

'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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Cathy Taylor, York, 1999.

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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 Madness⁵ 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 Clare⁶ 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 Clare⁷ (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.⁹ 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 Madness¹⁰ (1949) together with the Oxford edition of The Later Poems of John Clare¹¹ (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 faircopy 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, MS6¹² 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*¹³ 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 1841.¹⁴ 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, Mary¹⁵ 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.¹⁷ 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 sojourning:

I trusted fate to ease my world of woes
 Seeking loves harbour - where I now sojourn
 - But hell is heaven could I cease to mourn¹⁸

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'.¹⁹ 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.¹

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.²

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 smileing brow
Her picture used to cheer me
Both walls and rooms are naked now
No Marys nigh 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 Interpretation³ 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 'Reollections' were partly visited at night, twilight or through the disorientation of dehydration, near starvation and exhaustion,⁴ '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 recollect I had passed'.⁵ 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)⁶ 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 Northorough, 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 & Mary⁷

'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.⁸ 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'.⁹ 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'.¹⁰

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 thralldom. (Child Harold ironically describes such thralldom 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').¹¹ 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'¹² 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

notebook as opposed to a 'finished' manuscript also shapes and enhances its mood of temporality.

II

A young poet¹³ 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 sequence¹⁴; 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'.¹⁵ 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 stanzas¹⁶ from Child Harold on his return to Northborough.¹⁷

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.¹⁸ 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'.¹⁹ 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.²² 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 Friends²³

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 home²⁴

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 breast¹

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 1850.² 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) imperceptably into a Vol & then I call it Child Harold of which I wrote much both in Essex & here which I did & do meerey to kill time and whose more proper Title might be 'Prison Amusements',³

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,'⁶ 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 & home⁷ & love & woman⁸

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 iceicle in the summer sun - ⁹

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 1864¹⁰ 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 drift¹¹

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 challenges 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, 'Reollections &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 family¹⁵

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 now¹⁶

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 Irsome 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 'Reccolections &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's²⁸ 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),²⁹ 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 1820,³² 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 sweet³³

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 essay³⁵ 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.

i **THE TEXTUAL HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD AND RELATED MATERIAL**

Child Harold was resurrected in full in 1949 with the publication of Geoffrey Grigson's, Poems of John Clare's Madness.¹ 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.² 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',³ 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'⁴ 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'.⁵ 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 1893.⁶ 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.⁷ 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 Circumstance⁸ (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.⁹

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.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'²⁰ in The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare, (1983), Mark Storey the letter to 'Mary Clare – Glington'²¹ 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 1984.²² 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.²³ 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 Madness²⁴ 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.²⁵ In 1908, Arthur Symonds in his

edition of The Poems of John Clare²⁶ 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.²⁷ Grigson's editing of Clare's asylum poetry, including the 1950 edition, Selected Poems of John Clare,²⁸ 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'.²⁹

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'.³⁰ 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'.³¹ 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'.³²

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 Harold³³ (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),³⁴ 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.³⁵

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',³⁶ but Grigson has not included those songs and ballads found along the margins of the Bodleian newspapers³⁷ 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'³⁸ 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).³⁹ 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 Clare⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ Robinson and Summerfield reprimand Grigson for reaching, 'an all time low for inaccuracy in the readings of Clare's poetry'.⁴² 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'.⁴³ 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'.⁴⁴ 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'⁴⁵ 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’.⁴⁶ 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’.⁴⁷

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’.⁴⁸ 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'.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰

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, MS8.⁵¹

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'⁵² 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 Poetry⁵³ 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'.⁵⁴

The sequential order the Tibbles have chosen to employ in the *Everyman*⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ 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'.⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸

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,⁵⁹ 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'.⁶⁰

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 Poems⁶¹ 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'.⁶² 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.

ii **THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD. ‘THE SLEEPING BEAUTY’.**

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.¹ He was not dead, despite a report in 1840 to this effect;² 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!

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'.³ Clare also apparently spoke of his loneliness away from his wife while expressing a great desire to go home.⁴ 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'.⁵ 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'.⁶ 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'.⁷

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'.⁸ 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 1956,⁹ 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'.¹⁰

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 bench mark 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 Context²⁵ (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'.²⁶ 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'.²⁷ 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 1821,²⁸ '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'.²⁹ 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*³⁰ 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.³¹

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,³² 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'.³³ *The Nonconformist* in February 1873 talked of 'Clare's sustained lingering intensity of tone'³⁴ 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,³⁵ 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.

iii 'SLEEPING BEAUTY'

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 Clare¹ 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'.² 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.³ 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'.⁴

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'.⁵ 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 Rousseauesque 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 her study, “Child Harold”; John Clare’s Child Harold: A Polyphonic Reading,¹¹ (1987) 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,¹² 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 1987,¹³ maintains that the poem is important for Clare's determination to 'vie for the laurel with Byron'.¹⁴ 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 Mind¹⁵ (1965) and Mark Storey in The Poetry of John Clare: A Critical Introduction¹⁶ (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 Harold¹⁷ 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*²² (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.²³ 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 essays²⁴ 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.²⁵ 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 addressed to his friend John Taylor Esq, March 1821.²⁶ 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 murmuring winds these were my delights & here I woud mutter to myself as usual unheard and unnoticed by the sneering clown & consceited coxcomb, & here my old habits & feelings returnd with redoubled ardour, for they left me while I was a gardener²⁷

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 -²⁸

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 leave 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 improvd form what ever but to utterly condemn them to oblivion M.S.S. excepted

if I knew such things I disapprove of shoud appear in print after my death it would 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 wishes¹

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 manuscripts² 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’.³

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’⁴ 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.⁵ 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 lines⁶) 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'.⁷

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*⁸ (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*,⁹ 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',¹⁰ 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',¹¹ 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'.¹²

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,¹³ Thomas Tanselle in Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures¹⁴ and Donald Reiman in Romantic Texts and Contexts¹⁵ appear to be in agreement about the authority and accuracy of the primary text. Reiman emphasises the primitive text's autonomy¹⁶ 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'.¹⁷ 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'.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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.²⁰ 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'.²¹ 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 Muse²² 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'.²³ 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 trespass²⁴ - 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.²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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 abounded 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 clues 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?³¹ 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?³² 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'.³³ 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 a8.³⁴ 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, MS6 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.³⁵ 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, MS6 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, MS6 is left with responsibility of using the material as it stands – either all or nothing.

A notebook edition of the entire contents of Nor, MS6 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'³⁶ 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.³⁷ 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,³⁸ 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 filiations³⁹ 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'.⁴⁰

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 1841.⁴¹ 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'.⁴² 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'.⁴³ 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'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 many⁴⁵ - 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 paradise⁴⁶ 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'.⁴⁷ 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'.

i 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" 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, 'Reccolections &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'⁷ 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'.⁸

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.⁹ 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 twinned¹⁰ 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 innoſcent & blooming / Cuckold their ſpouſes to ſeem honeſt women'¹¹ 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'.¹² 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 Harold¹³ 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 -¹⁴

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,¹⁵ 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 should have been happy to gratify Curiosity - many Trifles begun but none finished'.¹⁶ 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.'¹⁷

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 - Glington', 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 us²¹

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.²² (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'²⁶ and in the longer description called, 'Autumn',²⁷ 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.²⁸ We know from details in Martin's biography²⁹ 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'.³⁰ Even in 1821 in his Sketches, Clare referred to his deep love of the 'Book of Job', describing it as a 'fine hebrew poem'.³¹ 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'.³² 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*.

ii THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOR, MS6 AND NOR, MS8

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 Phillips⁵ 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, MS6.⁶ 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 'Reollections.' 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.¹¹ 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.¹² 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 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'.¹³

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'.

iii THE NORTHBOROUGH AUTUMNAL SEQUENCE 1841

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 & dissatisfaction'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', 'Heres 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, MS8⁵ but it is difficult to determine precisely where or when the other Child Harold stanzas were composed,⁶ 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’.⁷ 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 Glington 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*⁸ 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.⁹ The biblical paraphrases which accompany the verse stanzas such as 'The Lamentations of Jeremiah' and 'The New Jerusalem Rev. Chap 21st' 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 'sojourning'. 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, MS6.¹⁰ 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 air¹¹

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'.¹² 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 free¹³

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.¹⁴ 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 remembrance 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

Neither regardeth the drivers cry
 His free born pasture is the mountain range
 His search is after everything thats green
 Or by thy crib abide - or in the glebe
 Bind him to trace the furrow - or will he
 Harrow the fertile valley after thee¹⁷

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.¹⁸ 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 flowers¹⁹

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

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

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 *Chronicle* becomes a record of Clare's bewilderment at feeling a stranger in his own land.

The stanzas found along *The Lincoln Rutland and Stamford Herald* dated September 3rd have much in common with the prose piece 'Autumn' found on pages 46 to 48 in Nor, MS6, as Margaret Grainger in *The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare*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'²¹ 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 Glington 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'²² 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 will²³

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 conscealed 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 & years²⁴

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 pursuing 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 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 & sardins the sixth
 The seventh was chrysolite - yellow & green
 & Beryl the eight[h] & of yellow unmixt
 The ninth was a topaz - the rest they were seen
 Chrysoparsus a jacinth an amethyst - blue
 As violets that in the old fallen world grew²⁷

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 thralldom 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 be able to see things as they were.²⁸ 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 leaf hid 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.

iv THE PROSE PIECE 'AUTUMN' AND THE NORTHBOROUGH
AUTUMNAL STANZAS.

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'.²

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 ill³

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 & serpentines 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.

v THE SONGS & BALLADS OF NOR, MS6

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, ababbcbcc. 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?¹ 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',⁴ argued that Clare, used the word song, 'interchangeably' with the word "lyric".⁵ 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.¹⁰ 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'.¹¹

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'.¹² 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'.¹³

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 returning¹⁴

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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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'.¹⁷ 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 half hearted 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 Tradition*²⁰ 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 Ballad²¹ 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.²²

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.

i **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 Reccolections &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.

Recolections &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 Recolections &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 - Ginton'. 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 ababbcbcc 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'

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; ababbcbcc 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.

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 wherebye 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 gauze & 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 ababbcbc form followed by a fourth nine line stanza in ababbcdcd 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 ababdcdd 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 ababcdccd 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.

One nine line stanza in Childe Harold form. Untitled. First line reads: 'The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge'. Orthography legible. One ink mark on ninth line, fourth word, 'though'. Stanza scored off by a single line. Some discolouration evident on the bottom edge of this 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.

Dauids 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 (ababdcdd) 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'n't 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.

Child Harold. Title underlined. Child Harold resumed after an interruption. Second title; I think of thee a Song as on page 37, also underlined. First line reads: 'I think of thee at early day'. Seven quatrains in abab rhyme form. Six stanzas scored off by a single line. Seventh stanza scored off by a double line. Orthography clear and strong. Written in full ink.

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 ababcbcd 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 Glington 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. Hand writing showing through on the right hand side of the page.

Page 55.

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

Psalms 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 Psalms 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.

Psalms 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 1829,¹ Clare observes that grammatical ‘points’ are a *movable feast*:

do I write intelligible I am generally 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 else²

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.**

song

I've wandered many a weary mile
 Love in my heart was burning
 To seek a home in Mary's arms
 But cold is love's embracing
 Her all around was in father's bed
 With arms as the contrary
 I had no love & love my head
 My love was love & Mary

I had no love in early youth
 When my first love was thwarted
 But if these heart still beats with truth
 I'd never more be parted
 & hanging as her love may be
 My own shall never vary
 Her night nor day in when free
 But sigh for absent Mary

No night nor day nor sun nor shade
 Work month nor rolling year
 Repair the breach which I've left made
 These mad days - missing here
 Life's lease was lengthened by her smile
 In trust & love contrary
 A ray of hope my fate brighten
 She lost love like & Mary

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

Here on the wall with smiling cross
 Her picture used to cheer me
 Both walls & rooms are naked now
 No Mary's right to hear me

The church spire still attracts my eye
 & leaves me broken hearted
 Though grief left worn their channels dry
 I sigh on days departed

The churchyard where she used to play
 My father's grave I wander hourly
 My school walks there who every day
 Where she made winter flowering

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

Recollections of of journey from Exeter - ^{a fortnight} ^{at the end of the journey}
 some where on the London side the "Plough" public house a Man passed
 me on horseback in a deep frock & said "here's another of the broken
 down hazy-makers" & threw me a penny to get a half pint of beer which
 I picked up & thanked him & 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 drivers who were very penny
 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 Gt. Des but I forgot the name I set down to rest on a
 flint heap where I might rest half an hour or more & while sitting here I saw
 a tall gipsy come out of the lodge gate & make down the road towards where I
 was sitting when she got up to me in saying 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 nothing in my
 hat to keep the crown up & said in a low tone "you'll be noticed in back returning
 what she hinted? I took no notice & made no reply at length she pointed to a
 small tower church which she called Sheppard Church & advised me to go
 on a fortnight which would take me direct to it & I should shorten my
 journey fifteen miles by doing so I would gladly have taken the young
 woman's advice feeling that it was honest & a high quest towards the truth
 but fearing I might lose my way & not be able to find the worth road again
 I thanked her & told her I would keep to the road when she bade me "good
 day" I went into a house or shop on the left hand side the road
 * It was St. Nicks

Page 1.Song¹

I've wandered many a weary mile²
 Love in my heart was burning
 To seek a home in Mary's smile
 But cold is loves sojourning³
 The cold ground was a feather bed⁴
 Truth never acts contrary
 I had no home above my head⁵
 My home was love & Mary

I had no home in early youth
 When my first love was thwarted⁶
 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 abscent Mary

Nor night nor day nor sun nor shade⁷
 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 & Mary⁸

Song⁹

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

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 spire¹⁰ still attracts my eye
 & leaves me broken hearted
 Though grief hath worn their channels dry
 I sigh oer days departed

The church yard where she used to play¹¹
 My <feet¹²> 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

a part from it

Reccolections &c of journey from Essex¹³ - 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 plough¹⁴ 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 Gipse¹⁵ 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 something 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

Page 2.July 24th 1841¹⁶

Returned home out of Essex & found no Mary - her & her family are nothing to me now¹⁷ though she herself was once the dearest of all - & how can I forget¹⁸

Journal July 18 - 1841-Sunday - Felt very melancholly - went a walk on the forest in the afternoon fell in with some gipseys 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 gone¹⁹ - 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 oppertunity & as good luck would have it, it turned out to be so

July 19 Monday -[I del?] Did nothing

July 20 Reconitered the rout the Gipsey 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 followed²⁰ but being careless in mapping down the rout as the Gipsey 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 knew²¹ coming out of the door²² told me the way


I walked down the lane gently²³ and was soon in Enfield Town & bye & bye on the great York road where it was all plain sailing & steering²⁴ ahead meeting no enemy & fearing none I reached Stevenage where being Night 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 paleings into the yard & then had higher pailings 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 ^]²⁵ 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)²⁶ 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 overshadowed 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 reccolect 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 answer²⁷

This note should be placed at the bottom of the page Baldeck²⁷

*Note On searching my pockets after the above was written I found part of a newspaper vide "Morning Chronicle"²⁸ 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 ones countenance which seemed so cheerfull in my own - "There is no place like home"²⁹ the following was written by the Road side³⁰ - Ist 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 Baldeck & 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 do'n'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 pennyless & be thankfull I had a leg to move on

Page 3.

I then asked him whether he could tell me of a farm yard any where 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 recollecting 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 apace & the odd houses on the road began to light up & show the inside tenants lots very comfortable & my outside lot very uncomfortable & wretched³¹ - still I hobbled forward as well as I could & at last came to the Ram the shutters were not closed & the lighted window looked very cheering but I had no money & did not like to go in there was a sort of shed or gighouse at the end but I did not like to lie there as the people were up - so I still travelled on the road was very lonely & dark in places being overshadowed with trees at length I came to a place where the road branched off into two turnpikes one to the right about & one straight forward & on going bye my eye glanced on a mile stone standing under the hedge so I heedlessly turned back to read it to see where the other road led too & on doing so I found it led to London 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 recollect I had passed so I went on mile after mile almost convinced I was going the same way I came & these thoughts were so strong upon me that doubt & hopelessness made me turn so feeble that I was scarcely [word del] 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 stopt 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 air³² of highland Mary³³ as I went on I 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 trough or spout there was a large porch over the door & being weary I crept in & glad enough I was to find I could lye 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 familys³⁴ when I lay down & when I got up & when I thought of some former difficultys on a like occasion I could not help blessing the Queen³⁵ I have but a slight recollection 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 & went sleep half an hour when I suddenly awoke & found one side wet through from the sock³⁶ in the dyke bottom so I got out & went on - I remember going down a very dark road hung over with trees on both sides very thick which seemed to extend a mile or two I then entered a town & some of the chamber windows had candle lights shineing in them - I felt so weary here that I forced to sit down on the ground to rest myself & while I sat here a Coach that seemed to be heavy laden came rattling up & stopt in the hollow below me & I cannot recollect its ever passing by me I then got up & pushed onward seeing little to notice for the road very often looked as stupid as myself & I was very often half asleep as I went on the third day I satisfied my hunger by eating the grass by the road side which seemed to taste something like bread I was hungry & eat heartily till I was satisfied & in fact the meal seemed to do me good the next & last day I recollect that I had some tobacco & my box of lucifers being exhausted I could not light my pipe so I took to chewing Tobacco all day & eat the quids when I had done & I was never hungry afterwards - I remember passing through Buckden & going a length of road afterwards - but I dont recollect the name of any place untill I came to Stilton where I was compleatly 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 meet too young women & I asked one of them whether 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]

in rather more cheerful though I forced to rest oftener than usual before got to ...
 a man & woman passed me in a cart & on halting me as they passed I found them ...
 for the stone when I sold to ...
 out of the cart I picked it up & walked at small public house ...
 towards the top of bread & cheese when I had some I started quite refreshed ...
 I could scarcely make a walk of it over the stones & ...
 on the more I got through ...
 stone heaps as it passed till I was able to go on a fresh stage & beyond ...
 destination I was making for the Brechin as fast as I could when a cart met me with a man ...
 & baby in it when reaching me the woman jumped out & caught fast hold of my hands & ...
 got into the cart but I refused & thought he either drunk or mad but when I was to ...
 second wife Betty I got in it was soon at Brechin but Mary was not there ...
 I got any information about her further than the ... story of her being dead ...
 years ago which might be taken from a ... paper printed a dozen years ...
 ago but I took no notice of the blarney having seen myself about a ...
 & well had gone across - so had an home life at home & half gratified to feel I can believe ...
 any where

May some these marks of my sad fate efface
 the memory of my tyrannical ...
 Bygone

Child Harold

My dear wife
 Mary Anne - Glinton

Northborough July 27 1841
 I have written an account of my journey or rather escape from ...
 your amusement & hope it may find its way to 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 & ...
 & bye feel nearly hopeless but not so lonely as I did in ...
 Glinton church & feeling that Mary is safe if not happy I am gratified to believe ...
 though my home is no home to me my hopes are not entirely hopeless while even the ...
 memory of Mary lives & sees me God bless you my dear Mary for my love ...
 to your dear & beautiful family & to your mother - I believe now I can believe ...
 & you shall be

My dearest Mary
 your affectionate husband
 John Clare

Child Harold

Many are poets - though they use no pen
 To show their talents to the shuffling age
 Real poets must be truly honest men
 Dead to no mongrel law or hollow page
 To zeal have they for wrong or false rage
 - original hand The life of labour is a rural song
 That needs no cause - nor warfare tries to wage
 For C. like the brook in music wears along
 Great little minds claim right to act the wrong

Ballad

Summer morning is risen
 & to even of wended

Page 4.

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 live³⁷ - 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 Patty³⁸ 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 old³⁹ 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 [word ? illeg^] I can be happy anywhere

"May none those marks of my sad fate efface

"For they appeal from tyranny to God"⁴⁰

Byron⁴¹

Child Harold⁴²[del]

Mary[del]

To Mary Clare - Glington

My dear wife

Northborough July 27 1841⁴³

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 home⁴⁴ & 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 Glington church⁴⁵ & feeling that Mary is safe if not happy [&? word ~] I am gratified to believe so though my home is no home⁴⁶ 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 Husband⁴⁷

John Clare

Child Harold⁴⁸

Many are poets⁴⁹ - though they use no pen⁵⁰
 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
 Toil like the⁵¹ brook in music wears along -
 Great little minds claim right to act the wrong

Ballad⁵²

Summer morning is risen⁵³

& to even it wends

is still in a prison
without any penitence

I had my appearance
Thought in the days of sin
I am still left in duration
Am willing to sigh

Still the forest is round me
Where the bees bloom in green
As if chains were laid from Iove
Or cares had never been

Nature's love is eternal
In forest & plain
The course is eternal
To be born again

For home & friends forsaken
I have no more of wrath
For in days of sin I have sinned
My heart is forever lost to the

My hopes are all hope left
My sighs have no return
Could I feel in you the mercy
I will freeze on

But love like the seed is
In the heart of a flower
It will blossom with truth
In a prosperous hour

True love is eternal
For God is the giver
I love like the soul will
Endure — & forever

He who studies nature's volume through
I read 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
Still from him creations work & reform
The high & lofty one is great & kind
Love may cause the flight & smothering storm
His is the sunny glory & the calm

Song

The sun has gone down with a rest on his brow
While I in the forest sit mourning alone
The maiden has seen on the hills for her
While my needs & affections are freezing to stone
Sweet Mary I wish that the day was my own
To live in a cottage with beauty & cheer
The past I will sit as a mourning benon
For absence leaves my still dearest to me

How sweet are the glooms of the midsummer even
Dark night in the bushes seems going to rest
& the boom of Mary with fancy is leaving
Where my sorrows & feelings for seasons were staid
Nor will I refine though in love were divided
She in the islands & I in the glen
Of these forest beeches — by nature we're guided
& I shall find rest on her boon eyes

How soft the dew falls on the leaves of the beech
How fresh the wild flower seems to slumber below
How sweet are the lips 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 was fairer than flowers
No yet has the name of her memory faded
Though absence like winter our happiness lowers

Though eyes shall with gather like clouds in my sky
Though hopes may grow hoarse & fall to recall
While the sun of existence sheds light on my eye
I'll be free in a prison & cling to the soul

Page 5.

& still Im in prison⁵⁴
Without any friends⁵⁵

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

Still the forest is round me⁵⁶
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 again⁵⁷

& he who studies natures volume through⁶³
& reads it with a pure unselfish mind
Will find Gods 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 & kind⁶⁴
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 -⁶⁵
While I in the forest sit museing alone
The maiden has been oer the hills for her cow
While my hearts affections are freezing to stone
Sweet Mary I wish that the day was my own
To live in a cottage with beauty & thee⁶⁶
The past I will not as mourner bemoan
For absence leaves Mary still dearer to me⁶⁷

How sweet are the glooms of the midsummer even⁶⁸
Dark night in the bushes seems going to rest
& the bosom of Mary with fancys 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 glen⁶⁹
Of these forest beeches⁷⁰ - by nature we're guided
& I shall find rest on her bosom agen

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 Mary⁷¹ was fairer then flowers⁷²
Nor yet has her name or her memory perished⁷³
Though absence like winter oer happiness lowers

Though cares still will⁷⁴ gather like clouds in my sky
Though hopes may grow hopeless⁷⁵ & fetters recoil
While the sun of existance sheds light in my eye
I'll be free in a prison⁷⁶ & cling to the soil

For home & friends vanished⁵⁸
I have kindness not wrath
For in days care has banished
My heart possessed both⁵⁹

My hopes are all hopeless⁶⁰
My skys have no sun
Winter fell in youths maydays⁶¹
& still freezes on

But Love like the seed is
In the heart of a flower⁶²
It will blossom with truth
In a prosperous hour

True love is eternal
For God is the giver
& love like the soul will
Endure - & forever

Will cling to the spot where my first love was hidden
 Where my heart may my soul unlovingly give
 & when my last hope & creature is perished
 Her memory will shine like a sun on my grave

Mary thou see of ~~me~~ thou mine of song
 The pale star of my being & decay
 Even the cowardly fold my shattered bark may wrong
 Still thou art the sunrise of my natal day
 Born to misfortune — where no sheltering bay
 Keeps off the tempest — over her shoulder flee
 I struggle with my fate — unless she strong —
 Kicks thy name down & thou shall keep me free
 Till my lost life becomes a part of thee!

Song #5

I've wandered many a weary mile -
 Love in my heart was burning
 To seek a home in Mary's smile
 But cold is love's returning
 The coldness I was a feather bed
 With never a comb
 I had no home above my head
 My home was love & Mary

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

For night nor day nor sun nor shade
 Week month nor rolling year
 Repairs the breach storied love hath made
 Mine madcap — many have
 Lived leads, was laughed by her smiles
 — one truth & love comb
 As ray of hope my life befriends
 My lost love home & Mary

Love is the main spring of existence — it
 becomes a soul, & when I love to love
 On all I see that dearest name is writ
 In school is here — but truth has life above
 Where every star that shines or cold in love
 Things vary in their clouds the seasons vary
 From heat to cold — change cannot be proved
 The south is bright — but smiles can act contrary
 My guide star guides the north — & shines with Mary

Song #6

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

Note
 * * * The above songs were written after my return home to Bullborough last Friday evening
 the rest of the stanzas & songs was written on Epping Forest & Essex

Page 6.

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 & existance⁷⁷ is perished
 Her memory will shine like a sun on my grave

Mary thou ace of [arts del][hearts ^] thou muse of song⁷⁸
 The pole star of my being & decay⁷⁹
 Earths coward foes my shattered bark may wrong⁸⁰
 Still thourt 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[s]⁸³ 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 abscent 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 wherebye 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 with smiling brow
 Her picture used to cheer me
 Both walls & rooms are naked now
 No Marys left to cheer me

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

The churchyard where she used to play
 My feet could wander lonely
 The school walks here was every day
 Where she made water flowers

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

My life hath been one love — no blot it out
 My life hath been one chain of contradictions
 And those dreams which — ~~would~~ — even 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 bubble
 & clut the joints with of maledictions
 They took me from my wife & to save trouble
 I wed again & made the error double

Yet absence claims them both & keeps them too
 & locks me in a shop in spite of law
 Among a low bred set & dirty crew
 Here let the sense of law's curb claim draw
 & let man think — for God hath often said
 Things here too dirty for the light of day
 For in a madhouse here it costs no law —
 How stagnant grows my too refined clay
 I envy birds their wings to fly away

How servile is the look to please alone
 Though beauty was & love inspires the song
 Here painted beauty with her heart of stone
 Thinks the world worships while she flunts along
 The flower of sunshine butterfly of song
 Give me the hulk of heart in woman's life
 The love to cherish one — & do no wrong
 To none — & peace of every care & strife
 Is true love in an estimable wife

How beautiful this hill of fern & ivy on
 So beautiful the chappel peeps between
 The hornbeams — with its simple bell — above
 I wander here hid in a palace green
 Mary is absent — but the forest green
 Nature is with me — morning noon & gloaming
 I write my poems in these paths unseen
 & when among these trees & beeches roaming
 I sigh for truth & home & love & woman

I sigh for one to love & still I sigh
 For many are the whistles I have heard
 From thoughtless lips — love's soul in many an eye
 Hath gazed my heart with such intense regard

Page 7.

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 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 cheek⁹⁶ & 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 jiant 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 butterflye 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 abscent - 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 and the reward
 I think of them I love each girl & boy
 Babes of two or three - on this velvet sward
 & nature thinks - in her usual employ
 While dew falls on each blossom weeping joy
 Here is the chappel yard enclosed with hedges
 & oak trees nearly top the little bell
 Here is the little bridge with guiding rail
 That leads me on to many a pleasant dell
 The formal chikens like a startled quail
 Is nature - yet tis sweet at evening still -
 a pleasant road & woods round the gentle well
 where nature seems to have her own sweet will
 Planting her beech & horn 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 things that are free
 Yet would I had some eye to smile on me
 some heart where I could make a happy home
 sweet Susan that was wont my love to be
 & Percy of the glen - for he's been roaming
 with both at noon & noon & dusky gloaming
 faces gather round I make their chains & tears
 & smile in agony & laugh in tears
 like playing with a deadly serpent - who
 stings to the death - there is no room for fears
 whose death would bring me happiness for years
 kills cares that help to poison many a vein
 The thought to be extinct my fate is dire
 Pale death the grand physician cares not 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 of feel
 Nor chills with fear eternal destiny

My soul is apathy - a ruin vast
 Time cannot clear the ruins & map away
 My life is hell - the hopeless days are cast
 & manhoods prime is premature decay

Roll on ye wrath of this sea - roll on ye
 Till worlds are ruins & all well alone
 Melt heart & soul ead in ocean's wide
 Till I can feel that nature is my throne

I live in love sun of undying light
 & fathom my own heart for ways of god
 In its pure atmosphere day without night
 Smiles on the plains the forests & 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 creature still

Page 8.

I looked for joy & pain was the reward
 I think of them I love each girl & boy¹⁰⁹
 Babes of two mothers¹¹⁰ - 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 pales¹¹¹
 & oaktrees¹¹² nearly top its little bell
 Here is the little bridge with guiding rail
 That leads me on to many a pleasant dell
 The fernowl 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 hill¹¹³

I have had many loves - & seek no more -
 These solitudes my last delights shall be
 The leaf hid forest¹¹⁴ - & the lonely shore¹¹⁵
 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 in¹¹⁶
 Sweet Susan that was wont my love to be
 & Bessey of the glen - for I've been roaming
 With both at morn & noon & dusky gloaming¹¹⁷

Cares gather round I snap their chains in two
 & smile in agony & laugh in tears
 Like playing with a deadly serpent¹¹⁸ - who
 Stings to the death - there is no room for fears
 Where death would bring me happiness¹¹⁹ - his sheers
 Kills cares that hiss to poison many a vein
 The thought to be extinct¹²⁰ my fate endears
 Pale death the grand phisician cures all pain
 The dead rest well - who lived for joys in vain¹²¹

Written in a Thunder Storm July 15th 1841¹²²

The heavens are wrath - the thunders rattling peal
 Rolls like a vast volcano in the sky¹²³
 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 hell¹²⁴ - the hopeless die is cast¹²⁵
 & manhoods prime is premature decay¹²⁶

Roll on ye wrath of thunders - peal on peal¹²⁷
 Till worlds are ruins & myself alone
 Melt heart & soul cased in obdurate steel
 Till I can feel that nature is my throne¹²⁸

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 me¹²⁹
 Bid earth & its delusions pass away
 But leave the mind as its creator free

This twilight veils a veil of grace & mist
 Trees seem dark hills between the earth & sky
 Winds sob awake & then a quiet hush
 Passes through the wheat like serpents gliding by
 I love to stretch my length 'twixt earth & sky
 & see the waxy foliage on the wave
 Though shades are still my prison shade I lie
 Long use grows nature which I easily brave
 I think how sweet cares rest within the grass

Remind me not of other years or tell
 My broken hopes of joys they are to meet
 While thy own falchion rings the londest knell
 In one fond heart that aches too cold to beat
 May low oft with fond hope I repeat
 That name alone to give my troubled rest
 The very sound though bitter beneath sweet
 In my loves home & thy own faithless breast
 Rude bonds are broken & every nerve distracted

Life is to me a dream that never wakes
 Night finds me on this lengthening road alone
 Love is to me a thought that soon aches
 A foot bound thought that freezes life to stone
 Mary in truth & nature still my own
 That warms the winter of my aching heart
 My name is joy nor will I life be known
 Midnight when sleep takes charge of nature's rest
 Still we awake & find life — not distant

Lie all my cares up in thy arms & sleep
 & give my weary spirits peace & rest
 I'm not an outlaw in this midnight deep
 If prayers are offered from sweet woman's breast
 One & one only made my being blest
 & fancy shap'd her form in every dell
 On that sweet bosom lie I'd love to 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
 Sheds in the ocean glen & days of life
 My name can sing my Mary's heart was won
 & joy was heaven when I called her wife
 The only harbour in my days of strife
 Was Mary when the sea roiled mountains high
 When joy was lost & every sorrow wife
 In her sweet bosom I was wont to fly
 No undivided by truth life's treacherous eye

Friend of the kind life from a host of cares
 From long exiles & from friendly foes
 I sought the quiet trust to calm my cares
 & on the flight of reason found repose

Page 9.

This twilight seems a veil of gauze & mist¹³⁰
 Trees seem dark hills between the earth & sky
 Winds sob awake & then a gusty hist
 Fanns through the wheat like serpents gliding bye
 I love to stretch my length `tween earth & sky
 & see the inky foliage oer me wave
 Though shades are still my prison where I lie¹³¹
 Long use grows nature which I easy brave
 & think how sweet cares rest within the grave¹³²

Remind me not of other years or tell¹³³
 My broken hopes of joys they are to meet
 While my own falshood rings the loudest knell
 To one fond heart that aches too cold to beat
 Mary how oft with fondness I repeat¹³⁴
 That name alone to give my troubles rest
 The very sound though bitter seemeth sweet
 In my loves home¹³⁵ & thy own faithless breast
 Truths bonds are broke¹³⁶ & every nerve distrest

Life¹³⁷ is to me a dream that never wakes¹³⁸
 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 bemoan¹³⁹
 Midnight when sleep takes charge of natures rest
 Finds me awake & friendless - not distrest¹⁴⁰

Tie all my cares up in thy arms O sleep
 & give my weary spirits peace & rest
 I'm not an outlaw in this midnight deep¹⁴¹
 If prayers are offered from sweet womans breast¹⁴²
 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 sun¹⁴³
 Sinks in the ocean gloom & dregs of life
 My muse can sing my Marys heart was won
 & joy was heaven when I called her wife¹⁴⁴
 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 bosom¹⁴⁵ I was wont to flye
 To undecieve by truth lifes treacherous agony¹⁴⁶

Friend of the friendless from a host of snares¹⁴⁷
 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 strife of nature ceas'd her throes
 & other hearts would beat for my return
 I trust'd fate to ease my world of woes
 Seeking loves labour - where I now sojourn
 - But hell is known could I cease to mourn

For her for one whose very name is yet
 My hell or heaven - & will ever be
 Beloved & in doubt - but I can never forget
 Gave virtuous falsehood volunteered to me
 To make my soul new bonds which God made free
 Gods gift is love & do I wrong the giver
 To place affections wrong from Gods decree
 - At 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 pearl 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 bless'd with matchless charms
 Seems love rolled between us - not to part
 E'en Iceland's snows true loves delirium warm
 For this be dream'd? - & Mary fill'd my arms

Song

O Mary sing thy songs to me
 Of love & beauty's melody
 My sorrows sink beneath thy strains
 My deepest griefs are sorrow'd
 To us'd to gloom & cease and
 My tearful troubles cease as joy
 O Mary sing thy songs to me
 Of love & beauty's 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 times
 To hear thy sweet Rina's chime
 In music so divine & clear
 That woke my soul in heaven to hear

But heaven itself without thy presence
 Is one would be his 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 those songs divine
 For music love & melody
 Breathe all of thee & only thee

Page 10.

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 harbour¹⁴⁸ - 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 doubt¹⁴⁹ - 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 done¹⁵⁰
 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 Icelands snows true loves delirium warms
 For there Ive dreamed¹⁵¹ - & Mary filled my arms

Song¹⁵²

O Mary¹⁵³ sing thy songs to me¹⁵⁴
 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"¹⁵⁵
 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 thee¹⁵⁶

Song

Lovely Mary when we parted
 I never felt so lonely smothered
 As I do now in fields & glen
 When hope says "we shall meet again"
 How by you shine 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
 As if thy love in my heart unrolled
 Though love was fire & would soon be cold
 By the eyes of heavens own blue
 My heart for thine was ever true
 Thy sun & moon by sea & shore
 My life I love thee more & more

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

Now melancholly autumn comes anew
 With oblong clouds & fields of wheat turned brown
 Along the meadow banks & peace purvues
 & all the wild flowers gleaming up & down
 Like sun & light - the ragwort's golden crown
 Mirrors like sunshine when sunbeams retire
 & silver yarrow - there's the little town
 & on the meadows gleams that slender spire
 Reminding of Owen & waking for I desire

I love thee nature in my inmost heart
 For when I will thy truth seems from above
 For when I will thy landscape forms a part
 Of heaven - even these fens when wood not grown
 are seen - their very nakedness I love
 For one dwells nigh that secret hopes perfect
 Above the race of women - like the dove
 I mourn her absence - fate that would deter
 My love for all things - strengthens love for her

Thus saith the great & high & lofty one
 whose name is holy - howebeit
 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 receive
 - from high & lofty one - I said to me
 Truths low estate & I will glad believe
 If such I am not - such in feign to live

Page 11.

Song

Lovely Mary when we parted¹⁵⁷
 I ne'er felt so lonely hearted
 As I do now in field & glen
 When hope says "we shall meet agen"
 [At illeg?] & by yon spire that points to heaven¹⁵⁸
 Where my earliest vows was given
 By each meadow field & fen
 I'll love thee till we meet agen

True as the needle to the pole¹⁵⁹
 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 lifes 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 melancholly autumn comes anew¹⁶⁰
 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 town¹⁶¹
 & oer the meadows gleams that slender spire¹⁶²
 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 dove¹⁶³
 I mourn her absence - fate that would deter
 My hate for all things - strengthens love for her¹⁶⁴

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 recieve
 - Thou 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

That voice - that look - that face of one I delight
 That form from boyhood loved - still loved on
 And voice - that look - that face of one I delight
 Love's regret for years, months, weeks - each day & night
 Her looks was never forgot or out of sight
 - Many the names of many songs I write
 My decided memory never leaves my own
 Though eases chill, winter with its grandeur blight
 & freeze like Nobe my thoughts to sterner
 Our loves are two - our end & aim is one

Ballad

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 & hears the spires
 which I can daily see
 & if true love had heart inspires
 Life still has joys for me

She sees the wild flowers in the dells
 that in my rambles shine
 The sky that over her homestead dwells
 looks sunny over mine

The cloud that passes where she dwells
 I left her half an hour
 Drunken around these orchard dells
 for me to a sudden shower

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

When will autumn bring the news
 that harvest browns the fen
 that Mary as my gipsy maid
 & I shall meet again

His pleasant now days hours begin to pass
 To Daisy's love - To walk down narrow close
 & feel one's feet among refreshing grass
 & hear the insects in their homes discourse
 & startled black bird fly from covert close
 of white thorn hedge with wild fowls fluttering wings
 & see the spire & hear the clock toll hours
 & whisper names - I think on many things
 that love buds up in the heart in spring

Some blessed upon me like a comet's gleam
 Some waned & left me like a fallen star
 because I told the evil what they are
 & truth & falsehood never win to war
 My life hath been a wreck - & I'm gone far
 in peace & truth - & hope in for home & rest
 - like Eden gates - fate news a constant bar -
 thoughts may mistake the sunset in the west
 - then meet us home within a wounded breast

Though they are blighted in the frost's severe
 as all the comforts which our life contain

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[That voice - that look - that face of one delight del]¹⁶⁵
 That form from boyhood loved & still loved on¹⁶⁶
 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 Niobe¹⁶⁷ my thoughts to stone¹⁶⁸ -
 Our lives are two - our end & aim is one¹⁶⁹

 Ballad¹⁷⁰

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 spires¹⁷¹
 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 rambles¹⁷² shine
 The sky that oer her homestead dwells
 Looks sunny over mine

The cloud that passes where she dwells
 In less then 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 muse¹⁷³
 & I shall meet agen

Tis pleasant now days hours begin to pass¹⁷⁴
 To dewy Eve¹⁷⁵ - To walk down narrow close
 & feel ones feet among refreshing grass
 & hear the insects in their homes discourse
 & startled blackbird flye from covert close¹⁷⁶
 of white thorn hedge with wild fears fluttering wings¹⁷⁷
 & see the spire & hear the clock toll hoarse¹⁷⁸
 & whisper names - & think oer many things
 That love hurds up in truths imaginings

Fame¹⁷⁹ blazed upon me like a comets glare¹⁸⁰
 Fame waned & left me like a fallen star¹⁸¹
 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 & 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 song¹⁸²
 As all the comforts which our lifes contain

I read & sought such joys my whole life long
 & found the heart of poets young in song
 But still I read & sighed at what was gone
 & lost no purpose where I had the will
 & almost worshipped when my toils grew vain
 Pining as artists do my pen to kill
 I sought 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
 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 round a prison
 To fainting may sigh
 But why heh! the reason
 Over prospects of joy
 Here all are void of day
 When the sun it get low
 Even gales whisper joy
 How can you sigh so

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

Song

The spring may forget that he sang 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 whistles white on the new budding tree
 & nature in tempests forget the bright sun
 But I'll never 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 worshipped so dearly
 From boyhood to manhood — & all my life long —
 As leech to the branches in summer when I sit
 & the flowers will bloom on the stalk & the tree

Page 13.

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 still¹⁸³

Song¹⁸⁴

Dying gales of sweet even¹⁸⁵
 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 prison¹⁸⁶
 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 rest¹⁸⁷
 The babe meets its mother
 & sleeps on her breast -
 The sun in the west
 Has gone down in the ocean
 Dying gales gently sweep
 Oe'r the hearts ruffled motion
 & sing it to sleep

Song¹⁸⁸

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 me¹⁸⁹

How could I - how should I - that loved her so early¹⁹⁰
 Forget - when I've sung of her beauty in song
 How could I forget¹⁹¹ - What I've worshiped so dearly
 From boyhood to manhood - & all my life long¹⁹² -
 As leaves to the branches in summer comes duly
 & blossoms will bloom on the stalk & the tree

To her beauty I'll cling - & I'll love her as truly
 & think of sweet Mary whenever I be

Song

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

When silence with the loudest call
 My secrets to betray
 As moonlight with the night in all
 As sunbeams at the day

I hide it in the silent shades
 Till silence finds a tongue
 I make its green olive tree invade
 Till time becomes a song

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

When summer ceases to be green
 & winter bare & blue
 Death may forget what's have been
 But I shall cease to be

When words refuse before the crowd
 My Mary's name to give
 My mind in silence wings aloud
 & there my love will live

The harvest smiles embracing all the plain
 The sun of heaven sees its ripeness shine
 "Peace - plenty" has been sung nor sung in vain
 All bring forth the maker's grand designs
 Like gold that brightens in some hidden mine
 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
 His poverty near masks an honest face
 Strong'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 knives flourish - & the country giving
 Lies was the current gospel in my youth
 & now a man - I'm further off from truth

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To her beauty I'll cling - & I'll love her as truly
& think of sweet Mary wherever I be

Song¹⁹³

No single hour can stand for nought
No moment hand can move
But calenders a aching thought¹⁹⁴
Of my first lonely love

Where silence doth the loudest call
My secrets to betray
As moonlight holds the night inthrall¹⁹⁵
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 song¹⁹⁶

I bid my foolish heart be still
But hopes will not be hid
My heart will beat - & burn - & chill¹⁹⁷
First love will not be hid

When summer ceases to be green
& winter bare & blea -¹⁹⁸
Death may forget what I have been
[When, del] [But ^] I [shall del] [mayst ^]¹⁹⁹ 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 plain²⁰⁰
The sun of heaven oer its ripeness shines
"Peace - plenty" has been sung nor sung in vain²⁰¹
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 & decieving
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 truth²⁰²
I've seen knaves flourish - & the country grieving
Lies was the current gospel in my youth
& now a man - I'm farther off from truth²⁰³

Song

They never read the heart
 Who would read it in mine
 That love can desert
 The first truth on his shrine
 Though in death 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 pondered thus lonely
 In sorrow & fears
 My sorrows I smother
 Though troubles annoy
 In this world & no other
 I cannot meet joy

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

Thou first best & dearest
 Though dwelling apart
 In my heart still the nearest
 Wherever thou art
 & thou wilt be the dearest
 Though our joys may be o'er
 & to me thou art nearest
 Though I meet thee no more

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 beset me
 If Mary would meet me
 I'd kiss her sweet beauty & long 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

Page 15.Song²⁰⁴

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 lonely²⁰⁵
 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 loses 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 nomore²⁰⁶

Song²⁰⁷

Did I know where to meet thee
 Thou dearest in life
 How soon would I greet thee
 My true love & wife²⁰⁸
 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

16
 - My eyes beaming blue
 absent pains the sweetest
 Recalling's the dearest
 & if Mary's absent - how can I be true

How dull the glooms cover
 This meadow & the
 Where I as a lover
 seek Mary again
 But silent is the ground
 Wherever I stray
 There's nothing seems pleasing
 Or aching thoughts evening
 Though Mary lies near me or she seems far away

Could these gales murmur
 My love in her ear
 Or a bird's note inform her
 While I linger here
 But rather contrary
 I stand all the day
 To bird-gale or fairy
 Can whisper to Mary
 To tell her who seeks her - while Mary's away

How sweet that time live who need murmur
 I know & know that his hill foot knew
 In whose yard & the maid he early loved
 In whose wall where now the old blind grew
 In whose that can tell whom retains the year
 In whose the wallnut shade I see them still
 Though not in's cause I do now pursue
 I still see where thine my room-chill
 I know a bird nor love nor hope may fill

How sweet that time live who need murmur
 I know & know that his hill foot knew
 In whose yard & the maid he early loved
 In whose wall where now the old blind grew
 In whose that can tell whom retains the year
 In whose the wallnut shade I see them still
 Though not in's cause I do now pursue
 I still see where thine my room-chill
 I know a bird nor love nor hope may fill

How sweet that time live who need murmur
 I know & know that his hill foot knew
 In whose yard & the maid he early loved
 In whose wall where now the old blind grew
 In whose that can tell whom retains the year
 In whose the wallnut shade I see them still
 Though not in's cause I do now pursue
 I still see where thine my room-chill
 I know a bird nor love nor hope may fill

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- Thy eyes beaming blue
 Abscent pains the severest
 Feel 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 agen
 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 away²⁰⁹

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 being²¹⁰ live who sees unmoved²¹¹
 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 walnut shade I see them still
 Though not such fancys do I now pursue
 Yet still the picture turns my bosom chill²¹²
 & leaves a void - nor love nor hope may fill

After long absence how the mind recalls
 Pleasing associations of the past²¹³
 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 death²¹⁴
 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 & Cot²¹⁵
 The princely palace too hath been his home
 & Gipseys camp when friends would know him not²¹⁶
 In midst of wealth a beggar still to roam
 Parted from one whose heart was once his home²¹⁷

& yet not faded - still loves loped illumer
 & like the rainbow brightest in the storm
 & looks for joy beyond the wreck of time
 & in life's irritable keeps loves embosomed warm
 The ocean's roughest tempest meets a calm
 & e'er the thickest cloud shall break in sunny joy
 Beneath the parched wastes showers yet shall fall like balm
 & e'er the soul of life for whom I sigh
 Like flowers shall cheer me when the storm is by

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 avenues & roads & bowers
 & every scene that Mary loves
 I've found her home I seek her here
 But Mary's absent every where

'Tis autumn & the rustling corn
 Goes loaded on the creaking rain
 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

The autumn morn looks mellow as the fruit
 & ripe as harvest - every field & farm
 So full of health & toil - yet never mute
 With rustic mirth & hence the day is warm
 The village maid with gleam upon her arm
 Brown as the hazel nut from field to field
 Goes cheerily - the valleys nature's charmer
 I seek for charms that autumn best can yield
 In mellowing wood & time of the setting field

'Tis autumn now & nature's scene
 The plucky fields & yellowing trees
 Looks their blooming time & green
 But nature finds no change in me
 The fading woods the rustling grass
 The hum of nature may dispart
 But nought in me shall change
 No wrong the angel of my heart
 For Mary is my angel still
 Though I were with the very ill

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& yet not parted - still loves hopes illumines
 & like the rainbow brightest in the storm
 It looks for joy beyond the wreck of tombs²¹⁸
 & in lifes winter keeps loves 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

Song²¹⁹

O Mary dear three springs have been²²⁰
 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 groves²²¹
 In avanues & shaded bowers
 & every scene that Mary loves
 E'en round her home I seek her here
 But Marys abscent everywhere

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 abscent 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 field²²²

Song

Tis autumn now & natures scenes²²³
 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 change²²⁴
 To wrong the angel of my heart
 For Mary is my angel still
 Through every month & every ill²²⁵

The leaves then loosen from the branch
 & fall upon the quiet wind
 But my heart's silent love is staunch
 That I can tear her from my mind
 The flowers are gone from dell & bow
 Though crowds from summer's lap was given
 But love is an eternal flower
 Like the amaranth in heaven
 So long 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
 & in ripe harvest met the shower
 & made earth's blessings manifest
 Just so my many lives for me
 A silent thought for months & years
 The world may live in welling
 Her name my lonely quiet stirs
 & here it will stay in my
 While many lives to think of me

Sweet comes the misty mornings in September
 Among the dewy paths how sweet to stay
 Greenward on stables as I well remember
 I once saw you - the mist curls thick & grey
 As stage smoke - like net work on the spray
 & seeds of grass the colored draperies run
 & beads with pearls of dew at early day
 & on the fleecy stables keep the sun
 The lamp of day when that of night is done
 & mellowed by these harvest days unfed
 the strong glances of the mid day sun
 & in the very grass seems cheery to gold
 the light in golden shadows seems to run
 & every spray it casts upon
 with that with ~~sun~~ hue of sunny joy
 Nature's life is sweet companion mine about
 & she starts up before the shepherd boy
 & in bridge ~~eyes~~ on up set wings of joy
 The meadow flags now mottled bleached & dark
 & mistier ~~in~~ down as fine as dew
 The blue & dewberry shine along the bank
 where weeds in bloom's luxuriance lately grew
 & I love the sun that up the meadow flaps
 from bank to bank the meadow arches & stride
 where foamy floods in winter tumbled through
 & spread a heartless ocean framing wide
 & now the ~~in~~ boys sleep no fear the coming tide
 about the meadows now I love to sit
 & ~~in~~ bridge walls & sills ~~in~~ a boy
 & ~~in~~ old trees bend over the ~~in~~ pit
 with high roots bare that time ~~in~~ not detest of
 where sits the angler at his ~~in~~ employ
 & ~~in~~ my leaves the bank to climb
 & ~~in~~ true ~~in~~ now ~~in~~ sweet to weary joy
 & ~~in~~ of things seems so happy & sublime
 Ad out ~~in~~ ~~in~~ halls ~~in~~ their delightfull chime

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The leaves they loosen from the branch
 & fall upon the gusty wind
 But my hearts silent love is staunch²²⁶
 & 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 flower²²⁷
 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 conscealed 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 revellry
 Her name my lonely quiet cheers
 & cheer it will what e'er may be
 While Mary lives to think of me²²⁸

Sweet comes the misty mornings in september²²⁹
 Among the dewey paths how sweet to stray
 Greensward²³⁰ or stubble as I well remember
 I once have done - the mist curls thick & grey
 As cottage smoke - like net work on the spreay
 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 done²³¹

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 wir 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 through²³²
 & spread a restless ocean foaming wide
 Where now the cowboys sleep nor fear the coming tide²³³

About the meadows now I love to sit
 On banks bridge walls & rails as when a boy²³⁴
 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 seeems so happy & sublime
 As sabbath bells & their delightfull chime²³⁵

Sweet solitude thou partner of my life
 Thou balm of hope & every pressing care
 Thou soothing silence at the noise of strife
 These meadow flats & trees - the autumn air
 Hallow my heart to harmony - I bear
 Lives breathe happily - these young dells
 Seem Eden in this shabbeth 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 self - & still the song
 To her through sun & shade through right & wrong
 On her my memory forever dwells
 The flower of life - the green of song
 Built in my heart the same one story tells
 - I love the music of those village bells

Song

Here's a health unto thee young lassie o
 Leave the town - I care wi' me
 & whatever I may be
 He's happy up to thee
 Young lassie o

Here's joy unto thee young lassie o
 Though we never meet again
 I will can bear the pain
 If happiness is thine
 Young lassie o

Here is time we unto thee young lassie o
 Though absence is ours
 The spring will come wi' flowers
 & love will wait for thee
 Young lassie o

So here's love unto thee young lassie o
 Aye wherever I may be
 He's a double health to thee
 Till life shall cease to love
 Young 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 their music in his rustling wings
 "Pink pink" he cries & spind the robin sings
 The small hawk like a shot drops from the sky
 Close is my feet for mice & creeping things
 How swift as thought again he starts by
 & hides among the clouds from the pursuing eye

Page 19.

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 harmony²³⁶ - I bear
 Lifes burthen happily - these fenny 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 sun²³⁷
 Whose beams hath cheered me all my lorn life long
 My heart to nature there was early won
 For she was natures self - & still my song
 Is her through sun & shade through right & wrong
 On her my memory forever dwells
 The flower of Eden²³⁸ - evergreen of song
 Truth in my heart the same love story tells
 - I love the music of those village bells²³⁹

Song²⁴⁰

Here's a health unto thee bonny lassie o²⁴¹
 Leave the thorns o' care wi' me
 & whatever²⁴² 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 thine²⁴³
 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 heres 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 o²⁴⁴

The blackbird startles from the homestead hedge²⁴⁵
 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 pursuing eye²⁴⁶

Gorges of greenness & narrow water down by rills about harvest time & pieces of fresh
 water such as ponds lakes & pools with a field in the distance & the lake over it
 & if ever so deep full I instantly feel low spirited & dejected & with the
 -tray pieces of green grass & when the trees are cleared of their leaves & frames
 a glowing green with lakes of water well streaked with fish. Looking up in the
 sunshined & sunny rays widening & growing on the water with a play
 of a blue in the water & finding a lot of trail into the blue water of the
 now & then towards the top their bodies & their legs in the sun & the
 scenes though I am almost over-taken with sleep & being feeling I am
 happy as if I was rambling in Paradise & perhaps in the country of Eden then
 when there would still be flowers to be seen

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

Her cheeks are like roses
 Though she is away
 I shall see her beauty
 On some other day

In the flowers of the spring
 In the meadow & plain
 I shall see her again

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

Gap Clouds

When a pipe is just lighted the smoke
 is in distinct or separate masses that
 smoke - & we often see clouds which
 are the origin of separate masses of smoke
 in the middle sky & then from the quiet pouring
 in the same colour

Insects in the house

There is in autumn on the leaves of the
 or rather figures made in the form of
 forms or folds they all resemble each other
 being the tale of the other the head of
 into what sort of insects did it not
 leaf & started

[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

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Closes of greensward & meadow eaten down by cattle about harvest time²⁴⁷ & pieces of naked water such as ponds lakes & pools without fish make me melancholly 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 Paradise²⁴⁸ & perhaps more so then if I was there where there would still be feves²⁴⁹ to trouble us

Her cheeks are like roses²⁵⁰
 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 theres 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 &
 Whereso ever I go

 Gass Clouds

When a pipe is first lighted the smoke issuing from the bowl curls up in distinct or seperate masses this is the heated gass or gass smoke - & we often see clouds which we identify by their curling up from the orison in seperate 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)²⁵¹
 There is in autumn²⁵² 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 inscet did it as they had all punctered the skin of the leaf & started²⁵³

Scraps, Prayers, Lustrations &c

The word maddling generally denotes something of a calamity - if the character of a woman is reckoned maddling & like a pretty woman the world generally look upon her as above the maddling state of the world gets below public opinion - invidious character soon strikes & dies rotten

"Eternal Spirit God of truth to show
"All things were in thy eye"

Balaams Public word 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 of God lives 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 pronounce
Balaam hath said the offspring of Israel
& the many whose eyes have been opened with vision
Who heard in the words of the Lord & who saw
Visions of the almighty in tremblings & awe
Who felt in a trance that his eyes were unsealed
How goodly the tents are & how disposed
As beautiful valleys of green forth for birds
As gardens like Eden by the rivers green side
As trees of life whose which God as the giver
Did plant - & as cedars beside the green river
Who shall pour water out of his buckets - his seed
Shall be in the waters to flourish & spread
His thing shall be higher than any in power
& his kingdom exalted in glory & honour
God brought him from Egypt - he hath as it were
The strength of a unicorn - tear on & fear
Shall cut up the nations - his names all
Break their bones & their arrows pierced through they shall fall
He made him lay down in him at his
As a great lion who shall contend with him there
Who whose blessing God's people's best
& any of the who shall injure their rest
The Lord being wrath with the seed of the Lord
Shall both hands together in anger unawed
Saying I called them to curse them through nations & aimed
& behold they have blessed them three or four times
Nor flee they thence to the place from this hour
I thought to punish them to know & power
But they got back from all honours desert
So flee to his refuge & quickly depart
Then Balaam to Balaam's feet in the hall
Did I not say to the messengers all
If Balaam would let me his riches behold
& give me his house full of silver & gold
I cannot go wrong the commands of the Lord
In to good or ill of my feeble accord

W. H. A. P. H.

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Scraps Fragments Quotations²⁵⁴ &c &c

The word middling²⁵⁵ 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 rotten²⁵⁶

"Eternal Spirit God of truth to whom

"All things seem as they are"²⁵⁷

Balaams Parable second part

Numbers Chap 24th²⁵⁸

& 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 youth²⁵⁹
 Where nature & God live in silence & truth²⁶⁰
 & Balaam he cast up his eyes & again
 Saw Israel abiding in tents on the plain
 & the spirit of God came upon him like dew²⁶¹
 & 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 & awe²⁶² [Dan. ^e]
 Who fell in a trance but his eyes where unclosed
 How goodly thy tents are O Jacob disposed
 As beautiful valleys spread forth far & wide
 As gardens like eden by th' rivers green side²⁶³
 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 were²⁶⁴
 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 rest²⁶⁵
 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 seperate 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 refuge²⁶⁶ & 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

now 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 - the language now plain
 to let this people hear which my slaying must praise
 shall do to thy people in stripes latter days
 & he took up his parable justice & clear
 saying Balaam the prophet the offspring of Bess:
 who fell in a trance & yet having his eyes
 open to visions that gleamed in the skies
 do I not speak the words he said in my vision
 as they enter the almighty his chosen & chosen
 I shall rebuke him now but not now with my eyes
 & I shall behold him now but not with my eyes
 but of Jacob a star shall illumine the skies
 a sceptre from Israel shall flourish & rise
 & smite all the enemies of Judah with stripes
 & destroy all the children of Hagar to the life
 & Ephraim shall be a possession & Ben
 shall be a possession for Ephraim's name
 & Israel shall do valiant deeds for their name
 but 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 Amalek - he
 took up his parable justice & fire
 Amalek first of all nations - the giver
 of life dooms thy end that thou perished forever
 & he looked on the tented not caring to look
 saying strong is thy place like a rock in the rock
 song of Balaam

"If when thou art I may not dwell
 I will worth to be where thou hast been"

Nature says "Hug" but my pen denies
 to write the truth & it lives in sighs
 Honesty & good intentions are
 so madd' & hampered in with coil his
 he hath not room to stir a single foot
 to even thought to break a spiders web
 - so his keep climbing round loves sacred often
 brighten fair truth whose leaf is ever green
 whose roots are the hearts fibres & whose sun
 the soul that cheers & omelas it into bloom
 till heaven proclaims that truth can never die

"They shall die for death as for his
 treasures & shall not find it"
 Job
 "O! would it were my lot
 to be forgetfull as I am forgot -"
 Byron
 "For now turne I will a common signature
 of all freedom preserving all"
 Byron

Continued
 & the help kettles shall fail in that day
 & Ashur shall carry them captives away
 & he took up his parable nothing to miss
 alas who shall love when my God doeth this
 ships come from Chittim in idlet & run
 & afflict Ashur - & Ephraim shall perish for ever
 & Balaam arose to his place on that day
 & Balaam he also signum on his way

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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 childern of Sheth 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 Balaam²⁶⁷

"Imputed madness prison'd solitude

"& the minds canker in its savage mood"

Byron²⁶⁸

"If where thou art I may not dwell

"T'will sooth to be where thou hast been"

Byron²⁶⁹

Nature says "Mary" but my pen denies
 To write the truth & so it lives in sighs²⁷⁰

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 die²⁷¹

"They shall dig for death as for hid
 treasures & shall not find it"²⁷²

Job

" - O! Would it were my lot
 To be forgetfull as I am forgot²⁷³ -"

Byron

"I've now turned wild a commoner of nature
 Of all forsaken & forsaking all"²⁷⁴

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'afflict Ashur - & Ebor shall perish for ever
 & Balaam arose to his place on that day
 & Balak he also sojourned on his way²⁷⁵

The very good common place counsel is self identity to did not mean to forget
our ourselves & always to keep self in the first place but all the while we always
keeps us behind it should forget us all together - forget the self - but the world will not
forget this - forget the self - the world will willingly forget the self - the world
nothing but a living dead man, living among the dead & the living

The mother may forget her child
That had led on her lap has been
The bedroom may forget the child
That he was wedded to yesterday

But I cannot forget that I'm a man & that I should be dignified & independent in
to do so
self identity is one of the first principles in every body's life & holds up the
outline of honest truth in the decisions of character - a person who denies
himself must either be a madman or a coward

I'm often troubled at times to know that should the world have the impudence
not to know me but willingly forgetting my name any single individual
would be honest enough to know me - but the world would be useful
the knocker to a door or the bell of a case to find a bird on the top of a
there are two impossibilities which can never be met - the hall never be
in three places at once nor ever change to a counter - that ought to be some
comfort mind this moral or immoral changing in life - death have a bid
hand when she is obliged to take lies for her own pleasure - only every
man has the liberty to know himself

His liberty alone that gives the pleasure
of fleeting life its greater to be free
& we are wretched without it.

Page 23.

[It is - del] [a - del] 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 thee²⁷⁶ till thou art nothing but a living - dead man dwelling among shadows & falshood²⁷⁷

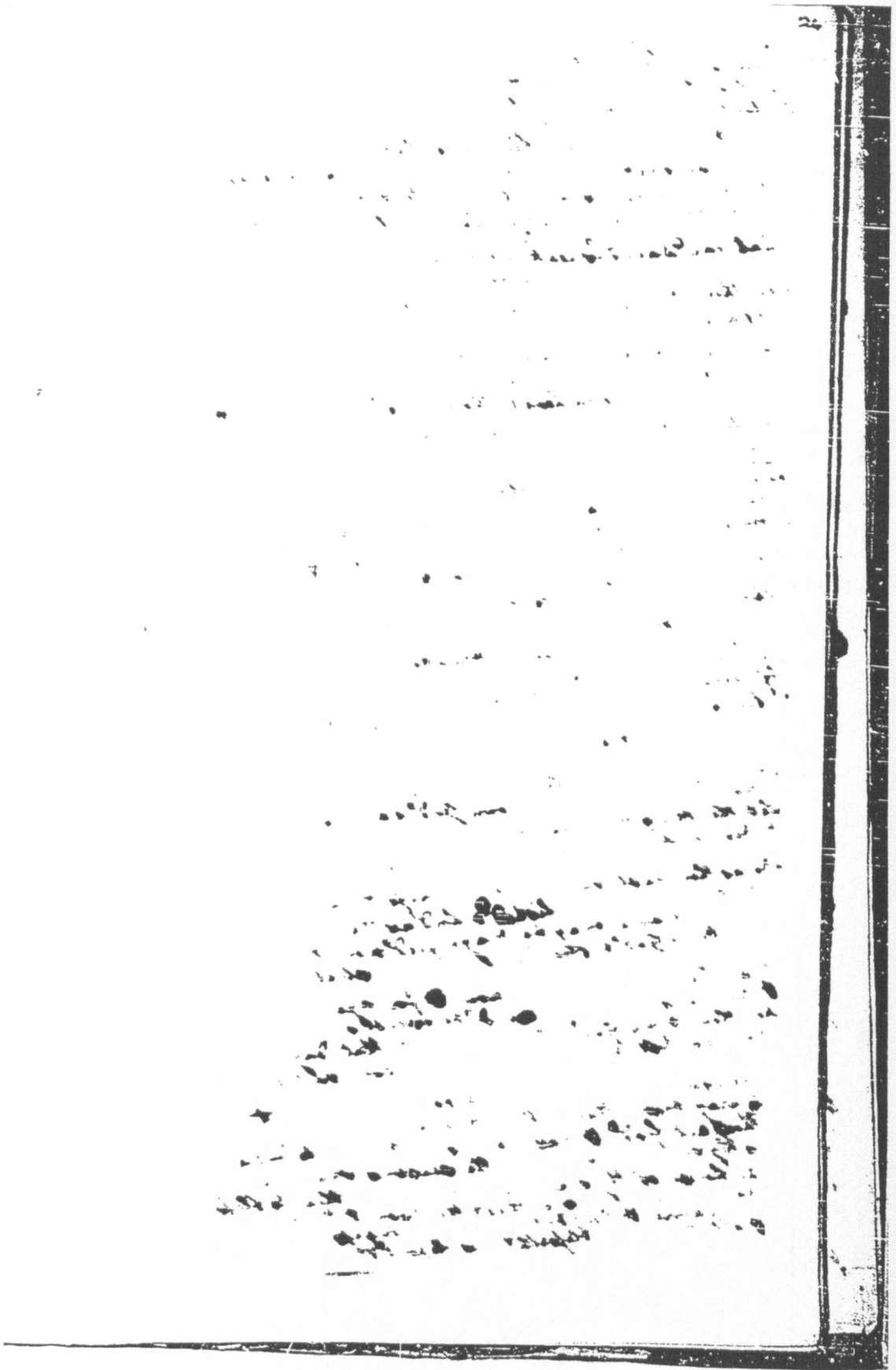
The mother may forget her child
That dandled on her lap has been
The bridegroom may forget the bride
That he was wedded to yestreen²⁷⁸

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 life²⁷⁹ - 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.²⁸⁰



Page 24.

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David's Prayer

Who am I my God & my Lord
 & what is my house in thy eye
 Thou hast thought me low of thy own mercies
 & clothed 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 loneliness 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
 & exaltest him highly indeed

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

O Lord there is none beside thee
 as 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 & terrible - even like thee
 Driving out nations from before them like flame
 The redeemed from proud Egypt - who conquered the sea

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

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

O a God to all Israel now & for aye
 & the house of King David be established of thee
 Do thou O my God to thy servants that day
 Thou wouldst build him a house - even as lets it be

Therefore thy servant hath found in his heart
 To pray before thee - & he knows from his soul
 That thou God & has promised thy love to impart
 To thy servants as long as the heavens shall roll
 The house of thy servant lets it please thee to stop
 That it may be before thee the boon of the given
 all nature & life both thy unity & unity
 & all that thou hast said - is the fact of heaven

Page 25.Dauids Prayer²⁸¹

Who am I my God & my Lord²⁸²
 & 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 degree²⁸³
 & exaltest 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 thou²⁸⁴
 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 sea²⁸⁵
 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 fears²⁸⁶

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 conquered 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 forever²⁸⁷ 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 still²⁸⁸

& 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 be²⁸⁹

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 & forever²⁹⁰

Page 26.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 forever²⁹¹
 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 & bondage²⁹² 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 house²⁹³ 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 alter 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
 & speakest²⁹⁴ 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

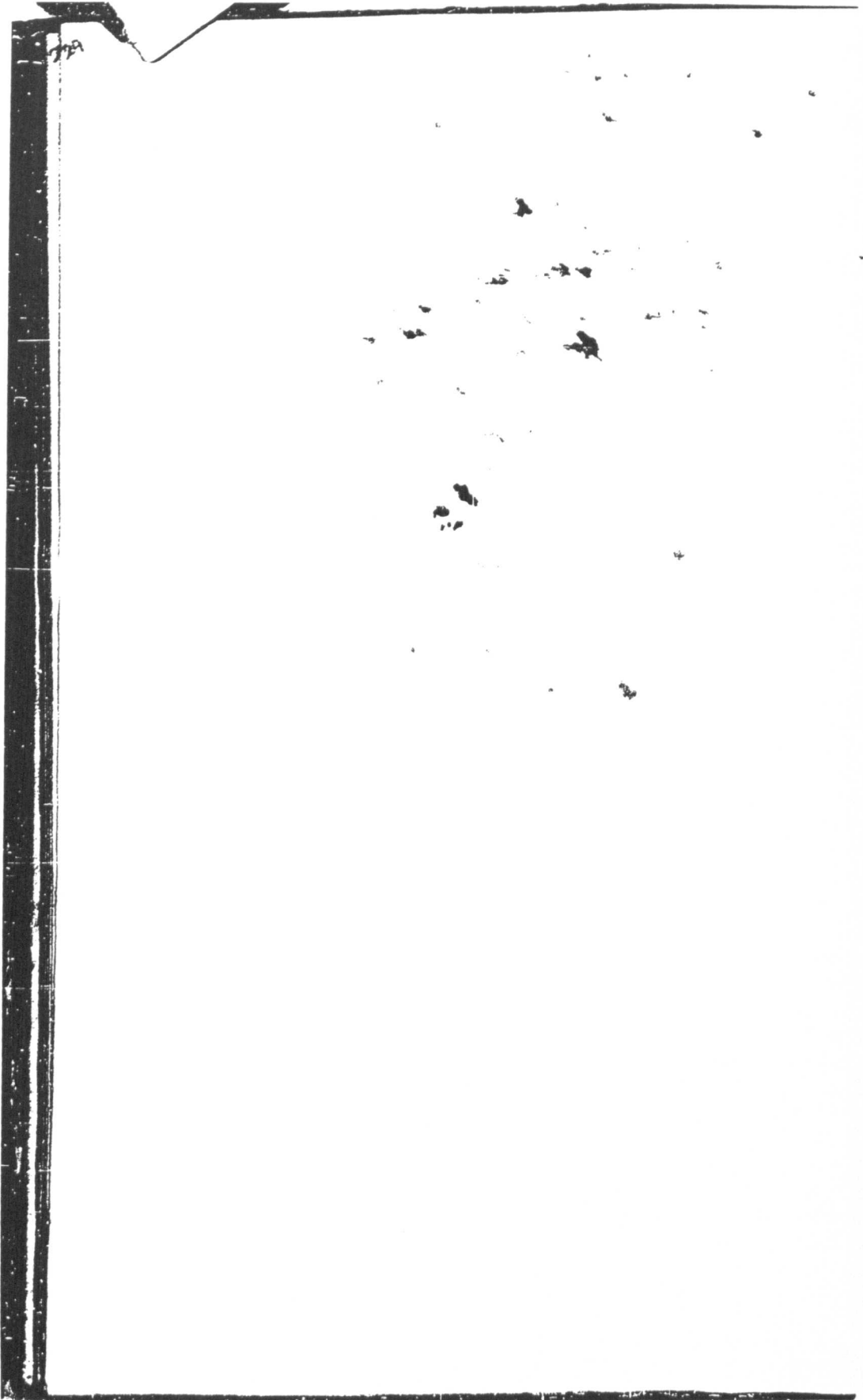
To sit on Israel's great people & throne
 As they children take heed to the law as my own
 To shall in the way as he laid before them
 In my law as the hitherto list before me
 And then God of Israel said being & said
 Because that thou hast spoken thy word
 With David thy servant - I speak & shall
 But will - I in deed make him dwelling with men
 On the earth will our people - I shall gain thee
 When the servant that I send hath said to them that
 How much left this temple which was built
 Though the earth with thy law & thy spirit
 Therefore have respect to the prayer of David
 Let not supplications be despised
 & let not slightly do the words on high
 Of thy servant all prayer for Israel
 Then God of all Israel before a prayer
 That the Lord God of Israel should be
 On the place of Jerusalem which thou hast chosen
 On the place thou hast chosen to dwell
 & thou shalt be as a Father to the fatherless
 To the prayer which thy servant David thy
 When thou from the dwelling of heaven
 & hearing & do it on our side to forgive
 If a man sin against his neighbor - almighty power
 & an oath be laid on him to bring him
 The oath to this house on the day that he bring
 Then hear thou from heaven & forgive
 By requiring the wicked & doing justice to all
 On his own head let the wicked be made
 Justifying the righteous - his ways approved
 & giving his righteous wife - mercy & love
 If David yet is thy enemy because
 Because he has sinned against thee & gone far from thee
 & again shall confess thy great name & return
 & make in this house supplication & mourn
 Then hear thou from heaven & will forgive
 In Israel thy people that mercy may be
 & bring them again like a flock to the stall
 Is the place which thou gavest them their fathers
 When the heavens were shut up have no reason of rain
 Because thy sinners against thee will again
 Get if they turn toward this place & pray
 & confess thy great name & return from their way
 When thou hast afflicted them & they are miserable
 Then hear thou from heaven & do & forgive
 The sins of thy people & David thy servant
 The good word which thou hast taught them to go
 on their land of inheritance & call thy name
 In the land & people shall flourish again
 & there be fertility & blessings & increase
 & millet & wheat & spreading oaks on earth
 & their enemies come & lay cities in thall
 & sickness & pestilence & death over all
 Then what necessary by man shall be made
 Or of the people of Israel & thou shalt
 which says he knows his own mind & shall
 & opened forth his hands in the name of the Lord

Page 27.

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
 Verifye 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 master²⁹⁵ 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 grace²⁹⁶
 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 alter they bring
 Then hear thou from heaven [words illeg] thing²⁹⁷
 By requiteing the wicked doing justice to all
 On his own head let the wickeds own reccompence 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 strand²⁹⁸
 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 again²⁹⁹
 If there be pestilence blastings & dearth
 & 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 & affraid
 When every one knows his own grief to proclaim³⁰⁰
 & spreads forth his hands in this house to thy name

Page 28.

Then hear thou from heaven thy own dwelling place
 & render to every man blessings & grace
 According to truth do thou raise them agen³⁰¹ [ways
 For thou knowest the hearts of the childern 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 request³⁰²
 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 name³⁰³
 Then hear from the heavens - petitions & prayers
 & mentain 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 countrys far off or near
 Yet should they bethink them whose childern 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 art³⁰⁴
 Although they are captives let them pray towards their land
 & the citys 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 laws³⁰⁵
 & though they have sinned before thee let them live
 The erring restore before thee & - forgive
 Let thine eyes Lord be open in mercey & 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 cloathed 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



Page 29.

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Page 30.Job- 38th Chap: 1st Part³⁰⁶

Then God half angered answered Job aright³⁰⁷
 Out of the whirlwind & the darkening storm
 "Who darkeneth 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 measures laid & knowest thou
 "Or [who ^] hath 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 racking clouds
 & wrapt thick darkness as its swaddling bands
 & brake up for it my decreed 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 extreemest 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 should'st take it to the bound thereof
 & know the paths that leadeth to its home³⁰⁸
 Knowest thou as much because thou wast 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 oer 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 wildered wastes where no man cares to dwell
 The influences of Pleiades canst thou bind
 Or loosen Orions belt - canst thou bring forth
 Nazzaroth 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'³⁰⁹ - say who hath put
 Wisdom in the inward parts & who hath given
 Prime understanding to the beating heart
 Who can number in wisdom heavens [host of ^] clouds

at the borders of heaven also
 when the clouds have fast together & the most
 growth hath as a rock - can mountains build
 they for the rain on the trees & help
 when rain in dew or in the earth's womb
 they lie in wait for prey - & who provides
 the raven with his food - his young ones cry
 to God & wander for their meat

Psalm 97

The earth rejoiceth now earth is green in his smiles
 let gladness extend through her hundreds of isles
 clouds & darkness are round him almightie & lone
 & terrible righteous judgments inhabit his throne
 a fire goes before him that never burns out
 that flames of his enemies round & about
 his thunders & lightnings blazon the word
 the earth saw & trembled when ruin was hurled
 when the Lord of the earth in his majesty sped
 hills melted like wax in his presence & fled
 the heavens his righteousness praise every hour
 & all people see both his glory & power
 worship him all ye gods & confounded be they
 who serve graven images beings of clay
 Zion saw & was glad at the voice of his Lord
 Judah's daughters rejoiced in thy judgments O Lord
 The Lord on the earth is exalted & high
 he above all the gods is his home in the sky
 he doth 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 mercies is shown
 to the upright 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

Page 31.

Or the bottles of heaven who can stay³¹⁰
 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 97³¹¹

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 throne³¹²
 A fire goes before him that never burns out
 That burns up his enemies round & about
 His thunders & lightnings blazon the world
 The earth saw & trembled where ruin was hurled³¹³
 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
 [Hate]³¹⁴ evil ye people whose love is the Lord
 He preserveth his saints by the truth of his word
 He delivereth from evil & bondage & thrall³¹⁵
 From the hand of the wicked he saveth them all
 For the righteous the light of his mercey 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

Page 32.The New Jerusalem Rev. Chap 21st³¹⁶

& 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 & no³¹⁷ longer it ran
 Which had rolled ever since the creation of man

& I John the most holy city descried³¹⁸
 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 agen

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 crys

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 & true³¹⁹

& once more he said unto me - [now ^] it is done
 I am Alpha Omega - beginning & end³²⁰
 Their thirst shall have water as clear as the sun
 For I am lifes fountain benefactor & friend³²¹
 To him that oercometh 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 & liars³²²
 Idolaters scorcerers mocking the seer
 I leave in the lake of unquenchable fires
 There burning for ever their being & breath
 & this is the second existance 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 eternitys light
 As precious as Jasper as crystal more bright

& had a great wall shining spacious & high³²³
 & 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

He that talked with me a golden reed held
 An emblem of justice & truth not his rod
 In response the city the gates & the wall
 In kindred & love being equal by all

The plan of the city it held 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 the reed in his hand
 Of cubits one hundred forty & four
 According to the measure of a man was the wall
 That is of the angel who guarded the door
 The wall 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 thinees
 The fourth was an emerald green as the waves
 Of the earth that was varnished with oceans & graves

The fifth was sardonyx & sardius the sixth
 The seventh was chrysolite - yellow & green
 & purple the eighth & of yellow unmixt
 The ninth was a topaz - the rest it is here & seen
 Chrysopearus a jacinth an amethyst - blue
 Ad violets that in the sea fallen on the green

The twelve gates were twelve pearls of delight to behold
 Every gate was one pearl where no mortal could walk
 Of the street of the city was paved with pure gold
 Transparent as glass & the waves of a brook
 It was temple there shined itself in my sight
 For the Lord God himself was its temple to light

It need had the city of sun or the moon
 To shine on its splendour - the builders & grace
 Of its glory - was also its light & its noon
 His sun shone upon it for ever & ever
 There the nations of them that are vain's meet a home
 There the kings of the earth bring their glories to come

Its gates they shall never be closed by day
 & night in that city shall never be broken
 The righteous shall there dwell & glory display
 & the labour of nations shall make it their town
 Its wickedness they shall destroy their abode
 & man's prison the friendship of God

No wise shall enter anything to defile
 No abomination of evil come in
 No wickedness of working deception or guile
 No man that forgeth or maketh a lie

Page 33.

& 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 mercey to man

& he measured the wall with his reed in his hand³²⁴
 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 & graves³²⁵

The fifth was sardonix & sardius the sixth
 The seventh was chrysolyte - yellow & green
 & Beryl the eight & of yellow immixt
 The ninth was a topaz - the rest they were seen
 Chrysoparsus 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 lie³²⁶

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But they which are written in Gods book of life
They shall live here forever from sorrow & strife

The River of the Water of Life - Rev. Chap. 22³²⁷

& he showed me a river in midst of the street
Of the water of life clear as chrystal & 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 Jehovahs 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
& faithfull - & 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 bretheren 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 thats 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 holily 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 last³²⁸
They are blest that on all my commandments attend
The tree of life is their right - when lifes 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

And I will open all their eyes & desire to repeat
& they who so loveth & maketh a lie
I Jesus have sent my angel to record
these things unto you & the church of the Lord

I am the offspring of David & the 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 thirst with thirst come & drink
for the water of life ever flows to the brink

In every man living I now testify
that he who doth the words of this book - & yet doth the sin
in adding anything to this prophecy
God shall send him the plagues that are written therein
& if any man take from this book - I Jesus strip
God shall take out his part from the volume of life

& in the most holy city shall meet with no home
for share of the things in this volume of joy
He that testifieth this saith shall quicken & come
Even so come, O Jesus as all sinners desire
The power of Gods love be with all - now - & the
& the grace of Christ Jesus be with you - Amen

The last Judgment - Mt. Matt. from Rev. 3:11 to Rev. 19:1

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

He one from the other shall separate
The wise & the good from the unwise
The sheep from the goats the good shepherds & the
As gold in the furnace is heated & tried

When this is done
shall be placed on his right hand
to come ye blessed of God bid to inherit the kingdom prepared for you

From the foundation of earth in the beginning of time
Some of every colour from every clime

For when I was hungry ye offered me meat
& when I was thirsty ye offered me drink

Ye lodged me a stranger - forsook me
When naked ye clothed me nor left me in travail
I was in prison ye came to me there
& your talk made my bonds unprofitable as the air

Then shall the righteous say - how did we love
See thee in hunger & offer thee food
I was thirsty to give thee drink as a guest
I was naked to give thee a welcome & rest

Ye naked & clothed me in part of our need
When I was sick & restored thee to health
Or in prison came to thee to make thy bonds free
& the king of heaven make answer - ye did it to me

For verily I say unto you in as much
As ye have done to the least of my brethren
ye have done to me

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& whoremongers all their old deeds to repeat
 & they whoso loveth & maketh a lie³²⁹
 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 seperate 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 cloathed 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 & 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
 & 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

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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 cloathed me not - sick & distrest³³⁵
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 lightnings 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 flye³³⁷
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 oer 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 oft a group of cows
Huddled together close - or propped behind
An hedge or hovel ruminant & 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 allied

Speedily will be published
 The tale of Odysseus & Sundryes
 a Poem By Lord Byron
 In Quarts For & Quavers

The haze with naked mast in sheltered place
 Beside the brig close to the bank is tied
 While small waves plashed by its bulgy side

Song

The floods come on the river
 The dykes & full
 Field furrows reach the horses
 Where wild flocks off
 The sky is black the fields are
 The trees their leaves are losing
 The leaves are dancing in the air
 The sun is warm the profusion
 Brown are the flags & fading
 The meadow plain
 Bright yellow is the osier
 Beside the humming trains
 The crows the willow tree
 The lake is full
 But still the duller things
 To self that wanders slow
 The hills are not so tall
 As thought
 The humming dykes are not so tall
 As my heart's silent
 I look on troubled
 With none to share
 The only joy my feeling
 Hides in an aching

Absence in is worse than
 Summer is winter desert & the spring
 So like a mine & city
 Joy dies & hope retires for
 Like living death
 The strongest bitterest thing that life
 Is woman's misdeed of hate & love
 I think of her
 a Song

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Speedily will be Published

The Sale of old Wigs & Sundries³⁴²
A Poem By Lord Byron³⁴³

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

Song³⁴⁴

The floods come oer the meadow leas
The dykes & full & brimming³⁴⁵
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 full³⁴⁶
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 desolate³⁴⁷
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 & love³⁴⁸

I think of thee
a Song³⁴⁹

Don Juan a Poem

"Get us born" - you are whored - the trade is
 promiscuous - in these canting days
 woman of fashion must of course be lewd
 & whoring is the business - that still plays
 Playhouses Ball rooms & then the masquerade is
 - to do what was of old - & now a days

Their maids - say wives so innocent & blooming
 touch of their spouses to seem honest women

This much said about ^{for} more of women
 I wish they were as modest as they seem
 some know husbands till their backs are blooming
 like the red rose black - but yellow cream
 Lord what a while those good days are in coming
 Rants, Haques & Balls - I wish they were a dream
 - I wish for poor men luck - an honest penny
 - heap lot of clothing - no corn law or taxes

I wish - but there is little yet to be wishing
 I wish that head & great coats were had
 I wish that there was some such word as fish in
 my game cake in my garden must be digger
 with dressed fish - as looks with bait for fishing
 I wish all honest men were out of prison
 I wish Mr. P. would spin left yarn - nor quite
 but brown false bills & work had taxer out

I wish young married Games were not so frisky
 for hide the ring to make believe they're single
 I wish small beer was half as good as what
 & married Games with buggers would not bungle
 There's some too cunning for & some too frisky
 I here I want a rhyme - so write down "single"
 & there's such putting in - in wheres cream cows
 some months won't eat for ever & eat on

& children are fond of sucking sugar candy
 & maids of daughters - larger the better
 & women are fond of good regard & bread
 & of blood - & if you change the letter
 No 6 or 8 it could be quite as handy
 & throw the next away - but I'm your debtor
 For modesty - yet wishing ought between us
 It's hard close to a sheaf of oysters did to census

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 helped them fine had made them rotten

I wish old wigs were done with ere they were mended
 I wish - but here's the paper large & lusty
 with speeches that full fifty times the letter
 - Noble Lord John to sweet Misses Prudy
 Is well - a lie good reader I never would ye

Page 38.Don Juan a Poem³⁵⁰

"Poets are born³⁵¹" - & so are whores - the trade is³⁵²
 Grown universal - in these canting days³⁵³
 Women of fashion must of course be ladies
 & whoreing is the business - that still pays
 Playhouses Ball rooms³⁵⁴ - there the masquerade is³⁵⁵
 - To do what was of old - & now a days
 Their maids - nay wives so innocent & blooming
 Cuckold their spouses to seem honest women³⁵⁶

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There's much said about [love ^] & more of women³⁵⁸
 I wish they were as modest as they seem³⁵⁹
 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 dream³⁶⁰
 - I wish for poor men luck - an honest praxis
 Cheap food & cloathing - no corn laws or taxes³⁶¹

I wish - but there is little got bye wishing
 I wish that bread & great coats ne'er had risen
 I wish that there was some such word as 'pishun'³⁶²
 For rhyme sake for my verses must be dizen
 With dresses fine - as hooks with baits for fishing
 I wish all honest men were out of prison³⁶³
 I wish M.P.s would spin less yarn - nor doubts
 But burn false bills & cross bad tapers out

I wish young married dames were not so frisky
 Nor hide the ring to make believe they're [wed del] single³⁶⁴
 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"³⁶⁵
 & there's such putting in - in whore's crim con³⁶⁶
 Some mouths would eat forever & eat on

Childern are fond of sucking candy
 & maids on sausages - larger the better
 Shopmen are fond of good sigars & brandy
 & I of blunt³⁶⁷ - & if you change the letter
 To C or K it would be quite as handy³⁶⁸
 & throw the next away - but I'm your debtor
 For modesty - yet wishing nought between us
 I'd have close to a she as vulcan³⁶⁹ did to venus

I really cant 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 hollow³⁷⁰
 Long speeches in a famine will not fill me
 & madhouse traps³⁷¹ still take me by the collar³⁷²
 So old wig bargains now must be forgotten
 The oil that dressed them fine has made them rotten³⁷³

I wish old wigs were done with ere they're mouldy
 I wish - but heres the papers large & lusty
 With speeches that full fifty times [I've del] [they've ^] told ye
 - Noble Lord John to sweet Miss Fanny Fusty³⁷⁴
 Is wed - a lie good reader I ne'er sold ye

Prince Albert goes to Germany & must he
 leave the queen snuff but when all fools are strutting
 from added eggs as chickens can be coming
 whigs stum state fiddle strings untill they snap
 with cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo year by year
 The razor plays it on the barbers strap.
 The sissors grinder thinks its rather queer
 That labour wont afford him "one wee drop"
 Of ale or gin or half & half or beer
 - Irish prince Albert & the noble bastards
 lols wed the wives - wont 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 the bles ye when in power - in prison sorrow ye
 W 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 back with all my heart
 As I would any other honest body
 His fat nameth paper by me taken - t
 stinking of brimstone - then like whisky toddy
 he mullow sin which seems to warm the habit
 - There's no impiety any sin to god? he
 Pills call with whigs it is not it a hard case
 To leave old whigs & give to hell the carcass

He - in may throw his wig to little kicky
 & so resign his thumb & his power
 & she with the young princeps mount the dicky
 he as milk diet for her german tour
 as for like ministers are rather tricky
 & the country proves it every hour
 well - get in & out - let - for in their station
 Coblers the queens are plumed to the nation

These batch of tondotools on this rotten tree
 shall be the cabinet of any queen
 Though not such coblers had her ornaments be
 They're of gods making - that is plainly seen
 Not red nor green nor orange - they are
 As thin as & flourish as the whigs have been
 But come tomorrow - like the whigs forgotten
 You'll find them withered withered dead & rotten

Death is an aw full thing it is by god
 I've said so often & I think so now
 I'd rather will to see an old wig and
 them doze & die the devil dont bring down
 but things are wearied & this is all -
 I'd rather work them kicking up a row
 I'm weary of whigs & old whigs
 & long been sick of teasing god with prayers

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- Prince Albert goes to Germany & must he³⁷⁵
 Leave the queens snuff box where all fools are strumming³⁷⁶
 From addled eggs no chickens³⁷⁷ can be coming³⁷⁸

Whigs strum state fiddle strings untill they snap³⁷⁹
 With cuckoo cuckold cuckoo³⁸⁰ 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 journey³⁸¹
 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 & land³⁸² -
 I wish prince Alberts queen was undefiled³⁸³
 - & every man could get his wife³⁸⁴ with child³⁸⁵

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 - t
 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 carcasss

Me- b - ne may throw - his wig to little Vicky
 & so resign his humbug & his power
 & she with the young princess mount the dickey³⁸⁶
 On ass milk diet for her german tour³⁸⁷
 Asses like ministers are rather tricky
 I & the country proves it every hour
 W - ll - gt - n & M - lb - n in their station
 Coblers to queens - are phisic to the nation

These batch of toadstools on this rotten tree³⁸⁸
 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 & rotten³⁸⁹

Death is an awfull thing it is by God³⁹⁰
 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

I've never seen the cow turn to a bull
 I've never seen the horse become an ass
 I've never seen an old brown clouted milk
 But I have seen full many a bounding lass
 I wish I had one now beneath the blades
 of these high slams - Must tell me where I live
 & talk of turning I've seen boys & girls
 Turn into of hell - & all for England's glory

I love good fellow ships & wit & punning
 I love true love & God's mercies & blessing
 I hate most damnable all sorts of sinning
 I love the Moor & the Moor & the Moor
 I do not like the way of some young fellows
 I love a modest wife & trusty friend
 - Bricklayers want lime, I want a wife for Phillip
 - do heels & health to sweet Eliza Phillip

Song

Eliza now the summer tells
 Of spots where love & beauty dwells
 Come & spend a day with me
 Underneath the forest tree
 Where the water flows
 Give me joy in words & wishes
 I shall love & freedom dwell
 With orchid flowers & forget me bells
 Come now Eliza set me free
 & see the forest room with me

Here I see the morning sun
 Among the beech tree's shadows run
 That birds go to the short sunny trees
 Where each bright yellow blossom
 With hues that would I had seen
 Yet thought can match their smile
 I try to find them all the day
 But none we wish when they are
 Though flowers bloom now on every tree
 Eliza is the fairest still

The sun wakes up the pleasant morn
 & find me lonely & forlorn
 Then years away to sunny noon
 The flower in bloom that birds in tune
 While dull & down all the year
 As vilest to see no voice to hear
 I in this forest prison lie
 With none to heed my silent sigh
 & underneath the beechen tree
 With none to sigh for love but thee

But the new man is entirely
 as we are young or money from the night
 For all I know it is entirely true
 For I would seem to put all in my spirit
 - I seem to see for princes - & I see
 & see I should I try my spirit to put
 - The cattle salesman - he says
 & feels his bullocks are he
 Let bless me now heady in the
 & ever will thought is the best
 How I should like to punch
 to die creep in with my own eyes

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I've never seen the cow turn to a bull³⁹¹
 I've never the horse become an ass³⁹²
 I've never seen an old brawn³⁹³ cloathed in whool -
 But I have seen full many a bonny lass
 & wish I had one now beneath the cool
 Of these high elms³⁹⁴ - Muse tell me where I was
 O - talk of turning I've seen Whig & Tory
 Turn imps of hell - & all for England's glory³⁹⁵

I love good fellowship & wit & punning
 I love "true love" & God my taste defend
 I hate most damnably all sorts of cunning -
 I love the Moor & Marsh & Ponders end³⁹⁶
 I do not like the song of "cease your funning".³⁹⁷
 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

Song³⁹⁸

Eliza now the summer tells³⁹⁹
 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
 & oer 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 sigh⁴⁰⁰
 & underneath this beachen treee
 With none to sigh for Love but thee

Now this new poem is entirely new⁴⁰¹
 As wedding gowns or money from the mint⁴⁰²
 For all I know it is entirely true
 For I would scorn to put a lie in print⁴⁰³
 - 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 woman⁴⁰⁴
 Or else creep in with my two wives tonight⁴⁰⁵ -

surely that wedding day is on the evening
 Absence like phibic prisons all Delight—
 Mary & Martha both an evil one
 Though both my own — they still belong to no man
 But to our text again — I fear where is it
 Begin as parsons do at the beginning
 Like the first line friend & you can't miss it
 "Poets are born" & so are whores for sinning
 — Here's the court circular — & Lord is that it
 Court cards like bits of — not the naked meaning
 Here's Albert going to Germany they tell us
 & the young queen down with the Dampier & jealous

Now have you seen a trampier on race courses
 Seeking an honest penny as his trade is
 trying a list of all the running horses
 & showing handbills of the sporting ladies
 — In hills of face you'll find a mady groom
 yet all are innocent as any maid is
 But these two dishes into one & drop it
 & if there is a meaning — you may guess it

Don Juan was Ambassador from Spain
 But had no hand in any sort of tax
 His orders hung like halpoms of the fukin
 & made the ladies hearts to melt like wax
 He knew Napoleon & the King of Spain
 & blow'd a cloud over spirits wine or mead
 But all his profits turned out losses rather
 To save one orphan which he forced to father

There's Doctor Woodwimp who deals in wine
 As keeper of state prisons for the queen
 As great a man as is the Duke of Devon
 & save in London is but seldom seen
 Zeph & old A-U-U — mad bawdy ladies curing
 Some for — I like blue & but seldom cure
 The new road over the forest is the right one
 To see red hell & further on the white one

Count hells or 6-99-2 sh-fo as that you please
 Where men clove prisoners are & women ravished
 I've often seen such dirty sights as these
 I've often seen good money spent & laughed
 To keep bad houses up for doctors fees
 & I have known a 2-99-10 tally tavern
 Till all his good intentions began to falter
 — blue death brought in his bill & left the latter

& glorious constitution about expiring
 You had from your tax harvest & your
 Old hang which cluck about that fair young chicken
 — Cooks without spurs that got run over by the
 But is shut up in prison while you're laughing
 The gold from off the gingerbread — to let

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Surely that wedding day is on the comeing
 Abscence like phisic poisons all delight - ⁴⁰⁶
 Mary & Martha ⁴⁰⁷ 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 ⁴⁰⁸
 - Here's the court circular - O Lord is this it
 Court cards like lists of - not the naked meaning ⁴⁰⁹
 Here's Albert going to germany they tell us
 & the young queen down in the dumps & jealous ⁴¹⁰

Now have you seen a tramper 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 innoscent 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 ⁴¹¹
 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 prusia
 & blowed a cloud oer spirits wine or max ⁴¹²
 But all his profits turned out losses rather
 To save one orphan which he forced to father

Theres Doctor Bottle imp who deals in urine ⁴¹³
 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 ⁴¹⁴
 Yclep'd old A - ll - n - mad brained ladies curing
 Some p - x - d like Flora and but seldom clean ⁴¹⁵
 The new road oer the forest is the right one ⁴¹⁶
 To see red hell & further on the white one

Earth hells or b - gg - r sh - ps or what you please ⁴¹⁷
 Where men close prisoners are & women ravished
 I've often seen such dirty sights as these ⁴¹⁸
 I've often seen good money spent & lavished
 To keep bad houses up for doctors fees ⁴¹⁹
 & I have known a b -gg -rs tally travers'd
 Till all his good intents begin to falter
 - 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 ⁴²⁰
 - Cocks without spurs that yet can crow so blythe
 Truth is shut up in prison while ye're licking ⁴²¹
 The gold from off the ginger bread - be lythe

In winding that patched broken old state clock
Playbones open - but mad houses lock up

Give tail more pay where rank stamper larches
& pay your debt what your frocks to right
Dead blues & paglomas & fill your churches
Sto' clove foot of dirty victory fight
Like left all still of nature's blame
& look his penning on another's fault
To show plain truth something by force
New conventions - not mine - those their own

Now this day give the almost empty
& being out say I will seek no friend
In man or woman - but his friend
In two days more I may that ticket bear
& or may thousands here as well as
The day is here - the next shows
& then mad houses I can find no more
Next Tuesday next to be Lord Byron's birthday

Lord Byron's job - the man who wrote the Don Quixote
& is just what he is & nothing more
Who with his pen has left the world his price
& makes all nothing as it was before
Who used his wings to fly to the world
& might have had some twenty other
Who have been dead so long their names
& still in all men's minds & in the world

It is a wickedness to say him
I am I by having people or making
to him. Off all habits try to get
& be like an old ball that's out of play
It is these such a man as
I've read that poem called The Tale of the
- But singing verse may tell you
Line an old rogue that's the best man

Lord Byron had a quire of foolscap paper
that he used - & composed Don Quixote
in which he can do what he pleases
Lord bless me what fine poems Don Quixote
The very tailors they will read & enjoy
& maintain a man's countenance
through the laws of weather by how his air environ
I think myself as great a hand 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 & young as a flower
& one could - would bring in the tea men
whose hands pens steamers each of ten horse power
I am I bring her beauty's fair to weather
in I've looked both in harbour that together
Now isn't this can't write a single line
From any body's pocket she will buy

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In winding that patched broken old state clock up
 Playhouses open - but madhouses lock up⁴²²

Give toil more pay where rank starvation lurches⁴²³
 & pay your debts & put your books to rights
 Leave whores & playhouses & fill your churches⁴²⁴
 Old clovenfoot your dirty victory fights
 Like theft he still on natures manor poaches
 & holds his feasting on anothers nights
 To show plain truth your action in bawdy farces
 Men show their tools - & maids expose their arses⁴²⁵

Now this day is the eleventh of July⁴²⁶
 & 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 birthday⁴²⁷

Lord Byron poh⁴²⁸ - the man wot rites the worses⁴²⁹
 & 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 rehearses⁴³⁰
 & might have had some twenty thousand more
 Who has been dead so fools their lies are giving
 & still in Allens madhouse caged & living⁴³¹

If I do wickedness today being Sunday⁴³²
 Can I by hearing prayers or singing psalms
 Clear off all debts twixt 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'⁴³³
 - 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 could endite
 A silver candlestick & green wax taper
 Lord bless me what fine poems I would write⁴³⁴
 The very tailors they would read & caper
 & mantua makers⁴³⁵ would be all delight
 Though laurel wreaths my brows did ne'er environ
 I think myself as great a bard as Byron⁴³⁶

I have two wives & I should like to see them⁴³⁷
 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 mem⁴³⁸
 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 together⁴³⁹

Now i'n't this canto worth a single pound
 From anybodys pocket who will buy

as things are with a letter I'll be bound
the honest reader take the book & try
& if as I have said it is not good
I'll write a better can't say & say
so reader now the money tall in lock it
& buy the book to help to fill my pocket.

[the beginning of the poem]

• Dis Jura - to be inserted between the first & second Sonnet at

Milton sung to den & the fall of man
not woman for the name implies a fall - c
& they would make a ruin of his plan
falling so often they can fall no more
Till he a worse delusion if you see
An innocence - & I will sing no more
Whenever mischief is tis woman's having
treated from man's off to be man's ruin

The flower in bud hides from the fading sun
& keeps the hue of beauty on its cheek
But when full blown it shows its richest hue
The hue turns pale & soon is ready streak
So tis with woman who pretends to shun
Immediate actions which they only seek

Night hides the wh - e & in the dark & part
Blas was p - x - d - in woman's quiet as ready

Marriage is nothing but a drinking hour
A phlegm old codger when they're turned up forty
Good & left my wife like other folks
But not untill I found her false & faulty
& woman fair - the man must pay the piper
Such makes a husband out of the unbelly manly
Who falls in love will suffer his own undoing
The road to marriage is - "the road to ruin"

Love worse then debt or death or any other
It is the damnest part of nature
A hell incarnate is a woman's nature
The kn. is tied - & therefore love the knave
A wife is just the prototype to hate
Commons for stock & warrens for the cow
Are not more truly passed over in sight to plain
Then this incumbrance on the rights of man

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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 it⁴⁴⁰
 & buy the book & help to fill my pocket

[the beginning of the Poem⁴⁴¹

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 lower⁴⁴²
 Tell me a worse delusion if you can
 For innocence - & I will sing no more
 Wherever mischief is tis womans brewing
 Created from manself to be mans ruin⁴⁴³

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 seek⁴⁴⁴
 Night hides the wh - e & cupboards tart & pasty⁴⁴⁵
 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 & faulty⁴⁴⁶
 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 undoing⁴⁴⁷
 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 matrimony⁴⁴⁸
 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.⁴⁴⁹

[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible due to high contrast and noise. It appears to be a list or series of entries.]

Page 44.

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Child Harold

I think of thee a song

I think of thee at early day,
I wonder where my love can be
When the evening shadows grey
I low I think of thee

Along the meadow banks I rove
When the flax is green
I hope my first & dearly love
To meet thee once again

I think of thee at dewy morn
At the sunny noon
I walk 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 winter's lone & naked view
I think of only thee

While life breathes on this earthly ball
What e'er my lot may be
Whether in freedom or in thrall
Nay I think of thee

In winter & the fields are bare & waste
The air one mass of "vapour clouds & storms"
The good hard beams are buried & obscured
& chilly glooms the mid-day light deforms
Yet comfort now the social bosom warms
Friendship of nature which I hourly prove
And in this winter scene of frost & storms
That fields the frozen lake & leafless grove
Are richer grand religion & true love

Song

Thou art 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
When art still my bonny queen

Page 45.

Child Harold
I think of thee a Song⁴⁵⁰

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 rove⁴⁵¹
& down the flaggy fen
& hope my first & early love
To meet thee once agen

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 & waste⁴⁵²
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 blossom⁴⁵³
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 queen⁴⁵⁴

Page 46.Autumn⁴⁵⁵

Autumn⁴⁵⁶ hath commenced her short pauses of showers calms & storms & sunshine & 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 & naked fields that he is already on the way - it is now very pleasant to take walks in the morn - ing & in fact at any time of the day though the mornings are misty & "the foggy dew"⁴⁵⁷ 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 maybe almost called red - black others brick red & 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 & serpentine by a fine river⁴⁵⁸ whose [wood of ^] osiers & reeds make a pleasant rustling sound though the wind scarcely moves a single branch - how beautifull the bank curves on like an ornament in a lawn by a piece of water the map of ploughed field & grass ground in small alotments 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 &⁴⁵⁹ 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 jiant 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 steeples⁴⁶⁰ & castle towers as fine houses & public edifices do amongst city scenery - tis pleasant as I have done to day to stand upon a length of Bridges⁴⁶¹ & notice the objects around us there is the fine old Northborough castle peeping through the scanty foliage of orchards & thorn hedges & there is the beautifull Spire of Glinton Church⁴⁶² towering high [over? illeg] the grey willows & dark wallnuts⁴⁶³ 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 beautifull 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 autumn sky is 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 sweeing 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 bank⁴⁶⁴ its green slopes look so pleasant though the wind blows chilly & the rustics face looks purple

with cold - men are occupied in cutting the reeds from the drains to make
 a water course from the autumn rains - solitary persons are sifting up
 the hedges & thrusting the brushwood into their places & creeps which
 the wine made from one ground or field into another & stopping gaps
 made in harvest by gleaners & labourers - the ~~stall~~ stall up from
 the brown grass in the mead over where a couple of flutters & flights &
 drops out of sight as suddenly again into the grass - now a flock of
 redwings 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 other they
 are near - a solitary crow & sometimes 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 round at the sight of the stick in ones hand perhaps snick
 taking it for a gun - the top stones of the walls of all the ~~ing~~ ing or
 gaps are full of fine two letter names rudely cut with a knife
 for houses churches & flowers - & some phobos & some ~~in~~ in some
 cut in full - the idle amusements of contented ~~in~~ in some
 - tinders & shepherds - now a snipe with its pointed wings hovers
 from the meadow dikes into the fields - the meadow in ~~in~~ in some
 the banks put me in mind of school adventures & boyish ~~in~~ in some
 the very spots where I used to open the whole & in days of fishing
 the bells kept chiming in vain - I can not make out ~~in~~ in some
 feelings & fancies are gone too - the ~~in~~ in some
 bigger than ~~in~~ in some
 large are now no bigger than puddles & as for fish I can not have
 interest enough to walk round them to see if there is an ~~in~~ in some
 arches yonder with trees peeping above ~~in~~ in some
 the traveller is hopping away heavily over them on the ~~in~~ in some
 is Colham Bridges - ~~in~~ in some
 fancied wishes & happiness of early life faded to shadows of ~~in~~ in some
 even then the shadows of ~~in~~ in some
 help it - yet there is even calm ~~in~~ in some
 I can even now meet happiness in sorrow the usual pictures ~~in~~ in some
 in these flats & meadows warns ones loneliness such as ~~in~~ in some
 driving his little lot of cows or sheep down the ~~in~~ in some
 plucking a handful of awes from the half naked sedges to
 as he goes on - The rocky mornings now are often frosty - the
 grass & wild herbs are often covered with rime or ~~in~~ in some
 of snow - in the few greenward ~~in~~ in some
 he seen in flocks of two or three hundred to other about ~~in~~ in some
 Mall Dabbling on the hedges of the lakes left by the ~~in~~ in some
 pleasing to be the woods of osiers by the river sides ~~in~~ in some

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with cold - men⁴⁶⁵ 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 awes⁴⁶⁶ 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 cowntending boys horse
 - tenders & shepherds - now a snipe with its pointed wings hurries up from the meadow dyke into the fields - the meadow lakes⁴⁶⁷ 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 vain⁴⁶⁸ - I cannot make out where all these feelings & fancys 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 any⁴⁶⁹ - 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 Bridges⁴⁷⁰ - time makes strange work with early fancys 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 loneliness⁴⁷¹ such as a rustic driving his little lot of cows or sheep down the plashy droves & plucking a handfull 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 Hall⁴⁷² 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

There are a few holes to us by the hall or village - here he was in in the
 old nests as if it was spinning, though perhaps they may do it to get from the
 cold for - is a little crizzling ice on the edges of the water, in some
 places much as - & horse footings - Now the man is sitting off his boat
 to ferry over the water where an old passenger may now & then call to be fer-
 ried over the lake to the other bank or high road - The older hedges & lotts are
 with a row of the white thorn hedges are getting thin of leaves & so crowded with
 and that - by the fields will be dressed in nothing but crimson & scar-
 let - nature like simplicity is beautiful in every day she chooses to put on
 with the seasons - even winter with his doublets of snow & hoar frost can
 make himself agreeable when he chooses to give people leave to go out of
 doors - I love to clamber over these bridges - 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 per-
 titting off some ledge portion of the bank but the middle rail is off so
 I took under it - though instead of climbing over it - there is a pair of
 feet on a beam - standing on end against the thorn hedge & in another
 front an old man stands on its beam ends against a dotted line
 sometimes we see a roll lying in on one corner & broken trays & an old
 ate off the hooks waiting to be repaired till repairs are useless - even
 these rustic implements - pendages of husbandry blend with nature
 & look blending in the fields

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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 & scarlet - 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 doors⁴⁷³ - I love to clamber over these bridgewalls & 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 partitioning 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 dotterel⁴⁷⁴ 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

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While the winter swells the fountain
 While the spring awakes the bee
 While the channel 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 never as won
 I so true'll ever be

Thou'rt loves eternal summer
 The dearest maid I prove
 With bloom white as ivory
 & warm as virgin love
 No falshood gets between us
 Thine ought the tie can sever
 As early I dwell with veins
 Thou'lt my own love forever

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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 cupid⁴⁷⁵ dwells with venus⁴⁷⁶
 Thou'rt my own love forever⁴⁷⁷

Page 50.Lamentations of Jeremiah⁴⁷⁸Chap. 3

I am the man that affliction hath seen⁴⁷⁹
 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 light⁴⁸⁰
 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 old⁴⁸¹
 He hath made my chain heavy & hedged me about
 He hath shut out my prayer & I cannot get out⁴⁸²
 He hath enclosed all my [path del] 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 del] [pince^] 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 hour⁴⁸³
 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 & gall⁴⁸⁴
 My soul hath them still in remembrance the pain
 & is humbled within me to feel it again
 This I recall to my mind [though del] & 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 hour⁴⁸⁵
 Yet faith shall be new every morning like flowers⁴⁸⁶
 The Lord saith my soul [saith the Lord del]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 friends⁴⁸⁷
 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 truth⁴⁸⁸

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 he should be his hope & his trust
 He giveth his cheek to the smiters & our fears
 He is filled with reproach at their insolent jeers
 For his Lord & his God forsake him will never
 Although he cause grief will not leave him for ever
 He will have compassion - I am not afraid
 For his mercies in multitudes come to aid
 He hath not withdrawn his face from me
 Nor will he give his hand to the enemy
 The Lord will not foot the imprisoned of earth
 To turn aside the right of a man from his right
 To submit a man in his cause or to let
 But his right the most high he approveth & sett
 Who saith & it cometh to pass in the sun
 When the Lord he commandeth it not to be done
 Out of your mouth it was never derided
 That mixture proceeded of evil & good
 Whence with a living man daily complain
 When our sins are punished & rebuking is pain
 Let us search out our ways & to comfort accept
 Turn us again to the help of the Lord
 Let us lift up our hearts & our hands unto heaven
 Pleading God the most high & the merciful
 We had transgressed & rebelled against him
 Thou hast not heard with anger - he is called upon
 Thou hast not heard with anger - he is called upon
 Thou hast not heard with anger - he is called upon
 Thou hast not heard with anger - he is called upon
 That our prayer should not pass or be not heard
 In the midst of the people - the great & the small
 Thou hast made us the refuse of scorn
 All enemies open their mouths to deride
 Dear & precious are against us every side
 Desolation destruction hath left us & here
 With rivers of waters mine eyes run down
 In the destruction of the day of my people
 Without intermission my tears trickle down
 Till the Lord shall look down from the heavens & see
 I mourn for my own city 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 - & never
 & cast a stone on the door of my freedom forever
 I said I'm cut off & my heart is felt dead
 When waters & darkness flowed over mine head
 From out the low dungeon I cried on the same
 Thou heardest & heard my petition & mine
 I did not thine ear to my breathing cry
 Thou dost not hear in this day that I should die
 "Dear God" was his voice when I called upon thee
 Thou hast paid the cause of my soul & I'm free

Page 51.

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 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 aid⁴⁸⁹
 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
 Imploreing 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 rest⁴⁹⁰
 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 dead⁴⁹¹
 When waters & darkness flowed over mine head⁴⁹²
 From out the low dungeon I called on thy name⁴⁹³
 Thou heardest 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

Page 52.

Thou hast witnessed my wrongs & redeemed my life
 Judge thou my cause thou hast witnessed the strife⁴⁹⁴
 Against me all their vengeance thy wisdom hath seen
 & thou knowest what their [word illeg del] hidden immaginings 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 somthing abhored
 From under the face of thy heaven O Lord

Pursecute & destroy them - thine anger
 & rod [of God
 From the earth & from under the heavens

 Job Chap. 39⁴⁹⁵

Knowest thou the time when the wild goats breed
 On rocks - or mark when the swift hinds calve
 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 land⁴⁹⁶
 The multitudes of citys are his scorn⁴⁹⁷
 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 barn⁴⁹⁸
 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 that⁴⁹⁹
 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 scorns both horse & rider in her flight
 Hast thou given the horse his strength or cloathed
 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 scorns to be affraid & mocks at fear
 Neither turneth he away from the [battle del] sword

Against him the load of sinners rattles
 The pattering of feet to the dominions of the
 & his withered fingers shall sweep the ground
 Whether heeds be the sound of the trumpet
 He pines among the trumpets & languishes ah ah
 In the rage of battle he smelleth afar
 The thunder of captains & shoutings of war
 Both the weak widow teach the hawk to fly
 & stutted her wings toward the southern sky
 At thy command O the eagles mount & make
 Their nests on high - their cry is the rock
 In the strong place & on the rocky crag
 From thence their cry is heard & their eyes
 Behold the far - the young ones suck up milk
 & here the slain is where the eagles fly

Job Chap 40

Moreover God answered Job & said
 Shall he that reprovethe God
 Then Job made answer Lord be hold
 What shall I answer thee - my voice is small
 I lay my hand upon my mouth & fear
 I have heard & I shone - but I answer not
 thy voice - nor further than I now proceed
 I had heard the voice whispering in the storm
 I should be answered fearful Job & said of sake
 & hid up thy reins again & like a man
 I will demand of thee - declare & speak
 wilt thou my judgments divanual & me
 condemn as wrong - that thou mayest righteous be
 to thine the power - hast thou an arm like God
 or canst thou thunder with a voice like him
 thyself with excellency & majesty array
 with glory & with beauty deck thyself
 & cast about the rage of violence
 Behold the proud abuse him with thy wrath -
 around look on the proud & bring him low
 Reared underfoot the wicked in their place
 together hid them in degrading dust
 & hid their faces under secret the alle
 Then will I also unto thee confess
 that thy right hand & arm - thy self can save
 Behold Behold which I made with thee
 the cattish grasp is with the ot - is now
 his strength is in his loins his force & power
 is in the navel of his belly - moving now
 his tail like a cedar - his sinews stones
 are waft together - his bones are strong as brass
 as firm unflinching all as iron bars
 Chief of Gods ways is he - let that made him
 can make his sword to pierce him & destroy
 The mountains smelt bring him forth his food
 where all the beast with field & forest & play
 covets of shady trees & make his lair
 In the new forests of the untrodden fern

Page 53.

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 & make⁵⁰⁰
 Their nests on high - their erie 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 40⁵⁰¹

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 dust⁵⁰²
 & bind their faces under secret thralls
 Then will I also unto thee confess
 That thy right hand & arm thy self can save⁵⁰³
 Behold Behemoth which I made with thee
 He eateth grass as doth the ox⁵⁰⁴ - 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 all as iron bars⁵⁰⁵
 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 fens⁵⁰⁶

The shady trees doth cover him with shadow
 & willow brooks encompass him with shade
 Behold he drinks a river in his thirst
 & tramples swallows Jordan in his mouth
 He takes it with his eyes in thirsty draughts
 & his nose pierces through the hidden sources

Job 41 Chap

Canst thou with hooks Leviathan draw out
 or with a cord let down amidst the deep
 Canst thou put hooks into his nostrils nose
 or bore his jaw through with a fetter thou
 wilt he to thee a supplication make
 or speak soft words to make a friend of thee
 will he with thee make covenant - or thou
 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 stripes & do no more
 thy hopes of him behold are all in vain
 shall not one at his sight be soon cast down
 is station up thine none so piece to dare
 who thou is able by my power to stand
 who hath prevented that I should repay
 All under the whole heavens lives at mine
 who parts & powers I will not conceal
 his great proportions & his faint powers
 the facing of his garment who can see
 or with his double bridle temper him
 The doors of his face who can unlock
 his teeth stand round as terrible as death
 his scales they are his bridle shut up secure
 From mortal eye as is a clove of eel
 one to another joins the common air
 comes not between them - nor a passage finds
 they stick & join & sundering is in vain
 He needs & a splendid light doth shine
 His eyes are like the mornings bright & fair
 out of his mouth breath cometh like burning lamps
 & spouting sparks leap out as living fire
 His nostrils as a boiling chaldron smokes
 His breath is kindled as coals - & terrors flames
 come issuing from his mouth in terror play
 His 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 hurls forth his fire the waves
 The sword & spearing him will never hold

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

Job 41 Chap⁵⁰⁷

Canst thou with hooks Leviathan draw out⁵⁰⁸
 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 consceal
 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 affraid
 When he breaks forth they purifye themselves
 The sword assailing him with never hold

The heavens his wondrous works declare
 The firmament his power
 His hand works 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
 Scatter all the world around
 As a bridegroom from his chamber comes
 He shows his shining face
 Rejoicing as the school blooms
 As a strong man runs a race
 His going forth is from the east
 & to the end of times 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 commandments they are pure
 My eyes with love they fill
 The fear of God is clean & pure
 Enduring still forever
 The judgments of the Lord are sure
 & righteous as the given
 It more to be desired are they
 Than gold can ever become
 More sweet than the honey far
 Or than the honeycomb

Psalm 19

The heavens his wondrous works declare
 The firmament his power
 His hand works 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
 Scatter all the world around
 As a bridegroom from his chamber comes
 He shows his shining face
 Rejoicing as the school blooms
 As a strong man runs a race

His going forth is from the east
 & to the end of times 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 commandments they are pure
 My eyes with love they fill

The fear of God is clean & pure
 Enduring still forever
 The judgments of the Lord are sure
 & righteous as the given

It more to be desired are they
 Than gold can ever become
 More sweet than the honey far
 Or than the honeycomb

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 childern brutes of pride

 Psalm 19⁵⁰⁹

The heavens his wonderous works declare⁵¹⁰
 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 oer run
 His tabernacle there hath birth
 A dwelling for the sun

As a bridegroom from his chamber comes⁵¹¹
 He shows his shineing 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 pure⁵¹²
 & 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
 Endureing 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

Thou shalt not truth thy servant to warm
 Their faith is his regard
 In keeping them my being earnest
 In safe & sure reward

Who can his errors understand
 Pardon me from secret faults
 Keep back thy servant in thy love
 That he not fails nor letts

Let no presumptions sins dar have
 Dominion over me
 Thou shalt I meet a welcome grave
 Or live upright with thee

Of vile transgressions great & small
 Lord keep me innocent
 Thou shalt thou hear my conscience call
 I 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 ere I fall
 By thy avenging rod
 My strength my hope my life my all
 My 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 loving friend shall be
 He is my refuge still
 The prince of my cares is he
 I trust in God I will

Surely from the foulness of man
 He shall deliver thee
 From the noisome pestilence
 Still keep thee pure & free

His truth shall shield & buckler give
 When hell its vengeance brings
 Beneath his feathers thou shalt live
 & his defending wings

Night's terrors all shall flee away
 His fears thy soul alarm
 The arrows that are shot by day
 Shall do thy life no harm

From pestilence that walks by day & night
 By dwelling shall be free
 His destruction that at all times shall blight
 Shall never injure thee

Page 56.

Their stedfast 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 presumptious 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 innoſcent
 Then ſhalt 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 91⁵¹³

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 ſtronghold of my cares is he
 & truſt in God I will

Surely from the fowler's ſnare
 He ſhall deliver thee
 & from the noiſome peſtilence
 Still keep thee pure & free⁵¹⁴

His truth ſhall ſhield & buckler give
 When hell its vengeance flings⁵¹⁵
 Beneath his feathers thou ſhalt live
 & his defending wings

Nights terrors all ſhall flee away⁵¹⁶
 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

In hand by thy side shall fall
 And shall bring thee into the hall
 Thy hand shall hold the
 Thy hand shall hold the
 The world's eyes
 Because the land thy refuge lies
 Thy house is God's land

Its evil thou shalt meet at large
 No plague thy dwelling raise
 For he shall give his angels charge
 To keep thee all thy days

Then they shall bear up in their hands
 Nor lead thee all alone
 Lest thou shouldst dash in troubled 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 trampled 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 touch
 Him I will satisfy
 So mine salvation will I show
 When troubles days are by

Child Harold

Song

In this cold world without a home
 Discomolate I go
 The summer looks as cold to me
 As winter frost & snow
 Though winter scenes are dull & drear
 A colder lot I prove
 No home had I through all the year
 But Mary's honest love

But love inconsistent as the wind
 Some shifts another way
 No other love my heart can find
 No other love my heart can find

Page 57.

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 Gods regard⁵¹⁷

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 bye⁵¹⁸

Child Harold⁵¹⁹

Song

In this cold world without a home⁵²⁰
 Diconsolate 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 Marys honest love

But love inconstant as the wind
 Soon shifts another way
 No other home my heart can find
 Lifes⁵²¹ wasting day by day

up & sit & sit & sigh
 on better days to come
 Mary with my love & joy
 my truth & heart my home

My tent & heart was once my home
 May was all the year
 But now through seasons as I roam
 My winter everywhere
 My life I got through care & toil
 My friend I see no more
 My recompense for Mary's smile
 & the love within her breast

My love was nice as that as when
 I mingled with her own
 But often to be told I grieve
 Every feeling known
 But slow loved hopes are all beaft
 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 Babylon
 Come on the ground & gird must
 Thy throne & power is gone
 Daughter of the children thy race is over
 Now art thou tender & delicate no more

Take millstones & grind meal
 Remove thy fair locks
 Bare thy thighs reveal
 For go thy teaching mocked
 Paps on the streets thy nakedness is seen
 & shame is over thee though thou art a queen

Thy innermost shame is seen
 Abuse 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 fly
 Uncover thy brow
 To Chaldea's daughter sigh
 For thou shalt never more be called
 Lady of kingdoms by these

I with my people wrath
 Did their heritage pollute
 & in thine hands left bill
 To make them desolate
 Thou shoudst no mercy but with heavy strokes
 Upon the ancient heart thou laid the yoke

Page 58.

I sigh & sit & sit & sigh
 For better days to come
 For Mary was my hope & joy
 Her truth & heart my home⁵²²

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 possess
 To recompence for Marys 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 agen
 & every feeling known
 But now loves hopes are all bereft
 A lonely man I roam
 & abscent Mary long hath left
 My heart without a home

Isaiah Chap 47⁵²³

Come down & sit in dust⁵²⁴
 Daughter of Babalon
 Come on the ground ye must⁵²⁵
 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 mocks⁵²⁶
 Pass oer the streams thy nakedness is seen
 & shame is oer thee though thou art a queen

Thy inmost shame is seen
 Reverse thy every plan
 I'll vengance 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 mercey 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 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 something'. 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 'Reollections &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 Glington Church. Glington was the home of Mary Joyce.
- ¹¹ Glington 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 [&?] 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'.
- ¹⁹ Cowper in *The Task: A Poem*, Book I, was ambivalent about Gipsies in that he appreciated their colourful presence in the countryside but also deemed them 'A vagabond and useless tribe'. William Cowper, 'The Task: A Poem' (Ilkley, N. Yorkshire & London: A Scolar Press Facsimile, 1973), p. 30.
- 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 - them 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' Urbevilles* (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 Poems of Robert Burns* (London and New York: Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd, 1928), p. 280.
- ³³ 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.
- ³⁴ Clare constantly refers to his two wives throughout Nor, MS6 and in his correspondence dated 1841.
- ³⁵ Clare's disrespect towards Queen Victoria in the *Don Juan* stanzas contrasts with the warmth of affection expressed for her early in the manuscript.
- ³⁶ Anne Tibble explains that 'sock' is from the verb to sog or soak through. *John Clare: The Journals, Essays, and the Journey from Essex* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1980), p. 136, n. 10.
- ³⁷ 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'.

- ³⁸ 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.
- ³⁹ A complex and bizarre statement as regards chronology.
- ⁴⁰ 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.
- ⁴¹ 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.
- ⁴² Note Clare's use of Byron's title immediately following his quotation from 'Sonnet on Chillon'.
- ⁴³ 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.
- ⁴⁴ 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.
- ⁴⁵ 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.
- 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'.
- ⁴⁷ 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.
- ⁴⁸ 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.
- ⁴⁹ Robinson and Powell, *Later Poems*, p. 40 draw attention in a footnote to the similarity of this line to Byron's, 'The Prophecy 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.
- ⁵⁰ 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.
- ⁵¹ Clare has failed to cross the letter 't' in 'truly' and on many other occasions in the first twenty

pages of the manuscript.

- ⁵² 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.
- ⁵³ The stanzas of this first ballad are written on page 2 of Nor, MS8.
- ⁵⁴ Clare's identification with Byronic prisoners, ('The Prisoner of Chillon', Tasso and Dante) surface throughout Nor, MS6.
- ⁵⁵ Ink is splattered on the paper here.
- ⁵⁶ Presumably the forest at High Beech which in the early days of his confinement Clare greatly admired.
- ⁵⁷ 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.'
- ⁵⁸ 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.
- ⁵⁹ 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.
- ⁶⁰ Nor, MS6, p. 4, 'my hopes are not entirely hopeless while while even the memory of Mary lives so near me'.
- ⁶¹ The letters 'y' and 's' are smudged.
- ⁶² Nor, MS6, p. 1, 'My school walks there was every day / Where she made winter flowery'.
- ⁶³ This stanza is written on page 32 of Nor, MS8 and is in keeping with the mood and sentiment of 'Psalm 19'.
- ⁶⁴ 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.
- ⁶⁵ Nor, MS8, p. 14. Byron in Don Juan, Canto II, Stanza 49, ll. 385 - 386 wrote, "'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went down / Over the waste of waters: like a veil'. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 445.
- ⁶⁶ 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 - Glington', '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.

- ⁸⁴ 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.
- ⁸⁵ 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.
- ⁸⁶ 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[ince] 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.
- ⁸⁷ Byron's stanza in his 'Epistle to Augusta' also describes a ceaseless vigil. The Oxford Authors: Byron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 271, stanza 14.
- ⁸⁸ It is not clear whether Clare is using a capital letter here.
- ⁸⁹ In Nor, MS8, this line reads, 'There's madness there & misery here'.
- ⁹⁰ This stanza is written in Nor, MS8, p. 18.
- ⁹¹ 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.
- ⁹² 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.
- ⁹³ 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.
- ⁹⁴ Clare fails to use the apostrophe here and throughout the manuscript.
- ⁹⁵ Clare has substituted a comma for the hyphen he has used in the same stanza of this song on page 1 of the manuscript.
- ⁹⁶ Robinson and Powell in Later Poems, p. 45, l. 143 use the plural, 'cheeks'.
- ⁹⁷ This stanza and the following five stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, on page 18.
- ⁹⁸ Exactly as Clare has written the word.
- ⁹⁹ Bunyan's, Pilgrim's Progress.
- ¹⁰⁰ Clare was convinced that he was a bigamist during his confinement both at High Beech and Northampton asylums.
- ¹⁰¹ Byron, 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto III, 'Above me, hark! the long and Manic cry / Of minds and bodies in captivity'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Byron, p. 416, ll. 1 - 2.
- ¹⁰² 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 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.

- ¹⁰³ Clare may be thinking here of the women who frequented the playhouses and whorehouses described in Don Juan. See Nor, MS6, p. 38.
- ¹⁰⁴ 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 & asistance of the devil'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 651.
- ¹⁰⁵ 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.
- 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'.
- ¹²⁴ John Broadbent, ed., John Milton, Paradise Lost, Books I - II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 60, 'The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven'.
- ¹²⁵ Caesar at the Rubicon, 'lacta alia est'.
- ¹²⁶ 'The pole star of my being & decay'. Nor, MS6, p. 6.
- ¹²⁷ 'Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean - roll! / Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain / Man marks the earth with ruin'. Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza 179, ll. 1603 - 1605. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 199.
- ¹²⁸ King Lear, 'And thou all-shaking thunder, / Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world'. Act III, scene ii, ll. 6 - 7. Peter Alexander, ed with Introduction and Glossary, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1973), p. 1092.
- 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.
- ¹³¹ Byron's 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto VIII, ll. 189 - 191, 'Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,/ But with a sense of its decay: - I see / Unwonted lights among my prison shine'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, p. 417.
- 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.
- 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.
- ¹⁴¹ Byron, in his *Childe Harold*, Canto III, stanza 3, wrote: 'in my youth's summer I did sing of one / The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind'. Jerome McGann, *Byron: Oxford Authors*, p. 105.
- 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 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.
- 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.

- ¹⁵³ Nor, MS8, p. 28.
- ¹⁵⁴ 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.
- ¹⁵⁵ 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.
- ¹⁵⁶ Clare has written parts of 'Balaam's Parable Chapter 24' at this point in Nor, MS8.
- ¹⁵⁷ 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.
- ¹⁵⁸ Glinton Spire would seem to be the reference here.
- ¹⁵⁹ Compare with, 'the pole star of my being and decay', Nor, MS6, p. 6.
- ¹⁶⁰ 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.
- ¹⁶¹ Glinton.
- ¹⁶² Glinton church spire stands tall and clear of the flat terrain which surrounds it.
- ¹⁶³ The dove is known to mate only once.
- ¹⁶⁴ In Nor, MS8, the paraphrase of Balaam's Parable interrupts here.
- ¹⁶⁵ Draft version in Nor, MS7, p.55.
- ¹⁶⁶ 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.
- ¹⁶⁷ 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.
- ¹⁶⁸ 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.
- ¹⁶⁹ 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.
- ¹⁷⁰ Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.
- ¹⁷¹ In the prose piece 'Autumn', p. 46, Clare refers to 'Glinton Church', 'West Deepings crocketed spire' and 'Maxey Tower church'.
- ¹⁷² Clare appears to have used an apostrophe here but incorrectly.
- ¹⁷³ 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'.
- ¹⁷⁴ Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.

- ¹⁷⁵ 'From morn to noon he fell, / from noon to dewy eve,' John Broadbent, John Milton: Paradise Lost, Book One, p. 80, ll. 742 - 743.
- ¹⁷⁶ 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'.
- ¹⁷⁷ 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.
- ¹⁷⁸ Another reference to Glinton church.
- ¹⁷⁹ 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.
- ¹⁸⁰ 'Satan stood unterrified, and like a comet burned'. John Broadbent, Paradise Lost, l. 708, p. 109.
- ¹⁸¹ 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.
- ¹⁸² Written in ink on the margin of *The Morning Chronicle*, 18th June. Nor, MS7, p. 55.
- ¹⁸³ A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V, scene i, 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet, / Are of imagination all compact'. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ll. 7 - 8 p. 217.
- ¹⁸⁴ Draft version in Nor, MS D20.
- ¹⁸⁵ 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.
- ¹⁸⁶ Note the reiteration of the idea of confinement.
- ¹⁸⁷ Robinson and Powell in The Later Poems, p. 56, suggest 'nest' here.
- ¹⁸⁸ Written in Nor, MS D20.
- ¹⁸⁹ 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 remembrance. Eric Robinson and David Powell, The Later Poems, p. 14.
- ¹⁹⁰ Clare refers to this notion on p. 2 and p. 23 of Nor, MS6.
- ¹⁹¹ See Nor, MS6, p. 2, '& how could I forget'.
- ¹⁹² 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.
- ¹⁹³ MS D20.
- ¹⁹⁴ The stanzas in the early pages of Nor, MS6 do indeed 'calendar' the memories of Mary.

- ¹⁹⁵ Clare writes two words in one here.
- ¹⁹⁶ 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'.
- ¹⁹⁷ Clare has deleted a letter at the front of 'chill'.
- ¹⁹⁸ An echo of Burns here.
- ¹⁹⁹ Robinson and Powell suggest 'must' as opposed to 'mayest'.
- ²⁰⁰ Both this stanza and the one following are written together on an undated catalogue for household furniture. Nor, MS7, p. 49.
- ²⁰¹ Sung in celebration of the autumn harvest.
- ²⁰² 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.
- ²⁰³ 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, ll.156 - 167, pp. 1080 - 1081.
- ²⁰⁴ Nor, MS7, p. 47.
- ²⁰⁵ The speaker of this song develops the idea of sojourning in order to find Mary.
- ²⁰⁶ This song does not appear in Nor, MS8 or in Peterborough, A62.
- ²⁰⁷ Nor, MS7, p. 47.
- ²⁰⁸ 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.
- ²⁰⁹ 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.
- ²¹⁰ Nor, MS7, p. 15.
- ²¹¹ This stanza and the following two stanzas share much in common with the prose piece 'Autumn' on pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6.
- ²¹² In his autobiographical Sketches Clare remembers Mary Joyce, 'yet young as my heart was it would turn chill when I touchd her hand'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 87.
- ²¹³ 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'.
- ²¹⁴ '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.

- ²¹⁵ Writing in the third person Clare appears to be referring to himself as well as Byron.
- ²¹⁶ 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.
- ²¹⁷ 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.
- ²¹⁸ 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 wallnuts still lingering in the church yard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time'.
- ²¹⁹ This song has been faircopied into Nor, MS6 from the Bodleian, MS Don. a8.
- ²²⁰ 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.
- ²²¹ Compare with 'Song of Solomon, Chapter 3, l. 2, 'I sought him but found him not'.
- ²²² 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.
- ²²³ To the right of this stanza Clare has written the paraphrase of 'Revelations, Chapter 21st, The New Jerusalem'.
- ²²⁴ 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.
- ²²⁵ The Bodleian stanza, written along the margins of the *The Mercury*, reads as follows, 'But autumn finds no change in me', etc.
- ²²⁶ The word 'love' is crossed through in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.
- ²²⁷ See, Nor, MS6, p. 5. 'But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower'.
- ²²⁸ Bodleian, MS Don. a8 reads, 'While Mary lives in bloom for me'.
- ²²⁹ 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.
- ²³⁰ Compare with prose fragment on page 20 of Nor, MS6. 'Closes of greensward & meadow', etc.
- ²³¹ 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 spre*y
 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 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 beautifull 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 Glington 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. Glington’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.
- ²⁴³ Coleridge’s ‘Dejection: An Ode’, ‘Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice; / To her may all things live from pole to pole’. John Beer, ed., Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poems (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1963), p. 283.
- 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 Glington 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.
- ²⁶⁸ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, ed., The Poetical Works of Lord Byron (London: John Murray, 1905), p. 415, 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto I, ll. 4 - 5.
- ²⁶⁹ *ibid.* 'To Florence', p. 243. Hartley Coleridge's 'List of Contents' describes this poem as being first published in Childe Harold, 1812. p. lxiv.
- ²⁷⁰ Clare's own lines. They reaffirm the manuscript's preoccupation with truth and deception as does

the following stanza.

- ²⁷¹ Robinson and Powell include this stanza on page 69 of The Later Poems.
- ²⁷² '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'.
- ²⁷³ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Lord Byron, 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto IV, ll. 80 - 81, p. 416.
- ²⁷⁴ 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 Godridge and the Library at Nottingham Trent University in locating the exact source for this quotation.
- ²⁷⁵ Clare's engagement with the idea of sojourning surfaces throughout Nor, MS6.
- ²⁷⁶ 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.
- ²⁷⁷ Please refer to the Chapter entitled 'Self Position and Reposition in Nor, MS6'.
- ²⁷⁸ 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'.
- ²⁷⁹ 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.
- ²⁸⁰ Robert Inglesfield, ed., William Cowper, The Task: A Poem (Ilkley, N. Yorkshire & London: Scholar Press Facsimiles, 1973), Book V, ll. 446 - 448.
- ²⁸¹ The paraphrase is written in quatrains with alternate rhyme scheme, abab.
- ²⁸² 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.
- ²⁸³ Clare may be referring to his own social position here but David is also a Shepherd King.
- ²⁸⁴ 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'.
- ²⁸⁵ This paraphrase continues to argue the enduring truth of God in the face of personal doubt and uncertainty.
- ²⁸⁶ The mood of exaltation and gratitude for freedom and stability is clearly present in this paraphrase.
- ²⁸⁷ The reference to home here cannot be coincidental.

- ²⁸⁸ 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.
- ²⁸⁹ The mood and emphasis on reestablishing roots and building foundations of a 'house' endorsed by God is relevant, particularly as 'Balam's Parable' which precedes 'David's Prayer' is also concerned with fresh beginnings.
- ²⁹⁰ 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.
- ²⁹¹ 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.
- ²⁹² The ideas of liberation and relocation are firmly in place here.
- ²⁹³ The notion of a dwelling place or 'house' are repeatedly referred to by the biblical speaker in this paraphrase.
- ²⁹⁴ Robinson and Powell include an apostrophe here. The Later Poems, p. 118, l. 50.
- ²⁹⁵ Robinson and Powell suggest 'maker' here. *ibid.* p. 119, l. 72.
- ²⁹⁶ This line is interpreted as 'grace' by Robinson and Powell though the line is illegible in Nor, MS6.
- ²⁹⁷ Robinson and Powell supply '& do the just thing'. Later Poems, p. 119.
- ²⁹⁸ The metaphor of the wreck is employed by Clare in his prose fragment 'Autumn' on page 46 of Nor, MS6.
- ²⁹⁹ 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.
- ³⁰⁰ Clare appears to be using the pages of Nor, MS6 to proclaim his grief and loss.
- ³⁰¹ 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[li]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 'Muliplying 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 follws 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 *The Lincoln 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 on page 25 of Nor, MS6.
- 319 The ideas of faithfulness and truthfulness are in abundance in the paraphrases in contrast to the world of Don Juan.
- 320 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.
- 321 Here the speaker finds spiritual comfort in God in contrast to his acute sense of isolation and disillusionment expressed in Child Harold.
- 322 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.
- 323 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.
- 324 This verse of the paraphrase shares the page with the autumnal stanza, 'Tis autumn now & nature's scenes', etc.
- 325 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'.
- 326 These lines prefigure the preoccupation with lying, deception and counterfeit in Don Juan

commencing on p. 38 of Nor, MS6.

- ³²⁷ This paraphrase is also written in draft form in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.
- ³²⁸ It is worth comparing the time scheme described in the first stanza on page 12 of Nor, MS6.
- ³²⁹ The speaker's main preoccupation in Don Juan two pages later.
- ³³⁰ This is a clear example of the fusion of the themes of homelessness and questing which permeate Nor, MS6.
- ³³¹ See also Bodleian, MS Don. a8. See also Last Judgement in Chapters 21 & 22 of Revelations.
- ³³² 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.
- ³³³ See Chapter Three, 'The Northborough Autumnal Sequence'.
- ³³⁴ 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.
- ³³⁵ 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.
- ³³⁶ 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.
- ³³⁷ Job, Chap. 38, Nor, MS6, p. 30. See also Genesis, Chapters 18 & 19.
- ³³⁸ 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.
- ³³⁹ 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.
- ³⁴⁰ 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.
- ³⁴¹ 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'.
- ³⁴² 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.
- ³⁴³ Child Harold is not so specifically attributed to Byron on p.4 of Nor, MS6.
- ³⁴⁴ 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.

³⁴⁵ '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.

³⁴⁶ There are a number of lines and fragments in Peterborough, 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.

³⁴⁷ 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.

³⁴⁸ Page. 3 of Peterborough, MS A62.

³⁴⁹ 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.

³⁵⁰ 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, l. 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.
- ³⁷⁰ The Whigs lost the election in July 1841.
- ³⁷¹ A name given to asylum warders.
- ³⁷² 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).
- ³⁷³ A euphemism for corruption; in particular to make them drunk.
- ³⁷⁴ In July 1841 the newspapers announced the marriage of Lord John Russell to Lady Fanny Eliot.
- ³⁷⁵ 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.
- ³⁷⁶ Obscene reference to Queen Victoria and her alleged lovers who deceived Albert in his absence.
- ³⁷⁷ A highly salacious slur on the Queen's moral character - possibly gossip in the papers about Queen Victoria's difficulty in conceiving another child.
- ³⁷⁸ 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.
- ³⁷⁹ Another reference to deception but in this instance political and not marital.
- ³⁸⁰ 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.
- ³⁸¹ Prince Albert left England to return to Germany in July 1841.
- ³⁸² References to Clare's own confinement and possibly its cause - poverty.

- ³⁸³ 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.
- ³⁸⁴ 'Wife' is underlined by Clare in Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8.
- ³⁸⁵ See Byron's Don Juan, Canto 1, stanza 100.
- ³⁸⁶ 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.
- ³⁸⁷ Asses milk was given to babies.
- ³⁸⁸ Corruption had spread throughout society including the Cabinet.
- ³⁸⁹ This may be Clare's own political view or a report 'lifted' from contemporary newspaper accounts.
- ³⁹⁰ Clare assumes the posture and voice of the Regency fop here. See also Measure for Measure, Act III, Scene (i), l. 114.
- ³⁹¹ '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.
- ³⁹² The impossibility of animals practicing deceit is emphasised here.
- ³⁹³ 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.
- ³⁹⁴ 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.
- ³⁹⁵ Clare appears equally unimpressed by both Whigs and Tories and their false promises to the country.
- ³⁹⁶ Three miles from High Beech.
- ³⁹⁷ A quote from Gay's, Beggar's Opera.
- ³⁹⁸ See Chapter Three, 'Songs and Ballads' in Nor, MS6. In Nor, MS8, these three stanzas follow the opening ballad of Child Harold.
- ³⁹⁹ The stanza form alters here from ottava rima to abababcc of the Childe Harold style.
- ⁴⁰⁰ 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.

- ⁴⁰¹ Return to ottava rima verse form of Don Juan.

- ⁴⁰² The inference would seem to be that both new coins and early marriage are quickly worn down through ill use.
- ⁴⁰³ ‘Real poets must be truly honest men’, Nor, MS6, p. 4.
- ⁴⁰⁴ ‘Sweet Susan that was wont my love to be / & Bessey of the glen - for I’ve been roaming’. Nor, MS6, p. 8.
- ⁴⁰⁵ 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.
- ⁴⁰⁶ Don Juan’s *alter ego* also finds the idea of absence difficult to negotiate, ‘Absence in love is worse than 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.
- ⁴¹¹ See Byron’s Don Juan Canto 9 and Canto 10, stanzas 21 and sixty. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, pp. 704 and 714.
- 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?
- ⁴¹⁵ Geoffrey Summerfield draws attention to Allen’s tests on urine for venereal disease. Selected Poems, note for p. 220, p. 371.
- ⁴¹⁶ See p. 2 of Nor, MS6 where Clare discusses the ‘rout the Gipsej 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 this time, concerned with cuckoldry and infidelity. Robinson and Powell, Later Poems, pp. 102 - 103.
- 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.
- ⁴⁴⁰ '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 -'.

- 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'. Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 379.
- ⁴⁴² This stanza which dwells on woman's reputation has much in common with Clare's prose fragment on page 21 of Nor, MS6.
- ⁴⁴³ 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.
- ⁴⁴⁴ 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.
- ⁴⁴⁵ Note the pun on 'tart' as whore and in tart as pastry.
- ⁴⁴⁶ Possibly a reference to Byron who married Miss Milbanke in 1815 and signed a deed of separation in 1816.
- ⁴⁴⁷ '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.
- ⁴⁴⁸ Clare draws a distinction between true love and matrimony.
- ⁴⁴⁹ 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.
- ⁴⁵⁰ This song was sent to George Reed on November 17th 1841 from Northborough.
- ⁴⁵¹ The mood in this song is in keeping with the prose passage 'Autumn' which follows immediately on page 46.
- ⁴⁵² This stanza has been written in draft form into a blue exercise book held at the Bodleian and known as Bodleian, MS Don. c64.
- ⁴⁵³ 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.
- ⁴⁵⁴ 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

- ⁴⁵⁵ 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.

- ⁴⁵⁶ 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.
- ⁴⁵⁷ Clare refers to the folk song.
- ⁴⁵⁸ Margaret Grainger identifies the river as The Welland. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 5.
- ⁴⁵⁹ Margaret Grainger comments on the smudged insertion here, calling it 'an insertion within an insertion'. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 8.
- ⁴⁶⁰ 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.
- ⁴⁶¹ 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.
- ⁴⁶² It is significant that Clare uses specific markers both here and in his 'Reollections' 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.
- ⁴⁶³ 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.
- ⁴⁶⁴ Clare was probably walking up - stream towards Lolham as Grainger suggests in The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 333, n. 6.
- ⁴⁶⁵ This page of the description is altogether more legible.
- ⁴⁶⁶ Bodleian, Don. c64 and Peterborough, MS A62, dated 1841 contain the following lines: 'Crimsoned with awes the awthorns bend / Oer meadow dykes & rising floods'.
- ⁴⁶⁷ 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'.
- ⁴⁶⁸ See stanza 6 on Nor, MS6, p. 18, 'About the meadows now I love to sit / On bridge walls & rails as when a boy'.
- ⁴⁶⁹ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁰ 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'.
- ⁴⁷¹ This line echoes Clare's prose fragment, 'Greenswards'. Nor, MS6, p. 20.
- ⁴⁷² 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.

- ⁴⁷³ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁴ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁵ Note the strong similarity between these lines and Nor, MS6, p. 38. In this instance Vulcan is substituted for the god of love - Cupid
- ⁴⁷⁶ Clare's use of what appears to be a quasi Elizabethan erotic convention.
- ⁴⁷⁷ These two verses have been written at the bottom of page 49. The upper half of this page is blank.
- ⁴⁷⁸ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁹ 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.
- ⁴⁸⁰ This particular paraphrase is resonant with Clare's sense of betrayal, self-deception and disillusionment.
- ⁴⁸¹ 'Autumn', p. 47. Clare is engaged in both instances with memories of the past and the passage of time.
- ⁴⁸² 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.
- ⁴⁸³ 'The Lamentations' as the lines develop, provide an ambiguous mix of total desperation and tentative hope in the future.
- ⁴⁸⁴ 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.
- ⁴⁸⁵ 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'.
- ⁴⁸⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 5, 'But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower'.
- ⁴⁸⁷ 'Friend of the friendless from a host of snares / From lying varlets & from friendly foes'. Nor, MS6, p. 9.
- ⁴⁸⁸ 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'.
- ⁵⁰⁸ This paraphrase is written in pencil on page 3 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.
- ⁵⁰⁹ Clare has written this psalm on page 4 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.
- ⁵¹⁰ 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.
- ⁵¹¹ 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 nature's 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', 'absent' 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.

'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

I

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. Its 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 by 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 'Reollections', 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 thralldom of his love for Mary, 'Nor night nor day I'm never free / But sigh for absent 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 view point 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.⁴ 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 'Reollections', 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'.⁵

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 invloved as the speaker's muse, '- Mary the muse of every song I write / Thy cherished memory never leaves my own'.⁶ 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 process⁷ 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.

II

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'.⁸ 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'.⁹

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 thralldom. 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 possessing / Fare thee well'.¹⁰ 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'.¹¹ 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'.¹² 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, MS8,¹³ '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 thralldom 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'.¹⁴ 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'.¹⁵ 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 existence that might make me a liar before this letter is now scribbling is finished'.¹⁶

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 fancies 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'¹⁷ or the form which his fancy, shapes 'in every dell'.¹⁸ 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’.¹⁹ In October of 1848, he reminisced that, ‘There is no place like Home’.²⁰

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’.²¹ 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’.²² 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’.²³

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 imperceptably into a Vol & then I call it Child Harold of which I wrote much in Essex & here'.²⁴ 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'.²⁵ 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 - Glington', 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 'Reccolections' 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 explains³¹ 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 recieved 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 carnallity of life palatable & the way to eternity pleasant - the one & only book that supplies soul & body with happiness - I also found in it the beautiful in poetry in perfection - I had read Homer but a greater than 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 extistance³⁴

‘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’.³⁵ 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’.³⁶ 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'.³⁷ 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'.³⁸ 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'.³⁹ 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'.⁴⁰ 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'.⁴¹ 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'.⁴²

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 Glington 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'⁴⁴ 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'.⁴⁵ 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'.⁴⁶ 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'.⁴⁷ 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 oer many things / That love hurds up in truth's imaginings'.⁴⁸ 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'.⁴⁹

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'.⁵⁰ 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'.⁵¹

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 through 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'.⁵²

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'.⁵³ 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'.⁵⁴ (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'.⁵⁵ 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 challenges'. 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 Faze & 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'.⁵⁶ 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 -'.⁵⁷ 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 thralldom 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 - Glington' 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 casuality'. 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'.⁶⁵ 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'.⁶⁶ 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 -'.⁶⁷ 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 Iceland's 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 - ⁷⁰

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

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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 mass¹

'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'.²

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.³ One begins to feel, like Clare, that the 'path is stopt' or that there is: 'no road here'.⁴

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.⁵ 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'⁶ 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 80'⁷ The sheer range⁸ 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'.⁹ 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 cartoons¹⁰ 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 - 1837¹¹ 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 amendments. 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'.¹²

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'.¹³ 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'.¹⁴ 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'.¹⁵ 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.

NOTES

PREFACE

- ¹ Jerome McGann, ed., Byron: Oxford Authors (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto IV, stanza 164, ll. 1468 - 1470, p. 195.
- ² J.W. Tibble, ed., The Poems of John Clare (London and New York: Dent: Dutton, 1935).
- ³ Geoffrey Summerfield, ed., John Clare: Selected Poems (London: Penguin, 1990).
- ⁴ Donald Reiman, Romantic Texts and Contexts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), p. 5.
- ⁵ Geoffrey Grigson, ed., Poems of John Clare's Madness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949).
- ⁶ Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, eds., The Later Poems of John Clare (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964).
- ⁷ Eric Robinson and David Powell, The Later Poems.
- ⁸ Jack Stillinger, The Texts of Keats' Poems (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974).
- ⁹ Chapter Two of this thesis explores the Textual and Reception History of Child Harold.
- ¹⁰ Geoffrey Grigson, ed., Poems of John Clare's Madness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949).
- ¹¹ Eric Robinson and David Powell, The Later Poems.
- ¹² A detailed description of Nor, MS6 and its relationship with the earlier manuscript Nor, MS8 follows in Chapter Three.
- ¹³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodleian MS Don. a8.
- 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

- ¹ T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets: 'Little Gidding V' (London: Faber, 1944), pp. 58 - 59.
- ² Richard Jackson's article on 'The Romantic Metaphysics of Time' provides a very useful debate on the Romantic preoccupation with History and Metaphysics. *Studies in Romanticism*, 19, Spring 1980, pp. 19 - 30.
- ³ George Dennis O'Brien, Hegel on Reason and History: A Contemporary Interpretation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 110.
- 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'.
- ¹⁷ I am referring to the same 1828 Galignani edition presented to Clare by Eliza Emerson in February 1832. See *The Catalogue of the John Clare Collection*, p. 24 in The Northampton Public Library.
- 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.

- ²¹ Mark Storey, ed., The Letters of John Clare (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1985), pp. 645, 646 and 649.
- ²² For a discussion on the importance of Clare's sense of loss in poems of the Middle Period see C. Taylor, 'The tradition of Melancholy and its influence upon the sense of loss in The Poetry of John Clare', unpublished master's dissertation, University of York, 1991.
- ²³ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 643.
- ²⁴ 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.
- ⁵ Mark Storey, 'Byron and Clare, "Childe Harold" and "Child Harold". Byron – Byronism – Liberalism – Philhellenism', *Proceedings of The 14th International Symposium*, Athens, 6 – 8th July, (1987), p. 45.
- ⁶ William Cowper, The Task: A Poem (Ilkley, North Yorkshire & London: Scolar Press Facsimiles, 1973), Book V, ll. 458 - 459, p. 204.
- 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.*
- ¹³ Jerome J. McGann, Byron: The Oxford Authors, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 144.
- ¹⁴ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 647.
- ¹⁵ Mark Storey, op. cit. pp. 644 - 645.
- ¹⁶ Mark Storey, op. cit. pp. 647 - 648.
- ¹⁷ Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 643.
- ¹⁸ Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 646.

- ¹⁹ 'Her house of bondage worse than that of old / Which God avenged on Pharoah - the Bastile'. William Cowper, The Task: A Poem, Book V, ll. 1 - 2, p. 201.
- ²⁰ Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 669.
- ²¹ Nor, MS6, p. 16.
- ²² Eric Robinson and David Powell, Later Poems, 2nd Vol.
- ²³ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 678.
- ²⁴ Mark Storey, loc.cit.
- ²⁵ Frederick Martin, The Life of John Clare 'The Northampton Peasant Poet' (London: Macmillan & Co., 1865).
- ²⁶ Frederick Martin, Life of John Clare, p. 274.
- ²⁷ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 648.
- ²⁸ J.W. and Anne Tibble, John Clare: His life and poetry (London: Heinemann, 1965).
- ²⁹ In the 'Chronology 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.
- ³⁰ Martin, Life of John Clare, p. 237.
- ³¹ Martin, loc. cit.
- ³² 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.
- ³³ Stephen Gill, ed., William Wordsworth: The Oxford Authors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 131 - 135.
- ³⁴ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 146.
- ³⁵ Janet Todd, 'John Clare: A Bibliographical Essay', *British Studies Monitor*, Vol 4 (1974), PT Winter, pp. 3 - 18.

CHAPTER TWO

i THE TEXTUAL HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD

- ¹ Geoffrey Grigson, ed., Poems of John Clare's Madness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949).
- ² J.W. Tibble, ed., The Poems of John Clare, 2 Vols, (London and New York: Dent Dutton, 1935).
- ³ Geoffrey Grigson, Poems of John Clare's Madness, p. 9.
- ⁴ Geoffrey Grigson, op. cit. p. 6.
- ⁵ Mark Storey, ed., Clare: The Critical Heritage (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 274.

- ⁶ I am indebted to David Powell for this information and a number of other helpful and encouraging conversations.
- ⁷ Quoted by J.W. and Anne Tibble, John Clare: His Life and Poetry (London: Heinemann, 1956), p. 176.
- ⁸ Johanne Clare, John Clare and The Bounds of Circumstance (Kingston and Montreal: Mc Gill Queens University Press, 1967).
- ⁹ Johanne Clare, op. cit. p. 194.
- ¹⁰ J.W. and Anne Tibble, eds., John Clare: Selected Poems (London and New York: Everyman Dent, Dutton, 1965).
- ¹¹ Geoffrey Summerfield, John Clare: Selected Poems (London: Penguin, 1990).
- ¹² Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, eds., Clare: New Oxford English Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).
- ¹³ Elaine Feinstein, John Clare: Selected Poems (London: University of London Tutorial Press, 1968).
- ¹⁴ James Reeves, Selected Poems of John Clare (London: Heinemann, 1969).
- ¹⁵ Pierre Leyris, Poemes et Proses de la Folie de John Clare (presentes et traduits par Pierre Leyris, suivis de 'La Psychose de John Clare' par Jean Fanchette) (Paris: Mercure de France, 1969).
- ¹⁶ Raymond and Merryn Williams, eds., Selected Poetry and Prose of John Clare (London and New York: Methuen, 1986).
- ¹⁷ Eric Robinson and David Powell, eds., The Oxford Authors: John Clare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
- ¹⁸ Johanne Clare, John Clare and The Bounds of Circumstance, p. 195.
- ¹⁹ Anne Tibble ed., John Clare: The Journals, Essays, and the Journey from Essex (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1980).
- ²⁰ Margaret Grainger, The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 326 - 337.
- ²¹ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 649.
- ²² Eric Robinson and David Powell, eds., The Later Poems of John Clare, Vol 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 105 - 158.
- ²³ 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: Heinemann, 1964).
- ²⁴ Geoffrey Grigson ed., Poems of John Clare's Madness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949).
- ²⁵ I refer to the numbered stanzas in Nor, MS8 which make their appearance half way through this manuscript.

- ²⁶ Arthur Symons, ed., Poems by John Clare (London: Henry Frowde, 1908).
- ²⁷ Andrew Motion, 'Watchful Heart: The Poetics and Politics of John Clare', review of Hugh Haughton, Adam Phillips, and Geoffrey Summerfield, eds., John Clare in Context in *The Times Literary Supplement*, No. 4762, July 8th, (1994), p. 5.
- ²⁸ Geoffrey Grigson, ed., Selected Poems of John Clare (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950).
- ²⁹ Geoffrey Grigson, op. cit. p. 20.
- ³⁰ ibid.
- ³¹ Geoffrey Grigson, Poems of John Clare's Madness, p. v.
- ³² Geoffrey Grigson, loc. cit.
- ³³ Grigson states on page 9 of his Introduction that: 'Never until this book printed in full'.
- ³⁴ Using an asterisk to denote poems, 'previously collected', Grigson lists stanzas presumably published by J. W. and Anne Tibble in 1935; 'No Single Hour Can Stand For Nought', 'Written in a Thunderstorm', 'I've Wandered Many A Weary Mile', 'Say What is Love' and 'T'is Autumn now'.
- ³⁵ Geoffrey Grigson, Poems of John Clare's Madness, p. 91.
- ³⁶ Geoffrey Grigson, op. cit. pp. 99 - 108.
- ³⁷ 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'.
- ³⁸ Nor, MS8, p. 27.
- ³⁹ Eric Robinson and David Powell, Later Poems.
- ⁴⁰ Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, eds., The Later Poems of John Clare (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964).
- ⁴¹ Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, op. cit p. 1.
- ⁴² Robinson and Summerfield, loc. cit.
- ⁴³ Robinson and Summerfield, loc. cit.
- ⁴⁴ Robinson and Summerfield, Later Poems, p. 2.
- ⁴⁵ Robinson and Summerfield, loc. cit.
- ⁴⁶ Robinson and Summerfield, loc. cit.
- ⁴⁷ Robinson and Summerfield, loc. cit.
- ⁴⁸ Robinson and Summerfield, op. cit. p. 3.

- ⁴⁹ Robinson and Summerfield, *op. cit.* p. 8.
- ⁵⁰ Robinson and Summerfield, *op. cit.* p. 7.
- ⁵¹ J. W. and Anne Tibble, John Clare: Selected Poems (London and New York: Dent, Everyman, 1965), p. 239.
- ⁵² Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, Later Poems, p. 27.
- ⁵³ J.W. and Anne Tibble, eds., John Clare: A Life (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1956).
- ⁵⁴ Janet Todd, 'Mary Joyce in The Poetry of John Clare', *The Mary Wollstonecraft Newsletter*, Vol 1, No. June, (1972), pp. 12 - 18.
- ⁵⁵ J.W. and Anne Tibble, eds., John Clare: Selected Poems (London and New York: Everyman, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1965).
- ⁵⁶ I refer to p. 242 of the The Selected Poems of John Clare.
- ⁵⁷ J.W. and Anne Tibble, *op. cit.* p. 239.
- ⁵⁸ See Chapter Three in which the Northborough autumnal sequence is discussed in detail.
- ⁵⁹ J.W. and Anne Tibble, Selected Poetry of John Clare, p. 239.
- ⁶⁰ J.W. and Anne Tibble, *loc. cit.*
- ⁶¹ Geoffrey Summerfield, ed., John Clare: Selected Poetry (London: Penguin, 1990).
- ⁶² Nor, MS9, 10 and 20 are Northampton manuscripts and are cited here as references for work completed during Clare's second confinement.

ii THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF CHILD HAROLD: 'THE SLEEPING BEAUTY'

- ¹ Clare's engagement with the whole notion of *existence* and *forgetfulness* permeates the entire contents of Nor, MS6.
- ² 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).
- ³ Mark Storey, Clare: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 256.
- ⁴ Mark Storey, *op. cit.* p. 248.
- ⁵ Mark Storey, *op. cit.* p. 250.
- ⁶ Mark Storey, *loc. cit.*
- ⁷ These poems are included in Volume 1 of Robinson and Powell's, Later Poems of John Clare, pp. 16 - 27.
- ⁸ Quoted by Margaret Grainger, 'A Study of the Poetry of John Clare with Special Reference to his Lyrics, Ballads and Ballad Collecting', unpublished master's thesis, University of London, 1959, p. 173.

- ⁹ A.J.V. Chapple, 'Some Unpublished Poetical Manuscripts of John Clare', *The Yale University Gazette*, Vol. 31 (1956), pp. 34 – 48.
- 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!).
- ¹⁴ Margaret Grainger, 'A Study of The Poetry etc', p. 186.
- ¹⁵ Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 266.
- 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.
- ¹⁹ Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 252.
- ²⁰ Margaret Grainger, 'Bicentenary Thoughts iv: Past Thoughts', *John Clare Society Journal*, Bicentenary Number 12 (July 1993), p. 39.
- ²¹ John Plummer was a local poet from Kettering. His Northamptonshire Ballads and Other Poems were published in 1861.
- ²² Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 268.
- ²³ Nor, MS6, p. 9.
- ²⁴ Mark Storey, The Critical Heritage, p. 272.
- ²⁵ Hugh Haughton, Adam Phillips and Geoffrey Sumerfield, eds., John Clare in Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 'The exposure of John Clare', pp. 178 - 187.
- ²⁶ Adam Phillips, op. cit. p. 179.

- ²⁷ Adam Phillips, op. cit. p. 180. Phillips also observes, 'For Clare, wider circulation meant less room for himself'.
- ²⁸ Nor, MS17, p. 12.
- ²⁹ Nor, MS6, p. 70.
- ³⁰ 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.
- ³¹ 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.
- ³² J. L. Cherry, *Life and Remains of John Clare* (London: J. Taylor & Son, Northampton, 1873).
- ³³ Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 16.
- ³⁴ Mark Storey, loc. cit.
- ³⁵ Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 18.

iii 'SLEEPING BEAUTY'

- ¹ Arthur Symons, ed., *Poems by John Clare* (London: Henry Frowde, 1908).
- ² Mark Storey, ed., Clare: *The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1973), p. 307.
- ³ Arthur Symons, *Poems by John Clare*, p. 205.
- ⁴ Edward Thomas, *Feminine Influence on the Poets* (London: Secker, 1910), Chapter IV, 'Women Nature and Poetry', pp. 80 – 87.
- ⁵ *Athenaeum*, (7th January, 1921) No. 4732, pp. 9 – 10.
- ⁶ J.W. and Anne Tibble, *John Clare: His Life and Poetry* (London: Heinemann, 1956).
- ⁷ J.W. and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. 171.
- ⁸ J.W. and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. 170.
- ⁹ J.W. and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. 169.
- ¹⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 444 - 456.
- ¹¹ Lynne Pearce, 'John Clare and Mikhail Bakhtin - the dialogic principle: readings from John Clare's manuscripts 1832 - 1845', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1987. Pearce's argument is encapsulated in an article written in 1989, 'John Clare's "Child Harold": A Polyphonic Reading', *Criticism*, Vol xxxl, Spring (1989), No. 2, pp. 139 - 157.

- ¹² Johanne Clare, John Clare and the Bounds of Circumstance.
- ¹³ See Mark Storey, 'Byron and Clare: "Childe Harolde" and 'Child Harold', from Byron: Byronism - Liberalism - Philhellenism, Proceedings of The 14th International Symposium, Athens (6 - 8th July, 1987), pp. 42 - 52.
- ¹⁴ Byron in his 'Prophecy of Dante', Canto The Fourth, describes poets who remain: 'Unlaurelled upon earth, but far more blessed / Than those who are degraded by the jars / Of Passion, and their frailties linked to fame'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Lord Byron (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1905), p. 450, ll. 6 - 8.
- ¹⁵ Tim Chilcott, A Real World: A Doubting Mind: A Critical Study of The Poetry of John Clare- (Pickering: Hull University Press, 1987).
- ¹⁶ Mark Storey, The Poetry of John Clare: A Critical Introduction (London: Basingstoke, 1974).
- ¹⁷ Tim Chilcott, Chapter V, 'Don Juan and Child Harold', p. 146.
- ¹⁸ Chilcott, op. cit. p. 175.
- ¹⁹ Mark Storey, The Poetry of John Clare p. 160.
- ²⁰ Storey, op. cit. p. 155.
- ²¹ Storey, op. cit. pp. 161 and 165.
- ²² Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, 'An Interpretation of Certain Asylum Letters', *Review of English Studies*, xii Part 50, (1952), pp. 135 - 146.
- ²³ Chilcott, A Real World: A Doubting Mind, p. 145.
- ²⁴ Hugh Haughton touches on this issue. Clare in Context, p. 2. John Goodridge and Kelsey Thornton discuss Clare's 'outsiderness' in their essay, 'John Clare: the trespasser': Haughton, op. cit. pp. 87 - 122.
- 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 usd 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**
- ¹ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 14.
- 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: '- besure you take care of all M.S.S as you have & may recieve as they will often be the only copies'. *ibid.* p. 48.

- ³ Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, John Taylor's Editing of Clare's, 'The Shepherd's Calendar' *Review Of English Studies, New Series*, Vol XIV, (1963), p. 73.
- ⁴ Eric Robinson and Geoffrey Summerfield, loc cit.
- ⁵ To be fair to Taylor, the poor state of Clare's handwriting made proof reading 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.
- ⁸ Robert Wells, 'The Waking Dream of Act: John Clare's passion for knowledge and the medieval rootedness of his poetry', *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 13th, (1997), pp. 3 - 4.
- ⁹ Hugh Haughton, Adam Phillips and Geoffrey Summerfield, *Clare in Context*, pp. 11 - 26.
- ¹⁰ Anne Barton, 'John Clare Reads Lord Byron', *Romanticism* issue ii Vol 2 (1996), p. 130.
- ¹¹ Zachary Leader, *Revision and Romantic Authorship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 206 - 261.
- ¹² *ibid.* p. 208.
- ¹³ Jack Stillinger, *The Texts of Keats' Poems* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1974).
- ¹⁴ Thomas Tanselle, *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, ed., Joseph Gibaldi (New York: Modern Language Association, 1981).
- ¹⁵ Donald Reiman, *Romantic Texts and Contexts* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), Chapter 10, pp. 167 - 180.
- 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.
- ¹⁹ Thomas Tanselle, *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1981), pp. 60 - 61
- ²⁰ Kelsey Thornton and Anne Tibble, eds., *John Clare: The Midsummer Cushion* (Ashington and Manchester: Mid - NAG and Carcanet Press, 2nd edition, 1990).
- ²¹ Kelsey Thornton and Anne Tibble, op. cit. p. vii.
- ²² Kelsey Thornton, ed., *John Clare: The Rural Muse* (Manchester: Mid - NAG and Carcanet New Press, 1982).
- ²³ Kelsey Thornton, op. cit. p. 21.

- 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 trespasser', 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.
- ²⁸ Mark Storey, Letters, pp. 667 - 668.
- 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.
- ³² See Textual and Reception History of Child Harold.
- 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.
- ³⁷ Jerome McGann, The Textual Condition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 21.
- 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.
- ³⁹ McGann, The Textual Condition, 'The Socialization of Texts', p. 72. Also, McGann, The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 69 - 110 and McGann, A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
- ⁴⁰ Jerome McGann, A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism (Chicago: University of Chicago

Press, 1983), p. 6. McGann cites Philip Gaskell who describes the indeterminacy 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 improv'd form what ever but to utterly condemn them to oblivion M. S. S. excepted'. Mark Storey, The Letters, p. 14.
- ⁴² Quoted by Mc Gann, A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 6.
- ⁴³ McGann, A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism, p. 7.
- ⁴⁴ Richard Holmes, Footsteps: Adventures Of A Romantic Biographer (London: Flamingo, 1995), p. 253.
- 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

i 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; 'Recolections &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.
- ⁴ Margaret Grainger, ed., The Natural History Prose Writings of John Clare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

- ⁵ Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself (Ashington, Northumberland: Mid-NAG and Carcanet, 1996).
- ⁶ 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'.
- ⁷ Nor, MS6, p. 16.
- ⁸ Throughout Clare's experience of confinement he held the associative memory of home truth and loved woman in the forefront of his memory.
- ⁹ Pages may well be missing in this manuscript, so the sequential order of both poems is unreliable.
- ¹⁰ 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; 'Ill 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 sceednd reading of ones ryhmes in general but the thing is quite decievd me & I think it will take when your Pencil has just gone over it here & there as its printing'.
- ¹¹ Nor, MS8, p. 3.
- ¹² Nor, MS6, p. 1.
- ¹³ 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.
- ¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 648. This letter also comes at the end of Don Juan on p. 13 Nor, MS8.
- ¹⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 22.
- ¹⁶ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 24.
- ¹⁷ Mark Storey, *op. cit.* p. 33.
- ¹⁸ Nor, MS6, p. 45.
- ¹⁹ Page. 15 of the Catalogue, The Clare Collection: Peterborough
- ²⁰ Nor, MS6, p. 4.
- ²¹ Nor, MS6, p. 20.
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ Cited by Margaret Grainger in her MA Thesis, 'A Study etc', p. 185.
- ²⁴ 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.

- ²⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 20.
- ²⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 23.
- ²⁷ Nor, MS6, pp. 46 - 48.
- ²⁸ 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.
- ²⁹ Frederick Martin, The Life of John Clare (London: Macmillan & Co, 1865).
- ³⁰ Frederick Martin, Life, p. 254.
- ³¹ Nor, MS14, p. 8.
- ³² 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.

ii THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOR, MS6 AND NOR, MS8

- ¹ 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 be 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.
- ² J.W and Anne Tibble in The Everyman Edition of Child Harold (1965) do not include this song in their version of the poem.
- ³ Nor, MS6, p. 40.
- ⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁵ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 647.
- ⁶ I refer to the stanzas which begin with the line: 'The sun has gone down with a veil on his brow'.
- ⁷ '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.
- ⁸ 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.
- ⁹ Donald Reiman, Romantic Texts and Contexts (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987).
- ¹⁰ 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

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁷ See Geoffrey Gower’s expression, cited by Peter Marris, Loss and Change, (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul), 1974.

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.

¹⁴ Thomas Crawford, Burns: A Study of The Poems and Songs (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1960).

¹⁵ Bodleian, MS Don a 8.

¹⁶ Edmund Blunden, ‘Manuscripts of John Clare’ *The London Mercury*, Vol ii, No 9, July (1920), pp. 136 – 326.

¹⁷ Bodleian, MS Don a8.

¹⁸ Nor, MS6, p. 5, stanza 6:

My hopes are all hopeless
My skys have no sun
Winter fell in youths maydays
& still freezes on.

¹⁹ Nor, MS6, p. 50.

²⁰ Margaret Grainger, loc. cit.

²¹ Page 17 of Nor, MS6.

²² 'The summer like a stranger comes / I pause and hardly know her face'. Geoffrey Sunnerfield, John Clare: Selected Poems, p. 198.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Nor, MS6, p. 18.

²⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 19.

²⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 35.

²⁷ *ibid.* p. 33.

²⁸ 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

¹ Nor, MS6, p. 48.

² Nor, MS6, p. 17.

³ *ibid.*

v THE SONGS AND BALLADS OF NOR, MS6

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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 cursd critics could be shovd out of the fashion wi their rule & compass & cease from making readers believe a Sonnet cannot be a Sonnet unless it be precisly 14 lines.....'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 80.

- ⁴ Margaret Grainger, 'A Study of the Poetry of John Clare with Special Reference to his Lyrics, Ballads and Ballad Collecting', unpublished master's dissertation, University of London, 1959, pp. 171 – 199.
- ⁵ Margaret Grainger, 'A Study etc', p. 172.
- ⁶ George Deacon, John Clare and the folk tradition (London: Sinclair Browne Ltd, 1983).
- 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.
- ¹⁷ Willa Muir, Living With Ballads (London: The Hogarth Press, 1965).
- ¹⁸ In a letter to John Taylor in May 1820 Clare describes the difficulty he has in laying to rest the love for Mary.
- ¹⁹ See Tibbles' 'Introduction', to John Clare: Selected Poems, page xxi.
- ²⁰ Gordon Hall Gerovld, The Ballad of Tradition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 5.
- ²¹ Louise Pound, Poetic Origins And The Ballad (New York: Macmillan, 1921).
- 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 'Reccolections &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 Glington Church. Glington was the home of Mary Joyce.
- ¹¹ Glington 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 [&?] 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'.
- ¹⁹ Cowper in *The Task: A Poem*, Book I, was ambivalent about Gipsies in that he appreciated their colourful presence in the countryside but also deemed them 'A vagabond and useless tribe'. William Cowper, 'The Task: A Poem' (Ilkley, N. Yorkshire & London: A Scolar Press Facsimile, 1973), p. 30.
- 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 - them 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' Urbevilles (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

Poems of Robert Burns (London and New York: Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd, 1928), p. 280.

- ³³ 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.
- ³⁴ Clare constantly refers to his two wives throughout Nor, MS6 and in his correspondence dated 1841.
- ³⁵ Clare's disrespect towards Queen Victoria in the Don Juan stanzas contrasts with the warmth of affection expressed for her early in the manuscript.
- ³⁶ Anne Tibble explains that 'sock' is from the verb to sog or soak through. John Clare: The Journals, Essays, and the Journey from Essex (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1980), p. 136, n. 10.
- ³⁷ 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'.
- ³⁸ 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.
- ³⁹ A complex and bizarre statement as regards chronology.
- ⁴⁰ 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.
- ⁴¹ 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.
- ⁴² Note Clare's use of Byron's title immediately following his quotation from 'Sonnet on Chillon'.
- ⁴³ 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.
- ⁴⁴ 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.

- ⁴⁵ 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.
- 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'.
- ⁴⁷ 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.
- ⁴⁸ 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.
- ⁴⁹ 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.
- ⁵⁰ 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.
- ⁵¹ Clare has failed to cross the letter 't' in 'truly' and on many other occasions in the first twenty pages of the manuscript.
- ⁵² 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.
- ⁵³ The stanzas of this first ballad are written on page 2 of Nor, MS8.
- ⁵⁴ Clare's identification with Byronic prisoners, ('The Prisoner of Chillon', Tasso and Dante) surface throughout Nor, MS6.
- ⁵⁵ Ink is splattered on the paper here.
- ⁵⁶ Presumably the forest at High Beech which in the early days of his confinement Clare greatly admired.
- ⁵⁷ 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.'
- ⁵⁸ 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.

- ⁵⁹ 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.
- ⁶⁰ Nor, MS6, p. 4, 'my hopes are not entirely hopeless while while even the memory of Mary lives so near me'.
- ⁶¹ The letters 'y' and 's' are smudged.
- ⁶² Nor, MS6, p. 1, 'My school walks there was every day / Where she made winter flowery'.
- ⁶³ This stanza is written on page 32 of Nor, MS8 and is in keeping with the mood and sentiment of 'Psalm 19'.
- ⁶⁴ 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.
- ⁶⁵ Nor, MS8, p. 14. Byron in Don Juan, Canto II, Stanza 49, ll. 385 - 386 wrote, 'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went down / Over the waste of waters: like a veil'. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 445.
- ⁶⁶ 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 - Glington', '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.
- ⁸⁴ 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.
- ⁸⁵ 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.
- ⁸⁶ 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 cooled with my reason and contented itself with another tho I felt a hopeful tenderness one that I might one day renew the acquaint[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.
- ⁸⁷ Byron's stanza in his 'Epistle to Augusta' also describes a ceaseless vigil. The Oxford Authors: Byron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 271, stanza 14.
- ⁸⁸ It is not clear whether Clare is using a capital letter here.
- ⁸⁹ In Nor, MS8, this line reads, 'There's madness there & misery here'.
- ⁹⁰ This stanza is written in Nor, MS8, p. 18.

- ⁹¹ 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.
- ⁹² 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.
- ⁹³ 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.
- ⁹⁴ Clare fails to use the apostrophe here and throughout the manuscript.
- ⁹⁵ Clare has substituted a comma for the hyphen he has used in the same stanza of this song on page 1 of the manuscript.
- ⁹⁶ Robinson and Powell in Later Poems, p. 45, l. 143 use the plural, 'cheeks'.
- ⁹⁷ This stanza and the following five stanzas run in sequence in Nor, MS8, on page 18.
- ⁹⁸ Exactly as Clare has written the word.
- ⁹⁹ Bunyan's, Pilgrim's Progress.
- ¹⁰⁰ Clare was convinced that he was a bigamist during his confinement both at High Beech and Northampton asylums.
- ¹⁰¹ Byron, 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto III, 'Above me, hark! the long and Manic cry / Of minds and bodies in captivity'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Byron, p. 416, ll. 1 - 2.
- ¹⁰² 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 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.
- ¹⁰³ Clare may be thinking here of the women who frequented the playhouses and whorehouses described in Don Juan. See Nor, MS6, p. 38.
- ¹⁰⁴ 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 & asistance of the devil'. Mark Storey, Letters, p. 651.
- ¹⁰⁵ 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.
- 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'.

- ¹²⁴ John Broadbent, ed., John Milton, Paradise Lost, Books I - II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 60, 'The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven'.
- ¹²⁵ Caesar at the Rubicon, 'Iacta alia est'.
- ¹²⁶ 'The pole star of my being & decay'. Nor, MS6, p. 6.
- ¹²⁷ 'Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean - roll! / Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain / Man marks the earth with ruin'. Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza 179, ll. 1603 - 1605. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 199.
- ¹²⁸ King Lear, 'And thou all-shaking thunder, / Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world'. Act III, scene ii, ll. 6 - 7. Peter Alexander, ed with Introduction and Glossary, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1973), p. 1092.
- 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.
- ¹³¹ Byron's 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto VIII, ll. 189 - 191, 'Yet do I feel at times my mind decline, / But with a sense of its decay: - I see / Unwonted lights among my prison shine'. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, p. 417.
- 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.
- 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.
- ¹⁴¹ Byron, in his Childe Harold, Canto III, stanza 3, wrote: 'in my youth's summer I did sing of one / The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind'. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 105.
- 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 Glington 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.
- ¹⁵³ Nor, MS8, p. 28.
- ¹⁵⁴ 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.
- ¹⁵⁵ 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.

- ¹⁵⁶ Clare has written parts of 'Balaam's Parable Chapter 24' at this point in Nor, MS8.
- ¹⁵⁷ 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.
- ¹⁵⁸ Glinton Spire would seem to be the reference here.
- ¹⁵⁹ Compare with, 'the pole star of my being and decay', Nor, MS6, p. 6.
- ¹⁶⁰ 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.
- ¹⁶¹ Glinton.
- ¹⁶² Glinton church spire stands tall and clear of the flat terrain which surrounds it.
- ¹⁶³ The dove is known to mate only once.
- ¹⁶⁴ In Nor, MS8, the paraphrase of Balaam's Parable interrupts here.
- ¹⁶⁵ Draft version in Nor, MS7, p.55.
- ¹⁶⁶ 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.
- ¹⁶⁷ 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.
- ¹⁶⁸ 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.
- ¹⁶⁹ 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.
- ¹⁷⁰ Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.
- ¹⁷¹ In the prose piece 'Autumn', p. 46, Clare refers to 'Glinton Church', 'West Deepings crocketed spire' and 'Maxey Tower church'.
- ¹⁷² Clare appears to have used an apostrophe here but incorrectly.
- ¹⁷³ 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'.
- ¹⁷⁴ Written in Nor, MS7, p. 55.
- ¹⁷⁵ 'From morn to noon he fell, / from noon to dewy eve,' John Broadbent, John Milton: Paradise Lost, Book One, p. 80, ll. 742 - 743.
- ¹⁷⁶ 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'.

- ¹⁷⁷ 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.
- ¹⁷⁸ Another reference to Ginton church.
- ¹⁷⁹ 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.
- ¹⁸⁰ 'Satan stood unterrified, and like a comet burned'. John Broadbent, Paradise Lost, l. 708, p. 109.
- ¹⁸¹ 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.
- ¹⁸² Written in ink on the margin of *The Morning Chronicle*, 18th June. Nor, MS7, p. 55.
- ¹⁸³ A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V, scene i, 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet, / Are of imagination all compact'. Peter Alexander, William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ll. 7 - 8 p. 217.
- ¹⁸⁴ Draft version in Nor, MS D20.
- ¹⁸⁵ 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.
- ¹⁸⁶ Note the reiteration of the idea of confinement.
- ¹⁸⁷ Robinson and Powell in The Later Poems, p. 56, suggest 'nest' here.
- ¹⁸⁸ Written in Nor, MS D20.
- ¹⁸⁹ 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 remembrance. Eric Robinson and David Powell, The Later Poems, p. 14.
- ¹⁹⁰ Clare refers to this notion on p. 2 and p. 23 of Nor, MS6.
- ¹⁹¹ See Nor, MS6, p. 2, '& how could I forget'.
- ¹⁹² 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.
- ¹⁹³ MS D20.
- ¹⁹⁴ The stanzas in the early pages of Nor, MS6 do indeed 'calendar' the memories of Mary.

- ¹⁹⁵ Clare writes two words in one here.
- ¹⁹⁶ 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'.
- ¹⁹⁷ Clare has deleted a letter at the front of 'chill'.
- ¹⁹⁸ An echo of Burns here.
- ¹⁹⁹ Robinson and Powell suggest 'must' as opposed to 'mayest'.
- ²⁰⁰ Both this stanza and the one following are written together on an undated catalogue for household furniture. Nor, MS7, p. 49.
- ²⁰¹ Sung in celebration of the autumn harvest.
- ²⁰² 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.
- ²⁰³ 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, ll.156 - 167, pp. 1080 - 1081.
- ²⁰⁴ Nor, MS7, p. 47.
- ²⁰⁵ The speaker of this song develops the idea of sojourning in order to find Mary.
- ²⁰⁶ This song does not appear in Nor, MS8 or in Peterborough, A62.
- ²⁰⁷ Nor, MS7, p. 47.
- ²⁰⁸ 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.
- ²⁰⁹ 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.
- ²¹⁰ Nor, MS7, p. 15.
- ²¹¹ This stanza and the following two stanzas share much in common with the prose piece 'Autumn' on pp. 46 - 48 of Nor, MS6.
- ²¹² In his autobiographical Sketches Clare remembers Mary Joyce, 'yet young as my heart was it would turn chill when I touchd her hand'. Eric Robinson and David Powell, John Clare By Himself, p. 87.
- ²¹³ 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'.

- ²¹⁴ '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.
- ²¹⁵ Writing in the third person Clare appears to be referring to himself as well as Byron.
- ²¹⁶ 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.
- ²¹⁷ 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.
- ²¹⁸ 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 wallnuts still lingering in the church yard like the remains of a wreck telling where their fellows foundered on the ocean of time'.
- ²¹⁹ This song has been faircopied into Nor, MS6 from the Bodleian, MS Don. a8.
- ²²⁰ 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.
- ²²¹ Compare with 'Song of Solomon, Chapter 3, l. 2, 'I sought him but found him not'.
- ²²² In May, 1826 Clare advised his friend Ripplingille 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.
- ²²³ To the right of this stanza Clare has written the paraphrase of 'Revelations, Chapter 21st, The New Jerusalem'.
- ²²⁴ 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.
- ²²⁵ The Bodleian stanza, written along the margins of the The Mercury, reads as follows, 'But autumn finds no change in me', etc.
- ²²⁶ The word 'love' is crossed through in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.
- ²²⁷ See, Nor, MS6, p. 5. 'But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower'.
- ²²⁸ Bodleian, MS Don. a8 reads, 'While Mary lives in bloom for me'.
- ²²⁹ 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.
- ²³⁰ Compare with prose fragment on page 20 of Nor, MS6. 'Closes of greensward & meadow', etc.
- ²³¹ 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 spre
 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 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 beautifull 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.
- ²⁴³ Coleridge’s ‘Dejection: An Ode’, ‘Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice; / To her may all things live from pole to pole’. John Beer, ed., *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Poems* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1963), p. 283.
- 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 Ginton 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.
- ²⁶⁸ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, ed., The Poetical Works of Lord Byron (London: John Murray, 1905), p. 415, 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto I, ll. 4 - 5.
- ²⁶⁹ *ibid.* 'To Florence', p. 243. Hartley Coleridge's 'List of Contents' describes this poem as being first published in Childe Harold, 1812. p. lxiv.
- ²⁷⁰ Clare's own lines. They reaffirm the manuscript's preoccupation with truth and deception as does the following stanza.
- ²⁷¹ Robinson and Powell include this stanza on page 69 of The Later Poems.
- ²⁷² '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'.
- ²⁷³ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Poetical Works of Lord Byron, 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto IV, ll. 80 - 81, p. 416.
- ²⁷⁴ 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 Goodridge and the Library at Nottingham Trent University in locating the exact source for this quotation.
- ²⁷⁵ Clare's engagement with the idea of sojourning surfaces throughout Nor, MS6.
- ²⁷⁶ 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.
- ²⁷⁷ Please refer to the Chapter entitled 'Self Position and Reposition in Nor, MS6'.
- ²⁷⁸ 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'.
- ²⁷⁹ 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.
- ²⁸⁰ Robert Inglesfield, ed., William Cowper, The Task: A Poem (Ilkley, N. Yorkshire & London: Scolar Press Facsimiles, 1973), Book V, ll. 446 - 448.

- 281 The paraphrase is written in quatrains with alternate rhyme scheme, abab.
- 282 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.
- 283 Clare may be referring to his own social position here but David is also a Shepherd King.
- 284 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'.
- 285 This paraphrase continues to argue the enduring truth of God in the face of personal doubt and uncertainty.
- 286 The mood of exaltation and gratitude for freedom and stability is clearly present in this paraphrase.
- 287 The reference to home here cannot be coincidental.
- 288 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.
- 289 The mood and emphasis on reestablishing roots and building foundations of a 'house' endorsed by God is relevant, particularly as 'Balam's Parable' which precedes 'David's Prayer' is also concerned with fresh beginnings.
- 290 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.
- 291 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.
- 292 The ideas of liberation and relocation are firmly in place here.
- 293 The notion of a dwelling place or 'house' are repeatedly referred to by the biblical speaker in this paraphrase.
- 294 Robinson and Powell include an apostrophe here. The Later Poems, p. 118, l. 50.
- 295 Robinson and Powell suggest 'maker' here. *ibid.* p. 119, l. 72.
- 296 This line is interpreted as 'grace' by Robinson and Powell though the line is illegible in Nor, MS6.
- 297 Robinson and Powell supply '& do the just thing'. Later Poems, p. 119.
- 298 The metaphor of the wreck is employed by Clare in his prose fragment 'Autumn' on page 46 of Nor, MS6.
- 299 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.
- 300 Clare appears to be using the pages of Nor, MS6 to proclaim his grief and loss.
- 301 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[il]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 'Muliplied 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 thralldom and bondage. Compare with the paraphrase of Isaiah, Ch. 47. In Bodleian, MS Don. c64, the paraphrase of Isaiah follws 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 *The Lincoln 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

on page 25 of Nor, MS6.

- ³¹⁹ The ideas of faithfulness and truthfulness are in abundance in the paraphrases in contrast to the world of Don Juan.
- ³²⁰ 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.
- ³²¹ Here the speaker finds spiritual comfort in God in contrast to his acute sense of isolation and disillusionment expressed in Child Harold.
- ³²² 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.
- ³²³ 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.
- ³²⁴ This verse of the paraphrase shares the page with the autumnal stanza, 'Tis autumn now & nature's scenes', etc.
- ³²⁵ 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'.
- ³²⁶ These lines prefigure the preoccupation with lying, deception and counterfeit in Don Juan commencing on p. 38 of Nor, MS6.
- ³²⁷ This paraphrase is also written in draft form in Bodleian, MS Don. a8.
- ³²⁸ It is worth comparing the time scheme described in the first stanza on page 12 of Nor, MS6.
- ³²⁹ The speaker's main preoccupation in Don Juan two pages later.
- ³³⁰ This is a clear example of the fusion of the themes of homelessness and questing which permeate Nor, MS6.
- ³³¹ See also Bodleian, MS Don. a8. See also Last Judgement in Chapters 21 & 22 of Revelations.
- ³³² 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.
- ³³³ See Chapter Three, 'The Northborough Autumnal Sequence'.
- ³³⁴ 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.
- ³³⁵ 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.
- ³³⁶ 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.

- ³³⁷ Job, Chap. 38, Nor, MS6, p. 30. See also Genesis, Chapters 18 & 19.
- ³³⁸ 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.
- ³³⁹ 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.
- ³⁴⁰ 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.
- ³⁴¹ 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'.
- ³⁴² 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.
- ³⁴³ Child Harold is not so specifically attributed to Byron on p.4 of Nor, MS6.
- ³⁴⁴ 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.
- ³⁴⁵ '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.
- ³⁴⁶ There are a number of lines and fragments in Peterborough, 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.

- ³⁴⁷ 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.
- ³⁴⁸ Page. 3 of Peterborough, MS A62.
- ³⁴⁹ 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.
- ³⁵⁰ 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, l. 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.

- ³⁷⁰ The Whigs lost the election in July 1841.
- ³⁷¹ A name given to asylum warders.
- ³⁷² 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).
- ³⁷³ A euphemism for corruption; in particular to make them drunk.
- ³⁷⁴ In July 1841 the newspapers announced the marriage of Lord John Russell to Lady Fanny Eliot.
- ³⁷⁵ 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.
- ³⁷⁶ Obscene reference to Queen Victoria and her alleged lovers who deceived Albert in his absence.
- ³⁷⁷ A highly salacious slur on the Queen's moral character - possibly gossip in the papers about Queen Victoria's difficulty in conceiving another child.
- ³⁷⁸ 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.
- ³⁷⁹ Another reference to deception but in this instance political and not marital.
- ³⁸⁰ 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.
- ³⁸¹ Prince Albert left England to return to Germany in July 1841.
- ³⁸² References to Clare's own confinement and possibly its cause - poverty.
- ³⁸³ 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.
- ³⁸⁴ 'Wife' is underlined by Clare in Nor, MS6 and Nor, MS8.
- ³⁸⁵ See Byron's Don Juan, Canto 1, stanza 100.
- ³⁸⁶ 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.
- ³⁸⁷ Asses milk was given to babies.
- ³⁸⁸ Corruption had spread throughout society including the Cabinet.
- ³⁸⁹ This may be Clare's own political view or a report 'lifted' from contemporary newspaper accounts.

- ³⁹⁰ Clare assumes the posture and voice of the Regency fop here. See also Measure for Measure, Act III, Scene (i), l. 114.
- ³⁹¹ '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.
- ³⁹² The impossibility of animals practising deceit is emphasised here.
- ³⁹³ 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.
- ³⁹⁴ 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.
- ³⁹⁵ Clare appears equally unimpressed by both Whigs and Tories and their false promises to the country.
- ³⁹⁶ Three miles from High Beech.
- ³⁹⁷ A quote from Gay's, Beggar's Opera.
- ³⁹⁸ See Chapter Three, 'Songs and Ballads' in Nor, MS6. In Nor, MS8, these three stanzas follow the opening ballad of Child Harold.
- ³⁹⁹ The stanza form alters here from ottava rima to abababcc of the Childe Harold style.
- ⁴⁰⁰ 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 Im in prison
Without any friends
- I had joys assurance
Though in bondage I lie
- I am still left in durance
Unwilling to sigh.
- ⁴⁰¹ Return to ottava rima verse form of Don Juan.
- ⁴⁰² The inference would seem to be that both new coins and early marriage are quickly worn down through ill use.
- ⁴⁰³ 'Real poets must be truly honest men', Nor, MS6, p. 4.
- ⁴⁰⁴ 'Sweet Susan that was wont my love to be / & Bessey of the glen - for I've been roaming'. Nor, MS6, p. 8.
- ⁴⁰⁵ 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.
- ⁴⁰⁶ 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.
- ⁴¹¹ See Byron's Don Juan Canto 9 and Canto 10, stanzas 21 and sixty. Jerome McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, pp. 704 and 714.
- 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?
- ⁴¹⁵ Geoffrey Summerfield draws attention to Allen's tests on urine for venereal disease. Selected Poems, note for p. 220, p. 371.
- ⁴¹⁶ See p. 2 of Nor, MS6 where Clare discusses the 'rout the Gipsy 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 Ripplingille 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.

- 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.
- ⁴⁴⁰ 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 -'. McGann, Byron: Oxford Authors, p. 433.
- 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

fragment on page 21 of Nor, MS6.

- ⁴⁴³ 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.
- ⁴⁴⁴ 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.
- ⁴⁴⁵ Note the pun on 'tart' as whore and in tart as pastry.
- ⁴⁴⁶ Possibly a reference to Byron who married Miss Milbanke in 1815 and signed a deed of separation in 1816.
- ⁴⁴⁷ '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.
- ⁴⁴⁸ Clare draws a distinction between true love and matrimony.
- ⁴⁴⁹ 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.
- ⁴⁵⁰ This song was sent to George Reed on November 17th 1841 from Northborough.
- ⁴⁵¹ The mood in this song is in keeping with the prose passage 'Autumn' which follows immediately on page 46.
- ⁴⁵² This stanza has been written in draft form into a blue exercise book held at the Bodleian and known as Bodleian, MS Don. c64.
- ⁴⁵³ 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.
- ⁴⁵⁴ 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

- ⁴⁵⁵ 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.

- ⁴⁵⁶ 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.
- ⁴⁵⁷ Clare refers to the folk song.
- ⁴⁵⁸ Margaret Grainger identifies the river as The Welland. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 5.
- ⁴⁵⁹ Margaret Grainger comments on the smudged insertion here, calling it 'an insertion within an insertion'. The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 330, n. 8.
- ⁴⁶⁰ 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.
- ⁴⁶¹ 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.
- ⁴⁶² It is significant that Clare uses specific markers both here and in his 'Reccolections' 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.
- ⁴⁶³ 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.
- ⁴⁶⁴ Clare was probably walking up - stream towards Lolham as Grainger suggests in The Natural History Prose Writings, p. 333, n. 6.
- ⁴⁶⁵ This page of the description is altogether more legible.
- ⁴⁶⁶ Bodleian, Don. c64 and Peterborough, MS A62, dated 1841 contain the following lines: 'Crimsoned with awes the awthorns bend / Oer meadow dykes & rising floods'.
- ⁴⁶⁷ 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'.
- ⁴⁶⁸ See stanza 6 on Nor, MS6, p. 18, 'About the meadows now I love to sit / On bridge walls & rails as when a boy'.
- ⁴⁶⁹ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁰ 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'.
- ⁴⁷¹ This line echoes Clare's prose fragment, 'Greenswards'. Nor, MS6, p. 20.

- ⁴⁷² 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.
- ⁴⁷³ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁴ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁵ Note the strong similarity between these lines and Nor, MS6, p. 38. In this instance Vulcan is substituted for the god of love - Cupid
- ⁴⁷⁶ Clare's use of what appears to be a quasi Elizabethan erotic convention.
- ⁴⁷⁷ These two verses have been written at the bottom of page 49. The upper half of this page is blank.
- ⁴⁷⁸ 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'.
- ⁴⁷⁹ 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.
- ⁴⁸⁰ This particular paraphrase is resonant with Clare's sense of betrayal, self-deception and disillusionment.
- ⁴⁸¹ 'Autumn', p. 47. Clare is engaged in both instances with memories of the past and the passage of time.
- ⁴⁸² 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.
- ⁴⁸³ 'The Lamentations' as the lines develop, provide an ambiguous mix of total desperation and tentative hope in the future.
- ⁴⁸⁴ 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.
- ⁴⁸⁵ 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'.
- ⁴⁸⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 5, 'But love like the seed is / In the heart of a flower'.
- ⁴⁸⁷ 'Friend c^f the friendless from a host of snares / From lying varlets & from friendly foes'. Nor, MS6, p. 9.
- ⁴⁸⁸ 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’.

- ⁵⁰⁸ This paraphrase is written in pencil on page 3 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.
- ⁵⁰⁹ Clare has written this psalm on page 4 of Bodleian, MS Don. c64.
- ⁵¹⁰ 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.
- ⁵¹¹ 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 nature’s 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: ‘Self Position and Reposition’. A Reading of Child Harold.

- ¹ James Taylor, Account of the history of the lyrics in the Programme for his *Hourglass* tour of Europe, 1998, p. 1.
- 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.
- ²⁰ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 658.
- ²¹ Mark Storey, op. cit. p. 665.
- ²² Mark Storey, Letters, p. 660.
- ²³ Mark Storey, loc. cit.
- ²⁴ *ibid.*
- ²⁵ Holy Bible, Revised Standard Edition, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), Chapter 3, p. 719.

- ²⁶ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 646.
- ²⁷ Nor, MS6, p. 7.
- ²⁸ Nor, MS6, pp. 15 - 16.
- ²⁹ Nor, MS6, p. 17.
- ³⁰ Nor, MS6, loc. cit.
- ³¹ Greg Crossan, A Relish For Eternity: the process of divinisation in the poetry of John Clare (Saltzburg; Universitat Saltzburg, 1976).
- ³² Clare paraphrases 'Solomon's prayer etc etc' on page 26 of Nor, MS6.
- ³³ 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.
- ³⁴ Mark Storey, Letters, p. 515
- ³⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 25.
- ³⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 25.
- ³⁷ Nor, MS6, p. 27.
- ³⁸ Nor, MS6, p. 5.
- ³⁹ Nor, MS6, p. 32.
- ⁴⁰ Nor, MS6, p. 50 - 52.
- ⁴¹ Nor, MS6, p. 50.
- ⁴² Edward Storey, A Right to Song: the Life of John Clare (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 298.
- ⁴³ Anne Michaels, Fugitive Pieces (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc), 1998, p. 17.
- ⁴⁴ Nor, MS6, p. 6.
- ⁴⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 6.
- ⁴⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 14.
- ⁴⁷ Nor, MS6, loc. cit.
- ⁴⁸ Nor, MS6, p. 12.
- ⁴⁹ Nor, MS6, p. 50.
- ⁵⁰ Nor, MS6, p. 39.
- ⁵¹ Nor, MS6, p. 39.

- ⁵² Nor, MS6, p. 38.
- ⁵³ Nor, MS6, P. 38.
- ⁵⁴ Nor, MS6, p. 38.
- ⁵⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 7.
- ⁵⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 23.
- ⁵⁷ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, (London: John Murray, 1931), 'The Lament of Tasso', Canto I, ll. 4 -5 and Canto IV, ll. i - 2 p. 415.
- ⁵⁸ *ibid.* p. 243. stanza 11. ll.3 - 4.
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.* p. 379, ll. 13 - 14.
- ⁶⁰ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, p. 415. ll. 123 - 125
- ⁶² *ibid.* p. 416. ll. 48 49.
- ⁶³ Earnest Hartley Coleridge, *loc.cit.*
- ⁶⁴ Lynn Pearce, 'John Clare's "Child Harold": A Polyphonic Reading' *Criticism*, (1989), pp. 139 - 157.
- ⁶⁵ Nor, MS6, p. 7.
- ⁶⁶ Nor, MS6, p. 16.
- ⁶⁷ p. 416. ll. 79 - 80.
- ⁶⁸ Nor, MS6, p. 8.
- ⁶⁹ Nor, MS6, p. 10.
- ⁷⁰ Nor, MS6, p. 13.

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.
- ⁴ Eric Robinson and David Powell, eds., John Clare: The Oxford Authors (Oxford University Press, 1984), 'The Mores', p. 169, ll. 65 - 70.
- 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.
- ¹⁰ John Lucas, 'Revising Clare' in Robert Brinkley and Keith Harly, eds., *Romantic Revisions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 253.
- ¹¹ Eric Robinson, David Powell and P. M. S. Dawson, eds., *Clare: Poems Of The Middle Period, 1822 - 1837* (Oxford, 1997).
- ¹² Robert Wells, 'The Waking Dream of Act: John Clare's passion for knowledge and the medieval rootedness of his poetry', *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 13th, (1997), pp. 3 - 4.
- ¹³ Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 30.
- ¹⁴ Mark Storey, *Letters*, p. 491.
- ¹⁵ Wells, p. 3.

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