 of Nor, MS6). Later in the prose passage, Clare states that; ‘the rural pictures or objects in these flats & meadows warms ones loneliness’ (page 47 of Nor, MS6). In Child Harold, such solitariness is ‘the soothing silence o’er the noise of strife’.

On page 37 of Nor, MS6 the speaker of Child Harold, in a song, observes the ditches and drains of meadow flats with their hedges made of osiers and willow trees, together with the brimming dykes. These images reduce him to a depressed state in that he is drowning under the weight of separation from Mary. In ‘Autumn’, Clare notes the ploughed autumnal fields, the ‘green curves & serpentes by a fine river’ (page 46 of Nor MS6). The rustling sounds of the wind as it moves through the osier trees is also remarked upon. Three lines which appear in Bodleian, MS Don c.64, independently of any other song or stanza, become, in Nor, MS6, the last three lines of a stanza beginning ‘The lake that held a mirror to the sun’. Such illustrations provide evidence
to support the relationship between prose and poetry in Clare’s creative composition in the autumn of 1841.
There are two main considerations to be taken into account in any discussion about the songs and ballads which form part of the contents of Nor, MS6. Firstly, all but one of the songs and two specified ballads ('Summer morning is risen', Nor, MS6 page 4 and 'Sweet days while God your blessings send', Nor, MS6 page 12) which contribute towards the architecture of the manuscript are included in the Child Harold sequence of stanzas. Only the 'Song' to Eliza, made up of three ten line stanzas, belongs to Don Juan. The romantic lyricism of this particular song is strangely out of keeping with the mood of cynicism, misogyny and sarcasm which is the hallmark of Don Juan as a whole. In Nor, MS8, Clare inserted this 'Song' amongst the Child Harold stanzas on page 4 of the manuscript immediately following the Ballad, 'Summer morning is risen / & to even it wends' which starts the Child Harold sequence both here as well as in Nor, MS6.

Secondly, only five of the eighteen 'traditional' songs which make up the contents of Nor, MS6 appear in Nor, MS8. One of the difficulties implicit to a reading of Nor, MS6 lies in attempting to fix a clear definition of the 'song', as it would appear that there are three main categories of lyrics Clare is utilising within the framework of his notebook. Firstly, there is Clare's imitation and employment of the longer 'narrative' song made up of octaves or the nine line stanza. The nine line stanzas are written in the Byronic rhyme scheme, iambic pentameter, ababcbccc. Clare's use of the octave is varied and complex. There are octaves written in anapaestic dimeter rhyme scheme, and there are octaves written in regular iambic metre, with alternating 4 and 3
beats. Some octaves are written in rhyming couplets. Secondly, there is the use Clare makes of the ‘traditional’ song also made up of octaves and nine line stanzas together with quintains and quatrains. The traditional song would seem to be used by Clare as a type of chorus which enhances, recapitulates or repeats the main refrain of its poet singer. It is also more universal in appeal while suggesting the anonymity of the ballad tradition. Thirdly, there is the song clearly defined by Clare as a ‘ballad’ made up of quatrains also written in anapaestic dimeter rhyme scheme. It is clear from a study of both manuscripts that the songs and ballads are clearly more associated with Clare’s increasing engagement with Child Harold.

It is tempting to explain the surge of songs on page 4 to 20 of Nor, MS6 as the direct result of Clare’s arrival home to a known place with all the associations of the oral tradition of his youth and childhood, but this would be over simplistic as well as neglectful of those songs which do surface in Nor, MS8 and the twelve songs which may be found on the first seventeen pages of Nor, MS6 prior to those stanzas Clare is known to have composed on his arrival home. If contact with Northborough was the most obvious stimulus for the clustering or ‘suite’ of songs and ballads I have referred to as the Northborough autumnal sequence, why, even though Clare remained at Northborough for a further five months following the composition of these stanzas, was there a ‘falling off’ of songs immediately following page 20? I shall argue in the course of this section that the songs in Nor, MS6 provided Clare with the appropriate poetic form through which to convey a single obsessive refrain – the unrequited love for Mary. It would appear that their presence in Nor, MS6, even towards the end of the manuscript when the song whose first line is ‘In this cold world without a home’
follows the biblical paraphrase of ‘Psalm 91’, that Clare envisaged them as an integral part of his writing.²

What was the specific function of the song and ballad in Child Harold? How did it serve or accommodate Clare’s changing mood and priorities throughout the evolution of his long poem? Why did Clare differentiate between the two ballads and remaining songs of Nor, MS6, when ostensibly there is very little distinction in subject matter and form between them?³ Margaret Grainger in her unpublished thesis, ‘A Study of the Poetry of John Clare with Special Reference to his Lyrics, Ballads and Ballad Collecting’, argued that Clare, used the word song, ‘interchangeably’ with the word “lyric”.⁴ George Deacon in his introduction to John Clare and the folk tradition (1983) comments upon the importance of the song and ballad to Clare’s development as a poet, suggesting that they were in fact one and the same form, though he adheres to the notion that they emanated originally from different directions e.g. from the Chapbook or the Broadside.⁶

Just as Lorca in his lecture, ‘On The Gipsy Ballads’ described his use of ‘deep song’ in his plays as a fusion of the narrative or anecdotal ballad with the lyrical passion of the sung verse,⁷ so too does Clare combine both oral traditions in one in Nor, MS6. In his Introduction, Deacon cites the Peterborough manuscript, MS A31, where Clare describes his earliest contact with books which included versions of old ballads: ‘The first books I got hold of beside the bible & a prayer book was an old book of essays with no title another large one on farming Robin hoods Garland & the Scotch Rogue’.⁸ (In his Sketches Clare also lists Milton’s Paradise Lost and Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress together with Robinson Crusoe⁹ as influential texts in his early reading).
George Deacon's quote is useful in that it suggests the influence of the bible and the ballad in the early and later stages of Clare's career as a poet.

Deacon goes on to suggest that Clare made use of the song as a stylistic base for composition or even as encouragement or inspiration to write. There is certainly evidence on the margins of the local newspapers dated August and September 1841 to suggest that this was precisely what he could have been doing when he appeared to use the vertical lines to mark rhythm or to scan the lines of the songs and paraphrases which mark this particular phase of composition. I want to make some preliminary observations about the importance of the songs and ballads to Nor, MS6, attempting to find some explanation for the wide use of stanza forms Clare utilised in this instance. The presence of the songs and ballads throughout the early part of the manuscript create a sense of recapitulation and repetition. They also indicate a certain intimacy where the familiarity of their form and structure possibly provided a touchstone for Clare, assisting him in confinement to sustain the memories of his childhood and the past. A letter Clare wrote to John Taylor in May 1820 is revealing for its suggestion that even in the early years, returning to Helpstone afforded him a sense of stability together with an opportunity to mix with 'harmless cottagers' and 'rustics,' while he listened to their songs and conversations. On the 11th of May 1820, Clare enclosed a song with a letter to Taylor, indicating that the rhythm of his lines kept time with the turning of his mother's spinning wheel, 'I measured this ballad today wi the thrumming of my mothers wheel, if it be tincturd wi the drone of that domestic music you will excuse it after this confession.'
The opportunity to participate in village gatherings tended to lift depression and draw Clare out of his self imposed isolation. He described the comfort gained from contact with dialect, gossip and those anecdotal conversations which, he observed, allowed him to 'hear things which I formerly was accustomed to this puts all thoughts of other things out of my head'. Remembering his past at High Beech might well have prompted a return to the use of the traditional song especially those versions which traced the wandering or sojourning of a poet hero. In his Sketches in The Life of John Clare Written by Himself & addressed to friend John Taylor Esq March 1821, Clare talks of the themes of his earliest poetry. The narratives he outlines are almost identical to those being played out in Nor, MS6, except for the fact that there is none of the happy ending he refers to in his comment to Taylor. They were: 'always romantic wanderings of Sailors, Soldiers etc, following them step by step, from their starting out to their return, for I always lov'd to see a tale end happy'.

The voice of the singer / balladeer in Nor, MS6 speaks through a variety of poetic forms which, it may be argued, are echoes of a central poet narrator. Firstly, there is the voice of the singer of the anapaestic octave and nine line stanza. This voice appears to be associated with those stanzas most closely modelled on Byron’s Childe Harold which were composed during confinement and are distinctive for their introspection, self centred morbidity and engagement with isolation and secrecy. The octave form which Clare uses in the early pages of the manuscript, may also be categorised as a song. The nine line stanza written in the Byronic form used in Childe Harold (ababbcbcc) sometimes used alternately with the octave in Nor, MS6, (Nor, MS6, page 6 for example) slackens the metrical stress of individual words thus creating a mood of sombre reflection. The speaker appears confined to one location in which his
only escape is through the mind’s ability to remember or to muse upon the strength of his feeling for loved woman Mary.

An example of the nine line Byronic stanza with its more melancholy rhythm may be found on page 9 of Nor, MS6, with the opening lines, ‘Remind me not of other years or tell / My broken hopes of joys they are to meet’. Secondly, there is the voice of the traditional song, also written in octaves, nine lines and quatrains which, as I have already suggested convey intensity, universality and anonymity. The poet singer in this instance exchanges impotent inactivity for mobility as a result of his desire to be reunited with Mary. This particular speaker’s ability to conjure himself into the presence of loved woman both by the change of location or by summoning her physical presence to his place of confinement enhances the octave and quatrain with fluidity.

The opening four lines of the traditional song on page 1 of Nor, MS6 articulate a certain freedom through a momentary flash of optimism followed by retraction and doubt:

The cold ground was a feather bed
Truth never acts contrary
I had no home above my head
My home was love & Mary

The uncertainty of such opposing moods which are set side by side within four lines of each other undermines the possibility of the singer’s quest ever finding success while simultaneously weakening his resolve. The traditional song (which also acts as a form of continuity throughout the earlier pages of Nor, MS6) reiterates the singer’s loss and isolation inherent to the nine line stanzas and early octaves but the fact that the singer is
in some way physically and psychologically active would appear to lessen the pain of disillusionment. There appears to be a different resonance in the voice of the speaker present in the two named ballads of the manuscript, who on both occasions bemoans his confinement and friendless condition and who seeks comfort from God as opposed to the brevity and fickleness of human love. On page 5 of Nor, MS6, the singer / balladeer recalls a happier previous life while describing his present condition in prison, 'I had joys assurance / Though in bondage I lie'. The construction of the songs of Nor, MS6, most particularly from page 4 to 17 would appear to evolve not only from a dialogue taking place between the voices of the varying poetic forms but also from two different perspectives in the chronology of the speaker's existence.

I want to develop what I consider to be the manuscript's intrinsic textual complexity and ambivalence by drawing attention to some specific examples of the interplay between stanzaic forms in order to demonstrate the virtuosity of the song in the sequential order of Nor, MS6. Such complexity is, in part, created by the alteration in the number of lines which make up the different poetic forms commonly titled 'songs'. Clare uses the quatrain, quintain, sestet, octave and nine line stanza through which to sustain his singer's narrative. Metrical variation together with the use of abbreviated or elongated quatrain and octave enhance the general feeling of restlessness and unresolved questing being played out by the singer. Importantly, by page 17, the use of the traditional song, which up until this point has initiated a conscious move on behalf of the singer to change his condition becomes modified or reduced. Clare employs the sestet in its place. In this instance, the song is utilised to convey a point of relocation though the singer remains haunted by Mary's absence.
The difference between the earlier use of the nine line stanzas and octaves written at High Beech and those nine line stanzas written at home is the widening of physical perspective available to the singer. On pages 5 and 6 of Nor, MS6 the octave is associated with enclosed and solitary locations, ‘How sweet are the glooms of the midsummer even / Dark night in the bushes seems going to rest’. A later, nine line stanza on the Bodleian margins, ‘Sweet comes the misty mornings in september’ demonstrates a vista that is ‘opening up’ to the eye. The first seventeen pages of Nor, MS6 move forward through momentum and stasis, mobility and restriction, optimism and dark regret. The eight and nine line Childe Harold stanzas convey a more formal, tragic and contemplative mood while appearing generally to be more static. This singer appears to be paralysed in a type of emotional and psychological torpor. The pervading tone of these stanzas is one of thwarted desire and emotional paralysis. A clear example of a song with these characteristics may be found on page 5 of Nor, MS6 where the poet speaker bemoans the absence of Mary:

The sun has gone down with a veil on his brow
While I in the forest sit musing alone
The maiden has been oer the hills for her cow
While my hearts affections are freezing to stone

On the page that immediately follows Clare employs a different form of singing voice, that of the traditional singer / lover who is directly engaged with the presence of loved woman or it would seem, acutely sensitive to her absence. (‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’). What is clear from the positioning of two such differing forms so close to each other in the manuscript is that whereas the voice of the octave or nine line song seems trapped in a condition of immobility, that of the traditional singer, even when experiencing loss, appears to be able to break his condition of stasis by either physical
or psychological activity. ‘Song a’ which follows the four stanza song on page 5 of Nor, MS6 provides an appropriate example:

I've wandered many a weary mile
Love in my heart was burning
To seek a home in Mary's smile
But cold is loves returning

The function of the songs in Nor, MS6 would appear then to be linked to Clare’s decision to use them as a vehicle for differing voice locations or speaking modes. In Nor, MS6, the two ballads which appear on page 5 and page 12 are clearly linked through the autobiographical implications of the balladeer’s imprisonment and isolation. Separated physically from those he loves in both ballads, the singer creates an interior landscape which mirrors that of home, where he can imagine the sights and details that Mary sees while he remains in confinement:

The cloud that passes where she dwells
In less then half an hour
Darkens around these orchard dells
Or melts a sudden shower

The ballads in Nor, MS6 lack the emotional lyricism and freedom of the anapaestic dimeter Childe Harold stanzas or the traditional form of song employed by Clare as a type of choric refrain but the confined singer creates a strong sense of engagement with all that is happening beyond the walls of his prison. It is precisely the development of physical and psychological mobility that I now want to consider as I believe one of the most important functions of the songs in the manuscript as a whole is to provide a type of emotional ‘gear change’ which assists any one particular singer to modify his psychological condition or on occasions, even marking the stage at which the speaker is about to change his geographical location. I intend to explore how Clare’s use of the traditional song or ‘choric refrain’ in particular releases the voice of
the longer octaves of *Child Harold* from a condition of stasis and pessimism to a condition of possibility and increased energy.

It is Clare's use of the traditional songs to propel the singer / lover out of immobilising depression that most interests me. Clare manipulates the oral tradition to strengthen and underpin the dominant themes of displacement, loneliness, unrequited love and homelessness which make their presence felt throughout *Nor, MS6*, but there is a subtle shift in the implications or potentiality of the event or story being conveyed. On pages 4 and 5 of *Nor, MS6*, the ballad which begins with the line 'Summer morning is risen' would seem to echo the same condition and mood of the poet hero in the nine line stanza which immediately follows it. There is, however, a difference in the use of the singer's voice from first person in the ballad to third person in the longer stanza. The assertion of the first person becomes an echo of the fundamental autobiographical self at the heart of *Nor, MS6*, who is able to disguise himself on this occasion through the more universal or anonymous tradition of the song.

The songs provide a marked pattern of emotional and semantic echoes in *Nor, MS6*. When the experience of the poet / hero in the nine line stanzas of the poem becomes most despairing in terms of his failure to meet his loved Mary or when he finds himself in a position of emotional and physical stasis, the voice of the traditional singer or balladeer lightens the mood of the poem by changing the implications of the speaker's emotional response to one of potentiality. At a point in the manuscript when the singer / hero seems impossibly distanced or separated from Mary, the voice of the traditional song or ballad enters into specific dialogue with loved woman despite her
continuing physical absence. The immediacy of the rhetorical conversation allows the speaker intimate psychological contact or engagement with her.

A clear example of Clare’s usage of the traditional song to subtly bring loved woman into nearer focus may be seen on page 10 of Nor, MS6. Nine lines of the stanza which begins:

I loved her in all climes beneath the sun  
Her name was like a jewel in my heart  
Twas heavens own choice - & so Gods will be done  
Love ties that keep unbroken cannot part

infer that only through the act of dreaming can Mary be fully realised. This stanza however is immediately followed by the traditional song in which Mary is addressed directly and requested to sing, ‘O Mary sing thy songs to me / Of love & beautys melody’. The implication in the last three lines of the first stanza that Mary’s voice will lessen the distress of the singer / lover is important. On page 11, the release of tension already set in place by the song outlined above is enhanced by another song of three eight line stanzas through which the mood of renewed optimism acts a means of propelling the singer out of sense of impossibility into the realms of realisation, anticipation or potentiality. The song becomes, in fact, a metaphor for hope:

& by that hope that lingers last  
For heaven when lifes hell is past  
By time the present - past & gone  
I’ve loved thee - & I love thee on.

In directly addressing Mary, she has in a sense been conjured before the singer / lover and this in turn reduces or lessens his sense of bereavement or loss so much more apparent on the previous page of the manuscript. Indeed the longer nine line stanzas which follow after the song quoted above demonstrate Clare repositioning himself back
into the role of the traveller or quester who frequented the first four pages of Nor, MS6. The observations of the poet hero on page 11 are resonant with movement and energy which are a consequence of his own physical mobility and his renewed ability to absorb movement in the natural world around him:

Along the meadow banks I peace pursue
& see the wild flowers gleaming up & down
Like sun & light - the ragworts golden crown

There is one further example of the energising effect of the traditional song within the framework of the contents as a whole. On page 15 of Nor, MS6 in the song which begins ‘Did I know where to meet thee / Thou dearest in life’, the declaration of love on behalf of the speaker in the song prompts him into moving out of a condition of separation into one of reunion and compatibility. The desire to see Mary again which is articulated through the medium of language is translated into actuality when the song which follows this on page 17 ‘O Mary dear three springs have been’ not only marks a piece of work actually composed by Clare on his arrival home at Northborough but also suggests that the speaker of the song has exchanged dream for reality. At this moment in Nor, MS6 Clare’s use of his autobiographical and fictional voice intersect in an extraordinary fusion of creative and physical mobility. The ritual or process which evolves through the layering or alignment of quatrain with the octave is mirrored onto the manuscript’s structural development of interplay between real and imaginary experience.

An idea of what happens to the overall structural complexity and mobility of Nor, MS6, which I believe is directly related to the presence of the songs and ballads, when the choric songs are ‘dropped’ or edited out may be seen in Geoffrey Grigson’s
edition of *Child Harold* in his *Poems of John Clare's Madness*. Grigson's edition separates the traditional songs and ballads from the longer eight and nine line stanzas with the result that the voice position or narratorial stance is immobilised into one particular tone and preoccupation and cannot move forwards or outwards either from physical or psychological limitations. In his edition Grigson not only gives the traditional songs a category of their own but the songs he *does* include, in a completely separate section are described as those Clare wrote on his arrival home at Northborough. Such editing ignores the presence of the earlier songs in Nor, MS6 altogether while substantially disrupting the sequential order implied by Clare's fair copied sequence. By way of contradiction, typical of the twists and mood changes of this manuscript, Grigson recognises in his Introduction that Clare, like Byron: 'had planned to lighten it [*Child Harold*] much as Byron had lightened the length of his poem with songs'. Grigson's observation demonstrates that he recognised the function and presumably the importance of the songs but persisted in separating them from the remaining octaves and other nine line stanzas.

The function of the songs as a reenactment of the predominant moods of Nor, MS6 allows the various contents to pass through shared levels of existence as well as sustaining the mood of opposition so typical of the manuscript as a whole. The oscillation between extremes of emotion which are also at the heart of the paraphrases and the songs demonstrates the presence of what Willa Muir describes as, 'polar paradigms'. The contradictory swirls of emotion and attitude present in the songs in particular offer a model against which all that is vital and living lies in total counterposition to all that lacks such life principles. An example of Clare utilising the song and ballad in precisely this way may be seen on page 20 of Nor, MS6 where Clare
appeared to be engaged in composing a song concerned with reconciling the physical absence of Mary with her presence in the singer's mind.

The song in question is composed of four quatrains in abcb rhyme, which like the two prose fragments it is wedged between, displays the characteristics of creative and psychological distraction. Clare participates in the rituals inherent to the traditional song, that scheme of narrative which points towards the positive and negative qualities which activate momentum or mobility in human relationships:

Her cheeks are like roses –
& though she's away
I shall see her sweet beauty
On some other day

The song becomes, in a unique way, the method through which the singer conveys the confusion and complexity of attempting to fix in language the polarity between Mary's presence in his mind together with what potentially lies ahead with her absence in the present and the finality of this absence.

It is through the rich semantic domain of the song in Nor, MS6 that the warmth, luminosity and amplification of sound together with the profusion of colour associated with loved woman are brought into immediate focus. In detailing all her 'living' attributes the extreme anguish of her absence 'here' and 'now' is accentuated. In the song on page 20 as in other parts of the manuscript, the singer replays the moment of separation from loved woman just as he has done in the first nineteen pages only to conjure her presence back again.18 What is extraordinary about page 20 of Nor, MS6 is that the halting orthography, together with the halfhearted attempt to compose a song, could suggest that Clare has exhausted the ritual of reenactment. The biblical
paraphrases replace the ephemeral optimism of the songs, and in their sombre reflections on the speaker’s continuing homelessness there is a sense that Clare has passed from a tendency to self-deception to self-denial.

It is unwise perhaps to make a reading of Nor, MS6 by only identifying the various voices which continuously relocate themselves amongst the pages. An accommodation of these voices necessitates to a degree, some sensitivity towards who is listening to them. In other words, to whom is the material of Nor, MS6 addressed? I argued at the start of this discussion that Clare was writing himself into the manuscript and much of the contents are directed towards self-discourse where Clare becomes the listener as well as the speaker. The question as to who else is listening becomes particularly important in the case of the songs and ballads as when they appear as interruptions to the longer octaves which make up the manuscript they tend to sharpen our awareness as to who at this precise moment might be the recipient of the song or the listener. When, as I have described, the singer conjures the presence of Mary through rhetorical conversation with her the reader of Nor, MS6 begins to believe in her immediacy in the same way as the singer himself.

Finally, I want to turn to the question which concerns the way in which Clare perceived the song and ballad in Nor, MS6. Were they in fact one and the same form or did Clare envisage a subtle difference in their function and purpose? That Clare envisaged the song and ballad as one in the same thing is borne out by the fact that on page 5 of Nor, MS6, the ballad contains four lines set in an abab rhyme scheme. On page 6, however Clare utilises precisely the same construction but on this occasion it is called a song. Equally, as I have outlined earlier, the poetic form of the song can
change from nine line stanzas to octaves to four line ballads to five line songs. I am suggesting that the number of lines Clare uses to 'set' a song or ballad appears to be less important than their common bond of thematic cohesion and purpose.

J. W. and Anne Tibble described Clare's use of the song and ballad as interchangeable, precisely as they were used in earlier folk verse.¹⁹ The tendency to interchange the use and function of the song with the ballad may be explored by considering the definition of the ballad form which appears linked to the centralisation of a certain situation incorporating a series of 'flashes' which accentuate the condition of the hero or heroine. In Nor, MS6 both the song and the ballad perform this task. The songs and the ballads stress the situation of the thwarted lover rather than the continuity of narrative.

One of the functions of the ballad is to focus on a single episode where the reader does not so much know why something has happened but is required to accept that it has. Minendez Pidal cited in The Ballad of Tradition²⁰ comments upon the irrelevance of what goes before and comes after the narrative of a ballad. He develops his argument by describing the significance of the constant action present in a ballad, which centres on a single dramatic situation. He also stresses the importance of the dramatic quality of the narrative which accounts for its intrinsic brevity and its inherent compressed quality. These characteristics which appear both in the songs and ballads of Nor, MS6 appear to focus on a series of events which only the central character has experienced and which culminate in one dramatic moment.
The incremental repetition of the song and ballad stress a crucial situation, while the sweep and flow of the narrative is held in check by musical iteration. Structurally or for emphasis, successive stanzas of songs or ballads reveal a situation or advance the interest of that situation by successive changes of a single phrase or line. Each advancement contributes something to the development of the story. In Nor, MS6 it appears as though Clare was using the ballad and song to develop one crucial episode - that of his separation from home and all those associations bound to home. Louise Pound, citing F. Sidgwick, in Poetic Origins And The Ballad describes the demise of the ballad once it is written down:

You cannot write a popular ballad; in truth you cannot even write it down. At best you can record a number of variants and in the act of writing each one down you must remember that you are helping to kill that Ballad.

It seems entirely appropriate that Clare should have included the songs and ballads in Nor, MS6. These lyrical narratives serve to remind us as readers what he appeared to be only too aware of himself, that in the act of self assertion which is fundamental to the motivation behind this manuscript he is also, to a degree, inscribing his own creative epitaph.
CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF NORTHAMPTON MS6.
A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF NORTHAMPTON MS6.

A note accompanies Nor, MS6. ‘Originals from which this film was made were very tightly bound, parts of the text in the spine may be lost. Discolouration appears on the original’.

**Page 1.**

Two songs written directly alongside each other. ‘Song ‘a’, ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’. Three eight line stanzas. First two stanzas scored off by a single line. Third stanza scored off by a double line. ‘Song ‘b’ ‘Here’s were Mary loved to be’.

Five quatrains. Four stanzas scored off by a single line. Fifth stanza scored off by a double line. The metre is alternating 4 and 3 stress lines.

The songs are written clearly. Orthography is consistent; letters formed evenly. One correction in Song ‘b’, in fourth stanza second line, second word - ‘feet’.

The songs are followed by 26 lines of prose, which Clare has entitled Reccollections &c of journey from Essex’. Title underlined. Handwriting is larger in the first nine lines of the prose including Clare’s title. Letters are formed more fully and ink appears to be darker. Fresh ink? After line 9, orthography becomes smaller and thinner. No revisions. Clare has placed two asterisks in the first line of the prose account and again at the start of the ninth line. Some discolouration on the left hand side of the page and at the bottom of the page.
Page 2.

Badly discoloured. The ‘singed’ appearance of this page and other similar pages in Nor, MS6 may be due to Clare’s miscalculations in the ingredients of his home made ink. It is possible to detect a vinegary aroma on certain pages. Most discolouration occurs down the centre of page 2 and on the right hand side. Orthography less legible than previous page due to the density of lines. 61 lines of prose. Evidence of smudges. One water blot evident immediately above a ruled line. Eleven lines of the account on Page 2 has been marked out by a note and an asterisk. These lines have been ruled off. Five lines at the bottom of the page are annotated by an arrowed editorial note, ‘Text continued’.

Page 3.

Recollections &c of journey from Essex continued. 63 lines of prose. Discolouration in evidence on the left hand side of the page. Blotches also present on the left hand side of the page. Damp? Generally, orthography is clear and strong. Three lines written at the bottom of the page following a ruled line. These lines are also marked with an asterisk.

Page 4.

20 lines of Recollections &c Of journey from Essex continued from page 3 which are then scored off by a double line. Clare has written Child Harold. Title underlined. Title deleted. ‘Mary’ written then deleted. There follows a fourteen line letter addressed to ‘Mary Clare - Glinton’. Orthography is legible but there is evidence of smudge marks. Blots over certain words suggest surplus ink on nib? Letter scored off by a double line. Child Harold. Title underlined. First nine line iambic pentameter stanza of Child Harold in ababcbcc rhyme scheme as in Byron’s poem. First line reads: ‘Many are poets -
though they use no pen’. Clare has deleted four words in the sixth line of this first stanza. The line reads: ‘The life of labour is a rural song’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

**Ballad**: title underlined. First two lines of a four line anapaestic dimeter stanza continued on page 5. First line reads; ‘Summer morning is risen / & to even it wends’

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**Page 5.**

Last two lines of stanza begun on page 4. The lines read: ‘& still Im in prison / Without any friends’. Stanza scored off by a single line. Seven four line stanzas of the same ballad. Six scored off by a single line. Seventh and last stanza scored off by a double line. Some discolouration on the bottom right hand side of the page.

Nine line stanza written in the rhyme scheme of Byron’s *Childe Harold*; ababcbcc rhyme. Untitled. First line reads: ‘& he who studies natures volume through’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

**Song.** Underlined. Three eight line stanzas in anapaestic metre. Each stanza scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘The sun has gone down with a veil on his brow’. Clare has deleted third word and inserted ‘are’ in the third line of third stanza. Four lines of a further eight line stanza. Remaining four lines on page six.

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**Page 6.**

Four lines belonging to previous stanza. First line reads; ‘I’ll cling to the spot where my first love was cherished’. Stanza scored off by a double line. One nine line iambic pentameter stanza as in *Childe Harold*. Untitled. First line reads: ‘Mary thou ace of hearts thou muse of song’. Clare has deleted fifth word in first line correcting ‘arts’ to ‘hearts’. Stanza scored off by a single line.
‘Song * a’. Three eight line alternating 4 and 3 beat iambic regular rhyme, ababcdcd stanzas. First two stanzas scored off by a single line. Last stanza scored off by a double line. Clare has omitted apostrophes in first stanza. He has failed to cross the ‘t’ in ‘still’ (fifth word in third line in stanza 2).

One nine line stanza in Childe Harold rhyme scheme. First line reads: ‘Love is the mainspring of existence – it / Becomes the soul whereby I live to love’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

‘Song * b’. Four line stanza. First line reads: ‘Heres where Mary loved to be’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

Note. Underlined. This compositional note is important as Clare’s own record of the dating of the sequence of songs. * a *b The above songs were written after my return home to Northborough last friday evening the rest of the stanzas & songs were written on Epping Forest Essex’. Handwriting showing through from previous page.

Page 7.

Four quatrains continued from page 6. First line reads: ‘Here on the wall with smileing brow’. Three stanzas scored off by a single line. Fourth and last stanza scored off by a double line.

Four nine line stanzas and four lines in Childe Harold stanza form. Untitled. First line reads: ‘My life hath been one love - no blot it out’. Four stanzas scored off by a single line. Orthography is clear and full. Some discolouration on bottom edge of the page. Handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page. Four lines of nine line stanza continued on page 8.
Page 8.

Five lines belonging to last stanza on page 7. First line reads ‘I looked for joy & pain was the reward’. Three more nine line stanzas in Childe Harold stanza form. Each stanza scored off by a single line.

Written in a Thunder storm July 15th 1841. Title underlined. Five quatrains with alternating rhymes. First line reads: ‘The heavens are wrath - the thunders rattling peal’. Four stanzas scored off by a single line. Fifth stanza scored off by a double line. Third stanza is badly smudged. Handwriting showing through from previous page.

Page 9.

Five nine line stanzas and four lines of a stanza in Childe Harold stanza form. Five further lines of nine line stanza continued on page 10. First line of first stanza reads: ‘This twilight seems a veil of gause & mist’. Each stanza scored off by a single line.

This page shows evidence of what might possibly be a change of nib or use of new or better quality ink. Evidence of ink showing through from previous page, mostly on the right hand side of the page.

Page 10.

Last five lines of previous stanza on page 9. First line reads: ‘But when the strife of nature ceased her throes’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

Two further stanzas in same form. First lines read: ‘For her for one whose very name is yet / My hell or heaven’ and ‘I loved her in all climes beneath the sun’. Each stanza scored off by a single line.

Song. Title underlined. Three eight lined stanzas in rhyming couplets in iambic 4 beat lines. First line reads: ‘O Mary sing thy songs to me’. First two stanzas scored off by a
single line; last stanza scored off by a double line. Discolouration of paper on right hand side. Ink marks showing through from previous page.

**Page 11.**

_Song._ Title underlined. Three eight line stanzas in the same rhyming couplet form as previous song. First line reads: ‘Lovely Mary when we parted’. Two stanzas are scored off by a single line. Lines written with full ink. Change of nib? Third stanza is scored off by a double line.

Three nine line stanzas in _Childe Harold_ form. Untitled. First line reads: ‘Now melancholly autumn comes anew’. Page is smudged in places, particularly last stanza on page 11 in the last two lines of third stanza - third word of third line. Handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page. Each stanza scored off by a single line.

**Page 12.**

One further nine line stanza in _Childe Harold_ form at the top of the page. The deleted first line reads: (‘That voice - that look - that face of one delight’) Second version becomes; ‘That form from boyhood loved and still loved on’. Stanza scored off by long single line.

_Ballad._ Title underlined. Six quatrains of alternating rhymed lines of 4 and 3 stresses. First line reads: ‘Sweet days while God your blessings send.’ Orthography is clear while the stanzas are written in full ink. Handwriting shows through from previous page on the right hand side. Five quatrains are scored off by a single line. Sixth stanza scored off by a double line.
Two further nine line stanzas in *Childe Harold* form. Untitled. First line reads: ‘Tis' pleasant now days hours begin to pass’. Stanza scored off by a single line. Stanza shows fuller lettering. New ink used at the start of each line?

Nine line stanza. First line reads: ‘Fame blazed upon me like a comets glare’. Clare has possibly changed pen or nib. Thinner letter formation. Stanza scored off by a single line.

Two lines of a further nine line stanza continued onto page 13. Lines written at the bottom of the page: ‘Though they are blazoned in the poets song / as all the comforts which our lifes contain’.

*Page 13.*

Remaining seven lines of previous stanza. First line reads: ‘I read and sought such joys my whole life long’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

**Song.** Title underlined. Three eight line stanzas in ababcabc form followed by a fourth nine line stanza in abababcdcd form. The metre is unusual: a fluid anapaestic dimeter. First line reads: ‘Dying gales of sweet even’. Three stanzas scored off by a single line. Fourth stanza scored off by a double line.

**Song.** Title underlined. One of two eight line stanzas, in ababcdcd form in 4 beat anapaestic metre. First line reads: ‘The spring may forget that he reigns in the sky’. Stanza scored off by a single line. Six lines of second stanza beginning: ‘How could I - how should I - that loved her so early’. Handwriting shows through from previous page on the right side. Orthography is clear but suggests use of wide nib or full ink.
Page 14.

Two lines from last stanza on page 13. First line reads: 'To her beauty I'll cling - & I'll love her as truly'. Stanza scored off by double line.

Song. Title underlined. Six alternately rhymed quatrains (abab) alternating 4 and 3 feet per line. First line reads: 'No single hour can stand for nought'. Five stanzas scored off by a single line. Sixth stanza scored off by a double line. Song written in a clear legible hand. Fresh, full use of ink in all stanzas. In stanza 5 which begins: 'When summer ceases to be green' the fourth line has been deleted. 'When I shall cease to be' becomes 'But I mayst cease to be'. Fourth line of sixth stanza has a deletion and insertion of the word 'will' in the fifth word.

Two nine line stanzas in Childe Harold form beginning: 'Now harvest smiles embrowning all the plain' and 'This life is made of lying & grimace'. Each stanza scored off by a single line. Smudges evident in last stanza on page 14 especially in the last four lines. Last line contains blotches amongst the last six words. Handwriting showing through from previous page.

Page 15.

Song. Title underlined. First line reads: 'They near read the heart'. Four eight line stanzas in ababcdcd form, using an irregular anapaestic dimeter line Three stanzas scored off by a single line; fourth stanza scored off by a double line. Evidence of fuller use of ink in eighth line of first stanza in the second word 'keep'. Evidence of some lines containing blotchy words - third line of second stanza, fifth and seventh line third stanza and third and eighth line of fourth stanza.
Song. Title underlined. One of four nine line stanzas in complex anapaestic 2 beat metric and intricate rhyming form. First line reads: ‘Did I know where to meet thee’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

First five lines of a further nine line stanza, one of three in ababcdced form. First line reads: ‘& when evening discovers’. Evidence of smudges. Ink marks showing through on the right hand side of the page. Some discolouration on bottom of page.

**Page 16.**

Four lines of previous stanza on page 15. First line reads: ‘- Thy eyes beaming blue’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

Two further nine line stanzas; third stanza scored off by a single line. Fourth stanza scored off by a double line. Sixth line of third stanza has been deleted. The line reads: ‘Turns night into day’ as opposed to the earlier version which reads: ‘Is still all the day’. Handwriting shows through from the previous page on the right hand side of these stanzas. Last stanza scored off by a double line.

Three nine line stanzas in *Childe Harold* form. First line reads: ‘Dull must that being live who sees unmoved’; each stanza scored off by a single line.

Last two stanzas on page 16 are blotted and smudged. Fresh fuller ink? Change of pen or nib? These stanzas contrast with first nine line stanza which is faintly written. Handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page.

**Page 17.**

One further nine line stanza in *Childe Harold* form written in full ink. First line reads: ‘& yet not parted - still loves hopes illumes’. Stanza scored off by a single line.
**Song.** Title underlined. Three regular six line 4 stress iambic stanzas in ababcc form. First line reads: ‘O Mary dear three springs have been’. First two stanzas scored off by a single line. Third stanza scored off by a double line. Smudge marks evident in first stanza throughout six lines and in the second stanza, lines 1, 2 and 5.

One nine line stanza in *Childe Harold* form. First line reads: ‘The autumn morn looks mellow as the fruit’. Stanza scored off by single line. Smudge marks present in all nine lines. Handwriting showing through from previous page.

**Song.** Title underlined. First line reads: ‘Tis’ autumn now & natures scenes’. Title badly smudged. The first of three ten line stanzas in ababcdcdee form made up of 4 stress lines. Smudge marks evident in all ten lines. Most prominent in the last three words of each line. Stanza scored off by a single line. Handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page.

**Page 18.**

Two further ten line stanzas. First line reads: ‘The leaves they loosen from the branch’. First stanza scored off by a single line; second stanza scored off by a double line. Generally cleaner than page 17. Orthography legible. One blotch mark in fourth line of second stanza; third word; ‘earths’.

Four nine line stanzas in *Childe Harold* form, each scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘Sweet comes the misty mornings in september’. Handwriting showing through faintly on right hand side of the page. Some discolouration on the right hand side of the page.
Page 19.

Two further nine line stanzas in Childe Harold form. First line reads; ‘Sweet solitude thou partner of my life’. Each stanza scored off by a single line. One substantial ink mark on the right hand side of second stanza opposite the third and fourth line.

Song. Title underlined. Four irregular five line stanzas, the first two in abba form, the second in abca form. First line reads: ‘Heres a health unto thee bonnie lassie o’. First three stanzas scored off by a single line. Fourth stanza scored off by a double line.

Evidence of handwriting showing through in the first two stanzas. One substantial ink mark on upper right hand side of the page. Four further smaller ink marks on the right hand side of the page.


Page 20.

This page is markedly different to the first nineteen pages of Nor, MS6. The first prose piece since page 4 of the manuscript. Untitled. Eleven closely spaced lines. First line: ‘Closes of greensward & meadow eaten down by cattle about harvest time & pieces of naked [water]’. Handwriting showing through behind the prose script. No single or double line to rule off prose fragment.

Four lyric quatrains in abcb form, in dimeter form. Untitled. First line reads: ‘Her cheeks are like roses’. Clare has not used his usual method of scoring off individual stanzas with a single line. Last and fourth stanza scored off by a double line. Orthography in these four stanzas is larger, less controlled than in previous pages.
Change of pen or nib? Substantial ink blots in all stanzas. Handwriting from previous page showing through on the right hand side of the page.

Prose fragment: Gass Clouds. Title underlined. Six lines of writing. First words read: ‘When a pipe is first lighted’. After the first six words of each line clarity of each line is greatly reduced, mainly due to the intrusion of handwriting from previous page.

Prose fragment: Insects in The Chinese Rose Leaves (side stem leaves). Title underlined. First line reads: ‘There is in autumn on the leaves of the chinese rosetree punctures’. Six lines of prose. Orthography deteriorates after first six words in each line. Substantial discolouration on the right hand side of this page.

Page 21.

Scraps Fragments Quotations etc etc. Title underlined. Six lines. First line reads; ‘The word middling generally denotes something of a ‘casuality”. This section ruled off as opposed to scored off.

Ballams Parable second part. Title underlined. Second title also underlined; Numbers Chap 24th. 44 lines of biblical paraphrase. Orthography fuller. New ink? Ink marks evident on right hand side of the script. Last forty lines are blotchy and difficult to read. Handwriting showing through from previous page on the right hand side.

Page 22.

Balaam’s Parable continued. First line reads: ‘But what the Lord showeth me that will I seek. Thirty lines of the paraphrase interrupted by the title, ‘Song of Balaam’, which is ruled off across the entire page. Two, two line quotations: two from Byron; ‘The Lament of Tasso’ and ‘Stanzas To Florence’ and one from Clare. One nine line stanza from Child Harold. Untitled. First line reads: ‘Honesty & good intention are’. Two
lines from Job. Two further lines from Byron's 'The Lament of Tasso'. Two lines from Dryden's *All For Love*. Eight lines of 'Song of Balaam' continued. Opening line reads: 'Nevertheless Kenites shall fail in that day'. Final line of paraphrase scored off by a double line.

*Page 23.*

Prose piece. Untitled. Based on the subject of *Self Identity*. Twenty six lines. Substantial amount of handwriting showing through from previous page. Half of this page left blank.

*Page 24.*

Blank. Handwriting showing through the page on the right hand side.

*Page 25.*

Davids Prayer. Title underlined. Twelve alternately rhymed quatrains (abab). First line reads: 'Who am I my God & my Lord'. Written in full ink. Eleven stanzas scored off by a single line. Twelfth stanza scored off by a double line. Verses nine to twelve carry blotchy ink marks.

*Page 26.*

Solomons Prayer &c &c. Title underlined. First line reads: 'Then said Solomon the Lord hath made known'. Fifty six lines of paraphrase. Discoloured and badly marked by ink blots. Handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page. Orthography in those areas free of discolouration is legible and firm.
Page 27.
Solomons Prayer &c &c, continued. Fifty eight lines of prose. First line reads: ‘To sit over Israels great people & throne’. Change of pen or nib. Script appears to be written in italic hand. Page carries a number of substantial ink marks. Handwriting showing through from previous page on right hand side of the paraphrase.

Page 28.
Solomons Prayer continued. First line reads: ‘Then hear thou from heaven thy own dwelling place’. Fifty four lines of paraphrase scored off by a double line. Smudges or ink marks evident on this page on script itself. No handwriting showing through from previous page. Two lines of prose written alongside lines four and five on upper right hand side of the page.

Page 29.
Blank.

Page 30.
Job - 38th chapter: 1st Part. Title underlined. Sixty eight lines of prose. First line reads: ‘Then God half angered ansered Job aright’. First four lines demonstrate orthography is clear and firm. After this point, the script becomes cramped; with thinly formed letters. Handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page. Some ink marks on right hand side of the page.
Page 31.

Last eight lines of Job 38. First line reads: ‘or the bottles of heaven who can stay’.
Paraphrase scored off by a double line.

Psalm 97 Title underlined. First line reads: ‘The earth reigneth now earth is green in his
smiles’. Twenty six lines in rhymed pentameter couplets of paraphrase, scored off by a
double line. Orthography is clear. Script written in a full hand. One substantial ink mark
on line 19 and 20, obscuring first word on each line.

Page 32.

The New Jerusalem Rev. Chap 21st. Title underlined. First line reads: ‘& I looked & I
saw a new heaven’. Nine six line ababcc 4 feet stanzas. Two lines belonging to a tenth
stanza continued on page 33. Each stanza scored off by a single line. Discolouration on
title and in the first three lines. First three stanzas show clear orthography. Some fading
of ink visible on left hand side of the script from stanzas 4 to 9. One substantial ink
mark visible on right hand side of the page.

Page 33.

Four lines of a previous stanza commenced on page 32. First line reads: ‘& he that
talked with me a golden reed held’. Seven further six line stanzas and four lines of a
paraphrase of New Jerusalem continued on page 34. Stanzas 4, 5, 6, and 7 show
evidence of smudges. Some discolouration towards the end of this page. No evidence
of handwriting showing through from previous page. Stanzas scored off by a single
line.
Page 34.

Remaining two lines of the paraphrase of: The New Jerusalem. First line reads: ‘- But they which are written in Gods book of life’. Paraphrase scored off by a double line. Some letters formed in italic style of hand on this page.

The River of the Water of Life - Rev. Chap. 22. Title underlined. First line reads: ‘& he showed me a river in midst of the street’. Eight comparable six line stanzas in ababcc form and two lines of a ninth stanza. Eight stanzas scored off by a single line. Script is cramped and faded in places. Fading also evident on left hand side of the page. Some discolouration present on right hand side of the page. Some handwriting visible on the right hand side at the bottom of this page.

Page 35.

Four remaining lines of the stanza begun on page 34; ‘& whoremongers all their old deeds to repeat’. Stanza scored off by a single line. Three remaining stanzas of Revelations in same form. Two stanzas scored off by a single line. Third and final stanza scored off by a double line. Smudge mark in third stanza, second line.

The Last Judgment - St. Matt. From Ver 31st to the end. Title underlined. Seven quatrains in aabb form and two lines of a quatrain continued on p. 36. First line reads: ‘When the sun of man comes in his glory anew’. Seven stanzas scored off by a single line. Orthography clear full hand.

Page 36.

Two lines belonging to previous stanzas: ‘Ye have done it to me in the mind & the heart -’. Remaining four stanzas of paraphrase. Three stanzas scored off by a single line. Fourth and last stanza scored off by a double line. Orthography clear and even.
Child Harold. Title underlined. Clare resumes Child Harold after a long interruption. Three nine line stanzas in Childe Harold form and six lines belonging to the stanza continued onto page 37. First three stanzas scored off by a single line. First line of first stanza reads: 'The lightnings vivid flashes - rend the cloud'. Fading evident on left hand side of the page. Clare has deleted sixth line in third stanza. First version reads: 'The peace - as health & I was wont to find'. Second version reads: 'The peace as walks & health & I pursue'. Some smudges evident. Handwriting is comparable to page 20. Evidence of revision.

Page 37.

Four lines of an advertisement which reads as follows: Speedily will be published. Phrase underlined. The Sale of Old Wigs & Sundries A Poem By Lord Byron. Title underlined. In Quarto 8vo & Twelves. Phrase underlined. Last three lines of final stanza on page 36 beginning: 'The barge with naked mast in sheltered place / Beside the brig close to the bank is tied / While small waves plashes by its bulky side'. Lines scored off by a single line. These lines follow the rhyme scheme of the stanza on the bottom of page 36.

Song. Title faintly underlined. Three eight line stanzas with alternating rhymes (ababcdcd) with alternating lines of 4 and 3 iambic feet. First line reads: 'The floods come oer the meadow leas'. Clare has deleted a word in the sixth line of the first stanza of this song. The first version reads: 'The trees their leaves are loosing'. The second version reads as follows: 'The trees their coats are loosing'. First two stanzas scored off by a single line. Third stanza scored off by a double line. Some discolouration throughout the stanzas of this song. Orthography is erratic on this page.
One nine line stanza in *Childe Harold* form beginning: 'Absence in love is worse than any fate'. Stanza scored off by a single line. Evidence of lines from previous page showing through.

*I think of thee a song*. Title underlined. No lines to this song - see page 45 of *Nor*, MS6.

*Page 38.*

*Don Juan a Poem*. Title underlined. This is the first appearance of *Don Juan* in *Nor*, MS6. Like *Nor*, MS8, the poem appears in a self-contained unit. Six stanzas and five lines of Byronic ottava rima. Six stanzas scored off by a single line. First line of first stanza reads: "'Poets are born' - & so are whores - the trade is'. Second stanza carries an asterisk above the first word of the first line: 'There's'. Clare has also inserted the word 'love' in this line, which reads as follows; 'There's much said about [love ^] & more of women'. Handwriting shows through from previous page on the right hand side. Deletion in the third line the last five lines of this page; Clare's first draft reads as follows; 'With speeches that full fifty times I've told ye'. Altered to: 'With speeches that full fifty times they've told ye'.

*Page 39.*

Remaining three lines belonging to previous stanza: ' - Prince Albert goes to Germany & must he'. Stanza scored off by a single line.

Six further ottava rima stanzas. First line reads: 'Whigs strum state fiddle strings untill they snap'. Each stanza scored off by a single line. Orthography is full and clear. Some discolouration. Handwriting showing through from previous page. The word 'wife'
underlined in second, eight line stanza. Last two stanzas on this page are written in a smaller neater hand. Finer nib? Change of pen?

**Page 40.**

Two further ottava rima stanzas. First line of first stanza reads: ‘I’ve never seen the cow turn to a bull’. Each stanza scored off by a single line.  

**Song.** Title underlined. First line reads: ‘Eliza now the summer tells’. Three ten line rhyming couplet stanzas. Two stanzas scored off by a single line. Third stanza scored off by a double line.  

One stanza in ottava rima scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘Now this new poem is entirely new’.  

Four lines of another stanza which continues onto page 41. First line reads: ‘Lord bless me now the day is in the gloaming’. Handwriting shows through from previous page. The song on this page appears faint and thinly written compared to other stanzas.

**Page 41.**

Remaining four lines belonging to stanza on page 40. First line reads: ‘Surely that wedding day is on the comeing’. Stanza scored off by a single line.  

Five stanzas written in ottava rima, each scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘But to our text again - & pray where is it’.  

Six lines of a further stanza which continues onto page 42. First line reads: ‘O glorious constitution what a picking’. Orthography clear. Use of full ink. Evidence of handwriting showing through from previous page; more obvious on the right hand side at the bottom of the page. No deletions or revisions.
Page 42.

Remaining two lines of stanza at the bottom of page 42. First line reads: ‘In winding that patched broken old state clock up’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

Six stanzas written in ottava rima each stanza scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘Give toil more pay where rank starvation lurches’.

Two further lines of ottava rima stanza which are continued into the stanza on page 43. First line reads: ‘Now i’nt this canto worth a single pound’. Thinner ink evident in stanzas 3, 4, 5 and six. Orthography clear but the page is badly smudged and blotted.

Handwriting showing through from previous page to a substantial degree.

Page 43.

Six lines continued from the previous page. First line reads: ‘As thieves are worth a hatter I’ll be bound’. Stanza scored off by a double line.

Don Juan. Title underlined. Clare has written a note following an asterisk above Don Juan. The note reads: ‘To be inserted between the first & second verses at the beginning of the Poem’.

Four stanzas written in ottava rima. Each stanza scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘Milton sung Eden & the fall of man’. Stanzas written with full ink. Handwriting showing through from previous page on the right hand side. Clare has deleted the fifth word in the second line of fourth stanza. First version reads: ‘It is the damnest fact of matrimony’. Second version reads: ‘It is the damnest smart of matrimony’. Second and third stanzas are badly blotted and smudged.

Page 44.

Blank. Handwriting showing through from previous page.
**Page 45.**


One nine line stanza in Childe Harold form, scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘Tis winter & the fields are bare & waste’.

Song. Title underlined. One eight line stanza with ababcdcd rhyme scheme and trimeter lines. First line reads: ‘Thourt dearest to my bosom’. Stanza scored off by a single line.

No evidence of handwriting showing through from previous page.

**Page 46.**

Prose piece, entitled Autumn. Title underlined. Forty nine lines of prose. Substantial ink mark on the lower half of this page. Two further ink marks to the right of the page. The marks obliterate a large part of Clare’s account of Glinton Church. Orthography clear but there is evidence of smudges and blotches. Clare has inserted the word ‘wood’ in the fourteenth line of this account. Writing is cramped and erratic.

**Page 47.**

Continuation of forty four lines of the prose account ‘Autumn’. Orthography is more consistent. Script is clearer and the page is cleaner. Handwriting less cramped. No evidence of revisions or insertions. A number of minor blotches throughout the page.
Page 48.

Further continuation of twenty two lines of prose. Orthography clear. Page relatively clean. No evidence of revisions or insertions. Three areas of slight smudging. Lines 8, 9, 16 and 20. Prose finishes on the upper half of the page and is not scored off by single or double line.

Page 49.

Three quarters of this page is blank. Towards the bottom, written on the left hand side are two eight line stanzas; last stanza is scored off by a double line. First line reads: ‘While the winter swells the fountain’. The metre and rhyme scheme suggest this is a continuation of the ‘Song’ on page 45. Untitled.

Page 50.

Lamentations of Jeremiah Chap. 3. Title underlined. Biblical paraphrase. Forty eight lines in rhyming couplets in loose anapaestic metre. First line reads: ‘I am the man that affliction hath seen’. Clare has deleted the sixth word in line thirteen. The first version reads: ‘He hath enclosed all my pathways with hewn heavy stone’. The second version reads: ‘He hath enclosed all my ways with hewn heavy stone’. Deletion on line 35. First version reads: ‘This I recall to my mind though I sigh’. The second version reads: ‘This I recall to my mind & I sigh’. Clare has deleted words in line 42. First version reads: ‘The lord saith the lord is my portion and stay’. The second version reads: ‘The Lord saith my soul is my portion and stay’. Orthography is clear and firm. The paraphrase is written in full ink. No handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page.
**Page 51.**

Fifty four lines of the paraphrase of *Jeremiah* continued from previous page. First line reads: ‘He keepeth his silence & sitteth alone’. Orthography clear and firm. One ink mark in line one on first word. No deletions or insertions. Clean page. No handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page.

**Page 52.**

Sixteen lines of the paraphrase of *Jeremiah* continued. The paraphrase is scored off by a double line. Two lines of paraphrase inserted in the top right hand side of the page.

‘Job Chap. 39’. Title underlined. forty two lines of blank verse. First line reads: ‘Knowest thou the time when the wild goats breed’. Orthography clear and firm. Clare has deleted a word on line 31, fourth word. First version reads: ‘To aid her labours - yet when she soars on high’. The second version reads: ‘To aid her toils - yet when she soars on high’. Second deletion in line 40, in the seventh word. First version reads: ‘Neither turneth he away from the battle’. The second version reads: ‘Neither turneth he away from the sword’. Handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page.

**Page 53.**

Continuation of the paraphrase of ‘Job. 39’. Fifteen lines scored off by a double line. No revisions or deletions.

*Job Chap. 40*. Title underlined. Thirty nine lines of a paraphrase in blank verse. First line reads: ‘Moreover God answered Job & said’. Clare has deleted eighth word in tenth line. First version reads: ‘The Lord he answered fearfull Job & said’. The second version reads: ‘The Lord he answered fearfull Job & spake’. Written in clear firm hand and in full ink. No handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page.
Page 54.

Continuation of Job 40. Six lines scored off by a double line.

Job 41 Chap. Title underlined. Forty nine lines of paraphrase in blank verse. First line reads: 'Canst thou with hooks Leviathan draw out'. 44 lines. Clare has deleted the fifth word in line 39. First version reads: 'His breath is kindled flames - & terrors flames'. The second version is 'His breath is kindled coals - & terrors flames'. Orthography is clear and firm. Ink marks evident on the right hand side of the paraphrase. Handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page.

Page 55.

Continuation of Job 41. Fifteen lines scored off by a double line.

Psalm 19. Title underlined. First line reads: 'The heavens his wonderous works declare'. Nine rhyming quatrains in abab form, alternating 4 and 3 beats to the line. Each stanza scored off by a single line. One ink mark in stanza three, fourth line, first word. This page is discoloured in the first fifteen lines particularly and around the lower edge of the page. Orthography clear and strong.

Page 56.

Continuation of Psalm 19. Six further quatrains in the same form. First five stanzas scored off by a single line. Sixth stanza scored off by a double line. Handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page.

Psalm 91. Title underlined. Six quatrains in the same form as the previous psalm. First line reads: 'He that dwelleth in the secret place'. Six four line stanzas. Each stanza
scored off by a single line. One ink mark on top right hand side of the page. Handwriting showing through from previous page on the right hand side.

Page 57.

Continuation of Psalm 91. Eight further quatrains in the same form. Seven stanzas scored off by a single line. Eighth stanza scored off by a double line. First four stanzas are discoloured. Ink mark on seventh stanza on the left hand side of the first word. Orthography clear and firm.

Child Harold. Title underlined. Second title, also underlined; ‘Song’. One eight line stanza in ababcdcd form, alternating 4 and 3 iambic lines, scored off by a single line. First line reads; ‘In this cold world without a home’.

Four lines of a stanza continued onto page 58. First line reads; ‘But love inconstant as the wind’. Substantial discolouration on the left hand side of the bottom of this page and along the bottom of the page. Handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page. Orthography is clear and firm.

Page 58.

Continuation of song from ‘Child Harold’. Four concluding lines of previous stanza scored off by a single line. First line reads: ‘I sigh & sit & sit & sigh’. Two further stanzas of this song in the same form. Last and third stanza scored off by a single line.

No handwriting showing through on right hand side of the page.

‘Isaiah Chap 47’. Five six line stanzas in ababcc form. Four stanzas scored off by a single line. Fifth stanza scored off by a double line. Ink blot in third line of first stanza. Orthography clear and firm. No handwriting showing through on the right hand side of the page.
ii NOTES TO THE TEXT

a) Editorial Principles.

From the outset of this project, my intention has been to prepare an accurate transcription of Nor, MS6 which faithfully reflects the subtle nuances and idiosyncratic style of Clare’s 1841 notebook. A close inspection of each page of the manuscript reveals not only subtle changes in handwriting but also a variation in the quality and strength of ink Clare was using at a particular time. I would hope that strict adherence to the general characteristics of Nor, MS6 through detailed annotation will convey something of the spirit and form of the original.

I have retained all those details which characterise Clare’s early asylum work - his inconsistent use of basic grammatical rules such as the failure to cross ‘t’s, to dot the ‘i’ or to use the apostrophe, particularly in the first twenty pages of Nor, MS6. Clare’s use of the ampersand and his erratic, phonetic spelling have also been retained. My aim has always been to draw attention to those anomalies which appear to mirror a lapse in concentration, a moment of hesitation or a spontaneous rush of composition.

The facsimile reproduction will hopefully allow closer inspection of the creative rawness of the varied material contained in Nor, MS6. I have attempted to reproduce, exactly, the difference in character and size of handwriting as it varies from page to page and to highlight the way Clare was using space on paper, occasionally writing diagonally or in the margin. I have also incorporated Clare’s points of emphasis and all
rough lines which appear to ring or to denote a fragment, quotation or note in Nor, MS6.

I am inclined to agree with Clare when he describes the absence of formal punctuation as no great loss to an understanding of his work. In a letter written to Eliza Emmerson in December 1829, Clare observes that grammatical ‘points’ are a movable feast:

do I write intelligable I am gennerally understood tho I do not use that awkward squad of pointings called commas colons semicolons &c & for the very reason that altho they are drilled <daily> hourly daily & weekly by every boarding school Miss who pretends to gossip in correspondence they do not know their proper exercise for they even set gramarians at loggerheads & no one can assign them their proper places for give each a sentence to point & both shall differ - point it differently
to be sure I do not often begin a new sentence with a capital & that is a slovenly neglect which I must correct hereafter in my Essay pretentions for I fear they will be nothing else

Clare is generally understood in Nor, MS6. I have included all Clare’s deletions, revisions, corrections and insertions when and where they appear in his manuscript. I have also attempted to reproduce as authentically as possible his diagrammatic notations such as asterisks, arrows, and underlinings – double to denote an end to a section or Canto and single to denote a stanza division. Clare’s use of the asterisk to indicate a specific instruction or the occasional sketched hand to point the reader’s interest to a particular point of the text has also been included.

What I hope will be quickly apparent is that despite formal grammatical omissions such as commas or full stops the material of Nor, MS6 loses none of its intellectual subtlety or artistry. Clare’s use of a single or double line to mark the division between individual stanzas is a device previous editors have been inclined to
overlook. Such lines would appear to not only shape and direct the general order of its contents but they also enhance what I consider to be an inherent architectural construction to the manuscript as a whole. Geoffrey Grigson's 1949 edition followed Clare's principle of underlining up to a point as does Geoffrey Summerfield's edition of 1990 but neither of these editors have been consistent in their use throughout their respective versions of Child Harold.

The endnotes for the transcription are necessarily full as there is, to date, no comprehensive commentary on Child Harold or the remaining contents of Nor, MS6. My aim has been to avoid repeating information contained in the footnotes suggested by Robinson and Powell in The Later Poems of John Clare, (1984). The editors in this instance have, in the main, indicated differences in lines and words between Nor, MS8 Nor, MS7 and Nor, MS6 together with references for Byron's Don Juan and Childe Harold with Clare's two long poems. Whenever possible I have drawn attention to Clare's particular use of Byron's poems of confinement such as 'The Lament of Tasso', 'The Prisoner of Chillon' and 'The Prophecy of Dante'. My priority as regards the endnotes has been to provide a background or secondary narrative to Clare's manuscript, which should enhance an autobiographical focus in evidence throughout. I have also attempted to identify other, sometimes earlier drafts of the material which make up Nor, MS6. My notes explain where and possibly why Clare has quoted writers other than Byron and Burns, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Sterne and Swift. The notes related to the biblical paraphrases demonstrate Clare's wide knowledge and generous use of the bible.
Above all, I hope to have emphasised the relationship between individual pieces of writing in Nor, MS6, retaining all the material of each individual page together, in order to demonstrate how Clare appears to use stanzas or passages of prose to work off each other, often in a particular sequence. Whenever possible I have indicated subtle revisions taking place in the Northborough autumnal sequence as Clare copied these stanzas from the newspaper margins onto the pages of Nor, MS6. I have indicated revisions from draft work to fair copy by using italics in the lines that have been revised or altered. I should point out that each page of the transcript is reproduced in smaller or larger font size in order to accommodate a more authentic appearance of the manuscript’s material and its relationship with other work on a single page. It is a central aim of this thesis to convey the unity of theme and purpose of the manuscript as a whole.

b) **Symbols**

- **[Word ~]** Denotes a word that is badly smudged.
- **<Word>** Denotes a word that Clare has written over or corrected but which has obliterated the earlier choice of word.
- **[Word ^]** Denotes word that Clare has inserted.
- **[Word del]** Denotes word that Clare has deleted.
- **[Word ? illeg]** Denotes a word that is difficult to decipher – the word in the transcription is conjectural based on Clare’s use of vocabulary in other parts of the text.
CHAPTER FIVE

TRANSCRIPTION
BROKEN TEXT AND SOME POOR QUALITY IMAGES IN ORIGINAL THESIS.
Recollections of Journey from Naples in 1825.

*From what is now the London Bridge, the "Pass" of Mito House, a man's house, on the banks of the River Thames.* It was on a Sunday afternoon and I was taking a walk. I passed by the bridge and saw a lady walking towards it. She was dressed in black and carried a small handbag. I wondered if she was a nun. I followed her and reached the second bridge. When I reached the second bridge, I saw a man standing on the side and I asked him if he knew the way to my destination. He pointed to the left and said, "That's the way." I followed his advice and reached my destination. I was grateful to him for his help.
I've wandered many a weary mile
Love in my heart was burning
To seek a home in Mary's smile
But cold is loves sojourning
The cold ground was a feather bed
Truth never acts contrary
I had no home above my head
My home was love & Mary

Here's where Mary loved to be
& here are flowers she planted
Here are books she loved to see
& here - the kiss she granted

I had no home in early youth
When my first love was thwarted
But if her heart still beats with truth
We'll never more be parted
& changing as her love may be
My own shall never vary
Nor night nor day I'm never free
But sigh for absent Mary

Here on the wall with smiling brow
Her picture used to cheer me
Both walls & rooms are naked now
No Marys nigh to hear me

The church spire still attracts my eye
& leaves me broken hearted
Though grief hath worn their channels dry
I sigh o'er days departed

The church yard where she used to play
My feet could wander hourly
My school walks there was every day
Where she made winter flowery

No ray of hope my fate beguiles
I've lost love home & Mary

Here's were Mary loved to be
& here are flowers she planted
Here are books she loved to see
& here - the kiss she granted

Recolections &c of journey from Essex - Placed at the end of the Journey &

* Somewhere on the London side the "Plough" Public house a Man passed me on horseback in a Slopfrock & said “here's another of the broken down haymakers” & threw me a penny to get a half pint of beer which I picked up & thanked him [for ^] & when I got to the plough I called for a half pint & drank it & got a rest & escaped a very heavy shower in the bargain by having a shelter till it was over - afterwards I would have begged a penny of two drovers who were very saucey so I begged no more of any body meet who I would

* Having passed a Lodge on the left hand within a mile & half or less of a town I think it might be *[St ~] Ives but I forget the name I sat down to rest on a flint heap where I might rest half an hour or more & while sitting here I saw a tall Gipsey come out of the Lodge gate & make down the road towards where I was sitting when she got up to me on seeing she was a young woman with an honest looking countenance rather handsome I spoke to her & asked her a few questions which she answered readily & with evident good humour so I got up & went on to the next town with her - she cautioned me on the way to put somthing in my hat to keep the crown up & said in a lower tone “you'll be noticed” but not knowing what she hinted - I took no notice & made no reply at length she pointed to a small tower church which she called Shefford Church & advised me to go on a footway which would take me direct to it & I should shorten my journey fifteen miles by doing so I would gladly have taken the young womans advice feeling that it was honest & a nigh guess towards the truth but fearing I might loose my way & not be able to find the north road again I thanked her & told her I should keep to the road when she bade me “good day” & went into a house or shop on the left hand side the road

* It was St Neots
July 20th, 1821

Your note of July 14th, 1821, has been read, but it is difficult to say whether the information contained therein is correct or not.

The subject of your note is the possibility of a voyage to the East Indies, which you propose to undertake.

I have no reason to doubt your sincerity and enthusiasm, but I must caution you against the dangers and difficulties you may encounter.

The East Indies are a land of mystery, and the climate can be extremely harsh. You must be prepared for long journeys and uncertain conditions.

However, if you are determined to undertake this voyage, I shall do everything in my power to assist you.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
July 24th 1841

Returned home out of Essex & found no Mary - her & her family are nothing to me now though she herself was once the dearest of all - & how can I forget?

Journal July 18 - 1841-Sunday - Felt very melancholy - went a walk on the forest in the afternoon fell in with some gipsseys one of whom offered to assist in my escape from the mad house by hiding me in [the del][his] camp to which I almost agreed but told him I had no money to start with but if he would do so I would promise him fifty pounds & he agreed to do so before Saturday on Friday I went again but he did not seem so willing so I said little about it - on Sunday I went & they were all gone. I found an old wide awake hat & an old straw bonnet of the plumb pudding sort was left behind - & I put the hat in my pocket thinking it might be usefull for another oppurtunity & as good luck would have it, it turned out to be so

July 19 Monday - [I del?] Did nothing

July 20 Reconnoitered the rout the Gipsy pointed out & found it a legible one to make a movement & having only honest courage & myself in my army I led the way & my troops soon followed but being careless in mapping down the rout as the Gipsy told me I missed the lane to Enfield town & was going down Enfield highway till I passed "The Labour in Vain" Publichouse where a person I knew coming out of the door told me the way.

I walked down the lane gently and was soon in Enfield Town & bye & bye on the great York road where it was all plain sailing & steering ahead meeting no enemy & fearing none I reached Stevenage where being Nigh I got over a gate crossed over the corner of a green paddock where seeing a pond or hollow in the [word? illeg] I forced to stay off a respectable distance to keep from falling into it for [my ?] legs were nearly knocked up & began to stagger I scaled some old rotten palings into the yard & then had higher palings to clamber over to get into the shed or hovel which I did with difficulty being rather weak & to my good luck I found some trusses of clover piled up about 6 or more feet square which I gladly mounted & slept on there was some trays in the hovel on which I would have reposed had I not found a better bed I slept soundly but had a very uneasy dream [I thought my first wife lay on my left arm & somebody took her away from my side] which made me wake up rather unhappy I thought as I awoke somebody said "Mary" but nobody was near - I lay down with my head towards the north to show myself the steering point in the morning.

July 21 Daylight was looking in on every side & fearing my garrison might be taken by storm & myself be made prisoner I left my lodging by the way I got in & thanked God for his kindness in procuring it - (for anything in a famine is better than nothing & any place that giveth the weary rest is a blessing) I gained the north road again & steered due north - on the left hand side the road under the bank like a cave I saw a Man & boy coiled up asleep which I hailed & they woke up to tell me the name of the next village - ** I passed 3 or 4 good built houses on a hill & a public house on the road side in the hollow below them I seemed to pass the Milestones very quick in the morning but towards night they seemed to be stretched further asunder I got to a village further on & forgot the name the road on the left hand was quite overshaded by some trees & quite dry & so I sat down half an hour & made a good many wishes for breakfast but wishes was no hearty meal so I got up as hungry as I sat down - I forget here the names of the villages I passed through but recollect at late evening going through Potton in Bedfordshire where I called in a house to light my pipe in which was a civil old woman & a young country wench making lace on a cushion as round as a globe & a young fellow all civil people - I asked them a few questions as to the way & where the clergyman and overseer lived but they scarcely heard me or gave me no answer.

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This note should be placed at the bottom of the page Baldeck".

*Note On searching my pockets after the above was written I found part of a newspaper vide "Morning Chronicle" on which the following fragments were pencilled soon after I got the information from labourers going to work or travellers journeying along to better their condition as I was hoping to do mine in fact I believed I saw home in every one's countenance which seemed so cheerfull in my own - "There is no place like home" the following was written by the Road side - 1st Day - Tuesday Started from Enfield and slept at Stevenage on some clover trusses - cold lodging

Wednesday - Jacks Hill is passed already consisting of a beer shop & some houses on the hill appearing newly built - the last Milestone 35 Miles from London got through Baldeek & sat under a dry hedge & had a rest in lieu of breakfast.

** Text continued

I then went through Potton & happened with a kind talking country man who told me the Parson lived a good way from where I was or overseer I don't know which so I went on hopping with a crippled foot for the gravel had got into my old shoes one of which had now nearly lost the sole Had I found the overseers house at hand or the Parsons I should have gave my name & begged for a shilling to carry me home but I was forced to brush on pennys & be thankfull I had a leg to move on
I then asked him whether he could tell me of a farm yard anywhere on the road where I could find a shed & some dry straw & he said yes & if you will go with me I will show you the place - its a public house on the left hand side of the road at the sign of the "Ram" but seeing a stone or flint heap I longed to rest as one of my feet was very painful so I thanked him for his kindness & bid him go on - but the good natured fellow lingered awhile as if wishing to conduct me & then suddenly recolecting that he had a hamper on his shoulder & a lock up bag in his hand cram full to meet the coach which he feared missing - he started hastily & was soon out of sight - I followed looking in vain for the countrymans straw bed - & not being able to [find del] meet it I lay down by a shed side under some Elm trees between the wall & the trees being a thick row planted some 5 or 6 feet from the buildings I lay there & tried to sleep but the wind came in between them so cold that I lay till I quaked like the ague & quitted the lodging for a better at the Ram which I could hardly hope to find - it now began to grow dark upon me that doubt & hopelessness made me turn so feeble that I was scarcely able to walk yet I could not sit down or give up but shuffled along till I saw a lamp shining as bright as the moon which on nearing was suspended over a Tollgate before I got through the man came out with a candle & eyed me narrowly but having no fear I stoop to ask him whether I was going northward & he said when you get through the gate you are; so I thanked him kindly & went through on the other side & gathered my old strength as my doubts vanished I soon cheered up & hummed the air" of highland Mary" as I went on at length fell in with an odd house all alone near a wood but I could not see what the sign was though the sign seemed to stand oddly enough in a sort of rough or spout there was a large porch over the door & being weary I crept in & glad enough I was to find I could lie with my legs straight the inmates were all gone to roost for I could hear them turn over in bed as I lay at full length on the stones in the porch - I slept here till daylight & felt very much refreshed as I got up - I blest my two wives & both their families" when I lay down & when I got up & when I thought of some former difficulties on a like occasion I could not help blessing the Queen" I have but a slight recolection of my journey between here & Stilton for I was knocked up & noticed little or nothing - one night I lay in a dyke bottom from the wind & I was never hungry afterwards - I remember passing through Buckden & going a length of road afterwards - but I dont recolect the name of any place until I came to Stilton where I was completely foot founded & broken down when I had got about half way through the town a gravel causeway invited me to rest myself so I lay down & nearly went sleep a young woman (as I guessed from the voice) came out of [word -- the?del] a house & said "poor creature" & another more elderly said "O he shams" but when I got up the latter said "O no he don't" as I hobbled along very lame I heard the voices but never looked back to see where they came from - when I got near the Inn at the end of the gravel walk I met too young women & I asked one of them wether the road branching to the right bye the end of the Inn did not lead to Peterborough & she said "yes" it did so as soon as ever I was on it I felt myself in homes way & went % The coach did pass me as I sat under some trees by a high wall & the [word illeg] splashed in my face & wakened me up from a doze - when I knocked the gravel out of my shoes & [started? illeg]
I occasioned to think of the 3rd day of my mothe's birthday, when he is never to have more time to see me, as I shall be 21 years of age. I wish you to write to me and inform me of your health and how you are getting on. I am well and thank you for your letter. I am but a child of 17 years old, but I have been living in the World for some time and I am beginning to get some wisdom. I have been studying hard and I hope to become a good man in the future. I am attached to my friend and I wish you would write to me often.

Sincerely,

John

P.S. I have been thinking of my loving heart.

Mary

[Signature]

[Date]

[Address]

[Note: The text is written in a mix of formal and informal language, indicating a letter from a young man to his mother or a close friend, discussing his personal growth and future prospects.]
on rather more cheerfull though I forced to rest oftener then usual before I got to Peterborough
a man & woman passed me in a cart & on hailing me as they passed I found they were neighbours
from Helpstone where I used to live - I told them I was knocked up which they could easily see & that I had neither
eat nor drank anything since I left Essex when I told my story they clubbed together & threw me fivepence
out of the cart I picked it up & called at a small public house near the bridge where I had two half pints of ale &
twopenn'oth of bread & cheese when I had done I started quite refreshed only my feet was more crippled than ever
& I could scarcely make a walk of it over the stones & being half ashamed to sit down in the street I forced to keep
on the move & got through Peterborough better than I expected when I got on the high road I rested on the
stone heaps as I passed till I was able to go on afresh & bye & bye I passed Walton & soon reached
Werrington & was making for the Beehive as fast as I could when a cart met me with a man & woman
& a boy in it when nearing me the woman jumped out & caught fast hold of my hands & wished me to
get into the cart but I refused & thought her either drunk or mad but when I was told it was my
second wife Patty I got in & was soon at Northborough but Mary was not there neither could
I get any information about her further than the [word del] old story of her being dead six
years ago which might be taken from a bran new old Newspaper printed a dozen years
ago but I took no notice of the blarney having seen myself about a twelvemonth ago alive &
& well & as young as ever - so here I am homeless at home & half gratified to feel [word ? illeg"] I can be happy
anywhere
"May none those marks of my sad fate efface
"For they appeal from tyranny to God"
Byron

Child Harold[del]
Mary[del]
To Mary Clare - Glinton

My dear wife

Northborough July 27 1841

I have written an account of my journey or rather escape from Essex for
your amusement & hope it may [divert?] your leisure hours - I would have told you
before now that I got here to Northborough last friday night but not being able to
see you or to hear where you was I soon began to feel homeless at home & shall bye
& bye feel nearly hopeless but not so lonely as I did in Essex - [I shall be the same ^] for here I can see
Glinton church & feeling that Mary is safe if not happy [? word ^] I am gratified to believe so
though my home is no home to me my hopes are not entirely hopeless while even the
memory of Mary lives so near me - God bless you My dear Mary Give my love
to your dear [? word ^] beautifull family & to your Mother - & believe me as I ever have been
& ever shall be
My dearest Mary
your affectionate Husband
John Clare

Child Harold

Many are poets - though they use no pen
To show their labours to the shuffling age
Real poets must be truly honest men
Tied to no mongrel laws on flatterys page
No zeal have they for wrong or party rage
[No [good?] have they for del The life of labour is a rural song
That hurts no cause - nor warfare tries to wage
Toll like the ^ brook in music wears along -
Great little minds claim right to set the wrong

Ballad
Summer morning is risen
& to even it wends
Thou still art in my thought,
Like as I stili bear thee in mine eye,
Like as I love thee not at any time
For ever and for ever,

Heaves the hark more soulful
To hear the joyous thrushes sing,
To hear the lark ascend
To clear the joyous thrushes sing,

Like as I love thee not at any time
For ever and for ever,

Oh, who shall raise me up again
And make me sit in my appointed place?

Though I am weak and sickly
And in my bed of pain,
My love, my dearest, art thou
For ever and for ever.
Page 5.

& still I'm in prison\(^{34}\)
Without any friends\(^{35}\)

I had joys assurance
Though in bondage I lie
- I am still left in durance
Unwilling to sigh

Still the forest is round me\(^{36}\)
Where the trees bloom in green
As if chance ne'er had bound me
Or cares had ne'er been

Nature's love is eternal
In forest & plain
Her course is diurnal
To blossom again\(^{37}\)

& he who studies nature's volume through\(^{33}\)
& reads it with a pure unselfish mind
Will find God's power all round in every view
As one bright vision of the almighty mind
His eyes are open though the world is blind
No ill from him creations works deform
The high & lofty one is great & kind\(^{44}\)
Evil may cause the blight & crushing storm
His is the sunny glory & the calm

Song

The sun has gone down with a veil on his brow\(^{45}\)
While I in the forest sit musing alone
The maiden has been o'er the hills for her cow
While my heart's affections are freezing to stone
Sweet Mary I wish that the day was my own
To live in a cottage with beauty & thee\(^{36}\)
The past I will not as mourner bemoan
For absence leaves Mary still dearer to me\(^{37}\)

How sweet are the glooms of the midsummer even\(^{38}\)
Dark night in the bushes seems going to rest
& the bosom of Mary with fancies is heaving
Where my sorrows & feelings for seasons were blest
Nor will I repine though in love we're divided
She in the Lowlands & I in the glen\(^{39}\)
Of these forest beeches' - by nature we're guided
& I shall find rest on her bosom again

How soft the dew falls on the leaves of the beeches
How fresh the wild flower seems to slumber below
How sweet [word del] [are °] the lessons that nature still teaches
For truth is her tidings wherever I go
From school days of boyhood her image was cherished
In manhood sweet Mary\(^{41}\) was fairer than flowers\(^{42}\)
Nor yet has her name or her memory perished\(^{43}\)
Though absence like winter o'er happiness lowers

Though cares still will\(^{44}\) gather like clouds in my sky
Though hopes may grow hopeless\(^{45}\) & fetters recoil
While the sun of existance sheds light in my eye
I'll be free in a prison\(^{46}\) & cling to the soil
with how my heart sang when I thought I saw
her beautiful form and smile, so sweetly and
gracefully did I gaze. She was the beauty of
the universe, the life of my soul.

She was the one who filled my heart with
joy and happiness. Her beauty was such that
I could not help but love her. She was the
queen of my life, the one who made my
world complete.

I loved her dearly and would do anything
for her. She was the apple of my eye and I
would follow her wherever she went.

With her, the world seemed brighter, the
days longer, and the nights shorter. I was
completely devoted to her and would do
anything to make her happy.

The thought of being with her filled me
with joy and happiness. I would do anything
to be with her, to hold her close and never
let her go.

She was the light of my life, the one who
made me smile every day. She was the
most beautiful person I had ever known.

I would give anything to have her by
my side, to hold her close and never let
her go. The thought of being with her
filled me with joy and happiness.

With her, the world seemed brighter, the
days longer, and the nights shorter. I was
completely devoted to her and would do
anything to make her happy.

The thought of being with her filled me
with joy and happiness. I would do anything
to be with her, to hold her close and never
let her go. The thought of being with her
filled me with joy and happiness.
Page 6.

I'll cling to the spot where my first love was cherished
Where my heart may my soul unto Mary I gave
& when my last hope & existance77 is perished
Her memory will shine like a sun on my grave

Mary thou art one of [arts del ]hearts " ]thou muse of song78
The pole star of my being & decay79
Earths coward foes my shattered bark may wrong80
Still thoust the sunrise of my natal day81
Born to misfortunes - where no sheltering bay
Keeps off the tempest - wrecked where'er I flee82
I struggle with my fate - in trouble strong -
Mary thy name loved long still keeps me free
Till my lost life becomes a part of thee

Song * a

I've wandered many a weary mile
Love in my heart was burning
To seek a home in Mary's83 smile84
But cold is loves returning85
The cold ground was a feather bed
Truth never acts contrary
I had no home above my head
My home was love & Mary

I had no home in early youth
When my first love was thwarted86
But if her heart still beats with truth
We'll never more be parted
& changing as her love may be
My own shall never vary
Nor night nor day I'm never free
-But sigh for absent Mary

Nor night nor day nor sun nor shade87
Week88 month nor rolling year
Repairs the breach wronged love hath made
There madness - misery here89
Lifes lease was lengthened by her smiles
- Are truth & love contrary
No ray of hope my life beguiles
I've lost love home & Mary

Love is the main spring of existance - it90
Becomes a soul whereby I live to love
On all I see that dearest name is writ
Falsehood is here - but truth has life above91
Where every star that shines exists in love
Skys vary in their clouds the seasons vary
From heat to cold - change cannot constant prove92
The south is bright - but smiles can act contrary
My guide star guilds the north - & shines with Mary93

Song * b

Heres94 where Mary loved to be
& here are flowers she planted
Here are books she loved to see
& here,95 the kiss she granted

Note
*a b The above songs were written [directly *] after my return home to Northborough last friday evening
the rest of the stanzas & songs were written on Epping Forest Essex
Here on the wall in white lining Irow
The picture never clears for me
With little figures are marked in
Not always right to please me

The church home still attract my eye
It leaves me broken hearted
Though great and true these channels fly
I sigh with joy, I heal

Then observe this fly my foot in and wonder why
All bright with flowers the wonder day
Blue sky the blue in flower

And there is angels flying now
times forever more
They recited at a broken one
one in my redeeming crown

As life hath been one love
As life hath been one time of divine
Adorning fame
which the know no doubt
And all the life left to me is an important
That such was wrong redress make restorings
Without them work that left in battle
And the last side of man's sight
They took me from my wife to care to be
I do again I made the ever doubt

Yet absence claims them both I keep them too
It becomes our duty in life of our
Among a few his God and every cheer
Here in the dark of man's certain view
The man thinks far God other care
Things true to duty for the light of day
For in a mad time men wish to be gone
Not all such great men to reflect clear
They bring in New reigns to the air

How came to the land to please alone
Though beauty far I love in every line the song
The more I do so I still to love to be
Not the worst without which life is life
Not the beauty which I love to see
The life of earth in every life
The life that is done one
For no song
Not alone
Pose of every care to follow
To their love in all aaulable cause

How steadfast this hill of firm foundation
So teach the chaste pleads between
The earth moves with its endless roll above
I can hear the sea in a future green
Story is abroad but the found gree
Nature so wonderful forever not appearing
Winds in sound in morning sea
As wake with differ in these later men
Vehement as their faded temple's evening
I sigh with the flame of love forever

I sigh with the flame of love forever
Waves in the sound of love forever
Waves in the sound of love forever
Here on the wall with smileing brow
Her picture used to cheer me
Both walls & rooms are naked now
No Marys nigh to hear me

The church spire still attracts my eye
& leaves me broken hearted
Though grief hath worn their channels dry
I sigh o'er days departed

The churchyard where she used to play
My feet could wander hourly
My school walks there was every day
Where she made winter flowery

But where is angel Mary now
Loves secrets none disclose 'em
Her rosey cheek & broken vow
Live in my aching bosom

My life hath been one love - no blot it out97
My life hath been one chain of contradictions
Madhouses Prisons wh- reshops98 - never doubt
But that my life hath had some strong convictions
That such was wrong - religion makes restrictions
I would have followed - but life turned a bubble99
& clumb the giant stile of maledictions
They took me from my wife & to save trouble
I wed again & made the error double100

Yet absence claims them both & keeps them too
& locks me in a shop in spite of law
Among a low lived set & dirty crew
Here let the Muse oblivions curtain draw
& let man think - for God hath often saw
Things here too dirty for the light of day
For in a madhouse there exists no law 101
Now stagnant grows my too refined clay
I envy birds their wings to flye away102

How servile is the task to please alone
Though beauty woo & love inspire the song
Mere painted beauty103 with her heart of stone
Thinks the world worships while she flaunts along
The flower of sunshine butterfly of song
Give me the truth of heart in womans life104
The love to cherish one - & do no wrong
To none - & peace of every care & strife
Is true love in an estimable wife

How beautifull this hill of fern swells on105
So beautifull the chappel peeps between
The hornbeams - with its simple bell - alone
I wander here hid in a palace green
Mary is absent - but the forest queen
Nature is with me - morning noon & gloaming106
I write my poems in these paths unseen107
& when among these brakes & beeches roaming
I sigh for truth & home & love & woman108

I sigh for one & two & still I sigh
For many are the whispers I have heard
From beautys lips - loves soul in many an eye
Hath pierced my heart with such intense regard
I looked for joy & pain was the reward
I think of them I love each girl & boy,
Babes of two mothers - on this velvet sward & nature thinks - in her so sweet employ
While dews fall on each blossom weeping joy

Here is the chappel yard enclosed with pales & oaktrees nearly top its little bell
Here is the little bridge with guiding rail
That leads me on to many a pleasant dell
The fern owl chitters like a startled knell
To nature - yet tis sweet at evening still -
A pleasant road curves round the gentle swell
Where nature seems to have her own sweet will
Planting her beech & thorn about the sweet fern hill

I have had many loves - & seek no more -
These solitudes my last delights shall be
The leaf hid forest - & the lonely shore
Seem to my mind like beings that are free
Yet would I had some eye to smile on me
Some heart where I could make a happy home in
Sweet Susan that was wont my love to be & Bessey of the glen - for I've been roaming
With both at morn & noon & dusky gloaming

Cares gather round I snap their chains in two & smile in agony & laugh in tears
Like playing with a deadly serpent - who
Stings to the death - there is no room for fears
Where death would bring me happiness - his sheers
Kills cares that hiss to poison many a vein
The thought to be extinct my fate endears
Pale death the grand physician cures all pain
The dead rest well - who lived for joys in vain

Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841

The heavens are wrath - the thunders rattling peal
Rolls like a vast volcano in the sky
Yet nothing starts the apathy I feel
Nor chills with fear eternal destiny

My soul is apathy - a ruin vast
Time cannot clear the ruined mass away
My life is hell - the hopeless die is cast & manhoods prime is premature decay

Roll on ye wrath of thunders - peal on peal
Till worlds are ruins & myself alone
Melt heart & soul cased in obdurate steel
Till I can feel that nature is my throne

I live in love sun of undying light & fathom my own heart for ways of good
In its pure atmosphere day without night
Smiles on the plains the forest & the flood

Smile on ye elements of earth & sky
Or frown in thunders as ye frown on me
Bid earth & its delusions pass away
But leave the mind as its creator free
The twilight covers a mile of green. The sun sets between the earth and sky, a vast expanse of violet, purple, and red. The twilight is a time of rest, a moment of quiet peace.

Through the mist, the moon rises in the east, casting a soft glow across the landscape. The stars twinkle in the night sky, a distant reminder of the universe.

The twilight is a time of solace, a moment of reflection. It is a time to remember and to reflect.

Life is like a dream that never ends. The twilight is the time of rest, a moment to reflect on the day.

In all my years of life, I have seen many things. The twilight is a time of calm, a moment to reflect on the day.

Life is like a dream that never ends. The twilight is a time of rest, a moment to reflect on the day.

The twilight is a time of solace, a moment of reflection. It is a time to remember and to reflect.

Life is like a dream that never ends. The twilight is the time of rest, a moment to reflect on the day.
This twilight seems a veil of gauze & mist
Trees seem dark hills between the earth & sky
Winds sob awake & then a gusty hist
Fans through the wheat like serpents gliding bye
I love to stretch my length 'tween earth & sky
& see the inky foliage o'er me wave
Though shades are still my prison where I lie
Long use grows nature which I easy brave
& think how sweet cares rest within the grave

Remind me not of other years or tell
My broken hopes of joys they are to meet
While my own falsehood rings the loudest knell
To one fond heart that aches too cold to beat
Mary how oft with fondness I repeat
That name alone to give my troubles rest
The very sound though bitter seemeth sweet
In my loves home & thy own faithless breast
Truths bonds are broke & every nerve distrest

Life is to me a dream that never wakes
Night finds me on this lengthening road alone
Love is to me a thought that ever aches
A frost bound thought that freezes life to stone
Mary in truth & nature still my own
That warms the winter of my aching breast
Thy name is joy nor will I life bemoan
Midnight when sleep takes charge of natures rest
Finds me awake & friendless - not distrest

Tie all my cares up in thy arms O sleep
& give my weary spirits peace & rest
I'm not an outlaw in this midnight deep
If prayers are offered from sweet womans breast
One & one only made my being blest
& fancy shapes her form in every dell
On that sweet bosom I've had hours of rest
Though now through years of absence doomed to dwell
Day seems my night & night seems blackest hell

England my country though my setting sun
Sinks in the ocean gloom & dregs of life
My muse can sing my Marys heart was won
& joy was heaven when I called her wife
The only harbour in my days of strife
Was Mary when the seas roiled mountains high
When joy was lost & every sorrow rife
To her sweet bosom I was wont to flye
To undecieve by truth lifes treacherous agony

Friend of the friendless from a host of snares
From lying varlets & from friendly foes
I sought thy quiet truth to ease my cares
& on the blight of reason found repose
But when the storm is past and the tempest
By the heart's control for my return
I could fete to ease my spirit and
Teach it love before when I have removed
And tell in heaven. Let's have to war

For war for one whom very rare is put
By tale or teasing. Well can be
Doubt — but I am near past
With a outward followed solitude to me
To make a real war. Why should God make for
God's gift is true. For I may the sun
In these effects arise from God's pleasure
And other pleasures for my soul in your
Well the last. I lost The more the war

I love The most unless beneath the sun
The name was the spirit in my heart.

Are having your choice — by God will be done
The ties that keep unbroken cannot part
For can of the cases even or desert
But ample beauty to God with the metal's silver
Bears love to Thee between us — not to part

Are to know more the love'sbeloverness
Is there in dearest? Will long filled days

He sang the song to me
Of love's beauty, only...

To be below I do all week
To how I love my loved one

The soul of woman is my theme
I sang to my song Divine

And for that tale the happy times
To hear the sweet sounds there

So may be done. I found what
But when my soul in heaven to heaven

But heaven itself without the best
If I must to his return phase
Through the cold was he dwell
What would love but in the right an issue
The soul of woman is my theme with
The songs make these songs Divine

And make me say "marry me".

But all of the truly these
But when the strife of nature ceased her throes
& other hearts would beat for my return
I trusted fate to ease my world of woes
Seeking loves harbour - where I now sojourn
- But hell is heaven could I cease to mourn

For her for one whose very name is yet
My hell or heaven - & will ever be
Falsehood is doubt - but I can ne'er forget
Oaths virtuous falsehood volunteered to me
To make my soul new bonds which God made free
Gods gift is love & I do wrong the giver
To place affections wrong from Gods decree
- No when farewell upon my lips did quiver
& all seemed lost - I loved her more than ever

I loved her in all climes beneath the sun
Her name was like a jewel in my heart
Twas heavens own choice - & so Gods will be done
Love ties that keep unbroken cannot part
Nor can cold absence sever or desert
That simple beauty blessed with matchless charms
Oceans have rolled between us - not to part
E'en ice lands snows true loves delirium warms
For there I've dreamed - & Mary filled my arms

Song

O Mary sing thy songs to me
Of love & beautys melody
My sorrows sink beneath distress
My deepest griefs are sorrowless
So used to glooms & cares am I
My tearless troubles seem as joy
O Mary sing thy songs to me
Of love & beautys melody

"To be beloved is all I need
" & them I love are loved indeed"
The soul of woman is my shrine
& Mary made my songs divine
O for that time that happy time
To hear thy sweet Piana's chime
In music so divine & clear
That woke my soul in heaven to hear

But heaven itself without thy face
To me would be no resting place
& though the world was one delight
No joy would live but in thy sight
The soul of woman is my shrine
Then Mary make these songs divine
For music love & melody
Breath all of thee & only thee
I love the nature in my own heart
for when I walk the earth DOWN FROM above
for then I will the landscape from a foot of heaven—
then there lies the world all grown
then very truly I know
For one I call you that greatest hero known
Upon the face of women—ever the son
I know her absence...fill that void that not
My hold for all things—stirring that too far

Thus with the great and high, life one
whose name in love—been ares
In the high white place of your dream
with that which I wish to see
Of contrite heart and spirit from in free
We will do, at my will and wise—never think
Our love's life to end to be
Of rich, I am not—such is fate to live
Song

Lovely Mary when we parted
I ne’er felt so lonely hearted
As I do now in field & glen
When hope says “we shall meet again”
[At illeg?] & by yon spire that points to heaven
Where my earliest vows were given
By each meadow field & fen
I’ll love thee till we meet again

True as the needle to the pole
My life I love thee heart & soul
Wa’n’t thy love in my heart enrolled
Though love was fire t’would soon be cold
By thy eyes of heavens own blue
My heart for thine was ever true
By sun & moon by sea & shore
My life I love thee more & more

& by that hope that lingers last
For heaven when life’s hell is past
By time the present - past & gone
I’ve loved thee - & I love thee on
Thy beauty made youths life divine
Till my soul grew a part of thine
Mary I mourn no pleasures gone -
The past hath made us both as one

Now melancholy autumn comes anew
With showery clouds & fields of wheat tanned brown
Along the meadow banks I peace pursue
& see the wild flowers gleaming up & down
Like sun & light - the ragworts golden crown
Mirrors like sunshine when sunbeams retire
& silver yarrow - there’s the little town
& oer the meadows gleams that slender spire
Reminding [me’] of one & waking fond desire

I love thee nature in my inmost heart
Go where I will thy truth seems from above
Go where I will thy landscape forms a part
Of heaven - e’en these fens where wood nor grove
Are seen - their very nakedness I love
For one dwells nigh that secret hopes prefer
Above the race of women - like the dove
I mourn her absence - fate that would deter
My hate for all things - strengthens love for her

Thus saith the great & high & lofty one
Whose name is holy - home eternity
In the high & holy place I dwell alone
& with them also that I wish to see
of contrite humble spirits - from sin free
Who trembles at my word - & good receivethou high & lofty one - O give to me
Truths low estate & I will glad believe
If such I am not - such I’m feign to live
Balloons

I would love to see those balloons rise
I can see them

He fears the future, he sees the future
Which he has only seen
If true love has heart, he must be true
To see the wild again, he must see true

The sky that we have broken today
The cloud that protects where the birds play
To keep the little one from the sun

He said that leaving the money worth
1.0, he said, the green tree
Right, he said, he need not
To lift his voice to me

I will return to the shore
To keep the fever of the fire
That never do, my sweet voice
To the child again

The pleasant moon, how does he in to help
To keep the moon, how does he in the moon

He fell, he fell among the rushing waves
He could not hold on to the moon

He said, "I fear the night," he said, "I fear the night"
Of what tomorrow brings to me

He said, "I fear the night," he said, "I fear the night"
Of what tomorrow brings to me

That love, how do I hold it up in my heart

Some days Iוהו me like a comet, those days
Some days I would love to see a comet rise

Because I told the world that they are not
Because I told the world that they are not

Some days I יהוה me, I would love to see a comet rise
Because I told the world that they are not
Because I told the world that they are not
[That voice - that look - that face of one delight del] 165
That form from boyhood loved & still loved on 166
That voice - that look - that face of one delight
Loves register for years, months, weeks - [each day & night del] time past & gone
Her looks was ne’er forgot or out of sight
- Mary the muse of every song I write
Thy cherished memory never leaves my own
Though cares chill winter doth my manhood blight
& freeze like Niobe 167 my thoughts to stone 168 -
Our lives are two - our end & aim is one 169

Ballad 170

Sweet days while God your blessings send
I call your joys my own
- & if I have an only friend
I am not left alone

She sees the fields the trees the spires 171
Which I can daily see
& if true love her heart inspires
Life still has joys for me

She sees the wild flower in the dells
That in my rambles 172 shine
The sky that oer her homestead dwells
Looks sunny over mine

The cloud that passes where she dwells
In less than half an hour
Darkens around these orchard dells
Or melts a sudden shower

The wind that leaves the sunny south
& fans the orchard tree
Might steal the kisses from her mouth
& waft her voice to me

O when will autumn bring the news
Now harvest browns the fen
That Mary as my vagrant muse 173
& I shall meet again

Tis pleasant now days hours begin to pass 174
To dewy Eve 175 - To walk down narrow close
& feel ones feet among refreshing grass
& hear the insects in their homes discourse
& startled blackbird flye from covert close 176
of white thorn hedge with wild fears fluttering wings 177
& see the spire & hear the clock toll hoarse 178
& whisper names - & think over many things
That love hurds up in truths imaginings

Fame 179 blazed upon me like a comets glare 180
Fame waned & left me like a fallen star 181
Because I told the evil what they are
& truth & falsehood never wished to mar
My Life hath been a wreck - & I’ve gone far
For peace & truth - & hope - for home & rest
- Like Edens gates - fate throws a constant bar -
Thoughts may o’ertake the sunset in the west
- Man meets no home within a womans breast

Though they are blazoned in the poets song 182
As all the comforts which our lifes contain
I saw it set in each sun-my soul it lasted
From the heart of health to sorrow's breast,
But still it held its might, for this is where
I felt my purpose, where I felt the need.
I almost came to know my daily path
Fuming as emblems my tender will,
I sought his past the boundless air,
And thus my heart was shaped.
I read & sought such joys my whole life long
& found the best of poets sung in vain
But still I read & sighed & sued [in vain del] again
& lost no purpose where I had the will
I almost worshiped when my toils grew vain
Finding no antidote my pains to kill
I sigh a poet & a lover still

Song

Dying gales of sweet even
How can you sigh so
Though the sweet day is leaving
& the sun sinketh low
How can you sigh so
For the wild flower is gay
& her dew gems all glow
For the absence of day

Dying gales of sweet even
Breath music from toil
Dewey eve is loves heaven
& meets beautys smile
Love leans on the stile
Where the rustic brooks flow
Dying gales all the while
How can you sigh so

Dying gales round a prison
To fancy may sigh
But day here hath risen
Over prospects of joy
Here Mary would toy
When the sun it got low
Even gales whisper joy
& never sigh so

Labour lets man his brother
Retire to his rest
The babe meets its mother
& sleeps on her breast -
The sun in the west
Has gone down in the ocean
Dying gales gently sweep
O’er the hearts ruffled motion
& sing it to sleep

The spring may forget that he reigns in the sky
& winter again hides her flowers in the snow
The summer may thirst when her fountains are dry
But I’ll think of Mary wherever I go
The bird may forget that her nest is begun
When the snow settles white on the new budding tree
& nature in tempests forget the bright sun
But I’ll ne’er forget her - that was plighted to me

How could I - how should I - that loved her so early
Forget - when I’ve sung of her beauty in song
How could I forget - What I’ve worshiped so dearly
From boyhood to manhood - & all my life long
As leaves to the branches in summer comes duly
& blossoms will bloom on the stalk & the tree
A long, long time ago I thought
To make a wish and see it come
But nothing was worth the thought
Of my first true love.

When I closed my eyes, I saw his face,
My wish was to be with him,
Admiring his beauty, his might in all,
As we danced in the day.

I like to see, feel, hear, taste,
Filling myself with a song
I make it grow, this same
To some becomes a song.

If I had a pencil I must be still,
But you will not be cold,
Big heart with hearts from all,
That love will not be lost.

When summer seems to be green,
Winter bare is thin,
Do we forget that we have been?
That time seems to be.

When we do refuse before the sword?
Do we have to give
The most in seeking love?
But my love will come.

This heart smiles and rumbles all the plain
Of heaven, see its harvests shine.

Trust in the spirit and in all things
As it was, it is, and it shall be,
For beauty and strength in our life
The nature of the strength, that brings increase
To all the world to his own foreseen peace,
He hides his face, he hides the increase.
He moves in the sun, looks out the wealth at pleasure.

This life is made of things to promote.
Your heart is filled with beauty, revealing
In every place, marks and white face
To the truth, but seeing is believing.

If we see much from truth that's in returning.
We see deception take the place of truth.
In every human flower, in the country growing.
Now am a man, I can stand off from truth.
To her beauty I'll cling - & I'll love her as truly
& think of sweet Mary wherever I be

---Song---

No single hour can stand for nought
No moment hand can move
But calenders a aching thought
Of my first lonely love

---

Where silence doth the loudest call
My secrets to betray
As moonlight holds the night in thrall
As suns reveal the day

---

I hide it in the silent shades
Till silence finds a tongue
I make its grave where time invades
Till time becomes a song

---

I bid my foolish heart be still
But hopes will not be chid
My heart will beat - & burn - & chill
First love will not be hid

---

When summer ceases to be green
& winter bare & blea
Death may forget what I have been
[When, del] [But ^] I [shall del] [mayst ^] cease to be

---

When words refuse before the crowd
My Marys name to give
The muse in silence sings aloud
& there my love [can? illeg del] [will ^] live

---

Now harvest smiles embrowning all the plain
The sun of heaven o'er its ripeness shines
"Peace - plenty" has been sung nor sung in vain
As all bring forth the makers grand designs
- Like gold that brightens in some hidden mines
His nature is the wealth that brings increase
To all the world - his sun forever shines
- He hides his face & troubles they increase
He smiles - the sun looks out in wealth & peace

---

This life is made of lying & grimace
This world is filled with whoring & deceiving
Hypocrisy ne'er masks an honest face
Story's are told - but seeing is believing
& I've seen much from which there's no retrieving
I've seen deception take the place of truth
I've seen knaves flourish - & the country grieving
Lies was the current gospel in my youth
& now a man - I'm farther off from truth
The new red the heart
The soul read it in mine
Not even a decent
Despair truth in the shrine
Though in death I keep it
To borrow before
In my heart and I keep it
Help it for bay

For her I long
Through months and years-
In passion, this only
In sorrow I grieve
My sorrow I grieve-
Though tedious away
In this world Iiever
I cannot meet you

No heart nor yet pleasure
Without her will stay
Life leaves its treasure
When she’s away
Though the mists of the sea
Dehors may miss
The heart of the winter
Meet the dawn of the spring

The first bent he distant
The last feeling shelter
To my heart it’s the nearest
Where their art
How will he the farthest
Though my eyes may be dry
If to me that art nearest
Though I meet the wave

But I know when to meet thee
How distant in life
How soon will I meet thee
Here true love I’ll unite
How soon will I meet thee
At the slope of the day
Though after would still that wave
Kissing would meet me
To kiss the sweet beauty would shine away

The newness of the west
The sun in the west
Loves like true lovers
As they on the breast
To meet the way distant
Page 15.

Song

They near read the heart
Who would read it in mine
That love can desert
The first truth on his shrine
Though in Lethe I steep it
& sorrows prefer
In my hearts core I keep it
& keep it for her

For her & her only
Through months & through years
I've wandered thus lonely
In sorrow & fears
My sorrows I smother
Though troubles anoy
In this world & no other
I cannot meet joy

No peace nor yet pleasure
Without her will stay
Life looses its treasure
When Mary's away
Though the nightingale often
In sorrow may sing
- Can the blast of the winter
Meet blooms of the spring

Thou first best & dearest
Though dwelling apart
To my heart still the nearest
Forever thou art
& thou wilt be the dearest
Though our joys may be o'er
& to me thou art nearest
Though I meet thee nomore

________________________________________

Song

Did I know where to meet thee
Thou dearest in life
How soon would I greet thee
My true love & wife
How soon would I meet thee
At close of the day
Though cares would still cheat me
If Mary would meet me
I'd kiss her sweet beauty & love them away

& when evening discovers
The sun in the west
I long like true lovers
To lean on thy breast
To meet thee my dearest
Thy eyes beaming blue
Abscent pains the severest
Fool Mary's the dearest
& if Mary's abscent - how can I be true

How dull the glooms cover
This meadow & fen
Where I as a lover
Seek Mary a'gen
But silence is teasing
Wherever I stray
There's nothing seems pleasing
Or aching thoughts easing
Though Mary live's near me - she seems far away

O would these gales murmur
My love in her ear
Or a birds note inform her
While I linger here
But nature contrary
[Is still all the day del] Turns night into day
No bird - gale - or fairy
Can whisper to Mary
To tell her who seeks her - while Mary's away

Dull must that being live who sees unmoved
The scenes & objects that his childhood knew
The school yard & the maid he early loved
The sunny wall where long the old Elms grew
The grass that e'en till noon retains the dew
Beneath the wallnut shade I see them still
Though not such fancys do I now pursue
Yet still the picture turns my bosom chill
& leaves a void - nor love nor hope may fill

After long absence how the mind recalls
Pleasing associations of the past
Haunts of his youth - thorn hedges & old walls
& hollow trees that sheltered from the blast
& all that map of boyhood overcast
With glooms & wrongs & sorrows not his own
That oer his brow like the scathed lightening past
That turned his spring to winter & alone
Wrecked name & fame & all - to solitude unknown

So on he lives in glooms & living death
A shade like night forgetting & forgot
Insects that kindle in the springs young breath
Take hold of life & share a brighter lot
Then he the tennant of the hall & Cot
The princely palace too hath been his home
& Gipseys camp when friends would know him not
In midst of wealth a beggar still to roam
Parted from one whose heart was once his home
But now, this year, there's hope! The sun is shining, the sky is clear.

Peace at last. The town is at peace.

The children played, the birds sang. It was a day of joy.

But then, a storm loomed. Dark clouds gathered, threatening rain.

But even in the storm, there was beauty. The flowers bloomed, the trees were adorned.

And so it was, a day of both peace and storm.
& yet not parted - still loves hopes illumes
& like the rainbow brightest in the storm
It looks for joy beyond the wreck of tombs
& in life's winter keeps love's embers warm
The oceans roughest tempest meets a calm
Cares thickest cloud shall break in sunny joy
O'er the parched waste showers yet shall fall like balm
& she the soul of life for whom I sigh
Like flowers shall cheer me when the storm is bye

Song

O Mary dear three springs have been
Three summers too have blossomed here
Three blasting winters crept between
Though absence is the most severe
Another summer blooms in green
But Mary never once was seen

I've sought her in the fields & flowers
I've sought her in the forest groves
In avanues & shaded bowers
& every scene that Mary loves
E'en round her home I seek her here
But Mary's absent everywhere

Tis autumn & the rustling corn
Goes loaded on the creaking wain
I seek her in the early mom
But cannot meet her face again
Sweet Mary she is absent still
& much I fear she ever will

The autumn morn looks mellow as the fruit
& ripe as harvest - every field & farm
Is full of health & toils - yet never mute
With rustic mirth & peace the day is warm
The village maid with gleans upon her arm
Brown as the hazel nut from field to field
Goes cheerily - the valleys nature charm -
I seek for charms that autumn best can yield
In mellowing wood & time y bleaching field

Song

Tis autumn now & natures scenes
The pleachy fields & yellowing trees
Looses their blooming hues & greens
But nature finds no change in me
The fading woods the russet grange
The hues of nature may desert
But nought in me shall find a change
To wrong the angel of my heart
For Mary is my angel still
Through every month & every ill
But love is an element from infancy,
To love the fleeting, transient things,
In the present, not the past.
Yet in this, I keep it now,
Just as the summer keeps the flower,
Which spring converts to seeds of gold.
And while the heart is not the dance,
I make my love manifest
In every song, story, poem.
My soul is the voice of the earth.
It may live in poetry,
The name my only quiet place,
Where it will, let me may be
To help, they live to think of thee.
The leaves they loosen from the branch
& fall upon the gusty wind
But my hearts silent love is staunch & nought can tear her from my mind
The flowers are gone from dell & bower
Though crowds from summers lap was given
But love is an eternal flower
Like purple amaranths in heaven
To Mary first my heart did bow & if she's true she keeps it now

Just as the summer keeps the flower
Which spring concealed in hoods of gold
Or unripe harvest met the shower & made earths blessings manifold
Just so my Mary lives for me
A silent thought for months & years
The world may live in revelry
Her name my lonely quiet cheers & cheer it will what e'er may be
While Mary lives to think of me

Sweet comes the misty mornings in September
Among the dewey paths how sweet to stray
Greensward or stubble as I well remember
I once have done - the mist curls thick & grey
As cottage smoke - like net work on the sprey
Or seeded grass the cobweb draperies run
Beaded with pearls of dew at early day & oer the pleachy stubble peeps the sun
The lamp of day when that of night is done

What mellowness these harvest days unfold
In the strong glances of the mid day sun
The homesteads very grass seems changed to gold
The light in golden shadows seems to run & tinges every spray it rests upon
With that rich [autumn del] [harvest ^] hue of sunny joy
Nature lifes sweet companion cheers alone -
The hare starts up before the shepherd boy & partridge coveys wlr on russet wings of joy

The meadow flags now rustle bleached & dank & misted oer with down as fine as dew
The sloe & dewberry shine along the bank
Where weeds in blooms luxuriance lately grew
Red rose the sun & up the moorhen flew
From bank to bank the meadow arches stride
Where foamy floods in winter tumbles through & spread a restless ocean foaming wide
Where now the cowboys sleep nor fear the coming tide

About the meadows now I love to sit
On banks bridge walls & rails as when a boy
To see old trees bend oer the flaggy pit
With huge roots bare that time does not destroy
Where sits the angler at his days employ & there Ivy leaves the bank to climb
The tree - & now how sweet to weary joy
- Age nothing seems so happy & sublime
As sabbath bells & their delightfull chime
In that hamlet, how my rying was
borne because hath char'd the all along life. Long
my heart to native there was early won
in she was mine, all-willing song
by her though must shake through night among
on her my memory, famine small.
The flowers of the - evergreen of you
Dost in my heart the same love they tall
I love the music of these village tells

Song

'ere a health unto their bring love o
Since this, once we're in
the's helpful at the.

Bring love o

There's joy unto this: bring love o
Though we never meet again
I will in bear the pain
The happiness is this:

Bring love o

There is love unto their bring love o
Though absence is not
The story is the come in flowers
I love it I wait for thee:

Bring love o

she loves love unto their bring love o
The wherein I may be
That a double heart is there,
Sill life shall cease to love

Bring love o

The blackbird flutters from the twining leaves
Rippling leaves felt yellow as the strings
And iridescent on my breast is loveliness
The whole music of his waiting wings
And sounds of the trees, upon its wings
I am under the shadow of the sky
There's a spot from me, the passing things
The wind so softly, and the rustic love
Of birds among the climb from the morning sky
Sweet solitude thou partner of my life
Thou balm of hope & every pressing care
Thou soothing silence oer the noise of strife
These meadow flats & trees - the autumn air
Mellows my heart to harmony - I bear
Life's burthen happily - these fairy dells
Seem Eden in this sabbath rest from care
My heart with loves first early memory swells
To hear the music of those village bells

For in that hamlet lives my rising sun
Whose beams hath cheered me all my lorn life long
My heart to nature there was early won
For she was nature's self - & still my song
Is her through sun & shade through right & wrong
On her my memory forever dwells
The flower of Eden - evergreen of song
Truth in my heart the same love story tells
- I love the music of those village bells

Song

Here's a health unto thee bonny lassie
Leave the thorns o' care wi' me
& whatever I may be
Here's happiness to thee
Bonny lassie o

Here's joy unto thee bonny lassie o
Though we never meet again
I well can bear the pain
If happiness is thine
Bonny lassie o

Here is true love unto thee bonny lassie o
Though absence cold is ours
The spring will come wi' flowers
& love will wait for thee
Bonny lassie o

So here's love unto thee bonny lassie o
Aye wherever I may be
Here's a double health to thee
Till life shall cease to love
Bonny lassie o

The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge
Raindrops & leaves fall yellow as he springs
Such images are nature's sweetest pledge
To me there's music in his rustling wings
"Prink prink" he cries & loud the robin sings
The small hawk like a shot drops from the sky
Close to my feet for mice & creeping things
Then swift as thought again he suthers bye
& hides among the clouds from the pursuing eye
Cheeks are like roses
our eyes are blue
I hate being in hiding
of the light it is a shame

I think we're like ocean
though miles away
I shall see my sweet charity
on some other day

For the form of the sea
is the load on the barge
of the truth in her breast
will it be the same

I'll love him as long
as the hours and days
I shall very come to

For ever

I am just opening the water's hiding
for the joy of the universe

for the joy to themselves and all others
in the middle of the water
in the same color

Insects and

70%
Closes of greensward & meadow eaten down by cattle about harvest time & pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me melancholy to look over it & if ever so cheerfull I instantly feel low spirited depressed & wretched - on the contrary pieces of greensward where the hay has been cleared off smooth & green as a bowling green with lakes of water well stocked with fish leaping up in the sunshine & leaving rings widening & quavering on the water with the plunge of a Pike in the weeds driving a host of roach into the clear water slanting now & then towards the top their bellies of silver light in the sunshine - these scenes though I am almost wretched quickly animate my feelings & make me happy as if I was rambling in Paradise & perhaps more so then if I was there where there would still be feves to trouble us

Her cheeks are like roses
Her eyes they are blue
& her beauty is mine
If her heart it is true

Her cheeks are like roses -
& though she’s away
I shall see her sweet beauty
On some other day

Ere the flowers of the spring
Deck the meadow & plain
If there’s truth in her bosom
I shall see her again

I will love her as long
As the brooks they shall flow
For Mary is mine &
Where so ever I go

Gass Clouds

When a pipe is first lighted the smoke issuing from the bowl curls up in distinct or separate masses this is the heated gass or gass smoke - & we often see clouds which we identify by their curling up from the orison in separate masses as gass clouds which ascend into the middle sky & then join the quiet journey of other clouds & are lost in the same colour

Insects in The Chinese Rose Leaves (side stem leaves)  
There is in autumn on the leaves of the chinese rosetree punctures or rather figures made in the form of serpents & though in different forms or folds they all resemble each other in size & shape - one end being the tale & the other the head of a silvery white - I could not make out what sort of insect did it as they had all punctered the skin of the leaf & started.
When Solomon saw that it pleased the Lord to dwell in his presence, he built the temple to the glory of the Lord, and filled it with all the treasures of the earth. He also established the kingdom and the law, and made the people serve the Lord. Solomon was known for his wisdom and his understanding, and he was loved by all. He ruled over a prosperous kingdom, and his reign was a time of peace and prosperity.

Solomon was also a great builder, and he constructed many temples and palaces. He was a man of great wealth, and he used his riches to build his kingdom. Solomon was a wise man, and he was known for his ability to solve complex problems.

Solomon's reign was a time of great prosperity, and he was loved by all. He was a man of great wisdom, and he was known for his ability to solve complex problems. His reign was a time of peace and prosperity, and he was loved by all.
Scraps Fragments Quotations &c &c

The word middling generally denotes something of a casualty - if the character of a woman is reckoned middling & she's a pretty woman the world generally look upon her as above the middlings but if she once gets below public opinion her character soon stinks & dies rotten.

"Eternal Spirit God of truth to whom All things seem as they are".

Balaams Parable second part

Numbers Chap 24th

& when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord well To bless them - he sought not enchantment or spell But he turned to the wilderness loved in his youth Where nature & God live in silence & truth

& Balaam he cast up his eyes & again Saw Israel abiding in tents on the plain & the spirit of God came upon him like dew & his parable then did the prophet pursue Balaam hath said the offspring of Beor & the many whose eyes have been open'd saith here Who heard in the words of the Lord & who saw Visions of th' almighty in tremblings & awe [Dan. ^e] Who fell in a trance but his eyes where unclosed How godly thy tents are O Jacob disposed As beautiful valleys spread forth fair & wide As gardens like eden by th' rivers green side

As trees of lign aloes which God as the giver Did plant - & as cedars besides the green river He shall pour waters out of his buckets - his seed Shall be in the waters to flourish & speed His King shall be higher than Agag in power & his kingdom exalted in glory & dower God brought him from Egypt - he hath as it were The strength of a unicorn - terror & fear Shall eat up the nations - his enemies all Break their bones & with arrows pierced through they shall fall He couched - he lay down as a lion at lair As a great lion who shall compeat with him there He whoso blesseth Gods people is blest & cursed is he who shall injure their rest Then Balak being wrath with the Seer of the Lord Smote both hands together in anger unawed Saying I called thee to curse them through nations & climes & behold thou hast blessed them three separate times Now flee thee therefore to thy place from this hour I thought to promote thee to honour & power But thy God keeps thee back from all honours desert So flye to his refuge & quickly depart Then Balaam to Balak spoke fearless in thrall Did I not say to thy messengers all If Balak would let me his riches behold & give me his house full of silver & gold I cannot so wrong the commands of the Lord To do good or ill of my feeble accord
They shall be with me in my house forever."

"Tell the children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem..."

"They shall be with me in my house forever."

Justice and righteousness forever."

"And the Lord shall be for ever with me.""
Page 22.

But what the Lord showeth me that will I seek
& what my God biddeth me that will I speak
& now lo! I go to my people again
Come & I'll show thee - then language more plain
What this people here which my blessings must praise
Shall do to thy people in strifes latter days
& he took up his parable justly & clear
Saying Balaam the prophet the offspring of Beor
Who fell in a trance & yet having his eyes
Open to visions that gleamed in the skies
Do I not speak the most high in my voice
Are they not the almighty's his chosen & choice
I shall see him anon but not now with my eyes
& I shall behold him anon but not nigh
Out of Jacob a star shall illumine the skies
A Sceptre from Israel shall flourish & rise
& smite all the corners of Moab with strife
& destroy all the chaldern of Sheeth to the life
& Edom shall be a possession & Seir
Shall be a possession for enemies near
& Israel shall do valiant deeds for their dower
Out of Jacob comes he with dominion & power
To destroy him that yet in the city remains
& prosper the freedom of mountains & plains
& when he had looked over Amaleck - he
Took up his parable justly & free
Amaleck first of all nations - the giver
Of life dooms thy end that thou perish for ever
& he looked on the Kenites not caring to mock
saying strong is thy place like a nest in the rock

Song of Balaam

"Imputed madness prison'd solitude
"& the minds canker in its savage mood"

Byron

"If where thou art I may not dwell
"T'will sooth to be where thou hast been"

Byron

Nature says "Mary" but my pen denies
To write the truth & so it lives in sighs

Honesty & good intention are
So mowed & hampered in with evil lies
She hath not room to stir a single foot
Or even strength to break a spiders web
- So lies keep climbing round loves sacred stem
Blighting fair truth whose leaf is evergreen
Whose roots are the hearts fibres & whose sun
The soul that cheers & smiles it into bloom
Till heaven proclaims that truth can never die

"They shall dig for death as for hid treasures & shall not find it"

Job

" - O! Would it were my lot
To be forgetfull as I am forget"

Byron

"I've now turned wild a commoner of nature
Of all forsaken & forsaking all"

Dryden

Continued

Nevertheless Kenites shall fail in that day
& Ashur shall carry them captives away
& he took up his parable - nothing to miss
Alas who shall live when my God doeth this
Ships come from Chittim in islet & river
T'affliet Ashur - & Ebor shall perish for ever
& Balaam arose to his place on that day
& Balak he also sojourned on his way
Thick very green place counsel is left. Getting to this place a fog
one after another. Always to keep up with the thing place last. A place
keeps as behind. It should forget all together. Trying to forget the things
forget this — forget that. The next will bring it all together. Nothing

But I can't forget that. In a dream. That is a place. It is
in a dream.

To be self-righteous is one of the first known to me before life. I held it
obstinate to keep in the Dharma. If the periphery, himself must either be a
rescue man.

I'm apt to be at times to break it and break it with the
not to know me. It will be a struggle.

It isn't the hour enough to change.

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Page 23.

A very good common place counsel is Self Identity to bid our own hearts not to forget our own selves & always to keep self in the first place lest all the world who always keeps us behind it should forget us all together - forget [not ^]thyself & the world will not forget thee - forget thyself & the world will willingly forget thee till thou art nothing but a living - dead man dwelling among shadows & falsehood.

The mother may forget her child
That dandled on her lap has been
The bridegroom may forget the bride
That he was wedded to yestreen.

But I cannot forget that I'm a man & it would be dishonest & unmanly in one to do so

Self Identity is one of the first principles in every bodys life & fills up the outline of honest truth in the decision of character - a person who denies himself must either be a madman or a coward

I am often troubled at times to know that should the world have the impudence not to know me but willingly forgetting me wether any single individual would be honest enough to know me - such people would be usefull as the knocker to a door or the bell of a cryer to [the ^] dead [or ^] alive or the lost found.

there are two impossibilitys which can never happen - I shall never be in three places at once nor ever change to a woman & that ought to be some comfort amid this moral or immoral "changing" in life - truth has a bad herald when she is obliged to take lies for her trumpeters - surely every man has the liberty to know himself

Tis Liberty alone that gives the flower
of fleeting life its lustre & perfume
& we are weeds without it.
Now he is gone up to heaven, and is sitteth on the right hand of God. 21. Neither was there any man like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. 22. In all the signs and wonders, which the Lord did through Moses in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and in all the judgments which he wrought in the land of Egypt, against all the gods of Egypt. 23. For God did set his ways in the sea, and caused to triumph over the depths thereof. 24. And he rained hail and fire down upon the earth: he sent flames upon Sodom and Gomorrah. 25. He also did smite the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast: and made a path for his people to go forth to the land of Egypt. 26. For thy love is before mine eyes, and thy name is even so: thou hast cast me up great stones, O Lord. 27. For he is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. 28. He did stretch forth his right hand: he smote the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast. 29. He brought them out, and did not suffer for ever: he saved them with an everlasting covenant. 30. This is my God: and I will declare all his wonders. 31. The Lord is my strength and song: he is also become my salvation. 32. Therefore will I bless the Lord that he hath helped me, and havedelivered me from all them that hated me. 33. For his life is precious in mine eyes: and my spirit is highly exalted in him. 34. I will not again curse the Lord, neither say, Why is his wrath raised up against me? when I am filled with things without number. 35. I am a man given to base counsel: but the Lord was with me. 36. I said, Thou art my God: guide my feet in thy testimony. 37. I have called upon thee for help, O Lord, and thou hast hearkened unto my prayer. 38. All my enemies shall be ashamed and sore troubled: they shall be turned again that brought me up. 39. All them that seek thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be turned every one to his own shame.
Page 25.

Davids Prayer

Who am I my God & my Lord
& what is my house in thy eye
Thou hast brought me Lord of thy sovereign accord
& cloathed me in majesty

Yet this was a trifling thing unto thee
Thou hast spoke of thy servant whose house is to last
Like a man of estate & of noble degree
O God though in lowness his lot hath been cast

What can David speak more unto thee
For the honour of thy servant - or need
For thou knowest thy servant was of humble degree
& exalted him highly indeed

O Lord for thy servants sake only
Hath thou done all this greatness to me
According to thy own heart thou blessed me once lonely
For all of these great things are of thee

O Lord there is none beside thee
No other God living but thou
According to all that we hear or we see
From our beings beginning 'till now

There is no God but one - on the land or the sea
According to all we have heard with our ears
What nation is like to thy people now free
Israel redeemed of the Lord in their fears

God went to redeem them & make them a name
Of greatness & terribleness - even like thee
Driving out nations from before them like flame
The redeemed from proud Egypt - who conquored the sea

For Israel thy people thou madest thine own
& thou Lord became their own God e'en as mine
Let the thing thou hast spoke of thy servant be done
& his home be established forever as thine

Do as thou hast said - be of goodness the giver
Let it even be established Lord as thy will
That thy name may be magnified now & forever
& the true God be God of all Israel still

& a God to all Israel now & for aye
& the house of King David be established of thee
For thou & my God told thy servant that day
Thou wouldst build him a house - even so let it be

Therefore thy servant hath found in his heart
To pray before thee - & he knows from his soul
Thou art God & has promised thy love to impart
To thy servant as long as the seasons shall roll

The house of thy servant let it please thee to bless
That it may be before thee the boon & the giver
All nature & life doth thy bounty confess
& all that thou blesseth - is before & forever
Solomons Prayer &c &c

Then said Solomon the Lord hath made known
He would dwell in thick darkness with nature alone
But I've built an house where faith bows the knee
& built up a grand habitation for thee
& made thee a place for thy dwelling forever
There thy mercy may reign & thy love never sever
& the king turned his face & blessed while he turned
The whole congregation that hither sojourned
He blest them forever for God & his good
& the whole congregation of Israel stood
& he said blessed be God of Israel the Lord

Who hath with his hands fulfilled his own word
That he spake unto David my father & said
"Since the day that I brought forth my people from dread
"From Egypt & bondage no city was named
"In the tribes of all Israel no dwelling proclaimed
"To build me an house that my name might be there"
"Nor chose I a King for their comfort or care
"But my name now shall dwell in fair Jerusalem
" & David I've chosen as king over them"

Now it was in the heart of my father to raise
A house for the Lord whom all Israel should praise
But the Lord to my father this thing did proclaim
As it was in thy heart to build his house to my name
As it was in thine heart to do so thou didst well
But thou shalt not build the house where my mercy shall dwell
Yet my mercy shall live & [the? illeg] thing shall be done
By the offspring that comes from thy loins & thy son
So the Lord hath performed all the words he hath spoken
& fulfilled all he vowed to my Father unbroken
For I'm set up as King upon Davids high throne
& have built up a house to Jehovah alone
& the ark of the covenant stands in the shade
Which God with the children of Israel made
By the altar of God in thy presence Israel
He spread forth his hands in true worship & zeal
A scaffold of brass made King Solomon there
The height three cubits & five cubits square
In the midst of the court great Jehovah to please
& upon it he stood & then kneeled on his knees
Before the whole congregation whom God had forgiven
& spread forth his hands in the presence of heaven
& said O Lord God of all Israel - forgiven
There is no God like thee in the earth or the heaven
Who keepeth thy covenant truth as thy own
& still to thy servants thy mercy is shown
While still they will walk with their whole hearts before thee
Thou who crownest David my Father with glory
Thou promised my Father & made it to stand
& speakest with my mouth & fulfilled with thy hand
Thou hast kept every promise nor took none away
But all are fulfilled as it is [at ? del] on this day
Now therefore God almighty of Israel the Lord
Still keep with David my father thy word
The promise thou made him saying that which is right
& there shall not fail thee a man in my sight
To sit over Israels great people & throne
So thy childern take heed to the law as my own
To walk in the way as I've laid before thee
In my law as thou hitherto hast before me
Now then God of Israel their being & Lord
Verifie that thou hast spoken - thy word
With David thy servant - O speak it agen
But will God in deed make his dwelling with men
On the earth will our prayers & petitions so gain thee
When the heaven of heavens hath no room to contain thee
How much less this temple which now I have built
Though the earth with thy love & thy [glory? illeg] is gilt
Therefore have respect to thy servant his prayer
Let not supplications be vapour & air
O Lord God almighty do list to the cry
Of thy servant who prays to his master on high
Thou God of all Israel before you I pray
That thy eyes may look over this house night & day
On the place of Jehovah the glory of fame
On the place thou hast chosen on the house of thy name
& harken & heed as a symbol of grace
To the prayer which thy servant now prays in this place
Hear them from thy dwelling place even in heaven
& hearing O Lord let our sins be forgiven
If a man sin against his neighbour - almighty forbear
& an oath be laid on him to make him to swear
& the oath to this house on my altar they bring
Then hear thou from heaven [words illeg] thing
By requiteing the wicked doing justice to all
On his own head let the wickeds own recompence fall
Justifying the righteous - his ways to approve
& giving his righteousness - mercey & love
If Israel get worse & from enemies force
Because they have sinned against goodness & thee
& again shall confess thy great name & return
& make in this house supplication & mourn
Then hear thou from heaven & evil forgive
In Israel thy people that mercey may live
& bring them again like a wreck to the strand
To the place which thou gav' st them their fathers own land
When the heavens [word del] shut up have no season of rain
Because they [have ~] sinned against thee - will again
Yet if they turn toward this place & pray
& confess thy great name in return from their way
When thou dost afflict them - in mercey believe
Then hear thou from heaven O Lord & forgive
The sins of thy people & Israel shall know
The good way wherein thou hast taught them to go
On their land of inheritance scatter thy rain
& the land & thy people shall flourish again
If there be pestilence blastings & death
& mildews & locusts spreading deserts oer earth
If their enemies come & lay cities in thrall
& sickness & sores threaten death over all
Then what prayers soever by man shall be made
Or of thy people Israel when wronged & afraid
When every one knows his own grief to proclaim & spreads forth his hands in this house to thy name
Then hear thou from heaven thy own dwelling place
& render to every man blessings & grace
According to truth do thou raise them agen[301]
For thou knowest the hearts of the children of men & that they may fear thee & walk in thy
Which thou gave to our fathers our birthright to be - So long as they live in the land of thy praise
Moreover concerning the stranger with thee
Which is not of Israel but come from afar
For thy great name & justice in peace or in war
For thy hand that's almighty & outstretched arm
If they prey in this house - do thou keep them from harm
Then hear from the heavens thy dwelling on high
To the strangers petition do thou heed & reply
Though a stranger may plead do thou grant his request[302]
That the people of earth may believe thee as best
As Israel doth know of thy goodness & fame
& may know that this temple is called by thy name
If thy people go out to thy enemies far
In the way that thy guidance shall send them to war
& their prayers unto thee towards thy [word ^ ? illeg ]proclaim
Towards the place & the house I have built for thy name[303]
Then hear from the heavens - petitions & prayers
& maintain thy own cause in the peoples affairs
If they should sin against goodness & thee
For there is not a man that from sin is all free
& thou in thy anger sends strifes roughest waves
& deliver'st them up to their foeman as slaves
& they carry them captives in terror & fear
To lands & strange countries far off or near
Yet should they bethink them whose children they are
While they are captives & pray to thee there
In the midst of captivity saying aright
" That we have dealt wickedly Lord in thy sight"
If to thee they return with their soul & their heart
In the land of captivity - thither thou art[304]
Although they are captives let them pray towards their land
& the cities to stay the dread wrath of thy hand
The land of their fathers great Lord & thy fame
& toward the house I have built for thy name
Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place - hear
Their prayers, supplications, & terrible fear
Forgive thy own people & dwell in their cause
& bring them once more to their land & thy laws[305]
& though they have sinned before thee let them live
The erring restore before thee & - forgive
Let thine eyes Lord be open in mercy & grace
Attend to the prayer that is made in this place
Arise o Lord God in thy resting place - thou
Let thy priests o Lord God as before thee they bow
Be clothed with salvation thy mercies to prove
& thy saints all rejoice in thy goodness & love
From th' face of thine anointed Lord turn not away
But remember the mercies of David for aye
Then God half angered answered Job angrily.
Out of the whirlwind & the darkening storm
"Who darketh counsel thus & argues wrong
"By words without all knowledge vague & void
"Gird up thy loins now like a man - for I
"Demand of thee & answer me aright
"Where wast thou mortal when I formed & laid
"Foundations of the earth & sea - declare
"If thou hast understanding think & speak
"Who hath the measure laid & knownest thou
"Or (who " ) hast stretched the line upon its base
"Whereon are earths foundations fastened - say
" Or who hath planned & laid the corner stone
When all the morning stars together sang
& all the sons of God did shout for joy
Or who as if with doors shuts up the sea
When it break forth as issuing from the womb
When I made its garments of the rolling clouds
& wove thick darkness as its swaddling bands
& brake up for it my deemed abode
& set up bars & doors to keep it staid
& said here shalt thou come not further
& here shalt thy proud waves be staid
Hast thou commanded morning since thy days
& caused the bright day spring to know its place
That it might hold on earths extremest ends
& the wicked might be shaken out therefrom
It is turned as clay into the seal
& they stand as garments clothing it with light
Their light from wickedness is still withheld
& the high arm is broken in its might
Hast thou entered in the ocean springs
Or walked in search of the unfathomed deeps
Hath death his gates e'er opened unto thee
Or shown the shadows of eternal sleep
Hast thou perceived the breadth of earth or space
If thou knowest all or part thereof - declare
Where is the way wherein the light may dwell
& as for darkness where doth it repose
That thou shouldst take it to the bound thereof
& know the paths that leadeth to its home
Knowest thou as much because thou wert then born
Or since because thy numbered days was great
Hast thou entered the palace of the snow
O hast thou seen the treasures of the hail
Which for the time of trouble I reserve
Against the day of battle & of war
By what way is light parted - knowest thou
Which scattereth over the earth the eastern wind
For the overflow of waters who divides
A channel & a course that it may speed
Who guides forked lightnings through the sultry sky
& gives the thunder terrors shuddering voice
To cause the rain on spots where no man is
On wilder wastes where no man cares to dwell
The influences of Pleiades cast thou bind
Or loometh Orion's belt - canst thou bring forth
Nazaroth in his season or yet guide
Arcturus with his sons - a man knowest thou
The ordinances of heaven - canst thou set
The dominion thereof in earth - let silence speak
Canst thou lift up thy voice to clouds & sky
& bid the rain in waters cover thee
Canst thou send lightnings forth that they may go
& answer 'here we are" - say who hast put
Wisdom in the inward parts & who hast given
Prime understanding to the hearing heart
Who can number in wisdom heavens [host of ""] clouds
Page 31.

Or the bottles of heaven who can stay
When the clods cleave fast together & the dust
Groweth hard as a rock - can mortals hunt
Prey for the Lion or the lions whelps
When hid in dens or in the coverts couched
They lie in wait for prey - & who provides
The raven with his food - his young ones cry
To God & wander for the lack of meat

Psalm 97

The earth reigneth now earth is green in his smiles
Let gladness extend through her hundreds of isles
Clouds & darkness are round him almighty & lone
& truths righteous judgments inhabit his throne
A fire goes before him that never burns out
That burns up his enemies round & about
His thunders & lightenings blazon the world
The earth saw & trembled where ruin was hurled
Where the Lord of the earth in his majesty sped
Hills melted like wax in his presence & fled
The heavens his righteousness prove every hour
& all people see both his glory & power
Worship him all yet Gods & confounded be they
Who serve graven images beings of clay
Zion saw & was glad at the voice of his word
Judahs Daughters rejoiced in thy judgments O Lord
The Lord oer the earth is exalted & high
For above all the Gods is his home in the sky
[Have] evil ye people whose love is the Lord
He preserveth his saints by the truth of his word
He delivereth from evil & bondage & thrall
From the hand of the wicked he saveth them all
For the righteous the light of his mercye is sown
To the up right of heart all his gladness is shown
Ye righteous rejoice in the Lord all your days
To the memory of his holiness offer your praise
...
& I looked & I saw a new heaven 
& earth on the bosom of day 
For the first earth was fled with its deeds unforgiven 
& its heaven had perished away 
& the ocean was dry & no longer it ran 
Which had rolled ever since the creation of man 

& I John the most holy city descried 
New Jerusalem coming from God to the living 
Adorned for her husband prepared as a bride 
& I heard a great voice speaking loud from the heaven 
Behold the tabernacle of God is with men 
& there he will dwell with his people again 

They shall be his people united & free 
The choice of his love not the fear of his rod 
& God shall dwell with them forever & be 
Their soul keeping saviour redeemer & God 
He shall wipe away all the tears from their eyes 
There shall be no more death neither sorrows nor cries 

Nor shall there be any more sickness or pain 
For the world of their sickness is passed & away 
& he that sat on the throne said again 
In language as bright as meridian day 
& he said to me write I make all things as new 
& the words which I spake are both faithfull & true 

& once more he said unto me - [now 'twas done 
I am Alpha Omega - beginning & end] 
Their thirst shall have water as clear as the sun 
For I am lifes fountain benefactor & friend 
To him that overcometh all goodness is won 
His God I will be then & he is my son 

But the vain unbelieving & them that have fear 
The abominable - murderers whoremongers & liars 
Idolaters scorcerers mocking the seer 
I leave in the lake of unquenchable fires 
There burning for ever their being & breath 
& this is the second exisance of death 

One of the seven angels then came unto me 
Which held their seven plagues in seven phials of strife 
Saying come hither & I will show unto thee 
The light of salvation the bride & lambs wife 
& me in his spirit he carried away & won 
To a great & high mountain that peered in the sun 

Whose forehead looked green in the realms of the sky 
Whose crags in the beams of eternity nod 
& shewed me a city great glorious & high 
New Jerusalem descending from heaven & God 
Having Gods glory eternities light 
As precious as Jasper as crystal more bright 

& had a great wall shining sparcious & high 
& twelve gates about it that glittered like flames 
& twelve angels watched from the realms of the sky 
& written thereon where del] were the tribes & their names 
On the east & the north six gates I [espied del] descried 
& the south & the west three on every side 

Twelve foundations the walls of the city upheld 
& twelve names thereon - the apostles of God
Nor the gates thereof shut; for it shall be an everlasting habitation; and priests and pastors shall dwell therein.

No city being thus, nor gates nor walls.

The Lord shall be there for evermore.

No city being thus, nor gates nor walls.

The Lord shall be there for evermore.

No city being thus, nor gates nor walls.

The Lord shall be there for evermore.

No city being thus, nor gates nor walls.

The Lord shall be there for evermore.
& he that talked with me a golden reed held
An emblem of justice & truth not his rod
To measure the city the gates & the wall
In kindness & love doing equal by all

& the plan of the city it lieth foursquare
The breadth is as long as the height & the length
Twelve thousand furlongs his reed measured there
The contents of that city of glory & strength
The length & the breadth & the height of the plan
Are equal - like God in his mercy to man

& he measured the wall with his reed in his hand
Of cubits one hundred [& '] forty & four
According to the measure of a man was the wand
That is of the angel who guarded the door
The walls was of jasper the city pure gold
As clear as a mirror of glass to behold
The walls of the city were garnished like fire
With all manner of sorts of rich precious stones
The first foundation was jasper the second sapphire
The third chalcedony more splendid than thrones
The fourth was an emerald green as the waves
Of the earth that was vanished with oceans & graves

The fifth was sardonix & sardius the sixth
The seventh was chrysoyte - yellow & green
& Beryl the eight & of yellow immixt
The ninth was a topaz - the rest they were seen
Chry sopharsus a jacinth an amethyst - blue
As violets that in the old fallen world grew

The twelve gates were twelve pearls of delight to behold
Every gate was one pearl where no mortal could look
& the street of the city was paved with pure gold
Transparent as glass & the waves of a brook
& no temple there showed itself in my sight
For the Lord God himself was its temple & light
No need had the city of sun or the moon
To shine on its splendour - the builder & giver
Of its glory - was also its light & its boon
His sun shone upon it for ever & ever
There the nations of them that are saved meet a home
There the kings of the earth bring their glories & come

& its gates they shall never be closed by day
& night in that city shall never be known
The righteous shall there truth & glory display
& the honour of nations shall make it their own
No wickedness there shall destroy their abode
Or enemies poison the friendship of God

In no wise shall enter anything to defile
& no abomination of evil come nigh
No wickedness working deception or guile
Nor any that forgeth or maketh a lie
The River of the Water of Life—Rev. Chap. 22

He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it was a tree of life, on either side of the river scribbled the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielded, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And the nations might, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

For there shall be no night there, for the Lord God shall be their light, and they shall reign forever and ever. And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him there.

And they shall see his face: and his name shall be called King forever and ever.

And he said unto me, These are the words of the Amen, which are the faithful and true. He is the beginning of the creation of God. Amen. Amen. And every created thing which is in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and is written in heaven, shall worship him forever and ever.

And the river of water of life, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall water the tree of life which is in the midst of the street of it, and by the tree of life shall the nations bring forth fruit every month; and the leaves thereof shall be for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be written in them.

And the city had no need of sun, neither need they of light of candle; for the Lord God gave them light: and they had need of no light of lamp; for the light of the sun shone upon them. And the nations shall walk by his light: and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it.

And the gates of it shall have no need of bars; neither shall anything enter in that causeth death, for it is for the healing of the nations.
But they which are written in God's book of life
They shall live here forever from sorrow & strife

The River of the Water of Life - Rev. Chap. 22

& he showed me a river in midst of the street
Of the water of life clear as chrysal & pure
Flowing out from the throne of the Lord - heaven sweet
The weary to bless & the feeble to cure
& on each side the river like comfort in thrall
The tree of life grew as a blessing for all

Twelve manner of fruits did its branches supply
That every month ripened - so fertile the sod
& the leaves of the tree 'neath Jehovah's own eye
Held a cure for the nations who trusted in God
No curse shall there be in that endless of day
With the Lord - where his servants shall serve him for aye

& his name it shall be on their foreheads of light
& they shall see his face - nor his majesty shun
No candle is needed where never was night
Neither is wanted the light of the sun
For the Lord God of light & of life is the giver
& they shall reign with him forever & ever

& he said unto me all these sayings are true
& faithful & now are as being begun
The God of the prophets sent his angel to shew
To his servants the things which must shortly be done
Behold I come quickly & blessed is he
Who keepeth the sayings of this prophecy

I John saw these things & heard while I saw
& when I had heard & had seen unforgot
I fell at the feet of the angel with awe
But he said unto me see thou do it not
For I'm thy fellow servant & worship aright
& of thy brethren the prophets who live in his light

Of them which keep the sayings this book doth contain
Of which thou art witness what God doth reveal
Worship God - him alone - other worship is vain
These sayings he said unto me - never seal
Leave the prophecy open till all understand
For the kingdom is come & the time is at hand

& he that is unjust - unjust let him be
& he that is filthy live filthy at will
& he that is righteous - leave righteousness free
& he that is holy live holy still
Behold I come quickly my reward is with me
To give all men according as his work it shall be

I am Alpha Omega beginning & end
Time past as the present - the first & the last

They are blest that on all my commandments attend
The tree of life is their right - when life's troubles is past
The gates are all open the passage is free
& the new golden city their dwelling shall be

For without the dogs growl & the sorcerers cheat
& murder that stabs with idolators bye
The Last Judgment

When the day of the Lord comes in its glory, and all the holy angels in heaven, and all the holy saints who were on earth, shall be gathered together before him, all nations shall look upon him and be ashamed. For the Lord shall come out of Jerusalem, and she shall reign over all the nations.

For, behold, the day of the Lord cometh, hearken and behold, and be astonished together, and be marvelled. For the Lord will come from far, for he is long and slow in his journey, and he cometh from a place of a land of peace, he cometh, and it shall be given for a portion, and for the inheritance of them that wait for him.

For there shall be no more but the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

And, behold, all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

And, behold, all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

And, behold, all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

And, behold, all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

And, behold, all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
& whoremongers all their old deeds to repeat
& they whoso loveth & maketh a lie²⁹⁳
I Jesus have sent my angel t'record
These things unto you & the church of the Lord

I am the offspring of David & root
& I am the bright & the morning star
& the bride & the spirit say come - eat the fruit
& let him that heareth say come from afar
& let him that parcheth with thirst come & drink
For the water of life ever flows to the brink

To every man living I now testify
That hears the words of this book -& yet doeth the sin
To add anything [to del] [unto ’] this phrophecy
God shall send him the plagues that are written therein
& if any man take from this book - dealing strife
God shall take out his part from the volume of life

& in the most holy city shall meet with no home³³⁰
Nor share of the things in this volume of joy
He that testifieth this saitheth quickly I come
Even so come Lord Jesus all sin to destroy
The power of Gods love be with all - now - & then
& the grace of christ Jesus be with you - Amen

The Last Judgment - St Matt. from Ver. 31st to the end³³¹

When the son of man comes in his glory anew
& all holy angels surrounding him too
Then shall he sit upon glory his throne
& before him all nations be gathered as one

The one from the other he’ll separate them
The wise & the good from lascevious men
The sheep from the goats the good shepherds divide
As gold in the furnace is heated & tried

When his sheep are no longer of comfort bereft
Shall be placed on his right hand & the goats on his left
Come ye blessed of God bid to troubles adieu
& inherit the kingdom prepared for you

From the foundation of earth - the beginning of time
Come of every colour from every clime
For when I was hungered ye offered me meat
& when I was thirsty your water was sweet

Ye lodged me a stranger - forsaken of all
When naked ye clothed me nor left me in thrall³³²
I was in prison ye came to me there
& your talk made my bonds unconfined as the air³³³

Then shall the righteous say when did we Lord
See thee an hungered & offer thee food³³⁴
Or thirsty to give thee of drink as a guest
A stranger to [give del][find ‘] thee a welcome & rest

Or naked & clothed thee in part of our wealth
When saw we thee sick & restored thee to health
Or in prison came to thee to make thy bonds free
& the king shall make answer - ye did it to me

For verily I say unto you in as much
As ye’ve done [it ‘] to the least of my brothers twas such
Ye have done it to me in the mind & the heart -
He shall say to the left now ye cursed depart

From me into hell everlasting & fire
With the devils own tortures & never expire
For I was an hungered & ye gave me no meat
& athirst but ye brought me no drink in my heat

I was a stranger ye offered no rest
Naked ye clothed me not - sick & distress335
Ye visited not to give health or set free
Then shall they say Lord - whenever did we

See thee an hungered or sick or a thirst
Or naked or stranger or in bonds from the first
& did not administer comfort to thee
Then shall he answer them saying - as ye

Did it not to the poorest & least of my fold
Your friendship to me was as barren & cold
& these shall go away to the punishment due
But the righteous shall find joys eternity true

Child Harold336

The lightenings vivid flashes - rend the cloud
That rides like castled crags along the sky
& splinters them to fragments - while [the del] aloud
The thunder heaves artillery vollies bye
Trees crash earth trembles -beast prepare to fye337
Almighty what a crash - yet man is free
& walks unhurt while danger seems so nigh -
Heavens archway now the rainbow seems to be
That spans the eternal round of earth & sky & sea

A shock a moment in the wrath of God
As long as [word del] hell's eternity to all
His thunderbolts leave life but as the clod
Cold & inanimate their temples fall
Beneath his frown to ashes - the eternal pall
Of wrath sleeps o'er the ruins where they fell
& nought of memory may there creeds recall338

The sin of Sodom was a moments yell
[Two words? del] Death bed [scenes *] [word blotted] their [first*] grave[was del] the last a hell339

The towering willow with its pliant boughs340
Sweeps its grey foliage to the autumn wind
The level grounds341 where off a group of cows
Huddled together close - or propped behind
An hedge or hovel ruminate & find
The peace - [as health & I was wont to find del] walks & health & I pursue
For natures every place is still resigned
To happiness - new life's in every view
& here I comfort seek & early joys renew

The lake that held a mirror to the sun
Now curves with wrinkles in the stillest place
The autumn wind sounds hollow as a gun
& water stands in every swampy place
Yet in these fens peace harmony & grace
The attributes of nature are ailed
The scene is calm and serene, a
picture of tranquility.

Leaves gently fall from the
branches, creating a soft
melody.

The sky above is a
mixture of blue and
gray, reflecting the
calmness of the scene.

Falling leaves

The wind is

This scene is but

a fleeting

moment,

yet

it brings

solace and

peace.
Speedily will be Published

The Sale of old Wigs & Sundries
A Poem By Lord Byron

In Quarto 8vo & Twelves

The barge with naked mast in sheltered place
Beside the brig close to the bank is tied
While small waves plashes by its bulky side

Song

The floods come oer the meadow leas
The dykes & full & brimming
Field furrows reach the horses knees
Where wild ducks oft are swimming
The dykes are black the fields are bare
The trees their [del leaves] [coats ^] are loosing
The leaves are dancing in the air
The sun its warmth refusing

Brown are the flags & fading sedge
& tanned the meadow plains
Bright yellow is the osier hedge
Beside the brimming drains
The crows sit on the willow tree
The lake is full below
But still the dullest thing I see
Is self that wanders slow

The dullest scenes are not so dull
As thoughts I cannot tell
The brimming dykes are not so full
As my hearts silent swell
I leave my troubles to the winds
With none to share a part
The only joy my feeling finds
Hides in an aching heart

Absence in love is worse than any fate
Summer is winters desert & the spring
Is like a ruined city desolate
Joy dies & hope retires on feeble wing
Nature sinks heedless - birds unheeded sing
Tis solitude in citys - crowds all move
Like living death - though all to life still cling
The strongest bitterest thing that life can prove
Is womans undisguise of hate & love

I think of thee
a Song
Dear Jean:

I know you will want to know how your mother is getting on. I have not had time to write to you since our return from France. We have been very busy and have had a great deal to do. The war has been very hard on us. I can hardly believe it is over.

I hope you will be happy in your new home. I think you will like it. I wish you could come and see us. We would be glad to have you.

I will write to you soon. I hope you will soon hear from me.

Yours truly,

[Signature]
"Poets are born - & so are whores - the trade is universal - in these canting days. Women of fashion must of course be ladies & whoring is the business - that still pays. Playhouses Ball rooms - there the masquerade is. To do what was of old - & now a days. Their maids - nay wives so innocent & blooming. Cuckold their spouses to seem honest women.

There's much said about love & more of women. I wish they were as modest as they seem. Some borrow husbands till their cheeks are blooming. Not like the red rose blush - but yellow cream. Lord what a while these good days are in coming. Routs Masques & Balls - I wish they were a dream. I wish for poor men luck - an honest praxis. Cheap food & clothing - no corn laws or taxes.

I wish young married dames were not so frisky. Nor hide the ring to make believe they're single. I wish small beer was half as good as whiskey. & married dames with buggers would not mingle. There's some too cunning far & some too frisky. & here I want a rhyme - so write down "jingle." Some mouths would eat forever & eat on.

I really can't tell what this poem will be. About - nor yet what trade I am to follow. I thought to buy old wigs - but that will kill me. With cold starvation - as they're beaten hollow. Long speeches in a famine will not fill me. & madhouse traps still take me by the collar. So old wig bargains now must be forgotten. The oil that dressed them fine has made them rotten.

I wish old wigs were done with ere they're mouldy. I wish - but herses the papers large & justy. With speeches that full fifty times [I've del] [they've ~] told ye. - Noble Lord John to sweet Miss Fanny Fusty. Is wed - a lie good reader I ne'er sold ye.
Sir Robert is at home. I must be
alone, my dear, without you. I cannot
bear the idea of your being out. I must
say, too, that I am not well. I have a
headache and feel very sick. I am
writing this to tell you how much I
love you and how much I need you.
I wish you were here with me.

I have been feeling rather down
lately. I think it is because I am
lonely. I wish you were here to
cheer me up. I love you so much.

I hope you are happy and healthy.
I pray for you every day.

Yours always,
Robert
- Prince Albert goes to Germany & must he
Leave the queen's snuff box where all fools are strumming
From added eggs no chickens can be coming

Whigs strum state fiddle strings until they snap
With cuckoo cuckold cuckoo year by year
The razor plays it on the barbers strap
- The sissors grinder thinks it rather quere
That labour wont afford him “one wee drap"
Of ale or gin or half & half or beer
- I wish prince Albert & the noble dastards
Who wed the wives - would get the noble bastards

I wish Prince Albert on his german journey
I wish the Whigs were out of office &
Pickled in law books of some good attorney
For ways & speeches few can understand
They'll bless ye when in power - in prison scorn ye
& make a man rent his own house & land
- I wish prince Alberts queen was undefiled
- & every man could get his wife with child

I wish the devil luck with all my heart
As I would any other honest body
His bad name passes bye me like a f \\
Stinking of brimstone - then like whiskey toddy
We swallow sin which seems to warm the heart
- There's no imputing any sin to God - he
Fills hell with work - is 'n't it a hard case
To leave old whigs & give to hell the carcasses

Me-b ne may throw - his wig to little Vicky
& so resign his humbug & his power
& she with the young princess mount the dickey
On ass milk diet for her german tour
Asses like ministers are rather tricky
I & the country proves it every hour
W - Il - gt - n & M -lb - n in their station
Coblers to queens - are phisic to the nation

These batch of toadstools on this rotten tree
Shall be the cabinet of any queen
Though not such coblers but her servants be
They're of Gods making - that is plainly seen
Nor red nor green nor orange - they are free
To thrive & flourish as the Whigs have been
But come tomorrow - like the Whigs forgotten
You'll find them withered stinking dead & rotten

Death is an awful thing it is by God
I've said so often & I think so now
Tis rather droll to to see an old wig nod
Then doze & die the devil don't know how
Odd things are wearisome & this is odd -
Tis better work than kicking up a row
I'm weary of [old '] Whigs & old Whigs heirs
& long been sick of teasing God with prayers
The page contains a hand-written text in English. However, the handwriting is quite difficult to read and interpret accurately. It appears to be a fragment of a larger work, possibly a poem or a letter, written in a flowing, emotive style. The content seems to touch on themes of nature, possibly the sea or a journey, with references to natural elements and possibly celestial bodies. The text is densely written with paragraphs running into one another, making it challenging to extract coherent sentences.
I've never seen the cow turn to a bull
I've never the horse become an ass
I've never seen an old brawn cloathed in whose
But I have seen full many a bonny lass
& wish I had one now beneath the cool
Of these high ems. - Muse tell me where I was
O - talk of turning I've seen Whig & Tory
Turn imps of hell. & all for England's glory

I love good fellowship & wit & punning
I love "true love" & God my taste defend
I hate most damnable all sorts of cunning
- I love the Moor & Marsh & Ponders end
I do not like the song of "cease your funning"
I love a modest wife & trusty friend
- Bricklayers want lime as I want rhyme for fillups
- So here's a health to sweet Eliza Phillips

--- Song

Eliza now the summer tells
Of spots where love & beauty dwells
Come & spend a day with me
Underneath the forest tree
Where the restless water flushes
Over mosses mounds & rushes
& where love & freedom dwells
With orchis flowers & foxglove bells
Come dear Eliza set me free
& o'er the forest roam with me

Here I see the morning sun
Among the beach tree's shadows run
That tints gold the short sward turns
Where each bright yellow blossom burns
With hues that would his beams outshine
Yet nought can match those smiles of thine
I try to find them all the day
But none are nigh when thou'rt away
Though flowers bloom now on every hill
Eliza is the fairest still

The sun wakes up the pleasant morn
& finds me lonely & forlorn
Then wears away to sunny noon
The flowers in bloom the birds in tune
While dull & dowie all the year
No smiles to see no voice to hear
I in this forest prison lie
With none to heed my silent sigh
& underneath this beechen tree
With none to sigh for Love but thee

Now this new poem is entirely new
As wedding gowns or money from the mint
For all I know it is entirely true
For I would scorn to put a lie in print
- I scorn to lie for princes - so would you
& ere I shoot I try my pistol flint
- The cattle salesman - knows the way in trying
& feels his bullocks ere he thinks of buying

Lord bless me now the day is in the gloaming
& every evil thought is out of sight
How I should like to purchase some sweet woman
Or else creep in with my two wives tonight.
Surely that wedding day is on the coming
Absence like physic poisons all delight -
Mary & Martha both an evil omen
Though both my own - they still belong to no man

But to our text again - & pray where is it
Begin as parsons do at the beginning
Take the first line friend & you cannot miss it
"Poets are born" & so are whores for sinning
- Here's the court circular - O Lord is this it
Court cards like lists of - not the naked meaning
Here's Albert going to Germany they tell us
& the young queen down in the dumps & jealous

Now have you seen a tramp on race courses
Seeking an honest penny as his trade is
Crying a list of all the running horses
& showing handbills of the sporting ladies
- In bills of fare you'll find a many courses
Yet all are innocent as any maid is
Put these two dishes into one & dress it
& if there is a meaning - you may guess it

Don Juan was Ambassador from Russia
But had no hand in any sort of tax
His orders hung like blossoms of the fushia
& made the ladies hearts to melt like wax
He knew Napoleon & the king of Prussia
& blew a cloud o'er spirits wine or max
But all his profits turned out losses rather
To save one orphan which he forced to father

There's Doctor Bottle imp who deals in urine
A keeper of state prisons for the queen
As great a man as is the Doge of Turin
& save in London is but seldom seen
Yclep'd old A - II - n - mad brained ladies curing
Some p - x - d like Flora and but seldom clean
The new road o'er the forest is the right one
To see red hell & further on the white one

Earth hells or b - gg - r sh - ps or what you please
Where men close prisoners are & women ravished
I've often seen such dirty sights as these
I've often seen good money spent & lavished
To keep bad houses up for doctors fees
& I have known a b - gg - rs tally traver's'd
Till all his good intents begin to filter
- When death brought in his bill & left the halter

O glorious constitution what a picking
You've had from your tax harvest & your tythe
Old hens which cluck about that fair young chicken
- Cocks without spurs that yet co.7 crow so blythe
Truth is shut up in prison while ye're licking
The gold from off the ginger bread - be lythe
In winding that patched broken old state clock up
Playhouses open - but madhouses lock up.

Give toil more pay where rank starvation lurches
& pay your debts & put your books to rights
Leave whores & playhouses & fill your churches
Old clovenfoot your dirty victory fights
Like theft he still on natures manor poaches
& holds his feasting on another's nights
To show plain truth your action in bawdy farces
Men show their tools - & maids expose their arses

Now this day is the eleventh of July
& being Sunday I will seek no flaws
In man or woman - but prepare to die
In two days more I may that ticket draw
& so may thousands more as well as I
To day is here - the next who ever saw
& in a madhouse I can find no month pay
- Next Tuesday used to be Lord Byron's birthday

Lord Byron poh - the man who writes the verses
& is just what he is & nothing more
Who with his pen lies like the mist disperses
& makes all nothing as it was before
Who wed two wives & oft the truth rehearse
& might have had some twenty thousand more
Who has been dead so fools their lies are giving
& still in Allen's madhouse caged & living

If I do wickedness today being Sunday
Can I by hearing prayers or singing psalms
Clear off all debts twist god & man on Monday
& lie like an old hull that dotage calms
& is there such a word as Abergundy
I've read that poem called the 'Isle of Palms'
- But singing sense pray tell me if I can
Live an old rogue & die an honest man

I wish I had a quire of foolscap paper
Hot pressed - & crowpens - how I would endite
A silver candlestick & green wax taper
Lord bless me what fine poems I would write
The very tailors they would read & caper
& mantua makers would be all delight
Though laurel wreaths my brows did ne'er environ
I think myself as great a bard as Byron

I have two wives & I should like to see them
Both by my side before another hour
If both are honest I should like to be them
For both are fair & bonny as a flower
& one o Lord - now do bring in the tea mem
Were bards pens steamers each of ten horse power
I could [not ^] bring her beautys fair to weather
So I've towed both in harbour blest together

Now i'n't this canto worth a single pound
From anybodys pocket who will buy
As thieves are worth a halter I’ll be bound
Now honest reader take the book & try
& if as I have said it is not found
I’ll write a better canto bye & bye
So reader now the money till unlock it & buy the book & help to fill my pocket

Don Juan - * To be inserted between the first & second verses at

Milton sung Eden & the fall of man
Not woman for the name implies a wh -- e
& they would make a ruin of his plan
Falling so often they can fall no lower Tell me a worse delusion if you can
For innocence - & I will sing no more
Wherever mischief is tis womans brewing
Created from mansel to be mans ruin

The flower in bud hides from the fading sun & keeps the hue of beauty on its cheek
But when full blown [word illeg del] they into riot run
The hue turns pale & lost each ruddy streak
So ‘tis with women who pretend to shun
Immodest actions which they inly seek
Night hides the wh - e & cupboards tart & pasty
Flora was p - x - d - & womans quite as nasty

Marriage is nothing but a drivelling hoax
To please old codgers when they’re turned of forty I wed & left my wife like other folks
But not untill I found her false & faulty
O woman fair - the man must pay thy jokes
Such makes a husband very often [word illeg del] naughty
Who falls in love will seek his own undoing
The road to marriage is - “the road to ruin”

Love worse than debt or drink or any fate
It is the damnest [part del] smart of matrimony
A hell incarnate is a woman - mate
The knot is tied - & then we lose the honey
A wife is just the prototype to hate
Commons for stock & warrens for the coney
Are not more tresspassed over in rights plan
Then this incumberance on the rights of man.
Blank
"Wild Harpelt"

I think of thee a song

A field of grass at early moon,
A smile where my feet may be
The skies opening with such gay
In love I think of thee

And have you seen the dome
In the happy year
Of my first lady love
To meet thee once more

I think of thee at day's noon
In the opening moon
To walk with thee now left alone
Beneath the silent room

I think of thee, I think of thee,
Now that we both have the
The moon looks pale when the wall
Continues into the scene

I can't expect to meet thee now
The winter flowers bloom
The winter street is white
Thou art as my heart within

I think of thee, the seasons through
To bring our happy days of their
A winter street in the new year
I think of thee, the winter

While life's beauty on this earth shall
What may my lot may be
Better in the Dom on high
Mary, Mary, I think of thee

In winter, the fields are bare. Winter
The snow covers all without the
In the snow, I see the beauty and the
Yielding pan of the happy days of
But I don't nor the cold the snow on one
Book to the grass which I lonely know
This winter scene of past time
But shall the days like I long to have
Are the notes of the, the love

Wind

But not to the room
As there I will wake
While the morning sun the
A leaf is on the tree
Can forget the dream
While the snow goes up the
Until the first snow on the other
The art of life my true love
Child Harold
I think of thee a Song

I think of thee at early day
& wonder where my love can be
& when the evening shadows grey
O how I think of thee

Along the meadow banks I rove
& down the flaggy fen
& hope my first & early love
To meet thee once a'gen

I think of thee at dewey morn
& at the sunny noon
& walks with thee - now left forlorn
Beneath the silent moon

I think of thee I think of all
How blest we both have been -
The sun looks pale upon the wall
& autumn shuts the scene

I can't expect to meet thee now
The winter floods begin
The wind sighs through the naked bough
Sad as my heart within

I think of thee the seasons through
In spring when flowers I see
In winters lorn & naked view
I think of only thee

While life breaths on this earthly ball
What e'er my lot may be
Wether in freedom or in thrall
Mary I think of thee

Tis winter & the fields are bare & waste
The air one mass of "vapour clouds & storms"
The suns broad beams are buried & oercast
& chilly glooms the midday light deforms
Yet comfort now the social bosom warms
Friendship of nature which I hourly prove
Even in this winter scene of frost & storms
Bare fields the frozen lake & leafless grove
Are natures grand religion & true love

Song

Thourt dearest to my bosom
As thou wilt ever be
While the meadows wear a blossom
Or a leaf is on the tree
I can forget thee never
While the meadow grass is green
While the flood rolls down the river
Thou art still my bonny queen
Autumn

The sky is painted with a deep blue, the sun is setting in the west. The air is filled with the sweet fragrance of maturing fruits. In the background, a distant mountain range is silhouetted against the sky.

As I walk along the path, I notice the trees starting to change color. The leaves turn shades of orange, red, and gold, creating a beautiful tapestry. The sound of crunching leaves underfoot adds to the peaceful atmosphere.

The path leads to a hidden clearing, where a small pond sparkles in the fading light. A few birds take flight, their wings creating a gentle rustling sound. The moon begins to rise, casting a soft glow over the landscape. It's a perfect evening, and I feel a sense of tranquility.

I sit down by the pond, my mind wandering as I gaze at the stars. The stars twinkle like diamonds in the night sky, each one a story waiting to be told. The quietness of the moment is soothing, allowing me to connect with nature.

As the night deepens, I stand up, feeling refreshed and renewed. I make my way back along the path, the sound of my footsteps echoing softly in the cool air. The world seems to slow down, and I feel a sense of peace and contentment.

This is a moment of quiet reflection, a time to connect with nature and savor the beauty of the autumn season. It's a reminder of the simple pleasures in life, and I feel grateful for this peaceful experience.
Autumn hath commenced her short pauses of showers, calms, storms, sunshine, and shadow. With all her bustle, she is nothing but a short preface before a large volume of "Winter" though not yet come to drive us to the fireside. He is giving us daily notice by dirty paths, brimming dykes, and naked fields. He is already on the way — it is now very pleasant to take walks in the morning and in fact at any time of the day though the mornings are misty and "the foggy dew" lies long on the grass. Here is a drove leads us on its level sward right into the flaggy fens. Shaded on each side with white thorn hedges covered with awes of different shades of red, some may be almost called red, black others brick red, and others nearly scarlet like the coats of the fox hunters. Now we have a flaggy ditch to stride which is almost too wide for a stride to get over — a run & jump just lands on the other side & now a fine level bank smooth as a bowling green curves & serpentines by a fine river whose wood of osiers & reeds make a pleasant rustling sound though the wind scarcely moves a single branch — how beautiful the bank curves on like an ornament in a lawn by a piece of water the map of ploughed field & grass ground in small allotments on the left hand with an odd white cottage peeping some where between the thorn hedges in the very perfection of quiet retirement & comfort. On the right hand the clear river with its copies of reeds, osiers & willow thickets & now & then a house — peeps through where the willows are not so thick and showing trees loaded with apples of a dull red & too thick for lodges shows we are near the approach of a town & now the church spire looking rather large dimensions catches the eye like a giant overtopping trees & houses & showing us his magnitude from half way up the tower to the weathercock & looks so noble above his willow woods nothing looks so noble among country landscapes as church steeples & castle towers as fine houses & public edifices do amongst city scenery — it is pleasant as I have done to day to stand upon a length of Bridges & notice the objects around us there is the fine old Northborough castle peeping through the scanty foliage of orchards & thorn hedges & there is the beautiful spire of Glinton Church towering high [over? illeg] the grey willows & dark walnuts still lingering in the Churchyard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time — place of green memorys & gloomy sorrows — even these meadow arches seem to me something of the beautiful having been so long a prisoner & shut up in confinement they appear something worthy of notice — to a man who has had his liberty they appear nothing more than so many tunnels thrown over a few puddles that are dry three parts of the year but to me they are more interesting than a flight of arches thrown over a cascade in a park or [even del] the crowded bridges in a great city — yonder is Maxey Tower church looking as if it were lighting up with sunshine when the au - tumn sky as gloomy as summer twilight & on the right peeping between the trees may be seen West Deepings crocketed spire & on the left Glinton Mill goes sweeping away to the wind — how sweet & green the banks wind along on each side the meadow with now & then a single arch crossing the meadow drains through which one can see a bit of the bank on the other side & being weary looking out for steeples I will take the path down the north bank its green slopes look so pleasant though the wind blows chilly & the rustics face looks purple
with cold - men are occupied in cutting the weeds from the drains to make a water course for the autumnal rains - solitary persons are sideing up the hedges & thrusting the brushwood in the thin places & creeps which the swine made from one ground or field into another & stopping gaps made in harvest by gleaners & labourers - the larks start up from the brown grass in the meadows where a couple of flutters & fights & drops out of sight as suddenly again into the grass - now a flock of redcaps seven or eight together take flight from the sides of the bank & settle again in the hedges which are almost crimson with awes seeming as if they fed on the seeds of the ragwort as no thistles are near - a solitary crow & some times a pair fly with heavy wing just over head now & then uttering a solitary croak to warn their tribes around that a man is approaching & then make a sudden wheel around at the sight of the stick in ones hand perhaps mis - taking it for a gun - the top stones of the walls of all the bridges I pass are full of [word illeg del] two letter names rudely cut with a knife - spread hands - & feet - often true love knotts & some times figures meant for houses churches & flowers - & sheep hooks & some times names cut in full - the idle amusements of cowtending boys horse - tenders & shepherds - now a snipe with its pointed wingshurries up from the meadow dyke into the fields - the meadow lakes seen from the bank puts me in mind of school adventures & boyish rambles the very spots where I used to spend the whole Sundays in fishing while the bells kept chiming in vain - I cannot make out where all these feelings & fancies are gone too - The plot of meadows now dont look bigger than a large homestead & the ponds that used to seem so large are now no bigger than puddles & as for fish I scarcely have interest enough to walk round them to see if there is any - yon arches yonder with trees peeping above them & between them & where the traveller is hopping away wearily over them on the narrow road is Lolham Bridges - time makes strange work with early fancies the fansied riches & happiness of early life fades to shadows of less substances even then the shadows of dreams I sigh for what is lost & cannot help it - yet there is even calm spots in the stormiest ocean & I can even now meet happiness in sorrow - the rural pictures or objects in these flats & meadows warms ones loneliness such as a rustic driving his little lot of cows or sheep down the plashy droves & plucking a handful of awes from the half naked hedges to eat as he goes on - The rawky mornings now are often frosty - & the grass & wild herbs are often covered with rime as white as a shower of snow - in the fen greensward closes the pewet or lapwing may be seen in flocks of two or three hundred together about Waldram Hall dabbling on the hedges of the lakes left by the rains - it is pleasing to see the woods of osiers by the river sides fading yellow
The sun was then high over the town when I arrived in the
town. As it was early, though perhaps too late to get from the
hotel, I walked around the town. The hotel was in some
places more... The next day, Mr. N. was walking along the street, and
saw a man sitting on the bench. He was smoking a pipe.

The fields will be full of corn. In nothing but corn, there
is a great deal of beauty in every field. I think that even
with the seasons, even with the beauty of the fields, I have yet to
make myself aware. When I think of the beauty, I think of the
fields. I love to walk on these fields. It's a great thing to see, to feel,
and to instinctively look both ways to see if my footsteps
are going or coming or into a canyon. I am alone in the
fields, and I walk on the banks. I walk on the banks...
There are a few willow trees by the Hall or Cottage - where the crows sit in the old nests as if it was spring though perhaps they may do it to get from the cold for there is a little crizzling ice on the edges of the water in some places such as ruts and horsefeetings - Now the man is putting off his boat to ferry over the water where an odd passenger may now & then call to be ferried over the lake to the other bank or high road - the ozier hedges & holts are with yellow & the white thorn hedges are getting thin of leaves & so crowded with awes that bye & bye the fields will be dressed in nothing but crimson & scar - let - nature like simplicity is beautiful in every dress she chuses to put on - with the seasons - even winter with his doublet of snows & hoar frost can make himself agreeable when he chuses to give people leave to go out of doors - I love to clamber over these bridgetwall & when I get off the banks on the road I instinctively look both ways to see if any passengers are going or coming or carts or waggons passing - now here is a stile paritioning off sombodys portion of the bank but the middle rail is off so I stoop under to get through instead of climbing over it - there is a pair of harrows painted red standing on end against the thorn hedge & in another ground an old plough stands on its beams ends against a dotterel tree some times we see a roll lying in on one corner & broken trays & an old gate off the hooks waiting to be repaired till repairs are useless - even these rustic implements & appendages of husbandry blend with nature & look pleasing in the fields.
While the winter veiled the forest green,
While the spring graced the bee,
While the waters kissed the mountain
She will burn green to me.
The wind sways to the sea,
As their love to the bee.
Their love was soon as warm
As their love can be.

- Robert Fosberg, American Poet
While the winter swells the fountain
While the spring awakes the bee
While the chamois loves the mountain
Thou'lt be ever dear to me
Dear as summer to the sun
As spring is to the bee
Thy love was soon as won
& so twill ever be

Thou'rt loves eternal summer
The dearest maid I prove
With bosom white as ivory
& warm as virgin love
No falsehood gets between us
Theres nought the tie can sever
As cupid\textsuperscript{475} dwells with venus\textsuperscript{476}
Thou'rt my own love forever\textsuperscript{477}
of affliction; but was
with earthly counsel; for I saw
the Lord, and am filled with gladness.
I am his servant; I am all the day
by his strong bow, he maketh me to
I am forsaken; I am broken by his hand;
I am put in places of drought: I go in a
thing; in the law of the Lord.
I make my path straight before my face:
the Lord directeth my steps. I mark
his paths with my footsteps, with my
I am all my paths is opened for me:
this is my law by the way.
I delight in the list of his courts.
I have determined to do his will


Lamentations of Jeremiah

Chap. 3

I am the man that affliction hath seen
By the rod of his wrath sorely scourged have I been
He hath turned against me like a vision of night
& led me to darkness & not into light
He turneth his hand against me all the day
My flesh & my skin he made old as a prey
He hath builded against me & broken my bones
I’m compassed with gall & travel & moans
He hath set me in places of darkness & cold
Like a being forgot as the dead are of old
He hath made my chain heavy & hedged me about
He hath shut out my prayer & I cannot get out
He hath enclosed all my ways with hewn heavy stone
& made all my paths both crooked & lone
He was unto me as a bear by the way
Or hiding in secret as a lion to slay
He pulled me in pieces my ways were all turned
Like a desolate being I sorrowed & mourned
I’m a mark for his arrow he bendeth his bow -
& empties his quiver to fill me with woe
To my people I was a derision & prey
& their song was my sufferings all the long day
He hath filled me with bitterness trouble & thrall
& made me mad drunk both with wormwood & gall
With gravel stones also my teeth he hath broke
He hath covered me over with ashes & smoke
Thou took my souls peace in a desolate hour
I forgot my prosperity riches & power
& I said that my strength in the Lord now must sever
& my hopes in my God now are perished forever
Remembering mine afflictions my misery & thrall
Confinement persecution - the wormwood & gall
My soul hath them still in remembrance the pain
& is humbled within me to feel it again
This I recall to my mind & I sigh
Yet therefore have hope that the worst may be bye
It is of Gods mercies we are not consumed
Because his compassions fail not - yet entombed
His love seems to me in the desolate hour
Yet faith shall be new every morning like flowers
The Lord saith my soul is my portion & stay
Therefore he’s my hope both by night & by day
The Lord he is good unto them that will wait
To the soul that will seek him both early & late
It is good that a man he should hope without friends
For the Lord of salvation to make him amends
It is good that a man bear the yoke of his youth
& endure persecution for the sake of the truth
A night or his pleasure, it last alone
Because he left none it was grief his own
The heart it travelled his months in the - out
Of which the dead in his life. Left trace
The griefs his death in the intricate our fears
He is ended, but respect all their solemn griefs
On his soul. God's gifts, forever will have
Although the cause grief will not leave him for own
We will have our grief. - I am not affairs
The best pleasure in mankind. See it come to
It build, all other. Be

In will, in will the will to

The soul of the mind, the soul of earth
To his soul, the sight of a man from his shift
In order, man in his cause on the

That he right the most high is affection. I felt
The chosen, I sought to help in the sun
Within the mind he commenc'd. It not to be done
Of your words it was gone - whatever
That particular proceeded of end V your
Therefore with a long and valiant

The poor man, his friends, I mention as wes
Did not reach out to many. On board, and see
I turn me again to the hill of the land
As if the light of the sun, the whole, his way, was risen
Within the world high. The man in the tree

The light drive with anger. Everything then
Those lost, when the earth rose again
Those lost, when the earth rose again

Those lost, when the earth rose again
Then our strong shall not halt in his battle -
The midst of the desert. So great a sound was.
That sound made the air quiver. serene.

The sound made the air quiver. serene.

Dear Vesper ace again, I very sel
Resilience formation did left who, bow
Lest manner, written music

On the direction of the news, how the words of how
In this I had been, my heart, my blood
Still the last, with scorn from the heaven tree

Now for my own city, letters to me
Some months does, I like a bird, from it more
Bind them from the house to travel. Give me no rest

Clouds in the sky, in the face of my passion, from

When this shall be, God to God be, thank you?

Three of the suburbs plant me none had
Now at the conclusion of my visit to me

Now ready. I'm in my own kitchen for I

The door to my own

Missed, but not in the way. (Verse 17)
He keepeth his silence & sitteth alone
Because he hath born it as a grief of his own
He hideth & putteth his mouth in the dust
If so that the Lord be his hope & his trust
He giveth his cheek to the smiter [who del] nor fears
He is filled with reproach at their insolent jeers
For his Lord & his God forsake him will never
& though he cause grief will not leave him forever
He will have compassion - I am not affraid
For his mercies in multitudes come to our aid
He hurteth not willingly th’ afflicted agen
Nor willingly grieveth the children of men
To crush underfoot the imprisoned of earth
To turn aside the right of a man from his birth
To subvert a man in his cause or to blot
But his right the most high he approveth it not
Who saith & it cometh to pass in the sun
When the Lord he commandeth it not to be done
Out of Gods mouth it was ne’er understood
That mixture proceeded of evil & good
Wherefore doth a living man daily complain
When our sins they are punished rebukeing is vain
Let us search out our ways & to comfort accord
& turn us agen to the help of the Lord
Let us lift up our hearts & our hands unforgiven
Imploiring God the most high & the mercies of heaven
We have transgressed & rebelled against thee
Thou hast covered with anger - persecuted we flee
Thou hast not pardoned we seek thee again
Thou hast not pittied but smitten & slain
Thou hast covered thy self in the depth of a cloud
That our prayer should not pass or be heard uttered aloud
In the midst of thy people - the great & the small
Thou hast made us the refuse offscouring of all
All enemies open their mouths to deride
Fear & snares are against us on every side
Desolation destruction hath left us no shore
With rivers of waters mine eyes runneth o’er
For the destruction of the daughters of my people’s renown
Without intermission my tears trickle down
Till the Lord shall look down from the heavens & see
I mourn for my own citys daughters & me
Mine enemies chased like a bird from its nest
My heart from its home & would give me no rest
They’ve cut off my life in the dungeon - to sever
& cast a stone on the door of my freedom forever
I said I’m cut off & my heart it felt dead
When waters & darkness flowed over mine head
From out the low dungeon I called on thy name
Thou hearest O Lord my petition & came
Hide not thine ear to my breathing & cry
Thou drawest near in the day that I thought I should die
“Fear not” was the voice when I called upon thee
Thou hast pleaded the cause of my soul & I’m free
...then the time did with great heart
be made as when the sun was set
and the stars shone. Finish the tale
of the man who stands up strong.

And in the land...
Thou hast witnessed my wrongs & redeemed my life
Judge thou my cause thou hast witnessed the strife
Against me all their vengeance thy wisdom hath seen
& thou knowest what their [word illeg del] hidden imaginings mean
The lips of all those who rose up in the fray
Their device against me is as clear as the day
Their reproaches thou hearest - when they sit down or rise
I am their music to scoff & despise
Render them Lord as their justice demands
A recompence mete to the work of their hands
Give them sorrow of heart that may inly condemn
Be the hatred of heaven thy curse upon them
Persecute & destroy them as something abhorred
From under the face of thy heaven O Lord

Job Chap. 39

Knowest thou the time when the wild goats breed
On rocks - or mark when the swift hinds caive
Canst thou number the months that they fulfill
Or know the time when they being forth their young
They bow themselves in travail & bring forth
& cast out their fond sorrows on the hills
Their young ones are the image of themselves
They grow up with corn go forth & not return
Who hath sent out the wild ass free or who
Hath loosed his weary bonds - whose house I made
The wilderness - his home the barren land
The multitudes of cities are his scorn
Neither regardeth he the drivers cry
His free born pasture is the mountain range
His search is after everything thats green
Will Unicorns thy slaving voice obey
Or by thy crib abide - or in the glebe
Bind him to trace the furrow - or will he
Harrow the fertile valley after thee
Wilt thou trust him because thy strength is great
Or wilt thou leave thy labour to his will
Wilt thou trust him to garner up thy seed
& gather home thine harvest to the barn
Gavest thou the peacocks tail his purple gold
Or wings & feathers to the ostrich tribe
Who leaveth her eggs on the earth to hatch
Warming them in the dust - forgetting that
The foot may crush or wild beast break their shells
Against her young ones she is hard & strange
As though they were not hers - her labour is
In vain withouten fear - God hath deprived
Her heart of reason - understanding lacks
To aid her [labours del] [toils ^yet when she soars on high
She soars both horse & rider in her flight
Hast thou given the horse his strength or clothed
His neck with thunder - canst thou make him fear
& flee like a grasshopper - the glory
Of his nostrils is fierce & terrible
He paweth the ground in strength rejoicing
& goeth onward to meet the battle
He soars to be afraid & mocks at fear
Neither turneth he away from the [battle del] sword
Against him the loaded quiver rattles
The glittering spear & the burnished shield
& his untamed fierceness swallows the ground
Neither heeds he the sound of the trumpet
He drives amongst the trumpets & laugheth ah ah
& the rage of battle he smelleth afar
The thunder of captains & shoutings of war
Doth thy weak wisdom teach the hawk to flye
& stretch her wings toward the southern sky
At thy command doth eagles mount & make
Their nests on high - their eerie is the rock
In the strong place & on the rocky crag
From thence their prey is noted & their eyes
Beholdeth far - her young ones suck up blood
& where the slain is there the eagles flye

Job Chap 40

Moreover God answered Job & said
Shall he who contends with God instruct him
He that reproveth God - let man reprove
Then Job made answer Lord behold I'm vile
What shall I answer thee - my voice is dumb
I lay my hand upon my mouth & fear
Once have I spoken but I answer not
Nay twice - nor further dare I now proceed
Then out of the fierce whirlwind & the storm
The Lord he answered fearfull Job & [said del] spake
" Gird up thy loins again & like a man
I will demand of thee - declare & speak
Wilt thou my judgment disannul & me
Condemn as wrong - that thou mayst righteous be
Is thine the power - hast thou an arm like God
Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him
Thyself with excellence & majesty array
With glory & with beauty deck thyself
& cast abroad thy rage of viewless ire
Behold the proud abuse him with thy wrath -
Around look on the proud & bring him low
Tread underfoot the wicked in their place
Together hide them in degrading dust
& bind their faces under secret thralls
Then will I also unto thee confess
That thy right hand & arm thy self can save
Behold Behemoth which I made with thee
He eateth grass as doth the ox - lo now
His strength is in his loins his force & power
Is in the navel of his belly - moving now
His tail like to a cedar - his sinewed stones
Are wrapt together - his bones are strong as brass
Aye firm unflinching ail as iron bars
Chief of Gods ways is he - he that made him
Can make his sword to pierce him & destroy
The mountains surely bring him forth his food
Where all the beast o' th' field do herd & play
Coverts of shady trees do make his lair
In the reed forests of the untrodden fens
Job 41

Clapham

He casteth forth lightning, and scattereth it abroad, he scattereth it into the depths of the sea.

And he made a path to it with clouds; he made a path to it with thick darkness;

The thick cloud is a covering for him that smiteth through great waters as an easy swimmer.

He looketh upon all the face of the earth; if the earth be turned as a charter, if the deep be overflown with clouds;

then he saith unto the south, Go forth; and the wind of the south cometh.

Send thy winds, that they may be fulfilled; that they may make the north wind to blow upon my garden.

Thou waterest the yellow grass with water; thou bringest green grass to grow.
Page 54.

The shady trees doth cover him with shadow
& willow brooks encompass him with shade
Behold he drinks a river in his thirst
& trusts to swallow Jordan in his mouth
He takes it with his eyes in thirsty draughts
& his nose pierces through the hidden Snares

Canst thou with hooks Leviathan draw out
Or with a chord let down amidst the deep
Canst thou put hooks into his mountain nose
Or bore his jaw through with a feeble thorn
Will he to thee a supplication make
Or speak soft words to make a friend of thee
Will he with thee make covenant - or thou
Make him for aye thy servant or thy slave
Wilt thou as with a bird play with his strength
Or bind him for thy maidens sportive smiles
Shall thy companions banquet on his flesh
Or part him among merchants for rich gain
Or canst thou fill his skin with barbed hooks
Or pierce his island of a head with spears
Lay thy hand on him & the battle fear
Remember thou the strife & do no more
Thy hopes of him behold are all in vain
Shall not one at his sight be soon cast down
To stir him up theres none so fierce to dare
Who then is able by my power to stand
Who hath prevented that I should repay
All under the whole heavens lives as mine
His parts & powers I will not conceal
His great proportions & his jiant powers
The facing of his garment who can see
Or with his double bridle tamper him
The doors of his face who can unlock
His teeth stand round as terrible as death
His scales they are his pride shut up secure
From mortal eye as is a closed seal
One to another joins the common air
Comes not between them - nor a passage finds
They stick & join & sundering is in vain
He neeses & a splendid light doth shine
His eyes are like the mornings bright & fair
Out of his mouth breath comes like burning lamps
& issuing sparks leap out as living fire
His nostrils as a boiling chaldron smokes
His breath is kindled [flames del] coals - & terrors flames
Come issuing from his mouth in terrors play
In's neck like to a mountain strength remains
& sorrow before him is turned to joy
His flakes of flesh join firm within themselves
& fast as is the mountain cant be moved
His heart is like the stone of adamant
Nay as the nether millstone firm & hard
When he is roiled the mighty are afraid
When he breaks forth they purifye themselves
The sword assailing him with never hold
The heavens his understanding words declare
The fragments his power
His hand works are written there
Though ever so low

They into joy in language speaks
Right into right all shows
Where did he fall language sends
To hear that voice from

Here has words through all the earth
With all the world own
To teach that these last built
To dwelling to the sun

As a bright scene from his sight comes
The arrow the shining star
Reposing as the solar standard
As a song over and a race

His song forth is from the eait
To the eait of every heaven
His might alway in every land
Where his rays of life are given

The laws of God a perfect law
Overwrite the world's laws
God's treasures all we have
To make the simple wise

The statues of the land are come
The heart-reflecting skill
My Lord one Deity they are none
They go with me the field

The fear of God is clear to fore
Standing with power
The judgment of the land are sure
Worthy are the given

To turn to the heart one they
New gold can she beark
More lights than the many far
Or seen the longest
Page 55.

The dark harbergeon or glittering spear
Iron is straw & brass is rotten wood
The arrow neither makes him fear or flee
Sharp stones are stubble aiming at his power
Darts count as rotten straw & are no more
He laugheth at the shaking of a spear
Sharp stones are under him he heeds them not
He spreads sharp pointed things upon the mire
The sea beneath him like a chaldron boils
& like a pot of oil or ointment shines
& after him a path of light shines far
One thinks the sea all hoary where he swims
Earth owns nought like him made without a fear
High things are open to his mountain view
King over all the children brutes of pride

Psalm 19

The heavens his wonderous works declare
The firmament his power
His handyworks are written there
Through every day & hour

Day unto day in language speaks
Night unto night will shine
In knowledge - & all language reads
& hears that voice divine

Their line & words through all the earth
Hath all the world o'er run
His tabernacle there hath birth
A dwelling for the sun

As a bridgrom from his chamber comes
He shows his shining face
Rejoicing as the season blooms
As a strong man runs a race

His going forth is from the end
& to the end of [time del] heaven
His circuit shines on every land
Where his rays of life are given

The law of God a perfect law
Converts the soul & tries
Gods testimonies all are pure
& makes the simple wise

The statutes of the Lord are sure
The heart rejoicing still
The Lords comandments they are pure
My eyes with love they fill

The fear of God is clear & pure
Enduring still forever
The judgments of the Lord are sure
& righteous as the giver

& more to be desired are they
Then gold can e'er become
More sweeter than the honey jar
Or e'en the honey comb
Psalm 91

The Lord shall direct his mercy forthward his truth, in all thy ways;
Upon thy right hand shall the sun arise, in the face of thine enemies;
To keep thee is his light, none shall safely suffer in thine presence.

In all thy paths shall be his arm, he will keep thee from the snare of the fowler, from destruction.
He shall deliver thee, he shall keep thee from falling, he shall preserve thy life, he shall guide thee in the paths of righteousness for thy soul's good.

Forsake not the way of the Lord, and he shall dwell with thee, his truth shall be a shield over thee, nor shall thy foot be moved, he shall guide thee with his eye in all thy ways.

When thou passest through the waters, he shall be with thee; thou shalt not stick with the messenger of death, nor be taken in destruction.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

The Lord shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, from destruction that worketh mischief in the earth, and the shadow of death.

For he will command his angels concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.

Upon thy right hand shall the sun arise, in the face of thine enemies; he will keep thee in all thy ways, he will bear thee up, and keep thee from all evil.

The Lord shall direct his mercy forthward his truth, in all thy ways; he will keep thee from the snare of the fowler, from destruction that worketh mischief in the earth, and the shadow of death.

He will command his angels concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.

The Lord shall direct his mercy forthward his truth, in all thy ways; he will keep thee in all thy ways, he will bear thee up, and keep thee from all evil.

As for me, I will not see any evil, for thou art with me; thy right hand will guard me.

The Lord will be merciful to thee, and good, and will love thee; he will establish thy goings; he will keep thee in all thy ways.

He will command his angels concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.

The Lord shall direct his mercy forthward his truth, in all thy ways; he will keep thee from the snare of the fowler, from destruction that worketh mischief in the earth, and the shadow of death.

He will command his angels concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.

The Lord shall direct his mercy forthward his truth, in all thy ways; he will keep thee in all thy ways, he will bear thee up, and keep thee from all evil.

As for me, I will not see any evil, for thou art with me; thy right hand will guard me.

The Lord will be merciful to thee, and good, and will love thee; he will establish thy goings; he will keep thee in all thy ways.

He will command his angels concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.

The Lord shall direct his mercy forthward his truth, in all thy ways; he will keep thee from the snare of the fowler, from destruction that worketh mischief in the earth, and the shadow of death.

He will command his angels concerning thee, to guard thee in all thy ways.
Their steadfast truth thy servant warms
Their faith is his regard
In keeping them my being earns
A safe & sure reward

Who can his errors understand
Cleanse me from secret faults
Keep back thy servants in thy hands
That he not fails nor halts

Let no presumptuous sins e'er have
Dominion over me
Then shall I meet a welcome grave
Or live upright with thee

Of vile transgressions great & small
Lord keep me innocent
Then shall thou hear my conscience call
& know my good intent—

The meditations of my heart
Lord keep them all with thee
Let all the words my thoughts impart
With thy own sanction be

Do thou accept me e'er I fall
By thy avenging rod
My strength my hope my life my all
& my redeeming God

Psalm 91

He that dwelleth in the secret place
Of God the great & high
Beneath the shadow of his grace
In quiet peace shall lie

The Lord my lasting friend shall be
He is my refuge still
The fortress of my cares is he
& trust in God I will

Surely from the fowlers snare
He shall deliver thee
& from the noisome pestilence
Still keep thee pure & free

His truth shall shield & buckler give
When hell its vengeance flings
Beneath his feathers thou shalt live
& his defending wings

Nights terrors all shall flee away
Nor fears thy soul alarm
The arrows that are shot by day
Shall do thy life no harm

From pestilence that walks by [day del] night
Thy dwelling shall be free
Destruction that at noon shall blight
Shall never injure thee
A thousand by thy side shall fall
Ten thousand by thy hand
But nought shall bring thee into thrall
While God thy friend shall stand

Thou shalt behold it with thine eyes
The wicked's sure reward
Because the Lord thy refuge lies
Thy home is God's regard

No evil thou shalt meet at large
No plague thy dwelling rase
For he shall give his angels charge
To keep thee all thy days

Thee they shall bear up in their hands
Nor leave thee all alone
Lest thou should'st dash in troubles lands
Thy foot against a stone

Thou shalt tread on the Lions main
& crush the adders crown
Young Lions by thy foot be slain
That tramples Dragons down

Because on me he sets his love
I'll keep his heart from shame
I'll set him high all foes above
Because he knows my name

On me his inward love shall call
In care I'll bring relief
I'll answer him in every thrall
& honour his belief

With length of life & honours too
Him I will satisfye
To him salvation will I shew
When troubles days are bye

Child Harold

Song

In this cold world without a home
Disconsolate I go
The summer looks as cold to me
As winters frost & snow
Though winters scenes are dull & drear
A colder lot I prove
No home had I through all the year
But Mary's honest love

But love inconstant as the wind
Soon shifts another way
No other home my heart can find
Life's wasting day by day
The love within the love
My love was mine at first as then
Attune'd with her own
Do I see thee in my dream
My love is taken from me

Is it not of the children the race is on
Their is one more of their kind no more

The love of Israel is his name
The holy one of Israel is his name
Is it not true of all
A word for my sake I make

Thy name is seen
Tis seen by every eye
Thine name is seen
Thy name is seen

I have a rider of my own
As in my reversion to forego
Who is the rider of the people's path
I look to the leap and the leap to the leap

I leap and my feet
A word for my sake I make
Is it not true of all
The holy one of Israel is his name
I sigh & sit & sit & sigh
For better days to come
For Mary was my hope & joy
Her truth & heart my home

Her truth & heart was once my home
& May was all the year
But now through seasons as I roam
Tis winter everywhere
Hopeless I go through care & toil
No friend I e'er possesst
To recompence for Mary's smile
& the love within her breast

My love was ne'er so blest as when
It mingled with her own
Told often to be told again
& every feeling known
But now loves hopes are all bereft
A lonely man I roam
& absent Mary long hath left
My heart without a home

ISAIAH CHAP 47

Come down & sit in dust
Daughter of Babalon
Come on the ground ye must
Thy throne & power is gone
Daughter of the chaldeans thy race is oer
Thou art the tender & delicate no more

Take millstones & grind meal
Uncover thy fair locks
Bare legs & thighs reveal
For God thy treachery mocks
Pass o'er the streams thy nakedness is seen
& shame is o'er thee though thou art a queen

Thy inmost shame is seen
Reverse thy every plan
I'll vengeance take nor mean
To meet thee as a man
As for our redeemer he feels shame
The holy one of Israel is his name

Sit there in silence now
& into darkness flye
Uncoronet thy brow
Chaldeans daughter sigh
For thou shalt never more be called
Lady of kingdoms [by del]thy [base'] power enthralled

I with my people wrath
Did this heritage polute
& in thine hands left both
To make them destitute
Thou showed no mercy but with heavy stroke
Upon the ancient hast thou laid the yoke
NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPTION

NB. These notes also appear in the Notes Section

1 The first two stanzas of this song are written on the penultimate page of Clare’s copy of Byron: The Complete Works, Including The Suppressed Poems (Paris: Galignani 1828), held at Northampton Public Library.

2 Clare explains in a note on the bottom of page 6 of Nor, MS6 that the two songs which he has faircopied here as well as on page 1 of the manuscript were written immediately on his arrival home at Northborough in 1841. The note reads as follows, “a *b The above songs were written directly after my return home to Northborough last friday evening the rest of the stanzas & songs were written on Epping Forest Essex’. This emphasises how precisely Clare pinpoints the time of composition and his arrival home at the start of the manuscript. The first two stanzas of ‘song a’ appear on page 23 of Nor, MS8 and were probably written on the road during his escape.

3 Clare uses the word ‘sojourning’ on page 1 of Nor, MS6. When the second version of the same song appears on page 6 of the manuscript Clare has substituted ‘returning’ for ‘sojourning’. Robinson and Powell in their edition of Child Harold use Clare’s second version. The Later Poems of John Clare 1837 – 1864 (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1984), p. 43. Clare’s change of use of the two verbs interests me. ‘Song a’ in Nor, MS8 reveals that a draft of this song may have been written while Clare was ‘on the road.’ Without doubt, the first version of the song suggests voyaging and temporality which are hallmarks of Nor, MS6.

4 In his account of his escape on page 3 of Nor, MS6, Clare describes one cold night’s sleep in particular: ‘I followed looking in vain for the countryman’s straw bed - & not being able to [find del] meet it I lay down by a road side under some Elm trees between the wall & the trees being a thick row planted some 5 or 6 feet from the buildings I lay there & tried to sleep but the wind came in between them so cold that I lay till I quaked like the ague’.

5 See St. Matthew, Chapter VIII, Verse, 20, ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head’.

6 Clare refers to parental opposition when it came to his love for Mary ‘for her parents were farmers and Farmers had great pretentions to somthing’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare by Himself (Ashington, Northumberland: Mid NAG / Carcanet), 1996, p. 87.

7 This stanza is found on page 24 of Nor, MS8.

8 The first two stanzas of this song may be found on pages 22 and 23 of Nor, MS8, opposite part of a draft version of the ‘Reccollections &c of journey from Essex’.

9 ‘Song b’ does not appear in Nor, MS8 but is written in ink along the margins of The Morning Chronicle dated 18th June (presumably 1841). Clare refers to this newspaper on page 2 of Nor, MS6, ‘On searching my pockets after the above was written I found part of a newspaper vide “Morning Chronicle” on which the following fragments were written (Clare is referring to the pencilled account of his escape). Nor, MS7, p. 55.

10 Clare is referring to Glinton Church. Glinton was the home of Mary Joyce.

11 Glinton churchyard appears to be specifically asscociated with Mary Joyce. See ‘Autumn’, Nor, MS6. p. 46.

12 Clare has written ‘feet’ over another word here in Nor, MS6, but it is not possible to distinguish the original word.

13 Clare’s account of his escape from High Beech in Essex appears in Nor, MS8 in interrupted fragments on pages, 13, 16, 22, 23 and 24. It is clear that the details of this experience were very
important to him. It is a striking feature of this document that he is meticulous about attempting to offer some sort of chronological order of events relating to his escape.

14 In a draft letter written on the margins and between the columns of *The Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser* dated Friday 27th August 1841, Clare recounts the same details, 'for I had travelled from Essex to Northamptonshire without ever eating or drinking all the way save one pennyworth of beer which was given to me by a farm servant near an odd house called the plough'. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 650.

15 Clare's account of his escape includes two very specific references to Gipsies.

16 Clare has dated this particular entry as July 23rd 1841 in Nor, MS8.

17 Note the contradiction here in comparison to p. 4 of Nor, MS6, where Clare, writing to Mary Joyce remembers Mary's family with respectful affection, 'God Bless you My dear Mary Give my love to your dear [&?] beautifull family & to your Mother'.

18 On page 10 of Nor, MS6, in the second stanza, Clare includes the following lines '- but I can ne'er forget / Oaths virtuous falsehood volunteered to me'. See also p. 12 of Nor, MS6 'Her looks was ne'er forgot or out of sight / - Mary the muse of every song I write'.


20 Clare's humour is in evidence even at moments of stress. It is not clear at this point in the text whether Clare was suffering from the delusion that he was Napoleon though an account of Clare by a fellow patient twenty years later at Northampton asylum in 1864, gives a clear picture of Clare's excellent impersonations of celebrities such as Nelson, Napoleon and Byron. Clare also believed himself to be Jack Randall, a celebrated boxer. William Jerom's, "Reminiscences of Clare. / The Northampton Peasant Poet / By a Fellow Patient" reveals a poignant and graphic picture of Clare the year he died. At times, the details of Jerom's account are reminiscent of Clare's style of writing in 1841, particularly when he employs the trope 'of travelling the long road of life'. He justifies his "Reminiscences" in his introduction, saying: 'to proclaim to myself and also to others, or as you will, signposts and fingerposts to mark the lapse of time, and to proclaim to oneself and also to others that so much of life's pilgrimage has been passed'. Peterborough, Peterborough Museum, G5, p. 1.

21 Clare does not say who this person was nor is there any inference that such a meeting may have jeopardised his escape.

22 Clare's account is broken off at this point in Nor, MS8. Clare has written four lines of a poem:

Madhouses they must shut up shop  
& tramp to fairs and races  
Master & men as madmen stop  
Life lives by changing places.

Robinson and Powell do not include this as part of *Don Juan* or *Child Harold* despite the fact that seven stanzas are found in Nor, MS8 on pages 21 to 22. These editors do include the poem on pp. 37 - 38 of *The Later Poems*.

23 This line follows the first two stanzas of 'I've wandered many a weary mile' in Nor, MS8.

24 Metaphors of sailing, oceans and harbours abound in the *Child Harold* stanzas in Nor, MS6. Clare had read and enjoyed Falconer's 'Shipwreck'. Byron's *Child Harold* also contains many references to shipwreck. See Nor, MS6, page 9, stanza 5.
England my country though my setting sun  
Sinks in the ocean gloom & dregs of life  
My muse can sing my Marys heart was won  
& joy was heaven when I called her wife  
The only harbour in my days of strife

There appears to be a line of continuous writing following these inserted comments but this line is illegible.

See Clare’s paraphrase ‘The Last Judgment - St. Matt’ etc. Nor, MS6, p. 35, ‘A stranger to [give del] find thee a welcome & rest’.

This word amongst other fragments of Clare’s account of his escape are written in pencil on a torn scrap of newspaper. Nor, MS7, p. 55.

Clare may be referring to the manuscript known as Bodleian, MS Don a8. Clare wrote stanzas of poetry on the margins of The Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser and The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury dated August and September 1841 respectively. See Chapter on ‘The Northborough Autumnal Sequence’.

In a letter to Charles Clare, written on Tuesday the 17th October 1848 from Northampton, Clare echoes precisely the same sentiment: ‘live happy & comfortable together in your old house at home for go where we will & be as we may always remember ‘There is no place like Home’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 658. See also J. H. Payne, (1791 - 1852), ‘Clari, or The Maid of Milan’, (1823 Opera), ‘be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home’ and also ‘Home, home sweet, sweet home!’. Angela Partington, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 510.

Does this refer to the moment of composition or an example of the text-writer’s art found on the roadside? Thomas Hardy, Tess of The D’Urbervilles, Chapter 12: ‘I think they are horrible,’ said Tess. ‘Crushing! killing!’ / ‘That’s what they are meant to be!’ he replied in a trade voice. ‘But you should read my hottest ones - them I kips for slums and seaports. They’d make yew wiggle! Not but what this is a very good tex for rural districts.......’. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d’ Urbevilles (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1975), p. 138.

These lines appear after the poem ‘Written in a Thunderstorm July 15th 1841’ on an unnumbered page in Nor, MS8. The concentration and effort Clare must have expended in ordering and collating the chaotic fragments which make up the account of his escape in Nor, MS8 is astonishing.


Over fifteen years earlier in his journal for Friday 3 June 1825 Clare wrote: ‘got the tune of Highland Mary from Wisdom Smith a gipsey & pricked another sweet tune without name as he fiddled it’. Nor, MS15, p. 87. Cited by George Deacon in John Clare and the folk tradition, p. 28.

Clare constantly refers to his two wives throughout Nor, MS6 and in his correspondence dated 1841.

Clare’s disrespect towards Queen Victoria in the Don Juan stanzas contrasts with the warmth of affection expressed for her early in the manuscript.


Clare is presumably referring here to the period before he moved to Northborough in 1832. It is revealing that he recalls the traumatic move from Helpstone nine years earlier at a time when he is once more feeling ‘homeless at home’.
Clare repeatedly refers to Patty Clare, his legal wife as his second wife in Nor, MS6. In a letter to Patty dated May 1841, Clare appears to be writing to Mary Joyce and Patty Clare at one and the same time. This particular letter is very brief: 'My Dearest Mary, As This Will Be My Last Letter To You Or Any One Else - Let My Stay In Prison Be As Long Or As Short As It May - I Will Write To You & My Dear Patty In The Same Letter'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 645. In another letter Clare reveals even more of the complex relationship between these two women in his personal and creative life: 'My Dear Wife Mary I might have said my first wife & first love & first everything - but I shall never forget my second wife for I loved her once as dearly as yourself - & almost do now so I determined to keep you both forever & when I write to you I am writing to her at the same time & in the same letter'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646. I am interested by the duality of purpose which makes itself felt throughout the pages of Nor, MS6.

A complex and bizarre statement as regards chronology.

This quote from Byron's 'Sonnet on Chillon' is written on page 25 of Nor, MS8, after a note concerning the location and setting of Fern Hill. The intermingling of biographical detail in the first pages of Nor, MS6 in particular is striking.

Byron's poem 'The Prisoner of Chillon' must have seemed particularly appropriate to Clare at this point of his narrative in Nor, MS6. Byron's 'Sonnet' similarly describes the power of the mind to remain free of the chains of confinement: 'Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind / Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! Thou art: / For there thy habitation is the heart'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Lord Byron, p. 379.

Note Clare's use of Byron's title immediately following his quotation from 'Sonnet on Chillon'.

The month of July in 1841 was a particularly warm and clear one. The local school master of Appleton-Le-Moors, near Pickering in Yorkshire recorded in his diary of the same year: 'July 26th Monday, Invited by the lovely weather, we set out as soon as school was over & descended into our favourite Dale'. Sunday the 18th of July was described by the schoolmaster as a brilliantly warm day with a full moon at night. Clare was countryman enough to appreciate the advantages of a full moon to travel by. This diary is in private ownership, but it is still housed in the village of Appleton-Le-Moors opposite the house which used to be the village rectory.

Clare replicates the notion of homelessness here. The use he makes of the autobiographical voice in Nor, MS6 to reposition and reconstruct one obsessive refrain is the subject of Chapter Six.

Glinton was Mary's village and the church spire and churchyard are mentioned by Clare throughout Nor, MS6. See p. 1, p. 7, p. 16, p. 19, and p. 46.

This is clearly an echo of the mood and tone of the first song in Nor, MS6 'I had no home in early youth'.

In a letter to Mary Joyce in Nor, MS8, p. 18, Clare explains that he is writing to his legal wife Patty while he writes to Mary adding, 'I loved her once as dearly as yourself - & almost do so now so I determined to keep you both forever'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

Geoffrey Summerfield in John Clare: Selected Poems, note to p. 214, p. 369, observes that it became a popular pastime to imitate Byron's poems following his death. Clare is obviously doing more than this at this point in his manuscript.

Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, p. 40 draw attention in a footnote to the similarity of this line to Byron's, 'The Phrophecy of Dante', Canto The Fourth, 'Many are Poets who have never penn'd'. They do not comment upon Clare's identification with Dante's experience of exile.

This stanza appears on page 3 of Nor, MS8. It follows the opening stanza of Don Juan and possibly indicates at this point that Clare cannot make up his mind as to which poem he intends to work on.

Clare has failed to cross the letter 't' in 'truly' and on many other occasions in the first twenty
Clare rated the Medieval and Elizabethan song highly. In a letter written to James Montgomery in May 1826, Clare wrote: ‘I have long had a fondness for the poetry of the time of Elizabeth though I have never had any means of meeting with it, farther than in the confined channels of Ritson’s ‘English Songs’ Ellis’s ‘Specimens,’ and Walton’s ‘Angler’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 375. This opening ballad also suggests the passion of the English hymn.

The stanzas of this first ballad are written on page 2 of Nor, MS8.

Clare’s identification with Byronic prisoners, (‘The Prisoner of Chillon’, Tasso and Dante) surface throughout Nor, MS6.

Ink is splattered on the paper here.

Presumably the forest at High Beech which in the early days of his confinement Clare greatly admired.

Robinson Crusoe’s narrative in the September Journal entry of Defoe’s novel is relevant here: ‘In a word, as my life was a life of sorrow one way, so it was a life of mercy another; and I wanted nothing to make it a life of comfort but to be able to make my sense of God’s goodness to me and care over me in this condition’. Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1900), p. 131. In his Sketches, written into Nor, MS14, Clare referred specifically to the merits of Robinson Crusoe, describing it as a ‘Romance’. It was, ‘the first book of any merit I got hold of after I could read’. Clare relates the account of borrowing the romance from a boy at school and despite promising to return it the following day, was confined at home due to a heavy fall of snow for a full week. The impact the book made upon him is clear as another observation in the same account suggests ‘new Crusoes & new Islands of Solitude was continually mulled over on my journeys to and from school.’

Clare wrote to Patty on March 17th 1841, ‘It Was My Lot To Seem As Living Without Friends Untill I Met With You And Though We Are Now Parted My Affection Is Unaltered’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 643.

In his August letter to Matthew Allen Clare commented, ‘I found your words true on my return here having neither friends or home left’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 650.

Nor, MS6, p. 4, ‘my hopes are not entirely hopeless while while even the memory of Mary lives so near me’.

The letters ‘y’ and ‘s’ are smudged.

Nor, MS6, p. 1, ‘My school walks there was every day / Where she made winter flowery’.

This stanza is written on page 32 of Nor, MS8 and is in keeping with the mood and sentiment of ‘Psalm 19’.

Robinson Crusoe also takes comfort from the presence of God: ‘One morning, being very sad, I opened the Bible upon these words, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”...... “Well then”, said I, “if God does not forsake me, of what ill consequence can it be, or what matters it, though the world should all forsake me, seeing on the other hand if I had all the world, and should lose the favour and blessing of God, there would be no comparison in the loss’. Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (London, Edinburgh, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1900), p. 112.


In a stanza in an untitled ‘Song’ dated 1840, Clare wrote, ‘Bye That Cottage Near a Wood / Though The Summer Flowers Appear / They Charm Not Me -.’ Robinson and Powell, Later
Poems, p. 5.

67 Note the use of anapaestic dimeter here.

68 Nor, MS8, p. 14. The following three stanzas occur in the same sequence in Nor, MS8.

69 Geoffrey Grigson draws attention to the representation of lowland and highland and their parallel to the Fens where Mary resides and the elevation of High Beech where Clare was confined. There is also a strong echo of Burns here.

70 Presumably a reference to the wooded country around High Beech Asylum in Essex, where Clare had been a patient from 1837 - 1841. An interesting chapter on the geographical characteristics of Epping Forest, especially High Beech asylum, may be found in Epping Forest: Its Literary and Historical Associations. Clare became greatly attached to the beauty of the surrounding forests despite his terrible homesickness. In a poem printed in the English Journal dated 15th May 1841, page 308, Clare describes in meticulous detail the views available to him ‘I love to see the Beach Hill mounting high / The brook without a bridge, and nearly dry’. Robinson and Powell, The Later Poems, p. 24.

71 Clare establishes the presence of Mary as loved woman and muse early in the manuscript and continues to return to this idea throughout.

72 ‘My school walks there was every day / Where she made winter flowery’. Nor, MS6, p. 1.

73 Clare’s use of the phrase ‘nor yet’ followed by the reference to Mary’s name and memory would suggest that he may have absorbed the details of her physical death but sustains her creative life.

74 Clare fails to dot his ‘i’ here and in many other instances in the early part of his fair copy.

75 See the letter addressed to ‘Mary Clare - Glinton’, ‘my hopes are not entirely hopeless while even the memory of Mary lives so near me’.

76 In a letter addressed to Matthew Allen which Clare wrote along the margins and in between the columns of the Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser for Friday, 27th Aug 1841, he described his irritation and frustration with the constant intrusive authority of the nurses and doctors at Allen’s hospital. ‘...but the greatest annoyance in such places as yours are those servants styled keepers who often assumed as much authority over me as if I had been their prisoner’. Although Clare enjoyed a good relationship with his doctor at High Beech, Allen suffered his fair share of satirical criticism in Don Juan. See Nor, MS6, p. 41.

77 The whole notion of existence is central to Nor, MS6. While Mary exists through poetry so are Clare and the various speakers sustained throughout the manuscript.

78 On Nor, MS6, p. 12, in the ‘Ballad’, stanza 6, Clare refers to Mary as his ‘vagrant Muse’.

79 Byron in Don Juan Canto III, Stanza 80, ll. 634 - 635 wrote, ‘His polar star being one that rather ranges / And not the fix’d’. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 507.

80 Shakespeare’s ‘Sonnet 116’ finds an echo here: ‘it is an ever - fixed mark / that looks on tempests and is never shaken; / It is the star to every wand’ring bark’.

81 Four lines earlier the speaker has referred to the memory of Mary shining like ‘a sun on my grave’. The polarity of mood and imagery is common to all the material in Nor, MS6.

82 Falconer’s ‘Shipwreck’ was a part of Clare’s library as was Gulliver’s Travels. The shipwreck metaphor surfaces repeatedly in Nor, MS6, particularly in the prose piece ‘Autumn’ which begins on page 46 of the manuscript.

83 Clare has failed to use the apostrophe here.
Byron’s ‘Epistle to Augusta’ contains two lines which find a substantial echo in Clare’s song, ‘There yet are two things in my destiny / A world to roam through - and a home with thee’. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, stanza 1, p. 268.

In the first version of this song on page 1 of the manuscript Clare has used ‘sojourning’ as opposed to ‘returning’. Robinson and Powell have chosen to use the verb ‘returning’ in their version of this song. *The Later Poems*, p. 43.

A poignant reflection in Clare’s autobiographical *Sketches* in Chapter 6, ‘Memorys of Love’, describes how his love for Mary Joyce was thwarted by family opposition while also suggesting that he had always hoped that they might one day renew their acquaintance: ‘so my passion coold with my reason and contented itself with another tho I felt a hopeful tenderness one that I might one day renew the acquain[t]ance and disclose the smotherd passion’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, *John Clare by Himself*, p. 87. Many of the early stanzas in Nor, MS6 become a declaration of love.


It is not clear whether Clare is using a capital letter here.

In Nor, MS8, this line reads, ‘There’s madness there & misery here’.

This stanza is written in Nor, MS8, p. 18.

A possible echo of Clare’s earlier refusal to believe Mary had died, where he described the news of her death as ‘blarney’. See Nor, MS6, p. 4.

Byron in *Don Juan* wrote, ‘I hate inconstancy - I loathe, detest, / Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made / Of such quicksilver clay’. Canto II, Stanza 209, ll. 1665 - 1667. See also l. 1669, ‘Love, constant love, has been my constant guest’. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, p. 485.

Byron in his *Don Juan*, Canto V, stanza iv, comments on his ‘passion’ for the name of Mary, ‘I have a passion for the name of Mary’, ‘for once it was a magic sound to me; / And still it half calls up the realms of fairy’. Jerome J. McGann, *Byron: The Oxford Authors*, p. 549.

Clare fails to use the apostrophe here and throughout the manuscript.

Clare has substituted a comma for the hyphen he has used in the same stanza of this song on page 1 of the manuscript.

Robinson and Powell in *Later Poems*, p. 45, l. 143 use the plural, ‘cheeks’.

This stanza and the following five stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, on page 18.

Exactly as Clare has written the word.

Bunyan’s, *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Clare was convinced that he was a bigamist during his confinement both at High Beech and Northampton asylums.


In a letter addressed to William Knight dated Friday, 11th of April 1851, Clare refers to his confinement. Citing Sterne, Clare describes the effects of incarceration on his creative instinct: ‘I would try like the Birds a few songs I’ the spring but they have shut me up & gave me no tools & like the caged Starnel of Stern ‘I cant get out’ to fetch any so I have made no progress at present -
but I have written a good lot & as I should think nearly sufficient'. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 680. In an earlier letter to Knight written in July 1850, Clare also refers to Sterne: 'I am still wanting like Sterne's Prisoners Starling to 'get out' but can't find the Way'. It is difficult to comprehend how ten years earlier he was producing some of the most brilliant poetry of his career. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 678.

Clare may be thinking here of the women who frequented the playhouses and whorehouses described in *Don Juan*. See Nor, MS6, p. 38.

Compare this line with an observation about women in his letter to Matthew Allen, dated August 27th 1841: ‘I care nothing about the women now for they are faithless & deceitful & the first woman when there was no man but her husband found out means to cuckold him by the aid & assistance of the devil’. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 651.

In the honeymoon period of Clare's early experience of hospitalisation he wrote to his wife Patty in November 1837: ‘the place here is beautiful & I meet with great kindness the country is the finest I have seen’. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 642. Even in 1841, he was still enamoured of the landscape around him. He wrote to Mary Joyce referring specifically to Fern Hill: ‘I went a few evenings on Fern Hill & wrote a new canto of ‘Child Harold’. Mark Storey's *Letters*, p. 646. Fern Hill was one of Clare's favourite haunts situated at the at the back of High Beech's chapel. The original site was on the Forest side of the road, between High Beech vicarage and the 'Suntrap' which occupies the site of Fairmead House. *Epping Forest and its Associations*, p. 161.

Reminiscent of Burns.

Even today the dip and swell of Epping Forest allows for secrecy as well as remaining impenetrable in places.

Clare reiterates the refrain of ‘Song a’ on page 1 of Nor, MS6.

Clare wrote to Patty in March 1841 explaining how much he missed his children, ‘Give My Best Love To My Dear Childern & Kiss The Little One's For Me’. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 643.

Mark Storey, *Letters*, pp. 646 - 647. In the same letter, Clare refers to his ‘two wives’ and his children.

This stanza and the following two stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, p. 19.

Robinson and Powell make two words here, *Later Poems*, p. 47, l. 91.

A direct reference to Fern Hill at High Beech in Essex.

High Beech is at the very centre of Epping Forest and its isolation is wholly apparent to a visitor right up to the present day.


Having no one to love the speaker believes himself to be ‘homeless’. A similar sentiment is expressed on page 1 of Nor, MS6 though in this instance Mary's smile is the metaphor for 'home'.

These lines are reminiscent of the poems found in Nor, MS9, the octavo notebook Clare used at Northampton in 1850. Clare draws on a number of female names in this notebook, Bessey being one in particular.

A reference to Dryden’s ‘All For Love’. See also page 22 of Nor, MS6.

Note the same desire for extinction as Job, in Chapter 3, ‘Let the day perish wherein I was born’.

On page 20 of Nor, MS8, following these stanzas Clare has written seven quatrains of the song, ‘Nigh Leopards hill stand All - ns hells’. Eric Robinson and David Powell do not include these stanzas in their version of Don Juan or Child Harold though they include the poem in the period of composition dated 1841. Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, pp. 37 - 38.

In Nor, MS8 this poem is written on page 16 and follows the letter to Mary Joyce. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646. It is revealing that only the letter written to Mary Joyce finds its way into Nor, MS6. This unsent letter together with those written in Nor, MS8 appear to be another method by which Clare records the events of 1841.

Tennyson on a visit to High Beech Asylum in Essex commented on the location and its thunder storms. Epping Forest: Its Literary and Historical Associations. Clare’s use of the thunder trope is intriguing. The prose passage ‘Autumn’, (pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6) describes the sound of birds in the trees sounding like thunder. On p. 7 of Peterborough, A62, Clare jots down a short fragment dated 4th November 1841 ‘a immense flock of starnels settled on an ash tree in the orchard & when they took wing it was like a large roll of thunder’.


Caesar at the Rubicon, ‘lacta alia est’.

‘The pole star of my being & decay’. Nor, MS6, p. 6.


King Lear, Act III, scene iv, ll. 8 - 9, ‘But where the greater malady is fix’d / the lesser is scarce felt’. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works. op. cit. p. 1093.

In Nor, MS8, on page 23, this stanza follows an extract from Clare’s account of his escape (as yet untitled) dated July 23rd 1841, beginning: ‘returned home out of Essex & found no mary - her & her family are nothing to me now....’. The pagination of Nor, MS8 is indistinct and therefore unreliable as specific reference points.


‘I Am’ composed in 1840 but published in 1848 contains two very similar lines, ‘Untroubling, and untroubled where I lie, / The grass below - above the vaulted sky’. Merryn and Raymond Williams, John Clare: Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 194.

Written in ink on the margins of The Morning Chronicle, dated 18th June (1841?). Nor, MS7.

A clear endorsement of the therapeutic value of writing about Mary even though this initiates a painful response.

Mary being absent from her geographical home has been placed in the memory, heart and home of...
the speaker instead.

136 Clare’s speaker identifies the gap between his own continuing unbroken regard for Mary and the impossibility of his affection being returned.

137 This stanza and the following two stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, p. 6.

138 A description of Clare which appeared in the Northampton Mercury dated 30th April 1842 comments upon Clare’s mental state: ‘He writes frequently and beyond a doubt composes many more poems than he puts on paper, if indeed his life is not passed in one almost unbroken poetic dream’. Clare’s death is commented upon by an anonymous writer in a letter to the editor of the Northampton Mercury dated 28th May 1864. This account, although melodramatic echoes Clare’s own metaphor in Child Harold: ‘Night finds me on this lengthening road alone’. See p. 9 of Nor, MS6. The writer of the obituary writes: ‘Sorrow to think that for so many years his bright intellect should have been overclouded with the awful shadow of insanity, and a melancholy pleasure to think that his long night of sorrow and disease has ended in death’. Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 272.

139 In Nor, MS8, seven lines of this stanza are broken by a blank space of plain paper before Clare includes the final two lines which appear in Nor, MS6, ‘Midnight’, etc.

140 An apparent contradiction here though the speaker implies that the truth of his love for Mary is a comfort through the long, restless night.


142 A contrasting view of women in comparison to those expressed in Don Juan, ‘I wish they [women] were as modest as they seem’, p. 38, Nor, MS6.

143 In a letter to John Taylor written on the 19th April, 1820, Clare quotes four lines from Cowper’s ‘England’. The first two lines of this quotation are echoed at this point in Child Harold: ‘England with all thy faults I love thee still / My countrey & while yet a nook is left...’. This quotation is followed by his own poem whose first line is, ‘England my countrey mong evils enthralling’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 49.

144 Clare writes to ‘Mary Clare’ at Glinton on p. 4 of Nor, MS6 and he signs the letter, ‘your affectionate Husband’.

145 Clare repeats this image three times within fourteen lines.

146 At the end of this stanza in Nor, MS8 there follow twenty four stanzas of Don Juan.

147 This stanza and the following two stanzas occur in sequence on the back cover of Clare’s copy of Galignani’s edition of The Works of Byron Including The Suppressed Poems, 1828, held in Clare’s library at Northampton Public Library.

148 The metaphor here describes Mary as a harbour or sanctuary from the tempestuous ocean of life.

149 To admit to confusion or to doubt is to deny the truth of the speaker’s love for Mary.

150 Clare has failed to use the apostrophe twice in this particular line and on three further occasions in this stanza.

151 See Clare’s poem ‘I Am’ - ‘Into the living sea of waking dreams’.

152 In Nor, MS8, this song is blotted, smudged and follows an extract from Clare’s account of his escape from Essex. After the song Clare has paraphrased ‘Balaam’s Parable’ which is, in turn, followed by a prose fragment beginning: ‘The word middling gennerally denotes’ etc. See p. 21 of
Nor, MS6.

Nor, MS8, p. 28.

Nor, MS8, p. 28. This song is reminiscent of Byron’s, ‘Song’, ‘Maid of Athens, ere we part’ in its form of direct address to loved woman. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 15.

See Coleridge’s ‘The Pains of Sleep’: ‘To be beloved is all I need / And whom I love, I love indeed’. Cited in a footnote by Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, p. 51.

Clare has written parts of ‘Balaam’s Parable Chapter 24’ at this point in Nor, MS8.

Compare the mood and subject of Byron’s, ‘When We Two Parted’ with this opening stanza. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, p. 348.

Glinton Spire would seem to be the reference here.

Compare with, ‘the pole star of my being and decay’, Nor, MS6, p. 6.

Nor, MS8, p. 47. This stanza is written opposite a page with ‘note of accounts’ recorded in Clare’s hand. The note is dated April - May 1841.

Glinton.

Glinton church spire stands tall and clear of the flat terrain which surrounds it.

The dove is known to mate only once.

In Nor, MS8, the paraphrase of Balaam’s Parable interrupts here.

Draft version in Nor, MS7, p. 55.

Byron in Don Juan wrote, ‘I loved, I love you, for that love have lost / State, station, heaven, mankind’s, my own esteem’. Canto 1, stanza 193, ll. 1537 - 1538. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 426.

See Byron, Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza 79. Byron described Rome as the place that all ‘orphans of the heart must turn’. In stanza lxxix Rome is the ‘Niobe of nations’ whose ‘holy dust was scattered long ago’. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, Childe Harold, p. 171.

Hamlet, Act 1, scene ii, ll. 146 - 148, ‘Frailty thy name is woman...A little month, or ere those shoes were old / With which she followed my poor father’s body / Like Niobe, all tears’. Zeus turned Niobe to marble. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, p. 1032.

Byron in ‘Epistle to Augusta’ in stanza 16, ll 7 - 8, ‘We are entwined - let death come slow or fast - / That tie which bound the first endures the last’. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 271.

Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.

In the prose piece ‘Autumn’, p. 46, Clare refers to ‘Glinton Church’, ‘West Deepings crocketed spire’ and ‘Maxey Tower church’.

Clare appears to have used an apostrophe here but incorrectly.

This ballad has much in common with the second song on page 1 of Nor, MS6. In this context Mary has become the ‘vagrant muse’.

Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.
‘From morn to noon he fell, / from noon to dewy eve,’ John Broadbent, *John Milton: Paradise Lost*, Book One, p. 80, ll. 742 - 743.

Compare this line with the final stanza on p. 19 of Nor, MS6. ‘The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge / Raindrops & leaves fall yellow as he springs’.

A reading of Peterborough, A46, reveals exquisite cameos of natural history observations. Many of these jottings are written in pencil and demonstrate how Clare utilises the spontaneous note to make poetry. A note on the Hawk on p. 116 of Peterborough, A46 is a clear example of this: ‘Their very shadow seems to feel a fear’. Clare’s exceptional memory is constantly brought into play in his manuscripts. Peterborough, A46 is dated 1820 - 1830.

Another reference to Glinton church.


In Peterborough, A46, p. 56, Clare writes four lines on the notion of fame the last of which read as follows: ‘Applause is but a shadow crowned with bays / Without the honey dew of beauty’s praise’. In a letter to Markham Sherwill, dated 12th July 1820, Clare criticises Sir Walter Scott for appearing to rate himself so highly that he is above the act of signing a copy of his work for Clare. Clare writes about the fickleness of fame: ‘if Fame ever destines me the laurel twig Flattery will be ready in an instant to overwhelm me in mockery of praise & poets wi their odes, Sonnets, Lines, Epistles &c &c &c will if possible even bury one in a forest of garlanding bays - this is the way of the world -.’ Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 86.

Written in ink on the margin of *The Morning Chronicle*, 18th June. Nor, MS7, p. 55.


Draft version in Nor, MS D20.

The mood and metaphors of this song have much in common with Burns’ ‘Song: Mary’. The Poems of Robert Burns (London and New York: Frederick Warne & Co, 1928), pp. 278 - 279.

Note the reiteration of the idea of confinement.

Robinson and Powell in *The Later Poems*, p. 56, suggest ‘nest’ here.

Written in Nor, MS D20.

The Overland Monthly in 1873 printed Clare’s untitled poem beginning, ‘I long to forget them - the love of my life - / To forget them, and keep this lorn being my own;’ The poem was written in 1840 or 1841 and is also concerned with notions of home and rememberance. Eric Robinson and David Powell, *The Later Poems*, p. 14.

Clare refers to this notion on p. 2 and p. 23 of Nor, MS6.

See Nor, MS6, p. 2, ‘& how could I forget’.

A clear reference to the dangers of forgetfulness and the need to remember loved ones as well as oneself. ‘Remembrance’ through verse form is a potent form of continuity.

MS D20.

The stanzas in the early pages of Nor, MS6 do indeed ‘calendar’ the memories of Mary.
Clare writes two words in one here.

A later song written in Northampton, 'I hid my love when young while I' suggests the same mood and preoccupation as this 1841 lyric. In the Northampton song the speaker is haunted by a secret love, 'And even silence found a tongue / to haunt me all the summer long'.

Clare has deleted a letter at the front of 'chill'.

An echo of Burns here.

Robinson and Powell suggest 'must' as opposed to 'mayest'.

Both this stanza and the one following are written together on an undated catalogue for household furniture. Nor, MS7, p. 49.

Sung in celebration of the autumn harvest.

The voice of Don Juan intrudes here with its criticism of society's intrinsic hypocrisy and dishonesty. The last line of the final stanza has the peculiar characteristics of the voices of the speakers of both long poems fused into one '& now a man - I'm farther off from truth'. The contrast between honest rural prosperity and the 'whoring and deceiving' urban society at large is striking.

This stanza in its Byronic imitation of satire and ironical riddling is more akin to Clare's other voice in Nor, MS6 - Don Juan. It is one of a number of instances where there appears to be voice slippage from idealist to cynic. The riddle also echoes Shakespeare's Fools. In this instance the tragic implications behind such irony is characteristic of Lear's fool. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, Act. I scene iv, ll.156 - 167, pp. 1080 - 1081.

Nor, MS7, p. 47.

The speaker of this song develops the idea of sojourning in order to find Mary.

This song does not appear in Nor, MS8 or in Peterborough, A62.

Nor, MS7, p. 47.

In a letter written to Mary Joyce in May? 1841, Clare wrote, 'I might have said my first wife & first love & first everything - but I shall never forget my second wife & second love for I loved her once as dearly as yourself'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

Contradiction and ambiguity. Clare's speaker remains near Mary in that he frequents the place where she used to live but her absence is all the more painful because of these associations.

Nor, MS7, p. 15.

This stanza and the following two stanzas share much in common with the prose piece 'Autumn' on pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6.

In his autobiographical Sketches Clare remembers Mary Joyce, 'yet young as my heart was it woud turn chill when I touchd her hand'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 87.

This stanza and the one before marks a return home to old associations. They both sound remarkably similar in mood and subject to the prose piece 'Autumn'.

'The day drags through though storms keep out the sun; / And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on'. Childe Harold, Canto III, stanza 32, ll. 287 - 288. McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 133.
Writing in the third person Clare appears to be referring to himself as well as Byron.


These three verses bear a remarkable similarity to the prose piece ‘Autumn’ as Margaret Grainger has pointed out. *The Natural History Prose Writings*, p. 327.

See p. 46 of *Nor*, MS6 where Clare is using similar imagery in his description of tombs in the churchyard: ‘& there is the beautiful Spire of Glinton Church towering high above the grey willows & dark wallnuts still lingering in the church yard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time’.

This song has been faircopied into *Nor*, MS6 from the Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

The opening line of this song is reminiscent of Wordsworth’s ‘Tintern Abbey’, ‘Five years have passed; five summers, with the length / of five long winters’. Geoffrey Summerfield commented that ‘this seems to be some kind of recognition that his crucial severance from Mary occurred three years earlier i.e. in 1838 the year of her death’. Geoffrey Summerfield, *John Clare: Selected Poetry*, p. 373.

Compare with ‘Song of Solomon, Chapter 3, 1, 2, ‘I sought him but found him not’.

In May, 1826 Clare advised his friend Rippingille to visit him in August, ‘the scenery is then in its greatest beauty the fields will be alive with harvest’. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 380.

To the right of this stanza Clare has written the paraphrase of ‘Revelations, Chapter 21st, The New Jerusalem’.

In his essay, ‘Women, Nature and Poetry’, Edward Thomas quotes Shelley in his essay, ‘On Love’ as he discussed Laurence Sterne: ‘Sterne says that if he were in a desert he would love some cypress. So soon as this want or power is dead, man becomes a living sepulchre of himself and what yet survives is the mere husk of what once he was’. Edward Thomas, *Feminine Influence on The Poets* (London: Seeker, 1910), p. 68.

The Bodleian stanza, written along the margins of the *The Mercury*, reads as follows, ‘But autumn finds no change in me’, etc.

The word ‘love’ is crossed through in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

See, *Nor*, MS6, p. 5. ‘But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower’.

Bodleian, MS Don. a8 reads, ‘While Mary lives in bloom for me’.

This evocative and detailed stanza was faircopied into *Nor*, MS6 from Bodleian, MS Don. a8 and conveys all the appreciation of the exile once more on home ground.

Compare with prose fragment on page 20 of *Nor*, MS6. ‘Closes of greensward & meadow’, etc.

Bodleian, MS Don. a8. Italics denote the changes in words between first draft and faircopy and reads as follows:

> Sweet comes the misty morning in September  
> Among the dewey paths *tis* sweet to stray  
> Greensward or stubbles as I well remember  
> *I have done* - & the mist it curleth grey  
> & *think of smoke* - like net work on the sprey  
> Or seede grass the cobweb draperies run
Beaded with pearls of dew at early day
& o'er the pleachy stubbles peeps the sun
The lamp of day when that of night is done

232 Clare describes the sight of such meadow arches after a period of captivity in Nor, MS6, p. 46: "- even these meadow arches seems to me something of the beautiful having been so long a prisoner & shut up in confinement". Margaret Grainger in The Natural History Prose Writings identifies the arches as the Nine Bridges which span the water meadows near Clare's home carrying the main Peterborough to Market Deeping road over the North and South Drains. ibid. p. 332.

233 A much earlier manuscript, Peterborough, MS A46, dated 1820 - 1830, carries a remarkably similar observation: 'Just by the wooden brig a bird flew up / To sit by the cowboy as he scrambles down [the bank del] / To reach the misty dewberry'. p. 130.

234 There is a marked difference between the exuberance of this stanza and the deeper melancholy or despondency of the prose piece 'Autumn'.

235 'we heard the bells chime but the fields was our church and we seemd to feel a religious feeling in our haunts on the sabbath'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare by Himself, p. 40.

236 Compare with p. 47 of Nor, MS6, 'the rural pictures or objects in these flats & meadows warms ones loneliness'.

237 Clare refers directly to Glinton here.

238 Mary is likened to a flower nourished by the Eden of home.

239 Reconstruction, reassertion and repetition of the same ideas. Compare the last three lines of the previous stanza with the last lines here. Glinton's bells, the 'fenny dells' and the love of the speaker for Mary are reaffirmed within a short space.

240 This song is definitely lyric in the style of Burns. See Burns' 'Here's To Thy Health, My Bonnie Lass'.

241 Bodleian, MS Don a8.

242 Clare has written the two words together.


244 See Peterborough, A62, dated 1841. Clare has written the following stanza:

O the evening for the fair, bonny lassie O!
To meet the cooler air and walk an angel there
With the dark dishevelled hair
Bonny lassie O!

245 Bodleian, MS Don a8.

246 The simplicity, together with the visual precision of these lines easily match the best of the Northborough bird poems which Clare was engaged upon in 1832. I am referring to a poem such as 'The Sky Lark'. See Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, eds., Selected Poems And Prose of John Clare (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 77 - 78.

247 The reference to harvest time and the melancholy mood of this prose fragment would suggest that this prose fragment belongs to the same period of composition as 'Autumn'.

248 In the Child Harold stanzas Clare's speaker frequently refers to Northborough and Glinton itself as
'Eden'. Nor, MS6, p. 19 has two such references.

249 Margaret Grainger notes Clare's use of this word in The Natural History Prose Writings. Clare might be suggesting 'fear' or 'fever' here. Grainger, p. 336, n. 3.

250 This song would appear to form part of Child Harold.

251 It is typical of Clare to slip into a prose fragment a detail of precise horticultural value. Margaret Grainger, Natural History Prose Writings, p. 337, n. 7 draws attention to the fact that the Chinese rose to which Clare is referring is probably the Rosa indica.

252 This page appears to mark an interruption to faircopying and continues the idea of autumnal impressions.

253 A detailed account of page 20 may be found in the 'A Detailed Description of Nor, MS6'.

254 On page 23 of a blue quarto exercise book used by Clare in 1841 for general draft work there is a list of Proverbs, one of which reads 'a good name shines in the dark'.

255 This fragment is written on p. 28 of Nor, MS8 after 'Balaam's Parable' and four stanzas of Don Juan, beginning, 'There's much said', etc.

256 Peterborough, A 62. Interestingly, this brief discourse on the word 'middling' has not been extended or elaborated upon.

257 The speaker refers to God's reliability in the face of uncertainty and confusion.

258 This paraphrase may be found in Nor, MS8 after three stanzas of the song, 'O Mary sing thy songs to me' and it is followed by the reflection on 'middling' and then by the stanza from Don Juan commencing with the line: 'Theres much said about love & more of women'. Page references are unreliable in Nor, MS8 as there are pages missing from this manuscript.

259 The emphasis here of looking backwards to the landscape of youth is important.

260 Clare is preoccupied here, as elsewhere in Nor, MS6 with the idea of 'home' as a centre of reliability or truth.

261 Clare has written what appears to be a reference: '5 - 8' at the end of this line.

262 Clare has appeared to write 'Dan e' at the end of this line. Robinson and Powell in The Later Poems refer to this in a footnote on p. 106.

263 Note that the biblical Eden here is described in similar terms to the verdant fens.

264 The last word of this line is illegible in Nor, MS6 but reference to Nor, MS8 reveals 'as it were'.

265 A number of the paraphrases draw attention to an avenging God.

266 One of a number of references to refuge and sanctuary in the paraphrases.

267 Logically, the following quotations should have been written immediately after the description of 'Quotations' on the previous page.


270 Clare's own lines. They reaffirm the manuscript's preoccupation with truth and deception as does
the following stanza.

Robinson and Powell include this stanza on page 69 of *The Later Poems*.

'Job', Chapter 3, l. 22. See also in the same Chapter the strength of suicidal thoughts, 'Why is light given to him that is in misery and life to the bitter in soul / Who longs for death but it comes not'.


Montague Summers, ed., *Dryden: The Dramatic Works* (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), 'All For Love', Act 1, p. 197. I am indebted to the suggestion of Hugh Haughton in this instance and the practical assistance of John Gcodridge and the Library at Nottingham Trent University in locating the exact source for this quotation.

Clare's engagement with the idea of sojourning surfaces throughout Nor, MS6.

This reflection finds an echo in the letter to Eliza Phillips in May 1841, 'I seem to be disowned by my friends & even forgot by my enemies'. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 647.

Please refer to the Chapter entitled 'Self Position and Reposition in Nor, MS6'.

Eric Robinson and David Powell suggest that these lines have been adapted from Burns', 'Lament for James, Earl of Glencaim', ll. 73 - 78. John Clare By Himself (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1996), p. 341, n. 1. See also the ballad of 'Sir Patrick Spens' and Coleridge's epigraph to 'Dejection: An Ode'.

This poignant attempt at self comprehension which on the surface certainly appears sound and sensible belies the picture of Clare we are given by G. J. De Wilde, editor of *The Northampton Mercury*. Wilde wrote to Clare's biographer Frederick Martin on the 25th February 1865 describing Clare's apparent discussion about his different identities: "perhaps you don't know that I am Jan Burns and Tom Spring". 'In fact he was any celebrity you might mention. "I'm the same man", he said "but sometimes they call me Shakespeare and sometimes Byron and sometimes Clare". Later, he fancied himself to have witnessed the execution of Charles 1st and to have served as a naval rating with Nelson at the Battle of The Nile, both of which he would describe graphically and in much detail'. Cited by Kerith Trick in *A History of St. Andrews Hospital, Northampton* (Cambridge: Granta Editions, 1989), pp. 134 - 135.


The paraphrase is written in quatrains with alternate rhyme scheme, abab.

This opening line which asks God to authorise the speaker's identity following so closely after the essay fragment on the same subject is an excellent example of the interdependence of many of the contents of Nor, MS6.

Clare may be referring to his own social position here but David is also a Shepherd King.

Compare David's celebration of the power of God with the first nine line stanza on p. 5 of Nor, MS6, whose first line reads: '& he who studies natures volume through'.

This paraphrase continues to argue the enduring truth of God in the face of personal doubt and uncertainty.

The mood of exaltation and gratitiude for freedom and stability is clearly present in this paraphrase.

The reference to home here cannot be coincidental.
God's truth and enduring presence are stressed here together with the suggestion that God's promises are fulfilled even when human promises prove otherwise.

The mood and emphasis on restablishing roots and building foundations of a 'house' endorsed by God is relevant, particularly as 'Baalam's Parable' which precedes 'David's Prayer' is also concerned with fresh beginnings.

These last two stanzas of the paraphrases share much in common with the four line stanzas of the Ballad found on pp. 4 - 5 of Nor, MS6.

The emphasis in these opening lines of a fixed dwelling place and a secure habitation has a direct link to the theme of homelessness which permeates Nor, MS6.

The ideas of liberation and relocation are firmly in place here.

The notion of a dwelling place or 'house' are repeatedly referred to by the biblical speaker in this paraphrase.

Robinson and Powell include an apostrophe here. The Later Poems, p. 118, l. 50.

Robinson and Powell suggest 'maker' here. ibid. p. 119, l. 72.

This line is interpreted as 'grace' by Robinson and Powell though the line is illegible in Nor, MS6.

Robinson and Powell supply '& do the just thing'. Later Poems, p. 119.

The metaphor of the wreck is employed by Clare in his prose fragment 'Autumn' on page 46 of Nor, MS6.

Both this line and many similar lines from other paraphrases suggest the speaker is in the process of readjusting or realigning the past with the present.

Clare appears to be using the pages of Nor, MS6 to proclaim his grief and loss.

It is a feature of all the contents of Nor, MS6 that when human frailty is confirmed, the various speakers turn to God and a universal truth for consolation.

The speaker's reference to estrangement must surely reflect Clare's own emotions on his return home out from 'captivity'.

There seems to be clear recognition throughout this paraphrase of a return to one's rightful home or dwelling place.

Virtually all of the material contained in Nor, MS6, though written or faircopied in freedom, dwells on the experience of captivity.

Reward and restoration lie in wait for those who have kept their trust in God. This sentiment echoes the opening stanzas on Nor, MS6, p. 5.

The apocalyptic characteristics of the paraphrases of 'Job' encapsulate Clare's response to his confinement and his sense of isolation. A Blakean emphasis on darkness and destruction as a mirror for the state of mind of the speaker is relevant here.

The relentless testing of Job's faith in this paraphrase may be paralleled to Clare's own endurance at a time of considerable personal stress.

A direct reference to the idea of home.
Compare with stanzas in ‘Written in a Thunderstorm July 15th 1841’. Nor, MS6, p. 8.

Clare’s comment on this bizarre line is worth noting. In a letter to Henry Behnes, on 30th December, 1827 he described reading ‘Solomon’s Song’ and ‘Job’, both of which left a great impression upon him. He quotes this line specifically, observing its oddness: ‘the simple sublimity of the poetry [the biblical accounts of ‘Job’] is more then beautiful tho in some parts I confess I have been puzzled wether or not I should call them beautys or blemishes of such is the following conclusion of a sublime sentence - ‘Who can number the clouds in wisdom & who can stay the bottles of heaven’ Job but to turn critic in such matter would only be ‘Multiplying words without knowledge’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 409.

This psalm is also found in Bodleian, MS Don. c64, p. 7. On p. 8 of this blue exercise book, Clare has written the song, ‘In this cold world’ in pencil.

Compare with ‘Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841’, Nor, MS6, p. 8.

The mood and substance of this psalm has much in common with stanzas ‘Written In A Thunder Storm July 15th 1841’, Nor, MS6, p. 8.

This word is badly smudged.

The speaker’s preoccupation here is that he has been delivered from thraldom and bondage. Compare with the paraphrase of Isaiah, Ch. 47. In Bodleian, MS Don. c64, the paraphrase of Isaiah follows the song, ‘In this cold world’ as it does in Nor, MS6. See also ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ - ‘Deliver us from Evil’.

This paraphrase was faircopied into Nor, MS6 from the margins of The Lincoln Rutland and Stamford Mercury dated September 3rd 1841. These are the last two chapters of Revelations and therefore the Bible.

The word has a long upright above the ‘n’ which could be read as ‘l’.

The assertive presence of the voice of John in this paraphrase is in stark contrast to that of David on page 25 of Nor, MS6.

The ideas of faithfulness and truthfulness are in abundance in the paraphrases in contrast to the world of Don Juan.

While the stanzas of Child Harold reflect insecurity about the future and doubt about the past these stanzas reassert the continuity and dependability of God together with His immortality.

Here the speaker finds spiritual comfort in God in contrast to his acute sense of isolation and disillusionment expressed in Child Harold.

In a letter written to Patty Clare from Northampton, dated between 1849 and 1850, Clare draws on precisely the same details. Clare recalls ‘Revelations’, commenting, ‘the Revelations has a placard in capitals about ‘The Whore of Babylon & the mother of Harlots’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 669.

This particular stanza is written alongside the stanza whose first line reads, ‘What mellowness these harvest days unfold’. Nor, MS6, p. 18. The page of the journal itself summarises the price of corn throughout the County during the last week of August 1841.

This verse of the paraphrase shares the page with the autumnal stanza, ‘Tis autumn now & nature’s scenes’, etc.

A similar image occurs on Nor, MS6, p. 46: ‘the grey willows & dark wallnuts still lingering in the Churchyard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time’.

These lines prefigure the preoccupation with lying, deception and counterfeit in Don Juan.
This paraphrase is also written in draft form in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

It is worth comparing the time scheme described in the first stanza on page 12 of Nor, MS6.

The speaker's main preoccupation in Don Juan two pages later.

This is a clear example of the fusion of the themes of homelessness and questing which permeate Nor, MS6.

See also Bodleian, MS Don. a8. See also Last Judgement in Chapters 21 & 22 of Revelations.

This paraphrase written so soon after Clare's arrival home at Northborough is reminiscent of the responses to the physical deprivation Clare experienced during his escape.

See Chapter Three, 'The Northborough Autumnal Sequence'.

Clare repeats the same details within a short space. One is reminded of Clare's account of his journey home when he is forced to eat the grass on the road side.

In a letter to Patty Clare written in April 1841, from High Beech, Clare uses the same tone of recrimination to probe his wife's conscience at her lack of visits, 'Since then, months have elapsed, & I am still here, away from them, enduring all the miseries of solitude'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 645.

The biblical paraphrases are interrupted at this point by four stanzas which Clare has entitled Child Harold and underlined. These stanzas do not appear to be fair copied in the same uninterrupted way as the paraphrases.

Job, Chap. 38, Nor, MS6, p. 30. See also Genesis, Chapters 18 & 19.

There is a gap at this point in the manuscript where it appears as if two lines are missing. They may have faded through time or eroded due to the poor quality of Clare's homemade ink. Edmund Blunden in 'Manuscripts of John Clare', The London Mercury, comments interestingly on blank sections of manuscript such as this one. Blunden describes them as 'pools of silence' resulting from the use of a particularly baneful writing fluid'. p. 319.

Robinson and Powell supply, 'First they died by fire, then they suffered the fires of hell to the last'. The Later Poems, p. 69, note for line 821.

Both this stanza and the one that immediately follows it are strongly reminiscent of the prose piece 'Autumn', pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6 and demonstrate an abrupt change from the apocalyptic imagery of the previous stanzas.

Compare with the prose fragment on p. 20 of Nor, MS6: 'Closes of greensward & meadow eaten down by cattle about harvest time & pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me melancholly to look over it'.

Clare's Byronic challenge to a world of marital, political, social and emotional deceit. Clare was punning on the idea of old 'wigs' as a disguise used by the rich and powerful and on the idea of the 'Whigs' as a political party. While the speaker in Child Harold admits to self deception the speaker in Don Juan complains of having deceit and corruption practised upon himself and others.

Child Harold is not so specifically attributed to Byron on p.4 of Nor, MS6.

The prose piece 'Autumn' together with the three stanzas on page 37 of Nor, MS6 beginning: 'The floods come oer the meadow leas / The dykes & full & brimming' are written in draft form in Peterborough, MS A62.
‘He ["Winter"] is giving us daily notice by dirty paths brimming dykes and naked fields that he is already on the way’. Nor, MS6, p. 46.

There are a number of lines and fragments in Perborough, A62 which Clare may have envisaged as future contributions to Child Harold. Certainly the themes and tone of particular lines would be easily assimilated into this long poem. Four unconnected lines on page 11 of Peterborough, MS A62 contain a number of echoes of the autumn descriptions in Child Harold.

A similar sense of destruction and decay pervades Byron’s Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza, 143, ll. 1279 - 1280, ‘A ruin - yet what ruin! from its mass / Walls, palaces, half - cities, have been reared;’. Jerome McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, p. 189. Compare with Genesis - the destruction of Sodom.

This song precedes: ‘Absence in love etc’ in Peterborough, MS A62. In Nor, MS6 Clare has written the title only; the song itself is picked up again on p. 45 of Nor, MS6 after Clare has faircopied the Don Juan stanzas.

After Byron’s death in 1824, it became a fashionable literary game to write sequels or continuations of his Don Juan. One of them, published in 1825, was in Clare’s library. Geoffrey Summerfield, John Clare: Selected Poetry, note for p. 214, p. 369.

The contrast between the tragic lyricism of the Child Harold stanzas on the previous page and the Byronic pastiche evident here is dramatic.

In Nor, MS8, this stanza is underlined and precedes the opening stanza of Child Harold.

The first line of Child Harold, also on p. 1 of Nor, MS8, reads, ‘Many are poets - though they use no pen’. ‘Poeta nascitur, non fit’. A Latin tag meaning ‘Poets are born, not made’.

Clare’s asterisk refers to the four stanzas written on p. 43 of Nor, MS6, with the accompanying note, ‘To be inserted between the first & second verses at the beginning of the Poem’.

Clare complains of women’s infidelity in his letter to Matthew Allen in August 1841, ‘man I never did much like & woman has long sickened me’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 651.

See Canto I of Byron’s, Don Juan.

Clare’s ‘Beppo’ contains the following line: ‘A thing which causes many ‘poohs’ and ‘pishes’’. Byron’s, ‘Beppo: A Venetian Story’ takes place in the city known to contemporary 19th century English aristocratic travellers as a dissolve, corrupt playground. Jerome McGann, Oxford Authors,
Most certainly Clare's reference to his own confinement. In a letter written to Mary Joyce in May 1841, from High Beech, Clare refers to his unjust imprisonment: 'if I was in prison for felony I could not be served worse than I am'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

The similarity to Byron's poem is clear, but Clare is also concerned with the notion of deceit in these opening verses. Political, marital and social deceit are all referred to. 'Whigs' refer to the deceitful disguise of the rich and powerful. Geoffrey Grigson, John Clare: Selected Poetry, p. 370, n. 214.

A derogatory term used in this instance to suggest trifling or second rate poetry.

Robinson and Powell point out that 'crim con' was a legal word for adultery. The Later Poems, p. 91, note for line 63.

Slang for money.

Clare relishes the obscene puns and riddling here.

Vulcan's badge was made up of the horns of a cuckold. After his parents Zeus and Hera had quarrelled Vulcan was flung from Olympus, leaving him lame in one leg. It is tempting to ask if Byron's lameness was also in Clare's mind in this instance.

The Whigs lost the election in July 1841.

A name given to asylum warders.

Clare may be referring to a form of treatment meted out to the insane in the 18th century. Metal or leather collars were placed around the patient's neck which were attached by a chain connected to a pole fixed permanently in the ground. The patient could stand up and sit down but was limited to movement beyond this. For a comprehensive history of insanity I refer the reader to Madness, ed., Roy Porter (London and Boston: Faber, 1991).

A euphemism for corruption; in particular to make them drunk.

In July 1841 the newspapers announced the marriage of Lord John Russell to Lady Fanny Eliot.

Although imitating Byron in this disrespectful satire on the royal family, Clare includes a topicality to his version by substituting Queen Victoria and Prince Albert for King George and Queen Caroline. See also a letter Clare wrote to James Hessey on 1st of December 1820 in which he debates allegiance to George IV or Caroline over the bill 'of pains and penalties'. Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 109 - 110, n. 5.

Obscene reference to Queen Victoria and her alleged lovers who deceived Albert in his absence.

A highly salacious slur on the Queen's moral character - possibly gossip in the papers about Queen Victoria's difficulty in conceiving another child.

This line is written separately on the top of page 7 of Nor, MS8. Page 6 of Nor, MS8 carries three stanzas from Child Harold.

Another reference to deception but in this instance political and not marital.

The pun on both words which refer to the bird which steals another's nest and the husband who steals another's wife is clear.

Prince Albert left England to return to Germany in July 1841.

References to Clare's own confinement and possibly its cause - poverty.
Clare appears to use the Queen as a symbol for the liberal behaviour of women in general. During his confinement Clare seemed preoccupied by fidelity or the lack of it in women.

‘Wife’ is underlined by Clare in Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8.

See Byron’s Don Juan, Canto 1, stanza 100.

See Robinson and Powell’s ‘Dickey - back seat of a carriage or penis’. The editors also draw attention to Byron’s use of the word in his Don Juan, Later Poems, p. 94, n. 115.

Asses milk was given to babies.

Corruption had spread throughout society including the Cabinet.

This may be Clare’s own political view or a report ‘lifted’ from contemporary newspaper accounts.

Clare assumes the posture and voice of the Regency for here. See also Measure for Measure, Act III, Scene (i), l. 114.

‘I shall never be in three places at once nor ever change to a woman & that ought to be some comfort amid this moral or immoral “changing” in life - truth has a bad herald when she is obliged to take lies for her trumpeters’. Nor, MS6, p. 23. Clare is obsessed with the whole idea of deceptive appearances.

The impossibility of animals practicing deceit is emphasised here.

Robinson and Powell’s note on page 95 of The Later Poems draws attention to the fact that the word denotes a male prostitute as well as pig or boar.

Clare wrote to Mary Joyce in May? 1841 that he had composed a Canto of Don Juan, sitting under the elm trees at High Beech: ‘I sat under the Elm trees in old Matthews Homestead Leppits hill where I now am - 2 or 3 evenings & wrote a new canto of Don Juan’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

Clare appears equally unimpressed by both Whigs and Tories and their false promises to the country.

Three miles from High Beech.

A quote from Gay’s, Beggar’s Opera.

See Chapter Three, ‘Songs and Ballads’ in Nor, MS6. In Nor, MS8, these three stanzas follow the opening ballad of Child Harold.

The stanza form alters here from ottava rima to abababcc of the Childe Harold style.

Compare these two lines with the first two stanzas of Child Harold on pp. 4 - 5 of Nor, MS6.

Summer morning is risen
& to even it wends
& still I’m in prison
Without any friends

I had joys assurance
Though in bondage I lie
- I am still left in durance
Unwilling to sigh.

Return to ottava rima verse form of Don Juan.
The inference would seem to be that both new coins and early marriage are quickly worn down through ill use.

'Real poets must be truly honest men', Nor, MS6, p. 4.

'Sweet Susan that was wont my love to be / & Bessey of the glen - for I've been roaming'. Nor, MS6, p. 8.

Clare is convinced that he has been married to two wives both here and in Child Harold. In 1820, Taylor's *London Magazine* published a review of Thomas Medwin's *Journal of The Conversations of Lord Byron*, which referred to Byron's promiscuity.

Don Juan’s *alter ego* also finds the idea of absence difficult to negotiate, 'Absence in love is worse then any fate'. Nor, MS6, p. 37.

This is both ironic and poignant. Mary might well refer to Mary Joyce here and Martha to Patty (Martha) Clare nee Turner.

"Poets are born", a reference back to the first line of the text - part of the Byronic spoof.

A reference to the superficial language of court circulars and visiting cards, but with bawdy overtones.

In June 1841 Parliament was dissolved and the ensuing election brought a Tory majority. Lord Melbourne the Whig premier resigned and Peel became Prime Minister. He was a close ally of Prince Albert. Clearly, Clare was not only writing on newspapers but feeding off them poetically.


See Nor, MS8, pp. 21 - 22. Clare has written seven four line stanzas, untitled, beginning: 'Nigh Leopards hill stand All - ns hells'. Both these stanzas and this line refer to Matthew Allen and High Beech Asylum. Although these stanzas follow on from four stanzas belonging to Child Harold, Robinson and Powell separate them from both *Don Juan* and *Child Harold*. *Later Poems*, p. 37.

A reference to Allen’s absences from High Beech on business?


See p. 2 of Nor, MS6 where Clare discusses the ‘rout the Gipsey pointed out’.

A reference to buggery that was rife in prisons and also mad houses? This reference may be linked to the earlier references to Sodom in *Genesis* on p. 30 of Nor, MS6.

'... for God hath often saw / Things here too dirty for the light of day'. *Child Harold*, Nor, MS6, p. 7.

The inference here is that even doctors are not above profit making from prostitution, insanity and corruption.

The elderly statesmen who surrounded Queen Victoria.

A reference to Clare’s obsession with the fact that Truth and Honesty are incarcerated in prison.

Madhouses, like theatres were open to the public. Bedlam had a viewing gallery. Both places were also perceived as immoral as the last few stanzas have suggested.
'Toil like the brook in music wears along - / Great little minds claim right to act the wrong'. Nor, MS6, p. 4.

The irony here appears to be that organised religion is as hypocritical as the more widely acknowledged places of disorder and deceit.

Clare may be referring to the bawdy French farces he saw with Rippingille in London in 1824 at the Royal West London Theatre. 'Le Grondeur', a bawdy vaudeville was amongst the repertoire at this time, concerned with cuckoldry and infidelity. Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, pp. 102 - 103.

Hugh Haughton has drawn my attention to the fact that 13th July 1793 was Clare's own birthday.

Byron was born on the 22nd of January 1788.

See Canto XV, stanza 1, ll. 5 - 7 of Byron's Don Juan: 'All present life is but an Interjection, / 'An 'Oh!' or 'Ah!' of joy or misery, / Or a 'Ha! ha!' or 'Bah!' - a yawn or 'Pooh!'. Byron: The Oxford Authors, p. 819.

The cockney accent here may be a mimicry of the dialect Clare heard in the asylum. Allen's patients were mainly from London and the Home Counties.

Clare's identification with Byron goes deeper here.

Clare was in fact treated with great kindness by Matthew Allen at High Beech. It is interesting to hear Allen's polite but firm claiming of Clare as his patient in a letter he wrote to an unidentified correspondent on the 30th of July 1841. (The recipient's name is illegible). The letter reads as follows: 'I sent for Clare but his wife thought him so much better that she wished to try him for awhile. Should he not remain well I hope his friends will send him here rather than elsewhere as I should feel hurt after the interest I have felt & do feel for him'. See Bodleian, MS Don. d36.

This being Sunday, Clare's birthday would follow two days later on the Tuesday. I am indebted to Hugh Haughton for this reference.

Written by John Wilson, alias 'Christopher North' and published in 1812.

Ink and paper were both expensive and hard to come by for Clare and the suggestion here is that even though the wealthy have all the materials they need with which to write the result is not always good or tasteful. See Nor, MS6, p. 4, 'Many are poets - though they use no pen / To show their labours to the shuffling age'.

A newspaper article which described the murder of the mother of Charles Lamb by his own sister Mary, reported her profession as a 'mantua maker' eg a dressmaker, most particularly the loose outer gowns worn by 17th and 18th century women of rank.

A direct reference to Byron here. Mark Storey has written an article on Clare's attitude and debt to Byron, "Child Harold and Childe Harold" etc.. Note also the way Clare clearly differentiates himself from Byron having identified himself with him earlier.

Clare's reference to Mary Joyce and Patty Turner.

A curious fusion of the voices from both Child Harold and Don Juan here.

'I trusted fate to ease my world of woes / Seeking love's harbour - where I now sojourn'. Nor, MS6, p. 10.

'Now honest reader', Byron, Don Juan, Canto I, stanza 221, ll. 1761 - 1762: 'But for the present, gentle reader and / still gentler purchaser, the bard - that's I -'.

A direct reference to Byron here. Mark Storey has written an article on Clare's attitude and debt to Byron, "Child Harold and Childe Harold" etc.. Note also the way Clare clearly differentiates himself from Byron having identified himself with him earlier.
See Byron’s *Don Juan*, Canto I, stanza 7, ll. 50 - 52: ‘My way is to begin with the beginning / The regularity of my design / Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning’. Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 379.

This stanza which dwells on woman’s reputation has much in common with Clare’s prose fragment on page 21 of Nor, MS6.

Clare echoes precisely this same idea in his August letter to Matthew Allen, ‘a man who possesses a woman possesses without gain’. Mark Storey *Letters*, p. 651.

One is reminded of Hamlet speaking to Ophelia: ‘for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.’ Peter Alexander, *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Hamlet, Act III, scene i, ll. 111 - 115, p. 1047.

Note the pun on ‘tart’ as whore and in tart as pastry.

Possibly a reference to Byron who married Miss Milbanke in 1815 and signed a deed of separation in 1816.

‘For wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them’. Hamlet, Act III, scene i, l. 140. Also: ‘Go to, I’ll no more on’t; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriage: those that are married already, all but one, shall live’. ibid. ll. 147 - 150. Peter Alexander, op. cit. p. 1048.

Clare draws a distinction between true love and matrimony.

In his journal for Thursday 14th March 1825, Clare wrote: ‘I have not read Paine (Tom Paine, *The Rights of Man*) but I have always understood him to be a low blackguard’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, *John Clare By Himself*, p. 219.

This song was sent to George Reed on November 17th 1841 from Northborough.

The mood in this song is in keeping with the prose passage ‘Autumn’ which follows immediately on page 46.

This stanza has been written in draft form into a blue exercise book held at the Bodleian and known as Bodleian, MS Don. c64.

Clearly a ‘spring’ song but it is placed here between an autumnal stanza and the prose piece ‘Autumn’. The thematic preoccupation of the song as opposed to its more appropriate chronological location appears to have led to it being placed on this page.

There are three stanzas to this song but the sequence has been interrupted by the prose piece ‘Autumn’. On page 12 of Peterborough, MS A62 Clare has written a fragment, heavily deleted that is worth quoting. The following lines bear a remarkable likeness to the stanzas of this last named song:

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Tho’[art del] [my del] loves eternal summer
The dearest maid I prove
[Her del] with breasts [are del] as white as Ivory
& warm as virgin love
No falshood gets between
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There is also a shorter, much deleted version of ‘Autumn’ in the Peterborough octavo notebook, Peterborough, MS A62, (the first page commencing at the back of the book). Clare also writes upside down upon the page in this manuscript. Margaret Grainger offers an interesting note as regards the blunt pencil Clare has used in this instance to write the prose account. She suggests that Clare possibly wrote the notes as he walked the fields. Margaret Grainger, *The Natural

Margaret Grainger divides this prose piece into four specific locations. Lines 1 - 8 cover Clare’s introduction. Lines 8 - 31 describe a walk due East from Northborough to the river Weeand and then up the west bank of the river to Deeping Gate. Lines 31 - 85 describe the walk from the Nine Bridges, Northborough along the north bank of the North Drain to Lolham Bridges. The fourth location is between Waldram Hall and Welland Ford, The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 328.

Clare refers to the folk song.

Margaret Grainger identifies the river as The Welland. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 5.

Margaret Grainger comments on the smudged insertion here, calling it ‘an insertion within an insertion’. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 8.

Not simply an appreciation of rural beauty. Glinton Church spire is consistently described as a psychological and geographical marker for Clare throughout the first twenty pages of Child Harold.

Margaret Grainger identifies these as the Nine Bridges or the viaduct carrying the main Peterborough to Market Deeping road over the North and South Drains. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 332, n. 5.

It is significant that Clare uses specific markers both here and in his ‘Reccoleetions’ on page 1 of Nor, MS6, to identify places and buildings which represent home. Glinton Mill, Maxey Church and West Deeping’s cracked spire are all singled out for special attention. They all held particular importance for Clare as locations associated specifically with Mary Joyce.

In his autobiographical Sketches, Chapter 6, entitled ‘Memorys of Love’ Clare recalls an incident in Glinton churchyard when he threw a ‘walnut’ at Mary Joyce: ‘I remember an accident that roused my best intentions and hurt my affection unto the rude feelings of imaginary cruelty when playing one day in the church yard I threw a green walnut that hit her [Mary Joyce] on the eye’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 88.

Clare was probably walking up-stream towards Lolham as Grainger suggests in The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 333, n. 6.

This page of the description is altogether more legible.

Bodleian, Don. c64 and Peterborough, MS A62, dated 1841 contain the following lines: ‘Crimsoned with awes the awthorns bend / Oer meadow dykes & rising floods’.

Compare this section of prose with the prose fragment on page 20 of Nor, MS6. Clare may possibly have envisaged this last piece of prose as part of ‘Autumn’.

See stanza 6 on Nor, MS6, p. 18, ‘About the meadows now I love to sit / On bridge walls & rails as when a boy’.

Compare with the prose fragment on p. 20 of Nor, MS6: ‘pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me melancholly to look over it’.

See p. 13 of Peterborough, A62. Clare has written the following prose fragment: ‘The three Lolham bridges look very picturesque among the trees of which two are visible from the bank the first with four arches’.

This line echoes Clare’s prose fragment, ‘Greenswards’. Nor, MS6, p. 20.

Grainger suggests that the shape of the prose passage is controlled to a certain extent by the walk Clare took at the time he wrote these observations. Here, for example, Clare has described the walk
between Waldram Hall and Welland Ford. Natural History Prose Writings, p. 328.

There is an exquisite cameo prose fragment in an early Peterborough manuscript, dated between 1820 and 1830, which describes a walk taken by Clare in the winter. On page 3 of Peterborough, A46, Clare writes: 'I have often fancied like walking in the fields in winter when the snows hung in fairey & light romantic shadows upon every tree & bush. What beautiful bits of effective landscape might be found by the painter when the skirts of a forest with a cowshed underneath its branches glows like a scene of fairey (land?) is a rural picture of enchantment with its pendant branches'.

The name is used to describe the bird known as Plover. Also a pollard tree. See The Village Minstrel, I, I. 152, 'He mixed with them beneath a dotterel tree'.

Note the strong similarity between these lines and Nor, MS6, p. 38. In this instance Vulcan is substituted for the god of love - Cupid

Clare's use of what appears to be a quasi Elizabethan erotic convention.

These two verses have been written at the bottom of page 49. The upper half of this page is blank.

Clare appears to identify strongly here with the biblical prophet Jeremiah: 'I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness but not into light'.

This is possibly the most mournful and desolate of all the expressions of rejection in the paraphrases of Nor, MS6. Utter desperation has replaced the unquestioning trust and hope of the earlier paraphrases.

This particular paraphrase is resonant with Clare's sense of betrayal, self-deception and disillusionment.

'Autumn', p. 47. Clare is engaged in both instances with memories of the past and the passage of time.

In a letter to William Knight, dated April, 1851, Clare writes pathetically of his 'incarceration': 'they have shut me up & gave me no tools & like the caged Stamel of Stern 'I can't get out'. Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 679 - 680.

'The Lamentations' as the lines develop, provide an ambiguous mix of total desperation and tentative hope in the future.

Clare's experience of confinement, his return home to find Mary absent and his despair are all clearly articulated through these lines. There is mention of 'Confinement' in the biblical original.

There is a discussion on the apparent shift of focus from the fickleness of human love to the uncompromising divine presence of God in Chapter Three, 'The Northborough Sequence'.

Nor, MS6, p. 5, 'But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower'.

'Friend of the friendless from a host of snares / From lying varlets & from friendly foes'. Nor, MS6, p. 9.

The pursuit of reliability or truth is common to all the material in Nor, MS6.

'True love is eternal / For God is the giver'. Nor, MS6, p. 5.

These last two lines reflect Clare's predicament in all its intensity. References to 'nest', 'heart' and 'home' are Clare's own terms and are part of the autobiographical translation at the heart of these paraphrases.
An echo of the mood and imagery in ‘Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841’, Nor, MS6, p. 8.


All the poet prisoners of Nor, MS6 are called to mind here: Tasso, Dante, The Prisoner of Chillon and Clare himself.

Clare has written two further lines alongside these two lines of the paraphrase. They read as follows: ‘Persecute & destroy them - thine anger & rod / From the earth & from under the heavens of God’.

This paraphrase is found along the margins of Bodleian, MS Don. a8. As with Lamentations, Clare draws on the biblical poetry of complaint, judgement and exile - not redemption.

The speaker dwells on the ideas of homelessness and vagrancy, like so much of the material of Nor, MS6.

‘[Absence] is like a ruined city desolate / Joy dies & hope retires on feeble wing’. Nor, MS6, p. 37.

The mention of harvest and garnering seed is wholly appropriate to this phase of writing at Northborough in the autumn of 1841. The images are biblical: ‘wilt thou believe him’, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn’. (39, 12)

This calls to mind the notion of forgetfulness relevant to the manuscript as a whole.

The apocalyptic images of the sublime here are in contrast to the more subdued melancholy observations of the prose piece ‘Autumn’.

See also Bodleian, MS Don. c64. On p. 2 of this blue exercise book, Clare has written this paraphrase in pencil.

See ‘Isaiah Chap 47’, Nor, MS6, p. 58, ‘Come down & sit in dust’.

Clare often used the copying and writing of the paraphrase to console and support himself in testing situations. It is not the first instance where Clare appears to use the act of writing as a means of psychological survival.

‘the third day I satisfied my hunger by eating the grass by the road side which seemed to taste something like bread’. Nor, MS6, p. 3.

The notion of confinement and imprisonment continues to surface in this manuscript.

The fens in ‘Autumn’, are described in Nor, MS6, p. 46. See also Job 39. 12: ‘and bring your grain to your threshing floor’.

ibid. See also Peterborough, A62. In this context Clare has written the paraphrase in verse form. In the margin alongside the paraphrase are the following lines: ‘My heart my dear Mary from thee cannot part / But the sweetest of pleasure that joy can impart / Is nought to the memory of thee’.

This paraphrase is written in pencil on page 3 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.

Clare has written this psalm on page 4 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.

The psalms are written in abab verse form, in the tradition of English hymnology - Herbert, Watts and the Wesleys. Their mood is more uplifting in comparison to the paraphrases of Job and Jeremiah.

In a letter written to Marianne Marsh, dated 6th July, 1831, Clare wrote of his love of the Psalms:
'the book which has given me most satisfaction since my late illness has been Horn on the Psalms & it is one of the best books I have met with'. Clare was referring to George Horne's, (Bishop Of Norwich), Commentary on the Psalms, (1771). Mark Storey, Letters, p. 544.

512 Nor, MS6, p. 5, ‘& he who studies natures volume through / & reads it with a pure unselfish mind’.

513 See Bodleian, MS Don. c64, p. 6. Page 5 of this manuscript is blank and when Clare has completed this paraphrase he draws a double line under its last line.

514 Clare remains heavily indebted to the Authorised Version of the Bible in this paraphrase.

515 Bunyan’s, Pilgrim’s Progress.

516 Bunyan's, Pilgrim’s Progress. Clare wrote to Charles Clare in February 1848, sounding like Polonius delivering a sermon to Leontes. He advises his son on reading and recalls his youthful pastimes. He also refers directly to Bunyan: ‘- Like old Muck Rake in the Pilgrims Progress I know nothing in other peoples business & less in whats to come or happen - ‘There is nothing like home’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 656. In his Sketches, Nor, MS14, he describes Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress as having ‘pleased me mightily’. p. 29.

517 The Authorised Version uses the word ‘habitation’ here.

518 ‘Cares gather round I snap their chains in two’. Nor, MS6, p. 8.

519 This song may be found on p. 8 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64. Clare returns to Child Harold after a long gap and for the last time in Nor, MS6.

520 The refrain of sojourning and homelessness is a replication of the opening song on page 1 of Nor, MS6, but Clare has allowed it a seasonal edge which mirrors his personal circumstances towards the end of 1841. ‘Hopeless’, ‘roam’, ‘abscent’ are all words which initiated the themes of this manuscript at the start.

521 In the blue quarto exercise book held at the Bodleian, Clare has written ‘Love wasting life away’.

522 Clare reiterates the association between truth of his love for Mary and home.

523 Clare has retained the same sequential order of Bodleian, MS Don. c64. Like Job and the Lamentations, Isaiah is a classical biblical lamentation.

524 There is no categorical evidence that Nor, MS6 originally concluded with this paraphrase, but in relation to the argument of this thesis, the recapitulation of theme and preoccupation would not seem to be coincidental. The prevailing mood of this last paraphrase - its nihilistic and deadening flatness of tone demonstrate that Clare would seem to have acknowledged not only Mary’s absence but the terrible truth of his own self - beguilement, ‘For thou shalt never more be called / Lady of Kingdoms thy power enthralled’.
CHAPTER SIX

A READING OF CHILD HAROLD.
One of my new songs has been under construction for more than a decade... Like longing, it's a theme I find myself returning to again and again. I state it and then come back to it and then come back to it. Like a dog barking. Like a folksinger in an electronic age singing a refrain. It's only the verses that change. So perhaps I only imagine that I got some sense of closure this time.¹

I have argued that the diverse contents of Nor, MS6 are united by an intense and sustained longing for 'truth & home & love & woman'² and it is true to say that many of the Child Harold stanzas, prose fragments and biblical paraphrases also articulate a profound sense of loss and regret. While Clare's engagement with the notion of absence is not unique to the year 1841 as the poetry composed at Northborough a decade earlier demonstrates, (The Flitting', 'Decay' and 'Remembrances', all written in 1832, are testimony to Clare's early susceptibility to geographical change and upheaval) the sense of bereavement being acted out in Nor, MS6 differs in that even though Clare and his speakers are eventually reunited with 'home', many of its potent associations are missing. While the contents of Nor, MS6 vary considerably in their material form their subject matter and mood appear to be closely related.

On occasions, the interchangeable voice of autobiographer, poet/lover and paraphraser mingle to create a resounding echo of despair, exiled hopelessness and rejection. At other times the manuscript's contents become ambivalent or contradictory as in the verses of Psalm 91 on page 57 of the manuscript. Here the speaker's trust in a
God who shall not bring him ‘into thrall’ and whose only regard is to offer refuge and a ‘home’ is undermined almost immediately by the nihilistic voice present in the one eight line stanza and four further lines of the song which immediately follow, ‘In this cold world’. The plaintive voice of the vagrant, orphan and quester in the song’s first stanza is unmistakable, ‘No home had I throughout the year / But Marys honest love’. The fragments of prose on pages 21 and 23 and the longer prose piece ‘Autumn’ convey their respective speaker’s dissatisfaction, melancholy and isolation. While the prose fragment on the subject of the word ‘middling’ explores the importance of good opinion easily lost, the second on ‘Self Identity’ ruminates on the ease with which the world forgets those out of sight - ‘the living dead’. Forgetfulness, together with a longing for all that is past, may be heard in Clare’s letter voice on page 4 of Nor, MS6 (‘but not being able to see you or to hear where you was I soon began to feel homeless at home’) and again in a poignant line in ‘Autumn’ on page 47 of Nor, MS6 ‘I sigh for what is lost and cannot help it’.

The satirical voice of Don Juan also lends his weight to the notion of regret and disillusionment. Where can one find honesty, reliability and fidelity in an essentially corrupt society? Women are nothing more than whores or deceivers. The poem’s first four stanzas on page 38 of Nor, MS6 reveal the speaker participating in a fruitless act of wishing for order and honesty, ‘I wish - but there is little got bye wishing’. Whereas the speaker in Child Harold singles out one woman for attention - the idealised muse Mary, Don Juan describes women only in general terms, judging them by their scant regard for love or marriage. One common interest links the two long poems with the remaining material of Nor, MS6; each one is engaged in a quest to find certainty and
reliability in an otherwise chameleon-like world. At the heart of Nor, MS6 lies a personal voyage to find social, physical and psychological stability.

In this chapter I want to explore the ways in which Clare has introduced the mood and thematic unity of Nor, MS6 by employing four different speakers or voice modes, three of whom take their cue from the autobiographical presence inhabiting the main prose accounts and the smaller fragments interspersed throughout the manuscript. I intend to demonstrate throughout the course of this argument how the four main forms of writing, (prose passages and letter, the long poem Child Harold, its alter ego Don Juan and the biblical paraphrases) evolve as a result of what appears to be one central autobiographical impulse. Each form of writing is identifiable by the particular speaker's voice or persona which I would claim articulates Clare's responses to his own physical and psychological Odyssey.

The untitled song which Clare has written initially onto page 1 of the Northborough notebook, and again on page 6 carries a refrain that finds an echo in virtually all the material of Nor, MS6, 'I've lost love home and Mary'. When Clare as autobiographical prose writer is not contemplating the absence of Mary as he does in his 'Recolections', the voice of Don Juan is commenting on the lack of genuine marital love, deceitful, licentious wives and the political lies and double dealing inflicted on the nation. The biblical paraphrases recall a desperate exile in which each speaker attempts to sustain a trust in the constancy of God while seeking refuge and the voice in the 'Autumn' fragment mournfully remembers the past. A substantial amount of the material in the manuscript either address all three losses at once as in many of the stanzas of Child Harold or deals with each form of loss independently as in a number of
the biblical paraphrases where the speaker appears to be wholly preoccupied with the
notion of home, of having a ‘house’ or ‘dwelling place’ to which he may return from a
life of exile.

Two stanzas of the first song in Nor, MS6 are written in draft form on page 23
of Nor, MS8 and a third on page 24. Faircopied into Nor, MS6, they would seem to
bridge not only the physical distance Clare has travelled from Essex to Northborough
but also to imply a creative watershed as Clare negotiated freedom and change. From
the outset in Nor, MS6, Clare positions himself firmly in the role of the Byronic
‘Childe’, questing or travelling in search of loved woman, home and the truths implicit
to the places in which he was born. In the first stanza of the opening song, Clare’s
speaker initiates a scenario that will dominate his manuscript; journeying is preferable to
arrival as in ‘returning’ there is only disappointment. The speaker seeks only to find
comfort in the ‘smile’ (or home) of Mary but, ‘cold is loves sojourning’. What is more,
Mary is not where she should be or where his poet / lover has imagined her during his
confinement:

I’ve wandered many a weary mile
Love in my heart was burning
To seek a home in Mary [s] smile
But cold is loves sojourning
The cold ground was a feather bed
Truth never acts contrary
I had no home above my head
My home was love & Mary³

The final lines of the remaining two stanzas redefine, endorse and reconstruct
precisely the same preoccupations. In the second stanza the singer / poet describes the
emotional and psychological thraldom of his love for Mary, ‘Nor night nor day I’m
never free / But sigh for abscent Mary’. In the final stanza, the same voice bemoans the
continuing absence of loved woman and his sense of overwhelming hopelessness: ‘No ray of hope my fate beguiles / I’ve lost love home & Mary’. Those references to voyaging, travelling, sailing, sojourning and questing which characterise this song are mirrored throughout Nor, MS6 with its final expression in the third stanza of the final song on page 58: ‘But now loves hopes are all bereft / A lonely man I roam’. Clare’s use of the word ‘beguiles’ in the first song is apt; hope, in the speaker’s past, particularly in confinement, has nurtured the ability to invert or contradict reality - to change events or to provide the appropriate conditions for self-deception. Contact with home or the present, shatters the illusion and Clare, speaking as himself and through his poet / speaker, is forced to confront that they have both ‘lost home & Mary’.

A substantial part of Clare’s notebook appears to be framed around three retrospective accounts. These not only chart Clare’s physical and emotional confinement but also act as a recapitulating declaration of his continuing love for Mary. I will argue that these three accounts are directed primarily by Clare as autobiographer, who either directly or indirectly reworks his own story throughout the early pages of his manuscript positioning himself as different personae in order to sustain the impact of one central personal narrative. Firstly, on pages 1 - 4 Clare relates the events of his escape and journey home in all its harrowing detail in his ‘Reccolections &c of journey from Essex’. (Clare has in fact written first a condensed miniaturised version of his journey home and his arrival there on the top half of page 1 in the two songs, ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’ and ‘Here’s were Mary loved to be’). The account is followed by a short letter to Mary Joyce and signed by John Clare. Later in the manuscript Clare as essayist writes in the first person, recalling his childhood days and a
lost past in ‘Autumn’ while reminding himself, as well as others of his continued existence in the prose fragment ‘Self Identity’.

Secondly, from page 4 to 19 Clare would appear to have reconstructed his own story again, this time from the viewpoint of the poet speaker in Child Harold. This account is related by two different types of singers, the poet/lover moulded on Byron’s Childe and the voice of the balladeer of the traditional song. Although they reiterate many of the same refrains and contradictory mood swings they speak from differing poetic traditions. Thirdly, from page 21 onwards, the biblical paraphrases pick up the notion of exile and journeying with a brief interruption from Clare as essayist and the resurgent voice of the vagrant Child Harold towards the end of the manuscript. There is also a fourth “rogue” voice present in the Don Juan sequence who shares a similar quest for truth despite its absence in the face of glaring and excessive social, moral and political deceptions.

Although the second and third narrative accounts absorb and reconstruct similar events taking place on the first four pages of the manuscript, they would appear to be extended versions of Clare’s ‘Recolections’, including, in the case of Child Harold, a personal history of what takes place in confinement before the journey while the biblical paraphrases document the continuing exile of the speaker which follow after the Northborough autumnal stanzas, written at home. I want to suggest that Clare’s return to the same refrain - ‘I’ve lost love home & Mary’ - through two consecutive versions of the same story, influences our reading of the manuscript as a whole. Clare’s decision to faircopy the song quoted above on the first page of the notebook and to follow this with a detailed account of his autobiographical journey out of Essex, clearly indicates
the importance such details held for him. I intend to examine how the material of Nor, MS6 would seem to evolve from the preoccupations or refrain of the first four pages, concluding with a final song on page 57 which echoes an identical theme, ‘In this cold world without a home / Disconsolate I go’. Clare’s ‘story’ begins and ends with his vagrancy together with an acute sense of loss and although there is a semblance of change and progression in the implied mobility of journeying, it is, ultimately, a self created beguilement which brings him back to where he has started, ‘& now a man - I’m farther off from truth’.

I will go on to describe the ways in which Clare as autobiographer redistributes himself into three different voice modes when his opening autobiographical account concludes. Clare’s use of thematic and structural recapitulation is instinctive to a poet who recognised his substantial debt to the traditional ballad and song and seems to be a conscious artistic decision. It prolongs the potency of Mary’s presence in his memory which in turn motivates the act of writing. In Child Harold she is evolved and involved as the speaker’s muse, ‘- Mary the muse of every song I write / Thy cherished memory never leaves my own’. I would suggest that there is another consequence to the relentless reconstruction of events taking place in the early pages of Nor, MS6; the act of physically putting pen to paper, of fair copying the various forms of writing would also appear to allow Clare the psychological and emotional space to come to terms with the loss of Mary; to reach in fact, a point of reliable certainty. The act of writing three consecutive and to a degree overlapping accounts all engaged with exile and loss would seem to assist Clare in a therapeutic process through which he is able to come to terms with reality after confinement. In this respect substantial parts of Nor, MS6 become a record (even if subconsciously) of personal bereavement for Mary.
The presence (or simultaneous absence) of Mary Joyce in Clare’s personal and creative life, together with the work through which his precarious dependence upon her was expressed, spans at least three decades. Clare had first met Mary Joyce in 1800, the relationship ending fifteen years later. Mary Joyce died in 1838 though in 1841 Clare was clearly either unaware of her death or in a state of denial as many of the contents in Nor, MS8 and MS6 would indicate. It is not only Clare’s poetry which demonstrates the obsessive engagement with her memory. From 1821 to 1848 there is evidence to suggest that Clare was fixated with the circumstances surrounding the relationship with his youthful love and muse. In August 1821, Clare wrote to his publisher John Taylor confessing that he had been left shaken and agitated after having caught sight of Mary. It was the last occasion he would see her, ‘I have had the horrors agen upon me by once agen seeing devoted mary’. In the same letter Clare observed that the sighting of his childhood sweetheart had resurrected tormenting memories of his unresolved love for her, ‘tis reflections of the past & not of the present that torment me’.

Clare also sent Taylor three stanzas of a song, ‘Farewell to Mary’ which reveal the speaker’s attempt to disentangle himself from an intense emotional thraldom. The close relationship between Clare’s autobiographical presence and the voice of the poem’s speaker (which prefigures the balance of voices in Child Harold) is clearly in place in this letter of 1821. The material of Nor, MS6 would suggest that Clare continued to be haunted or tormented by ‘reflections’ of his past not only in 1841 but as late as 1849. Clare’s early song is strikingly similar in theme and mood to those faircopied into Nor, MS6 in that Clare introduces a complex inverted logic into the
poem’s construction. While on the one hand proposing to end the relationship, the poet / lover in ‘Farewell to Mary’ simultaneously fails to make sense of existence devoid of loved woman, ‘Cold is the hope that loves thee yet / Now thou art past possesing / Fare thee well’. On page 11 of Nor, MS6, a later song echoes similar contradictions, ‘Wa’n’t thy love in my heart enrolled / Though love was fire t’would soon be cold’. In his letter of 1821, Clare argued as much to himself as to Taylor that his song to Mary would be, ‘the last doggerel that shall ever sully her name & her remembrance any more’. Tellingly, in a letter written twenty years later to his doctor Matthew Allen along the margins and columns of the Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser, in August 1841, Clare confesses that although he wishes for the solitary life of a hermit, there remained one ‘whom I am always thinking of & almost every Song I write has some sighs & wishes in Ink about Mary’. Over a period of thirty years, in one way or another, Clare was to continue to write to and about Mary Joyce, returning again and again to a theme which simultaneously celebrated his love for her while recalling its failure and disappointment. Clare’s susceptibility to self delusion together with his attempts to separate fact from fiction, truth from deception and reality from fantasy are apparent not only in the early letter to Taylor but also in the poetry and correspondence he was engaged upon from 1821 up to his confinement at Northampton.

In 1841, Clare appeared to be still bound to Mary Joyce with an obsessive, futile longing to both see and to be reunited with her. Physical confinement at High Beech would appear to have deepened rather than lessened Clare’s memory of her. The lack of proximity with home and home’s associations, in Clare’s case, undoubtedly ‘made the heart grow fonder’ as he confirmed in a letter addressed to Mary Joyce in Nor, MS8, ‘the love I have for you my dear Mary was never altered by time but always increased
by absence’. The contents of Nor, MS6, demonstrate Clare’s continuing ‘remembrance’ of loved woman in their reconstruction of the events which retrace their separation and his attempt to return home to find her.

The first page of Nor, MS6 epitomises the manuscript’s preoccupation with a poet/lover whose burning fixation with Mary is in danger of consuming him, ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile / Love in my heart was burning’. The stanzas of the two opening songs repeat the same confusion, ambiguity and disinclination to ‘let go’ that are in evidence in the song of 1821. The second stanza of the first song, faircopied into Nor, MS6 implies that the speaker’s emotional thraldom is as unrelenting as physical chains; he can, in effect, never be free, ‘Nor night nor day I’m never free / But sigh for absent Mary’. A line in the third stanza suggests that the poet/lover’s existence is wholly dependent upon her presence, ‘Lifes lease was lengthened by her smiles’. Clare’s song not only clearly demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the resolution to deny Mary made two decades earlier, it also indicates that the potentially dangerous tendency towards self deception had not diminished.

In his letter to Taylor in 1821 Clare identified his own failure to exorcise Mary’s presence from his memory as a ‘weakness & vanity’. There is evidence too in the same letter of the contradictions and ambivalence being played out in his early love poetry. Speaking of his disenchantment with the habitual use of stereotypical romantic metaphors Clare goes on to quote some specific examples, ‘sunbeams lips of rubies & rosey cheeks & liley bosoms’. He is quick to point out that reality is very different, offering only, ‘this hopeless sickening clog at ones foot & a proof of its faded reallitys at ones elbow’. While on the one hand informing Taylor that he will ‘have very few
more love things from me' he admits at the same time Mary’s unchallenged place in his life, ‘there are faces in existance that might make me a liar before this letter im now scribbling is finished'.

Nearly three decades later, Clare was still referring to his muse, on this occasion in a letter addressed to Mary Howitt written from Northampton between 1849 and 1850. In this particular context Mary appears to have experienced a sea change which may well have been the result of a shift in Clare’s own circumstances:

- I can assure you my home was never in such places as these - my fancy wont even have a bed in them she fancys on & lyes elsewhere - have you read Whartons ‘Ode to fancy’ I used to like it - I have poetical sweathearts too which my fancy dwells on as it did when I was single so in writing of these as my fancy dictates they grow imperceptably into a Vol

By 1849 Clare had lived with the knowledge of Mary’s death and her absence in his life for eight years. It is then perhaps, not so surprising that in the letter to Mary Howitt, Mary Joyce is no longer the ‘One and one only made my being blest’ or the form which his fancy, shapes ‘in every dell’. She has become his ‘fancy’, with all the association of something imagined, or self created as opposed to real or living.

Clare’s letter of 1849 is revealing not only for its reference to a new volume of *Child Harold* he was apparently writing at this time but also for the continuing, acute, sense of dislocation he was feeling while confined at Northampton. Separated from Mary, his legal wife Patty and his children, Clare’s *letter voice* during his second confinement sounds disorientated and distracted. Like the speaker of his *Don Juan* it also appears to be obsessed with ideas of hypocrisy, deception and truth. On Saturday the 28th April he concluded his letter to his son Charles with the following advice,
'never act Hypocrisy for Deception is the most odious Knavery in the World - Stick to Truth & "shame the Devil"'. A number of letters at this time are written to Charles, drawing attention to his rootlessness and homesickness. In February, 1848 he wrote, 'There is nothing like home'. In October of 1848, he reminisced that, 'There is no place like Home'.

In November 1849, writing again to his son, he is more specific about his loneliness, making it clear that he wants, 'to come Home very much'. In the same way the letter to Mary Howitt referred to earlier, confirms Clare’s distress at his alienation and suggests that both he and his muse have become homeless, 'I can assure you my home was never In such places'. Significantly, he also draws attention to the detrimental effect of confinement on his creative impulse which he goes on to describe as having left him, 'my fancy wont even have a bed in them (asylums) she fancys on & lyes elsewhere'.

The reference to his fancy ‘lying’ elsewhere is suggestive. Clare is probably referring to his ‘fancy’s’ literal location at home in Northborough, where both Mary and the familiar landscape of home served as inspiration for writing. However the word ‘lyes’ may also refer, subliminally, to Clare’s sense of his self deception - the tendency to believe in his love for Mary which is, in effect, a lie. Is this what Clare affirms on page 22 of Nor MS6 when he writes, ‘Nature says “Mary” but my pen denies / To write the truth & so it lives in sighs’? Whatever we make of Clare’s remark, it is useful to read more of this letter as it appears he that he is again participating in an act of contradiction. Despite the fact that he informs Mary Howitt that his ‘fancy’ resides
elsewhere in 1848, another aspect of her, a shadow even, nourishes the continuation of Child Harold which he was writing in Essex and whose inspiration there was Mary.

In a note about his ongoing engagement with Child Harold in this same letter, Clare observes that the one significant woman he was writing about in 1841 has, by 1849, been possibly absorbed into a number of muses or poetical ‘sweathearts’: ‘I have poetical sweathearts too which my fancy dwells on as it did when I was single so in writing of these as my fancy dictates they grow imperceptibly into a Vol & then I call it Child Harold of which I wrote much in Essex & here’. The stanzas belonging to his Northampton Child Harold, which incidentally, he clearly suggests formed a sequel to those stanzas written in Essex, have never been identified. Mary Joyce, the focus and inspiration for his Essex Child Harold stanzas would seem to have metaphorically perished in 1841. Was this the reason Clare identified a different creative impulse in 1849 - those many ‘poetical sweathearts’? It is tempting to ask what difference, if any, there was between the later stanzas attributed to Child Harold written in Northampton asylum from those written at High Beech when Clare still believed Mary Joyce to be alive?

My intention in charting what would appear to be three decades of Clare’s emotional engagement with Mary Joyce is to firstly explore the significance of Nor, MS6 as a document which may be read as another stage of Clare’s continuing obsession with her absence. Secondly, I want to argue that even though the autobiographical bias as regards the subject of Mary diminishes to a degree after page 20 in the manuscript the other main preoccupations of exile and homelessness consistently associated with her are developed up to its final page. The first twenty pages of Nor, MS6 at least,
could be interpreted as a testimony to a particular point in Clare’s psychological and emotional separation from Mary. Like the voice of the speaker in the ‘Song of Solomon’, the world is resonant with the presence or absence of loved woman - existence becomes one continuing quest to rediscover her. In Solomon’s ‘Song’, the female lover seeks her partner: ‘I sought him whom my soul loves / I sought him, but found him not; / I called him but he gave no answer’. Three lines later in the same chapter, longing becomes reconstructed into precisely the same refrain: ‘I will seek him whom my soul loves.” / I sought him, but found him not’. On page 17 of Nor, MS6, the second stanza of Clare’s song echoes an identical sense of loss, ‘I’ve sought her in the fields & flowers / I’ve sought her in the forest groves’.

While Clare’s letter to Taylor in 1821 professed to be a denial of Mary Joyce, in 1849, to all extent and purposes, he appears to be still engaged with a process of separation. In Nor, MS6, at a point equidistant between the period of acknowledged beguilement or self deception in 1821 and what would seem to be some form of acknowledgement of Mary’s poetical death suggested in the letter to Mary Howitt in 1849, we become party to the unfolding stages of a repossession of self identity. Clare appears to be using his notebook to record confessional, tortured and repetitive autobiographical details. This chapter will attempt to explain how Clare uses these details and the effect this has upon a reading of the contents of Nor, MS6 as a whole.

III

An example of the way in which writing may well be providing a synthesis for Clare’s grief as he slowly learns to accommodate particular truths may be seen on page
4 of Nor, MS6. On arrival at Northborough, Clare records how he was informed of Mary’s death: ‘but Mary was not there neither could I get any information about her further than the old story of her being dead six years ago’. What follows, demonstrates the way Clare prepares to reconstruct events to suit his preferred (certainly less painful) version of reality, ‘but I took no notice of the blarney having seen her myself about a twelvemonth ago alive & well & as young as ever’. Immediately following his prose account, in a letter addressed to ‘Mary Clare - Glinton’, Clare defiantly calls Mary his ‘wife’ and while endorsing her presence simultaneously concedes her absence. Clare’s temporary acceptance of Mary’s absence, ‘but not being able to see you or hear where you was’ is tempered by his passionate commitment to her memory, ‘my hopes are not entirely hopeless while even the memory of Mary lives so near me’.

This last observation matches precisely the same response to Mary’s absence as Child Harold’s speaker on page 19 of Nor, MS6 as part of the second reconstruction. In the second of two, nine line stanzas in which the speaker in this context also talks of the woman who has cheered him, ‘all my lorn life long’, he reiterates the compulsive nature of his bond with her, ‘On her my memory forever dwells’. Was Clare confused or did he prefer to reinvent factual details in order to postpone acknowledging Mary’s absence as in the words of Wordsworth, to be engaged with ‘something evermore about to be’? There is one further example of Clare manipulating chronological facts to suit his preferred version of events early in the manuscript. On page 2 of Nor, MS6, Clare dated his arrival home at Northborough as July 24th 1841 and comments briefly: ‘Returned home out of Essex & found no Mary her & her family are nothing to me now’. Immediately after this journal entry he reconstructs time, moves backwards six
days to a period before his journey home where he writes an account of the days leading up to his escape.

I suggested earlier that Clare’s second narrative absorbs events prior to the journeying described in Clare’s original account. The autobiographical significance of a number of details included in the Child Harold stanzas is relevant to this argument. The ballad written on pages 4 and 5 describes confinement and imprisonment and may be indicative of Clare’s recollection of High Beech as well as his response and identification with the Byronic prisoners already discussed. On page 7, of Nor, MS6 the details of Fern Hill would indicate that although spoken by the Byronic persona, the hornbeams, beeches and forests of these stanzas were in fact authentic as Clare himself stated in his letter to Mary Joyce in May 1841. Compare the details of this letter in which he describes writing his poems on Fern Hill, with the lyrical account in Nor, MS6. Clare’s letter describes Fern Hill as a location associated with a sense of well being, ‘to get myself better I went a few evenings on Fern Hill & wrote a new Canto of ‘Child Harold’.26 In Child Harold this account becomes, ‘How beautifull this hill of fern swells on / So beautifull the chappel peeps between / The hornbeams - with its simple bell’.27

Later in the Child Harold stanzas on page 16 the voice of Clare’s poet-lover refers to a specific detail which Clare as autobiographer also describes, the gypsy encampment which first promised so much in his bid for escape but which was abandoned before he could take advantage of the gypsies’ offer of help. In his ‘Recolections’ Clare relates his encounter in the forest near High Beech remembering that when he admitted he had no money, the gypsies ‘did not seem so willing’ to help
him in his escape. In *Child Harold*, this experience is reflected in the line, ‘The princely
palace too has been his home / & Gipseys camp when friends would know him not’.
(Nor, MS6, p. 16.)

The fact that there is no specific account of the escape or journey home in this
second narrative is important. Child Harold appears more intent on sustaining the truth
of Mary’s existence through a type of suspended replay of her presence in his memory
than in those details in life which affirm her absence. It is interesting with this in mind to
observe how the *Child Harold* narrative jumps from Clare’s Child in confinement
longing for Mary and to be reunited with home, (‘Did I know where to meet thee / Thou dearest in life / How soon would I greet thee / My true love & wife’),\(^{28}\) to the
song two pages later which marks the speaker’s arrival home, ‘O Mary dear three
springs have been / Three summers too have blossomed here’.\(^{29}\) This song is a
remarkable fusion of Clare’s autobiography and the second narrator’s account
documenting precisely the same moment of arrival home. Clare composed three stanzas
after his arrival at Northborough which endorsed and echoed the emptiness and
disappointment of his words on page 4 of the manuscript. The voice of *Child Harold*
sings, ‘Een round her home I seek her here / But Mary’s abscent everywhere’.\(^{30}\)

The descriptive precision of the Northborough autumnal stanzas would seem to
suggest that Clare in the persona of his Child has begun to negotiate the truth of Mary’s
absence and that in attempting to accept her physical absence he transfers his love for
her into a celebration of the landscape around him. Greg Crossan explains\(^{31}\) this process
of transference of fixed affection from woman to Nature as a process of ‘divination’.
Certainly, the ‘Sweet Mary’ in the three stanza song on page 17 becomes
metamorphosed into, ‘Sweet solitude thou partner of my life / Thou balm of hope &
every pressing care’ on page 19 of the manuscript. Although Clare has undoubtedly
learnt to come to terms with Mary’s absence, he still carries her memory in his heart as
he states via the narration of his Child on the same page, ‘On her my memory forever
dwells / The flower of Eden - evergreen of song / Truth in my heart the same love story
tells’. The admission here to repetition or replication is important. Clare’s speaker
acknowledges the habit of returning to the ‘same love story’. It is on the page that
follows, that the third narration begins, marked by the voice of the more objective
biblical paraphraser.

I now want to turn to the way in which Clare rehearses his story for the last
occasion in the manuscript, in this instance, excluding the specific references to Mary
and reworking the details of continuing homelessness which begin to stir in the
Northborough autumnal stanzas. In the song already referred to above, the singer’s
voice implies desperation, ‘I’ve sought her in the fields & flowers / I’ve sought her in
the forest groves’, which, as I commented upon earlier would appear to be an echo of
‘The Song of Solomon’,32 ‘I sought him but found him not’. It was entirely appropriate
that when he found himself faced with disillusionment and despair following his arrival
home to Northborough to find Mary absent, he should turn to faircopying and writing
biblical paraphrases. In a letter to Hessey much earlier in his career as poet but which
nonetheless marks a period of similar depression and disillusionment, Clare talks of his
love of the Bible,33 especially as a panacea to health and happiness:

As to religion my mind is compleatly at rest in that matter my late deplorable
situation proved to me that I had read the Bible successfully for it was an
antidote to my deepest distresses & I had not the least doubt on my conviction
of its truth - but I recievved a relish for reading it from some Numbers of Scotts
Octavo Bible which is a most excellent Work & it also gave me a relish for
thinking - I studied the Bible often & found it long before my illness the one book that makes the carnalities of life palatable & the way to eternity pleasant - the one & only book that supplys soul & body with happiness - I also found in it the beautiful in poetry in perfection - I had read Homer but a greater then Homer is there - I found in it gems of the oldest excellence in sublimity which the greatest & oldest poets had borrowed to enrich their own lustre & what astonished me most was that I found beautys that I had never met with before tho I had read it over time after time when I was the happiest fellow in extistance.

'Balaam's Parable, second part' which begins on page 21 of the manuscript and follows a fragment of prose reflecting on female mediocrity and the loss of reputation continues the narrative of the exile who seeks moral and psychological reassurance by returning to the known landscape of his youth, 'But he turned to the wilderness loved in his youth / Where nature & God live in silence & truth'. The autobiographical presence appears less sure of his identity in the pages following the Northborough autumnal stanzas, requiring God to endorse his existence for him and to punish those who have neglected him in exile as the paraphrase of 'David's Prayer makes clear: ‘God went to redeem them & make them a name / of greatness & terribleness -even like thee’. The biblical paraphrases reflect the manuscript's general mood of ambiguity and contradiction oscillating between the voice of optimism epitomized in Child Harold and the disillusioned pessimist with a nihilistic eye to the future, heard in Don Juan. The presence of the biblical paraphrases represent a balance between both voices and appears to be employed by Clare as a means of more reconciling two opposing and contradictory states of mind. The biblical narratives provide the perfect middle ground for Clare’s unresolved confusion as regards the gap which marks the past and the present. ‘David’s Prayer’ opens with a plaintive reflection on the uncertainty of life, ‘Who am I my God & my Lord / & what is my house in thy eye’. David clings to a God who has promised enduring love and has not forsaken the speaker’s loneliness. He
is also, we are reminded, greater than any other living thing, ‘O Lord there is none beside thee / No other God living but thou’.

The voice of the biblical narrator in ‘Davids Prayer’ is more inclined to talk of the uncompromising love and truth of God in contrast to the brevity of human affections, ‘Thou art God & has promised thy love to impart / To thy servant as long as the seasons shall roll’. In ‘Solomons Prayer’ the emphasis is on the importance of inherited land, on the importance of known and honoured place to the exile who returns there with joy and hope, ‘& bring them again like a wreck to the strand / To the place which thou gav’st them their fathers own land’. In the Paraphrases of Job, Chapters 38, 39, 40 and 41 the speaker is reminded of God’s omniscience. He is humbled both by the anger and power of God who checks his identity and defines his progress. The voice of these paraphrases is daunted and intimidated when he is advised to consider the smallness of his station in life. Generally speaking, as much as the voice of the biblical paraphraser would prefer to envisage God as a more reliable substitute for the frailty of human love, he is aware that such love is not always enough. In ‘Psalm 97’ on page 31 of Nor, MS6, the intrinsic truth of God is not a sufficient substitute for the lack of purpose the speaker is weighed down with.

There appear to be strong echoes of Child Harold in ‘Psalm 91’ which is written towards the end of the manuscript, ‘The Lord my lasting friend shall be / He is my refuge still’. The voice of Child Harold also speaks of his dependency upon God, ‘No ill from him creations works deform / The high & lofty one is great & kind’. In ‘Solomons Prayer’, on page 26, the voice of the paraphraser identifies the circular journey of life which brings you back to where you start from. In the same paraphrase
the speaker reminds himself that God remains with the exiled, and will bring them home once more: ‘& bring them once more to their land & thy laws’.

The narration belonging to the paraphrases from page 32 to 36 is engaged more with a vision of a ‘New World’ as described in the paraphrases of ‘Revelations’, Chapter 21 and 22’. The biblical voice here speaks of new beginnings, where he turns his back upon the old, ‘other’ world associated with tears, mourning and crying. Clare paraphrases Chapter 21, emphasising an end to human pain, ‘Nor shall there be any more sickness or pain / For the world of their sickness is passed & away’. Later in the same paraphrase, the speaker describes finding a home, ‘There the nations of them that are saved meet a home / There the kings of the earth bring their glories & come’. Stanzas which belong to Child Harold beginning on page 37 of the manuscript and which follow the paraphrases of ‘Revelation’ typically contradict such optimism, life without Mary is not regenerated but it becomes a living death, ‘Like living death - though all to life still cling’. The stanzas from Don Juan which interrupt the biblical paraphrases and a song from Child Harold, ‘I think of thee’ are startling in their cynicism, and aggressive rejection of truth or stability in love. The significance of Clare’s positioning of Don Juan at this point in his faircopy manuscript would appear to lie in his recourse to another form of comfort after the return home to Northborough to find Mary absent. Whereas the paraphrases attempt to offer spiritual healing, the Byronic persona in Don Juan allows a vitriolic rejection of all that has beguiled or deceived him including a black comic observation on the ‘drivelling hoax’ of matrimony. Clare’s autobiographical description entitled ‘Autumn’ sustains the melancholy, disconsolate register of the latter half of Nor, MS6.
The voice of Clare on page 47 of the manuscript sounds invariably old and vulnerable, 'the fansied riches & happiness of early life fades to shadows of less substances even then the shadows of dreams'. In the paraphrase of 'The Lamentations of Jeremiah Chap 3', the first person speaker talks of his experience of suffering, 'I am the man that affliction hath seen / By the rod of his wrath sorely scourged have I been'. These cries of despair, quite literally 'lamentations', are hauntingly akin to the voice of the autobiographer using particular biblical references to underpin his personal experience. Images of madness, confinement, confusion and fear are predominant in the lines of Clare's paraphrasing of Jeremiah: 'He hath shut out my prayer & I cannot get out / He hath enclosed all my ways with hewn heavy stone / & made all my paths both crooked & lone'. Later, in the same paraphrase Clare includes a line which finds an echo in an image he used to describe himself four years before his death, 'I said I'm cut off & my heart it felt dead'. Who cannot read these lines without thinking of the terrifying image of himself he recounted to Agnes Strickland in 1860, 'I can't do it [write] they have cut off my head, and picked out all the letters of the alphabet - all the vowels and consonants - and brought them out through my ears'.

In the last pages of Nor, MS6 whether it is Clare as Child Harold or Clare as self-loathing Job or Clare speaking as the voice of Isaiah who regards the world as in some way spoiled or corrupted, the reader of Nor, MS6 is aware that the account of each narrative is resolute in its acceptance of the predominance of deception and the pointlessness of life. It is true that Clare would seem to have worked his way through his bereavement but at a cost. The speaker on page 58 of the manuscript is not only homeless, but he sits in the 'dust' - undeceived but, it would seem, emotionally sterile:
'Come on the ground ye must / Daughter of the Chaldeans thy race is oer / Thou art the tender & the delicate no more'.

IV

The shadow of the past is shaped by everything that never happened. Invisible, it melts the present like rain through karst. A biography of longing. It steers us like magnetism, a spirit torque.\(^43\)

Clare's perception of what is true, particularly his attitude towards moral and emotional truths in Nor, MS6 is complex. The speakers of both the Child Harold and Don Juan stanzas are preoccupied with the distinction between what has and is taking place and what they would like to happen in the future. The speaker of Child Harold in particular, believes that if he can return as quickly as possible to the place where positive and regenerating events took place he has a better chance of such events repeating themselves. The process of reconciliation, between the past and present, the here and there and the now and then is a contributory factor to the sense of mobility in the manuscript. Mobility however, becomes illusory when it is suggested through dreams or wish fulfilment, and in the early stanzas in particular, especially those written at High Beech in Nor, MS8, both Clare and his poet/lover travel through the realms of thought and memory. When Clare in confinement cannot move physically he voyages in his mind instead. Three lines from a stanza on page 10 of Nor, MS6 describe the power of dreaming to overleap physical separation, ‘Oceans have rolled between us - not to part / E’en Icelands snows true loves delerium warms / For there I’ve dreamed - & Mary filled my arms’.
The complexity behind both Clare’s and the various speakers’ quest for truth would appear to lie in the perverse logic articulated by Clare’s Child on page 10 in the manuscript, ‘Falsehood is doubt’. If this is true then it follows that ‘Truth is certainty’. This is problematical both for Clare as autobiographer and his speakers. If hitherto ‘truthful’ points of stability and reliability become uncertain or shift their ground, (which would appear to have occurred after Clare’s first removal from home) then truth becomes open to question - doubtful in fact. Separation from known markers, whether Glinton Church spire, home or Mary, destroyed Clare’s bearings. His compass shattered, the voyager loses his way. On page 1 of Nor, MS6, when Clare asks through rhetorical inversion and riddling contradictions, ‘Are truth & love contrary’ (which in itself is a contradiction of what he has written in the previous stanza, ‘Truth never acts contrary’) he is attempting to make sense of a map that no longer has meaning for him.

The analogy of map reading or reading the stars is relevant to the contents of Nor, MS6. If Mary is ‘the pole star’ and ‘guide star’ that ‘gilds the north’ she should be reliable and therefore true. When she is not, when Clare or his poet/lover fail to find her at home or in the direction she has seemed to be pointing, they are forced to admit that, ‘smiles can act contrary’. All is not what it seems or what it appears to be. This is the crux. In Nor, MS6, Clare’s return again and again to a ‘Hamletesque’ preoccupation with honesty and truthfulness appears linked both to an acute sensitivity to the years of his own chronic self deception and to dishonesty and deception in society generally, ‘Story’s are told - but seeing is believing’. Both Clare and his speaker are forced to accept that lies as opposed to truth have dominated or formed their existence, ‘Lies was the current gospel in my youth / And now a man - I’m farther off from truth’. When Child Harold on page 7 of Nor, MS6 describes life turning to a
'bubble' he has already comes to terms with the mind's susceptibility towards self
deception, ' & think o'er many things / That love hurds up in truth's imaginings'. The
biblical speaker of the paraphrases together with the cynical voice of Don Juan are
equally preoccupied with falsity and deception. On page 43 of Nor, MS6 in the
asterisked stanzas which Clare clearly designates as those which he envisages as
beginning his other long poem, the speaker dwells on delusion and deception, 'Tell me
a worse delusion if you can / For innocence - & I will sing no more'. In the paraphrase
of the 'Lamentations of Jeremiah, Chap. 3' the speaker complains against his God who
has behaved out of character: 'He hath turned against me like a vision of night / & led
me to darkness & not into light'.

Ideas of political, social and moral deception are fundamental to all the material
of Nor, MS6, and it is perhaps, nowhere more effectively treated than in Don Juan
though in this instance deception is practised upon the speaker by those adept in the art
of counterfeit - corrupt, inadequate politicians and scheming married women. The
speaker in Don Juan is not as isolated or solitary as the voice of Child Harold but he is,
nonetheless through his shared experience of 'social exile' set slightly apart from a
community which thrives on deceit and lies. Don Juan's speaker is clearly bothered by
the general gullibility of a society so easily 'taken in' by blatant, immoral behaviour on
the part of women in particular. Don Juan is irritated by the way married women cause
mischief and ruin. Clare's alter ego is the antithesis to his Child, rejecting the notion of
enduring or true love, stung instead into 'singing' about the hypocrisy of marriage
which wrecks the first flush of early love. The speaker of Don Juan believes matrimony
to be the 'prototype to hate' - liberty is effectively lost after marriage vows have been
taken: 'A hell incarnate is a woman - mate / The knot is tied - & then we lose the
honey'. Don Juan's mood of cynicism and self disgust combined with frequent outbursts of anger against the obscenities practiced openly around him, stand in direct opposition to the idealistic, Romantic ruminations of the voice in Child Harold. Private disillusionment is matched by the public condemnation of the Monarchy and the government. Neither Queen Victoria and Prince Albert nor the Whigs escape ridicule or vicious parody.

Both political, poetical and marital impotence become the subject of mockery, 'I wish prince Albert & the noble dastards / Who wed the wives - would get the noble bastards'. Corruption appears to be the order of the day and at its heart the poem becomes a polarised version of the voice in Child Harold. The spirit of the quester, defiant in despair and still able to cling to his belief in a religion which upholds and consoles, is subdued into a bitter atheist in Don Juan who is bored with the society he observes around him: 'I'm weary of [old] Whigs & old Whigs hairs / & long been sick of teasing God with Prayers'.

The Don Juan stanzas would appear to actively contradict the notion of feminine beauty, fidelity and chaste and honourable womanhood voiced in Child Harold. It is as if Clare employs this fourth narrative voice of the Don Juan stanzas to cut through polite society's hypocrisy and cant, both of which, like Byron, he deplores. The first seven stanzas of Don Juan on page 38 of Nor, MS6 in particular relish the opportunity to speak though indecent punning and jingles, which Don Juan's speaker believes are held to be esteemed more highly than 'true' poetry, '& here I want a rhyme - so write down "jingle" / & there's such putting in - in whore's crim con / Some mouths would eat forever & eat on'.

Don Juan satirises not only a tasteless society but also contemporary society's tasteless regard for contemporary poetry. The implication seems to be that poets are so common or 'universal' that they have become indistinguishable from the 'whores' who disguise themselves as honourable, trustworthy wives, "'Poets are born - & so are whores - the trade is / Grown universal - in these canting days'. Life, as far as the speaker of the poem is concerned, is one long well rehearsed masquerade, where only honest men remain uncorrupted due to the fact that they are all confined in prison, 'I wish all honest men were out of prison / I wish M.P.s would spin less yarn'. (On page 41 of Nor, MS6, the same idea is reaffirmed, 'Truth is shut up in prison'). Prison, confinement, hospitalisation - all, allow their inmates a clearer view of the malpractices of the outside world than those who inhabit it. Even in isolation however, separated from society, there was another world of corruption which remained largely unspoken about. It is significant that it is the socialised voice of Don Juan who is able to articulate his criticism of those who have confined Child Harold.

At High Beech, if we take Clare's description in Child Harold at face value, it was difficult to uphold 'strong convictions'. The voice of Child Harold describes the environment of the 'madhouse' where, in the absence of fundamental truths or laws it was easy to lose sight of one's own identity: 'For in a madhouse there exists no law - / Now stagnant grows my too refined clay'. To believe in Mary, to trust in the truth of what she represented was Clare's salvation in confinement as it was for his fictional creation. As the speaker in Child Harold reflects on page 9 of the manuscript she was forever the 'One and one only made my being blest'. On the same page, Clare's 'Child' associates a fundamental truth with his Mary, 'Mary in truth and nature still my own'.
In the course of this discussion so far, I hope to have stressed the relationship between Clare’s search or quest for a specific truth that would seem to reside with Mary and the development of what I believe to be three consecutive autobiographically influenced narratives.

V

I want to now move on to explore why I believe Clare’s autobiographical presence is more clearly in evidence in Nor, MS6 in comparison to the voice on the pages of the earlier notebook belonging to 1841, Nor, MS8. The contrast between the fluid unstable identities which inhabit Nor, MS8 and the more clearly accessible unitary ego of Nor, MS6 is striking. In Nor, MS8, Clare appears unable to sustain one specific voice for any length of time. On page 1 of the earlier notebook, the Byronic twins, Don Juan and Child Harold interchange their narratives within the space of a few lines. John Clare writes to Eliza Phillips on page 13 of the manuscript, complaining about the conditions in the madhouse he is forced to reside in: ‘having been cooped up in this Hell of a Madhouse till I seem to be disowned by friends & even forgot by my enemies for there is none to accept my challanges’. He also dedicates his stanzas of Child Harold to her, (Why were they not addressed to Mary Joyce?)

On page 25 of Nor, MS8, the confused voice of the stereotypical ‘madman’ speaks through what appears to be part of a draft of Clare’s ‘Reccolections &c of journey from Essex’. This voice believes his ‘daughter is the queen of England & is now sitting on a stone heap on this highway’. Later still in the notebook on page 42, it is the voice of the pugilist Jack Randall who speaks offering his challenge to fight ‘any customer’, ‘Jack Randall The Champion Of The Prize Ring Begs Leave To Inform The
Sporting World That He Is Ready To Meet Any Customer In The Ring Or On The Stage To Fight For The Sum Of £500'. On the opposite side to this challenge, the autobiographical voice of John Clare intrudes briefly with a note for Child Harold in which he describes an authentic location near High Beech - Buckhurst Hill. The note, dated 'Easter Saturday - 1841' records the sighting of a nine year old boy resembling Clare's own son William, 'He Had A Serious Face & Looked As Weary With The Working Days As A Hard Working Man'. At the bottom of this brief account Clare has signed himself as Byron, which he has then deleted to write teasingly - 'Byron - made of Iron'. Jack Randall, a champion boxer, the satirical Don Juan or the poet/lover Child Harold - where is John Clare of Northborough? When he does speak in Nor, MS8 it is tormented and spare, speaking through the letters to Mary Joyce as on page 18, 'My dear Wife Mary, I might have said my first wife & first love & first every thing'.

In Nor, MS6, Clare as the essayist appears to be more clearly in search of his social and emotional self. In 'Self Identity' he emphasises the importance of remembering oneself in the event of others - even your enemies - forgetting you in 'Self - Identity'. He also employs the Byronic voice to represent or exemplify his condition. Whereas the Byronic voice in Nor, MS8 threatens to overwhelm Clare's sense of his own identity, in Nor, MS6, Byron's imprisoned heroes mirror and endorse his predicament.

On page 22 of the later notebook, Clare has interrupted his faircopy of the paraphrase of 'Balaam's Parable' to write two quotations from Byron's, 'The Lament of Tasso': 'Imputed madness, prison'd solitude / And the mind's canker in its savage mood' and 'Oh! would it were my lot / To be forgetfull as I am forgot -'. Another
quotation from Byron’s ‘Stanzas to Florence’ is included on the same page: ‘If where thou art I may not dwell - / T’will sooth to be where thou hast been’.58 Clare’s three references, together with an earlier quotation from Byron’s, ‘Sonnet On Chillon’ on page 4 of Nor, MS6: (‘May none those marks of my sad fate efface / For they appeal from tyranny to God’)59 suggest that Clare appears more engaged with Byron’s appreciation of the constraints of physical incarceration as well as the ways in which Byron’s poet/lovers mirror his own experience of the consequences of emotional thraldom than with Byron himself.

It is easy to see why Byron’s ‘The Lament of Tasso’ in particular, appealed to Clare. Tasso’s ‘imputed’ or ascribed madness, his alleged love for Leonora D’ Este, the noblewoman far beyond his social reach would have surely found a response in Clare. When Tasso in Byron’s poem confronts his own social station defiantly acknowledging his social inferiority, Clare must have identified strongly with his own thwarted affection for Mary Joyce. Tasso relates the nature of his predicament in Canto V, ‘I knew thy state - my station - and I knew / A princess was no love mate for a bard:/ I told it not - I breathed it not - it was / Sufficient to itself its own reward’.60 Clare’s autobiographical account of his love for Mary Joyce touches on precisely the same dilemma: ‘When she grew up to woman hood she felt her station above mine at least I felt that she thought so’.61

Tasso in Canto II of Byron’s poem protests against those who have hospitalised him, ‘they called me mad - and why? / Oh Leonora wilt not thou reply? / I was indeed delirious in my heart’.62 For Clare, like Tasso, madness would appear to be the result of delirium in love and not a ‘frenzy of the mind’.63 Clare’s insertion of the quotations
from Byron on page 22 of Nor, MS6 together with the quotation from Dryden’s ‘All For Love’ (I’ve now turned wild a commoner of Nature / Of all forsaken & forsaking all’) where Mark Anthony’s love for Cleopatra has alienated him politically and socially from those around him, indicate the degree to which Clare perceived the plight of Byron and Dryden’s poet/lover as reflections of his own story. The autobiographical voice evident in the first six pages of Nor, MS6, where Clare replicated the details of the account of his escape from Essex first into the letter which follows addressed to ‘Mary Clare - Glinton’ and then once again in the stanzas which appear on page 6 of the manuscript, is driven, like Coleridge’s Mariner, by the need to tell his story. On page 4 of Nor, MS6, Clare described his arrival home to Northborough to find Mary absent. The discovery, he recalled, left him feeling, ‘homeless at home’. Six lines later, Clare repeated the same details: ‘I soon began to feel homeless at home & shall bye & bye feel nearly hopeless but not so lonely as I did in Essex.’ On page 6 of the manuscript the autobiographical details of Clare’s sense of homelessness have been transmuted into the line, ‘I had no home above my head / My home was love & Mary’. Similarly, the metaphor of the poet hero’s life as a ‘shattered bark’ on the sea of life suggested in a stanza also on page 6 of Nor, MS6 may be heard earlier in Clare’s account of his escape from Essex on page 2 of the manuscript.

Lynn Pearce’s article on Child Harold⁶⁴ which explores the function and importance of what she perceives as the many social voices of Clare’s poem seems more relevant to Nor, MS8 than Nor, MS6. Pearce argues that the varying class registers which may be heard throughout the poem demonstrate the instability of the Bakhtinian polyphonic text. It is precisely on this issue of whether or not there is a unitary ego in Nor, MS6 that Pearce and I differ. As I have already suggested, although
there is evidence of instability of narrative voice in Nor, MS8, Nor MS6 would seem to suggest John Clare attempting to engage with his own story - a decided self endorsement.

What does this autobiographical voice sound like? John Clare of Northborough sounds clearly vulnerable when he describes his journey out of Essex. He is also insecure, tending to relate his story through a breathless profusion of ideas, emotions images and reflections. The account of his escape in particular is characterised by passages typical of a writer responding to his stream of consciousness as the events described on page 4 of the manuscript suggest: ‘I slept soundly but had a very uneasy dream I thought my first wife lay on my left arm and somebody took her away from my side’. It is also a voice given to articulating melancholy observations such as the personal details to be found in the prose fragment ‘Greenswards’ (here Clare appears to attempt to write himself out of depression by discussing the different types of landscape which encourage or discourage low spirits). Clare’s autobiographical voice is also precise about minute details such as those of the autumnal landscape on page 46 of Nor, MS6.

On occasions, short fragments or observations begin unannounced, and disappear without warning. The short fragment on page 21 of Nor, MS6, which reflects on the word ‘middling’ is an appropriate example of such intrusions. In six lines Clare reflects on reputation and its relationship to mediocrity and the notion of flawed personality: ‘The word middling generally denotes something of a casualty’. This fragment which concerns itself with the presence of women in society (also a preoccupation of Don Juan) is quite typical of the autobiographical voice in the
manuscript - he feels the absence of women deeply: 'I sigh for truth & home & love & woman'. Clare's commentary would appear to be motivated by desire - desire not only to be reunited with Mary but with all that is associated with her.

The autobiographical 'I' of Nor, MS6 although disorientated as regards chronological time is intelligent, attempting coherence and psychologically astute. Even in confusion there appears to be a strong element of the autonomous authorial presence manipulating facts and incidents to accommodate his own version of events. In the third stanza of 'Song a' which opens Nor, MS6, the first person speaker clearly acknowledges that he has negotiated the brutal reality of the 'absence' of loved woman. At this point it is not clear whether it is John Clare of Northborough speaking about Mary Joyce or his poet hero, as yet unintroduced through the formal contextualisation of Child Harold speaking of his Mary. What is more important perhaps is that the speaker of this opening song is a combination of both autobiographical persona and fictional hero; they appear to be one and the same person engaged in the same quest, facing the same terrible disappointment.

Why would Clare wish to repeat the story which would seem to cause only pain and disillusionment? Why does he wish to lay to rest those things he most wishes to forget while simultaneously recalling them over and over again? The answer to both these questions would seem to lie in Clare and his Child's perception of each one's existence as bound entirely to Mary. If Mary's absence is corroborated, Clare's own continued existence is brought into question, 'And if Mary's absent - how can I be true'. Being true in this particular context refers not only to Child Harold's inability to demonstrate the truth of his love for Mary due to her absence, it also refers to a much
more subtle and devastating threat to the speaker’s sense of selfhood. While Mary is absent, he can no longer repossess himself and the result would be psychological extinction. Much of what Clare envisaged as making up his identity resides enclosed within the idea of Mary’s presence or at the least his memories of her. To forget her, is to experience a traumatic negation of self – in other words a type of death. Remembering Mary assists the speaker in Child Harold in an act of self-preservation or resurrection of an identity all but erased in confinement. Without her, the world for Clare, as for Catherine Earnshaw without Heathcliff, becomes ‘a mighty stranger’.

VI

Nor MS6 is also concerned with the notion of forgetfulness, not only in Clare’s essay fragment on ‘Self Identity’ referred to earlier, but in the stanzas belonging to Child Harold and the biblical paraphrases. Firstly, one should not forget oneself, secondly one should not forget others who reinforce a perception of one’s own selfhood, and thirdly, it is important that others should not forget you. On page 2 of Nor, MS6, at the point in his narrative where he describes his escape from High Beech and his return home to Northborough to find loved woman absent, Clare asks rhetorically, ‘& how can I forget’. The tragic undertones of the contents which make up Nor, MS6, derive from the speaker’s complex inability or refusal to forget precisely those associations which cause him discomfort. The same obstinate refusal to help himself may be seen on page 4 of the manuscript. Byron’s Tasso encapsulates Clare’s dilemma: ‘I had forgotten half I would forget, / But it revives -’. Contradiction and opposition abound in Nor, MS6 but appear more emphasised in the first ten pages of
the manuscript, when the action of ‘remembering’ carries the sting of the serpent: ‘Like playing with a deadly serpent – who / Stings to the death – there is no room for fears’. 68

In confinement Clare not only speaks like Byron’s Tasso or his Prisoner in Chillon, he also shares their reliance on chimerical dreams and wish fulfilment. The speaker in Child Harold describes his own tenacious hold on Mary’s presence sustained only in his imagination, ‘E’en Icelands snows true loves delirium warms / For there I’ve dreamed - & Mary filled my arms’. 69 I want to suggest that Clare’s rhetorical question ‘& how can I forget’ has two implications. How could he forget Mary, who, as he says in the same reflection, ‘was once the dearest of all’? Secondly, by ‘forgetting’ her, as I have outlined above, Clare would be participating in an act of self-denial.

The voice of the poet hero later returns to the same question in extended form:

How could I - how should I - that loved her so early
Forget - when I’ve sung of her beauty in song
How could I forget - what I’ve worshiped so dearly
From boyhood to manhood - & all my life long -

The continuity of the ‘I’ here is dependent on the worship of Mary as a muse and also upon the truth of ‘Child’s’ love for her. Memory would also appear to empower Clare into a resurrection of his poetic and personal identity so it follows that the act of remembering must be sustained at all costs. A stanza which bridges page 5 and 6 of Nor, MS6 epitomises the complex dependence of Clare upon the cherished memory of Mary though it is articulated through the mouthpiece of his poet hero:

I’ll be free in a prison & cling to the soil
I’ll cling to the spot where my first love was cherished
Where my heart nay my soul unto Mary I gave
& when my last hope & existance is perished
Her memory will shine like a sun on my grave
One of the most striking characteristics then, of Nor, MS6, would seem to be its Romantic preoccupation with self position. When the details of Mary's death confront Clare as autobiographical narrator, he appears to move into another voice such as when he speaks as Child - imprisoned, thinking of Mary and preparing for his flight from the madhouse just as Clare had done. Clare's story concludes as it has begun with his homelessness, though in the final stages and pages of Nor, MS6 the emphasis upon Mary's presence is greatly reduced. We know already that there are pages missing in this manuscript and it would be unwise to argue against the possibility that there were or are more pages beyond those left to us in Nor, MS6 which in turn may or may not change the emphasis of the material described thus far.

The strength of Clare's written material, the extraordinary sophistication of the various cohesive forms of writing deserve far more than a convenient reading. I have argued however from the outset that Nor, MS6 be taken at its face value. At face value, Clare's manuscript as we understand, concludes with Child Harold's speaker and Isaiah's voice sharing the same refrain; existence without the woman who it would seem is a chimera, a beguiling deception, one who has not only corrupted herself through her shame but who has also polluted her lover. The fourth stanza of the paraphrase of 'Isaiah Chap 47' on page 58 of Nor MS6 reveals a revengeful speaker whose lyricism is, to a large extent, ponderous and intimidating:

Sit there in silence now
& into darkness flye
Uncoronet thy brow
Chaldeans daughter sigh
For thou shalt never more be called
Lady of kingdoms thy base power enthralled
From page 43 of the manuscript, the Don Juan voice is effectively displaced and the reader is left with the bleak sequence of biblical lamentations and apocalyptic predictions, with one last glimpse of the desolate Child in his song for absent Mary, before it concludes with the poignant translation of Isaiah, quoted earlier, ‘Come down and eat in dust / Daughter of Babylon’. The final line of this paraphrase involves the image of woman - a woman accused of treachery like the women berated in Don Juan now finally uncoronated, and left in the dust ‘in silence’.

It does not matter how many times one reads Nor, MS6, the final page still has power to compel. As I suggested at the start, the refrain of this last song in Nor, MS6 brings us back to that found in the manuscript’s first song. ‘But now loves hopes are all bereft / A lonely man I roam / & absent Mary long hath left / My heart without a home’. The journey through Nor, MS6 comes full circle. The reader, like Clare has embarked on a quest which has no reliable beginning and no certain end. It is a journey of loss, bereavement and self accountability and on reaching the end of Nor, MS6 we feel a degree of suspense, as if both Clare’s manuscript and his story remain unfinished.

The letter written to Mary Howitt from Northampton in 1849 which refers to another canto of ‘Child Harold’ in progress would suggest that Clare was intent on attempting to resolve both his long poem and his grief for Mary nearly a decade into his second and final confinement. Some of Clare’s manuscripts have surfaced through history to surprise and delight. In the case of Child Harold such a find may resolve but not outdo what has already been resurrected and left to us.
CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more - these breathings are his last;
His wanderings, done, - his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: - if he was
Aught but a phantasy and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer - let that pass -
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass

‘In my end is my beginning’. I spoke in my Preface of the recapitulation of theme and poetic form present in Nor, MS6, and the repetition of events and details relevant to 1841 that Clare appears to be intent on recording in his manuscript. The elusiveness of Clare’s ‘Child’, even after his resurrection, as he dips in and out of the manuscript, is characterised by a series of tantalising sightings which leaves the reader uncertain as to precisely where or who he is. Perhaps, like Byron’s Pilgrim, when we read Nor, MS6, we also participate in a type of protracted dream in which we journey with Clare through a voyage of self discovery.

A reading of Child Harold undoubtedly nudges one into a substantial reconsideration of Clare’s early asylum work, arguably different to the poetry of the 1820s or indeed the poetry written at Northborough between 1832 and 1837. Clare’s ‘difference’ or independence so consummately articulated through the poetry of his first confinement requires us to look again at Child Harold and the related writings in Nor, MS6 and to become attuned to the shifts and changes not only in the mood of
Clare's notebook but also of Clare, as he repositions himself throughout the manuscript, 'I am not now / That which I have been'.

In the closing stages of my research, I find myself, appropriately, back at the point at which I embarked, asking, like Clare's speaker in Child Harold if, despite my voyaging, I am but 'farther off from truth'. Certainly, the issues which interested me at the start of my thesis continue to haunt me here. Can we be certain what stanzas actually belong to Child Harold? Should Nor, MS6 be left intact or more pertinently undergo editorial interpretation in its entirety? Would a facsimile version of his notebook, forged in comparative secrecy and anonymity, now find a wider and more appreciative reading public?

It is difficult to 'let go' of Nor, MS6, as anyone who has lived with a voice for any length of time will testify. In this particular context, there is also some unfinished business to attend to. My transcription of Nor, MS6, and indeed the aim to also produce a facsimile version of Nor, MS8 which I would eventually envisage as a 'versioning' edition of Clare’s work of 1841 (much as the Cornell edition of Wordsworth's Home At Grasmere has achieved), is 'on hold', due to the present restrictions imposed by Copyright. One begins to feel, like Clare, that the 'path is stopt' or that there is: 'no road here'.

I would hope that such obstacles are only temporary. The sophistication and intellectual challenge of the material contained in Nor, MS6 may hopefully encourage a reappraisal of Clare’s early asylum poetry. A facsimile edition of the work of 1841 such as a transcription of the contents of Nor, MS6, which traces the intertextuality of
Clare’s work, the compositional development of Child Harold and the importance of the autobiographical presence which, to a substantial degree, nourished its development, must usefully contribute to a re-evaluation of Clare’s reputation amongst his more celebrated Romantic contemporaries. The creative scope of Clare’s Child Harold in particular, merits a comparison with other major, complex autobiographical works such as Shelley’s Epipsychidion or Byron’s Childe Harold. Nor, MS6 is testimony to Clare’s engagement with a vast array of authors and lays to rest any assumption that he was uncomplicatedly a ‘poet of the fields’.

Clare’s entire life’s work together with our perception of it, seems to fall between two stools. Critical commentary as I have argued earlier, either perceives Clare as a rural or nature poet whose full poetic achievement was blighted by insanity or as a critical novelty upon whom social, political or contemporary critical theories may be hung. Clare was intensely wary of the fickleness of fashionable taste and his letters convey an abhorrence of too much learning. It is perhaps, important in a consideration of his poetry, to strike the right balance between providing the appropriate academic forum for what lies at the heart of Clare’s work while at the same time allowing for the variety, difference, and freshness of approach that new and contemporary texts and editions may bring to our understanding of him as a Romantic poet. Clare’s ‘oeuvre’, which ranged across both Romantic and Victorian literary scenes, deserves equally wide ranging editorial interpretation.

Those views of Clare in the past which conveyed the impression of a poet who was neither intellectually challenging nor on a par with the major Romantic figures who dominated the canon were misleading. The contents of Nor, MS6, suggest that
nothing could be further from the truth as Anne Barton in her article ‘John Clare Reads Lord Byron’ confirms. In a discussion about the prolific nature of Clare’s composition Professor Barton comments upon Clare’s poetic range which she believes: ‘was considerably larger than that of Wordsworth, who died at 80’ The sheer range and complexity of Clare’s instinctive knowledge of his fellow man as well as his contemporary literary terrain may be seen perhaps to its best (certainly most mature) advantage in *Child Harold* and the remaining contents of *Nor, MS6*.

What ever lies between the tension of the opposing academic views of Clare’s poetry, one thing seems certain and that is the substantial and diverse quality of his work is in danger of being overwhelmed by the act of ‘claiming’ or over possessiveness. Clare was claimed early in his career as poet both by a public which in time turned its back on him, by Lord Radstock, who acted as patron (while also patronising him) and who bridled when he spoke too frankly about social injustice, country courtship and politics. I choose the word ‘claim’ advisedly, encouraged by Clare’s love of Sterne’s metaphor of the caged starling, and his repeated use of the analogy of being shut up and not being able ‘to get out’. One of the ways in which contemporary criticism might assist towards an act of release - or at least to assist Clare, ‘to get out’ - is to avoid stereotyping his poetry or his life into convenient categories. By respecting the growth, maturation and decline of his life together with the work which evolved alongside his personal story, we might also allow his work to speak for itself, free of the cosmetic retouching implied by critical correctness.

By broadening the editorial horizon of Clare’s poetic output we might provide an opportunity to celebrate the multiple creative qualities he unquestionably possessed.
Some of Clare’s manuscripts for example, contain powerfully emotive Blakean cartoons scribbled alongside his poetry and prose. What might an edition of Clare’s work, which includes all the facets of Clare’s thinking contribute to our study of him as Romantic poet? Importantly, intelligent readers and publishers for that matter, appreciate as Reiman has observed, that critical texts require more from editions than clever introductions and a few hasty footnotes.

Robert Wells in his review of *Clare: Poems of The Middle Period - 1822 - 1837* adheres perhaps to the more rigid academic view of Clare’s poetry which seeks to remove the stigma of what he perceives as ‘freakishness’ or clownishness in his poetry which he also considers goes hand in hand with a text without amendations. For Wells, a ‘primitive’ text which represents Clare’s work exactly as he wrote it, is a way of presenting Clare: ‘to some degree, in the way that he most dreaded, as a curiosity, a freak, the “uneducated poet” (Southey’s paradoxical phrase) again on display’.

In fact it was Clare himself, in a number of letters in the early years of his career as a poet, who played up his self-deprecating role as a ‘Clown’. Clare’s references to his unsuitability in the role of a refined, erudite or serious poet is often, I believe ‘tongue-in-cheek’, as a letter to William Strong in 1820 reveals. Although Clare’s tone is obsequious, the reader is not fully convinced that he believes what he is writing. He might even be positioning himself here into the role of grateful ‘pheasant’: ‘I beg you respected Sir to accept the simple thanks of a Clown who little dreamt of acquiring the honor you have done him by thinking his ryhmes worth your notice’. Nine years later in December 1829, this time writing to Eliza Emmerson, the tone of his letter is altogether less submissive, more persuasive and confident. Dismissing grammatical
rules as interchangeable as the academic who happens to be using them at a given time, Clare, without a hint of arrogance, believes that the important point to remember is that his work is accessible and coherent even without 'pointings'. He knew then what we seem more inclined to accept today that he is, 'generally understood'. On the few occasions that he inserts a comma, self consciously in Nor, MS6, it may be incorrect grammatically and yet omission or otherwise and has little impact on the subtlety of his composition.

Wells' idea that preparation of Clare's manuscripts without modern grammatical conventions gives his work, 'a false emphasis' does not apply to the poetry of 1841. The notion of uncouthness or clown-like primitivism does not apply to Nor, MS6 or indeed Nor, MS8. In Nor, MS6, even dialect, the one characteristic Clare always upheld and defended but which both contemporary and some more recent critics most vociferously railed and rail against, is almost entirely absent. There is, even, a note of ambiguity and tension in Wells' article. While in the first instance arguing a case for a 'grammatically correct' edition of Clare, Wells goes on to discuss Clare's inherent love of poetry which, he suggests, stems from Clare's understanding of 'its primary function in a semi-literate community for knowledge'. The contradiction implied here, between the discomfort felt in presenting an unamended Clare text while simultaneously allowing for his response to the primitive poetic force of the oral tradition is an irony Clare would have appreciated.

Nor, MS6, moulded through the adept mobility of Clare's use of different literary modes or writing positions and startling in the absence of grammatical 'pointings' appears neither uncouth nor freakish. The essential myriad brilliance of
Clare’s mature manuscript surely lies in what Robert Wells also acknowledges as the fusion between Clare’s work and the circumstances of his life. Although in this instance he is referring to the poems of the Middle Period, Wells’ observation also applies directly to the work of 1841. I believe he is right when he describes Clare’s work as sharing, ‘with his life a pattern, a logic, which means that it must be taken in its entirety’. It is precisely the unselfconscious fusion between the personal and the creative together with Clare’s persistent autobiographical presence which I have argued lends Nor, MS6 its cohesion and unity of purpose and which I hope this transcription reflects.
PREFACE


9. Chapter Two of this thesis explores the Textual and Reception History of *Child Harold*.


12. A detailed description of Nor, MS6 and its relationship with the earlier manuscript Nor, MS8 follows in Chapter Three.


14. From my readings of *Child Harold* in *The Later Poems* I had been alerted to the fact that some of the stanzas in the Oxford edition (pp. 75-88) were different in tone and sequential order to the stanzas which appear in Nor, MS6. The stanzas found between pages 75 and 88 of *The Later Poems* appear in Nor, MS8 only and carry numbers in front of them unlike the remaining stanzas in Nor, MS6.

15. Although Mary Joyce has long been assumed to be the muse of *Child Harold* Clare admitted in his Sketches: 'that other Marys, etc, excited my admiration, and the first creator of my warm passions was lost in a perplexed multitude of names, that would fill a volume to calendar them down, ere a bearded chin could make the lawful apology for my entering the lists of Cupid'. Cited by Kerith Trick, *St Andrews Hospital, The First 100 Years* (Cambridge: Granta Editions, 1989), p. 124.

16. The significance which Clare attaches to thematic unity allows a natural sequential order to evolve in Nor, MS6. I hope to suggest how this order evolves as the thesis develops.

17. Clare's stanza from *Child Harold* on page 7 of Nor, MS6 describes the associative loss of 'truth & home & love & woman'.

18. Nor, MS6, p. 10.

19. Even as early as 1832, Clare wrote to Marianne Marsh, 'where my family are there will be my home & my comfort be & they would make me a home every where & anywhere'. Mark Storey, *The Letters of John Clare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 576.
INTRODUCTION


4. Nor, MS6, p. 2.

5. Nor, MS6, p. 3.

6. ‘That Mary as my vagrant muse / & I shall meet again’. Nor, MS6, p. 12.

7. Song ‘a’, Nor, MS6, p. 1.

8. This notion of relocation is one I have discussed with Hugh Haughton on a number of occasions, and I acknowledge a useful discussion on this subject in his Introduction to *John Clare in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

9. Nor, MS6, p. 50. ‘Lamentations of Jeremiah Chap 3’.

10. ibid.

11. Nor, MS6, p. 6.

12. A phrase belonging to Tim Chilcott with whom I have enjoyed a number of conversations regarding our mutual interest in the work of 1841.

13. I am indebted in this instance to Stuart Pickford who lectured a group of Advanced Level students on his working methods as a poet, and the importance of his notebook.

14. *Don Juan* in Nor, MS6 has been written uninterruptedly, but in Nor, MS8, although Clare has written his poem in two sustained bursts, *Don Juan* is interspersed with stanzas from *Child Harold*, biblical paraphrases, letters and fragments. Nor, MS8 shows evidence of the simultaneous composition of his two long poems of 1841.

15. I refer to Clare’s note on the bottom of page 6 of Nor, MS6.

16. The three stanzas found at the back of Clare’s copy of *Byron: The Complete Works Including The Suppressed Poems*, (Paris: Galignani, 1828) are found on pp. 10 - 11 of Nor, MS6, commencing with the line, ‘Friend of the friendless from a host of snares’.


18. On page 5 of Nor, MS6 Clare describes the woodlands and forest around High Beech, ‘How soft the dew falls on the leaves of the beeches / How fresh the wild flower seems to slumber below’.

19. This letter follows the last stanza of *Don Juan* on p. 13 of Nor, MS8.

20. Nor, MS6, p. 46.


Mark Storey, Letters, p. 643.

Nor, MS6, p. 16.

CHAPTER ONE

1 Nor, MS6, p. 12.

2 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 678.

3 Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 660.

4 Mark Storey, loc. cit.


7 See Byron's Childe Harold, 'The cold - the changed - perchance the dead - anew, / The mourn'd, the loved, - the lost - too many! - yet how few!': Jerome J. McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza, 24, ll. 15 - 16, p. 155.

8 Nor, MS6, p. 7.

9 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

10 Peterborough, Peterborough County Museum and Local History Library, Peterborough G5.

11 Peterborough, G5.

12 ibid.


14 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 647.


17 Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 643.

18 Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 646.
“Her house of bondage worse than that of old / Which God avenged on Pharoah - the Bastile”.

Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 669.

Nor, MS6, p. 16.

Eric Robinson and David Powell, Later Poems, 2nd Vol.

Mark Storey, Letters, p. 678.

Mark Storey, loc. cit.


Frederick Martin, Life of John Clare, p. 274.


In the ‘Chronolgy of Clare’s Life’ in Mark Storey’s, Letters, Storey points out that 1840 was significant for a number of ‘reports in newspapers of Clare’s death’. p. xiii.

Martin, Life of John Clare, p. 237.

Martin, loc. cit.

Clare wrote to James Hessey in July 1820 outlining his intentions of becoming his own editor, ‘I think I shall soon be qualified to be my own editor - pride once rooted grows very fast’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 83.


Mark Storey, Letters, p. 146.


CHAPTER TWO

THE TEXTUAL HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD


I am indebted to David Powell for this information and a number of other helpful and encouraging conversations.


Johanne Clare, op. cit. p. 194.


An example of such a version may be read in James Reeves’ version of *Child Harold* where Reeves has taken a number of stanzas from *Child Harold* and presented them under the title ‘Exile’. James Reeves, *The Selected Poems of John Clare* (London: Heinmnan, 1964).


I refer to the numbered stanzas in Nor, MS8 which make their appearance half way through this manuscript.


ibid.


ibid.


ibid.

The stanzas Grigson has included are; ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’, ‘What is Love’, ‘Lovely Mary when we parted’, ‘In this cold world’, ‘tis autumn now’, ‘Sweet days etc’, ‘The spring may forget’, ‘‘Tis Martinmas’, ‘O Mary dear three Springs have been’ and ‘The floods come o’er the meadow leas’.

Eric Robinson and David Powell, *Later Poems*.


Clare’s engagement with the whole notion of existence and forgetfulness permeates the entire contents of Nor, MS6.

Mark Storey, Letters, p. xlii. On the 19th June 1840, The Halifax Express reported Clare’s death. This article was subsequently reprinted in The Times. Matthew Allen wrote to contradict the statement and his letter was published in The Times, on the 23rd June. Agnes Wilson, Green Shadows: The Life of John Clare (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951).

These poems are included in Volume 1 of Robinson and Powell’s, Later Poems of John Clare, pp. 16 – 27.


10 Quoted by Margaret Grainger, ‘A study of the Poetry of John Clare with Special Reference to his Lyrics, Ballads and Ballad Collecting’, p. 195.

11 Inskip to Knight, 28th January 1847. Cited by Margaret Grainger in ‘A study etc’, p. 189.

12 Margaret Grainger, op. cit p. 186. Grainger’s reference is taken from J. L. Cherry, *The Life and remains of John Clare, the “Northamptonshire Peasant Poet”* (London and Northampton: Frederick Warne and J. Taylor, 1873).

13 Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, ‘John Taylor’s Editing of Clare’s, The Shepherd’s Calendar’, *Review of English Studies, n. s.* (14 November 1963). p. 361. In this letter Taylor’s frustration is palpable: ‘the poems are not only slovenly written, but as slovenly composed, and to make good Poems out of some of them is greater Difficulty than I ever had to engage with in your former works’. (Taylor’s use of the capital letter here is intriguing; he may have picked up a few of Clare’s ‘bad’ habits’, an occupational hazard after contact with Clare’s manuscripts!).


16 Mark Storey, op.cit. p. 247.

17 Mark Storey, loc. cit.

18 Redding draws attention to two aspects of Clare’s poetry which interest me in relation to the themes of Nor, MS6; geographical location and the love of women. Discussing the merits of Clare’s poetry, Redding comments, ‘In Clare, too, there is a peculiar locality which is always prevalent, his themes belonging to that part of England frequented by the nightingale, which goes no further than York, and enters not the mild climate of Devonshire and Cornwall. Another quality remarkable in Clare is his admiration of women; a fond, respectful, true love attachment to the sex distinguishes his writing’. Mark Storey, *The Critical Heritage*, p. 255. One feels Redding would have been surprised at Clare’s view of women in *Don Juan*.


21 John Plummer was a local poet from Kettering. His *Northamptonshire Ballads and Other Poems* were published in 1861.


23 Nor, MS6, p. 9.


26 Adam Phillips, op. cit. p. 179.
Adam Phillips, op. cit. p. 180. Phillips also observes, 'For Clare, wider circulation meant less room for himself'.

Nor, MS17, p. 12.

Nor, MS6, p. 70.

Clare's obituary in The Mercury reads as follows: 'He continued the habit of poetical composition to the last, and among those which have been preserved are some which are said to possess the beauty and coherence of the writings of his healthier days; but assuredly many of them have all the inconsecutiveness of a mind ungoverned – "Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh". - If it should be proposed to publish any of them, they will require very careful editing at thoroughly competent and congenial hands'. Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 271.

Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage. From a letter to the editor, Northampton Mercury, 28th May 1864. I quote the following comment to draw attention to the prevailing tone of sentimentality of the writer's comments on Clare: 'Sorrow to think that for so many years his bright intellect should have been overclouded with the awful shadow of insanity'. p. 272.


Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 16.

Mark Storey, loc. cit.

Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 18.

iii 'SLEEPING BEAUTY'


Arthur Symons, Poems by John Clare, p. 205.


Athenaeum, (7th January, 1921) No. 4732, pp. 9 – 10.

J.W. and Anne Tibble, John Clare; His Life and Poetry (London: Heinemann, 1956).

J.W. and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. 171.


J.W. and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. 169.


12 Johanne Clare, John Clare and the Bounds of Circumstance.


17 Tim Chilcott, Chapter V, ‘Don Juan and Child Harold’, p. 146.

18 Chilcott, op. cit. p. 175.


20 Storey, op. cit. p. 155.

21 Storey, op. cit. pp. 161 and 165.


25 Clare’s distaste for being ‘brought out’ as a ‘show-case’ is revealed in an early letter of 1820. Writing to Taylor about visitors who turn up to meet ‘the peasant poet’ unexpectedly, he has this to say about the inconvenience: ‘its no use making resolutions to work you see now - they will not let me keep quiet as I used to be - they send for me twice & 3 times a day out of the fields & I am still the strangers poppet Show’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 89.

26 Nor, MS14.

27 ibid. p. 24

28 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 403.

iv HOW TO EDIT NOR, MS6


2 In a letter to John Taylor written in October 1820, Clare admits his dislike of anything other than the manuscript version of his work: ‘I never was fond of copying nor Ill be answerable when there was such good reasons to shun it would I take the trouble’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 99. Clare also comments to Taylor earlier in the same year on April 19th 1820: ‘- beseure you take care of all M.S.S as you have & may recieve as they will often be the only copies’. ibid. p. 48.

4 Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, loc cit.

5 To be fair to Taylor, the poor state of Clare’s handwriting made proofreading very difficult. Taylor’s exasperation at making a version of ‘July’ is expressed in a letter he wrote to Clare quoted by Robinson and Summerfield in this same article. ‘I can find no one here who can perform the Task besides myself. Copying it out is therefore a Farce, for not three words in a line on the average are put down right……..not only did it (July) run over 500 lines, but to add insult to injury it suddenly turned into another poem. ibid. p. 361.

6 Robinson and Summerfield, op. cit. p. 365.

7 Robinson and Summerfield, op. cit. p. 360.


9 Hugh Haughton, Adam Phillips and Geoffrey Summerfield, Clare in Context, pp. 11 - 26.


12 ibid. p. 208.


16 Reiman, op. cit. p. 23. ‘The writer being edited is presumed to be correct until he has been proved to be in error’.

17 Reiman, op. cit. p. 178.

18 Reiman, op. cit. p. 179.


21 Kelsey Thornton and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. vii.


24 For a developed and useful discussion on the notion of trespass in relation to Clare, refer to John Goodridge and Kelsey Thornton, ‘John Clare: the tresspasser’, Clare in Context, pp. 87 - 122.

25 As a point of fact Nor, MS8 contains more of these plaintive personal observations but in this instance I am referring to p. 22 of Nor, MS6, where, for example Clare appears distracted from the task at hand (which is paraphrasing) by a series of quotations, one of which is his own reflection on Mary.

26 David Powell informs me that Nor, MS6 was purchased by John Taylor of Northampton (not Clare’s publisher on this occasion but his namesake) in 1864 from Patty Clare. As far as Mr. Powell is aware the 1841 manuscripts were not included in the Bicentenary catalogue of the exhibition of Clare’s work in 1893.

27 Clare uses the term ‘finished with’ to denote a faircopied version of his work in Peterborough, A62 on a number of occasions.


29 When Clare was not in the mood or ‘Q’ as he called it, he was unable to, ‘write originally’ as he commented to Taylor, in April 1820. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 47.

30 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 626.

31 I refer to Clare’s letter to Mary Joyce dated May 1841, in which Clare talks of composing, ‘merely to pass the time away’. See Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.


33 Thomas Tanselle, Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures, p. 64.

34 There are five stanzas from Child Harold written in Clare’s hand on the back pages of his copy of the Galignani one volume edition of Byron’s Works.

35 Refer to the discussion on p. 66 of this section.

36 In his ‘Preface’ of 1815, Wordsworth spoke of his poetry, ‘as the product of the mind predominant’ and described their unity as ‘the mould in which they were cast’. Jerome McGann, Textual Criticism and Bibliographical Studies, p. 130. Jerome McGann also cites Matthew Arnold and his use of the same word ‘mould’ to suggest a foundation or template upon which a series of poems were produced.


38 McGann in his discussion on textual hermeneutics in his chapter, ‘The Garden of Forking Paths’ makes a useful observation, ‘texts are produced and reproduced under specific social and institutional conditions - and hence that every text, including those that may appear to be purely private, is a social text’. Jerome McGann, The Textual Condition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 21.


40 Jerome McGann, A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism (Chicago: University of Chicago
Press, 1983), p. 6. McGann cites Philip Gaskell who describes the indeterminancy of an author’s manuscript; ‘For many authors the actual writing of the manuscript is a means of composition not an end’.

41 Clare is very specific about the value he himself places upon the status of manuscript work. In a letter to Edward Drury dated late 1819, Clare discusses those poems which he would wish to remain unpublished after his death. He asks Drury to publish: ‘no poems which are against my inclination in any improved form whatever but to utterly condemn them to oblivion M. S. S. excepted’. Mark Storey, The Letters, p. 14.


45 Dumas who edited the magazine Le Mousquetaire published a poem of Nerval’s in December 1853, with an accompanying note: ‘Sometimes he is Soloman, the king of the Orient......sometimes he simply believes he is a madman, and explains how he became so’. The tendency towards self delusion is strikingly present in both Clare and Nerval. ibid. p. 256.

46 Nerval’s autobiographical poem: ‘El Desdichado’ or ‘The Disinherited’ contains the following lines:

Je suis le Ténébreux, - le veuf - l'Inconsolé,
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la Tour abolie:
Ma seule Étoile est morte - et mon luth constellé
Porte le soleil noir de la Mélancholie

ibid. p. 211. In their Introduction to Poems Chiefly From Manuscript, Edmund Blunden and Alan Porter quote Clare in January 1833, as saying: ‘I look upon myself as a widower or a bachelor’. p. 38.

47 Richard Holmes, Footsteps, pp. 253 – 255.

CHAPTER THREE

1 AN ACCOUNT OF NORTHAMPTON MS6

1 Catalogue of The John Clare Collection in The Northampton Public Library, 1964. A note at the start of the microfilm copy of Nor, MS6 draws attention to the fact that the ‘originals from which this film was made were very tightly bound. Parts of the manuscript may be lost’. See Nor, MS6, EP Microform Limited East Ardsley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

2 Clare begins his account; ‘Reccollections &c of journey from Essex’ on Page 1 of Nor, MS6. He continues to fair copy this account uninterruptedly until Page 4. Passages from the account of Clare’s journey also appear in the margins of The Lincolnshire Chronicle and The Stamford Advertiser dated 1841 and The Morning Chronicle.

3 The footnotes to my transcription specify which pieces of work belong to each Bodleian manuscript.


A note on p. 2 of Nor, MS6 is interesting. Clare writes, ‘On searching my pockets after the above was written I found part of a newspaper vide “Morning Chronicle” on which the following fragments were pencilled’.

Nor, MS6, p. 16.

Throughout Clare’s experience of confinement he held the associative memory of home truth and loved woman in the forefront of his memory.

Pages may well be missing in this manuscript, so the sequential order of both poems is unreliable.

See Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 136. Clare used a similar expression in a letter written to John Taylor on Sunday 7th of January 1821. In this early letter Clare informs Taylor that he has sent him every rhyme he had in his possession at home; ‘I’ll be bound to have stuff enough by then - 2 or 3 years you know will be soon enough for us after these 2 Vols comes as twins into the world’. Later in the same letter he reveals how disinclined he is to revise and correct his own work preferring to leave corrections to Taylor’s pencil: ‘I feel little pleasure after a seconnd reading of ones ryhmes in general but the thing is quite decieved me & I think it will take when your Pencil has just gone over it here & there as its printing’.

Nor, MS8, p. 3.

Octavius Gilchrist first lent Clare a copy of Byron’s poem, recommending that Clare should look at Canto III in particular. In a letter to Gilchrist in 1820, Clare begged to be allowed to keep the poem longer. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 24.

ibid. p. 648. This letter also comes at the end of *Don Juan* on p. 13 Nor, MS8.

Nor, MS6, p. 22.


Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 33.

Nor, MS6, p. 45.

Page. 15 of the Catalogue, *The Clare Collection: Peterborough*

Nor, MS6, p. 4.

Nor, MS6, p. 20.

ibid.


In a note in Peterborough, MS A 49, Clare describes the location of a spring known to him as a boy, ‘it [the stream] used then to dribble its way thro the grass in a little ripple of its own making no bigger than a grip or cart rut - & in this little spring head [that del]] there used to be hundreds of little fish called a minnow’. Margaret Grainger, *The Natural History Prose Writings*, p. 73.
Eric Robinson and David Powell have edited the paraphrases from Nor, MS6 in precisely this way, but as the paraphrases are taken out of the manuscript’s sequential order, the sense of thematic unity between the remaining contents and the paraphrases is not apparent to the reader.


Nor, MS14, p. 8.

This song, follows Clare’s paraphrase ‘The New Jerusalem, Rev Chap 21st’. This paraphrase is in keeping with the mood of the speaker of *Child Harold* who yearns for freedom, to be united with his family and to escape the pain and torment of present existence.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOR, MS6 AND NOR, MS8**

The stanzas above are not faircopied by Clare into Nor, MS6, as implied by Robinson and Powell in *The Later Poems*. A comment by these editors in a note at the bottom of p. 75 states: ‘MS6 ceases to as the primary source and is replaced by MS8’. There is no editorial explanation as to why the editors have included these numbered stanzas or indeed the possible reason for their numbering.

J.W and Anne Tibble in The Everyman Edition of *Child Harold* (1965) do not include this song in their version of the poem.

Nor, MS6, p. 40.

ibid.


I refer to the stanzas which begin with the line: ‘The sun has gone down with a veil on his brow’.

‘Easter Sunday, 1841. Went in the morning to Buckhurst Hill Church and stood in the Churchyard, when a very interesting boy came out while the organ was playing, dressed in a slop frock like a plough boy and seemingly about nine years of age. He was just like my son Bill [William Clare, b. 29th April 1828] when he was about the same age and as stout as made’. Addison and Williams suggest in their, *Epping Forest: Its Literary and Historical Associations*, that Clare may have been visiting his friend Mr. Watson, curate of St. John’s Buckhurst. p. 162.

These crosses serve a different function to the larger crosses present in Peterborough, A62. In this last instance Clare seems to denote that he has copied a stanza and that the cross means ‘finished with’. As I mentioned earlier, he actually writes ‘finished with’ against a copied stanza on occasions.


One has to take into account the damage done to Clare’s scripts as a result of his use of home-made ink.
11 Nor MS6, p. 1 & onwards. This method of ‘ruling off’ a stanza and canto is a general characteristic in this manuscript.

12 Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, p. 43, l.95.

13 Nor, MS6, p. 4.

iii THE NORTHBOROUGH AUTUMNAL SEQUENCE 1841

Margaret Grainger, ed., The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 326. In a note pertaining to Nor, MS6, ‘Autumn’ Grainger quotes the two nine line stanzas beginning ‘Dull must that being live who sees unmoved’ and ‘After long absence how the mind recalls’. She also usefully draws attention to Clare’s tendency towards depression and melancholy in the autumnal months. See also, Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 73, 85, 135, 136.

1 This letter is interesting for its slightly different version of Clare’s escape from Essex described in his own account from pp. 1 - 4 of Nor, MS6.

2 Nor, MS6. p. 1.

4 Anne Barton, in her article, ‘John Clare reads Lord Byron’, describes Clare’s copy of Byron’s Works, in which Clare ‘scribbled five stanzas from his own Child Harold, on his arrival home at Northborough. See Romanticism, issue ii Vol 2, (1996), p. 130.

5 The Child Harold stanzas as they appear in the earlier manuscript Nor, MS8 are interspersed amongst Clare’s fragmented account of his escape from High Beech, reflections, parts of biblical paraphrases and the clustered stanzas belonging to Don Juan.

6 I respectfully acknowledge the ongoing research and work of Tim Chilcott in this instance.


8 These newspapers in remarkably good condition, are held in the Bodleian Library, known as MS Don.c.a8.

9 A note accompanying the Bodleian, MS Don.c.a8 specifically draws attention to the uniqueness of these draft stanzas.

10 The paraphrases begin in earnest on p. 21 of Nor, MS6.

11 Nor, MS6, p. 35. stanza 5.

12 Nor, MS6, p. 19.

13 Robinson and Powell, The Later Poems, p. 150.


15 Bodleian, MS Don a 8.

Nor, MS6, p. 5, stanza 6:

My hopes are all hopeless
My sky have no sun
Winter fell in youths maydays
& still freezes on.

Nor, MS6, p. 50.
Margaret Grainger, loc. cit.
Page 17 of Nor, MS6.

'The summer like a stranger comes / I pause and hardly know her face'. Geoffrey Sunnerfield, John Clare: Selected Poems, p. 198.

Nor, MS6, p. 18.
Nor, MS6, p. 19.
Nor, MS6, p. 35.

I refer to the nine line stanza on page 5 of Nor, MS6, ‘& he who studies natures volume through /
& reads it with a pure unselfish mind / Will find Gods power all round in every view / As one
bright vision of the almighty mind’.

iv THE PROSE PIECE ‘AUTUMN’ AND THE NORTHBOROUGH AUTUMNAL STANZAS
Nor, MS6, p. 48.
Nor, MS6, p. 17.

v THE SONGS AND BALLADS OF NOR, MS6
A note at the start of Nor, MS6 suggests that the notebook is loosely bound and that some of the
original contents might be missing. Clare may have written more songs and verse on his arrival
home which may have been lost. I have referred to the marked break in style of copying and
content on page 20 on a number of occasions.

The song on page 57 which begins ‘In this cold world without a home’ can be found in a blue
exercise book known as MS Don c. 64 held at the Bodleian Library. The song is followed by a
paraphrase of Isaiah Ch 47, in both Bodleian, MS Don c. 64 and Nor, MS6.

Clare’s disrespect for rules of form in the writing of poetry are vigorously displayed in a letter
written to Hessey on 4th July 1820 in which he admires the freedom Keats employs in his poetry.
Clare goes on to comment that he hopes that the critics will refrain from criticising Keats’ work
due to its lack of metrical and syntactical conformity. Clare’s observations reveal as much about
Clare’s poetic style as about Keats’ own: ‘he [Keats] launches on the sea without compass - &
mounts pegasus without saddle or bridle as usual & if those cursed critics could be shov’d out of the fashion wi their rule & compass & cease from making readers believe a Sonnet cannot be a Sonnet unless it be precisely 14 lines......’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 80.


5 Margaret Grainger, ‘A Study etc’, p. 172.


7 In this lecture Lorca comments on his ideas for a fusion of the two oral forms, ‘I wanted to fuse the narrative ballad with the lyrical without changing the quality of either’. Deep Song and Other Prose, edited and translated by Christopher Maurer (London and Boston: Marion Boyars, 1980), p. 105.

8 Deacon, John Clare and the folk tradition, p. 35.

9 Nor, MS14, pp. 29, 31 and 28 respectively.

10 Clare uses this device on occasions in Peterborough, A62. Edmund Blunden in his article on Clare’s manuscripts considered this device demonstrated that Clare had finished with the stanza or paraphrase in question. At this point in my research I remain unconvinced of this.

11 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 65.

12 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 59.

13 George Deacon, John Clare and the folk tradition, p. 49.

14 Nor, MS6, p. 6.

15 The song on page 15 of Nor, MS6 whose first line suggests a longing to be reunited with Mary is a clear example of a song marking a change in location. The speaker yearns to be reunited with loved woman, ‘Did I know where to meet thee / Thou dearest in life’. On page 17, the song ‘O Mary dear three springs have been’ marks a geographical and psychological change. This song was written by Clare on his arrival home. It is one of many instances when autobiography and fiction fuse together.

16 Geoffrey Grigson, Poems of John Clare’s Madness.


18 In a letter to John Taylor in May 1820 Clare describes the difficulty he has in laying to rest the love for Mary.


22 ibid. p. 57.
CHAPTER FOUR

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF NORTHAMPTON MS6

a) Editorial Principals

1 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 491.

2 ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE. TRANSCRIPTION

NB. These notes are also provided at the end of the Transcription

1 The first two stanzas of this song are written on the penultimate page of Clare's copy of Byron: The Complete Works, Including The Suppressed Poems, (Paris: Galignani 1828), held at Northampton Public Library.

2 Clare explains in a note on the bottom of page 6 of Nor, MS6 that the two songs which he has faircopied here as well as on page 1 of the manuscript were written immediately on his arrival home at Northborough in 1841. The note reads as follows,*a *b The above songs were written directly after my return home to Northborough last friday evening the rest of the stanzas & songs were written on Epping Forest Essex'. This emphasises how precisely Clare pinpoints the time of composition and his arrival home at the start of the manuscript. The first two stanzas of 'song a' appear on page 23 of Nor, MS8 and were probably written on the road during his escape.

3 Clare uses the word 'sojourning' on page 1 of Nor, MS6. When the second version of the same song appears on page 6 of the manuscript Clare has substituted 'returning' for 'sojourning'. Robinson and Powell in their edition of Child Harold use Clare's second version. The Later Poems of John Clare 1837 - 1864 (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1984), p. 43. Clare's change of use of the two verbs interests me. 'Song a' in Nor, MS8 reveals that a draft of this song may have been written while Clare was 'on the road.' Without doubt, the first version of the song suggests voyaging and temporality which are hallmarks of Nor, MS6.

4 In his account of his escape on page 3 of Nor, MS6, Clare describes one cold night's sleep in particular: 'I followed looking in vain for the countrymans straw bed - & not being able to [find del] meet it I lay down by a road side under some Elm trees between the wall & the trees being a thick row planted some 5 or 6 feet from the buildings I lay there & tried to sleep but the wind came in between them so cold that I lay till I quaked like the ague'.

5 See St. Matthew, Chapter VIII, Verse, 20, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head'.

6 Clare refers to parental opposition when it came to his love for Mary 'for her parents were farmers and Farmers had great pretentions to somthing'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare by Himself (Ashington, Northumberland: Mid NAG / Carcanet), 1996, p. 87.

7 This stanza is found on page 24 of Nor, MS8.

8 The first two stanzas of this song may be found on pages 22 and 23 of Nor, MS8, opposite part of a draft version of the 'Recollections &c of journey from Essex'.

9 'Song b' does not appear in Nor, MS8 but is written in ink along the margins of The Morning Chronicle dated 18th June (presumably 1841). Clare refers to this newspaper on page 2 of Nor, MS6, 'On searching my pockets after the above was written I found part of a newspaper vide "Morning Chronicle" on which the following fragments were written (Clare is referring to the
pencilled account of his escape). Nor, MS7, p. 55.

10 Clare is referring to Glinton Church. Glinton was the home of Mary Joyce.

11 Glinton churchyard appears to be specifically associated with Mary Joyce. See ‘Autumn’, Nor, MS6. p. 46.

12 Clare has written ‘feet’ over another word here in Nor, MS6, but it is not possible to distinguish the original word.

13 Clare’s account of his escape from High Beech in Essex appears in Nor, MS8 in interrupted fragments on pages, 13, 16, 22, 23 and 24. It is clear that the details of this experience were very important to him. It is a striking feature of this document that he is meticulous about attempting to offer some sort of chronological order of events relating to his escape.

14 In a draft letter written on the margins and between the columns of The Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser dated Friday 27th August 1841, Clare recounts the same details, ‘for I had travelled from Essex to Northamptonshire without ever eating or drinking all the way save one pennyworth of beer which was given to me by a farm servant near an odd house called the plough’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 650.

15 Clare’s account of his escape includes two very specific references to Gipsies.

16 Clare has dated this particular entry as July 23rd 1841 in Nor, MS8.

17 Note the contradiction here in comparison to p. 4 of Nor, MS6, where Clare, writing to Mary Joyce remembers Mary’s family with respectful affection, ‘God Bless you My dear Mary Give my love to your dear [&?] beautiful family & to your Mother’.

18 On page 10 of Nor, MS6, in the second stanza, Clare includes the following lines ‘- but I can ne’er forget / Oaths virtuous falsehood volunteered to me’. See also p. 12 of Nor, MS6 ‘Her looks was ne’er forgot or out of sight / - Mary the muse of every song I write’.


20 Clare’s humour is in evidence even at moments of stress. It is not clear at this point in the text whether Clare was suffering from the delusion that he was Napoleon though an account of Clare by a fellow patient twenty years later at Northampton asylum in 1864, gives a clear picture of Clare’s excellent impersonations of celebrities such as Nelson, Napoleon and Byron. Clare also believed himself to be Jack Randall, a celebrated boxer. William Jerom’s, “Reminiscences of Clare. / The Northampton Peasant Poet / By a Fellow Patient” reveals a poignant and graphic picture of Clare the year he died. At times, the details of Jerom’s account are reminiscent of Clare’s style of writing in 1841, particularly when he employs the trope ‘of travelling the long road of life’. He justifies his “Reminiscences” in his introduction, saying: ‘to proclaim to myself and also to others, or as you will, signposts and fingerposts to mark the lapse of time, and to proclaim to oneself and also to others that so much of life’s pilgrimage has been passed’. Peterborough, Peterborough Museum, G5, p. 1.

21 Clare does not say who this person was nor is there any inference that such a meeting may have jeopardised his escape.

22 Clare’s account is broken off at this point in Nor, MS8. Clare has written four lines of a poem:
Madhouses they must shut up shop
& tramp to fairs and races
Master & men as madmen stop
Life lives by changing places.

Robinson and Powell do not include this as part of Don Juan or Child Harold despite the fact that seven stanzas are found in Nor, MS8 on pages 21 to 22. These editors do include the poem on pp. 37 - 38 of The Later Poems.

23 This line follows the first two stanzas of ‘I’ve wandered many a weary mile’ in Nor, MS8.

24 Metaphors of sailing, oceans and harbours abound in the Child Harold stanzas in Nor, MS6. Clare had read and enjoyed Falconer’s ‘Shipwreck’. Byron’s Childe Harold also contains many references to shipwreck. See Nor, MS6, page 9, stanza 5.

England my country though my setting sun
Sinks in the ocean gloom & dregs of life
My muse can sing my Marys heart was won
& joy was heaven when I called her wife
The only harbour in my days of strife

25 There appears to be a line of continuous writing following these inserted comments but this line is illegible.

26 See Clare’s paraphrase ‘The Last Judgment - St. Matt’ etc. Nor, MS6, p. 35, ‘A stranger to [give del] find thee a welcome & rest’.

27 This word amongst other fragments of Clare’s account of his escape are written in pencil on a torn scrap of newspaper. Nor, MS7, p. 55.

28 Clare may be referring to the manuscript known as Bodleian, MS Don a8. Clare wrote stanzas of poetry on the margins of The Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser and The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury dated August and September 1841 respectively. See Chapter on ‘The Northborough Autumnal Sequence’.

29 In a letter to Charles Clare, written on Tuesday the 17th October 1848 from Northampton, Clare echoes precisely the same sentiment: ‘live happy & comfortable together in your old house at home for go where we will & be as we may always remember ‘There is no place like Home’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 658. See also J. H. Payne, (1791 - 1852), ‘Clari, or The Maid of Milan’, (1823 Opera), ‘be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home’ and also ‘Home, home sweet, sweet home!’. Angela Partington, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 510.

30 Does this refer to the moment of composition or an example of the text-writer’s art found on the roadside? Thomas Hardy, Tess of The D’Urbervilles, Chapter 12: ‘I think they are horrible,’ said Tess. ‘Crushing! killing!’ / ‘That’s what they are meant to be!’ he replied in a trade voice. ‘But you should read my hottest ones - then I kips for slums and seaports. They’d make ye wriggle! Not but what this is a very good tex for rural districts......’. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d’Urbervilles (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1975), p. 138.

31 These lines appear after the poem ‘Written in a Thunderstorm July 15th 1841’ on an unnumbered page in Nor, MS8. The concentration and effort Clare must have expended in ordering and collating the chaotic fragments which make up the account of his escape in Nor, MS8 is astonishing.

32 Clare may have hummed this song to the tune of ‘Katherine Ogie’. See ‘Highland Mary’ in The
Over fifteen years earlier in his journal for Friday 3 June 1825 Clare wrote: 'got the tune of Highland Mary from Wisdom Smith a gipsey & pricked another sweet tune without name as he fiddled it'. Nor, MS15, p. 87. Cited by George Deacon in John Clare and the folk tradition, p. 28.

Clare constantly refers to his two wives throughout Nor, MS6 and in his correspondence dated 1841.

Clare's disrespect towards Queen Victoria in the Don Juan stanzas contrasts with the warmth of affection expressed for her early in the manuscript.


Clare is presumably referring here to the period before he moved to Northborough in 1832. It is revealing that he recalls the traumatic move from Helpstone nine years earlier at a time when he is once more feeling 'homeless at home'.

Clare repeatedly refers to Patty Clare, his legal wife as his second wife in Nor, MS6. In a letter to Patty dated May 1841, Clare appears to be writing to Mary Joyce and Patty Clare at one and the same time. This particular letter is very brief: 'My Dearest Mary, As This Will Be My Last Letter To You Or Any One Else - Let My Stay In Prison Be As Long Or As Short As It May - I Will Write To You & My Dear Patty In The Same Letter'. Mark Storey Letters, p. 645. In another letter Clare reveals even more of the complex relationship between these two women in his personal and creative life: 'My Dear Wife Mary I might have said my first wife & first love & first every thing - but I shall never forget my second wife for I loved her once as dearly as yourself - & almost do now so I determined to keep you both forever & when I write to you I am writing to her at the same time & in the same letter'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646. I am interested by the duality of purpose which makes itself felt throughout the pages of Nor, MS6.

A complex and bizarre statement as regards chronology.

This quote from Byron's 'Sonnet on Chillon' is written on page 25 of Nor, MS8, after a note concerning the location and setting of Fern Hill. The intermingling of biographical detail in the first pages of Nor, MS6 in particular is striking.

Byron's poem 'The Prisoner of Chillon' must have seemed particularly appropriate to Clare at this point of his narrative in Nor, MS6. Byron's 'Sonnet' similarly describes the power of the mind to remain free of the chains of confinement: 'Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind / Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! Thou art: / For there thy habitation is the heart'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Lord Byron, p. 379.

Note Clare's use of Byron's title immediately following his quotation from 'Sonnet on Chillon'.

The month of July in 1841 was a particularly warm and clear one. The local school master of Appleton-Le-Moors, near Pickering in Yorkshire recorded in his diary of the same year: 'July 26th Monday, Invited by the lovely weather, we set out as soon as school was over & descended into our favourite Dale'. Sunday the 18th of July was described by the schoolmaster as a brilliantly warm day with a full moon at night. Clare was countryman enough to appreciate the advantages of a full moon to travel by. This diary is in private ownership, but it is still housed in the village of Appleton-Le-Moors opposite the house which used to be the village rectory.

Clare replicates the notion of homelessness here. The use he makes of the autobiographical voice in Nor, MS6 to reposition and reconstruct one obsessive refrain is the subject of Chapter Six.
Glinton was Mary’s village and the church spire and churchyard are mentioned by Clare throughout Nor, MS6. See p. 1, p. 7, p. 16, p. 19, and p. 46.

This is clearly an echo of the mood and tone of the first song in Nor, MS6 ‘I had no home in early youth’.

In a letter to Mary Joyce in Nor, MS8, p. 18, Clare explains that he is writing to his legal wife Patty while he writes to Mary adding, ‘I loved her once as dearly as yourself - & almost do so now so I determined to keep you both for ever’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

Geoffrey Summerfield in John Clare: Selected Poems, note to p. 214, p. 369, observes that it became a popular pastime to imitate Byron’s poems following his death. Clare is obviously doing more than this at this point in his manuscript.

In a letter written to James Montgomery in May 1826, Clare wrote: ‘I have long had a fondness for the poetry of the time of Elizabeth though I have never had any means of meeting with it, farther than in the confined channels of Ritson’s ‘English Songs’ Ellis’s ‘Specimens,’ and Walton’s ‘Angler’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 375. This opening ballad also suggests the passion of the English hymn.

The stanzas of this first ballad are written on page 2 of Nor, MS8.

Clare’s identification with Byronic prisoners, (‘The Prisoner of Chillon’, Tasso and Dante) surface throughout Nor, MS6.

Ink is splattered on the paper here.

Presumably the forest at High Beech which in the early days of his confinement Clare greatly admired.

Clare wrote to Patty on March 17th 1841, ‘It Was My Lot To Seem As Living Without Friends Untill I Met With You And Though We Are Now Parted My Affection Is Unaltered’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 643.
In his August letter to Matthew Allen Clare commented, 'I found your words true on my return here having neither friends or home left'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 650.

Nor, MS6, p. 4, 'my hopes are not entirely hopeless while while even the memory of Mary lives so near me'.

The letters 'y' and 's' are smudged.

Nor, MS6, p. 1, 'My school walks there was every day / Where she made winter flowery'.

This stanza is written on page 32 of Nor, MS8 and is in keeping with the mood and sentiment of 'Psalm 19'.

Robinson Crusoe also takes comfort from the presence of God: 'One morning, being very sad, I opened the Bible upon these words, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”..... “Well then”, said I, “If God does not forsake me, of what ill consequence can it be, or what matters it, though the world should all forsake me, seeing on the other hand if I had all the world, and should lose the favour and blessing of God, there would be no comparison in the loss’. Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (London, Edinburgh, New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1900), p. 112.


In a stanza in an untitled ‘Song’ dated 1840, Clare wrote, ‘Bye That Cottage Near a Wood / Though The Summer Flowers Appear / They Charm Not Me -‘. Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, p. 5.

Note the use of anapaestic dimeter here.

Nor, MS8, p. 14. The following three stanzas occur in the same sequence in Nor, MS8.

Geoffrey Grigson draws attention to the representation of lowland and highland and their parallel to the Fens where Mary resides and the elevation of High Beech where Clare was confined. There is also a strong echo of Burns here.

Presumably a reference to the wooded country around High Beech Asylum in Essex, where Clare had been a patient from 1837 - 1841. An interesting chapter on the geographical characteristics of Epping Forest, especially High Beech asylum, may be found in Epping Forest: Its Literary and Historical Associations. Clare became greatly attached to the beauty of the surrounding forests despite his terrible homesickness. In a poem printed in the English Journal dated 15th May 1841, page 308, Clare describes in meticulous detail the views available to him 'I love to see the Beach Hill mounting high / The brook without a bridge, and nearly dry'. Robinson and Powell, The Later Poems, p. 24.

Clare establishes the presence of Mary as loved woman and muse early in the manuscript and continues to return to this idea throughout.

‘My school walks there was every day / Where she made winter flowery’. Nor, MS6, p. 1.

Clare's use of the phrase 'nor yet' followed by the reference to Mary's name and memory would suggest that he may have absorbed the details of her physical death but sustains her creative life.

Clare fails to dot his 'i' here and in many other instances in the early part of his fair copy.
See the letter addressed to 'Mary Clare - Glinton', 'my hopes are not entirely hopeless while even the memory of Mary lives so near me'.

In a letter addressed to Matthew Allen which Clare wrote along the margins and in between the columns of the *Lincolnshire Chronicle and General Advertiser* for Friday, 27th Aug 1841, he described his irritation and frustration with the constant intrusive authority of the nurses and doctors at Allen's hospital. '...but the greatest annoyance in such places as yours are those servants styled keepers who often assumed as much authority over me as if I had been their prisoner'. Although Clare enjoyed a good relationship with his doctor at High Beech, Allen suffered his fair share of satirical criticism in *Don Juan*. See Nor, MS6, p. 41.

The whole notion of existence is central to *Nor*, MS6. While Mary exists through poetry so are Clare and the various speakers sustained throughout the manuscript.

On *Nor*, MS6, p. 12, in the 'Ballad', stanza 6, Clare refers to Mary as his 'vagrant Muse'.

Byron in *Don Juan* Canto III, Stanza 80, ll. 634 - 635 wrote, 'His polar star being one that rather ranges / And not the fix'd'. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, p. 507.

Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 116' finds an echo here: 'it is an ever - fixed mark / that looks on tempests and is never shaken; / It is the star to every wand'ring bark'.

Four lines earlier the speaker has referred to the memory of Mary shining like 'a sun on my grave'. The polarity of mood and imagery is common to all the material in *Nor*, MS6.

Falconer's 'Shipwreck' was a part of Clare's library as was Gulliver's *Travels*. The shipwreck metaphor surfaces repeatedly in *Nor*, MS6, particularly in the prose piece 'Autumn' which begins on page 46 of the manuscript.

Clare has failed to use the apostrophe here.

Byron's 'Epistle to Augusta' contains two lines which find a substantial echo in Clare's song, 'There yet are two things in my destiny / A world to roam through - and a home with thee'. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, stanza 1, p. 268.

In the first version of this song on page 1 of the manuscript Clare has used 'sojourning' as opposed to 'returning'. Robinson and Powell have chosen to use the verb 'returning' in their version of this song. *The Later Poems*, p. 43.

A poignant reflection in Clare's autobiographical *Sketches* in Chapter 6, 'Memories of Love', describes how his love for Mary Joyce was thwarted by family opposition while also suggesting that he had always hoped that they might one day renew their acquaintance: 'so my passion coold with my reason and contented itself with another tho I felt a hopeful tenderness one that I might one day renew the acquia[n]tance and disclose the smotherd passion'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, *John Clare by Himself*, p. 87. Many of the early stanzas in *Nor*, MS6 become a declaration of love.


It is not clear whether Clare is using a capital letter here.

In *Nor*, MS8, this line reads, 'There's madness there & misery here'.

This stanza is written in *Nor*, MS8, p. 18.
A possible echo of Clare's earlier refusal to believe Mary had died, where he described the news of her death as 'blarney'. See Nor, MS6, p. 4.

Byron in Don Juan wrote, 'I hate inconstancy - I loathe, detest, / Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made / Of such quicksilver clay'. Canto II, Stanza 209, ll. 1665 - 1667. See also l. 1669, 'Love, constant love, has been my constant guest'. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 485.

Byron in his Don Juan, Canto V, stanza iv, comments on his 'passion' for the name of Mary, 'I have a passion for the name of 'Mary', / for once it was a magic sound to me; / And still it half calls up the realms of fairy'. Jerome J. McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, p. 549.

Clare fails to use the apostrophe here and throughout the manuscript.

Clare has substituted a comma for the hyphen he has used in the same stanza of this song on page 1 of the manuscript.

Robinson and Powell in Later Poems, p. 45, l. 143 use the plural, 'cheeks'.

This stanza and the following five stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, on page 18.

Exactly as Clare has written the word.

Bunyan's, Pilgrim's Progress.

Clare was convinced that he was a bigamist during his confinement both at High Beech and Northampton asylums.


In a letter addressed to William Knight dated Friday, 11th of April 1851, Clare refers to his confinement. Citing Sterne, Clare describes the effects of incarceration on his creative instinct: 'I would try like the Birds a few songs I' the spring but they have shut me up & gave me no tools & like the caged Sarnel of Stern 'I cant get out' to fetch any so I have made no progress at present - but I have written a good lot & as I should think nearly sufficient'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 680. In an earlier letter to Knight written in July 1850, Clare also refers to Sterne: 'I am still wanting like Sternes Prisoners Starling to 'get out' but cant find the Way'. It is difficult to comprehend how ten years earlier he was producing some of the most brilliant poetry of his career. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 678.

Clare may be thinking here of the women who frequented the playhouses and whorehouses described in Don Juan. See Nor, MS6, p. 38.

Compare this line with an observation about women in his letter to Matthew Allen, dated August 27th 1841: 'I care nothing about the women now for they are faithless & deceitfull & the first woman when there was no man but her husband found out means to cuckold him by the aid & assistance of the devil'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 651.

In the honeymoon period of Clare's early experience of hospitalisation he wrote to his wife Patty in November 1837: 'the place here is beautiful & I meet with great kindness the country is the finest I have seen'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 642. Even in 1841, he was still enamoured of the landscape around him. He wrote to Mary Joyce referring specifically to Fern Hill: 'I went a few evenings on Fern Hill & wrote a new canto of 'Child Harold'. Mark Storey's Letters, p. 646. Fern Hill was one of Clare's favourite haunts situated at the at the back of High Beech's chapel. The original site was on the Forest side of the road, between High Beech vicarage and the 'Suntrap' which occupies the

106 Reminiscent of Burns.

107 Even today the dip and swell of Epping Forest allows for secrecy as well as remaining impenetrable in places.

108 Clare reiterates the refrain of ‘Song a’ on page 1 of Nor, MS6.

109 Clare wrote to Patty in March 1841 explaining how much he missed his children, ‘Give My Best Love To My Dear Childern & Kiss The Little One’s For Me’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 643.

110 Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 646 - 647. In the same letter, Clare refers to his ‘two wives’ and his children.

111 This stanza and the following two stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, p. 19.

112 Robinson and Powell make two words here. Later Poems, p. 47, l. 91.

113 A direct reference to Fern Hill at High Beech in Essex.

114 High Beech is at the very centre of Epping Forest and its isolation is wholly apparent to a visitor right up to the present day.

115 Byron, Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza, 178, ll. 1594 - 1602. ‘There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, / There is a rapture in the lonely shore’. Jerome McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, p. 199.

116 Having no one to love the speaker believes himself to be ‘homeless’. A similar sentiment is expressed on page 1 of Nor, MS6 though in this instance Mary’s smile is the metaphor for ‘home’.

117 These lines are reminiscent of the poems found in Nor, MS9, the octavo notebook Clare used at Northampton in 1850. Clare draws on a number of female names in this notebook, Bessey being one in particular.

118 Byron describes the same bitter-sweet effects of memory: ‘But ever and anon of griefs subdued / There comes a token like a scorpion’s sting, / Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;’ Jerome McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza xxiii, ll. 1 - 3, p. 155.

119 A reference to Dryden’s ‘All For Love’. See also page 22 of Nor, MS6.

120 Note the same desire for extinction as Job, in Chapter 3, ‘Let the day perish wherein I was born’.

121 On page 20 of Nor, MS8, following these stanzas Clare has written seven quatrains of the song, ‘Nigh Leopards hill stand All - ns hells’. Eric Robinson and David Powell do not include these stanzas in their version of Don Juan or Child Harold though they include the poem in the period of composition dated 1841. Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, pp. 37 - 38.

122 In Nor, MS8 this poem is written on page 16 and follows the letter to Mary Joyce. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646. It is revealing that only the letter written to Mary Joyce finds its way into Nor, MS6. This unsent letter together with those written in Nor, MS8 appear to be another method by which Clare records the events of 1841.

123 Tennyson on a visit to High Beech Asylum in Essex commented on the location and its thunder storms. Epping Forest: Its Literary and Historical Associations. Clare’s use of the thunder trope is
intriguing. The prose passage ‘Autumn’, (pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6) describes the sound of birds in the trees sounding like thunder. On p. 7 of Peterborough, A62, Clare jots down a short fragment dated 4th November 1841 ‘a immense flock of starnels settled on an ash tree in the orchard & when they took wing it was like a large roll of thunder’.


125 Caesar at the Rubicon, ‘Iacta alia est’.

126 ‘The pole star of my being & decay’. Nor, MS6, p. 6.


129 King Lear, Act III, scene iv, ll. 8 - 9, ‘But where the greater malady is fix’d / the lesser is scarce felt’. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, op. cit. p. 1093.

130 In Nor, MS8, on page 23, this stanza follows an extract from Clare’s account of his escape (as yet untitled) dated July 23rd 1841, beginning: ‘returned home out of Essex & found no mary - her & her family are nothing to me now....’. The pagination of Nor, MS8 is indistinct and therefore unreliable as specific reference points.


132 ‘I Am’ composed in 1840 but published in 1848 contains two very similar lines, ‘Untroubling, and untroubled where I lie, / The grass below - above the vaulted sky’. Merryn and Raymond Williams, John Clare: Selected Poetry and Prose, p. 194.

133 Written in ink on the margins of The Morning Chronicle, dated 18th June (1841?). Nor, MS7.

134 A clear endorsement of the therapeutic value of writing about Mary even though this initiates a painful response.

135 Mary being absent from her geographical home has been placed in the memory, heart and home of the speaker instead.

136 Clare’s speaker identifies the gap between his own continuing unbroken regard for Mary and the impossibility of his affection being returned.

137 This stanza and the following two stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, p. 6.

138 A description of Clare which appeared in the Northampton Mercury dated 30th April 1842 comments upon Clare’s mental state: ‘He writes frequently and beyond a doubt composes many more poems than he puts on paper, if indeed his life is not passed in one almost unbroken poetic dream’. Clare’s death is commented upon by an anonymous writer in a letter to the editor of the Northampton Mercury dated 28th May 1864. This account, although melodramatic echoes Clare’s own metaphor in Child Harold: ‘Night finds me on this lengthening road alone’. See p. 9 of Nor,
MS6. The writer of the obituary writes: ‘Sorrow to think that for so many years his bright intellect should have been overclouded with the awful shadow of insanity, and a melancholy pleasure to think that his long night of sorrow and disease has ended in death’. Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 272.

In Nor, MS8, seven lines of this stanza are broken by a blank space of plain paper before Clare includes the final two lines which appear in Nor, MS6, ‘Midnight’, etc.

An apparent contradiction here though the speaker implies that the truth of his love for Mary is a comfort through the long, restless night.


A contrasting view of women in comparison to those expressed in Don Juan, ‘I wish they [women] were as modest as they seem’, p. 38, Nor, MS6.

In a letter to John Taylor written on the 19th April, 1820, Clare quotes four lines from Cowper’s ‘England’. The first two lines of this quotation are echoed at this point in Child Harold: ‘England with all thy faults I love thee still / My country & while yet a nook is left...’. This quotation is followed by his own poem whose first line is, ‘England my country & mong evils enthralling’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 49.

Clare writes to ‘Mary Clare’ at Glinton on p. 4 of Nor, MS6 and he signs the letter, ‘your affectionate Husband’.

Clare repeats this image three times within fourteen lines.

At the end of this stanza in Nor, MS8 there follow twenty four stanzas of Don Juan.

This stanza and the following two stanzas occur in sequence on the back cover of Clare’s copy of Galignani’s edition of The Works of Byron Including The Suppressed Poems, 1828, held in Clare’s library at Northampton Public Library.

The metaphor here describes Mary as a harbour or sanctuary from the tempestuous ocean of life.

To admit to confusion or to doubt is to deny the truth of the speaker’s love for Mary.

Clare has failed to use the apostrophe twice in this particular line and on three further occasions in this stanza.

See Clare’s poem ‘I Am’ - ‘Into the living sea of waking dreams’.

In Nor, MS8, this song is blotted, smudged and follows an extract from Clare’s account of his escape from Essex. After the song Clare has paraphrased ‘Balaam’s Parable’ which is, in turn, followed by a prose fragment beginning: ‘The word middling gennerally denotes’ etc. See p. 21 of Nor, MS6.

Nor, MS8, p. 28. This song is reminscent of Byron’s, ‘Song’, ‘Maid of Athens, ere we part’ in its form of direct address to loved woman. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 15.

See Coleridge’s ‘The Pains of Sleep’: ‘To be beloved is all I need / And whom I love, I love indeed’. Cited in a footnote by Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, p. 51.
Clare has written parts of ‘Balaam’s Parable Chapter 24’ at this point in Nor, MS8.

Compare the mood and subject of Byron’s, ‘When We Two Parted’ with this opening stanza. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, p. 348.

Glinton Spire would seem to be the reference here.

Compare with, ‘the pole star of my being and decay’, Nor, MS6, p. 6.

Nor, MS8, p. 47. This stanza is written opposite a page with ‘note of accounts’ recorded in Clare’s hand. The note is dated April - May 1841.

Glinton.

Glinton church spire stands tall and clear of the flat terrain which surrounds it.

The dove is known to mate only once.

In Nor, MS8, the paraphrase of Balaam’s Parable interrupts here.

Draft version in Nor, MS7, p. 55.

Byron in *Don Juan* wrote, ‘I loved, I love you, for that love have lost / State, station, heaven, mankind’s, my own esteem’. Canto 1, stanza 193, ll. 1537 - 1538. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, p. 426.

See Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, stanza 79. Byron described Rome as the place that all ‘orphans of the heart must turn’. In stanza lxxix Rome is the ‘Niobe of nations’ whose ‘holy dust was scattered long ago’. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, *Childe Harold*, p. 171.

Hamlet, Act 1, scene ii, ll. 146 - 148, ‘Frailty thy name is woman...A little month, or ere those shoes were old / With which she followed my poor father’s body / Like Niobe, all tears’. Zeus turned Niobe to marble. Peter Alexander, *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, p. 1032.

Byron in ‘Epistle to Augusta’ in stanza 16, ll 7 - 8, ‘We are entwined - let death come slow or fast - / That tie which bound the first endures the last’. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, p. 271.

Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.

In the prose piece ‘Autumn’, p. 46, Clare refers to ‘Glinton Church’, ‘West Deepings crocketed spire’ and ‘Maxey Tower church’.

Clare appears to have used an apostrophe here but incorrectly.

This ballad has much in common with the second song on page 1 of Nor, MS6. In this context Mary has become the ‘vagrant muse’.

Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.

‘From morn to noon he fell, / from noon to dewy eve,’ John Broadbent, *John Milton: Paradise Lost*, Book One, p. 80, ll. 742 - 743.

Compare this line with the final stanza on p. 19 of Nor, MS6. ‘The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge / Raindrops & leaves fall yellow as he springs’.
A reading of Peterborough, A 46, reveals exquisite cameos of natural history observations. Many of these jottings are written in pencil and demonstrate how Clare utilises the spontaneous note to make poetry. A note on the Hawk on p. 116 of Peterborough, A 46 is a clear example of this: “Their very shadow seems to feel a fear”. Clare’s exceptional memory is constantly brought into play in his manuscripts. Peterborough, A 46 is dated 1820 - 1830.

Another reference to Glinton church.

Byron in ‘Epistle to Augusta’, stanza 13, ll. 1 - 2 wrote, ‘With false Ambition what had I to do? / Little with love, and least of all with fame!’. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 271.


In Peterborough, A46, p. 56, Clare writes four lines on the notion of fame the last of which read as follows: ‘Applause is but a shadow crowned with bays / Without the honey dew of beauty’s praise’. In a letter to Markham Sherwill, dated 12th July 1820, Clare criticises Sir Walter Scott for appearing to rate himself so highly that he is above the act of signing a copy of his work for Clare. Clare writes about the fickleness of fame: ‘if Fame ever destines me the laurel twig Flattery will be ready in an instant to overwhelm me in mockery of praise & poets wi their odes, Sonnets, Lines, Epistles &c &c &c will if possible even bury one in a forest of garlanding bays - this is the way of the world -’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 86.

Written in ink on the margin of The Morning Chronicle, 18th June. Nor, MS7, p. 55.


Draft version in Nor, MS D20.

The mood and metaphors of this song have much in common with Burns’ ‘Song: Mary’. The Poems of Robert Burns (London and New York: Frederick Warne & Co, 1928), pp. 278 - 279.

Note the reiteration of the idea of confinement.

Robinson and Powell in The Later Poems, p. 56, suggest ‘nest’ here.

Written in Nor, MS D20.

The Overland Monthly in 1873 printed Clare’s untitled poem beginning, ‘I long to forget them - the love of my life - / To forget them, and keep this lorn being my own;’ The poem was written in 1840 or 1841 and is also concerned with notions of home and rememberance. Eric Robinson and David Powell, The Later Poems, p. 14.

Clare refers to this notion on p. 2 and p. 23 of Nor, MS6.

See Nor, MS6, p. 2, ‘& how could I forget’.

A clear reference to the dangers of forgetfulness and the need to remember loved ones as well as oneself. ‘Remembrance’ through verse form is a potent form of continuity.

MS D20.

The stanzas in the early pages of Nor, MS6 do indeed ‘calendar’ the memories of Mary.
Clare writes two words in one here.

A later song written in Northampton, ‘I hid my love when young while I’ suggests the same mood and preoccupation as this 1841 lyric. In the Northampton song the speaker is haunted by a secret love, ‘And even silence found a tongue / to haunt me all the summer long’.

Clare has deleted a letter at the front of ‘chill’.

An echo of Burns here.

Robinson and Powell suggest ‘must’ as opposed to ‘mayest’.

Both this stanza and the one following are written together on an undated catalogue for household furniture. Nor, MS7, p. 49.

Sung in celebration of the autumn harvest.

The voice of Don Juan intrudes here with its criticism of society’s intrinsic hypocrisy and dishonesty. The last line of the final stanza has the peculiar characteristics of the voices of the speakers of both long poems fused into one ‘& now a man - I’m farther off from truth’. The contrast between honest rural prosperity and the ‘whoring and deceiving’ urban society at large is striking.

This stanza in its Byronic imitation of satire and ironical riddling is more akin to Clare’s other voice in Nor, MS6 - Don Juan. It is one of a number of instances where there appears to be voice slippage from idealist to cynic. The riddle also echoes Shakespeare’s Fools. In this instance the tragic implications behind such irony is characteristic of Lear’s fool. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, Act.1 scene iv, II.156 - 167, pp. 1080 - 1081.

Nor, MS7, p. 47.

This speaker of this song develops the idea of sojourning in order to find Mary.

This song does not appear in Nor, MS8 or in Peterborough, A62.

Nor, MS7, p. 47.

In a letter written to Mary Joyce in May? 1841, Clare wrote, ‘I might have said my first wife & first love & first everything - but I shall never forget my second wife & second love for I loved her once as dearly as yourself’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

Contradiction and ambiguity. Clare’s speaker remains near Mary in that he frequents the place where she used to live but her absence is all the more painful because of these associations.

Nor, MS7, p. 15.

This stanza and the following two stanzas share much in common with the prose piece ‘Autumn’ on pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6.

In his autobiographical Sketches Clare remembers Mary Joyce, ‘yet young as my heart was it woud turn chill when I touchd her hand’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 87.

This stanza and the one before marks a return home to old associations. They both sound remarkably similar in mood and subject to the prose piece ‘Autumn’.
‘The day drags through though storms keep out the sun; / And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on’.

Writing in the third person Clare appears to be referring to himself as well as Byron.

Here the voice of Clare as autobiographer mingles freely with his poet lover in Child Harold. See p. 2 of Nor, MS6 and Clare’s poem, ‘The Gipsy Camp’ published in English Journal on 29th May 1841. The forest of High Beech is described after a snow fall, ‘The snow falls deep; the Forest lies alone’. Geoffrey Summerfield, John Clare: Selected Poetry, p. 212.

These three verses bear a remarkable similarity to the prose piece ‘Autumn’ as Margaret Grainger has pointed out. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 327.

See p. 46 of Nor, MS6 where Clare is using similar imagery in his description of tombs in the churchyard: ‘& there is the beautifull Spire of Glinton Church towering high above the grey willows & dark walnuts still lingering in the church yard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows founndered on the ocean of time’.

This song has been faircopied into Nor, MS6 from the Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

The opening line of this song is reminiscent of Wordsworth’s ‘Tintern Abbey’, ‘Five years have passed; five summers, with the length / of five long winters’. Geoffrey Summerfield commented that ‘this seems to be some kind of recognition that his crucial severance from Mary occurred three years earlier i.e. in 1838 the year of her death’. Geoffrey Summerfield, John Clare: Selected Poetry, p. 373.

Compare with ‘Song of Solomon, Chapter 3, 1, 2, ‘I sought him but found him not’.

In May, 1826 Clare advised his friend Rippingille to visit him in August, ‘the scenery is then in its greatest beauty the fields will be alive with harvest’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 380.

To the right of this stanza Clare has written the paraphrase of ‘Revelations, Chapter 21st, The New Jerusalem’.

In his essay, ‘Women, Nature and Poetry’, Edward Thomas quotes Shelley in his essay, ‘On Love’ as he discussed Laurence Sterne: ‘Sterne says that if he were in a desert he would love some cypress. So soon as this want or power is dead, man becomes a living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere husk of what once he was’. Edward Thomas, Feminine Influence on The Poets (London: Secker, 1910), p. 68.

The Bodleian stanza, written along the margins of the The Mercury, reads as follows, ‘But autumn finds no change in me’, etc.

The word ‘love’ is crossed through in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

See, Nor, MS6, p. 5. ‘But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower’.

Bodleian, MS Don. a8 reads, ‘While Mary lives in bloom for me’.

This evocative and detailed stanza was faircopied into Nor, MS6 from Bodleian, MS Don. a8 and conveys all the appreciation of the exile once more on home ground.

Compare with prose fragment on page 20 of Nor, MS6. ‘Closes of greensward & meadow’, etc.

Bodleian, MS Don. a8. Italics denote the changes in words between first draft and faircopy and
reads as follows:

Sweet comes the misty morning in September
Among the dewy paths tis sweet to stray
Greensward or stubbles as I well remember
I have done - & the mist it curleth grey
& think of smoke - like net work on the sprey
Or seede grass the cobweb draperies run
Beaded with pearls of dew at early day
& oer the pleachy stubbles peeps the sun
The lamp of day when that of night is done

232 Claré describes the sight of such meadow arches after a period of captivity in Nor, MS6, p. 46: ‘- even these meadow arches seems to me something of the beautiful full having been so long a prisoner & shut up in confinement’. Margaret Grainger in The Natural History Prose Writings identifies the arches as the Nine Bridges which span the water meadows near Clare’s home carrying the main Peterborough to Market Deeping road over the North and South Drains. ibid. p. 332.

233 A much earlier manuscript, Peterborough, MS A46, dated 1820·1830, carries a remarkably similar observation: ‘Just by the wooden brig a bird flew up / To sit by the cowboy as he scrambles down [the bank del] / To reach the misty dewberry’. p. 130.

234 There is a marked difference between the exuberance of this stanza and the deeper melancholy or despondency of the prose piece ‘Autumn’.

235 ‘We heard the bells chime but the fields was our church and we seemd to feel a religious feeling in our haunts on the sabbath’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Claré by Himself, p. 40.

236 Compare with p. 47 of Nor, MS6, ‘the rural pictures or objects in these flats & meadows warms ones loneliness’.

237 Claré refers directly to Glinton here.

238 Mary is likened to a flower nourished by the Eden of home.

239 Reconstruction, reassertion and repetition of the same ideas. Compare the last three lines of the previous stanza with the last lines here. Glinton’s bells, the ‘fenny dells’ and the love of the speaker for Mary are reaffirmed within a short space.

240 This song is definitely lyric in the style of Burns. See Burns’ ‘Here’s To Thy Health, My Bonnie Lass’.

241 Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

242 Claré has written the two words together.


244 See Peterborough, A62, dated 1841. Claré has written the following stanza:

O the evening for the fair, bonny lassie O!
To meet the cooler air and walk an angel there
With the dark dishevelled hair
Bonny lassie O!
The simplicity, together with the visual precision of these lines easily match the best of the Northborough bird poems which Clare was engaged upon in 1832. I am referring to a poem such as ‘The Sky Lark’. See Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, eds., Selected Poems And Prose of John Clare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 77 - 78.

The reference to harvest time and the melancholy mood of this prose fragment would suggest that this prose fragment belongs to the same period of composition as ‘Autumn’.

In the Child Harold stanzas Clare’s speaker frequently refers to Northborough and Glinton itself as ‘Eden’. Nor, MS6, p. 19 has two such references.

Margaret Grainger notes Clare’s use of this word in The Natural History Prose Writings. Clare might be suggesting ‘fear’ or ‘fever’ here. Grainger, p. 336, n. 3.

This song would appear to form part of Child Harold.

It is typical of Clare to slip into a prose fragment a detail of precise horticultural value. Margaret Grainger, Natural History Prose Writings, p. 337, n. 7 draws attention to the fact that the Chinese rose to which Clare is referring is probably the Rosa indica.

This page appears to mark an interruption to faircopying and continues the idea of autumnal impressions.

A detailed account of page 20 may be found in the ‘A Detailed Description of Nor, MS6’.

On page 23 of a blue quarto exercise book used by Clare in 1841 for general draft work there is a list of Proverbs, one of which reads ‘a good name shines in the dark’.

This fragment is written on p. 28 of Nor, MS8 after ‘Balaam’s Parable’ and four stanzas of Don Juan, beginning, ‘There’s much said’, etc.

This paraphrase may be found in Nor, MS8 after three stanzas of the song, ‘O Mary sing thy songs to me’ and it is followed by the reflection on ‘middling’ and then by the stanza from Don Juan commencing with the line: ‘Theres much said about love & more of women’. Page references are unreliable in Nor, MS8 as there are pages missing from this manuscript.

The emphasis here of looking backwards to the landscape of youth is important.

Clare is preoccupied here, as elsewhere in Nor, MS6 with the idea of ‘home’ as a centre of reliability or truth.

Clare has written what appears to be a reference: ‘5 - 8’ at the end of this line.

Clare has appeared to write ‘Dan e’ at the end of this line. Robinson and Powell in The Later Poems refer to this in a footnote on p. 106.

Note that the biblical Eden here is described in similar terms to the verdant fens.

The last word of this line is illegible in Nor, MS6 but reference to Nor, MS8 reveals ‘as it were’.
A number of the paraphrases draw attention to an avenging God.

One of a number of references to refuge and sanctuary in the paraphrases.

Logically, the following quotations should have been written immediately after the description of 'Quotations' on the previous page.


Clare’s own lines. They reaffirm the manuscript’s preoccupation with truth and deception as does the following stanza.

Clare’s engagement with the idea of sojournings surfaces throughout Nor, MS6.

This reflection finds an echo in the letter to Eliza Phillips in May 1841, ‘I seem to be disowned by my friends & even forgot by my enemies’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 647.

Please refer to the Chapter entitled ‘Self Position and Reposition in Nor, MS6’.

Eric Robinson and David Powell suggest that these lines have been adapted from Burns’, ‘Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn’, ll. 73 - 78. John Clare By Himself (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1996), p. 341, n. 1. See also the ballad of ‘Sir Patrick Spens’ and Coleridge’s epigraph to ‘Dejection: An Ode’.

This poignant attempt at self comprehension which on the surface certainly appears sound and sensible belies the picture of Clare we are given by G. J. De Wilde, editor of The Northampton Mercury. Wilde wrote to Clare’s biographer Frederick Martin on the 25th February 1865 describing Clare’s apparent discussion about his different identities: “perhaps you don’t know that I am Jan Burns and Tom Spring”. ‘In fact he was any celebrity you might mention. “I’m the same man”, he said “but sometimes they call me Shakespeare and sometimes Byron and sometimes Clare”. Later, he fancied himself to have witnessed the execution of Charles 1st and to have served as a naval rating with Nelson at the Battle of The Nile, both of which he would describe graphically and in much detail’. Cited by Kerith Trick in A History of St. Andrews Hospital, Northampton (Cambridge: Granta Editions, 1989), pp. 134 - 135.

The paraphrase is written in quatrains with alternate rhyme scheme, abab.

This opening line which asks God to authorise the speaker's identity following so closely after the essay fragment on the same subject is an excellent example of the interdependence of many of the contents of Nor, MS6.

Clare may be referring to his own social position here but David is also a Shepherd King.

Compare David's celebration of the power of God with the first nine line stanza on p. 5 of Nor, MS6, whose first line reads: 'he who studies nature's volume through'.

This paraphrase continues to argue the enduring truth of God in the face of personal doubt and uncertainty.

The mood of exaltation and gratitude for freedom and stability is clearly present in this paraphrase.

The reference to home here cannot be coincidental.

God's truth and enduring presence are stressed here together with the suggestion that God's promises are fulfilled even when human promises prove otherwise.

The mood and emphasis on restablishing roots and building foundations of a 'house' endorsed by God is relevant, particularly as 'Baalam's Parable' which precedes 'David's Prayer' is also concerned with fresh beginnings.

These last two stanzas of the paraphrases share much in common with the four line stanzas of the Ballad found on pp. 4 - 5 of Nor, MS6.

The emphasis in these opening lines of a fixed dwelling place and a secure habitation has a direct link to the theme of homelessness which permeates Nor, MS6.

The ideas of liberation and relocation are firmly in place here.

The notion of a dwelling place or 'house' are repeatedly referred to by the biblical speaker in this paraphrase.

Robinson and Powell include an apostrophe here. The Later Poems, p. 118, l. 50.

Robinson and Powell suggest 'maker' here. ibid. p. 119, l. 72.

This line is interpreted as 'grace' by Robinson and Powell though the line is illegible in Nor, MS6.

Robinson and Powell supply '& do the just thing'. Later Poems, p. 119.

The metaphor of the wreck is employed by Clare in his prose fragment 'Autumn' on page 46 of Nor, MS6.

Both this line and many similar lines from other paraphrases suggest the speaker is in the process of readjusting or realigning the past with the present.

Clare appears to be using the pages of Nor, MS6 to proclaim his grief and loss.

It is a feature of all the contents of Nor, MS6 that when human frailty is confirmed, the various
speakers turn to God and a universal truth for consolation.

302 The speaker's reference to estrangement must surely reflect Clare's own emotions on his return home out from 'captivity'.

303 There seems to be clear recognition throughout this paraphrase of a return to one's rightful home or dwelling place.

304 Virtually all of the material contained in Nor, MS6, though written or faircopied in freedom, dwells on the experience of captivity.

305 Reward and restoration lie in wait for those who have kept their trust in God. This sentiment echoes the opening stanzas on Nor, MS6, p. 5.

306 The apocalyptic characteristics of the paraphrases of 'Job' encapsulate Clare's response to his confinement and his sense of isolation. A Blakean emphasis on darkness and destruction as a mirror for the state of mind of the speaker is relevant here.

307 The relentless testing of Job's faith in this paraphrase may be paralleled to Clare's own endurance at a time of considerable personal stress.

308 A direct reference to the idea of home.

309 Compare with stanzas in 'Written in a Thunderstorm July 15th 1841'. Nor, MS6, p. 8.

310 Clare's comment on this bizarre line is worth noting. In a letter to Henry Behnes, on 30th December, 1827 he described reading 'Solomon's Song' and 'Job', both of which left a great impression upon him. He quotes this line specifically, observing its oddness: 'the simple sublimity of the poetry [the biblical accounts of 'Job'] is more then beautiful tho in some parts I confess I have been puzzled wether or not I should call them beautys or b[l]emishes of such is the following conclusion of a sublime sentence - 'Who can number the clouds in wisdom & who can stay the bottles of heaven' Job but to turn critic in such matter would only be 'Multiplying words without knowledge'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 409.

311 This psalm is also found in Bodleian, MS Don. c64, p. 7. On p. 8 of this blue exercise book, Clare has written the song, 'In this cold world' in pencil.

312 Compare with 'Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841', Nor, MS6, p. 8.

313 The mood and substance of this psalm has much in common with stanzas 'Written In A Thunder Storm July 15th 1841', Nor, MS6, p. 8.

314 This word is badly smudged.

315 The speaker's preoccupation here is that he has been delivered from thraldom and bondage. Compare with the paraphrase of Isaiah, Ch. 47. In Bodleian, MS Don. c64, the paraphrase of Isaiah follwes the song, 'In this cold world' as it does in Nor, MS6. See also 'The Lord's Prayer' - 'Deliver us from Evil'.

316 This paraphrase was faircopied into Nor, MS6 from the margins of TheLincoln Rutland and Stamford Mercury dated September 3rd 1841. These are the last two chapters of Revelations and therefore the Bible.

317 The word has a long upright above the 'n' which could be read as 'l'.

318 The assertive presence of the voice of John in this paraphrase is in stark contrast to that of David
The ideas of faithfulness and truthfulness are in abundance in the paraphrases in contrast to the world of Don Juan.

While the stanzas of Child Harold reflect insecurity about the future and doubt about the past these stanzas reassert the continuity and dependability of God together with His immortality.

Here the speaker finds spiritual comfort in God in contrast to his acute sense of isolation and disillusionment expressed in Child Harold.

In a letter written to Patty Clare from Northampton, dated between 1849 and 1850, Clare draws on precisely the same details. Clare recalls 'Revelations', commenting, 'the Revelations has a placard in capitals about 'The Whore of Babylon & the mother of Harlots'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 669.

This particular stanza is written alongside the stanza whose first line reads, 'What mellowness these harvest days unfold'. Nor, MS6, p. 18. The page of the journal itself summarises the price of corn throughout the County during the last week of August 1841.

This verse of the paraphrase shares the page with the autumnal stanza, 'Tis autumn now & nature's scenes', etc.

A similar image occurs on Nor, MS6, p. 46: 'the grey willows & dark walnuts still lingering in the Churchyard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time'.

These lines prefigure the preoccupation with lying, deception and counterfeit in Don Juan commencing on p. 38 of Nor, MS6.

This paraphrase is also written in draft form in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.

It is worth comparing the time scheme described in the first stanza on page 12 of Nor, MS6.

The speaker's main preoccupation in Don Juan two pages later.

This is a clear example of the fusion of the themes of homelessness and questing which permeate Nor, MS6.

See also Bodleian, MS Don. a8. See also Last Judgement in Chapters 21 & 22 of Revelations.

This paraphrase written so soon after Clare's arrival home at Northborough is reminiscent of the responses to the physical deprivation Clare experienced during his escape.

See Chapter Three, "The Northborough Autumnal Sequence".

Clare repeats the same details within a short space. One is reminded of Clare's account of his journey home when he is forced to eat the grass on the road side.

In a letter to Patty Clare written in April 1841, from High Beech, Clare uses the same tone of recrimination to probe his wife's conscience at her lack of visits, 'Since then, months have elapsed, & I am still here, away from them, enduring all the miseries of solitude'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 645.

The biblical paraphrases are interrupted at this point by four stanzas which Clare has entitled Child Harold and underlined. These stanzas do not appear to be fair copied in the same uninterrupted way as the paraphrases.
Job, Chap. 38, Nor, MS6, p. 30. See also Genesis, Chapters 18 & 19.

There is a gap at this point in the manuscript where it appears as if two lines are missing. They may have faded through time or eroded due to the poor quality of Clare’s homemade ink. Edmund Blunden in ‘Manuscripts of John Clare’, The London Mercury, comments interestingly on blank sections of manuscript such as this one. Blunden describes them as ‘pools of silence’ resulting from the use of a particularly baneful writing fluid’. p. 319.

Robinson and Powell supply, ‘First they died by fire, then they suffered the fires of hell to the last’. The Later Poems, p. 69, note for line 821.

Both this stanza and the one that immediately follows it are strongly reminiscent of the prose piece ‘Autumn’, pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6 and demonstrate an abrupt change from the apocalyptic imagery of the previous stanzas.

Compare with the prose fragment on p. 20 of Nor, MS6: ‘Closes of greensward & meadow eaten down by cattle about harvest time & pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me melancholly to look over it’.

Clare’s Byronic challenge to a world of marital, political, social and emotional deceit. Clare was punning on the idea of old ‘wigs’ as a disguise used by the rich and powerful and on the idea of the the ‘Whigs’ as a political party. While the speaker in Child Harold admits to self deception the speaker in Don Juan complains of having deceit and corruption practised upon himself and others.

Child Harold is not so specifically attributed to Byron on p.4 of Nor, MS6.

The prose piece ‘Autumn’ together with the three stanzas on page 37 of Nor, MS6 beginning: ‘The floods come oer the meadow leas / The dykes & full & brimming’ are written in draft form in Peterborough, MS A62.

‘He [“Winter”] is giving us daily notice by dirty paths brimming dykes and naked fields that he is already on the way’. Nor, MS6, p. 46.

There are a number of lines and fragments in Perborough, A62 which Clare may have envisaged as future contributions to Child Harold. Certainly the themes and tone of particular lines would be easily assimilated into this long poem. Four unconnected lines on page 11 of Peterborough, MS A62 contain a number of echoes of the autumn descriptions in Child Harold.

Crimson with awes the white thorn bends.
Oer meadow dykes and rising floods
The wild geese seeks the reedy fen
& dark the storm comes oer the woods.

A similar sense of destruction and decay pervades Byron’s Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza, 143, ll. 1279 - 1280, ‘A ruin - yet what ruin! from its mass / Walls, palaces, half - cities, have been reared;’. Jerome McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, p. 189. Compare with Genesis - the destruction of Sodom.

Page. 3 of Peterborough, MS A62.

This song precedes: ‘Absence in love etc’ in Peterborough, MS A62. In Nor, MS6 Clare has written the title only; the song itself is picked up again on p. 45 of Nor, MS6 after Clare has faircopied the Don Juan stanzas.

After Byron’s death in 1824, it became a fashionable literary game to write sequels or
continuations of his Don Juan. One of them, published in 1825, was in Clare's library. Geoffrey Summerfield, John Clare: Selected Poetry, note for p. 214, p. 369.

351 The first line of Child Harold, also on p. 1 of Nor, MS8, reads, 'Many are poets - though they use no pen'. 'Poeta nascitur, non fit'. A Latin tag meaning 'Poets are born, not made'.

352 In Nor, MS8, this stanza is underlined and precedes the opening stanza of Child Harold.

353 The contrast between the tragic lyricism of the Child Harold stanzas on the previous page and the Byronic pastiche evident here is dramatic.

354 Nor, MS8 reads 'churches'.

355 Robinson and Powell offer some useful details about Clare's visit to the new Royal West London Theatre on Tottenham Street in 1824, with his friend Rippingille. Later Poems, pp. 101-102.

356 See Canto I of Byron's, Don Juan.

357 Clare's asterisk refers to the four stanzas written on p. 43 of Nor, MS6, with the accompanying note, 'To be inserted between the first & second verses at the beginning of the Poem'.

358 Clare complains of women's infidelity in his letter to Matthew Allen in August 1841, 'man I never did much like & woman has long sickened me'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 651.

359 See Canto I of Byron's, Don Juan, particularly stanza 110.

360 All superficial social gatherings limited to the wealthy.

361 Opposition to the Corn Laws which kept the price of bread high was at a peak in 1841. The contemporary observation demonstrates how engaged Clare was with topical issues in Don Juan, as opposed to the trance like suspended state he conveys in Child Harold.

362 Byron's 'Beppo' contains the following line: 'A thing which causes many 'poohs' and 'pishes'. Byron's, 'Beppo: A Venetian Story' takes place in the city known to contemporary 19th century English aristocratic travellers as a dissolute, corrupt playground. Jerome McGann, Oxford Authors, p. 318, stanza 7, I.53.

363 Most certainly Clare's reference to his own confinement. In a letter written to Mary Joyce in May 1841, from High Beech, Clare refers to his unjust imprisonment: 'if I was in prison for felony I could not be served worse than I am'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

364 The similarity to Byron's poem is clear, but Clare is also concerned with the notion of deceit in these opening verses. Political, marital and social deceit are all referred to. 'Whigs' refer to the deceitful disguise of the rich and powerful. Geoffrey Grigson, John Clare: Selected Poetry, p. 370, n. 214.

365 A derogatory term used in this instance to suggest trifling or second rate poetry.

366 Robinson and Powell point out that 'crim con' was a legal word for adultery. The Later Poems, p. 91, note for line 63.

367 Slang for money.

368 Clare relishes the obscene puns and riddling here.

369 Vulcan's badge was made up of the horns of a cuckold. After his parents Zeus and Hera had
quarrelled Vulcan was flung from Olympus, leaving him lame in one leg. It is tempting to ask if Byron’s lameness was also in Clare’s mind in this instance.

The Whigs lost the election in July 1841.

A name given to asylum warders.

Clare may be referring to a form of treatment meted out to the insane in the 18th century. Metal or leather collars were placed around the patient’s neck which were attached by a chain connected to a pole fixed permanently in the ground. The patient could stand up and sit down but was limited to movement beyond this. For a comprehensive history of insanity I refer the reader to Madness, ed., Roy Porter (London and Boston: Faber, 1991).

A euphemism for corruption; in particular to make them drunk.

In July 1841 the newspapers announced the marriage of Lord John Russell to Lady Fanny Eliot.

Although imitating Byron in this disrespectful satire on the royal family, Clare includes a topicality to his version by substituting Queen Victoria and Prince Albert for King George and Queen Caroline. See also a letter Clare wrote to James Hessey on 1st of December 1820 in which he debates allegiance to George IV or Caroline over the bill ‘of pains and penalties’. Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 109 - 110, n, 5.

Obscene reference to Queen Victoria and her alleged lovers who deceived Albert in his absence.

A highly salacious slur on the Queen’s moral character - possibly gossip in the papers about Queen Victoria’s difficulty in conceiving another child.

This line is written separately on the top of page 7 of Nor, MS8. Page 6 of Nor, MS8 carries three stanzas from Child Harold.

Another reference to deception but in this instance political and not marital.

The pun on both words which refer to the bird which steals another’s nest and the husband who steals another’s wife is clear.

Prince Albert left England to return to Germany in July 1841.

References to Clare’s own confinement and possibly its cause - poverty.

Clare appears to use the Queen as a symbol for the liberal behaviour of women in general. During his confinement Clare seemed preoccupied by fidelity or the lack of it in women.

‘Wife’ is underlined by Clare in Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8.

See Byron’s Don Juan, Canto 1, stanza 100.

See Robinson and Powell’s ‘Dickey - back seat of a carriage or penis’. The editors also draw attention to Byron’s use of the word in his Don Juan, Later Poems, p. 94, n, 115.

Asses milk was given to babies.

Corruption had spread throughout society including the Cabinet.

This may be Clare’s own political view or a report ‘lifted’ from contemporary newspaper accounts.
Clare assumes the posture and voice of the Regency fop here. See also Measure for Measure, Act III, Scene (i), l. 114.

'I shall never be in three places at once nor ever change to a woman & that ought to be some comfort amid this moral or immoral “changing” in life - truth has a bad herald when she is obliged to take lies for her trumpeters'. Nor, MS6, p. 23. Clare is obsessed with the whole idea of deceptive appearances.

The impossibility of animals practising deceit is emphasised here.

Robinson and Powell’s note on page 95 of The Later Poems draws attention to the fact that the word denotes a male prostitute as well as pig or boar.

Clare wrote to Mary Joyce in May 1841 that he had composed a Canto of Don Juan, sitting under the elm trees at High Beech: ‘I sat under the Elm trees in old Matthews Homestead Leppits hill where I now am - 2 or 3 evenings & wrote a new canto of Don Juan’. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.

Clare appears equally unimpressed by both Whigs and Tories and their false promises to the country.

Three miles from High Beech.

A quote from Gay’s, Beggar’s Opera.

See Chapter Three, ‘Songs and Ballads’ in Nor, MS6. In Nor, MS8, these three stanzas follow the opening ballad of Child Harold.

The stanza form alters here from ottava rima to abababcc of the Childe Harold style.

Compare these two lines with the first two stanzas of Child Harold on pp. 4 - 5 of Nor, MS6.

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Summer morning is risen
& to even it wends
& still Im in prison
Without any friends

I had joys assurance
Though in bondage I lie
- I am still left in durance
Unwilling to sigh.
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Return to ottava rima verse form of Don Juan.

The inference would seem to be that both new coins and early marriage are quickly worn down through ill use.

‘Real poets must be truly honest men’, Nor, MS6, p. 4.

‘Sweet Susan that was wont my love to be / & Bessey of the glen - for I’ve been roaming’. Nor, MS6, p. 8.

Clare is convinced that he has been married to two wives both here and in Child Harold. In 1820, Taylor’s London Magazine published a review of Thomas Medwin’s Journal of The Conversations of Lord Byron, which referred to Byron’s promiscuity.

Don Juan’s alter ego also finds the idea of absence difficult to negotiate, ‘Absence in love is worse
then any fate'. Nor, MS6, p. 37.

407 This is both ironic and poignant. Mary might well refer to Mary Joyce here and Martha to Patty (Martha) Clare nee Turner.

408 "Poets are born", a reference back to the first line of the text - part of the Byronic spoof.

409 A reference to the superficial language of court circulars and visiting cards, but with bawdy overtones.

410 In June 1841 Parliament was dissolved and the ensuing election brought a Tory majority. Lord Melbourne the Whig premier resigned and Peel became Prime Minister. He was a close ally of Prince Albert. Clearly, Clare was not only writing on newspapers but feeding off them poetically.


412 See Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, page 98.

413 See Nor, MS8, pp. 21 - 22. Clare has written seven four line stanzas, untitled, beginning: 'Nigh Leopards hill stand All - ns hells'. Both these stanzas and this line refer to Matthew Allen and High Beech Asylum. Although these stanzas follow on from four stanzas belonging to Child Harold, Robinson and Powell separate them from both Don Juan and Child Harold. Later Poems, p. 37.

414 A reference to Allen's absences from High Beech on business?


416 See p. 2 of Nor, MS6 where Clare discusses the 'rout the Gipsey pointed out'.

417 A reference to buggery that was rife in prisons and also mad houses? This reference may be linked to the earlier references to Sodom in Genesis on p. 30 of Nor, MS6.

418 ' - for God hath often saw / Things here too dirty for the light of day'. Child Harold, Nor, MS6, p. 7.

419 The inference here is that even doctors are not above profit making from prostitution, insanity and corruption.

420 The elderly statesmen who surrounded Queen Victoria.

421 A reference to Clare's obsession with the fact that Truth and Honesty are incarcerated in prison.

422 Madhouses, like theatres were open to the public. Bedlam had a viewing gallery. Both places were also perceived as immoral as the last few stanzas have suggested.

423 'Toil like the brook in music wears along - / Great little minds claim right to act the wrong'. Nor, MS6, p. 4.

424 The irony here appears to be that organised religion is as hypocritical as the more widely acknowledged places of disorder and deceit.

425 Clare may be referring to the bawdy French farces he saw with Rippingille in London in 1824 at the Royal West London Theatre. 'Le Grondeur', a bawdy vaudeville was amongst the repertoire at

426 Hugh Haughton has drawn my attention to the fact that 13th July 1793 was Clare’s own birthday.

427 Byron was born on the 22nd of January 1788.

428 See Canto XV, stanza 1, ll. 5 - 7 of Byron’s *Don Juan*: ‘All present life is but an Interjection, / ‘An ‘Oh!’ or ‘Ah!’ of joy or misery, / Or a ‘Ha! ha!’ or ‘Bah!’ - a yawn or ‘Pooh!’. *Byron: The Oxford Authors*, p. 819.

429 The cockney accent here may be a mimicry of the dialect Clare heard in the asylum. Allen’s patients were mainly from London and the Home Counties.

430 Clare’s identification with Byron goes deeper here.

431 Clare was in fact treated with great kindness by Matthew Allen at High Beech. It is interesting to hear Allen’s polite but firm *claiming* of Clare as his patient in a letter he wrote to an unidentified correspondent on the 30th of July 1841. *(The recipient’s name is illegible). The letter reads as follows: ‘I sent for Clare but his wife thought him so much better that she wished to try him for awhile. Should he not remain well I hope his friends will send him here rather than elsewhere as I should feel hurt after the interest I have felt & do feel for him’. See Bodleian, MS Don. d36.

432 This being Sunday, Clare’s birthday would follow two days later on the Tuesday. I am indebted to Hugh Haughton for this reference.

433 Written by John Wilson, alias ‘Christopher North’ and published in 1812.

434 Ink and paper were both expensive and hard to come by for Clare and the suggestion here is that even though the wealthy have all the materials they need with which to write the result is not always good or tasteful. See Nor, MS6, p. 4, ‘Many are poets - though they use no pen / To show their labours to the shuffling age’.

435 A newspaper article which described the murder of the mother of Charles Lamb by his own sister Mary, reported her profession as a ‘mantua maker’ eg a dressmaker, most particularly the loose outer gowns worn by 17th and 18th century women of rank.

436 A direct reference to Byron here. Mark Storey has written an article on Clare’s attitude and debt to Byron, “Child Harold and Childe Harold” etc. Note also the way Clare clearly differentiates himself from Byron having identified himself with him earlier.

437 Clare’s reference to Mary Joyce and Patty Turner.

438 A curious fusion of the voices from both *Child Harold* and *Don Juan* here.

439 ‘I trusted fate to ease my world of woes / Seeking love’s harbour - where I now sojourn’. Nor, MS6, p. 10.


441 See Byron’s *Don Juan*, Canto I, stanza 7, ll. 50 - 52: ‘My way is to begin with the beginning / The regularity of my design / Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning’. McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, p. 379.

442 This stanza which dwells on woman’s reputation has much in common with Clare’s prose
Clare echoes precisely this same idea in his August letter to Matthew Allen, 'a man who possesses a woman possesses without gain'. Mark Storey Letters, p. 651.

One is reminded of Hamlet speaking to Ophelia: 'for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.' Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, Hamlet, Act III, scene i, ll. 111 - 115, p. 1047.

Note the pun on 'tart' as whore and in tart as pastry.

Possibly a reference to Byron who married Miss Milbanke in 1815 and signed a deed of separation in 1816.

'For wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them'. Hamlet, Act III, scene i, l. 140. Also: 'Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriage: those that are married already, all but one, shall live'. ibid. ll. 147 - 150. Peter Alexander, op. cit. p. 1048.

Clare draws a distinction between true love and matrimony.

In his journal for Thursday 14th March 1825, Clare wrote: 'I have not read Paine (Tom Paine, The Rights of Man) but I have always understood him to be a low blackguard'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 219.

This song was sent to George Reed on November 17th 1841 from Northborough.

The mood in this song is in keeping with the prose passage 'Autumn' which follows immediately on page 46.

This stanza has been written in draft form into a blue exercise book held at the Bodleian and known as Bodleian, MS Don. c64.

Clearly a 'spring' song but it is placed here between an autumnal stanza and the prose piece 'Autumn'. The thematic preoccupation of the song as opposed to its more appropriate chronological location appears to have led to it being placed on this page.

There are three stanzas to this song but the sequence has been interrupted by the prose piece 'Autumn'. On page 12 of Peterborough, MS A62 Clare has written a fragment, heavily deleted that is worth quoting. The following lines bear a remarkable likeness to the stanzas of this last named song:

Tho'[art del] [my del] loves eternal summer
The dearest maid I prove
[Her del] with breasts [are del] as white as Ivory
& warm as virgin love
No falshood gets between

There is also a shorter, much deleted version of 'Autumn' in the Peterborough octavo notebook, Peterborough, MS A62, (the first page commencing at the back of the book). Clare also writes upside down upon the page in this manuscript. Margaret Grainger offers an interesting note as regards the blunt pencil Clare has used in this instance to write the prose account. She suggests that Clare possibly wrote the notes as he walked the fields. Margaret Grainger, The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 328.
Margaret Grainger divides this prose piece into four specific locations. Lines 1 - 8 cover Clare’s introduction. Lines 8 - 31 describe a walk due East from Northborough to the river Weeand and then up the west bank of the river to Deeping Gate. Lines 31 - 85 describe the walk from the Nine Bridges, Northborough along the north bank of the North Drain to Lolham Bridges. The fourth location is between Waldram Hall and Welland Ford, The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 328.

Clare refers to the folk song.

Margaret Grainger identifies the river as The Welland. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 5.

Margaret Grainger comments on the smudged insertion here, calling it ‘an insertion within an insertion’. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 8.

Not simply an appreciation of rural beauty. Glinton Church spire is consistently described as a psychological and geographical marker for Clare throughout the first twenty pages of Child Harold.

Margaret Grainger identifies these as the Nine Bridges or the viaduct carrying the main Peterborough to Market Deeping road over the North and South Drains. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 332, n. 5.

It is significant that Clare uses specific markers both here and in his ‘Recollections’ on page 1 of Nor, MS6, to identify places and buildings which represent home. Glinton Mill, Maxey Church and West Deeping’s cracked spire are all singled out for special attention. They all held particular importance for Clare as locations associated specifically with Mary Joyce.

In his autobiographical Sketches, Chapter 6, entitled ‘Memories of Love’ Clare recalls an incident in Glinton churchyard when he threw a ‘walnut’ at Mary Joyce: ‘I remember an accident that roused my best intentions and hurt my affection unto the rude feelings of imaginary cruelty when playing one day in the church yard I threw a green walnut that hit her [Mary Joyce] on the eye’. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 88.

Clare was probably walking up - stream towards Lolham as Grainger suggests in The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 333, n. 6.

This page of the description is altogether more legible.

Bodleian, Don. c64 and Peterborough, MS A62, dated 1841 contain the following lines: ‘Crimsoned with awes the awhorns bend / Oer meadow dykes & rising floods’.

Compare this section of prose with the prose fragment on page 20 of Nor, MS6. Clare may possibly have envisaged this last piece of prose as part of ‘Autumn’.

See stanza 6 on Nor, MS6, p. 18, ‘About the meadows now I love to sit / On bridge walls & rails as when a boy’.

Compare with the prose fragment on p. 20 of Nor, MS6: ‘pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me melancholly to look over it’.

See p. 13 of Peterborough, A62. Clare has written the following prose fragment: ‘The three Lolham bridges look very picturesque among the trees of which two are visible from the bank the first with four arches’.

This line echoes Clare’s prose fragment, ‘Greenswards’. Nor, MS6, p. 20.
Grainger suggests that the shape of the prose passage is controlled to a certain extent by the walk Clare took at the time he wrote these observations. Here, for example, Clare has described the walk between Waldram Hall and Welland Ford. Natural History Prose Writings, p. 328.

There is an exquisite cameo prose fragment in an early Peterborough manuscript, dated between 1820 and 1830, which describes a walk taken by Clare in the winter. On page 3 of Peterborough, A46, Clare writes: 'I have often fancied like walking in the fields in winter when the snows hung in fairy & light romantic shadows upon every tree & bush. What beautiful bits of effective landscape might be found by the painter when the skirts of a forest with a cowshed underneath its branches glows like a scene of fairy (land?) is a rural picture of enchantment with its pendant branches'.

The name is used to describe the bird known as Plover. Also a pollard tree. See The Village Minstrel, I, l. 152, 'He mixed with them beneath a dotterel tree'.

Note the strong similarity between these lines and Nor, MS6, p. 38. In this instance Vulcan is substituted for the god of love - Cupid.

Clare's use of what appears to be a quasi Elizabethan erotic convention.

These two verses have been written at the bottom of page 49. The upper half of this page is blank.

Clare appears to identify strongly here with the biblical prophet Jeremiah: 'I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness but not into light'.

This is possibly the most mournful and desolate of all the expressions of rejection in the paraphrases of Nor, MS6. Utter desperation has replaced the unquestioning trust and hope of the earlier paraphrases.

This particular paraphrase is resonant with Clare's sense of betrayal, self-deception and disillusionment.

'Autumn', p. 47. Clare is engaged in both instances with memories of the past and the passage of time.

In a letter to William Knight, dated April, 1851, Clare writes pathetically of his 'incarceration': 'they have shut me up & gave me no tools & like the caged Starnel of Stern 'I can't get out'. Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 679 - 680.

'The Lamentations' as the lines develop, provide an ambiguous mix of total desperation and tentative hope in the future.

Clare's experience of confinement, his return home to find Mary absent and his despair are all clearly articulated through these lines. There is mention of 'Confinement' in the biblical original.

There is a discussion on the apparent shift of focus from the fickleness of human love to the uncompromising divine presence of God in Chapter Three, 'The Northborough Sequence'.

Nor, MS6, p. 5, 'But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower'.

'Friend cf the friendless from a host of snares / From lying varlets & from friendly foes'. Nor, MS6, p. 9.

The pursuit of reliability or truth is common to all the material in Nor, MS6.
489 'True love is eternal / For God is the giver'. Nor, MS6, p. 5.

490 These last two lines reflect Clare's predicament in all its intensity. References to 'nest', 'heart' and 'home' are Clare's own terms and are part of the autobiographical translation at the heart of these paraphrases.

491 An echo of the mood and imagery in 'Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841', Nor, MS6, p. 8.

492 Byron, 'The Prisoner of Chillon': 'Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls: / A thousand feet in depth below / Its massy waters meet and flow'. Stanza VI, ll. 107 - 109.

493 All the poet prisoners of Nor, MS6 are called to mind here: Tasso, Dante, The Prisoner of Chillon and Clare himself.

494 Clare has written two further lines alongside these two lines of the paraphrase. They read as follows: 'Persecute & destroy them - thine anger & rod / From the earth & from under the heavens of God'.

495 This paraphrase is found along the margins of Bodleian, MS Don. a8. As with Lamentations, Clare draws on the biblical poetry of complaint, judgement and exile - not redemption.

496 The speaker dwells on the ideas of homelessness and vagrancy, like so much of the material of Nor, MS6.

497 '[Absence] is like a ruined city desolate / Joy dies & hope retires on feeble wing'. Nor, MS6, p. 37.

498 The mention of harvest and garnering seed is wholly appropriate to this phase of writing at Northborough in the autumn of 1841. The images are biblical: 'wilt thou believe him', that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn'. (39, 12)

499 This calls to mind the notion of forgetfulness relevant to the manuscript as a whole.

500 The apocalyptic images of the sublime here are in contrast to the more subdued melancholy observations of the prose piece 'Autumn'.

501 See also Bodleian, MS Don. c64. On p. 2 of this blue exercise book, Clare has written this paraphrase in pencil.

502 See 'Isaiah Chap 47', Nor, MS6, p. 58, 'Come down & sit in dust'.

503 Clare often used the copying and writing of the paraphrase to console and support himself in testing situations. It is not the first instance where Clare appears to use the act of writing as a means of psychological survival.

504 'the third day I satisfied my hunger by eating the grass by the road side which seemed to taste something like bread'. Nor, MS6, p. 3.

505 The notion of confinement and imprisonment continues to surface in this manuscript.

506 The fens in 'Autumn', are described in Nor, MS6, p. 46. See also Job 39. 12: 'and bring your grain to your threshing floor'.

507 ibid. See also Peterborough, A62. In this context Clare has written the paraphrase in verse form. In the margin alongside the paraphrase are the following lines: 'My heart my dear Mary from thee
cannot part / But the sweetest of pleasure that joy can impart / Is nought to the memory of thee'.

This paraphrase is written in pencil on page 3 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.

Clare has written this psalm on page 4 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.

The psalms are written in abab verse form, in the tradition of English hymnology - Herbert, Watts and the Wesleys. Their mood is more uplifting in comparison to the paraphrases of Job and Jeremiah.

In a letter written to Marianne Marsh, dated 6th July, 1831, Clare wrote of his love of the Psalms: 'the book which has given me most satisfaction since my late illness has been Horn on the Psalms & it is one of the best books I have met with'. Clare was referring to George Horne's, (Bishop Of Norwich), *Commentary on the Psalms*, (1771). Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 544.

Nor, MS6, p. 5, ‘& he who studies natures volume through / & reads it with a pure unselfish mind’.

See Bodleian, MS Don. c64, p. 6. Page 5 of this manuscript is blank and when Clare has completed this paraphrase he draws a double line under its last line.

Clare remains heavily indebted to the Authorised Version of the Bible in this paraphrase.

Bunyan’s, *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Bunyan’s, *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Clare wrote to Charles Clare in February 1848, sounding like Polonius delivering a sermon to Leontes. He advises his son on reading and recalls his youthful pastimes. He also refers directly to Bunyan: ‘- Like old Muck Rake in the Pilgrims Progress I know nothing in other peoples business & less in what to come or happen - ‘There is nothing like home’. Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 656. In his *Sketches*, Nor, MS14, he describes Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* as having ‘pleased me mightily’. p. 29.

The Authorised Version uses the word ‘habitation’ here.

‘Cares gather round I snap their chains in two’. Nor, MS6, p. 8.

This song may be found on p. 8 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64. Clare returns to Child Harold after a long gap and for the last time in Nor, MS6.

The refrain of sojourning and homelessness is a replication of the opening song on page 1 of Nor, MS6, but Clare has allowed it a seasonal edge which mirrors his personal circumstances towards the end of 1841. ‘Hopeless’, ‘roam’, ‘absent’ are all words which initiated the themes of this manuscript at the start.

In the blue quarto exercise book held at the Bodleian, Clare has written ‘Love wasting life away’.

Clare reiterates the association between truth of his love for Mary and home.

Clare has retained the same sequential order of Bodleian, MS Don. c64. Like Job and the *Lamentations*, Isaiah is a classical biblical lamentation.

There is no categorical evidence that Nor, MS6 originally concluded with this paraphrase, but in relation to the argument of this thesis, the recapitulation of theme and preoccupation would not seem to be coincidental. The prevailing mood of this last paraphrase - its nihilistic and deadening flatness of tone demonstrate that Clare would seem to have acknowledged not only Mary’s absence but the terrible truth of his own self - beguilement, ‘For thou shalt never more be called / Lady of
Kingdoms thy power enthralled'.


2 Nor, MS6, p. 7.

3 Page 1 of Nor, MS6.

4 Nor, MS6, pp. 57 - 58. A song belonging to Child Harold, ‘In this cold world without a home’, follows Clare’s paraphrase of Isaiah.

5 Nor, MS6, p. 14.

6 Nor, MS6, p. 12.

7 ‘Grief is itself a med’cine’. William Cowper, Olney Hymns, ‘Charity’.

8 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 206.

9 Mark Storey, loc. cit.

10 Mark Storey, loc. cit.

11 Mark Storey, loc. cit.

12 Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 651.

13 Nor, MS 8, p. 18.

14 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 207.

15 Mark Storey, Letters, op. cit. p. 207.

16 ibid.

17 Nor, MS6, p. 9.

18 Nor, MS6, loc. cit.

19 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 656.


21 Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 665.

22 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 660.

23 Mark Storey, loc. cit.

24 ibid.

Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 646.

Nor, MS6, p. 7.

Nor, MS6, pp. 15 - 16.

Nor, MS6, p. 17.

Nor, MS6, loc. cit.


Clare paraphrases 'Solomon's prayer etc etc' on page 26 of Nor, MS6.

In his *Sketches*, written in 1821, Clare spoke of his reading of the Bible as an act of complete pleasure, recalling, 'the simple ardour of the Psalms - the first pleasure of those divine writings'. Nor, MS 14, p. 8.

Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 515

Nor, MS6, p. 25.

Nor, MS6, p. 25.

Nor, MS6, p. 27.

Nor, MS6, p. 5.

Nor, MS6, p. 32.

Nor, MS6, p. 50 - 52.

Nor, MS6, p. 50.


Nor, MS6, p. 6.

Nor, MS6, p. 6.

Nor, MS6, p. 14.

Nor, MS6, loc. cit.

Nor, MS6, p. 12.

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Nor, MS6, p. 39.
CONCLUSION

1 Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza 164, Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 195.

2 Jerome McGann, loc. cit.

3 Controversy over the whole issue of the Copyright of Clare’s work continues right up to the present moment. In an article written in The Independent: The Weekend Review, Books, 10th July 1999, p. 10, Boyd Tonkin in an article ‘The People’s Poet must be set free’ comments on Simon Kövesi’s recent edition of John Clare: Love Poems (Bangkok: M & C Services Company Ltd., 1999), and the editor’s challenge to present Copyright restrictions.


5 I refer the reader to Chapter One.

6 See Anne Barton, Romanticism, issue ii, Vol 2, 1996.
7 ibid.

8 A view I know is shared by Tim Chilcott from a valuable and illuminating meeting we had to discuss the importance of Clare's work of 1841.

9 I refer to Clare's letter to William Knight dated 11th February 1851, when he states on three occasions in the same letter that he 'can't get out'. Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 679 - 680.


14 Mark Storey, Letters, p. 491.

15 Wells, p. 3.
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