

# Three Poems



*Wivenhoe Park, Essex* by John Constable, 1816

by [Lawrence Cottrell](#) (February 2022)

## ANNOTATION

She went as she'd come, bygone girl of long since put  
away public habits...

antique at conception.

She seemed unhappy mostly, lonely, perhaps, on her wee  
patch of ideas,

But meticulous in her housekeeping, and planning her  
funeral,

And, o' yes, she kept us from starving when her man

wouldn't...

Which, if you'd been her child, was something after all, as  
If Jesus had had flatulence, picked his nose some, kicked a  
dog once,

but saved man on Golgotha...

Well...

that may go too far...

Though, if love is the measure of things, there was in her  
then

an aside of glory...

Eloquence of heart amid the lesser texts of her penny  
dreadful story...

Found annotation on a dog-eared leaf of reminiscence,  
molt left from a scold transmuted

(for an hour)

unto grace –

## WANTON

Once this realm was home, where daisies told me secrets,  
silks stroked tears of all my weepings...

Before Earth seemed cold, quicksilver pad I wrote on; ere  
Even Sheol hollowed, temples emptied, providence  
thinned 'to fate merely.

O' then upon a time, self was minstrel seeking songs,  
spells,

was middling dicing for its greatness.

Erst I lay serene with wanton hours, was sought (it  
seemed)

by importunities of promise...

Spoke well of by zephyrs in the willows, beloved of genial

transits by a sun,

played jacks and Simon says and marbles

in the deepings –

## **GANDY DANCINGS**

...always the getting there not the *there*, the in-between of  
town and town;

need craved the hunt,

not quarry found.

I swore, to anyone who asked, that there were reasons for  
Those nights beside roads: goals chased, prey or prophecy  
tracked to ground,

But, really, sir, they were faux threshings of straw, feints  
by self-respect for public eyes...

snug interstices 'midst perches.

I felt, now-and-then, that I was exile by decree, brush  
Stroke of a souldrop on a pane, off key note of jack-tar  
shanty,

not good for much save gandy dancings...

An itinerant refrain in (oh) a Georgia rain, ten miles  
north of Brunswick,

on my way to Savannah...

In the half-dawn drear of one day more without a name.

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Lawrence Cottrell has lived in West Virginia, mostly, preferring to dwell among good people, in a place where change is an unloved orphan. He has a BA from West Virginia State University and attended several graduate schools, leaving each finally to walk mist-hewn hollers and prowl wind-blasted

ridges, to be where valleys can be spanned by two arms and a broom handle, and noons aren't quite sure of themselves. His poems have appeared in *The Lyric*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Good Foot* and *Grab-a-Nickel*, among others. His work is in the celebrated anthology *Wild Sweet Notes: Fifty Years of West Virginia Poetry 1950-1999*. He blooms presently at a bend of Elk River's meander.

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