

San José State University
English Department
English 193, Literature of Self Reflection. Spring 2013

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Office Hours:	Monday: 3-3:45; Wednesday: 12:15-1:15; 3:30-4
Class Days/Time:	M/W 1:30-2:45
Classroom:	Clark 231

Course Description/goals

The first aim of this course is reflective: You will review your years as an English major, rereading essays you've written, reflecting on your development as a writer and a reader, considering the reasons that you chose to be an English major. A portfolio will be assembled that contains papers from your courses in literature and writing, collected and organized in a way that seems appropriate to you, based on your growth as a writer. Early in the semester, each student will have a conference with me about your portfolio, which will include a reflective essay on your writing (see assignment below, Essay #1).

Each student will also reflect on the ways in which reading and class discussions have enriched his or her appreciation of literature. As a class, we will reflect on reasons why reading matters. In addition, we will review the department's list of Student Learning Goals.

The second aim of this course is literary: The class will consider a broad theme, literature and ethics: beliefs, codes, errors. Of course, if we read only for moral instruction, reading would become onerous. We read for many reasons: to delight, appreciate, escape, instruct, challenge. In this class we will consider different texts, their cultural contexts and the codes of conduct they explore—recognizing that ethical codes do not remain static, are not universal, but shift and change across time.

The third aim of the class is creative: You will write weekly reading responses, both personal and literary reflections/analyses.

The fourth aim of this class is “emergence”: You will soon graduate, and the future may be uncertain, may seem at once terrifying and thrilling. We will discuss possibilities: jobs, graduate school, careers, professional writing, travel, relocation. Furthermore, reading beyond the classroom is also a significant part of this class. Book groups serve as models for post-graduation reading groups.

Student Learning Objectives [SLO]

In the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. **read** closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, and/or rhetoric;
2. **show familiarity** with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American and World Literature;
3. **write** clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. **develop and carry out** research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. **articulate** the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Required Texts/Readings

J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

Ernest Hemingway *The Sun Also Rises*

Aldo Leopold, *Sand Country Almanac*

Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Anne Fadiman, *At Large and At Small*

Recommended reading: *I'm an English Major—Now What?* Tim Lemire

Texts for group work, 3-5 in each group (copies from Amazon or Powells Books, Portland).

Groups determined by January 30.

- a. Culpability: Lief Eger, *Peace Like a River*; Louise Erdrich, *The Round House*.
- b. Culpability: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*; T.C. Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain*
- a. Culpability: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*; Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*
- b. The city: Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*; Nicole Krauss, *The History of Love*
- c. Finding self: Richard Ford, *Canada*; Tobias Wolfe, *This Boy's Life*
- d. Memory and reflection: Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*; Anthony Doerr, *Memory Wall*
- e. Humanity and the environment: Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*; James Galvin, *The Meadow*
- f. Violence: Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*; Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got his Gun*
- g. Individual and community: Bryce Courtenay, *The Power of One*; Kent Haruf, *Plainsong*
- h. Medical ethics: Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*; Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let me Go*
- i. Medical ethics: Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches you and You Fall Down*; Chris Bohjalian, *Midwives*

Classroom Protocol

Please come to each class prepared; read the assignment for each day carefully and, on Wednesday at 1:30, have your reading response ready to turn in. Please hand in hard copies of all essays; I do not accept online submissions unless I give a student specific permission to hand in an essay online. Late

essays (1,2, 3 below) will receive lower grades; failure to attend class will result in lower participation grades as well. Please do not bring computers to class (unless you are consulting online texts for the class)—this is a seminar, and attentive participation is expected of all.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/) web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Assignments and grading policy

I. Weekly responses, 25%. Each student will write weekly reading responses due at the beginning of Wednesday's class; entries will be returned the following Monday. In 350 words, 1 ½ pages) either relate the week's reading to your own experience **or** write a focused analytical piece, considering a character, image, theme or a theoretical perspective on the reading. Explore ethical themes in the books, but select specific passages to consider.

Note that these are two different activities: roughly half of your writing responses should be personal; the other half analytical and/or theoretical. Please remember that you cannot possibly discuss broad issues in 2 pages without focusing on a particular scene or character that represents the issue you feel is significant.

When writing your personal entries, please make the connection between your experience and the reading in personal entries by noting specific sections of the text that you found significant to your experience. **In the upper right corner of each paper, after your name and the date, please identify each entry as personal, analytical, theoretical.**

Every reading response, whether personal, analytical, or theoretical, must demonstrate active engagement in the text and in ideas generated by that text. Weekly assignments will be graded on a 1-10 scale, based on the following:

9-10: A superior piece of writing. It is clearly focused, the language is sharp, and the writing is free of grammatical errors. The essay has originality and style, is elegant, thoughtful and persuasive, topic focused

7-8: A good piece of writing, solid and clear. But it may lack the innovation and sharpness of the top category. The point is clear but could be supported with additional details. There may be minor spelling, typographic, and/or grammatical errors. But it is interesting enough to hold a reader's attention.

5-6: This is an average response, acceptable senior-level work. It meets the requirements of the assignment, but it does not go beyond. The point may be too broad or unsupported. Examples may be general rather than specific. There may be grammatical errors. The central idea may not be fresh. The writing may be wordy and vague.

3-4: These responses are short, general, and lacking in examples. There may be serious grammatical errors.

1-2: Unacceptable work: Lacks insight and clarity.

By the end of the semester, each student will have **at least 10 entries placed in the portfolio (which you will bring to the final exam)**.

No late responses accepted, no responses from those not in class.

II. 3 Essays:

Essay #1: Self-reflective essay due when you have the conference with me: “What kind of writer am I? What are my strengths and weaknesses?” 15%.

Response to collecting and organizing your papers and then reflecting on your strengths and weaknesses as a writer: Each student will write a **four to five page essay** that focuses on your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, drawing from the papers you have written as an English major to support your points (please consider *only* papers written for your major, in both lower division and upper division classes). In short, the papers you examine and organize for your portfolio will be your “evidence” and the essay you write will reflect on what those papers tell you about your own writing: what are your strongest characteristics as a writer? What are your challenges? How confident do you feel in grammar? Are your sentences varied? Paragraphs coherent? Evidence strong? Have you developed a personal voice?

Bring this essay with you when you have your portfolio conference (first three weeks of the semester).

Essay #2: Reconsidering your prose/new directions in prose, 25%. During each student’s conference about the portfolio and essay #1, the following options will be discussed:

a. Substantial revision of one paper. For this option, the student will read **at least three** additional scholarly essays on the text, the author, or the theoretical approach and revise with three specific goals in mind. Those goals will be articulated on a cover sheet of the paper. Students will hand in both the original essay and the revised essay.

b. Writing a “Familiar Essay” modeled on Anne Fadiman’s essays. Select a topic that is important to you—it can be a hobby, an academic interest, an author, a summer job—almost anything, as Fadiman’s book suggests. This essay is in part personal and in part factual, based on research. Each “familiar essay” will quote from **at least 4 solid and useful sources** and list at least 5 works in the bibliography.

The final grade will consider of the following:

a. Originality of idea: Due February 11 (but can be narrowed in process of research)

- b. Annotated bibliography of 3 solid sources (+ 2 others for final paper, due with paper): Due March 6.**
- c. Thesis statement + first paragraph: due March 18.**
- d. Rough draft + Works Cited, 5 sources in MLA format: due April 8. In-class workshop.**
- e. Final essay, due April 15. Please turn in a,b,c, d as well, stapled to final essay. No essays accepted without all previous work attached.**

Essay #3 on bookgroups (+ oral presentation): 25%.

Working in groups of 4-5, you will select a pair of books from the additional reading list. After reading groups are determined, each group will spend 15 minutes on January 30 exchanging email addresses, work schedules, and preference of where to meet.

Group organization and group dynamics: One person will serve as secretary, keeping notes; one as president, organizing presentation and meetings; the other members of the group will circulate as “discussion leader” for each session. When you turn in your group list, please note these “officers.” I have scheduled bookgroup meetings during several class periods; this semester I will not give you questions for groups, but ask that each member of the group come up with two questions he/she wants to discuss for each meeting. You need not write down your responses to the questions—simply discuss them during the meeting--but I would like the group to take 5 minutes at the end of each meeting to write two sentences of what went best in the meeting: best question, best part of book, best passage. Be specific. Only two sentences.

Each group will read two books over the course of the semester. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate how book groups can enrich even the busiest lives.

On the day of your presentation, each student will hand in a **four to five page essay** which will cover the following:

Part I: Central ethical issues that were most intriguing to you in each book. You may compare treatments in each text or show how similar/different.

Part II: Relate an ethical dilemma in at least one of the books to another book read in class.

Part III: Is biographical/scholarly research helpful? Important? What did you use to prepare your presentation?

Part IV: What was best about your group and/or the books you read? What was the greatest challenge for you or your group?

Your grade for this assignment will be based on the following, each receiving equal weight:

- a.** Quality of the team’s group work (questions generated; 2 sentence summaries)
- b.** Oral presentation based on professor and peer reviews (ie. voice projection, enthusiasm for material, original ideas generated, integrated research, each participant discussing issues in both books)
- c.** Originality of the essay: clarity, specificity, lucid examples, etc.

III. Other: Class participation, resume workshop/final, short and creative final exam: 10%

This is an important part of your grade, and I will determine the final piece in the following way, on a 7 point scale:

6-7 points: Someone who has been a reliable and constant positive force in class, who has not missed classes, and who turns in a carefully revised resume and writes a careful and thoughtful and specific exam.

5-6 points: Someone who has been a reliable and constant positive force in class but may have missed one or two classes. Resume is good, exam is good but could be more specific and thoughtful.

3-4 points: A mostly positive force in class but sometimes unprepared. Someone who has missed a few classes. Resume needs more work and exam is brief and/or vague.

1-2 points: Someone who has not contributed because of poor attendance and poor participation and poor preparedness. Resume may be weak, and exam is very general.

Grading: The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU *Catalog* (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A=excellent; B=above average; C=average; D=below average; F=failure. In this course, as in all English Department courses, I will comment on and grade the quality of writing (grammar, organization, clarity, specificity, etc.) as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University’s Academic Integrity policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Schedule

PART I: The Humanities: Reading/Writing

January 23: Introduction: “Secret Ingredient for Success”

Schedule conferences, held from January 30 to February 7. **Bring to your scheduled conference:**

- portfolio of essays written for literature classes at SJSU and other universities, with table of contents and 1 paragraph explanation of arrangement. Bring all essays that you have available.
- Essay #1, a four page reflective essay about your strengths and weaknesses as a writer.
- Ideas about rewriting/composing a long essay.

January 28: Reflecting on literary studies: Fadiman: “Preface” and “Procrustes and the Culture Wars,” 75-94. [SLG: 1,2,5]

January 30: Fadiman, “The Unfuzzy Lamb”; Charles Lamb; “Witches and Other Night Fears” and “A Dissertation on Roast Pig” <http://www.uclouisiana.edu/~jer6616/>

Bookgroups determined by this date; 15 minutes for in-class meeting. [SLG: 1,2,3,4,5]

February 4: Fadiman, “Coleridge the Runaway” “Ice Cream” “Night Owl.” [SLG 1,2,3]

February 6: Fadiman, “Mail” “A Piece of Cotton.” [SLG 1,2,3].

Note: At the end of this week, all students will have had conferences on their portfolios, turned in Essay #1, and have a clear idea of what their project for Essay #2 will be.

February 11: For Essay #2: Three sentence statement of idea for essay. Fadiman, “Coffee” and “Underwater.” Review the English Department’s Student Learning Goals, above, and select one; write a single paragraph reflection on why this goal is the most important one to you.

February 13: Bookgroups meet, 1:30-2:00. By this date, you should have read at least 1/4 of the first book
2:00-2:45: Writing workshop.

PART II: Reading

February 18: Robert Frost: “Design”; “Home Burial”; Handout: from *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on love and life from Dear Sugar*.

February 20: Hemingway, *SAR*, Ch 1-9. [SLG 1,2,3]

February 25: Hemingway, *SAR*, Ch 10-18. [SLG 1,5]

February 27: Hemingway, *SAR*, complete. [SLG 1,5]
[SLG 1,5]

March 4: Bookgroup meeting, 1:30-2:00: Finish 1/2 of first book by this point. Ideas/2-sentence group summary collected. [SLG 1,5]. **Email PDF:** Gary Snyder, “The Place, the Region, and the Commons” “Tragedy of the Commons” [SLG 1,5]

March 6: For Essay #2: Annotated bibliography. Leopold, January-March; Fadiman, “Collecting Nature.” [SLG 1.5]

March 11: Leopold, April-July.

March 13: Leopold, complete.

March 18: For Essay #2, Thesis +first paragraph; McEwan. [SLG 1,2,5]

March 20: McEwan. [SLG 1, 2,5]

April 3: Bookgroup meeting, 1:30-2:00: Finish first book by this meeting. Ideas/2-sentence summary collected. [SLG 1,3,5]. McEwan, complete. [SLG 1,2,5]

April 8: Rough draft of Essay #2. In-class workshop. [SLG 1,2,5];

April 10: Coetzee, Ch. 1-6 [SLG 5]

April 15: Coetzee, Ch. 7-14 [SLG 5]

April 17: Essay # 2, final draft due. Coetzee, complete.

April 22: Bookgroup meeting, 1:30-2:15. Discuss part of book 2. Ideas/2-sentence summary collected. [SLG 1,3, 5]

April 24: Workshop on resumes. Handout: “Graduates’ First Job: Marketing Themselves.”

April 29: Workshop on interviews. <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/07/02/how-to-make-optimism-work-for-you-2/>

May 1: Bookgroup meeting, 1:30-2:15. Discuss book 2 and presentation. Ideas/2-sentence summary collected. Bechdel, Ch. 1-4 [SLG 1,2,5]

May 8: Bechdel, Complete. Bookgroup presentations + Essay #3 (1 or 2 groups).

May 10: Bookgroup presentations + Essay #3 (up to 3 groups).

May 13: Bookgroup presentations + Essay #3 (up to 3 groups).

May 21: 12:15, Final exam.

Secret Ingredient for Success

By CAMILLE SWEENEY and JOSH GOSFIELD

WHAT does self-awareness have to do with a restaurant empire? A tennis championship? Or a rock star's dream? David Chang's experience is instructive.

Mr. Chang is an internationally renowned, award-winning Korean-American chef, restaurateur and owner of the Momofuku restaurant group with eight restaurants from Toronto to Sydney, and other thriving enterprises, including bakeries and bars, a PBS TV show, guest spots on HBO's "Treme" and a foodie magazine, Lucky Peach. He says he worked himself to the bone to realize his dream — to own a humble noodle bar.

He spent years cooking in some of New York City's best restaurants, apprenticed in different noodle shops in Japan and then, finally, worked 18-hour days in his tiny restaurant, Momofuku Noodle Bar.

Mr. Chang could barely pay himself a salary. He had trouble keeping staff. And he was miserably stressed.

He recalls a low moment when he went with his staff on a night off to eat burgers at a restaurant that was everything his wasn't — packed, critically acclaimed and financially successful. He could cook better than they did, he thought, so why was his restaurant failing? "I couldn't figure out what the hell we were doing wrong," he told us.

Mr. Chang could have blamed someone else for his troubles, or worked harder (though available evidence suggests that might not have been possible) or he could have made minor tweaks to the menu. Instead he looked inward and subjected himself to brutal self-assessment.

Was the humble noodle bar of his dreams economically viable? Sure, a traditional noodle dish had its charm but wouldn't work as the mainstay of a restaurant if he hoped to pay his bills.

Mr. Chang changed course. Rather than worry about what a noodle bar should serve, he and his cooks stalked the produce at the greenmarket for inspiration. Then they went back to the kitchen and cooked as if it was their last meal, crowding the menu with wild combinations of dishes they'd want to eat — tripe and sweetbreads, headcheese and flavor-packed culinary mashups like a Korean-style burrito. What happened next Mr. Chang still considers "kind of ridiculous" — the crowds came, rave reviews piled up, awards followed and unimaginable opportunities presented themselves.

During the 1970s, Chris Argyris, a business theorist at Harvard Business School (and now, at 89, a professor emeritus) began to research what happens to organizations and people, like Mr. Chang, when they find obstacles in their paths. Professor Argyris called the most common response single loop learning — an insular mental process in which we consider possible external or technical reasons for obstacles.

LESS common but vastly more effective is the cognitive approach that Professor Argyris called double-loop learning. In this mode we — like Mr. Chang — question every aspect of our approach, including our methodology, biases and deeply held assumptions. This more psychologically nuanced self-examination requires that we honestly challenge our beliefs and summon the courage to act on that information, which may lead to fresh ways of thinking about our lives and our goals.

In interviews we did with high achievers for a book, we expected to hear that talent, persistence, dedication and luck played crucial roles in their success. Surprisingly, however, self-awareness played an equally strong role.

The successful people we spoke with — in business, entertainment, sports and the arts — all had similar responses when faced with obstacles: they subjected themselves to fairly merciless self-examination that prompted reinvention of their goals and the methods by which they endeavored to achieve them.

The tennis champion Martina Navratilova, for example, told us that after a galling loss to Chris Evert in 1981, she questioned her assumption that she could get by on talent and instinct alone. She began a long exploration of every aspect of her game. She adopted a rigorous cross-training practice (common today but essentially unheard of at the time), revamped her diet and her mental and tactical game and ultimately transformed herself into the most successful women's tennis player of her era.

The indie rock band OK Go described how it once operated under the business model of the 20th-century rock band. But when industry record sales collapsed and the band members found themselves creatively hamstrung by their recording company, they questioned their tactics. Rather than depend on their label, they made wildly unconventional music videos, which went viral, and collaborative art projects with companies like Google, State Farm and Range Rover, which financed future creative endeavors. The band now releases albums on its own label.

No one's idea of a good time is to take a brutal assessment of their animating assumptions and to acknowledge that those may have contributed to their failure. It's easy to find pat ways to explain why the world has not adequately rewarded our efforts. But what we learned from conversation with high achievers is that challenging our assumptions, objectives, at times even our goals, may sometimes push us further than we thought possible. Ask David Chang, who

never imagined that sweetbreads and duck sausage rice cakes with kohlrabi and mint would find their way beside his humble noodle dishes — and make him a star. Camille Sweeney and Josh Gosfield are the authors of the forthcoming book “The Art of Doing: How Superachievers Do What They Do and How They Do It So Well.”

HOME BURIAL

He saw her from the bottom of the stairs
 Before she saw him. She was starting down,
 Looking back over her shoulder at some fear.
 She took a doubtful step and then undid it
 To raise herself and look again. He spoke
 Advancing toward her: "What is it you see
 From up there always? -- for I want to know."
 She turned and sank upon her skirts at that,
 And her face changed from terrified to dull.
 He said to gain time: "What is it you see?"
 Mounting until she cowered under him.
 "I will find out now -- you must tell me, dear."
 She, in her place, refused him any help,
 With the least stiffening of her neck and silence.
 She let him look, sure that he wouldn't see,
 Blind creature; and a while he didn't see.
 But at last he murmured, "Oh" and again, "Oh."

"What is it -- what?" she said.
 "Just that I see."
 "You don't," she challenged. "Tell me what it is."

"The wonder is I didn't see at once.
 I never noticed it from here before.
 I must be wonted to it -- that's the reason.
 The little graveyard where my people are!
 So small the window frames the whole of it.
 Not so much larger than a bedroom, is it?
 There are three stones of slate and one of marble,
 Broad-shouldered little slabs there in the sunlight
 On the sidehill. We haven't to mind those.
 But I understand: it is not the stones,
 But the child's mound ----"

"Don't, don't, don't,
 don't," she cried.

She withdrew, shrinking from beneath his arm
 That rested on the banister, and slid downstairs;
 And turned on him with such a daunting look,
 He said twice over before he knew himself:
 "Can't a man speak of his own child he's lost?"

"Not you! -- Oh, where's my hat? Oh, I don't need it!
I must get out of here. I must get air.--
I don't know rightly whether any man can."

"Amy! Don't go to someone else this time.
Listen to me. I won't come down the stairs."
He sat and fixed his chin between his fists.
"There's something I should like to ask you, dear."

"You don't know how to ask it."
"Help me, then."

Her fingers moved the latch for all reply.

"My words are nearly always an offense.
I don't know how to speak of anything
So as to please you. But I might be taught,
I should suppose. I can't say I see how.
A man must partly give up being a man
With womenfolk. We could have some arrangement
By which I'd bind myself to keep hands off
Anything special you're a-mind to name.
Though I don't like such things 'twixt those that love.
Two that don't love can't live together without them.
But two that do can't live together with them."
She moved the latch a little. "Don't -- don't go.
Don't carry it to someone else this time.
Tell me about it if it's something human.
Let me into your grief. I'm not so much
Unlike other folks as your standing there
Apart would make me out. Give me my chance.
I do think, though, you overdo it a little.
What was it brought you up to think it the thing
To take your mother-loss of a first child
So inconsolably -- in the face of love.
You'd think his memory might be satisfied ----"

"There you go sneering now!"

"I'm not, I'm not!
You make me angry. I'll come down to you.
God, what a woman! And it's come to this,
A man can't speak of his own child that's dead."

"You can't because you don't know how to speak.
If you had any feelings, you that dug
With your own hand -- how could you? -- his little grave;
I saw you from that very window there,

Making the gravel leap and leap in air,
 Leap up, like that, like that, and land so lightly
 And roll back down the mound beside the hole.
 I thought, Who is that man? I didn't know you.
 And I crept down the stairs and up the stairs
 To look again, and still your spade kept lifting.
 Then you came in. I heard your rumbling voice
 Out in the kitchen, and I don't know why,
 But I went near to see with my own eyes.
 You could sit there with the stains on your shoes
 Of the fresh earth from your own baby's grave
 And talk about your everyday concerns.
 You had stood the spade up against the wall
 Outside there in the entry, for I saw it."

"I shall laugh the worst laugh I ever laughed.
 I'm cursed. God, if I don't believe I'm cursed."

"I can repeat the very words you were saying:
 'Three foggy mornings and one rainy day
 Will rot the best birch fence a man can build.'
 Think of it, talk like that at such a time!
 What had how long it takes a birch to rot
 To do with what was in the darkened parlour?
 You couldn't care! The nearest friends can go
 With anyone to death, comes so far short
 They might as well not try to go at all.
 No, from the time when one is sick to death,
 One is alone, and he dies more alone.
 Friends make pretense of following to the grave,
 But before one is in it, their minds are turned
 And making the best of their way back to life
 And living people, and things they understand.
 But the world's evil. I won't have grief so
 If I can change it. Oh, I won't, I won't!"

"There, you have said it all and you feel better.
 You won't go now. You're crying. Close the door.
 The heart's gone out of it: why keep it up?
 Amy! There's someone coming down the road!"

"You -- oh, you think the talk is all. I must go --
 Somewhere out of this house. How can I make you ----"

"If -- you -- do!" She was opening the door wider.
 "Where do you mean to go? First tell me that.
 I'll follow and bring you back by force. I will! --"