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THE USES OF BIOGRAPHY

THE CASE OF WILLA CATHER

JAMES WOODRESS

In the first of his series of lectures on biography at the University of Toronto, Leon Edel observed that "the writing of a literary life would be nothing but a kind of indecent curiosity, and an invasion of privacy, were it not that it seeks always to illuminate the mysterious and magical process of creation."¹ Edel was generalizing about the life of Henry James when he made that statement, for he was deep in the writing of the James biography to which he devoted about twenty years of his life. For a writer such as James this view of biography is undeniably true. His writing was his life, and there is no separating the two. One cannot imagine a biography of James in which the biographer talks only of his relations with his brothers and sister, his parents, his goings and comings between England and America, his travels on the Continent, his social life in London, and his country life in Rye. And I think Edel's generalization also applies to Willa

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Cather, whose dedication to her art was as consuming a passion as was James's.

I don't know whether or not it would be "indecent curiosity" exactly to write a life of Cather that dealt only with her early years in Red Cloud, her college days in Lincoln, her journalistic beginnings, her school teaching, her managing editorship of *McClure's Magazine*, her trips back and forth between Nebraska, the Southwest, and New York, her travels in Europe, and her New York apartments, but it surely would be of limited value unless it related her life to her writing. Certainly the purpose of a biography of Cather must be to "illuminate the mysterious and magical process of creation." That is what I intended when I wrote my book about her, and I hope I succeeded.

How does the biographer manage to illuminate the mysterious and magical act of creation? First of all he must approach his subject objectively. Then he must be willing to undergo a great deal of drudgery to collect his data. Finally, he must have a reasonable amount of success in clearing the roadblocks from his path.

The biographer is a historian, and a biased historian is not much use to anyone. In our

Western culture we hold the ideal of objectivity high, though it may often be much more honored in the breach than in the observance. Of course, we do not rewrite our history every time a hero falls from power as the Russians do, but we change our viewpoint from age to age. Emerson said that every age had to write its own books, and his words were prophetic. The history of literary reputations makes it clear how perspectives change as the culture changes. But given these inevitable shifts, one still hopes for objectivity in a biographer. One does not ask the biographer to be completely neutral about his subject. That would be asking too much, for who would spend months or years of his life writing the life of someone he did not have a strong interest in and liking for? Complete neutrality probably would result in something like a clinical case history, and I think that in biography, as in fiction, what Cather called the "gift of sympathy" is necessary for good work.

In our biographies of Willa Cather, E. K. Brown and I were perhaps too admiring, but it is difficult to spend years working on a biography of someone one admires without becoming somewhat protective of the subject.² It is a natural hazard that must be kept constantly in mind. A biographer's subject becomes almost a member of the family. One can ask, however, that the biographer not start with a preconceived thesis that he wants to prove. If Vernon Calverton or Granville Hicks had written biographies of Cather in the thirties, they might have tried to diminish her stature because of her lack of interest in social activism. And the efforts to make a case for Cather's anti-Semitism, as has been tried, can only be done by slanting the evidence. Both Brown and I endeavored to present a balanced portrait of Cather, and I am not aware of suppressing any biographical data that I collected.

In the advertisement to the first edition of his *Life of Samuel Johnson*, our first really modern biography, James Boswell emphasizes the research task of the biographer: "The labour and anxious attention with which I have collected and arranged the materials of

which these volumes are composed, will hardly be conceived by those who read them with careless facility. . . . I have sometimes been obliged to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly; which, when I had accomplished, I well knew would obtain me no praise, though a failure would have been to my discredit."³ Of course, in the eighteenth century the amount of documentation available was far less than it is today. The verifiable facts about Shakespeare's life, despite three centuries of scholarship, can be written on one sheet of paper. For contemporary writers there is likely to be too much material. The literary remains of Theodore Dreiser and Thomas Wolfe, for example, are prodigious; James T. Farrell, who was persuaded years ago by the University of Pennsylvania to give them his papers, sent a truckload, and he kept material coming until he died in 1979.

For Cather the amount of archival material is modest, and one would like to have much more. Few of her manuscripts are extant and many of her letters were destroyed. Yet I had a great deal more material at my disposal than Brown did, because many of the letters I was able to use at the University of Virginia, the Newberry Library, and the Huntington Library were not available to him. Edith Lewis wrote her memoir for his use, and the archives and memory of Alfred Knopf were an important resource, but Elizabeth Sergeant had not yet published her memoir, and the great efforts of Bernice Slote and others to identify and retrieve the huge amount of journalistic writing of Cather's early years had not yet been made.⁴ Thus when I began my research there was more to go on, and I am sure that when the next biography of Cather appears the picture will be even more complete.

The drudgery in collecting all this information is formidable. There are approximately one thousand Cather letters scattered about the United States in fifty-eight libraries spread between San Marino, California, and Burlington, Vermont. All must be read and assimilated. One must examine everything the author ever wrote and, insofar as possible, everything that

ever has been written about her. For Cather this preparation for the writing of the biography is not nearly so difficult as the preparation for writing the life of someone like James or Howells, whose extant letters number about ten thousand each and whose published work is many times more extensive than Cather's. Then there is the search for documents and the sifting of evidence, a time-consuming and tedious process.

Of course, I collected more data than I could use. I was aiming at a biography of about a hundred thousand words, which seemed to me a reasonable length. There is no ideal length for a biography. Although Edel advocated succinctness, his own biography of James (which is a great achievement) ran to five volumes, and the last is the thickest of all. Some biographies are far too long, however, and cannot sustain their subjects. The trick in writing literary biography is in knowing what facts to use and how to put them into the proper sequence to illuminate the creative process.

Removing roadblocks is a frustrating and sensitive area for the biographer. Protective relatives and friends sometimes make the task of objectivity difficult. Edith Lewis, for example, was highly protective of Willa Cather and in her memoir presented a portrait somewhat retouched. E. K. Brown and I accepted her report as being essentially accurate, but no doubt there are distortions that are yet to come to light. One in particular was discovered by Patricia Lee Yongue and discussed in her recent two-part article, "Willa Cather's Aristocrats."⁵ Yongue set out to study what Bernice Slote believes to have been one of Cather's strong drives, the desire to be a Virginia lady like her mother. To pursue this subject Yongue investigated the friendship that Cather had for twenty years with the rich young English aristocrat Stephen Tennant. As Edith Lewis described the relationship, Tennant wrote Cather a fan letter in about 1922 praising *A Lost Lady*, and from that opening the friendship developed. The facts are different. Tennant wrote a mutual friend some years later praising *My Mortal*

Enemy; Cather then initiated the correspondence with Tennant. This fact comes as a surprise, because Cather is deferential and candid about her work in her first letter to this twenty-year-old golden youth of the British upper class. This letter was written at a time when Cather was refusing interviews and drawing a veil of silence about her private life. Lewis no doubt felt that it was unseemly for an established writer with a large following and a secure critical reputation to initiate such a friendship. The entire relationship, which I confess I made nothing of in my book, strikes me now as important and revealing of a facet of Cather's character that needs more illumination. It is another of the paradoxes that governed her life.

The roadblocks are not thrown up only by protective family and friends. Writers themselves try to cover their tracks. Cather's effort to move her birthday from 1873 to 1876 is well known, and Edith Lewis added to the confusion by having the erroneous date carved on her tombstone. But such deceptions rarely are successful in modern times because too much documentary evidence exists to frustrate the efforts. In the absence of birth certificates there is always going to be a dated letter, as there was in Cather's case, fixing the time of birth finally and irrevocably. More serious, I think, are testamentary efforts to block access to biographical material. Cather's stipulation in her will that none of her letters may ever be published presents a problem, not insolvable, but a problem nonetheless. A biographer wants to quote his subject directly; one of the things that makes a biography come alive is the author's own words describing reactions to people and places, comments on work, and direct memories of incidents. Cather's letters are available for information, but they may not be quoted. I resorted to paraphrase, which was the best solution under the circumstances. Fortunately, every once in a while someone who hasn't heard about wills such as these goes ahead and publishes letters, and once published they are available for quotation. Cather's will specifically says that her executors

need not prosecute if her letters were to be published, but a scrupulous scholar still cannot ignore the prohibition.

Even more serious than prohibiting the publication of letters is the destruction of them. Cather was a great hand at burning letters, and if all of her friends and relatives had died before she did, there would probably be very few Cather letters to help the biographer. One of her most important relationships was the long friendship with Isabelle McClung that began early in her Pittsburgh years and lasted until McClung's death in 1938. This relationship, which was more than a friendship, must have produced hundreds of letters, but after McClung died Cather retrieved the letters she had written to her and destroyed both sides of the correspondence. However, she apparently missed two of McClung's letters to her; these have surfaced recently in a book about Cather's summers on Grand Manan Island.⁶ For the biographer the destroyed letters are a tremendous loss. Fortunately, some friends who outlived Cather, such as Carrie Miner Sherwood, had the good sense to preserve their letters and place them in institutional collections. There is nothing in Cather's letters that would damage her reputation. She wrote splendid letters, and when she discussed her own work, they provide important insights into her creative process.

The question arises, of course, about the right to privacy. Should an author be able to control a biographer from the grave? This brings us back to Edel's view about the purpose of a literary biography. It is not idle curiosity that spurs the biographer but the desire to throw light on the creative process. I would argue that, once a writer commits his novel or play or poem to the public by the act of publication, he becomes a public figure and subject to different rules from those that apply to persons who do not offer their work to all who will buy. At the same time, I can sympathize with Cather's desire to control what is presented to the public. Her wish that people read only what she prepared for publication is understandable, but the biographer and scholar want to see the apprentice work that went

into the forming of the mature style or the rejected pieces that did not measure up to the mature author's estimate of her own potential. Cather wanted to forget many of the early stories she published under a variety of pseudonyms during her apprentice days in Pittsburgh, but scholars have dug them out and identified them. Thanks to these efforts we now can trace her steady growth toward maturity in style and narrative technique and see her trying out themes that she later used more effectively in her best work. Writers like to forget that in learning to write they had to produce much awkward or immature material before achieving mastery. Although we have recovered Cather's early published work, it is a pity that her manuscripts no longer exist. One would like to see a first draft of *My Antonia* or perhaps the early draft of *A Lost Lady* in which Cather tried out a first-person narrator, but nothing of this kind survives.

Cather did revise and was able to improve her work by judicious emendations, but we have all too little evidence to study. Since I wrote the biography, I have studied in detail the revisions she made for the version of *The Song of the Lark* that went into her collected works. That novel was the longest she wrote and the one that departs the farthest from the later notions of novel writing that she put in her essay "The Novel *Démeublé*." In *The Song of the Lark* she left nothing out. She even introduced a discussion of reform politics in Colorado to fill in the details of Dr. Archie's life after Thea Kronborg grows up. And there is much detail about Thea's life after she has achieved stardom as reigning Wagnerian soprano at the Metropolitan Opera. A study of Cather's pruning of the last parts of this novel shows us the mature artist retouching her early work. This is also part of her biography, for it tells us important things about Cather's dedication to her art and her striving for perfection. Some writers have no further interest in a novel once it is published and are content to reprint earlier works that they would admit are inferior to their mature work.

Another example of Cather's textual revisions

that illustrates her craftsmanship and artistry lies in the successive versions of some of the stories that appear in *The Troll Garden*. Four of the stories, "The Sculptor's Funeral," "A Death in the Desert," "A Wagner Matinee," and "Paul's Case," underwent successive revisions, and one can study Cather's polishing of these tales before reprinting them. When her friend Dorothy Canfield Fisher, herself a novelist, reviewed *Youth and the Bright Medusa* in *Yale Review* in 1920, she commented specifically on the revisions of "A Death in the Desert." She recommended that anyone who wanted to see how a real artist smoothed away crudeness without rooting out the life of the story should study the evolution of this story. Cather had reworked the tale from its original version in *Scribner's Magazine* for its publication in *The Troll Garden*, then worked it over again for *Youth and the Bright Medusa*. In making these revisions, she cut and trimmed and polished, and the final version is only two-thirds as long as the original one. When she again looked over her stories for inclusion in her collected works, she dropped "A Death in the Desert" completely. Apparently she was dissatisfied and thought that further revisions could not salvage it. This decision shows how much Cather's attitudes had changed over the years. The story had originally been inspired by the fascination she felt over meeting the composer Ethelbert Nevin. For her he represented golden youth and talent. Her letters of the period and the magazine article she wrote about him make this clear, but by the time she was in her sixties the *fin de siècle* aestheticism out of which the story had been written and the death of an artist in the desert no longer had the power to move her.

While any writer's life is relevant for the understanding of his art, Cather is a much more autobiographical author than most. She created out of her direct experience: thus a knowledge of her life throws clear light on the creative process. The fictional portrait of *Ántonia* is perhaps the most striking example of Cather's use of direct experience in her work. There are many other biographical elements in *My*

Ántonia, and it is only after one has studied the life in detail that the marvelous amalgam of experience and memory that make this novel an American classic can be appreciated. Consider some of the things besides Cather's memories of Annie Pavelka that went into the novel: her grandparents, her relationship with the Miner family, the blind pianist, her experiences at the University of Nebraska, her study of the classics, her reviewing of plays for the *Nebraska State Journal*, and so on.

The Song of the Lark is a fascinating blend of memory, experience, and friendships. The recreation of Red Cloud as Moonstone, Colorado, in the early part of the novel evokes vividly Cather's childhood, her friendship with Dr. McKeeby (who no doubt suggested Dr. Archie), her piano lessons with the itinerant teacher who becomes Herr Wunsch in the novel, and her attic room in the old homestead. Parts II and III, which take place in Chicago, are fashioned from Cather's memories of going off to the larger intellectual and cultural center of Lincoln and from her visits to Chicago during her college years. The aspirations, longings, and strivings of young Thea Kronborg making her way in the world were Cather's own feelings. Then the section of the novel that is set in the Southwest as Thea takes time out to think about her life and prepare for her future career develops fictionally the experiences Cather had when she left *McClure's Magazine* and visited her brother in Arizona. She too was at the turning point of her career, finished with journalism and ready to devote all her energies to art. Finally, the last parts of the story re-create the life of Olive Fremstad, the Swedish girl from Minnesota whose career as a singer was the inspiration for the novel. Cather's interview with Fremstad for *McClure's* and Fremstad's performances at the Metropolitan Opera provided the kind of "inner explosion" that usually initiated a Cather novel. Cather told Elizabeth Sergeant at the time that finding a new type of human being and getting inside that person's skin was the finest sport she knew.

Getting inside another person's skin is, I

think, a good metaphor for the art of writing fiction. The result of this process is the creation of characters that combines both the personality of the artist and the real-life prototypes. Cather got into the skin of Olive Fremstad and created Thea Kronborg; later she got into the skin of Archbishop Lamy and created Archbishop Jean Latour. It was this same impulse that produced her first novel, *Alexander's Bridge*, for as she said, even while disowning this book, she had written it as the result of meeting some interesting people in London. There is much of Cather inside the skin of her protagonist Bartley Alexander, whoever his real-life prototype may have been. His restless dissatisfaction with life accurately reflects Cather's own feelings in 1911 when she was writing the story. *Alexander's Bridge* is actually an impressive first novel; she need not have disparaged it.

The biographer can easily supply the reasons for her feelings about this novel. She wrote it just before she left *McClure's Magazine*. She was worn out from the grind of putting out a monthly magazine and wanted to cut loose from journalism to become a full-time writer. A year later she was in Arizona undergoing the sort of spiritual rebirth that Thea Kronborg experiences. Also the novel is the last work she produced during her literary apprenticeship—the final work produced under the influence of Henry James. This influence, which is seen clearly in her early stories, had lasted a decade. She had picked a very good master to learn from, but by 1912 she was ready to strike out on her own. Her friend Sarah Orne Jewett had told her four years before that she must do it, but she had lacked the courage to make the move. It is no wonder that she felt the way Bartley Alexander does when he tells his old professor who comes to visit: "You work like the devil and think you're getting on, and suddenly you discover that you have only been getting yourself tied up. A million details drink you dry. Your life keeps going for things you don't want, and all the while you are being built alive into a social structure you don't care a rap about."⁷

The novel that Cather liked to think of as

her first was, of course, *O Pioneers!* This was the novel, as she put it, in which "I walked off on my own feet—everything before was half real and half an imitation of writers whom I admired. In this one I hit the home pasture and found I was Yance Sorgeson and not Henry James."⁸ Here Cather certainly is inside the skin of Alexandra Bergson, whose story she tells in the novel. It is not possible to identify any one person as the prototype of this character because she is an amalgam of all the pioneer women Cather remembered from her childhood. The novel begins in 1883, the year the Cathers moved to Nebraska from Virginia, when Willa began storing up memories of the immigrant farm women on the Divide. At the time *O Pioneers!* was published in 1913, she told an interviewer, "I have never found any intellectual excitement any more intense than I used to feel when I spent a morning with one of those old women at her baking or butter making. I used to ride home in the most unreasonable state of excitement . . . as if I had actually got inside another person's skin."⁹

O Pioneers! is clearly a very personal novel. Its view of life on the Divide twenty years after the story begins reflects Cather's experiences. The pioneering times were the times of greatness, and the mean-spirited, materialistic attitudes of Alexandra's brothers are those that Cather found when she returned from the East to visit her family in Red Cloud. There is plenty of documentary evidence to support these views in letters and statements Cather made during her middle years. So the biographer is constantly working from the sources to the art and back again from the art to the sources. Interviews and letters corroborate events and statements in the fiction, but there is never a one-to-one correlation. This is where biography provides insight into the process of creation. We see Alexandra emerging as the avatar of a dozen pioneer women from the deep well of Cather's memory. The artist's imagination has made a living portrait out of a mosaic of many pieces. It is, as Edel says, a magical process.

One would not expect the biographer to be able to throw as much light on the creative

process in the writing of historical fiction as on contemporary stories. When the artist is using the materials he sees around him, there is likely to be a close relationship between life and art. But what can the biographer tell us about Cather's reconstructions of the past? Let us take *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and see how a knowledge of Cather's life illuminates that novel.

When I wrote my biography of Cather, I did not know just how much of herself the artist had put into the character of Jean Latour, though I suspected quite a lot. Paul Horgan's excellent 1975 biography of Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy makes it possible to compare the fictional character with his real-life prototype, and it is quite clear that Latour's attitudes towards life, civilization, and culture are Cather's, not Lamy's.¹⁰ In broad outline, Archbishop Lamy is like Jean Latour the organizer, the revitalizer of the faith in New Mexico, and the builder of the cathedral in Santa Fe, but Lamy's ideas on progress were the typical optimistic views of the nineteenth century. He wanted the railroad brought through Santa Fe and worked to get it. He wanted the empty spaces filled up with settlers, and he wanted the marauding Navajos and Comanches pacified. The sense of loss that Latour expresses in his old age as the pioneering days recede into the past are Cather's views and compatible with those we find in her Nebraska fiction.

The biographer can also supply details on the inspiration for this novel. Cather was preparing to write the story for many years, perhaps from her first visit to the Southwest in 1912. Her previous use of the area in *The Song of the Lark* and "Tom Outland's Story" in *The Professor's House* make clear her fascination with and enthusiasm for that region. Her letters, particularly her correspondence with Elizabeth Sergeant, document this, and so does Edith Lewis's memoir. One summer night in 1925 during a visit to New Mexico, Cather discovered William Howlett's book about Bishop Joseph P. Macheboeuf, who had been Archbishop Lamy's vicar. She stayed up all

night reading, and again there occurred one of those "inner explosions" that started the creative process. By morning she knew just what she wanted to do in this novel, and the story of the Southwest that she had wanted to write for years took shape.

Death Comes for the Archbishop is based on fact, but I would estimate that only about 10 percent of it is history; the rest is fiction. I have reached this conclusion on the basis of Father Howlett's book and Paul Horgan's biography of Archbishop Lamy. These works provide an illuminating insight into Cather's creative process. Historical novelists of smaller stature spend lots of time in libraries collecting authentic data so that their historical recreations move against a backdrop that is literally faithful to the historical record. The quality of the imagination that went into Cather's novel is much higher. What Cather needed to write the book was her gift of sympathy for the area and its people, her many visits to the Southwest, the long automobile rides she took with Tony Luhan, Mabel Dodge's Indian husband, who drove her to barely accessible villages in the Cimmaron Mountains, and the actual letters written by Father Macheboeuf about his and Jean Baptiste Lamy's work in the New Mexico diocese in the second half of the nineteenth century. The novel was forged in the crucible of Cather's imagination.

Because it is the most autobiographical of Cather's novels, *The Professor's House* is perhaps interpreted best by a biographer. A problematic work, the novel might be considered a spiritual autobiography. The protagonist Godfrey St. Peter, a midwesterner of Cather's own age, is a man whose world has split, as Cather had described her own situation not long before writing this novel. St. Peter's spiritual malaise is Cather's malaise, and the crisis of the novel is the crisis of middle age. At the end of the novel, after St. Peter narrowly misses asphyxiation, he comes out of his unconsciousness feeling that something in him has let go. He now can face the future with fortitude, though he is no longer the same person. Cather too picked herself up after experiencing

this trauma at about her fiftieth year, and she too went on with her life and her art. In fact, she wrote *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, which many think is her greatest novel, after this crisis.

Without studying Cather's life during the mid-twenties, one cannot appreciate *The Professor's House* fully. Godfrey St. Peter is a man who should have everything to live for. He has just won an important literary prize for his history of the Spanish in North America, his life-long work. His eminence as a historian is secure and acknowledged. Why should he be weary of life and why should his accomplishments seem unrewarding? One needs to know Cather's feelings about success and her disenchantment with the world of the 1920s. She always felt that the end was nothing but the struggle was everything. For twenty years she had been working toward the success she had finally achieved. She had won the Pulitzer Prize for *One of Ours*, and after years of effort she was suddenly making lots of money. She was rich and famous. But it was a disillusioning time—the era of Prohibition, the scandals of the Harding administration, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's witchhunts following World War I, and rampant materialism. This was truly a crisis situation for her.

The writing of biography is often compared with the painting of portraits. The analogy is apt because the biographer, like the painter, tries to catch the expression that reveals the person beneath the outer appearance. Both the painter and the biographer want to reveal more than the sitter might like to show. A case in point is the portrait that Leon Bakst painted of Cather during this time of her spiritual crisis. Cather never liked it, probably because it reveals too much; Edith Lewis, always protective of her friend, judged it a flat failure. The painting, now hanging in the Omaha Public Library, is not flattering, but Bakst was painting a middle-aged woman going through a profound physical, emotional, and spiritual crisis. He uncovered the soul of Professor St. Peter, whose fictional life Cather was about to write.

As a final note I would add a word of

caution. I have been extolling the uses of biography—the ways in which the biographer, if he does his job well, can illuminate for us the mysterious and magical process of creation. But in the final analysis the biographer's searchlight cannot penetrate below the surface. Nor can the critic's analysis of themes and archetypal patterns, of myth and symbol, of style and structure unlock the ultimate secret of an artist's act of creation. How it is done will remain a mystery, just as the ancient alchemist's efforts to change lead into gold were always unsuccessful. But even if we were able to unlock the secret, we probably would wish in the end that we had not done it. I end with Emily Dickinson's thought on the matter:

Split the lark—and you'll find the Music—
Bulb after bulb, in Silver rolled—
Scantly dealt to the Summer Morning
Saved for your ear when Lutes be old.

Loose the Flood—you shall find it patent—
Gush after Gush, reserved for you—
Scarlet Experiment! Sceptic Thomas!
Now, do you doubt that your Bird was true?¹¹

NOTES

1. Leon Edel, *Literary Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 3.

2. E. K. Brown, *Willa Cather: A Critical Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1953); James Woodress, *Willa Cather: Her Life and Art* (New York: Pegasus, 1970).

3. Reprinted in James L. Clifford, ed., *Biography as an Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 52.

4. Edith Lewis, *Willa Cather Living* (New York: Knopf, 1953); Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, *Willa Cather: A Memoir* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963); Bernice Slote, ed., *The Kingdom of Art: Willa Cather's First Principles and Critical Statements, 1893-1896* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

5. Patricia Lee Yongue, "Willa Cather's Aristocrats," *Southern Humanities Review* 14 (Winter and Spring 1980): 43-56 and 111-25.

6. See Marion Marsh Brown and Ruth Crone,

Only One Point of the Compass: Willa Cather in the Northeast (Danbury, Conn.: Archer Editions, 1980), pp. 79-81, 82-84.

7. Willa Cather, *Alexander's Bridge* (1912; reprint ed., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), pp. 12-13.

8. This statement is inscribed in a presentation copy of *O Pioneers!* that Cather gave to Carrie Miner Sherwood. It is reproduced in Mildred Bennett, *The World of Willa Cather* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961),

pp. 222-23.

9. *Philadelphia Record*, August 9, 1913; reprinted in Slote, *The Kingdom of Art*, pp. 446-49.

10. Paul Horgan, *Lamy of Santa Fe: His Life and Times* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1975).

11. Thomas H. Johnson, ed., *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Belknap, 1955) 2: 644 (poem number 861).