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Buried in Plain Sight: Unearthing Willa Cather's Allusion to Thomas William Parsons's "The Sculptor's Funeral"

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In January 1905, Willa Cather's story "The Sculptor's Funeral" appeared in *McClure's Magazine* and shortly thereafter in her first book of fiction, *The Troll Garden*, a collection of stories about art and artists. In the story, the body of sculptor Harvey Merrick arrives in his hometown of Sand City, Kansas, on a train from Boston, accompanied by his friend and former student, Henry Steavens. Cather criticism has long been concerned with identifying real-world prototypes for characters and situations in her fiction, and two such prototypes have been unearthed for "The Sculptor's Funeral." First, the return by train of the body of a young man who died elsewhere to her childhood home of Red Cloud, Nebraska, an event commemorated in her poem "The Night Express," first published in *The Youth's Companion* in 1902 and republished in her first book, the collection of poems *April Twilights* (1903). Second, the situation of Pittsburgh-born painter and illustrator Charles Stanley Reinhart, who died in 1896 in New York and whose funeral in Pittsburgh Cather attended, writing a newspaper column about the erection of a memorial at his grave in 1897.¹ While the case for these prototypes is clear, no one has accounted for the title of Cather's story and her decision to make her dead artist a sculptor—that is, her story is not "The Painter's Funeral."

In this essay, I propose a literary source for Cather's title and the situation of her story, a nineteenth-century poem by the same title. In January 1858, Boston poet and dentist Thomas William Parsons published in the *Atlantic Monthly* a poem entitled "The Sculptor's Funeral." The occasion of the poem was the December 5, 1857, New York City funeral of American sculptor Thomas Crawford. He had died in London in

October 1857 after a long illness, and his body had been sealed in a lead-lined oak coffin for transport back to his native New York for burial.² For many years before his death, Crawford had lived and worked in Italy, and Parsons himself, who had met Crawford in Italy, is the “mourner” in the striking opening of his poem about the funeral at St. John’s Episcopal Chapel in Varick Street:

AMID the aisle, apart, there stood
 A mourner like the rest;
 And while the solemn rites were said,
 He fashioned into verse his mood,
 That would not be repressed.

Why did they bring him home,
 Bright jewel set in lead?
 Oh, bear the sculptor back to Rome,
 And lay him with the mighty dead,—³

In her early career, Cather considered herself both a poet and a fiction writer, and she read poetry avidly. She saturated *The Troll Garden* stories with quotations from and references to nineteenth-century poems and poets, from the volume’s epigraph from Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” to nineteenth-century opera lyrics. Robert Browning’s poem “A Death in the Desert” has long been recognized as an ironic intertext for Cather’s *Troll Garden* story of the same title⁴—Cather’s title appeared without quotation marks in *Scribner’s Magazine* in 1903, but in *The Troll Garden* Cather signals that her title quoted Browning’s by putting her own in quotation marks. Properly, her title is “‘A Death in the Desert,’” with two sets of quotation marks. Cather’s “Sculptor’s Funeral” title is, I argue, an unmarked quotation of Parsons’s title designed to frame the reading of her story on a strongly similar theme. In order to advance this argument, I introduce Parsons and his poem (including his subject, sculptor Thomas Crawford), make a case for Cather’s access to the poem at the pertinent time in her career, and suggest how recognizing Parsons’s poem as an intertext adds a layer of meaning to Cather’s story.

Why has this prominently-placed allusion gone unnoticed for more than a century? During that period, Cather’s story has been widely anthologized and taught, in part because it was one of two stories, the other being “Pauls’ Case” (also published in *McClure’s* and collected in *The Troll Garden*), that Cather and her literary estate allowed to be reprinted. Unlike “Pauls’ Case,” however, “The Sculptor’s Funeral” has received scant scholarly attention. Indeed, Sarah Orne Jewett’s praise for “The Sculptor’s

Funeral," her singling out of the story from among all of the *Troll Garden* stories and Cather's other early short stories, has puzzled some. What made Jewett, a master of the short story form, find depth, complexity, and potential for the Cather's future achievement in it? One possibility is that she, unlike later critics and literary historians, recognized the allusion to Parsons. I will return later to the question of how Cather's tip of the hat to him functioned both to create meaning within her story and to position her as an author in the literary field, but it is significant that Jewett was among the select few equipped to recognize this allusion to an obscure New England poet.

* * * * *

Parsons was born in Boston in 1819 and attended the Boston Latin School.⁵ In 1836, instead of enrolling him in an undergraduate course of study, his father (an English immigrant) took him on a European grand tour, on which he first encountered Italy, the Italian language, and the poetry of Dante, which would become a lifelong obsession. Although in 1867 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow became the first American to publish a complete translation of the *Divine Comedy*, the 1843 publication of Parsons's translation of the first ten cantos of the *Inferno* marks his status as the first American translator of Dante.⁶ A devout High-Church Episcopalian, he was sympathetic to Dante's Roman Catholicism. On his return from Europe he entered Harvard Medical School; although he never completed his Harvard medical degree he became known as "Dr. Parsons" and practiced dentistry in Boston. Among his patients were two men who would themselves become Dante translators, a young Charles Eliot Norton, future Harvard professor of the history of art, and James Russell Lowell, the poet who eventually succeeded Longfellow in the Smith Professorship in Modern Languages at Harvard and was a member with him of the Dante Club fictionalized in Matthew Pearl's 2003 novel.

W. D. Ticknor issued the 1843 printing for private circulation of Parsons's earliest Dante translations, and when Ticknor joined forces with James T. Fields, Ticknor & Fields published a volume of Parsons's original verse in 1854. Thereafter, Parsons's original verse continued to appear in newspapers and magazines, including the *Atlantic Monthly*, which Ticknor & Fields acquired in 1859 and of which Fields became the second editor in 1861. However, obscure firms in Boston and London, rather than Ticknor & Fields or its successors, printed books—often designed for private circulation only—collecting this poetry. Parsons's complete *Inferno* finally appeared the same year as Longfellow's complete *Divine Comedy*, but his remaining Dante translations—including continuing refinements of cantos already published—appeared piecemeal in *Catholic World* magazine over the remaining decades of his life, and he

left other translations in manuscript at his death. Despite his relative obscurity as a poet and his increasingly solitary and reclusive habits, Parsons was deeply connected to the Harvard-based literary and social circle of Longfellow, Lowell, Norton, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. In the words of his friend and fellow poet Louise Imogen Guiney after his death, “the high-minded group who made the illustrious Boston and the Harvard University of forty and fifty years ago were his friends, and from them he had always the sole recognition which he found good.”⁷ As the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Lowell was at the helm when “The Sculptor’s Funeral” appeared there.⁸ Longfellow modeled the character of “The Poet” in his *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863) on Parsons, and Parsons’s sister Fanny married Luigi Monti, Longfellow’s protégé and instructor in Italian at Harvard under him, who appears in *Tales* as “The Sicilian.” Holmes and Parsons sustained a long friendship and shared the dual vocation of poet and medical practitioner. Parsons announced his affiliation with these better-known men in his poetry, addressing poems to Holmes, Lowell, and Longfellow and writing several poems about Sudbury and its inn made famous by Longfellow’s *Tales*.⁹ His acquaintance with the Sage of Concord was more distant, but he knew him well enough to send him his *Inferno* translation, which Emerson praised as “excellent,” although he professed he “was by no means a good Dantean, as you know” — Parsons addressed poems to Emerson as well.¹⁰

Sculptor Thomas Crawford, the subject of Parsons’s funeral ode, was born in New York City in 1814 to Irish immigrant parents. Crawford’s best-known sculpture at his death was his first major commission, a marble “Orpheus” that Charles Sumner (who met Crawford in Italy) urged the Boston Athenaeum to purchase.¹¹ A young Parsons met both Sumner and Crawford on his second trip to Italy in 1847, where, according to Parsons’s biographer, he “accompanied [Crawford] upon long rambles through town and country,” and “spent long evenings of wine and conversation.”¹² Parsons memorialized these long nights when he and Crawford “roved and dined on crust and curds” in his poem commemorating Crawford’s death.¹³ At the time of his death, Crawford had completed plaster models for another major commission, statuary for the U.S. Capitol Building, including the figure of “Freedom” that sits atop the Capital dome, but the bronze castings from his plaster models were not made until after his death.¹⁴ At his public funeral in New York, the subject of Parsons’s poem, Sumner was one of the honorary pallbearers.¹⁵

So how might Cather, who was born in 1873 in Virginia and whose family moved to central Nebraska in 1883, have encountered Parsons’s poem? Likely not in the 1858 *Atlantic Monthly*, where it appeared anonymously (as did all items in the first volume of the fledgling magazine); nor in the privately printed book *The Magnolia*

(1866), in which Parsons collected the poem and claimed authorship. However, in 1893, a year after Parsons's death, Houghton Mifflin, successor to Ticknor & Fields, published a two-volume set of Parsons's works. The first volume featured his original verse, including "The Sculptor's Funeral," and the second collected his Dante translations. The Dante volume featured a preface by Charles Eliot Norton and a longer appreciation and biographical reminiscence of Parsons as a Dante translator by Louise Guiney.

In the wake of Parsons's death and Houghton Mifflin's publication of his collected works, Parsons and his poems received a flurry of attention in national literary magazines. Indeed, for a period of several years Parsons became famous for being obscure, yet important. As an anonymous contributor to the *Dial* wrote in 1892 in a column commemorating Parsons's death alongside those of John Greenleaf Whittier and George William Curtis, Parsons "was one of those poets who, like [Walter Savage] Landor, appeal to but a limited audience; who find their reward in the steadfast affection of the few rather than in the applause of the many. Judged by the world's crude test of popularity, his place in our literature is insignificant: measured by the exacting standards of art, few of our poets have so high a place as his."¹⁶ Responding to the publication of his collected poems the next year, the *Literary World* pronounced him "enamored of poetry and a sincere devotee of the *Divina Commedia*, but quite indifferent to fame."¹⁷ In 1894, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Parsons's friend, fellow poet, and editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1881 to 1890, explained that Parsons "did not address himself to the general," and taking up the Landor analogy, noted that "both wrote marvelously finished verse, which poets praised and the public neglected to read." Aldrich also made clear that "in some degree" the fact that Parsons himself was "curiously indifferent" to the fate of his poems accounted for his lack of fame and popularity.¹⁸ Nevertheless, Aldrich held up Parsons's example up as "a lesson to mediocrity" (i.e. those pursuing a wide reading audience rather than focusing on craft). "Parsons's verse found only a narrow circle of readers," Aldrich explains, "but they were of that kind which in each age keeps the fire burning on the altars."¹⁹ A few years later, Maria S. Porter attempted to stoke the fires on the altars by publishing previously unpublished Parsons poems and letters from Holmes to Parsons. Sounding the note heard again and again, she explained that "Poe, Bryant, Longfellow, Emerson, Whittier, Lowell, and Holmes" are "appreciated by the many, while Parsons is known only to the few, comparatively speaking; and yet his poems are ranked as of supreme merit by scholars and lovers of exquisite art in verse." Briefly reviewing his poetic achievements, she mentions "the memorial verses on Crawford, the sculptor" as "full of solemn grandeur."²⁰

In the early 1890s, Cather lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, and was an ambitious young poet and short story writer, college literary magazine editor, and newspaper critic: she would thus have been regularly reading the national literary magazines in which Parsons was eulogized. Furthermore, her university library acquired the 1893 posthumous collection of Parsons's works during her student years.²¹ As Bernice Slote, the scholar responsible for recovering much of Cather's early criticism observes, Cather was "a young woman quite astonishing intellectually with a background of reading and knowledge that seems to have no boundaries."²² Cather does not reference Parsons or the sculptor Crawford in her journalistic writing and criticism from the 1890s or early 1900s.²³ However, together the identical title, the striking thematic similarity between Cather's story and Parsons's poem, the presence of the volume in the University of Nebraska library, and the flurry of national attention to the poet after his death all combine to make a strong *prima facie* case for her access to the poem in the early 1890s. If Parsons and his collected poems did not come to Cather's attention before she left Nebraska, she may have encountered them in Pittsburgh through Dante enthusiast Isabelle McClung, in whose family home she lived.²⁴ And, finally, she may have encountered Parsons's "Sculptor's Funeral" poem as a memorial for Crawford when she visited Washington, DC, in 1901, and toured cultural sites.

What did Cather gain through this allusion? As Wolfgang Karrer argues in his study of titles as "intertextual devices," "quoting titles" occupy "privileged and hierarchical slots in text," often "overcoding" an entire text and potentially signaling "structural reproduction."²⁵ Cather's quotation of Parsons's title invites readers to consider both Cather's structural reproduction of Parsons's poem and her departures from it. Indeed, the title of Parsons's poem is itself a quoting title that functions similarly: Parsons structurally reproduced and revised yet another poem entitled "The Sculptor's Funeral," one by Thomas Buchanan Read. An American poet, painter, and sculptor, Read published his poem in *Putnam's Magazine* in 1853.²⁶ Like Crawford, Read lived and worked in Italy in the 1840s and 1850s. Read's "Sculptor's Funeral" is historical rather than occasional: it describes the burial of fifteenth-century sculptor Donatello in the Basilica of San Lorenzo in his native Florence and features three "bystanders" speaking their memories of the sculptor, interspersed with chants of the Miserere and a chorus of Donatello's students.²⁷ Because Donatello spent much of his career in Florence, a substantial portion of his body of work is located in churches there, including the Basilica where he is buried. Read's poem is thus necessarily anchored firmly in Donatello's native city. Parsons, in contrast, splits the geography of his poem to reflect Crawford's biographical trajectory. Parsons sets the frame in New York, where Crawford was born and buried, but as speaker he shifts the scene to Italy, where Crawford

practiced his art and drew inspiration from the Classical and Renaissance sculptural traditions. Parsons adopted from Read's poem the conceit of the bystander speaking his thoughts during the funeral but shifted from three speaking bystanders to one. Boston is also a key, unnamed geographical axis of the poem: Parsons lived in Boston, and as the poem's speaker he imagines himself wandering his city and encountering two of Crawford's sculptures situated there. In his "loved library" (the Boston Athenaeum), Parsons encounters Crawford's "Keen Orpheus, with his eyes / Fixed deep in ruddy hell, / Seeking amid those lurid skies / The wife he loved so well," while in "Music's festive hall" (the Boston Music Hall), Crawford's "genius" greets Parsons in the form of a "man of bronze" (a sculpture of Beethoven).²⁸ The poem's publication in *The Atlantic Monthly* also aligned the poem along the Boston/Cambridge axis.

Thus in his "Sculptor's Funeral," Parsons wanders Boston while thinking of Italy, the setting of Read's "Sculptor's Funeral." In her "Sculptor's Funeral," Cather shifts the geographical axes, just as Parsons shifted Read's, creating a scenario in which two observers located in Kansas think of the artist's career in Boston. Her fictional sculptor, Harvey Merrick, was born in Kansas and dies in Boston (where he attended college and taught), but his body is returned to his hometown for burial. Paris, the site of Merrick's artistic triumph, is an additional geographical axis of Merrick's life and Cather's story. She splits the position of the bystander between Steavens, who accompanies the body from Boston, and Jim Laird, who went to college in Boston with Merrick but returned to Sand City to practice law. At the opening of the story, Laird is "but one of the company [at the station] who looked as though he knew exactly why he was there; and he kept conspicuously apart." After the opening of the story, Steavens serves as the story's puzzled focalizer. He "stared about him with the sickening conviction that there had been some horrible mistake, and that he had somehow arrived at the wrong destination."²⁹ Laird serves as Steavens's sympathetic interpreter, and his speech denouncing the town's lack of understanding of Merrick occupies nearly half the story.

Sand City, Kansas is a very-thinly-disguised version of Cather's Nebraska hometown, Red Cloud, located just a few miles north of the Kansas border in south central Nebraska. By referencing Parsons's poem and through it, Crawford's career, Cather structurally aligns Nebraska with New York City as the artist's birthplace, making her home region an origin point for serious American art. However, she also makes it a place the nascent artist flees. As Steavens observes Merrick's home community and family, he thinks that such a place caused Merrick to experience "the yearning of a boy, cast ashore upon a desert of newness and ugliness and sordidness, for all that is chastened and old, and noble with traditions."³⁰

Indeed, in Cather's story, the small prairie town is a kind of hell—or at least his mother “made Harvey's life hell for him,” as Laird explains to Steavens.³¹ Through her quoting title, Cather structurally reproduces a key element of Parsons's poem, a mythic descent into hell. Using Crawford's sculpture of Orpheus as a central motif, Parsons explicitly references Orpheus's descent into hell seeking his wife Eurydice and implicitly references Dante's descent with Virgil as his guide:

O, Rome! What memories awake,
 When Crawford's name is said,
 Of days and friends whose dear sake
 That path of Hades unto me
 Will have no more of dread
 Than his own Orpheus felt, seeking Eurydice!³²

Cather thus implies that Steavens's trip to Sand City is a descent into hell, with Laird as his guide. Parsons professes not to fear death because Crawford will be waiting for him on the other side of the river Acheron. In contrast, Cather makes Kansas a terrifying place from which Steavens will flee back to Boston, while Laird and the other residents of Sand City will continue to suffer eternal torment for their sin of greed.

It is not entirely clear when Cather wrote “The Sculptor's Funeral,” but she likely did so at least two years before its 1905 publication. Her attraction to the elite, genteel literary culture of Boston is well known. As Cather biographer Sharon O'Brien observes, “Other young writers might not have been as impressed by Boston's dusty greatness as Willa Cather was, for in the early 1900s literary prestige and activity had shifted from Boston to New York, by then the center of the publishing industry. For Cather, however, Boston was still the symbolic center of American culture.”³³ Notably at the time her “Sculptor's Funeral” was published, Cather had not yet experienced Boston firsthand. She had been to Chicago, New York City, and Washington, DC, and she had toured England and France with Isabelle McClung, but she had not yet been to Boston, nor had her European tour encompassed Italy. Cather thus lacked direct experience of these New World and Old World capitals of culture that defined Thomas Parsons's life. However, by making Boston the origin point of the train carrying Merrick's remains and by titling her story in homage to Parsons's poem about the burial of an expatriate American sculptor, Cather aligned herself with Boston's nineteenth-century cultural dominance.

Here we return to the questions of who had access to these meanings called up by Cather's quoting title and why her allusion has gone unrecognized for so long. As Joseph Pucci argues in his study of literary allusion in the Western tradition, all allusions

function "in two discrete ways, signifying within the work and outside of it."³⁴ Cather's title signifies so transparently "within the work" that it has seemed to require no further explanation. As Pucci also argues, however, an allusion only *becomes* an allusion "in the mind of the reader, who is reminded by virtue of shared language of a connection between a later set of words and an earlier set of words, and who configures on his own terms the interpretive outcomes of this connection."³⁵ Pucci does not, in the fashion of high poststructuralist theorists of intertextuality, take the author and questions of intention out of this equation.³⁶ Instead, he argues, "allusion begins and ends in a work written by an author; it is not some free-floating mass of literary potential, autotelically actualizing itself, but rather a discrete literary phenomenon that partakes of the internationalities of both reader and author."³⁷

For more than a century Cather's allusion has been, in a sense, not an allusion at all because the vast majority of readers have not been able to complete this circuit. And that is, I think, precisely the point. As Gerard Genette argues in *Paratexts*, quoting titles like Cather's not only provide a text "with the indirect support of another text" but also "the prestige of a cultural filiation."³⁸ It is precisely this gesture of cultural filiation and authorial self-fashioning to which I turn for the remainder of the essay. By alluding to an obscure poet who was nevertheless a well-connected insider, admired by the literary coterie of better-known authors centered in nineteenth-century Boston, Cather strategically imagined herself into the elite literary culture of nineteenth-century Boston and constructed an image of herself as a serious, anti-commercial artist.

Cather used quoting titles frequently throughout her career, but "The Sculptor's Funeral" crucially diverges from other instances. In addition to "A Death in the Desert" and "The Sculptor's Funeral," her story "The Bohemian Girl" (1912) takes its title from an 1843 opera by Michael William Balfe with libretto by Alfred Bunn;³⁹ the title of *The Song of the Lark* (1915) derives from the title of a painting by Jules Breton (1882); the title *O Pioneers!* partially reproduces the title of Walt Whitman's poem "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" (1865); and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) derives its title from a wood engraving in Hans Holbein's "Dance of Death" series (1538). In all of these cases, however, Cather's acts of filiation were more legible to her original readers, either because she alluded to well-known works, she explicitly acknowledged the allusion, or both, as in the case of her story "The Bohemian Girl," which includes references to and quotations from the libretto of the popular and widely-performed opera in the body of the story. "A Death in the Desert" is subtler. However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Browning was at the height of his popularity with American readers—indeed, he was more popular in America than in Britain. Cather took a year-long course on Browning as an undergraduate, and outside

of academia a wide range of people joined Browning societies and clubs across the United States.⁴⁰ Many readers of "'A Death in the Desert'" in *Scribner's* in 1903 or in *The Troll Garden* in 1905 were thus equipped to spot her allusion. In the 1890s, Cather published criticism about the recently-deceased Whitman, and in the early twentieth century, his reputation as a major poetic voice of the nineteenth century was well established.⁴¹ As a result, Cather could offhandedly announce her title for her novel-in-progress in a letter to her friend Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant ("I think I shall call it after Walt Whitmans [sic] 'O Pioneers!'",) and she could expect others to know the allusion as well. As Latrobe Carroll wrote in the *Bookman* in 1921, "In taking for a title the name of one of Walt Whitman's poems, the author drew attention to his influence upon the mood of her narrative."⁴² In *The Song of the Lark* protagonist Thea Kronborg encounters Breton's painting in the Chicago Art Institute, and Houghton Mifflin drove home Cather's allusion to readers in 1915 by reproducing the painting on the book's dust jacket. Cather asked them to reverse this design decision when they reissued it in 1931, but her reference to Breton's widely-reproduced painting nevertheless remained legible.⁴³ Cather's allusion to Holbein was somewhat obscure, but in an essay in the *Commonweal* magazine appearing after the publication of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* she removed the obscurity, explaining, parenthetically, "the title, by the way, which has caused a good deal of comment, was simply taken from Holbein's *Dance of Death*."⁴⁴

Parsons, however, was no Whitman or Browning, and Cather did not comment on her own allusion as she did in other cases. The late nineteenth-century reviewers of Parsons from whom I quote above describe Parsons as a textbook case of a producer in what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "autonomous sector" of the field of cultural production, in which "the only audience aimed at is other producers" and "the economy of practices is based, as in a generalized game of 'loser wins,' on a systematic inversion of the fundamental principles of all ordinary economies."⁴⁵ The reviewers repeatedly point both to Parsons's entire lack of interest in the popularity of or profit from his poetry and the high esteem in which fellow poets held his poetry. That is, they point to the symbolic capital (Bourdieu's term) he and his poetry accrued *because* only the knowing few, his fellow producers, recognized the value of his work. In affiliating herself with Parsons through the title of her story, Cather signaled to the knowing few who would recognize, and thus complete, the allusion that she aspired to be an autonomous artist who cared only for the recognition of fellow artists.

Cather's story incorporates these dynamics into its plot in a way that Parsons's poem does not. The people of Sand City do not value Merrick's art because it has not produced profits even though the distinction conferred on Merrick by his peers puts

Sand City on the map. Twice in the story, Steavens glances at a palm insignia on Merrick's casket and feels frustrated that no one in Sand City recognizes the meaning of it (Cather seems to have intended the palms to signify that Merrick was a holder of the *palmes académiques*, an award signifying his status as a distinguished teacher of sculpture in France).⁴⁶ None of Merrick's work is visible in his parents' house, however, and one of the things that makes Steavens feel "a sickening conviction" that he must have brought his teacher's body to the wrong place is "a 'Rogers group' of John Alden and Priscilla, wreathed with smilax" (a green vine with red berries) hanging on a wall—that is, he sees a cheap plaster reproduction of a work by the popular sculptor John Rogers based on a scene from Longfellow's popular long narrative poem about the Pilgrims, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858).⁴⁷

Cather first traveled to Boston in January 1907, on assignment for *McClure's Magazine*, and in 1908 she met Annie Adams Fields, widow of publisher James T. Fields, and Sarah Orne Jewett, an author of New England regional fiction and a partner with Annie in a Boston marriage. As Cather wrote in "148 Charles Street," her homage to Annie Fields published in *Not Under Forty* (1936), "the name of that firm [Ticknor & Fields] meant something to me. In my father's bookcase there were little volumes of Longfellow and Hawthorne with that imprint." Finding herself in Annie Fields's parlor, Cather felt that "Longfellow, Emerson, Whittier, Hawthorne, Lowell, Sumner, Norton, Oliver Wendell Holmes" became more than a list of names that "sounds like something in a school-book." Instead, they came to seem like "very living people."⁴⁸

Although her recollected sentiments here seem to be genuine, the opening of "148 Charles Street," in which Cather presents herself as being taken, quite by chance, into the home of someone she assumed to be long dead, is a carefully wrought fiction. In 1905, the young Harvard-educated poet Witter Bynner, who worked for S. S. McClure, sent a copy of *The Troll Garden* to Sarah Orne Jewett, who reported back to Bynner that she found the bleak realism of some of the stories troubling. "The stories are full of talent – but I cannot help wishing that a writer of such promise chose rather to share the hopeful, constructive yes! – even the pleasant side of unpleasant things and disappointed lives!" she wrote. "[I]t may come of growing older," she conceded, "... but I think very often of what Stevenson said once in a letter, that realism should be a means but never an end." Nevertheless, Jewett also reported that she was "very glad to read 'The Sculptor's Funeral' again," implying that she had already read and been

struck by it in *McClure's* "and again ... It has touched me profoundly." She asked Bynner to "give my best messages to Miss Cather" because they would "have much to say if [they] could talk together."⁴⁹ In Cather's first letter to Annie Fields, she confirmed an appointment to see her and wrote apologetically, "You will not think me importunate for having telephoned so often, will you? You see I have wanted to know you and Miss Jewett for so many years, and as my time is short now I cannot bear to go away without having seen more of you."⁵⁰ In her next letter, she complained of what seems to have been S. S. McClure's failure to fulfill a promise to come to Boston during her first research trip for his magazine in order to introduce her to Fields and Jewett (McClure knew Jewett because she published some short stories through his newspaper syndicate): "I cant [sic] help groaning a good deal that Mr. McClure did not come up and take me to see you a year ago."⁵¹

For years before 1908, then, she had been imaginatively projecting herself into the past of which Fields was a living representative. As Richard Brodhead writes in *The School of Hawthorne*, Annie Fields's late husband pioneered a particular strategy for promoting literature. He "found a way to identify a certain portion of...writing as distinguished— as of elevated quality, as of premium cultural value" and then "buil[t] a market for that writing on the basis of that distinction," all the while claiming this elevated status of his authors's works "as a difference before the market." The salon James Fields established at the 148 Charles Street house still occupied by his widow half a century later was "a scene where he could...produce his authors as a kind of sacred cultural elite."⁵² When Cather quoted Parsons's poem title as the title for her story about the burial of an artist raised in a small prairie town, she projected herself into that sacred cultural space where Fields had produced the cultural distinction of his authors—not because Cather wanted to be truly obscure, as Parsons chose to be after the early 1850s, but because she aspired to be like the group of distinguished authors who knew who Parsons was, authors who occupied a position *in* the market as authors *above* the market. And in 1905, Cather had, in a manner of speaking, received an invitation from Sarah Orne Jewett (whose works appeared regularly in the *Atlantic Monthly* and whose books appeared under the Houghton Mifflin imprint) to come talk to her about "The Sculptor's Funeral," and when her work for *McClure's* sent her to Boston Cather assiduously pursued Jewett's invitation.

The list of names Cather associates with Annie Fields in "148 Charles Street" intersects markedly with Parsons's life and his funeral ode for Crawford: Longfellow was Parsons's friend and fellow Dante translator; as editor of the *Atlantic* Parsons's friend Lowell published his poem; Sumner was responsible for Thomas Crawford's first major commission as a sculptor and was pallbearer at his funeral; Oliver Wendell Holmes

was Parsons's life-long friend who similarly combined medical and literary pursuits; Emerson admired Parsons's Dante translations; James T. Fields published Parsons's first collection of his own poems. When Cather ingratiated herself into Annie Fields's 148 Charles Street salon, she could not meet James Fields, Sumner, Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, or Lowell, all of whom were dead. She may, however, have met Sara Norton, daughter of Charles Eliot Norton and an intimate friend of Fields and Jewett, and perhaps the famous Harvard Professor himself. Even if she was, as she describes herself in "148 Charles Street," "an American of the Apache period and territory," having befriended Fields and Jewett she was in a position to send a letter of condolence when Norton, eminent Boston Brahmin (and a lifelong acquaintance of Thomas Parsons) died.⁵³ "I knew Mr. Norton's death would be a sorrow to both you and Mrs. Fields," she wrote to Jewett in October 1908, "and I thought of you both when I saw the headlines announcing it. Mrs. Fields is the only one left who can evoke that vanished time that was so much nobler than this. How she does evoke it! I think it never had much reality for me until that afternoon when I first went to her house on Charles Street, and she sat in the window with the fine broad river and a quiet sunset behind her."⁵⁴ Although Annie Fields and Sarah Jewett were of a younger generation than Norton, they knew Parsons, too. Parsons regularly sent volumes of his poems as they appeared to James and Annie Fields before James's death in 1881. When he sent them his volume *The Old House at Sudbury* (1870), which featured a frontispiece of the Wayside Inn and several poems linked to the group associated with it, Annie Fields wrote him that she "re-read every word of the old favorites and made happy acquaintance with the contents of the whole box of jewels already, for it is always safe to read your books before writing to say 'I thank you,' which may not be said of all. Now we can thank heaven that there are still poets."⁵⁵ As Jewett wrote to a friend in 1892 about an aging "Dr. Holmes" and the passing of his peers, Holmes was saddened by the death of "Dr. Parsons, an erratic man of real genius, the translator of Dante and a poet of no mean skill, who was one of Dr. Holmes's and Mr. Fields's friends."⁵⁶ And, finally, through Fields and Jewett, Cather met Louise Guiney, whose poetry Cather had praised as a newspaper critic. Guiney moved to England in 1901, but in early 1909, when Cather enjoyed "two very pleasant hours" with her "that had been long looked forward to," she had recently arrived for a visit with her mother in suburban Boston. Guiney knew Parsons better than did Jewett and Fields, and her appreciation of Parsons appeared in the collected edition of his works—indeed, in addition to authoring this signed appreciation, she undertook the uncredited work of gathering together the many print and manuscript fragments of Parsons's Dante translations to create something like the coherent published whole that Parsons himself never undertook.⁵⁷

In 1908 and 1909, when Cather was an upstart young-ish Westerner who became an insider in the Boston social networks of these nineteenth-century literary women, she also made her first trip to Italy, a reward from her employer for completing her work on the Mary Baker Eddy exposé that had taken her to Boston and, in a roundabout fashion, into 148 Charles Street. Following in the footsteps of generations of American authors and painters before her, she made a pilgrimage to the ruins of Paestum, where, as Mark Madigan has demonstrated, she wrote a poem about the ruins, left unpublished at her death. In *My Ántonia* (1918), Cather gave her experience of Paestum to Gaston Cleric, a New Englander and Harvard-trained classicist who is a professor at the University of Nebraska.⁵⁸ Cleric does not stay long in Nebraska—when he is offered a position at Harvard, he takes the narrator of the novel, his student Jim Burden, with him, and Jim never lives in Nebraska again.

Fields and Jewett had been to Italy, and, as a recent initiate, Cather delighted in writing to them about sites they knew. From Ravello, she wrote Jewett, “Do you, I wonder, remember what an extravagantly beautiful place this is?...You probably remember what a magical aspect the sea presents from this terrace.” Her experience of Italy thus contributed to her growing relationship with Fields and Jewett in Boston, but it also tied her back to Nebraska. Marveling at the blue of the Mediterranean sea, Cather wrote Jewett, “When I was little I knew a funny old lady in Nebraska who had some water from the Mediterranean corked up in a bottle, and when you looked at the bottle for a long time and suddenly shut your eyes you saw the sea itself for a moment, and this was the way it looked—a color and remoteness that exist in legends and nowhere else.” Even when she most strenuously attempted to experience Italy at its most authentic, she could not escape her distant Nebraska childhood. She describes to Jewett stumbling upon a religious procession and joining in with a group of old people and a priest trooping down to Amalfi, when “some people from Nebraska, whom [she] had not seen for years” appeared on the road, recognized and hailed her, and compelled her turn to Ravello with them for a social visit. “I have felt,” she complained to Jewett, “as if I were being put through the world by some awfully complicated kind of clock-work ever since.”⁵⁹

After Cather’s return from Italy, Jewett wrote a famous letter advising Cather to quit her editorial job at *McClure’s* so she could take up writing full time. She also pointed to Cather’s “Nebraska life” as one of Cather’s “backgrounds” about which she might write if she gained proper perspective. In this letter, Jewett once again singled out “The Sculptor’s Funeral” for praise as she had in her letter to Witter Bynner, telling Cather that it “stands alone a head higher than the rest” of the stories in *The Troll Garden*. Jewett’s repeated praise of the story suggests she may have recognized

Cather's allusion to Parsons's poem and the depth and aspiration to high artistry conveyed through it.⁶⁰

Six months later, while Cather was in London on *McClure's* editorial business, Fields wrote her about Jewett's death. Despite Jewett's advice of 1908, Cather did not leave her editorial position at *McClure's* until 1912, and she set her first published novel, *Alexander's Bridge* (1912), in Boston and London, not Nebraska. Her turn towards Nebraska came with "The Bohemian Girl" and *O Pioneers!*, the latter being dedicated "To the memory of Sarah Orne Jewett, in whose beautiful and delicate work there is the perfection that endures." Cather held on tightly to her friendships with Fields and Guiney. As she wrote in 1911 to Guiney (who had returned to England) after spending a week visiting the elderly Fields at 148 Charles Street, "We had beautiful days and evenings, and the magic of that magically haunted house was never so potent for me. That other rare spirit whom we all loved so well [Sarah Orne Jewett] seemed not far away, and one kept stumbling upon things that were hers."⁶¹

As Bernice Slote argues in an early study of Cather's allusiveness, she "enjoyed having secrets," including the "secret web" of allusions that created "actual complexity" behind the "apparent simplicity" of her work.⁶² Parsons remains one of the most obscure nineteenth-century American poets, although in 1905, when Cather's story appeared, he was perhaps less obscure, his reputation as an anti-commercial artist who wrote for the discerning few having been promoted by the critical tastemakers who knew him. By titling her story in homage to Parsons's poem, Cather positioned herself as one of those discerning few and as a potential heir, with a new regional variation, to the tradition Parsons represented. Indeed, in a poem Willa Cather probably did not read before she wrote her "Sculptor's Funeral," Parsons uncannily predicted Cather's later relationship to him. In 1843, Parsons published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* a series of satirical verse epistles in the persona of a fictitious Englishman writing from America to real London literary figures whom Parsons had met and befriended there. His "Letter to Samuel Rogers" features the Englishman's take on the crudities of what was then the American west, including Illinois and Arkansas.⁶³ In his 1854 *Poems* published by Ticknor & Fields, Parsons included a preface explaining and contextualizing the verse epistles. In addition to looking back a decade, he also projected forward in time, imagining hypothetical Americans from an ever-shifting west attempting to view their culture from the perspective of New England:

To many a spirit full of zeal and young,
 Whose mother speech is ours and Shakespeare's tongue
 Such as to us — a consecrated stream —
 Isis hath been, our little Charles may seem!
 In Harvard's names, that now so humbly sound,
 St. John's and Pembroke may by them be found,
 And what old England is to you and me,
 Such may New England to Nebraska be!⁶⁴

The editors of the posthumous 1893 collection of Parsons's poems available to Cather as a university student did not include the verse epistles and Parsons's preface to them, but I am tempted to imagine Annie Fields in 1908 pulling the 1854 volume published by her late husband off a shelf in the library at 148 Charles Street to share Parsons's prediction with her new friend as they sat in the long parlor overlooking the Charles River.

During their lifetimes Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell all wrote poetry that earned both critical praise and popularity with ordinary readers. They combined cultural prestige with commercial success in a manner alien to Parsons. In the wake of the publication of his collected poems in 1893, some critics imagined that time would vindicate Parsons and that his poems would become classics. Thomas Bailey Aldrich opined that Parsons would "be better known to our grandchildren than he has been to us. For time saves and sanctifies as well as destroys."⁶⁵ Or as the *Dial* suggested, "the quality of the work is exquisite, and it is quality that tells in the long run."⁶⁶ Their thinking once again aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's theorizing of the economics of prestige. Authors who "throw[] away" their works "like a gift" achieve the "precious gift [of] recognition" in the long run, while "*best-sellers*" are "here today and gone tomorrow."⁶⁷ In Parsons's case, however, these predictions were dead wrong. He attracted one early twentieth century dissertation and appears marginally in scholarship on Dante in America, but his original verse disappeared from view. Guiney's appreciation of Parsons, published during his lifetime in the *Catholic World*, was more prescient: "He will be always, probably, as he is now, living among the poets of private adoration. He will dwell on Parnassus, if not in the anthologies."⁶⁸ Or, as she wrote in a private letter to Richard Henry Stoddard, "I lost my dear old friend Dr. T. W. Parsons, this month. Did you know him? He was worth knowing, and worth reading, in Heaven, if not here."⁶⁹

Guiney, who titled her published appreciation of Parsons "'The Poet' of the Wayside Inn," and her contemporaries might have been surprised by what happened to the critical reputations of Parsons's more famous friends. Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes

were christened, with their friend and fellow Ticknor & Fields author John Greenleaf Whittier, the schoolroom or fireside poets because families read their poetry together and students recited it in schoolrooms. As a result they lost their prestige and largely disappeared from literary history and university teaching anthologies.⁷⁰ With their devaluation, Parsons's obscurity only increased. And with the deaths of Jewett in 1909, Annie Fields in 1915, and Guiney in 1920, Cather and literary history lost three women who could hear her dog whistle of affiliation with Parsons and his nineteenth-century poetic reputation. Not even the recent Longfellow revival in academia, spurred in part by Longfellow's transnational reach and work as a translator, has managed to revive "The Poet" of Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

So how did I find Parsons's poem and recognize its relevance to Cather's short story? I divide my scholarly time between Willa Cather and popular nineteenth-century American women novelists. Cather strenuously distanced herself from these predecessors in her early criticism, including in a 1901 newspaper column describing her visit to the Georgetown cottage of the recently deceased E. D. E. N. Southworth, one of the most popular and prolific novelists of the nineteenth-century U.S.⁷¹ While engaged in coediting a volume of essays on Southworth and researching a bibliography of her serially published fiction, I sought out an 1866 essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* about Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the antislavery weekly the *National Era*, in which Southworth published fiction in the 1840s and 50s.⁷² Navigating the awkward interface of the "Making of America" digital reproduction of the *Atlantic Monthly*, I found myself paging through a much earlier portion of the magazine, and the title "The Sculptor's Funeral" and the opening lines of the poem arrested my attention. A quick Internet search revealed Parsons to be the author of the anonymously published poem. I am not sure whether Cather would have chuckled at the irony or recoiled in disgust at my stumbling upon the key to her cannily obscure allusion while researching a popular woman novelist whose career she described as "comically grotesque." Nevertheless, just as she returned Harvey Merrick's body to Kansas in her short story, I now return her quoting title to its source in Parsons's poem, completing the circuit of her allusion.

Notes

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1. James Woodress, "Introduction," in *The Troll Garden*, by Willa Cather (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), xxi–xxii. Mark Madigan, "Historical Essay," in *Youth and the Bright Medusa*, by Willa Cather (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 329–31. Hermione Lee parenthetically suggests that the story is an "angry elegy" for Pittsburgh composer Ethelbert Nevin, who was "unappreciated by his townfolk." *Willa Cather: Double Lives* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 75. James A. Jaap suggests that Merrick's sculptures evoke the work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens (although he was still living when Cather wrote her story). "Willa Cather and Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Idealism and the Artist," *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*, 58, no. 3 (2016): 7–12. Other intertexts have been proposed. Richard Cary proposes Sarah Orne Jewett's "Miss Tempy's Watchers" (1888). "The Sculptor and the Spinster: Jewett's 'Influence' on Cather," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 10, no. 3 (1973): 168–78. Eban Bass proposes Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful" (1844). "The Sculptor of the Beautiful," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 14, no.1 (1978): 28–35. Peter Mallios proposes Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900). *Our Conrad: Constituting American Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 181–184.
2. Robert L. Gale, *Thomas Crawford: American Sculptor* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 187.
3. [Thomas William Parsons], "The Sculptor's Funeral," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1857, 368.
4. Woodress, "Introduction," xxi.
5. For biographical details, I rely on Austin Warren, "An Expatriate in Boston," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 28, no. 2 (1959): 134–148, and "Thomas William Parsons," in *Letters by T. W. Parsons*, Ed. Zoltán Haraszti (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1939), 9–22. There is a great deal of overlap, but the former includes some information not in the latter.
6. Kathleen Verduin, "Dante in America: The First Hundred Years," in *Reading Books: Essays on the Material Text and Literature in America*, ed. Michel Moylan and Lane Stiles (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 26.
7. Louise Imogen Guiney, "Thomas William Parsons: 1819–1892," in *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Translated into English Verse by Thomas William Parsons* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1893), xix.
8. On the early years of the *Atlantic*, see Susan Goodman, *Republic of Words: The Atlantic Monthly and Its Writers, 1857–1925* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2011) and Ellery Sedgwick, *The Atlantic Monthly, 1857–1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994). Tellingly and typically, neither book mentions Parsons as a contributor, and the same is the case for books about all of these better known men—Parsons appears not at all or is mentioned only in passing despite his long association with them.
9. "To O.W.H. March 19th. Spring Begins" in Maria S. Porter, "Thomas William Parsons," *Century Illustrated Magazine*, October 1901, 935–36. Porter posits that it was "never published," but see Haraszti on its publication in the *Boston Post* and Holmes's acknowledgment of it (*Letters*, 121). In Thomas William Parsons, *Poems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893), see "To James Russell Lowell in return for a Talbotype Picture of Venice" (73–75), "To Henry Wadsworth Longfellow" (76–77), and on Sudbury, "Down by the Shore in December" (37–38),

- "Guy Fawkes Day at the Old House in Sudbury" (140–2), "By the Sudbury" (135–6), "Inscription for a Drinking Fountain at Wayland" (137), and "The Old House in Sudbury Twenty Years Afterwards" (143–5).
10. Thomas William Parsons to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 26 August 1867, in Haraszti, *Letters*, p. 68. "Emerson" in Parsons, *Poems*, 65–66. This poem gestures towards Concord more broadly, spending as much time on Hawthorne as Emerson, although Parsons's relationship with Hawthorne seems to have been more as a reader than a friend.
 11. Loretta Dimmick, "Thomas Crawford's *Orpheus*: The American Apollo Belvedere," *American Art Journal*, 19, no. 4 (1987): 46–84.
 12. Warren, "An Expatriate in Boston," 136. Tellingly, Parsons is not mentioned in the book-length biography of Crawford by Robert Gale.
 13. Parsons, *Poems* (1893), 52.
 14. Gale, *Thomas Crawford*, 182.
 15. *Ibid.*, 187.
 16. "The Threefold Loss of American Letters," *The Dial*, 16 September 1892, 174.
 17. "Dr. Parsons' Poems," *The Literary World*, 30 December 1893, 24.
 18. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, "A Portrait of Thomas William Parsons," *The Century Magazine*, July 1894, 323.
 19. *Ibid.*, 324.
 20. Porter, "Thomas Williams Parsons," 934.
 21. The library currently holds only the first volume, *Poems*, the volume collecting Parsons's original verse, including "The Sculptor's Funeral," although it seems likely that they once held both volumes. The bookplate and markings in the copy of *Poems* are characteristic of early 1890s acquisitions. Thanks to Kari Ronning for sharing her expertise in this regard.
 22. Bernice Slotte, "Willa Cather: The Secret Web," in *Five Essays on Willa Cather / The Merrimack Symposium*, ed. John J. Murphy (North Andover: Merrimack College, 1974), 3
 23. Cather does, however, reference Crawford's son, novelist Francis Marion Crawford, in her criticism and met him in Pittsburgh, where she moved in 1895 to take an editorial position at the *Home Monthly* magazine. [Willa Cather], "The Passing Show," *Lincoln Courier*, 21 Sept. 1895, [7]. Willa Cather to Mariel Gere, 10 January [1898], *The Selected Letters of Willa Cather*, ed. Andrew Jewell and Janis Stout (New York: Vintage, 2014), 50.
 24. Elizabeth Moorhead, *These Too Were Here: Louise Homer and Willa Cather* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1950), 51. Helen C. Southwick, "Willa Cather's Early Career: Origins of a Legend," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 65, no. 2 (April 1982): 93–94. Southwick corrects Moorehead's apparent misdating of McClung's membership in a Pittsburgh Chapter of the Dante Society in 1905, placing its founding in 1910. Nevertheless, McClung's enthusiasm for Dante when Cather lived in Pittsburgh can be inferred from her role in founding a chapter in 1910.
 25. Wolfgang Karrer, "Titles and Mottoes as Intertextual Devices," in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 123, 126.

26. [Thomas Buchanan Read], "The Sculptor's Funeral," *Putnam's Magazine*, February 1853, 137–138. It later became part of a two-part poem preceded by "The Sculptor's Last Hour." *The Poetical Works of Thomas Buchanan Read*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1903), I: 208–19. Read and his poem were likely better known than Parsons and his poem, and some readers in 1905 may have interpreted Cather's title as an allusion to Read. Indeed, Cather may have intended that allusion as well. However, the situation of the return of the expatriate American artist's body in Parsons's poem more closely matches Cather's story. Put another way, Crawford as Parsons's poetic subject more closely matches Cather's fictional Harvey Merrick than does Donatello, even though Parsons apparently took up Read's title to suggest that as a sculptor Crawford was of equal stature to Donatello and was worthy of an Italian burial. Furthermore, Read was not associated with Boston, while both Parsons and his "Sculptor's Funeral" evoke Boston. Boston as a locus of Cather's literary imagination in her short story is key to my reading of the allusion as part of Cather's authorial self-fashioning.
27. Donatello's name appears nowhere in Read's poem, but the details of the burial make it clear that the unnamed sculptor is Donatello. See Charles Avery and Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello (1386–1466), Sculptor," *Grove Art Online*, January 1998, accessed 23 April 2015.
28. Parsons, *Poems* (1893), 54, 55. Austin identifies the allusions. "Thomas William Parsons," 4.
29. Willa Cather, "The Sculptor's Funeral," in *The Troll Garden*, ed. James Woodress (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 32, 35.
30. *Ibid.*, 39.
31. *Ibid.*, 38.
32. Parsons, *Poems* (1893), 53.
33. Sharon O'Brien, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 316.
34. Joseph Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 34.
35. *Ibid.*, 36.
36. For a recent summary of this approach, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2011). See also Tom Quirk's vigorous defense of source study at the height of the poststructuralist critique of it. "Sources, Influences, and Intertexts," *Resources for American Literary Study*, 21, no. 2 (1995): 240–57. Oddly, his Cather example involves self-reference and prototype rather than literary allusion (251).
37. Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader*, 46.
38. Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 91. My thinking has been influenced by Paul Christian Jones's analysis of Ellen Glasgow's allusion to E. D. E. N. Southworth that works in precisely the opposite fashion—as a legible disavowal of a commercially popular artist. "Burning Mrs. Southworth: True Womanhood and the Intertext of Ellen Glasgow's *Virginia*," *Southern Literary Journal*, 37, no. 1 (2004): 25–40.
39. Richard Giannone, *Music in Willa Cather's Fiction* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), 51–58.

40. Hédi Jaoud, *Browningmania, America's Love for Robert Browning* (Amherst: Cambria, 2014). Bernice Slote, "Willa Cather and Her First Book," in *Willa Cather, April Twilights (1903): Poems by Willa Cather* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), vii.
41. As critics have argued, Cather's affiliation with Whitman goes beyond "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" to Whitman's broader body of work, especially "Song of Myself." James Woodress, "Whitman and Cather," *Etudes Anglaises* 45, no. 3 (1992): 324–32. Maire Mullins, "'I Bequeath Myself to the Dirt to Grow from the Grass I Love': The Whitman-Cather Connection in *O Pioneers!*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 20, no. 1 (2001): 123–36.
42. Willa Cather to Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, [early 1913], The Morgan Library, New York, New York. *Willa Cather in Person*, ed. L. Brent Bohlke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 22.
43. Willa Cather to Ferris Greenslet, 26 November 1931, in *The Selected Letters*, 460–61. Cather does not explain her desire to have the image removed, but her comments in the rest of the letter about why she is not fond of authorial prefaces suggests that she found the use of the image too direct and heavy-handed in its imposition of a particular meaning for readers.
44. Willa Cather, "On *Death Comes for the Archbishop*," in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 378.
45. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 39.
46. Woodress hypothesizes this significance in an explanatory note. "Introduction," 125.
47. Cather, "The Sculptor's Funeral," 45; Marilyn Arnold notes the brutal irony of the Rogers Group, but neither she nor Woodress as editor of *The Troll Garden* notes that an allusion to the sculpture is also an allusion to Longfellow's poem (even though Arnold considers other Longfellow allusions in Cather). "The Allusive Cather," *Cather Studies* 3 (1996): 147.
48. Willa Cather, "148 Charles Street," in *Not Under Forty* (New York: Knopf, 1936), 53, 56. A portion of this essay first appeared in 1922 as "The House in Charles Street" in the *Literary Review*, 4 November 1922, 173–4. I reference the later revised and expanded version because it includes elements important to my analysis not featured in the original. Referencing the small size of the volumes in her father's library, Cather implicitly evokes Ticknor & Fields's prestigious "Blue and Gold" editions, finely printed pocket sized (32mo) volumes bound in gold-stamped blue cloth with gilt edges and featuring engraved frontispiece portraits of the authors. Every man she mentions as seeming to live at 148 Charles Street, save Sumner and Norton (who were not primarily literary authors), appeared at least once in Blue and Gold. Jeffrey D. Groves, "Judging Books by Their Covers: House Styles, Ticknor and Fields, and Literary Promotion," in *Reading Books*, 75–100. Sarah Wadsworth, *In the Company of Books: Literature and Its "Classes" in Nineteenth-Century America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 161–191. Ticknor and Fields put Longfellow in Blue and Gold three times, Emerson and Holmes each twice, and Hawthorne, Whittier, and Lowell each once, making an entire shelf of their books in this format an exaggeration, however.
49. Sarah Orne Jewett to Witter Bynner, 3 May 1905, Witter Bynner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Am 1891 (435). Bynner wrote to Cather on 19 May 1905: "Miss Sarah

- Orne Jewett bids me send you her messages, and several other people whom you do not know have had good things to say about the book. I have been trying to get it to the attention of Henry James, but as he tells me he is 'smothered in engagements and occupations', we had better wait and send the book after he has gone home." Charles E. Cather Collection, Box 1, Folder, 11, University of Nebraska- Lincoln Archives & Special Collections. Although an enclosure does not survive and Bynner retained the original Jewett letter, based on the example of James, where Cather's response makes clear she read James's dismissive comments on fiction by American women, I suspect Bynner enclosed a transcription of Jewett's remarks. See Henry James to Witter Bynner, 1 February 1906, in *The Letters of Henry James, Volume IV: 1895–1916*, ed. Leon Edel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 395, and Willa Cather to Witter Bynner, 24 February [1906], in *The Selected Letters*, 91–92.
50. Willa Cather to Annie Adams Fields, [early 1908], in *The Selected Letters*, 104.
 51. Willa Cather to Annie Adams Fields, [April 1908], in *Ibid.*, 107. On Jewett's relationship with McClure, see Charles Johanningsmeier, "Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins (Freeman): Two Shrewd Businesswomen in Search of New Markets," *New England Quarterly*, 70, no. 1 (1997): 57–82.
 52. Richard Brodhead, *The School of Hawthorne* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 55.
 53. Cather, "148 Charles Street," 57.
 54. Willa Cather to Sarah Orne Jewett, 24 October [1908], in *The Selected Letters*, 115–116.
 55. Annie Fields to Thomas William Parsons, 15 March 1870, Thomas William Parsons Papers, Houghton Library, MS Am 1179 (26). See also Parsons's letter to James T. Fields transmitting several copies of his "On the Death of Daniel Webster" and mentioning that he is sending a copy to Longfellow. 10 November 1851, MS 1179 (65).
 56. Sarah Orne Jewett to David Douglas, 10 November 1892, in Annie Fields, ed., *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 104. When Parsons's final illness confined him to a bed at the Massachusetts General Hospital, a sympathetic Holmes visited him there. Haraszti, *Letters*, 121.
 57. Cather's praise of Guiney as a poet appeared in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 30 November 1902. Willa Cather to Louise Imogen Guiney, 16 February 1909, College of the Holy Cross Library, Worcester, MA. On Guiney and Parsons's friendship, see Elizabeth Bischof, "'Against an Epoch': Boston Moderns, 1880–1905," Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston College, 2005. On Guiney's editorial work, see her letters to Francis Jackson Garrison and Horace Elisha Scudder, various dates in 1893, Houghton Mifflin Archive, Houghton Library, MS Am 1925 (735). Her letters seem to imply that Scudder was responsible for the selection of Parsons's original verse in the companion volume, which she calls "Mr. Scudder's book," but I was unable to locate other documentation of his role.
 58. Mark Madigan, "'Paestum': An Unpublished Poem from Cather's Tour of Italy," *Willa Cather Newsletter & Review*, 55, no. 2 (2011): 17–24. As Madigan documents, Paestum was a common poetic subject. Parsons visited Paestum but to my knowledge never wrote a poem about it.
 59. Willa Cather to Sarah Orne Jewett, 10 May 1908, in *The Selected Letters*, 111.
 60. Sarah Orne Jewett to Willa Cather, 13 December 1908, in *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, 247–48.

61. Willa Cather to Louise Imogen Guiney, 25 May 1911, in *The Selected Letters*, 138.
62. Slote, "The Secret Web," 5, 9.
63. Warren, "An Expatriate in Boston," 142–43.
64. Parsons, "Preface to the Letters," in *Poems* (Boston: Ticknor, 1854), 2.
65. Aldrich, "A Portrait," 323.
66. "The Threefold Loss," 4.
67. Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 101, 100.
68. Louise Imogen Guiney, "'The Poet' of Wayside Inn," *Catholic World* 49, no. 289 (April 1889): 10–11.
69. Louse Imogen Guiney to Richard Henry Stoddard, 21 September 1892, Thomas William Parsons Papers, Houghton Library, b MS Am 1179 (29).
70. On Longfellow's fate in literary history, see Dana Gioia, "Longfellow in the Aftermath of Modernism," in *Columbia History of American Poetry*, ed. Jay Parini and Brett C. Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 64–96, and Angela Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865–1917* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).
71. Willa Sibert Cather, "In Washington," *Nebraska State Journal*, 3 March 1901, 12. On how Cather defined herself against Southworth, see Melissa J. Homestead and Pamela T. Washington, "Introduction," in *E. D. E. N. Southworth: Recovering a Nineteenth-Century Popular Novelist*, ed. Homestead and Washington (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), xiii–xix.
72. "A Pioneer Editor," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1866, 743–51.