

**Second Order Literature:
Amy Lowell's "Patterns" and H.D.'s "Garden"**

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Obviously, as one would guess from the title, Robert Duncan's *The H.D. Book* is an engagement with the works of H.D. (particularly her *Trilogy*). It is also an extended meditation upon the idea of Poetry: that is, capital-P Poetry; not "poetry" in the broad, populist, use of the word but in the sense of that literature that is the rarity in any and every period, that is that rarefied experience that separates Poetry from mundane verse. The primal scene of the book, the opening scene, is his first experience of what Duncan calls that "second order" of literature, in a high school classroom, in his having read to him by his teacher H.D.'s "Heat." It is a scene of revelation, in the context of the book a first initiation into the possibilities of that higher realm of literary (and artistic) experience. I will permit myself one extended quotation from *The H.D. Book*, one that speaks to that "second order" of literature:

More than sensation, then, more than impression, gave force to the image. It was not only a vivid representation of sensory data but an evocation of depth. Image in Amy Lowell's poem ["Patterns"] had meant that words could illustrate and give mood. But in this poem "Heat," image conveyed not only the appearance of things or the sensual feel of things and moods, but experience, the reciprocity between inner and outer realities. There was another working of the image, more than Amy Lowell proposed, back of sense and mood, partly conscious and partly unconscious. I was aware that sensual

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intensity in this poem of H.D.’s, like the sensual intensity in Lawrence’s work, demanded some new beginning in life from my own intensity. Such images were more immediate and real than likenesses of seeing, hearing or smelling were. (42-43)¹

Duncan sets up Amy Lowell, specifically as regards the verse “Patterns” as counterpoint to H.D. and “Heat”: both verses involve gardens, and both H.D. and Lowell were considered (or called) Imagists, though Pound did not consider Lowell all that much of an Imagist and H.D. was and remains the foremost Imagist. (As Duncan points out, Pound would later say he created Imagism primarily to promote H.D.’s work.) For Duncan, Lowell is of that “order of poems and stories that we must know all about if we were to be accomplished students” (38). Though, Duncan, there, is speaking both of texts that are of the same modality as “Patterns” and of the reading of texts in the manner that texts like “Patterns” can only be read. That is, I believe he includes the act of forcing second order texts to be read as though of the first order, turning them into those culturally requisite – which is also to say culturally safe – texts. (While Duncan does not explicitly make that statement, I believe it is inherent in his wording. *The H.D. Book* would not be written as it were if Duncan was not quite aware that there is no small body of literary criticism that strives to treat literature

¹ I am writing from the edition of *The H.D. Book* published as volume 1 of the *Collected Writings of Robert Duncan* (U of Cal P, 2011). There is a version of *The H.D. Book* available online, available at the CCA Canadian Art Database, marked as published by Frontier Press in 1984. It is to me unclear what is the relationship between the e-book and *Collected Works* edition, if there is one, or what difference there is between the texts contained therein (outside of included appendices). To note, though I am working here out of *The H.D. Book*, I question whether I could recommend the book to a general audience, in the least to persons not directly interested in either H.D. or Duncan.

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universally in just that way.)

What is meant by “second order”? To a great degree, Duncan takes it as assumed that his reader understands the difference – and not superficially – between the “representation of sensory data” that is the modality of “Pattern” and the “evocation of depth” that is the modality of “Heat.” Since he mostly leaves out any direct argument to the point, I thought it might be interesting to pick up demonstration of the difference myself.

Some groundwork can be set, some grounding can be done, by turning to the division of texts into their material and ideational aspects.² The material aspect, the ends of which spectrum are labeled “verse” and “prose,” which speaks to the manipulation of the language of the text, lies mostly (but not wholly) outside this discussion. Our concern here is primarily the ideational aspect, the “poetic-prosaic” spectrum, the consideration of the modality of the language of the text in its ideational working, whether to the factual in the prosaic or to the symbolic in the poetic. It is that difference in modality, the move from the prosaic to the poetic, the move from the factual to the symbolic, that marks the creation of that “second order” experience that Duncan finds in “Heat.”

Note that in this demonstration I am not arguing that only poetic texts should be considered meritable literature. Yes, it is implied in this presentation, and is overt in *The H.D. Book* that literature in its highest form, literature and art as that highest endeavor of humankind, is found within the poetic. But that does not mean there is not value to works that are prosaic in nature but, say, are demonstration of what can be worked materially with language. Indeed, the poetic and prosaic are not exclusive: the former can and usually does use the latter to its ends. It is the elevation of works that excel neither technically nor poetically to which I most openly object.

² See, Owen Barfield’s *Poetic Diction* on the material and ideational (for him, “spiritual”) spectra.

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Three points before continuing.

First, the two spectra of prose and verse and the prosaic and the poetic should not be understood as ‘measuring’ (as it were) the presence of prose factors and/or verse factors, or measuring the amount of prosaic ideation against the amount of poetic ideation. Prosaic prose is better understood as a null upon which verseform and poetic ideation is added. That is because prosaic prose is text crafted to the ends of communication, to the ends of transmitting information with as little distortion to the message being transmitted as possible. Pure prosaic prose is a text devoid of verseform or poetic ideation, both of which can and will interfere with clear transmission (especially as concerns poetic ideation, which functions in the symbolic, pulling the text away from the factuality necessary to any clear transmission of information).³ Thus, “verse” can be understood as prosodic effects added to the null of pure prose, and “the poetic” as symbolic ideation that is present in addition to the prosaic.

Second, by “symbolic” I do not mean the use of signs to “stand for” concepts which they don’t normally hold: for example, writing a text in which the color red stands for violence, or in which a character stands for some quality of human existence, as with allegory. Such one-to-one substitutions function within the modality of the factual, of the prosaic, only in a denotative relationship established within the boundaries of the text (rather than through a dictionary). The poetic is that other modality of thought, the experiential, the psychically energetic; that “second order” of thought which I hope here to demonstrate, and through that demonstration give substance to.

Third, the work “Heat” was published in *Sea Garden* as the second half of a two part verse, “Garden,” and it is as such that you

³ As I always point out, pure prosaic prose does not exist in human language. Its true representative is computer language, which functions wholly and only within the realm of pure fact.

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find the work in H.D.'s *Collected Poems: 1912-1944*. It is that larger text that I will take up here.

But I will begin with "Patterns." The first stanza is representative of the whole of the verse so I will quote it in full.

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

It is straight narration: description of the scene, description of the action, description of the narrator. It offers the reader direct presentation of "sensory data": the facts of the scene and the action. This is the nature of the prosaic: that of verisimilitude. Which does not mean documenting something that actually happened, nor is restricted to things that could possibly happen. Verisimilitude is the presentation in the *modality* of factuality: information is being presented to the reader, a scene is being described, and the reader is to accept that information as though truth.

Two moments in the first stanza might stand out to the attentive reader as significant. First, the word "stiff," which seems to carry some emphasis above the rest of the description not only aurally but in its setting up a relationship between the narrator and the world around her. Her gown feels stiff; one can imagine the sensation of walking in stiff clothing. But note how while the ideation appeals to memory and, perhaps, imagination, it still rests in factual description.⁴ The squills are bright blue; the gown is stiff, and, one

⁴ Instead of "imagination," it would be appropriate there to use the term fancy as Coleridge uses it.

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can imagine, uncomfortable and limiting. It may be indirect but it is still simply an appeal to sensation and emotion through factuality. There is nothing being done with the idea of "stiffness" that breaks it from that modality.

The second moment is the clause "I too am a rare pattern." It is marked in two ways. First, by it repeating the title of the work. Obviously the word "pattern" is important. Second, by its equating of the narrator to the world around her: like the garden paths, like the brocaded gown, the narrator is a "rare pattern." What that means may for the moment be in the air as "rare" is presently unanchored; but, there is nothing offered that gives any reason for "rare" to be taken in any way except in the governing modality of denotation, as but one more part of the description of the basic scene. There may be a connection being made between the woman and the surroundings, but it is a logical connection: the garden has quality X, so also does the woman have that same quality X.

Both these moments, occurring as they do in the opening of the verse, can be considered thesis statements of the argument of the text. The question to be had is what is going to be done with those statements. Reading through the poem, "Rare," is never returned to, is never qualified beyond its initial presentation, and we can will ignore it as stray detail. However, both "stiff" and "pattern" – the two words related to each other in that a pattern is generally unchanging and thus itself stiff – are part of the central opposition of the verse as a whole, as presented in the next stanza.

Stanza two continues with description.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.

When we get to

Not a softness anywhere about me

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we see the restating of that lightly marked "stiff" from the first stanza. Though it is presenting the central conflict of the verse, stiffness vs. softness, nothing is being done with the concept as initially presented: it is but the same idea presented in different terms. Any fact always implies, logically, its own opposite; and, the text is merely making overt that opposition.

[. . .] For my passion

Wars against the stiff brocade.

(The "For" is mis-used as the idea comes out of nowhere. She "sinks in a seat" because her "passions wars"? The cause-effect is a little forced: one would think warring passions would push a person to motion, not to sinking.) "Stiff" is repeated, and the central opposition is made overt. But merely because there is an opposition between facts, simply because a text presents the logical couplet of A/not-A, does not break the modality of factuality. The two halves have no influence upon their opposite's reading. The world is stiff, the woman is not; the woman is impassioned, the world is not. The reader is not being asked to consider stiffness or softness (passion) outside of their denotative meanings.

The same can be said for the second opposition presented, that between the flowers and the woman.

The daffodils and squills

Flutter in the breeze

As they please.

And I weep;

The flowers are presented as lively and gay while the narrator is presented as weeping. It is yet another factual opposition. This is a slightly more complex opposition than that root opposition of stiffness/passion. For the description also calls to the fore a parallel that is present – if unemphasized – in the first stanza.

I walk down the patterned garden paths

In my stiff, brocaded gown.

Within the stiff gown the woman has passion; within the patterned paths of the garden the flowers flutter and blow. Thus we have a

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parallel – the woman in the garden is alive like the flowers in the garden – at the same time as we have an opposition – the flowers flutter while the woman weeps. Because the text is functioning entirely within the logical, this is actually an error in the text. There is a conflict in that Lowell wants the reader to see, simultaneously, that the garden is stiff in its pathways and alive in the flowers contained in the pathways. But by experience, if I am walking through a garden and the flowers are alive on the breeze, the whole of the garden will seem alive. Pathways dominate the feeling of a garden only when the presentation of plants is failing: for example, were I to walk a garden in the midst of winter, when the plant life is mostly dead, the stiff pathways would stand out.

This time we have a logical opposition that cannot be resolved, and it creates a problem in the reading of the verse. Is the garden supposed to be alive or is it supposed to be stiff? Which memory, which sensation, the reader goes, is being appealed to? The error is created because the text is functioning entirely in the modality of factuality. The reader has two opposing facts that can only be reconciled through one winning out over the other. And as the text is read the reader is forced to flip back and forth to fit with the moment at hand: now the garden is alive, to fit the idea of the flowers paralleling the woman; now the garden is stiff, to fit the idea of the paths paralleling the stiff patterns of the gown.

Prosaic texts are but lists of facts coordinated and organized by the mechanical elements of language. For example, the word *for*, which appears for a second time in what comes next in the action.

And I weep;

For the lime tree is in blossom

And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

Lowell is bringing causality into the action, logically coordinating the fact of the act with the fact of the cause of the act. “I weep” because a “blossom” “has dropped on my bosom.” The weakness of the writing – experientially it seems somewhat absurd that a flower blossom falling on a woman’s breast would cause her to weep –

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works to demonstrate how the text is progressing. Lowell has offered fact A: the woman is weeping. Lowell has offered fact B: the blossom falls on the woman’s breast. Both facts are important to the text. Within the narrative, as is seen later, the latter fact is indeed the cause of the former fact. So Lowell presents the two in a logical – factual – relationship. As with everything previous, the reader can only either accept the fact or reject it. There has been no cue thus far that the text would be momentarily lying, so the reader accepts the facts as presented, and through the logical association the concept of “weeping” is transferred onto the event of the landing blossom. The reader is being *told* it is a sad thing that the blossom fell on the woman’s breast, and the reader is being asked to accept that fact, to accept the sadness of that fact, despite the visual silliness of the image – indeed, as later implied, the blossom apparently hits a bullseye right into her cleavage – and the aural silliness of the rhyming of “blossom” and “bosom.” The same can be said with the first instance of “for” (as described above): on the surface it may seem odd that the woman “sinks” because of the passion that “wars” inside her; but the reader is forced to accept the fact as presented, and the logical association forces the linking of the cause onto the effect.

The point here is twofold. Yes, it demonstrates the weakness of the writing. But also, it demonstrates the modality of the writing. Lowell is using the mechanics of fact to link together the parts of the text, even to the point of forcing readings where they would not naturally occur. The text is offering facts for the reader to passively accept; it is not offering ideas for the reader to engage and think about.

Continuing into stanzas 3 and 4:
And the splashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.

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Some might point to this as being “poetic writing” in that the idea of something dropping on something has been doubled: the blossom dropped on the woman, the water drops on the path. But it is a mere repetition of the common quality between the two events. Does the idea of water influence how we are to read the blossom? No. Nor the blossom the drops. It is the same when the repetition is extended to include the woman’s tears: the relationship is entirely mechanical, another means of coordinating facts within a text (it has made a list). Yes this is a touch of verseform, added to the general prosody of the text; and it offers some of that pleasure that readers get from verseform. But it has no effect at all upon ideation.

Next comes the appearance of the lover by way of the narration of an imagined scene.

Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,

The reverie functions to two ends: to describe the relationship between the woman and her lover/husband, and give information to the “passion” within her. Though there is a doubling of meaning here – a tripling if you permit that the reverie may be entirely fantasy on the part of the woman – the added layers of meaning does not break the modality. The scene merely carries more than one, independent meaning simultaneously, just as a character in an allegory will simultaneously carry the meaning of a concrete character in a narrated action and the abstract concept in a philosophical or moral presentation. All the meanings still function within the modality of the prosaic. The scene even falls into the banal because of the modality:

Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he
 \ clasped me,

Aching, melting, unafraid.

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Though the moment is supposed to be demonstration of the woman’s passion, there is no generation of the energies of passion within the text. There is merely appeal to memory or imagination through factuality. Do the words “aching, melting, unafraid” carry any depth? Or is the reader being asked to accept them in a wholly convention-driven manner?

Aching, melting, unafraid.

(You know what that means.)

Notice the ends of the stanzas. First the third stanza.

What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!

I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.

All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

It is once again the basic thesis statement – stiff gown vs. passion-filled woman – but translated now into the narrative context of the reverie. It is material manipulation, playing with prosody; but it has no effect upon ideation. And then at the end of the fourth stanza, where the narrator comes out of reverie and back to the garden:

With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,

And the plopping of the waterdrops,

All about us in the open afternoon

I am very like to swoon

With the weight of this brocade,

For the sun sifts through the shade.

we have again nothing but the mechanical repetition of qualities: drops, passion, the stiffness of the dress. Has the text at all moved out of the facts of the basic scenario? Has it at all moved, even, out of factuality?

Beginning with stanza five we have the explanation of the woman’s warring passions. There’s no reason to go into it except to say that it continues in the narration of brute fact, scattered about with the repetitions of factual elements previously presented: the stiff brocade, the flowers echoing her own emotion

The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun within the confines of the patterned garden, the reappearance of

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the seat and the lime tree.

Should we go through the mechanics of the lime tree? It first appears in the second stanza.

And I weep;

For the lime tree is in blossom

And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

We already discussed these unfortunately phrased lines. (It is for me unavoidably comedic as I cannot help but imagine women running about under trees as if in a snowfall trying to catch petals on their out-thrust breasts.) The lime tree reappears at the start of stanza five, with equally regrettable phrasing:

Underneath the fallen blossom

In my bosom,

Is a letter I have hid.

Note that this is not foreshadowing. (Not to say that foreshadowing is inherently poetic, though it can be so.) The fall of the lime blossom is not shadowed by the meaning of other yet to be presented events. There is in the first stanza simply the absence of two related pieces of information. The scene as a whole is as follows:

— She sits on the bench.

— The lime blossoms are falling.

— In the past she sat on that same bench with her now dead husband. (That the notice of death was brought to her implies marriage.)

The moment now and the moment then carry the same factual quality: that of the falling blossoms.

— The lime blossom falls upon her bosom.

— She carries the note of her husband’s death within her bosom.

The note and the blossom carries the same factual quality of being lodged between her breasts.

All those facts are coordinated – whether immediately present or not – by that mechanical “for.” Though the full presentation may be belated, it is a simple narration of facts; it does ever break from

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the prosaic.

The final stanza points from the present to the future and is mostly the translating of the present walk of the garden into future walks. It might be worth pointing to those final lines

For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.

Christ! What are patterns for?

to show how the gimmick of a closing exclamation is nothing particular to contemporary verse. Not even that moment breaks from the modality of the prosaic; and the lines, if you sit and ponder them, again reveal how the modality of the prosaic is being used to force logical conclusions. On first thought, one might think a war is quite alive and impassioned and not at all stiff. But the verse has throughout insisted that patterns, which are negative things, are stiff, so we must take as logically asserted that wars, which are negative things, are also stiff patterns.)

In sum, the prosaic nature of "Patterns" is hopefully quite apparent. If you read back through you should be able to see how every element, even the emotional elements, are presented as narrated facts, and appeal to the reader in the manner that facts appeal to readers. This is the nature of what I call "dead puppy poems," poems that appeal to the emotions of the reader merely through the stating of ostensibly emotional situations (that is, stating the fact of a dead puppy). The text itself does not generate – nor does it invite the generation of – energy outside of factual appeals. And though there is playing about with verseform, that material manipulation does not change the modality of the text. The two spectra – the material and the ideational – are not necessarily related: you can have prosaic verse; you can have poetic prose. That the material aspect may be manipulated, chopped up, scrambled, repeated, inverted, or whatever, that information may be presented out of order or outright withheld, does not necessarily change a factual text into a symbolic one. Indeed, the vast majority of

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verse written at any time, including today, is prosaic in its modality.

Which is why Duncan's experience with "Heat" was for him a moment of awakening. It is his first experience with a poetic literary object – which perhaps should be said, considering that the reader is as important as the text within the poetic, his first poetic experience with a poetic literary object. As I work through "Garden" (which contains "Heat"), the presentation itself should be demonstration that there is a fundamental difference between how "Garden" works (and was written) and how "Patterns" works (and was written). Yet, the active participation of the reader in the poetic experience makes the task inherently tenuous. We are working here with experience, the experience of the reader in engagement of a text; and I cannot 'logically' – prosaically – present an experience that is not in itself logical. I can only show how the text works and hope that the reader can then poetically engage the text on their own. As well, even though a text is written so that it can be read poetically does not mean it will be done so by everyone: we are, again, speaking of experience, of engagement; and, not everyone looks upon a mountain the same, nor looks upon it the same every time.

Verse-prose considerations, the material aspect of "Garden," is of some importance here, though less in the question of the degree of verseform present in the text than the general quality of the writing. H.D.'s lines have an elegance to them, have a grace that "Patterns" lacks. The text, in good Imagist fashion, is pared down to only what is necessary, only what contributes to the text. For it, you have none of the awkward language of "Patterns" (like the blossom/bosom rhyme), and none of the falling into prosodically uninteresting if not clumsy narration, as with

"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday sen'night."

As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.

"Any answer, Madam," said my footman.

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"No," I told him.

"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.

No, no answer."

Such language should not be looked at solely from the side that it creates a drop in the tightness or quality of the text. It should also be looked at – and perhaps more productively – from the side that poor language control gets in the way of the experience of the work and as such is detrimental to the experience of the text. At the simplest, a break in technical skill creates an unwanted contrast: one section of the text is better than some other section of the text, and for that contrast that other section looks poorly written. In being short, tight text, "Garden" successfully avoids that narrative lulls that "Patterns" falls into. Which is not to say that condensation of language in itself creates energetic texts. Sometimes it merely creates sparsity or some other stylistic effect.⁵

But our concern here is with the ideational, with the difference between the poetic and the prosaic modes. So let me give a reading of "Garden," and through it show how the ideation works not within the factual, not mechanically, but symbolically, as fields of meaning unified in the making (and reading) of the text.

It begins:

You are clear

⁵ I grant that the narrative nature of "Patterns" and the lyrical nature of "Garden" may create a perceived unfair advantage in any comparison between the two. It also may create the false impression that narrative in itself eschews poetic ideation. It does not. As seen in the description of "Garden," below, poetic texts must still be built upon concrete details: the poetic utilizes the prosaic. Without the latter the former becomes abstract to the point of incomprehension. (Consider the necessity of both the Dionysiac and the Apollonian to art in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.) It is how the factual aspects are utilized that determines the modality of a text, not the presence of fact in itself. For that, the difference between the narrative "Patterns" and the lyrical "Garden" hopefully serves to bring the difference in modality into greater contrast.

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O rose, cut in rock,
hard as the descent of hail.

The verse begins in description, just as did "Patterns." As well, "Garden" also establishes an opposition: where "Patterns" offered the opposition between the passionate woman and her stiff environment, "Garden" creates an opposition between the text's description and the reader's own experience. The rose is described as being like stone: an idea that fits neither with everyday experience with nor with how roses are commonly treated in literature.

From the start, we are being asked to read the verse in a quite different manner: the opposition is within a single thought, that of the rose. This is not an alternate reality. It's an everyday garden, and in everyday gardens roses are not stone. Yet, the rose *is perceived* as "cut in rock." The reader is being invited into an active engagement with the text: it is a rose, but it is not a rose. How? Why?

But the first two lines are but the establishment of the ideational dynamo. Up to that point we have but two facts: the rose is a rose, the rose is cut stone. Only, they are not two facts in opposition as with the passionate woman and her stiff dress; nor are they in logical exclusion, where the reader, as with the toggling nature of the garden which was sometimes stiff sometimes alive, must select one fact to the exclusion of the other. They are two facts that ask to be taken simultaneously, symbolically. What energizes the dynamo is the third line: the encountered rose is hard as "the descent of hail." There is the idea of discomfort, if not of pain, brought into the perception of the rose. The garden rose offers not an experience of enjoyment but something quite the opposite. Again, the verse is not offering a logical opposition: instead of an actual rose the narrator finds a stone rose. Rather there is the simultaneity that lies at the core of all symbolism: the rose is simultaneously a rose and not a rose; it is a rose but it is experienced not as a rose; and that experience, despite it being a rose, is unpleasant.

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The second stanza expands the dynamo.

I could scrape the colour
from the petals
like spilt dye from a rock.

The color of the rose is equated to "spilt dye": by use of simile a quality of spilt dye is being transferred to the rose. What quality? That the color is separable from the rose; even, that the color is incidental to the rose, that the color is not part of the rose's true self. The rose is perceived as hard as stone, and one of the primary sources of its beauty, its color, feels superadded.

The beauty of the rose is forbidden the viewer. It is not that the rose is not beautiful, it is that the viewer cannot perceive that beauty. But that experience is not an impossibility.

If I could break you
I could break a tree.

The tree functions in two ways: first to extend the situation from a single rose to the whole of the titular garden. Second, to speak the power, the potency of that previous line: *if I could break you*. That power is given emphasis through repetition.

If I could stir
I could break a tree –
I could break you.

But the repetition also serves to bring that dynamo to its full scope. Notice the word "stir" – the central word of this half of "Garden." It is itself in opposition to the idea of "cut in rock," an opposition which works to equate the person to the rose and the garden.

If I could break you
If I could stir

That is,

If I could break myself.

Not only is the rose experienced as cut in rock, the speaker themselves is cut in rock.

When unable to stir, when unable to break the rose, the rose is experienced as other than a rose: its "beauty" is artificial, spilt upon

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Write three other descriptive pieces of verse that also describe a woman in a garden at odds with her environment in the nature of the woman in "Patterns" and they can all be comfortably filed under that same category. The difference between the three texts will only be the chosen details, the chosen facts, the information that is being relayed. Though the texts be verse (if they indeed are verse, and they need not be), they are prosaic in modality. "I have a story to tell about a woman" – a root narrative to which various facts can be added, subtracted, or swapped out without changing the root narrative.

The same cannot be said for "Garden." The difference between "Patterns" and "Garden" can perhaps be demonstrated through what might be the most rudimentary responses to the verses.

"Patterns":

I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
[. . .]
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.

An opposition is established: the world is stiff; the woman is impassioned. Narrated fact A, narrated fact B, in opposition, but acceptable as presented. And the reader responds: "Ok, I got that information."

"Garden"

You care clear
O rose, cut in rock

An opposition is established. The rose, which is normally perceived as soft, delicate, even transient, is here "cut in rock." Not narrated fact A, narrated fact B, but *experiential reality* A (a rose is still a normal rose); *experience* B (a rose as experienced in the text). And the reader responds: "Wait, how can that be?" How can the rose

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simultaneously be a rose and not a rose? An ideational dynamo is created, the reader is invited to actively engage the ideation in the text, to *think about* the ideation; and the whole of it is anchored in experience:

hard as the descent of hail.

Not only is the rose not a rose, but it is also unpleasant that it is not a rose. Paraphrasing "Garden" leaves out that experiential aspect of the text itself, leaves out how the text engages the psyche of the reader, the reader in their being in the cosmos, the reader in their being in a "garden" while simultaneously barred from "being" in a garden. Though we only have eleven lines and fifty-one words in the first half of "Garden," the verse successfully expands that ideational, experiential dynamo from experience of the rose to experience of the self, from perception and understanding of the rose to perception and understanding of the self, and of the self's being in the cosmos.

Which leads us to the second part of "Garden," that part originally published as "Heat." By the context established by the construction of the verse and its title, the speaker is still in engagement with a garden. Now, however, that engagement has moved from focusing on the specific elements of the garden outward to the experience of the general atmosphere. Another opposition is created.

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

that between wind and heat, the wind presented as a positive, the heat as a negative. Notice how with the word "rend" the ideation from the first part is carried forward: "rend" invokes the idea of cloth, curtains, veils; the heat is being described as a barrier.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air-

The heat is obstacle to the course of nature, and obstacle also, if we extend the boundaries of "cannot drop," to the engagement with

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nature, with the pleasures – the beauty – of the garden. Yet, the text does not establish a simple opposition of A vs. B:

fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

The heat is barrier to the experience of the garden, but it is also part of the garden, part of nature. It is because of the heat that grapes and pears have their shapes. Is the verse saying the world is not as it should be? No. It is saying that the heat – the oppressive heat – has a part in the making of the garden, in the making *of the beauty* of the garden. And yet,

O wind, rend open the heat

There is a distinction being made in the second part as there was in the first, a distinction between action and passivity:

If I could stir
I could break a tree –

Cut the heat –
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

The heat contributes to if not makes the world as it is; yet the heat also gets in the way of seeing the world, of experiencing the cosmos in its beauty. The heat makes a world *of things*; it makes the rose just as it makes the grape. And in its oppressive stillness, its resistance to movement, it is a barrier to the experience of beauty.

If I could stir

So also is the self of the world, so also is the self both simultaneously shaped by heat and removed by heat.

Again, the opposition is not logical: fact A, wind = good; fact B, heat = bad; with the text arguing the exclusion of one in favor of the other. There is rather the symbolic coincidence of opposites: fact A, heat = bad; fact B, heat = good; both are present, neither

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can be removed. Again the reader is posed: “How can that be?” The invitation to active thought is made by that text, thought that will never exclude either side of the equation from the thinking. Another dynamo is established, one that is again anchored in experience, in that of the wind moving through the heat. It is a dynamo in that the poem is not arguing for the mechanical removal of the fact of heat in its negative aspect. The wind does not eliminate the heat, it cuts through it, creating a path. The wind creates motion. The wind, in terms of the first part, is *stirring*; the wind *is* stirring.

But keep in mind, wind is not a permanent thing like stone or the heat. It is ethereal, momentary; it is action, it has a beginning and an end, and it must be energized for it to exist at all.

“Garden” is thus not a mere description of a person in a garden. It is the “evocation of depth,” the generation of the experience of a person in a garden; depth that goes beyond the surface facts of sensory data into the energetic dynamos of symbolic imagination, of ideational experience. The verse, in speaking to the idea and experience of being in the world, of the perception of the beauty of the cosmos that requires being in the cosmos, speaks also of itself, of its own reading and writing. To perceive the microcosmos of “Garden” requires of the reader something quite different from hearing the narration of “Patterns”; to “stir” in the reading of “Garden” requires something other than the passive reception of sensory data offered by “Patterns”: it requires active reading, active engagement in the dynamos of experiential ideation, active engagement with the evocation of depth. To return to the quotation with which I opened, above:

There was another working of the image, more than Amy Lowell proposed, back of sense and mood, partly conscious and partly unconscious.

“Garden” is not a text of elements working into some sequence or order by logical mechanisms. It is a text of elements that in themselves do work, that in themselves create energy and flow, that

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churn in themselves and in engagement with the other elements of the verse, creating an organic whole, an aesthetic microcosmos: one that engages the whole of the mind not solely the rational consciousness; one that requires an active imagination to be perceived – just as does a rose to be *truly* engaged. Thus the symbolic, the poetic nature of “Garden,” a modality of a different order from the prosaic modality of “Patterns.”