

THE PROBLEM OF CRAWFORD'S STYLE

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ISABELLA VALANCY CRAWFORD is from one point of view a figure easily stereotyped. Though he wisely rejected any such pitfall, Northrop Frye nevertheless acknowledged that she was "an intelligent and industrious female songbird of the kind who filled so many anthologies in the last century." But Frye also called her "the most remarkable mythopoeic imagination in Canadian poetry,"¹ and (although he himself has written nothing extended on Crawford) in so doing gave direction to three decades of study which has recaptured from sentimental history one of the strangest and most powerful figures of Canadian literary life. To modernist poets and critics like Louis Dudek, Crawford's work seems "all hollow convention," "counterfeit."² But James Reaney, operating within Frye's critical assumptions in a bravura essay of 1959, successfully reconstructed the very sophisticated grammar of images that unifies Crawford's vision, and in so doing opened up her poetry to the serious readership it had long been uneasily felt she deserved.³

Yet despite this new audience, the reading of Crawford's poetry has been vulnerable to a charge made by W. J. Keith against critics of Reaney himself: that of not giving sufficient attention to the quality of the poetry.⁴ Recently Robert Alan Burns in stressing Crawford's "ambiguity" has attempted to rectify the balance, but only by applying to Crawford a now dated critical paradigm, one which does not succeed in penetrating the sources of her style in the complex of historical and cultural forces within which she worked.⁵ Some of these forces have been identified in a preliminary way by Dorothy Livesay, Elizabeth Waterston, John Ower, and Dorothy Farmiloe,⁶ and with their help it is possible to evoke the texture of Crawford's cultural experience as reader of Tennyson, Victorian woman, Ontario villager, and working poet in a nineteenth-century city. But apart from recognizing that Crawford had to write for money, and that she both learned from and attempted to escape from Tennyson, not much has been done to isolate and consider the stylistic practices of her work. These practices originate, I contend, in the "conflictedness" which critics of every persuasion have observed in Crawford. In her poetry, however, they lead not to the ambiguities of a proto-modernist poetics, but to the inclusive strengths of a public and socially oriented vision, one which seeks to comprehend in dispassionate equilibrium the strengths and limitations of all her characters.

Crawford's poems, as Roy Daniells writes, "tend to invite two readings — a straightforward and an esoteric — with very different results." Daniells is less troubled by this divergence than some others: of *Malcolm's Katie* he observes, "there are some nice pictures of the struggles and satisfactions of clearing the land and building homes in the wilderness," yet at the same time the poem "has the ability to pull the raw landscape into an interior world of living passion and fulfillment."⁷ However, if we turn away from that small masterpiece — a long poem in the manner of Tennyson's domestic idylls which succeeds in challenging the very terms of its models — we are likely to find that raw landscape and interior world are *not* fused by the poem but are severed from each other by an almost baroque improbability in the poet's stance toward her subject matter. It is hard to be just to a passage such as

From shorn fields the victor comes,
Rolls his triumph thro' the streets;
On his chariot's glowing sides
Sound of shout and laughter beats.⁸

when we are trying at the same time to keep in perspective the fact that the poem from which it comes is called "September in Toronto." The conflict between the visionary intensity and height of style aimed at, and the quite plausible but entirely humble subject — an Ontario town in harvest time — frustrates the reader, and drives the critic to such Churchillian stratagems as A. J. M. Smith's observation that "energy is the most outstanding quality of Miss Crawford's best poems."⁹ Yet this conflict suggests that the problem of style in Crawford is at least in part the key to understanding fully what she was attempting in poetry. To answer Keith's challenge, in other words, we need a procedure for understanding why the style of her most convincing poems shows the characteristics it does, and for recognizing when this strong and interesting poet is her own worst enemy.

It is possible to read Crawford with real appreciation when the gap between subject and manner is less obvious than it is in "September in Toronto," for example in *Gisli the Chieftain*, where an austere lexicon and a racing verse form are employed to portray a cosmic landscape of heroic scale:

A ghost along the Hell Way sped:
The Hell shoes shod his misty tread;
A phantom hound beside him sped.

Beneath the spandrels of the Way
Worlds rolled to night — from night to day;
In Space's ocean suns were spray.

Grouped worlds, eternal eagles, flew;
Swift comets fell like noiseless dew;
Young earths slow budded in the blue.¹⁰

But about the poems that begin Garvin's 1905 collected edition of her work even James Reaney had reservations; "when I first started to read this section," he writes dryly, "I remember thinking it was going to be a long time before I reached the passages I couldn't forget in *Malcolm's Katie*."¹¹ Interestingly Crawford's first volume (the only one published in her lifetime) produced a divided response in a Victorian reader, the reviewer of London's *The Spectator*:

The first poem is written in a dialectic [*sic*] which we commonly associate with the Western States, and tells in a vigorous fashion (though not without a curious, and we should think inappropriate sprinkling of ornate literary English), the story of a stampede of cattle in a pass of the Rocky Mountains. 'Malcolm's Katie' is a love story spoiled in a way by an immoderate use of rhetoric, witness Alfred's speech on pp. 66-7, (such a tirade as surely never was delivered over a camping fire in the woods), but still powerful.¹²

Elizabeth Waterston has justly attributed to the influence of Tennyson's Parnasianism some responsibility for Crawford's taste for the elaborate and rhetorical.¹³ But the unease in the *Spectator* notice comes from other sources than an "eighties" reaction against Tennyson's manner. This critic was well aware of the strength of Crawford's poetry and the seriousness of her stance, as this and other statements in the same review show. At the same time there is a reluctance to admit Crawford's chosen situation — Alfred's debate with Max in the forest over the nature of time, chance, and immortality — as *probable*. Crawford has the mythopoeic confidence to enable her to situate a philosophical debate on the pioneer fringe but the critics' failure to understand this has undermined any attempt to consider the actual nature of her poetics. This divided response is representative: over the past century Crawford criticism has shown several tendencies not always productive: either to deplore her vision, or to deplore what is thought to be a disjunction between her poetic manner and that vision, or to assume that an understanding of the vision is sufficient to understand her as a poet. I will argue here that Crawford's mythopoeic confidence and her poetic strategies *are* related, though in a way unexpected for a proto-Symbolist poet, if not for a Canadian of her culture and generation.

DESPITE WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID, we must begin with Crawford's structural strength, and the iron logic of her vision, for these are what persistently urge us to approach her poems with more than their limitations in mind. Crawford resists the stereotype of songbird fiercely: she is not "all moody and glimmery like late romantic Chopin," as Reaney has said, but "tough like Bach."¹⁴ The source of this toughness is the visionary grammar Reaney has described. It begins with "a huge daffodil which contained all reality." The image

of the daffodil, which she seems to have picked up from Tennyson, is made — in an imaginative act which places her securely on a line between Blake and Yeats — to yield an entirely unTennysonian coherence. In the fallen world of experience, the daffodil breaks up into

tree and lake, eagle and dove, eagle and swan, the queen of heaven looking at herself in a glassy lake, wind and ship, cloud and caged skylark, whip and stampeding herd, good brother and evil brother, paddle and lily bed, smouldering darkness and prickly starlight, aristocratic Spartan and beaten Helot, Isabella Valancy Crawford and King Street, Toronto.¹⁵

But when these elements are disposed in a narrative — in long poems like *Malcolm's Katie*, *Gisli the Chieftain*, and *Old Spookses' Pass*, or in Crawford's prose fairy tales — they assume romance form, describing as Barbara Godard puts it, a "movement from a state of innocence through an encounter with the fallen world of mortality and evil, a movement which, when assimilated and empowered by human love, allows the hero to be transformed to a higher state of perfection."¹⁶

Yet the total effect of Crawford's poetry is not to focus us on the moment of reconciliation, important though it is. Though at the level of abstraction Crawford's romance structure is as secure as Spenser's, in the poetry itself she keeps rewriting that romance over and over again. Instead of building a single poem like many romance writers, she enters and re-enters this world of intense oppositions, making palpable for us the restless energy which pours through the pivotal points that link upper and lower, good and evil, day and night. For good or ill — and sometimes it is for ill — her sense of the poet's capacity to control this moment of re-entry through style is what determines the character of much of her poetry.

In the draft which is all we have of the long poem now called *Hugh and Ion*, the painter Ion is depicted as one who

. . . lov'd the wilds, Athenian-wise, so lov'd
His little Athens more — his canvas best
His patient and impatient eyes beheld
The leprosy of Nature, and her soul
Of beauty hidden under twisted limbs
And so his spirit at his canvas stood
And painted spirit — never burst a vine
Of Spring beneath his brush, but men beheld
The grapes of Autumn on it, and foresaw
The vintages . . .¹⁷

This Browningsque moment may or may not provide Crawford's credo as an artist. But it does catch her in the act of articulating the artist's divergent worlds as she had experienced them: the wilds, the "little Athens," and the canvas; the vines of Spring, and the grapes of Autumn they foretell. But it also catches Ion's sense of the artist's *task*, and his desire for a controlled, unified and essentially

persuasive effect. Such a sense of the poet's authority is reflected in unexpected ways in Crawford's own art: in an impersonal reserve that finds her refusing the use of the first person except as a dramatic device, in her dialect poetry, where there is a shrewdness beyond the conventions of folk sagacity, in the amused judiciousness she sometimes gives us to appease our desire for irony (Alfred, the quasi-villain of *Malcolm's Katie*, has "the jewels of some virtues set / On his broad brow").

WE CAN SEE a symptomatic detachment and economy in two roughly contemporaneous passages which deserve to be set side by side. The first is from that long poem "in a dialectic which we commonly associate with the Western States," *Old Spookses' Pass*. The aging cowhand who is the speaker there is describing the herd whose eventual stampede calls up a chaos which can only be controlled by divine intervention:

Ever see'd a herd ringed in at night?
 Wal, it's sort uv cur'us, — the watchin' sky,
 The howl uv coyotes, a great black mass
 With here an' thar the gleam uv an eye
 An' the white uv a horn, an' now an' then
 An old bull liftin' his shaggy head
 With a beller like a broke-up thunder growl,
 An' the summer lightnin', quick an' red,

 Twistin' and turnin' amid the stars,
 Silent as snakes at play in the grass.¹⁸

The second is in *Malcolm's Katie*, published in the same volume:

Who journey'd where the prairies made a pause
 Saw burnish'd ramparts flaming in the sun,
 With beacon fires, tall on their rustling walls.
 And when the vast, horn'd herds at sunset drew
 Their sullen masses into one black cloud,
 Rolling thund'rous o'er the quick pulsating plain,
 They seem'd to sweep between two fierce red suns
 Which, hunter-wise, shot at their glaring balls
 Keen shafts with scarlet feathers and gold bars.¹⁹

In both these examples Crawford picks up a single image — the black herd of animals — and illuminates it with glancing light: the domestic cattle of *Old Spookses' Pass*, flickeringly lit by summer lightning, the buffalo herd in *Malcolm's Katie* like a black cloud more sharply delineated by the sunset red of beacon fires. The Tennysonian artifice of the second passage reaffirms what Waterston has

termed Crawford's "openness to the strongest model of her day,"²⁰ but the same might be said of the response to dialect poetry in the first passage; in both cases we sense Crawford's awareness of genre, of type, of the value of the model. But what is of real interest is the use to which she puts that awareness: she creates two completely different sets of conditions within which the herd — "raw landscape" to begin with — can become a visionary possibility. In either case, the herd signifies the same thing in her mythopoeic system: unformed chaos. In *Old Spookses' Pass*, it is rendered from the almost domestic point of view of an observer long familiar with the herd and its unstable ways. Yet despite this simplicity and exactitude, everything the old hand tells us intimates the presence of a larger scale as well. In *Malcolm's Katie* the goal is to create openly that effect of heroic grandeur which is required as its valid setting by the "machinery" of Indian legend that parallels the human action of the poem. Crawford has used a single repeated image to enter the world of warring opposites at two different points, and significantly, those two points are defined in terms of a purely verbal space.

"Said the Canoe," Crawford's most brilliant, suggestive, and complex poem, affords an extended example of how her method works. This is a poem in the first person, but employing a dramatized persona, the canoe of the title. Speaking in the voice of a beloved woman who has been put to bed by the hunters who are her "masters twain," the canoe watches in the campfire light as their slaughtered stag is

Hung on forked boughs with thongs of leather:
Bound were his stiff, slim feet together,
His eyes like dead stars cold and drear.
The wandering firelight drew near
And laid its wide palm, red and anxious,
On the sharp splendour of his branches,
On the white foam grown hard and sere
 On flank and shoulder.
Death — hard as breast of granite boulder —
 Under his lashes
Peered thro' his eyes at his life's grey ashes.²¹

The effect of this extraordinary stanza depends, to begin with, on Crawford's exact feeling for the tensions between words: slim and stiff, dead and stars, foam and hard, boulder and lashes, life and ashes. Fundamentally this tension arises from the contrast between the dead animal swinging from its pole and the living fire, "red and anxious," whose light illuminates the scene. Yet all is not contrast; there are in fact three focal points within the stanza. At one extreme is the "raw landscape" of the hunting camp: two men, a deer carcass, the leather thongs, the hooves, the drying foam on shoulder and flank. The other is purely visionary and is represented by the image of death, "hard as breast of granite boulder," peering through the deer's eyes at the grey ashes of the deer's own life. Mediating between

these extremes is the wandering firelight which in an astonishing and tender moment lays its anxious palm on the dead body of the deer.

The detail of the firelight's hand continues the series of purely physical images that is a noticeable motif of the stanza: feet, eyes, palm, flank, shoulder, breast, and then eyes again. But almost all of these are dead; the fire, like the canoe, is alive. Furthermore, it seems to observe, and thus participates in a life beyond the night routine of the camp. It is, as the canoe has already recognized, the "camp-soul," and from its light

Into the hollow hearts of brakes —
 Yet warm from sides of does and stags
 Passed to the crisp, dark river-flags —
 Sinuous, red as copper-snakes,
 Sharp-headed serpents, made of light,
 Glided and hid themselves in night.

The fire's light and its mediating influence suffuse the whole poem, though in the end we meet with the boundaries of its realm, which are determined by a counter-vailing presence, that of night. We meet also with the other, imponderable entities that flutter at that boundary line:

The darkness built its wigwam walls
 Close round the camp, and at its curtain
 Pressed shapes, thin, woven and uncertain
 As white locks of tall waterfalls.

Crawford has presented us not with two poles of existence, on the one hand that of the hunters and on the other that of the death they take so routinely, but with a whole set of nested worlds, each with its degree of vision: the dead stag, the men with their songs "loud of the chase and low of love," the watching canoe, the dreaming hounds, the bat that circles over the flames, the probing fire with its "thin golden nerves of sly light," and at the periphery, the influence of yet another world, perhaps (to come full circle) the one that looks through the dead stag's eyes.

ALL OF THIS COMES ABOUT initially because of Crawford's *awareness* of the extreme boundaries of vision and of the distance between them. In "Said the Canoe" the verbal texture of the poem is constantly creating an arena in which these extremes can meet and comment on each other. Early in the poem Crawford challenges us to accept, on her terms, the kind of control she has chosen to exercise over the creation of that verbal texture. From the "golden nerves of sly light" there rise

. . . faint zones,
 Half way about each grim bole knit,
 Like a shy child that would bedeck
 With its soft clasp a Brave's red neck,
 Yet sees the rough shield on his breast,
 The awful plumes shake on his crest,
 And, fearful, drops his timid face,
 Nor dares complete the sweet embrace.

The epic simile is taken over from Homer (*Iliad* vi, 392 ff.), and its dignity is startling to a reader expecting something more rhapsodical (or wishing for something less so). But Crawford uses this dignity to tie the poem together in a characteristic way. The literary context so unexpectedly suggested hints that the 74 lines of the poem, though not epic in quantity, will have the cosmic range of epic, from heaven to earth. (It is a gravity of reach which suffuses *Malcolm's Katie* as well, and suggests a formal, public quality behind the superficial prettiness of the idyll which places that poem securely in the context of the settlement epic as Howe, McLachlan, and Kirby were practising it.) In "Said the Canoe" the Indian infant's hesitation is as plausible as the war-garb of its heroic parent, and while the simile — seen as mere device — is obviously directing us to pay attention to the seriousness of the poem, it is at the same time stating the poem's central preoccupation; the tentativeness with which different levels of vision meet, a tentativeness which is still with us at the poem's concluding image of white-locked presences trembling like falling water at the edge of the curtain of night.

This tentativeness is not the result of a Tennysonian sense that (as David Shaw puts it) "the ultimate nature of the world is necessarily hidden from any finite mind."²² Crawford is creating in this poem a firmly bi-polar structure — light contrasting with dark, life with death — and for her it is the structure by which the world may be *known*. Indeed, the schemata of her vision may be recognized in "Said the Canoe" in as full a form as Yeats' is in "The Second Coming." But two contrasting passages suggest the nature of the poetic difficulty she poses herself in doing so. The hunters sing:

"O Love! art thou a silver fish,
 Shy of the line and shy of gaffing,
 Which we do follow, fierce, yet laughing,
 Casting at thee the light-winged wish?
 And at the last shall we bring thee up
 From the crystal darkness, under the cup
 Of lily folden
 On broad leaves golden?"

This and the succeeding song "Oh love, art thou a silver deer?" have an ornateness which suits the loftiness of the poem, yet at the same time a witty hint of

dramatic distance in the conscious lushness differentiates them from the impersonal brilliance and controlled *diminuendo* of the campfire picture which follows:

They hung the slaughtered fish like swords
 On saplings slender; like scimitars,
 Bright, and ruddied from new-dead wars,
 Blazed in the light the scaly hordes.

They piled up boughs beneath the trees,
 Of cedar web and green fir tassel.
 Low did the pointed pine tops rustle,
 The camp-fire blushed to the tender breeze.

The hounds laid dewlaps on the ground
 With needles of pine, sweet, soft and rusty,
 Dreamed of the dead stag stout and lusty;
 A bat by the red flames wove its round.

Despite their differences, however, the passages share an important feature: what we might begin by thinking of as their pictorialism. The fish of the second passage are, quite explicitly, "slaughtered." We are aware of their scales, their silver colour, their blazing brightness, details which, however intense, are very exact. When Crawford seeks to intensify an already vivid picture, it is through comparison: the fish are like swords, then like freshly bloodied scimitars. The swords and the scimitars are themselves as exact as other details in the same passage: the slender saplings, the boughs, the pointed pine tops, the sleeping hounds, and the red flames. There is nothing suggestive, nothing allusive, in any of this; the only attempt at metaphoric extension is in "cedar web" and "green fir tassel," both of which seem to be minor decorative effects rather than true metaphors. The hunters' song, by contrast, is elaborately figurative; if "Said the Canoe" has an ironic dimension, it might well be in its implicit circumscribing of that kind of figure in the limits of the song.

This suggests that Crawford has a surprisingly rationalistic concept of poetic diction. Her images arise in that area Daniells calls "landscape," and they do not unfold themselves in the metaphoric gesture we might expect of a mythopoeic poet like, for example, Reaney. Instead her terms are precise, explicit, denotative; however intense the effect she desires, it has to be created syntactically, descriptively, and through comparison, rather than by using the resources of metaphor and allusion. As a result, her methods of creating intensity at the purely verbal level come closer to those of the orator, with his need to persuade, than to the mythmaker, with his network of ever-resonating analogies. It is this gap, the gap between her mythopoeic vision and a poetic method innately, rather than adventitiously, rhetorical, which Crawford must bridge in every poetic decision she makes. She may not have had to make such decisions in isolation; I suspect that Craw-

ford's reading of Thompson's *The Seasons* must have been just as attentive as her reading of Tennyson. Unfortunately, without concrete evidence we cannot say.

IN SEEKING AN ANSWER to the problem of stylistic strain in Crawford we might stop here, at that "Parnassianism," were it not that her preference for what might almost be called a neoclassical theory of diction is related very cogently to other poetic strategies we can see in her work: to her alertness to genre, to her masquing use of dramatic persona in preference to the unmediated first person, and to the tense awareness of dramatic situation which we can see even in the orderly composition — it might be called "After the Hunt" — we have been looking at in "Said the Canoe." Crawford's poetic technique at its best, I would argue, exhibits five features which can be expected to support each other in any poem of hers which commands our serious attention. To "read" her adequately we need to watch for her conception of the genre she is using, to accept the paradox of a symbolic poet who avoids the connotative, the ambiguous, the allusive, to recognize the impersonality which issues in her exploitation of dramatic monologue, to detect the presence of mythopoeia at every level of the mimetic, and to respond to her gift for shaping dramatic situations. These are the characteristics of a self-consciously public poet, one whom the inwardness of Romantic poetry has entirely passed by, and they account, I contend, for the seriousness with which she approaches her subject matter, and the essentially public rhetorical stance which she therefore adopts.

The most fully achieved effects in Crawford's poetry are arrived at when all five of the characteristic features of her poetic are operating in consonance. Curiously these five features are precisely what we need to be aware of in her less satisfying poems as well. When Crawford's poetry weakens, it is not from the *absence* of these qualities, but from an almost demonic *inversion* of them. Because she is attentive to genre, it is easy for her to allow the conventions of a poetic kind to overtake the vision of a particular poem, for example in the verse she wrote to celebrate the return of the troops from the second Riel Rebellion, in genteel "album verse" like "The Inspiration of Song," "Life," "Faith, Hope and Charity," "The Poet of the Spring" (one marvellous stanza here, amidst the dross), and even in the piously-admired but in my view completely meretricious "The Camp of Souls." Similarly, if Crawford's diction at its best is direct, explicit, pictorial, unallusive, at its worst it has a disconcerting violence, a lack of tact, and a troubling failure to consider the ear. The impersonal voice can become oppressively oratorical, the mythopoeic vocabulary transform itself into a restricted set of images exploited for their superficial colour, the inherent drama of a situation can be reduced to mere theatre. It is as if a pivot operated within Crawford

herself, like the one on which her visionary universe turns. This creative pivot provides a controlling mechanism by which the diverse elements of her art can be made to cohere; when they are all in balance and answering to each other the integrating vision and the world of "landscape" are brought into a distinctive and Crawfordesque rapport, and the campfire scene claims its place as an arena for serious verse. When they are out of balance Crawford diminishes into a mere imitator of Tennyson like "Owen Meredith" or Sir Lewis Morris, and to a minor niche among minor poets.

The meeting within Crawford of her own opposites — song-bird and visionary — cannot have been easy, particularly in view of the fact that she excelled not at the brief and marketable Romantic lyric but in the fuller scale of the nineteenth-century verse-narrative. What that collision was like we can only gauge indirectly; she left some manuscripts when she died so suddenly in the King Street boarding house, but nothing more personal. It is clear, however, that she sought an audience assiduously. The genres of polite verse were important to her, of course, for she and her mother lived on the money she made by selling poems to the *Globe* and the *Telegram*, but so was a serious readership. She sought out Susie Harrison ("Seranus") at *The Week*, and received an interested response.²³ She reached outward for patronage and recognition in a larger literary milieu: copies of "*Old Spookses' Pass*," "*Malcolm's Katie*," and *Other Poems* (1884) went not only to the London reviewers (who treated her very fairly) but to former Governor-General Lord Dufferin in India. Tennyson, to whom she is indebted for much in *Malcolm's Katie* is reported to have read with interest the copy of *Old Spookses' Pass* she sent him.²⁴ Crawford's sense of her social role as a poet, in other words, was one with the public stance of her poetic method; her actions all suggest that despite her intensely personal vision, she did not think of poetry as in any way a hermetic craft. For Crawford the mythopoeic mode, like Max in *Malcolm's Katie*, is "social-soul'd." If we must read her poems "... with the eyes close shaded with the hand, / As at some glory terrible and pure,"²⁵ it is because she seems to have been less interested in the increasing privatization of symbolic modes in her age than in impersonally, compassionately focussing the perilous equilibrium of her art on the radical dividedness of man himself.

NOTES

- ¹ Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), pp. 147-48.
- ² Louis Dudek, "Crawford's Achievement," in *The Crawford Symposium*, ed. Frank M. Tierney (Ottawa: Univ. of Ottawa Press, 1979), pp. 123-25; see especially the response by Elizabeth Waterston.
- ³ James Reaney, "Isabella Valancy Crawford," in *Our Living Tradition*, ed. Robert L. McDougall, Second and Third Series (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, in association with Carlton University [1959]), pp. 268-88.

- ⁴ W. J. Keith, "James Reaney, 'Scrutumnus,' and the Critics: An Individual Response," *Canadian Poetry* No. 6 (Spring/Summer 1980), pp. 25-34.
- ⁵ Robert Alan Burns, "Crawford and Gounod: Ambiguity and Irony in *Malcolm's Katie*," *Canadian Poetry* No. 15 (Fall/Winter 1984), pp. 1-30.
- ⁶ Dorothy Livesay, "Tennyson's Daughter or Wilderness Child: the Factual and the Literary Background of Isabella Valancy Crawford," *Journal of Canadian Fiction* 2, No. 3 (1973), pp. 161-67; Elizabeth Waterston, "Crawford, Tennyson, and the Domestic Idyll," in *The Crawford Symposium*, pp. 61-77; John Ower, "Isabella Valancy Crawford and 'The Fleshly School of Poetry,'" *Studies in Scottish Literature* 13 (1978), pp. 275-81; Dorothy Farmiloe, *Isabella Valancy Crawford: The Life and the Legends* (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1983). See also Catherine Sheldrick Ross, "Isabella Valancy Crawford's 'Gisli the Chieftain,'" *Canadian Poetry* No. 2 (Spring/Summer 1978), pp. 28-37, and the interesting suggestions made about Crawford's reading by Burns, note 5 above. D. M. R. Bentley's review of *The Crawford Symposium* ("Letters in Canada," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 49, Summer 1980, pp. 453-55), issues a general call for a cultural approach to Crawford's aesthetics.
- ⁷ Roy Daniells, "Crawford, Carman, and D. C. Scott," in *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English*, ed. Carl F. Klinck *et al.*, 2nd edition (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 424.
- ⁸ Isabella Valancy Crawford, *Collected Poems*, ed. J. W. Garvin (1905; rpr. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 150. (Hereafter referred to as "Garvin".) On the limitations of Garvin's text see S. R. MacGillivray, "Garvin, Crawford, and the Editorial Problem," in *The Crawford Symposium*, pp. 97-106, and Mary F. Martin, "The Short Life of Isabella Valancy Crawford," *Dalhousie Review* 52, 1972, pp. 390-400.
- ⁹ A. J. M. Smith, ed., *The Book of Canadian Poetry* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 129.
- ¹⁰ Garvin, p. 184.
- ¹¹ James Reaney, "Introduction" to Garvin, p. xix.
- ¹² Quoted by Reaney, "Introduction" to Garvin, p. xxii.
- ¹³ Waterston, "Crawford, Tennyson, and the Domestic Idyll," in *The Crawford Symposium*, pp. 61-77.
- ¹⁴ Reaney, "Introduction" to Garvin, p. xx.
- ¹⁵ Reaney, "Introduction" to Garvin, p. xxxi.
- ¹⁶ Barbara Godard, "Crawford's Fairy Tales," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 4 (1979), pp. 109-35.
- ¹⁷ Isabella Valancy Crawford, *Hugh and Ion*, ed. Glenn Clever (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1977), p. 19.
- ¹⁸ Garvin, p. 267.
- ¹⁹ Isabella Valancy Crawford, *Malcolm's Katie*, ed. David Sinclair, in his *Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, New Canadian Library (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), p. 163.
- ²⁰ Waterston, "Crawford, Tennyson, and the Domestic Idyll," p. 66.
- ²¹ Garvin, p. 68. All further references to "Said the Canoe" are to this text.
- ²² W. David Shaw, *Tennyson's Style* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1976), p. 290.

²³ Katherine Hale, *Isabella Valancy Crawford*, p. 10.

²⁴ E. J. Hathaway, writing in 1895 in *The Canadian Magazine*, said "Lord Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, wrote, congratulating her on her work, making special mention of this particular piece [*Old Spookses' Pass*]." The passage is quoted by Dorothy Livesay, "Tennyson's Daughter or Wilderness Child," p. 161.

²⁵ Garvin, p. 247.

SKATING AMONG THE GRAVES

Geraldine Rubia

I pass a cemetery
on my way to work
and see perhaps myself
skating among the graves
impossibly fleet
one foot in the air
shouting "Hello down there
thanks for the lovely rink"

I am thinking of leaving
my body to Science
if I can watch
as they slice my brain
decipher my innards
and disentangle the knots

"So that was the cause
of her Rues and Awes"
"Here is the root
of the Hems and Haws"
"Well I'll be damned
a Silver Sliver
this side of Sanity"