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LAMPMAN'S

TRANSCENDENTAL-VISIONARY DEVELOPMENT

"THE CLEARER SELF":

LAMPMAN'S TRANSCENDENTAL-VISIONARY DEVELOPMENT

by

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## ABSTRACT

Criticism of Lampman, while recently successful in finally getting away from reading him merely as a descriptive nature poet, has not closely examined his complex relationship with Emersonian Transcendentalism, nor has it looked at his poetical career as a whole. Many critics portray Lampman as a "dreamer of dreams", an escapist, and the critics who have noticed transcendental tendencies in his poetry conclude that his poetical career was, like that of Emerson or Thoreau, a sustained retreat into nature. After first of all offering a fairer and more balanced biographical account of Lampman than has yet been offered, this study examines past and present criticism of Lampman and the biases that inform it, and looks at Lampman's views of Emersonian Transcendentalism before coming to the major task which is to examine closely Lampman's three volumes of verse and to show that there is a development, a maturing, of his poetic vision. His first volume, Among The Millet (1888), reflects an attempt to give expression to the Emersonian identification of man with nature; in his second, Lyrics of Earth (1895), after adopting a thoroughly transcendental stance, he sees the dishonesty and inadequacy of this philosophy; and in his last volume, Alcyone (1899), he abandons his transcendental quest for unity with nature

and gives uninhibited expression to his frightening, direct vision of nature and human nature. In Lampman there is an important, but hitherto neglected, transcendental-visionary development.

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DEDICATED TO WILLIAM D. ARNOLD (1917 - 1979)



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## CHAPTER ONE: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Archibald Lampman's untimely death on 10 February 1899 occasioned a very interesting and revealing eulogy on the following day in the Ottawa Journal. The editor begins by claiming categorically that Canada "has as yet but a limited place for the poet or the artist, nor will it have much better for many a decade".<sup>1</sup> This country is "raw, rough, unbroken; it is the land of the engineer, the railway promotor, the contractor, the hard-headed practical man. There is no leisure, little culture". The magic sounds of poet and musician are "drowned out" by the whistles and engines of industry; small wonder then, he adds, that a creative mind such as Lampman's did not, nor could, reach fruition in such an environment:

One can hardly help believing that a man of such essentially refined and artistic feeling as Archibald Lampman's poems and tastes showed him to be would have been better nourished intellectually, and personally happier had fate placed him in another and artistically richer atmosphere.

Later that week, the editorial received a response from none other than Lampman's mother, who evidently found it a fitting lament for her son's early death:

Dear Mr. Ross: Accept a deeply grieved Mother's heartfelt thanks for your tribute to my dear son's memory. I had not thought anyone but myself so fully understood the blockade of adverse circumstances surrounding his life and which I knew too well has helped him to a pre-mature grave.<sup>2</sup>

This editorial and its response form the outline of an image of Lampman's life that has been coloured in by various hands over the decades: critics who have commented on Lampman the man have invariably seen him as the stifled, bored victim of a mind-deadening job, a passive dreamer who continually longed to escape from an oppressive and fast-moving world that frightened his quiet and refined sensibility. A year after the poet's death John Marshall writes in the Queen's Quarterly that Lampman was a man of "more or less limp and languid moods".<sup>3</sup> Louis Untermeyer (Poet Lore, November 1909) says that Lampman was concerned "less and less with the stress and complexity of modern life", and more with "solitude and woodland wonders".<sup>4</sup> Another contributor in the Queen's Quarterly writes in 1915 that for Lampman poetry was a narcotic; it had "drugged and left him on an enchanted isle away from the world of action — a spellbound minstrel of song — the Canadian poet's poet".<sup>5</sup> In his book-length study of Lampman, Norman Gregor Guthrie proposes that a good motto for the life of this poet would be, "Behold, this dreamer cometh";<sup>6</sup> he also claims that for Lampman the city "is something undesirable and awful, something from which one must flee, something which inspires a mood of sadness. . .".<sup>7</sup> Six years after Guthrie's book of 1927, Leo Kennedy presents a fascinating little article in the Canadian Forum, an article which contains an excellent summary of the view widely held of Lampman the man as one who is

made in the image and likeness of the conventional  
'poet' of the last century, a hater of cities,  
crowds, etc., a worshipper of nature, an advocate

of extremely simple living and very high ideals,  
a solitary dreamer of dreams. . . in short, a  
seclusive, paranoic person. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Even more recent biographical comments about Lampman only tend to colour in this picture rather than sketch a new one. In the middle of this century John Sutherland describes Lampman as "someone who expended more energy in getting away from Ottawa and its citizens than in any other form of practical endeavour. . . .";<sup>9</sup> and Northrop Frye fixes Lampman as the "placid romantic nature poet beating the track of Wordsworth and Keats".<sup>10</sup> D. G. Jones is fond of applying to Lampman the infinitive "to escape" in Butterfly On Rock (1970): "His problem was to escape from the garrison of a culture that was itself becoming a wilderness. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Along this line Sandra Djwa claims in 1973 that "for most of his poetic career, Lampman seems to have willed himself into a denial of reality".<sup>12</sup> And in 1976 Margaret Coulby Whitridge stresses Lampman's great personal misfortunes as a cause of his pessimistic temper and vision later in life.<sup>13</sup> It seems that the only critic to return to the drawing board when thinking about Lampman's life is Barrie Davies, who, having found a hitherto unknown Lampman manuscript, points out that in it the poet agrees with Henri Frederick Amiel that the "test of every religious, political, or educational system, is the man which it forms. . . .", and that Lampman was concerned and involved with social change.<sup>14</sup> What follows in this chapter is a brief biographical account which presents aspects of Lampman's life that have not been given fair consideration.

Born on 17 November 1861, the son of Archibald Lampman Sr., rector

of Trinity Church in Morpeth, and Suzanna Gesner, whom the rector married on 29 May 1860, Archibald Lampman lived in Morpeth until the family moved first to Perrytown near Port Hope, and then to Gore's landing on Rice Lake. Due probably to the dampness of this house, the boy was stricken in November 1868 with rheumatic fever, a disease which may have caused or at least contributed to his frail physical constitution later in life. For a time at least it left him bedridden and then lame, though he nevertheless entered the school of F. W. Barron, M.A. of Cambridge, in September 1870. In September 1876 he entered Trinity College School in Port Hope, where he won many scholastic prizes and became in his second year Head Boy and Prefect of the school.

Though he had apparently written a few poems before leaving Port Hope, his writing really began in earnest after he entered Trinity College in Toronto in 1879. In the December 1880 issue of Rouge et Noir appears a prose discussion on Shelley's "Revolt of Islam"; in this paper, Lampman, though the son of an Anglican minister, sets aside the "blasphemous infidelity" in Shelley's work and praises it as "a magnificent poet's dream" about naturally good men whose stifled natures are released from the evils and bondages of oppressive political, social, and religious systems. His essay "Friendship" appears in February of 1881 and a year later "Verses", his first poetical contribution, is printed. At about this time he began to take over the tasks of editing Rouge et Noir and acting as "scribe" for the paper called Episkopon. These tasks undoubtedly took valuable time away from his studies, for in 1882 he graduated with

second-class honours in the Classics.

A letter addressed to his college friend J. A. Ritchie of Ottawa shows that in July of 1882 the young graduate was seeking employment as a teacher: "I have applied to Orillia, Vankleek Hill (refused there!); Orangeville and Stratford (\$900 a year, impossible). Orangeville is the one I think I shall get".<sup>15</sup> Ironically, though he fared well in getting a position as assistant master in Orangeville High School, he immediately detested his job; after only one week of teaching, he writes to Ritchie on 9 September 1882:

Here endeth the first week of pedagogy and right tired I am of it too. John of Ottawa, take the advice of one whose eyes have been terribly opened, never descend to the abyss of pedagogy if there is another path open in any direction to thee in this life.<sup>16</sup>

In a letter that soon followed this one Lampman declares: "John of Ottawa, I mean to quit this teaching business as soon as possible. I can't stand it any longer".<sup>17</sup> Lampman's creative writing, whether poetry or prose, evidently ground to a halt in the wheels of pedagogy; on 14 December 1882 he writes to Ritchie: "I grow too dull to put pen to paper, save in the correction of some sweet-faced urchin's exercise".<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately, however, one of Lampman's college friends was Archibald Campbell, the son of Sir Alexander Campbell, then Postmaster-General in Ottawa. After some assistance from his friend, Lampman was offered a clerkship in the Civil Service on 16 January 1883.<sup>19</sup> The Public Records show that Lampman lived at 67 O'Connor Street in Ottawa

until 1884 when he moved to 144 Nicholas.<sup>20</sup> His job, he says, was a bit "monotonous", but "hours easy and time to myself, thank God".<sup>21</sup> It is hard to reconcile the traditional view that Lampman hated and longed to escape his mind-killing job with the actual facts and his own writing during these first years in Ottawa. The job was evidently not taxing, nor did it seem to interfere with his thinking and writing. In fact, in the 1880's Lampman liked his work. He writes:

I have grown wonderfully prolific of verse since I came here. . . . I wrote 48 lines last night and got into such a fever over it that I couldn't sleep all night. I have the long evenings to myself and invariably fall adreaming. . . . My verse is continually getting better. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Lampman's poetical vocation did indeed sprout healthily in his first years in Ottawa: he published "Winter Evening" in Canadian Illustrated News on 3 February 1883; he published "The Coming of Winter"<sup>23</sup> and "Three Flower Petals" in The Week in January 1884; "Bird Voices" in Century Magazine, May 1885; and he wrote his two prose tales, "Hans Fingerhut's Frog Lesson" and "The Fairy Fountain", at this time. Financially, the job was pleasing also: the rate of pay Lampman received (which rose from \$9.00 to \$16.00 per week for a six-hour day) seems rather cruel until one realizes that this is an extraordinarily high wage compared with the average adult mill-worker who earned \$8.00 weekly for a twelve-hour day.<sup>24</sup> All things considered, it is little wonder that Lampman could look over his situation in the middle eighties and summarize it thus: "I am in a very good condition for verse making, as I am

altogether undisturbed through the long evenings. . . . I like the Civil Service".<sup>25</sup> Ottawa was even a source of inspiration for the poet:

Perched upon its crown of rock a certain atmosphere flows. . . borne upon the breath of the prevailing north-west wind, an intellectual elixir, an oxygenic essence thrown off by immeasurable tracts of pine-clad mountain and crystal lake. In this air the mind becomes conscious of a vital energy and buoyant swiftness of movement rarely experienced in a like degree anywhere.<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to what many critics who have commented on Lampman's life have said, Lampman became more and more involved in important social and political issues as time went on. He not only spoke up, but many of his opinions were startlingly radical for his time and place. At about the time of his marriage to Maud, daughter of Dr. Edward Playter of Toronto, Lampman wrote an untitled essay on Socialism (c. 1886-7) which has a very bitter tone and solid convictions; one can almost envision Lampman as a ranting political leader as he directly states: "If this soul is incapable of adapting itself to conditions of equality, community and brotherhood, then better had we never have been born, for reason, the capacity of faith was given to us in vain".<sup>27</sup> Also at this time he took active part in meeting with the "Progressive Club", a group composed of socialist sympathizers including W. W. Campbell, D. C. Scott, and James Macoun.<sup>28</sup>

But Lampman's most direct and public statements on important issues appear in the Toronto Globe in a column entitled "At the Mermaid Inn". In September of 1890 Sir John Willison became editor of the Toronto Globe.



Having already met Lampman, D. C. Scott, and W. W. Campbell when in Ottawa, Willison suggested that they write a weekly column for a payment of three dollars per week each. "They were to have a carte blanche as to the quantity and subject of their writing",<sup>29</sup> so from 6 February, 1892 to 1 July 1893, the three poets submitted many short papers, some of which were harmlessly trivial, but some of which reflected and spoke out upon the issues and conflicts of the age.

An important idea that comes through at various points in these columns is Lampman's view of the poet. Surprisingly (at least it would be to some critics), Lampman does not believe in any idea of the poet as "dreamer"; the poet should not follow a road to Xanadu but rather should be nervously alive to the world around him. In the column of 2 April 1892 he says that the poet is not "a sort of monstrosity", or one of "frenzied glance" who is "wrapped in fiery abstractions". Rather he is

like other sensible men, the chief difference being that he is possessed in a much higher degree of. . . common sense; for the faculty of genius is nothing more than clear, plain common sense, carried to a high degree and kindled with imagination. . . . The poet attaches himself to no dream. He endeavours to see life simply as it is, and to estimate everything at its true value in relation to the universal and the infinite. . . . [The poet is] the wisest, the manliest, the most self-contained, and sometimes even the austere and apparently most unimpassioned of all men.<sup>30</sup>

A poet is first of all a man-- a socially involved one; in fact, the more involved a poet is with important social issues, the greater

his art will be. On 2 July 1892 he observes that it is

a noticeable fact that the greatest poets, those few who are eminent above all others for dignity and majesty of tone, have been men of affairs before they were poets, and that those men who have been poets only have belonged, however illustrious, to the second class.<sup>31</sup>

Aeschylus, Dante, and Milton are examples of the first class, as is Tolstoy whom Lampman earlier admired as a writer who was involved with the poor in his society.<sup>32</sup> Though Lampman admires Shelley, he criticizes him for not being "human", for being instead an airy "spirit". On 5 March 1892 he writes of Shelley's verse:

I find myself often a little repelled by the absence of something, which for lack of a nearer term I would call "the human". Shelley appears to us. . . strange, radiant, and inspired. . . . We miss in him. . . earthly human heartiness.<sup>33</sup>

One social issue that the common-sensical poet spoke out upon was the touchy problem of women's rights. When one realizes that Lampman was writing in the nineteenth century, it is quite startling to read very forward-looking statements on women such as these:

Give them perfect independence, place them upon an exactly even footing with men in all the activities and responsibilities of life, and a result for good will be attained which it is almost beyond the power of imagination to picture. . . .<sup>34</sup>

and: "When the moral and intellectual emancipation of women is fully effected many a cloud will be lifted from human life. . . ."<sup>35</sup> These statements are unconventional enough, but that Lampman argues for the "intellectual" as well as "moral" emancipation of women suggests that

he sees the fair sex as equally competent in a university atmosphere, equally competent to lead the cultural and intellectual life of a country. This he believes fully:

We say that women are unfitted for such and such occupations, forgetting that their unfitness is due simply to the fact that the rudimentary capacity for those occupations, which certainly is in them, is immature through never having been allowed exercise. Women are quite fitted for all the intellectual occupations undertaken by men, and for many of the physical. In some of the intellectual ones they decidedly excel.<sup>36</sup>

Here, as in other places, Lampman is indicting the whole structure of a society that is male-dominated. By implication he probably intends this stand as a jab against the all-male parliamentary house at this time, against business organizations that are controlled and operated solely by men, and against universities which discourage, if not outrightly forbid, female candidates. Lampman believes in and desires a change in the social set-up; women must be given equal rights in all things: "It is absolutely necessary that this change should take place if the race is to reach its noblest and fullest development. . .".<sup>37</sup>

Another issue that Lampman is quite vocal about is Socialism. His essay on this subject is explicit enough, and in the Globe column he rides the issue even more vigorously. On 24 September 1892 he contributes a very abrasive attack against the capitalist doctrine of free enterprize: he calls the accumulation of riches "a purely brute instinct" and says that the

importance attached to the possession of wealth

is due to a species of madness or mental blindness which is endemic in no particular country, but has been a universal pestilence affecting every age and climate.<sup>38</sup>

The desire for riches is "miserable emptiness and vulgarity", and no proper social reform can take place as long as wealth, the "emissary of satan", the "real enemy of mankind", is the motivating principle in society. After all, he says on 3 June, "it is now a practical truth that one person is of the same dignity as another".<sup>39</sup> And on 25 March 1893 he writes a highly socialist passage about work-hours and holidays: "Most people seem to think that the mass of mankind were only made to be 'worked', to be kept at the mill from dawn till sunset. . . to grant a holiday is almost to overturn the world".<sup>40</sup> Lampman is incensed that while only "a certain portion of the people are compelled by an irresistible force to carry out this production, a large other portion sits by in comparative idleness and enjoys the spectacle".<sup>41</sup> This observation, in language not unlike that of Karl Marx, leads Lampman to his conclusion:

The new idea is that every man shall work, that the work done shall be no more than necessary, and that in consequence the whole may be divided up into very moderate apportionments for each citizen.<sup>42</sup>

In other words, from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Lampman seems more extreme than a socialist, and evidently speaks out fearlessly his convictions. In these columns of 1892-3 Lampman shows himself to be intimately involved in the society in which he lived: he believed that a poet should be a man of affairs, and this he was, lecturing occasionally and taking active part in the "Progressive

Club" discussions; he believed in and campaigned for women's rights; he propounded iron-clad socialistic ideals and saw the need for political change in Canada. In the midst of all this he had published in 1888 his first volume of verse, Among The Millet, and was working on a second. Though perhaps falling short of his ideal of "poet" and "man of affairs" as seen in Milton or Dante, Lampman was certainly collecting credentials in both categories.

The clearest insight into Lampman's final decade can be had when looking at the poet's correspondence with his very good friend Edward W. Thomson. Lampman became Thomson's friend after the publication of Among The Millet when Thomson, then editor of the Toronto Globe, wrote a friendly editorial suggesting that the government of Canada recognize and foster Canadian genius by appointing men like Lampman to better positions in the Civil Service.<sup>43</sup> In return Lampman recommended some of Thomson's short stories to Scribner's and Harper's.<sup>44</sup>

With Thomson's help, Lampman was offered a job as reader with The Youth's Companion of Boston, which journal Thomson edited in 1893. His response to this offer and its pay of \$1,000 a year is another indication that he was not gruellingly discontent in Ottawa. Lampman refuses the offer and adds: "Here the drudgery I do — and it is I confess not very heavy — is a thing apart from my literary faculty and does not directly injure it".<sup>45</sup> A few months later Lampman turned down a position in the Cornell University Library; he writes to Thomson on 5 July 1893: "I am becoming so embedded in my present surroundings —

disquieting as they are in some respects, that it will be hard to get me out of them".<sup>46</sup>

One of the dominant personal qualities that can be seen in these letters is Lampman's ability to be introspective. Having sent a poem to the Youth's Companion, Lampman's response to the editors' judgement shows that he has an eye for his own verse and that he is willing to push his opinion of it: "Your Y.C. readers have gone below zero in my estimation since they rejected the 'Hermit Thrush' which was one of the best things I have ever offered to any publication. They must be a set of block heads".<sup>47</sup> Early in the following year he realizes that his outlook on life is changing; the optimism that can be seen in his volume Lyrics of Earth is giving way to pessimism and a direct vision of the sordidness of human social experience. He writes on 28 February 1894:

There is one thing about me that may be safely said.  
I certainly am not stagnating: on the contrary, I  
become more sensitive, more exciteable, more nervously  
alive with every year. You used to credit me with  
a peaceful serenity of thought and vision. . . . I  
am becoming morbid, subject to dreadful moods and  
hypochondria and even insomnia has bothered me a  
little of late.<sup>48</sup>

On 5 March 1894 he concludes: "I suppose I am passing through some spiritual revolution — in fact I know I am and some things have caused me unusual agonies".<sup>49</sup> As is shown in later chapters, the "spiritual revolution" was that he began to see that the philosophy of Transcendentalism, which he liked so much and had adopted in Lyrics of Earth, was, in the middle

nineties, seen as inadequate and dishonest, so he abandons it and is left looking directly at the world "simply as it is".

Along with these spiritual difficulties there came some physical and emotional ones. His son Arnold, born in early May 1894, died in early August at the age of about 3 months;<sup>50</sup> in 1895 his father fell ill with cancer and Archibald tended him day and night, having to let his poetry "stand for a while";<sup>51</sup> sometime after his father's death Lampman seems to have strained his heart on a canoe trip -- he would not respond to treatment and gradually weakened. Also, during these years he evidently fell in love with Kate Waddell, a co-worker in the Civil Service. They both knew that their relationship would never work and eventually stopped seeing each other. Lampman's notebooks contain love poems that were almost certainly written about Kate, though it is very unlikely that she ever read them. In one rough jotting he describes her physical appearance and concludes:

. . .Touch'd by her,  
A world of finer vision I have found;  
Less heedful of the common fret and stir,  
I tread, grave-hearted, upon loftier ground.<sup>52</sup>

In a letter to Thomson dated April 1898, Lampman writes a poem about spring which concludes:

And the promise of April is bright as a smile  
On the beautiful lips of my Lady --  
The lips of my Lady -- my Lady.<sup>53</sup>

Margaret Coulby Whitridge discusses several of Lampman's love poems to Kate Waddell, and shows that this relationship became one of frustration

and grief for the poet.<sup>54</sup> As his love was slipping away from him, so was his life. By the middle of 1898 he knew that he would never be well; he writes to D. C. Scott on 5 August 1898: "I am gradually reconciling myself to the fact that I am an invalid and shall remain so as long as I live, which I imagine can hardly be long — not many years".<sup>55</sup> Shortly before his death he says of himself: "Do not think of me as a hollow-eyed spectre on the verge of dissolution, suffering perpetual pain".<sup>56</sup> On 8 February 1899, he was "stricken with a sharp pain in the lungs, and lingered with intermittent suffering until the 10th; then in the first hour of the morning he passed away as if to sleep".<sup>57</sup> He was buried in Beechwood Cemetery. He did not live to see the publication of his third and last volume of verse, Alcyone (1899), and his close friend and literary executor, D. C. Scott, cancelled its publication but ordered twelve copies. Scott did this because he was preparing a Memorial Edition of Lampman's collected poems; this edition appeared in 1900.<sup>58</sup>

Though Lampman's frail medical condition robbed years from his life, it did not rob life from his years. Far from being a runaway "dreamer", an "escapist", a "spellbound minstrel", a "seclusive paranoic person", a "poor Johnny Keats", who fled from and denied reality, Lampman was, the evidence shows, very much involved with, and spoke out upon, the major issues of his time: he was a socialist, in a sense a feminist, and he had definite ideas about the poet as "man of affairs". Far from being an oppressed little clerk who faced "adverse circumstances" and who was situated in an artistically arid atmosphere, Lampman was not only well



paid, and not physically or mentally taxed in his labour, but he himself admits to liking his job because of its short hours and the fact that it did not interfere with his writing. As for Ottawa itself, not only was he inspired there, but he had the company of other intellectuals such as Scott, Campbell, and Macoun. It must be remembered also that this book-hungry classicist refused positions as reader for the Youth's Companion and as a librarian at Cornell University. Add to all of this that he was a fairly prolific - - and famous - - poet after 1890 and it is clear that although Lampman was certainly not without problems and griefs (indeed, they increased in the last seven or eight years of his life) he was by no means the agonizing dreamer that many critics have drawn in their biographical comments.

## CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL APPRAISAL, PAST AND PRESENT

If critics have been rather unfair to Lampman the man, they have been even more unfair to Lampman the poet. While it is true that critical stances and outlooks change (it is not difficult in 1980 to find fault with an article of 1920), and while especially in literary criticism the past is altered by the present, Lampman criticism has remained curiously uniform: trends and conceptions that were formed by Lampman's contemporaries in their criticism of his verse, though perhaps not followed to the letter through the last eight decades, have remained as foundations or bases for all subsequent criticism. The first half of this chapter comprises a look at Lampman criticism from 1889 to about 1950; the second half will look at criticism from about 1950 to the present.

### I

The first critical review on Lampman's work came out shortly after his first volume, Among The Millet. In The Week, 22 March 1889, "Fidelis", or Agnes Maule Machar, states that Lampman's "distinguishing excellence lies in his fine poetic thought, vivid description, grace and suggestiveness. . .",<sup>1</sup> but "while there is true and delicate description,

we miss something more, something which would have given the description a greater value. It strikes us like a noble portico which leads nowhither".<sup>2</sup> Machar sees Lampman as nothing more than a poet of description who fell "into the old Greek habit of resting in Nature, instead of fulfilling the nobler function of interpreter".<sup>3</sup> Lilly E. F. Barry agrees in her article of 1891 that Lampman is "so fine a master in the art of description";<sup>4</sup> she praises his "vivid pictures" and "happy descriptive power", concluding that "the burden of it all is one of good cheer, of noble consolation".<sup>5</sup> Arthur Stringer's "Glance at Lampman" in the Canadian Magazine of April 1894 continues in this vein, saying that Lampman "has an artist's eye for colour, and the quiet thoughtfulness of a student of scenery — the true nature poet".<sup>6</sup> Lampman wanders off into nature and "reproduces, with faithful minuteness, the scene. . .".<sup>7</sup> At last, however, a moderately critical article appeared (Acta Victoriana, Dec. 1895): A. W. Crawford sees Lampman as a great descriptive poet of nature but complains that

We find him giving very little self-expression. . . .  
He does not unveil for us the hidden workings of his  
own heart and life. We might read through almost  
his entire work and know nothing about him but  
the thoughts he has had concerning things outside  
himself.<sup>8</sup>

This Crawford calls "objective art", art concerned with "Nature rather than man". Crawford's conclusion is one that was to stay with Lampman criticism for a long time to come:

There is one feature which we would not expect to find, considering he is an earnest student of Wordsworth, and that is that his concern with nature is Description rather than Interpretation. Wordsworth is the great interpreter of nature, and it seems scarcely to be an end in itself; but with Lampman, Nature seems herself the goddess, and he worships her for her own sake.<sup>9</sup>

Other contemporary critics see nothing wrong with this, and Lampman is crowned "Canada's poet of nature" by one, "the keen observer of nature" by another, and still another critic announces in 1898 that Lampman's "descriptions are so fine, sympathetic and true. . .".<sup>10</sup> Lampman lived to see himself praised as the master of pure description, the poet of nature.

Lampman, fortunately, did not live to see the article in the Queen's Quarterly, July 1901, where John Marshall calls him "derivative", "colourless and incoherent", "lacking in breadth and imagination", "infelicitous in expression", and "without individuality". Speaking of the collected edition Marshall declares:

One lays aside the volume with a stronger impression than ever of the derivative character of Lampman's work, his lack of originality, his narrow range of thought and feeling and the almost entire absence of any evidence of progress towards clearer and more consistent views of life and art.<sup>11</sup>

This idea that Lampman did not progress or develop in his vision of life has not been exorcised from the criticism even today. Marshall's article, however, is valuable in that at least it begins the trend of looking critically at the text rather than mindlessly doffing one's

hat to the famous Canadian poet.

A few years later, however, the curious and epidemic view of Lampman as "the dreamer" or the escapist has its birth. Louis Untermeyer observes that as Lampman became a better poet his poetry concerned itself "less and less with the stress and complexity of modern life; ceased almost to reflect the moving panorama of the crowded days and echoed only the themes of solitude and woodland wonders".<sup>12</sup> Untermeyer says that Lampman always escaped from the "troubled cities" to nature, the "soft-cheeked mother", whose "voice was his inspiration and his comfort".<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Bernard Muddiman, though traditionally praising Lampman's great descriptive power, the "vivid richness" in his "vignettes of the natural world", speaks of the "restoring faculty of nature" that Lampman depended upon:

We are told again to take comfort in the fields and  
feast on summer sounds. Drink of nature's restful  
cup and ye shall be filled and ye shall understand.  
An excellent philosophy, no doubt, but hardly  
universally satisfying.<sup>14</sup>

Muddiman goes as far as to say that Lampman's nature poems, "mere exercises in description", put one to sleep; "Lampman was essentially a dreamer of dreams".<sup>15</sup> G. H. Unwin joins the ranks in 1917 by saying in the University Magazine that Lampman "is essentially a dreamer, projecting his mind into the past or the future, but avoiding the present".<sup>16</sup>

In the twenties these two concepts of Lampman the dreamer and Lampman the purely descriptive writer were reiterated first in two

important articles and then in the only two book-length studies of Lampman to date. Raymond Knister writes in the Dalhousie Review (Oct. 1927) that "no poet has made clearer and more definite pictures"<sup>17</sup> and that the "lack of tension between the poet and his environment. . . kept him from development" of a poetic vision.<sup>18</sup> Later that year O. J. Stevenson writes that Lampman's is "the song of the spirit, and not the song of the streets";<sup>19</sup> and also that in most of his poems he merely "delineates some scene from nature".

Norman Gregor Guthrie's The Poetry of Archibald Lampman (1927) seems a compendium and expansion of earlier Lampman criticism. His verse is seen as an "onrush of pictures and figures of unrestrained beauty";<sup>20</sup> in the matter of "purely descriptive writing Lampman was a master"<sup>21</sup> because he sat "at the feet of John Keats".<sup>22</sup> Lampman, heralded with the motto, "Behold, this dreamer cometh", is criticized slightly because he placed "too slight a value on the human relationships of life".<sup>23</sup> Carl Y. Connor's Archibald Lampman: Canadian Poet of Nature seems a sequel to Guthrie's work: it agrees that Lampman "was pre-eminently the poet of Canadian nature",<sup>24</sup> "a pictorial artist", a "disciple of Beauty". And of course, nature, into which Lampman dreamed himself, was a source of "consolation and calm": he found in nature's beauty "not only a sensuous pleasure and a mood conducive to thought, but also a guarantee of happiness".<sup>25</sup>

The tide turned against Lampman in the thirties, but strangely

enough the critical views of him as "dreamer" and "nature poet" remained unscathed. Paradoxically, it is precisely these two qualities (which earlier critics praised) that Leo Kennedy and W. E. Collin attack in Lampman. Kennedy's rather rabid article condemns the poet as "a solitary dreamer of dreams which are never defined or described":<sup>26</sup>

His preoccupation with a very ridiculous concept of the poet's place in the scheme of things is really laughable. Again and again in the collected poems he suggests that the poet is a vague, witless creature who engages himself in an intolerable amount of dreaming. . . .<sup>27</sup>

Kennedy also charges Lampman with unwarranted and consistent optimism:

"We have detected, as the Lampmans do not appear to have done, that all is decidedly not right with the world; we suspect that God is not in his Heaven".<sup>28</sup> In other words, Lampman avoided important "modern"

issues and has no appeal to the modern reader. W. E. Collin says:

"Young Canadian poets today find no pleasure in Lampman. An art which proceeds directly from a purely sensual apprehension of the exterior world. . . cannot stir their minds",<sup>29</sup> though Collin is willing to point out that Lampman's descriptions of nature are excellent.

E. K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry (1944) has little that is original to add to Lampman criticism, though what it does add is very important. At first, half-century-old ideas appear once again: "Lampman's early verse is a delicate record of the surface of nature. . .";<sup>30</sup> "the desire for sharp accuracy" and "the nervous sensibility" — these were Lampman's qualities; and of course "Lampman retreated from the city" because nature was "a refuge from society". Brown's chapter on Lampman ends, however,

with an interesting and, in a sense, new twist:

It is true that at the end as at the beginning, Lampman was happiest when he was melting into the landscape; but at the end he was no longer dependably at peace when he was so lost in nature: the embrace was now a drug and often he both feared and forsook the awakening. The note predominant in Among The Millet was that of tranquil happiness; in Alcyone it is that of intellectual and spiritual struggle.<sup>31</sup>

Though Professor Brown is wrong on his "notes" predominant in the respective volumes, he is the first critic at least to recognize that Lampman's vision and thinking did change. One wishes that Brown, or even later critics, would have explored this change in Lampman's sensibility.

Nobody did -- at least for a while. Ralph Gustafson's paper in Northern Review (1947) claims that Lampman was an escapist who fled into abstraction and whose poetry was "an exaltation of reverie"; he "failed to penetrate his experience" and used nature "as a nook for reverie". D. C. Scott writes to Gustafson in a letter dated 17 July 1945 that Lampman's "high place in our letters is reared on his nature poems rather than on those dealing with human affairs".<sup>32</sup> John Sutherland, who says in 1951 that Lampman "regarded poetry as an escape into dream, a kind of opiate",<sup>33</sup> keeps company with no less a critic than Northrop Frye, who writes in the University of Toronto Quarterly at this time that Lampman has "a tendency to be much more at ease with the vegetable than with the human world";<sup>34</sup> this poet is "a placid romantic nature poet



beating the track of Wordsworth and Keats".<sup>35</sup> Lampman criticism from 1889 to around 1950, though it may vary in scope and emphasis, is actually fairly uniform -- it stands on the concrete foundations, laid by the earliest critics, that Lampman is almost solely a descriptive nature poet with no greater significance, and a "dreamer of dreams" who continually melted into the arms of his mother, "the innocent earth".

## II

It is not until September 1953 that an article appears which, at long last, offers a close reading of Lampman's verse rather than a general impression. Desmond Pacey's paper, "A Reading of Lampman's 'Heat' ", though concentrated on only one poem, at least reads it with some depth and intelligence. More important than Pacey's argument about the poem is his conclusion that "there is a little more to Lampman's poetry than meets the casual eye";<sup>36</sup> his goal in the article, he says, is to provoke "careful re-reading" of the poetry. This much-needed provocation probably affected Louis Dudek, whose article in Culture, September 1957, marks an important departure from much earlier criticism. Dudek still admits that Lampman "had his share of. . . handy romantic formulae: 'Nature' as the great refuge, the comforter",<sup>37</sup> but he continues with a very significant and close observation:

But more important than this apt use of the romantic tradition is the tone of sadness and deep pessimism that pervades all of Lampman's poetry.

He is the only poet in Canada before 1900 who possesses the significant ground-tone of all valuable poetry elsewhere in that period.<sup>38</sup>

Though it is not true that this pessimism underlies all of his verse, this observation is the first that goes beneath the descriptive surface of the poetry. Dudek emphasizes that Lampman "is not at his best, therefore, as a purely descriptive nature poet (though Canadian critics were bound to think so). . .".<sup>39</sup> "Lampman failed", Dudek believes, "in both the philosophical and political dimensions to develop his real energy to the fullest as a poet".<sup>40</sup> He is a poet of "unresolved conflict and incomplete statement". Though Dudek's views are wide of the mark, his article is important, as is Pacey's, for looking beneath the "woodland wonders" and "green retreats" that do figure so often in the verse.

Curiously, and unfortunately, subsequent critics either did not read Dudek's paper or they read it and chose not to follow along the new avenue that it opened. F. W. Watt turns the critical clock back when in 1958 he says: "It is true, as these poems show, that he continually turned to rural scenes as the simplest kind of anodyne or release";<sup>41</sup> Lampman found his "consolations in the natural world". Roy Daniells in, of all places, the Literary History of Canada (1965), says without qualification that Lampman "is consistently Wordsworthian; he finds his consolation, his sense of the divine, his daily sensuous delights, all in the countryside, the world of farm and forest, lake and rock and stream".<sup>42</sup> Lampman's poetry is a dream and the "dream is a protection from actualities". What is more startling and almost inconceivable

is Daniells's double-barrelled assertion that there is virtually no development in Lampman's poetic vision, and that he is -- and the eternal echo strikes -- primarily a descriptive nature poet:

. . .his poetry exhibits a consistent wholeness which makes a chronological arrangement of his poems of little importance. The heart of Lampman's poetic achievement . . . consists of a small group of nature poems, the product of his excursions. . .<sup>43</sup>

That these views should appear in the Literary History tends to suggest that Lampman criticism, in spite of Dudek's article, has not changed over the decades: he is still the dreamer, the recorder of nature.

This suggestion is supported by a look at the discussion of Lampman in Butterfly On Rock (1970). Here D. G. Jones agrees that Lampman's main need was "to escape from the garrison of a culture" that was oppressive, "to escape from boredom and sterility", "to embrace the wilderness of nature". Lampman's verse is "a direct echo of Wordsworth"; like the English poet Lampman had "an excessively benevolent conception of nature and an excessively passive conception of man's relationship to her".<sup>44</sup> And, predictably, Jones agrees with A. J. M. Smith that Lampman "was best at pure landscape where his painter's eye for significant detail produced impressive results".<sup>45</sup>

The first significant departure from the conventional highway of Lampman criticism (except for Dudek's slight detour) is made in Barrie Davies's article in The English Quarterly, Spring 1971. Davies parts company with almost all earlier critics by saying that Lampman was not

just the nature poet:

It is a cliché that Lampman is a poet of nature, though this description has often been loosely used. What should be recognized as equally true is that Lampman is very much a poet of the city. Lampman did not escape into nature; he was an exile there.<sup>46</sup>

Davies goes on to say that several of Lampman's poems offer solid social criticism, though Davies still implies, like other critics, that nature is benevolent and the city is the evil power. Sandra Djwa falls in behind Davies with her article in Canadian Literature, 1973:

Lampman's first poems are superficially descriptions of the peace, beauty and truth received by the poet as he 'dreams' in nature, but the reader is always made aware of the unpleasant 'real' which the idyllic vision attempts to subjugate; the 'dissonant roar of the city' intrudes into the 'easeful dreams' of even such idylls as the early poem 'April'.<sup>47</sup>

Djwa recognizes the deceptiveness and deeper significance of Lampman's verse, but she too simply equates nature with benevolence and dream, and the city with the disturbed and uneasy elements in Lampman's poetry. Having made this equation, she tends, when discussing the "nature poems", to agree with the "Lampman as dreamer" thesis: "As John Sutherland and Roy Daniells both have noted, it is the figure of the poet as apparent idler and dreamer which appears throughout Lampman's poems. . .".<sup>48</sup>

Djwa agrees that Lampman is an escapist, saying that his dream becomes a way of "circumventing the pain of everyday reality". Nature, of course, is "the cure for melancholy", and finally, she concludes: "For most

of his poetic career, Lampman seems to have willed himself into a denial"<sup>49</sup> of reality. Even into the middle seventies, then, though the criticism has become more sophisticated, the old bases of Lampman as dreamer and descriptive nature poet not only underlie much of it but are in fact still its informing principles.

Perhaps the most recent criticism of Lampman is a number of essays that collectively form The Lampman Symposium (1976). Though the book is allegedly a "reappraisal" of this poet, many of the articles are, though ingenious, not only disappointing, but, beneath the sophisticated surface, quite old-fashioned and conventional. For example, Ralph Gustafson accepts the axioms that Lampman is a dreamer and that he was simply a nature poet; Gustafson ingeniously justifies both of these qualities in Lampman by saying first of all that he should not have to be a social poet -- he was a nature poet: "He took refuge where all intelligence can find refuge, in things natural".<sup>50</sup> Secondly, that Lampman dreams is justified: "Let me define the word 'dream' as used by Lampman: it meant, not unreality, not vacuity; dream meant living, it meant meditation".<sup>51</sup> Gustafson doesn't prove this, but it seems more acceptable to him than saying that "dream" means "dream".

Louis Mackendrick and Dick Harrison take contrasting viewpoints in their articles; they symbolize the old and the new in Lampman criticism. Mackendrick, writing primarily about the sonnets, adopts the idea that Lampman escaped into nature, but gives it an interesting twist: "Nature

became for Lampman, in archetypal Romantic fashion, a place where large eternal matters, not human tininesses, could be absorbed, not thought upon".<sup>52</sup> Dick Harrison, however, looks beneath the surface of the verse and senses that something is amiss with "the innocent earth": "Beyond this largely conventional elegaic tone, some of Lampman's most intense images are of terror, pain, and grief in nature, like the image of the trees in 'In October' ".<sup>53</sup> Harrison notices, as do only a few other critics, that pain and fear creep into Lampman's poems quite regularly.

There are other significant articles in the Symposium, but many of them are comments on Lampman's life, are concerned only with the sonnets, or are concerned with one particular poem. Barrie Davies has an important paper, as do Carl Klinck and Sandra Djwa, but these will be discussed in the next chapter because they deal with Lampman as a transcendentalist. What this chapter has shown is that the basic concepts of Lampman as the escapist or dreamer, and Lampman as the purely descriptive nature poet, these concepts that were laid down by critics in Lampman's lifetime, have persisted as foundations for virtually all of the critics even up to the present. Only a few critics have moved away significantly from these propositions and have sensed that the poetry is deeper and more ambiguous, the images more difficult, and the tone more uneasy than anyone else has realized.

### CHAPTER THREE: LAMPMAN AND TRANSCENDENTALISM

A few recent critics of Lampman have noticed that there are transcendental influences in the poet's work, though they have not examined Lampman's career closely in the light of this philosophy, nor have they really discussed how extensively Transcendentalism does figure in his poetry, nor have they asked when he adopted this philosophy. Barrie Davies points out in 1976 that Lampman liked Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings, but he moves on to say that although there are Emersonian influences in the poet's work, his basic philosophy is really just Platonism.<sup>1</sup>

Carl Klinck, in his close reading of "The Frogs", states first that there "can be no doubt about Lampman's acquaintance with Emerson's ideas",<sup>2</sup> and then that "transcendentalist terms and ideas" crop up in the poem.

Klinck asks: ". . .if Lampman could escape from something, should there not be a closer examination of what he escaped to?"<sup>3</sup> He concludes that "recognition of Emersonian idealism promises to serve as an explanation and reconciliation of all the various uses of 'dream' ".<sup>4</sup> For Klinck,

Lampman is somewhat of an escapist and an optimist because he is in fact transcendentalist in his philosophical outlook. In an article not in the Symposium Barrie Davies asserts very strongly that Lampman is a transcendentalist - - not an Anglican, Christian, or even Pantheist.<sup>5</sup> Though Lampman is being seen, then, only now as a transcendentalist,

Sandra Djwa's conclusion to the Symposium of 1976, although a superb summary of the very recent criticism, ends the collection of essays on an uncertain and puzzled note:

Was he, as some earlier critics have claimed, an idle dreamer, an escapist from human society and is this attitude related to a form of Platonism similar to that discussed by Professor Barrie Davies? Or was he, as Professor Carl Klinck has convincingly argued, an Emersonian transcendentalist, for whom union with the Immensity and All led to a greater understanding of self and of communion with his fellow man? . . . Emersonian idealism would minimize the retreat inherent in nature worship by insisting that such experiences enlarge the poet's understanding of himself and his fellow man; in Lampman's metaphor, his experiences in nature are not only poetic 'dream' but also 'true reality'.

But if Lampman's attitude to nature. . . is to be explained with reference to Emersonian idealism, at what stage did he adopt this philosophy?

. . . How do we reconcile the morbidity of [some] poems with the optimism of transcendentalism?<sup>6</sup>

Before offering answers to these questions and offering a new approach to the study of Lampman's poetical career, it is necessary to describe some of the most salient features of Emersonian Transcendentalism and to show that Lampman indeed knew and was influenced by this particular thinker.

Four major sources of Emerson's Transcendentalism are Platonism, Neo-platonism, German Idealism, and Vedantic mysticism. The first source stresses the importance, or superior claim to reality, of spirit over matter: the world is composed of particular things that partake of absolute forms or ideas (a just man has a share of the absolute idea



justice, a tall man has a share of tallness, a tree of "treeness" and so on) and one can envision and make mental contact with these ideas by contemplating them. The second source accounts for the transcendental belief that even these Platonic ideas are a part or emanation of the ONE, the perfect Good or source of all being. German Idealists propose that the faculty of reason is limited and that there is another, more penetrating and immediate, way of knowing: intuition. One can have an immediate apprehension of the truth of something by intuiting that thing's essence and relationship to other things, rather than by deducing and arguing about it. To reason is to analyze, while to intuit or "feel" is to synthesize. Finally, the Vedantic element in Emerson accounts for his conception of the Oversoul -- a pantheistic, all-pervading soul which informs and is all of reality. Emerson's favorite Vedantic writing was the Bhagavadgita, in which it is written that through knowledge of the identity of the individual self with Brahman-Atman (world-soul or Oversoul) salvation is attained.<sup>7</sup>

Emerson's ideas first appear in 1836 with the publication of Nature, in the first chapter of which Emerson says that the "lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood".<sup>8</sup> When in nature, Emerson says he is "uplifted into infinite space, -- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being

circulate through me. I am part or parcel of God".<sup>9</sup> By identifying himself with nature, the human being becomes a part of the All; or, more precisely (and paradoxically), the human being becomes nothing because he becomes the All. Nature, for Emerson, is a Parmenidean Unity: "A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole".<sup>10</sup> And, of course, the whole is ideal, not material: "Outside is subjected to the inside; the huge world comes round to the man".<sup>11</sup> Man is "cut adrift from the belief in any reality external to himself".<sup>12</sup> This is Emerson's Platonic component: true reality exists in Ideas of which the perceivable world's particulars are only imperfect fragments. Reality is spiritual, good, and whole. The way to the good life is, by intuition, to contemplate and to identify oneself with nature; in so doing one can transcend the world of disordered particulars, apparent evil, chaos, and sadness, and can experience a vision of the good, spiritual whole of the universe.

In his essay, "The Poet", Emerson writes that "the world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but beauty is the creator of the universe".<sup>13</sup> The poet, then, must abandon himself to nature and "suffer the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him: then he is caught up into the life of the universe".<sup>14</sup>

Emerson's most startling assertion is made in his essay "Compensation" when he says that if the Whole or Oversoul, as he calls it, is good,

then evil cannot exist. Evil is only the absence of good, not a power antagonistic to good. Although man sees evil all around him, he cannot see that the larger design of things is good; the best summary of this position is his poem "Brahma":

If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;  
Shadow and sunlight are the same;  
The vanished gods to me appear;  
And one to me are shame and fame. . . .<sup>15</sup>

In 1841 Emerson published "Self-Reliance", in which he propounds his beloved doctrine of trusting oneself: "No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. . . the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it".<sup>16</sup> This is not (one would hope) a license for rampant individualism or unrestrained hedonism; by trusting the self one is also trusting the Whole, the Oversoul, or Immensity. Therefore, one cannot but do right by trusting one's own soul. The important idea of the Oversoul is explained in Emerson's essay (1841) of that name:

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every particle and part is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist. . . is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one.<sup>17</sup> [emphasis mine]

Informing the whole of Emerson's work is a tone of profound optimism; ultimately, all is right with the world or, in Biblical terms, "all things work together for good". A brief summary of Emerson's major tenets, all of which show this pervasive optimism, could be made thus: 1) personal intuition is of greater value than reason, tradition, or even society; 2) spirit is the true reality, not the material world of particulars; 3) identification of the self with nature leads one to a unity with the benevolent Oversoul, the universe itself; 4) because the All or Oversoul is good, evil does not exist.

With this general impression of Transcendentalism in mind one can profitably consider the poetical career of Archibald Lampman. But before actually looking at the three volumes of verse, it might be useful to look quickly at other Lampman writings which suggest that he gave a great deal of serious thought to the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In several of his contributions to The Globe in 1892 and 1893 Lampman writes Emersonian passages or brings Emerson into his discussions. In fact, his very first entry on the first day of the column, 6 February, betrays an Emersonian concept of the world of spirit inducing the soul to contemplate the larger nature of visible phenomena:

The forms of unseen things present themselves to our imaginations with a vividness and reality of detail rarely at other times attained. Out on a country road, walking in a quiet and silent downfall of snow, when distances are veiled and hidden, and my mind seems wrapped about and softly thrown in upon itself by a smooth and caressing influence,

I become immersed in the same depth and intensity of reflection.<sup>18</sup>

A week later he mentions in the column that he has read Thoreau,<sup>19</sup> and on 2 July he admits to having read Emerson.<sup>20</sup> A passage written on 18 June seems like it was lifted both from Thoreau's Walden and Emerson's Nature:

The happiest man is he who has cultivated to the utmost the sense of beauty. The man who is able at all times to find perfect and prolonged satisfaction in the contemplation of a tree, a field, a flower, or a 'spear of grass', can never be bored save by his fellow creatures. For him life is full of variety; every moment comes to him laden with some unique enjoyment, every hour is crowded with a multitude of fleeting but exquisite impressions. If health and a reasonable destiny attend him he cannot be otherwise than happy; pessimism for him is impossible. The beautiful is everywhere about us. As a matter of fact, there is nothing fashioned by nature herself that is not beautiful, either in itself or in its relation to its surroundings. You need not go to the Rocky Mountains or the Yosemite Valley in order to find the beautiful; it is in the next field; it is at your feet. . . . He whose first impulse on projecting an excursion into the country is to carry with him a gun or fishing rod has certainly not attained it [enjoyment of natural beauty]. To the real lover of nature the gun and the fishing rod are an encumbrance.<sup>21</sup>

Like Lampman, Emerson finds perfect satisfaction and "greatest delight" in the contemplation of "fields and woods": "They nod to me, and I to them";<sup>22</sup> and this relationship with nature is a source of eternal "surprise" and "better emotion". Lampman's every moment and hour "comes to him laden with some unique enjoyment",<sup>23</sup> like Emerson's, which, "marching

single in an endless file,/ Bring diadems and fagots in their hands".<sup>24</sup>  
When Lampman says "there is nothing fashioned by nature herself that  
is not beautiful",<sup>25</sup> he seems to be echoing Emerson: ". . .God has not  
made some beautiful things, but beauty is the creator of the universe".<sup>26</sup>  
As for Lampman's idea of beauty being right at one's feet, Thoreau  
conveys this idea throughout Walden: at one point a "crusty farmer  
supposed that he had got a few wild apples only",<sup>27</sup> when in fact these  
are beautiful, if only he would open his eyes to them. Finally, it is  
Thoreau who says: "He [man] goes thither [into nature] at first as  
a hunter and fisher", until he sees nature's beauty and "leaves the gun  
and fish-pole behind".<sup>28</sup>

On 19 November 1892 Lampman publishes in The Globe a poem that is  
very Emersonian in its theme, and even in its style:

#### Vision

Down a narrow alley blind,	
Touch and vision, heart and mind,	
Turned sharply inward, still we plod	
Till the calmly smiling God	
Leaves us and our spirits grow	5
More thin, more acrid, as we go,	
Creeping by the sullen wall	
We forego the power to see	
The threads that bind us to the all,	
God or the immensity,	10
Whereof on the eternal road	
Man is but a passing mode.	
Subtly conscious, all awake,	
Let us clear our eyes and break	
Through the cloudy chrysalis —	15
See the wonder as it is	

Too blind we are, too little see  
Of the magic pageantry,  
Every minute, every hour,  
From the cloud-flake to the flower, 20  
Forever old, forever strange,  
Issuing in perpetual change  
From the rainbow gates of time.  
But he who through this common air  
Surely knows the great and fair, 25  
What is lovely, what sublime,  
Becomes in an increasing span  
One with earth and one with man.  
One, despite these mortal scars,  
With the planets and the stars; 30  
And nature from her holy place,  
Bending with unveiled face,  
Fills him in her divine employ  
With her own majestic joy.<sup>29</sup>  
[numbering mine]

The terms "all" and "immensity" in lines 9 and 10 are Emersonian, as is the idea (also in Thoreau) that earthlings have had their ability to see "beyond the range of sight" greatly obscured. In "Ode to Beauty" Emerson speaks of seeing the wonder as it is, and Lampman's metamorphosis in lines 28-9 and 31-4 is not unlike Emerson's in "Each and All":

"Beauty through my senses stole;/ I yielded myself to the perfect whole".<sup>30</sup>

For what it is worth, this poem has exactly the same rhyme, meter, form (two parts), theme, and is nearly the same length, as Emerson's poem "Compensation" (1847).

On 8 April 1893 Lampman writes with the same tone of optimism that pervades Emerson's work. He asks, in rebuttal to one who had called life "one long disease" and this world "a gigantic hospital": "Have we not already noted the beginning and spreading of a new conception

of the higher life. . .?"<sup>31</sup> He implies that since the ultimate design of things is good, then in time "the world will become less and less a hospital, and the old cankerous maladies gradually decline and disappear".<sup>32</sup>

The best evidence, at least from the Globe column, that Lampman read and greatly admired the work of Emerson is written on 22 April 1893.

This entry is very important and will be quoted here extensively:

I do not know whether very many people outside of New England read Emerson's poems, but, if they do not, they ought to. There are few poets who are more bracing reading. In Emerson there is the freedom, the vitality, the fertility, the inexhaustible permutation, the god-like optimism of nature herself. His mind is like the heaven itself — cool and infinite, with its stars — and is fed from a heart like the ploughed earth, sunny and fecund, and full of perpetual chemic change. . . . His pieces are, indeed, so packed with pictures, suggestions, and luminous thoughts that they must be attentively read or much will escape the grasp of the reader, simply because there are so many things. . . . One can open his books anywhere, and take up the thread of some inspiring current of thought. . . .

Emerson was in the fullest sense a nature poet. He identified himself with nature. He was not so persistent and hardy a roamer of forest and lake as Thoreau, but his faculty of penetrating into the methods and moods of nature was as fine as his. . . .

Emerson's sympathy with nature is not, however, in the main that of the observer, the student, or the artist; it is a sympathy of force, a cosmic sympathy. He is drawn to nature because in the energies of his own soul he is aware of a kinship to the forces of nature, and feels with an elemental joy as if it were part of himself the eternal movement of life.<sup>33</sup> His voice is like the voice of the pine. . . .

Lampman evidently admired many of Emerson's qualities and tried



himself to imitate them. One of Lampman's manuscript workbooks from 1889-92 contains the following fragment:

Earth, heaven, and the mighty whole —  
I scan them and forget the strife;  
'Tis when I read the human soul  
A darkness passes upon life.<sup>34</sup>

Lampman adopts Emerson's ontology here, and his belief that all is right with the world if only man would look past the transient world of particulars. In another notebook (1894-99) Lampman has jotted down some terms from Hindu religion and Vedantic mysticism, terms that Emerson would have read in the Bhagavadgita and been familiar with in his thinking:

Mir-han-oya - final complete  
self consciousness

Manvantara - the great process  
of expansion & contraction  
- the day of Brahma

Pralaya - the period of concentration  
the Night of Brahma<sup>35</sup>

And in an unpublished manuscript essay entitled "The Poetry of Byron" Lampman makes a statement about human nature and destiny that is Emersonian in idea and in tone: "Human nature is working forward slowly surely and ever infinitely nearer to what is pure and noble and beautiful; and it will not permit itself to be shaken or thrown back in its divine progress".<sup>36</sup>

Other connections between Lampman and Emerson, less important ones, are pointed out by Barrie Davies in his recent article, "Lampman and

Religion". Davies observes that "with Emerson, Lampman regarded the belief in a "system of post-mortem rewards and punishments. . .as false and degrading";<sup>37</sup> that like the New England Transcendentalists Lampman did not believe "in the supernatural origin of Christ; he considered, as Emerson did, that Christ was a great ethical and moral teacher";<sup>38</sup> and, of course, that both writers used the same words for God: "Deity", "Spirit", "Force", "Energy". Overall, however, Davies asserts that Lampman is a transcendentalist in every sense of the word - - and for his entire poetic career. This is quite wrong.

What will be shown in the next chapters is that Lampman did indeed attempt to be a fully-fledged Emersonian transcendentalist. Lampman admired in Emerson, and sought after, this poet's "god-like optimism of nature herself"; he wanted to be, like Emerson, "in the fullest sense a nature poet" and "identify himself with nature"; he desired the cosmic sympathy that Emerson could achieve with nature; and most of all, he desired, through this identification and sympathy, to feel the "elemental joy" that results from unity with the universe. In his first volume of poetry, Among The Millet (1888), he attempts to achieve this total identification with nature in order to feel "the eternal movement of life", but this identification is never completed; Lampman sees something in nature that causes him to draw back in fear. There is something ominous, terrifying, and constantly threatening about the naked natural world - - something that Emerson must have overlooked.

In order to achieve a complete and simple unity with nature, Lampman has to ignore his complex, ambivalent feelings and adopt a thoroughly transcendental stance toward nature. This he does in his second volume, Lyrics of Earth (1895). Though Lampman does adopt the Emersonian stance and follows Emerson at many points, he sees the dishonesty and inadequacy of the Emersonian view of nature: consequently, he has to unite himself with a dream of nature rather than the real thing, because nature is not as simple and benevolent as Emerson believes. At the end of Lyrics of Earth Lampman abandons his transcendental quest and at this point, and throughout his final volume, Alcyone (1899), he turns his penetrating sensibility to something real and of pressing importance: he gives expression to his sordid, frightening, and direct vision of nature and human life. While his realistic visions become terrible, his dreams become, he announces, mere dreams. Lampman's entire career shows a mind too intense, sensitive, and penetrating to allow itself to take a comfortable seat in Emersonian philosophy. In the end he does achieve "the clearer self" because unlike Emerson, whose Transcendentalism narrowed his poetic vision, Lampman, by adopting and then having to reject Transcendentalism, widened and deepened his poetic vision.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: "AMONG THE MILLET"

In the early poems of this volume of 1888 Lampman echoes Emerson on the topics of the poet and nature. The poet, according to Emerson, by becoming one with nature, transforms the world of solid particulars into a unified world of spirit: the poet dissolves "all that fixture is,/ Melts things that be to things that seem/ And solid nature to a dream".<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Lampman says in the very first poem in Among The Millet that "the sweetest poets I will deem/ The men of old for moulding/ In simple beauty such a dream".<sup>2</sup> Lampman knew the Emersonian passage cited above; he himself quoted it in The Globe column. Emerson sees nature as a power and symbol of the great Oversoul: "I. . .suppose/ The self-same Power that brought me there brought you".<sup>3</sup> Lampman agrees: "I think some blessed power/ Hath brought me wandering idly here. . .".<sup>4</sup> But while Emerson can and does "yield" himself "to the perfect whole", while nature's beauty does move through his being ("Beauty through my senses stole") and the distinction between himself as subject and nature as object does vanish as he is absorbed into the benevolent All, Lampman, try as he may, can never fully experience this union.

A typical transcendentalist experience, whether of Emerson or Thoreau, is depicted by having the human being leave the busy city for the quiet country, and here he becomes one with nature and all

creation. In Lampman's "Freedom" this typical quest begins: "Out of the heart of the city" and away from its "labour", "struggle", "usurer's hold", "horrible crash", "clamour" and "din and glare", comes the poet. He heads for "the arms of our mother", "Our broad strong mother, the innocent earth", who is "beautiful", "light", "mother of hopes" and "mirth". For the next three stanzas the poet traverses "over the swamps", "over the meadow", "over the fields", to get to the heart of grand nature. Finally he goes into nature, but the description of this nature is very curious:

Into the dim woods full of the tombs  
Of the dead trees soft in their sepulchres,  
Where the pensive throats of the shy birds hidden,  
Pipe to us strangely entering unbidden,  
And tenderly still in the tremulous glooms  
The trilliums scatter their white-winged stars. . . .  
[emphasis mine]

Nature is threatening, sinister, and frightening: it manifests "tombs" and not "light", "glooms" and not "mirth", "dead trees" and not "beauty". Frightened, the poet quickly leaves the forest, climbs a hill, and then says he can "clear [his] eyes to the beauty" before him, to "Earth with the glory of life on her breast. . .". There has been a significant logical twist or shift in meaning in the poem: in the beginning, beauty and innocence, light and mirth, are nature; at the end (nature having been seen as it really is -- frightening) the beauty, innocence and light are the vision of nature. The "great mother" is not nature;

the "great mother" is the detached view of nature. Lampman has attempted the Emersonian quest for unity with nature but once too close to nature is frightened by its inexplicable gloom and ominousness. For what it is worth, in the manuscript workbook where this poem was originally written, all the stanzas except stanza nine, the "tombs" stanza quoted above, are roughly in order and are together. Stanza nine appears some thirty pages later and looks quite worked over. It is as if this part of Lampman's experience of going into nature needed more thought than the rest of the poem, as if he hoped he could exorcize his ambivalent feelings.

This marked ambivalence toward nature is evident in many poems in the volume. In "Morning on the Lievre" Lampman evokes the Emersonian oneness or wholeness of the universe: "Softly as a cloud we go,/ Sky above and sky below. . ."; the forest is mirrored in the lake; forest and stream "meet and plight like a dream". All combines into a unity, silent and still. But the poet has only been observing nature impressionistically; when he looks closely at the particulars, his language carries fearful and sinister connotations: ". . .the lazy river sucks/ All the water as it bleeds" from a creek; muskrats "sneak/ In around the sunken wrecks/ Of a tree. . .". Finally, seven ducks disappear behind a "rocky spur/ Just ahead", and only their "whir" is heard. This last observation by the poet may not seem sinister in itself, but it

harkens back strangely to the beginning of the poem; that is, the motif of something unknown hidden behind the observable aspects of nature opens and closes this poem. It begins:

Far above us where a jay  
Screams his matins to the day,  
Capped with gold and amethyst,  
Like a vapour from the forge  
Of a giant somewhere hid,  
Out of hearing of the clang  
Of his hammer, skirts of mist  
Slowly up the woody gorge  
Lift and hang.

It seems that, were the poet to observe nature very minutely, he would perceive clearly what he only senses at a distance: there is some undefinable and intangible element throughout nature that makes the poet very uneasy. The closer he observes nature, the more sinister it seems.

Likewise in "In October" the poet can at a distance praise the "low long strip of dolorous red that lines/ The under west", the brown meadows, and the pines that are "like tall slim priests"; but when he listens closely to the leaves falling close about himself he hears "A soft strange inner sound of pain-crazed lips,/ That move and murmur incoherently". He recognizes that the "sad trees rustle in chill misery" as "slowly earthward leaf by red leaf slips. . .". He paradoxically moves toward and away from nature simultaneously by sitting down upon a "naked stone" and by drawing his "coat closer" with "numbed hands". Hearing the "ferns sigh" and the "wet woods moan", he concludes that

though man can be like nature in a sense, nature is foreign to man;  
man is painfully outside of it and "none but stars and biting winds"  
may read nature:

The dry dead leaves flit by with thin weird tunes,  
Like failing murmurs of some conquered creed,  
Graven in mystic markings with strange runes,  
That none but stars and biting winds may read;  
Here I will wait a little; I am weary,  
Not torn with pain of any lurid hue,  
But only still and very gray and dreary,  
Sweet sombre lands, like you.

"Ballade of Summer's Sleep" tells the story of the coming of  
winter:

Sweet summer is gone; they have laid her away —  
The last sad hours that were touched with her grace —  
In the hush where the ghosts of the dead flowers play. . . .

The woods that are golden and red for a day  
Girdle the hills in a jewelled case,  
Like a girl's strange mirth, ere the quick death slay  
The beautiful life that he hath in chase.  
Darker and darker the shadows pace  
Out of the north to the southern sands. . . .

The pronoun "they" in the opening line again betrays a hint that the  
poet sees a living malevolent being (or several) operating behind the  
visible scenes of nature. The poem depicts very vividly the eradication  
of light by darkness, the ending of life, the spreading of malevolent  
"shadows", and a huge spirit of death and nothingness that looms immanent:

In the autumn's cheek is a hectic trace;  
Behind her the ghost of winter stands;  
Sweet summer will moan in her soft gray place. . . .

At the end of the poem, however, the poet curiously and clumsily tacks



onto an already whole piece an afterthought by mentioning the return of spring:

Till the slayer be slain and the spring displace  
The might of his arms with her rose-crowned bands,  
Let her heart not gather a dream that is base:  
Shadow her head with your golden hands.

The poet will not let go of the hope of rebirth. But this "Envoi", as it is titled, is an untidy addendum rather than a part of the organic whole of the poem. It is as if he wants to believe what Emerson says (in these same terms) about the goodness of things: "If the red slayer think he slays,/ Or if the slain think he is slain",<sup>5</sup> then they know not the larger benevolent design.

Yet in "The Coming of Winter", a more forceful poem with greater conviction than the "Ballade", the slayer does slay. "Sombre weirds" call "out of the Northland" and as shadows fall southward day by day "the stern one" has his way:

It is the voice and shadow of the slayer,  
Slayer of loves, sweet world, slayer of dreams. . .

Black grows the river, blacker drifts the eddy;  
The sky is gray, the woods are cold below:  
O make thy bosom and thy sad lips ready  
For the cold kisses of the folding snow.

And there is no intimation of rebirth. It is interesting to note that in an early manuscript version of this poem, dated "Sept. '83", the opening line read: "Out of the North a sombre voice is calling",<sup>6</sup> and the published version reads: "Out of the Northland sombre weirds are

calling". By altering "sombre voice" to "sombre weirds", Lampman's meaning is expanded and made even more eerie and macabre: a sombre voice could simply be the sound of a wind, but the word "weird", very frequent in Lampman, carries connotations of fate, destiny, enchanting powers, the supernatural, even "having the power to control the fate or destiny of men" (O.E.D.), or, an agency which predetermines events (O.E.D.). This poem suggests that the controlling malevolent energies in nature are inexorable and they elude human comprehension. This idea is suggested also in "Lament of the Winds" where men, "in sorrow coldly witting,/ In the bleak world sitting, sitting", watch "dead leaves falling, falling" and summer being buried in the "graveyard of flowers". Yet, "as death grows vaster" and leaves drop faster, nothing can be done.

In spite of Lampman's failure to unite with nature, his ambivalent vision of nature, and the rather sinister and eerie mood in many of the poems in this volume, there are a few in which he earnestly seeks Emerson's cosmic vision. The poem "Passion", for example, seems strangely inconsistent in tone and imagery with many of the others, and this is because Lampman is beginning to take up an Emersonian posture:

Passion

As a weed beneath the ocean  
As a pool beneath a tree  
Answers with each breath or motion  
An imperious mastery;

So my spirit swift with passion  
Finds in every look a sign

Catching in some wondrous fashion  
Every mood that governs thine.

In a moment it will borrow,  
Flashing in a gusty train,  
Laughter and desire and sorrow  
Anger and delight and pain.

This poem echoes thematically Emerson's "Compensation" and "Ode to Beauty". After the poet has perfectly responded to the forces of nature he can see the whole of his being -- he can sense all of the human qualities of laughter, desire, sorrow, anger, delight and pain at once because to sense any one is, by implication, to be conscious of the rest. The human spirit, says the poet in this short chant, must respond to nature as minutely and perfectly as nature responds to herself. In other words, he must be a part of nature, not something separate from it.

Another poem which is Emersonian, more in style than theme, is "An Impression". Emerson writes an untitled poem about "time" in the following manner:

All day the waves assailed the rock,  
I heard no church-bell chime,  
The sea-beat scorns the minster clock  
And breaks the glass of Time.<sup>7</sup>

In the same rhythm, and concerned with time, is Lampman's short piece:

I heard the city time-bells call  
Far off in hollow towers,  
And one by one with measured fall  
Count out the old dead hours;  
  
I felt the march, the silent press

Of time, and held my breath;  
I saw the haggard dreadfulness  
Of dim old age and death.

Whether Lampman had Emerson's poem in mind when he wrote this is less important than to see the difference between the way a confirmed transcendentalist and an unconvinced one see the phenomenon of time. For Emerson, time is unimportant because the great All or Oversoul is beyond it. Emerson says in other places that the human being is only caught in time during his earthly life, and thereafter transcends it into the All. So Emerson's poem is an affirmation of his ontology, an optimistic bit of ecstasy at seeing the glass of time and mortality broken. Lampman, however, hears the "time-bells" whereas Emerson did not. For Lampman, time is a memento of man's inevitable and universal fate: "dim old age and death". This is an intensely pessimistic poem; it is uncomplicated by any rays of hope or double meanings in its language. Whereas for Thoreau "time is but the stream I go a-fishing in"<sup>8</sup> and for Emerson it is a stream that one can step out of forever, for Lampman it is an irresistible current that washes the helpless, floundering individual toward the chasm of non-existence.

"The Frogs", a sequence of five sonnets, has been seen by critics as the fruit of a dreaming nature lover. Carl Klinck reads it as a dreamy transcendental poem in the Symposium of 1976. But if it is read closely, it becomes obvious that the poem is less optimistic and dreamy than it seems on first reading. The poet talks about frogs, "breathers

of wisdom", in a beautiful landscape -- a natural scene of true beauty. Yet the scene is not a vividly realized landscape; it is pure dream, pure fantasy:

All the day long, wherever pools might be  
Among the golden meadows, where the air  
Stood in a dream, as it were moored there  
For ever in a noon-tide reverie,  
Or where the birds made riot of their glee  
In the still woods, and the hot sun shone down,  
Crossed with warm lucent shadows on the brown  
Leaf-paven pools, that bubbled dreamily. . .  
[emphasis mine]

The poet listens to the frogs but, though they are "breathers of wisdom", they cannot express that wisdom to mankind: they are "pipers", "flutists", "murmurers". They are incomprehensible. What is comprehensible and is present "evermore" is "the outer roar", the "voices of mankind" which are growing louder and louder. Hearing these sounds of nature and sounds of the "cities", the poet says to the frogs that he was

content to dream with you  
That change and pain are shadows faint and fleet,  
And dreams are real, and life is only sweet.

The poet would like to believe these things, he did dream them; but there is no indication that they have any claim to reality. Also, the entire poem is in the past tense: the poet did dream this kind of vision but, the suggestion is, he cannot anymore. Nature is incomprehensible, and a beautiful nature is only a dream.

Throughout Among The Millet nature is not a lovely place that "laughs in flowers"; it is a sinister and eerie place that harbours

some dreadful malevolent powers. His short poem "Why do ye call the Poet Lonely" gives a subtle hint of what the poet deals with:

Why do ye call the poet lonely,  
Because he dreams in lonely places?  
He is not desolate, but only  
Sees, where ye cannot, hidden faces.

The poet does not see "into the life of things" or experience the "joy of elevated thoughts"; he sees "hidden faces". Lampman chose this expression very carefully. When he, as a poet, looks at nature there is, throughout his verse, a malevolent being, or several -- a "giant somewhere hid", a "sombre wierd", "priests of storm", a "ghost", "shadows pacing", a "slayer" -- something living, active, destructive, yet incomprehensible and unrecognizable. All of these figures are here neatly packaged into the frightening metaphor of "hidden faces". A face, of course, stands for something living, but that it is "hidden" suggests that its disposition, feelings, even identity, remain unknown and therefore it is an object of fear and uncertainty. Lampman is careful not to say that the poet is more fortunate to be able to see "where ye cannot"; in fact, the suggestion is that he is rather unfortunate to have to see hidden faces. Also, the logic in the last two lines is deliberate and suggestive. The poet "is not desolate" (alone, wasted, laid waste, ruined, O.E.D.), but sees the terrifying side of existence. The implication is that perhaps the more he sees the more he is "laid waste" or ruined by what he sees. In other words, being a poet is not

the sweet-faced occupation it is generally thought to be. Second, the poet sees the hidden faces that the others cannot see. That is, these hidden faces are present even if not seen. Nature's eeriness and unrecognizable power is all around.

Even in a seemingly happy poem like "Among the Timothy" nature is perceived in this ambivalent and uncertain way. "It is sweet to lie/ And watch the grass and the few-clouded sky"; but the poet is honest and perceptive enough to acknowledge that this nice grass is "Mixed with dead daisies". Nevertheless, the poet again, as in "Freedom", attempts the transcendental quest for unity with nature; he leaves the city and comes to the country for spiritual solace:

For when the noon was turning, and the heat  
Fell down most heavily on field and wood,  
I too came hither, borne on restless feet,  
Seeking some comfort for an aching mood.  
Ah! I was weary of the drifting hours,  
The echoing city towers,  
The blind gray streets, the jingle of the throng,  
Weary of hope that like a shape of stone  
Sat near at hand without a smile or moan,  
And weary most of song.

Yet, the poet says, those high moods he had in nature in the past were illusory; nature is not a soul-lifting "mother" -- nature is just nature:

And those high moods of mine that sometime made  
My heart a heaven, opening like a flower  
A sweeter world where I in wonder strayed,  
Begirt with shapes of beauty and the power  
Of dreams that moved through that enchanted clime  
With changing breaths of rhyme,  
Were all gone lifeless now, like those white leaves  
That hang all winter, shivering dead and blind

Among the sinewy beeches in the wind,  
That vainly calls and grieves.  
[emphasis mine]

Looking at the white leaves which shiver dead and blind, the poet realizes that nature played no part in giving him spiritual comfort. Rather, his happy dreams were fabricated by himself and were not the result of any unity with nature. Just as man has no affinity with nature, so also nature has no affinity with man: the wind calls "vainly" in a voice totally incomprehensible to man. At this point the poet decides that such spiritual tasks as unity with nature and spiritual refreshment from nature are not worthwhile:

Ah! I will set no more mine overtaskèd brain  
To barren search and toil that beareth nought,  
For ever following with sore-footed pain  
The crossing pathways of unbournèd thought. . . .

Lampman is saying a great deal in these few lines of this early poem. He does not feel a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, nor does he think, at this point, that a power brought him wandering idly here. Nor is "the innocent earth" the "great mother" who soothes all sorrows. It is quite impossible to take "comfort of the fields" because the fields are not comforting; nature is an order quite alien to man -- in one sense it is "dead and blind".

The manuscript versions and variants of this poem in Lampman's notebook of 1884-85 show not only interesting alternative readings of some lines, but also that the poet had a good deal of trouble with



this poem. The earliest draft version is not dated, but it is earlier than "5 Aug '85", which is the date of a later draft version. In the printed version, "hope. . . Sat near at hand without a smile or moan", as he sat in the quiet fields. In the draft, "hope. . . sat far aloof without a smile or moan"<sup>9</sup> - - and the italics are Lampman's. Perhaps Lampman realized that nature holds no hope for man, but then modified this to the even more discouraging thought that nature may offer hope to man though man can never know whether it does or not. And if it does, what kind of relationship, if any, is man expected to enter into with nature? This uncertainty conjured up in the published version of the line is both less explicit and more deeply suggestive and poetic than is the draft version. Another variant occurs in the opening of stanza three. The draft reads:

For those high moods of mine that sometime [made]  
My heart a home of fair imaginings  
A sweeter world where I in wonder strayed  
To the changing fancies borne on eager wings. . . ,<sup>10</sup>

while the final version reads:

And those high moods of mine that sometime made  
My heart a heaven, opening like a flower  
A sweeter world where I in wonder strayed,  
Begirt with shapes of beauty and the power. . . .

The language in the draft version is more abstract and effusive: "fair imaginings" and "changing fancies" are difficult to visualize. In the final version the imagery is more visually oriented: the poet's imagination, or "heart", opens and blooms "like a flower", and the world is "begirt"

or dressed with images and impressions of beauty and power. Yet even these lines are rather fantastical and cloudy; Lampman is trying very hard to put into words the kind of imaginative experiences or "high moods" that he has had in the natural world, but is still to an extent left with language that is, though pleasing to the ear and pretty, rather ineffective in semantic content and efficacy. This problem is consistent with his sad realization that these high moods are really "lifeless" and artificial anyway. As mentioned earlier, the poet decides not to burden himself with dreams of peace and unity with nature and the universe anymore. The published version reads:

Ah! I will set no more mine overtaskèd brain  
To barren search and toil that beareth nought,  
For ever following with sore-footed pain  
The crossing pathways of unbournèd thought.

The early rough version of these lines (the fourth line is missing) is even more pessimistic and explicit than the published version:

And I will strive no more to follow out  
The tangled pathway of unbournèd thought  
That only leads from barren doubt to doubt. . . .<sup>11</sup>

"From doubt to doubt" is indeed the feeling that pervades Lampman's view of the relationship between man and nature in Among The Millet. It might be interesting to note that this poem, "Among the Timothy", was originally entitled "Among the Millet" in the manuscript version, and was probably intended to be the title poem of the volume.

There seems to be almost no end in the volume to poems that emphasize the eeriness and even cruelty of nature. In "Winter", the

season is personified and watches grimly the macabre dance of his subalterns. Winter

all the while beyond the northmost woods  
. . .sat and smiled and watched his spirits play  
In elfish dance and eerie roundelay. . .

Finally the "elfin spirits" "sting" and smite "flower and fruit and weed": "The wet woods moan: the dead leaves break and fall". In the midst of the great storm

a strange music raves  
Among the pines, sometimes in wails, and then  
In whistled laughter, till affrighted men  
Draw close, and into caves  
And earthy holes the blind beasts curl and creep.

In the final stanza, mankind garrison themselves into their homes while nature rages and threatens destruction:

Poor mortals haste and hide away: creep soon  
Into your icy beds: the embers die;  
And on your frosted panes the pallid moon  
Is glimmering brokenly.  
Mutter faint prayers that spring will come e'erwhile,  
Scarring with thaws and dripping days and nights  
The shining majesty of him that smites  
And slays you with a smile  
Upon his silvery lips, of glinting mockery.

Nature here is an awesome power; and what is worse is that it takes delight in the destruction of life. The scene here, it is true, is one of a storm in winter, but even in poems which describe quiet, peaceful scenes, this frightening aspect of nature is never absent.

"Midnight" begins in a tranquil setting:

From where I sit, I see the stars,  
And down the chilly floor

The moon between the frozen bars  
Is glimmering dim and hoar.

Without in many a peaked mound  
The glinting snowdrifts lie;  
There is no voice or living sound;  
The embers slowly die.

One might expect a quiet contemplation to follow, a romantic reverie  
such as in "Frost at Midnight". But this expectation is not met:

Yet some wild thing is in mine ear;  
I hold my breath and hark;  
Out of the depth I seem to hear  
A crying in the dark;

No sound of man or wife or child,  
No sound of beast that groans,  
Or of the wind that whistles wild,  
Or of the tree that moans. . . .

Again there is some living force that is behind, or rather, is hidden  
in, the universe -- some force that is a source of fear and agitation  
to the poet. The sound made by this force is totally incomprehensible;  
it is like the sound heard in "In October" -- an incoherent utterance  
that is evidence of something living, something frightening, right at  
the heart of the existing universe. Lampman acknowledges this element  
of the universe throughout his poetry; in the final stanza of "Midnight"  
he admits that he can never exorcize it from his sensibility:

I know not what it is I hear;  
I bend my head and hark:  
I cannot drive it from mine ear,  
That crying in the dark.

In spite of the "crying in the dark", however, Lampman never loses

sight of his transcendental ideal in this volume. He continually tries to achieve an Emersonian relationship to nature and the universe even though his sensibility will not allow it. "Winter Hues Recalled" is a poem in which he attempts to extract from his memory only the positive aspects of nature in winter. It is very much like, and could have been inspired by, Thoreau's "Winter Memories" of 1842. Thoreau's poem begins:

Within the circuit of this plodding life  
There enter moments of an azure hue,  
Untarnished fair as is the violet  
Or anemone, when the spring strews them  
By some meandering rivulet, which make  
The best philosophy untrue that aims  
But to console man for his grievances.  
I have remembered when the winter came. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Like Thoreau, Lampman begins by saying that in this work-a-day life there are times when thought breaks through with pleasant memories and only then does one see clearly the nature of time past:

Life is not all for effort; there are hours  
When fancy breaks from the exacting will,  
And rebel thought takes schoolboy's holiday,  
Rejoicing in its idle strength. 'Tis then,  
And only at such moments, that we know  
The treasure of hours gone — scenes once beheld,  
Sweet voices and words bright and beautiful,  
Impetuous deeds that woke the God within us. . . .

But whereas Thoreau's poem describes the great beauty of nature throughout, Lampman ends his by admitting that the pleasant memories have only the status of a dream -- he has ignored reality for the sake

of painting lovely winter hues; once back in the real world the omnipresent fear that plagues him returns:

Then I awoke  
As from a dream, and from my shoulders shook  
The warning chill, till then unfelt, unfeared.  
[emphasis mine]

Lampman's "Despondency", which opens:

Slow figures in some live remorseless frieze,  
The approaching days escapeless and unguessed  
With mask and shroud impenetrably dressed. . . ,

is very much like Emerson's "Days":

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,  
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes  
And marching single in an endless file. . . .<sup>13</sup>

And, like Emerson, Lampman wants to stand above time and be able to see the whole of life and nature. In "Outlook" he desires

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,  
But to stand free: to keep the mind at brood  
On life's deep meaning, nature's altitude  
Of loveliness, and time's mysterious ways. . . .

"This is to live", he says later in the poem. But does this ever happen? Does he ever transcend himself and become a part of the whole? These lines here quoted are in an infinitive verb form; there is no suggestion in the poem, or in the volume, that this transcendence ever takes place.

This desire pervades the closing poems of the volume wherein Lampman conjures up Emersonian ideas in an Emersonian tone. In "Sight" the poet claims that "the world is bright with beauty" but human beings

see through a glass darkly:

Yet if we could but lift our earthward eyes  
To see, and open our dull ears to hear,  
Then should the wonder of this world draw near  
And life's innumerable harmonies.

Life is good if seen in totality. Though Emersonian, this poem nevertheless lacks Emerson's certainty. Lampman's poem is in conditional tenses: "could we but tear away the walls" of our narrow perceptive faculties; "if we could but lift our earthward eyes"; "could we only know true ends from false". Emerson's voice, on the contrary, is always affirmative, boastfully certain: "I yielded myself to the perfect whole"; "I inhaled the violet's breath"; I am "full of light and of deity".<sup>14</sup> In "An Old Lesson From The Fields" Lampman says: "I saw myself made clear as in a glass", echoing Emerson who claims: "I become a transparent eyeball". But whereas Emerson goes on to say, "I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me. . . . I am part or parcel of God",<sup>15</sup> Lampman sees something different: "my soul was for the most part dead". He cries out for light and ends the poem in uncertainty: "Could we but cast away its [life's] conscious stress,/ Simple of heart becoming even as you". Lampman desires the Emersonian unity with the universe but cannot allow himself to have it. "Conscious stress" plagues him throughout the volume: he wants to experience the "elemental joy" and to be part of the "eternal movement of life", but he sees nature in a more complex light than did Emerson. As the title

of the volume suggests, he is among nature -- but never united with it. In one of the last poems, "In November", he finds himself in the "naked uplands" and as an ominous, creeping darkness sets in he again pulls up short of a union with nature: he is "wrapped around with thought, content to watch and dream". Lampman sees nature in Among The Millet as beautiful and ugly, beneficent and malevolent, happy and sinister -- always it is a complex entity that harbours the unknown, the eerie, the frightening. Hence his nature poems are something more than just descriptive sketches, reveries, and "melting into the landscape". Lampman desires unity with nature; he seeks unity with the All in a transcendental sense. But it doesn't come about in this volume. In order to achieve a complete and simple unity with a godlike nature Lampman will have to ignore his complex, ambivalent feelings and sensitivity and adopt a thoroughly transcendental stance toward nature. This he does in his next volume, Lyrics of Earth.



## CHAPTER FIVE: "LYRICS OF EARTH"

Even a cursory glance at the titles in this volume of 1895 informs a reader of a difference in tone from Among The Millet: "The Sweetness of Life", "April in the Hills", "The Return of the Year", "In May", "June", "Comfort of the Fields", "A Reassurance", "The Sun Cup"; all these titles promise a more optimistic, happy mood as opposed to the troubled mood of the earlier volume's "In October", "Storm", "Midnight", "Unrest", "Lament of the Winds", "The Coming of Winter", "A Night of Storm", "Winter", and "Solitude". The optimistic mood is a result of Lampman casting himself into the transcendental mold: this time he will "yield" himself "to the perfect whole".

The volume opens with "The Sweetness of Life", which begins:

It fell on a day I was happy,  
And the winds, the concave sky,  
The flowers and the beasts in the meadow  
Seemed happy even as I;  
And I stretched my hands to the meadow,  
To the bird, the beast, the tree:  
'Why are ye all so happy?'  
I cried, and they answered me.

Here the poet is reaching out and communicating with the natural world.

He asks its creatures and plants why they are happy and they answer him:

'We are born, we are reared, and we linger  
A various space and we die;  
We dream, and are bright and happy,  
But we cannot answer why.'

The poet cannot extract from the natural world "why" its creatures are happy -- he knows only that they are. That nature even speaks to the poet is quite a change from the earlier volume wherein it invariably made only incomprehensible and frightening noises. After receiving this same answer from the "meadow", the "roses", the "valley", and the "brooklet", he asks the same question of himself. Identifying himself with nature, he proposes that his answer would be the same as nature's:

'Thou art born as the flowers, and wilt linger  
Thine own short space and die;  
Thou dream'st and art strangely happy,  
But thou can'st not answer why.

Man, the poet is suggesting, is a part of nature and is under the same laws and conditions. He realizes "the sweetness of life" when he becomes aware of this fact -- that he is part of a controlled natural order and there is therefore no reason to seek answers. In other words, nature is the All and the All is nature; this is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

This tone of happiness and vision of nature as exclusively beautiful and grand is picked up again in "April in the Hills", a very Emersonian poem. The description of nature begins:

To-day the world is wide and fair  
With sunny fields of lucid air,  
And waters dancing everywhere;

and it continues in such bouncy, happy language. After painting a beautiful and serene picture of "jetting falls", "dashing streams",

"little lakes", "bluebirds", "robins" and "shore-larks", he locates himself, a "wanderer in enchanted lands", who is tasting "the springs of life". In the final stanza, the poet does what Emerson does so well, and in the latter's terms:

I feel the tumult of new birth;  
I waken with the wakening earth;  
I match the bluebird in her mirth;  
    And wild with wind and sun,  
A treasurer of immortal days,  
I roam the glorious world with praise  
The hillsides and the woodland ways,  
    Till earth and I are one.  
                                    [emphasis mine]

It seems that Lampman has achieved a transcendental unity with nature here: "the subject and the object are one",<sup>1</sup> as Emerson would say, and the very optimistic and affirmative tone that pervades this poem, especially this last stanza, is reminiscent of many of Emerson's poems.

Optimism is the keynote of "The Return of the Year", wherein the emphasis is on rebirth. Winter is now over and

A touch of far-off joy and power,  
A something it is life to learn,  
Comes back to earth, and one short hour  
    The glammers of the gods return.

In this coming to life of the natural world "Dead thoughts revive" and the world "wins back to her/ The rapture of her vanished youth". This great emphasis on the coming to life of nature is almost entirely absent from Among The Millet, in which the seasonal poems invariably just depict the vicious onslaught of winter and death.

"Favorites of Pan" seems to be the transcendental answer to "Midnight" of the earlier volume. In "Midnight" the poet listens to nature and hears a haunting "crying in the dark" that cannot be driven from his ear. In "Favorites of Pan" the same action is taking place -- a man is listening to the natural world -- but it is a transcendental conception of a benevolent and sympathetic natural world he hears:

Often to the tired listener's ear  
There came at noonday or beneath the stars  
A sound, he knew not whence, so sweet and clear,  
That all his aches and scars

And every brooded bitterness,  
Fallen asunder from his soul, took flight,  
Like mist or darkness yielding to the press  
Of an unnamed delight, --

The poet suddenly experiences a sort of cosmic consciousness, "A sudden brightness of the heart", and sees the world in a grain of sand:

The loveliness and calm of earth  
Lay like a limitless dream remote and strange,  
The joy, the strife, the triumph and the mirth,  
And the enchanted change. . . .

This is common in Emerson's work also, where "the huge world comes round to the man",<sup>2</sup> where he sees all the warring components of human existence at once as a whole. Instead of hearing "crying", "moaning" or "pain-crazed lips", the transcendentalist in this poem of Lampman's hears the "murmur of Pan's pipes":

And they that hear them are renewed  
By knowledge in some god-like touch conveyed,  
Entering again into the eternal mood  
Wherein the world was made

Just as "Favorites of Pan" seems to be a transcendental version of "Midnight", so also "The Meadow" seems a transcendental version of "Freedom" from Among The Millet. In "Freedom" the poet fled the loud, troubled city in order to get to nature, "the mother", "the innocent earth". Once in nature, however, he sensed its ominousness and ugliness and he became fearful so he climbed a high hill in order to be able to admire nature yet remain at a distance. "The Meadow" depicts the poet going into nature, but this time, unlike in "Freedom", he perceives nature as beautiful, revivifying, and benevolent:

So as I watched the crowded leaves expand,  
The bloom break sheath, the summer's strength uprear,  
In earth's great mother heart already planned  
The heaped and burgeoned plenty of the year,  
Even as she from out her wintry cell  
My spirit also sprang to life anew,  
And day by day as the spring's bounty grew,  
Its conquering joy possessed me like a spell.

What is more significant than this is that he "sought these upland fields and walked apart,/ Musing on Nature, till my thought did seem/ To read the very secrets of her heart. . .". In Among The Millet nature is always incomprehensible to man: "none but stars and the biting winds" can read nature's secrets. Here the poet can. A poem similar to "The Meadow", and intended as another answer to the earlier volume's failed transcendental quests in "Freedom" and "Among the Timothy", is "Life and Nature". This poem begins in good transcendental fashion: "I passed through the gates of the city", the poet says as he realizes

that in "the midst of the city" all life seems melancholy: " 'O Life! O Life!' I kept saying,/ And the very word seemed sad". After reaching the country he lies on "the earth's quiet breast". Suddenly, the thought of life, which had always seemed sad, was miraculously changed: " 'O Life! O Life' I kept saying/ And the very word seemed sweet".

Several of the poems looked at in this volume thus far, particularly "April in the Hills", "The Meadow", and "Life and Nature", seem to be truly transcendental experiences: the poet becomes one with, and is refreshed by, a benevolent nature. Lampman has somehow avoided his feelings of fear and uncertainty about nature that infected the earlier volume. But how?

The answer seems to be that Lampman never does feel the Universal Being circulate through him as Emerson does; he never actually yields himself to nature; he never becomes united with nature. He yields himself to, and becomes united with, a dream of nature. In "April in the Hills" he wanders not in a vividly realized landscape, but rather in "enchanted lands". In "The Meadow" it is not nature that he unites with, but rather a dream or reverie of nature: "Its conquering joy possessed me like a spell./ In reverie by day and midnight dream/ I sought these upland fields. . .". In reverie and dream - - not in reality. He has not focused his attention directly upon nature but rather upon an ideal reverie of what he wishes nature were like: "Ah, I have watched till eye and ear and brain/ Grew full of dreams. . .". In

"Life and Nature" the poet is entranced into a reverie by repeating "O Life! O Life!"; nature, he says, "sang me to rest", and finally in this half-asleep state he mumbles that the word life seemed sweet. Lampman wants the transcendental experience but does not want actually to have to face the reality of nature too closely. In "The Sweetness of Life" he is only happy because he dreams, not because he is united with nature: "'Thou dream'st and are strangely happy. . .". His joy of seeing the rebirth of nature in "The Return of the Year" is occasioned only by his ability to dream about an ideal nature: ". . .once again the dream! the dream!" he says, and then and only then the "glamours of the gods return". Nature in "Favorites of Pan" is not really the nature Lampman knows, but is rather "A limitless dream remote and strange". By rendering nature into a state of dream Lampman can unite with it because it is purged of the eerie and threatening elements that in reality it possesses. Lampman does not "dream" in order to escape society and withdraw into himself and nature. It is quite the reverse that is true. He dreams in order to escape himself and the reality of nature because his mind, his sensibility, is too alive to the complexity of nature; he is only too conscious that nature is not an Emersonian meadowland but is rather a place of beauty and ugliness, benevolence and malevolence, life and death, darkness and light. He desires an Emersonian relationship to nature and he admires Emerson's philosophical outlook greatly. But he cannot allow himself to become a fully-fledged

transcendentalist because he sees in nature awful, threatening elements which Emerson obviously overlooked, and also because he cannot allow himself to look at reality through the same optimistic glasses worn by Emerson. The only universe that deserves an optimistic view is the world of dream and reverie for Lampman. The world of dream is the world of, in his own words, "the ought-to-be", the "might-have-been". The world of reality is much different, much more complex.

But Emerson's philosophy still seems attractive to Lampman as a solution to his problem of seeing in nature elements that instill fear and uncertainty within him. "Distance" is a short monument to the Emersonian ontology:

To the distance! ah, the distance!  
Blue and broad and dim!  
Peace is not in burgh or meadow  
But beyond the rim.

Aye, beyond it, far beyond it;  
Follow still my soul,  
Till this earth is lost in heaven,  
And thou feel'st the whole.  
[emphasis mine]

Much of Emerson's cosmic view is contained in this little poem: the world of earthly existence is but a transcient and discordant one; but the larger universe is good and complete, and at death the human soul becomes a part of the whole. One might be tempted to pass quickly over this piece of derivative Emersonian tripe: its bouncy rhythm, epigrammatic language, and easy expression make it seem like a poem that was not given a great deal of thought. But a closer look at the



poem, in the light of its Emersonian underpinnings, can be rewarding. Emerson did say that one can "feel the whole" of the universe, and so does Lampman. But the important difference is that Emerson believes (and Thoreau does too) that one can "feel the whole" or be united with the natural world now. At any time, the human being can "become a transparent eyeball" and see and be a part of all of creation. Emerson feels the All as he walks through a meadow or sits in a forest, Thoreau as he fishes in a stream or even thinks about nature. But Lampman seems to stress here that the experience of being united with the universe is one that resides in the distance; it is something that one can strive for but never really attain. This experience is "beyond", "far beyond", and will only be attained when "this earth is lost in heaven". Also, it is interesting to note in this poem that Lampman says "Peace is not in burgh or meadow" [emphasis mine]. A reading of his verse suggests indeed that he cannot find peace in the "meadow". Nature is not, for Lampman, the "great comforter", the "great mother", the "refuge", the "place of rest", as critics invariably claim it is.

In fact, the only time that nature is a comfort and a refuge to Lampman is when he can dream away its actuality and recreate it as an ideal place. In "The Moon-Path" he can contemplate, unafraid, the mysteries and beauty of the moon only because he wills himself into a dream of it: "An old-world spell encompassed me:/ Methought that in a godlike dream/ I trod upon the sea". In "Comfort of the Fields"

nature is seen as an "easement after grief", as new life to "tired eyes", because it is looked at "as through a mist of light and dreams". In order to keep the optimistic mood and the transcendental stance that pervade this volume, it is necessary for Lampman to translate the world of actuality into the world of dream, purging and exorcizing all disagreeable elements in the process.

In the midst of all these "nature poems" is a poem about the "poet", as there was in the earlier volume, Among The Millet. The poem, "Why do ye call the Poet Lonely", is, as has been shown, a statement that the poet sees where ordinary men cannot; he sees "hidden faces". This image was seen as the amalgamation of the many images of unknown beings and energies that lurk in the natural world. And this poetic vision is frightening to the poet, yet he cannot avoid it. Poetry is compulsive and not always a pleasant activity. In what seems to be this poem's counterpart in Lyrics of Earth, "The Poet's Possession" is consistent with the optimistic tone of the volume and in fact suggests that the poetic activity is a pleasant and profitable one:

Think not, O master of the well-tilled field,  
This earth is only thine; for after thee,  
When all is sown and gathered and put by,  
Comes the grave poet with the creative eye,  
And from these silent acres and clean plots,  
Bids with his wand the fancied after-yield  
A second tilth and second harvest be,  
The crop of images and curious thoughts.

The poet recreates the land; he begets it a second time. But the

"after-yield" that he gets, whether he realizes it or not, is "fancied" - - it is somehow less than real; and many of the poems in this volume have made nature less than real. Nevertheless, the poet in this poem is a much happier person with a much happier lot than the poet of "Why do ye call the Poet Lonely" in Among The Millet.

"In November" is one of the most enigmatic poems in Lyrics of Earth. Here the poet wanders into the woods and offers a clear perception of the frightening and eerie natural world: it is

scattered with black stumps and briers,  
And the old wreck of forest fires.  
It was a bleak and sandy spot,  
And, all about, the vacant plot,  
Was peopled and inhabited  
By scores of mulleins long since dead.  
A silent and forsaken brood. . . .  
[emphasis mine]

These mulleins are "shrivelled", "haggard", and "austere". They stand "lifeless". The poet says that they look like "hermit folk" who had "chanced upon this lonely way" and had been surprized by death at their "compline prayer". Having described this ominous scene of nature, the poet says that he "stood/ Among the mullein-stalks as still/ As if myself had grown to be/ One of their sombre company,/ A body without wish or will". This is Emerson's simple identity with nature but with a double edge: Emerson insists that he feels the Universal Being circulate through him when he unites with nature; he becomes "part or parcel of God" and is revitalized and filled with cosmic energy. Lampman's

poet here, however, is one "standing lifeless there"; perhaps the sober suggestion is that if one becomes nature, one becomes the essentially inert, unconscious being that nature is. Or, if one becomes united with nature, one must enter into its life-death cycle and die like the shrivelled mulleins. The poet here does experience a sudden illumination of sunlight, a "shadow of some former dream;/ A moment's golden reverie", but this higher vision or momentary cosmic consciousness is only a dream. The poet, perceiving himself "standing idly there", now awakens from the golden reverie and sees naked, objective nature all around him. This realization elicits a complex reaction from him:

I. . .  
Drew my thoughts closer, like a cloak,  
While something in my blood awoke,  
A nameless and unnatural cheer,  
A pleasure secret and austere.

Realizing that he cannot be one with nature, he shelters himself from it; yet there is something in his instinctual self, in his "blood", that takes pleasure in the self-annihilating idea of identification with nature. It is no accident that the word "austere" is also used to describe the dead, gray, shrivelled mulleins. To wish union with nature is, in one sense, to wish death. For nature can be, as well as a living, dynamic being, a cold, unconscious, even destructive, mass.

The longest and most important poem in Lyrics of Earth is "Winter-Store". In its opening sections Lampman seems to lift expressions right

out of Emerson's work: as human beings we should "clear our eyes" to "see the wonder as it is", the "threads that bind us to the All,/ God or the Immensity". Just as Emerson sees man as a part of the All, a part which is evolving toward perfection, so also Lampman says that "on the eternal road/ Man is but a passing mode". Human beings cannot see that change or evolution are constantly taking place and that man and all things are signs of a great and perfect whole that awaits:

Too blind we are, too little see  
Of the magic pageantry,  
Every minute, every hour,  
From the cloudflake to the flower,  
For ever old, for ever strange  
Issuing in perpetual change  
From the rainbow gates of Time.

But one who can see through life's ordinariness and vicissitudinousness can experience the transcendental union with the universe:

But he who through this common air  
Surely knows the great and fair,  
What is lovely, what sublime,  
Becomes, in an increasing span,  
One with earth and one with man  
One, despite these mortal scars,  
With the planets and the stars;  
And Nature from her holy place,  
Bending with unveiled face,  
Fills him in her divine employ  
With her own majestic joy.

[emphasis mine]

The poem goes on to describe the poet's wanderings in grand nature.

Just as Emerson communicates with nature and vice-versa - - flowers

"nod to me and I to them"<sup>3</sup> - - so also does this poet: "I shall hear

the crickets tell/ Stories. . .". A more Emersonian poem would be hard to imagine. The poet lies "In the pungent balsam shade", wanders in "some low meadow land", searches "in crannied hollows", strays "by many a stream", collecting beautiful impressions of nature from simple things, much as does Emerson in "Each and All". After this long excursion into nature, however, the poet turns his thoughts to "darker days", to "a vision sad and high" that takes over his attention and the poem: he sees the "labouring world", those in misery and affliction -- and now he begins piling up ugly and realistic impressions of the human world around him:

a vision sad and high  
Of the labouring world down there,  
Where the lights burn red and warm,  
Pricks my soul with sudden stare,  
Glowing through the veils of storm.  
In the city yonder sleep  
Those who smile and those who weep,  
Those whose lips are set with care,  
Those whose brows are smooth and fair;  
Mourners whom the dawning light  
Shall grapple with an old distress. . .

The poem now becomes a vision of the pressing actuality of human misery; he is experiencing "evil thoughts" which are "shade by shade and line by line,/ Refashioning what was once divine". This vision of urgent and actual misery, this replacing of the vision of the "All,/ God or the Immensity" with that of "old men with the mask of death", possesses the poet; it is, he says, "A something I cannot control,/ A nameless hunger of the soul. It holds me fast". Against this his former vision

of beauty and perfection is "vain":

In vain, in vain,  
I remember how of old  
I saw the ruddy race of men,  
Through the glittering world outrolled,  
A gay-smiling multitude,  
All immortal, all divine,  
Treading in a wreathed line  
By a pathway through a wood.

This poem, ending in all its inconclusiveness, is ultimately a rejection of Emersonian Transcendentalism. The poet discards the great vision of the "All" for the vision of the sordid actuality of his world.

Emerson emphasizes that whatever is, is right, and that the "All" is what is really important. Lampman is too sensitive and perceptive to accept this. The painfully clear vision of human misery and the vicissitudinousness of earthly existence seems to possess his mind more fully than does the transcendental vision. It is on this note -- only the short and trivial "Sun Cup" follows -- that he ends the volume and abandons his transcendental quest.

There is an early version of this poem that, when looked at alongside the published version, shows a great deal about Lampman's visionary development during the years between 1892 and 1895. On 19 November 1892, Lampman published a poem in the Globe entitled "Vision". This poem makes up the first 34 lines of "Winter-Store" (in varying orders); that is, the Emersonian lines that are concerned with the poet seeing "the wonder as it is", the "threads that bind us to the All,/ God or the Immensity" -- the lines that describe the poet

seeing "through this common air" and becoming "One with earth and one with man". The poem "Vision" ends with nature filling the poet "With her own majestic joy". This poem of 1892 is a true transcendental piece; even its tone is undiluted optimism and its title suggests the transcendental nature of the experience. "Winter-Store" is evidently a later poem or rather, an expanded and changed version of "Vision". This poem, as the reading in this chapter has shown, presents the transcendental experience but then it goes on to look at the reality of human misery. At the end, the "vision sad and high" of old age, suffering, and mourning begins to possess the poet's mind and the earlier vision of transcendental ecstasy seems vain and superfluous. These poems, then, "Vision" and "Winter-Store", illustrate what is happening in Lampman's visionary development with respect to Transcendentalism at this time. He adopted the stance throughout Lyrics of Earth, but at the end of this volume, having seen the dishonesty and futility of Transcendentalism, he abandons this outlook and turns his eyes upon human nature and society. His third and final volume, Alcyone (1899), is a frightening, naked portrayal of the human situation.



## CHAPTER SIX: "ALCYONE"

On 5 March 1894 Lampman writes to his friend E. W. Thomson: "I suppose I am passing through some spiritual revolution — in fact I know I am and some things have caused me unusual agonies".<sup>1</sup> Lampman's thinking was indeed undergoing a revolution: he was developing from a hopeful would-be transcendentalist to a clear-sighted thinker stripped of any neat philosophical framework. In Among The Millet (1888) Lampman attempted in his nature poems to achieve a spiritual, transcendental union with nature, but he always saw nature in an ambivalent light -- he remained among nature but never became part of it. As its title suggests, in Lyrics of Earth Lampman does adopt the Emersonian stance and follows Emerson at many points. But he still always saw the dishonesty of the transcendental view of nature: consequently, he unites himself with a dream of nature rather than nature herself because the wild, eerie, destructive, complex, natural world is not beautiful, simple, and benevolent, as Emerson believes it to be. At the end of Lyrics of Earth he abandons the transcendental vision in order to move on to a vision that is more worthy of this sensitive thinker's attention. Alcyone (1899) is Lampman's direct and mature view of the human situation. In this volume he turns the act of dreaming back upon itself by presenting dreams not primarily of sylvan shades and green retreats, but nightmares

of a totally hellish industrial society, the horror of death, the agony of suffering, the deadening influence of cities on the human spirit.

The most startling and effective poem in the volume - - perhaps the best poem in the Lampman canon - - is "The City of the End of Things", in which is presented an apocalyptic view of the world industrialized. Perhaps to call it a "view" is misleading because the reader is meant primarily to feel and hear the final city rather than clearly see it. Its physical description is deliberately vague: "Its roofs and iron towers have grown/ None knoweth how high within the night. . .". Its streets are "murky", in which move "stalking shadows". But the aural quality of the city is very pronounced - - it assaults the ear effectively:

From out a thousand furnace doors;  
And all the while an awful sound  
Keeps roaring on continually,  
And crashes in the ceaseless round  
Of a gigantic harmony.

The elements of "fire and night", "clanking hands", "iron lips", "the thunder and the hiss", "a monotonous cry", and ceaseless "unheard commands", all constitute a "gigantic harmony", an "inhuman music". This is a sharp contrast to the younger Lampman's idea of life as "filled with music" of "innumerable harmonies". In this world of industry all human qualities in man have been eradicated: the figures that obey the "hideous routine" "are not flesh, they are not bone,/ They see not with the human eye. . .". In the end everything

into rust and dust shall fall  
From century to century;  
Nor ever living thing shall grow,  
Nor trunk of tree, nor blade of grass;  
No drop shall fall, no wind shall blow,  
Nor sound of any foot shall pass. . . .

There is no benevolent All or Immensity, no immortality, no "return of the year". Darkness closes down upon the world and it falls forever into "silence and eternal night".

Another horrible vision is presented in "Chione". Here a child had died and the mother is so agonized and despairing that she sinks into a psychotic state:

The hapless mother, tender Chione,  
Beside the earth-cold figure of her child,  
After long bursts of weeping sharp and wild  
Lay broken, silent in her agony.

At first in waking horror racked and bound  
She lay, and then a gradual stupor grew  
About her soul and wrapped her round and round. . . .

She falls into an elaborate delusion and finds herself in a horrid natural world; she sees "an awful vale", "a grizzled stream", a "mute and murky stream,/ As cold and cavernous as the eye of death". She wanders in a land of "dismal beaches", hideous streams, "gloomy meadows". The description of this natural world seems to be the visionary inverse of his earlier views of nature; it is totally unlike anything Lampman had written earlier. After setting the terrible scene, Lampman depicts the mother praying to the "gloomy masters" of this world; she asks them to take her life. In the end she saw "dark waters and an unknown

shore,/ And the gray shadows crept about her soul". She "fell silent", and Lampman says, very ironically, "the grim gods had heard her prayer". Mother and child then are subsumed not into a great All or Immensity; they are subsumed into this horrible hell. This poem is a study of human suffering and a vision of the hellish and awful "afterlife".

"A Vision of Twilight" and "The Land of Pallas", two other important poems in Alcyone, seem, however, to be the visionary inverse of these two poems. In both, the poet sees ideal settings where there are "men of a diviner making" and "gardens wide and fair". In "A Vision of Twilight", there is a world of beauty and understanding:

In its domed and towered centre  
Lies a garden wide and fair,  
Open for the soul to enter,  
And the watchful townsmen there  
Greet the stranger gloomed and fretting  
From this world of stormy hands,  
With a look that deals forgetting  
And a touch that understands.

And in "The Land of Pallas", "a happy land", "strife and care were dead", and life was a "placid river". It is a land "where beauty dwelt supreme", a "land of equal gifts and deeds", a place of "peaceful days". But the difference between the ugly visions ("Chione" and "The City of the End of Things") and these happy visions is that the latter are clearly intended to be mere dreams. "The Land of Pallas" begins: "Methought I journeyed along ways that led for ever/ Throughout a happy land. . .". At the end of the poem people smile incredulously

at the rather mad vision and the poet assumes- - very tentatively - -  
that "somehow" the "end of human life is Peace":

I preached but fruitlessly; the powerful from their stations  
Rebuked me as an anarch, envious and bad,  
And they that served them with lean hands and bitter patience  
Smiled only out of hollow orbs, and deemed me mad.  
And still I preached, and wrought, and still I bore my message,  
For well I knew that on and upward without cease  
The spirit works forever, and by Faith and Presage  
That somehow yet the end of human life is peace.

The "Vision of Twilight" takes place "On the outer edge of space,/ Where  
the body comes not ever,/ But the absent dream hath place. . .".<sup>2</sup> It is  
deliberately said to be a collection of "Dreams of distant worlds".

"The City of the End of Things", however, has a conviction and urgent  
tone and effect that make it very real and horrifying. The enjambed  
and short lines give it a driving Miltonic force and the reader is  
assaulted through the ear as well as the eye; one hears every clank,  
crash, and hiss of the steel city. Also, never in "Chione" is it said  
that the poem is a dream; the poem is dream-like in its imagery  
because it is portraying a horrible schizoid state, but this imagery  
suggests the incredible monstrosity of hell and the delusion, not that  
the poem is a dream. And again, the conviction is too great, the study  
of the woman's grief too minute and sincere, for the poem to be an  
"absent dream" like the happier visions. A look at Lampman's proof for  
the titles of two of these poems is revealing also. Right up until  
the final correction of the proofs for Alcyone, "The City of the End

of Things" carried the following title:

The City of the End of Things,  
or,  
The Issue of the Things that Are.<sup>3</sup>

And the title for "The Land of Pallas" was

The Land of Pallas,  
or,  
The Country of the Ought to be.<sup>4</sup>

"The City of the End of Things" is a direct vision of what is and what is coming about, while "The Land of Pallas" is a mere trifling dream -- it is a conception of what ought to be but what, of course, will never be. Vision and dream are relaxing pastimes, Lampman has come to realize, but they ultimately have no validity or applicability to reality.

The title poem of the volume is unlike Lampman's earlier verse. The title poem of Among The Millet asserted that the poet can fashion "the whole" into beautiful art; the opening poem of Lyrics of Earth, "The Sweetness of Life", showed the poet communicating with the natural world. But "Alcyone" talks about the permanence of geological bodies and geological time as compared to the swift, transient, extinct human race. Men with "their long-forgotten deeds have come and gone", and any worlds that have existed are now nothingness:

A region mute with age, and peopled only  
With the dead and ruined dust  
Of worlds that lived eternities ago.

When man thinks of this, Lampman says, of "The half-blind toils since

life began,/ The little aims, the little span", he tries to "break beyond it all":

Seeking for the spirit unconfined  
In the clear abyss of mind  
A shelter and a peace majestic.  
For what is life to thee,  
Turning toward the primal light,  
With that stern and silent face,  
If thou can'st not be  
Something radiant and august as night,  
Something wide as space?

Therefore, he concludes, "Thou shalt cherish in thine heart for sign/  
A vision of the great and burning star. . .Alcyone". This poem emphasizes the transience and smallness of human life; one can only seek a permanent existence and try to be something large and permanent. There is no affirmation in the poem, no suggestion that the human spirit is or can be "radiant and august as night". All it can do is aspire to something that symbolizes permanence, something that is "immeasurably far" away. The mood of this poem is ultimately quite bleak: it emphasizes uncertainty and the smallness of man, not any union with the universe or immortality.

Other poems that emphasize uncertainty and that are, like "Alcyone", open-ended, are "Refuge" and "Personality". In the former, the poet leaves the city and goes to the country (as he does so often) and hopes for some sort of rejuvenation or refuge from his pain:

I come from the choking air  
Of passion, doubt, and strife,

With a spirit and a mind laid bare  
To your healing breadth of life:

O fruitful and sacred ground,  
O sunlight and summer sky  
Absorb me and fold me round,  
For broken and tired am I.

And the poem ends here. There is no resolution; only a rather simple poet-figure rather simply asking nature for refuge. There is no hint of an answer or response from nature, and if the rest of this volume is any indication of Lampman's general mood during these years, there is no response from nature - - just a suffering poet who is indeed all alone in an alien world. In "Personality" the poet feels a "subtle ineradicable longing/ For tender comradeship. . .". He "cannot" through "the half-lights and phantom-haunted mists" understand the workings of the "differing human heart". In other words, he lacks community with others and knowledge of his own heart. He concludes very sadly with what is probably his greatest image of human uncertainty in the face of the world and the self:

I am like one that comes alone at night  
To a strange stream, and by an unknown ford  
Stands, and for a moment yearns and shrinks,  
Being ignorant of the water, though so quiet it is,  
So softly murmurous,  
So silvered by the familiar moon.

As well as uncertainty and despair, loneliness is a theme that prevades the volume. In "To the Prophetic Soul", a poem about poets, the poet-figure is seen to have more refined goals than the common



people, but while the people (the world at large) are depicted as poor, blind fools, the enlightened poet is seen as almost painfully alien. The common people are "bustlers at the gate", "playthings in the hand of Fate,/ That pass and point no way. . .". Though they are aimless masses, and the poet would not want to be one of them, he is nevertheless somewhat frightened of his role as poet:

These gropers betwixt right and wrong,  
That seek an unknown goal,  
Most ignorant when they seem most strong;  
What are they, then, O Soul,

That thou shouldst covet overmuch  
A tenderer range of heart,  
And yet at every dreamed-of touch  
So tremulously start?

The poet is cast into his role and can never leave it even if he desires to do so; he is condemned to a solitary existence, travelling a road the end and purpose of which he knows not:

Nay, for they are not of thy kind,  
But in a rarer clay  
God dowered thee with an alien mind  
Thou canst not be as they.

Be strong, therefore; resume thy load,  
And forward stone by stone  
Go singing, though the glorious road  
Thou travellest alone.  
[emphasis mine]

The vocation of being a poet is not only a lonely and uncertain one, but it can be seen, at least in modern society, as a futile one. In "The Poet's Song" a poet lives in a crowded, troubled city, "Half-mad

with heat", and tries to create something valuable out of his experience, but in vain:

As listless as the hour, alone,  
The poet by his broken lute  
Sat like a figure in the stone,  
Dark-browed and mute.

When the troubles of the city become too great, the king sends for the poet because the poet "alone canst give him rest". But the poet's lute is broken, his "fountain dry"; he concludes: "Yea, tho' he gave his crown to me,/ I cannot sing!" In the second part of the poem the poet awakens at night and goes out into the "darkling street" among the "murmuring men", yet again he cannot play his lute so he passes through the gates of the city into the country. Here he can take a large look at the nature of things. What he sees could never cheer up a king; it is a very direct and frightening vision of nature:

And then the storm arose and fell  
From wheeling shadows black with rain  
That drowned the hills and strode the plain;  
Round the grim mountain-heads it passed,  
Down whistling valleys blast on blast,  
Surged in upon the snapping trees,  
And swept the shuddering villages.  
[emphasis mine]

Again, Lampman's vision of the ominousness and terrifying elements of nature is what impinges most strongly on this poet-figure's sensibility. Strangely, it is only with these kind of stimuli that the poet can sing again:

That night, when the fierce hours grew long,  
Once more the monarch, old and gray,  
Called for the poet and his song,  
And called in vain. But far away,  
By the wild mountain-gorges, stirred,  
The shepherds in their watches heard,  
Above the torrent's change and clang,  
The cleaving chant of one that sang.

The poet, this poem suggests, is a very lonely and special person. He cannot have any social function -- he is useless to the king -- nor can he even cheer up or even sing about the society in which he lives. The poet, whether he likes it or not, has a very special vocation: to face and become involved with the most frightening and real elements of existence -- large forces such as destiny, death, existence -- all of which are symbolized in nature. The poet is alone in the huge, mysterious and frightening universe.

If "The Poet's Song" offers a rather bleak vision of what a poet is, "The City" offers a rather bleak view of what modern life is. It begins:

Canst thou not rest, O city,  
That liest so wide and fair;  
Shall never an hour bring pity,  
Nor end be found for care?

In an earlier manuscript version the opening line is: "When shalt thou rest, O city. . .".<sup>5</sup> This line implies that the city will rest in time, but the final version of the line implies that the city cannot rest, that modern urban civilization is caught up in a kind of self-perpetrating

vertigo that makes the human consciousness dizzier and dizzier. The city is seen as a self-nourishing organism of madness, misery, greed, and killing:

The curses of gold are about thee,  
And thy sorrow deepeneth still;  
One madness within and without thee,  
One battle blind and shrill.

The numerology of "one" was important to Lampman in his earlier volumes: the "one", or "whole", or "All", symbolized for him the perfect order of things. Now the oneness is perfect disorder, or, paradoxically, perfect chaos. In effective rhythm and machine-like simplicity, he describes what he sees in his society:

I see the crowds for ever  
Go by with hurrying feet;  
Through doors that darken never  
I hear the engines beat.

Through days and nights that follow  
The hidden mill-wheel strains;  
In the midnight's windy hollow  
I hear the roar of trains.

This is Lampman's vision of society. No longer can he trifle with dreams of elysian fields and happy, fulfilled people -- his transcendental vision is gone: ". . .the days are gone like a vision/ When the people wrought and sang". If one remembers his Globe contribution in 1892 where he disagrees with Alexander Pope that life is one long disease and death the doctor who liberates man, it is strange at this time (1898) to hear him say quite directly and bluntly: ". . .life is one long

labour,/ Till death or freedom come". Also, he is not saying, till death and freedom come, but, "Till death or freedom come". For Emerson and the transcendentalists, death is freedom because it is when one joins the great Oversoul. But Lampman distinguishes between death and freedom, the former seeming much more likely, even inexorable.

Dreams have not only been a waste of time for Lampman, but they have caused him great disillusionment. The more dreams he has gone through, the more bitter and sad he has become, he says in "Sapphics". This poem begins with Lampman describing the decay and ruthless stripping of the maple trees, intending this as a metaphor for his own life:

Soon the maples, soon will the glowing birches,  
Stripped of all that summer and love had dowered them,  
Dream, sad-limbed, beholding their pomp and treasure  
Ruthlessly scattered. . . .

Though rather clumsily done, he then makes the analogy to his own life:

Me too changes, bitter and full of evil,  
Dream by dream have plundered and left me naked,  
Gray with sorrow. Even the days before me  
Fade into twilight.

Earlier in his career Lampman said that "dreams are real and life only is sweet". He is realizing in this volume that dreams are mere illusions, and damaging ones at that; he is realizing that modern life and society are sad and misshapen things, that he as a human being is not on the road to "the All, God, or the Immensity", but is moving ever so hopelessly toward final annihilation. The universe is not full of "innumerable harmonies" as he once tried to believe.

"We have not heard the music of the spheres", he says in "Voices of Earth". There is no "song of star to star, but there are sounds/ More deep than human joy and human tears,. . .". These are the sounds that "Nature uses in her common rounds". Yet what kinds of sounds are these? Are they a reassurance that God is in his Heaven and all's right with the world? On the contrary, these sounds, the "cry of winds", "the roaring of the sea's surge", the "might of thunder", are sounds of earth's "secrets" and "mystery". He says, "To him who hears them grief beyond control". Not joy, but grief. The universe is a mysterious, frightening place and the poet, the ultra-sensitive and perceptive person, because he sees and hears right to the heart of the universe, is the victim of grief and pain, of fear and uncertainty. Far from the company of romantics, Lampman seems at times to be verging upon the still closed doors of existentialism.

Lampman's last mention of an "All" or an Emersonian wholeness toward which the transient world strives is made in "Peccavi, Domine", a poem to the "Power" or "Energy, serene and pure". The first stanzas seem to reckon back to Lampman's transcendental Lyrics of Earth, or even to Emerson himself:

O Power to whom this earthly clime  
Is but an atom in the whole,  
O Poet-heart of Space and Time,  
O Maker and immortal Soul  
Within whose glowing rings are bound,  
Out of whose sleepless heart had birth  
The cloudy blue, the starry round,  
And this small miracle of earth:

Who liv'st in every living thing,  
And all things are thy script and chart,  
Who rid'st upon the eagle's wing,  
And yearnest in the human heart. . . .

This poem seems an Emersonian prayer as well as a collection of Emersonian terminology. It seems strangely inconsistent with the temper and visionary stance of the volume Alcyone as a whole.

A look at Lampman's manuscript notebooks shows, however, that this poem was written probably for inclusion in the Lyrics of Earth volume of 1895 rather than the later Alcyone volume of 1899. The poem is dated at 1894, and the later version in Alcyone is significantly changed. In the 1894 version, the "Power" or "Energy serene" is called, in stanza two, "O Spirit of the grand and true",<sup>6</sup> whereas in the published version it is "O Riddle with a single clue. . .". The oversoul, if it exists at all, has become for Lampman unknowable and uncertain. In the published version he goes on to admit that the Emersonian oversoul is not a reality, as Emerson thought, but it is the stuff of dreams: it is a "Vision of the Ought-to-be,/ O Memory of the Might-have-been. . .". Later in the poem he talks about his "aching heart", "burning brow", "sorrow", his shame, groaning and whining, and concludes with an admission of his total weakness in the scheme of things:

O Spirit, passionless, but kind,  
Is there in all the world, I cry,  
Another one so base and blind,  
Another one so weak as I?  
O Power, unchangeable, but just,

Impute this one good thing to me,  
I sink my spirit to the dust  
In utter dumb humility.

Emphasizing man's baseness and hopelessness, this conclusion is the inverse of a typical Emersonian one which would read: "Beauty through my senses stole;/ I yielded myself to the perfect whole". In the 1894 manuscript version there is another stanza after this:

My soul is like a famished plot  
Of barren shrub and [bunched] weed  
Which I, with tears, have burned, God not,  
And tilled it for thy sacred seed  
[So] let thy fearful presence fall,  
Now, Master, while the soil is bare;  
O Spirit of the sleepless All  
Enfold it in thy lucid air.<sup>7</sup>

Though this conclusion emphasizes even more than the other the agony and inadequacy of the poet's human strength, it is, by implication, far more hopeful and happy a conclusion than the final version. Here the poet has made ready for the All his soul; he is willing and receptive to the Power that will fertilize his being and make him whole. In the final version, however, there is no mention of his soul being "tilled" and ready to be "enfolded" or made productive; there is no appeal for the "Power" even to help him in any way. He simply looks about in desperation, seeking another soul as "base and blind" as his own, and then he sinks to the dust in "utter dumb humility". These two different conclusions to a poem that was originally written in 1894 and revised for publication probably in 1897-8 show the evolution of Lampman's



transcendental-visionary development rather graphically. The early nineties were his transcendental phase, and in the 1894 "Peccavi, Domine" he emphasizes the perfection of the All, the baseness of himself, and the communion between the two, the hopefulness and implied confidence that the All will send his roots rain. In the final version he emphasizes the perfection of the All, the baseness of himself, and the unbridgeable gap or void between the two: the All is now a Riddle - - existing perhaps, but unknowable. There is no confidence, no hope even, of communion between soul and All, man and universe: man now sinks in awe and insignificance at the thought of the huge universe rather than preparing the way of the Lord. His transcendental vision is no longer a comfort; hope has given way to despair.

Indeed, in "The Better Day" the ironic conclusion is that there is no better day coming. This poem begins with Lampman's summary of what comprises modern life and society:

Harsh thoughts, blind angers, and fierce hands,  
That keep this restless world at strife,  
Mean passions that like choking sands,  
Perplex the stream of life.

Pride and hot envy and cold greed,  
The cankers of the loftier will,  
What if ye triumph, and yet bleed?  
Ah, can ye not be still?

Emerson would never mention even the possibility of these elements triumphing, because "If the red slayer thinks he slays", then he is wrong - - he can never slay. But Lampman here implies that these

malignant elements can triumph and that perhaps they cannot be still. Lampman is admitting plainly that he now cannot subscribe to Emerson's view of the apocalypse. He asks:

Oh, shall there be no space, no time,  
No century of weal in store,  
No freedom in a nobler clime,  
Where men shall strive no more?

The rest of the poem is composed of such hopeless questions; in fact, of the six sentences in this poem, five are questions - - eternally unanswered ones. After all these questions he concludes by asking, will rest and peace be found only "in the grave?" The suggestion in this poem is that there are no answers. He cannot write affirmatively or even speculatively about "the better day" because there is no better day coming.

Many of the later poems in the volume are filled with moods of despair and sadness. In many he looks directly at the experience he is concerned with and describes the feelings of pain and uncertainty that it occasions. "We too shall Sleep" was occasioned by the death of his son at 3 months, and rather than assert a "Peace, peace, he is not dead" affirmation as in virtually all elegies, rather than at least assert that the dead person is in a "nobler clime", he admits that his son is silent and cold, that life is "fleeting gleams of joy" and "fruitless tears", that "immutable night shall fall" on everyone, and that he will one day be "side by thy side" with his son and he too shall

sleep. There is no hope, no consolation. In "The Autumn Waste" the entire natural world is such a hideous, doom-inflicting waste-land that "What dream, or flesh, could ever have been young?" Some power inflicts "mindless misery" on a world where flowers could never have bloomed and birds could never have sung. He concludes hopelessly that "Life, hopes, and human things seem wrapped away,/ With shrouds and spectres, in one long decay". In "Vivia Perpetua" two saints are captured and tortured mercilessly by animals that gore them viciously. Lampman's description of their pain as the blood spurts from shredded flesh is quite disturbing and real. The saints cling ever so tenaciously to the hope of Christ and a rewarding afterlife, but there is no affirmation or even hint that Christ and heaven exist. Indeed, since this is virtually the only poem in the canon where Lampman even mentions Christ, one is led to assume that he did not hold much hope for his suffering martyrs. And "War", a lament for the way of the world, depicts the hatred and slaughter that is a timeless and integral part of human existence. At a few points Lampman has had to make his vision less particular or worldly and more imaginative or abstract in order to save the poem from becoming simply a kind of visionary tantrum. The line, "I can see the kings grow pallid" was, earlier, "I can see the world grow pallid";<sup>8</sup> and the line, "Once more war with fire and famine/ Gathers", was, "Once more war awaits the nations. . .".<sup>9</sup> And his excellent sonnet, "Winter Evening", after giving a superb description of the city

on a cold evening, concludes with a lament at the loss of the vision of summer, which lament can also be read as the loss of Lampman's transcendental vision:

Soon, soon shall fly  
The glorious vision, and the hours shall feel  
A mightier master; soon from height to height,  
With silence and the sharp unpitying stars,  
Stern creeping frosts, and winds that touch like steel,  
Out of the depth beyond the eastern bars,  
Glittering and still shall come the awful night.

This final, despairing vision is only balanced by the fact that Lampman, though uncertain and bitter about society and the human predicament, never totally gives up hope for something better. In 1892 or 1893 Lampman wrote in his workbook a poem entitled "The Clearer Self". This period is, of course, his transcendental period and "The Clearer Self" was probably originally intended to appear in the volume of 1895 instead of that of 1899. "The Clearer Self" seems a very Emersonian poem, as one might expect from this period. But that Lampman modified it and included it in Alcyone suggests that though he knew the Emersonian vision was not a possible cosmic view for him, nevertheless the imaginative striving for a vision "Above the measured and the known" is still a noble pursuit, though it must always be held at the status of vision and not elevated to a religion, belief, or reality. In the first version he writes:

For me, tho' yet the fire be dull  
In folds of thwarting matter furled

Ere Death be nigh, while life is full  
O Master Spirit of this world

Grant me to seek, to know, to find  
And hold in proud security  
Emerging from the waste and blind,<sup>10</sup>  
The clearer self, the grander me!  
[emphasis mine]

The underlined parts were significantly changed for the published version, in which the first line quoted here reads: "Though yet the sacred fire be dull. . .". Lampman no longer sees himself as elect for a personal transcendental experience. The "sacred fire" is of all existence, not just his own. The "Master Spirit" of this world becomes the master spirit of the world; again the line becomes more impersonal, more general. Most importantly, in the first version Lampman wants to "hold in proud security" this vision of his clearer self. In the later version he says:

Grant me to know, to seek, to find,  
In some small measure though it be,  
Emerging from the waste and blind,  
The clearer self, the grander me!  
[emphasis mine]

By including this poem in Alcyone he shows that he has hope for the human experience; yet all he wishes for at this time is, "in some small measure", a vision of his greater position in the cosmic scheme of things. The cosmos is somehow sound. There is somewhere a purpose for existence. But the quiet suggestion in the final stanza, indeed, throughout Lampman's poetry (particularly his later work) is that the

human being cannot ever know the "Master Spirit" of the world. He can never, during earthly existence - - or even thereafter - - achieve the transcendental unity with the universe or "Immensity". All man has is experience; it is experience and life as such that he must face. Ironically, this is the exact position that Emerson came to take late in his life in his last essay, "Experience". Lampman believes that one can dream of the Land of Pallas, of the Ought-to-be or Might-have-been, but one must always remember that it is only a dream - - something outside of reality, not an alternative for reality. Nature, the whole universe, is good and evil, beautiful and ugly, frightening and soothing; but human life, a good thing, though troubled and at times morbid, must go on. In Alcyone Lampman does achieve "the clearer self" because unlike Emerson, whose Transcendentalism narrowed his poetic vision, Lampman, by examining Transcendentalism, widened and deepened his poetic vision - - he could see, and could never make himself avoid seeing, the essential complexity of the universe and himself.

## CONCLUSION

If the reading of Lampman offered in this study is sound, then he can and should be seen in a totally different light than he has been. A look at Lampman's life in the first chapter has shown that he is not the "poor Johnny Keats", the agonized "dreamer", or the oppressed and miserable "escapist" that many critics have sketched in the scanty biographical impressions offered on Lampman. Rather he is an active and socially involved man who edited journals, wrote widely acclaimed verse, spoke out upon important issues, and called for social and political change; and he was also relatively happy in his easy job, and fairly content with Ottawa and its environs. Far from being the descriptive nature poet, the "dreamer of dreams" who fled to nature and there found great consolation, Lampman was an intensely astute and deep-thinking poet who, though he admired Emersonian Transcendentalism and sought union with nature and happiness from his verse, could see beyond the transcendental framework, right to the elusive and complex heart of nature and human nature. Rather than being a romantic and sitting "at the feet of Wordsworth and Keats", Lampman is uncannily modern in the complexity of his vision, in the development of his thinking, and in the deeply pessimistic, yet not hopeless, tone that runs throughout his verse. He sits at the feet of no single poet, though

he may sit alongside Thomas Hardy.

Several of the major Canadian poets of the Confederation period were influenced by Emersonian Transcendentalism. Bliss Carman was, through his mother's family, related to Emerson; he mentioned Emerson in his letters frequently; he studied Transcendentalism under Josiah Royce at Harvard, and much of his work is suffused with the monistic idealism, evolutionary amelioration, optimistic tone, and even the language of the Sage of Concord. Wilfred Campbell was disturbed by Emersonian Transcendentalism and consequently left his Anglican ministry in 1891. Several of his volumes have the same happy, meditative tone that appears in Emerson, and according to Carl Klinck, some of the pieces in the Collected Poems are "pure Emerson". Charles G. D. Roberts, a very influential poet, wrote several poems that propounded Emersonian monism; he seems to have adopted the stance more and more as his career progressed. And D. C. Scott, whose father's library contained extensive works by Emerson, shows his transcendental colours, though not as obviously as the other poets. Many of Scott's poems depict conflicts between man and nature, man and man, nature and nature; but always out of these conflicts emerge peace and beauty. He stresses not the storm, but the calm and silence after it. In general terms, these four poets all had faith in the ultimate rightness of things.

Like these poets, Lampman was heavily influenced by Emersonian



Transcendentalism, but with a difference. While the others tended to adopt Emersonianism as their ultimate philosophical foundation, Lampman, as has been shown in this study, wanted to subscribe to this framework but never fully could. Lampman shows a searching philosophical bent of mind, a deeply penetrating sensibility that is not present to an equal degree in the other Confederation poets. Lampman began his poetical career by articulating his vision of nature while following the Emersonian lead. Then he found it necessary to conceal his ambivalent feelings, his own complex vision, if he was to achieve the Emersonian "clearer self". Never being able to avoid seeing nature "simply as it is", however, he had to unite himself with a dream of it; he had to exorcize the demons from the world of visible phenomena, and transform that world into an ideal, dream vision. Finally, he saw the futility and dishonesty of this kind of visionary framework, so he cast off his Emersonian spectacles in order to look directly and painfully at life and nature as they really are. He separated dream and reality, instead of trying to conflate them, and articulated some very frightening, realistic, and poetically moving poems. In Lampman there is a transcendental-visionary development that makes his the most moving, fascinating, and penetrating poetry in nineteenth-century Canada.

ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED IN THE NOTES

- Bourinot - - Arthur S. Bourinot, ed., Archibald Lampman's Letters to Edward William Thomson (1890-1898) (Montreal: Quality Press, Ltd., 1956).
- Connor - - Carl Y. Connor, Archibald Lampman: Canadian Poet of Nature (Montreal: Louis Carrier & Co., 1929).
- Critical Views - - Michael Gnarowski, ed., Critical Views on Canadian Writers: Archibald Lampman (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1970).
- Foerster - - Norman Foerster, ed., Introduction to American Poetry and Prose (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1971).
- Scott - - Duncan Campbell Scott, ed., The Poems of Archibald Lampman (Toronto: Morang, 1900). Reprinted in The Poems of Archibald Lampman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).
- Symposium - - Lorraine McMullen, ed., The Lampman Symposium (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1976).
- The Globe - - "At the Mermaid Inn", a column of 1892-3 in The Globe (Toronto newspaper), to which Lampman, as well as Scott and Campbell, submitted articles.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER ONE

- <sup>1</sup> Ottawa Journal, 11 February 1899.
- <sup>2</sup> Ottawa Journal, 15 February 1899.
- <sup>3</sup> John Marshall, "Archibald Lampman", Queen's Quarterly, 9 (July, 1901), 63-79. Cited in Critical Views, p. 37.
- <sup>4</sup> Louis Untermeyer, "Archibald Lampman and the Sonnet", Poet Lore, 20 (Nov. 1909), 432-37. Cited in Critical Views, p. 55.
- <sup>5</sup> Bernard Muddiman, "Archibald Lampman", Queen's Quarterly, 22 (Jan. 1915), 223-43. Cited in Critical Views, p. 80.
- <sup>6</sup> Norman Gregor Guthrie, The Poetry of Archibald Lampman (Toronto: Musson Book Co. Ltd., 1927) p. 15.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 23.
- <sup>8</sup> Leo Kennedy, "Canadian Writers of the Past: Archibald Lampman", Canadian Forum, 13 (May 1933), 301-303. Cited in Critical Views, p. 121.
- <sup>9</sup> John Sutherland, "Great Things and Terrible", Direction (Nov. 1945). Cited in "A Lampman Manuscript", by Barrie Davies, Journal of Canadian Fiction (Spring 1972) p. 55.
- <sup>10</sup> Northrop Frye, "Letters in Canada", University of Toronto Quarterly (1950). Cited in The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination, by Northrop Frye, (Toronto: House of Anansi, Ltd., 1971) p. 1.

- 11 D. G. Jones, Butterfly On Rock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) p. 96.
- 12 Sandra Djwa, "Lampman's Fleeting Vision", Canadian Literature (1973) p. 36.
- 13 Margaret Coulby Whitridge, "Love and Hate in Lampman's Poetry", in Symposium, pp. 9-16.
- 14 Barrie Davies, "A Lampman Manuscript", Journal of Canadian Fiction (Spring 1972) 55-58.
- 15 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, 24 July 1882. Connor, p. 56.
- 16 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, 9 September 1882. Connor, p. 59.
- 17 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, n.d. Connor, p. 60.
- 18 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, 14 December 1882. Connor, p. 63.
- 19 Scott, xvii. Lampman's career in the Civil Service was more varied than Scott or any other biographer has noted. His positions were as follows:

1883-4 . . . . .Savings Branch  
1884-5 . . . . .Post Office Dept.  
1885-8 . . . . .Secy. Branch, P. O. Dept.  
1888-9 . . . . .Clerk, P. O. Dept.  
1889-99. . . . .Clerk, Secy. Branch, P. O. Dept.

This information, extracted from the Directories, Public Archives, Ottawa, illustrates that Lampman did move around in the Civil Service and was not doing one job for his entire career there.

- 20 "Directories", as found in D. C. Scott MS papers, MG 30 D100, Vol. 2, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 21 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, 19 January 1883. Connor, p. 65.

- 22 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, c. February 1883. Connor, p. 66.
- 23 This poem, when it appeared, was entitled "A Monition".
- 24 See Greg Kealey, ed., Canada Investigates Industrialism (Toronto, 1973), pp. 192-220.
- 25 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, c. February 1883. Connor, p. 67.
- 26 Lampman to J. A. Ritchie, n.d. Connor, p. 79.
- 27 "Untitled Essay on Socialism". Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59, Vol. 6, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 28 James Macoun: Socialist sympathizer best known for publishing in 1922 the autobiography of his father, John Macoun (1831-1920), the famous botanist and geologist.
- 29 Connor, p. 113.
- 30 The Globe, 2 April 1892.
- 31 The Globe, 2 July 1892.
- 32 The Globe, 27 February 1892.
- 33 The Globe, 5 March 1892.
- 34 The Globe, 9 April 1892.
- 35 The Globe, 9 April 1892.
- 36 The Globe, 27 August 1892.
- 37 The Globe, 27 August 1892.
- 38 The Globe, 24 September 1892.

- 39 The Globe, 3 June 1892.
- 40 The Globe, 25 March 1893.
- 41 The Globe, 25 March 1893.
- 42 The Globe, 25 March 1893.
- 43 Bourinot, p. 6.
- 44 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
- 45 Lampman to E. W. Thomson, 8 March 1893. Bourinot, p. 17.
- 46 Lampman to E. W. Thomson, 5 July 1893. Bourinot, p. 19.
- 47 Lampman to E. W. Thomson, 6 November 1893. Bourinot, p. 22.
- 48 Lampman to E. W. Thomson, 28 February 1894. Bourinot, p. 24.
- 49 Lampman to E. W. Thomson, 5 March 1894. Bourinot, p. 24.
- 50 D. M. R. Bentley, in his edition of Lyrics of Earth, 1978, says that Lampman's son "was born in 1894 but died a year later". A close look at Lampman's correspondence reveals, however, that he was born around the beginning of May and died in early August 1894. In his letter of 6 June 1894 Lampman talks about his new son and in a letter dated 19 August 1894 he laments his son's death. He lived, therefore, about 3 months or so.
- 51 In a letter of 23 June 1896 he recalls his hiatus in poetry and his caring for his father. Bourinot, p. 36.
- 52 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59, Vol. 2, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 53 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59, Vol. 2. Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.

- 54 Margaret Coulby Whitridge, "Love and Hate in Lampman's Poetry", in Symposium, pp. 9-16.
- 55 Lampman to D. C. Scott, 21 August 1898. Cited in Some Letters of D. C. Scott, Archibald Lampman, and Others, ed. Arthur S. Bourinot (Montreal: Quality Press, Ltd., 1959) p. 5.
- 56 Ralph Gustafson, "Life and Nature: Some Reappraisals of Archibald Lampman", in Symposium, p. 3.
- 57 Scott, xxi.
- 58 In Volume 3 of the Lampman MS Papers, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada, there is a copy of Alcyone. On the inside cover of this volume there is a typed note which reads as follows:

Reference to this book will be found on page xxi of the Memorial edition of Lampman's Poems. When it was decided to publish a complete edition I cancelled publication of Alcyone but ordered Constable and Co. to print one dozen copies of the book from the type which was standing. The title page shows the name of the publisher, James Ogilvy, a bookseller of Ottawa. Bound with this copy are the last proof sheets of the book corrected by Lampman.

Duncan Campbell Scott  
Feb. 10, 1930.

## CHAPTER TWO

- <sup>1</sup> Agnes Maule Machar, "Some Recent Canadian Poems", The Week, 6 (March 22 1889), 251-2. Cited in Critical Views, p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 2.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

- 4 Lilly E. F. Barry, "Prominent Canadians — XXXV: Archibald Lampman", The Week, 8 (April 10, 1891), 298-300. Cited in Critical Views, p. 8.
- 5 Ibid., p. 18.
- 6 Arthur Stringer, "A Glance at Lampman", Canadian Magazine, 2 (April 1894), 545-48. Cited in Critical Views, p. 22.
- 7 Ibid., p. 23.
- 8 A. W. Crawford, "Archibald Lampman", Acta Victoriana, 17 (Dec. 1895), 77-81. Cited in Critical Views, p. 29.
- 9 Ibid., p. 30.
- 10 Earnestine Whiteside, "Canadian Poetry and Poets II", The McMaster University Monthly, VIII, (Nov. 1898), 68-9. Cited in Symposium, p. 27.
- 11 John Marshall, "Archibald Lampman", Queen's Quarterly, 9, (July 1901), 63-79. Cited in Critical Views, p. 37.
- 12 Louis Untermeyer, "Archibald Lampman and the Sonnet", Poet Lore, 20, (Nov. 1909), 432-37. Cited in Critical Views, p. 55.
- 13 Ibid., p. 55.
- 14 Bernard Muddiman, "Archibald Lampman", Queen's Quarterly, 22, (Jan. 1915), 223-43. Cited in Critical Views, p. 77.
- 15 Ibid., p. 79.
- 16 G. H. Unwin, "The Poetry of Archibald Lampman", University Magazine, 16, (Feb. 1917), 55-73. Cited in Critical Views, p. 99.
- 17 Raymond Knister, "The Poetry of Archibald Lampman", Dalhousie Review, 7, (Oct. 1927), 348-61. Cited in Critical Views, p. 105.



- 18 Ibid., p. 101.
- 19 O J. Stevenson, "Archibald Lampman", in A People's Best (Toronto: Musson Book Co. Ltd., 1927) p. 130.
- 20 Norman Gregor Guthrie, The Poetry of Archibald Lampman (Toronto: Musson Book Co. Ltd., 1927) p. 11.
- 21 Ibid., p. 29.
- 22 Ibid., p. 13.
- 23 Ibid., p. 44.
- 24 Carl Y. Connor, Archibald Lampman: Canadian Poet of Nature (Montreal: Louis Carrier & Co. Ltd., 1929) p. 148.
- 25 Ibid., p. 148.
- 26 Leo Kennedy, "Canadian Writers of the Past: Archibald Lampman, Canadian Forum, 13 (May 1933), 301-03. Cited in Critical Views, p. 121.
- 27 Ibid., pp. 123-4.
- 28 Ibid., p. 125.
- 29 W. E. Collin, "Archibald Lampman", University of Toronto Quarterly, 4, (Oct. 1934), 103-20. Cited in Critical Views, pp. 141-2.
- 30 E. K. Brown, On Canadian Poetry (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1973. First published in 1944) p. 88.
- 31 Ibid., p. 104.
- 32 Copy of a letter to Ralph Gustafson by D. C. Scott, 17 July 1945. Cited in Critical Views, pp. 156-7.

- 33 John Sutherland, "Edgar Allan Poe in Canada", Northern Review, 4, (Feb. - March, 1951), 22-37. Cited in Critical Views, p. 165.
- 34 Northrop Frye, "Letters in Canada" (1950). In The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Ltd., 1971) p. 1.
- 35 Ibid., p. 147.
- 36 Desmond Pacey, "A Reading of Lampman's 'Heat' ", Culture, 14, (Sept. 1953) 292-97. Cited in Critical Views, p. 184.
- 37 Louis Dudek, "The Significance of Lampman", Culture, 18, (Sept. 1957) 277-90. Cited in Critical Views, pp. 185-6.
- 38 Ibid., p. 186.
- 39 Ibid., p. 196.
- 40 Ibid., p. 200.
- 41 F. W. Watt, "The Masks of Archibald Lampman", University of Toronto Quarterly, 27, (Jan. 1958), 169-84. Cited in Critical Views, pp. 206-7.
- 42 Roy Daniells, "Lampman and Roberts", in The Literary History of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) p. 390.
- 43 Ibid., p. 389.
- 44 D. G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) p. 98.
- 45 Ibid., p. 100.
- 46 Barrie Davies, "Lampman: Radical Poet of Nature", The English Quarterly, 4, (Spring 1971), 34.

- 47 Sandra Djwa, "Lampman's Fleeting Vision", Canadian Literature, 56, (1973), 22.
- 48 Ibid., 24.
- 49 Ibid., 36.
- 50 Ralph Gustafson, "Life and Nature: Some Re-appraisals of Archibald Lampman", cited in Symposium, p. 6.
- 51 Ibid., p. 4.
- 52 Louis K. Mackendrick, "Sweet Patience and her Guest, Reality: The Sonnets of Archibald Lampman", cited in Symposium, p. 55.
- 53 Dick Harrison, "So Deathly Silent: the Resolution of Pain and Fear in the Poetry of Lampman and D. C. Scott", cited in Symposium, p. 65.

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- 1 Barrie Davies, "The Forms of Nature: Some of the Philosophical and Aesthetic Bases of Lampman's Poetry", cited in Symposium, p. 76.
- 2 Carl F. Klinck, "The Frogs: An Exercise in Reading Lampman", cited in Symposium, p. 33.
- 3 Ibid., p. 29.
- 4 Ibid., p. 30.
- 5 Barrie Davies, "Lampman and Religion", Canadian Literature, 56, (Spring 1973) 40-59.
- 6 Sandra Djwa, "Lampman's Achievement", cited in Symposium, pp. 111-112.

- <sup>7</sup> See Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Virgilius Ferm, (The Philosophical Library, 1945) p. 87, and Backgrounds of American Literary Thought, ed. R. W. Horton and H. W. Edwards (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974) p. 119.
- <sup>8</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Foerster, p. 307.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 307.
- <sup>10</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Transcendentalism in America, D. N. Koster (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975) p. 34.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 34.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 34.
- <sup>13</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet", 1844. Cited in Foerster, p. 327.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 331.
- <sup>15</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Brahma", 1856. Cited in Foerster, p. 305.
- <sup>16</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance", 1841. Cited in Transcendentalism in America, D. N. Koster, p. 37.
- <sup>17</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Over-soul", 1841. Cited in Transcendentalism in America, D. N. Koster, p. 39.
- <sup>18</sup> The Globe, 6 February 1892.
- <sup>19</sup> The Globe, 13 February 1892.
- <sup>20</sup> The Globe, 2 July 1892.
- <sup>21</sup> The Globe, 18 June 1892.
- <sup>22</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Foerster, p. 307.

- 23 The Globe, 18 June 1892.
- 24 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Days". Cited in Foerster, p. 304.
- 25 The Globe, 18 June 1892.
- 26 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet", 1844. Cited in Foerster, p. 327.
- 27 Henry David Thoreau, Walden 1854. Cited in Foerster, p. 367.
- 28 Ibid., p. 379.
- 29 The Globe, 19 November 1892.
- 30 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Each and All", 1834. Cited in Foerster, p. 296.
- 31 The Globe, 8 April 1893.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 The Globe, 22 April 1873.
- 34 Lampman, MS poems 1889-92, University of Toronto Library.
- 35 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59, Vol. 2, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 36 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 2, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 37 Barrie Davies, "Lampman and Religion", Canadian Literature, 56, (Spring 1973), 43.
- 38 Ibid., 44.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

- 1 Fragment by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Cited by Lampman in The Globe, 22 April 1893.

- 2 Archibald Lampman, "Among The Millet". Cited in The Poems of Archibald Lampman, ed. D. C. Scott (Morang, 1900). This edition of Scott is reprinted along with At the Long Sault and Other New Poems by Archibald Lampman, ed. E. K. Brown (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1943), in The Poems of Archibald Lampman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). All further quotations from Lampman's poetry are from this standard text.
- 3 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Rhodora", 1834. Cited in Foerster, p. 295.
- 4 Archibald Lampman, "Heat".
- 5 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Brahma", 1856. Cited in Foerster, p. 305.
- 6 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 5, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 7 Ralph Waldo Emerson, untitled quatrain which is titled "Nahant" in Foerster, p. 305.
- 8 Henry David Thoreau, Walden. Cited in Foerster, p. 372.
- 9 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 3, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 10 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 3, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 11 Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 4, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
- 12 Henry David Thoreau, "Winter Memories", 1842. Cited in Foerster, p. 354.
- 13 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Days", 1851. Cited in Foerster, p. 304.
- 14 Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Foerster, p. 307.
- 15 Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Foerster, p. 307.

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- <sup>1</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Over-soul", 1841. Cited in Transcendentalism in America, D. N. Koster (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975) p. 39.
- <sup>2</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Transcendentalism in America, D. N. Koster (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975) p. 34.
- <sup>3</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836. Cited in Foerster, p. 307.

## CHAPTER SIX

- <sup>1</sup> Lampman to E. W. Thomson, 5 March 1894. Bourinot, p. 24.
  - <sup>2</sup> An early version reads, "Out of time and out of place" rather than "On the outer edge of space". Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 6, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
  - <sup>3</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 3, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
  - <sup>4</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 3, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
  - <sup>5</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 3, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
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  - <sup>7</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 6, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
  - <sup>8</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 7, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
  - <sup>9</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 7, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
  - <sup>10</sup> Lampman MS Papers, MG29 D59 Vol. 4, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada.
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