

CHAPTER 14

Romantic and Victorian Poetry

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Elizabeth Bishop grew up in an atmosphere of nineteenth-century poetry. “As for the books in our house, we had Emerson, Carlyle, all the old poets,” she recalled in 1966. In a later interview she elaborated: “My aunt, like so many Victorians, belonged to the village’s poetry society and she recited a great deal to me—Longfellow, Browning, Tennyson.”¹ She started reading poetry, she remembered, when she was eight.²

She advised her students at the University of Washington: “You should have your head filled with poems all the time, until they almost get in the way.”³ Her primary focus here is on poems as against poets. A head full of poems is the way to make more poems; tradition should almost but not quite impede the individual talent. In her own writing Bishop sees poems as a series of possibilities to be revisited gratefully, shrewdly, critically, neither agonistically as precursors to battle or displace, nor polemically in the spirit of a literary politics championing a school or movement. The primary importance of poets, for her, was as a help in making new poems.

While Bishop admired a number of nineteenth-century poets, above all Wordsworth and Hopkins, she had little interest in an overall conception either of Romanticism or Victorianism. Nonetheless, she occasionally seemed to espouse an anti-Romantic position. An early journal entry made in 1934, for instance, discusses the relation between the material and spiritual in the creative process:

It’s a question of using the poet’s proper materials, with which he is equipped by nature, i.e., immediate, intense physical reactions, a sense of metaphor and decoration

in everything—to express something not of them—something, I suppose, *spiritual*.
[...] The other way—of using the supposedly “spiritual”—the beautiful, the nostalgic,
the ideal and *poetic*, to produce the *material*—is the way of the Romantic, I think –
and a great perversity.⁴

She had been reading T.S. Eliot’s *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* shortly
after its 1933 publication,⁵ and her phrasing echoes Eliot’s polemically classical
position of this time, including his idea that “a wilful perversity had taken hold of
literary men, a new literary disease called Romanticism.”⁶ More than a generation
later, in a 1966 interview, she would call the Beats “Romantic and self-pitying ... I
hate self pity poems.”⁷ The word “Romantic” here comes at the start of a sentence, so
we can’t quite tell if it should have a capital “R,” nor whether she means the word in
its colloquial or its historical sense. But in recruiting the “Romantic” as an anti-Beats
category she is again clearly influenced by the cultural politics of a particular moment.
Within her poetry, however, the story is different. Bishop’s dealings with Romantic
writers and the Romantic period in her poetry are, as we might expect, more
considered and measured.

When in 1976 Bishop was awarded the Neustadt International Prize for
Literature, her poem “Sandpiper” was printed in the programme. She wryly noted in
her acceptance speech that all her life she had “lived and behaved very much like that
sandpiper” (*PPL* 731). The bird in her poem is “awkward / in a state of controlled
panic” (*P* 129), so this was partly a joke about awards ceremonies. The sandpiper was
also “a student of Blake,” perhaps doomed to be so because he started his famous
“Auguries of Innocence” with the line “To see a World in a Grain of Sand.” How far
was Bishop herself, in fact, a student of Blake? The question is complicated because

the purport of Blake's famous lines, to which the sandpiper can't help alluding, is not entirely clear:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour ⁸

These opening lines stand apart, partly as a quatrain in a poem composed almost entirely of couplets, and partly because they make a freestanding unpunctuated non-sentence, a series of infinitives but neither a grammatical sentence nor manifestly a proposition. They are not in the imperative voice of (for instance) Blake's "Hear the voice of the Bard," though we are likely to take them at first as an injunction. Seeing the world in a grain of sand like this could indeed be a visionary aspiration, but the following lines suggest that it may involve agonies of sensitivity, and they beg difficult questions around hyperbole:

A dog starvd at his Masters Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State
A Horse misusd upon the Road
Calls to Heaven for Human blood ⁹

Bishop's sandpiper doesn't follow Blake far into the world-shaping grandeur of his auguries. He is indeed more of a follower of the later poets of Romantic quest, Keats and Shelley. They too imagine searches for something that can never be a stable point

of arrival. The protagonist of Shelley's "Alastor", for example, journeys through the world and finds only an empty self-reflection at the end of his travels; Keats's protagonist in *Endymion* searches endlessly for something that exists only in dreams or visions. We know that Bishop had a Shelley phase, and she told Howard Moss "I adore Keats anyway—even *all* the poetry" (*NYr* 228). Her sandpiper may be "a student of Blake," but that doesn't make him altogether a follower of Blake.¹⁰

He may for instance be a student with more than one teacher. "Sandpiper" implies more than a single poetic heritage, a complication of influence and allusion characteristic of Bishop. Even in "Casabianca" and "The Gentleman of Shalott," her two published poems the titles of which openly allude to previous poems, the focus is not entirely on their apparent precursors Hemans and Tennyson. Bishop's very enigmatic "Casabianca" is a poem about the absurd and sacrificial nature of love, as against duty in Hemans's original; her Gentleman of Shalott sees himself in a Stevens-like mirror of doubled identity, a differently problematic situation from Tennyson's narrative of the Lady of Shalott. Each poem, too, uses a metrical form markedly different its precursor. The point of her choices is partly their famous afterlives. She often responds poetically to an anthology warhorse like these two; she is sceptically interested in moments when the cultural heritage is sliding towards cliché. Sceptically, however, and not cynically, because the very fame of such moments implies a continuing and engaging history in which they have merited attention.

Bishop's sandpiper ends with a vista of continuing quest:

His beak is focussed; he is preoccupied,

looking for something, something, something.

Poor bird, he is obsessed!

The millions of grains are black, white, tan, and gray
mixed with quartz grains, rose and amethyst. (*P* 129)

“Poor bird,” perhaps, but we could hear in these lines not only a sorry plight but also an absorbing and rewarded vocation. To see the world in these grains of sand, for instance, enables the painterly sequence in which “tan” richly interrupts and complicates the monochrome tones of black, white and gray. And the final line, opening into the metaphorical as part of the sensory, is reminiscent of the end of Hopkins’s “Windhover,” with its visionary evocation of a transcendent world beneath the observer’s feet:

blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion. ¹¹

The sandpiper’s search for “something” might further put us in mind of the poet for whom more than any other the word “something” is often crucial, and this is not Blake but Wordsworth. Several of Wordsworth’s greatest poems and lines surround “something” with mystery and grandeur: “a sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused”; “O joy! that in our embers / Is something that doth live” ; “’twas a sound / Of something without place or bound”; “whether it were by peculiar grace, / A leading from above, a something given.”¹² The Wordsworthian “something” combines elusive intimations with a sense of solid confidence. For Bishop’s sandpiper, too, the quest for “something” is driven by belief in the existence of a desirable object

alongside the experience of its recurrent or perpetual slippage. Whether it is recurrent or perpetual depends on whether we take it to refer to three somethings or just one—a record of the bird repeatedly finding its object and then moving on, or a record of its always missing the object and being compelled to continue the search.

Such ambiguous possibilities in “something” contribute to another beautiful and uncanny moment in Bishop, when she evokes the bus passengers’ talk in “The Moose”:

deaths, deaths and sicknesses;
the year he remarried;
the year (something) happened. (*P* 192)

Had she written “the year something happened” the line would already impart a doubleness to “something,” its substantiality as the subject of the verb lessened by its lack of definition and its location in the past. But Bishop has enclosed the word in brackets, with a further estrangement. This is partly an estrangement from ordinary grammar in a sentence that already lacks the proper component of a main verb (it extends dreamily from line 90 to line 105). For it is a principle of a parenthesis that “it may be taken out without injuring the sense of that which encloses it” (Samuel Johnson’s definition)¹³; but to exclude Bishop’s parenthesis is to transform the sentence: “the year (something) happened” becomes “the year happened.” This makes sense, and it has the placidity of a truism; but it is a very different sense from the one conjured by “the year (something) happened.” Bishop creates an evocation of time that includes the effacement of human damage; she makes this unspecified event of the past spectral. The line quiets the grievousness of the surrounding stanzas, with

their visitings of death, sickness, and even (since it implies termination as well as inception) of remarrying. In the “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth speaks of the poet as having “a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present.”¹⁴ In these lines the absent “something” is at once parenthetically present in the sentence and strangely absent from it. The effect resembles what Wordsworth describes as one of the effects of poetic meter, namely “to throw a sort of half consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition” with the result that “more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose.”¹⁵ Bishop’s stoicism, her art of coping, owes a good deal to Wordsworth.

She was rueful but not only rueful when she told Robert Lowell that “I find I’m really a minor female Wordsworth.” (WIA 122) You can be quite a major writer by being a minor Wordsworth, so this is not just a lament; moreover, to be a female Wordsworth gives you advantages and differences, not just a lower place in the pecking order. Dorothy Wordsworth, after all, might be described that way. Bishop was talking about a preponderance of “Nature poems” in her recent work when she referred to herself this way. But there are several other ways in which Wordsworth is her crucial precursor among the English romantic poets—in for instance such phrasings as “small leaves, real leaves” in “Quai d’Orléans” (recalling Wordsworth’s “the Sea, the real Sea”), or “I liked the place” in “Santarém” (recalling “I liked the greeting” in “Stepping Westward”).¹⁶ The sensation of “falling off / the round, turning world” in “In the Waiting Room” (P 180) might remind us of Wordsworth’s “Fallings from us, vanishings,”¹⁷ both expressing the intuition that crucial moments may combine negativity and revelation. Above all, in terms of what he meant to Bishop, he

is the poet with the most central insistence on the provisionality of vision. “Tintern Abbey” pays tribute to “the mighty world / Of eye and ear, both what they half-create, / And what perceive:”¹⁸ eye and ear are mighty and creative, not just unreliable. Wordsworth figures the relationship between inner and outer at its happiest as an “ennobling interchange.”¹⁹ At other times, the interchange becomes an overbalance either of the external or the internal, in which the world may appear only “a soulless image on the eye”²⁰ or else may be overcome by the power of visionary perception. Such a sense that perception is fallible and changeable leads to many instances in Wordsworth, on both a large and small scale, of revised and reframed details. The sequence in “Tintern Abbey” describing “hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines / Of sportive wood run wild”²¹ is a forerunner of numerous such alternations and alterations of phrase in Bishop. The “big leaves, small leaves, giant leaves” in “Brazil, January 1, 1502” (*P*, 89) are one such moment; “small, big, giant” would describe a more lucid progression, but it is characteristic of Bishop to complicate the sequence. The disruption helps us see the variety of leaves with a little surprise, a provocation to the reader more sharply to register the magnifying term “giant” leaves, which may seem at first a harmless botanical word but comes into focus as the poem continues as an instance of paranoid imperialist vision. The earlier settlers in Brazil, “the Christians” as Bishop disconcertingly calls them, perceive or half-create monstrous and wicked figures in the Brazilian jungle, and they bring violence and conquest. Such a sequence doesn’t insist that the arrivers of 1502 and 1952 are identical, but suggests that it is very hard to know where the continuities begin and end. Bishop’s evocation of the cultural density of perception carries with it a politics and an ethics that we could reasonably call Wordsworthian. It centres on the imperfect authority of the poet’s point of view, and a consequent need “to be reserved in speech.”²²

Bishop valued Wordsworth as a poet of depression as well as its management. Her most direct reference to his work comes in obtrusively anachronistic lines from “Crusoe in England”:²³

the poems—well, I tried
reciting to my iris-beds,
“They flash upon that inward eye,
which is the bliss...” The bliss of what? (*P* 184)

In Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a Cloud,” another anthology piece, the daffodils help him change from being “lonely as a Cloud” to experiencing “the bliss of solitude.”²⁴ What worked for Wordsworth doesn’t here work for Crusoe. The iris-beds don’t give him anything back, and these irises, actually snail-shells, aren’t even flowers, never mind eyes. Insofar as the poem is a critique of Wordsworth, its plot implies that imaginative vision is crucially to be supplied not by nature but by human company and love: in this it follows on early critiques of Wordsworth by, for instance, William Hazlitt and Sara Coleridge.²⁵ But Crusoe’s unreceptiveness is partly his own failure of vision; he is not offered as an exemplary perceiver. Wordsworth’s poem, moreover, isn’t as simple as it has often been taken to be. Its final stanza begins: “For oft when on my couch I lie / In vacant or in pensive mood / They flash upon that inward eye / Which is the bliss of solitude.”²⁶ Does “oft” imply that the magic sometimes doesn’t work? The moods may return, the recovery is provisional and has to be made and remade. As the creator of the dejected figure of “The Solitary” (in *The Excursion* Books II and III) Wordsworth was familiar with the unblissful sides of

solitude. He was familiar, too, with the kind of blank unredeemed vision that ends Bishop's poem. Crusoe's knife, which used to "reek of meaning," has become blank:

Now it won't look at me at all.

The living soul has dribbled away. (*P* 186)

In Wordsworth's great "Elegiac Stanzas," he imagines how once he had beheld an idyllic peaceful vision of Peele Castle, "And seen the soul of truth in every part." But after the death of his brother John no longer: "A power is gone, which nothing can restore; / A deep distress hath humanised my Soul."²⁷ Bishop combines Wordsworth's bereft and stoic vision with a remembrance of one of Hopkins's finest maxims: "What you look hard at seems to look hard at you."²⁸ Both Wordsworth and Hopkins offer Bishop examples of the vicissitudes of poetic illumination, its bafflement as well as its arrival.

Bishop does not conceive the Victorian period monolithically. As she was born in 1911, the nineteenth century was perhaps far enough away for its poetry not to be felt as a strongly oppressive influence; modernist poetics were well-established when she began writing. Indeed, Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Victorian poet by whom she was most strongly influenced, was often thought of as a proto-modernist after the first publication of his *Poems* in 1918. Bishop named Hopkins along with Herbert and Baudelaire as one of her three favourite poets (*PPL* 703). His influence on her writing is pervasive. She was also at times influenced by two poetic genres, the dramatic monologue and nonsense poetry, that reached their creative zenith in the Victorian period.

When asked by an interviewer in 1966 what she thought about the dramatic monologue as a form, Bishop replied: “I haven’t given it much thought. Robert Lowell and others have done brilliant things in this form. I suppose it should act as a sort of release. You can say all kinds of things you couldn’t in a lyric. If you have scenery and costumes, you can get away with a lot. I’m writing one right now.”²⁹ She sounds a little guarded, perhaps protective of “the one I’m writing now” – which would probably have been an early version of “Crusoe in England.” But within her reply lies a large claim for what the form can afford: “a sort of release,” saying “all sorts of things you couldn’t in a lyric,” being able to “get away with a lot.” Bishop didn’t write many dramatic monologues, but they include three of her longest poems, “Manuelzinho,” “The Riverman” and “Crusoe in England.” What did the permissiveness of the form allow her to get away with? One answer would be that it released her from what she called her “George-Washington-handicap” of not being able to tell a lie (*WIA* 402).³⁰ The speakers of dramatic monologues are *expected* to stand in a dubious relation to truth, to be unreliable, excessive. “The Riverman” and “Crusoe in England,” in particular, allow Bishop to explore speakers at a distance not just from reliability but from humanity. The creatures in the three prose monologues titled “Rainy Season; Sub-Tropics,” again, are all egotists, reluctant to acknowledge ties to one another. They don’t know they are all gathered under the umbrella of the title that makes them less unique than they each feel. The dramatic monologue is a form that finds comedy or grotesquerie in the problems of the overweening self. As such, it may be a cautionary about excesses of self-attention such as Bishop sometimes associated with English Romanticism.

How far has the speaker of “The Riverman” left the world behind? In a normal dramatic monologue there would be a listener to whom the speaker speaks – the

“silent interlocutor”—for reasons that are integral to the poem. Here there isn’t one, in particular not his wife, but the speaker hasn’t entirely left behind the wish to be heard, looked at, and perhaps thanked.

Godfathers and cousins,
your canoes are over my head;
I hear your voices talking.
[...] I will go to work
to get you health and money.
The Dolphin singled me out;
Luandinha seconded it. (*P* 106-7)

He hears them, but can they hear him? If the poem is a dream of entry to a new magical element, what is the price in terms of distance from human contact? Such questions about communication might occur to a poet drawn to the complexities of surrealism and symbolism; here the monologue gives them a dramatic context. The ending proffers more than one version of his motives: first the altruistic option—“to get you health and money”—but then one that turns on the egoism of being “singled out,” and turns away from the human even; the privacy and fantasy of the water-world comes at a price. As a dramatic monologue testing the limits of an isolated subjectivity, “The Riverman” draws on the heritage of the two great inaugurators of the genre, Browning and Tennyson, perhaps especially Browning’s necromancers and Tennyson’s recluses.

At other points “The Riverman” seems to draw into its life of fantasy two further nineteenth-century poets much admired by Bishop, namely Baudelaire and Lear. When the Riverman says that

... all is sweetness there
in the deep, enchanted silt

we could hear an echo and variation of Baudelaire’s “L’Invitation au Voyage”:³¹

Là, tout n’est qu’ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.³²

The complexity of Baudelaire’s sequence, combining classicism and romance, sexuality and calm, becomes a simpler enchantment for Bishop’s speaker. His recourse to the river is perhaps more childlike as well, akin to Edward Lear’s figures who take leave of the human world for fellowship with other creatures, most often birds and insects, but sometimes fish too. [INSERT “FIG 0.5 EMS JPG” HERE]

There was an Old Person of Ems, who casually fell in the Thames;

And when he was found, they said he was drowned,

That unlucky Old Person of Ems.³³

Despite the words of the verse the Old Person of Ems looks neither unlucky nor drowned in Lear’s drawing. As another riverman he seems to be flourishing in the

company of a support group of variously-shaped fish, having changed his human world for a water-world.

Thanking her *New Yorker* editor Howard Moss for his 1969 book *Writing Against Time: Critical Essays and Reviews*, Bishop noted how much they both loved Edward Lear; she included “Chekhov, Keats, Lear” among “our favorite writers” (*NYr* 308).³⁴ Nonsense writing was important to her, and in particular that of Lear, like her a connoisseur of the “awful but cheerful” (*P* 59). Mildred J. Nash remembered that in Bishop’s bookshelves “Lewis Carroll had two biographies, as did Edward Lear. How she adored that man! She paused to leaf through his *Nonsense Books*, talking of his sad life.”³⁵ She made connections between nineteenth- and twentieth-century nonsensicality; teaching Stevens, for instance, she became “most animated in discussing pieces that bordered on nonsense verse.”³⁶

Many of Bishop’s poems, especially the early ones, have titles suggestive of the nonsensical, for instance “Sleeping on the Ceiling,” “The Man-Moth” and “Pink Dog.” Nonsense for Bishop is often a resource for dreams of felicity, of worlds unbound by the rules of the sensical. In “Insomnia,” for instance, the portal to love is a through the looking-glass “world inverted / where left is always right, / where the shadows are really the body” (*P* 68). Brett Millier suggests that Lewis Carroll is the “truest antecedent” for the mad-hatting deviant world of “Exchanging Hats.”³⁷ When the early poem “Seascape” uses the phrase “beautiful pea-green back-pasture,” we are likely to hear an echo of the “beautiful pea-green boat” in which Edward Lear’s owl and pussycat went to sea.³⁸ Bishop’s back-pasture is part of a heavenly fluid scene.

and the beautiful pea-green back-pasture

where occasionally a fish jumps, like a wild-flower

in an ornamental spray of spray; (*P* 41)

The jumping fish seems an amphibious creature here, as untethered to its home element as the cow that jumps over the moon in the nursery-rhyme. A spray of spray is a phrase at once tautological and nonsensical. Language cooperates here in uniting the floral spray and the sea spray, and the poet in charge of such a language game is acting like Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty, able to make language mean what she wants it to.³⁹ The lighthouse later in "Seascape" takes and gives a contrasting view, in which "heaven is not like this," but for most of the poem it has been.

Gerard Manley Hopkins mattered to Bishop both formatively and abidingly. She admired Hopkins ethically, and championed his idea of the gentleman as "still applicable and very moving" in the context of both of her crucial poetic colleagues, Marianne Moore and Robert Lowell.⁴⁰ In details of prosody, too, Hopkins was a precursor for some of Bishop's more audacious effects. Her 1934 essay follows G.F. Lahey's 1930 book on Hopkins in noting that he "occasionally uses quasi-apocope" (*PPL* 667), a term Lahey uses to describe the elision of a syllable in such enjambments as "does set danc- / Ing blood" and "I wear- / Y of idle a being"⁴¹. Lahey had deprecated such moments (he lists seven) as a tendency to "degenerate into a quasi-apocope,"⁴² but Bishop defends them: "by these difficult devices his poetry comes up from the pages like sudden storms" (*PPL* 667). Such Hopkins metrical audacities as these inform her own poetry, for instance the vertiginous mention in "Arrival at Santos" that Miss Breen's "home, when she is at home is in Glen Fall // s, New York" (*P* 87-8). Hopkins's stressed and strained rhymes, too, are precursors to Bishop's rhyming in such poems as "Exchanging Hats" and "Pink Dog," with its

tercet contriving an excruciating rhyme of “*fantasia*” with “to be a-” and “ever see a” (P 213).

In a 1966 interview Bishop recalls being impressed as a student by Hopkins’s phrase “Fancy, come faster” in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*: “He breaks off and addresses himself [...] the present tense helps to convey this sense of the mind in action.”⁴³ Like Wordsworth and Baudelaire, Hopkins exemplified for Bishop a poet dynamically observing his own process of observation (Baudelaire called such a process “*dédoublement*”).⁴⁴ Moreover, Hopkins’s descriptions dramatise an observer urgently seeking God’s plan and presence in the details of the created world; his intensity is religious. That Bishop once expressed (to Marianne Moore) a reservation about “that emotional *rushing* effect he sometimes produces” (OA 335) points to the ways in which her own poetics characteristically calm Hopkins’s tempo as well as drawing on his example. Her quest for the transcendent is relatively muted. The affinities and contrasts emerge in a comparison of lines from Hopkins’s “Hurrahing in Harvest” and Bishop’s “A Cold Spring” (with its epigraph from Hopkins, “Nothing is so beautiful as spring”). Here is Hopkins:

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies? ⁴⁵

And Bishop:

Now, from the thick grass, the fireflies

begin to rise:
up, then down, then up again:
lit on the ascending flight,
drifting simultaneously to the same height,
—exactly like the bubbles in champagne. (*P* 56)

In both poets “now” registers an alignment of the time in the poem and in the world; both respond to a process of “rising” dynamically registered by prepositions (“Around; up, above” in Hopkins, “up, then down, then up again” in Bishop). Hopkins’s exclamations and question are absorbed into the less demonstrative implications of Bishop’s description. He sees the sensuousness of the world more erotically than Bishop, in phrases at once alluring and troubling (“barbarous”, “wilful-wavier”), and the direction of his poem is religious: “I lift up heart, eyes, / Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour.” Lifting “up” eyes turns into “Down all that glory,” where “down” has become not a preposition but a verb, as if he were downing a pint, but eucharistically. Bishop’s “drifting” is less luxurious than Hopkins’s “meal-drift,” her rhythms gently rise and fall with less of a “rush” than Hopkins’s dense compacted lines, her final champagne simile is celebratory but a little rueful, moving us from the cosmic to the oenophile. The contrast is one of temperaments, periods and methods; but the influence is clear and important.

NOTES

¹ *Conversations with Elizabeth Bishop*, ed. George Monteiro (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1996), citing a 1966 interview with Ashley Brown (20) and a 1978 interview with Alexandra Johnson (98). See also *WIA* 399-400.

² *Conversations*, 20.

³ *Conversations*, 40.

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- ⁴ Brett C. Millier, *Elizabeth Bishop: Life and the Memory of It* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 64; citing a journal entry for 1934.
- ⁵ She writes about *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* in a letter of 12 December 1933 (“Very dry, but there are some pretty good spots”) (*OA* 15); and she cites a passage from the book in her 1934 essay on Hopkins (*Pr* 471).
- ⁶ *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), 128.
- ⁷ *Conversations*, 35.
- ⁸ William Blake, *The Complete Poems*, ed. Alicia Ostriker (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 506; lines 1-4.
- ⁹ Blake, *The Complete Poems*, 507; lines 9-12.
- ¹⁰ For other valuable discussions of Bishop and Romanticism see Michael O’Neill’s *The All-Sustaining Air: Romantic Legacies and Renewals in British, American, and Irish Poetry since 1900* (Oxford University Press, 2007), and Bonnie Costello’s “Bishop and the Poetic Tradition,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Bishop*, ed. Angus Cleghorn and Jonathan Ellis (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 79-96.
- ¹¹ *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works*, ed. Catherine Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 132. Bishop cites and scans these lines in her 1934 essay “Gerard Manley Hopkins: Notes on Timing in His Poetry” (*PPL* 663).
- ¹² *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford Major Authors, 1984), 134, 300, 314, 262; quotations from “Tintern Abbey,” “Ode (There was a time),” “Stepping Westward” and “Resolution and Independence”.
- ¹³ I am indebted here to Christopher Ricks’s discussion of parenthesis in *Eliot and Prejudice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 153.
- ¹⁴ *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 603.
- ¹⁵ *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 609-10.
- ¹⁶ *The Major Works*, 579 and 314; from *The Prelude* (1805), xiii. 49, and “Stepping Westward,” line 13.
- ¹⁷ *The Major Works*, 301.
- ¹⁸ *The Major Works*, 134; “Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey,” lines 106-8.
- ¹⁹ *The Prelude* (1805), xii. 376.
- ²⁰ *The Prelude* (1805), vi. 456.
- ²¹ *The Major Works*, 132; “Tintern Abbey,” lines 16-17.
- ²² *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 205; “Poems on the Naming of Places. IV,” line 78.
- ²³ It is interesting that Bishop does *not* make Wordsworth her model, metrically or otherwise, in her major effort at a ballad, “The Burglar of Babylon” (*P* 110-15).
- ²⁴ *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 303-4.
- ²⁵ See for instance Hazlitt’s essay on *Romeo and Juliet* in his *Characters of Shakespear’s Plays* (1817), and Sara Coleridge’s poem “The Pair that will not meet” in *Collected Poems*, ed. Peter Swaab (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007), 100.
- ²⁶ *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 304.
- ²⁷ *Wordsworth: The Major Works*, 326-8; “Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont,” lines 31, 35-6.
- ²⁸ *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Humphrey House and Graham Storey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 204.
- ²⁹ *Conversations*, 26.
- ³⁰ Lee Edelman’s essay “Elizabeth Bishop’s ‘In the Waiting Room’” shows that there were sometimes limits to Bishop’s stringency with truth-telling; see *The Geography*

of *Gender*, edited by Marilyn May Lombardi (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993).

³¹ Bishop lists Baudelaire as one of her three favourite poets in “Poetry is an Unnatural Act”, along with Herbert and Hopkins. The essay, which is unfinished, includes a note to herself to include “B here,” but unfortunately she didn’t (PPL 703). Baudelaire is cited directly in “The Bight”: “if one were Baudelaire / one could probably hear it turning to marimba music” (P 59).

³² Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Editions de la Pléiade, 2 vols, 1975-6), i. 51.

³³ *A Book of Nonsense* (London: T. McLean, 1846; eighteenth edition, 1866), 100.

³⁴ Moss’s book includes his article “Edward Lear: An Introduction.”

³⁵ *Conversations*, 137.

³⁶ *Conversations*, 145.

³⁷ *Life and the Memory of It*, 279.

³⁸ Edward Lear, *The Complete Verse and Other Nonsense*, ed. Vivien Noakes (London: Penguin, 2001), 238.

³⁹ Compare the reference to Lewis Carroll at the end of “Efforts of Affection” (Pr 140).

⁴⁰ In a letter to Lowell, 21 March 1972 (WIA 708), and in relation to Moore in “Efforts of Affection” (PPL 498-9).

⁴¹ *Hopkins: The Major Works*, 167, 166.

⁴² G.F. Lahey, S.J., *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (New York: Haskell House, 1969; first published 1930), 98.

⁴³ *Conversations*, 26.

⁴⁴ In his essay “De l’essence du rire” Baudelaire commends “la force de se dédoubler rapidement et d’assister comme spectateur désintéressé aux phénomènes de son *moi*.” (*Oeuvres complètes*, ii. 532); “the power of getting outside himself quickly and watching, as a disinterested spectator, the phenomenon of his ego”, in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, translated by P.E. Charvet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 148.

⁴⁵ *Hopkins: The Major Works*, 134.