

# THE THIRD STANZA

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From the Tybee Island Lighthouse  
(for Lilly Pasche)

1

At the top,  
the light goes round  
and round.  
At the bottom,  
there is no light  
at all.  
I can never go  
back down,  
but I wish the stairs  
were not spiralled so.  
They go round,  
and round  
and the night becomes  
a few dim  
consolations,  
scattered over glass.  
Each time the light  
goes past,  
it turns my face  
and other people  
and places  
into a circle  
of thin constellations.

2

After  
the white light  
there's the blue light,  
and after that,  
there's nothing.  
The pavilion  
and the ocean liner  
go on  
just as they did  
before, waiting  
for someone else  
to discover them.  
The slim girl,  
thinking

about nothing,  
keeps on swimming  
out to sea,  
my son  
curled about her heart.  
The light,  
the light that searches  
for the bottom,  
does not replace  
the dark.

3

It almost  
puts one to sleep,  
the turning  
and turning.  
I never *really* see  
anything  
except the ocean liner  
moving slowly across  
the horizon,  
the slim girl  
swimming  
and swimming.  
I hear the sounds,  
the indecipherable sounds  
inside, down  
the stairwell,  
and I listen.  
I listen to the dark,  
where the center  
always breaks,  
nothing ever  
really  
keeps.

4

I thought  
there would be others  
at the top.  
I thought  
the slim girl  
could come along too.  
I do not know  
what I sought  
up here,  
the lights  
having scattered so,  
and all my pages  
turned to glass.  
And the old folks  
along the shore,

who have never seen  
the ruined castles  
in Spain,  
think everything  
would change  
if their only son  
would only  
come down to shore  
again.

Anyone who has written seriously or, even worse, attempted to teach students how or how *not* to write knows that one of the most difficult aspects of the creative process to understand and hence teach is the critical process, the process of revision, the phase in which the artist or writer becomes the critic. It is rare indeed that a piece of writing, whether poetry or prose, forms as perfectly as crystals with just one “seeding.” In effect, during the critical process, after most of the “fun” of the imaginative process has ceased to be “fun,” the writer actually feels himself or his *other* self moving back from the object, moving toward a proper aesthetic distance from the work, to become the fiercest member of his audience — the critic. This by no means should imply, of course, that writers who become their own critics will ever make the particular pieces of writing perfect. There is, in fact, a great deal of antagonism between the two selves, as there is no doubt between the idealist and realist; but the point is that the critical self attempts to hone away the jagged edges of the imaginative self. This is difficult because the imaginative self is almost always trying to salvage its freedoms and special interests while the critical self is almost always trying to make the imaginative self sober. But, as we all know, this is the nature of the beast; conflict is an integral part of the creative process. It is, nevertheless, a difficult concept to explain because it involves paradox and the interdependence of selves — sometimes being one self, sometimes being the other self, and sometimes being both. It is even more difficult to stand before a group of students one day encouraging them to write automatically, to write freely about subjects of interest as a means of lessening their fears of writing, then a few days or weeks later to inform them that they must use words carefully, that they must be meticulous in the use of their language. This is precisely, however, the process through which many of us struggle in an attempt “to make it right”; we begin, more often than not, with a few loose scribblings and move on

toward a tight or sophisticated diction; and I believe it is encouraging, at least comforting, to students to realize and see that we as teachers and writers share their frustrations of trying to make decent sentences, choose the best words, and focus into, through, and beyond our objects.

Hopefully, then, without appearing overly presumptuous, I would like to share one of my fairly recent frustrations — the process of making the third stanza of “From The Tybee Island Lighthouse” (*Descant*, Winter ’82). Perhaps a few ancillary comments will be helpful. Quite honestly, I have been fascinated for as long as I can remember with lighthouses and the ocean. Apparently, the case was the same with Florence Martus (1868-1943) who, before and during WW II, as the story goes, waved a lantern or handkerchief from the Tybee Island Lighthouse off the coast of Georgia to every incoming and outgoing vessel, in the hope that her estranged lover, who had gone to sea, would be reached and would return. Somehow, though I never knew the lady, she has become for me my Laura, Beatrice, Fanny Brawne, Maud Gonne, Lilly Pasche, and all the rest of them, except that I have selected from the actualities and sensitivities and used them for my own purposes. For example, the Tybee Island Lighthouse does not really have a “blue” light, though it *should* have one. It occurred to me during a lecture and discussion once that a “blue” light was very appropriate for intellectual discussions. I was on the Bakalar Campus in Columbus, Indiana, one evening and my students and I were having a rather interesting discussion involving existentialism and self-actualization, after I had assigned readings in Camus, Sartre, Tillich, Buber and Maslow the previous week. Our discussion suddenly seemed to reach an impasse. That was when I glanced out the window to notice the turning blue light of the Bakalar searchlight, consequently replying to my students that “At the top, the light goes round and round.” That was when the poem actually began, in the print of my mind, though it had no doubt been germinating semi-unconsciously for some time. In passing, I do not think my students and I solved the intellectual *cul-de-sac*; we were not supposed to; we were supposed to motivate ourselves into a thinking process which would transform us into a creative or expository writing process. This the intellectual or philosophical discussion did do, but how well the transformation worked is another question.

In any event, I would like to turn now to the third stanza of the lighthouse poem and determine if there are characteris-

tics within *my* creative process which may be applied to writing in general. As we will see, the problems with the third stanza were problems of grammar and rhythm. Stanzas one, two, and four did not present serious problems, at least not problems which persisted and were not solved within a reasonable amount of time. For me, a "reasonable amount of time" means a week or so, but the problems with the third stanza persisted for much longer than a week. I do not recall ever having so much difficulty, even with the "Out Of My Windows Whitely" poem ("Art As Discovery," *Discourse*, Autumn, '70), and I think much of the difficulty with this poem was because I did not actually recognize that the problems involved grammatical and rhythmical errors. After I finished the fourth stanza, having accepted version "5" of the third stanza which is printed below, I typed the poem, read it a few times, and "heard" the inconsistencies. That was when all the aggravation really began. I suppose I had been so preoccupied with *saying* and *not saying*, so much *inside* the poem, *inside* each stanza specifically, that I did not at first notice the inconsistencies of form and rhythm, generally. Finally, after days and days of frustration, I decided to leave the poem for a while; and it was only after taking a breather from the poem that I actually returned to it to see its problems clearly.

The various versions of the third stanza follow, numbered so that they may be referred to accordingly:

- |    |                         |    |
|----|-------------------------|----|
| 1. | It is not               | 1  |
|    | a lighthouse            | 2  |
|    | exactly.                | 3  |
|    | I wish it were          | 4  |
|    | as simple as that.      | 5  |
|    | Nor is it               | 6  |
|    | the nude bathers        | 7  |
|    | I know                  | 8  |
|    | are down <i>there</i> , | 9  |
|    | somewhere, still        | 10 |
|    | bathing.                | 11 |
| 2. | There is a point        | 1  |
|    | at which                | 2  |
|    | even words              | 3  |
|    | do not mean             | 4  |
|    | anything.               | 5  |
|    | But it has something    | 6  |

	to do with circling,	7
	being circled,	8
	yet not the lighthouse,	9
	the ocean lines.	10
3.	There is an effect	1
	which even words	2
	cannot mean.	3
	It is not the circling	4
	exactly,	5
	nor is it	6
	being circled.	7
	It is fixity	8
	but not the thing	9
	being fixed	10
	<del>exactly</del>	11

For some reason, perhaps because I sensed I was not making progress, I actually sketched the outlines of a lighthouse on the page near the penciled, hand-written versions of the lines noted above. I always work with #2 pencil on yellow lined paper; and when I reach the point of typing on white bonded paper, I tend to think the poem is almost finished. In any event, I sensed the lines above were not what I wanted. I sensed that "3" was superior to "1" and "2," but I decided to begin again:

4.	I think	1
	of a room	2
	a room as huge	3
	as the sky,	4
	and you	5
	are unbuttoning my life.	6
	It is	7
	important to remember	8
	I am the light.	9
	I have become	10
	my own questions.	11
	I circle	12
	the dark,	13
	and I become	14
	the empty flicker	15
	between	16
	the blue and the white.	17
	Each time	18

the light moves across	19
the horizon	20
I realize	21
it is not	22
the light or the circle,	23
the ocean	24
or the pavilion	25
that matters.	26

I sensed that this version was terrible too. It seems trite, and I had actually gotten Lilly into the poem, which I did not wish to do. I wanted to address the poem to her, or make the effect of her, perhaps explain something to her, but I did not wish to have her “unbuttoning my life” and so on, for I “knew” where that would lead. So, I began again; but I recall thinking at this point that the first two stanzas had a sort of hypnotic effect. I sensed that I should continue accordingly. I wrote the following version of the third stanza fairly rapidly, but truly it was where my *real* difficulties began:

5.	It almost	1
	puts one to sleep	2
	the one turning	3
	and turning,	4
	never <i>really</i> seeing	5
	anything	6
	except the ocean liner	7
	moving slowly across	8
	the horizon,	9
	the stars	10
	as solitary as	11
	the lights, hearing	12
an .	<del>that</del> indecipherable sound	13
	inside	14
	down the stairwell,	15
	listening	16
	listening	17
	listening to the dark,	18
<del>where-</del>	<del>only-</del> <del>but</del> the center always	19
	breaks, and nothing ever	20
	really	21
	keeps.	22
	<del>The center always-</del>	23
	<del>breaks, though,</del>	24

<del>and nothing ever</del>	25
<del>really</del>	26
<del>keeps</del>	27

At this point, I thought I had it. I typed it and continued to the fourth stanza. The only problem I had with the fourth stanza involved the last eleven lines, with which I am still not entirely pleased, primarily because, even with the third person objective, the lines barely escape, if indeed they do escape, sentimentality. But, with a few reservations, I decided I could live with the ending, typed the entire poem, and read it a number of times. After a few readings, I “knew” something was wrong, and I “heard” it in the third stanza. At first, I thought it was because I had not “done” enough in the stanza. I added to the lines, but the result was an inflated version. While the other stanzas had between 83 and 87 syllables, the inflated version of the third stanza, with the additions, had approximately 111 syllables:

6.	It almost	1
	puts one to sleep,	2
	the turning and turning,	3
	my never	4
	<i>really</i> seeing anything	5
	except the ocean liner	6
	moving slowly across	7
	the horizon,	8
	<del>jagged pavilion</del> <del>the pavilion,</del> the slim girl	9
	swimming and swimming,	10
	<del>distant stars</del> <del>the stars</del>	11
	cold and as solitary	12
	<del>bleak horizon</del> as the lights, hearing	13
	an indecipherable sound	14
	<del>idle pavilion</del> inside	15
	down the stairwell,	16
	listening, listening	17
	listening to the dark	18
	where the center always	19
	breaks, and nothing,	20
	<del>broken images</del> except <del>revolving images</del> , ever	21
	really	22
	keeps.	23
	<del>the pavilion</del>	
	<del>riding</del> <del>the idle pavilion</del>	
	<del>clinging to shore</del>	



From version “5” to version “6,” the inflated version, there occurred a great deal of rewordings, crossovers, and retypings. The lines, “the one turning/ and turning” (“5,” lns. 3 and 4) became “the turning and turning” (“6,” ln. 3); the “never *really* seeing/anything” (“5,” lns. 5 and 6) became “my never/*really* seeing anything” (“6,” lns. 4 and 5); and then, I squeezed “the pavilion, the slim girl/swimming and swimming” (“6,” lns. 9 and 10) between “the horizon,/the stars” (“5,” lns. 9 and 10), changed “the stars/as solitary as/the lights, hearing” (“5,” lns. 10, 11 and 12) to “the stars/cold and as solitary/as the lights, hearing” (“6,” lns. 11, 12, and 13), diddled around a bit with the arrangement of “listening” (“5,” lns. 16, 17, and 18), and changed “breaks, and nothing ever” (“5,” ln. 20) to “breaks, and nothing,/except revolving images, ever” (“6,” lns. 20 and 21). The “pavilion” became the “jagged pavilion” (“6,” ln. 9), the “stars” became “distant stars” (“6,” ln. 11), and “revolving images” became “broken images” (“6,” ln. 21); and moreover, the “pavilion” at one point became “idle pavilion,” then “the pavilion/riding,” and I even had an “idle pavilion/clinging to shore,” which was ridiculous to say the least; and I also had a “bleak horizon”; but all of these minor revisions were eventually deleted from the final version of the stanza.

I also noticed that in “the stars/as solitary as/the lights” (“5,” lns. 10, 11, and 12) there was too much action in the s’s, and the a’s tended to be a bit harsh or unpleasant to my ear. But adding “cold and” (“6,” ln. 12) only made the lines worse; for then the lines hung and lingered too long over the o’s, the a’s, the d’s; and furthermore, the liquid l’s did not help matters either. The “except revolving images” (“6,” ln. 21) presented the same difficulty; the vowels were just too difficult to read over smoothly. Actually, the rhythm in “the pavilion” (◡◡/∧) was inferior to the “the idle pavilion” (◡/◡◡/∧) or “the jagged pavilion” (◡/∧◡/∧), and “the bleak horizon” (◡/◡/∧) was superior to “the horizon” (◡◡/∧), but an economy of words ultimately prevailed, and I think and hope to the poem’s advantage.

Nevertheless, I still had not noticed that while the third stanza consisted of one long complex sentence, the other stanzas consisted of four or five sentences, mostly of simple and compound types. I cannot account for this oversight; I suppose, as mentioned earlier, I was too intensely *inside* the poem to see. In any event, I closed my folder of poetry for a few

days; and when I returned to the poem, I returned to version "5." I preferred the "skinny 5" to the "inflated 6"; and when I started checking version "5" again, I seemed to see dangling participles everywhere. The participles "seeing" ("5," ln. 5; "6," ln. 5), "hearing" ("5," ln. 12; "6," ln. 13) and "listening" ("5," lns. 16, 17, and 18; "6," lns. 17 and 18) tended to dangle without modifying proper subjects, for they certainly could not modify "It" ("5" and "6," ln. 1). I had changed "never *really* seeing/anything" ("5," lns. 5 and 6), to "my never/*really* seeing anything" ("6," lns. 4 and 5), which helped and should have *told* me something; for "hearing" tended to modify "lights," "stars" or "girl" and "listening" tended to modify "stairwell." Only "moving" seemed correct because it properly modified "the ocean liner." It became obvious at this point that the problems were problems involving grammar and subsequently those of rhythm, and not whether or not I needed more or less words. I needed the same sentence structures and the same rhythms in the third stanza as in the other stanzas. This, of course, *similia similibus curantur*, should have occurred to me; the amazing thing to me is that I failed to see the problems for so long. However, with the grammatical errors corrected, the third stanza appeared as follows:

7.	It almost	1
	puts one to sleep,	2
	the turning	3
	and turning.	4
	I never <i>really</i> see	5
	anything	6
	except the ocean liner	7
	moving slowly across	8
	the horizon,	9
	the pavilion,	10
	the slim girl	11
	swimming	12
	and swimming.	13
	I hear	14
	the indecipherable sounds	15
	<i>inside</i> , down	16
	the stairwell,	17
	and I listen,	18
	I listen to the dark,	19
	where the center always	20
	breaks, and nothing ever	21

really  
keeps.

22  
23

From this version to the final version of the stanza was not a terribly difficult process; but note that though the grammar was relatively correct in version “7,” the rhythm was still not quite right. Version “7” had 23 lines as did the first stanza — the second and fourth stanzas were to have 24 lines; but it, the third stanza, version “7,” had 91 syllables. The “ocean liner” seemed not only to be moving slowly across “the horizon,” but also, and ridiculously, across “the pavilion,” and it, “the pavilion,” seemed to drag out the rhythm. I deleted “the pavilion” and lost four syllables. The “I hear” (“7,” ln. 14) seemed to rush into “the indecipherable sounds,” so I slowed the line by adding “the sounds” to the line and gained two syllables. I completely stopped line 18 with a period, which gave “listen” more emphasis as well as the next line, “I listen to the dark.” I broke lines 20 and 21 into three lines to account for the line I lost in removing “the pavilion,” but breaking the lines also slowed the rhythm. I used a stopwatch and timed how long it took to read each stanza. I did ten readings for each stanza, and the average times were: 37, 36, 35, and 34 seconds. In contrast, version “6” took 41 seconds to read. The syllabic counts were: 87, 85, 89, and 83. The longest time of 37 seconds for a reading of the first stanza is probably because the stanza has five sentences, while the other stanzas have only four sentences, and also probably because of “consolations . . . constellations.” The poem, in any event, had a sort of vanishing away effect, like an echo maybe, and that was what I wanted.

I checked the internal sounds and rhymes throughout the poem and was pleased. I was especially pleased with the third stanza, the “one,” “ocean,” “horizon,” “I,” “liner,” “sleep,” “really,” “see,” “anything,” “slowly,” “the,” “turning,” “anything,” “moving,” “slim,” “swimming,” etc. I was also pleased with the circumlocution and the transitional repetitions, but I would have been happier if I had had a “blackbird” or “deserted beach,” and I regretted that the poem did not seem to have a central image, symbol or metaphor, except perhaps for the slim girl and/or the lighthouse. I was not even certain whether or not the poem went anywhere; perhaps the intellect never really goes anywhere, anyway; but I have been trying for years to make my poems go into, through, and beyond their objects. The poem, in any event, was just another poem which

reverberated around and around as within a seashell. Then, as always, I consoled myself by promising myself that some summer I would return to New Orleans and bring my poems together, that I would make a group of poems which would go *into* and *through* and *beyond*.

In the meantime, being unable to do what we are supposed to be doing, perhaps pacifying ourselves in what the Germans refer to as *ein Sichtreibenlassen*, we can make some generalizations about writing, whether in writing poetry or prose, which will assist us as writers and also as teachers trying to instruct. Though it is very tempting here to discuss ritual and tone, I think it best to defer these difficult aspects of writing to another essay, in which there will be ample space to discuss them thoroughly. Above all, though, even if it is as peculiar as was Balzac's, the writer should utilize time intervals of high energy levels. For most people, there are low energy levels at or near 2:00 P.M., 4:00 P.M., 8:00 P.M., and 2:00 A.M.; but obviously, this must not have been the case with Balzac. As for tone, I will simply say that while writing the lighthouse poem I was thinking of Stevens's "Thirteen Ways Of Looking At A Blackbird," Donald Justice's "The Man Closing Up," Camus's "The Wind At Djemila," and Murray Krieger's *The Tragic Vision*. The tone and voice in these works have significance for me; but tone and voice, which spill over into style, are unquestionably the most difficult aspects of writing to discuss. I prefer to think of them in relation to the musical scale; and when I choose to read a work with a certain tone of voice, I realize that I am attempting to identify the writer's intended tone or voice. In any case, the works noted above were my "touchstones," though I opted not to use fragmentation as did Justice. Be that as it may, having decided on a tone and having begun the writing of the lighthouse poem, during high energy levels, I suddenly found myself in the technical dilemmas of the third stanza.

When I found myself too close, too *inside*, the poem, I moved away to breathe, to allow myself time to become fairly objective, to become somewhat detached as it were. I saw that in some versions of the third stanza, for example, there was too much ego and/or too much sentiment, a blasting of feeling on the one hand and a begging for emotion on the other. Also, I recognized that there were too many "empty" words; and as we know, words without concrete images place an unreasonable burden on one's audience; likewise, excessive words can detract as much as empty words; and ultimately, an

economy of sensual words prevailed. Moreover, I finally had to resort to grammatical and rhetorical devices to make the third stanza work. It should be quite clear that I would have never gotten the third stanza to work without grammar and rhetoric. Even in this prose, it should be obvious that I favor certain rhetorical devices — key word repetitions, anaphora sentences, suspended, open-grammatical, trisemicolon, and convoluted sentences; but this should not imply by any means that I admire Hemingway any the less. It should imply, however, that I had rather listen to Vonnegut than read him. But even so, my point is that grammar and rhetoric, as far as I am concerned, saved the third stanza, maybe even the poem; because had I not been able to smooth out the third stanza, the fragmented poem would have been discarded to my attic in Savannah.

It is important, in any event, to stress that grammatical and rhetorical devices were not consciously contrived or considered prior to the poem's composition any more than they were before the composition of this essay. Quite simply, when I find myself in difficulty, whether in poetry or prose, I conjure up whatever technical skills I have at my disposal. Students, and some teachers, especially those of us who are romantically inclined, have a difficult time relying on technical skills. As far as I am concerned, this is unfortunate, not that technical skills will always save us, but rather, that without technique all the inspiration and tension of conception may remain in the "raw" states of inspiration and tension. For example, this essay originally began with the topic sentence, "The problems with the third stanza of 'From The Tybee Island Lighthouse'" (see the third paragraph), but it became obvious later that this essay had no introduction. Also, the first two sentences of this present paragraph were originally as follows:

Students, and some teachers, especially if they are romantically inclined, have a difficult time relying on technical skills. This is often the case when we say that a piece of writing has to have 'balance.'

There is definitely a long leap from "technical skills" to "balance;" the sentences do not "link" or "loop;" and I obviously needed some transitional sentences to bridge the gap, at least to the extent that this space allows. Balance, of course, may include technical skills which ensure continuity, such as linking or looping skills, but balance normally refers to organization. To have the sense of balance, to my way of

thinking, relates to a writer's sense of organization — beginnings, middles, and ends. Hence, it does not matter that I made the third stanza last; it could have been written first; it does not matter that the introduction to this essay was written after the middle and ending or that this present paragraph and section was written last; the important thing to see is that all the parts have to "fit," that each part has to add to or extend the previous parts.

In fact, when students approach me with the problem of where to begin, which might very well be the most difficult part of an essay to write, I often advise them to write the middle, the "guts" first, or even the conclusion first; at least this way they can see the direction their introduction has to pursue. I suspect we have all had this problem of "balance" at one time or another. Once, while attending the University of Miami (Fla.), I approached Professor Clark Emery with my writing problems, and he advised me to take a breather during the summer and read Sherlock Holmes. Naturally, I thought the man was crazy! What did Sherlock Holmes have to do with my aesthetic problems and poetry? Then, later, I realized that Doyle made all the parts "fit," which was the beginning of my understanding of balance and continuity. One part has to anticipate the next part, and the last part has to be justified by the previous parts.

This almost makes me feel anachronistic, at least classical, in my approach to writing, that I am "pro" product and "con" process writing. This is certainly not what I had hoped to communicate, nor would I wish to be platinized by all this. I am merely saying that between the tension, the intention, and the extension there is a long and often tedious road to the finished product and that the greater our command of technical skills the greater our chances of transforming our doubts and confusions into art. As Professor Richard Fogle said to me once at Tulane, "Never forsake the object, Lenny." And it is precisely this that we do not do, after the romanticizing, after the releases of tension involved in process writing, when we make those final critical, aesthetic, and objective revisions in an effort to eliminate anything that would unnecessarily blur our self-actualizations into art, whether we are attempting multiplicity of metaphor or symbol, as in the poem or multi-level discourse, as in the composition of this essay, in an attempt to extend the dimensions of creating a poem to include certain aspects of writing and the teaching of writing in general. My recommendation, of course, is that we study

and teach the process of revision more than we have in the past and that this be done with a thorough knowledge of grammatical and rhetorical skills, in conjunction with the manuscripts of those who are willing to publish and share their creative dilemmas.

For all that, then, the third stanza of the lighthouse poem, which was completed last, revealed — during the process of revision — problems of grammar and rhythm. As has been implied, I believe there is sanity in grammatical order; but grammar is not necessarily rhythm, and exactly how rhythm fits into all this, no one is entirely certain, except perhaps George B. Pace. Oliver Wendell Holmes believed that the length and rhythm of the line indicated the poet's patterns of breathing and pulse rate, and I generally accept this proposition if we extend the proposition to include the libido and all the creative impulses that go with the libido. But, there must be various exceptions to this. For example, I normally favor the long, massive line or sentence, but I do not see how "From The Tybee Island Lighthouse" could have been written with a long, strong line. I honestly believe that there is an enigmatic something, heretofore explored but never satisfactorily explained, which actually dictates that a certain poem be written in a certain form. Obviously, I do not know what it is. I find myself breathing in a certain way and the lines forming in a certain manner; and occasionally, as in the third stanza of "From The Tybee Island Lighthouse," everything goes astray; but what actually got the poem into its proper form in the first place is entirely a mystery. I decided that versions "1," "2," and "3" were terrible. I decided that they read as broken pieces of prose; I decided that "I wish it were/as simple as that" was as empty as any lines could be; I decided that the last lines of version "3" came close to what I found it necessary to do; I decided that version "4" was just a larger version of "1," "2," and "3," still searching for its proper form; also that "I am the light" in version "4" was egotistic and would lose the reader's sympathy; and it was quite easy to see that version "6" was "fat" and excessive; but why version "5" did the right thing in the wrong manner and that it had to be changed to version "7" which had to be changed into the final version of the poem and that the final version of the third stanza was consistent with the rest of the poem and why there could be no more changes, no more words, no more rhythms, *ever*, baffles and aggravates me to no end, though we can pretend to know within our grammatical and rhetorical discussions. We can

maintain that this process of revision is necessary for the sake of art and ourselves, but we cannot explain why there is art in the first place. We find ourselves in a philosophical impasse when we attempt to do so. We can, in short, discuss the grammar, the rhetoric, the diction, and that this part fits better here than there, but why should any of it taunt one throughout a lifetime? Could it be that we are never ever really to know WHY we have to do what we have to do? Could it be that the third stanza of "From The Tybee Island Lighthouse" can be read demonstratively merely as an exercise in grammatical rhythms, transitional repetitions, a completely infatuated circumlocution for Lilly Pasche, and nothing more?

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