Notes to Introduction

1. In my argument “high modernism” refers to the specific intellectual formation that descends from the polemical arguments of Pound, Yeats, Eliot, and Lewis, through the evaluative premises of the Fugitives and Agrarian New Critics, into the mid-century literary academy, where its dominance “largely silenced the century’s complex and contentious social context,” as Walter Kalaidjian puts it (2). As I use it, high modernism does not encompass any poet’s corpus of verse, even Eliot’s or Pound’s. Their poetry was central to that formation, but at least some of it was (and is) capable of functioning in other intellectual and ideological frameworks. I reject broader uses of the term to refer to any American poet who wrote complex verse and eventually became canonical; it makes little sense, in my view, to refer to such poets as Williams, Stevens, Moore, or Hart Crane as “high modernist.”

2. Rachel Blau DuPlessis’s fine recent study demonstrates the lingering influence of these stylistic priorities upon the chronological outlines of modern poetry. Describing “‘new’ social subjectivities” produced by changing racial, ethnic, and gender dynamics—New Black, New Jew, New Woman—DuPlessis hints at a revised modernist chronology by locating their “incipit dates” firmly in the 1890s (or earlier in the latter case) (2–4). Yet despite her clear sense of the 1890s as a pivotal decade for American modernity, virtually all the verse DuPlessis examines falls firmly within a traditional high-modernist time frame between 1910 and 1935—a disjunction explained by her frank attachment to “writers who tend to stylistic innovation” (26).

3. Among these stimulating works combining formalist interpretive sensitivity with historicist particularity are Miles Orvell’s The Real Thing, Martha Banta’s Taylored Lives, Cecilia Tichi’s Shifting Gears, Bill Brown’s The Material Unconscious, and Michael Brooks’s Subway City.

4. Note, for example, the complete absence of verse from a project consciously conceived as the “inaugural event for an emergent field of new American studies” (Pease vii): the group of essays first published in Boundary 2 in the spring of 1990 and then issued as the volume Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon by Duke University Press in 1994. Except for a single fleeting mention of Emily
Dickinson, this volume contains no reference to any of the significant poets of nineteenth-century America, not even Whitman. Harrington’s Poetry and the Public offers an excellent account of the disappearing-verse phenomenon in the contemporary academy (160–69).


6. For major contributions to the study of socially engaged verse after 1910, see Nelson, Revolutionary Memory; Kalaidjian, American Culture between the Wars; DuPlessis, Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry; Harrington, Poetry and the Public; Michael Thurston, Making Something Happen; Robert Shulman, The Power of Political Art; Mark Van Wienen, Partisans and Poets; Rita Barnard, The Great Depression and the Culture of Abundance; Alan Wald, The Revolutionary Imagination and Exiles from a Future Time; and Nancy Berke, Women Poets on the Left.

7. A few of the studies cited here do not ignore the turn of the century, but Nelson’s Repression and Recovery (50–51, 235–36) and Revolutionary Memory (12–26) are so far the only ones to propose that this period might be integral to a historical revision of modern American poetry.

8. I’m aware that current disciplinary usage of “modernity” extends as far back as the sixteenth century. However, I have no intention of claiming five hundred years of verse as a unitary discourse of “modern poetry.” If desired, the reader may imagine the words “urban-industrial” as sounding before every appearance of “modernity” in this book, and will no doubt understand if I don’t actually include them every time.

9. “The New Poetry” was the term most commonly used in the 1910s to describe the dramatic rejuvenation of creative energy and institutional prominence in American verse that can be dated from 1911–1912. I have adopted it in this book as an alternative to “poetic modernism,” because in practice the latter commonly degenerates into a prescriptive label designating a narrow set of poets who employ radical stylistic innovations and (it is claimed) seek aestheticist disengagement from an alienating modern scene. The term “New Poetry” implies inclusion rather than exclusion, incorporating the vast range of styles, politics, and attitudes manifested across the landscape of American verse after 1910.

10. As Harrington notes, Bourdieu’s analytical divisions such as “legitimate” and “popular” are suggestive for the evaluative history of American poetry (Poetry and the Public 22). See also Beach, Poetic Culture, 45–47.

11. I advance this position more fully in the article “The Footprint of the Twentieth Century: American Skyscrapers and Modernist Poems.”

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Nina Baym has traced a “nationalistic narrative” institutionalized by academics writing histories of American literature in the half century after the Civil War,
which located “American history in New England” and proclaimed “the carefully edited New England Puritan,” exemplified by the Fireside poets, as “the national type” (Feminism 81–82).

2. By grouping the Fireside poets together in this analysis, I’m not implying that they were alike in every important respect. No doubt most generalizations about the group are contradicted by at least one of the six. Bryant was almost ten years older than all the others, Lowell ten years younger. Bryant was never closely associated with the Atlantic Monthly as the other five were. Early on, Emerson was more inclined to literary nationalism and to an “Orphic mode of revelation and transcendence” (Beach, Politics 53) than the others. Lowell and Holmes, “Tempted by demons of irreverence,” as Lawrence Buell puts it, were accused of “using a more vigorous language than the traditionally polite” in some of their most popular works (45); so was Whittier in his antislavery verse, for different reasons. But such exceptions notwithstanding, these six figures comprised a coherent canonical formation central to the “hegemonic poetic discourse” (Beach, Politics 53) of the century’s latter decades. As they grew more entrenched as American classics, their differences on such questions as abolition and nationalism became less important and their cultural force became thoroughly collective, as Mark Twain’s notorious speech at the Whittier birthday dinner of 1877, discussed in the third chapter, dramatizes.

3. In 1900 E. C. Stedman summarized their canonicity using similar domestic imagery: “the works of our ‘elder American poets’ lay on the centre-tables of our households and were read with zest by young and old alike” (American Anthology xxii).

4. Charvat estimates that original poems published in Graham’s magazine in the early 1840s “were instantly reprinted, without payment, by half the magazines in the country” (109).

5. Charvat’s The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800–1870 offers a good summary of the amateur model of authorship that dominated American literary activity until around 1840 (6–7). Harper’s began to identify most of its contributors in the early 1860s, while the Atlantic Monthly included authors’ names only in its yearly index from 1862, not attaching them to the articles until 1870. But as Paula Bennett notes, most periodicals had dropped the policy of anonymity by around 1860 (“Not Just Filler” 203).

6. Due to his precocious early publications, Bryant had been well known in literary circles since 1820. By the early 1840s he had arrived at “the center of the nation’s culture”: as editor-publisher of the New York Evening Post, he had become a prominent champion of abolition and reform; as president of the fledgling American Art Union (1844–1846), he helped its membership grow by more than 120 percent (Shapiro 85). During these years Whittier was making a precarious living as an editor of various antislavery periodicals and also publishing verse prolifically, with seven volumes between 1836 and 1846. His partisan prominence in the abolition movement meant that he was less consensually accepted than Bryant and Longfellow; nor did he make much money from his work, since most of it went gratis to impecunious antislavery publications. But his public profile grew throughout the 1830s and 1840s as he became the national poet of abolition. Though Emerson enjoyed enormous renown as an essayist from the late 1830s, his transcendentalist and nationalist associations placed him somewhat outside the Fireside circle until the 1850s, when he began to adopt notably more conservative positions. Christopher Beach suggests that Emerson’s famous turn away from Whitman after
an enthusiastic first reaction to *Leaves of Grass* may have been precipitated by his ongoing, “rapprochement with the fireside poets and other members of the Boston literati” (*Politics* 192, n. 38), whose reaction to Whitman ranged from indifferent to scandalized. Holmes, pursuing his medical career, would achieve national notoriety as a poet much later than these three. But he had published “Old Ironsides” in 1831 while still a student, and by 1841 was ensconced within the cultural ambit of the Cambridge circle. Lowell, a decade younger than the other Fireside poets, first came to prominence in 1848 with the initial installment of *The Biglow Papers* and cemented his national reputation over the next decade.

7. For an example of this interlocking economy, note Ticknor and Fields’s publication of Longfellow’s volume *Tales of a Wayside Inn* on November 25, 1863, which was preceded by five days by a feature-length article on the poet in the *Atlantic* by G. W. Curtis. Observing this, Whittier wrote to Fields on Christmas Day to ask, “Is there no use to do for me . . . what Curtis has done for Longfellow . . . ?” (Austin 89–90). Fields then arranged a similar package upon the publication of Whittier’s volume *In War Time* the following March (the collection’s title poem already having appeared in the magazine).

8. Paula Bennett notes that “even highly trained readers” of the nineteenth century “ranked poetry’s music and its power to elicit high-minded sentiment as or more important than its ability to encourage thought” (“Introduction” xxxi).

9. Whitman and Emily Dickinson, not Poe, are now the fully canonical poets of nineteenth-century America. But Dickinson as a classic American author is a construction of the twentieth century. Before she became available, it was Poe who functioned as the “other” poetic rebel of nineteenth-century America, no less iconoclastic than Whitman but upholding a distinct set of alternative values.

10. Concerning *Leaves of Grass*, Griswold expressed amazement that anyone “could have conceived such a mass of stupid filth, unless he were possessed of the soul of a sentimental donkey” (“Review” [*Criterion*] 8–9), while to the *New York Daily Times*, Whitman “roots like a pig among a rotten garbage of licentious thoughts” and appears as a “Centaur,” “half man, half beast, neighing defiance to the world” (“Review” 40). A London reviewer judged Whitman “as unacquainted with art, as a hog is with mathematics. His poems . . . resemble nothing so much as the war-cry of the Red Indians” (“Review” [*Critic* (London)] 32). Even more viciously, the London *Critic* reviewer insisted that “the man who wrote page 79 . . . deserves nothing so richly as the public executioner’s whip” (“Review” 32), while a Boston reviewer also mentioned “the lash,” and despite calling Whitman “some escaped lunatic, raving in pitable delirium,” showed no pity, urging that he “be kicked from all decent society as below the level of a brute” (“Review” [*Boston Intelligencer*] 37).

11. Edward Wagenknecht supplies further evidence of the Quaker poet’s lifelong antipathy, noting that decades later he resisted contributing to a fund for a horse and carriage for the infirm Whitman in fear that this would be misconstrued as approbation of Whitman’s work (116).

12. In her analysis of the postwar “nationalistic narrative” of American literary value, Baym notes that the “disruptive” Whitman and Poe were “cast as pretenders—writers who were not ‘really’ American—and thus as foils to the central authors” (*Feminism* 81–82, 93). In effect, this process sophisticated the more heavy-handed moralistic distinctions of “character” predominant in evaluations of Poe and Whitman in the 1850s.
13. In *Kavanagh* Longfellow asserted that American literature “is growing slowly but surely, striking its roots downward, and its branches upward, as is natural,” and that it must strive to be “worthy of our forefathers” (85, 84). These metaphors of graduated organic development implied that literary value was defined by stability and continuity, even in a world of rupture and heterogeneity. Responding to a buffoonish nationalist who demands “a national literature altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth, like a herd of buffaloes thundering over the prairies” (85), Longfellow’s spokesman, Churchill, insists, “All that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal” (86).

14. For another, earlier example of this nationalist rhetoric, note Sarah Josepha Hale’s 1830 assertion that the “greatest obstacle to the production of works of originality among us is this—our writers copy European models” (qtd. Okker 87).

15. Lowell had already assaulted cultural nationalism in his 1848 satire of the literary scene, *A Fable for Critics*, where some of his harshest barbs were aimed at thinly disguised versions of nationalists Margaret Fuller, Rufus Griswold, and the “Young American” leaders Evert Duyckinck and Cornelius Mathews (36–42, 72–76).

16. The nationalist rhetoric Lowell and Longfellow were parodying can be sampled in this passage from Fuller’s “American Literature”: “What suits Great Britain . . . does not suit a mixed race, continually enriched with new blood from other stocks the most unlike that of our first descent, with ample field and verge enough to range in and leave every impulse free, and abundant opportunity to develope [sic] a genius, wide and full as our rivers, flowery, luxuriant and impassioned as our vast great prairies, rooted in strength as the rocks on which the Puritan fathers landed” (299–300).

17. In her *Poetry* editorials after 1912, Monroe would redefine the work of genius as thoroughly a product of its environment: “A masterpiece of art is not a miracle of individual genius so much as the expression of a reciprocal relation between the artist and his public” (“The Poet’s Bread and Butter” 197). For further discussion of her challenge to prevailing elitist models of literary value, see my forthcoming article “Poetry’s Opening Door: Harriet Monroe and American Modernism.”

18. From their earliest writings, the Fireside poets asserted the harmlessness, even the benefits, of the poet’s worldly penury. Note these comments from Bryant’s 1825 lecture series at the New York Aetheneum: “Who would think of fattening a race-horse? Complaints of the poverty of poets are as old as their art, but I never heard they wrote the worse verses for it” (*Prose Writings* 33).

19. In “Woodnotes II” (1841), Emerson theorized the analogical function of formally conventional verse, proposing that couplet rhyme corresponded to “the natural order of things” (Buell 111) and urging the reader to

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Come lift thine eyes to lofty rhymes,
Of things with things, of times with times,
Primal chimes of sun and shade,
Of sound and echo, man and maid,
The land reflected in the flood,
Body with shadow still pursued,
For Nature beats in perfect tune,
And rounds with rhymes her every rune. (Collected Poems and Translations 45)
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Thirty-five years later, in the late essay “Poetry and Imagination” (1876), Emerson returned to these same images to reassert the universality of rhyme and meter on analogical grounds (41). Beginning from powerfully analogical premises (“Nature itself is a vast trope”; “all thinking is analogizing” [13–14]), Emerson insisted on the value of formal regularity in verse, using the term *rhymes* to refer to formative “correspondences of parts in nature” such as “acid and alkali, body and mind, man and maid” (43). Given these commitments to convention, which led Emerson to approve Ben Jonson’s condemnation of Donne (“Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging” [qtd. 47]), we can’t be too surprised that he rejected Whitman’s work for the less jarring tones of the Cambridge circle.

20. For another evocation of the Fireside poets in their last years as ageless saints, see the 1888 remembrance in *The Writer* called “Whittier’s Advice to a Boy,” by Fred Lawrence Knowles, later a popular anthologist (*Golden Treasury of American Songs and Lyrics* [1901]). Though less ideologically resonant than Bok’s vivid narrative, it indicates that such reminiscences form an identifiable genre and suggests their role in the maintenance of a national genteel canon.

21. Bok’s autobiography is written in the third person.

22. Further evidence of the abundance of these gender stereotypes is supplied by Alicia Suskin Ostriker (30–32). This rhetoric of gender separation had both ideological and mundanely economic functions: Griswold’s sharp eye for the main chance meant that after he put together the 1854 volume *The Female Poets of America* (largely from material he had generated in assembling the 1842 *Poetry and Poets of America*), he left woman poets out of subsequent editions of the latter, creating two separate and unequal canons, one of “American Poets” (all male) and one of “American Female Poets.”

23. Beginning in the 1960s, feminist history and literary criticism took up the separate-spheres model with renewed vigor, reigniting interest in texts by nineteenth-century women: in Linda K. Kerber’s words, it “enabled historians to move the history of women out of the realm of the trivial and anecdotal into the realm of analytic social history” (37). But in recent years most of its basic assumptions have been challenged. In the issue of *American Literature* she edited in 1998, Cathy N. Davidson’s preface proclaims “No More Separate Spheres!” and argues that the separatist model perpetuates essentialist gender binaries “too rigid and totalizing . . . for understanding the different, complicated ways that nineteenth-century American society or literary production functioned” (445). In the same volume, Amy Kaplan’s essay “Manifest Domesticity” works to “shift the cognitive geography of nineteenth-century separate spheres” (582) by describing how the ideology of familial domesticity, supposedly elevated above the amoral fray of politics, instead helped to create “an American empire by imagining the nation as a home at a time when its geopolitical borders were expanding rapidly through violent confrontations” (583).

24. As early as 1832 we find Longfellow responding to conventional notions that literature, particularly poetry, begat “an effeminate and craven spirit” (“Defence of Poetry” 62) and “disqualified” its practitioners from “‘active life’” in a democracy (Haralson 333–35). Longfellow’s “Defence of Poetry” attempts an elaborate anti-instrumentalist definition of poetry’s use value, but even as he denies charges of effeminacy he fears their truth, remarking, in an unguarded moment a few pages later, “Another circumstance which tends to give an effeminate and unmanly character to our literature, is the precocity of our writers” (“Defence” 77). Longfellow has
insisted that poetry does not have to beget an effeminate and craven character, but "our literature" apparently has one nonetheless.

25. A growing interest in gender studies has yielded excellent discussions of the gender dynamics of Longfellow’s work by Eric Haralson and Matthew Gartner. Much as I propose here, Haralson argues that a "key source of Longfellow’s appeal" was "his advocacy of a cross-gendered sensibility—and, crucially, of a ‘sentimental’ masculinity—that answered to the experiential trials and affective needs of his audience" (329). Along slightly different lines, Gartner argues that Longfellow constructed in his work a "gentle male paternalism" that offered "safe places for women and men seeking shelter" (67). These arguments cannot be applied equally to all the Fireside writers, since Longfellow was in his day (and presumably is now) perceived as a more "sentimental" poet than, say, Emerson or Holmes. But I do propose that a similar combination of patriarchal authority and emotional sensitivity undergirded their canonicity in the century’s second half.

26. Bryant was the editor, publisher, and part owner of a major daily newspaper, the New York Evening Post, taking positions on almost every issue of public importance, for nearly forty years. When he died in 1878, he was "New York’s first citizen," without whose presence "no large public affair was considered complete" (C. Brown 1). Despite lifelong ill health, Whittier served as an antislavery editor, lobbyist, and state legislator, and became one of the most prominent figures in the abolitionist movement. Emerson left the Unitarian ministry to become a prominent essayist and commentator, making a good living by giving public lectures (Buell 57). Holmes lectured on poetry and medicine, contributed important papers on medical research in the 1840s, coined the term *anaesthesia*, and from 1847 was Professor of Anatomy and Dean of the Harvard Medical School (Small 13–15, 50–55, 64–65). Longfellow was Smith Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at Harvard before leaving to make a lucrative living by his verse. Lowell, also an intermittently active abolitionist, edited various publications, succeeded Longfellow as Smith Professor at Harvard, and served as a convention delegate and Presidential elector for the reform wing of the Republican party (Duberman 277–81); he eventually became U.S. Minister to Spain and then to England, as well as the first president of the Modern Language Association.

27. Patricia Okker argues convincingly that Lydia H. Sigourney should “share the credit now often reserved for Longfellow” for improving the economic conditions of American writers during the 1840s (95).

28. For discussion of this and a few other city poems of the Fireside writers, see Beach, Politics 118–22.

29. Along similar lines, Nancy F. Cott asserts that nineteenth-century canons of domesticity did not “challenge the modern organization of work and pursuit of wealth,” but rather “accommodated and promised to temper them” (69).

30. Female poets used images of the fireside as well. Mary Hewitt’s well-known verse “The Hearth of Home” (1854), for example, offered a textbook opposition of domestic and worldly: “My humble hearth though all disdain, / Here may I cast aside the chain, / The cold world-fetters that restrain” (137). However, Cheryl Walker usefully distinguishes between the psychological functions of the “sanctuary poem” in the work of male and female writers. For female writers, she argues, such poems usually reflect “a longing for isolation” (54) from the demands of domestic society and an ambivalent but powerful desire for the self-reliance that female consciousness
was conventionally denied. In contrast, male poets found in these poems a soothing space of domestic comfort and community, psychic respite from the alienating daylight world. This divergence can be linked to asymmetrical changes in the patterns of work done by men and women in nineteenth-century homes. Ruth Schwartz Cowan argues that “in almost every aspect of household work, industrialization serves to eliminate” tasks traditionally assigned to men (More Work for Mother 63–64). In particular, the replacement of the hearth by the coal-fired stove as the method of cooking and heating made it both more feasible and “more necessary that a man be employed outside the home” in wage labor, since unlike wood, coal required cash, but once procured, demanded less time and labor to maintain (Cowan, Social History 194–95). Exempted from such time-consuming and strenuous chores as wood chopping and pounding meal, men came to perceive the home as “a place of leisure,” whereas for most women “it retained its character as a place of labor” (Kerber 32–33). Cowan agrees, arguing that technological advances such as the enclosed stove “meant more work rather than less” for women (Social History 195). Imagery of enclosure remained a productive and prevalent trope throughout twentieth-century American women’s verse, as Lesley Wheeler’s recent study The Poetics of Enclosure demonstrates.

31. Cook describes these “vulgar and babyish” fake fireplaces as the “funniest of all the fashionable humbugs of our time” (112, 111). But he doesn’t appear to be smiling.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. There are no intensive critical studies of these alternative verse venues of the 1890s and 1900s. They are still part of what Cary Nelson calls the “yet unwritable” history of modern poetry, unwritable because we lack intellectual grasp of—and often, physical access to—the “full range of modern poetic texts” dealing with sociopolitical issues (Revolutionary Memory 12). This history becomes a bit more writeable with each attempt to address these long-invisible writings, especially ones as painstaking as Mark W. Van Wienen’s exhaustive archival analysis of American verse about the Great War.

2. One of the most revealing defensive dynamics of turn-of-the-century genteel culture was its busy, even obsessive, generation of new venues of institutional authority, such as the Modern Language Association (1884); the exclusive National Institute of Arts and Letters (1899); its even more exalted inner circle, the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1904); and the Hall of Fame for Great Americans (1900).

3. The Oxford English Dictionary dates the use of “jingle” to refer specifically to advertising from 1930, but the disparaging connotations of the word to refer to trifling, repetitive, or singsong sound go back centuries.

4. For an excellent discussion of the turn-of-the-century “Demise of the Gentle Reader” (though it makes no reference to poetry), see Christopher P. Wilson’s The Rhetoric of Consumption (41–43).

5. This view of modernity as impending cataclysm was exacerbated by the turn of the century itself, an event characterized, as Hillel Schwartz notes, by a “runaway inflation of rhetoric . . . due to a feeling that the times were racing ahead faster than ever before” (167).

6. The number of magazines published in the United States jumped from about
700 in 1865 to around 3,300 by 1885 and 5,100 by 1895 (Tebbel and Zuckerman 57, 68). Jay Martin details the increasingly energetic and aggressive marketing methods used by magazine publishers after the Civil War (17). Theodore Greene describes the improvements in magazine distribution made possible by the growing railroad system and, after 1879, by “increasingly indulgent treatment of magazines in the Post Office” (61).

7. The largest circulation of the quality group was achieved by the Century, which peaked at 222,000 in 1887, but after 1890 declined to around 150,000 and to 125,000 after 1900. In 1930, with a circulation of 20,000, it was merged with the Forum (John 233, 271).

8. Greene points out that mass-magazine publishers and editors came not from “the world of books,” as most genteel magazine editors had, but from “the worlds of business and of newspapers” (66).

9. Though he is referring to the daily newspapers of these years rather than to magazines, Trachtenberg’s description of an emergent “language of mass intelligibility” (124) also emphasizes the necessity of seeing beneath the strategic claims of stylelessness made by ideologists of mass culture.

10. The items in “Etchings” had never been indexed individually, but the sections had always appeared in the volume indices. After 1903, however, “Etchings” and its successor “Light Verse” floated weightlessly through the volumes, entirely indexless.

11. See Saltus, “The Colossal City” and “New York from the Flatiron.” In the May 1905 issue, offering his editorial impressions from the eighteenth floor, Frank Munsey concluded that he “couldn’t tell in a hundred magazines all there is to be seen from this aerial floor” (“Impressions by the Way” [1905] 188).

12. We can measure this poem’s deficient identification with its urban subjects by comparing it to a poem of similar situation, William Blake’s “London.” Blake’s speaker is aware of a certain distance from his subjects—the hapless soldier, the forlorn chimney sweep, the horrifying young harlot and blasted baby—a distance that comes from his ability to observe, synthesize, and articulate their pain rather than being consumed by it. But he admits no essential difference between himself and them, saying that “I wander” through every “charter’d street” just as they must, and “mark in every face I meet” their “marks of weakness, marks of woe” (65). Blake’s speaker, genuinely empathetic, does not exclude himself from the scarring experiences of city life: as he marks the faces of these others, they mark him.

13. See such celebrations of manly struggle as “A Man-Song” by William R. Lighton and “The Love of the Day’s Work” by S. H. Kemper; Susan Buell Hale’s patriotic “The Alamo—March 6, 1836”; Cy Warman’s “Will the Lights Be White?” and Arthur Stringer’s “In the Open,” both evocations of the thrills of railroad life; and Warman’s “The Search for Gold,” a surprisingly ambivalent meditation on prospecting in the West. Through his Associated Literary Press, which sold material to a syndicate of newspapers, McClure had been largely responsible for introducing the young Rudyard Kipling to American audiences in 1890 (H. Wilson 53). When he began his own magazine, he drew upon Kipling early and often. The first volume featured “The Merchant-Man,” and several other verses, including the notorious “The White Man’s Burden,” appeared within the first ten years.

14. See also Henry Newbolt’s “Admiral Death” (July 1898) and Mary Stewart Cutting’s “On the Field” (July 1899).
15. More interesting examples of this martial verse can occasionally be found, such as the series “Songs of the Ships of Steel” (June 1898) by the naval historian James Barnes. These verses are composed in balladlike forms evoking traditional nautical chanteys (which Barnes was engaged in compiling and editing); yet they explore various aspects of contemporary nautical experience and technology, including the ferocious incendiary capabilities of modern warships, the careerism of ambitious young officers, and the endurance of the brave fire-room “gang” who maintain the ship’s mechanical operations.

16. McClure’s continued to feature Markham’s politically charged verse through 1899, including “Dreyfus” in September and “The Song of the Muse of Labor” in December. The latter, an optimistic counterpart to “The Man with the Hoe,” suffers from the sense of anticlimax that afflicts many sequels; however, its celebration of “Unselfish Service” reinforces the moral authority of the earlier poem, making clear that it is not labor per se that Markham protests against, but the soul-killing toil of a “world gone wrong.” Of course “Labor” refers not just to physical toil, but also to organized labor movements, which “bring the hope of Nations” and the promise of a “Fraternal State” (123).

17. Yearly advertising revenues for the Post, which totaled $6,933 in 1897 when Curtis bought it, reached $1,266,937 in 1907 and topped $16 million by 1917 (Tebbel and Zuckerman 141).

18. Others in this series of parodic nursery rhymes, which Carryl took to calling “Grimm Tales Made Gay,” were “Little Red Riding Hood,” “The Bottled Giant,” “Jack and the Beanstalk,” and “Pears and Toads.” “Little Red Riding Hood” exemplified the magazine’s campaign against both genteel poetry and Progressive do-gooding, describing an insufferably perfect little girl: “at six she was so notably smart / That they gave her a check for reciting The Wreck / Of the Hesperus wholly by heart” (but of course she gave this money to the poor). By the age of eleven she was teaching Sunday school, and the following year she “wrote a volume of verse.” She is eventually eaten by the wolf masquerading as her grandmother, mercifully so in the facetious speaker’s view, since it saves her from the hideous fate of being a “woman of awful renown / Who carried on fights for her feminine rights,” a creature who would no doubt “come to write verse for the Big Magazines!” Carryl’s moral fell comfortably into line with the Post’s distrust of the exceptional achiever in artistic and intellectual pursuits: “There’s nothing much glummer / Than children whose talents appal. / One much prefers those that are dumber.”

19. Braxton’s introduction to Dunbar’s Collected Poems surveys the cultural debates that Dunbar’s African American dialect poems triggered (x, xxiii-xxviii) and describes the limiting effects of white advocates like Howells, who tended to emphasize Dunbar’s verse in black dialects while ignoring his work in traditional literary forms and voices (xvi-xvii).

20. For examples contemporaneous to the poem, see the ads for Knox’s in the issues of January 5, 1901 (14), and March 2 (16); for Cream of Wheat on February 23 (inside front cover); and on April 20, for a “Rubber Brownie,” a strange toy figurine manufactured by B. F. Goodrich depicting a strutting and goggle-eyed black male in tuxedo and tails (which the ad makes a point of describing as “lifelike”) (18).

21. Joan Morris’s booklet notes to After the Ball (Elektra/Nonesuch 9 79148–2) put the song’s sales at five million, while Nicholas Tawa estimates its sales at “over 2 million” (44); this is a large discrepancy, but there is no disagreement over its posi-
tion as the genre’s first true mass seller. Morris notes that until “After the Ball,” a sale of 100,000 copies had been considered “a miracle.”


23. Sandy Petrey suggests the curious tonal influence of Dresser’s sentimental popular songs on his brother’s Sister Carrie (108–9).

24. Note also Fred J. Barnes’s lyrics to “The Girl I Loved ‘Way Out in Indiana” (1906): “Years have passed since I left dear old Indiana, / And perhaps I’ll never see its soil again.” Perhaps because the songwriters could count on their audiences’ familiarity with the sentimental “Hoosier Poet” James Whitcomb Riley, Indiana became the geographical epicenter of the nostalgic song—rather in the same way that the major political parties routinely chose Ohioans for their presidential candidates between 1865 and 1920.

25. David Nasaw notes that even in the 1870s and 1880s, “‘nightlife’ was still the preserve of the wealthy few” (2). His book Going Out details the startling emergence after 1890 of new sites of urban leisure geared to mass audiences: nickelodeons, amusement parks, professional baseball and other sports, vaudeville and melodrama theatres, and dance halls.

26. Figure 2, a scene of Cairo Street on the Midway, suggests exactly the sort of mingling evoked in the song. The group posed in the center of the picture consists of male and female tourists in their finery, posing with two dark-skinned men, presumably Arab, wearing white headgear.

27. In contrast, the cover illustration of the 1922 song “You Can Have Ev’ry Light on Broadway (Give Me That One Little Light at Home)” (words by Benny Davis, music by Seymour Simons) captures the growing segregation of urban and suburban realms even two decades later. The cover of “Take a Car” affirms continuity between these two realms through the presence of the trolley and conductor in the suburban pastoral. On the later song’s cover, this continuity is replaced by two separate and irreconcilable spaces, in which the innumerable lights of the Great White Way are confined to an inset, while the main image is a lone cottage silhouetted against a night sky, surrounded by foliage. This binarized conceptual model is also evoked by the parenthetical syntax of the song’s title. All these signifiers reiterate that the earlier synthesis of urban and suburban is giving way to a rigidly framed choice of either/or.

28. The intervening verses have airily celebrated horse racing, prostitution in the “tenderloin,” and even embezzlement (in the person of a cashier who absconds with the entire contents of the company’s safe, leaving “not a cent inside, just a card that was all, and it read: / Meet me in St. Louis, Louis”).

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Many of these polls were related to recurrent debates concerning an official institution of American culture, eventually realized in the National Institute of Arts and Letters. The 1884 poll in The Critic asked its readers to choose “Our Forty Immortals,” just from persons living at that time: the three living Fireside poets, Holmes, Lowell, and Whittier, were the top three vote-getters (“Our Forty Immortals” 169). In The Critic’s 1893 poll on “The Best Ten American Books,” the collected verse of Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, and Whittier placed between third and
eighth, matched only by Emerson’s *Essays* and three works of fiction (*The Scarlet Letter, Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and Irving’s *Sketch Book*).

2. Stedman’s many contributions to poetry of this era included *An American Anthology, 1787–1900* (hereinafter cited as AA), the detailed critical commentary *Poets of America* (1885) (hereinafter cited as PA), and an edition of the complete poems of Poe, coedited with George Edward Woodberry (1895).

3. Many commemorations echoed this distinction between Holmes’s personal worth and the aesthetic value of his work: “As a writer of verse, he is scarcely entitled to a place among the immortals” (Boyesen 162); he “may not have been great, in the sense of genius, nor immortal, as the world writes its narrowing record of fame” (E. Brooks 164); “Nothing he did in verse will entitle him to be called great” (Fawcett 166); “As a poet, his work . . . has not the highest imaginative quality” (Burton 166); “the essayist rises higher than the poet” (Garland 167). Oscar Fay Adams devoted his remarks to describing the damaging results of too freely using the adjective “great” in reference to poets; for him Holmes was “A delightful author . . . but hardly more” (162).

4. Even in 1885, Stedman had noted of his “collection of sketches, articles, debates” on American poets that “the Whitman and Poe packages, before the deaths of Emerson and Longfellow [in 1882], were each much larger than all the rest combined” (PA 350). In the same year, a volume on Poe by George E. Woodberry was issued in Houghton Mifflin’s prestigious American Men of Letters series (Casper 199). The publishers pushed for Whitman’s inclusion in this project, citing “a continuous and permanent interest in him” (qtd. Casper 190), but this was blocked by series editor Charles Dudley Warner’s distaste for the poet. After Warner’s death, the publishers brought out their Whitman volume by Bliss Perry in 1906.

5. Though Saltus (1855–1921) was older than the poets I discuss in part 3, he anticipated their skepticism toward genteel traditions and their anxiety over the apparent futility of literary endeavor. His 1884 poem “History” deconstructs the notion of history as a discipline of human enlightenment. Instead, from the pages of history books “streams / The incoherent story of the years, / The aimlessness of all we undertake” (*Poppies* 5). Much as George Santayana’s sonnets would do a few years later, the poem’s final lines reject genteel assumptions about community, society, and materiality for an alienated, “spiritual” individualism: “I think our lives are surely but the dreams / Of spirits, dwelling in the distant spheres, / Who as we die, do one by one awake” (5). The value of poetry for Saltus, as for Santayana, was to enact that rejection and to evoke that otherworldly ideality.

6. Holmes “leaves neither successors nor imitators” (N. Brooks 163); New Englanders “are not watching as eagerly to-day for the words of our singers as their fathers did for the poems of Lowell, Whittier, and Holmes, which were so splendidly prophetic as well as truly poetic” (G. Morris 195).

7. This rumor about the *Atlantic’s* waning commitment to poetry was not wholly inaccurate. By 1904 the number of poems in the magazine had been declining for several years. In 1900 (volumes 85 and 86), 75 poems had appeared in its pages, but in 1901 this dropped to 51, followed by 46 in 1902, 40 and 41 in 1903 and 1904; in 1905 the magazine’s support for poetry reached a nadir, when just 24 poems appeared there. The numbers began to rise a bit again in 1906, but only to 33.

8. The notion that turn-of-the-century poets were defined by imitiveness and conventionality has dominated American literary history from its beginnings as an
academic field, at least since 1930, when Fred Lewis Pattee described them as “The Transition Poets” and concluded that the “twenty years following 1890 produced little of distinctive verse” (194). See also Larzer Ziff’s influential assertion that with few exceptions, the poets of the 1890s “wrote sonnets, odes, and dramatic monologues which they believed to be American extensions of English Victorian poetry. Their lines were sounded with the flatness of a tone-deaf singer” (307).

9. In this quatrain “rhyme” can refer to the genre of poetry, as it often does. But this is virtually the only extant Crane verse employing a systematic rhyme scheme. Its uniqueness suggests that he also had the specific meaning of a formal technique now seen as obsolete and artificial, as does his parodic echo of Longfellow’s “A Psalm of Life,” the quintessential homiletic text of American poetry, which begins, “Tell me not, in mournful numbers, / Life is but an empty dream!—/ For the soul is dead that slumbers, / And things are not what they seem” (Complete Poetical Works 5).

10. The Atlantic’s implicit endorsement of Watson’s reactionary position came just one year before it published the advocacy of messianic innovation made by R. W. Gilder’s poem “A New Poet” (discussed below). This incongruity cannot be attributed merely to the happenstance of an eclectic, wide-ranging publication. The Atlantic was not eclectic; it had formulated, and had come to embody, the well-defined ideology of American genteel culture. Its internal contradictions reflected the growing incoherence of that culture.

11. Even the aged Oliver Wendell Holmes shared the anxiety of late-century writers that their creations would be lost amid an endless swarm of writing, the more anonymous and ineffectual as it expanded in volume. In “Cacoëthes Scribendi” (1890), Holmes imagines a world in which

... all the trees in all the woods were men;
And each and every blade of grass a pen;
... every sea
Were changed to ink, and all earth’s living tribes
Had nothing else to do but act as scribes,
And for ten thousand ages, day and night,
The human race should write, and write, and write...

Yet even after all this writing, Holmes concludes whimsically, “Still would the scribblers” “Call for more pens, more paper, and more ink” (300–1).

12. To some degree this constricting writer’s market can be viewed as a consequence of the rise of mass magazines. By commissioning many articles, soliciting pieces by well-known writers, and maintaining a cadre of staff writers, these new magazines had “an often-drastic effect” on unsolicited acceptances from little-known writers (C. Wilson, Labor 53). For discussion of these perceptions of exclusion, see Howells, “The Editor’s Relations with the Young Contributor”; “Of Editors and Their Critics”; “Is Genius Neglected by the Magazines?” and “Why Are Manuscripts Rejected?: A Symposium.”

13. In his classic account The American 1890s (1966), Ziff saw this kind of censoriousness as so central to the quality magazines that he entitled his chapter on them “The Tinkle of the Little Bell”—a metaphor used by Howells as Atlantic editor to describe the editorial alarm at anything that might be considered offensive: “I tried to catch the tinkle of the little bell when it was not actually sounded” (qtd. Ziff 126).
14. On the other hand, there were also schemes to profit from this sense of exclusion by throwing open the doors of publication to anyone willing to pay for an overpriced anthology volume, such as *Local and National Poets of America* (1890), whose epigraph read “Great oaks from little acorns grow” (Herringshaw i); and the unrealized project for a periodical called *Columbia Poetica*, which, as Munsey’s put it derisively in 1899, aspired “to embalm in type the metrical effusions of the great army of the perpetually ‘rejected’” (“A Poets’ Pantheon” 472).

15. As Ronald Martin details, the Spencerian notion of the “universe of force” had a much greater impact in the United States than in Europe: “not only did it become a factor to be reckoned with in American science, philosophy, and religion, but it penetrated to levels of the American population never before reached by any formal philosophy save Christianity” (9). Martin’s study traces “a motley school” of American pseudo-philosophers who used “the broadest, vaguest ideas of force, God, evolution, progress, providence, and ideality” to present “visions of a force-reconciled universe” (79). For a discussion of poetry’s future that partakes of exactly this cluster of ideas, complete with adulatory references to Spencer and Fiske, see Charles J. Goodwin’s 1895 essay “The Poet in an Age of Science” (131–34).

16. The Chatterton handkerchief is reproduced and briefly described by E. H. W. Meyerstein (475–76).

17. If well-established writers of the era contended with entrenched institutional indifference, younger poets had to count themselves lucky even to be mentioned, and if mentioned, to have their names printed correctly. Among the less fortunate was Robinson, whose reviewers, while mildly favorable overall, turned him with comical frequency into “Edward” Arlington Robinson. Richard Cary estimates that almost one-fifth of Robinson’s notices before 1910 made this error, including, ironically, “his glittering impresario Theodore Roosevelt” (15). Even when the reviewer got it right, things could still go awry, as in Clinton Scollard’s article of 1903, which included an elegant photograph of the poet, captioned “Edward” (Scollard 234). Perhaps Robinson’s most enthusiastic early notice, William Morton Payne’s review of *The Children of the Night* (1897) in the *Dial*, was just a single paragraph in length and identified the author as “E. H. Robinson” (Payne, “Recent Poetry” 92).

18. The date of the play’s composition is taken from Monroe, *A Poet’s Life* 179.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. After 1880, apprenticeship in skilled trades declined precipitously, as a growing middle class, financially able to delay the entry of its children into the workforce, sought more education to secure rewarding white-collar careers (Kett 144–50). The result was a phenomenal increase in enrollment in high schools, colleges, and professional and technical schools between 1875 and 1900, which suddenly prolonged the period of education far beyond the norms of just a few years earlier (Kett 154–55, 178–79).

2. The classic elaboration of the concept is G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (1904).

3. Cheryl Walker’s helpful analysis of Amy Lowell employs the Bloomian notion of the “covering Cherub” to describe James Russell’s inhibiting effect on her early creative development (Masks 34).

4. Not all of these young men were from privileged backgrounds. But Stickney,
the son of a classical scholar, was descended from a colonial governor of Connecticut
and spent most of his childhood in the European emigré circles Henry James wrote
about. Lodge, son of the powerful Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, possessed so much
social and cultural capital that the preface to his posthumous collected works was
written by Theodore Roosevelt and his biography by Henry Adams! Lodge and
Stickney were intimate friends for many years, entering the Sorbonne together in
1895 after their graduation from Harvard. Though they became close only after their
college years, Robinson and Moody remained literary confidantes to the end of the
latter’s life. In 1902 Moody worked hard to get Houghton Mifflin to publish
Robinson’s Captain Craig, which was the volume that garnered him national (and
presidential) attention and, thanks to Roosevelt, a sinecure in the United States
Customs House in New York City (Letters to Harriet 27–28). Moody and Lodge (along
with John Ellerton Lodge) served as Stickney’s literary executors and coedited the
posthumous edition of his works.

5. In later decades Santayana would commemorate several other luckless poetic
aspirants, all in residence at Harvard during these same years, who died before they
could develop any reputation at all, such as Thomas Parker Sanborn
(1864–1889), Philip Henry Savage (1868–1899), and Hugh McCulloch (1869–1902)
(Santayana, “Thomas Parker Sanborn” 46–47; Santayana, Letters 306; for a brief dis-
cussion of these poets, see Whittle 47–49).

6. Santayana makes virtually the same argument in his Dial review of the 1922

7. In suggestive readings of the philosophical treatises The Sense of Beauty and
Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, which were published in the five years after
these poems appeared, Lentricchia offers a different Santayana, a pioneer of modern
genesis grounded in “the immediacy and inviolable integrity of perception,”
who seeks to move “from isolate sensibility to community, from poems as aids to
perception to poems as aids to connection” (6). These illuminations are not borne out
in Santayana’s verses of the 1890s. While some may evoke the pleasures of percep-
tion, they almost never escape, and are often built upon, a fin de siècle sense of being
“imprisoned in an isolated subject” (5) that Lentricchia’s more modern Santayana
reacts against. In effect, the sonnets dramatize the impasse that the philosophical
works move beyond.

8. In “Arion” Brooks sardonically elaborated on this convention by describing a
contemporary poet who “with surpassing minstrelsy” creates “such ravishing
delights” as have never been heard before. But the fate of even this unmatched poet
is grim: “But what can break the links of lucre’s chain: / The sailors scowled, the
bard plunged in the main” (Margins 34). Brooks’s metaphors flatly equate moderni-
ity with the enslaving force of money.

9. This equation of medieval culture with spiritual integration was also seen in
the philosophical underpinnings of The Chap-Book, whose founder Herbert S. Stone
arrived as a freshman at Harvard in 1890. Stone began issuing The Chap-Book there
as an undergraduate periodical, and with his classmate H. I. Kimball started their
publishing firm at the university before moving to Chicago in 1894, at which point
Stone undertook the magazine’s production on a lavish and ambitious scale
(Schlereth 9). Also notable is the presence at Harvard during this same period of
Herbert Copeland and Fred Holland Day, who stayed in Boston to set up their own
publishing company (Schlereth 32). Both Stone & Kimball and Copeland & Day
exemplified the American aestheticist approach to the book not as a commodity of modern mass production, but as a unique object of beauty.

10. This generalization applies not only to Harvard poets but to some of their Ivy League contemporaries. The Dartmouth graduate Hovey hatched a monumental cycle of nine verse dramas on Arthurian mythography, managing before his death to complete three of them (*The Marriage of Guinevere*, *The Birth of Galahad*, and *Taliesin*).

11. Though he has garnered almost no attention from historians, Hugh McCulloch traced exactly the same path as his better-known classmates; the only volume he published during his lifetime took its title from the longest poem, *The Quest of Heracles* (1894).

12. This work, begun in 1901 well before Stickney’s death but never completed, was published posthumously as “Fragments of a Drama on the Life of the Emperor Julian” (Poems 133–60).

13. Of the Harvard poets, Moody was the most capable of engaging with modern themes, and his “western” play *The Great Divide* actually enjoyed significant success on Broadway in 1906 and on the London stage the following year. But this play was not written in verse, thus preserving the era’s conventional divide of subject matter between prose and poetry.

14. The theme, imagery, and tone of “The Shadows” are strikingly reproduced in Hugh McCulloch’s “Obsession” (1902), suggesting their centrality to aspiring turn-of-the-century poets. The speaker of “Obsession” describes a “vivid dream of hidden might” in which his “incantations” evoke the spirits of the canonical dead, whom he commands to “tell / Their wisdom, glory, ignorance, and fright.” But his feelings of might are illusory, and the experience quickly turns alienating (“The outlines of their forms I could not see, / I could not understand the words they said”). He finds that these spirits, once evoked, are impossible to control or escape and ends up confined by them in a prison of his own learning: “The spells which called them could not make them flee. / And still surrounding me with shapes of dread, / They who obeyed me once now master me, / And life is like a vigil with the dead” (*Lines Written in Florence* 16).

15. For an example of the more contented erotics of the turn-of-the-century bachelor, see Archibald Douglas’s verse “To My Cigar,” published in *Munsey’s* in 1896. Eulogizing his diminishing cigar in terms that would be grotesque if they were not so preposterous, this speaker has no need of an actual fireside, since “The warmth, the fire / That in you lies, / I’ve valued with / A lover’s eyes”; and no need of an actual lover, since “I’ve touched your lips / In fond caress, / I’ve smoothed the wrinkles / Of your dress” (152).

16. The poems that immediately follow—“Outward,” “The Voyage,” “A Song for Waking,” and “The Greek Galley”—insistently reiterate the impulse to “Sail ever on thy mystic voyage, / Cut loose, up anchor from the shores of thought” (1:120) that Lodge identifies with Whitman. These intensifying rhetorical gestures culminate in perhaps Lodge’s most Whitmanesque poem of all, “A Song for Revolution.” But this poem’s impassioned rhetoric never quite makes it clear what the poet is rebelling against and eventually substitutes classical reference for contemporary specificity, asserting that “the fire of rebellion we cherish is Promethean” (1:138).

17. This is not to say that Hovey’s response to expansionism was not rife with
unexamined self-contradiction, a problem perpetuated by this remark from the only critical book on the poet: “If Hovey had any doubts about the righteousness of America’s cause, all he needed to do was watch the stock market go down with every news release about the war; for anything that hurt Wall Street had to be good” (Linneman 44). Such an attitude testifies to the intensity of Hovey’s convictions, but in its assumption that “America’s cause” in Cuba was inversely related to the fortunes of “Wall Street,” to their extreme political naiveté as well.

18. For more of Hovey’s intemperate responses to the war, see “The Word of the Lord from Havana,” “The Call of the Bugles,” and “America,” grouped together in the 1898 volume Along the Trail.

19. The classic articulation of cosmic isolation in Crane’s verse is Daniel Hoffman’s view of the poet as the “literary figure as isolato” (6; see also 6–8). While I certainly agree that Crane’s wandering personae are isolated, this isolation emerges most vividly when they are placed into jostling proximity with a contrasting Other.

20. The poem beginning “Many red devils ran from my heart / And out upon the page” (Black Riders 49) is another well-known example of this topos. Other variations can be found in “Many workmen” (Black Riders 32); “I have heard the sunset song of the birches” (War Is Kind 27); “The trees in the garden rained flowers” (War Is Kind 65); and the fragment beginning “intermingled” (Poems and Literary Remains 77).

21. Stevens and Williams are apposite references here for another reason: Brooks is likely unique in American poetry in receiving extensive training in both law and medicine. The only informative scholarly reference to Brooks is Carlin Kindilien’s brief commentary, which draws heavily upon the memoir by Wallace Rice introducing Brooks’s posthumously published poems. Kindilien does accurately note that Brooks “broke cleanly with the sentimental and humorous tradition” of the day’s popular poetry to engage in intriguing formal experimentation (131, 203–04).

22. The verse form of “Titular,” a loose trochaic tetrameter without rhyme, conveys to today’s reader a modernity surprising for its date of origin. Here and elsewhere, Brooks found quietly effective ways of passing beyond the slavish reproduction of traditional forms. According to his close friend Wallace Rice, by the time Margins was published, Brooks had been powerfully influenced by Whitman, as suggested by the invocatory poem “To Him” (x-xi). That this influence is not obvious in Brooks’s verse, in contrast to the painfully unassimilated imitation of Whitmanesque diction and imagery seen in Hovey and Lodge, suggests Brooks’s promise as an original creative figure and makes his demise all the more poignant.

23. In “Autumn Refrain” (1931) Wallace Stevens would use this ambiguity of “still” for very similar purposes, again suggesting Brooks’s sensitivity to strategies of the New Poetry he did not live to see: “And yet beneath / The stillness of everything, and being still, / Being and sitting still, something resides, / Some skreaking and skrittering residuum... / And the stillness is in the key, all of it is, / The stillness is all in the key of that desolate sound” (Collected Poems 160).

24. Brooks’s fascination with marginality might have been catalyzed by personal misfortune: a laboratory accident at Harvard that “sadly marked” his face with acid burns, “not to a degree which would cause repulsion or even criticism, but internally, . . . setting him apart from his fellows, and leaving a scar upon an ambitious and sensitive nature” (Rice, “Francis Brooks” viii).
NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. In the 1910s, this intense interest in the meanings of modern structures would become a defining manifestation of the New Poetry’s power to address the everyday experience of twentieth-century life. See my article “The Footprint of the Twentieth Century: American Skyscrapers and Modernist Poems.”

2. The $250,000 needed to build the statue had been raised in France during the later 1870s, and construction was almost complete by early 1883. In the United States, however, the comparable amount needed for the foundation and pedestal was not easily forthcoming, and in March 1883 Congress rejected another appropriations request, requiring the statue’s supporters to redouble their private fund-raising efforts. Lazarus wrote “The New Colossus” for an auction of manuscripts and artworks held on December 3, 1883, an event that included contributions by Longfellow, Whitman, Mark Twain, and Bret Harte (Vogel 159). Over the next two years the cause was led by Joseph Pulitzer of the New York World, who hoped the issue would establish him as the nation’s most important publisher. Finally, on August 11, 1885, Pulitzer ran the headline “Triumphant Completion of the World’s Fund for the Liberty Pedestal”—along with a cartoon depicting the statue on a pedestal prominently blazoning the name of his paper! The real pedestal (without this feature) was completed in April 1886 and the statue unveiled on October 28 (Bell and Abrams 35–50).

3. The title of another of Thomas’s important urban poems, “Anima Urbis,” echoes Whitman’s assertion of a modern materialistic poetics in “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”: that the material things of the city furnish “parts toward the soul” (188). “Anima Urbis” is a highly personal appreciation of New York City, which the poet frankly admits adoring as a “lover,” for “many years” the very circumference and center of her world. She has no love for “Great Nature,” whose “vacant heavens” and “lonely wind-tides” seem “sad to me as Sophoclean seas.” In contrast, she tells the city raptly, “Your casual glimpses of the stars suffice, / Your chary sunsets are of precious sard; / Your yearning towers bloom agate as they rise, / Where men enskied do work—and Heaven keep guard!” (378). Thomas’s city allows people to achieve the sky, yet still do productive work in this world. As in “Broadway,” Thomas here evokes an important liminal function for urban verse: to explore yet unrealized but newly imaginable horizons of modern experience.

4. Decades before the Civil War, land bordering the Schuylkill River west of the city had been set aside as a preserve for the metropolitan water supply. The buildings of the Fairmount waterworks, opened in 1822, became one of the central tourist attractions in the eastern United States for the next half century, far outstripping Philadelphia’s historical sites in popularity (Stevick 72; cf. 72–86). Designated a city park in 1867, Fairmount was greatly enlarged over the next few years and housed the 1876 Centennial Exhibition. By 1900 it was the second largest city park in the world (Rhoades 348), containing an extensive boating culture, colonial mansions and other historic buildings, a Horticultural Hall and zoo, and the faded but still famous elegance of the reservoir.

5. Of course, there were plenty of verses toeing the designers’ party line, such as Richard Watson Gilder’s “The ‘White City’” (1893), which portrays the Neoclassical Court of Honor as modern embodiment of the “undying seed” of originary Euroamerican ideals: “Ah! happy West—/ Greece flowers anew, and all her temples
soar!” (602). Interestingly, Gilder does acknowledge one of the tricky ironies of the Columbian Exposition: the ephemerality of the White City as a physical structure, at odds with its ostensible significance as a symbol of eternal human ideals (“One bright hour, then no more / Shall to the skies / These columns rise”). But genteel idealism demands that Gilder immediately neutralize this disquieting insight, and he flees flawed materiality for weightless metaphor: “But though art’s flower shall fade, again the seed / Onward shall speed / Quickening the land from lake to ocean’s roar” (602).

6. Fordham was an African American writer of whom little is known other than her 1897 volume *Magnolia Leaves*, printed in South Carolina with a preface by Booker T. Washington.

7. Fordham’s “Atlanta Exposition Ode” portrayed the 1895 fair in Atlanta as bridging the “chasm” of North and South, unionist and rebel, black and white. Quoting the famous catchphrase of Booker T. Washington’s Atlanta speech, “Cast down your buckets where you are” (32), her poem strikes a strongly conciliatory note, as did the whole Exposition (which included buildings “devoted to women and to African-Americans, the latter portraying blacks as an economic asset” to soothe the concerns of prospective investors that the South had a continuing “‘race problem’” [Gray 323]).

8. Occasionally the ode strikes an arresting image that points toward modern directness, as in the portrayal of Columbia-America as a lithe young female athlete: “what would she / With all the out-worn pageantry / Of purple robes and heavy mace and crown? / Smiling she casts them down, / Unfit her young austerity / Of hair unbound and strong limbs bare and brown” (*Valeria* 225).


10. Most structures in the White City were made of staff, a plaster and fiber material designed, as Miles Orvell notes, for ease of demolition (35). In the event, many of the Exposition’s buildings proved rather too easy to demolish, outlasting the fair by just a few months before being devastated by fire in January 1894. Neil Harris notes in nicely deadpan fashion that “The White City vanished more quickly than it had appeared” (9).

11. According to L. G. Moses, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show made almost a million dollars profit in Chicago in 1893 (218). Moses’s article “Indians on the Midway” is the most thorough recent study of the contesting representations of Native Americans on the midway, which included a model Indian School sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a more “primitive” Indian village constructed by the fair’s Department of Ethnology and Archaeology, various unregulated commercial concerns, and Cody’s show just outside the gates (210–19). But it does not clarify the position of Rain-in-the-Face as captive or showman.

12. Given Libbie Custer’s friendships with Chicagoans, her tendency to showmanship (“There was a bit of the ham in her,” her biographer Lawrence Frost remarks [275]), and her longtime association with Cody and other Wild West spectacles, it is surprising that she apparently did not visit the Columbian Exposition. Possibly the actual presence of Rain-in-the-Face took all the savor away.

13. This relationship has been a convention of historical accounts of the war at least since the 1930s; see studies by Wilkerson (1932) and Wisan (1934).

14. The anti-imperialist anthology *Liberty Poems*, published two years later after
the war had turned sour, is briefly discussed by Cary Nelson as part of an “opposi-
tional intertext” within turn-of-the-century American poetry (Revolutionary Memory
23).

15. This chronology is drawn from the editor’s notes in Santayana’s Complete
Poems (671–72).

16. Beginning in the second half of 1899, anti-imperialist editors around the
country had reprinted a series of sensational personal letters written by American
soldiers to their families, describing atrocities against Filipino soldiers and civilians.
By the time of the poem’s composition, the issue was a subject of inflamed public
debate, exacerbated by the military administration’s extreme reluctance to pursue
any corrective action. The knowledge and tacit acceptance of American atrocities has
been traced all the way up to Elwell S. Otis, the self-proclaimed “Military Governor”
of the Philippines (S. Miller 52, 64, 88–89).

17. In a July 1902 letter to his future wife, Harriet Brainard, Moody articulated
this complex combination of pride in American idealism, shame over its corruption,
and anxiety over its future course: “Poor blundering, grudging, generous land! To
free Cuba with one hand, and with the other quietly remove all possible chance for
her to live decently—or indeed to live at all. . . . As for the recent disclosures in the
Philippines, . . . they are too sickening to talk or think about. Shall we ever be able
to hold up our heads again? The little flag you sent me on the Fourth of July seemed
striped and stained with that innocent blood. I wonder how we shall wash it out”
(Letters to Harriet 136–37).

18. Other evocations of Saint-Gaudens’s relief include Charles Ives’s tone poem
Three Places in New England (1903–1914), John Berryman’s “Boston Common”
(1940s), Robert Lowell’s “For the Union Dead” (1960), and the 1989 film Glory,
directed by Edward Zwick.

19. Garth Wilkinson James, William’s brother, was an officer in the Massachusetts
54th who was wounded at Fort Wagner. The section of William’s dedication speech
perhaps most resonant for Moody was his redefinition of true courage away from
bravery in battle with an external enemy, toward the struggle against the structural
injustices of one’s own society, a form of courage that Shaw and his soldiers exem-
plified: “of five hundred of us who could storm a battery side by side with others,
perhaps not one could be found ready all alone to risk his worldly fortunes in resist-
ing an enthroned abuse. The deadliest enemies of nations are not their foreign foes;
they always dwell within their borders” (qtd. “Memorable Words” 635).

20. The ode was received as a significant intervention in the Philippine debate,
generating nationwide acclaim in anti-imperialist circles. Atlantic Monthly editor
Bliss Perry felt it was “the finest American political poem in thirty years”; Nation edi-
tor Oswald Garrison Villard remembered “the sensation it created in newspaper
offices around the country”; and Massachusetts Senator George F. Hoar, a leader of
the anti-imperialist faction in Congress, cited lines from it in his speeches and writ-
ings (M. Brown 107).

21. The textual evidence amassed by Fredson Bowers in the Virginia edition of
Crane’s works leads him to conclude that almost all these poems were written before
Crane went to Cuba in 1898 (Poems and Literary Remains 232–33). In his 1966 critical
edition The Poems of Stephen Crane, however, Joseph Katz places several of them later
than Bowers, during the war itself. In the discussion that follows, where it seems
important to do so, I will indicate both scholars’ dating.
22. Crane reported on the Greco-Turkish War between April 1897 and its armistice in May. However, David Halliburton and others have noted Crane’s ability, famously in The Red Badge of Courage but also in his verse, to capture the bitter and chaotic experience of battle before he actually witnessed it. Halliburton concludes aptly, “the poet was disillusioned before the correspondent” (301).

23. “The one specter that really haunts the modern ruling class, and that really endangers the world it has created in its image, is the one thing that traditional elites (and, for that matter, traditional masses) have always yearned for: prolonged, solid stability” (Berman 95). In modernity, “stability can only mean entropy, slow death, while our sense of progress and growth is our only way of knowing for sure that we are alive.” For Marx, of course, the perpetual development of modernity augurs the bourgeoisie’s fall to a revolution generated by “the active and activistic energies that the bourgeoisie itself has set free” (94).

24. Katz dates the poem as late 1898 or early 1899 (223). Many American newspapers, especially the New York dailies pioneering “the journalism that does things” (qtd. Wilkerson 83), which they called “New Journalism” (and we’re now inclined to call “Yellow”) had lobbied for American intervention in Cuba as early as 1895, aggressively seeking out sensational incidents designed to increase circulation. By then stories and pictures generated by these major dailies were being syndicated nationwide, drastically increasing the impact of their interventionist rhetoric (Wisan 33). In February 1897 a correspondent for the New York World, one of Crane’s close friends (Crane, War Dispatches 274), was arrested by Spanish authorities while attempting to gain access to the rebel forces. The monthlong detainment of Sylvester Scovel, decried from Congress and state legislatures to small-town churches and newspapers, dramatically inflamed American attitudes toward Spain (Wilkerson 10–12). The bitter rivalry between Pulitzer’s World and the Morning Journal, which Hearst had taken over in 1895, drove both papers to escalating interventionist fire-works that garnered phenomenal increases in daily circulation (both topped eight hundred thousand by early 1898, and the Journal’s morning run spiked to over one million in the days after the Maine disaster [Wilkerson 8, 118; Wisan 26]). See Marcus Wilkerson and Joseph Wisan for exhaustive accounts of the intertwining of the Cuban insurrection with the developing ideologies and economics of American newspaper journalism.

25. This critique of the daily newspaper’s influence upon its readers’ sense of history has been well expressed by Alan Trachtenberg: “Unlike the printed page of a novel, the newspaper page declares itself without mistake as good only for a day, for this reading only: as if today’s history of the world has nothing in common with yesterday’s or tomorrow’s, except the repetition of the typographical form” (125).

26. For many years Dunbar-Nelson worked as a journalist, and all her life she contributed articles of political commentary to periodicals, clearly maintaining a belief in journalism’s progressive potential.

27. For other stimulating recent studies of Crane’s prose, see Michael Fried, Realism, Writing, Disfiguration; Mary Esteve, “A ‘Gorgeous Neutrality’”; Christopher P. Wilson, “Stephen Crane and the Police”; and Keith Gandal, The Virtues of the Vicious. The most substantial recent work on Crane’s verse is the chapter in David Halliburton’s The Color of the Sky (1989), which does note the protean qualities of Crane’s writings but leaves the critical tradition largely intact by identifying his verse as primarily “philosophical”—that is, “Poetry about life in general” (269–70).
The standard Virginia edition of Crane’s complete writings pairs his verse with his fragmentary and miscellaneous prose in a volume entitled “Poems and Literary Remains.” Though no doubt based on sound organizational exigencies, this arrangement offers ironically appropriate comment on the odd relation of Crane’s verse to his canonicity within American letters.

28. This “one” whose kindness exasperates and inhibits the aspiring creator also evokes Crane’s minister father, a “loving, unworldly soul” (Hoffman 48) who died before Stephen’s eleventh birthday, his kind, admonishing eyes remaining only in family pictures and in the memory of his son, who was thus deprived of a flesh-and-blood object for his rebellion against genteel piety.

29. Well, then, I hate Thee, unrighteous picture; Wicked image, I hate Thee; So, strike with Thy vengeance The heads of those little men Who come blindly. It will be a brave thing. (Black Riders 13)

30. Christopher Benfey makes a related point in discussing the striking typography of Crane’s first volume of verse, *The Black Riders* (Copeland & Day, 1894) which is printed entirely in bold capitals that “suggest scare headlines” (127). However, Benfey undermines the force of this observation when he refers to “In a Lonely Place” as “one of the few poems in *The Black Riders* that address contemporary reality” (127), implying that the dominant mode of Crane’s verse is philosophical abstraction.

31. The manuscript has “fetless,” presumably a misspelling of “feckless,” which most editions have substituted.

32. Linda Davis provides a helpful account of Crane’s college years (26–34). It’s fair to call baseball the most wholesome of his majors.

33. The difficulty of maintaining clear-cut divisions between experience and information is also illustrated by the practices of very early sports broadcasting, in which a studio announcer with just a schematic telegraphic or telephonic account of the action would invent details that enlivened the game for radio audiences who had no other access to it. In this scenario we can posit at least four categories, including “active participation” (the players), “active spectatorship” (those physically present at the stadium), “passive participation” (the announcer who constructs its events though he was not there), and the “passive spectatorship” of the radio audience (even here, it can be argued that this last group must “re-create” the game imaginatively).

34. Christopher Wilson’s painstaking account of the wildly varying newspaper accounts concerning Crane’s run-in with the New York Police Department in the “Dora Clark Affair” provides a related demonstration that discourses of mass culture, in the “journalistic carnival” of turn-of-the-century metropolitan newspapers, resist a single “detached, Panoptical vantage point” (“Stephen Crane and the Police” 279).