

I. V. CRAWFORD'S PROSE FICTION

Catherine Sheldrick Ross

CRAWFORD'S LITERARY REPUTATION will be based, as she expected it would, upon her poetry and especially upon her verse narratives. She undoubtedly saw herself as a poet who must interrupt her real work long enough to write popular romances for money. There is, nevertheless, a continuity in her work that gives the prose its special interest. In the poetry and prose alike, her characteristic mode of perception is romance. Consistently she sees experience in patterns provided by myths and fairy tales. Sleeping Beauty, the spring maiden who is pricked by the thorn of winter and sleeps in a trance until the bright Solar hero comes to drive away the chill mists — Sleeping Beauty lies behind both Brynhild in "Gisli the Chieftain" and many of the heroines of the prose stories. Both the poetry and the prose use as their basic structural principle the solar myth of the sun god's struggle with darkness. The conflict of light and dark, summer and winter, becomes a metaphor for the thematic dialectic of love and death, hope and despair. In "Malcolm's Katie," for example, Crawford uses the seasonal myth of the struggle between the North and South Winds to align the parallel plots of pioneer history and the love story of Max and Katie. Similarly, her incomplete novel, *Pillows of Stone* (1878), uses the eclipse of the sun to co-ordinate parallel themes and events. The prose work merits study because in it we can see a gifted writer battling more or less successfully with commercial necessity. She is adapting popular fictional conventions to the development of her structure of solar myth and to the expression of her central vision of the conflict of opposites reconciled by sacrificial love.

In her edition of Crawford's poems, Katherine Hale ends her "Appreciation" with this postscript:

A small trunk full of her manuscripts stands before me as I write. Not, alas, of poems newly discovered, but of old stories and novelettes written in her clear delicate handwriting on paper now yellow with age. The trunk is crammed with them; there are hundreds of closely written pages.

Commentary upon this trunkload of inaccessible work has until recently amounted to little more than Lawrence Burpee's judgment that "although her prose was of some merit, it was not the medium best suited to the peculiarly lyrical cast of her genius"¹ and the comment on *A Little Bacchante* in the *Varsity* (Jan. 23, 1886) to the effect that "the novel of Isabella Valancy Crawford, in the *Globe*, is vastly superior to the ordinary run of newspaper fiction."² After the death in 1936 of Crawford's literary executor, John Garvin, the manuscripts found their way into the Lorne Pierce collection and are now in four boxes in the Douglas Library at Queen's University. Garvin evidently intended to edit a book of Crawford's prose, but died before anything came of the project.

Most of the Douglas Library manuscripts are fiction — seven fairy tales, half a dozen completed short stories and seven or eight short story fragments, and ten novels.³ Of the novels, only two, *Helen's Rock* (eighteen chapters, dated April 11, 1883) and *Monsieur Phoebus* (thirty-seven chapters and several pages each from chapters fifty-two to fifty-five) are near to being complete. Along with various other fragments are the opening eleven chapters of *The Heir of Dremore*; two incomplete versions of *From Yule to Yule; or Claudia's Will*; two incomplete drafts of *The Halton Boys*, described on the title page as "a story for boys"; and 157 foolscap leaves of *Pillows of Stone; or Young Cloven-Hoof* (Chapter V of which is dated June 13, 1878). Crawford's obituary in the *Evening Telegram* (Feb. 14, 1887) says, "a continued story entitled 'Married With an Opal; or a Kingly Restitution' is at present running thru a serial published by the Toronto News Company." The Toronto News Company has not yet been tracked down, but more than 350 foolscap leaves of the manuscript of *Married With an Opal* can be found in the Douglas Library collection, catalogued severally as "Old General de Berir — Untitled story about" and "Unidentified Manuscript." The manuscripts that have been preserved represent probably much less than half of Crawford's total prose output. Lawrence Burpee says, "At the age of fourteen, she wrote stories for *Frank Leslie's Magazine* and soon became a constant contributor to this and other periodicals."

Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly is our best clue to the market that Crawford was trying to please. Acceptable stories relied on familiar romance formulas: the conflict between the steady-eyed hero and the villain of the deepest dye; the heartless step-mother; the beautiful heroine who must marry the man she most despises; the disinherited son or nephew; revenge plots; the child stolen away in infancy; disguises and mistaken identity; identical twins; sudden paralysis or blindness; deathbed confessions; and miraculous resurrections. The popular features of the current fiction that Crawford had to imitate turn out to be those highly conventionalized formulas that have always been popular from New Greek comedy to the present.

Not surprisingly then, Crawford's plots, like Dickens', are derived from fairy

tales. Her earliest prose pieces are, in fact, actual fairy tales. Later stories adjust the fairy tale plots and symbolism to the slightly more realistic form required by the magazine market. The fairy tale, "Wava, the Fairy of the Shell," for example, is an early version of Crawford's solar myth. Goldie, a human child, is snatched from the tempest by Wava and her fairy band:

The waves were thundering in. . . . Just as the fays reached the beach, the moon struggled for an instant through the dense clouds, and on the crest of an advancing wave the fays beheld . . . a child . . . whose long hair streamed out like threads of gleaming gold on the dark and troubled waters.

As the huge waves reached them, the mermaids laid the child at Wava's feet, and as they were borne swiftly back by the receding monster, they sang loud above the noise of the tempest —

"Take the waif and love her well
Wreath her round with fairy spell
In thy rosy bowers
T'is a gift we snatched for thee
From the all-devouring sea,
Strew her path with flowers."

Crawford's characteristic opposition of light and dark is developed here in the conflict between moon and "dense clouds," "gleaming gold" hair and "dark and troubled waters," golden child and "the all-devouring sea."

Another early fairy tale, "The Waterlily" (signed "I.V.C., 18, North Douro"), is about Roseblush, who has been abducted from her suitor, Goldenball, by a wicked black beetle, Prince Crystal Coat, and imprisoned inside a waterlily. Radiant spirits, presiding over the lily, sing:

"On the lake the lily lies
Glimmering in the silver ray
In its bosom pearly-white
Sad and tearful dwells the fay.
Sprite, nor fay, nor elfin hand
E'er can break the potent spell.
Yet an earthborn child has power.
This is all that we may tell."

The "earthborn child," Maggie, picks the lily, and her kiss of love defeats the "potent spell":

As the boat touched the shore Maggie and Tommie jumped out, and Maggie gently kissed the white petals of the lily. In a second a great and wonderful light shone round them, and a burst of harmony made the very air tremble. The petals of the lily slowly opened, and a creature no larger than a moth, but of the most exquisite beauty, unfolded her large, rose-coloured wings, and rose from a golden couch in the centre of the flower.

Here again we have Crawford's organizing myth of the conflict between light and dark that only human love can resolve. Moreover she is experimenting with motifs that recur in most later versions of the myth in both her poetry and prose. We can distinguish the rival suitors, one good and one evil; the imprisoned and disguised heroine; the "potent spell" that is broken by the love of a girl-child; the canoe on the water; and, most important, the mystic flower of love.

A late story, "The Lost Diamond of St. Dalmás," translates this fairy tale structure into a somewhat more realistic form. A precious diamond, lost for fifty years, is reborn on Christmas day from the heart of a great aquatic lily that flowers only once in ten or twenty years:

the greenish sheath burst, and let out the glorious mystery of petals and a piercing flood of leaping fire. . . . From the unsealed lips of the blossom had rolled a star, a flame, a fire, that blazed in unspeakable glory.

Crawford is drawing upon Eastern mythology for her image of the diamond on the lotus, but its symbolic function is clearly similar to the "great and wonderful light" that rises from the "golden couch in the centre of the flower" in "The Waterlily."

CRAWFORD INVOKES THE MYSTIC FLOWER whenever the epiphany of love is reached that gives meaning to the rhythms of life. Her world is a constant struggle of pairs of opposites reconciled by sacrificial love: light and dark, summer and winter, fertility and drought, hope and despair, wealth and poverty, creation and destruction, hunter and quarry, eagle and dove. In "The Waterlily" and "The Lost Diamond," she uses the lily or lotus as her symbol for painful experience transformed by love. Elsewhere she uses a mystic rose that resembles the multifoliate sunlit rose in Dante's *Paradiso*. In "Malcolm's Katie," love has "its own sun, its own peculiar sky, / All one great daffodil." In the redemptive final chapter of *Helen's Rock* called "Love is Lord of All," Helen declares that love is "a star and shines alone — a flower and grows alone. Only God can build the star and mold the flower."

Crawford's *paradiso* of love is a bright flower. Her *inferno* is a dark stoney vortex of despair. In between is a purgatorial world of conflict, called in "Malcolm's Katie" the "dark matrix" of Sorrow "from which the human soul / Has its last birth." In Crawford's stories we can distinguish three character types who correspond roughly with Dante's three levels of inferno, purgatory, and paradise. Some few are unregenerate inferno-dwellers, totally cut off from love and presented in images of granite and the swirling vortex of dry dust. More, like Alfred in "Malcolm's Katie" or Claudia in *From Yule to Yule*, have essentially loving

natures, but have responded to the pain of experience with cynicism, despair, and a deliberate hardening against emotion. And finally there are the Beatrice figures who beckon the purgatorial soul toward Crawford's paradise of love.

Claudia is typical of those characters who must endure purgatorial pain and sorrow before they can regain their capacity to love. We are told that "at twenty-one she had become scornful of the world, at twenty-two tired of it, and at twenty-three was settled into calm cynicism." She is like Alfred who wrestles against the giant of pity and love that is "bursting all the granite in [his] heart": "Life is too short for anguish and for hearts! / So I wrestle with thee, giant, and my will / Turns down the thumb" ("M.K.", IV). The explanation of Claudia's despair is a less intense, prose version of Alfred's remarkable speech to Max that ends, "Nought is immortal save immortal — Death!":

The discovery of one age became the doubt of another, the laugh of a second, a bygone scientific superstition in the third . . . [Claudia] wanted from Life a rock of some kind to stand on, and console herself for past deceit by saying "Here is Truth — I can demonstrate by numbers — by calculations, by experiments . . ." [Her rejection of all she could not prove made] her existence parched and siccous as a dried leaf — she steadily repelled the shining finger of Science when it pointed, as it always does, towards the awful Poems of the unknown — . . . she felt, with suspicion, that Science had some of the unreliable blood of Art in her veins — was a near kin of Poetry and a relation of Painting and Music.

Scientific facts provide no secure footing. The only "rock . . . to stand on" in Crawford's world is love. Therefore, what is important is the ability to feel: sorrow, if it keeps this capacity alive, is redemptive. Here is Crawford's analysis in chapter eleven of *Helen's Rock*:

She [observes] with dull horror that the petrifying process of anguish is commencing in her nature. Oh, far more terrible to face the Medusa and feel the quivering flesh losing its humanity — the blood pausing in chill stillness in the arteries, the marble death turning the rosy heart to a dumb, chill stone — the grand power of saying "I live — I feel" fading before those awful eyes — than to cringe, to lament, to suffer and retain the God-like capacity of sensation. Despair, like a dark planet, may roll in a golden atmosphere of hope — to outgrow its anguish; not to be able to suffer, to weep or to complain means an inner and terrible death.

As Crawford puts it in "Malcolm's Katie," "Who curseth Sorrow knows her not at all." Sorrow is the "dark mother of the soul," and an "instrument / Close clasped within the great Creative Hand."

In the prose romances, Crawford takes the melodramatic convention of the suffering heroine who goes from one frightful agony to another, and uses it to present her vision of the creative and purgatorial role of pain and sorrow. Claudia's aunt is moved by her niece's relentless hardness to exclaim:

"Heaven pardon you, Claudia. You will have to suffer tortures manifold and terrible before your wicked will melts — pangs I dread to think of. Twice within twenty-four hours you have stood on the threshold of death and you are still iron — iron — what pangs will melt you, girl?"

"I know of none. Did I, I would court them, for all this is like a cross of fire upon my breast."

The pattern here in *From Yule to Yule*, and repeated frequently elsewhere, is the descent of the purgatorial soul into a dark valley of soul-making, which the stories translate into the romance conventions of madness, amnesia, poverty, attempted suicide, and almost fatal illnesses. By the end, however, the character is redeemed, and images of darkness, granite, and "dumb, chill stone" give place to images of light, the flower of love, and the "rosy heart."

Crawford's third character type is an innocent figure whose suffering is sacrificial rather than purgatorial and whose role is redemptive. She is essentially a Beatrice, although she may be called Katie in "Malcolm's Katie," Betsie-Lee in "Old Spookses' Pass," Thea in *Pillows of Stone*, Rosamunda in *Married With An Opal*, and Moyna in *The Heir of Dremore*. The mystic rose or lily is invariably invoked in her honour. Miranda Farn is renamed Rosamunda. Thea has "the perfection of the rose at the mystic moment known only to the Gods." In the following scene from *The Heir of Dremore*, the Beatrice for the crippled Felix Dremore is his daughter Moyna, whom he supposes dead:

no tidings came to lost Moyna . . . Felix sat erect . . . in the attitude of one about to spring up and hurl himself against Fate — his head slightly forward as he plunged his sense of hearing far into the silence which was yet so full of sound — the sound of the sea — the waves, the wind — dead voices as far as he was concerned for none of them brought tidings of his child to him.

. . . On the threshold . . . stood a woman with the face of a smiling and powerful Angel . . . an absolute light seemed to strike from the fair, flawless ivory of her noble and delicate face. Her glances rushed into the room winged with joyous glory. . . . a slight starry radiance seemed to shimmer over her grand brow . . . Neither spoke . . . Felix had lost all power of speech — and for a moment she forgot all else in gazing at him . . . He tried to cry out to her, but speech would not come any more than hearing — he leaned more forward looking at her — she was motionless except for those outstretched arms — He leaned forward still more — breathless — intent on those wonderful eyes — She had come to him with news of Moyna . . . Would she never speak . . . ? But perhaps she was speaking — and that the physical tortures racking him prevented her voice reaching him — He *must* hear her. . . . He shuddered from head to foot and, with a groan he did not hear — *rose to his feet* — swaying, in his grand stature, like a lofty oak.

In this passage, romance conventions arrest and intensify the moment of awareness and beatitude. Felix is suspended in time, leaning forward, straining ahead "in the attitude of one about to spring up and hurl himself against fate." But this

tightly sprung energy is held static. Crawford is giving us, not a narrative of things happening in succession, but a motionless tableau. Everything is concentrated upon the straining of these two separated figures to reach each other. Felix is "intent on those wonderful eyes." Moyna, who is described in Chapter One as Felix's "one link with love," guides him with her eyes to salvation, as Beatrice does Dante. The imagery makes Moyna's angelic role unmistakable: "smiling and powerful Angel," "absolute light," "winged with joyous glory," "starry radiance." The visible sign of Felix's redemption is the recovery of his ability to walk, a conventional plot device in romance.

Another Beatrice figure, Rosamunda in *Married With An Opal*, performs a redemptive role that is sacrificial. This story takes the form of the descent of the girl-child into a dark underworld of suffering and loss of identity, followed by a re-emergence into light. Miranda Farn is a forlorn fourteen-year-old waif who is abandoned and left for dead by her bridegroom. She is subsequently adopted by the wealthy Mr. Vintamper and substituted for his supposedly dead daughter, Rose. Miranda becomes Rosamunda or rose of the world, an innocent party in a revenge plot to deprive Vintamper's nephew, Harold, of his inheritance. She, of course, loves and pities Harold, and her enforced participation in the revenge plot drives her to madness and a suicidal leap into a deep abyss. Just before this crisis, Rosamunda kneels between her biological father and her adoptive father, saying:

"You who bought me and you who sold me, have mercy on me. Give me back my oath. Don't be so cruel to me. I love you both. Why have you combined to torture me, to degrade me, to drive me mad?"

She undergoes madness, symbolic death, disfigurement ("few would have recognized the superb Rosamunda Vintamper in the disfigured wraith in the deep chair") — and rebirth. By the end, all disguises are put aside, true identities are revealed, and Rosamunda's marriage to Harold is celebrated as a "kingly restitution."

This is the happily-ever-after of the fairy tale and the conventional shape of comedy. The stories are linked by this structure to poems like "Gisli the Chieftain," "Old Spookses' Pass," and "Malcolm's Katie" which move toward reconciliation. While revenge usually provides the initial energy to set Crawford's plots in motion, their direction and final destiny are controlled by a power of love strong enough to bring about miraculous conversions, recoveries from amnesia or madness or death, and recognitions of identity of both the self and the beloved. In most stories there are characters who have two sets of names. The comic action of the plot uncovers some hidden fact that allows each to adopt his proper name, as, for example, "I am the little Rose you thought dead!" in *Married With An Opal*. Typically, by the end, time has made a "kingly restitution" to the disinherited child or to the lost prince.

CRAWFORD'S STORIES HEIGHTEN THE OPPOSITION between good and evil in the dialectic characteristic of romance. But Crawford is also concerned with relationship, integration, and reconciliation. To show hidden relationships among characters, she repeatedly uses devices of substitute or stolen children, forged wills, missing heirs, and unexpected legacies, and, most important, step-brothers and identical twins. These last two devices function to distinguish opposites and then to draw apparent contraries into significant relationship. In *The Heir of Dremore*, Felix is the crippled heir who has been cast out by his demonic father, "Brute" Dremore, to live in a mud hut. He looks "like a grand effigy of some martyred king." He has a "noble head, . . . kind, gay, sad, restless brilliant blue eyes." His step-brother "Black" Desmond, "'Brute' Dremore's black-guard son," is a Heathcliff type with a "sullen young face, great restless fiery black eyes, a coarse red-lipped mouth, stonily set jaws, and a low broad brow drawn into a settled scowl — a form of continually repressed passion rather than of malice." The step-brothers exaggerate differences inherited from their different mothers in a way that suggests the opposition of calm and storm in *Wuthering Heights*. Chapter Two closes as Black Desmond looks at Felix's "mud hovel . . . and beyond it to the bleak grandeur of Dremore House": "'Yes!' he said heavily, 'It'll come! and it *will* grow between you and I, Felix, like a stone wall — and you'll never know what it is — and while I'm going headlong to the Devil, you'll be wondering why even you can't hold me back.'" Desmond sees a stone wall of difference separating dark and fair, Hell and Heaven. But the story, though incomplete, provides clues that these step-brothers were to have been reconciled after the fashion of the Dark and Bright twins in the epilogue to "Gisli the Chieftain." There, the contraries developed throughout "Gisli" are brought into relationship in the image of the clasped handshake:

Said the voice of Evil to the ear of Good,
 "Clasp thou my strong right hand,
 Nor shall our clasp be known or understood
 By any in the land.

"I, the dark giant, rule strong on the earth;
 Yet thou, bright one, and I
 Sprang from the one great mystery — at one birth
 We looked upon the sky.

.....
 . . . toil with me,
 Brother; but in the sight
 Of men who know not, I stern son shall be
 Of Darkness — thou of Light!"

In *Pillows of Stone* and *The Halton Boys*, Crawford uses the motif of twinship,

much as *Dombey and Son* uses the remarkable resemblance between Alice Brown the convict and the proud and wealthy Edith Dombey, to link the extremes of the social order. One twin is raised at home in a loving and wealthy family. The other, stolen away as a child or otherwise debauched, is exposed to a life of poverty, drunkenness, or crime. A character in *Pillows of Stone* is so moved by the startling contrast between Florian Dutrom and his drunken, tuberculosis-ridden twin, Clyffe, that she exclaims: "Oh Father! . . . Clyffe might have been like this nature, who, made in Thy image, is not yet defaced by sin."

In *The Halton Boys*, Lyon has been stolen as an infant and raised among convicts. He is discovered, and his twin brother goes from his exclusive public school to meet his lost double:

Lyon saw a slight, tall, muscular lad . . . his eyes steady as stars, and sharp as spears in the intensity of his gaze. . . . a frightful feeling of superstitious dread suddenly assailed his darkened and tempestuous mind. . . . Where had he seen [Larry's face] before? With him, but dark as a demon's then, in frightful city prisons: with him in loathsome city lairs where thieves lurked, and murderers hid in their darkness from the darker shadow of the gallows. With him, sullen and lowering, in vagabond marches through the leafy country — with him, ferocious, scowling, savage, in all the turnings and twistings of his miserable existence; aye with him *now*, with the sunken, glaring eyes of a wolf. . . . he stared into those other eyes, so familiar, so strange.

The scene closes with the statement: "Behind [Larry] slunk a terrible shadow of himself, his double in dingy rags, a fearful travesty of the fearless and faithful lad." These twins interconnect the world of the gentleman with the "frightful city prisons" and "loathsome city lairs." The metaphor of twinship, moreover, suggests that the Bright and Dark brothers, or the upper and lower worlds, were once identical and may be so again.

In Crawford's mythic structure, reconciliation of opposites and redemption requires sacrifice, and each story has its sacrificial figure. Sometimes, as in *From Yule to Yule: or Claudia's Will* and *Pillows of Stone*, this sacrifice occurs explicitly within the frame of the solar myth. In *From Yule to Yule*, the suffering victim is a man-child, found by Claudia on her estate one Christmas inside the oak tree, "Seven armed Dick, beloved of the Druids." Claudia adopts him and calls him Dick in the first draft of the story, a name that suggests his identity with the sacred oak tree that, in the Balder myth, must annually be cut down as a ransom to bring back the sun at the winter solstice. In the curious myth that Crawford is developing, Dick is a "stalwart young man well over six feet," whose misadventure with "Seven armed Dick" on that first Christmas has made him a baby again, deprived of memory and of speech. Claudia is like Sleeping Beauty, a counterpart to the frozen winter landscape that must be brought back to warmth and life. As one

character puts it, "She closed her heart wi' bars and padlocks when her step-sister Miss Rosalind, as was only sixteen, run away wi' a Frenchman four years ago."

The more Dick's innocence reminds Claudia of the runaway Rosalind, the more Claudia finds herself torturing him. On the second Christmas, Dick twice risks his life in twenty-four hours to rescue his beloved persecutor, first from drowning in a deep pool, then from fire, "strangl[ing] the fiery serpents eating her with his own naked hands." Threatened by a bullying servant with the terrors of being confined in the clockroom, he flees once again to his hiding place in "Seven armed Dick":

The clockroom! that arsenal of terrors, with its gallows-like beams, its ghastly shadows, its mammoth spiders and black flags of cobwebs and, crowning horror, that throbbing, pulsing, whining mass of iron life, mysterious and frightful — the works of the clock!

Claudia finds him on this second Christmas in the oak tree, with Christ's stigmata on his "burned hands, raw and blistered." In the third section of the story, Dick is the male counterpart to Shakespearean heroines like Hermione and Perdita who withdraw, undergo ritual death, and then return. Dick's return is a magical event, only slightly disguised. As would happen in fairy tales, Claudia's deathbed forgiveness of Rosalind in her will on the third Christmas restores Dick to her. She goes out to "Seven armed Dick" and finds there, all together, Rosalind and her husband and Dick, "not the immature soul she had known, but the one she had dreamed of." The hanged male god has completed the cycle from infant to triumphant bridegroom and has awakened Claudia from her winter trance to spring renewal.

Pillows of Stone has two sacrificial victims — Clyffe in the main plot and Thea in the subplot. The sacrifice of Thea is explicitly introduced in a context of solar eclipse, drought, and the decay of nature. We first meet Thea and her father waiting for the eclipse in their manor retreat. The countryside is parched with drought, "drowned in a cruel affluence of light and heat": the poor [are becoming] "more hollow-eyed, looking prophetically to the added pinch of the thumbscrews of Poverty turned by the cruel long-continued drought"; "Nature seemed fixed and a change impossible." This oppressive waiting for something to happen matches the characters' interior condition. Thea has given her oath when she "first could lisp" and has renewed her consent "year by year" to be the sacrificial victim in some "hybrid" plot of "honor, revenge, even-handed justice, [and] intrigue." "I had rather dash breathless into an unexpected chasm than be pushed leisurely to the edge of the Tarpeian rock," she says. Her father, like Andromeda's father or like Jephthah, is responsible for her plight and sadly calls her "the sacrifice, every beauty and grace but an added garland to deck [her] for the knife."

The long waiting period ends with the simultaneous coming of the eclipse, the raincloud, and the stranger from New York City who is to take Thea away to

fulfil her oath. Before the eclipse, "the world was rolling in an atmosphere of molten gold and azure. . . . The Earth was a Delilah shearing her mighty Samson the sun of his strengthgiving tresses":

Suddenly the gilding of the Earth seemed to begin to die of itself; the sky was bold, bright June blue, the Sun except for a slowly widening jet crescent encroaching on him was as fierce in his golden wrath as ever, and it was as if the Earth alone was swooning before his arrows. Presently the azure arch sickened to grey, the jet crescent waxed across his disk. . . . the greyness steadily deepened and solemn shadows crept into and swallowed the remaining light. . . . It was not a long affair, the black body moved in front of the golden shield, with a mystic slowness, leaving behind her a waxing orb of gold. She passed as a spirit into the brightening azure like a queen through the gates of sapphire high lifted before her the last folds of her royal robes sweeping into space, choired by the sudden shrill glad carol of birds, and all the gay sounds of the second matin her progress had given today, and the sun rolled on shaking his terrible mane of fire, unconquered, exultant.

Just then a raincloud appears, and the pattern of darkness as preliminary to rebirth is repeated. "That cloud fascinates me," says Thea, "how glaringly spotless the sky was just now, and see — that cloud has risen from the sea into a black Alp with violet peaks and chasms of jet, into which the sun is about to be hurled." "Were we Heathens . . . we should hurry to the temples and sacrifice," says her father. In the original myth, Thea would be the vestal virgin sacrificed to bring back the sun from his dark eclipse and to give rain to the parched earth. Here in a displaced version of the myth, Thea's sacrificial role is translated into the part her father has bound her to play in some mysterious revenge plot. Thea submits with a "rapt look like Jephthah's daughter and [leans] against the gilded pile of the organ as against an altar of sacrifice." On various levels, from the mythic treatment of the eclipse to the sentimental romance of Thea's story, the three parallel events establish the sacrificial role as a necessary one in the rhythm of dark and light, drought and fertility. The eclipse of the sun by the moon and his reappearance "unconquered, exultant" comes closest to the pure form of the solar myth that lies behind so much of Crawford's work. The interweaving of the three events repeats the technique of "Malcolm's Katie" in which Crawford aligns the changing seasons, pioneer history, and the love story of Max and Katie as different versions of the same cycle.

Consistently, then, despite the evident need to compete for magazine markets with May Agnes Fleming and Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, Crawford continues to develop her central vision. Interesting in themselves, the stories illuminate the handling of narrative in poems like "Old Spookses' Pass," "Gisli the Chieftain," and "Malcolm's Katie." Taken as a whole, the prose fiction is further evidence that Crawford is a mythopoeic writer intent on developing from scattered sources a single unifying structural myth.

NOTES

- ¹ "Isabella Valancy Crawford: A Canadian Poet," *Poet-Lore*, 13 (Oct. 1901), p. 577.
- ² *A Little Bacchante* was published in the evening and not the morning edition of the *Globe*. The Ontario Archives holds the *Evening Globe* issue of January 21, 1886, which contains Chapter IX, "In the Presence of the Tempter."
- ³ There is a bibliography for Crawford's manuscripts in *A Catalogue of Canadian Manuscripts Collected by Lorne Pierce and Presented to Queen's University*, compiled by Dorothy Harlowe (Toronto: Ryerson, 1946), pp. 100-104.

SHIP OF GOLD

Emile Nelligan

Hewn out of solid gold, a tall ship sailed:
Its masts reached up to heaven, on unknown seas;
Venus, naked, her hair cast to the breeze,
In too-hot sun, stood at the prow unveiled.

But then one night, on Ocean's cheating wave
While Sirens sang, it struck a reef head on,
And dreadful shipwreck beat its hull right down
To plumb the depths of that fixed Gulf, the grave.

A gold ship, whose translucence in each part
Disclosed the treasures that those impious tars,
Disgust and Hate and Madness, fought to keep.

How much remains after the storm's brief wars?
And what of that deserted craft, my heart?
In Dream-Abyss, alas, it foundered deep!

(translated by Fred Cogswell)