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A Case of Plagiarism?: Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes

Alvarez's introduction to *The New Poetry* – written in 1960 - has often been read as polarising the work of Larkin and Hughes. Such a critical stance cannot account for the connections between the writers in terms of their occasional engagement with each other's work, and the unpublished correspondence held at Emory University. Hughes's most famous Laureate poem, 'Rain-charm for the Duchy', can be read as a partial re-writing of Larkin poems 'The Whitsun Weddings' and 'Water' (read from h'out). The rain that ends 'The Whitsun Weddings', and the 'sousing' in 'Water', reappear as the tumultuous downpour to celebrate the christening of Prince Harry. Specific phrases from 'The Whitsun Weddings' reappear in 'Rain-charm for the Duchy', such as the 'bunting-dressed,/Coach-party annexes' which become the 'tourist bunting' in Hughes's poem. Other connections are evident: swelling at the end of 'The Whitsun Weddings' indicates the possibility of future procreation for the wedding couples (h'out); this becomes the 'tors' in Hughes's poem. 'Tors', a hill or rocky peak (you'll be familiar with this term if you've ever been to Devon), originates from the Latin 'torus', a 'swelling', 'bulge' or 'cushion'. This is connected with the 'girl in high heels' in 'Rain-charm for the Duchy', who is 'cuffed' by surf in an image of insemination, adding sexual piquancy to Larkin's image in 'Water' of a 'fording' congregation.

As if to register the poem's debt to the Hull poet, when it was first published in *The Observer* in 1984, 'Rain-charm for the Duchy' included a subtle epigraph to Larkin. 'A Blessed, Devout Drench for the Christening of Prince Harry' is clearly an allusion to 'A furious devout drench' in 'Water'. (I must thank Professor Neil Roberts

for pointing this out to me – show *Observer*.) This epigraph disappeared mysteriously in the version published in Hughes's *New Selected Poems* in 1995, and was replaced with the terse epigraph, '*for H.R.H. Prince Harry*'. Possible reasons for this original dedication to the Laureate who should have been, and its subsequent deletion, can be adduced from the Emory letters, Larkin's Thwaite letters and Andrew Motion biography. The poets corresponded occasionally; the letters from Larkin in Atlanta reveal a much more amiable relationship than has been acknowledged, but Hughes's opinion of the Hull poet changed during the 1990s. All seemed well in the 1970s: polite envy runs through Larkin's first missive to Hughes in June 1975: asking him how the Ilkley Literature Festival went, Larkin adds (Qu 1) 'I hope all these stories about young girls fainting in the aisles are not exaggerated'. In the next Emory letter, Larkin apparently responds to a Hughes letter praising 'Aubade': he thanks Hughes for his 'kind words', and states, 'Since writing it I stopped being afraid of death for a few months, but it is beginning to creep back now' (Qu 2). Of course, these initial letters display a different attitude towards Hughes than that recounted in the Thwaite letters and Motion biography: the latter reveals that Larkin framed a picture of him and Hughes in his toilet; in a letter to Kingsley Amis in 1967, he laments that 'Ted's no good at all. Not at all. Not a single solitary bit of good'.

Perhaps the first signs of a more public rift between the two writers occurred in 1980, when they disagreed over an entry to The Arvon Poetry Competition. In a letter to Judy Egerton in December 1980, Larkin expresses his regret that he became involved in the event, and declaims an 'extraordinary parody of Pope called "The Rape of the Cock"'. Hughes wanted the thirty-five page parody to win; in a letter (held at Emory) to David Ross in December 1980, he explains that it was 'a wild marvellous obscene lament for the glorious passion between a beautiful woman and a

baboon in a night-club'. Seamus Heaney quite liked it too. In contrast, Hughes notes that 'Larkin said if it got the prize he'd have to dissociate himself publicly from the judging panel'. Despite this disagreement, the poets continued to correspond after the event: Larkin appears to have been unimpressed by the eventual winner, Andrew Motion: 'When I see him', he writes to Hughes in January 1981, 'I will ask him what the poem means'. He adds dryly, 'Charles [Montieth] has just rejected his next collection of poems, so the situation is full of inconsistencies.' A few days earlier he expressed a more strident view to Amis: 'to think that someone is going to get FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS for some utter ballocks makes me want to do damage.'

Hughes remained relatively unaware of Larkin's reservations about his poetic taste and acumen, for the present. On one occasion he even sent Larkin his horoscope. Larkin replies in an Emory letter of November 1982 by stating: (Qu 3) 'Thank you for taking the trouble to send me my horoscope which I shall carefully preserve, though I don't know whether it is supposed to help me or frighten me ... I never thought to ask what time of day I was born, and the information by now is gone beyond recall. I should guess about opening-time'. ('Carefully preserve...') Such tongue-in-cheek geniality continues in the next letter (December 1984), when Larkin congratulates Hughes on the Laureateship: 'Much as I admired JB, I believe the job needs a different kind of imagination now, and I'm sure you can supply it. Hope you survive!' Five days later, on December 23rd 1984, Larkin wrote in a rather different tone to Robert Conquest, calling Hughes a 'boring old monolith', and accepting that 'he'll do the job all right except for writing anything readable'. This was penned on the same day that 'Rain-charm for the Duchy' was published in *The Observer*; the critic can only surmise whether Larkin wrote the letter after coming across the supposedly 'unreadable' piece. Nevertheless, Larkin continued to correspond with Hughes, and in

the last letter held at Emory, dated the 7th of August 1985, he touchingly complains that 'any journey further than Leeds seems to me fraught with danger'. In a bizarre letter to Larkin just before Larkin died of cancer, dated 21st of November 1985, Hughes offers Larkin the services of a local faith healer. In a letter to Monica Jones (8 December 1985), Hughes is appalled by the prospect that Larkin might have read the letter just before he died.

Despite this genial relationship recorded in the Emory letters, Hughes's suspicions that Larkin was less than enamoured by his poetic output begin to increase after 1985. In a letter to Alan Ross in 1988, he contends that he always stated publicly that he would have preferred Charles Causley to be the new Laureate, a more 'obvious natural choice', because he thought Larkin too 'obviously right wing, too much in himself a right-wing icon'. Hughes continues his discussion of Larkin's politics and poetics in Emory letters to Thom Gunn in the early 1990s. Thom Gunn then comments in a letter to Hughes held in Emory that 'Larkin was a malign influence' on English poets, 'encouraging a kind of pusillanimity that takes from them any chance of the imagination'. In 1993, Hughes was then piqued at his depiction by Larkin in the Thwaite letters. In a letter to a Douglas (probably Dunn - conference), he records that he spotted the proofs at Faber's: (Qu 4)

No, I shan't read Philip's letters. When I saw the proofs lying there in Daphne Tagg's office at Faber's I said: I don't expect I come out of that looking very clean. And she suddenly froze, in a My-God-we-completely-forgot-to-ask-him-whether-he'd-mind sort of posture. I could see her real alarm there, for a moment. So I reassured her. I told her from my experience they'd be blamed far more [for] what they cut out than for what they leave in. And no matter how bad his remarks might be, if they're cut out everybody will assume they were far worse. And who cares. (11 January 1993).

Hughes 'cared' in a sense, though, since he appears, as a retort, to have deposited a blank postcard of the footballer Bobby Charlton into the back of the Larkin file at Emory: the resemblance between the former Manchester United player and the Hull poet (in terms of their bald pates) is remarkable. Hughes's increasing antagonism towards the deceased poet after coming across the proofs may have also resulted in the excision of the Larkin epigraph from 'Rain-charm for the Duchy', a poem which, ironically, was originally designed to highlight a literary genealogy between the poets' views of a united England.

More seriously, in 1992, Hughes almost accused Larkin of plagiarism. In an intriguing letter sent to Alice Quinn in October 1992, Hughes contends that (Qu. 5) 'Two of Larkin's poems Larkinise (to my mind) two early poems of mine that I never republished (though he certainly saw them). One of them is one of his best.' Any blatant charge of plagiarism is clearly absent: the nonce verb 'to Larkinise' suggests that the texts in question form, at best, a pastiche of Hughes's originals. As Phillipa Gregory has pointed out in relation to eighteenth-century novelists, the appropriation, rather than copying, of content cannot be appended with the charge of plagiarism (which is, after all, a post-Romantic concept), since authors 'simply poached whole scenes or motifs from their colleagues, thus converting rivals into unwilling collaborators'. In her analysis of Coleridge's plagiarising of Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*, Jane Moore argues that this collaboration betrays 'an act of love'. Such an act is hard to imagine in the context of Larkin's version of Hughes in his letters to Amis. However, as Julia Kristeva contends, appropriation engenders both 'desire and murder': Larkin's jealousy over Hughes's charisma (registered in the letter about girls fainting in Ilkley) may have found its outlet in the possible plagiarism, 'killing off the otherness' of the

rival's text. This supposed crime of passion would overstate the case: to Larkinise a piece of writing might only be an instance of intertextuality, or, more broadly, influence, in which case an acute sensitivity (or cheeky playfulness) must surely lie behind Hughes's ruminations about Larkin's possible pilfering. Following Hughes's logic, 'Rain-Charm for the Duchy' must be regarded as a 'Hughesinising' of 'The Whitsun Weddings' and 'Water'. A poststructuralist reading of this process might be that arguments about 'Larkinising' and 'Hughesinising' are spurious, given that the social nature of language means that 'reading and writing are irreducibly intertextual activities' (and I've just Rowlandised Jane Moore in that sentence); plagiarism thus becomes 'part of the very structure of writing'. Such sentiments would be of little help to a student up against a university committee, accused of plagiarising the work of Larkin's most eminent critics. Intertextual references can nevertheless be distinguished from the wholesale copying of whole paragraphs, as they are in numerous guides to avoid plagiarism in HE institutions (Oxford Brookes good practice = 15%). Wholesale copying is not the issue for this paper. Rather than plagiarising a whole Hughes poem, using synonyms, or copying the rhythmic or metrical pattern of a poem, Larkin might be said to be 'stealing', and then 'altering', poetic images which constitute a series of intertexts ripe for all writers to pilfer.

Which poems, then, does Larkin steal 'scenes' or 'motifs' from? 'Mayday on Holderness' and 'Here' do share remarkably similar subject matter: the first poem was published in *The Spectator* on the 22nd of January 1960; Larkin's appeared in *The New Statesman* on the 24th of November 1961 (indicate on handout but don't read). Even though the shadow of Gallipoli and the 'Cordite oozings' broach the Mexborough marvel's palate as he contemplates the Humber estuary, as opposed to the *seemingly* more conventional version of English pastoral in 'Here', both poems

share a stubborn provinciality. For Hughes, Sheffield, the 'inert North', the North Sea and the Humber represent the national effort at Gallipoli rather than England as a whole. For Larkin, the villages around Goole form buffer zones to the postal districts of London; as he once wryly remarked, tourists would much rather travel northwards to visit Basil Bunting than change at Doncaster to bother him. Despite these similarities, however, 'Mayday on Holderness' can be discounted as a precursor of 'Here' on Hughes's own terms in the Emory letter. 'Mayday on Holderness' was republished in the collection *Lupercal*, and then reprinted in the *New Selected Poems*.

Hughes's comment about 'Larkinising' needs to be placed in two contexts: his reaction to the publication of Fabers' Larkin letters, and a sense - that can be adduced from reading from the Emory archives as a whole - that he was increasingly aware that his letters would be read by future scholars. After Keith Sagar and Anne Skea struggled to make sense of the vast collection of letters and manuscripts in the early 1990s, Hughes himself took over the process of selecting material for the archives. Hence the - perhaps offhand - comment in 1992 about Larkinising might be regarded as the epistolary equivalent of the Bobby Charlton postcard: a red herring to confuse literary scholars, and another jibe at a contemporary who had proved less than generous towards him in his letters. To try and prove the veracity of this position, I've looked at about thirty of Hughes's early poems which were never published in a full collection. Possibilities I've discounted include these examples on the overhead. (show OHP) Hughes's assertion that the culprits appertain to 'early' poems poses one of the major problems in detecting the originals: the pieces on the OHP date until 1964, by which time Hughes had published two major collections, *The Hawk in the Rain* and *Lupercal*. Two poems published before *Lupercal* in 1960 might be expected (since Hughes calls them 'early poems'), and yet one piece from 1968 does bear

comparison with a Larkin poem dated October 1969 in the *Selected Poems*. In the analysis to follow, however, the late sixties need to be regarded as an early part of a career which ended thirty years later in 1998: by 1968, Hughes had published three major collections.

‘Dog Days on the Black Sea’, ‘?’ (Handout) and ‘Second Bedtime Story’ appeared in the tenth anniversary special of *Critical Quarterly* in 1968 (read ‘Dod Days’). It might be tempting to suspect a connection between the ‘see-saw’ brains of the poem ‘?’ and the slide of the famous Larkin poem ‘High Windows’, were it not for the fact that Larkin’s poem appears in the same issue of *Critical Quarterly*. Nevertheless, unlike many of the poetry journals listed on the OHP, Larkin would perhaps, if not ‘certainly’ - as Hughes writes - have read this edition of *Critical Quarterly*. Larkin’s interest in the journal can be proved by reading his unpublished letters held in the Brian Cox and Critical Quarterly Archives at The John Rylands Library in Manchester. Letters dating from 1968 to 1974 display Larkin’s close friendship with Brian Cox, his self-promoted ‘English’ insularity, his homoerotic interest in George Best and a potential male partner at dancing, and a proclivity for pork pies. In a letter to Cox (30 July 1968), Larkin agrees to visit Manchester and watch United, at the same time as he makes it clear that he is refusing all invitations to speak formally. ‘If I once start to give way’, Larkin writes, ‘my life won’t be worth living.’ ‘Of course’, he continues, ‘it isn’t worth living as it is, but you know what I mean’. In another letter dated 4th October 1968, he contends that ‘Drinking to me was a fearful experience, like playing squash’; in a missive to Jean Cox in November 1969, he reports that he ‘ploughed [his] solitary way back to Hull [from Manchester], much fortified by the pork pie’. (Dockery?) In this letter he also apologises for not

dancing ‘with that old boy’, and then intriguingly adds that ‘I can’t get it into my head that it isn’t illegal any more’.

If these letters indicate that Larkin might have read the tenth anniversary special of *Critical Quarterly*, they provide no clues as to which poems might be Larkinised versions of ‘Dog Days on the Black Sea’ or ‘?’. The book *A Concordance to the Poetry of Philip Larkin* might help to detect them: if Larkin poached a whole scene or motif, the iteration of at least the odd word might be expected. As Brian Cox related to me in a private letter, ‘Dog Days on the Black Sea’ reads as ‘very much a Hughes poem’: there are no equivalents in Larkin, as one might expect, for ‘space-ditch’, ‘sombbrero’, ‘lizards’, ‘massacre’, ‘lurch’, ‘prehistory’, ‘thunderhead’, ‘soft-bellied’, ‘baskers’, ‘thunder-blue’ or ‘boomerang’. However, ‘beach’, ‘towels’, and ‘summer’ are an entirely different matter. There are five examples of ‘beach’: ‘Midsummer Night, 1940’, ‘Lift through the breaking day’, ‘Many famous feet have trod’, ‘Here’ and ‘To the Sea’; the first three can be discounted, as they were all composed before 1947. ‘Summer’ lists five poems: ‘To the Sea’, ‘Cut Grass’, ‘Going, Going’, ‘Show Saturday’ and ‘Bridge for the Living’. With four ‘hits’, is it possible that ‘To the Sea’ can be tentatively identified as a Larkinisation of ‘Dog Days on the Black Sea’? (Read ‘To the Sea’)

Larkin was certainly aware that the poem bears strong traces of his typical, authorial voice: in a letter to Barbara Pym in 1969 he describes it as ‘rather a self parody’. The dates fit, since ‘To the Sea’ was first published in *London Magazine* in January 1970, along with ‘Annus Mirabilis’. If this poem does indeed Larkinise Hughes, it is intriguing that a piece about the Black Sea metamorphoses into a text that might epitomise the Englishness some readers detect in Larkin’s work. It also uncannily mirrors the way in which the symbol of England, St George, was lifted

from his origins in Capadocia, now part of Turkey, and appropriated for an English ballad as the son of Lord Albert of Coventry. (Hughes talks about this process at great length in an Emory letter – written chapter on Englishness about this...)

Perhaps ‘towels’, ‘surf’, ‘summer’ and ‘beach’ are words that one might expect to find in the scenarios depicted by the poets anyway; any similarity between the two pieces may be entirely coincidental. If the Hughes letter at Emory does refer to this poem, however, then Larkin subverts his depiction of the beach as a site of primeval activity, and transforms it into an elegiac piece which tentatively celebrates holiday rites. In Larkin’s poem, sunbathing on the beach is ‘half an annual pleasure, half a rite’: the metrical break on ‘rite’ emphasises the cultural, as much as essential, pleasure. In contrast, Hughes portrays the process as purely biological, in which the humans creep like helpless lizards towards the beach in an unknowing lament for their fishy ancestors. Perhaps the Black Sea location inevitably alienates the Yorkshire poet: the river merges with local fare, as it is ‘slow as honey’; it is so hot that the writer can only ‘slog’ on under his sombrero. In contradistinction, the ‘flawless’ English weather paradoxically contains its own imperfection: ‘Like breathed-on glass’, in Larkin’s poem, ‘The sunlight has turned milky’. Whereas for Hughes the heat feels like a fever, the seaside for Larkin remains uncannily familiar: the world beyond the low wall appears like an apparition from the past, ‘something known long before’. Any sense of the *heimlich* is supported by Larkin’s familiar listing technique: the steep beach, blue water, towels, bathing caps. The next list in stanza three then undercuts this list: in an echo of Larkin’s surreal, metonymic half-line from ‘The Whitsun Weddings’ (‘and then the perms’), the delicate trebles at the sea’s edge are sullied by the half-line, ‘and then the cheap cigars’, followed by chocolate papers, tea-leaves, rusting soup-tins. These items, like the cigarette cards in the sand, are

paradoxically precious, since they are inscribed into the aesthetic harmony of the ode. None of the signs I've discussed from the poem are essentially signs of Englishness, yet, despite the abstract title – 'Sea' rather than 'Prestatyn' - they cohere as a whole to emphasise the particularity of the scene summed up as the 'miniature gaiety of seashores'. For Hughes, any such potential signs of Englishness merely remind the poet of his extreme circumstances. The land is compared to a 'big rose', but rather than place the Black Sea landscape in the context of the familiar English flower, it reminds the reader that the rose is, like St George, a foreign invader, and was only shipped over from Persia during the Medieval period. Even the form of the two pieces emphasises the contrasting landscape: whereas the benign beach is rendered in the English tradition of the ode for Larkin, Hughes writes in his characteristic free verse, the stylistics of which may have encouraged Larkin's comment that he was not one iota of good as a writer. Does Larkin ultimately domesticate the 'new depth' poetics of this supposedly 'unreadable' poet in 'Dog Days on the Black Sea', replacing barbaric lizards with frilled children to create, in Hughes's words 'one of his best pieces'? The answer is indeterminate: this tentative comparison between the two pieces openly admits that my foraging for these Larkinised texts might have turned up the critical equivalent of, not cigarette cards in the sand, but a red herring.

Hughes's *Collected Poems* was recently published: this includes poems printed in periodicals, but not in full collections, which has made the tracing of 'Larkinised' poems much easier (spent hours and hours in John Rylands trying to find the right poems, when if I'd hung on a few months I could have just looked in this book!) Two other possibilities have arisen from my reading of the *Collected Poems*: Hughes's 'Gibraltar', published in the *New Statesman* in April 1966, and 'Poem to Robert Graves Perhaps', printed in *Poetry (Chicago)* in December 1963. The

equivalent Larkinised poems are 'Homage to a Government', first published in January 1969, and 'Sad Steps', published in 1968. (Read 'Robert Graves' and 'Sad Steps' from h'out) In 'Sad Steps' and 'Poem to Robert Graves Perhaps', both poets associate the moon with the disappearance of youth: 'Poem to Robert Graves' contains the line 'Tomorrow the world will be back, hurrying you into old age' whereas Larkin's moon is a 'reminder of the strength and pain/ Of being young'. Whilst the Hughes narrator lies awake 'trying to focus that thing's helpless indifference', the more blunt description in 'Sad Steps' records Larkin 'Groping back to bed after a piss' (first stanza as archetypal Larkin). Larkin's moon is 'High and preposterous and separate', as well as 'clean', akin to the satellite 'clear of all poetry/ The exhauster of the poetical' in Hughes's poem. Structurally, the poems are also similar: line 11 of Hughes's poem forms an interjection: 'A calamity to be there, where there might as well be nothing!' The same line in Larkin's text similarly deploys the exclamation mark: Hughes's iambic octameter is replaced with the pentameter 'Lozenge of love! Medallion of art!'

The poems bear comparison to an extent that the critic might be tempted to declare, beyond all doubt, that 'Poem to Robert Graves Perhaps' must be one of the Larkinised texts. However, Hughes does contend that Larkin 'certainly saw' his poems in the periodicals, but there is no mention of *Poetry (Chicago)* in Larkin's selected letters or the Motion biography. The *New Statesman*, on the other hand, is cited frequently in both. 'Homage to a Government' is certainly written on a similar theme to 'Gibraltar': Hughes's anti-colonial poem describes the rock as a 'fang', whereas 'Homage to a Government' may form a right-wing retort to Hughes's liberalism. Larkin's pro-imperialist lament suffers in comparison with Hughes's more sophisticated prediction of a new era of American imperialism. Thus Hughes's

statement in the Emory letter that one of the Larkinised texts is one of Larkin's best poems might register his disapproval of the politics and poetics of 'Homage to a Government' compared to his high(er) praise for 'Sad Steps' or 'To the Sea'. However, as with 'Dog days on the Black Sea', these poems may ultimately just be other instances of red herrings.

- 'The Drowned Woman' (*Poetry* 89 [February 1957], pp.296-7)
- 'Letter' (*New Statesman* 54 [September 1957], p.387)
- 'Constancy' (*London Magazine* 5 [August 1958], pp.17-18)
- 'Gulls Aloft' (*Christian Science Monitor* [12 December 1959])
- 'Snails' (*Christian Science Monitor* [15 December 1959])
- 'A Fable' (*Times Literary Supplement* [9 September 1960], p.lxx)
- 'Shells' (*London Magazine* 8 [March 1961], pp.19-21)
- 'Love' (*Town* 4 [February 1963], p.32)
- 'Sunday Evening' (*Atlantic Monthly* 211 [May 1963], p.59)
- 'Poem to Robert Graves Perhaps', 'On Westminster Bridge', 'Era of Giant Lizards' and 'Small Hours' (*Poetry* 103 [December 1963]), pp.152-56)
- 'Bad News Good' (*Agenda* 3 [December-January 1963], p.16)
- 'Dice' (*Critical Quarterly* 6 [Summer 1964], p.153)
- 'O White Élite Lotus' (*Critical Quarterly* 6 [Winter 1964], p.319)

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1. I hope all these stories about young girls fainting in the aisles are not exaggerated. (Philip Larkin, letter to Ted Hughes, 13.vi.75)
2. Since writing [‘Aubade’] I stopped being afraid of death for a few months, but it is beginning to creep back now. (Philip Larkin, letter to Ted Hughes, 27.iii.79)
3. Thank you for taking the trouble to send me my horoscope which I shall carefully preserve, though I don’t know whether it is supposed to help me or frighten me ... I never thought to ask what time of day I was born, and the information by now is gone beyond recall. I should guess about opening-time. (Philip Larkin, letter to Ted Hughes, 8.xi.82)
4. No, I shan’t read Philip’s letters. When I saw the proofs lying there in Daphne Tagg’s office at Faber’s I said: I don’t expect I come out of that looking very clean. And she suddenly froze, in a My-God-we-completely-forgot-to-ask-him-whether-he’d-mind sort of posture. I could see her real alarm there, for a moment. So I reassured her. I told her from my experience they’d be blamed far more [for] what they cut out than for what they leave in. And no matter how bad his remarks might be, if they’re cut out everybody will assume they were far worse. And who cares. (Ted Hughes, letter to Douglas [Dunn?], 11.i.93)
5. Two of Larkin’s poems Larkinise (to my mind) two early poems of mine that I never republished (though he certainly saw them). One of them is one of his best. (Ted Hughes, letter to Alice Quinn, 6.x.92)

‘We slowed again, /And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled/ A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower/ Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.’ (from ‘The Whitsun Weddings’)

‘My liturgy would employ/ Images of sousing, / A furious devout drench’ (from ‘Water’)

‘The salmon, deep in the thunder, lit/ And again lit, with glimpses of quenchantings, / Twisting their glints in the suspense, / Biting at the stir, beginning to move.’ (from ‘Rain-Charms for the Duchy’)

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