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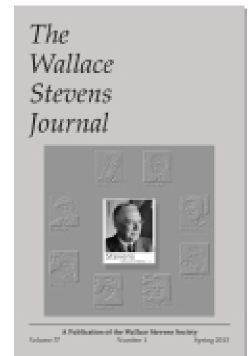

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The Maker's Rage: Narrative in Stevens' Poetry

CARRA GLATT

COMMONLY CONSIDERED among the most abstract of twentieth-century American poets, Wallace Stevens has rarely been read for his narrative qualities. After an early attempt at conventional narrative with the mock epic "The Comedian as the Letter C," Stevens largely abandoned sustained plotting in favor of a renewed commitment to the lyric and contemplative modes that would dominate his career. The few critics who have considered the narrative features of Stevens' works—Daniel R. Schwarz in *Narrative and Representation in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens* and, more recently, Milton J. Bates in "Stevens and Modernist Narrative"—have emphasized his revisions of conventional narrative structures. The storytelling impulse, they argue, far from being absent from Stevens' poetry, is rather redirected into an overarching intellectual quest narrative that informs both individual poems and the Stevens canon as a whole: if there are few traditional plots in Stevens, there is nonetheless an ongoing investment in an extended *Künstlerroman* that rivals the journey of the novelistic hero. Citing Roman Jakobson's distinction between the metaphoric and metonymic poles, Bates adds that Stevens' long poems establish covert narrative sequences by replacing the metonymic figuration normally associated with realist prose with an equivalent metaphoric order, a gesture he identifies with prevailing trends in modernist narrative.[1] Yet, from the rewriting of the biblical story of Susanna in "Peter Quince at the Clavier" to the tropical voyage of canto XXIX of "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," Stevens also constructs a number of narratives that follow more traditional patterns of plotting and characterization. In this article, I will discuss several such narrative poems, considering the reasons behind Stevens' decision periodically to utilize conventional plots and how that choice informs our understanding of his larger aesthetic journey.

The Case for Narrative

"Metaphors of a Magnifico" is not a narrative poem, but it does, perhaps better than any other in Stevens' corpus, encapsulate the poet's negotia-

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tion between competing literary modes. Its opening images are metaphors only in the most technical sense:

> Twenty men crossing a bridge,
> Into a village,
> Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,
> Into twenty villages,
> Or one man
> Crossing a single bridge into a village.
> (*CPP* 15)

Since one bridge is not twenty, and twenty men are not a single man, the statements satisfy—barely—the plain meaning of metaphor, equating two (or, in this case, three) different scenarios. But these are hardly the imaginative transformations of the poet; indeed, were it not for the title, we would not read them as metaphors at all, but as a philosophical formula about the nature of perception. Each of the twenty men has a distinct subjective experience of the crossing of the bridge: twenty men crossing *en masse* are twenty men having parallel but entirely separate experiences. The men, however, are not the only ones whose perceptions must be considered. The Magnifico, one of Stevens' many creator figures, presides over the poem, the maker of metaphors and manipulator of men. But if his metaphors are not the images of imaginative poetry, then what are they? Belonging entirely neither to lyric nor to philosophy, these opening statements suggest the varied possibilities of narrative, the way the mythmaker can inflate one village into twenty or the novelist can shrink epic experience into the drama of the individual consciousness. The unit of marching men becomes twenty potential stories to be told, which becomes the single story selected, by authorial fiat, out of all the others that might have been.

The Magnifico manipulates reality, taking an image and turning it into a more satisfying story. Stevens, however, seems frustrated by the result: "This is old song / That will not declare itself . . ." (*CPP* 15). The reference to "old song," rather than *an* old song, detaches his objection from the specific and moves it instead into the realm of genre: that which "will not declare itself" is the old song of the epic tradition of narrative poetry. Stevens' use of the verb "declare" suggests the disparity between the inherent reality of the scene and the Magnifico's magisterial impositions; he declares a fictive reality that does not otherwise "declare itself" to the viewer empirically observing the world.

While Stevens—or perhaps the Magnifico himself—appears to be unhappy with this narrative distortion of reality, its clearest alternative serves him no better:

Twenty men crossing a bridge,
Into a village,
Are
Twenty men crossing a bridge
Into a village.

That will not declare itself
Yet is certain as meaning . . .
(*CPP* 15)

In this formulation, the two sides of the putative metaphor are identical, a point emphasized structurally by the isolation of "Are." While the line lengths of the ostensible equivalencies in the first stanza are wildly disparate, the twin statements around the central word here are arranged symmetrically, reflecting each other literally rather than metaphorically. This mirroring of reality, like the old song, will not "declare itself." In this case, however, the failed declaration is not a result of the image's lack of correspondence to reality, but of the failure of pure mimetic representation to say anything at all. If the first sentence is a potential metaphor that turns into simple assertion, "certain as meaning" is rather a seeming assertion that is better read as simile: the image is *as certain as* meaning, but is not in itself meaningful. Indeed, it may not even be certain: the statement ends on an ellipsis, further complicating what initially appears to be an affirmation. Twenty men crossing a bridge do have twenty different experiences; in the world seen through limited and subjective perspectives, reality can be determined only by an assertion of a necessarily subjective vision. Choosing accuracy over imaginative transformation, the artist who commits himself to mimesis alone resigns his role as the declarative force that might have rendered his world coherent.

Once he has done so, the poet loses all capacity to shape or respond to reality in meaningful ways:

The boots of the men clump
On the boards of the bridge.
The first white wall of the village
Rises through fruit-trees.
Of what was it I was thinking?

So the meaning escapes.

The first white wall of the village . . .
The fruit-trees. . . .
(*CPP* 16)

The syllogistic sentences of the beginning of the poem have broken down into fragments, the stories they contained dissolved into impressionistic sensations: clumping boots, a blank wall, trees.[2] In one sense, this seems like a productive development, a collapse of rigid narrative formulations that permits the birth of the modernist lyric. Yet, Stevens presents it instead as a total loss of imaginative agency. Deprived of the conscious thought ("Of what was it I was thinking?") that could have imposed a meaning that instead escapes, the poet, no longer the Magnifico, trails off into ellipsis.

In the end, "Metaphors of a Magnifico" suggests the need for a compromise between the two modes. Narrative elaboration is a contrivance that privileges story over discourse, the overarching structures of plot over the impressionistic particulars of poetry. At the same time, the other extreme—lyric description unmediated by the narrative impulse to order, shape, and manipulate reality—ends in the denial of the poet's imaginative agency. It is only through the synthesis of these two competing modes that the Magnifico's metaphors can acquire, not the stable meaning that could be only a simplification, but the capacity for meaningful articulation.

The Terms of the Compromise

This is not to say that the balance need be symmetrical. As Schwarz and Bates suggest, the narrative mode in Stevens is more forceful as an implicit shaping mechanism in otherwise non-narrative poems than as an equal counterpart to lyric. There is no cohesive story in Stevens' long poems, but there is nonetheless an order to them that transcends their segmentation into numbered cantos. Sometimes this order is explicitly rhetorical, as in the further division of "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" into three canto sequences ("It Must Be Abstract," "It Must Change," and "It Must Give Pleasure"), each representing one step in a progression from the most conceptual to the most narrative to the most sensory aspects of poetry. It can also be, as Bates suggests, associative and metaphorical. "The Man with the Blue Guitar" opens with a dialogue between the player, whose blue guitar transforms reality, and his audience, who demands that he play a tune "Of things exactly as they are" (*CPP* 135). Like many of Stevens' narrative personae, the guitarist and his companions are even less developed novelistic characters than what Henry James, in his preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, called *ficelles*, nominally differentiated figures that have a functional role rather than a realized subjectivity (73–74). Part of, rather than contained within, the structural apparatus of the poem, the personae are formal components of a narrative framework that need not enclose a story to serve to modify the impulse toward lyric abstraction. The story that the

poems do contain is less a plot than a meta-plot, a fiction about fictions that dramatizes the poet's search for meaning and expression as part of an epic quest narrative.[3]

Following this general rule, "The Man with the Blue Guitar" uses the opening dialogue, not as the beginning of a story, but as a formal pretext for a series of meditations on the nature of art. Stevens teases epic possibilities in the second canto ("I sing a hero's head," the narrator says [*CPP* 135], following Homer and Virgil), but never realizes them, instead abandoning any pretense of particularity by replacing the guitarist and his listeners with a narrative "I" and a responding, generic "we." At the same time, the closing of the poem refers implicitly to its first lines, creating a narrative continuity established through sequences of images rather than sequences of events. In the first canto of the poem, the day is green and the guitar blue, an irregular color scheme that reflects the non-mimetic representational world of the modern artist. In the last canto, the narrator seems to pull back from this aesthetic, confining to inspired moments the imaginative freedom that offers such an unusual palette:

> Here is the bread of time to come,
>
> Here is its actual stone. The bread
> Will be our bread, the stone will be
>
> Our bed and we shall sleep by night.
> We shall forget by day, except
>
> The moments when we choose to play
> The imagined pine, the imagined jay.
> (*CPP* 151)

The imaginative and actual worlds are here strictly separated. The visions of night will be forgotten by day, unmentioned save in delineated moments of artistic expression—or so the speaker claims. His words, however, betray him. An "imagined pine" and an "imagined jay": green and blue, side by side, at last as at first. Yet, this time the imagined and the actual have merged. Before, the day was green and the guitar blue only by grace of art. But it takes no painter's brush to keep pines green in winter, and no poet's pen to send a blue jay out into the morning. What the narrator relegates to an isolated imaginative realm is in this case a property of the world of the actual. The improbable palette does not belong to art alone; playing things "exactly as they are" can also mean reflecting a world that satisfies the deepest desires of the imagination. As in "Metaphors of a Magnifico," what is required is not a choice but a synthesis, both of art and nature and of competing generic modes. The blue of aesthetic distortion is also the

blue of a natural aesthetic; the narrative momentum that propels the poem is carried out in the images of lyric.

What happens, then, in those rare moments in which Stevens allows the narrative mode to predominate? One obvious answer is that his characters cease to exist mainly as projections of his own poetic imagination. Indeed, Stevens seems to insist in these poems upon the particularity of his characters. In "Cy Est Pourtraicte, Madame Ste Ursule, et Les Unze Mille Vierges" (a title translated by Eleanor Cook as "Here is depicted Madam Saint Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins" [43]), a female worshipper in the habit of leaving exquisite bouquets on the Lord's altar instead makes a humbler, private, even bizarre offering of radishes and flowers. Hearing her appeal, "Half prayer and half ditty," as she leaves her tribute, the Lord feels "a subtle quiver, / That was not heavenly love, / Or pity" (*CPP* 17). Like so many of Stevens' characters, Ursula is an artist, of a sort, choosing her colors with care (she "gathered them, / With flowers around, / Blue, gold, pink, and green") and composing an extemporaneous prayer that Stevens compares to song. She is distinctly not, however, an aesthete. The poem, from its Old French title to the description of Ursula's usual bouquets, full of marguerites and coquelicots rather than daisies or poppies, flirts with a higher register that it consistently rejects. Radishes replace roses; holy liturgy becomes a demotic "ditty." The poem itself, with its inconsistent stanza lengths, irregular meter, and shifting rhyme scheme, shuns obvious marks of finely wrought poetic design. For His part, G-d, the ultimate Creator, against whose transcendent truth Stevens will later write his "supreme fiction," is humanized: "The good Lord in His garden sought / New leaf and shadowy tinct, / And they were all His thought." The products of the garden are "all His thought" in two senses. He is preoccupied with them, but they are also, literally, the manifestations of His omnipotent will: G-d spoke, and they were so. Yet, He finds, Pygmalion-like, that His desire for His own creations outstrips even the power that conceived them. In an inversion of the more typical dynamic of a Stevens poem, in which a nominally individualized persona takes on the qualities of the poet-narrator, in "Cy Est Pourtraicte" the Creator figure instead becomes imbued with physical desire for an embodied woman.

This is Stevens at his most human. Yet, he does not require narrative to serve as an antidote to intellectual abstraction. Poems like "The Plain Sense of Things" and "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" demonstrate Stevens' ability to write in domestic and local, as well as cosmic and universal, tones, even without recourse to conventional narrative. Beyond these detours into a comparatively intimate regionalism, however, Stevens' poetry serves as a refutation of the notion that a focus on the aesthetic is incompatible with a concern for the human. That the setting of "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" is the poet's mind, rather than a grove or garden, or that its characters are a poet and his muse, rather than a man and his lover, does not minimize the force of its "intensest

rendezvous" (*CPP* 444). Both the lyric and the narrative poem, Ursula's elegant coquelicots as well as her homely radishes, are offerings that arise from and bear witness to human concerns and desires.

Instead of asserting the necessity of conventional narrative, Stevens perhaps makes use of a more traditional plot structure in order to challenge it. Ursula, as the poem's title reveals, is St. Ursula, a legendary martyr who was murdered with her 11,000 virgin handmaidens while "fleeing the persecution of Christians and/or an arranged marriage" (Cook 43). Using an established figure, rather than a generic persona, further humanizes the character, allowing a preexisting literary and historical tradition to provide the contextualizing details that Stevens, in such a brief poem, cannot offer. Yet, his allusion to the Ursula story also draws attention to what is missing from the poem: there are no marriage, no attempted escape, and no 11,000 virgins. The only evidence that Stevens' Ursula is, in fact, St. Ursula comes from a title that is deliberately alienating, written, not just in French, but in archaic French that, if it does not entirely prevent comprehension, at least encourages the reader to turn his attention at once to the more accessible English text. The story we are left with is the Ursula legend stripped to such bare essentials as to be unrecognizable. Indeed, it has become an iteration of the oldest narrative, involving, as it does, a man, a woman, and a garden, even if the man happens, in this case, to double as G-d Himself.

What do we lose when narrative is so ruthlessly curtailed? Not much, suggests Stevens. Certainly, extended narrative has a scope that the lyric poet cannot match. When we first read the solemn title of the poem, we may not recognize the absurdity of its promise to portray Ursula and the 11,000 virgins. In retrospect, however, the notion that the limited scope of either a "pourtraicte" or a brief poem could possibly contain their story becomes comic, a satire on the pretensions of an artist who lacks all perspective about the parameters of his craft. Part of the joke is that his ambition is unnecessary: a love poem cannot do what an epic can, but neither can an epic match the quiet eroticism of the lyric. "This is not writ / In any book," the poem ends (*CPP* 17), challenging both the religious and secular narrative traditions. Unlike Holy Writ, in which a man-god can be imagined only if he is perfected past the ordinary limits of humanity, the poem dares to represent an unabashedly sexual deity. But the poem's critique of narrative extends beyond this bawdy defiance of Scripture. No book, Stevens' speaker claims, contains such a story: while the prose narrative can accommodate Ursula and her martyred legions, the lyric is better equipped to capture the momentary stirring at the heart of the tale. The poet *can* produce conventional narrative, as Stevens here proves, but his claims do not depend upon it. Just as the epic story of Ursula can be done justice in a lyric vignette, so the more sublimated narrative structure of other poems allows for an aesthetic grounded in the human.

In "Cy Est Pourtraicte," Stevens turns to narrative to challenge narrative. Elsewhere, he will use it to question the essentialist mythologies that pervert stabilizing structures into rigid totalities. In several respects, the story of Nanzia Nunzio in canto VIII of the second section of "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" reads like a rewriting of "Cy Est Pourtraicte." Like Ursula, Nanzia, whom we find "On her trip around the world" (*CPP* 342), is a figure whose actions within the poem take place against the backdrop of a larger, implied narrative context. She, too, makes an offering at the altar of a deity, of sorts, and she too is placed in an eroticized relationship with that god, even as she, like Ursula, appears before him "like a vestal long-prepared." Yet, while in "Cy Est Pourtraicte" it is Ursula whose sexual longing for her creator remains sublimated as the Lord feels an unmistakably carnal "quiver," in the canto in "Notes" the dynamic is reversed: Nanzia bares herself before Ozymandias, while he, impassive in the face of her nudity, tells her that "the spouse, the bride / Is never naked. A fictive covering / Weaves always glistening from the heart and mind."

Nanzia's display is less liberating than it may at first appear. Both stories—of Ursula and Nanzia—narrate the paring away of adornment: Stevens, as I have suggested, reduces the narrative tradition surrounding Ursula to its barest essentials, while Nanzia literally strips naked. Nonetheless, the two acts are fundamentally opposed. The deflation of the Ursula story leaves untouched—or, indeed, allows for the creation of—those lyric particulars that tell her tale more intimately than any epic: her story resides, not in mass martyrdoms or heroic resistance, but in radishes and flowers, the tears of a supplicant and the arousal of a god. What Nanzia Nunzio tries to rid herself of, by contrast, are precisely the particulars that Stevens preserves in "Cy Est Pourtraicte":

> I am the spouse. She took her necklace off
> And laid it in the sand. As I am, I am
> The spouse. She opened her stone-studded belt.
>
> I am the spouse, divested of bright gold,
> The spouse beyond emerald or amethyst,
> Beyond the burning body that I bear.
>
> I am the woman stripped more nakedly
> Than nakedness, standing before an inflexible
> Order, saying I am the contemplated spouse.
> (*CPP* 342)

Having traveled the world in search of experience, Nanzia now prepares herself for an encounter with unmediated reality. Shedding the trappings of culture in the desert sand, she presents herself naked, not any longer as Nanzia, but as an avatar of the eternal feminine. More naked even than nakedness, she transcends language: her nudity is the very form of nudity, the word itself a mere approximation that must be defined against her undeniable presence.

Nanzia is more naked than nakedness, too, because her self-negation extends well beyond divestiture of artificial ornamentation. The progression of discarded objects runs from the man-made to the body itself. She begins with the necklace and the belt, objects of human manufacture and design, before moving on to gold, emerald, and amethyst—stones that, despite their use in the craft of jewelry, are found in nature. Finally, she is beyond even her own "burning body." Rather than celebrating an immediate human reality, she seeks incorporation within a Platonic world that surpasses it, a world in which her eroticism, like Ursula's, can be channeled into service to an ideal.

In doing so, she becomes more destructively depersonalized than any of Stevens' poetic personae. If those figures are undifferentiated, it is because they are imaginative surrogates whose role is to create rather than to be. A degree of self-suppression is the price of aesthetic vision: Stevens must be able to imagine himself, not only as the Hartford insurance lawyer he was during the day, but as a rose rabbi or a Spanish guitarist or a dreaming woman, just as the ephebe must start by emptying himself of private preconceptions and become "an ignorant man again / And see the sun again with an ignorant eye" (*CPP* 329). Nanzia, by contrast, is a figure, not of creation, but of annihilation, a quality suggested almost immediately by her name. Literally, "Nunzio" means messenger or ambassador (Cambon 105), as in a Papal Nuncio. The name also, however, carries sonic resonances of a series of negations: Nanzia Nunzio suggests *non* and "none" as well as nonsense, the latter reinforced by the tongue-twisting quality of the alliterative name.

Rather than being contradictory, the two senses of the name, one laden with meaning and the other a denial of it, are intimately linked. Nanzia believes in a reality beyond artifice. Eventually, Ozymandias will tell her explicitly that there is no such thing: "the bride / Is never naked. A fictive covering / Weaves always glistening from the heart and mind" (*CPP* 342). In the meantime, her effort at engaging with the real consists of no more than the replacement of particularizing fictions—her own name, the ornaments she wears—with totalizing narratives. To assert oneself by saying "I am" is already to concede that the knowable self is a verbal construct; it is a conceit worthy of a Magnifico. But to conclude that declaration, on the other end of an enjambed phrase, with "As I am, I am / The spouse" (*CPP* 342) is to replace a private assertion of reality with submission to a preexisting paradigm, or indeed, to several paradigms. Whether as the

bride in an alchemical marriage between flesh and spirit, as primitive ur-woman, or as heavenly messenger, Nanzia Nunzio is a figure of myth, the "contemplated spouse" created out of the mind of men or gods.

Far from resisting artificial adornment, Nanzia has merely shifted her role in the aesthetic landscape from potential creator to resigned creation. "As I am, I am" is an echo of G-d's self-identification in Exodus 3:14: "I am that I am" (*JPS*). But Nanzia, neither a divine nor human artificer, cannot permit that assertion to stand unmodified. She rejects the opportunity to create herself through words, first bounding her existential declaration within the limits of a paradigmatic espousal, then demanding of her groom that he define her with language's shaping power: "Speak to me that, which spoken, will array me" (*CPP* 342).

Nanzia, however, seems to have misinterpreted the nature of the supreme fiction. Standing before Ozymandias, she believes that she is in the presence of "an inflexible / Order" (*CPP* 342), a transcendent design in which the naked earth-mother's destiny is to shed her humanity and achieve consummation with the infinite. She sees herself and him, in other words, as part of a narrative progression that must end in completion and perfection. But Ozymandias is a poor representative of permanence. While the dynamic intended by Nanzia and her spouse is one of worshipper and deity, Ozymandias is not Stevens' nor Nanzia's to use in an arbitrary manner, but a distinctly non-divine figure imported from P. B. Shelley's famous poem of that name. He is the broken statue of a man who thought himself a god, the evidence that all human power will prove transitory in the end.

The fragility of her idol creates a difficulty for Nanzia Nunzio, the woman who would be spouse, the body that would be spirit. She seeks in him the absolute and unchanging, and longs to be herself apotheosized and perfected as wife of the god-king. To replace her cast-off garments, she asks to be clothed "entire in the final filament" (*CPP* 342), imagining an end to the transformation she initiates in laying her necklace in the sand. Her meeting with Ozymandias can be a "Confront[ation]" only because he refutes—if only she would acknowledge it—the assumptions that guide her. But the impermanence that should exclude him as Nanzia Nunzio's chosen lover is also what allows Ozymandias to emerge as Stevens' hero. In Shelley's "Ozymandias," the plinth's words serve to mock the fallen tyrant: beside a broken statue, in the desert wasteland where a forgotten empire once stood, the inscription on the pedestal of the statue proclaims, "'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: / Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'" (62). In Stevens' account, however, Ozymandias is given the last word with his defense of the "fictive covering" (*CPP* 342). No matter how fallen, he suggests, how degraded and decayed, creator-man is never naked so long as he has a mind with which to clothe himself.

The perfection that Nanzia Nunzio seeks would be the death of art. The first section of "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" instructs the ephebe

that "It Must Be Abstract," a dictum that might satisfy Nanzia, ever seeking after an ideal she mistakes for the most vital reality. The second section, home to Nanzia and Ozymandias, declares that "It Must Change." Ozymandias, the king who became a statue, the statue that became a ruin, is an embodiment of this principle. Even as an aesthetic subject, he does not rest: he is represented by the sculptor, ironized by Shelley, and recuperated by Stevens. The final address to Nanzia reflects his own awareness of change: although she has consistently called herself "the spouse," it is of "the spouse, the bride" that he speaks. A woman cannot be a spouse without being first a bride, and as she changes, so too do the human inventions that cover her, from the woven veil to the ever-weaving imagination that sees her, even in the marriage bed, through a screen of romantic idealism and subjective perception. But these fictions, unlike the ones Nanzia imagines, do not demand her negation. Dynamic forms capable of adapting to the human metamorphoses of a mortal woman, they remind us that she need not transcend the body to find a satisfying aesthetic.

Ozymandias is not the only statue in "Notes." In the third canto of section II, we encounter "The great statue of the General Du Puy," of "a permanence, so rigid / That it made the General a bit absurd, / Changed his true flesh to an inhuman bronze" (*CPP* 338). He has completed the transformation that Nanzia sought, from body to bronze, from the man he was to the story that remains. But if he begins the canto as the perfected Nanzia, he ends it as the fallen Ozymandias: "Yet the General was rubbish in the end." He is a reminder, like Shelley's Ozymandias, that all is transitory, and a reminder, like Stevens', that all should be: the truest death is not to die at all, to be excluded from the mortal's lot of change and decay. He is a call, as well, for a human art: it is not merely the General, but the *general* that is rubbish in the end. The General falls, and the abstraction of the poem's first section gives way to the change of the second and the pleasure of the third. Still, as Stevens' narratives remind us, dreamy lyricism and detached intellectualism are not the only paths to inhuman abstraction. The narrative structure that works against the collapse of meaningful articulation into allusive fragments is a version of the same order that, at its worst, keeps monstrous statues standing and turns passionate women into vestals or symbols, into spouses that have never been brides and will never be mothers. Narrative has its place in Stevens. But when it becomes dominant, it is, more often than not, to remind us that it should not be.

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Notes

[1]Jakobson's original argument can be found in his 1956 paper "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances."

[2]In Bates's reading of the poem, this passage represents the breakdown of initial narrative promise into "metaphor-challenged aphasi[a]" (164); it is the loss, not of met-

onymic sequence, but of transformative metaphor that causes the breakdown of meaningful signification.

[3]For a comprehensive account of Stevens' poetic avatars, see Frusciante.

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