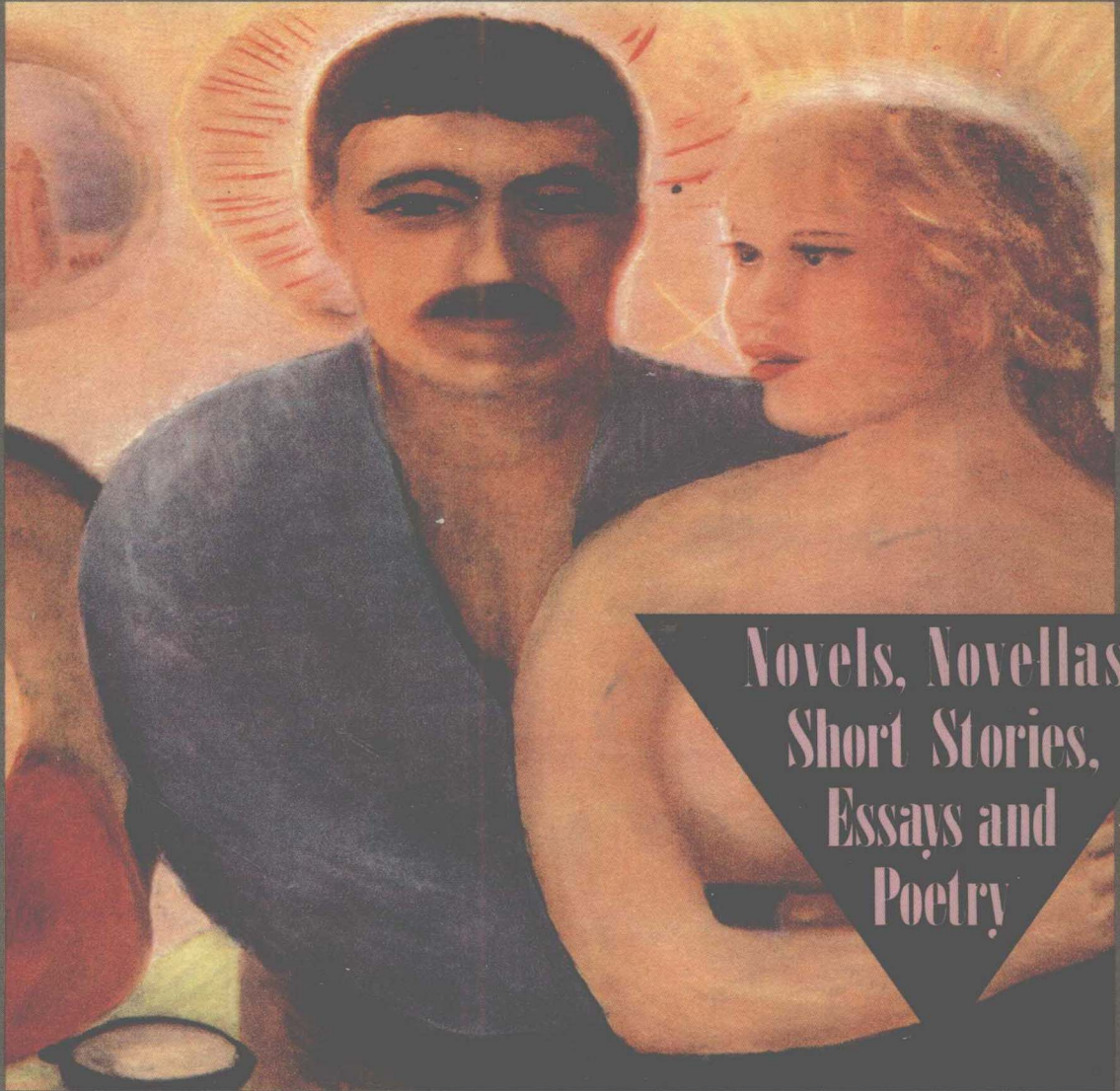


EROTIC WORKS OF D. H. LAWRENCE



Novels, Novellas,
Short Stories,
Essays and
Poetry

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR WITH THE
EROTIC PAINTINGS OF D.H. LAWRENCE

*Erotic
Works
of
D.H. Lawrence*

EDITED BY CLAIRE BOOSS
AND CHRISTOPHER BUSA

Introduction by Christopher Busa

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOR WITH
THE EROTIC PAINTINGS OF
D.H. LAWRENCE

AVENEL BOOKS
New York

This volume contains the complete and unabridged texts of the original editions. They have been completely reset for this volume.

Note: the spelling and punctuation of the original works have been retained for this edition.

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Illustrations in Color

Color plates follow page 40.

A Holy Family

Close-Up (Kiss)

Leda

Renascence of Men

Under the Haystack

Family on a Verandah

Contadini

The Lawrence Phoenix

About the Paintings

Although D. H. Lawrence did not create these paintings specifically for any of the works in this volume, they express so strongly the spirit of freedom and lyrical eroticism that it seems highly appropriate to reproduce them here.

When the paintings were first exhibited in London in 1929, the public shock and outcry was so great that the police closed the exhibit shortly thereafter. Lawrence deplored the then-current “horror of sexual life” characterized by an attitude to life “paralysed by fear . . . the most intimate fear and hate of one’s own instinctive, intuitive body, and fear and hate of every other man’s and every other woman’s warm, procreative body and imagination.” And he went on to observe the result this would have on the plastic arts “which depend entirely on the representation of substantial bodies [that] can only be perceived by the imagination . . . a kindled state of consciousness in which intuitive awareness predominates.”

The plastic arts are all imagery, and imagery is the body of our imaginative life, and our imaginative life is a great joy and fulfilment to us, for the imagination is a more powerful and more comprehensive flow of consciousness than our ordinary flow. In the flow of true imagination we know in full, mentally and physically, at once, in a greater, enkindled awareness. At the maximum of our imagination we are religious. And if we deny our imagination, and have no imaginative life, we are poor worms who have never lived.

All the paintings which follow were executed in oil, with the exception of *Leda*, *Renascence of Men*, and *Under the Haystack*, which were done in watercolor. The phoenix motif was Lawrence’s own design of the legendary bird that he took as his personal symbol.

CLAIRE BOOSS

The Myth of the Phoenix

“Beneath a hill in Elysium lies a verdant meadow shaded by dark-leaved ilex trees, where the moist earth grows ever green with undying grass. If we can trust in questionable beliefs, this is said to be the dwelling place of the sacred winged creatures, where profane birds are forbidden to go. There, far and wide, the innocent swans graze, and the long-lived phoenix, a bird always alone of its kind.” *Et vivax phoenix, unica semper avis, the long-lived phoenix, a bird always alone of its kind*, wrote the Roman poet Ovid in a finely honed line that weighs immortality against eternal solitude.

The myth of the phoenix tells of its scarce sightings, rumored to be once every five hundred years. Lacking an eyewitness account, Herodotus, the Greek historian, based his description of the phoenix on paintings he had seen, and decreed that its plumage was “partly gold, partly red, and in shape and size exactly like an eagle.” At the end of five hundred years, the phoenix builds its nest at the top of a palm tree—a funeral pyre of perfumed barks and yellow myrrh—and consumes itself in flames. From this nest of death a young phoenix emerges, flame from flame, life from death, to live alone another five hundred years and to bury its father’s body in the temple of the Sun.

D. H. Lawrence first created his famous illustration of the phoenix burning in its nest for the 1928 edition of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. As a symbol of his personal mythology, the phoenix is a figure rich with the conflicting imagery of Lawrence’s writing. For he sensed the great forces that surge through our lives, separating and colliding, polarizing industrialization against nature, captivity against freedom, frigidity against sexuality. His sensuality was of flamelike intensity; his writing scented with the perfumed wood of the phoenix’s funeral pyre. Like the phoenix, he transformed matter into being with the mastery of his craft; like the phoenix, he is unique—alone of his kind.

LOIS HILL

Introduction

Sex surely has a specific meaning. Sex means the being divided into male and female; and the magnetic drive or impulse which puts male apart from female, in a negative or sundering magnetism, but which also draws male and female together in a long and infinitely varied approach toward the critical act of coition. Sex without the consummating act of coition is never quite sex, in human relationships, just as a eunuch is never quite a man.

—D. H. Lawrence, from *Fantasia of the Unconscious*

This collection of writings by D. H. Lawrence emphasizes the erotic element, quite justifiably so, for Lawrence was the writer who penned “the best descriptions of sexual experience which have yet been done in English,” as the eminent literary critic, Edmund Wilson, said of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in a review he wrote at the time of its publication in the late 1920s. Lawrence was not competing with pornography. Deeply consumed by a powerful love for his wife, Frieda, he knew no such thing as bad sex, or rather knew that even when sex is bad, it is good. And Frieda said, “Considering sex is the very root of our existence, without which we would not walk on this earth, it seems worthy of any mature man’s thought as much as any atom bomb.”

Born in 1885, Lawrence grew up in the English Midlands as the beauty of the rural countryside was becoming blighted by machinery and smoke from newly mechanized industries. Nearby were the city of Nottingham and the Sherwood Forest of Robin Hood, the legendary outlaw who poached the king’s deer, stole from the rich and gave to the poor, and who treated women well. As he grew up, Lawrence saw his own mother regret her choice of husband. His father was a warm, crude, passionate, black-bearded miner whose face and hands were perpetually stained with coal dust. Underground labor in the mines gave him the swarthy aspect of someone from an alien world, like a criminal or gipsy. He was almost illiterate and he read the newspaper by pointing to one letter at a time until he could spell out one word and move on to the next. Suspicious of the

written word, he was astonished that his son should be paid a healthy sum for his first book, *The White Peacock*: "Fifty pounds! An' tha's never done a day's work in thy life!"

Lawrence's mother, a former schoolteacher and the daughter of an engineer, was more refined and had a love of books. Indeed, she valued the word above the flesh, the spirit more than the body. Her idea of a pleasant afternoon was to drink tea with the minister, Lawrence's godfather, discoursing on the meaning of Christ's miracle at Cana where He changed water into wine. Lawrence's mother was something of a snob, feeling superior to her husband. Perhaps she was justified in her irritation when she heard him in the lane, drunk, late for dinner, singing "Lead, Kindly Light," one of the hymns the congregation sang at the church on Sunday, as he lurched home in the dark after drinking with fellow miners in the pub.

For Lawrence, his father became associated with the demonic, the unconscious, and the animal way of knowing through one's senses, especially the sense of touch. Years later, in his essay "Nottingham and the Mining Countryside," Lawrence recalled his father's job as a "butty," a kind of foreman in charge of a face of coal and a gang of men: "Under the butty system, the miners worked underground as a sort of intimate community, they knew each other practically naked, and with curious close intimacy, and the darkness and the underground remoteness of the pit 'stall,' and the continual presence of danger, made the physical, instinctive, and intuitional contact between men very highly developed, a contact almost as close as touch, very real and very powerful." Despite the subjugation of his father to a life underground, Lawrence nevertheless esteemed the mode of knowledge that that life offered. In contrast, he believed that the civilizing process, leading to intellectual knowledge, took us further and further from intimate contact.

Lawrence was abnormally close to his mother. Their relationship is the theme of his autobiographical novel, *Sons and Lovers*, in which mother and son sleep together during a sickness, because "sleep is still most perfect, in spite of hygienists, when it is shared with a beloved. The warmth, the security and peace of soul, the utter comfort from the touch of the other, knits the sleep, so that it takes the body and soul completely in its healing." Lawrence absorbed his mother's traits—her yearning to be elsewhere; her prideful sense of being wellborn, of being in some sense aristocratic; her intellectual enthusiasm.

Sons and Lovers was published in 1913, shortly after the appearance of Sigmund Freud's essay, "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," which treated analytically what Lawrence depicted with a vividness so exact as to be brutal. He showed the truth of Freud's statement that a man who is beloved as an infant will always retain the confidence of a conqueror. Of his mother, Lawrence wrote in the novel, "How she serves him, how she stimulates him, how her true female self is his, is wife-submissive to him as never, never it could be to a husband."

In *Sons and Lovers*, mother stimulates son to become an artist at the same time that she interferes with his developing love life, dividing his ability to feel

affection and erotic desire for the same girl. Freud observed that this was one aspect of the Oedipal complex that was seldom resolved, causing men to become impotent with lovers who strike them as too "pure," too like their mothers, and to prefer sex with women who can be degraded in some way. Freud said that "some degree of this condition does in fact characterize the erotic life of civilized people," and Lawrence declared that it was "the tragedy of thousands of young men in England."

When he began publishing his work Lawrence was a scholarship student, and then became a teacher. The headmaster of the school where he taught, in the suburbs of London, remembered that "He used to say that boys ought to learn love poems at school, as a preparation for love in real life." Lawrence's first poems were almost botanical in their insistence that flowers are the sexual organs of plants. His second novel, *The Trespasser* (which appears in this collection), is an exceptionally fine, but less well-known, novel that shows the youthful Lawrence imagining himself as an older alter ego who has failed at love.

Although Lawrence's last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, attempted to show that adultery under certain circumstances is legitimate, the theme of the earlier *The Trespasser* treated adultery as a major moral transgression. The novel was based on a true story told to Lawrence by his friend and fellow schoolteacher, Helen Corke. Despondent and numb, she told Lawrence how her lover had hanged himself some months earlier. Using a diary she provided, Lawrence rewrote the story, imaginatively putting himself in the place of the dead lover, a thirty-nine-year-old music teacher and concert violinist named Siegmund. Siegmund hangs himself because "Helena" (as Helen is called in the novel) will not make love to him. They have "trespassed" by going away together to the Isle of Wight for a five-day idyll; he is married, with children. (Most departures from social morality in Lawrence take the form of trips, most often to foreign places.) There, Siegmund learns the bitter truth that "the best sort of women—the most interesting—are the worst for us. By instinct they aim at suppressing the gross and animal in us." Such a woman is a "dreaming woman whose passion exhausts itself at the mouth," meaning her lips manipulate her breath in the clever arts of talking and kissing, but she withholds herself sexually, exquisitely frustrating the man. As rule-breakers, Siegmund and Helena are failures; they fail to sin. Lawrence would later read Thomas Hardy and criticize Hardy for letting society win out in the end and punish the individual who trespasses. Here the risk taker is punished for risking, yet not risking enough.

Just prior to the publication of *The Trespasser*, Lawrence met Frieda von Richthofen. It was the great, transforming event of his life. With her he would spend the eighteen years that remained to him. When Lawrence first met Frieda, he was twenty-six and virtually penniless. Forced to stop teaching after becoming ill with pneumonia, he consulted, upon his recovery, Professor Weekley, a language instructor at Nottingham University (with whom he had studied French) about the possibility of going to Germany, where he hoped to obtain a position as *Lektor* or a "foreign teacher of his mother tongue." The professor had married a German woman during his own teaching period in Germany a dozen years

earlier, and it was his wife, Frieda, who answered the door when Lawrence arrived for lunch at their house. In her memoir, *"Not I, But the Wind,"* Frieda relates, "The half hour before lunch the two of us talked in my room, French windows open, curtains fluttering in the spring wind, my children playing on the lawn." Lawrence said in his high-pitched, penetrating voice, "You are quite unaware of your husband, you take no notice of him."

This was true. Frieda was the bored wife of a dull professor. She was six years older than Lawrence, and had had three children during her marriage. She made frequent trips alone to Germany to visit her family and to meet with a circle of bohemian intellectual friends. After Frieda eloped with Lawrence, in explanation of her action she sent her husband letters she had received from her friend Otto Gross, who wrote that he dreamed of Frieda as "the woman of the future . . . this miracle, you, golden child" who managed to keep "the dirt of two gloomy millennia from your soul with your laughter and love." Gross believed that to make such a woman happy was to give the world a sun.

Lawrence, too, connected sun worship with the sexual pleasure of women, as is evident in the beautiful short story, "Sun." In this story about the liberating powers of the sun, a woman is ordered by her doctor to leave her northern city and seek the sun. She takes her child with her, so "he shall not grow up like his father, like a worm that the sun has never seen." She remembers that the Greeks had said, "A white, unsunned body was unhealthy, and fishy." The woman becomes sexually receptive through an almost biochemical process of exposure to the sun, which begins to seem almost a lover to her. The story is provocative in championing the woman's desire for pleasure against her husband's inhibitions. This is uniquely characteristic of Lawrence, who once promised "to do my work for women, better than suffrage." And it is also modern in the woman's revelations of body consciousness.

Six weeks after Lawrence spent that half hour talking with Frieda in her room, with the spring wind fluttering the curtains, the pair eloped to the continent. Henceforth, Lawrence boldly opted to live by his pen. The honeymooners tramped through the Alps under pale blue skies, living on black bread, fresh eggs, and berries. As she confesses in her memoir, Frieda was a lazy housekeeper and had never washed sheets until she lived with Lawrence. When she stumbled on a path and broke a strap on her shoe, she took off the other shoe and tossed it away. Lawrence lectured her: "A pair of shoes takes a long time to make and you should respect the labor somebody's put into those shoes," to which she retorted, "Things are there for me and not I for them, so when they are a nuisance I throw them away." Lawrence was also disgusted with the coffee she made, telling her, "Any common woman can do lots of things you can't do."

They were to become a legendary couple. When Frieda spilled coffee on a pillow, she would merely turn the pillow over. A visitor, David Garnett, reminisced in his memoirs on how Lawrence made washing dishes an occasion for a good time. He recalled that "His writing did not affect our daily life. It never occurred to me, or I think to Frieda, not to interrupt him, and we spent all the day together in one room, while he scribbled away at odd moments in the corner,

jumping up continually to look after the cooking.” After dinner they played charades. Lawrence had a phenomenal memory and an uncanny psychological insight into people. He was also a natural mimic, and one friend remembers that “He had a genius for ‘taking people off,’ and could reproduce voice and manner exactly. He told you that he had once seen Yeats or Ezra Pound for half an hour in a drawing-room, and straightaway Yeats or Ezra appeared before you. The slightest affectation of manner or social pretence was seized on mercilessly.”

Lawrence’s first editor, Ford Madox Ford, was an important British author when he befriended the as yet unpublished writer. In his book *Portraits from Life* he recalled the strong impression that Lawrence’s writing made on him: “Each time that I have opened one of his books, or merely resumed reading one of his novels, I have had a feeling of disturbance—not so much as if something odd was going to happen to me but as if I myself might be going to do something eccentric.” He wondered if this was the same sort of “disturbing emotion caused in manufacturers and bankers by seeing, in a deep woodland, the God Pan—or Priapus—peeping round beside the trunk of an ancient oak.”

This glimpse into the uncanny and alien Lawrence called his “demon.” When he found a blue gentian in the mountains, Frieda said, “I remember feeling as if he had a strange communion with it, as if the gentian yielded up its blueness, its essence to him.” Lawrence did not think this detachment was extraordinary. In “Nottingham and the Mining Countryside” he wrote, “I’ve seen many a collier stand in his back garden looking down at a flower with that odd, remote sort of contemplation which shows a *real* awareness of the presence of beauty. It would not even be admiration, or joy, or delight, or any of those things which so often have a root in the possessive instinct. It would be a sort of contemplation: which shows the incipient artist.”

In his writing Lawrence attempted to achieve a quality that he found in some paintings, which he described thus: “as if I’d painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape.” (Significantly, Lawrence spent most of his late adolescence painting, rather than writing, and late in life he returned seriously to painting.) Much of the splendid animation in Lawrence’s writing comes from the way his images and situations and the cadences of his phrasing set up patterns of repetition, with mounting tensions that create excitement over slight modifications, so the words “shimmer” with additional meaning. If one can imagine this pleasurable tension transformed into sexual excitement, then it is easy to understand why Lawrence’s critics were made uncomfortable by his very style. He defended himself, saying, “In point of style, fault is often found with the continual, slightly modified repetition. The only answer is that it is natural to the author; and that every natural crisis in emotion or passion or understanding comes from this pulsing, frictional to-and-fro which works up to culmination.”

With Frieda, Lawrence claimed he had been transported into a condition of blessedness. Perhaps too stridently, he boasted, “I really believe in marriage. I have proved it.” He countered Frieda’s despair over her abandoned children with sharp anger. In a travel essay (published in the collection *Twilight in Italy*) written

while living with Frieda in Italy, Lawrence described a man he had met who had been unable to produce children, a man who stood annulled and ashamed, "nothing, a shadow that vanishes into nothing." He wrote, "I was startled. This then is the secret of Italy's attraction for us, this phallic worship. To the Italians the phallus is the symbol of individual creative immortality, to each man his own Godhead. The child is but the evidence of the Godhead." He continued, "The substratum of Italy has always been pagan, sensuous, the most potent symbol the sexual symbol. The child is really a non-Christian symbol: it is the symbol of man's triumph of eternal life in procreation." Lawrence and Frieda went childless, and Lawrence declared, "The children are not the future. The living truth is the future."

Lawrence had begun the writing that led to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, both novels considered to be masterpieces of English literature for their probings, especially into the psychology of women. He wrote to one of his editors, "I don't so much care what the woman *feels*—in the ordinary sense of the word. That presumes an *ego* to feel with." He likened the ego to a diamond and elemental woman to carbon, declaring, "The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond—but I say, Diamond, what! This is carbon!"

Lawrence and Frieda spent extended sojourns in Italy, France, India, Australia, the southwestern United States, and Mexico. Often they met other writers and painters in some remote spot on the globe, such as Capri (at that time). Lawrence had a gift for remaining friends with those whom he brilliantly insulted. His ridicule could be lethal, but he was also unsparing of himself. He created an intense and necessary atmosphere of intimacy, where truth had to be spoken before politeness could be observed. It was as if truth itself were nothing personal, but rather a third, impersonal thing, a holy ghost surrounding any relationship of significance.

Something of a priest for truth, Lawrence argued for a frank and healthy openness about sex. In his essay "Pornography and Obscenity" (included in this collection) he wrote, "Masturbation is the one thoroughly secret act of the human being, more secret even than excrementation." For Lawrence perceived that erotic excitement, if it were operating erotically and not merely as a thought in the head of the thinker, was not self-conscious. Lawrence condemned all inducements to masturbation, which he called "sex in the head," as they encouraged self-consciousness rather than a confrontation with the unknown. The range of his sexual sympathy is remarkable. As a novelist, he explored the sexual power of women from the point of view of women, and he imagined the sexual power of men from the viewpoint of men, making him alternately vulnerable to charges of male chauvinism as well as homosexuality. Yet Lawrence's shifts of perspective can be so dizzying that it is impossible to pin him down. As he himself said, "Trust the tale, not the teller."

Lawrence and Frieda returned to England prior to World War I, staying until the end of the war, when they left on what one biographer, Catherine Carswell, has called a "savage pilgrimage." They never again returned to England perma-

nently. Frieda finally obtained her divorce and married Lawrence, but she was still prevented from seeing her children.

England and Germany were at war while Lawrence and Frieda lived alongside the English Channel in Cornwall, hidden away in a stone cottage on the bleak coast, like "creatures in a cave." Frieda's cousin was the ace German pilot known as the "Red Baron." Her father was Baron Friedrich von Richthofen, an officer who had fought in the Franco-Prussian war. He kept a diary which showed that he beat his orderly much in the way Lawrence described the Prussian officer's behavior in "Honour and Arms" (also known as "The Prussian Officer"), one of his most powerful stories.

While in Germany before the war, Lawrence had met Frieda's father at their house, and in her memoirs Frieda recalled that "They looked at each other fiercely—my father, the pure aristocrat, Lawrence, the miner's son. My father, hostile, offered a cigarette to Lawrence. That night I dreamt that they had a fight, and that Lawrence defeated my father." In "Honour and Arms" some of this hostility appears as seethingly repressed sexuality. The story seemed particularly significant to Lawrence, Frieda said. "He wrote it before the war but as if he had sensed it. The unhappy, conscious man, the superior in authority envying the other man his simple, satisfied nature. I felt as if he himself were both those people. They seemed to represent the split in his soul, the split between the conscious and unconscious man."

The man from the working class was now a poor, persecuted writer married to an aristocratic woman whose country was at war with his own. Maintaining intermittent contact with an elite, influential circle of friends, Lawrence developed plans for a utopian colony he called *Rananim*, a sanctuary where the chosen few would go and where he would be their leader. In a sense, he already lived in *Rananim*, that mythic place where people had rid themselves of the idea of money, and where "a rich man with a beautiful house is like a jewel on a leper's body."

The energy of Lawrence's spleen during the war could only have heightened the irony of his celebrated marriage, which was as explosive as war. At the country house of Lady Ottoline Morrell, Lawrence argued with Bertrand Russell and other figures of Bloomsbury, while back at Cornwall he tarred the chimney to seal the bricks against the crumbling mortar, an action observed by the authorities who saw the Lawrences as spies sending signals to enemy boats. Lawrence kept sane by singing German folk songs while the British police crouched within earshot under the hedges. His published work was banned at the time, as later *Lady Chatterley's Lover* would be.

In that work, Lawrence addresses the issue of the couple who placed extraordinary importance on the satisfaction of their erotic drives. If they were genuinely fulfilled sexually, Connie and Mellors, the principals of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, were also fulfilled inwardly, and therefore could live happily "in the chinks" of society, away from politics and commerce and war.

For a time after the war, as an alternative to monogamy, Lawrence experimented with the theme of male friendship, which was intimate without being sexual. He

also considered how man might live alone, without a partner, and returned to this solitude in the diary-like poems (some of which are included here) that he wrote near the end of his life. In "There are No Gods," he asks:

Who is it smooths the bed-sheets like the cool
smooth ocean when the fishes rest on edge
in their own dream?

and he answers himself, "I tell you, it is no woman, it is no man, for I am alone."

Lawrence was weakening with tuberculosis, despite his efforts to live in hot, dry climates. Increasingly, he complained of his "bronchials," while ignoring the fact that he was doomed by what Kafka called "the germ of death itself." Yet Lawrence maintained an incredible level of literary production: novels, stories, essays, poems, plays, letters, translations, and reviews. Since he lived by his pen, publication was important, and in this context it is interesting that "Love Among the Haystacks" (also included here) was not published during Lawrence's lifetime. It is a haunting story of two misfits who fall in love: an oaf of a man and a female tramp. Each confronts the loneliness of the other. While they sit on the hay in the shed, he massages her feet, which are sore and cold from tramping after her husband who goes from town to town. "He reckons he's looking for a job. But he doesn't like work in any shape or form," she says. Much of Lawrence's power as a writer comes from the way he implicitly incorporates potential absurdities, such as that under certain circumstances a certain man will fall in love with a female tramp. And even the tramp, when soothed by love, is transformed: "Her bitter disillusionment with life, her unalleviated shame and degradation during the last four years, had driven her into loneliness, and hardened her till a large part of her nature was caked and sterile. Now she softened again, and her spring might be beautiful." This is a story of fulfillment that ignores the class conflict between farmer and tramp, exposing all the more effectively the power of the desire to find satisfaction in love.

After the war Lawrence said, "I shall say goodbye to England, forever, and set off in quest of our *Rananim*." He attempted to persuade several of his friends to follow him in his travels, but they preferred to visit at their leisure. During the 1920s, Lawrence spent considerable time near Taos, New Mexico, where he owned a ranch, the only property he ever possessed. (Frieda gave Mable Dodge Luhan the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers* in payment for the ranch when Lawrence refused to accept it as a gift.)

By the mid-1920s Lawrence had returned to Italy, where he wrote "Sun" and "The Virgin and the Gipsy" almost upon his arrival. "Italy feels very familiar: almost too familiar, like the ghost of one's own self," he confided in a letter.

Before he returned to Italy, he had stopped in England for one month. He drove through his native Midlands, and through nearby Derbyshire, the setting for "The Virgin and the Gipsy," where industrial blue smoke hung in dead, damp

air, making Lawrence cough and causing the landscape to look dreary. In this novella, the characters of the region are stunted, twisted, or dwarfish. The virgin's father is a church rector, mean-spirited from a scandal years past "when the vicar's wife ran off with a young and penniless man," leaving him "with the inferiority of a heart which has no core of warm belief in it." The book is dedicated to Frieda. At the time it was written, in Italy, Frieda's two daughters were visiting for the first time in their lives. In the novella, the virgin, approaching womanhood, wants to know of her absent mother, "Why did she do it?" As if in answer, she meets the gipsy: "One of the black, loose-bodied handsome sort." Charming, after he saves her life from the flash flood that destroys the rectory, and after they have made love, she learns the gipsy's name. It is a small detail, like the tip of a dart, but it sticks to its meaning. The gipsy, "being of a race that exists only to be harrying the outskirts of our society, forever hostile and living only by spoil," rescues the virgin. And he rescues her as much from the cold nunnery of her virginity as he does from the "strange, uncanny mass of water" that wells up at the book's climax, rather like an ejaculation that occurs unconsciously at night in a dream. On the last page, the girl reads a note from the gipsy, sees he has signed his name, and learns only then that he has a name. Identity follows being; and the name is the last thing you need to know about your lover, Lawrence suggests.

Toward the end of his short life Lawrence became quite sick. His writing took on a quality of essentiality, at times becoming too bluntly assertive, at other times reaching a simplicity that was as magisterial as the arch of a rainbow bursting with bright colors. Some of his works employ elements of the fable, in which a moral is expressed through the behavior of animals. As with the gipsy of "The Virgin and the Gipsy," an obstinate, irrational, animal-like consciousness is present in Lawrence's writing the way the eyes of a fox might be present in a child's drawing, gleaming and red.

Thinking of death, Lawrence toured the Etruscan tombs in central Italy. In some of the tombs the walls were painted with banquet scenes, "honouring the dead with wine," as Lawrence wrote in a fine essay on the Etruscan afterlife. He studied these paintings under torchlight and he saw that the Etruscans affirmed life in the presence of death. Soon Lawrence began to paint again, mixing his paints on a pane of glass, painting with his fingers, even with the palm of his hand, as well as with brushes. He painted slant-eyed Etruscan figures squinting at each other's genitals. One picture showed the Lord God being pelted by apples, thrown by Adam and Eve, to keep Him away.

Lawrence's oil paintings and watercolors, some of which are reproduced for this edition, convey the warm and spontaneous expression of sexuality that also runs throughout his writing. Phallic reality is not only a theme, it is also a form of visionary philosophy that links sexuality and life to form an ideal, organic whole. Incredibly, the year before Lawrence's death, at an exhibition of these paintings in London to which 20,000 people swarmed during the three weeks it was open, the police impounded his "wicked" paintings. They also took a portfolio

of William Blake's drawings, but returned them when they learned Blake had been dead a hundred years.

Lawrence envisioned sex as an opportunity for a man and a woman to ritualize their lovemaking, so that it would take on something of the sacred glow of ritual. In his essay "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," (included here), Lawrence wrote, "We *must* get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe. The way is through daily ritual." An example of such a ritual would be Mellors' address to his penis, "John Thomas," in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence's most celebrated novel and the last he wrote. "'John Thomas! Dost want *her*? Dost want my lady Jane? Tha's dipped in me again tha hast. Ay, an'tha comes up smilin'." Of this book, which he rewrote three times from start to finish, Lawrence said, "I always labor at the same thing, to make the sex relation valid and precious, instead of shameful. And this novel is the furthest I've gone."

Lady Chatterley's Lover is something of a love poem to Frieda. Lawrence has profoundly split himself into the characters of the crippled writer, who is cuckolded, and the gamekeeper, who did the poaching. Lady Chatterley is Frieda, married to the dying Lawrence, who, threatened with impotence, yet retains the wit to know that "if a woman hasn't got a tiny streak of the harlot in her, she's a dry stick as a rule." In "A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*," Lawrence revealed, "I have been asked many times if I intentionally made Clifford paralyzed, if it is symbolic. . . . Certainly not in the beginning, when Clifford was created. When I created Clifford and Connie, I had no idea what they were or why they were." The novel is structured around the satisfaction of Connie's desire. Mellors was created to become the man of her dreams, were she to have had the power of Lawrence's invention.

Scholars have shown that in the course of the composition of the novel, during the successive rewritings, Lawrence developed Mellors' character until he ceased to be a brute from the lower classes, becoming instead a man much like his creator, "a collier's son," educated and eloquent in both the King's English and the Midland dialect, which he speaks as a sexual language with Connie. Indeed, Mellors belongs to that "classless class" to which Lawrence belonged. Is the ending absurd? Like the couple in "Love Among the Haystacks," Mellors and Connie plan to live in Canada after their baby is born. They consider the prospects of their romance in the real world, elsewhere. The possibilities would be slim for the ordinary couple, but they remain strong for those who would become extraordinary through the force of their desire. Often for Lawrence the rigidity of class structure was the evil to be overcome. In this novel of the lady and the gamekeeper, Lawrence's class conflict clearly persisted to the end, and one scholar has wittily remarked that *Lady Chatterley* represents the initiation of the upper classes into proletarian sex. But where does the Laurentian couple live? In Canada? In *Rananim*? The question remains open today, and each reader must answer for his or her self.

Knowing that the novel would be banned in England, Lawrence published it himself. It was typeset in a little print shop in Florence, Italy, where "not a soul

knew English.” As Lawrence wrote in “A Propos of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*,” the men who did the work were told the contents of the book, and that the descriptions of the sex act were explicit. The men shrugged, “O! *ma!* but we do it every day!” One of the poems reprinted in this volume, “To Pino,” is addressed to Lawrence’s Florentine printer, who shared Lawrence’s chuckle at the outraged moralism of the Great British Public, as he calls his censors in another squiblike poem.

Lady Chatterley’s Lover was banned in the United States until 1959, when a New York court ruled that the book as a whole appealed to more than just prurient interests. Like the gipsy in “The Virgin and the Gipsy,” Lawrence was outside the law, but, like Mellors the gamekeeper, he was not without law. Something of a priest, Lawrence was also something of a pirate. From Florence, under secret wrappers with false titles printed on the book jacket, he mailed copies of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* past the eyes of customs officers and postal inspectors.

For his personal symbol, Lawrence took the image of the immortal phoenix, the legendary bird of scarlet and gold that is supposed to live 500 years, then fly to the sun at the time of its death, in order to be reborn. Lawrence drew his own design for the phoenix and emblazoned it on the cover of both *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and a special bound edition of the short story “Sun” (rarely read in the unexpurgated version that is included here). The phoenix, burning in its nest, is sex—libido aflame. “Far be it from me to suggest that all women should go running after gamekeepers,” Lawrence cautioned, even as he urged them into awareness of their desires, so that they would become, like the men who loved them, excited by truth, as if truth itself were erotic.

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