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“Who Would Keep an Ancient Form?": *In Memoriam*
and the Metrical Ghost of Horace

Ryan D. Stewart

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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December 2010

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ABSTRACT

“Who Would Keep an Ancient Form?": *In Memoriam*
and the Metrical Ghost of Horace

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Although Alfred Tennyson's 1850 elegy, *In Memoriam*, has long been regarded for the quality of its grief and its doubt, the deepened sense of struggle and doubt produced by his allusions to Horace in both the matter and the meter of the poem have not been considered. Attending to both syntactical/tonal allusions and metrical allusions to Horace's *Odes* in *In Memoriam*, I will examine Horace's role in creating meaning in Tennyson's poem. Drawing on various critics and Tennyson's own works, I argue that Tennyson was uncommonly familiar with Horace's *Odes* and Horatian Alcaic (the most common meter of the *Odes*). I explore the similarities between the *In Memoriam* stanza form and the Horatian Alcaic as well as their differences to demonstrate that, while he was certainly capable of more closely replicating the Alcaic in English, Tennyson suggests but ultimately resists Horace's meter. Resistance to Horace's meter mirrors Tennyson's resistance to Horace's paganism. I conclude that Tennyson's identification with Horace, but not too close an identification, serves to enhance the themes of the poem—struggle, tension, grief, and doubt—in a way that would go unnoticed without a close examination of Horace's influence upon *In Memoriam*.

Keywords: Horace, Horatian Alcaic, Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, *In Memoriam* stanza, prosody

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I will forever be indebted to a number of people for this project: My father, who taught me not to quit until the work is done and to do it well or not at all; my mother, who has always encouraged me and who ignited my passion for poetry as early as bedtime recitations of “The Owl and the Pussycat”; and my in-laws, who always made me feel that I was better at this than I probably was.

I am deeply grateful to my committee for their invaluable advice and interminable patience. I need to thank Leslee Thorne-Murphy, who helped me to organize and polish this project and many other projects throughout my college career. I am grateful to Kimberly Johnson, who has always pushed me to think a little deeper (or a lot deeper) about my work. And I am undeserving of the tireless efforts of my chair, John Talbot, on my behalf. Between this project and many others over the years, his help, advice, and friendship have been invaluable to me. He has been unwilling to give up on me even when I was ready to give up on myself.

Finally, I owe my greatest thanks to my wife and son. Will has never let me forget the value of taking frequent breaks to freshen my thinking. And I will always be grateful to Katie for her constant support and encouragement and her endless patience. She endured countless nights alone as I stayed up to write, and her own brilliance is responsible for much of what is good in this project.

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“Who Would Keep and Ancient Form?": *In Memoriam*
and the Metrical Ghost of Horace

Meter is “one of the primary correlatives of meaning in a poem” (Fussell 14). In other words, matter and meter have a complimentary relationship in creating poetic meaning.

Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* is a poem about tension and struggle, progressing through “opposition playing against itself” (Mays 28). Tennyson’s faith struggles with his doubt, his Christianity struggles with scientific discovery and natural evolution, and his hope in the immortality of the soul struggles with the untimely death of his dear friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. The struggle of the poem is complimented by the meter, which seems an appropriate “vehicle for embodying and signifying [Tennyson’s] intellectual and spiritual conflicts” (Gates 230). Some of this formal tension comes from its metrical similarity to Horace’s ancient Alcaic (the most common meter of the *Odes*) but its resistance to too close an identification with Horace. Tennyson’s metrical relationship to Horace in the poem not only casts light on the subtlety with which Tennyson assimilates classical rhythms into his own but also deepens the quality of tension and struggle within the poem. These characteristics are hardly noticeable without a careful examination of Tennyson’s experience with Horace’s poetry and of Horace’s presence in *In Memoriam*.

Tennyson was familiar with Horace’s poetry in the original Latin, particularly the *Odes*. As a boy, Tennyson composed translations of *Odes* I.9, III.3, and *Epodes* 5 in his 1822 boyhood copy of Horace’s *Odes*.¹ These translations are “careful technical imitations,” suggesting that Tennyson had at least some awareness of the technical elements of Horatian odes, even as a boy

¹ “Tennyson’s own copy of Horace’s *Odes* (Baxter-Gesner-Zeunius) now in the Research Centre dates from 1822 and is in two volumes” (Pollard 16). Campbell’s Catalogue numbers for these volumes are 1187 and 1189 at the Research Centre.

(Markley 479). The young Tennyson was sure to have been exposed to Horace at school, but he had no break from the *Odes* at home. Tennyson's father required him to memorize all four books of the *Odes* in Latin sufficiently to repeat them on successive mornings (Hallam Tennyson *Memoir* i.16). Years later, a volume of Horace's *Odes* is among a selection of only eight books that Tennyson is known to have taken along at times of relative seclusion during the seventeen-year span during which he wrote *In Memoriam*. The book listed in *Tennyson in Lincoln*² is inscribed, "A. Tennyson, Xmas Day, 1838" (No. 1430). Tennyson so valued Horace that he compelled his own sons to take up a study of Horace's poetry. In 1863, Emily Tennyson records in her journal that their nine-year-old son Lionel was already studying Horace (*Journal* 190). And in March 1870, she records in several letters to her husband that the boys—Hallam 17, Lionel 16—were compelled to study Horace.³

In composing *In Memoriam*, Tennyson drew on Horace's *Odes*, as has often been noticed.⁴ Not only Horace's meditations on death, but also his preoccupation with friendship and

² Nancie Campbell compiled and published this catalogue of the Tennyson collection at the Research Center.

³ 21 March 1870, "The boys have been doing their Horace this morning" (Hoge, *Letters* 251); 22 March 1870, "Our boys are good. They work several hours in the day. Lionel was at his Horace an hour and a half before breakfast" (252); and 28 March 1870, of Hallam who had left in the morning for Needles, Lady Tennyson writes, "I should add that he got up and did some Horace before breakfast" (255).

⁴ See Bradley (91, 183, 202); Hills (150); Markley, "Barbarous Hexameters" (479-80) and *Stateliest Measures* (79, 109); Nash, "Horace and 'In Memoriam'" (466-75); Redpath (114); Shatto and Shaw (172); and Vance (202, 208-09).

hospitality, “provided Tennyson with a literary model for the experiences he had once shared with Hallam” (Vance 208). Some sense of how Horace’s presence enriches *In Memoriam* can be felt from the Horatian allusions present in *In Memoriam* 9, 107, and 105 respectively.

Many of Tennyson’s Horatian allusions are of a relatively straightforward kind. For example, Horace’s *Odes* i.3 is a prayer to a ship that bears Horace’s poet friend Virgil. Horace begins by addressing the ship, praying for the safe delivery of Virgil to his destination, which initiates a soliloquy on the dangers of sea travel:

May the goddess who rules over Cyprus, and Helen’s brothers, those bright stars, and the lord of the winds, tying up all the others except the Iapyx, guide you, o ship; for you hold Vergil in trust and owe him to me. Be sure to discharge him intact on the shores of Attica, I pray you, and save one who is half my soul.

Oak and three layers of brass were wrapped round the heart of that man who first entrusted a fragile craft to the savage sea... (1-12)⁵

Tennyson too offers what seems a prayer, directly addressing the ship that bears the body of his friend, Arthur Hallam, in *In Memoriam* 9. Arthur has died unexpectedly in Austria, and his body is being shipped from Italy back to England to be mourned and buried.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur’s loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o’er. (1-4)

Tennyson’s allusion to *Odes* i.3 here is straightforward and has not gone unnoticed.⁶ Both poets address a ship in prayer, pleading for the safe arrival of their beloved friends, though Horace’s

⁵ All translations of Horace’s *Odes* are Niall Rudd’s.

friend is alive and Tennyson's is not. This difference may make Tennyson's allusion to Horace even more poignant—Horace's hopefulness is translated into Tennyson's hopelessness.

Other allusions are more complex. In *Odes* i.9, Horace addresses Thaliarchus, his servant boy, in a slightly melancholic meditation on mortality, contrasting his own old age with his servant's youth. Horace sets a wintry scene outside his house to contrast the warmth within:

Do you see how Soracte stands there shining with its blanket of deep snow, how the straining woods no longer support their burden, and the streams have been halted by the sharp grip of ice? Thaw the cold by piling logs generously on the hearth, Thaliarchus, and serve the four-year-old wine more lavishly than usual from its Sabine jar. (1-8)

In *In Memoriam* 107, Tennyson remembers Hallam's birthday, which he and his party will celebrate as if Hallam were there. But the melancholy scene and situation recall *Odes* i.9.

But fetch the wine,
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

 Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;

 We keep the day. With festal cheer,

⁶ Shatto and Shaw note the connection in their commentary (172). John Collins says that *In Memoriam* 9 "should" be compared to *Odes* i.3 (qtd. in Bradley 91).

With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
 And sing the songs he loved to hear. (15-24)

Tennyson sets a desolate, wintry scene for his discussion of Hallam's birthday—which was the first of February. Tennyson's ice is formed into ice-cycle daggers hanging sharp from the eaves while Horace's stream is halted by the "sharp grip of ice". Tennyson mentions the "rolling brine," and Horace speaks of the "boiling sea." This wintry scene, though not heavily allusive to Horace's in language, is nevertheless allusive to Horace in theme. Horace describes a cold, wintry day when he views the frozen Mt. Soracte. He bids Thaliarchus to "thaw the cold by piling logs generously on the hearth." Similarly, Tennyson bids an unknown person to "Bring in great logs and let them lie, / To make a solid core of heat" (17-18). Horace bids Thaliarchus to serve wine more lavishly than usual. Tennyson bids his unknown guest to "fetch the wine, / Arrange the board and brim the glass." Both poets describe a scene of interior cheer contrasted by a description of wintry chill, and both make a fire and bring out wine to thaw the exterior cold.

Horace's ode is itself influenced heavily by a poem written several centuries before (Bradley 202). The ancient Greek poet Alcaeus had written a similar poem in the Alcaic meter, a poem that *Odes* i.9 alludes to. Alcaeus's poem survives only as a fragment, "Zeus sends rain, a great storm comes from the heavens, running waters are frozen solid...thence...Down with the storm! Stoke up the fire, mix the honeysweet wine unsparingly, and put a soft fillet round your brows" (Alcaeus 375).⁷ Alcaeus also sets a chilly scene to be thawed by stoking the fire and serving the wine, but Alcaeus' poem is a sympotic poem that demonstrates the poet's inclination

⁷ All translations of Alcaeus are David Campbell's.

to “drinking in all seasons and in all circumstances⁸” (375). Horace’s ode takes its inspiration from Alcaeus’ drinking poem, but it becomes something more: a pretext for discussing the fleeting nature of life and love. Tennyson then uses Horace’s ode as the occasion for continued musing on his grief at the fleeting life of his departed friend. Tennyson describes Hallam’s birthday as cold and miserable, but because it is Hallam’s birthday, Tennyson is resolved to warm the cold, despite his grief, in a way that recalls the tradition begun by Alcaeus and continued by Horace.

In an even more subtle and complex allusion, Tennyson refers to an ode in which Horace himself again alludes to Alcaeus—this time fragment 332. Alcaeus expresses his joy at the death of the tyrant, Myrsilus, who had exiled him from his hometown when he discovered Alcaeus’ plot on his life, “Now must men get drunk and drink with all their strength, since Myrsilus has died” (Alcaeus 373). Athenaeus, from whom the fragment survives, suggest that this fragment was an example of Alcaeus’ inclination to drinking at happy times (373). Alcaeus was understandably happy at the death of the tyrant against whom he had plotted and by whom he was exiled.

Alcaeus’s poem furnished Horace with a model when he came to write about the downfall of another tyrant, Cleopatra, who with Marc Anthony had plotted the capture of Rome. Now that Cleopatra has at last been defeated, Horace’s *Odes* i.37 recommends celebration: “Now let the drinking Begin! Now let us thump the ground with unfettered feet! Now is the time, my friends, to load the couches of the gods with a feast fit for the Salii!” (93). This ode of Horace

⁸ Athenaeus, the man to whom we owe the survival of this fragment from Alcaeus, records this poem in his *Scholars at Dinner* only as an example of Alcaeus propensity to drink during all seasons—including winter (Alcaeus 375).

“begins with an imitation (in the same metre) as Alcaeus 332” (Nisbet and Hubbard 1: 411). Horace, too, is happy at the death of the tyrant—Cleopatra in this case. “The educated reader, who knows the Greek original, will understand that the tyrant is dead” (Nisbet and Hubbard 1:411). And it is the death of this tyrant (Cleopatra) that is the occasion for Horace’s celebratory drinking and dancing (“Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero / pulsanda tellus” [1-2]).

Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* 105 alludes to both Alcaeus’ fragment 332 and Horace’s *Odes* i.37, but Tennyson embraces these two poems to create a reversal of their merry tone. In the poem, Tennyson resists the pressure to disguise his grief by feigning Christmas merriment:

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Thro’ which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touch’d, nor flute be blown;
 No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid east (16-23)

Tennyson, on the eve of the third Christmas since the death of his friend—a holiday at which Tennyson seems, more than usual, reminded of the loss of his friend—requests that no dance, no music, and no wine sully this solemn day, saying, “But let no footstep beat the floor, / Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm” (16-17). He continues, “Be neither song, nor game, nor feast; / Nor harp be touch’d, nor flute be blown; / No dance, no motion” (20-22). These lines seem to be a delicate address to Horace’s ode and those who know it, as if to say, “Horace wrote in his ode

that to celebrate the death of a tyrant, ancient tradition passed down from Alcaeus suggests drinking and beating the floor with dancing, but Hallam was a good man, and his death is solemn and tragic. How could someone keep the ancient tradition of the Alcaeus in such a situation?” Tennyson uses this allusion to Horace and Alcaeus to recall their joy at the deaths of oppressive tyrants. The magnitude of these poets’ joy amplifies the magnitude of Tennyson’s despair at the death of his friend.

But if it is clear that themes, situations, and phrases from Horace’s odes went into the making of *In Memoriam*, what about poetic form? Does the meter of *In Memoriam* engage in any similar way with Horace’s meters? A case can be made that Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* stanza owes something to, and enters into a dialogue with, the metrical form that Horace most often uses in the *Odes*, the Alcaic strophe.

The Alcaic is a complex and expressive form. It is a quatrain with a syllable count numbering 11-11-9-10 in the four respective lines. The stanza looks like the following (where *u* is a short syllable, – is long, and u can be either short or long):

u – u – – || – u u – u u

u – u – – || – u u – u u

u – u – – – u – u

– u u – u u – u – u

The stanza begins with two massive 11-syllable lines very well suited for exposition. The stanza turns on the third line—the climactic line—, which, though shorter than the first two, still moves slowly because of its three long syllables that tend to dam up the movement of the stanza. After crossing the peak of the third line, the fourth line rushes away in a rapid dactylic ripple that sweeps the reader on to the next stanza. The stanza builds slowly to a climax, then rushes quickly

through the fourth line into the next stanza, impelling the reader forward in such a way that is well suited for presenting a difficult problem, culminating, and then trailing quickly off into the next stanza without dwelling on the problem.⁹ Horace uses this stanza for many different themes, including several of his meditations on death.

More than a third of all of Horace's lyrics were composed in Alcaics, his favorite meter (Lupton xxix). Horace was known to use the Alcaic to express a "thoughtful and pensive mood" (Sellar 138). It is a meter that is suited to conveying "diversity and contrast" (Perret 77). The Alcaic is also considered to be of "a grand and stately movement, especially fitted for martial or patriotic subjects" (Lupton xxix). Alcaeus used it for sympotic themes and for celebration. Horace uses the Alcaic for these and for making invitations, reasoning, giving counsel, discussing love, and much more. The Alcaic is a versatile form capable of a wide range of expression, and Horace takes advantage of this versatility.

Knowing something of the Alcaic, one avenue of exploration into the links between the Alcaic and the *In Memoriam* stanza is the translations of Charles Stuart Calverley. In the early 1860s Calverley undertook a translation of several classical authors, which he published with several of original poems in a volume he entitled *Verses and Translations* (1862). Among Calverley's translations in this volume were ten of Horace's odes.¹⁰ But what form could Calverley use to translate Horace's odes into English that would reflect the complexity, versatility, and movement of the Alcaic? Calverley chose to render some of "the *Odes* in a style

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the intricate components necessary in producing the Horatian Alcaic, consider two studies: Lee 42-46 and Perret 77-80.

¹⁰ By the time Sendall published Calverley's complete works in 1901, Calverley had translated a total of 15 odes.

that suggests the versification and phrasing of Tennyson” (Nash 161). Of these ten odes, Calverley renders two (*Odes* I.9 and III.3) that were originally composed in the Horatian Alcaic meter into Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* strophe. This is a provocation. Calverley claimed that Tennyson’s strophe (an iambic tetrameter quatrain with an *A-B-B-A* rhyme scheme) was particularly well suited to rendering the *Odes* into English: “A stanza of ‘In Memoriam’ is a thing compact *teres atque rotundum* [polished and well-rounded], as is a stanza in a Horatian ode” (“Horae” 509).

Calverley wasn’t the only Victorian who saw something Horatian in Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* stanza form. John Conington, maybe the most prominent nineteenth-century translator of Horace, claims of the ancient Alcaic, “the metre of ‘In Memoriam’ may ultimately be found to be its best English representative” (*Quarterly Review* 131). In the preface to his own translation of the *Odes* (1863), Conington offers some thoughts on translating Horace, saying that the first thing at which a translator ought to aim is “some kind of metrical conformity to his original” (viii). He maintained that it was impossible to preserve the quotable “sententious brevity” of Horace that makes him so popular unless the stanza in which the translator writes “is in some sort analogous to the metre of Horace” (ix). Conington, in the preface to his *Odes* is any indication, considered very carefully the meters with which he translated ancient poetry, and his admission that the *In Memoriam* stanza may be the most suitable to translate the Alcaic validates Calverley. One implication of this criticism is that Tennyson’s meter is somehow answerable to, or even analogous to, the Horatian Alcaic. Neither Calverley nor Conington fully explains how this is the case. Does this implication bear out on inspection of Calverley’s translations?

Calverley’s and Conington’s comments raise an important critical question. To what degree is the *In Memoriam* stanza answerable to the Alcaic? Calverley’s translations in the *In*

Memoriam stanza reproduce many of the metrical movements of the Horatian originals. First of all, the heavy enjambment that Calverley produces by writing in the short tetrameter lines of the *In Memoriam* stanza mirror the heavily enjambed lines of the Horatian Alcaic odes. One scholar suggests that Horace has a “fluid movement” that “runs the sense from line to line” (Carne-Ross 5). In fact, Horace is noteworthy for his heavy use of enjambment, not only in his odes,¹¹ but also in his satires.¹² Enjambment, in both Horace and Calverley, causes the stanzas to flow suspensefully—and sometimes even violently—from line to line. Take, for example, *Odes* iii.1, in which Horace acknowledges that no amount of wealth can spare a man from worry.

dstrictus ensis cui super impia
 cervice pendent, non Siculae dapes
 dulcem elaborabunt saporem,
 non avium citharaeque cantus

somnum reducent (17-21)

For the man who has a naked sword hanging over his unholy neck, no Sicilian banquets will provide a sweet taste; no music of birds or lyre will bring back his sleep. (17-21)

In every line of Horace quoted here except the third the clauses are severed violently by line-breaks. Some vital part of each clause is carried to the next line so that readers are dragged along from line to line. A reader has little time to pause because the idea drags the reader on to “leap across the line-end” to the next line and the next until the end of the stanza—this time, it doesn’t

¹¹ See Carrubba (116), Collinge (92), and Nisbet and Rudd (6, 298).

¹² See Braund (4) and Rudd (16).

end at the stanza break, but the last line of this fifth stanza runs into the sixth with “cantus / somnum reducent” (Hollander 15).

Where Horace chooses to break his lines in this stanza emphasizes certain words and phrases that add suspense to his message. The first line quoted, for example, begins with a bare sword above something unholy—we are not yet told what. The audience’s curiosity is suspended just as the sword that, as we are told in the next line, hangs above a neck. Horace creates suspense in the lines by dividing the noun *cervice* (neck) from its modifier *impia* (unholy). Horace uses his meter to achieve semantic suspense that, along with the sword that is literally suspended above a hypothetical character’s neck, give readers a taste of the anxiety that Horace says awaits all men, whether rich or poor.

The transition from the second to third quoted line is enjambed as well, though this time the enjambment is not as dramatic. He says that no Sicilian banquets will bring a sweet taste when one is beset by worries. Horace phrases his poem to take advantage of the line break: the words “no Sicilian banquets” are divided from the “sweet taste” they bestow because they straddle the line break. The form removes the sweet taste from Sicilian banquets just as Horace’s worries do. Horace’s meter enacts his message in a way that creates suspense in the reader—suspense that denies readers the satisfaction of “Sicilian banquets” and “sweet taste” coming together.

The enjambment created between the fourth and fifth quoted lines is even more appropriate to Horace’s message. In this case, the fourth quoted line says that “no music of birds or lyre,” but the reader is forced to look across not only a line break, but also a stanza break to see what it is that bird and lyre song fail to do (20). Horace uses this emphatic break in his form to separate bird and lyre song from sleep (*somnum*) at the exact point where his words are saying

bird song and lyre song cannot restore sleep to the worried man. Sleep is suspended across the gap created by this stanza break. These enjambments demonstrate not only Horace's prescience and skill to take advantage of his form, but also the capacity of the form to provide such opportunities. The Alcaic is more suited to creating heavy enjambment than forms with longer lines.

Calverley uses the short tetrameter lines of the *In Memoriam* strophe in his translation to approximate the movement created by Horace's enjambed Alcaic lines. For Calverley, the advantage of tetrameters is that they are often too short to contain a full idea on a single line.

Calverley translates these lines of Horace:

He o'er whose doomed neck hangs the sword

Unsheathed, the dainties of the South

Shall lack their sweetness in his mouth:

No note of bird or harpsichord

Shall bring him sleep. (17-21)

Calverley, too, runs over each line break except the third quoted line—the same line that is end-stopped by Horace. Calverley's lines drag us on—sometimes violently—to the next just as Horace's. Clearly, Calverley isn't just dilating his lines to accomplish this effect; the terseness of the first line suggests that Calverley used as few words as he could to convey his message and still couldn't fit "unsheathed" in the first line. The tetrameter line is too short to allow Calverley to finish his idea without running on to the next line, and in this way, the *In Memoriam* stanza is, in form, conducive to rendering the movement of the Alcaic. Calverley achieves at least some of Horace's suspense between these first two quoted lines, not by postponing the object over which

the sword hangs, but by postponing that the sword is bared and poised to sever. Calverley also separates noun and adjective with this line break, though he separates the other noun/adjective pair in Horace's clause. Calverley produces enjambment across the second line break, and the enjambment across the stanza break quoted above is a very faithful translation of the Horatian lines. Like Horace, Calverley separates the notes of birds and harpsichords from the sleep that they cannot provide for the man beset by worries.

With his enjambments, Horace lends a sense of suspense and violent separation to his poem, and he does so in a way that end-stopped lines could never accomplish (Wolosky 85-86). Calverley accomplishes the same effect in his translation. He exhibits remarkable skill and sensitivity to the original in his translation of Horace's ode, and some of this skill and sensitivity is evident in Calverley's choice of a stanza that accomplishes much of the work for him. The tetrameter lines of the *In Memoriam* stanza offer Calverley a canvas similar to the Alcaic on which to compose his translation.

In both the Horace and Calverley stanzas quoted, the only end-stopped line is the third. Because of this, the stanzas build to the third line and pause, climaxing at that point. Even without the end-stopped third lines, though, the Alcaic and *In Memoriam* forms have the ability to produce a slow building movement through the first two lines, a heavy, climactic third line, and a trailing off in the fourth. The Alcaic accomplishes this by its rhythm. Two eleven-syllable expository lines peak in a nine-syllable third line that is heavy with long syllables, damming the movement momentarily until it bursts into a pair of quick dactyls in the rapid fourth line, "like water in the stream" (Lee 60). The Horatian Alcaic suggests "rising and falling action, peaking in the third line" (Talbot 208). An example of this movement can be seen in the first stanza of

Horace's Soracte Ode (*Odes* i.9) in which Horace describes a wintry scene outside his villa to his servant boy as a prelude to his musings on the opportunities afforded by youth.

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
 Soracte, nec iam sustineat onus
 silvae laborantes, geluque
 flumina constiterint acuto. (1-4)

Do you see how Soracte stands there shining with its blanket of deep snow, how the straining woods no longer support their burden, and the streams have been halted by the sharp grip of ice? (1-4)

In the first two lines, Horace's Soracte is covered in deep snow and something—we're not told what—cannot continue to support its burden. That something isn't disclosed until the third line. Horace postpones "silvae laborantes [straining woods]," the woods that are having difficulty sustaining their heavy load of snow, until the third line, which is itself heavy with long syllables. The *geluque* in the third line signals the end of the previous clause and produces a pause mid-line, slowing the line even more. The fourth line then flows away in dactyls.

The movement produced by Horace's lines is difficult to reproduce in English: "with Alcaics it is no light task to reproduce the gathering wave of the first two lines, the thundering fall of the third and the rapid backwash of the fourth" (Wilkinson 152). However, with the *A-B-B-A* rhyme scheme of the *In Memoriam* stanza, Calverley can suggest the movement of the Alcaic. The first four lines of Calverley's translation represent Horace's movement well.

One dazzling mass of solid snow
 Soracte stands; the bent woods fret
 Beneath their load; and, sharpest-set

With frost, the streams have ceased to flow. (1-4)

Calverley also describes snowy Soracte, whose woods are straining in his first two lines. He ends the first line with “snow.” English poetry, with its long heritage of couplets and alternating rhymes, leads readers to expect one of these two patterns. The second line ends in “fret,” eliminating the possibility of rhymed couplets and leading the reader to expect alternating rhymes. When the third line ends in a B-rhyme, the reader can’t help but pause briefly, his or her expectation having not been met. Calverley takes further advantage of the line; the word “load” comes in an emphatic position, being a stressed syllable and coming immediately before the caesura—the caesura that comes in the same position as Horace’s.

But there are limits to the similarities between the *In Memoriam* strophe and the Alcaic. A. E. Housman was alert to such limits when, in a letter to a friend, he entered the reservation that however accomplished, Calverley’s translations were “too Tennysonian to be very Horatian” (530). Does this mean he believes the metrical nuances of the *In Memoriam* stanza exhibit so much the manner of Tennyson as to eclipse the manner of Horace? We cannot know. But if this is the case, Conington appears to agree when, in the preface to his own translation of the *Odes*, he explains why he does not use the *In Memoriam* stanza to render the Alcaic odes, despite its being the “best English representative” of the Alcaic (xvii). Conington claims of the *In Memoriam* meter that, “the majority of those who use it at present are sure in adopting Mr. Tennyson’s metre to adopt his manner [...] but Mr. Tennyson’s manner is not the manner of Horace [...]” (xvii). This raises the question: how does the *In Memoriam* meter demonstrate so much the manner of Tennyson that it can be Horatian without being “very” Horatian, and without eclipsing Tennyson’s own manner?

For all their similarities, there are some elements of the Alcaic that the *In Memoriam* stanza cannot reproduce. The Soracte stanzas demonstrate one of these limitations. When Horace describes the wintry scene on Soracte, his lines build to the climactic third line that discusses the woods burdened by snow, but his fourth line flows away in dactyls, ironically, just where the streams cease to flow. The contrast of the rapid meter makes more acute the stasis of the frozen river. Calverley's meter can't recreate this contrast. After his own straining woods in the climactic third line, Calverley writes, "and, sharpest-set / With frost, the streams have ceased to flow" (3-4). In this stanza, the repeated A-rhyme serves to clinch the stanza, which emphasizes that the flow of the streams is clinched by ice, but emphasizes it in a way opposite to Horace. In this case, Horace's line can trail away rapidly in an ironic ripple of dactyls, but the returning A-rhyme of the *In Memoriam* stanza does anything but trail off. The returning of the distant A-rhyme adds weight to the end of the stanza. Horace's resistance here to match his description of the streams to the action of his meter sparkles with his characteristic style. He has a tendency to address even the gravest and most serious of subjects with enough irony to make readers wonder if Horace is actually being grave or serious. Calverley fails to reproduce this stylistic element of Horace in his translation. Calverley's own fourth line adds weight to the theme by matching the clinching of the meter with the clinching of the ice. That is to say, where the movement of Horace's meter was so teasingly at odds with the action (or inaction) it described, Calverley's meter is more directly mimetic, and so a bit weightier and less sparkling.

The returning A-rhyme adds more than just weight, though; it adds a sense of returning not to be found in Horace. In his *Odes* ii.3, Horace speaks of fortune, which favors neither the rich nor the poor. All will die and leave their possessions to their heirs, whether their possessions are great or small.

omnes eodem cogimur, omnium

versatur urna serius ocius

sors exitura et nos in aeternum

exsilium impositura cumbae. (25-28)

We are all driven to the same pen; for all alike is the lot shaken in the urn; sooner or later, out it will come, and put us aboard the skiff for eternal exile. (25-28).

The forward movement of the Alcaic is relentless. Though it ebbs and flows, Horace's form plods forward. This relentlessness is important to Horace's message. The form drives the readers on as fortune drives men. There is little looking back in this stanza of Horace, who claims that there is no way for rich or poor to avoid what fortune will deal. The lots of all are shaken together, and sooner or later, lots will be drawn for each of us, and we will be shuffled on to death. This shuffling is made more emphatic by the tendency of Romans to elide syllables when words start with vowels. In this case, the last quoted line, "exsilium impositura cumbae," would be pronounced, "exsili—impositura cumbae." The elided fourth syllable would combine the first two words of the line, adding an even greater sense of acceleration to the dactylic rhythm. This stanza illustrates how well suited Horace's Alcaic is to encouraging the sensation of forward movement.

The *In Memoriam* stanza is less likely to produce the suggestion of slippage, since the rhyme in the fourth line enacts a return or recovery. In Tennyson, that return need not cancel the sense of anxiety produced in the stanza, but it does work against a feeling of resignation. When Calverley translates the Alcaic, he cannot prevent the sense of returning enacted by the echo of the A-rhyme in the end of the stanza. The A-B-B-A rhyme scheme of the *In Memoriam* stanza seems to produce "an unbroken circle" (Saintsbury, *History* 3: 205). The enfolding rhymes lend

themselves “particularly to pensive meditation,” something that is not suggested by the relentless forward motion of Horace’s Alcaic (205). While Horace is thoughtful, he is not known for pensive meditation; he is noted, instead, for the “dramatic movement” of his Alcaic (Reckford 46). The circularity of the *In Memoriam* stanza is a feature not well suited for the translation of the Alcaic, but very well suited for the ruminative meditation of Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*.

We know that Tennyson knew his Horace, and we know that he alludes to Horace in the matter of *In Memoriam*. The Alcaic form and the form of *In Memoriam* certainly have many common abilities and characteristics, suggested by Calverley’s translations of Horace in the Tennysonian meter. Of course, they also have many characteristics that are not common, as Housman and Conington have suggested. Such have been my concerns to this point, which provide the information necessary for a discussion of the effects of such similarities and dissimilarities on *In Memoriam* itself and an exploration of the question that is really at issue: How does alluding to Horace’s meter, yet not perfectly replicating his meter, create meaning in *In Memoriam*?

I have already pointed out Tennyson’s allusion to Horace’s *Odes* i.3 in the words of *In Memoriam* 9, but his irregular meter adds an even deeper identification with Horace. While there are sometimes variations in his meter, Tennyson’s iambic tetrameter *In Memoriam* lines are very regular. In the first stanza of this poem, however, Tennyson varies subtly yet significantly from his regular rhythm in a way that suggests the Alcaic. In the poem, as in the Horatian analogue, the poet addresses a ship, praying it will deliver his friend safely to his destination. Tennyson’s stanza could be scanned like this:

/ / u / u / u /

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore

/ u u / u / u /

Sailest the placid ocean-plains

u / u / u / u /

With my lost Arthur's loved remains,

/ u / / u / u /

Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er. (1-4)

Tennyson's first foot is a spondee, a common substitute for an iamb, but it draws more attention. In most lines of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson begins with an unstressed syllable, as the reader would expect from an iambic rhythm. In this first line (as well as the second and fourth) he begins with a stressed syllable that nudges the stanza further in the direction of the Alcaic, which nearly always begins with a long syllable. That the first foot contains two stressed syllables emphasizes his address to the ship—an address that corresponds with Horace's vocative *navis* (5). Horace so often makes the first two syllables of his Alcaic long—the equivalent to accented syllables in the English system. Tennyson suggests the Latinate stanza even more by requiring the reader to elide the words *the* and *Italian* in the first line in order to fit the line into a tetrameter. Such elision occurs rarely in Tennyson, but when it does happen, he usually signals the elision with an apostrophe. Such elision occurs also in Latin poetry. Tennyson's elision is reminiscent of such constructions as Horace's own "exsilium impositura (pronounced 'exsili-impositura')" from *Odes* ii.3. According to Latin conventions of prosody, the voicing of *-um* at the end of *exsilium* would be dropped when followed by a word that started with a vowel. The reader of Tennyson would expect to see *th'Italian* as a cue that elision is necessary. Since Tennyson gives no such clue, this line cannot help but draw extra attention from the reader conscious of meter. Moreover,

the trochaic *sailest* would draw little attention to itself if not for the many other irregularities. And it feels unnatural to cram “Spread thy full wings” into iambs—no matter how you scan it.

The regularity of Tennyson’s meter throughout most of *In Memoriam* holds these variations in sharp relief, adding emphasis to a passage in which Tennyson suggests Horace. One such metrical variation is the substitution of an unstressed syllable for a stressed one in the three lines that correspond with stress in the Alcaic. Tennyson’s first, second, and fourth lines start with stressed syllables; iambs should not. This nudges the stanza toward the Alcaic, in which the first, second, and fourth lines begin with long syllables. With such a theme as the one demonstrated in this stanza, *In Memoriam* embraces Horace thematically and metrically—so much so that the stanza form (which is already very Horatian, as we have seen) is augmented with flourishes that suggest Horace even more emphatically.

Like Calverley, Tennyson takes advantage of the short lines of the *In Memoriam* stanza to produce a high rate of enjambment throughout his poem. Not only this, but Tennyson tends to pause often in the middle of his lines. These enjambments and pauses allow Tennyson to recreate the kind of Horatian movement and suspense that Calverley translates so well with the *In Memoriam* strophe. In *In Memoriam* 87, for example, Tennyson recalls a visit to Cambridge where archers firing their bows reminded him of Hallam’s ability in speaking and debating to always hit the mark.

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, (29-33)

First, the master-bowman is separated from the action he performs in the first sentence.

Appropriately, the action he performs is cleaving his mark, where cleave is a homonym for the dividing that takes place in the sentence. Tennyson employs a strong caesura in the second line that halts the line as Horace often does in the first two lines of his Alcaic. The pause emphasizes the next sentence, which again straddles the line break. Tennyson ends this climactic sentence with another strong pause, but he slows the climactic third line even more with another pause after *Who*. These two pauses so near each other have the effect of Horace's three long syllables in the center of his third line. Both slow the stanza, causing it to jam up and climax in the center of the third line. Tennyson runs the third sentence over the line break again, but this time, his phrase, "hung to hear," is separated from its object, leaving readers suspensefully hanging from the third line to hear what Hallam's friends often hung to hear from him: a rapt oration.

Tennyson emphasizes the free flowing of Hallam's orations by allowing the idea to flow across the stanza break. This metrical arrangement in Tennyson's stanza produces a movement similar to the Horatian Alcaic. And in this case, the ghost of Horace felt through the movement of the meter is conducive to recalling the ghost of Hallam.

But enjambment is a metrical device available to poets of every age and language, so how can enjambment be an allusion to one particular poet? The enjambments of *In Memoriam* are noteworthy. In a poem that is already allusive to Horace in matter and was also seen by Victorian translators as appropriate in meter for the translation of Horatian Alcaic there is a higher rate of enjambment than other prominent Victorian poetry and a higher rate of enjambment than Tennyson's other poetry. That Horace had a tendency to enjamb heavily his poetry has already been noted. Significant scholarship on the matter of Tennyson's enjambment, however, is

relatively non-existent. A perusal of Tennyson's poetry besides *In Memoriam* reveals an enjambment rate of approximately one in five lines. This rate lines up very closely with other popular Victorian poetry.¹³ In *In Memoriam*, however, Tennyson enjambes at rates closer to one out of every three lines.¹⁴ Tennyson made a liberal use of enjambment in his *In Memoriam* that is out of character, both among his own poems and among Victorian poetry in general. This derivation from the Victorian norm and from his own average produces an effect similar to that produced by Horace's *Odes*. The similar sense and feeling of these poems that is produced by their enjambments enhance Tennyson's many thematic and syntactical allusions to Horatian ode.

¹³ I surveyed a sample of 57 poems selected randomly from 13 prominent Victorian poets: Matthew Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Lewis Carroll, Arthur Hugh Clough, Edward Fitzgerald, Gerard Manley Hopkins, George Meredith, William Morris, Christina Rossetti, Dante Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and Oscar Wilde. Another sample was taken of 18 randomly selected poems of Alfred Tennyson (not including *In Memoriam*). In a sample of 1808 lines from 57 randomly selected poems by prominent Victorian poets, nearly 18% were enjambed. Of several randomly selected Tennyson poems, also about 18% of 1062 lines were enjambed.

¹⁴ Of *In Memoriam* itself: 33 sections chosen at random. Of the 684 lines examined 224 lines (nearly 33%) were enjambed—almost twice the prominent Victorian average. Of course, degrees of enjambment vary, so in all categories I elected to count only those line-breaks that broke up clauses. In producing these statistics, I assumed that enjambment type was less important than consistent enjambment identification across the three separate areas—which was rigorously maintained.

Tennyson's poem can move like Horace's Alcaic odes, which allows Tennyson to borrow the suspenseful, sometimes violent, movement of Horace's strophe and invites the ghost of Horace to move through his poem.

Because Tennyson's stanza summons Horace's ghost, and because Horace is famous for his invitation poems, the meter and allusions provide a suitable site for Tennyson's invitations for Hallam to be near him. Horace was a pioneer of the invitation poem, as English poets well knew. Ben Jonson's "Inviting a Friend to Supper" and John Milton's "To Mr. Lawrence" demonstrate the English familiarity with Horace's invitation poems, and Tennyson's own familiarity was evident in his "To the Rev. F. D. Maurice." In *In Memoriam* 50, which, formally, evokes Horace's Alcaic, Tennyson invites a guest. In this case, he invites Hallam's spirit to be near. Tennyson begins each of the four stanzas in this section with the words "Be near me": "Be near me when my light is low", "Be near me when the sensuous frame / Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust", "Be near me when my faith is dry", and "Be near me when I fade away" (1, 5-6, 9, 13). Because of the form is so reminiscent of Horace's, it is appropriate for such invitations, even the invitation of a ghost.

Taken together, Tennyson's allusions to Horace and his meter that recalls Horace's Alcaic are indicative of a plan on Tennyson's part to create a stanza that embraces Horace. But Housman and Conington remind us that these meters are not the same. It's worth comparing these loose approximations of the Alcaic to Tennyson's closer approximations. Tennyson was very capable of producing a stanza that was much more suggestive of the Alcaic. He went on later to experiment with rendering the Alcaic meter into his own English poetry. The first of these experiments came in 1853 with "The Daisy" (published in 1855). Tennyson writes the poem, "In a meter which I invented, representing in some measure the grandest of meters, the

Horatian Alcaic” (*Poems* 2: 494). After “The Daisy,” Tennyson writes a poem that not only is metrically similar to Horatian ode, but thematically signals Horace as well. ““To the Rev. F. D. Maurice’ [...] is so explicitly Horatian in tone, subject, and allusiveness that the Alcaic strophe—Horace’s signature meter—becomes integral to the poem’s meaning” (Talbot 220). The poem is an invitation written in 1854 to the Rev. Maurice, a man Tennyson knew from Cambridge. The meter of this poem signals Horatian Alcaic even more overtly than does “The Daisy.” In 1863, Tennyson took up his Alcaic experimentation again in an attempt to faithfully replicate the Alcaic meter in English with “Milton. Alcaics,” a task that he accomplishes, though the poem is nearly unreadable for being crammed into so difficult a form.

/ / u / u / u u / u u

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,

/ / u / u / u u / u u

O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,

/ / u / u / u / u

God-gifted organ-voice of England,

/ u u / u u / u / u

Milton, a name to resound for ages; (1-4)

This very closely imitates the Alcaic.

u – u – – || – u u – u u

u – u – – || – u u – u u

u – u – – – u – u

– u u – u u – u – u

Although Tennyson doesn't stress the three consecutive syllables in the first three lines, the rest of the meter is perfect. Not only does Tennyson perfectly substitute stressed and unstressed syllables for longs and shorts, but he also makes the appropriate vowels comparatively long or short. The poem displays Tennyson's knowledge of the intricacies of the Alcaic and an apparent ease with which he writes it. But the fluidity and beauty of Tennyson's poetry are stifled by this rigid form. So close an imitation of the Alcaic defeats Tennyson's ability to merely suggest the Alcaic because it reproduces the Alcaic. Though this and the other two poems were composed after *In Memoriam*, they demonstrate that Tennyson was interested in the Alcaic and had the ability to bring it successfully into English poetry. But if it was within Tennyson's power to imitate Horace's meters much more directly, then the fact that he didn't do so suggests that his resistances to Horace serve some purpose.

And Tennyson does often resist Horace, especially when discussing matters of faith. Tennyson clearly wants to believe that there is some sort of redemption from death—that death is not the end. In *In Memoriam* 118, he expresses this hope for redemption. “But trust that those we call the dead / Are breathers of an ampler day / For ever nobler ends” (5-7). Such a belief, though, is not Horatian. Horace is “essentially backward-looking” because to Horace, “there is no to-morrow other than the little measure that the capricious gods may allow, and no real survival in a future life” (Nash 473). This attitude is born out on nearly every page of Horace's *Odes*, but this is the attitude that Tennyson tries to fight. While he wrestles with the possibility that Horace may be right—death may be the end—he grasps for hope and faith that there is something more. The presence of Horatian language and meter in *In Memoriam* casts relief on sentiments that are so unlike Horace's, as when he expresses in *In Memoriam* 130 that he senses the spirit of Hallam all around him.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shalt not lose thee tho' I die. (13-16)

Tennyson is “teased by the hope of [...] reunion beyond death” (Eliot 136). And in this poem, Tennyson end-stops every line, as if resisting the Horatian movement of heavily enjambed lines repels Horatian fatalism. This stanza is a good example of what is, in the *In Memoriam* stanza, too Tennysonian to be very Horatian. Tennyson’s fourth line can enact a returning that is impossible in the Alcaic. Tennyson’s A-rhymes enfold the stanza in a way that can provide the consolation (even in death) that Horace’s rapid fourth line cannot. The Alcaic is a stanza of relentless forward movement, and the fourth line that trails off in dactyls only adds to the sense of unyielding progression. But the *In Memoriam* stanza is ruminative and circulatory. Tennyson seems to say, “I know you’re far away, Hallam, but I can still feel you with me, and I am comforted by the hope that I will not lose you, even in death.” The rhyme scheme enhances the effect of the stanza. In the first line, Tennyson presents a tragedy (“Far off thou art”) and a consolation (“but ever nigh”). His rejoicing and prospering in the next two lines are the effects of this consolation. In the final line, Tennyson maintains consolation with the hope, “I shalt not lose thee,” in spite of possible tragedy, “tho’ I die.” But the rhyme enacts the consolation because the final A-rhyme, *die*, reminds the reader of the first line, ending in *nigh*. There is some consolation anyway in uniting sundered rhymes, which lends itself well to the theme of uniting parted friends, but in this instance, the final rhyme draws attention back to Tennyson’s consolation that, despite death, Hallam is “ever nigh.”

While Tennyson's form recalls the Horatian Alcaic, it prevents too close an identification with Horace. Tennyson often seems to embrace Horace just to draw attention to his resistance to Horace. When, in poem 105 of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson celebrates the third Christmas since the death of his friend, he calls for no dance or song or feasting.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
 For who would keep the ancient form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
 No dance, no motion, save alone

What lightens in the lucid east (17-24)

These stanzas are very reminiscent of Horace, and even allusive as we have seen with "let no footstep beat the floor." Tennyson's syntax, too, is Horatian. Tennyson uses a long sequence of negatives ("let no...nor...no...be neither...nor...nor...nor...nor...no...no"). Such constructions are characteristic of Horace's style, as in the second and third stanzas of *Odes* i.16 ("*non... non... non... neque... nec... nec... nec*") (Nash 472). Tennyson alludes overtly to Horace's *Odes* i.37, but the allusion itself offers up resistance to Horace. The first line quoted above recalls Horace's phrase, "nunc pede libero / pulsanda tellus (now let us thump the ground with unfettered feet)," but Tennyson's imperative is the opposite, "But let no footstep beat the floor." Just where he diverges from Horace, Tennyson diverges also from his regular meter, drawing attention to the divergence. The iambic ictus of the line is unfulfilled because Tennyson

has made a spondaic substitution in the second foot. The spondee draws attention because it is unexpected, but also because it creates a string of three stressed syllables. The word that reverses the line (*no*) puts unexpected stress in that position. Tennyson emphasizes his resistance to Horace. He goes on to request the absence of the things that might have given Horace comfort—“song”, “game”, “feast”, “harp”, “flute”, and “dance” (Nash 472).

Tennyson asks who would keep the ancient forms of celebration if they no longer bring their old spirit. This line has a pedigree, though. It is borrowed from Horace, who employed it in alluding to the ancient Greek poet Alcaeus. Horace borrows the phrasing of his line, the tradition, and the meter from Alcaeus, so Tennyson’s line and the tradition it refers to are themselves ancient forms. Tennyson’s question is at the very heart of this discussion. The Alcaic is an ancient poetic form practiced most prominently by poets that are long dead, so “who would keep the ancient form / Thro’ which the spirit breathes not more?” Tennyson certainly won’t. He alludes to Horace and the Alcaic, he even approximates Horatian Alcaic, but he ultimately resists too close an identification with Horace or the Alcaic because to fully embrace them would be to embrace their beliefs.

By alluding to Horatian meter, Tennyson flirts with Horace’s fatalism as an analogue to his own grief. *In Memoriam* is a poem of doubt and grief that longs for faith and relief. His contemporaries “regarded it as a message of hope and reassurance to their rather fading Christian faith” (Eliot 136). Tennyson’s poem is one of struggle: struggle between faith and doubt, life and death, grief and joy, love and pain, certainty and uncertainty, science and nature and divinity, etc. And Tennyson himself said, “The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love” (Hallam Tennyson, “In Memoriam” 106). He professed also a faith in

the immortality of the soul (108). But Horace's view of death is tempting. Death is the end; it is a release from care and worry. To produce this struggle in *In Memoriam*, Tennyson must be tempted by Horace's fatalism. And he is tempted. He said himself that he "would rather know that he was to be lost eternally" than to have doubts in the immortality of the human soul (Hallam Tennyson, "In Memoriam" 109). There is some comfort in Horace's fatalism. The poem is on the verge of giving in, but Christian faith pulls through. Without the struggle against Horatian fatalism, readers cannot see the triumph of the poem's Christian faith in its full magnitude. Since *In Memoriam* has Christian purposes, however, it is dangerous to identify too closely with the pagan Horace if one wants to suggest that relief comes, ultimately, through faith in God and the immortality of the soul. The in-between-ness of the poem gives it power.

In his dirge for Quintilius in *Odes* i.24, Horace tells Virgil, who pleads with the gods to restore Quintilius, "your piety is all in vain" (11). He tells Virgil that instead of wasting his time praying for such impossibilities, he should resign himself to allowing endurance to make his grief lighter. To Horace, death is inevitable, irrevocable, and eternal; it is the end. This is not Tennyson's view. Tennyson does not affirm Horace's fatalism, but to flirt with Horace's position creates tension in his poem—the tension of hoping that death is not the end but knowing that it would often be easier if it were. Tennyson's partial embracing of Horace's meter and his eventual resistance to it creates metrical tension in *In Memoriam* that mirrors the tension and struggle in the matter of the poem.

Tennyson creates tension by embracing and resisting the Alcaic. It is useful to compare this Tennyson's tense relationship with the Alcaic to Swinburne's embrace of the Sapphic. Swinburne was a contemporary of Tennyson, and is considered a metrical virtuoso of the Victorian era, as was Tennyson. The Sapphic meter embraced by Swinburne was named after

Sappho, the ancient Greek lyricist and contemporary of Alcaeus. Swinburne's Sapphics present an appropriate comparison to Tennyson's Alcaics. Swinburne wrote his poem "Sapphics" in the Sapphic meter, but this was not an approximation of the Sapphic meant to suggest the general movement of the meter; it was a careful technical replication of the ancient Sapphic. And the effect of Swinburne's Sapphic replication is very different from that of Tennyson's Alcaic approximation in *In Memoriam*.

Yopie Prins makes a significant contribution to the discussion surrounding the effects of borrowed meters on original poetry in her 1999 book, *Victorian Sappho*. She writes a chapter explaining the meaning produced by Swinburne's replication of Sappho's meter in his poem "Sapphics." Prins discusses how Aphrodite, whom Sappho actively invokes in her most famous surviving poem, is not actively re-invoked by Swinburne in the first two stanzas of his "Sapphics," though her presence is surely felt. Instead, Swinburne's imitation of the Sapphic meter compels her presence, "Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather, / Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron / Stood and beheld me" (2-4). Swinburne doesn't mention who the subject of the *shedding*, *shaking*, *unclosing*, *shutting*, *standing*, or *beholding* is until the third stanza, yet Prins says, "the goddess is mobilized, instead, by the repetition of a Sapphic rhythm compelling her to leave the time and place when Sappho called upon her, to leave the past and move into the future, the present moment of Swinburne's poem" (141). Prins observes that an ancient meter can compel the return of those departed. For Tennyson to imitate Horace's Alcaic (a meter that has a tradition as long as the Sapphic) summons up some departed souls as well. To use the meter compels the return of Horace himself.

For Tennyson to compel the presence of Horace is to flirt with the unchristian idea that death is death, that is the end. And for Tennyson's poem there is a comfort in an end to grief. But

Tennyson is unwilling to be led by Horace's meter to wherever it will take him; Swinburne is willing to let Sappho's meter possess him. Swinburne is "quick to turn the bonds of verse into bondage that he would only too willingly suffer" (Prins 150). Indeed, Swinburne's Sapphics are very close imitations of the Greek form. Quite literally, such a complex and limiting metrical structure as Sapphics, when worked into the English metrical system, can give a poet very limited word choice to fill each position with the proper stress. Swinburne becomes a slave to the meter; "Subject to metrical law, Swinburne relinquishes control and surrenders to compulsory form, allowing it to speak for him or through him, as if possessed" (Prins 155). This gives Swinburne the luxury of not having "to think in his meter; his mastery compels the meter to think for him" (156). But allowing the meter to dictate its thoughts is precisely what *In Memoriam* avoids by not imitating Horace's meter completely.

Swinburne's "Sapphics" wants a theophany, a full-on visitation from the goddess, Aphrodite, in the poem. This is why Swinburne chooses to represent the meter as perfectly as possible in the English metrical system. Tennyson's imitation of Horace's Alcaic stops short of this goal. While the ghost of Horace lurking in the corners of *In Memoriam* is a valuable reminder of the allure of Horace's fatalism, it is dangerous for the poem to entirely resurrect Horace by strictly representing the Alcaic meter in the English system, though Tennyson demonstrates his virtuosity in doing just that in his later Alcaic experiments. To faithfully reproduce Horace's meter in *In Memoriam* would allow Horace's voice to dominate it, and Tennyson, like Swinburne, would become a slave to his meter. The poem's voice would be possessed by Horace's presence—a dangerous thing when Horace's view is that death is death, the irredeemable end, and the poem struggles to find meaning in death and redemption after death.

But isn't this struggle to maintain Christian belief against the temptation of Horatian fatalism exactly the point of *In Memoriam*? The poem is intent on demonstrating the human temptation to give one's self over to a terminal and irredeemable view of death and the struggle to trust that there is something more, some redemption awaiting the faithful Christian. The words of *In Memoriam* beat out in a cadence poised between Horace's paganism and Christian hope as the poet calls to Christ,

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:

Thou madest man, he knows not why,

He thinks he was not made to die;

Thou hast made him: thou art just. ("Prologue" 9-12)

The allusion to Horatian Alcaic in the meter of *In Memoriam* enacts its doubt. Tennyson's meter haunts the middle ground that is unquestionably allusive to Horatian Alcaic (demonstrated by Victorian translators) and yet unwilling to replicate the Alcaic as faithfully as Tennyson was able. His meter is deliberately poised to invoke the Horatian temptation to believe that death is death, a relief of grief and pain—even grief over a lost friend and a lost self. But it is, at the same time, poised to cling to a shred of the Christian hope that after all the pain and grief, there is redemption in death and a reunion of souls. Tennyson's meter is a site in which this struggle can be enacted—a metrical site that amplifies the struggle created by the lyrics of the poem.

It is this struggle that intensifies the doubt that T. S. Eliot was so impressed by when he says that it is not the quality of its faith that makes *In Memoriam* so religious, but the quality of its doubt. Furthermore, Eliot claims that the faith of the poem is poor, but "its doubt is a very intense experience" (Eliot 138). But in order to have religious doubt, one may not simply believe nor may one simply disbelieve. Doubt relies on the intense and equal temptation of both belief

and disbelief. It is the tension between the two that creates the doubt. The tension between faith and disbelief discussed in the lyrics of the poem is augmented by the tension between the temptation of pagan fatalism and the yearning for Christian faith produced by the form. And the quality and intensity of its doubt is what might be lost if *In Memoriam* were written without such tension in matter and in form.

Tennyson has three metrical ranges. One is he can write in wonderful meters that are not allusive to Horace. Another is that he can write in meters that are very overtly a replication of Horace's. He has a middle ground, though, that is very delicately poised between both. Those who are not interested in Horace and who don't know the Alcaic strophe could read his *In Memoriam* stanzas as normal English meters and not suspect any relationship to Horace. Those who have read Horace would see the Alcaic connection. It's not a matter that they ought to. We have the historical record that Victorians went ahead and did it—critics in their writing and Calverley by his very practice. To write in this meter in *In Memoriam* allows Tennyson to layer meaning on top of meaning in the poem—the Christian message of the poem is complicated by the overlay of Horatian poetic movement. This meter that neatly situates itself between pagan irredeemability and Christian hope for redemption creates a cadence that embodies the struggle that Tennyson enacts in the matter of his poem. In this case, the meter complements the matter and enhances the tension of Tennyson's poem in a way that the full quality of its doubt would go unnoticed and unappreciated without a consideration of Horace's presence.

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