Expression

My “unhappiness,” so I have always been accustomed to think, was the result of my father’s remoteness and my mother’s denial of affection. When my eldest brother died suddenly, and my mother did not transfer any of her feelings for him to me, and my father did not become less aloof, I resolved (that resolution made at some time and for one reason or another by all children) that someday I would “show” them. But now that someday has come and gone, and no one remains to whom it would mean anything to be “shown” whatever is left to show, I myself being the last witness.

Restored to the present . . . I went from Triebschen to the Schwann Hotel for tea. (In 1890 it was tea and ratafia in, I think, the Englischeviertel.) Sitting there—where Wagner, not yet amnestied, followed with watch in hand the first performance of Lohengrin in Weimar—it seemed impossible that my own childhood could be so far away, and impossible that that world of feeling could be extinct, except in me. Yet not how far away but how close and how real; and
how soon that question in answer to which, like Lohengrin, I must
disappear myself.

stravinsky, 1969

With Homer as their necromancer, the Greeks elaborated a tradition
for heroes in which death was as natural and inevitable as in any quick
conflict between animals, and in which heroism was best expressed,
in a form of art and wit, as an oxymoron. The hero allies a kind of
gallantry of mind to bloodiness of body and purpose. . . . He does
the impossible—combines immortality and mortality, in a fragile
shell steered by some kind of awareness. The hero’s life was a hard
one, the only genuine intelligent profession of death, in which attend­
dant glimpses of life were given increased intensity. But mortality
always prevails because it is stronger than immortality, as well as
more common and more natural.

vermeule, Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry

Many years ago I had a dream, and in the dream I stood by my own
dead body and saw the pennies upon my eyes. I cannot remember at
this distance of time what the rest of the dream was, but it had to do
with the adventures of the soul after death. This dream, while it
convinced me of nothing and gave me no faith in a future life, made a
considerable impression upon me as an artist, and I expanded the idea
and the mood into a novel, which I called The Glimpse, the glimpse
being of what lies beyond death. . . . As regards the theory set forth
in my novel, I had naturally made it as plausible as I could to my own
reason. But I never had the slightest belief in it, nor instinctive ten­
dency to believe in it, nor wish to believe in it.

bennett, Sketches for Autobiography