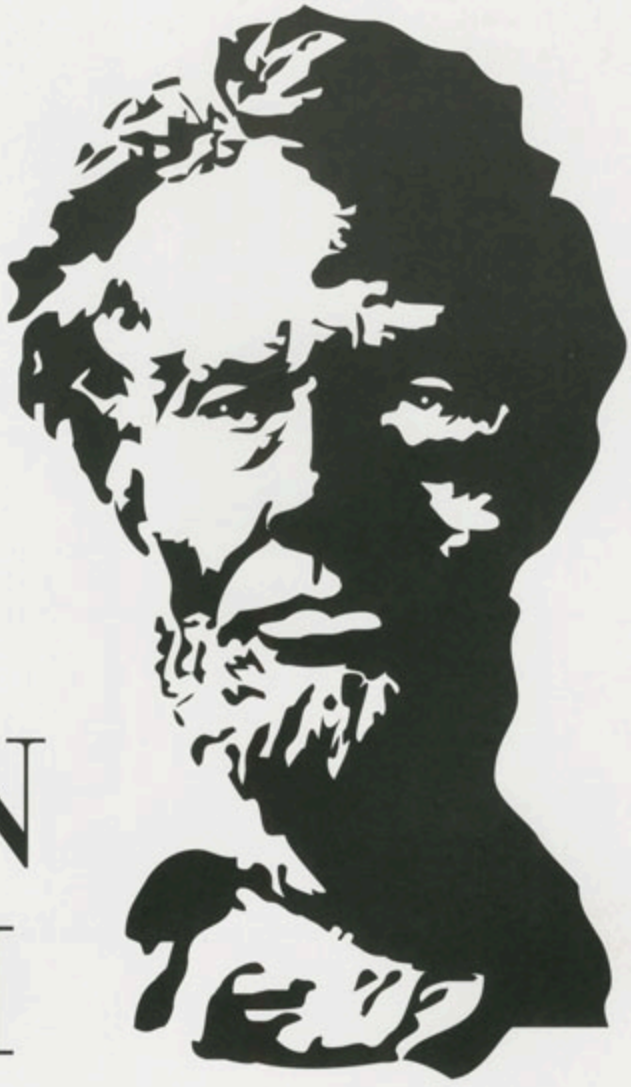
Lincoln Lore

The Bulletin of THE LINCOLN MUSEUM



THE LINCOLN MUSEUM

The Life and Legacy of Abraham Lincoln

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Lincoln Lore
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THE LINCOLN MUSEUM

The mission of The Lincoln Museum is to interpret and preserve the history and legacy of Abraham Lincoln through research, conservation, exhibitry, and education.

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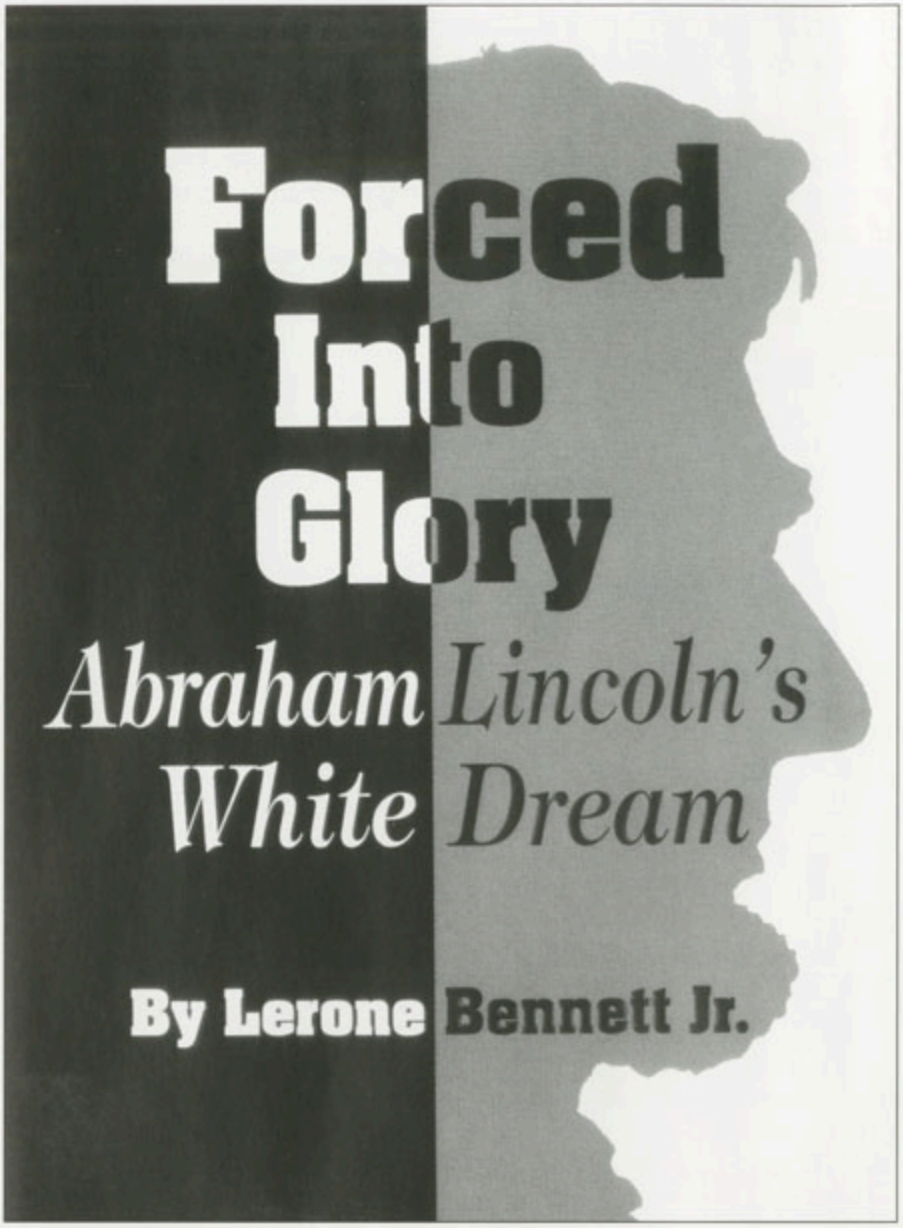


Rethinking Lincoln: Lerone Bennett's Dream

By Gerald J. Prokopowicz

Lerone Bennett's *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 2000; pp. 652; $35.00) is easily the most controversial Lincoln-related publication of this generation. Bennett's thesis is that Abraham Lincoln does not deserve to be known as the "Great Emancipator"; rather, he was a thoroughgoing racist who endorsed the Fugitive Slave Act and favored the deportation of black Americans to other countries. As president, Lincoln was forced by circumstances to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, an act that deserves no credit because it freed no slaves. By continuing to honor Lincoln today, Bennett argues, we perpetuate the pervasive racism of our culture.

(on the cover: The Lincoln Museum's new logo replaces the familiar stovepipe hat with an original image of Abraham Lincoln based on busts by Borglum, Berks, and others. For more on the new logo created by Emley Design Group of Fort Wayne, Indiana, see back cover.)

It is difficult to approach this book calmly and dispassionately, not only because of its radical thesis, but also because of the author's intemperate tone, both in print and in the lecture hall. The reader must be willing to tolerate exaggeration, distortion, selective use of evidence, straw man arguments, and gratuitous insults of cultures other than that of the author (such as Bennett's comment that America without Africans would be "a thin White gruel of pale religion and food," [p. 51] which tells me that he has never experienced Ukrainian cooking like my grandmother's).

This is unfortunate, because it means that only those readers who are willing to put up with Bennett's hyperbolic and abusive style will gain from his original and provocative insights. For example, Bennett introduces his discussion of Lincoln's views on race with the extreme statement that "racism was the center and circumference of his being," (p. 66), which practically begs the reader to put down the book and dismiss Bennett as a crank. What follows, however, is a unique and careful analysis of the role of whiteness as a component of Abraham Lincoln's identity, based in part on a close look at Lincoln's numerous written and spoken references to white supremacy, and his use of racial epithets. No previous scholar has subjected these unappealing elements of the Lincoln record to such a harsh, clear light.

Bennett roundly indicts the historical profession for using various tactics to cover up Lincoln's racial sins. He criticizes what he calls the "Feelgood school," for example, for quoting Lincoln out of context in order to make him appear more of an egalitarian than he really was. Bennett, however, engages in a fair amount of "Feelbad school" selectivity to achieve the opposite. He opens his book with a famous quote from the Lincoln-Douglas debates, for example, in which Lincoln denied that he favored political and social equality for African Americans, but he fails to note that this was Lincoln's standard way of countering the far more explicit race-baiting of Stephen Douglas: to concede the minor point (agreeing with Douglas that blacks should not be citizens) in order to give force to the major, that blacks should not be slaves, or, as Lincoln put it, "In the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he [the black man] is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man." To give another example, Bennett cites a number of Lincoln quotes regarding skin color, none of which reflects well on Lincoln, but leaves out the one in which he exposed the logical fallacy of racism:

> *If A. can prove, however conclusively, that he may, of right, enslave B. — why may not B. snatch the same argument, and prove equally, that he may enslave A? — You say A. is white, and B. is black. It is color, then; the lighter, having the right to enslave the darker? Take care. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own.*

Bennett is passionate about his view of Lincoln, so much so that one can almost hear him responding to the above: "What does a little ad hominem argument or out-of-context quote matter, when I'm talking about four hundred years of racism and brutality?" His political stance informs every page, indeed every word, of the book. In Bennett's world, as on the brilliantly designed dust jacket, everything is black or white, good guy or bad guy. What about Lincoln the compromiser, who appears on the jacket in a gray silhouette? To Bennett, everyone in history (and contemporary society) is either part of the solution or part of the problem; there can be no middle ground. Thus, instead of honoring Lincoln for his moderation, Bennett utterly condemns him.

If Lincoln is the Bad Guy in *Forced Into Glory*, who is the Good Guy? Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, Charles Sumner, and other black and white abolitionists play that role. This highlights the work's biggest conceptual problem, which is the omission of anyone to the right of Lincoln on the slavery question. Where are the conservative Whigs? Where are the Democrats (other than Stephen Douglas, whose open racism draws less scorn from Bennett than Lincoln's genteel variety)? By portraying Lincoln's political world as one of left vs. center, Bennett makes Lincoln's effort to slow down the radical abolitionists appear to be motivated by nothing but fear of black freedom. But Lincoln was under pressure from the right as well, from politicians who wanted no emancipation or black enlistment whatsoever, and he could ignore them (as Bennett does) only at the risk of losing the war and allowing the establishment of a permanent slave-based Confederacy.

Despite its flaws, *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* is an important book. A few years ago, AIDS activist Larry Kramer gained a moment of media attention by claiming that Lincoln was gay, but was ignored by most Lincoln scholars because he produced no evidence. Lerone Bennett's claim that Lincoln was racist has made an even bigger splash, but unlike Kramer, Bennett has produced a body of evidence that cannot be ignored. Bennett portrays a Lincoln who is always obsessed with race, always timid, always self-interested, always the friend of the slaveholder and the enemy of the slave, a Lincoln who played a role in the destruction of American slavery only because he was forced into it by circumstances beyond his control. For most Lincoln admirers, *Forced Into Glory* will not be pleasant reading. But for anyone who thinks that he or she knows Abraham Lincoln, it will not be enough to hear caricatures of Bennett's arguments as summarized by ignorant radio talk show hosts; it will not even be enough to hear the author's own overheated oratory at a Lincoln history conference. You will need to come to terms with this book.

The author is a literary critic and graduate of Antioch University whose analyses of Lincoln's writings have previously appeared in Lincoln Lore *and* Lincoln Herald.

LINCOLN'S POETRY

by Sarah Joan Ankeney

The study of Lincoln's works reveals the dignity of a great mind and heart that seeks for rightness in principle, fairness in act, and beauty in utterance....And so it is that he becomes as we study him, like the classic literary figures of the past, something more than a man. — Roy Basler [1]

Lincoln's great writings have frequently been called poetry. His poetry written in verse form has frequently been called doggerel.

What is a poem? Dictionary definition: "An arrangement of words written or spoken, traditionally a rhythmical composition, sometime rhymed, expressing experiences, ideas, or emotions in a style more concentrated, imaginative, and powerful than that of ordinary prose." Today, almost any colorful or emotionally charged utterance might be called poetry. The meaning has become so vague that almost any prose, broken down and arranged into separate lines might be considered a poem.

Was Lincoln's poetic verse mere doggerel? Did he write poetic prose, or was that poetic prose really poetry? In this essay I will offer my views as to what is successful and unsuccessful in Lincoln's verse and prose in a manner that is not too technical. However, in order to understand any poetry, the techniques of writing it cannot be avoided. In particular, I will mention rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and enjambment, which cannot be avoided, because Lincoln paid attention to them.

"My Childhood-Home I See Again"—modern reproduction of the Lincoln family cabin at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in southern Indiana. (TLM #3000).

"My Childhood-Home I See Again"

In his letter to Andrew Johnston, April 18, 1846, Lincoln wrote that his visit to his childhood home in southern Indiana "aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry; though whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question." [3] With these words Lincoln demonstrated that he understood both the deep feeling and the accomplished skill that it takes to create a good poem. His statement that feelings in themselves can be poetry belies the common belief that he himself was without emotion. Roy Basler says, "It was a common observation among Lincoln's friends that he was cold and unemotional" in the years prior to his Farewell Address.[4] However, in this one instance, we can see that he was deeply moved by his return to his childhood home in 1846. The emotion was there.

But was Lincoln capable of showing it, and as a poet, was he capable of expressing himself well? Lincoln knew (as so many moderns do not) that the expression of feelings is not in itself poetry unless it meets certain critical standards — and unless it simply rings true. The question was not whether Lincoln experienced emotion, but whether, in writing a poem, he could communicate it successfully to an audience. When Lincoln sent "My Childhood-Home I See Again" to a friend, he added that, "If I should ever send you another [poem] the subject will be a 'Bear-hunt!'" indicating that, while he was too busy to spend much time on poetry, he was still putting a great deal of thought into his subject before attempting to write a poem about it.

Lincoln apparently had his own critical standards, but whether he was able to meet them is another matter. As we look at "My Childhood-Home I See Again" we see Lincoln putting great effort into the technical aspects of the poem. His rhymes, for

My Childhood-Home I See Again

My childhood-home I see again,
And gladden with the view;
And still as mem'ries crowd my brain,
There's sadness in it too.

O memory! thou mid-way world
`Twixt Earth and Paradise,
Where things decayed, and loved ones lost
In dreamy shadows rise.

And freed from all that's gross or vile,
Seem hallowed, pure, and bright,
Like scenes in some enchanted isle,
All bathed in liquid light.

As distant mountains please the eye,
When twilight chases day—
As bugle-tones, that, passing by,
In distance die away—

As leaving some grand water-fall
We ling'ring, list it's roar,
So memory will hallow all
We've known, but know no more.

Now twenty years have passed away,
Since here I bid farewell
To woods, and fields, and scenes of play
And school-mates loved so well.

Where many were, how few remain
Of old familiar things!
But seeing these to mind again
The lost and absent brings.

The friends I left that parting day—
How changed, as time has sped!
Young childhood grown, strong manhood grey,
And half of all are dead.

I hear the lone survivors tell
How nought from death could save,
Till every sound appears a knell,
And every spot a grave.

I range the fields with pensive tread,
And pace the hollow rooms;
And feel (companions of the dead)
I'm living in the tombs.

A[nd] here's an object more of dread,
Than ought the grave contains—
A human-form, with reason fled,
While wretched life remains.

Poor Matthew! Once of genius bright,—
A fortune-favored child—
Now locked for aye, in mental night,
A haggard mad-man wild.

Poor Matthew! I have ne'er forgot
When first with maddened will,
Yourself you maimed, your father fought,
And mother strove to kill;

And terror spread, and neighbours ran,
Your dang'rous strength to bind;
And soon a howling crazy man,
Your limbs were fast confined.

How then you writhed and shrieked aloud,
Your bones and sinnews bared;
And fiendish on the gaping crowd,
With burning eye-balls glared.

And begged, and swore, and wept, and prayed,
With maniac laughter joined—
How fearful are the signs displayed,
By pangs that kill the mind!

And when at length, tho' drear and long,
Time soothed your fiercer woes—
How plaintively your mournful song,
Upon the still night rose.

I've heard it oft, as if I dreamed,
Far-distant, sweet, and lone;
The funeral dirge it ever seemed
Of reason dead and gone.

To drink it's strains, I've stole away,
All silently and still,
Ere yet the rising god of day
Had streaked the Eastern hill.

Air held his breath; the trees all still
Seemed sorr'wing angels round.
Their swelling tears in dew-drops fell
Upon the list'ning ground.

But this is past, and nought remains
That raised you o'er the brute.
Your mad'ning shrieks and soothing strains
Are like forever mute.

Now fare thee well: more thou the cause
Than subject now of woe.
All mental pangs, but time's kind laws,
Hast lost the power to know.

And now away to seek some scene
Less painful than the last—
With less of horror mingled in
The present and the past.

The very spot where grew the bread
That formed my bones, I see.
How strange, old field, on thee to tread,
And feel I'm part of thee!

— Abraham Lincoln, February 25, 1846 [2]

example, often seem the result of a labored effort either to develop the necessary skill with words, or to overcome his inability to show his emotion. In either case, the product is not doggerel, not the trite, superficial effort of the shallow mind. Basler says that Lincoln's early poems "are not the pure doggerel that many of [his] biographers have termed them." They are, he says, "most significant as literary experimentation." Sometimes Lincoln's lack of skill (including the skill of combining technique with feeling) approaches doggerel, but the poem as a whole transcends that definition.[5]

"My Childhood-Home I See Again" is written in a series of four-line stanzas, the first and third lines of iambic tetrameter (ta TAH ta TAH ta TAH ta TAH) and the second lines in iambic trimeter (ta TAH ta TAH ta TAH). The rhyme scheme is *abad cdcd* etc. Lincoln is faithful to his rhythm and rhyme schemes throughout, except that in the second stanza, "world" and "lost" do not rhyme.

The mood of the poem is meant to intensify from nostalgia, to grief over the deaths of many friends, to horror caused by the insanity of his friend, Matthew Gentry. Then Lincoln attempts to dispel the horror and to end the poem on a lighter, more nostalgic note once again. Does he succeed in taking us into this dark world and back again? Probably not as much as he would have liked, but intelligent effort is unmistakable, and many lines are successful. A few are memorable.

As Lincoln attempts to maintain strict adherence to his metric and rhythmic schemes, his technique takes precedence over his emotional expression. (This gives the impression of doggerel.) The opening quatrain is fairly successful in combining mood and technique.

My childhood-home I see again,
And gladden with the view;
And still as mem'ries crowd my brain,
There's sadness in it too.

Neither meter nor rhyme is forced. It is a simple, natural statement. With his shortening of "memories" to "mem'ries," however, we see Lincoln's rigid insistence on the basic iambic beat. There are variations that he could have allowed to make the flow of verse more natural.

In the second quatrain, Lincoln says that memory is a "mid-way world/'Twixt Earth and Paradise." As he gives a physical reality to memory ("mid-way world") we are reminded that Lincoln also believes in the impact that dreams can have on his life. ("Where things decayed, and loved ones lost/ In dreamy shadows rise.") But do these lines really convince us that Lincoln actually believes in the world of memory and of life after death? His classical evocation ("O memory!") of "dreamy shadows" seems artificial. "'Twixt" instead "Between" gives us the feeling that we are not listening to the real Lincoln. He loses his rhyme scheme, matching "World" with "lost." Has he done this on purpose or is he simply groping unsuccessfully for expression?

The third quatrain reminds us of his letter to Fanny McCullough, whose father was a Union officer killed in action in 1862. Here Lincoln's lost loved ones are "freed from all that's gross or vile,/ [They] Seem hallowed, pure, and bright." Compare this to his words of comfort to Fanny: "The memory of your dear Father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad sweet feeling in your heart, of a purer, and holier sort than you have known before."[6] The statement that memory frees a deceased loved one from worldly imperfections and enriches one's own love is the same in Lincoln's poem and letter, but the former seems artificial compared to the simple, sincere prose of 1862. In the poem Lincoln wavers between an actual Paradise and a substitute hereafter that exists in one's memory. In his letter, he does not attempt to deal with the hereafter. He focuses only on mortal psychology, and doing so, he is far more convincing.

Continuing in the third stanza, scenes from the past are like "some enchanted isle,/ All bathed in liquid light." Here Lincoln leaves the "hallowed, pure, and bright" and enters the unconvincing and unreal. No matter how much he loved those departed, his past cannot appear to be an "enchanted isle." It is not Lincoln, and it "don't scour."

Despite a touch of pathetic fallacy in the fourth quatrain, as "twilight chases day," Lincoln begins a series of comparisons that are effective. Memory is like "distant mountains" at twilight. It is "As bugle-tones, that, passing by, / In distance die away—." And it is like the sound of a water-fall heard in the distance as he walks away. There is nothing artificial in the comparisons. The mood is genuinely nostalgic.

But in the eighth quatrain, as Lincoln tries to deepen the mood from nostalgia to grief, rhyme and rhythm fail him. "And half of all are dead" rhyming with "sped" hits with the triteness of doggerel. The unflinching iambic meter is a little too jaunty for grief. It is too bad that Lincoln did not here use the metric device of spondee (heavily accented syllables minus the unaccented) that he uses in the fifth quatrain when he says "We've known, but know no more." "Know no more" is an impressive, oratorical device as well as one that frees the meter from an artificial sameness. Again, in the ninth quatrain, the rhyme "save" and "grave" is trite and it emphasizes the exaggeration that "every spot" is a "grave." In attempting to express grief, Lincoln can only exaggerate, and it does not work.

Continuing to the tenth quatrain, we find more of the same. "Tread," "dead," "rooms," and "tombs" are forced and emphasize the untrue statement. Is Lincoln really "pacing"? Are the rooms really "hollow"? We think of a hollow tree, but we think of an empty room. And Lincoln's attempt to add emotion by the use of the word "hollow" just seems inappropriate. "I'm living in the tombs" is the most unfortunate line in the poem. He is only visiting. He is above ground. The exaggeration does not work. The contraction "I'm" used instead of "I am" for the sake of rigid meter gives an unwonted jauntiness to a line that is meant to express solemnity. What does the parenthetical "companions of the dead" modify? The rooms? Lincoln? It must be rooms, because of number agreement. These are all questions that crowd the mind, confuse the reader, and detract from the mood Lincoln wishes to express.

In the second section, or canto, of the poem, as Lincoln wishes to deepen the

mood still further into one of horror, he actually begins to succeed.

And here's an object more of dread,
Than aught the grave contains—
A human-form, with reason fled.
While wretched life remains.

Here Lincoln explains, simply, his horror of Matthew Gentry's madness. His rhymes are not too outstanding, and his meter is varied enough by the caesura (or pause) not to appear to be doggerel. That there is something worse than death in Lincoln's mind does relieve us of the "rooms-tombs" exaggeration of the tenth quatrain. Lincoln's insistence on a rigid iambic beat does continue throughout, though, with "Here's," "ne'er" in the third quatrain of the second section, and so on. Metrical success is achieved with extra stress on the words "more," "grave," "reas" of "reason," and "life." Reading this out loud will show Lincoln's skill here.

Beginning in the fourth quatrain of the second canto, Lincoln uses with success the device that he will later use in the Gettysburg Address: the rhetorical parallel structure ("we can not dedicate—we can not hallow.") In this early poem, Lincoln begins parallel statements with the word "and" which creates a build-up of excitement. "And terror spread, and neighbors ran" is a successful expression of fear and excitement. The poem becomes truly dramatic. "And begged, and swore, and wept, and prayed" expresses the uncontrolled emotion of Matthew while Lincoln's own words are highly controlled. The intense rhyme, "bared-glared" is appropriate and adds to the portrayal of Matthew's insanity.

Unfortunately, as Lincoln walks away from this waterfall of madness, he sinks into the maudlin.

To drink its strains, I've stole away,
All silently and still,
Ere yet the rising god of day
Had streaked the Eastern hill.

The so-called poetic license of "I've stole away" is uncharacteristic of Lincoln. "Stole" for "stolen" and "I've" for "I have" show that Lincoln is, once again letting concern for his strict rhythm take precedence over his true feeling. Lincoln doesn't steal away—he walks away. This artifice, and the inappropriate classical reference to the "god of day," pulls us completely away from Lincoln's childhood home in southern Indiana.

Added to this, he stoops to the use of "pathetic fallacy" (the portraying of inanimate objects or of the natural environment as having human emotion). Perhaps this literary device works for some uncommonly good poets of certain periods. It does not work here.

Air held his breath; the trees all still
Seemed sorr'wing angels round.
Their swelling tears in dew-drops fell
Upon the list'ning ground

Once again, the contractions "sorr'wing" and "list'ning" are unnatural. As long as Lincoln is going to animate nature, he might just as well free himself from the unfeeling iamb. Are the angels round? No, they must be hovering around. Lincoln is having to fight for this comparison. We know that this is not the real Lincoln, and this is our main concern, after all. Here Lincoln's poetry just does not ring true.

We must keep in mind Basler's statement that Lincoln's early poems are experimental. For soon we see a remarkable thing happen:

Now fare thee well: more thou the cause
Than subject now of woe.

This is a statement of irony skillfully wrought. The inner rhyme "thou" and "now" supports the irony that while Matthew can no longer feel woe, he can inflict it upon others. The repetition of the word "now" (compare the repetition of "what we say here," "what they did here" in the Gettysburg Address) actually creates a flow to the statement of his meaning.

Poetry is meant to be read aloud. Reading this line of Lincoln's aloud, we see rhythm fit the meaning perfectly. Here we begin to sense that Lincoln tends to write in iambic pentameter, not in tetrameter, or trimeter. We can rearrange these lines in this manner:

Now fare thee well:
More thou the cause than subject now
of woe.

The second line becomes Shakespearean iambic pentameter, and as such, its intricate ironic statement is more apparent. Compare to Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* II, i. 63:

See you now,
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp
of truth.

The following lines in Lincoln's poem seem to stretch into the five-foot line: "All mental pangs, by time's kind laws." The use of the three consecutive stresses in "time's kind laws" tends to stretch the beat beyond the four-foot line. We see this, also, in: "Why dost thou tear more blest ones hence." These phrases, "by time's kind laws" and "blest ones hence" are in parallel rhythmic structure that lends power to this part of the poem.

Lincoln closes his poem with a gentle, affectionate statement:

The very spot where grew the bread
That formed my bones, I see.
How strange, old field, on thee to tread
And feel I'm part of thee!

Lincoln is not cold and unemotional. He affectionately relates to the land that fed him.

"My Childhood Home" is indeed an experimental poem. It ranges from the very unsuccessful to the highly successful, from near-doggerel to skilled statement of irony worthy of Shakespeare.

"The Bear Hunt"

"The Bear Hunt" is the "L'Allegro" to the "Il Penseroso" of "My Childhood-Home I See Again." The jaunty meter and the pat rhymes fit its mood:

A wild-bear chace, didst never see?
Then hast thou lived in vain.
Thy richest bump of glorious glee,
Lies desert in thy brain.

The rhyme and metric schemes are the same as in "My Childhood Home."

The Bear Hunt

A wild-bear chace, didst never see?
Then hast thou lived in vain.
Thy richest bump of glorious glee,
Lies desert in thy brain.

When first my father settled here,
`Twas then the frontier line:
The panther's scream, filled night
with fear
And bears preyed on the swine.

But wo for Bruin's short lived fun,
When rose the squealing cry;
Now man and horse, with dog and gun,
For vengeance, at him fly.

A sound of danger strikes his ear;
He gives the breeze a snuff:
Away he bounds, with little fear,
And seeks the tangled rough .

On press his foes, and reach the ground,
Where's left his half munched meal;
The dogs, in circles, scent around,
And find his fresh made trail.

With instant cry, away they dash,
And men as fast pursue;
O'er logs they leap, through water splash,
And shout the brisk halloo.

Now to elude the eager pack,
Bear shuns the open ground;
Th[r]ough matted vines, he shapes
his track
And runs it, round and round.

The tall fleet cur, with
deep-mouthed voice,
Now speeds him, as the wind;
While half-grown pup, and
short-legged fice,
Are yelping far behind.

And fresh recruits are dropping in
To join the merry corps:
With yelp and yell,—a mingled din—
The woods are in a roar.

And round, and round the chace
now goes,
The world's alive with fun;
Nick Carter's horse, his rider throws,
And more, Hill drops his gun.

Now sorely pressed, bear glances back,
And lolls his tired tongue;
When as, to force him from his track,
An ambush on him sprung.

Across the glade he sweeps for flight,
And fully is in view.
The dogs, new-fired, by the sight,
Their cry, and speed, renew.

The foremost ones, now reach his rear,
He turns, they dash away;
And circling now, the wrathful bear,
They have him full at bay.

At top of speed, the horse-men come,
All screaming in a row.
"Whoop! Take him Tiger. Seize
him Drum."
Bang,—bang—the rifles go.

And furious now, the dogs he tears,
And crushes in his ire.
Wheels right and left, and upward rears,
With eyes of burning fire.

But leaden death is at his heart,
Vain all the strength he plies.
And, spouting blood from every part,
He reels, and sinks, and dies.

And now a dinsome clamor rose,
`Bout who should have his skin;
Who first draws blood, each
hunter knows,
This prize must always win.

But who did this, and how to trace
What's true from what's a lie,
Like lawyers, in a murder case
They stoutly argufy.

Aforesaid fice, of blustering mood,
Behind, and quite forgot,
Just now emerging from the wood,
Arrives upon the spot.

With grinning teeth, and
up-turned hair—
Brim full of spunk and wrath,
He growls, and seizes on dead bear,
And shakes for life and death.

And swells as if his skin would tear,
And growls and shakes again;
And swears, as plain as dog can swear,
That he has won the skin.

Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee—
Nor mind, that not a few
Of pompous, two-legged dogs there be,
Conceited quite as you.

—Abraham Lincoln, September 6, 1846[7]

There is alliteration in the *s*, *g*, and *b* sounds. We might deplore that there is herein so little regard for the plight of the bear. But this poem is not meant to demonstrate the magnificence of nature as does William Faulkner's story of the same name, in which the bear symbolizes the deep mystery of God's creation. Lincoln's poem is written to demonstrate not the Faulknerian sins, but rather the foibles of mankind.

The bear does come off better than the hunters, however. While Nick Carter's horse throws him and Hill drops his gun, the bear makes an honorable fight for its life. When it runs from the hunters it does so "with little fear." When encircled by the dogs, it is nobly "wrathful" and "furious" "with eyes of burning fire." "But leaden death is at his heart" is without banal sentiment. The bear "spout[s] blood from every part,/He reels, and sinks, and dies." These lines, without sentimentality or exaggeration, cause us to be sympathetic toward the bear. But repetition of the word "and" creates a mock dramatic effect that is comic in nature. (Remember "root hog or die"?)

The hunters, in contrast, appear to be foolish and greedy. Who fired the first shot, they ask. Who gets the skin? Here the rhyme is perfect for the mood:

> *But who did this and how to trace*
> *What's true from what's a lie,*
> *Like lawyers, in a murder case*
> *They stoutly argufy.*

The contractions are appropriate, and the rhyme appropriately funny. Lincoln shows his knowledge of enjambment in the running on of the first line without pause into the second. This creates a kind of comic build-up to the word "lie."

The hunters are compared to the foolish dog (the "fice") that races forward "emerging [late] from the woods" to lay claim to the bear.

> *Conceited whelp! We laugh at thee—*
> *Nor mind, that not a few*
> *Of pompous, two-legged dogs there be,*
> *Conceited quite as you.*

Here is more enjambment with its mock dramatic effect. This moral to the story

is reminiscent of Burns's louse: if only the men in Lincoln's poem had the "giftie" to see themselves as Lincoln sees them.

"The Bear Hunt" is not intended to be deeply emotional. Nor does it attempt to plumb the depths of human experience. To the extent that Lincoln intended, it succeeds. The story line, the characterizations of men and dogs and bear, along with considerable technical skill, keep the poem from being mere doggerel (even if some modern critics would consider it so just because it rhymes and has meter!)

"Little Eddie"

It is interesting to compare some of the elements of these poems to those of the poem, "Little Eddie," of undetermined authorship. A tribute to the deceased son of the Lincolns and printed in the *Illinois Daily Journal*, February, 1850, the poem has frequently been attributed to Lincoln.

But recently Lincoln's authorship has been questioned. Jean Baker feels that Mary Lincoln wrote the poem. She says that Lincoln's "necrology ran to less mawkish poetry." There is, she feels, too much sentimentality for Lincoln's taste, and the spelling of Eddie's name is Mary's.[8] Jason Emerson, in "The Poetic Lincoln," says, "Lincoln wrote mostly in iambic meter, while 'Little Eddie' is far from strictly iambic." He also feels that the language in "Little Eddie" is "quite feminine." He cites such descriptions as "pure little bud," "angel child," and "angel boy."[9] But "mawkish" or "feminine," what could be more so than Lincoln's "enchanted isle,/All bathed in liquid light"? Or his "To drink its strains, I've stole away"? Or "seemed sorr'wing angels round"? Are these lines of Lincoln's better than "The angel of Death was hovering nigh,/ And the lovely boy was called to die"? I don't think so. Pathetic fallacy in both poems contributes to the "mawkish." In "Little Eddie," "Those midnight stars are sadly dimmed" is not so pronounced a pathetic fallacy as Lincoln's tree-angels with their "swelling tears."

Emerson points out that Lincoln's poems of 1846 are written in the pattern of *abab*, and that "Little Eddie" is written in the pattern of *abcbdd*. But that does not mean that Lincoln's having written in one pattern precludes his later writing in another.

I agree with Emerson that "Little Eddie" contains more religious content than we expect from Lincoln. But this poem is about the death of his child, not about the insanity of his friend. Does not the "spirit-world" of "Little Eddie" remind us of Lincoln's "mid-way world" of memory? I personally hope that Lincoln did not write, "Who warbles now at the Savior's feet." But then, I wish that he had not written, "sorr'wing angels round" either. I suppose if we count mawkish (or feminine) lines, "Little Eddie" comes out ahead.

The most obvious difference between the poems that we know Lincoln wrote and the poem of doubtful authorship lies in the meter. Lincoln's known poetry is almost too rigidly iambic, while "Little Eddie" is so loosely constructed that it scarcely holds together. The excess of inverted iambs, or trochees, makes the poem hard to scan. "Eddie," "Angel," "Dwells in," "Deep though," and "Bright is" are some of the line openings, the accent on the first syllable giving an effect, when read aloud, of uncontrolled emotion or outburst. The poet (Mary?) cannot contain himself (herself?). These two lines are not in balance: "Eddie, meet blossom of heavenly love,/ Dwells in the spirit-world above." We feel that a beat has been dropped somewhere. There is a structural emptiness in the second line.

Lincoln's two poems of 1846, on the other hand, are composed of strict quatrains that rise like vertebrae on an extraordinarily straight spine. His strict iambs are created to some extent by his contractions. "Sorr'wing," "lis'ning," "mad'ning"—anything to keep the beat.

We wish he would ease up—throw in an anapest here and there: "Seemed SORrowing Angels Round," for instance. Compare this to "Little Eddie" in which there are no contractions. This poem swims in unaccented syllables. How many can we count in "brilliantly"? Three. Lincoln might have written "bril'yant" to keep the beat. In "Little Eddie" is written, "Lie still over his marble brow." Lincoln would have used "O'er" for "over," cutting out at least one of the unaccented syllables. With all three unaccented syllables, the meter is lost.

"Little Eddie" contains words that rhyme on the first syllable of two (feminine rhymes). They have the effect metrically of let-down when emphasis is needed. Considering the rhetorical power that Lincoln shows in his "Now fare thee well" quatrain (with its strong rhymes "cause-laws" and "woe-know"), could he have written, "Bright is the home to him now given,/ For 'of such is the kingdom of Heaven'"? A beautiful quotation has been degraded by a maudlin and weak rhyme. To make this last line of the poem a four-foot line like its fellow *d*'s, we must accent the weak word "of." Now I know, some of us say that Lincoln did this at Gettysburg: "OF the people," etc., but here that does not work. Try the accents how you will, there is a power-failure. "For-of-such-is-the" can all be felt as unaccented sylla-

Little Eddie

Those midnight stars are sadly dimmed,
That late so brilliantly shone,
And the crimson tinge from cheek and lip,
With the heart's warm life has flown -
The angel of Death was hovering nigh,
And the lovely boy was called to die.

The silken waves of his glossy hair
Lie still over his marble brow,
And the pallid lip and pearly cheek
The presence of Death avow.
Pure little bud in kindness given,
In mercy taken to bloom in heaven.

Happier far is the angel child
With the harp and the crown of gold,
Who warbles now at the Savior's feet
The glories to us untold.
Eddie, meet blossom of heavenly love,
Dwells in the spirit-world above.

Angel Boy - fare thee well, farewell
Sweet Eddie, We bid thee adieu!
Affection's wail cannot reach thee now
Deep though it be, and true.
Bright is the home to him now given
For "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

—Author Unknown

bles. At best the line contains three anapests (weak in this usage) and a weak rhyme: "For of SUCH is the KINGdom of HEAven." It is sad to see the quotation abused in this manner.

It is likely that the disagreement over the authorship of "Little Eddie" will continue. It is possible that a sister or a friend of Mary wrote the poem, since both parents would likely have been too upset to write it. We do not know. However, "I think I can say with sincerity, that I hope" Abraham Lincoln is not the poet.

"To Rosa and To Linnie"

The poem by the sophisticated 17th Century poet Robert Herrick and the poem Lincoln wrote in Rosa Haggards's autograph album in 1858 (which he presumably composed) are remarkably similar, so much so, that one almost flows into the other. The Herrick poem contains four stanzas, and Lincoln's contains two. Herrick's metric foot scheme is 4-3-4-3, while Lincoln's is 4-4-4-4. But these are minor differences. The cavalier, sophisticated advice to women is the same. The use of feminine rhymes in both ("a-flying"-"dying" and "older"-"colder") adds to the sophisticated tone. The poets are not writing sermons.

Herrick objects to art "when it is precise in every part," (as Lincoln used to write).[10] His meter contains the spondee variation of the iamb ("Old Time"). He also uses the anti-bacchius ("same flower"). Lincoln, too, here uses more variations in his meter. He uses the monosyllabic foot in "Enjoy/life." He begins the first line with the monosyllabic "You," just as Herrick begins his second line with the monosyllabic "Old." Lincoln continues to use the spondee to good effect in "grow cold." Both poets use the hypermetrical unaccented syllable at the end of the line. ("goe mar/ry" and "am old/er.")

There are a few problems with Lincoln's style. The word "rot" is too strong in this context. His trouble with forced rhymes comes forward here. The contraction, "now's," is difficult to read aloud smoothly. It is harsh. But, all in all, this is an ingenious effort, especially as one "tossed off" without chance for thought, since the poem was written in the autograph book of the daughter of a proprietor of an hotel where Lincoln stayed.

The companion poem, "To Linnie," written in Rosa's sister's autograph book, is more in the manner of a limerick:

A sweet plaintive song did I hear,
And I fancied that she was the singer.
May emotions as pure as that song
set a-stir
Be the worst that the future shall
bring her.

The rhyme scheme is subtly *aaaa*. The first line is written in one foot each of iambic, trochee, monosyllabic, and anapest. All are acceptable variants, and the word order is expressive. We think Lincoln is going to be serious, but the remaining three lines use the anapest entirely, and they create a light-hearted mood. The poem is skillfully written, although not as ingenious as is "To Rosa."

At first glance, these small verses seem insignificant. But comparisons to the more polished lines of Herrick show that these of Lincoln are actually, on the whole, far better crafted than his two early poems which were products of greater time and thought. Lincoln is able, in these later verses to become less rigid, while his skill in varying his rhythm prevents his poetry from becoming loose and unstructured (as in "Little Eddie").

Lincoln's Prose

Roy Basler observes that "alliteration, assonance and even rhyme sounds" in Lincoln's prose, and notes Lincoln's use of repeated key words and of birth-death-rebirth symbolism in the Gettysburg Address. He feels that Lincoln's prose "approximat[es a] loose metrical effect," which "Lincoln tends to heighten...with an occasional metrical phrase or sentence." Lincoln's "concrete words" tend to create a compactness or compression of style, stripped of the unnecessary, a key element of poetry. Basler says of the Farewell Address, "Within this general pattern of close parallels there is enough variety in individual sentences to avoid monotony but sufficient regularity of rhythm to produce distinct cadence."[11]

But as he speaks of Lincoln's "parallelism in thought" and of his familiarity with "Hebrew literature through the King James Bible,"[12] we feel that we need further elaboration on these insights in order to understand whether or not Lincoln's great writings are poetry. In the Dartmouth Bible, in the section entitled, "Its Development and Nature," there is an illuminating passage on the nature of Hebrew poetry that makes its relevance to the most memorable of Lincoln's writings immediately discernible:

> In 1753 Bishop Robert Lowth's classic discussion of the subject [of the basic principles of Hebrew prosody]

From To the Virgins to Make Much of Time

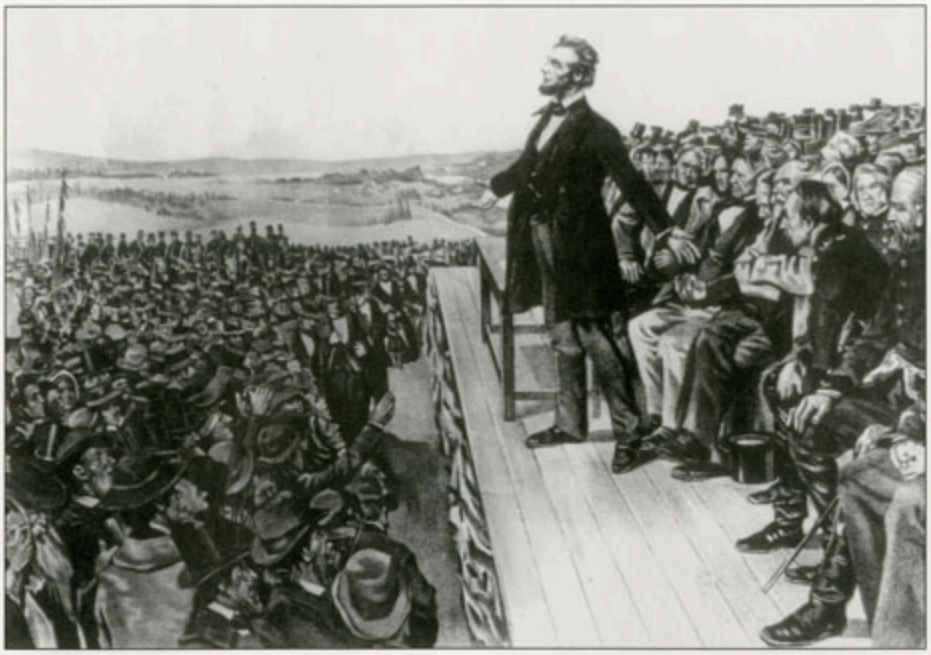
Gather ye Rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles today,
To morrow will be dying.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, goe marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.
—Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

To Rosa

You are young, and I am older;
You are hopeful, I am not.
Enjoy life, ere it grow colder.
Pluck the roses ere they rot.

Teach your beau to heed the lay—
That sunshine soon is lost in shade—
That now's as good as any day—
To take thee, Rosa, ere she fade.
—Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)



An imaginative rendering of Lincoln at Gettysburg, originally published in 1905. (TLM #3254).

pointed out that Hebrew poetry has little tangible syllabic rhythm or rhyme, but, instead, a parallel structure—a 'rhyme of thought' rather than of sound. One line is followed by a second containing the same thought but expressed in different words and images. An example is:

The heavens declare the glory of God:
And the firmament showeth
his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth
knowledge. (Ps.19:1-2.)

This parallelism appears usually in three well-marked forms: when, as in the verses above, the second or succeeding lines are identical in thought with the first line; when the second line contradicts the thought of the first line (usually introduced in English with the word "but"); and when the second line contains additional elements. The most common form is a couplet of two parallel lines, but frequently informal stanzas appear with as many as five or six lines, all based upon the first. It has been observed, also, that the various forms of Oriental art reflect "an instinctive aversion to absolute symmetry," and that is true of Hebrew poetry. The well-recognized rhythms, clearer in Hebrew than in English renderings, depend not upon syllables but rather upon "beats" or stresses, independent of the length of the line.[13]

In this description of Hebrew poetry, we see Basler's "close parallels" which contain "enough variety…to avoid monotony but sufficient regularity of rhythm to produce distinct cadence." We also hear Basler's "parallelism in thought" and "loose metrical effect." And we hear his "concrete words" when we read, in another passage from the Dartmouth Bible, that "the Hebrew mind tended toward the concrete and vivid."[14]

While we can find a great deal of "tangible syllabic rhythm [and] rhyme" in Lincoln's greatest writings, it seems that the key to the poetry of his prose lies in his "rhyme of thought" which he undoubtedly recognized in the King James Bible. Prose does not necessarily merit the word "poetry" just because it has a detectable beat or rhythm, or frequent bold imagery, or musical alliteration and assonance. Even the eloquent expression of great thoughts can be accomplished through prose. But if all these elements are added to a basic "rhyme of thought" then we can say that we have a kind of poetry—not English or European, but rather, Hebraic, or at least, influenced by the Hebraic.

The "rhyme of thought" in Lincoln's Farewell Address might be considered as this: sentences 1 through 4, his sadness at parting; sentences 5 through 7, his great task at which he may or may not succeed; and sentences 8-9, his faith that God will be with all during his separation from them. Similar thought rhymes can be found in the Gettysburg Address, such as:

We are met on a great battle-field of
that war.
We have come to dedicate….

This is the third type of Hebraic "rhyme of thought" in which the second line contains additional elements.

Here is another thought rhyme, expressing an opposite (the second Hebraic type):

We have come to dedicate…
[intervening line]
But…we can not dedicate

Another opposite:

The world will little note nor long
remember what we say here
but it can never forget what they
did here

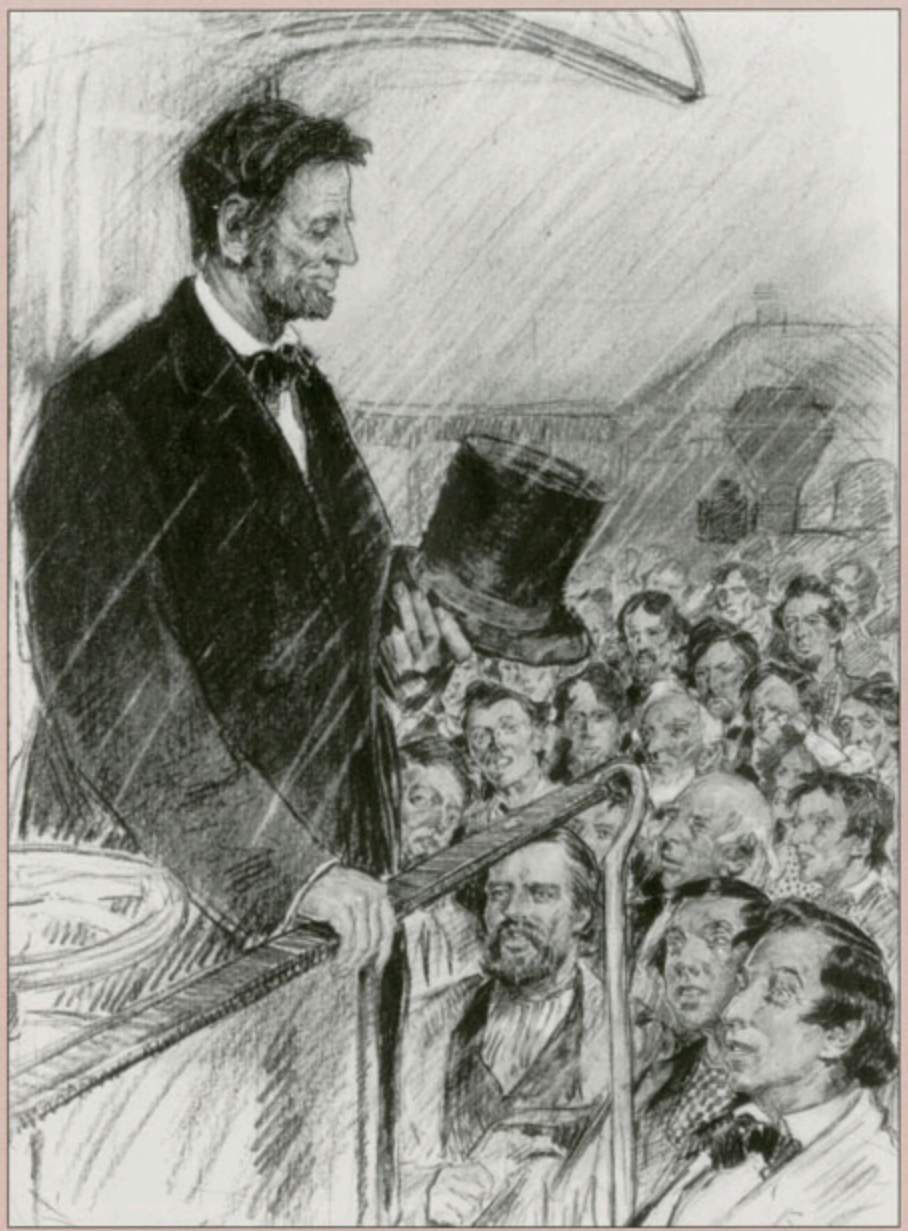
The address piles up its "rhymes of thought" with this first type in which exactly the same thought is expressed, but in different words and images:

It is for us..to be dedicated…to the
unfinished work…
It is…for us…to be…dedicated to the
great task.

So we see that, added to Lincoln's grammatical parallel construction, there is the parallel thought construction of Hebrew poetry.[15]

Consider the conclusion of the First Inaugural in terms of thought rhymes;

In your hands…and not in mine, is
the…issue of civil war.
The government will not assail you.
(Hebrew type one.)



(TLM #161).

Lincoln's Farewell Address, Springfield, February 11, 1861

My friends—No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe every thing. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being, who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you and be every where for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

You have no conflict....
You have no oath registered in Heaven.
(Hebrew type three.)

And the overlapping Hebrew type two:

You have no oath registered in
Heaven...
while I have the most solemn one....

In Lincoln's Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862, there is an example of the Hebraic fourth type of thought rhyme, in which there is more than a second line based on the first:

Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history
We...will be remembered in spite
of ourselves.
No personal significance...can spare
one or another of us.
The fiery trial...will light us down to
the latest generation.

In the Second Inaugural we find type three:

The prayers of both could not
be answered;
that of neither has been answered fully.
(Can be considered as type one.)

"Rhyme of thought" can also be found in smaller units of larger thoughts:

Fondly do we hope—
fervently do we pray

and

With malice toward none;
With charity for all.

Of course many more illustrations can be found. Lincoln uses this parallel thought form so often and so intricately (with smaller parallel units contained in larger ones) that it does not seem far-fetched to say that he has created his own type of "rhyme of thought" poetry based upon that of the Bible.

Is It Poetry?

The Gettysburg Address is unique in that it can be viewed not only as Hebraic thought-rhyme poetry with a beat unrelated to meter, but also as western, metric

poetry. It lends itself to the five-stress line of blank verse, and there is undeniable iambic pentameter in many of its lines.[16] Of course, Garry Wills relates it to the classic Greek funeral oration,[10] and still others say it is simply great prose; there are many ways of looking at the few remarks made at Gettysburg.

We need not be intimidated upon discovering that we cannot scan all of Lincoln's other great writings as western poetry. The "loose metrical effect" of his writing may be a close parallel to the non-metrical beat of Hebrew poetry. We might be able to speak of Lincoln's simple, plain-spoken Hebraic poetry, instead of his great prose, as we reflect on his great thought rhymes with their solemn cadence and their musical alliteration and assonance.

As president, Lincoln no longer experimented with structured English, or European forms of poetry. The difference between "My Childhood-Home" and the Farewell Address is great. Within the early poem, his verses were like vertebrae that gave the work a spine, a solid structure. His later writings, prose that becomes a different kind of poetry, substitute grand "rhymes of thought" for verses. But they too rise one on one like vertebrae, to give a solid structure to his "Hebraic poetry."

While Lincoln stopped writing in metrical verse, he retained its musical sound. The beauty of this verse from "My Childhood-Home" is undeniable when read aloud (in spite of the poor thought content):

Air held his breath; the trees all still
Seemed sorr'wing angels round.
Their swelling tears in dew-drops fell
Upon the list'ning ground.

Vowel sounds (assonance), alliteration of *s*'s and *d*'s, and especially the liquid *l*-sounds make this a beautiful verse to read aloud. But consider how far Lincoln has come with that same beautifully controlled music when we read:

Fondly do we hope—fervently do we
pray—that this mighty scourge
of war may speedily pass away.

There are the same assonance, alliteration, liquid *l*'s and emphatic *d*'s. The music is still there, but with new meaning. Ordinarily it is not appropriate to insert rhyme in unrhymed material, but this whole statement, including its rhyme, is too magnificent to submit to trivial technical criticism.

The musicality of the passage continues with more *l*'s and smooth vowel sounds. The words "wills," "until," "all," "wealth," "piled," and "toil" show us that Lincoln has not lost his fondness for *l*-sounds. The passage is "piled high" with alliterative *t*'s, *s*'s, *d*'s, and *p*'s that bind the words of the passage together in an expressive and intricate musical pattern.

Is this poetry? If we take the Hebraic parallelism of "rhymes of thought" [11] into consideration, the answer is, "Yes." It is more than poetic prose. It is Lincoln's own unique form of poetry, developed largely from the English translation of the Hebrew and blended with his mastery of Western elements.

The Second Inaugural

Of course, not all of Lincoln's writings are great prose, poetry, or oratory. Obviously, when he opens the Second Inaugural by saying, "At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first," he is speaking only in good, grammatical prose. It is expository as must be a great deal, if not most, of his official writing. The first paragraph of the Second Inaugural Address is undramatic and totally impersonal. It is almost as if it is not Lincoln himself who is taking the oath of office. But some of his typical parallels can be found ("Fitting and proper" and "every point and phase"), which help to create the flow of his good expository prose.

In the second paragraph, Lincoln becomes more emotionally involved. "All dreaded it—all sought to avert it" is a dramatic "rhyme of thought" (Hebraic type one). There follows a long sentence which can be almost entirely divided into thought rhyme verses:

While the inaugural address was being
delivered from this place,
devoted altogether to saving the Union
without war,
insurgent agents were in the city
seeking to destroy it without war—
seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide
effects, by negotiation.
Both parties deprecated war;
But one of them would make war rather
than let the nation survive;
And the other would accept war rather
than let it perish.
And the war came.

In the third paragraph, intensity of poetic parallels diminishes as Lincoln explains that "These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest." His parallels are strong but not of the intensity and involvement of poetry. "Peculiar and powerful interest" uses the parallel, grammatical construction of good, expository prose.

At the end of the third paragraph, we see the transition between powerful prose parallels and the Hebraic parallels of poetry. "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other" is a statement far more intense than those at the beginning of the paragraph. (We can identify it as Hebraic type three.)

The intensity of the beat of the following sentence creates an underlying iambic rhythm beneath a powerful prose statement: "It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; ..." Then Lincoln turns directly to the Biblical: "but let us judge not that we be not judged."

He then continues, returning to an Hebraic form:

The prayers of both could not be
answered;
that of neither has been answered fully.
The Almighty has his own purposes.

Again he returns to the Bible with passionate intensity:

Woe unto the world because of offenses!
for it must needs be that offences come;
but woe to that man by whom the
offence cometh!

Lincoln delivering the Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865—like poetry, Lincoln's greatest prose carried even more emotional power when read aloud. (TLM #O-108).

There follows a lengthy rhetorical question, which is the most dramatic of prose. Is God, Lincoln asks, behaving in any other way than we would expect him to act in giving "to both North and South this terrible war"? Then Lincoln, after this highly charged prose, breaks into rhymed poetry, Hebraic in form and Western in rhyme and meter:

Fondly do we hope—
fervently do we pray—
that this mighty scourge of war may
speedily pass away.

It is a fusion of elements that, had Lincoln lived and chosen to write poetry, would likely have become one of the unique characteristics of his style.

Lincoln is building up step by step in powerful oratorical fashion. Now he again returns to a prose passage, the length of it characteristic of his emotional involvement. He is a veritable Beethoven climbing higher and higher to the grand conclusion of his symphony. "[U]ntil all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword" are two extended parallels in an intense statement—a furious statement—that again drops dramatically to "still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.'" A prose statement of great length, it is held together by a balance of line in the manner of blank verse. It seems not to be a question of prose or poetry. It is both prose *and* poetry.

This provides yet another transition to the highest point of the address, the absolute poetry of the concluding paragraph (written as Hebraic verse):

With malice toward none,
with charity toward all;
with firmness in the right
as God gives us to see the right,
Let us strive on to finish the work we
are in;
to bind up the nation's wounds;
to care for him who shall have borne
the battle,
and his widow,
and his orphan—
to do all which may achieve and cherish
a just and lasting peace,
among ourselves, and with all nations.

In this address there is a rise and fall of intensity, from prose to poetry, to more intense prose to more intense poetry, until the final Hebraic verses ring out with tremendous consonance like great chords at the conclusion of a choral symphony. This is great oratorical poetry, compact like the Gettysburg Address but, I believe, even more powerful.

Yes, Lincoln wrote poetry. He wove it into a remarkable fabric made up also of exposition and oratorical prose to create a unique form totally his own. As we study—and read aloud—the Second Inaugural we can better understand why, years earlier, reporters at Bloomington forgot their pencils as Lincoln gave his legendary "Lost Speech."

When we read Lincoln—and hear him in our minds—we are aware of the vast cultural influence that has come to bear on his recreative imagination: Shakespeare, Pope, Gray, Burns, Hebraic literature and its translators and scholars to name the most outstanding. We hear so much of our culture in Lincoln's words that we are baffled by them. Is this prose? Is this poetry? Was he acquainted with Edmund Burke to whom Basler compares him? Could he possibly have been familiar with classical Greek funeral oratory? It is difficult to see how this man who insisted upon plain, even homely speech, somehow assimilated the greatest that our culture has produced, and reproduced it in his own unique way, with his own wisdom and his own capacity to wield it with a benign power in his own day and time.

Endnotes

1. Roy P. Basler, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1946), pp. 48-9.

2. This is the date assigned by Basler to the undated original manuscript, based on mention of the poem as "almost finished" in Lincoln's letter to Andrew Johnston of February 24, 1846.

3. Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, April 18, 1846, in Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953-55), 1:378 (hereinafter cited as "*CW*").

4. Basler, ed., *Speeches and Writings*, p. 41.

5. Basler, ed., *Speeches and Writings*, p. 12.

6. Lincoln to Fanny McCullough, December 23, 1862, *CW* 6:16-17.

7. This date is assigned by Basler, based on Lincoln's letter to Andrew Johnston of the same date. *CW* 1:386.

8. Jean H. Baker, *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: Norton, 1987), p.126.

9. Jason Emerson, "The Poetic Lincoln," *Lincoln Herald* (Spring, 1999), p. 9.

10. Robert Herrick, "Delight in Disorder," 1648.

11. Basler, ed., *Speeches and Writings*, pp. 44-7.

12. Basler, ed., *Speeches and Writings*, p. 45.

13. Roy B. Chamberlin, D.D. and Herman Feldman, Ph.D., eds., *The Dartmouth Bible* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1950), p.5. Here are some other examples of Hebraic "rhymes of thought":

Type One:

"Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
and has fenced me with bones and sinews." (Job 10:11)

Type Two:

"They are upright as the palm tree/but speak not:
they must needs be borne/because they cannot go." (Jeremiah 10:5)

Type Three:

"But oh that God would speak, /and open his lips against thee" (Job 11:5)

14. Chamberlin and Feldman, eds., *Dartmouth Bible*, p.5.

15. For more detailed analysis of Lincoln's use of grammatical parallelism, see my essay, "Parallel Construction in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address," *Lincoln Herald* (Winter 2000).

16. The similarity of the sound and cadence between Lincoln's writings and those of the Bible is apparent when the opening of the Gettysburg Address is read aloud:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

and then followed by the Lord's Prayer, (Matthew 6:9 and 10):

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed by thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

The difference in thought content should not deafen us to the similarities in the flow of the language. For similarity of content as well as structure, compare: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" from the Lord's Prayer, and "Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well" from Lincoln's Farewell Address.

17. This point is developed in detail in my unpublished essay, "The Five-Stress Line in Lincoln's 'Gettysburg Address'."

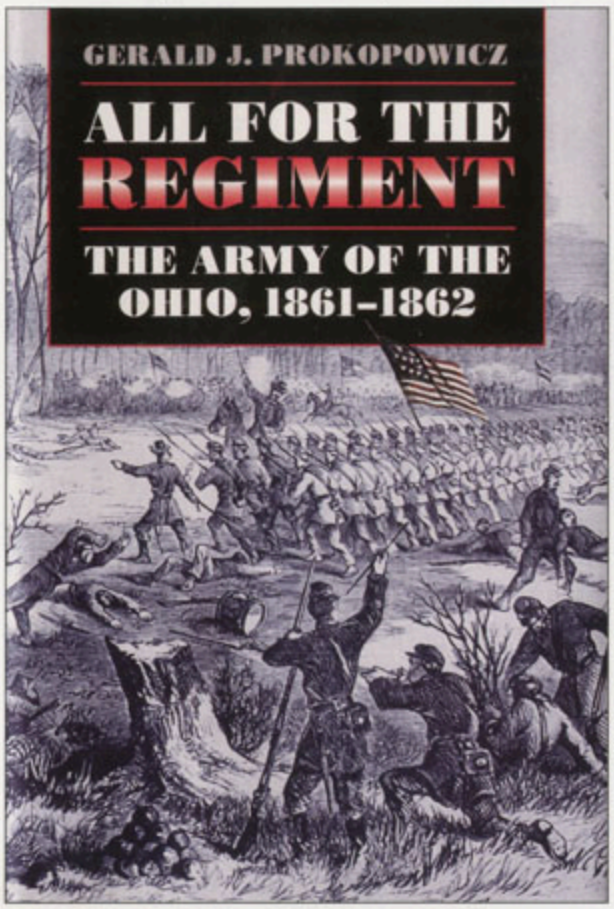
18. Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*, (New York: Touchstone, 1992).

At The Lincoln Museum

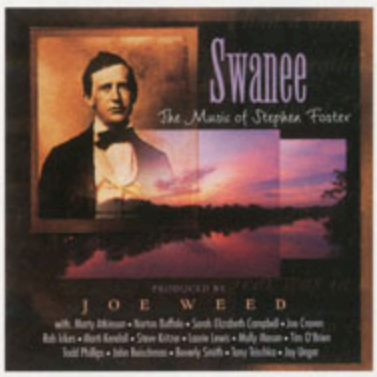
Author Appearance

Saturday, June 30 2 p.m.

Notwithstanding the fact that he is here every day, Lincoln Museum historian Gerald J. Prokopowicz will make a special appearance on Saturday, June 30 to discuss and sign copies of his new book, *All For The Regiment: The Army of the Ohio, 1861-1862* (University of North Carolina Press). James McPherson, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era,* describes *All For the Regiment* as "Lucid and lively" and says that it "fills an important niche in the history of Civil War armies." Michael Fellman, author of *The Making of Robert E. Lee*, call it "An insightful analysis of Civil War military culture… an excellent anti-romance, original and unusual in approach and refreshingly honest."



The book is available at The Lincoln Museum Store for $34.95 (discounted for Museum members).



Joe Weed In Concert

Friday, July 13 two shows

Noon and 8:00 p.m.

Musician/producer Joe Weed, creator of the musical components of the Museum's permanent exhibit, "Abraham Lincoln and the American Experiment," will perform music from his new CD "Swanee: The Music of Stephen Foster." In recognition of the Museum's current special exhibit, *Now He Belongs to the Ages: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*, his concerts will include songs related to that tragic event, drawn from the sheet music collection of The Lincoln Museum.

Where's the Hat?

Ten years ago, issue number 1823 of *Lincoln Lore* appeared with a new masthead and the now familiar logo of a stovepipe hat within a gold frame. At the same time, the name of its home institution changed from the unwieldy "Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum" to a more compact title, "The Lincoln Museum." The hat symbolized Abraham Lincoln, of course, while the gold frame represented the Museum collection's emphasis on prints and engravings.

With this issue, *Lincoln Lore* presents the Museum's new logo, which has been designed to clear up a few ambiguities of the old. The hat symbol led many visitors to ask, "Where's the hat?" in the exhibit— to our regret, The Lincoln Museum does not own any hats that belonged to Abraham Lincoln. Attractive as it was, the metallic gold color of the frame proved difficult and expensive to reproduce on mundane items like stationery and business cards, where the script caption "The Lincoln Museum" was all but impossible to read. Finally, the Museum received occasional visitors who expected to learn about the history of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Corporation and its successor companies, which have long anchored the local economy. The new logo and caption leave no question as to the focus of The Lincoln Museum: the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.