Verglas: Narrative Technique in Anne Carson's "The Glass Essay"

Ian Rae
University of Western Ontario

Anne carson published *Glass, Irony, and God* in 1995, and although the collection was not showered with prizes like some of her later books its opening poem, "The Glass Essay," has come to define Carson's narrative technique. The place of "The Glass Essay" in the Canadian canon seems secure, having been republished in such standard anthologies as Gary Geddes's *15 Canadian Poets X 3* (2001) and Sharon Thesen's *The New Long Poem Anthology* (2001). The poem's international reputation is also growing, having been singled out for praise by the American classicist Guy Davenport in his introduction to *Glass, Irony, and God* (ix), as well as opening an Anglo-American collection of women's writing, *Wild Workshop* (1997). The "Hero" section of the "The Glass Essay" has even made its way into the 2006 version of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2864–67). Yet "Carson's genre-averse approach to writing" creates a good deal of confusion for critics because it "mixes poetry with essay, literary criticism, and other forms of prose, and her style is at once quirky, inventive, and erudite" (Kuiper). Many critics worry that her writing "fails as poetry, simply because it shows either crashing inability or an unbecoming contempt for the medium" (2), as Richard Potts says of Carson's *The Beauty of the Husband* (2001). Several Canadian critics share Potts's objections (Solway,

ESC 37.3–4 (September/December 2011): 163–186

Ian Rae is Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Languages at King's University College at Western University, as well as Coordinator of its Canadian Studies program. He is the author of *From Cohen to Carson: The Poet's Novel in Canada* (2008) and editor of *George Bowering: Bridges to Elsewhere* (2010). Along with co-investigator Sandra Smeltzer, he holds a SSHRC Insight Development Grant for their *Mapping Stratford Culture* project.

Heer) and compound them by wondering how to situate Carson's poetry within the context of Canadian literature when her writing features few explicitly Canadian settings, characters, or homages to Canadian artists. I addressed some of these concerns in *From Cohen to Carson: The Poet's Novel in Canada* (2008) by demonstrating how Carson's *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse* (1998) might be situated within a Canadian tradition of poet-novelists, whereas American critics have countered accusations of "chopped prose" in Carson's writing by positioning it as the exemplary case of a hybrid and increasingly prominent genre, the "lyric essay" (D'Agata and Tall; see also Carson, "Woman" 32). In this article, I will explicate Carson's narrative technique in her signature poem by demonstrating how Carson employs the logic of the lyric essay to produce an extended, bilingual pun on the multiple senses of the English "glass" (transparent material, magnifying lens, mirror) and the French *glace* (ice, mirror).[1] Furthermore, I will measure Carson's achievement of combining the paratactic qualities of the modernist lyric (in which the poem leaps from one topic to another without transitional matter) with the hypotactic logic of the essay (in which the essay develops an argument using classical techniques of rhetorical persuasion) by reading "The Glass Essay" through a distinctly Canadian compound term, *verglas*, which can be translated literally from the French as "glass-ice" and is akin to the English terms "silver thaw" and "black ice."

However, it is easier to begin the analysis of Carson's bilingual puns by demonstrating how the other half of Carson's title plays on the differing senses of the English essay and the French *essai*. Critics frequently observe that Carson's poems use the term in the French sense: "An essay, etymologically, is an 'attempt,' a 'test' or 'trial' " (Stanton 36). John D'Agata pursues this line of thinking in an interview with Carson, and he attempts to situate her essays between the autobiographical explorations of Montaigne and the public concerns of Cicero (Carson, "Talk" 20). Although many critics align Carson's writing with the "open-ended" musings of Montaigne (Carson, "Gifts" 17), in the D'Agata interview Carson prefers to think of herself as an heir to Cicero, who maintains an urbane interest in rhetorical form, hypotaxis (hence her frequent use of a scholarly introduction to frame her narrative poems), and what Carson calls, in nearly every interview, "the facts." Yet Carson's work clearly moves between these two poles, counterbalancing raw confessional verse with academic enquiry into cases analogous to the speaker's emotional state, which gives the speaker a

1 This argument presumes that Carson is familiar with the French word *glace*. Carson has a reading knowledge of French and cites French texts in the original language in both her criticism and poetry, from her dissertation onwards.

better perspective on his or her own condition. Indeed, Carson entrenches her connection to Cicero by telling D'Agata, "when I'm writing, usually I mush around first with the form, and if I don't get it in a few days then I don't try to write the thing because I can't begin without a form" (22). But Carson also cites Montaigne three times in *Eros the Bittersweet* (86, 97, 107), her 1986 treatise on desire in ancient Greek writing that lays the groundwork for much of Carson's poetic practice (Jennings). Likewise, she begins her 2000 collection *Men in the Off Hours* with a citation from John Florio's 1603 translation of Montaigne's essay "Of Vanity," in which Montaigne justifies his digressive narrative style in this genre-blurring manner: "I love a poetical kinde of a march, by friskes, skips and jumps" (*Men* np, Montaigne 244). Several reviewers see this homage to Montaigne's eclectic mixture of anecdote and allusion, confession and classical quotation, erotic shock and scholarly exegesis as a key to interpreting Carson's narrative technique (Felts, Higgins), although they fail to recognize that Carson misattributes her epigraph to Montaigne's "Essay on Some Verses of Virgil" (np).[2] Similarly, Paula Melton begins her review "Essays at Anne Carson" by emphasizing the non-linear qualities of Carson's narrative technique: "'Essay' in the poem 'The Glass Essay' designates not autobiography but effort: 'It pains me to record this, // I am not a melodramatic person' (9). 'Glass' describes not clarity but circuitousness" (Melton 179). Yet, when I address Carson's development of the glass motif below, I will argue that the clarity of Carson's work is enhanced, not obscured, by this circuitousness because each variation of the glass motif is like a lens magnifying the significance of the preceding and succeeding variations.

Guy Davenport shares Carson's professional bias for classical models of rhetoric, but his understanding of the classical tradition allows for oscillation between emotion and analysis:

> [Carson] writes philosophy and critical essays that are as beautiful and charming as good poetry; it is not surprising that her poems are philosophical—in the old sense, when from Herakleitos (if his fragments are from a poem) to Lucretius, and even longer (Bernardus, Dante, Cavalcanti), poetry was a way to write philosophy. When Sokrates took Sappho's desire for the young and fused it with the process of learning, sublimating it and disciplining it with stoic restraint, he gave the

2 This misattribution seems to be a scholarly joke since the sentence preceding the Montaigne citation states, in the original, that "the titles of my chapters, embrace not always the matter" (Montaigne 244).

> genius of the West a philosophical idea that lasted almost two thousand years. (x)

Likewise, "The Glass Essay" is at once a poem that interprets the speaker's experience of desire through the glass motif and an attempt to create a broader interpretative context, one capable of mirroring the speaker's mental and emotional states, out of fragments of biography, theology, and literary analysis. Furthermore, Carson's brand of essay reflects *on* its own narrative construction, as she says of her subtitle for *The Beauty of the Husband: A Fictional Essay in 29 Tangos*, "calling it an essay means that it's not just a story but a reflection on that story" ("Beauty" 33). Carson's method thereby shatters and then reconstitutes the Enlightenment understanding of the essay as an analytical prose medium that strives for objectivity.

In a special issue of the *Seneca Review* (Fall 1997), editor Deborah Tall and associate editor John D'Agata coin the term "lyric essay" to describe this reconstituted medium: "The lyric essay partakes of the poem in its density and shapeliness, its distillation of ideas and musicality of language. It partakes of the essay in its weight, in its overt desire to engage with facts, melding its allegiance to the actual with its passion for imaginative form" (7). The editors announce that they will henceforth dedicate portions of the *Seneca Review* to publishing lyric essays. A few issues later, D'Agata claims that elements of the lyric essay can be traced back to the aphorisms of ancient Sumer ("Finding" 8), but the fact that the editorial relaunch issue is framed by a Carson long poem and essay suggests that the editors had her writing in mind when they fashioned their definition of the lyric essay. Thus the editors also conclude their preface by quoting Carson.

In the *Boston Review* three years later, D'Agata uses a long review of Carson's *Men in the Off Hours* as an opportunity to summarize the critical discussion of Carson's lyric essays. D'Agata begins by noting the definition of "prose" by "Samuel Johnson, in the first English dictionary[:] a 'plain, simple, matter-of-fact speech, and hence a dull or commonplace expression, quality, spirit, etc.... It is the opposite of Poetry'" (np). D'Agata then summarizes critical objections to Carson's "versified prosiness" while wondering whether or not Carson's generic hybrids reflect a market-driven desire to move from the tiny audience for essays to the slightly larger one for poetry. Indeed, D'Agata presents compelling evidence for this suspicion: "'Kinds of Water' and 'Short Talks,' two examples of Carson's earliest and best work, appeared in the *Best American Essays* anthologies, of 1988 and 1992 respectively. Yet, interestingly, when the original publishers of these two essays were credited in *Plainwater*'s acknowledgements, someone in error, or with a knack for marketing, changed the *Best American*

Essays citation to *Best American Poetry*" (np). However, digging deeper into the classical context of these genre issues, D'Agata argues that Carson exploits some ancient ambiguities in the now conventional opposition of poetry and prose:

> The word *prose* came into English use by way of the Latin *prosus*, the Vulgate's paired-down simplification of *prorsus*, itself the contracted form of *proversus*, "to move forward," as in Cicero's *prosa oratio*, "speech going straight ahead without turns." Notice, however, that the Latin root of *prose* has in it the word *versus*, which comes from the Greek *verso*, the little mechanism on a plow that allows a farmer to manually turn a furrow—or, for our purposes, a "line." In Latin, *verso* became *versus* and its verb form *vertere*, meaning "to turn"—hence the English *vertex*, *vertigo*, and even the word *conversant*, "one capable of spinning an interesting tale." *Verse*, in other words, is etymologically both the root of *prose* as well as its direct opposite in meaning. No wonder this scholar of classical texts is blurring genre distinctions. (np)

Taking into consideration Carson's training in classical philology, D'Agata concludes that *Men in the Off Hours* is "a book, in the end, not of poetry per se, but of translation—between languages, between identities, and ultimately between genres." I will now augment D'Agata's points about translation between languages, identities, and genres by showing how Carson combines these kinds of translation with bilingual word play in "The Glass Essay."

The distillation of ideas that D'Agata and Tall say characterizes the lyric essay, and the weaving of narrative strands that Davenport praises in "The Glass Essay" (ix), can be perceived at the lexical level of Carson's long poems in their semantic conflations. Consider her treatment of glass, which is a recurring metaphor for fragility in her writing. In *Men in the Off Hours*, one encounters metaphors such as: "Humankind is glass" (46) or "All this mental glass" (73). Glass also symbolizes a separation of physical spheres that frustrates the speaker by maintaining an illusion of continuity, as with the window-like partition in Carson's "The Truth About God" (39–40). In "The Glass Essay," Carson develops this metaphoric material into an overarching conceit that connects the disparate elements of the poem. Yet Carson's use of conceits is very different from those popularized by the metaphysical poets, in particular John Donne. Whereas Donne's conceits draw unlike entities into a convergent state of synonymy through brilliant but outrageous comparisons, Carson clusters related entities

together and explores their similarities without ever finally unifying or arresting them. Instead, these affinities serve as means for the author to change narrative foci, defer conclusions, explore ideas from different angles, negate initial hypotheses, and develop new ones. The remainder of this essay will demonstrate that through puns, echoes, and portmanteaux, as well as through recurring symbols and characterizations, Carson brings key words, characters, and concepts together for the purpose of clarifying their subtle but important differences.

These affinities serve as means for the author to change narrative foci, defer conclusions, explore ideas from different angles, negate initial hypotheses, and develop new ones.

The first instance of a "glass" within the body of Carson's long poem is an indirect reference, invoked through the introductory portrait of the speaker, who wakes up from a troubled sleep to stare into her bathroom mirror. The three stanzas of the poem's first section, which is titled simply "I," employ mostly short, demonstrative statements of fact in the first-person voice. With the exception of a metaphoric comparison of night to a dripping tap, these details are almost too blandly stated to be called poetry. Rather, the first section introduces the details (the departure of her lover Law, the date of his departure in relation to the cycle of seasons, the water imagery of the speaker washing away her tears) which will become the poem once they have been patterned according to the triadic configurations that Carson replicates in everything from her three-line stanzas in "The Glass Essay" to her theorization of erotic desire and narrative triangulation in *Eros the Bittersweet.* Like the hexagonal crystal that forms around a particle of dust to become a snowflake, Carson's triads grow through symmetrical accretions around innocuous details until they take on a unique shape.

These triads begin to take shape in the second section, "She." The third-person pronoun initially designates the speaker's mother, whom the speaker ("I") travels north to visit. But "She" also introduces the speaker's favourite author, Emily Brontë, whose collected works the speaker begins reading on the train. The speaker will dialogue with these two women in interpersonal and literary fashions over the course of the poem, such that the second section clarifies the second-person dynamics of the poem. Hence this section concludes with a second-person address that links "meat" as an idealized erotic and religious substance (the sacrificial body) to "meet" as a more commonplace human encounter: "What meat is it, Emily, we need?" (2). The pun is implied by the section's theme of visitation.

The third section, appropriately titled "Three," makes the triangular circuit between the speaker, her mother, and Brontë explicit in its opening line, which momentarily employs the third-person voice and perspective: "Three silent women at the kitchen table" (2). Carson heightens the fragile

tension between these women (the speaker is afraid of turning into her mother or Brontë) by introducing the first direct reference to glass. As the mother and daughter attempt some halting small talk, the speaker thinks: "It is as if we have all been lowered into an atmosphere of glass. / Now and then a remark trails through the glass. / Taxes on the back lot. Not a good melon" (2). This simile and the troubled mother-daughter relationship initially recall Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar*, in which the depressed heroine feels as if she is sitting under a "glass bell jar, stewing in [her] own sour air" (196).[3] Carson's long poem is full of similar images of containment, of which this jar-like atmosphere is merely the first. But unlike the suicidal heroine in *The Bell Jar*, who avoids spending any length of time with her mother, Carson's heroine has traveled a great distance to work through her problems with her illness-plagued family at the same time as she negotiates the aftermath of her love affair with Law.

In this atmosphere of glass, the window and *glace* motifs are juxtaposed. The speaker reacts to the chilly situation in the kitchen by repeatedly looking out the window at the April landscape "paralyzed by ice" (2). The ice initially symbolizes the wintry discontent of the speaker, whose lover left her in September. But as the mother's idle conversation about current events turns to a volcano erupting in the Philippines, the thawing ice is translated into volcanic imagery that represents the swelling emotions of the speaker (3, 28). Carson makes similar associations in *Autobiography of Red*, as I have argued with reference to the volcano imagery of Emily Dickinson ("Dazzling" 32–33). But unlike in *Autobiography of Red*, the metaphoric eruptions in Carson's poem about Emily Brontë initially resemble black obsidian (volcanic glass)[4] or black ice:

3 Carson revisits the subject of Plath's mother and marriage in "On Sylvia Plath" and "Sylvia Town" (*Plainwater* 38, 97), respectively. Adam Philips also hears an echo of Plath in the more vulnerable passages of "The Glass Essay" (118).

4 Red is obviously the dominant motif in Carson's novel in verse, and its red protagonist Geryon identifies with the molten lava of the volcanoes he visits. However, when the grandmother of Geryon's lover accompanies them to the volcano in Hades, she identifies with the obsidian:

> The lava dome here is more than ninety percent
> glass—rhyolite obsidian they call it. I find
> it very beautiful. Has a kind of pulse as you look at it [...]
> They say the reason for all these blocks and rubble on top
> is strains produced when the glass
> chills so rapidly.[...] Reminds me of my marriage. (*Red* 64)

At the middle of the moor

where the ground goes down into a depression,
the ice has begun to unclench.
Black open water comes

curdling up like anger. (3)

These images are much more than objective correlatives for the speaker's depression and repressed anger. In an interview for the *Paris Review* (2004), Carson identifies the ice imagery as the origin of the poem: "Particular images begin the thinking or the work. For example, 'The Glass Essay' began with staring at a frozen ditch near my mother's house, which I think actually occurs in the poem somewhere. So some phenomenological thing gives rise to the idea" (206). Hence, Carson's speaker keeps returning to this icy depression (or others like it) over the course of the narrative to add associations to the "phenomenological thing" whose accretions become the poem. The evolving glass/*glace* motif thereby serves to cluster percepts, affects, and memories in a constant state of becoming.

The third section of the poem concludes by developing the window motif such that it begins to resemble the patch of ice and vice versa. The speaker recalls reading the famous window scene in *Wuthering Heights* where Lockwood, a guest in Heathcliff's study, encounters the ghost of Catherine on the other side of a broken pane of glass (Brontë 30–35):

I was downstairs reading the part in *Wuthering Heights*
where Heathcliff clings at the lattice in the storm sobbing

Come in! Come in! to the ghost of his heart's darling,

I fell on my knees and sobbed too. (4)

This passage creates a complex synchronicity of narrative levels, as Carson's reader reacts to the sight of the normally reserved speaker reading about Brontë's lovelorn hero and imitating his actions. But the synchronizations do not stop there. Carson's speaker has an encounter similar to Brontë's window scene when she goes walking on the moor to commune with the ghost of her heart's darling (Law) or at least to gain insight into her spirit's darling (Brontë). She finds the telling image she seeks in a patch of ice, which is described in terms that recall the opening scene of "The Glass Essay," where the speaker stares in the mirror at 4 a.m.: "A solid black pane of moor life caught in its own night attitudes" (18). The mention of "pane" aligns the ice with glass and windows, as well as with

the "pain devil" theme in Carson's poem (14). The various glass motifs thus begin to congeal as the speaker looks at the ice, fractured by weeds and alders, and sees a face that resembles Catherine at the broken window, Brontë's "soul trapped in glass" (34) and the poem's opening mirror image of the speaker with white tear streaks on her face: "the ice radiates a map of silver pressures— / thousands of hair-thin cracks catching the white of the light / like a jailed face" (18). Thus the merging and ecstatic reconciliation of unlike elements that critics typically describe using terms such as condensation and epiphany are, in "The Glass Essay," parts of a process of congealing wherein things are connected by a medium of *glace* yet do not abandon their distinct identities.

Congealing becomes synonymous with writing by the end of the poem, where a long quotation from Brontë's poetry is introduced by a simile that suggests the verses have been written in ice:

> The swamp water is frozen solid.
> Bits of gold weed
>
> have etched themselves
> on the underside of the ice like messages. (33)

This combination of disparate elements (words, weeds, water, branches) in the ice is presented, finally, as an alternative to masculine modes of inscription—exemplified in their violent aspect by the phallic thorns in the speaker's vision of Nudes and in the quoted psalms (34).[5] Thus, when a giant icicle forms outside the speaker's urban dwelling, the speaker notes that its form is fascinating but unhelpful:

> A great icicle formed on the railing of my balcony
>
> so I drew up close to the window and tried peering through
> the icicle,
>
> hoping to trick myself into some interior vision (37)

However, no revelation will come to illuminate the woman's predicament through this medium. Her epiphany ultimately arises from her own interior vision of the Nudes, which represent a crystallization of female expe-

5 Thorns are prominent objects in the brief descriptions of the Nudes: "Nude #2. Woman caught in a cage of thorns" and "Nude #3. Woman with a single great thorn implanted in her forehead" (17). The speaker also describes her mother's laugh as "a strange laugh with ropes all over it" (32), but then she corrects herself: "Not ropes, thorns" (33).

rience: "the Nudes are still as clear in my mind / as pieces of laundry that froze on the clothesline overnight" (17). Thus, after turning away from the icicle, the woman sees her final Nude, which is not a singular image but a composite of elements from the previous series of twelve Nudes, in particular the first.

One acquires a better perspective on how Carson transforms masculine metaphors and symbols in "The Glass Essay" by comparing the poem's ice metaphors with those in the "Ice-pleasure" chapter of *Eros the Bittersweet*. The centrepiece of this chapter is a fragment of *The Lovers of Achilles*, a satyr play by Sophokles, in which love is defined as an obsession with a phallic object that is at once alluring and harmful:

> Here's a comparison—not bad, I think:
> when ice gleams in the open air,
> children grab.
> Ice-crystal in the hands is
> at first a pleasure quite novel.
> But there comes a point—
> you can't put the melting mass down,
> you can't keep holding it.
> Desire is like that.
> Pulling the lover to act and not to act,
> again and again, pulling. (*Eros* 112)

The paradoxical sensations of ice pleasure are, like Sappho's neologism "bittersweet," a compounding of dissimilar elements that defines the experience of eros for Carson. Thus night, dawn, sleep, anger, music, heartbreak, air, and "whaching" (Brontë's term for a kind of spiritual vigilance) are all described using water images and diction in "The Glass Essay," and ultimately these elements congeal around the glass conceit.

Carson also argues that the conjunctions of ice-pleasure have a temporal dimension: "A desire to bring the absent into presence, or to collapse far and near, is also a desire to foreclose then upon now" (*Eros* 111). Carson's wish to compress time in this manner makes her poetry relentlessly juxtapositional and paratactic. For example, a question from the speaker's mother in "The Glass Essay" prompts a five-stanza digression into the speaker's memory of her love affair that returns suddenly to the conversation it seemed to have abandoned, such that an entire love affair is crammed into the moment between question and response (3–4). Carson amplifies this sense of temporal compression by presenting the dialogue from this remembered experience in the present tense and without quo-

tation marks. Initially, this device makes the past seem immediate, but later it tricks the reader into believing that the reply of the daughter to the mother in the present tense of the narration belongs to the past tense of the recollection. There are a number of such flashbacks and parenthetical meditations in the text, as well as passages where the speaker alternates rapidly between past and present tenses in an attempt to convey the synchronic temporality of her father's dementia (26–27).

Circuitousness, in this manner, enhances clarity.

In her critical writing, Carson justifies sudden tense shifts by arguing that desire illuminates and clarifies the breadth of time: "The 'now' of desire is a shaft sunk into time and emerging onto timelessness" (*Eros* 157). The time of desire in "The Glass Essay" is thus vivid in its synchronicity:

> Perhaps the hardest thing about losing a lover is
> to watch the year repeat its days.
> It is as if I could dip my hand down
>
> into time and scoop up
> blue and green lozenges of April heat
> a year ago in another country.
>
> I can feel that day running underneath this one
> like an old videotape (8)

Whether she uses metaphors of water, glass, or videotape, the speaker stresses the transparent and layered quality of time to create a multiplanar effect: "Time in its transparent loops [...] passes beneath me now" (8). Rather than obscure the vision of any individual object, these layers act as magnifying lenses that amplify the significance of objects or events through comparison. Thus the memory of love for the speaker is "like a glass slide under a drop of blood" (8). This sense of amplification grows stronger with each passing scene, as Carson layers one interpretive lens on top of another. Circuitousness, in this manner, enhances clarity. As Montaigne actually does write in his essay "Upon Some Verses of Virgil," in a passage that nonetheless could have been written by Roland Barthes:

> He who hath no jovissance but in enjoying; who shootes not but to hit the marke; who loves not hunting but for the prey; it belongs not to him to entermedle with our Schoole. *The more steps and degrees there are: the more delight and honour is there on the top.* We should bee pleased to bee brought unto it, as unto stately Pallaces, by divers porches[,] severall passages, long and pleasant Galleries, and well contrived turnings. (110)

According to Michael Ondaatje, whose praise for Carson graces several of her book covers, this indirect and juxtapositional method is a technique for producing myth. Ondaatje argues that myth is created by "a very careful use of echoes—of phrases and images. There may be no logical connection when these are placed side by side, but the variations are always there setting up parallels" (266–67). For example, Carson makes use of phrasal variations in "The Glass Essay" as a means of building the speaker's personal myth in connection to Brontë's life and writing. Early on, the speaker introduces a quotation from *Wuthering Heights*: "In my flight through the kitchen I knocked over Hareton / who was hanging a litter of puppies / from a chairback in the doorway" (2). Shortly afterwards, the speaker converts this phrase into a metaphor for narrative skill: "She knows how to hang puppies, / that Emily" (4). Later, the quotation intrudes directly into the narrative as the speaker snaps out of a nightmare: "I wake too fast from a cellar of hanged puppies" (27). As the text progresses in this fashion, the intertextual allusions (between distinct authors and texts) transform into intratextual echoes (within Carson's poem), and Carson thereby achieves the effect of blurred identity between Brontë and her speaker. Whereas the speaker states at the outset of the poem that she fears turning into Brontë, the author makes the reader feel this transformation taking place by showing how language draws the reader into a vortex of thought and emotion by establishing systems of association that become part of the speaker's subconscious response to phenomena.

Carson also uses echoes and rhymes to link the identities of the main characters in "The Glass Essay": the lover Law, the psychiatrist Dr Haw, the speaker's mother (whom she addresses as "Ma"), the Haworth folk of Brontë's world, and Brontë's merlin hawk, who gives his name to the subsection "Hero" (21). The lover's name probably derives from the Law Hill School near Halifax, England, where Brontë worked as a teacher for six months in her youth. This unsuccessful attempt at regular employment seems to have convinced Brontë that her role in life was not a public one, much as the speaker's failed relationship with Law convinced her that the role of wife (which her mother urges her to adopt) is unsuitable. But within a matrix of echoes, such clear distinctions break down. For example, the name "Law" aligns the lover with the rule of the father, whose affections the speaker still courts—or, more specifically, she yearns for the attentions of the father whose mind had not yet become unruly (24). Like Brontë, the speaker is attracted to domineering men and the erotics of contesting their power, as a fragment of Brontë's verse cited in "The Glass Essay" illustrates: "Unconquered in my soul the Tyrant rules me still — / *Life*

bends to my control, but *Love* I cannot kill" (29). At least initially, both women legitimate the authority of male power by confounding it with the sublime might of a masculine divinity, the *Domine* of the Latin prayer Carson's speaker chants.[6] Thus the meditations on love affairs in "The Glass Essay" quickly turn theological, such that the final sexual encounter with Law takes on cosmological proportions: "That was a night that centred Heaven and Hell, / as Emily would say" (12). In this way, the loss of one lover is amplified in significance until it resembles the fall in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Law-st), which is also a major theme in the poetry of Anne and Emily Brontë (Davies 26).

In addition to linking the identities of characters aurally, Carson connects their roles in the speaker's life. Part of the speaker's anxiety in Carson's narrative results from the destabilization of familial and romantic roles that, whatever their impingements, she understood. For example, the speaker laments, in the narrative present, the confused mind of her ailing father and the confusing effects of the departing Law, whom she compares to the military hero (her father) as well as to the affectionate lover whom she cherished and understood in the past. To add to this confusion, the fallen father and lover are connected through repeated scenarios and diction, such as the parallels Carson draws between dementia and erotic madness (Hamilton 119). The male authority the speaker would contest has dispersed into multiple power centres and roles she must renegotiate. Hence her mother, as the new head of the household, takes on some of the stern power associated with patriarchy through her "Rules Of Life series" and through conservative advice about the daughter's clothes and sexuality that sparks an argument between mother and daughter (21).

Likewise, Dr Haw attempts to impose the codes of psychoanalysis onto the speaker's psychology to restore normative behaviour, but this imposition ultimately fails. Dr Haw tries to reconfigure the speaker's memories so that she can function in the hetero-normative fashion of the laughing couple (Ha, Ha) the speaker sees across the street at the conclusion of the poem, when she is most alone. However, Carson condemns psychiatry as a science designed to silence visionaries in *Men in the Off Hours* (68), and in "The Glass Essay" the speaker challenges the biographers who pity Brontë's

6 In her essay on the sublime in *Decreation*, Carson links sublimity to a sense of divine magnitude and threat. She explains that "[t]hreat provides the Sublime with its essential structure, an alternation of danger and salvation, which other aesthetic experiences (e.g., beauty) do not seem to share. Threat also furnishes the Sublime with its necessary content—dire things (volcanoes, oceans, ecstasies) and dire reactions (death, dread, transport) within which the sublime soul is *all but lost*" (48).

unconventional solitude.[7] The speaker argues that these critics ignore Brontë's visionary role. Thus the speaker in "The Glass Essay" adopts Brontë's vocation of being a "whacher" and, shortly after the speaker notes the disparity between her fate and that of the laughing couple, she has her vision of the liberated Nude which validates her formerly problematic psychic split between a mundane public life and a vivid imaginative one.

Carson's own theory of myth, as defined in *The Beauty of the Husband,* involves a kind of doubling wherein echoes encode alternate meanings into a message: "All myth is an enriched pattern, / a two-faced proposition, / allowing its operator to say one thing and mean another, to lead a double life" (33). In "The Glass Essay," this double life is lived at the level of character, such that each character also wears the mask of another. The speaker's Brontë mask is unmistakable, but the other characters also have two or more faces. For example, the bird-like physiognomy of the mother reminds the speaker of Brontë's hawk, in part because the military heroism of the father has been supplanted by the domestic heroism of the mother (23). Thus Hamilton argues that key terms such as Hero and "whacher" in Carson's narrative function like portmanteaux: these "are names for things … that have no name, and names that mean nothing but to those who know them—[like] the portmanteau[x] lovers use" (120). These "portmanteaux" might be better defined as nonce-words, because the terms are personal, provisional, and often irregular in spelling ("kichin" for "kitchen"). But one can still argue that Carson makes use of portmanteaux here, not in the strict sense of words composed of two other words (*port* + *manteau*), but in the broader sense that each name and key term is loaded with the weight of others.[8]

Consider the weight borne by the very first word in the body of the poem, "I," which is at once a roman numeral for the first section and an indication of this section's perspective and voice. In the Yorkshire dialect spoken by the minor characters in *Wuthering Heights*, "I" is spelled "Aw." Brontë's original version of the novel placed great emphasis on the contrast between the southern English of Lockwood and the Yorkshire dialect of the characters from the north. Charlotte Brontë revised Emily's phonetic

7 Plath also offers a chilling depiction of psychiatry and electroshock therapy in *The Bell Jar*. Windows in this novel are a constant focus because they offer the prospect of escape, whether from the psychiatric institution or from an undesirable life.

8 Hamilton does suggest that "whacher" can be pronounced as "wake her," which would make the term a classic portmanteau, as well as explaining Carson's speaker's passion for waking early (120).

spellings in subsequent editions to make the novel more accessible to London and international markets (Marsden and Jack xxv), but Joseph's use of "Aw" persists in the revised novel (Brontë 18). Carson mimics Emily's interest in dialects through her fascination with terms such as "whacher," and the dialogue between self and other in "The Glass Essay" can be read as a dialogue between "I" and "Aw"—the latter term signifying the speaker's gothic attachment to characters such as Law, Haw, Ma, and Pa. Unlike Brontë, who is interested in the Haworth dialect but not the people (Carson, "Glass" 30), the speaker initially tries to use her linguistic powers to improve her relationship with others. But when these attempts prove insufficient, the speaker follows a mystical course of action akin to that of Brontë by envisioning her soul stripped of all connections to the world in the final Nude. In retrospect, one can view the entire poem as a meditation on "I" that proceeds through marital (Ma, Pa, Law), psychoanalytical (Haw), and heroic (hawk) definitions until it reaches the religious state that Brontë characterizes as the "awful time," when Self encounters the "sterner power" of Thou (quoted in Carson, "Glass" 33). In this encounter with the divine, "awful" recovers its etymological association with "awe," but Carson's speaker initially substitutes the sublime power of nature for Brontë's personified Thou. She subsequently follows Brontë's example of changing the dynamic between "master and victim" (34) by adopting a narrative voice that is neither in the concluding phase of the poem. In this phase, the speaker draws inspiration from a passage of Brontë's poetry that may have inspired Carson's congealing tactics:

In this phase, the speaker draws inspiration from a passage of Brontë's poetry that may have inspired Carson's congealing tactics.

> And my influence o'er thee stealing
> Grief deepening, joy congealing,
> Shall bear thy soul away. (quoted in Carson, "Glass" 33)

In Carson's writing, then, symbol systems evolve out of banal details (ditches, kitchens, editorial emendations) and develop into private languages. Thus the speaker in "The Glass Essay" develops a private language to communicate with each of the main characters in the story. On the speaker's last night with Law, the couple's private language accentuates the collapse of their love affair: "We lay on top of the covers as if it weren't really a night of sleep and time, / caressing and singing to one another in our made-up language / like the children we used to be" (12). Between mother and daughter, the private language is mostly gestural. When the speaker proposes to visit the nursing home where her ailing father lives, for example, she gets no direct answer from her mother: "She is buttering her toast with jagged strokes. / Silence is assent in our code" (23). In these

communications, the women move outside of a patriarchal language that stifles female expression and into body languages or modes of indirect speech:

> I can tell by the way my mother chews her toast
> whether she had a good night
> and is about to say a happy thing
> or not.
>
> Not. (21)

While useful interpersonally, these private languages fail to encompass the speaker's entire experience and eventually she moves outside of these codes and into the medium of painting through her "Nudes": "I want to speak more clearly. // Perhaps the Nudes are the best way" (35). The Nudes become a medium for drawing the other private languages back into English by incorporating strange silences, potent gestures, and gothic eroticism.

In addition to describing these private languages, Carson enacts them through stylistic devices, such that the attentive reader can learn to speak the language. For example, when the mother and daughter encounter the father in the nursing home, the father is holding a one-sided conversation that initially seems beyond the comprehension of speaker and reader:

> He is addressing strenuous remarks to someone in the air
> between us.
> He uses a language known only to himself,
> made of snarls and syllables and sudden wild appeals. (26)

These snarls are the product of Alzheimer's disease, whose symptoms the speaker explained three pages earlier to ensure that the reader would make the connection between the father's snarled language and his neurological condition:

> First, the presence in cerebral tissue
>
> of a spherical formation known as neuritic plaque,
> consisting mainly of degenerating brain cells.
> Second, neurofibrillary snarlings
>
> in the cerebral cortex and in the hippocampus. (23)

Carson adds a visual rhyme to this verbal echo to emphasize how the internal condition of the father's mind manifests itself on the exterior of his body. As soon as the speaker sees her father, she finds a correlative for the neuritic plaque: "I notice his front teeth are getting black. / I wonder how you clean the teeth of mad people" (26). As she silently laments her father's once-impeccable hygiene, the mother-daughter language bursts into action:

> My mother looks up.
> She and I often think two halves of one thought.
> Do you remember that gold-plated toothpick
>
> you sent him from Harrod's the summer you were in Lon-
> don? she asks. (26)

The speaker's thoughts then begin to oscillate so rapidly between her father's past and present that she approximates the temporality of his dementia and momentarily seems able to communicate with him. Although the father has not uttered or understood a coherent sentence in years, the daughter abruptly calls out a phrase from his aviator days and the section concludes: "His black grin flares once and goes out like a match" (27). This simile at once accentuates the father's dementia (symbolized by the plaque) and suggests that the darkness of Alzheimer's was momentarily overcome by mimicking its own paratactic language.

In the best of Carson's long poems, patterns of diction and metaphor work in this fashion to transform ordinary objects and phrases into elements of a cosmology animated by its own distinct logic. Thus Jeremy Lawson interprets the play of hot and cold surfaces within "The Glass Essay" according to the laws of thermodynamics and entropy. But do these private languages and logics have anything to do with the physical and human environments of Canada? What does this poem, inspired by the Carson family property in Ontario (Carson, "Beauty" 30), have to do with Quebec, where Carson lived at the time of its publication? As I demonstrated in "Anne Carson and the Solway Hoaxes," the fiercest criticism of Carson's writing emanates from her fellow citizens and poets in Montreal. In many ways, Carson has dissociated herself from the anglophone writing community in Quebec by avoiding the QSPELL prize ceremony and abandoning her McNaughton Chair in Classics at McGill (where she taught full time from 1988 until the late 1990s) in favour of a permanent part-time position at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and more recently New York University. Carson does not seem to have a strong connection

to the francophone literary community in Montreal, either. *Verre, Ironie et Dieu* is the first of Carson's poetry collections to appear in French, and it was translated and published in France.

The evidence for an underlying Canadian sensibility or aesthetic in Carson's work is sporadic, but perhaps the individual pieces add up to more than the sum of their parts. In at least two interviews, Carson claims that her sense of connection to Canada has to do with "the rocks and the air, and the smell that the world has in Canada" ("Paris" 223, "Gifts" 13). Elsewhere she cites her fondness for snow ("Talk" 14, "Woman" 28) and "freezing cold and the way voices sound in hockey rinks" ("Talk" 14). Canada has no monopoly on these elements, but they are the ones that ground "The Glass Essay."

On the cultural level, Carson sometimes claims that her writing is not influenced by the country in which she was born and raised ("Art" 223) or at least not consciously influenced by it ("Gifts" 13). In *From Cohen to Carson: The Poet's Novel in Canada*, I demonstrated that, consciously or not, Carson's *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse* has much in common with a tradition of Canadian writing that gives particular prominence to Montrealers such as A. M. Klein and Leonard Cohen. Hence Montreal critics who praise Carson's writing, such as Sherry Simon, have situated its style in the multilingual milieu of her former home west of the Main and north of McGill. In one essay, Simon compares the hybrid form of Carson's long poems to the architectural and liturgical sensibility of St Michael's / St Anthony's church in Mile End, which combines a minaret with a Byzantine dome to shelter congregations of Polish, Irish, and Italian Catholics—Carson attends the service in Polish to neutralize the sermons (Carson, "Classicist" 1)—in a predominantly Jewish and Greek neighbourhood (Simon, "Hybrid"). In another essay, Simon maintains that Carson's poetry mimics the city's relentless movement between languages and cultural codes: "she is a quintessential Montreal writer [… because her] sensibility is translational" ("Single" 38). In still another essay, Simon argues that the interplay between English and ancient Greek in Carson's poetry subverts the politics of official bilingualism in Canada (where bilingualism is presented as a stereoscopic coexistence of English and French) and challenges notions of what qualifies as Canadian writing ("Crossing" 15, 22–23). The latter argument is valid for most of Carson's work, but "The Glass Essay" constitutes an exception, which perhaps explains its attraction to Canadian anthologists. "The Glass Essay" is structured around a bilingual pun on glass/*glace* that mediates between English and French, Ontario and Quebec, while stressing the attachment to a wintry landscape,

at once sublime and menacing, which is central to the literatures of both official languages. Obviously, the transposition of Brontë's moors onto the Ontario landscape is the product of a colonial or transnational imaginary. Yet the emphasis that Carson places on the searing clarity of northern light—one of the things Carson likes about Canada ("Gifts" 13)—contrasts sharply with the poetry of the Brontës, whose "favourite word seems to be 'drear' or 'dreary,' which can be applied to anything at all, and is, liberally" (Davies 10). "The Glass Essay" is thus a poem about transformation, not merely repetition or replication. Hence the appropriateness of the poem's water imagery, as water transforms seasonally in Eastern Canada from solid to liquid to vapour and back again.

Only rarely does Carson address the language issues that usually dominate discussions of Montreal. For example, asked by an American interviewer if Montreal has shaped her style of writing, Carson responds that she draws inspiration from her status as a linguistic minority in officially francophone Québec: "I think being in a province where I'm a marginal person, where I'm a minority, makes a difference. It's hard to be a minority as an Anglo in other first world countries, so that's different. I'm not inside French culture, in Quebecois [sic] culture, and I never will be; you just don't get in unless you're born here. I'm an observer of it, and I guess that's a position I feel comfortable in" ("Beauty" 28). In many ways this statement is absurd, as anglophones are minorities all over continental Europe and Scandinavia. Furthermore, Carson's decision to seek out marginality only highlights her position of privilege. As Dean Irvine argues, Carson's writing belongs primarily to a transnational network of publishing, critical, and canonical affiliations: "Carson trades her capital on a transnational English-language market, where the materiality of civic and national markets is liquidated under the pressure of late capitalism's push toward globalization" (Irvine 273). Hers is writing that is published in New York and sells more abroad than at home, in part because its direct cultural references are largely American and European.

However, the interview statement is useful for understanding the position out of which Carson writes: she sees herself as a "whacher" on the margins between cultural spheres. Although Carson may never be the poster woman for Heritage Canada, "The Glass Essay" does negotiate the fundamental linguistic divide in Canadian culture, and it is therefore appropriate that *Verre, Ironie et Dieu* is the first book of Carson's poetry to be translated into French. Furthermore, "The Glass Essay" complicates the dictum that poetry is what escapes translation by playing with homonymic translations between English and French. Indeed, translation from

English into French clarifies the structure of the poem by finding new ways to connect the same key images: *verre* in "*L'Essai de verre*" connotes both glass (51) and windows (15); the poem's opening scene uses *glace* in place of *miroir* (13); "icicle" is rendered *glaçon* (54); and "It is a chilly thought" is translated as "*C'est une pensée qui glace*" (47). French also makes possible the fusion of *verre* and *glace* in *verglas*, which denotes a phenomenon produced by April thaws or freezing rain that creates "an atmosphere of glass" by coating trees, rocks, roads, and other surfaces in a thin layer of transparent ice. Appropriately, *verglas* enters the written English language in 1808 via a letter from Canada: "During the thaw, a very extraordinary effect is produced, sometimes, on the trees. The Canadians call it a *ver-glas*" ("Verglas"). To the extent that "The Glass Essay" encodes this portmanteau in its overall form (perhaps with a nod to the punning juxtapositions of Jacques Derrida's *Glas*), it participates in, but is not entirely of, the francophone milieu of Quebec. The poem certainly does not attempt to achieve the equilibrium between francophone and anglophone elements that Simon discusses in federal policy, but if Simon is correct that what defines Anglo-Montreal writing is a crossover sensibility which seeks to encode practices of asymmetrical translation across levels of diction, form, and cultural reference, then "The Glass Essay" resides comfortably in that milieu ("Crossing" 22). More importantly, Carson's bilingual puns, lyric essays, two-faced myths, and wide-ranging conceits create a powerfully diverse and restless narrative medium that appeals to both Canadian and global audiences for its deft leaps of transformative thought and complex feeling.

By way of conclusion, I would argue that Carson's lyric essay creates new opportunities for producing productive relations between hypotaxis and parataxis. As late as the eighteenth century, literary critics still considered poetry to be strongly hypotactic (patterned in diction and imagery, structured in rhyme and metre, and ordered by the rhetorical logic of classical argumentation). Yet, ever since the modernists embraced the enigmatic ellipses of Symbolist poetry and the paratactic leaps of Imagist poetry, prose has cornered the market on hypotaxis (in which clauses and arguments are subordinated to a principal one). The extent of this transformation becomes clear if one compares the hypotactic strategies of Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" (1681) with the paratactic leaps of Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (1913). Over the course of three stanzas, Marvell's poem moves sequentially from the seducer's hypothetical postulation ("Had we but world enough, and time, / This coyness, lady, were no crime") to his pragmatic counter-argument ("But at my back I always

hear / Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near") to his synthetic conclusion ("Now therefore, while the youthful hue / Sits on thy skin like morning dew"), whereas Pound's haiku-inspired poem leaps without transitional matter from "The apparition of these faces in the crowd" to "Petals on a wet, black bough" with a semicolon and a line break suspending the two distinct phrases in juxtaposition. Carson's extensive allusions identify her deep debts to both these accentual-syllabic and free verse traditions (Davenport, Higgins). However, I would argue that the main contribution of Carson's lyric essays to contemporary poetics is to camouflage hypotaxis as parataxis, such that her seemingly fragmented poetry retains an element of rhetorical coherence and force, while at the same time undermining the element of subordination in the hypotactic logic of the patriarchal, classically inspired traditions of poetry. Instead of establishing a subordinate relationship between tenor (glass) and vehicle (ice, the frigidity of erotic loss, the partition between past and present or between spiritual planes) in the hierarchical and sequential manner of Donne, each variation of the key motif in Carson's poem cycles through moments of dominance, subordination, blurred identity, and complementarity before congealing in a surprising state of suspension. The paratactic shifts between topics, tenses, speakers, and narrative levels in "The Glass Essay" produce what D'Agata calls a "parallel present tense" (*Men*) of juxtaposed entities that actually helps Carson develop her theme rather than digressing from it. The *ver-glas* of "The Glass Essay," then, coats the narrative in a kind of linguistic and referential multiplicity that has the simplicity, the depth, the clarity, and the paradoxical qualities of myth.

The main contribution of Carson's lyric essays to contemporary poetics is to camouflage hypotaxis as parataxis.

Works Cited

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. 1847. Eds. Hilda Marsden and Ian Jack. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976.

Carson, Anne. "A Classicist Looks at Our New Dark Age." Interview by Philip Marchand. *Toronto Star*. 12 December 1998: 1.

———. "A Talk with Anne Carson." Interview by John D'Agata. *Brick* 57 (Fall 1997): 14–22.

———. *Autobiography of Red*. 1998. New York: Knopf, 1999.

———. "Beauty Prefers an Edge." Interview by Mary Gannon. *Poets and Writers* 29.2 (March/April 2001): 26–33.

———. *Decreation*. New York: Knopf, 2005.

———. *Eros the Bittersweet*. 1986. Normal: Dalkey Archive, 1998.

———. "Gifts and Questions: An Interview with Anne Carson." Interview by Kevin McNeilly. *Canadian Literature* 176 (Spring 2003): 45–65.
———. "Hero." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed., vol. 2. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006. 2864–67.
———. *Men in the Off Hours*. New York: Knopf, 2000.
———. *Plainwater*. New York: Knopf, 1995.
———. "The Art of Poetry No. 88: Anne Carson." Interview by Will Aitken. *The Paris Review* 171 (Fall 2004): 190–226.
———. *The Beauty of the Husband: A Fictional Essay in 29 Tangos*. New York: Knopf, 2001.
———. "The Glass Essay." *Glass, Irony, and God*. New York: Knopf, 1995. 1–38.
———. "The Truth About God." *Glass, Irony, and God*. 39–53.
———. "TV Men: Artaud." *Men in the Off Hours*. New York: Knopf, 2000. 64–72.
———. "Woman of Letters." Interview by Sam Difalco. *Canadian Writer's Yearbook* (2001): 28–32.
———. *Verre, Ironie et Dieu.* Trans. Claire Malroux. Paris: José Corti, 2004.

Carson, Anne, Kay Adshead, and Bridget Meeds. *Wild Workshop*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.

D'Agata, John. "Finding Love at Thirty: An Interview with *Seneca Review* on the Occasion of its Thirtieth Anniversary." *Seneca Review* 30.1 (Spring 2000): 5–11.
———. Review of *Men in the Off Hours* by Anne Carson. *Boston Review* (Summer 2000). http://bostonreview.net/BR25.3/dagata.html.

D'Agata, John, and Deborah Tall. "New Terrain: The Lyric Essay." *Seneca Review* 27.2 (Fall 1997): 7–8.

Davenport, Guy. Introduction to *Glass, Irony, and God* by Anne Carson. New York: Knopf, 1995. vii–x.

Davies, Stevie. Introduction. *The Brontë Sisters: Selected Poems*. Cheadle: Carcanet Press, 1976. 9–28.

Derrida, Jacques. *Glas*. Paris: Galilee, 1974.

Felts, Susannah. Review of *Men in the Off Hours* by Anne Carson. *Venuszine.* 1 September 2005. www.google.ca/search?q=felts+Anne+Carson+Men+in+the+Off&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a.

Geddes, Gary, ed. *15 Canadian Poets X 3*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2001.

Hamilton, Jeff. "This Cold Hectic Dawn and I." Review of *Plainwater* and *Glass, Irony, and God*, by Anne Carson. *Denver Quarterly* 32.1–2 (Summer/Fall 1997), 105–24.

Heer, Jeet. "Poet or 'Prize-Reaping Machine'?" *National Post.* 31 January 2002: B5+.

Higgins, Iain. "Lows and Highs." Review of *Men in the Off Hours* by Anne Carson and *Danger on the Peaks* by Gary Snyder. *Books in Canada*. www.booksincanada.com/article_view.asp?id=4761

Irvine, Dean. "Fugitive Places: Anne Carson and the Unlost." *Anglo-Quebec Poetry, 1976–2006*. Eds. Todd Swift and Jason Camlot. Montreal: Véhicule Press. 272–89.

Jennings, Chris. "The Erotic Poetics of Anne Carson." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 70.4 (Fall 2001): 923–36.

Kuiper, Kathleen. "Anne Carson." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. www.britannica.com.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca:2048/EBchecked/topic/1289804/Anne-Carson.

Lawson, Jeremy. "Anne Carson Thermodynamics: Dizzy Equilibrium." *Open Letter* 11.8 (Summer 2003): 41–48.

Marsden, Hilda, and Ian Jack. Introduction to *Wuthering Heights*. By Emily Brontë. 1847. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976. xiii–xxxix.

Marvell, Andrew. "To His Coy Mistress." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed., vol. A. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006. 677–78.

Melton, Paula. "Essays at Anne Carson." *The Iowa Review* 27.1 (Spring 1997): 179–82.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. 1667. New York: Oxford UP, 2005.

Montaigne, Michel de. *Essays and Belles Lettres*. Vol. 3. Trans. John Florio [1603]. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1915.

Ondaatje, Michael. Afterword to *Tay John*. 1939. By Howard O'Hagan. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989. 265–72.

Philips, Adam. "Fickle Contracts: The Poetry of Anne Carson." *Raritan* 16.2 (Fall 1996): 112–19.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. 1963. London: Faber and Faber, 1971.

Pound, Ezra. "In a Station of the Metro." *Selected Poems*. New York: New Directions, 1957. 35.

Potts, Robert. "Neither Rhyme nor Reason." *Guardian UK.* 26 January 2002: 1–3. www.guardian.co.uk.Archive/Article/0,4273,4342945,00.html.

Rae, Ian. "Anne Carson and the Solway Hoaxes." *Canadian Literature* 176 (Spring 2003): 45–65.

———. " 'Dazzling Hybrids': The Poetry of Anne Carson." *Canadian Literature* 166 (Autumn 2000): 17–41.

———. *From Cohen to Carson: The Poet's Novel in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2008.

Simon, Sherry. "A Single Brushstroke: Writing Through Translation: Anne Carson." *Paradigms for/of Translation.* Special Issue of *Journal of Contemporary Thought* (Summer 2002). Ed. Paul St-Pierre: 37–47.

———. "Crossing Town: Montreal in Translation." *PMLA: Profession* (2002): 15–24.

———. "Hybrid Montreal: The Shadows of Language." *Sites: The Journal of 20th-Century / Contemporary French Studies* 5.2 (Fall 2001): 315–30.

Solway, David. "The Trouble with Annie." *Books in Canada* 30.1 (July 2001): 24–26.

Stanton, Robert. "'I am writing this to be as wrong as possible to you': Anne Carson's Errancy." *Canadian Literature* 176 (Spring 2003): 28–43.

Thesen, Sharon, ed. *The New Long Poem Anthology*. 2nd ed. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2001.

"Verglas." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. 2 March 2006. www.oed.com.