Shakespeare and Domestic Loss

Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation

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1   Introduction: the circular staircase

I

If the title *Love's Labor's Won* does indeed refer to a lost play by Shakespeare, it is but one of many. His dramas repeatedly incorporate traces of different plays he might have written. Fragments of other genres often appear, whether as splinters painfully piercing the surface of the play or as guests convivially welcomed within. Marcade, a messenger not only from the court but also from the domain of tragedy, complicates comedic closure; "Pyramus and Thisbe" famously demonstrates what its host play might have become.[1] Less familiar than such episodes but no less important are the momentary suggestions of lost plots and possibilities, often present only in a few lines of dialogue. France's farewell lines in *King Lear* ("Thy dow'rless daughter, King, thrown to my chance, / Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France" [I.i.256–257]) gesture towards a comedy that could have ended on a declaration very much like his. The Prince's passing flirtation with Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*, II.i.326–330), a moment that deserves more attention than it has received, itself flirts with an alternative narrative. And the intimations of homoerotic plots recently traced by a number of critics suggest that gender, like genre, might have been constructed very differently.

Much as the interrupted sentences that figure prominently in the more literal syntax of so many plays hint at lost words, thoughts, and agendas, so moments like the Prince's approach to Beatrice temporarily break the syntax of the dramas in which they appear, thus enacting the preoccupation with loss in its many forms that is as fundamental to Shakespeare's plays and poems as it is to poststructuralist theory. If his tragedies predictably end on loss, his comedies less predictably may open on it; the initial scenes of *As You Like It* and *All's Well That Ends Well* refer in some detail to the death of a parent. In beginning with the corpse of a king on stage, *1 Henry VI* signals the many types of deprivation, whether of a monarch, an idealized vision, or an era, that structure the plots of Shakespearean history. All of Shakespeare's nondramatic

poems, including "A Lover's Complaint" and "A Funeral Elegy" if they are indeed his, are preoccupied, even obsessed, with the consequences of loss. Those consequences are staged as well on many levels of form and style. The rhetorical figure syneciosis, for example, ties together opposites and thus at once gives and snatches away. Witness one variety of this trope, an oxymoron like "Profitless usurer" (Sonnet 4, line 7); witness too the *x-less x* version that appears so prominently in *The Rape of Lucrece*, that narrative of reduplicated losses and recoveries ("helpless help" [1056], "liveless life" [1374]). And of course theater ends on an empty stage whose revels are ended. Loss and its fraternal twin lack in their many forms are, as I will demonstrate, no less pervasive in the culture than in the style of Shakespeare's plays and poems. He writes in, to, and for a nation of mourners.

Yet even this brief a survey points to the challenges of studying loss, whether in general or in Shakespeare's canon. The poststructuralist paradigms that direct our attention to the subject may also tempt us to misinterpret it: the discourse that so energetically resists ideologically driven impulses to categorization itself often oversimplifies loss (and recovery too, as we will see). Losses differ among themselves far more than generalizations about that concept, poststructuralist and otherwise, sometimes acknowledge. Unhappy families are not all alike; the loss of a kingdom is of course radically different from that of a home, even if the abode may on one level represent the state. And the contemporary emphasis on materiality encourages further distinctions based on value in its several senses, an apt response to a culture where the price of the item stolen determined whether the crime was capital. One size seldom fits all.

This book engages with the vast subject it addresses by defining loss in terms of the household and then further delimiting it. *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* is specifically about three closely related forms of domestic upheaval that can in fact fruitfully be studied in conjunction: the loss of goods via burglary, the loss of the dwelling place itself, both as physical locale and as haven, and the loss of parents when a child is still relatively young. I have selected these foci partly because some intriguing passages in Shakespeare – lines that variously challenge us intellectually, trouble us ethically, or dazzle us stylistically – involve them. Witness, among many other examples, two texts to which I turn later, that often neglected lyric Sonnet 48 and Leontes's expression of jealousy in I.ii.190–198. In addition, however, these three quotidian domestic events constitute a coherent unit for studying the epistemological incoherence and instability they represent. Indeed, one sign of the interdependence of the three types of loss surveyed in this book is that several texts that I assigned to a given chapter might instead have been examined within a different one;

Belarius is in a sense a burglar, for example, and *Cymbeline* engages with the absence of parents in addition to that of homes. As my chapter titles suggest, the members of our triad of losses involve interrelated issues about place in both spatial and social senses. All three types are further interconnected through their relationship to gender, an explicit concern at many points in this study and an implicit one on virtually every page. These domestic losses are also linked together by their interactions with events in more public spheres. All three involve intrusive outsiders (the thief, the stepparent, the opposing party in a legal dispute about land, who often literally trespassed on someone's property), and thus are connected to nationalistic fears of foreigners, as well as to concerns about sexuality as invasion.

The potential breadth of my topic has led me to narrow the scope of certain chapters. Chapter 3 refers in passing to many threats to the home, but I concentrate there on destruction by fire and the invasion of outsiders onto one's property in the course of land disputes: these were arguably the threats to the material dwelling place most feared by many members of Shakespeare's audience, and they have received little attention from literary critics. Although the deaths of children and siblings repeatedly shook the early modern home, the discussion in Chapter 4 centers instead on the demise of parents, largely because such events are more central to Shakespeare's canon. In that chapter I further delimit my inquiries by focusing on the loss of mothers and fathers during the period when their children were still young enough to live at home, hence referring only tangentially to the truant from Wittenberg who is surely Shakespeare's most famous bereaved son. For if the loss of a parent in some sense always imperils a home, that threat is likely to differ in both degree and kind when their sons and daughters are still actually dwelling in the domestic environment in question; some particularly significant material consequences of parental loss, notably the effects of the wardship system, are germane only until the children in question reach their majority.[2] I further delimit my topic by devoting somewhat less attention than I might otherwise have done to issues at the core of two forthcoming studies, the types of homelessness studied by Linda Woodbridge and the invasive adulterers analyzed by Richard Helgerson.[3] This book also restricts itself by concentrating in each chapter on two principal texts, generally single plays or poems but in the case of the Henriad a group of dramas. A case could have been made for choosing any number of other plays and poems; but since genre is a primary concern of this study, I have tried to represent a range of literary forms as well as of periods in Shakespeare's career and also to juxtapose texts that implicitly comment on each other.

Although *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* principally engages with drama, I also discuss Shakespeare's nondramatic work at some length and explore the implications of my arguments for several genres of early modern poetry; I do so because of both my personal interest in poetry and my professional conviction that students of Shakespeare should look more closely at the connections between his plays and poems, particularly in light of an academic climate that privileges the former. And, as the title of this introductory chapter indicates, I frequently allude to twentieth-century poetry, in part because such references can reveal connections between early modern and modern versions of loss and in part because one of my principal concerns, the complex relationship between language and loss, is central to many twentieth-century lyrics.

In one respect, however, in lieu of constricting its arena this study embraces capacious definitions. Any discussion of domestic spaces necessarily encompasses a large and amorphous category, and its boundaries are further blurred by raising the question of what constitutes a home. Though I concentrate mainly on edifices, an analysis of early modern abodes must acknowledge their intimate and complex relationship to the land on which they are situated, especially when that property constitutes a sizeable estate; I discuss land law in Chapter 3 because its disputes necessarily threaten domestic edifices as well. Moreover, as many critics have acknowledged, sixteenth-century England witnessed many redefinitions of the imbricated concepts ''house'' and ''home,'' and cultural constructions of dwelling places were as varied and shifting in early modern England as their material styles of constructions.[4] The increasing emphasis on privacy manifest in architectural decisions, notably the movement from the two-story central hall to a house whose second story contains separate chambers, was literally reshaping the physical dwelling place and in so doing reshaping conceptions of home.[5] Many observers of domesticity in early modern England have traced changing definitions of public and private, with the more acute studies acknowledging as well the imbrication of those categories.[6]

Religion sparked other shifts in the valences of domestic spaces; the Protestant emphasis on the home as center of moral and religious instruction reminds one that in Tudor and Stuart England the dwelling place was, as the marriage manuals emphasize, both a little commonwealth and a little church. But the spiritual resonances of home were quite different, though no less culturally specific, for those who, so to speak, dwelled in Rome while dwelling in England – how did the politically perilous religious practices followed within their own homes and condemned by the culture outside affect the very conception of home among recusants?[7] Moreover, in a period of intensified nationalism, the

connection of home and homeland intensified as well, an issue to which we will repeatedly return. As these examples suggest, not only is a dwelling place likely to have different resonances for inhabitants of, say, sixteenth-century England and twentieth-century Los Angeles, but its meanings may vary from region to region, period to period, and person to person within the same culture; for example, certain inhabitants of Tudor and Stuart England had several dwelling places, which evidently complicated their definition of home. But because the very relationship among various conceptions of dwelling place and home is so often explored in Shakespeare's texts – witness, among a host of other instances, the connections between literal homes and other havens in *Cymbeline* – I finesse the problem of definition by simply relying on the broadly conceived category of "dwelling place" when considering domestic spaces and referring to "homes" when and if the connotations of that term are just.

II

If, as I will suggest, domestic loss in Shakespeare is a circular staircase, so too is my critical practice in studying it. While engaging with such problems as the ideology of domestic spaces and the politics of transgression in early modern culture, I circle back as well to older questions about Renaissance literature. This study repeatedly raises issues about genre and language that were central to Renaissance studies during the long period when that title was used with neither apology nor self-consciousness. If this is a book on the styles and forms of loss, it is also a study of styles and forms in the more customary sense. At the same time, as my preliminary sketch of my topic suggests, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* participates in, and on occasion attempts to refine, contemporary critical practices and presuppositions. In focusing on the domestic, like such scholars as Frances E. Dolan, Richard Helgerson, Lena Cowen Orlin, and many others, I am attempting to bridge the concerns of first-generation new historicist and feminist scholarship by demonstrating an alternative site for many issues sometimes associated merely with more public arenas, notably fears of invasion.[8] My emphasis on the home also draws attention to regionalism, challenging, as I have done elsewhere, the new historicist tendency to emphasize London in general and the court in particular.[9] If England was a nation of mourners, it is only slightly hyperbolic to describe it as a nation of migrants, and the domestic spaces that this book examines were often literally distant from the court and London. But in privileging the domestic I aim to reinterpret, not repress, discussions of the nation and its capital by showing that the interactions

between home and state are as complex and dynamic as those between text and state.

If this study signals its participation in the project of exploring the domestic, it also insistently announces certain departures from the work of Dolan's *Dangerous Familiars* in particular. Whereas her important book mainly emphasizes threats from within, I am primarily concerned with invasive outsiders. Yet, as Dolan's occasional references to outsiders would indicate, my perspective is designed to supplement hers (in the many senses of that verb) rather than supersede it. Indeed, not the least of the transgressions of the outsiders catalogued in *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* is their threat to the very categories "inside" and "outside"; I suggest, for example, that in Shakespeare's culture like ours anxieties about intruders often encode concerns about the boy next door. Redefining uncanniness, Homi K. Bhabha suggests that the "unhomely" results when "the borders between home and world become confused ... the private and the public become part of each other";[10] the intruders examined in this book, whether they be burglars, stepparents, or fires spreading from alehouses, render home unhomely in just this sense.

Moreover, when Dolan and other critics, Foucauldians implicitly and often explicitly, interpret the domestic sphere, they describe it primarily in terms of outré and extreme events such as witchcraft and murder. Similarly, when another influential study, Katharine Eisaman Maus's *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance*, treats crime, it concentrates on witchcraft and treason rather than larceny and burglary.[11] *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* instead emphasizes the importance of common and in many instances quotidian happenings: the disappearance of a pie or a sheet, a death attributable to illness rather than violence. But this perspective too can supplement investigations of the anxieties associated with more atypical events; for example, I demonstrate connections between descriptions of the so-called "black art" and the rhetoric associated with rogues and vagabonds.

In emphasizing social history and its interaction with cultural history, I attempt variously to nuance and to negate some common critical presuppositions. Seconding Richard Strier's insistence on the importance of "the obvious, the surface, and the literal,"[12] I further contend that sometimes a cigar is mainly, if not necessarily only, a cigar – and that fact, far from precluding sophisticated analyses, may reveal important issues about smoking habits or the tobacco industry. Tarquin's bearing fire into Lucrece's dwelling place invokes not only martyrology and demonology but also house fires. In these and many other instances, an examination of the literal and quotidian levels of meaning is not a pedestrian, even plodding, alternative to the tightrope acrobatics of

cultural critique but rather, as I just observed, a supplement, and this book attempts both forms of locomotion.

This is not to say, however, that this study invariably presumes a mimetic relationship between the material phenomena of domestic loss and Shakespeare's texts. To be sure, sometimes it insists on exactly that; the changeling boy, for example, evokes not only cultural fears of Amazons but also financial and other practices concerning the custody of orphans. But in turning a human child into a fairy child in that episode, Shakespeare also tropes the transformations of the material world that in more extreme forms often characterize his representations of social and cultural history. Domestic loss may be translated into more abstract terms, as when a concern for lost homes becomes a preoccupation with threatened havens in *Cymbeline*, or transformed into figural and other stylistic mannerisms, as when syneciosis embodies the seesaw between absence and recovery or when Sonnet 35 overtly refers to a thief and also stages patterns of stealing linguistically.[13] In instances like these, Seamus Heaney's observation about poetry is applicable to drama too: the text "floats adjacent to, parallel to, the historical moment" – a position that makes its relationship to history by no means less significant but certainly more complex.[14]

The relationship between the quotidian events of social history traced here and national history is equally complicated, and complicated in some similar ways. The model of simple equivalence, though it produced some useful insights into the significance of the family, has been recognized as too bald a representation of either the ideologies of patriarchalism or the workings of a family. Dolan's claim that the culture should be read from the inside out, moving from the family to the state, though a useful corrective, risks merely repeating a mistake of earlier criticism:[15] one danger of positing the centrality of either the political and historical or the familial is the assumption that other levels of meaning merely encode it, so that burglary, for example, would be significant primarily as a xenophobic representation of the intrusion of Others with dark skins and dark religious rituals, or alternatively, such intrusions would be significant mainly as glosses on familial anxiety.

Metaphor, however, not only expresses responses to cultural and social patterns but also can, as it were, represent the relationship between these levels of meaning. Rejecting the so-called substitution and comparison models for the workings of metaphor, Max Black's rightly influential contribution to the debates on figuration recommends instead what he terms an "interaction view."[16] The meanings of both terms of the figure, Black asserts, shift in relation to each other: "The metaphor

selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject . . . This involves shifts in meaning of words belonging to the same family or system as the metaphorical expression.''[17] Black's statement reveals its era in its emphasis on an orderly relationship of meanings; I would add that the interaction may destabilize meanings, thus clearly placing metaphor on a continuum with that prodigal son the metaphysical conceit. Similarly, his pronouncements assume a largely stable hierarchy positioning the primary and secondary meanings, while in fact metaphor may function in part by confusing the relationship between the two – is ''To His Coy Mistress'' more centrally and more viscerally involved with love or with death? When we adjust Black's interactive model in these respects, however, it can aptly gloss the relationships realized in domestic loss between the quotidian and the extreme and between social and cultural history. Thus, as we will see, the surrogacy of stepparents and other guardians relates to that of language in the dynamic ways Black describes. Adducing the familial parallel draws attention to the danger of exploitation within language; the semantic and aural displacements of figurative language comment on the more material displacements often inflicted on an orphan.

My emphasis on social history also raises methodological questions about that endangered but still dangerous species the fact.[18] Two interrelated tenets of poststructuralism, the insistence that all analyses are colored by the presuppositions of the language system that presents them and the attack on the disinterestedness and rationality associated with the Enlightenment, have been deployed in some quarters to make the very concept of a fact suspect. But Rorty himself, though loosely and inaccurately associated with the more extreme versions of relativism, develops a modified version of it that permits of a cautious but significant recuperation of evidentiary procedures: the position that material reality is shaped by cultural constructions of it is, he persuasively argues, very different from the less convincing assumption that no material reality can exist independent of or prior to those systems.[19] Thus recognizing that the very concept of crime is a construction that performs important cultural work and that property was itself a shifting and highly charged concept does not preclude acknowledging an increase during the 1590s in the number of people who lost what they considered their property; recognizing the many different ways the loss of a parent could be explicated does not prevent us from devoting attention to the phenomena of mortality crises.

As I noted, both by precept and example this study aims to valorize the links both between social and cultural history and also between

history itself and modes of criticism too often dismissed as ahistorical, notably the close examination of language and the study of genre. Texts sometimes enunciate clearly but often whisper or stutter; the poststructuralist recognition of these and other instabilities in language often has led to the most rigorous scrutiny of its complexities, yet too often the association of any close examination of language with New Criticism has encouraged a cursory glance at texts that aims only to find evidence of the critic's presuppositions. Texts sing as well as stutter, louder sing for every tatter loss rends in our mortal dress – hence they urge us to remain attentive to style. Similarly, far from being inimical to the study of cultural history, genre is one of the most promising avenues for exploring it, as I imply in my subtitle and attempt to demonstrate throughout this book.

But it is, curiously, ophthalmology that provides the best trope for some central methodological aims of this study.[20] A technique known as monovision is often used to restore clear vision: one eye is corrected to see close objects well and the other to perceive distant ones, but the two eyes function together to produce a clearer image of both near and distant sights than even the single eye adjusted for each type of vision could have achieved.[21] Monovision, I maintain, protects against a view of English culture as monolithic: its dual focus sharpens our perceptions of the texts and cultures of early modern England. And hence *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss* practices monovision, in several respects looking at the near and the distant in conjunction: it examines the domestic and the national; nuances of texts such as the trope of the cuckoo in *The Rape of Lucrece* and their implications for much broader issues in Shakespeare's canon; Tudor and Stuart losses and their analogues in the stories of Eden and Troy; London and outlying areas; and the early modern in relation to the modern. This study is also indebted to monovision in that the eye that looks at what is near concentrates on events occurring in short and precise time spans, such as the mortality crisis of 1557–9 or the 1611 changes in coinage that arguably shape some passages in *Cymbeline;* the other eye gazes at a whole era.

III

One reason loss is culturally specific, *pace* many psychoanalytic overviews of mourning, is that different societies offer different narratives through which subsequent versions of deprivation are read. The contrasts among these stories crystallize distinctions among the cultures that tell them; the fabled decline of Arthur's court and the mythologized disap-

pearance of Norman Rockwell's small-town America reveal much about the respective societies that mourn their absence. Not the least reason for the references to Troy that glimmer in two plays I discuss, *Pericles* and *Cymbeline*, is that Troy and Eden provided paradigmatic narratives for interpretations of loss in early modern England. If Lucrece visits a representation of Troy when attempting to cope with her own grief, so too do many members of Shakespeare's audience, and the playwright himself often provides them with another version of monovision in juxtaposing diegetic losses with the destruction of those famously tall and flaming towers. And, whereas other scriptural narratives also lie behind representations of loss in Tudor and Stuart England (the story of Laban offered a familiar instance of thievery, Mary and Joseph modelled the loss of both home and haven, and so on), Eden was particularly influential.

No student of Renaissance pastoral would be surprised at claims that expulsion from that garden functioned as a paradigm for subsequent versions of deprivation and absence in early modern culture, even, or especially, those that involve falling on grass. The myth of Eden was of course the originary version of the repeated loss of God's presence through sin, the deprivation that Protestantism urged believers constantly to battle through carefully monitored stages of spiritual growth, even while its doctrine emphasized their inability to effect their own salvation and stressed the likelihood of a continuing chain of losses. But Eden is also more specifically relevant to the domestic calamities catalogued in *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss*. "So clomb this first grand Thief into God's Fold" (IV.192), Milton writes, reminding us that Satan is not just a thief but a burglar and as such deprives his victims of their home and distances them from a loving parent.[22]

The models of Eden and Troy, then, shape early modern presentations of loss in many ways and are in turn reread through and sometimes in those narratives. In both a woman is the immediate cause of catastrophic invasions, while the texts hint at a more complex gendering of guilt. Each offers details that correspond to concerns in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century culture; fire, for example, was both the source of Troy's ruin and one of the most pernicious dangers threatening the early modern household. And if domestic disasters involve place in social and spatial senses, as well as displacement and replacement, that concept is equally central to the narratives of Troy and Eden; they repeatedly demonstrate connections between losing a literal, geographical place and losing social position and emotional stability.

These stories also demonstrate the complex dynamic of loss and recovery that this book traces in so many arenas. Both narratives recount

an originary loss that limits all subsequent attempts at recuperation; paradoxically, while domestic spaces may be associated with presence and security, their Christian inhabitants knew well that they were imperfect surrogates for that first lost home, Eden. Yet at the same time, nationalistic pride in Troynovant scripts a more optimistic narrative, and, similarly, if the myth of Eden, the spiritual analogue to the story of Troy in so many ways, emphasizes the impossibility of recovering its paradisaical garden on this earth, it permits partial recuperations through some versions of pastoral and promises the possibility of that second and better Eden that is heaven.

Above all, the stories of Eden and Troy are germane to the domestic problems studied here because both demonstrate the inexorable relationship between a single traumatic happening, whether it be the stealing of a woman or an apple, and the thousand ships that are launched, the thousands of sins that are committed, and the thousands of lines that are both written and blotted as a result. Much as *Paradise Lost* both opens and closes on characters who, deprived of one dwelling, must construct another, so Shakespearean texts involve losing more than loss, tracing as they do longterm and often gradual processes in the households they evoke. Loss is relational inasmuch as one such event changes the interaction among other components of a system as well, and one of the clearest examples is the way family roles may shift homeostatically, a process involving considerable re-gendering, after the demise of a parent.[23] Even Shakespeare's lyric renditions of loss often emphasize not a constant, timeless state of affairs but rather perceptions that in their shifts draw attention to temporality; this is one of the many reasons he rearranges time sequences in the line, ''yellow leaves, or none, or few'' (Sonnet 73, line 2). And throughout the texts we will examine, current losses revive and reinterpret earlier ones.

In studying the processes of loss and attempts to control it, whether by the playwright, the culture, or diegetic characters, this book poses revisionary questions about social institutions, cultural practices, and formal potentialities. In particular, I reinforce some common conceptions of domestic spaces, challenge others. Arguably the most telling result of emphasizing domestic loss is the recognition that early modern households, ostensibly associated with tranquil stasis, were in fact profoundly unstable materially and ideologically. Objects within them or the edifice itself might be snatched away from their owners, inhabitants might be stolen by death, and such events initiated lengthy chains of events in which the interplay between loss and recovery might itself prove unstable. The myth of Eden serves to express both the radical upheavals associated with the early modern household and the reactive fantasy of a

time of unchanging and unthreatened bliss. Hence in one important sense the early modern household sports postmodern architecture: whatever its literal style, its inhabitants must often have experienced it instead as a creation of Frank Gehry, the postmodern architect who delights in diagonals that would unsettle even his baroque predecessors and in fences that refuse to extend quite as far as the walls they are ostensibly joining.

Another implication of my emphasis on loss is that the gendering of the early modern home is itself more complex and unstable than we often acknowledge. To begin with, the commonplace association between home and the female body has of course multiple valences. On one level, both surely trope comfort and spiritual as well as visceral nutrition. Yet on another level, as I have argued elsewhere, the female body too was perceived less in terms of constant classical or grotesque characteristics than in terms of its propensity to change, especially in response to gynecological ailments.[24] In the instance of the body like that of domestic spaces, sometimes such metamorphoses were realized, sometimes merely fearfully anticipated.

Moreover, if the home is a site of struggle as well as successfully realized surveillance and control, the often cited norm of the woman enclosed within the house acquires new and unsettling implications: that edifice is not an antidote to putative female disruption but rather a trope for that disruption and at best an imperfect vessel to contain it and the woman supposedly responsible for it. In particular, rather than serving as a shield against the invasions to which the dangerously permeable female body was subject, the house becomes a representation of such permeability. Indeed, in the texts we will explore, both domestic edifices and female bodies are repeatedly subject to, and subjected by, cognate intrusions, whether from diseases or contaminating intruders, whether from the flames of desire or more literal fires.

As I argue in Chapter 3, however, the early modern home was associated with male subjectivity and the male body as well as their female counterparts; if the death of one member of a couple could reverse male and female subject positions, neither was the gendering of the house itself clear-cut and unidirectional. The connections between early modern abodes and masculinity should not surprise us; witness, for example, the linkage of dwellings and patriarchy in the expression for a family line, "the house of *x*." Recently emphasized by many materialist critics, the connection between property and "proper" in the sense of pertaining to the self also suggests the possibility of gendering dwellings masculine as well as feminine. Witness too the presence of masculinized icons of defense such as crenellations on houses built before the early

modern period but still standing during it, as well as on some erected during that era.

These patterns intensify the dialogue of comparisons and contrasts that constitutes early modern patriarchalism. Not the least connection between state and household is that both were in so many ways threatened, so that assertions of authority were in part at least reactive, manifesting not unblinking confidence in the rights of monarch and husband but rather an attempt to maintain those rights under siege. And thus emerge analogues as potent as the more obvious ones between king and husband; the role of Lord Protector, whose name could prove heavily ironic when borne by a Richard of Gloucester, paralleled that of stepparent or other guardian. Another connection between the common-wealth and so-called little commonwealth is that both defined themselves in part through contrasts with Others.[25] Rogues and vagabonds, I will suggest, at once threatened and fascinated the English in part because their putative behavior was parodic, simultaneously reversing and miming the workings of a more typical domesticity. Like other versions of the *unheimlich*, these transgressors appear familiar in part because they parody the familiar in general and the familial in particular; Bhabha's unhomely would be particularly disruptive if one discovered that an intrusive vagabond, or an alternative version of E.T., was really the prodigal son.

My emphasis on domestic deprivation also has many implications for formal analysis. The popularity of several genres in the period may be traced in part to their negotiations of the losses so central to the culture, particularly ones associated with abodes. Petrarchism, that language of footprints and veils, provided a reading of and in turn was read through other versions of absence and loss. Romance and pastoral are stories of lost and regained homes – Virgil's *Eclogues* open on a lament for a pastoral milieu that must be abandoned – and this helps to explain the attraction of those genres to a culture whose domestic spaces were repeatedly threatened by fires and legal actions, notably the procedure termed actions of ejectment.[26] Romance is typically mapped as a movement from loss to recovery; but, more broadly, narrative itself, variously described in terms of movements towards answering a question, reaching the city, gaining the woman's body, and so on, often describes that same trajectory. This study traces the many different forms that pattern assumes in Shakespeare; for example, the couplet of a sonnet may represent an attempt to reassert epistemological and psychological rebirth that in fact reveals as well or instead the gaps, the canyons that cannot be contained within the embrace of rhyming lines.

IV

This project began simply as a study of loss; as my subtitle indicates, impelled by many versions of restoration in the texts it examines, it developed into an analysis of recuperation as well. My attempts to orchestrate an emphasis on the pervasiveness and persistence of loss in the early modern household with a recognition of forms of recuperation exemplifies the *via media* of this study. The commitment to finding harmonious texts and cultures manifest in much – though, I emphasize, by no means all – criticism written before around 1970 suggests that Prozac, far from being a recent discovery, used to be served as often as bad sherry at twentieth-century English Department receptions. Yet the poststructuralist tendency to assume that loss reduplicates itself with virtually no hope of mediation or remediation is as attractive and dangerous a drug.

Much as the mountains and canyons of loss should not be flattened into a simple pattern, neither, of course, does recuperation from domestic loss lend itself to sweeping generalizations. Its extent varies significantly not only from genre to genre but also from text to text within the same genre and passage to passage within the same text. Sometimes, to be sure, apparent healing merely conceals further disease, further loss. Thus the processes of loss, which are implicated in figuration in so many different ways, can themselves be aptly figured through the trope to which I referred earlier in a different context, syneciosis: apparent victories could often be described as "lossless losses," with all the instability that mischievous phrase involves. As this suggests, when Shakespearean texts represent the processes engendered by loss, we often encounter circular staircases – or, to put it another way, the canon includes a large number of histories, as well as many other plays that adapt the cycles of disaster and recuperation that characterize that genre. Yet elsewhere Shakespeare's texts celebrate significant types of recovery from the domestic losses chronicled in this study.

Although the relationship between those losses and recuperation is complex and varied enough to resist generalizations, in many instances its complexities can be understood by substituting the model of control, which suggests more limited and possibly more temporary remediation, for that of mastery. In her moving account of her struggle with ovarian cancer, Gillian Rose defines two implications of control, both of which are germane to writing about loss:

"Control" ... has two distinct meanings, both equally crucial. In the first place, "control," as you would expect, means priority and ability to manage, not to force, the compliance of others, to determine what others think or do. In the

second, more elusive sense – a sense which, nevertheless, saves my life and which, once achieved, may induce the relinquishing of "control" in the first sense – "control" means that when something untoward happens, some trauma or damage . . . one makes the initially unwelcome event one's own inner occupation. You work to adopt the most loveless, forlorn, aggressive child as your own.[27]

Thus *King Lear* attempts to redefine the loss of home, in so doing rethinking its relationship to power and to hospitality, while both King Lear and Edgar on another level celebrate the loss of home. Similarly, Emilia redefines the loss of home in the sense of both a material edifice and a marriage to which she can retreat as a type of freedom: "'Tis proper I obey him; but not now. / Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home" (*Othello*, V.ii.196–197).

One of the best models of these patterns of loss and recovery is the sonnet. Not the least reason "sonnet cycle" is a more appropriate label than "sonnet sequence" is that poems of this type typically involve not a steady movement from the losses of love to recovery but rather a series of partial, limited, and temporary recuperations, aptly represented formally both by the complex connections among poems in the series and the propensity of their couplets variously or even simultaneously to destabilize, to reassure, and to ironize reassurance. Arguably not the least reason for the extraordinary popularity of this genre is that it so aptly represents the uneven movement between loss and recovery in many arenas besides romantic love, including the domestic.

In no arena is it more important to acknowledge both the spiralling processes of loss and the ever-present possibilities for recovery than art, and in none is an emphasis on control rather than mastery more useful. Contemporary theoretical discourses enjoin us to see all language as the source of an originary loss of wholeness, as well as the site of continuing losses generated by the inevitable distrust, disloyalty, distance, and distaste that characterizes the relationship of signifier and signified as clearly as that between the Miltonic God and fallen man; inasmuch as many types of poststructuralist and Marxian analyses posit a writer who is written by the culture, language is also associated with the loss of agency. To what extent, then, can the texts of Shakespeare, or any writer, be seen as a successful attempt to control loss, turning its own instabilities into that trajectory of recovery? It is obvious that literature often attempts to do so, but when if at all is that attempt successful? "Making symbols, poems, symbolic pots conceals our helplessness in the face of literal death as unsymbolic urns conceal the ashes (metamorphosed synecdoches of body, troped bones) of the dead," writes that master potter John Hollander.[28] The concept of renaissances, like the term "Renaissance," is out of fashion; progress models are not congenial to

poststructuralism, and neither is the concept of the Maker who is also a successful re-Maker in the face of absence and deprivation.

Shakespeare and Domestic Loss, however, at once traces the limitations of language and demonstrates why and how it may nonetheless transform loss into recovery. Recent changes in criticism provide some support for such readings; the work of students of feminism and multiculturalism has emphasized agency anew, and, in particular, the concept of signifying demonstrates that speaking within the Law of the Father need not entail being a passive subject of it. But further support for seeing the act of writing as an effective enemy as well as an agent of loss, domestic and otherwise, comes from Shakespeare's own texts. I demonstrate, for example, that when Pericles recovers his father's armor he recovers as well control over not only his own potentialities for heroism but also representation. More broadly, even if certain of his romance endings hint at continuing absences, on the whole Shakespeare's contributions to that genre famously rewrite tragedy in terms of recuperation.

The lyric from which this chapter borrows its title, Linda Pastan's "Five Stages of Grief," analyzes and enacts the complex relationship between loss and recovery that is one of the principal concerns of my book. "The night I lost you / someone pointed me towards / the Five Stages of Grief," the poem opens, with the capitalization ironically dignifying and thus challenging the studies of mourning that posit such stages as well as the reassurances of self-help movements in general.[29] The text proceeds to describe the stages sequentially, its own narrative moment miming the concept of temporal progress and recovery. Yet its closure pivots on the inaccessibility of emotional closure: "But something is wrong. / Grief is a circular staircase. / I have lost you" (60–62). And thus the otherwise linear narrative, for all the ardor of its climb towards recovery, itself circles back to that first night of loss, circling back as well from the models of progress inherent though not inevitably realized in narrativity to the entrapped stasis often associated with the lyric mode. Thus the poem emphasizes the way art stages continuing loss even as it appears to do the opposite. At the same time, however, by choosing this lyric as the title poem for a collection, Pastan gestures towards its literary achievement and the potentialities of poetic language.

In an elegy tellingly named "Halved," Michael Blumenthal meditates on the death of Seamus Heaney's mother, emphasizing those potentialities more than Pastan does while also acknowledging their limitations:

> Last night the half moon rose over the Charles
> and I thought again how we too are halved
> by our losses time and time again until we
> seem hardly to exist:

. . . .
and I thought of your mother, entirely gone,
and was glad we survive in parts to name
what we have lost, that the same moon will hang
in a half-night over your Irish house, so glad
penultimate things survive to name the night.   (1–4, 21–25)[30]

A lament for the diminishment of the dead and those who mourn them, this lyric nonetheless offers measured and delimited consolations that provide, as it were, a half loaf, or a glass that can be read both as half empty and half full. On the one hand, by beginning and ending on night, it enacts the ubiquitous power of the darkness it challenges; and the agency and longevity of those who challenge it are in turn qualified by the label ''penultimate things'' (25). Yet, despite the fragmentation of ''in parts'' (22), the conclusion of the poem, like the *consolatio* section of more traditional elegies, offers the comfort of belonging to a community of mourners in its reference to a common moon. The members of that community, unlike Heaney's mother, are at least still half present, and they can ''survive'' (22, 25), a term that on one level merely suggests continuing existence, yet on another celebrates victory over what threatens survival, thus staging the ambivalences on which the poem pivots. In any event, the limited victory in question is achieved in part through language. For though the referent of the third person plural in the poem tellingly slides throughout the text in ways that explore that question of community, towards the end ''we'' seems to refer to poets in general and Heaney and Blumenthal in particular – second Adams who at least can name darkness. In that sense, for a moment at least loss goes into remission. When they deploy literary strategies to engage with domestic loss, Shakespeare's plays and poems juxtapose victories and slippages like those in the texts by Blumenthal and Pastan. For in exploring the threats and disasters associated with dwelling places, Shakespeare domesticates loss both in the sense of revealing its unremitting centrality to the home and his own canon and in the sense of taming it – if only partially, only temporarily.