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ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

On the life & work
of an American master

Edited by Jenny Molberg and Christian Bancroft

CONTENTS

FROM A STUDY IN ENGLISH METRICS

SELECTED LETTERS

IMAGE GALLERY

ESSAYS ON ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

COUNTING WITH CRAPSEY

Erin Kappeler

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Since its posthumous publication in 1918, Adelaide Crapsey's *A Study in English Metrics* has posed a challenge for critics, who tend to read this compact prosodic treatise as idiosyncratic and exceptional. Writing in 1923, Llewelyn Jones, for instance, argued that *A Study in English Metrics* was "perhaps unique among such studies in that it takes the great body of metrical knowledge, sifts from it the essentials, and builds from them,"[1] while Crapsey's most careful scholarly reader, Karen Alkalay-Gut, argues that Crapsey's *Study*, "in concern and approach . . . [was] utterly unlike anything else written in her time" and that her "theories of rhythm and stress were entirely original."[2] But this critical focus on Crapsey's exceptionalism does a disservice to her intense engagement with

the huge body of prosodical discourse that saturated the cultural landscape of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and to her role in modernist poetics. This essay thus takes on the modest but consequential goal of reorienting Crapsey scholarship away from the image of a woman theorizing new approaches to prosody in isolation toward the image of a scholar engaged in critical conversations, writing herself into discursive fields and helping to further debates about English prosody in productive and innovative—if not entirely unique–ways.[3]

The time is ripe for a fresh analysis of Crapsey's prosodic scholarship. New work in the field of historical poetics has helped to bring back into view both the cultural ubiquity and the enormity of turn-of-the-century debates about poetic meters in English, as well as the reasons why we have forgotten that these debates happened.[4] Meredith Martin's pathbreaking *The Rise and Fall of Meter*, for instance, investigates "the historical moment when our concept of 'English meter' seems to stabilize" into a foot-based accentual-syllabic system, roughly 1860 to 1930, in order to show that "the desire for a stable and regular prosody was often complicated by the unstable way that these terms ('prosody,' 'meter,' 'versification') circulated."[5] Though we tend to take it for granted now that foot-based prosody is natural to English, Martin shows that poets and prosodists experimented fruitfully with syllabic prosody, accentual prosody, musical scansion, and other alternatives to foot-based accentual-syllabic prosody throughout this crucial period and into the present day. But because we often do take "meter," "rhythm," "prosody," "versification," and associated terms to be more or less stable now, especially in teaching texts, it can be difficult to understand just how radically these terms have shifted historically, as well as to appreciate the high stakes poets and prosodists attached to the project of stabilizing these various terms. Martin shows us that debates about prosody were almost always also debates about national and cultural identity, highlighting the need to question, "when poets were inventing or experimenting with prosodic systems, with what else, in addition to the measure of the line, were they wrestling?"[6]

In Crapsey's case, she was wrestling with the exciting notion that advances in the relatively new science of phonetics were finally making it possible for poets to understand something close to the full complexity of poetic structures in all their variety. Crapsey undertook her study at a time when prosodic theorists were working to make prosody seem "more and more like a grammar with applicable and clear rules," even as it remained clear that those seemingly set rules were affected by variations in pronunciation.[7] Earlier debates about whether prosody was essentially a matter for the eye (a textual phenomenon) or the ear (a guide to proper pronunciation) were elided in prosodic handbooks as the nineteenth century progressed,[8] and an uptick in laboratory experiments aimed at recording and parsing poetic rhythm helped to make it seem that breakthroughs in understanding the basic units of poetic rhythm and meter were finally at hand.[9] For many modernist poets and prosodists, these developments seemed to simplify the complications of prosodic debates, offering a view of prosody as a coherent and consistent system. Amy Lowell, for instance, argued that the laboratory experiments she participated in with Dr. William Patterson at Columbia University had proved once and for all that "verse . . . and prose have a different mechanical base," and had also proved that, "as the 'foot' is the unit of 'regular verse'," so was the "time unit" the basis of free verse, which Patterson had shown to consist of "several different" classifiable forms.[10] To Lowell, these conclusions were definitive; as she put it, "I fail to see how any thoughtful person can discard these divisions which Dr. Patterson has been at such pains to discover. To me, they clear up much which had hitherto remained dark."[11] Crapsey, however, saw in the turn to lab-based approaches to prosody a sign that approaches to poetic structure were about to get more complex and various rather than less. Though Crapsey believed that certain prosodic terms were being better understood and hence becoming more stable, in other words, she also believed that the stability of terms wouldn't necessarily result in a reduction of complications within prosodic analysis.

In this assessment, Crapsey was following eminent poet and critic Robert Bridges, a touchstone in her writing on prosody. Bridges was committed to understanding meter as multiplicitous, right down to its potential fundamental bases. Bridges wanted to explore the depth, complexity, and multiplicity of English meter, and consistently pushed to expand the sense of what it meant to measure verse. Bridges's conviction that prosodic systems needed to be understood as complex and various came in part from his influential work on Milton's meters, begun in the 1880s and extending through multiple editions of *Milton's Prosody* in the 1910s and 1920s. Bridges argued that a careful study of Milton's poetry showed that Milton's "use of meter adhere[d] to his . . . own laws rather than a larger, inherent design in the language."[12] Because of this, the basis of Milton's prosody could shift from poem to poem, as Bridges believed it did from *Paradise Lost* (constructed on a syllabic basis) to *Samson Agonistes* (which displayed a stress-based metrical pattern). By paying attention to how poets exploited the multiple possibilities available to them, Bridges hoped to "redee[m] Milton as well as English meter from a simple, conventional understanding of metrical form associated with rhythmic regularity."[13] If the prosodical system an author used could change from poem to poem, then prosodic theorists needed a more capacious understanding of what English meters could be.

Though Bridges's capacious approach to prosody can seem like a highly specialized intervention in a technical conversation about aesthetic choices, the social and political stakes of his project were high. Bridges was writing in response to both Edwin Guest, an Anglo-Saxonist who believed that prosody needed to be rooted in stress-based accentual verse because the proper foundation for Englishness was Anglo-Saxon culture, and George Saintsbury, who wanted to abstract classical prosody into an idea of English foot-based meters that preserved class-based educational distinctions. As Martin reminds us, "competing histories of prosody in the late nineteenth century were also competing histories of Englishness."[14] Bridges wanted it all ways, emphasizing cultural plurality rather

than purity; he believed that "the purity, diversity, and freedom of English meter meant understanding each distinct possibility (the accentual, the syllabic, etc.) as a separate system that required its own kind of training and its own possibility for mastery."[15]

In *A Study in English Metrics*, Crapsey showed herself to be an astute student of Bridges who understood what was at stake in the differences between Bridges's approach to prosody and Saintsbury's. She argued that Saintsbury was the key representative of what she claimed was the first, underdeveloped stage of the study of prosody, in which theorists "think of verse as a simple uncomplex whole." In Saintsbury's case, she argued, his exclusive focus on poetic feet, or "the arrangement of syllables by means of which the rhythm is exteriorized," made him search for the rules of verse without considering how speech patterns interplayed with verse patterns.[16] Poetic feet were only one variable in verse structures, according to Crapsey, and Saintsbury's overemphasis of that one variable would lead critics to incorrect conclusions about how to evaluate different poets and how to think of what she called the "great main line of development in English poetry,"[17] and hence of Anglo-American culture.

Crapsey believed that the emerging science of linguistics could help prosodists to develop more complex, nuanced theories of poetic form, especially if prosodists worked to better understand what she saw as the two fundamental components of poetic structures: "the verse form proper, itself two-fold, consisting of (a) the rhythmic arrangement and (b) the syllabic arrangement by means of which the rhythm is exteriorized"; and the "sub-structural phonetic speech-arrangement," or "everything connected with the organized physical material of the language."[18] She argued that the word "in its phonetic aspect [is] the basic structural unit of language physically considered as the foot is the basic structural unit of the verse-form proper,"[19] meaning that any thorough prosodical analysis had to account for both the structure of the English language and the structure of poetic form. Syllables and feet had to be analyzed together, in other words, as parts of interlocking linguistic and literary systems. Such an approach would allow theorists to explore the possibilities of syllabic forms rather than exclusively focusing on accentual-syllabic or foot-based meters, thus opening up avenues of experimentation for poets while still systematizing the classification of various types of poetry.[20]

Crapsey's enthusiasm for lab-based approaches to prosody shows that she kept her finger on the pulse of prosodic discourse. Like many of her contemporaries, she argued that it was "no longer possible to discuss except on the basis of relevant evidence gathered by genuinely scientific laboratory analysis such fundamental questions of verse," and that the time had come to make "a first application of experimental phonetics to prosodic study."[21] Crapsey was writing during "a period of intense 'experimental investigation of the perception of rhythm',"[22] and she echoed calls to use experimental science as a means to better understand poetic form. Unlike many of her contemporaries, however, Crapsey didn't see rhythm as the answer to prosodical questions, but rather as one constitutive element among many in poetic form. She argued that prosodists had to work against "a tendency to throw very great emphasis on the newly observed factor" as approaches to prosody developed, with the "newly observed factor" in the early 1900s being rhythm. Crapsey argued that an overemphasis on rhythm (or on any one linguistic or poetic factor) would result in an oversimplification of the complexity of poetic form. Too, Crapsey argued, an overemphasis on rhythm specifically led prosodists to take the metaphorical comparison of poetic and musical rhythm as literal. She saw in the attempts of so-called "musical scansionists," or theorists who sought to mark poetic rhythm using musical notation, an "attempt to transfer the terms and notation developed in relation to the manifestations of a rhythm in one material to its manifestations in a different material." According to Crapsey, this was a flawed approach that resulted in a "reversion toward the primitive view of verse as an uncomplex whole."[23] Crapsey thus sought to balance attention to what she saw as the tangible material of language—syllables or

phonemes—with the more abstracted notion of poetic rhythm, without confusing the relationships between the two.

Though she cautioned against placing too much focus on rhythm, Crapsey argued that the new laboratory approaches to language did allow for advances in prosodic study that required the development of more complex methods of metrical analysis. She argued that this wouldn't be something that would emerge suddenly: musical scansion was "an attempt to meet this need" for "a method allowing the close study of the rhythmic groups of verse," but that failed to do so. She saw musical scansion as the second stage in the development of prosody as a field of study, in which theorists sought to show that "what had seemed to be an uncomplex whole [was instead] . . . a complex entity containing within itself two inter-existent entities."[24] Crapsey saw the limit to this method—indeed, to all prior methods of scansion—as the limits of human perception: "What has now become apparent is that we soon reach here the limits of possible analysis based on simple observation 'by ear' or by our 'sense of rhythm'. The delicate and accurate study of the rhythmic groups of verse must, it is seen, be carried on by means of laboratory experiment."[25] Crapsey refers the age-old question of whether prosody was meant to guide vocal performance ("observation 'by ear'") or whether it was a textual form appealing primarily to the eye, to the laboratory, where the discovery of the units of rhythms could perhaps show how the two poles interacted.

Though Crapsey didn't think that laboratory-based phonetics offered the ultimate solution to the unresolved (and perhaps ultimately irresolvable) questions of how to approach prosody as a complex system, she did argue that it provided a path to what she labeled as the third stage in English prosody. Crapsey wrote that the "continued introspective analysis of our reaction to verse-structure as a whole will result in conscious awareness of the existence within it of the sub-structural speech arrangement."[26] She cited Bridges's "Rules of Stress Rhythm," which argued against the idea of verse-specific stress patterns and for the idea that stress should be "natural," as spoken, as evidence of "a growing awareness of the speech-arrangement *per se*, manifesting at the same time exactly the over-emphasis on this arrangement which would naturally accompany its first conscious perception."[27] Phonetics, in other words, had paved the way for prosodists to recognize the "non-coincidence" of speech patterns and poetic structures,[28] or the simultaneous existence of prosody as a vocal guide and as a textual form. Crapsey argued that even Saintsbury, with his oversimplified view of prosody, recognized "the 'non-coincidence' of verse- and speech-units, particularly . . . of the foot and word," claiming that "his constantly increasing emphasis on just this point of the non-coincidence of foot- and word-division" would ultimately be his most important legacy.[29]

In spite of this crucial advancement, Crapsey argued, no one had yet teased out "the full theoretical implication of the observed fact [of the non-coincidence of foot and word] . . . and there is consequently no generalized theoretical statement of it."[30] This was the necessary next stage, according to Crapsey—a general theory of prosody that would consider both speech units and the prosodical units derived from classical systems as interlocking components of a complex formal whole with many branches and many formal possibilities. She argued that such a theory could come from new methods of metrical analysis—specifically, "a method allowing that close study of the sub-structural arrangement which is necessary to a proper understanding of the co-existent verse-arrangement. Such methodical investigation must . . . begin at the basic point, the relation of the foot to the word."[31]

Crapsey began her application of phonetics to metrical problems by arguing that attending to both syllabic units and metrical units showed that English poetry was made up of "two main rhythms, duple and triple," which could be further subdivided into "duple rhythm, rising and falling, and triple rhythm, rising and falling." She explained in duple rhythms, "the 'normal' syllabic unit, or foot, contains two syllables; in triple rhythm three syllables; the difference in cadence, whether rising or falling, is determined by the position

of the 'strong' or 'accented' syllable."[32] The advantage of using the terms duple and triple rhythm, according to Crapsey, was that they were "widely enough used to be generally intelligible without special explanation and their relation to the more frequently used classical terms sufficiently obvious."[33] That is, Crapsey noted, duple rising rhythms were correlated to iambic patterns, duple falling to trochaic patterns, triple rising to anapestic patterns, and triple falling to dactylic patterns.[34] But unlike those classical terms, her terminology placed emphasis on the overall sound effects of poetic lines, which included both syllabic groups and accentual patterns, while the classical terms were apt to confuse students about the units on which poetic rhythms were based.

For Crapsey, developing a less mystified terminology for poetic rhythm–one based on the rhythms of English words rather than on the rhythms of Greek or Latin–was not the only step to advancing prosodical studies. She argued that in addition to being able to identify the predominant rhythm of a poem, critics had also to think about whether the rhythm "operat[ed] in relation to a vocabulary of the mono-disyllabic type, or of the type of medium or of extreme structural complexity."[35] There was, in other words, the linguistic question of how words and feet tended to correlate in different bodies of poetry. Crapsey believed that this consideration further subdivided the possible types of English verse into "six main specialized conditions–(or twelve, allowing for the two varieties in each rhythm."[36]

Though this classificatory system could seem like a footnote in larger prosodical discussions, Crapsey argued that it had major implications for the way critics conducted comparative analyses of different poets. She cited, for instance, a study by John Williams White that posited "a literal technical advance from Milton to Tennyson," and argued that, if my analysis is correct . . . it means that no such advance can exist, at least for the particular poems analyzed, since in them Milton and Tennyson work with reference to differentiated technical problems. Milton deals with the problems that I have indicated as inherent in a vocabulary

of extreme structural complexity; his greater variety of word-forms imposes upon him all the difficulties of their manipulation, problems of weighting, of the management of the delicate, and treacherous, secondary accent syllables, and with these, since it is verse in duple rhythm, the question of variant feet. These things if present for Tennyson are far less acutely present and with the change in the basic condition of the vocabulary, the whole weighting and balance of the line change.[37]

Milton and Tennyson were, in essence, working with different materials; comparing them in terms of who was more "advanced" in technique would be akin to comparing a sculptor working in marble and one working in plaster. Crapsey demonstrates here a useful skepticism about progressive accounts of meter as a form that advances or evolves, favoring instead a view that appreciates the multiple possibilities always available to poets working in English. Such a view did not rule out comparative analysis, Crapsey argued, but it did change which poets' techniques could be rightly compared: "The proper comparison, as I make it out, is between Tennyson and Pope," though she noted that "there are between these two poets important secondary differences."[38] Similarly, she argued that comparisons of Swinburne's and Milton's technique had missed the mark because Swinburne's vocabulary was simple and his rhythm triple, while Milton's rhythm was duple. She objected to analyses such as Gilbert Murray's, who argued "that we find in Swinburne a poet using all the resources of the language," when in reality, she believed, "we find in him not a highly developed but an early technique. He has not mastered all the resources of the language; he has not even divined their existence."[39]

Crapsey did still argue for the existence of a perfectible tradition of English poetry, and suggested that her approach to meter could better reveal when a particular type of poetic form had reached its pinnacle. She took Milton and Swinburne as her examples, arguing that if Swinburne indeed stood at "the beginning of a sequence" while Milton had arrived "at the end of a long sequence in development," then it was possible to "suppose we are moving

in the great main line of development in English poetry towards a mastery of triple rhythms."[40] In other words, understanding the multiple systems individual poets worked with would allow analysts to "approach, by intelligible stages, a completer understanding of the whole complexity of English verse-structure."[41] Crapsey posited that new methods of study would differentiate twentieth-century from nineteenth-century understandings of prosody, arguing that "our scrutiny will contain within itself a whole series of re-actions which, as felt not at all, or felt in some degree short of complete awareness, did not enter into the making of nineteenth century judgments."[42] Twentieth-century judgments would be derived from "an increase in fully conscious perception" thanks to laboratory experiments.[43] Like her modernist counterparts in linguistics labs all across the country, Crapsey saw twentieth-century science as the key to fully unlocking the mysteries of language that had hitherto kept critics from treating poetic rhythm as nuanced and multiple.

Ironically, in making these claims for the distinctiveness of the discoveries of twentieth-century prosody, Crapsey was repeating a trope of nineteenth-century prosodic discourse—the statement of relief that definitive answers were in sight at last.[44] As Josh King notes, in 1857, Coventry Patmore had claimed, " 'I believe that I am now, for the first time, stating 'the great general law' of meter,'" while thirty years later, Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, "I believe that I can now set metre and music both of them on a scientific footing which will be final like the law of gravitation."[45] Indeed, a search of the Princeton Prosody Archive, a database of versification manuals, histories of prosody, elocution guides, and related materials, for the term "general law" in texts from the 19th century turns up 704 occurrences of the term in 319 works, while "great law" returns 266 occurrences in 194 works. Part of what makes Crapsey's *Study* difficult reading is the way that she does and does not acknowledge the impossibility of settling the question of how to approach prosody definitively. On the one hand, she recognized the interpretive nature of prosody and the complications with declaring new methods or theories to be definitive, noting midway through her *Study* that

"one is of course all the time working 'by ear'–but by a reasoned and tested hearing."[46] If the "reasoned and tested" ear comes from particular kinds of education and training, then of course there is nothing natural to discover about how prosody works, no matter how fine-tuned one's laboratory instruments may become. At the same time, Crapsey appealed to something like an innate sense of rhythm, arguing that although "there is much question" about prosodical terminology, "as to the verse to be identified . . . very little."[47] In other words, though theorists may not agree what to call various kinds of poetic patterns, they also recognize that they empirically existed. The experience of feeling or sensing rhythm here becomes a way for Crapsey to skirt terminological details that point to much deeper divisions within prosodic analysis about the nature of the English language (accentual, syllabic, some combination of the two, or something else altogether).

Another part of what makes *A Study in English Metrics* difficult reading is its lack of a conclusion. Crapsey positions her work as a preliminary investigation that will be useful for other scholars to build on. She provides evidence that the types of vocabulary used by different poets vary, but offers only tables filled with "preliminary data for the closer study of the mono-dissyllabic group hitherto treated as a whole," and instructions that "the closer study of the polysyllable group must be carried out in the same way."[48] Her study ends with tables identifying her findings rather than with a full description of those findings or with an explanation of the broader conclusions she draws from the specific analyses. Mary Elizabeth Osborn sought to apply Crapsey's analytical methods to Crapsey's own poetry in 1928, concluding that "Crapsey's vocabulary falls easily into type II, the type of medium structural complexity,"[49] but beyond that few critics have attempted to extrapolate theories from Crapsey's preliminary study. What might Crapsey's poetry tell us about her vision of prosodical analysis?

In Crapsey's syllabic poetry, we see her experimenting with the interplay of poetic patterns that are heard, seen, felt, and implied—an interplay that never settles down into a singular pattern, but that

keeps multiple options in play simultaneously. Take, for instance, "The Sun-Dial," which reads in its entirety:

> Every day,
> Every day,
> Tell the hours
> By their shadows,
> By their shadows.[50]

This can be read as a syllabic form with lines of 3, 3, 3, 4, and 4 syllables, or with lines of 3, 3, 4, 4, and 4 syllables, or a syllabic form with five lines of four syllables each, or various combinations of those patterns, depending on whether "every" is pronounced with two or three syllables and whether "hours" is one or two syllables. Crapsey defines a polysyllable as a word over two syllables in length, but doesn't give guidelines for determining how to count syllables. What we do know of her reading practices does not help those guidelines to materialize, as she evinced an interest in sounds apart from sense.[51] Is the piece emphasizing the length of an hour, the way that time can drag, and hence stretching "ev-er-y" across the length of three syllables, or contrasting the beat of the short "ev-ry days" with the lengthening shadows in the lines of 4 syllables? Thinking about syllables in relation to feet also doesn't settle the question, as the lines of 4 are trochaic but the variable lines don't have a clear relation to the trochee.

The possible foot combinations hinge on these questions of pronunciation. The poem could be scanned:

/ x /		/ x x /
Eve ry day,	OR	Ev er y day,
/ x /		
Eve ry day,		
/ x /		/ x / x
Tell the hours	OR	Tell the hours

/ x / x
By their shadows,

/ x / x
By their shadows.

If "Every day" is a three-syllable line, it's either a cretic foot (stress, unstress, stress) or a trochee with an extra syllable. If it's a four-syllable line, it's a trochee followed by an iamb. If "hours" is stretched across four syllables, the line is trochaic, like the final two lines, but if it's compressed into a single syllable, it would follow the pattern of the compressed pronunciation of "every day." In a poem about measuring time, we can hear both the steady tick of a clock (4/4/4/4/4) and the lengthening shadows registered by the sun dial (3/3/3/4/4). The immaterial–time, shadows–is materialized in the count, even as the count itself remains composed of shadow syllables. Rather than deciding on a definitive experience of time or a definitive mode of measuring, the poem registers multiple temporal counts, displaying the idea of the multiplicity within prosody. What does it mean to measure time through language in a language without syllabic quantity? The question remains.

Crapsey's cinquains tend to be more reliably iambic than "The Sun-Dial," but even here, counting remains a fraught endeavor. Take the poem "Triad":

> These be
> Three silent things:
> The falling snow . . . the hour
> Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
> Just dead.[52]

Much like the funny math in Wordsworth's "We Are Seven," counting in "Triad" is complicated by the endeavor to represent absence textually and aurally. The "three silent things" are spread out over the line breaks so that graphically they look like five things ("the falling snow," "the hour," "before the dawn," "the mouth of

one," "just dead"). The silent things are spoken in iambic, or rising (to use Crapsey's terminology) lines, but can also be read as beginning and ending with spondees, or "loud" accents (if we take accent to be equated with vocal emphasis). The ellipses in the lines counting the silent things likewise point to present absences, hovering at a sonic level below an unstressed syllable but as equally present to the eye as any of the sounded syllables in the text. Measuring may be meant to clarify and explain, the poem seems to suggest, but measuring syllables proves to be harder than simply counting. How does one measure the difference between a graphic silence (. . .) and an audible silence? How does one count absence? What happens when the eye and the ear don't count the same things?

I want to close by suggesting that the present absences in Crapsey's count provide a way to understand the figure of Crapsey's ailing body within scholarship about her work. The image of the dying woman laboring against a relentless countdown necessarily remains a part of her legacy, and part of our accounting for her work. But like the suspended questions about accent and syllable breaks within her lines, that figure does and does not resolve questions about her poetry and her metrical theories. While we may see and hear the pathos of a woman representing her own death through the play of shadowy syllables and unreliable methods of measuring time, presence, and absence, we also have to make sure that we are accounting for the woman still finding her place in the realm of the living. By consciously responding to Bridges and Saintsbury and seeking out other scholars to read and comment on her work, Crapsey showed herself to be deeply engaged in scholarly conversations about prosody. Her legacy is both the tragic beauty of her poetry and the engagement with contemporaneous prosodic discourse within its lines. The lesson her work teaches us is perhaps the value of keeping interpretive questions about prosody suspended, partway between answers that never firmly settle into a final form.

NOTES

1 Llewellyn Jones, "Adelaide Crapsey: Poet and Critic," *The North American Review* 217, no. 809 (April 1923): 539.

2 Karen Alkalay-Gut, "The Dying of Adelaide Crapsey," *Journal of Modern Literature* 13, no. 2 (1986): 225, 228.

3 That Crapsey was interested in contemporary conversations about prosody is well documented. Crapsey wrote to the respected scholar of prosody T.S. Omond asking for feedback on her work, and she sought out Cornell professor Martin Sampson, a Milton scholar, for further conversations about prosody and composition. Karen Alkalay-Gut, *Alone in the Dawn: The Life of Adelaide Crapsey* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 233, 241.

4 For an overview of the field of historical poetics, see Yopie Prins, "What is Historical Poetics?" *Modern Language Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (2016): 13-40. Field-defining works include Prins's "Victorian Meters," in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry*, ed. Joseph Bristow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 89-113; Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Meredith McGill, ed., *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange* (Rutgers University Press, 2008); Jason Hall, ed., *Meter Matters: Verse Cultures of the Long Nineteenth Century* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2011).

5 Meredith Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Meter: Poetry and English National Culture, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2, 18.

6 Ibid., 204.

7 Ibid., 40.

8 Ibid., 35.

9 For more on the intensification of laboratory-based investigations of poetic rhythm at the end of the nineteenth century, see Jason David Hall, *Nineteenth-Century Verse and Technology: Machines of Meter* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and "Materializing Meter: Physiology, Psychology, Prosody," *Victorian Poetry* 49, no. 2 (2011): 179-197, as well as Michael Golston, *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science* (Columbia University Press, 2007).

10 Amy Lowell, "The Rhythms of Free Verse," *The Dial* 64, no. 758 (Jan. 1918): 51, 54-55.

11 Ibid., 56.

12 Martin, *Rise and Fall*, 88.

13 Ibid., 89.

14 Ibid., 96.

15 Ibid., 97-98.

16 Adelaide Crapsey, *A Study in English Metrics* (New York: Knopf, 1918), 32.

17 Ibid., 69.

18 Ibid., 30.

19 Ibid.

20 For more on Crapsey and modernist syllabics, see Meredith Martin, "Picturing Rhythm," in *Critical Rhythm*, ed. Jonathan Culler and Benjamin Glaser, forthcoming from Fordham University Press.

21 Crapsey, *A Study*, 33.

22 Golston, *Rhythm and Race*, 3.

23 Crapsey, *A Study*, 33.

24 Ibid., 32.

25 Ibid., 34.

26 Ibid., 36.

27 Ibid., 37.

28 Ibid., 38.

29 Ibid., 39.

30 Ibid., 40-41.

31 Ibid., 44.

32 Ibid., 51

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 52.

35 Ibid., 53.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 62-63.

38 Ibid., 63.

39 Ibid., 68.

40 Ibid., 68-69.

41 Ibid., 74.

42 Ibid., 69.

43 Ibid.

44 Martin notes that such tropes were crucial parts of nineteenth-century approaches to prosody, and that "common tropes of the prosodic handbook" included "new marking systems, new names for metrical feet, and new definitions of and arguments over the definitions of terms." These multiplying systems and methodological disagreements "created the field of prosody" as prosodists "account[e]d for each other's theories … and [put] forth their corrections, adjustments, and improvements, both of each other and, in a series of revised and reprinted editions, of themselves." Martin, *Rise and Fall*, 45.

45 Joshua King, "Patmore, Hopkins, and the Problem of the English Metrical Law," *Victorian Poetry* 49, no. 2 (2011): 31.

46 Crapsey, *A Study*, 45.

47 Ibid., 52.

48 Ibid., 74.

49 Mary Elizabeth Osborn, "The Vocabulary in Adelaide Crapsey's Verse," *American Speech* 3, no. 6 (1928): 459.

50 Adelaide Crapsey, *Verse* (New York: Knopf, 1922), 69.

51 According to a friend of Crapsey's, it was the vowel sounds in "Lycidas" that had led to her passion for prosody: "She felt that certain combinations of sound were particularly effective, and she had tried for these combinations in a poem which she had just finished. She read it aloud, and then the vowel sounds alone to show the sequence of rising and falling tones." Osborn qtd. in Alkalay-Gut, "The Dying," 231. This was apparently a frequent practice, as another source notes that Crapsey also read her poem "Song' as "an exercise in vowel sequence" by "dropping the consonants altogether and leaving it as a series of vowel sounds only." Loescher qtd. in Alkalay-Gut, "The Dying," 231n9.

52 Crapsey, *Verse*, 33.