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STUDY OF THE THEME OF LOVE.

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LETTRES À LOU OF GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE:

A STUDY OF THE THEME OF LOVE

by

SHEILA ENDLER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in French in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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1975

This manuscript has been read and accepted
for the Graduate Faculty in French in
satisfaction of the dissertation requirement
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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to my parents

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Henri Peyre, whose guidance and encouragement were invaluable in the writing of this study.

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INTRODUCTION

Guillaume Apollinaire was a charismatic figure in the French world of arts and letters from the turn of the twentieth century until his untimely death at the end of World War I in 1918 at the age of thirty-eight. During his lifetime, he wrote poetry, prose, edited literature closeted in the Enfer of the Bibliothèque Nationale, promoted the great cubist painters in art chronicles, and amassed about him an impressively large group of friends, followers, and admirers. Just before his death, he embarked upon the "surrealist" theater of Les Mamelles de Tirésias. The younger poets who were to become the Surrealist school may have disdained the apologist strain that they saw in the Apollinaire of "L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes" or in the poignant lines of "La Jolie rousse", but no one was to deny his contribution to the growth of the arts. His extroverted personality won him many friends; while he was serving as a soldier in the war he amazed his comrades with the vast correspondence he received. His popularity did not dwindle after his death, but it grew to new heights. Friends composed memoirs, beginning to amass the bibliography on Apollinaire that was to rapidly expand. The same fascination that drew people to this active, prolific writer during his lifetime now attracted

admirers in the wake of his demise.

At first, the literature on Apollinaire was composed primarily of biographical data written by his contemporaries. But, in the 1940's the emphasis shifted to his work. René-Guy Cadou wrote an especially interesting book entitled Guillaume Apollinaire ou l'artilleur de Metz commenting on some of the poet's war poetry as well as his life, and the first Sorbonne thesis was written in 1948 by Margaret Davies, L'Ironie de Guillaume Apollinaire, centering about an analysis of his writings rather than constituting a biography. During the 1950's Marie-Jeanne Durry made a major contribution to the exegesis of Apollinaire's poetry in her Sorbonne course on Alcools. She followed this with a detailed and impressive three volume study of the poet's first collective book of verse.

At the same time, Pierre-Marcel Adéma and Michel Décaudin prepared a critical, annotated edition of Apollinaire's poetry for the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. It was first published in 1956. Then, in 1965-1966 M. Décaudin edited his Oeuvres complètes. Since the 1950's, the critical editions of all of Apollinaire's writings, plus biographies, articles, and analytical books have added much to the bibliography, attesting to the merit of

Apollinaire's work, and contributing to his growing fame. An annual periodical devoted to studies and commentaries on the author and his work was even established in 1962 under the direction of Michel Décaudin. That review, published by Lettres Modernes, has been instrumental in providing a lively exchange of critical approaches, including biographical, thematic, astrological, stylistic, and psychoanalytic methods. Along with the finest of the critical books, it has enhanced our comprehension of Apollinaire the artist and the man.

The majority of studies were devoted at first to Alcools. Apollinaire's personal life was investigated in the attempt to grasp more fully the meaning of the lines of his most famous poems, "La Chanson du mal-aimé" and "Zone". Much of his unhappy love life, which lay at the source of so much of his poetry, was elucidated by Adéma's excellent biography, Guillaume Apollinaire le Mal Aimé, in 1952, and by André Rouveyre's Apollinaire in 1945 and Amour et poésie d'Apollinaire, in 1955. The feminine inspiration behind the poet's love writings was revealed: Linda, Mareye of Stavelot, Annie Playden, Marie Laurencin, Louise de Coligny-Châtillon, Madeleine, and finally, Jacqueline, the "jolie rousse" who became the poet's wife only a short

time before his death. From the knowledge of Apollinaire's disappointed loves, and his sorrowful, sometimes angry laments of Alcools, grew the myth of the "mal-aimé" or the "mal-aimant" who continuously lost in the game of the heart.

But of all Apollinaire's famous love writings, the most passionate and erotic one was to receive little critical scrutiny: his love for Lou. Apollinaire had met Louise de Coligny-Châtillon at Nice in September of 1914 where he was vacationing while waiting to join the army. Approval of his enlistment papers had been delayed by the fact that he was not a French citizen and had to complete naturalization forms before being considered eligible to serve in the French forces. So he had accepted the invitation of one of his friends, Siégler-Pascal, to join him in a trip to Nice. Apollinaire was immediately drawn to the striking redheaded countess, Lou, who he probably met at an opium party. He began to send Lou letters of love and a few calligrammatic poems. His letters of October and November revealed seductive passion and tenderness, but it is doubtful that the relationship had attained the heights of which the poet dreamed since he took steps to hasten his enlistment. Yet, when Apollinaire

was able to join the army at the beginning of December, he wrote of his departure with regret to Lou. Perhaps he had finally conquered the coquettish countess he had been courting. No sooner had he left for Nîmes, joining the thirty-eighth artillery regiment on December 6th, than Lou followed him to the city and spent one week of voluptuous pleasure with him. The poet spent three of his leaves with his mistress, first from December 31-January 2, 1915, second from January 23-25, and finally on March 28, 1915. But his letters to her spanned the period of September 1914 through January 1916. Apollinaire wrote more than sixty love poems and two hundred letters to her. Many contain intimate, impassioned prose and poetry on love, unequalled in any of Apollinaire's earlier writings.

Yet these many letters were destined to wait until 1969 for their publication. In 1947 the poems to Lou appeared under the title Ombre de mon amour, published by Pierre Cailler; this edition was followed in 1955 by Poèmes à Lou, reproducing all the poems in facsimile. An edition of the integral text of Apollinaire's letters to Lou was prepared, prefaced by André Rouveyre and edited by Cailler. The lovely facsimile edition of the poet's

many letters never saw the light of publication. At the last moment, permission for publication was withdrawn, and most of the printed volumes were destroyed. A facsimile of the complete Cailler edition was preserved, and it was based upon this text that Michel Décaudin edited the Gallimard edition of Lettres à Lou in 1969. Now that both Lou and Jacqueline Apollinaire were dead, the intimate letters would no longer invade the privacy of Lou's relationship with the poet, or offend the poet's wife. The veil that had obscured the intimate letter-poems could finally be lifted, and the full extent of Apollinaire's passionate literature to Lou be revealed.

Even prior to the publication of the letters, little critical attention was given to the poems to Lou published in the Oeuvres poétiques of the Pléiade edition. Critics seemed to be more attracted to the baffling, hermetic lines of "Lui de Faltenin", or to the identification of the "Sept épées" of "La Chanson du mal-aimé". After the publication of Lettres à Lou, James R. Lawler wrote an excellent article¹ presenting an overall picture of the work and commenting on three of the poems. But no lengthy analysis of the book was undertaken by the critics. A marked preference continued to be shown for the study of

Alcools and of Calligrammes, considered by one Apollinairian specialist, Philippe Renaud, to uncover the more profound and significant side of Apollinaire.²

It seems a pity to disdain the importance of the more than five hundred pages of prose and poetry of Lettres à Lou, simply because Apollinaire did not live to edit the volume. The originality and richness of his expression of love deserve scholarly attention; the composition and study of the nuances of love enhance and deepen our appreciation of the poet's skill and versatility. Our portrait of Apollinaire as a great love poet is incomplete without a detailed examination of letters that sang a hymn to the beauty of love and poetic creation.

Apollinaire was not the first poet to compose letter-poems of love, but his originality in his use of this mixed genre stands clear. Dante, centuries before had written the Vita Nuova, which also utilized both prose and poetry. However, as Dante indicated in the prose passages, the sonnets to Beatrice had been composed earlier, and the prose passages were added to explain both the story of his love for Beatrice and the composition of the sonnets. In the nineteenth century, Baudelaire wrote letters to Madame Sabatier, in which he praised the woman he so admired both

in prose and poetry. But the letters did not commemorate a real love relationship, nor did they aim at an actual seduction. The love object remained elevated on a pedestal: Madame Sabatier was the idealized personification of the pure feminine, and that was the way Baudelaire wished to envision her. When his "Ange" expressed a flesh and blood interest in her admirer, the poetry ceased to flow forth, and the poet wrote of his "horreur de la passion" to her.³

Quite different in complexion are the letters Apollinaire composed to Lou. Mixing both prose and poetry freely, depending upon his mood, he expressed his eroticism freely. The prose did not serve to simply introduce the poetry; on occasions he would write passionate prose paragraphs. His aim at first was probably seduction, but once the love relationship was established, his purpose was then to celebrate the passion shared and to imagine new moments of ecstasy. The letters were part of an actual correspondence, and reflected the vicissitudes of the relationship. Written while Apollinaire was a soldier, they also contained many details of his life in the regiment and then as an artilleryman at the front. Their spontaneity adds to their lively character, giving a firsthand account of Apollinaire's life and changing moods.

Clearly, the most significant theme of the letters is the poet's love for Lou. In our study, we have divided the letters according to the major mood they reflect. Since eroticism is the outstanding characteristic of much of the prose and poetry, we will devote the first chapter to an analysis of the erotic texts and to an evaluation of their respective merit. In many of the letter-poems, the theme of war is intermingled with the expression of love. These texts shall be discussed in the second chapter. Nostalgic love expressed, stemming from Lou's absence and from Apollinaire's disappointment in her increasingly casual attitude toward him, will be examined in the third chapter. The serene love, also present in Lettres à Lou, will be analyzed in the fourth chapter. The more humorous expressions of love, interspersed in the volume, will be studied in the fifth chapter. Finally, in the conclusion, we shall discuss the originality and merit of this rich, varied literature of love. This thematic division is particularly appropriate for a critical study of the volume, since the letter-poems encompass these different humors of Apollinaire during his tempestuous relationship with Lou. Only texts unrelated to their love will be omitted from our study.

It is our hope that this study of the theme of love in Lettres à Lou will promote the respect due this poignant, moving volume of letters, and help establish the literary merit of this work. This impressive book of love letters should add to the appreciation of Apollinaire's creative talent. It is filled with a love so powerfully expressed, a passion that so stimulated the pen of the poet, that its beauty and sentiment should be experienced by all the admirers of Apollinaire, and by all who wish to enter the literary world of man's dream.

INTRODUCTION: FOOTNOTES

1. James R. Lawler, "Le Dernier livre d'Apollinaire," Essays in French Literature (University of Western Australia Press, Australia), No. 9 (November 1972), pp. 63-77.

2. Philippe Renaud, Lecture d'Apollinaire (Lausanne: Edition de L'Age d'Homme, 1969), p. 19.

3. Charles Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes de Charles Baudelaire: Correspondance générale, II (Paris: Editions Louis Conard, 1947), 94.

CHAPTER ONE:
EROTIC LOVE

To begin our study of the theme of love in Lettres à Lou by a series of exegeses of the erotic love poems and prose passages is to pick a logical point of departure rather than an arbitrary one. It is not simply an acknowledgment of the renown that the letters owe to the eroticism that they have been known to contain; but rather, an admission of the primordial importance of eroticism in this volume of letters. Strains of eroticism had already appeared in Apollinaire's previous works. Lettres à Lou do not constitute the poet's first exploration of the riches of the erotic in literature, but it does mark the very personal explosion of passion in his work.

In 1903, to augment a rather meager income, Apollinaire had secretly published a pornographic novel, Mirely ou le Petit Trou pas Cher, in 1907 he followed this venture with two other obscene works, Les Mémoires d'un jeune Don Juan and Les Onze mille verges. Such vulgar writings were just a means of earning a livable income. However, Apollinaire's taste and curiosity for the erotic and obscene in literature were evident in his legitimate undertakings. He worked in collaboration with Fernand Fleuret and with Louis Perceau establishing a bibliography

of the books in the Enfer of the Bibliothèque Nationale for the Mercure de France; continued later for the "Bibliothèque des Curieux". He also edited and prefaced a group of licentious works in the series known as the "Maîtres de l'Amour" published by the Briffault brothers. Apollinaire worked on this enterprise from 1909 until his death, beginning with the publication of the Marquis de Sade. Of course, these enterprises were undertaken in the interests of helping him subsist; but Apollinaire's enthusiasm and impressive thoroughness in the prefaces of the "Maîtres de l'Amour" series reflected an enjoyment of the work and research involved.

Eroticism and vulgarity shone through even in the poetry of Alcools, in such poems as "La Chanson du mal-aimé", "L'Ermite", "Le Larron", and "Merlin et la vieille femme". In prose, scatological language and sexuality were an intrinsic part of some of the stories of L'Hérésiarque et Cie. The blatant references to sexuality and the freedom of language were a significant facet of Apollinaire's writing and creative genius. His freedom in versification and language in terms of the introduction of prosaic verbiage into the realm of poetry, as evidenced by a cubist poem such as "Zone", was also matched by his

liberty with sexual language.

But the eroticism which we find in Lettres à Lou is quite different. Like the sensuality later found in Tendre comme le souvenir, the book of letters written to his fiancée, Madeleine Pagès, commenced when his relationship with Lou had passed its apex and fallen to the level of imagined love unions with no substance behind them, the eroticism of the letters marks an innovation and new dimension in Apollinaire's artistry. In the case of these letters, Apollinaire is evoking the anatomy of a particular woman, whereas in Alcools the mention of parts of the body is not attached to a definite individual referred to in a letter. The eroticism that we find in the love letters of the war thus marks an evolution in Apollinaire's creativity. Why this change?

The reason would seem twofold. First, Apollinaire was under the pressure of the military life, deprived of frequent contact with Lou. He was forced to maintain an epistolary contact with Lou with rare physical meetings. Lacking the opportunity to maintain a normal sexual union, he was reduced to imagining what had been or what he wished would be in the near future. All his dreams and desires were translated into the outpourings of his

letters to her, both in prose and poetry. Secondly, Apollinaire was truly passionate about Lou. His letters served the purpose both of alleviating his sexual tensions and of communicating to her his desire to make love. Of the intimacy of the poems to Lou and to Madeleine Pagès, Raymond Jean has written the following:

L'adoration n'est en fait ici que la force particulière de ce don qu'Apollinaire possédait au plus haut degré et qui devait lui valoir d'emblée l'admiration des surréalistes: le don d'émerveillement ... Il fait monter du plus lointain de son être un chant de joie profonde qui traduit le bouleversement de son imagination, le ravissement de ses sens devant les réalités charnelles dont il fait le minutieux inventaire. Et cet affolement surréaliste, s'il emprunte les voies incantatoires du langage mystique, va en fait beaucoup plus loin: il s'ouvre sur la reconnaissance d'une vocation authentiquement érotique de la parole... La parole est vraiment acte d'amour et possession...¹

The poetic magnitude of eroticism in Lettres à Lou first became apparent eight days after Apollinaire's first leave, spent with Lou in Nice. Apollinaire wrote a letter to Lou containing a fifty-line poem in free verse, "Je t'adore mon Lou..."² Physically, due to the alternating masses of long and then shorter lines, the poem is divided into five parts. Thematically and structurally Apollinaire expresses his images and sentiments in five different sections following the respective stanzas.

In the first part, he evokes the overwhelming power of Lou to inspire adoration in the whole universe through the poet's elevation of her:

Je t'adore mon Lou et par moi tout t'adore
 Les chevaux que je vois s'ébrouer aux abords
 L'appareil des monuments latins qui me
 contemplant
 Les artilleurs vigoureux qui dans leur
 caserne rentrent
 Le soleil qui descend lentement devant toi
 Les fantassins bleu pâle qui partent pour
 le front pensent à toi.
 Car ô ma chevelure de feu tu es la torche
 Qui m'éclaire ce monde et, flamme, tu es
 ma force (LL, p. 92).

He means of course that he projects his desire of her, of love, to all objects surrounding him, and that she is his constant thought and the goddess of other men and of things. This is a typical "baroque" hyperbole. Lou's flaming red hair is, through a double metaphor, both the torch lighting the world and the flame giving strength to the soldier.

Not only does the whole world adore Lou, but Lou is seen everywhere by the poet as he expresses at the beginning of the second part of the poem: "Dans le ciel les nuages / Figurent ton image" (LL, p. 92). The direct communication that exists between the poet and Lou and through which the two lovers overcome the obstacle of

time and space is evoked by the poet in a series of simple images. The shorter, song-like lines convey the joy experienced at the imagined closeness:

Le mistral en passant
Emporte mes paroles
Tu en perçois le sens
C'est vers toi qu'elles volent
Tout le jour nos regards
Vont des Alpes au Gard
Du Gard à la Marine (LL, p. 93).

Apollinaire and Lou overcome the reality distance that separates them through their union in the world of sleep. Through dreaming of each other they unite, defying the geographical barrier lying between them:

Et quand le jour décline
Quand le sommeil nous prend
Dans nos lits différents
Nos songes nous rapprochent
Objets dans la même poche
Et nous vivons confondus
Dans le même rêve éperdu.
Mes songes te ressemblent (LL, p. 93).

Apollinaire creates an effective contrast of moods in these lines by first alluding to the familiar image: "Objets dans la même poche", and then turning to more romantic language of the dream world, emphasized by the two nasal sounds of the last line of the stanza. This melodic last line, which closes part II of the poem, rhymes with the delicate, metaphoric following line:

"Les branches remuées ce sont tes yeux qui tremblent" (LL, p. 93), linking the second part to the third. The poet's dreams look like Lou, just as the clouds in the sky at the beginning of the second part drew Lou's picture in the sky. The omnipresence of Lou, which is the key to the entire poem, since it is the unifying element throughout, is once more evoked in the five remaining lines of the third section. Now erotic images suggest the intimacy of the poet and his beloved:

Et je te vois partout toi si belle et si
tendre.
Les clous de mes souliers brillent comme
tes yeux
La vulve des juments est rose comme la
tienne
Et nos armes graissées c'est comme quand
tu me veux
O douceur de ma vie, c'est comme quand tu
m'aimes. (LL, p. 93).

There is a deliberate lack of music and sweetness in the series of initial consonant sounds in the second part of the last two lines that contrasts with the Baudelafrican "O douceur de ma vie". The harshness may well be intended to suggest Apollinaire's inner pain, resulting from the knowledge that he is not actually making love to the mistress he has now erotically evoked. Even the longed for lovemaking is only imagined.

It is the use of the ordinary objects surrounding

him, as a base for deeply erotic lines, that constitutes the element of startling Apollinairian surprise. Yet the poet's ability to find beauty in the mare's vulva and to be reminded of Lou's is but a poetisation of the inescapable reality that successfully projects to the reader the intensity of Apollinaire's unfulfilled sexual desires.

The passion and "sweetness" of love connects part three of the poem to the nine octosyllabic lines of part four which commences:

L'hiver est doux, le ciel est bleu,
 Refais-me le, refais-me le
 Toi ma chère permission
 Ma consigne ma faction. (LL, p. 93).

The repetition of the second line, and the cacophony of the short syllables, convey Apollinaire's yearning to recapture the hours of love. He continues:

Son amour est mon uniforme
 Tes doux baisers sont les boutons
 Ils brillent comme l'or et l'orment
 Et tes bras si roses si longs
 Sont les plus galants des galons (LL, p. 93).

In the remaining lines of the stanza, harmony is restored as the poet plays upon sounds in the manner of the medieval poets and the Grands Rhétoriciens. Ingeniously, the beauty of Lou and of their desired embrace is picturesquely evoked in a new way, as metaphors and a simile

different in nature from those of the three previous stanzas are introduced.

Apollinaire once again surprises the reader as he expands the length of the lines of his last stanza. Simultaneously, he launches into a cubist technique injecting the prosaic elements of reality into a celebration of his mistress. A free association technique is pursued, abandoning the tight-knit preceding lines of stanza four:

Un monsieur près de moi mange une glace
 blanche
 Je songe au goût de ta chair et je songe
 à tes hanches
 A gauche lit son journal une jeune dame
 blonde
 Je songe à tes lettres où sont pour moi
 toutes les nouvelles du monde
 Il passe des marins, la mer meurt à tes pieds
 Je regarde ta photo tu es l'univers entier
 J'allume une allumette et vois ta chevelure
 Tu es pour moi la vie cependant qu'elle dure
 Et tu es l'avenir et mon éternité
 Toi mon amour unique et la seule beauté
 (LL, pp. 93-94).

Lou's ubiquity, as envisioned by Apollinaire, and the carnal nature of the second line of the stanza, unite this final homage to his mistress to the preceding parts of the poem. The lovely alexandrine lines at the end permit a longer development of the images of love, suggesting a seriousness and gravity lacking in the more playful shorter lines of the long second stanza of the poem.

Thematically, the entire poem is united by the poetic rapprochement of the two lovers overcoming the obstacle of time and space. The variety in lengths of lines and in images contributes to the free-flowing feeling Apollinaire establishes as he spontaneously writes the letter to Lou.

The erotic, passionate strain in Apollinaire's poetry to Lou stayed strong two days later when, on the twelfth of January 1915, he addressed a five page letter to Lou containing a thirty-six line poem in free verse. This poem differs in its organization and content from that of the poem "Je t'adore mon Lou...". It is a didactic poem in the sense that it serves the purpose of espousing Apollinaire's theory of the lovers' relationship. "Mon Lou, je veux te reparler maintenant de l'Amour" (LL, pp. 100-101, no. 44)³ is not only a passionate avowal of the poet's love for Lou but also a description of the domineering relationship he wishes to entertain with his mistress. Apollinaire is known to have been quite dominating in his relationships with women, as André Rouveyre points out: "Aussitôt la capture à peu près acquise, et nonobstant la douceur des premiers contacts, il fallait que de l'esclave, comme il disait, tout cède, tout obéisse, lui appartienne...".⁴ Undoubtedly,

he wished to prove his strength, virility and masculinity.

In the letter preceding the one of the twelfth, Apollinaire allows himself to be carried away by his erotic imagination and urges of domination in a passage cited in part by Scott Bates in his book, Guillaume Apollinaire.⁵ Imagining the naked body of Lou, and writing of his desires for her, Apollinaire states:

Mon Lou tu ne peux te figurer comme je t'ai désirée hier et cette nuit. Je m'imaginai ton corps, cette chère humidité de la grotte mystérieuse où gîte la volupté. J'ai imaginé que si tu ne me répondais pas comme je voulais, lors de notre prochaine rencontre, je t'aurais mise nue à quatre pattes comme une chienne. Je t'aurais fouaillée pendant que ta bouche m'aurait bu et si je ne t'avais pas jugée suffisamment humiliée je t'aurais piétinée. J'aurais foulé aux pieds ton ventre et ton derrière tour à tour sous les clous de mes souliers d'artilleur. Et meutrie je t'aurais empalée. Ta lettre est venue et je songe que je te serre dans mes bras et te faisant menotte longuement, longuement, longuement. (LL, pp. 95-96, no. 43).

This passage need not be offered as evidence of Apollinaire's "sadism", but rather as proof of his vivid imagination and feeling of freedom with Lou. The sensuous countess probably enjoyed the violent love play. Interestingly enough, the powerful statements were introduced with tender words and terminated with equally warm ones. "Te faire

menotte" as used again and again in the letters refers to manual sexual stimulation and caressing, and is a rather affectionate reference to make at the conclusion of such a violent passage. Apollinaire's ability to jump from tones of tenderness to those of violence reveal his complex feelings towards Lou. His talent to conjure up terrible images of violent practices à la Marquis de Sade is evidence of a literary and sexual freedom he experienced when writing to her. Such a passage of violent and gentle intimacy remains unequalled in his other writings.

The violence envisioned by Apollinaire as an integral part of the love relationship, and the imposition on the woman of the man's will are both brought out in the poem dated one day later:

Mon Lou, je veux te reparler maintenant
 de l'Amour
 Il monte dans mon coeur comme le soleil sur
 le jour
 Et soleil il agite ses rayons comme des fouets
 Pour activer nos âmes et les lier
 Mon amour c'est seulement ton bonheur
 Et ton bonheur c'est seulement ma volonté
 Ton amour doit être passionné de douleur
 Ma volonté se confond avec ton désir et ta
 beauté. (LL, p. 100).

These first eight lines can certainly be understood in light of the preceding letter. However, the didactic,

professorial tone gives the poem a flat beginning.

Then, Apollinaire vividly evokes Lou's body. She is the "dernière venue", the most recent addition to his museum of love objects. Sensuously evoking her presence, he goes on to say:

Tes seins ont le goût pâle des kakis et
des figues de barbarie
Hanches, fruits confits, je les aime,
ma chérie (LL, p. 100).

Appropriately, the fruits Apollinaire suggested are soaked in sugar, "fruits confits", suggesting the sweet taste of Lou's body. The effect of these two lines, with their multiplication of "i" sounds, is to awaken even the reader's sensation of taste. Indirectly, Venus is next evoked; the allusion to the goddess of love is a new comparison to emphasize the tight connection between Lou and love. Erotically, Apollinaire suggests the birth of a woman in the heat of passion:

L'écume de la mer dont naquit la déesse
Evoque celle-là qui naît de ma caresse. (LL, p. 100).

Of course, this is a delicate allusion to the secretions of Lou's sexual organs.

Using apostrophe and personification the poet then addresses his mistress directly. The abstract terms contrast with the lecturing opening of the poem, par-

ticularly since they are emphasized in the lines by the pause that precedes and follows each one:

Si tu marches, Splendeur, tes yeux ont le
 luisant
 D'un sabre au doux regard prêt à se teindre
 de sang
 Si tu te couches, Douceur, tu deviens mon
 orgie
 Et le mets savoureux de notre liturgie
 Si tu te courbes, Ardeur, comme une flamme
 au vent,
 Des atteintes du feu jamais rien n'est
 décevant (LL, p. 100).

Apollinaire elevates his lovemaking to the level of a religious ceremony by the use of the word "liturgie". This sacrilegious glorification of physical love is quite amusing as well as startling. It is certainly the sexual union that is further underlined by the introduction of the phoenix image in the next two lines, used as a phallic symbol:

Je flambe dans ta flamme et suis de ton
 amour
 Le phénix qui se meurt et renaît chaque
 jour. (LL, p. 100).

The actual act is further evoked by the modernist simile of a tramway screeching each day towards his loving destination:

Chaque jour
 Mon amour
 Va vers toi ma chérie
 Comme un tramway
 Il grince et crie
 Sur les rails où je vais (LL, pp. 100-101).

This sexual image heightens the tension of the poem. The shorter lines highlight the apex of eroticism reached in this second stanza. The poet's indention also attracts attention to these suggestive lines.

Now, in the third and final moment of the poem, Apollinaire calms his imagery and softens his tone. In several simple but magnificent lines, the poet succeeds in suggesting the serenity this new love has brought him:

La nuit m'envoie ses violettes
Reçois-les car je te les jette.
Le soleil est mort doucement
Comme est mort l'ancien roman
De nos fausses amours passées.
Les violettes sont tressées.
Si d'or te couronnait le jour
La nuit t'enguirlande à son tour. (LL, p. 101).

This sweet, tranquil ending to a passionate, erotic piece of verse achieves the wondrous effect of calming us as if after a storm. Following the avalanche of torrid, enthusiastic, sensuous images comes a calm passage evoking the exquisiteness of the golden and purple hues of the sky at sunset. With the end of day comes an end to this impassioned hymn of love to Lou.

However, Apollinaire renews the stress on passion, and reinforces the theme of man's domination and of woman's submission in the closing lines of the letter which immediately follow the poem: "Mon Lou mon amour, je

t'embrasse mille fois, je te prends toute passionnément, de toutes mes forces, de partout, je te prends, je t'aime je t'adore, je ne vis que pour [que] tu sois à moi, ma chose, ma chose obéissante et adorable." (LL, p. 101).

The conclusions of the poem and of the letter unite in a final encore to Lou, and show us the value of considering the poetry in its true context. The tenderness with which he concludes the poem is now overshadowed by the passion and strong affirmation of these last lines. They best join with the opening section of the poem in their acclamation of man's strength and mastery in his relationship with woman. "Mon Lou, je veux te reparler maintenant de l'Amour" should not be separated from the final paragraph of the letter that contains it, because the restatement and reiteration of the initial theme of the poem reflect its importance for Apollinaire. His desires for Lou, and need to believe she was subservient to him, are apparent in his run-on final sentence. Its frenetic rhythm and repetition of idea heighten the feeling of Apollinaire's emotions.

Eroticism and the themes of masculine domination and of the pleasures of flagellation dominate the correspondence of Apollinaire to Lou during the month of January 1915.

Time and again Apollinaire insists upon the sensuous pleasures of the violent physical bond linking him to his mistress, and numerous are the references to the master-slave relationship he wishes to sustain with her. On January 13th he writes to her: "C'est extraordinaire, ce que je peux te désirer. Tu m'as fait oublier mes anciennes maîtresses à un point inimaginable. Pourtant elles étaient jolies. Je ne les vois plus que comme de la m...de." (LL, p. 103, no. 45). Dreaming of Lou he then writes: "Je les adore toutes, le neuf portes sacrées de ton corps, le vagin royal ou bouillonne la cyprine voluptueuse que tu me prodigues ô chérie ...Neuf portes, ô mes neuf muses, quand vous entrouvrirai-je encore? Ma chérie, ma chérie, tu ne peux pas imaginer à quel point je te voudrais." (LL, p. 104). Once more he takes up one of the principal themes of the poem "Mon Lou, je veux te reparler maintenant de l'Amour": the pleasure-pain theme upholding the theory that all actions propagated by the lover to his mistress must be viewed as positive acts of love: "Coups ou baisers ce doit être aussi épatant pour toi, du moment où ça vient de moi." (LL, p. 105, no. 46). He probably harps upon the master-slave theme fearing that his lovemaking does not bring her enough

pleasure. Jealously, he reprimands Lou, urging her not to indulge in masturbation:

Voyons, Lou, réfléchis un peu, tu es intelligente, tu es d'une race merveilleuse, et des fois tu agis comme un petit noc, allons un peu de fierté, elle doit se développer d'autant plus qu'elle s'est abaissée devant moi, je te l'ai dit, cet abaissement volontaire de ton orgueil doit augmenter ta volonté, ta fierté, toutes tes facultés ... je suis ton roi, ton souverain, ton maître ... Avec moi et Toutou⁶ Lou, avec le reste Louve, voilà ce que tu dois être. (LL, p. 113, no. 49).

Once more, on January 21st Apollinaire insists upon the master-slave relationship whereby Lou voluntarily submits herself to him: "Tu dois m'être soumise, tu dois, je me donne tout à toi, mais comme ton maître qui t'adore, tu dois être à moi, sans quoi...Ton orgueil doit plier puisque je t'aime--Tu ne dois jamais en faire à ta tête sans quoi me perdras--Je veux pas que tu te forces, je veux que tu sois à moi par nature." (LL, p. 129, no. 55). His repeated insistence upon his role as master only indicates how uncertain he is of his ability to satisfy Lou's needs.

The flagellation theme by itself appears in the letters of January, both before and after the leave that Apollinaire spent with Lou from January 23rd to January 25th in Nice. On January 28th he writes to her: "...et moi, maître armé

du fouet de justice je cingle cette mappemonde merveilleuse. Toi tu souffres en ton orgueil, tu pâtis et l'amour change en volupté la souffrance que tu ressens. Ta croupe s'agite plus fort à mesure que je fouette plus fort ..."

(LL, p. 140, no. 59). On January 30th he vividly imagines his mistress tied down to a bed of voluptuousness: "Je reviens donc à ce matin. Imaginé des liens (chez moi à Paris) pour t'attacher sérieusement sans trop froisser tes poignets. T'expliquera cela." (LL, p. 144, no. 62).

Obviously, Apollinaire considered flagellation to be in keeping with the tenderness and affection of lovemaking. His editing of the works of the Marquis de Sade and of other licentious authors, such as John Cleland, who freely wrote of flagellation, may well have influenced his own audacity. Just as he advocated artistic freedom, he espoused a doctrine of freedom and imagination in the art of love. This becomes especially clear and evident in the poem he wrote to Lou on February 3, 1915: "Parce que tu m'as parlé de vice ..." (LL, pp. 164-65, no. 71).⁷

In this poem of passion and eroticism, Apollinaire uses a traditional versification pattern of six quatrains of twelve syllable lines to communicate his philosophy of love. Once again, as in his previous passionate poem,

"Mon Lou je veux te reparler maintenant de l'Amour"

(LL, pp. 100-101), Apollinaire explains the power of love to uplift its captives and render virtuous and acceptable all that lovers may do together in an expression of their passion for each other:

Tu m'as parlé de vice en ta lettre d'hier.
Le vice n'entre pas dans les amours sublimes.
Il n'est pas plus qu'un grain de sable dans
la mer,
Un seul grain descendant dans les glauques
abîmes. (LL, p. 164).

As Apollinaire has been pointing out in his letters to Lou, love endows those ensnared in its mesh with a protective covering, warding off all evil. Contrast is attained through the elevation of love suggested by the word "sublimes", and the insignificance of immorality implied by the word "abîmes". Using violently sensual images, Apollinaire goes on to suggest that love is the defiance of death by life. It is the activation of the imagination in the conquest of plain, dull objective reality. It is the sanctification of one's sexual urges. The love object is raised once more through simile to the level of religious rites and worship:

Nous pouvons faire agir l'imagination,
Faire danser nos sens sur les débris du monde,
Nous énerver jusqu'à l'exaspération
Ou vautrer nos deux corps dans une fange immonde,

Et liés l'un à l'autre en une étreinte unique,
 Nous pouvons défier la mort et son destin
 Quand nos dents claqueront en claquement panique;
 Nous pouvons appeler soir ce qu'on dit matin.

Tu peux déifier ma volonté sauvage,
 Je peux me prosterner comme vers un autel
 Devant ta croupe qu'ensanglantera ma rage,
 Nos amours resteront pures comme un beau ciel.

Qu'importe qu'essoufflés, muets, bouches ouvertes
 Ainsi que deux canons tombés de leur affût,
 Brisés de trop s'aimer, nos corps restent inertes!
 Notre amour restera bien toujours ce qu'il fut...

Ennoblissons, mon coeur, l'imagination!
 La pauvre humanité bien souvent n'en a guères.
 Le vice en tout cela n'est qu'une illusion
 Qui ne trompe jamais que les âmes vulgaires.
 (LL, pp. 164-65).

In the last stanza, Apollinaire suggests that love and its freedom render you noble and elevate you above the common mass of "vulgar souls"; just the opposite of what Lou must have implied in the letter that stimulated this response. Apollinaire's love is raised to a high level worthy of comparison with that of religion and its ceremonial. "Ennoblissons" contrasts with the last word of the quatrain, "vulgaires", to accentuate the antithetical distinction between the two. The purity of the love on which Apollinaire insists is bound to the purity of this regular verse. Meaning is united to the form, and the medium becomes the message. The harmony of the rhyming

lines contrasts sharply with the evil and violent images Apollinaire evokes. However, some of the power of the imagery is lost in the last two flat, didactic lines of the poem.

Apollinaire again used regular verse form in his next poem of passion to Lou written on February 4, 1915, entitled "Rêverie sur ta venue" (LL, pp. 173-75, no. 76).⁸ The poem consists of fifteen stanzas of five-line octosyllabic verse. Once more he speaks of the pleasures of flagellation. This time he dreams of the sensuous activities which he and Lou will enjoy during his next leave that he hopes to spend with his mistress in Nîmes. This poem differs greatly from the preceding ones. Apollinaire, in his evocation of flagellation, alludes to the mythological hero Jason, who, according to Apollinaire, whipped his wife as a just punishment for her witchcraft. Apollinaire adds to the unhappy, tragic story of Medea and Jason. If Medea were a sorceress, it is not reputed that her husband beat her. Rather, it is common knowledge according to mythology that Medea killed her two children to punish Jason for his plans to wed Creusa, princess of Corinth. Apollinaire takes poetic liberties with the legend, embroidering upon it. He also uses Jason's quest

of the Golden Fleece most successfully as a base of comparison with the golden fleece of his mistress on which he places a much higher value. In addition, he refers to Circe, the sorceress whom Ulysses encountered in his travels. The poet's reference to Circe in the role of Medea, rather than Medea herself, is understandable. Written from the army depot at Nîmes, Apollinaire could scarcely make use of his notebooks or any literary sources. The use of Jason and his sorceress-wife furnishes the poet with a rich background to his poem. Lou can thus be compared to the sorceress herself. She too can deserve an erotic beating, and she can be in possession of the golden fleece that the poet seeks:

Mon Lou, mon Coeur, mon Adorée,
Je donnerais dix ans et plus,
Pour ta chevelure dorée,
Pour tes regards irrésolus,
Pour ta chère toison ambrée.

Plus précieuse que n'était
Celle-là dont savait la route,
Sur la grand'route du Cathai
Qu'Alexandre parcourut toute,
Circé que son Jason fouettait.

Il la fouettait avec des branches
De laurier-sauce ou d'olivier,
La bougresse branlait des hanches
N'ayant plus rien à envier
En faveur de ses fesses blanches.

Ce qu'à la Reine fit Jason
Pour ses tours de sorcellerie,
Pour sa magie et son poison
Je te le ferai, ma chérie,
Quand serons seuls à la maison. (LL, p. 173).

Lou is not yet directly compared to Medea, but like Apollinaire's version of the queen, Lou deserves a whipping. The antithesis between the violence of this activity and the tenderness that Apollinaire feels towards Lou is established by the use of the words "ma chérie" in the fourth stanza. The dearness of Lou to Apollinaire is also communicated by the two examples of personification in the first line of the first stanza of the poem: "Mon Lou, mon Coeur, mon Adorée," which places Lou on a plateau above others. This idea is reinforced by the poet's stating that he would give "ten years or more" just to behold his lover's golden hair. We should note that the words "dorée" and "ambrée" of the first stanza lay the way for the introduction of the allusion to Jason who pursued the Golden Fleece. But Apollinaire surprises us. Instead of developing the comparison of the golden hair of Lou and the Fleece of Jason, he embarks upon a new motif, that of the flagellation of Medea who becomes just a "bougresse", a familiar word at that! He has used mythology in an original way to serve his own ends. A great man whipped a great woman and in the same way he dreams of beating Lou. Apollinaire has subtly elevated Lou and himself to the ranks of mythological heroes.

Apollinaire continues to develop the theme of flagellation and to exaggerate it:

Je t'en ferai bien plus encore!
L'amour, la schlague et coetera...
Un cul sera noir comme un Maure
Quand ma maîtresse arrivera...
Arrive, ô mon Lou que j'adore! (LL, p. 175).

The familiarity of the second and third lines of this stanza stresses the poet's longing for his mistress. His burning desire is clearly evoked by the next four stanzas in which Apollinaire dreams of the days he and his love will pass together in Nîmes:

Dans la chambre de volupté
Où je t'irai trouver à Nîmes,
Tandis que nous prendrons le thé,
Pendant le peu d'heures intimes
Que m'embellira ta beauté

Nous ferons cent mille bêtises...
Malgré la guerre et tous ses maux
Nous aurons de belles surprises:
Les arbres en fleur, les Rameaux,
Pâques, les premières cerises...

Nous lirons dans le même lit,
Au livre de ton corps lui-même
--C'est un livre qu'au lit on lit--
Nous lirons le charmant poème
Des grâces de ton corps joli,

Nous passerons de doux dimanches
Plus doux que n'est le chocolat,
Jouant tous deux au jeu des hanches.
Le soir j'en serai raplapla,
Tu seras pâle aux lèvres blanches. (LL, p. 174).

"Le peu d'heures intimes" mentioned by Apollinaire in the sixth stanza contrasts with the entire month during which he believes he will be able to visit with Lou. The projected time together is joyfully evoked in the next stanza when the poet says that the lovers will have "beautiful surprises": "Palm Sunday", "Easter", "the first cherries". The playfulness of their future lovemaking is suggested first by the eighth stanza which consists of an alliteration of the vowel "i" giving a clear, staccato sound to the five lines. It is again suggested by the onomatopoeia of the word "raplapla" of stanza nine which imitates the sounds of the intimate games in which the two lovers will indulge.

Apollinaire knows the month will pass and Lou will disappear. Sadness intervenes, suggested by the night. Lou will metaphorically be another Circe capable of cruel magic:

Un mois après tu partiras...
 La nuit descendra sur la terre.
 En vain, je te tendrai les bras
 Magicienne du mystère,
 Ma Circé, tu disparaîtras...(LL, p. 174).

Apollinaire has awakened our memories of those first stanzas built on multiple references to Jason and to his "Circe". Apollinaire has linked the opening of his poem

to the development section.

Tones of sorrow dominate the next stanza:

Où t'en iras-tu, ma jolie?
A Paris, dans la Suisse ou bien
Au bord de ma mélancolie:
Ce flot méditerranéen
Que jamais, jamais on n'oublie? (LL, p. 175).

The repetition of the word "jamais" of the last line underlines the poet's pain. How could he forget the Mediterranean, when it is along her shores at Nice that he found Lou? Repetition haunts the next stanza as does onomatopoeia by which Apollinaire realistically suggests the roaring of engines as the soldiers depart in their vehicles:

Alors sonneront, sonneront
Les trompettes d'artillerie.
Nous partirons et ron et ron
Petit patapon, ma chérie,
Vers ce qu'on appelle le Front (LL, p. 175).

At the Front the soldier Apollinaire will bravely fight for his lady, whose memory shall be his motivation:

J'y ferai qui sait? des prouesses
Comme font les autres poilus,
En l'honneur de tes belles fesses,
De tes doux yeux irrésolus
Et de tes divines caresses. (LL, p. 175).

Lou's Baudelairian "yeux irrésolus" hark back to the very first stanza of the poem, and probably suggest her elusiveness. Now, in the conclusion, Apollinaire abandons

nostalgia, returning to the theme of anticipation:

Mais en attendant, je t'attends.
 J'attends tes yeux, ton cou, ta croupe...
 Que je n'attende pas longtemps
 De tes beautés la belle troupe
 M'amie aux beaux seins palpitants

Et viens-t-en donc puisque je t'aime
 Je le chante sur tous les tons...
 ...Ciel nuageux...la nuit est blême...
 La lune chemine à tâtons...
 Une abeille sur de la crème... (LL, p. 175).

The repetition of the forms of "attendre" in the fourteenth stanza emphasize the poet's impatience. The adjective "palpitants", used to describe Lou's breasts, underlines the erotic nature of the relationship. It has already been evoked by the word "croupe" of line two. The serene final image of the poem, the exquisite metaphor used for the moon and pale sky, terminates this poem of passion and eroticism on a dreamy note. Apollinaire, as evidenced in his three previous poems of passion, possesses a particular talent for ending even the most passionate poem on a serenely beautiful image that transcends the carnal nature of previous stanzas. His lyricism sings forth and beckons to his mistress. He has appealed to both her passions and to her delicate sensibility through the varied images used in the poem, "Rêverie sur ta venue" and has once again shown the close tie in his poetry

between passion and serenity. It is the ethereal metaphors that impress us in the finale.

Lively images again dominate Apollinaire's next poem of passion: "Poème du 9 février 1915" (LL, p. 187, no. 81).⁹ However, the images are quite different and it is not flagellation nor the character of the love relationship that Apollinaire evokes. Rather, his picture-poem, divided into six different designs, sings a eulogy to Lou in free verse using many different designs.

The importance of the "idéogrammes" at this point in Apollinaire's life is pointed out by Apollinaire in his writings, as is the overriding significance of artistic freedom and liberty in the creation of poetry. In a letter to his godmother of war, who had published poems under the masculine pseudonym of Yves Blanc, Apollinaire writes: "...j'aime cette nouveauté de mon esprit. Pour ce qui est de la poésie libre dans Alcools il ne peut y avoir aujourd'hui de lyrisme authentique sans la liberté complète du poète et même s'il écrit en vers réguliers c'est sa liberté qui le convie à ce jeu; hors de cette liberté il ne saurait plus y avoir de poésie."¹⁰ In his famous manifesto "L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes", Apollinaire notes the intrinsic creative and inventive genius

of the poet: "Les poètes modernes sont donc des créateurs, des inventeurs et des prophètes..."¹¹ And finally, speaking of poetic syntax in a letter to his future fiancée, Madeleine, Apollinaire states: "J'ai fait mon possible pr simplifier la syntaxe poétique et j'ai réussi en certains cas, notamment un poème: 'Les Fenêtres!...'"¹².

Almost all the lines of "Poème du 9 février 1915"¹³ can be distinguished clearly, with the exception of two lines appearing in the middle of the poem figuring the monument which Apollinaire constructs to his "goddess", Lou. In the first design, figuring a rectangular mirror, Apollinaire writes horizontally, outlining the border of the glass:

Je me regarde dans ce miroir et c'est toi
que je vois toi ma Lou qui me ressembles
comme l'inverse reflet de mon âme virile forte
et très passionnée! (LL, p. 187),

Lou is the reflection of the poet's soul. This is a rather clever way to suggest the union and intimacy between him and his mistress. The three adjectives evoking his masculinity reveal once more Apollinaire's fear that perhaps Lou will not be sexually satisfied by him. How insecure he is!

The passionate soul to which the poet alludes in the first design is also depicted by the cannon-shaped second

ideogram with which the poet sends his love kisses. Apollinaire's use of a phallic symbol as the means of communicating his affection is significant. His love "s'emboîte dans ton amour comme s'il coulissait dans un rail de tramway" (LL, p. 187); the entire imagery here is sexual and highly passionate. Lou is "dans un train lointain" (LL, p. 187), and the echo produced by the alliteration of the nasal sound suggests the noise produced by the train in the far off distance. Picturesquely, the poet then opposes the image of Nîmes: "il pleut à Nîmes des grands ressorts d'horlogerie à Lou" (LL, p. 187). The choice of clockwork springs to evoke the drops of rain also reminds us of the time and space separating Apollinaire from Lou.

Again, erotically, Apollinaire writes of the day-break: "Le jour s'est levé comme un sabre et je t'aime mon Amour autant que j'aime le jour" (LL, p. 187). The poet once more has recourse to a phallic symbol which is taken from his storehouse of military equipment providing him with many possibilities for varied images. He has already used the cannon in the other ideogram, and now turns to the sword for a striking simile of a blazing sunrise. The poet vows his love to the day, to the sun

that must be an inspiration to him. He loves his Beloved as much as he does the day that acts as his muse.

And then, in tribute to his loved one, he raises a temple of worship to his goddess; "la divinité lascive que j'implore" (LL, p. 187). She is "la victime qu'il faut immoler sur l'autel à toi" (LL, p. 187). It is not the first time that Apollinaire has elevated his love and his love object to the heights of religious ceremony. In his eyes, his sublime love is a religion deserving of the finest, most sincere worship. Previously, she was the food of his communion, but now his lover becomes the object of his ceremonial and simultaneously the sacrificial lamb. She shall be immolated in the ardent ritual of lovemaking.

Next, Apollinaire chooses to draw a picture of Lou's bust, showing her under a wide-brimmed hat:

Reconnais-toi Cette adorable personne c'est
 toi sous le grand chapeau canotier Voici
 l'ovale de la figure nez la bouche Oeil
 Lou voici enfin l'imparfaite image de ton buste
 adoré vu comme à travers un nuage Lou exquis
 un peu plus bas c'est ton coeur qui bat (LL, p. 187).

The design takes on a poetic character due to Apollinaire's use of adjectives. Lou is not just "la personne" of the drawing but is the "adorable personne"; the artist has sketched her "buste adoré", not just her "buste", and he

sees it as if "through a cloud". She is surrounded by an air of mystery. The "coeur" that he suggests is not just an inanimate object, but a "beating" heart. It is indeed the adjectives that imbue his lines with life and inject them with the energy of poetry.

Apollinaire's final salute to Lou in this poem takes place in the last picture, the one depicting the orange from Lou's garden at her cousin's villa of Baratier. Referring first to a letter from Lou's other intimate friend, Apollinaire writes, perhaps a bit prosaically: "J'ai reçu la lettre de Toutou je t'adore" (LL, p. 187). But he immediately returns to the domain of poetry in speaking of the Baratier oranges:

les oranges de Baratier sont les meilleures
de la France. elles ont la saveur de ta chair
chaude comme le soleil semblable à
ces oranges (LL, p. 187).

Erotically the poet has suggested the luscious flavor of his mistress' warm flesh. The striking imagery here redeems what might otherwise have been a flat, unsuccessful ideogram. And the poet successfully imparts a final image to us when he next suggests the rain of Nîmes reflecting his own sadness. Compared to the warmth of Lou's flesh, and the sweetness and brightness of the oranges and sun he has just painted for us, the rain suddenly

contrasts, suggesting melancholy: "A bientôt Lou Il pleut ici tellement et je suis triste mon Lou" (LL, p. 187). The word "tellement" is difficult to decipher, but it seems to fit the letters Apollinaire's hand drew in script. Unfortunately, one of the problems with the handwritten ideograms is that of legibility; on occasion Apollinaire's writing is rather difficult to decipher as in the drawing of the temple mentioned above. However, the ideograms are an attractive combination of the art of poetry and drawing.

The force of imagery is more striking in the non-pictorial poem of passion, "O naturel désir pour l'homme être roi" (LL, p. 233, no. 101)¹⁴ written on April 1, 1915. This poem is incorporated into the second letter that Apollinaire wrote as part of his project to compose a book of letters to Lou for publication entitled Ombre de mon amour. These letters would be mailed to her but would not be part of the personal correspondence between them. However, the two letters of Lettres à Lou which are ostensibly his first pieces of the book never completed, include very personal data concerning the relationship between the poet and his mistress. Apollinaire alludes to Lou's taste for flagellation: "Deux ou trois miracles,

ou du moins j'appelle ainsi des coïncidences qui m'ont frappé, nous ont mis en rapport. Un amour naquit de cette rencontre et désignée comme tu l'es pour le Vice majeur (car il fut celui d'Eve qui écouta le serpent sifflant comme un fouet), tu te trouvas fatalement en ma possession, puisque je possède le pouvoir magique de châtier et de dominer." (LL, p. 228, no. 99). Apollinaire depicts Lou as a woman of experience and of great voluptuousness.

Belle ombre, tu es belle entre toutes les femmes, et cela provient avant tout de ton regard qui a quelque chose de douloureusement voluptueux. Avec cela ton visage est marqué de toutes les lassitudes que l'abus de la volupté trace sur le visage des femmes. Je ne dirai rien de tes oreilles, de ton nez, de ta bouche qui est grande et savoureuse, parce que je les aime tels qu'ils sont et que je les trouve difficiles à décrire. Toutefois, j'ajouterais touchant ton regard que lorsqu'il est hors la volupté et les moments d'esprit inattendus et surprenants qui te distinguent, il devient parfois insistant et gênant par le snobisme imprévu qu'il accompagne. (LL, p. 227, no. 99).

His frankness and objectivity in his ability to see even Lou's faults are important. Apollinaire could be most lucid and perspicacious in his view of this woman for whom he alternately rejoiced and suffered. He also felt great freedom in expressing his sentiments for her and in painting her highly erotic character. It should

be remembered that the above-quoted passages were meant for publication.

Unlike other poems to Lou, "O naturel désir pour l'homme être roi" figures as part of the letter destined for the eye of the public. The short, nine-line poem in free verse should actually be cited in its prose context, because in this passage the prose paves the way for the advent of the poem, and organically forms a whole with it:

Allons, chère ombre, voici que selon une juste métamorphose tu t'es pour moi changée en torche et flamme tordue, flamme couleur de tes propres cheveux, c'est la liberté que tu éclaires, toi qui est la rébellion.

Je sais pourquoi j'ai tant aimé à Nice cette flamme orange qui parut un midi sur la place Masséna, c'est que j'aime par-dessus tout cette liberté, cette rébellion, mais je les aime contre la liberté même et contre la rébellion même,

O naturel désir pour l'homme être roi
On est revêtu de la carte de son royaume
Les fleuves sont des épingles d'acier semblables
à tes veines où roule l'onde trompeuse de tes yeux
Le cratère d'un volcan qui sommeille mais n'est pas éteint
C'est ton sexe brun et plissé comme une rose sèche
Et les pieds dans la mer je fornique un golfe heureux
C'est ainsi que j'aime la liberté
Et je veux qu'elle seule soit la loi des autres
Mais je suis l'ennemi des autres libertés (LL, p. 233).

Apollinaire loves "liberty" and "rebellion" but he cherishes them in a special way: he values them as directed against themselves. The freedom he loves is the freedom

enjoyed by the king, the monarch, the absolute ruler who dominates and restricts the freedom of his subjects.

The taste for freedom and revolt which Apollinaire perceived in Lou attracted him to her according to the prose introduction to the poem, but it was this very freedom that Apollinaire wished to rule and bring under his subjugation.

In the poem, Apollinaire refers to the freedom of the monarch as the "naturel désir pour l'homme être roi", implying that all men may by nature feel the desire to rule others. Next, he evokes the enviable situation of the king: "On est revêtu de la carte de son royaume". The colorful card of the king suggests the metaphor and simile of the next line so rich in imagery: "Les fleuves sont des épingles d'acier semblables à tes veines où roule l'onde trompeuse de tes yeux". The steel pins suggest the icy coldness of his mistress, who, during the dark month of March, had done much to hurt Apollinaire. The disappointment, or rather the anger that he felt towards this false mistress, who deceived him by breaking her promise to visit him, is neatly summed up in the simile of steel pins. The "onde trompeuse" reinforces the anger conveyed. At the same time that Apollinaire

honors his lady by evoking her in the poem, he also criticizes her. He refrains from presenting her under an idealized light. She is cold and deceptive as she is presented to us.

After evoking her eyes, Apollinaire decides next to suggest her vagina through two vivid images: "Le cratère d'un volcan qui sommeille mais n'est pas éteint / C'est ton sexe brun et plissé comme une rose sèche". It is the richness and ingenuity of this imagery that give strength to the poem. And it is the juxtaposition of the next image, symbolically describing the sex act, that further enriches the already complicated embroidery: "Et les pieds dans la mer je fornique un golfe heureux". The ambiguity of this line was brought out by André Rouveyre in his analysis of the poem.¹⁵ Is the gulf happy by itself, or is it made happy by the poet's daring sexual act? Considering the importance Apollinaire attributes to himself, it would seem that it is his lovemaking that makes Lou respond so excitedly.

The remaining three lines summarize Apollinaire's vision of his love relationship: he wants to enjoy full freedom over Lou's body, but he won't grant such freedom to others. In this concise, nine-line poem, so rich in

suggestive imagery, Apollinaire has once more pointed out his need to control the relationship and be the master of his voluntary slave.

Apollinaire's assertiveness at this time can be well understood when we realize that he had undergone a very difficult, depressing month in his relationship with Lou. He had rented a room for her in Nîmes, believing that she would come to see him in March, and it was only on February 27th that he realized Lou was not planning to visit. She had chosen instead to remain at the front with her other lover, Toutou. On March 17th he wrote a letter to her expressing the full weight of his deception and despair:

Je ne te demande nullement de venir me trouver (sacrifice fait), non, ne viens pas ici, c'est absolument inutile puisque tu ne m'aimes pas et que bientôt je ne t'aimerai plus non plus, mais pars de là-bas pour ma tranquillité, pour que je puisse travailler avec courage. Tu m'as anéanti pendant ces 2 mois, si je n'ai pas eu une fièvre cérébrale ce n'est pas de ta faute... Je comprends tous tes sentiments et les respecte mais de ton côté rends-toi compte de ce que j'ai pu souffrir....Enfin, si je n'avais pas eu de lettre de toi aujourd'hui 17 date fixée par toi pour ta venue je me tuais demain 18. Maintenant c'est fini, je veux ne plus t'aimer, on souffre, on souffre, puis on apprend-à ne plus souffrir. (LL, p. 205, no. 89).

Apollinaire was always playing the comedy of the dejected, unfortunate lover.

However, the relationship between Apollinaire and Lou did not end; Lou did come see Apollinaire in Marseilles on March 28th. Apollinaire seemed to find the day spent with Lou reassuring, since he was inspired to write two poems immediately thereafter: "Faction" (LL, p. 211, no. 93)¹⁶ and "La Ceinture" (LL, pp. 212-14, no. 94).¹⁷ The tone and content of his letter to Lou on March 30th also reflect a much better morale if only a somewhat guarded optimism: "D'autre part JE SAIS que tu m'appartiens plus que tu ne crois peut-être et cela suffit à me rendre légères les peines qui sans cela seraient les plus affreuses. Je sais que tu es un peu plus à moi que tu ne penses maintenant... Tu vois de quelle tranquillité épatante Marseille m'a doué à mon départ." (LL, p. 220, no. 97).

But the relationship had definitely changed. Apollinaire adjusted his goals, accepting the possibility that Lou might have amorous adventures beyond her liaison with Toutou. What did he demand of Lou? Only that she be honest in all she wrote; not that she be faithful in the traditional sense:

Et l'avenir qui se prépare pr nous est charmant,
pas de jalousie et nous amusant ensemble ou
séparément serons les plus heureux amants du
monde si chacun de nous veut bien tenir ses

promesses avec joie et même avec passion et n'avoir pas un seul mensonge pour tromper l'autre. C'est la vraie fidélité. Si tu veux t'y tenir, tu seras la femme la plus épatante qu'un poète ait jamais connue et une telle muse est capable de faire de celui qu'elle aime à la façon que tu as promise le plus grand poète du monde. (LL, p. 224, no. 97).

Apollinaire's confidence in his relationship with Lou vacillated thereafter; in many letters a new type of contentment is expressed, a satisfaction based on the realization that his mistress will indeed have adventures but will at least recount them to his eager ears. Then there are depressed moments, too, when the awareness that Lou does not love him weighs heavily upon the poet--witness a passage from his letter of April 4, 1915, written during his departure for the front:

Dès que j'ai su que définitivement t'étais plus à moi, en ai eu un peu de peine, peut-être même beaucoup.

'Je suis fidèle comme un dogue'
ai-je écrit dans Alcools et tu aurais dû te douter que tout ce que je disais de te tromper était pas vrai. Pour le moment, je préfère mourir et ferai possible pour cela. Si pas possible, on verra.

Mais, suis maintenant tout autre qu'avant. Amuse-toi ma chérie puisque tu en as les occasions. Moi je pars de la façon la plus dure et le voulant. (LL, p. 242, no. 106).

Apollinaire consoles himself with the recognition that at least he has loved, and wonders further in the letter if the sentiment has at any time been reciprocated:

"Enfin, si je meurs, j'ai beaucoup aimé, pas à plaindre, car c'est la plus belle chose du monde qu'aimer et être aimé et tu m'as bien aimé quelques jours du moins?!? Aimerais bien savoir cela, mais la vérité. Où est la vérité? Savoir la vérité. Être c'est savoir la vérité quelle qu'elle soit." (LL, p. 244). On April 7th, he reiterates the primordial importance of love in his life: "L'amour, vois-tu Lou, est la grande chose sérieuse de ma vie, et tu es le grand amour." (LL, p. 261, no. 116). In the very same letter, he asks Lou to write him all about her life as a means of exciting his imagination; a communication of intimate confidences is desired by Apollinaire: "Ecris-moi, ptit Lou, des choses sur toi, ce que tu fais et toutes les cochonnetés surtout. Ça me récréera surtout dans les débuts de mon séjour ici. J'en ai inventé d'épatantes depuis quelques jours. Pas expérimentées encore. Je réserve cela après guerre. Mais elles sont épatantes et tout à fait neuves." (LL, p. 260).

Apollinaire's arrival at the front and beginning of a new life seemed to entail a resurgence of sexual frustration. In his letter of April 8, 1915, he reminisces about his past voluptuous intimacy with Lou, and

wonders how he will be able to refrain from masturbation.

It is not surprising that the following letter should contain the most carnal of the passionate poems thus far: a celebration of each part of Lou's body. The candid physical evocation of Lou's anatomy successfully communicates the poet's ardent desire for his mistress.

Beginning his series eulogy of each part of her body by praising Lou's vulva stresses the intense sexual desire that is behind the inspiration of the poem. Skipping from one part of the body to another gives an air of spontaneity to a piece seemingly composed by free association. In the poem, "Mon cher petit Lou, je t'adore" (LL, pp. 268-69, no. 118),¹⁸ eroticism stimulates Apollinaire's imagination to pour forth sensuous, provocative lines:

Mon cher petit Lou, je t'adore,
 Mon très cher petit Lou je t'aime,
 Ma chère petite étoile palpitante je t'aime
 Corps délicieusement élastique je t'aime
 Vulve qui serre comme un casse-noisettes je t'aime
 Sein gauche si rose et si insolent, je t'aime
 Sein droit si tendrement rosé, je t'aime,
 Mamelon droit couleur de champagne non champagnisé
 je t'aime
 Mamelon gauche semblable à une bosse du front
 d'un petit veau qui vient de naître
 je t'aime
 Nymphes hypertrophiées par tes attouchements
 fréquents, je vous aime
 Fesses exquisement agiles et qui se rejettent
 bien en arrière, je vous aime

Nombriil semblable à une lune creuse et sombre
 je t'aime
 Toison claire comme une forêt en hiver je t'aime
 Aisselles duvetées comme un cygne naissant je
 vous aime
 Chute des épaules adorablement pure je t'aime
 Cuisse au galbe aussi esthétique qu'une colonne
 de temple antique je t'aime
 Oreilles ourlées comme de petits bijoux mexicains
 je vous aime
 Chevelure trempée dans le sang des amours je t'aime
 Pieds savants, pieds qui se raidissent je vous aime
 Reins chevaucheurs, reins puissants, je vous aime
 Taille qui n'a jamais connu le corset, taille
 souple je t'aime
 Dos merveilleusement fait et qui s'est courbé
 pour moi je t'aime
 Bouche, ô mes délices, ô mon nectar je t'aime
 Regard unique regard-étoile je t'aime
 Mains dont j'adore les mouvements je vous aime
 Nez singulièrement aristocratique je t'aime
 Démarche onduleuse et dansante je t'aime
 O petit Lou, je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime et
 quand je le rajouterais encore, ce
 serait toujours le même mot. C'est
 celui-là même, je t'aime. (LL, pp. 268-69).

The poet gets so carried away by his inspiration that he runs his poem into the concluding prose paragraph, joining them physically by a comma and thematically by his rejoinders of love. The repetition throughout the poem of the words "je t'aime" or "je vous aime" at the conclusion of each line reiterates the poet's affection for Lou and his adoration of her. The poem draws its power and effect from the imaginativeness of the imagery. Apollinaire does not simply describe Lou's red hair, but

chooses to suggest it metaphorically and to imply much more: "Chevelure trempée dans le sang des amours je t'aime". Her hair has been "soaked in the blood of loves" since it has been witness to her past loves which have all died. The originality of an image such as "aisselle duvetée comme un cygne naissant je vous aime" is responsible for the tremendous impact of each of the images envisioned by the poet. A poem of this nature, which, due to its series format and repetition of final words of each line, could risk boring the reader, manages to avoid this danger. It succeeds marvelously in communicating the imagination and passion of the poet-lover through the multitude of images. The force of the poem is augmented by the final run-on line which connects the poem to the prose, revealing the great spirit and enthusiasm of Apollinaire. Simultaneously, he is exercising his sexual desires and trying to win back her affection.

The overriding importance of the place of love in Apollinaire's universe was brought out by Apollinaire in one of his subsequent letters to Lou: "...je ne déteste pas que l'Amour me fasse parfois souffrir. C'est là une source intarissable de poésie. Il est vrai qu'il faut que la souffrance ne dure pas trop longtemps." (LL, p. 280, no. 121). His suffering was seen even by him as the great

Je voudrais te prendre pour que tu m'aimes
 Je voudrais te fesser pour que tu m'aimes
 Je voudrais te faire mal pour que tu m'aimes
 Je voudrais que nous soyons seuls dans une chambre
 d'hôtel à Grasse pour que tu m'aimes
 Je voudrais que nous soyons seuls dans mon petit
 bureau près de la terrasse couchés
 sur le lit de fumerie pour que tu m'aimes
 Je voudrais que tu sois ma soeur pour t'aimer
 incestueusement
 Je voudrais que tu eusses été ma cousine pour
 qu'on se soit aimés très jeunes
 Je voudrais que tu sois mon cheval pour te
 chevaucher longtemps, longtemps
 Je voudrais que tu sois mon coeur pour te sentir
 toujours en moi.
 Je voudrais que tu sois le paradis ou l'enfer
 selon le lieu où j'aïlle
 Je voudrais que tu sois un petit garçon pour
 être ton précepteur
 Je voudrais que tu sois la nuit pour nous aimer
 dans les ténèbres
 Je voudrais que tu sois ma vie pour être par
 toi seule
 Je voudrais que tu sois un obus boche pour me
 tuer d'un soudain amour (LL, pp. 309-10).

The images combine the poet's wishful thinking with his memories of Lou and of the love he and she have shared together. The erotic nature of the images is particularly strong: the poet would like to practice flagellation in order that Lou might love him; this thought is reiterated by lines seven and fifteen. The kind of love that the poet is suggesting is physical love; not the spiritual love of two human beings for each other. His imagination can envision a complete union of the two lovers in line nineteen: "Je voudrais que tu sois ma vie pour être par

toi seule", and it can conceive of his mistress as being the German shell that will kill him with a bursting, sudden love in line eighteen: "Je voudrais que tu sois un obus boche pour me tuer d'un soudain amour". The images are all quite carnal, reinforcing the eroticism of the relationship.

The allusion to incest can be readily understood if we realize that in Lettres à Lou Apollinaire tells his mistress that the men at the front have incestuous dreams and openly discuss them together in the morning (LL, p. 291, no. 125). Incest was certainly a topic very much on Apollinaire's mind. Just like the previous poem, "Mon cher petit Lou, je t'adore", the first stanza of this poem emphasizes only the physical side of the love relationship.

Apollinaire next turns to Lilith and Proserpine as his actresses. From Hell they exclaim:

Nous nous aimons sauvagement dans la nuit noire
Victimes de l'ascèse et produits du désespoir
Chauves-souris qui ont leurs anglais comme les
femmes (LL, p. 310).

Apollinaire takes Lilith, Adam's first wife "who, chased from Paradise, became the consort of the devil"²⁰ and Proserpine, wife of Pluto and queen of Hades, and turns them into lesbians who oppose Gui's heterosexual love

for Lou. It is not the poet who answers back, but "Le Ptit Lou" who utters only one line:

Faut pas parler comm' ça, on dit coulitchonnette
(LL, p. 310).

"Coulitchonnette" seems to mean a kind of sexual play, although in the four times Apollinaire uses the word in Lettres à Lou he never once explains this term which the two lovers evidently understood. It must be a play on "cochonnette". Lilith and then Proserpine reply:

Lilith

J'ai créé la mer Rouge contre le désir de l'homme

Proserpine

J'ai fait sortir de son lit le Léthé
J'en inonde le monde comme d'un hippomane
(LL, p. 311).

"Hippomane" according to the lexicon compiled by Scott Bates means the vaginal mucous;²¹ if we accept this definition, Proserpine's statement as well as that of Lilith, would be an affirmation of the domination of women over men. Apollinaire makes of Lilith the creator of the Red Sea, when in legend she was actually "pursued by angels to the Red Sea", and it was she who was reputed to have "lost a hundred children a day."²² But she gains strength here and is not the pursuant but the creator of the Sea.

The Sea which could be interpreted as a symbol of menstruation, is an open challenge to man and a defiance of the male. In the same way, Proserpine's control over the river of oblivion--le Léthé--is a proclamation of the power of woman. In these four successive stanzas, Apollinaire expresses the fear that Lou no longer needs or desires him. It is amusing that he sees women as rivals for her affection rather than men. Lesbianism would not be a personal rejection of him.

Leaving the Underworld of Lilith and Proserpine and the domain of lesbian lovers, Apollinaire next mentions the "bird of eternity" of the "monastery of Heisterbach". He suggests the medieval setting of the nine lines of the bird of eternity by using the word "moutier" for "monastère". Choosing the old word takes us from the present to the past. All concept of time is ignored in the lines the bird is to utter; his words are a statement of what he symbolizes, for he is the sum of all the birds and thus the symbol of death, beauty, rebirth, truth, prophecy, and of goodness. He astonishes the monk whose privilege it is to behold him:

Je suis l'éternité
Mort belle de la Beauté
Je mords la mirabelle de l'été
Flambant Phénix de la Charité

Pélican de la prodigalité
 Aigle cruel de la Vérité
 Rouge-gorge de la sanglante clarté
 Corbeau de la sombre bonté
 Qu'est devenu le moine hébété (LL, p. 311).

We can perhaps best understand Apollinaire's jumping from one theme to another by the fact that while writing the poem the soldiers were awaiting a possible attack. "A 7 heures, Alerte!, en une heure, on était prêt et depuis ce temps on attend dans la nuit noire, tout éteint. J'écris dans ma cabane, un logis m'a prêté sa lampe électrique de poche et Berthier m'éclaire pendant que je t'écris. J'espère que ce sera une fausse alerte,..." (LL, p. 309). Laboring under the tension and fears which he surely must have felt, Apollinaire's mind quickly skipped from one thought to another, so that the poem became a network of different inspirations. Thinking of the bird of eternity while awaiting an attack and possible death is certainly understandable. In fact, the whole carnal nature of the first section of the poem becomes easy to comprehend when we realize that the soldier, Apollinaire, was grabbing onto what was dearest to him on this earth and what could perhaps best recall life. He was reaching for life through artistic creation and evocation of sensuality and voluptuous love. The bird of

eternity is a reminder of the afterlife promised by the religion in which the young Apollinaire had been thoroughly indoctrinated. It was a way of reassuring himself that he would not really die, for some manner of life would continue even after the German shells had struck. The whole somewhat disorganized nature of this poem, which consists of a series of very different roles or sections containing numerous themes, can perhaps best be explained by the fact that Apollinaire was writing under extreme duress. The prose of the letter, explaining his situation, elucidates the reasons for the complex structure of the poem.

After the words of the bird of eternity Apollinaire places side by side Prayer and Joy:

La Prière

Abaissement qui élève
Le maître fut l'élève
Aimer n'être pas aimé
Fumée, belle fumée

La Joie

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
Je commande et mande
Je nais du mal à
Samarcande
Mais il ne faut pas que
j'attende (LL, p. 311).

The Prayer is the description of a prayer rather than a prayer itself. It evokes man humbling himself before God. However, it is really a wish for love, but at the same time a recognition of the tendency of love to vanish. Through metaphor, love becomes the smoke that rises, thins in the

Toutes deux appelez-moi votre père
Et l'Art est notre fils multiforme
Je m'ouvre la poitrine, Entrez! c'est votre
demeure

The clock ringing out the hours is the instrument of time, whose presence can no longer be denied and which marks our hours on this earth. The evocation of time brings us back to the concrete world from this world of abstractions and religious trinities. The poet now lets his battalion speak and reminds us that the men are awaiting an attack:

The lines the battalion utters are rendered especially poignant by the last line in which the forceful metaphor "tigres volants de la guerre" is used to symbolize the shells. Apollinaire creates a vivid picture of the war. Tension is communicated by the pauses in the long lines.

The return to the war marks a return to "Gui" and to "Le Ptit Lou". Gui thinks of Lou "Je pense à toi ma Lou et ne pense pas à dormir", and Lou says: "Je suis dans ton dodo et de loin près de toi". (LL, p. 312). Then the "people of the world" cry out to Lou a declaration of their love, asking Lou to forget her soldiers, presumably referring to those she had been nursing in Nice and to those she'd met at the front when visiting Toutou:

Mon petit Lou je veux te reprendre
Oublie tes soldats pour mes fêtes. (LL, p. 312).

Suddenly, a dream of the future looms on the horizon. Apollinaire escapes the anguished present. If there is perhaps to be death on this night of battle, there will at least be the promise of a future in which the poet, his mistress, and her other lover, Toutou, can all rejoice and live together:

Lou et Gui et vous Toutou faut que voyez tous
trois
De merveilleux rivages
Une ville enchantée comme Cordoue
En Andalousie. Les gens simples séduits par
votre cœur
Et votre fantaisie
Vous donneront des fleurs, des cannes à sucre
(LL, p. 312).

The poet, interested now in his love and no longer fascinated by art which he had evoked earlier in the poem,

speaks out:

L'avenir m'intéresse et mon amour surtout
 Mais l'art et les artistes futurs ne m'inté-
 ressent pas.
 A Paris, il y aura la Seine
 Et le regard de mon petit Lou (LL, p. 313).

What a change of posture for Apollinaire! But how understandable such an utterance is in light of the tensions under which the poem was written. What mattered at the moment was physical life and experiencing it.

Apollinaire does not close this unusual poem of passion and life on this note. He goes on to write three more stanzas of octosyllabic quatrains, spoken by the "Choeur des jeunes filles mortes en 1915". In this grand finale, the poet unites the two great themes of the poem, the themes of war and love. The dead young girls have given up life as have their soldier lovers, and only the nightingale may sing as before. It is a saddened cry against merciless war. The rose, symbol of love, has also been killed:

O mort, mène-nous dans le bois
 Pour retrouver la rose morte (LL, p. 313).

Yet as the word "retrouver" suggests, Apollinaire will go on to search for love once more.

The remaining four poems of eroticism of Lettres à Lou revert to the more classical format of the previous

passionate poems. They are not divided into roles and they center about one main idea which seems to be the major source of inspiration of the poem. "Jolie bizarre enfant chérie" (LL, pp. 329-33, no. 141),²³ the first poem, is organized around the poet's five senses through which he experiences the presence of Lou. Each of the first five stanzas celebrates one of the senses and evokes a series of images or perceptions of Lou made possible through the particular sense in question. The final stanza sums up the picture of Lou created by all the images joined together. "En allant chercher des obus" (LL, pp. 362-65, no. 154),²⁴ the second poem, evokes each of the nine apertures of the body. One after another they permit the poet access to Lou's body and soul, and the most intimate of them all allows a real union of the poet and his mistress. "Lou ma rose" (LL, pp. 424-25, no. 176),²⁵ the third poem, pivots about the rose image which is suggested again and again as a symbol of the different parts of Lou's body. "Lou, mon étoile" (LL, pp. 427-29, no. 177),²⁶ uses the image of the star called Lou as the unifying element of the poem. The unity that thus prevails in each of these poems contrasts sharply with the lack of cohesiveness of "Scène nocturne du 22 avril", reminding

us rather of the earlier erotic poems. The individuality of "Scène nocturne du 22 avril" is apparent when the poem is compared to all these other poems of passion.

But within the group of erotic poems still unexamined, there are structural and thematic differences to note. The one common factor is the prominent eroticism which is a leitmotif running through each piece. In a different way, each poem sensuously evokes Lou's body. The similarity amongst the poems ends there; however, for each one uses different images and a different approach to suggest the absent woman.

Let us first examine the poem, "Jolie bizarre enfant chérie". The entire first stanza, consisting of fifteen lines in free verse, suggests a very sensuous Lou who swings her hips as she walks and twists her body as she jumps under her lover's whip:

Jolie bizarre enfant chérie
 Je vois tes doux yeux langoureux
 Mourir peu à peu comme un train qui entre en gare
 Je vois tes seins, tes petits seins au bout rose
 Comme ces perles de Formose
 Que j'ai vendues à Nice avant de partir pour Nîmes
 Je vois ta démarche rythmée de Salomé plus
 capricieuse
 Que celle de la ballerine qui fit couper la
 tête au Baptiste
 Ta démarche rythmée comme un acte d'amour
 Et qui à l'hôpital auxiliaire ou à Nice
 Tu soignais les blessés

Répand au moment de la volupté
 Parfum presque nul et que l'odorat d'un amant
 Peut seul et à peine percevoir
 Je sens la parfum de rose rose très douce et
 lointaine
 Qui te précède et te suit, ma rose (LL, pp. 329-30).

The multiple flower fragrances create an impression of great delicacy. It contrasts with the picture of a wildly passionate woman painted in the first stanza of the poem. The play on the word "rose" adds to the harmony of the last two lines. It enhances the sweetness of love Apollinaire evokes.

The central picture, however, is that of the erotic woman. It is she he paints when writing of his sense of touch. Caressing the most sensitive part of her anatomy he excites her and turns her into an impassioned creature. Through a multiplicity of images Apollinaire suggests Lou at the height of her passion:

Jolie bizarre enfant chérie
 Je touche la courbe singulière de tes reins
 Je suis des doigts ces courbes qui te font faite
 Comme une statue grecque d'avant Praxitèle
 Et presque comme une Eve des cathédrales
 Je touche aussi la toute petite éminence si
 sensible
 Qui est ta vie même au suprême degré
 Elle annihile en agissant ta volonté tout
 entière
 Elle est comme le feu dans la forêt
 Elle te rend comme un troupeau qui a le tournis
 Elle te rend comme un hospice de folles
 Où le directeur et le médecin-chef deviendraient
 Déments eux-mêmes

Elle te rend comme un canal calme changé
 brusquement
 En une mer furieuse et écumeuse
 Elle te rend comme un savon satiné et parfumé
 Qui mousse soudain dans les mains de qui se
 lave (LL, p. 330).

The seventeen lines of this stanza, by their very number, reinforce the image of his responsive lover, suggested in both the first and second stanza. They carry the image one step further by very descriptively evoking Lou's contortions during orgasm. The series of vivid similes intensifies our impression of the physical pleasure Apollinaire and Lou shared. The varied enumerations indicate the richness of Apollinaire's imagination and creativity.

The highly physical nature of the images is also quite apparent in the third stanza in which Apollinaire turns to his sense of taste. Imaginatively, he suggests the taste of her mouth. His repetition of the words "ta bouche" in line two, and of the same vowel sound underlined in lines two and three, give a melodious flow to the opening of the stanza:

Jolie bizarre enfant chérie
 Je goûte ta bouche ta bouche sorbet à la rose
 Je la goûte doucement
 Comme un khalife attendant avec mépris les
 Croisés
 Je goûte ta langue comme un tronçon de poulpe
 Qui s'attache à vous de toutes les forces de
 ses ventouses

Tendre et bleue de l'écorce du bouleau
 Ou d'une cigarette de Nestor Gianaklis
 Ou cette fumée sacrée si bleue 28
 Et qu'on ne nomme pas (LL, p. 330).

His sense of hearing inspires more images.

Seventeen lines are devoted to an evocation of the variety of timbres Lou's voice can assume. Each nuance in turn paints Lou in a different humor. All the timbres together compose an orchestra of sounds:

Jolie bizarre enfant chérie
 J'entends ta voix qui me rappelle
 Un concert de bois, musette hautbois, flûtes,
 Clarinettes, cors anglais
 Lointain concert varié à l'infini
 Tu te moques parfois et il faut qu'on rie
 O ma chérie
 Et si tu parles gentiment
 C'est le concert des anges
 Et si tu parles tristement, c'est une satane
 triste
 Qui se plaint
 D'aimer en vain un jeune saint si joli
 Devant son nimbe vermeil
 Et qui baisse doucement les yeux
 Les mains jointes
 Et qui tient comme une verge cruelle
 La palme du martyr (LL, p. 331).

The "satane" contrasts with the "concert des anges" that is Lou's voice when she speaks sweetly. And the demon also is opposed to the "jeune saint" whom she loves. We may be amused at Apollinaire's reference to himself, the object of Lou's affection, as a "jeune saint". He is not just a "young saint", for he is a saint "qui tient comme une verge cruelle / La palme du martyr". Once

In this conclusion to the poem, Lou becomes simply a useful personification of loveliness rather than an emblem of sensuality, for she is pictured as a "gracieuse ombre". Once more Apollinaire has terminated an erotic poem on a somewhat more serene note. His senses have been so capable of perceiving Lou like a saddened demon or

like a white dove. The poem has shown the different facets of Lou's personality. Most importantly, it has revealed the vastness of Apollinaire's poetic imagination.

The poem entitled "En allant chercher des obus" (LL, pp. 364-65), sent to Lou on May 13, 1915, also uses extremely rich imagery to convey the poet's message. The poem, celebrating the nine apertures of Lou's body, carnally evokes stanza by stanza each of the openings, appealing to Lou to reopen her doors to the poet. Thus the poem combines eroticism with a certain nostalgia. It is a nostalgia due to absence and to the knowledge that love has gone bad and is no longer the supremely jubilant experience it once was with Lou. However, it is the erotic mood which prevails throughout the poem.

In the first three stanzas, which serve as a preamble to the passages evoking the nine doors, Apollinaire calls upon his military situation and surroundings in order to offer a setting for the poem to follow. He addresses himself using the "tu" form, and evokes not only his present situation as a soldier but also the presence of his mistress suddenly suggested by the fragrance of the lilacs he smells. But the lilacs are already in the process of losing their flowers. This symbolic

death introduces the saddened situation of the lover who once tasted the fruits of passion but is now reduced to solitude and to reminiscences:

Toi qui précèdes le long convoi qui marche au pas
 Dans la nuit claire...
 Les testicules pleins, le cerveau tout empli
 d'images neuves...
 Le sergent des riz pain sel qui jette l'épervier
 dans le canal bordé de tilleuls...
 L'âme exquise de la plus Jolie me parvient dans
 l'odeur soudaine des lilas qui déjà
 tendent à défleurir dans les jardins
 abandonnés (LL, p. 362).

It is particularly interesting to note the connection that Apollinaire establishes here between his virility and his poetic imagination filled with new images waiting to be born on paper. He had earlier linked poetic creation to love in a letter to Lou written on January 18, 1915: "Les poètes sont les créateurs, (poète vient du grec et signifie en effet créateur et poésie signifie création)--Rien ne vient donc sur terre, n'apparaît aux yeux des hommes s'il n'a d'abord été imaginé par un poète. L'amour même, c'est la poésie naturelle de la vie, l'instinct naturel qui nous pousse à créer de la vie, à reproduire." (LL, p. 120, no. 51). Now in the poem, Apollinaire once again joins sexual procreation to poetic creation. This serves as a key for us concerning the primordial importance of sexuality in the erotic writings

to Lou, as in Apollinaire's other erotic works. Human love is a creative act as is poetic creation, and just as poetry is divine for Apollinaire, so may love attain the heights of divinity:

Je sais que ceux qui se livrent au travail
de la poésie font quelque chose d'essentiel,
de primordial, de nécessaire avant toute
chose, quelque chose enfin de divin. Je ne
parle pas bien entendu des simples versifi-
cateurs. Je parle de ceux qui, péniblement,
amoureusement, génialement, peu à peu peuvent
exprimer une chose nouvelle et meurent dans
l'amour qui les inspirait. (LL, pp. 120-21).

That love does at times become divine for Apollinaire has been shown in several instances where love with Lou was elevated to the level of a religious ritual. In the poem, "En allant chercher des obus" Apollinaire does not raise love to such exalted heights, but he does elevate it in the conclusion suggesting that physical love will allow lovers to gain knowledge over all things.

After the exposition of the poem, Apollinaire intensifies his evocation of the war scene surrounding him with a one-line stanza:

Des Bobosses poudreux reviennent des tranchées
blanches comme les bras de l'Amour (LL, p.362).

Then he introduces his subsidiary theme; the desire to hold Lou once again in his arms, and next goes on to present his major theme, the evocation of the nine openings

of the body that he wishes to reenter:

Je rêve de t'avoir nuit et jour dans mes bras
Je respire ton âme à l'odeur des lilas

O Portes de ton corps
Elles sont neuf et je les ai toutes ouvertes
O Portes de ton corps
Elles sont neuf et pour moi se sont toutes
refermées (LL, pp. 362-63).

At the first door, Lou's left eye, logical thinking meets its death. Following the Petrarchan concept of love, Apollinaire evokes a glance so powerful it was capable of enslaving his heart. We may remember the arrows of love shot forth by the lady's eyes, striking the man's heart and thus capturing him in poems of the Petrarchan school. Apollinaire appeals to Lou to remember that moment when she first cast her magical gaze upon him and asks her to again reopen the door of her eye to him:

A la première porte
La Raison Claire est morte
C'était, t'en souviens-tu le premier jour
à Nice
Ton oeil de gauche ainsi qu'une couleuvre
glisse
Jusqu'à mon coeur
Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ton
regard de gauche (LL, p. 363).

At the second door, Lou's right eye, the poet's strength dies; it is surrendered to the blinking eye gazing upon him. There is a structural parallelism between the

first and second stanzas established by the similarity of the first and last line of each:

A la seconde porte
 Toute ma force est morte
 C'était t'en souviens-tu dans une auberge
 à Cagnes
 Ton oeil de droite palpitait comme mon coeur
 Tes paupières battent comme dans la brise
 battent les fleurs
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ton
 regard de droite (LL, p. 363).

Briefly the poet then suggests her left ear, calling upon it to listen to the throbbing of his heart. The verb "battre" emphasizes the trembling movement captured in the previous stanza:

A la troisième porte
 Entends battre l'aorte
 Et toutes mes artères gonflées par ton seul
 amour
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ton
 oreille de gauche (LL, p. 363).

In a longer stanza, he asks her right ear to listen to the springtime song of love. It is a song that is sad for the soldiers at war, who, like Apollinaire, must sacrifice the season of rebirth for fighting and possibly for death. But, by implication, it is a song that is joyous to the ears of the lady being serenaded far from the army front:

A la quatrième porte
 Tous les printemps m'escortent
 Et l'oreille tendue entend du bois joli

Monter cette chanson de l'amour et des nids
 Si triste pour les soldats qui sont en guerre
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ton
 oreille de droite (LL, 363).

With the fifth door, Apollinaire returns to the structure of the first two "door" stanzas, calling upon Lou to remember the amorous moments spent together on the way back from Grasse. To the fifth door, her mouth, Apollinaire brings his life. What does he mean by the words, "C'est ma vie que je t'apporte"? He means that he bestows upon her his very life when he brings his lips to hers. The words he may utter to her represent his life, for he is a poet and his words are the greatest gift he can possibly offer. The power of words is reinforced in the stanza by the strength the poet confers upon even those Lou has whispered to Apollinaire:

Ta bouche me disait
 Des mots de damnation si pervers et si tendres
 Que je me demande, ô mon âme blessée
 Comment alors j'ai pu sans mourir les entendre
 (LL, p. 364).

The words are almost tangible objects: "O mots si doux, si forts que quand j'y pense il me semble que je les touche" (LL, p. 364). Indeed, the words are both the poet's life and his essence. For him they are so real that they are almost concrete objects. Certainly the very physical nature of so many of the images in Lettres à Lou can be

better understood when we realize that Apollinaire viewed words as being almost tangible objects. This is an echo of Rabelais' "Paroles Dégelées" in the fourth book of Gargantua et Pantagruel. The fact that Apollinaire is writing to Lou as both an artist and lover, as both a poet and anxious seducer, trying to win the lady back again, is made apparent by the complexity of this fifth door stanza.

Lou's left nostril is the sixth door in Apollinaire's scheme. The poet evokes at first the odors that Lou may smell and then those delicious ones that the poet may enjoy. But the very first odor is the putrid one of war. Here is one instance in which Apollinaire's evocation of the battle is certainly not pretty nor laudatory. Strongly contrasted with the stench of war are the sweeter odors he then enumerates:

A la sixième porte
 Ta gestation de putréfaction, ô Guerre, avorte
 Voici tous les printemps avec leurs fleurs
 Voici les cathédrales avec leur encens
 Voici tes aisselles avec leur divine odeur
 Et tes lettres parfumées que je sens
 Pendant des heures
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ta
 narine de gauche (LL, p. 364).

Apollinaire plunges into an evocation of the sweet fragrances of the past when suggesting the seventh door,

Lou's right nostril. He suggests both the odors that enveloped Lou and him and the salty taste of Lou's mouth which he associates with the intimacy he and Lou shared:

A la septième porte
 O parfums du passé que le courant d'air
 emporte
 Les effluves salins donnaient à tes lèvres
 le goût de la mer
 Odeur marine, odeur d'amour, sous nos
 fenêtres mourait la mer
 Et l'odeur des orangers t'enveloppait d'Amour
 Tandis que dans mes bras tu te pelotonnais
 Quiète et coïte
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ta narine
 de droite (LL, p. 364).

The salty taste evokes the memory of their first three months in Nice and the salty smell of the lovers' bodies during lovemaking. The poet has appealed to his mistress to let them both enjoy these tastes and odors once more. He has tried to whet her appetite for love through the vivid, pleasant, tantalizing images he has chosen.

In his evocation of the eighth door, Apollinaire manages to create a poetic series of images while suggesting the "derrière" which he would like to flagellate. He literally elevates his subject by using the metaphor of angels to allude to his object, by writing of the "ciel exquis" of Lou's waist, and by evoking a whip composed of moon's rays. These "heavenly" images raise his

subject to the level of poetry and are an excellent example of the poetisation of material that might otherwise seem rather vulgar:

A la huitième porte
 Deux anges joufflus veillent sur les roses
 tremblantes qui supportent
 Le ciel exquis de ta taille élastique
 Et me voici armé d'un fouet fait de rayons
 de lune
 Les amours couronnés de jacinthe arrivent en
 troupe
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte de ta
 croupe (LL, p. 364).

Suggesting Lou's ninth door, her most intimate, Apollinaire does not at first evoke Lou's anatomy but rather the glorious love that results from the union the two of them will enjoy. As a final point of seduction, he praises her body:

A la neuvième porte
 Il faut que l'amour même en sorte
 Vie de ma vie
 Je me joins à toi pour l'éternité
 Et par l'amour parfait et sans colère
 Nous arriverons dans la passion pure ou
 perverse
 Selon ce qu'on voudra
 A tout savoir à tout voir, à tout entendre
 Je me suis renoncé dans le secret profond
 de ton amour
 O porte ombreuse, ô porte de corail vivant
 Entre les deux colonnes de perfection
 Et que se rouvre encore la porte que tes
 mains savent si bien ouvrir (LL, p. 365).

Love allows the poet and his mistress to rise above the human condition, to know all and feel all. This is a

self-glorification and an amusing justification for sexual relations. Yet Apollinaire viewed his love relationship very seriously. His own intensity of emotion plus his creative ability enabled him to write this powerful poem. It is a fine work due to many striking images that convince the reader of the passion he felt.

The theme of the nine doors of the body must have haunted Apollinaire during the war, since on the twenty-first of September, 1915, four months later, he sent a similar poem to Madeleine Pagès, his fiancée since August. Now that an erotic union no longer existed between Apollinaire and Lou, Madeleine was to be the recipient of a series of intimate poems of which "Les Neuf portes de ton corps" represents the first.²⁹ However, although this poem is similar to "En allant chercher des obus", it differs in its content and aim. Apollinaire when writing to Lou is attempting to recapture an escaped mistress who has somehow slipped through his fingers; when writing to Madeleine he is trying to seduce a virgin. Each poem is adapted to the physical attributes of its recipient, thus each one becomes a highly personal, individualized piece of verse. Therefore, Apollinaire's use of the theme of the nine doors for two different poems addressed to two

different women in no way denies the individual character of each of the poems, nor the imaginativeness of the imagery of each. Since "En allant chercher des obus" was composed several months earlier, the poem to Lou is the initial "blason du corps" piece. It may well have paved the way for the intimate poems to Madeleine written later.

In the poem "Lou ma rose" (LL, pp. 424-25), Apollinaire uses one of his favorite techniques, the play on words, to construct a poem of twenty-nine lines. He constantly plays on the repetition of the word "roses" to achieve a unity in the poem, and at times achieves a repetitive rhyme effect running one line into the next in the manner of the Grands Rhétoriciens. Every part of Lou becomes a rose:

...
 Lou ma rose ou plutôt mes roses
 Tu m'as envoyé des feuilles de rose
 O petite déesse
 Tu crées les roses
 Et tu fais les feuilles de roses
 Roses (LL, p. 424).

This repetition may recall some of the famous plays on words Apollinaire used in Alcools; in "L'Ermite" he enjoyed playing on the sound of "amour":

Les humains savent tant de jeux l'amour
 la mourre
 L'amour jeu des nombrils ou jeu de la grande oie

La moure jeu du nombre illusoire des doigts
 Seigneur faites Seigneur qu'un jour je
 m'énamoure.³⁰

And in "Zone" he exploited the sound of the word "laide":

"Te voici à Amsterdam avec une jeune fille que tu trouves
 belle et qui est laide / Elle doit se marier avec un
 étudiant de Leyde",³¹ and then the sounds of "Jersey":

"Elle est la fille d'un sergent de ville de Jersey /
 Ses mains que je n'avais pas vues sont dures et gercées".³²

Now, in the poem "Lou ma rose" Apollinaire expands his play
 on words to encompass the entire poem and unify all the
 images of Lou. The actual rose petals are transformed
 into swaying naked women:

Petites femmes à poil qui se baladent
 Gentiment
 Elles se balancent en robe de satin
 Sur des escarpolettes
 Elles chantent le plus beau parfum, le plus
 fort le plus doux
 Lou ma rose ô ma perfection je t'aime
 Et c'est avec joie que je risque de me piquer
 En faveur de ta beauté
 Je t'aime, je t'adore, je mordille tes
 feuilles de rose
 Rose, reine des fleurs, Lou reine des femmes
 Je te porte au bout des doigts ô Lou ô rose
 Au bout des doigts, en te faisant menotte
 Jusqu'à ce que tu t'évanouisses
 Comme s'évanouit le parfum
 Des roses
 Je t'embrasse, ô Lou et je t'adore (LL, p. 425)

With Apollinaire's bent toward eroticism, he naturally
 sees nudes in the rose petals, and even imagines "les
 fesses des roses" when contemplating the flowers. His

next step is to erotically imagine Lou, and so he does envisioning an intimate caress. The proliferation of roses in the poem, and the frequency with which roses becomes the final word of the line, create a hypnotizing effect which matches the trance the poet suggests when he writes of making love to Lou. To the reader experiencing the poem, the continued play on words of "roses" also casts a dizzying spell.

By its unification centered about one word and its periodic repetition, "Lou ma rose" distinguishes itself from Apollinaire's other erotic poems which are not marked by such a play on words. The monotony caused by the repetition seems to take away from the effect of the poem, and makes it in our eyes a less successful example of Apollinaire's erotic verse to Lou. Poems with more varied imagery and sounds appear to be more effective and more moving.

Written one day later, on the third of June, 1915, "Lou, mon étoile" (LL, pp. 427-29) also centers about one main image, that of the star named Lou. Unlike the previous poem, it does not consist of a tightly-knit play on words and contains more highly developed images. The greater variety within the poem makes it a more successful

example of erotic verse and a more poignant piece of writing.

The poem opens by evoking a star that is "...aussi voluptueuse qu'une jolie fille vicieuse" (LL, p. 427).

The predominance of sensuality is sustained by the following images: "Les Planètes rutilantes", "des déesses callipyges", and the "éclairs" that are "doux comme des baisers éternels":

L'étoile nommée Lou est aussi belle aussi
 voluptueuse qu'une jolie fille vicieuse
 Elle est assise dans un météore agencé comme
 une automobile de luxe
 Autour d'elle se tiennent les autres étoiles
 ses amies
 Autour de l'automobile stellaire s'étend l'infini
 étheré
 Les Planètes rutilantes se montrent tour à tour
 comme des déesses callipyges
 sur l'horizon
 La Voie lactée monte comme une poussière derrière
 Le météore automobile
 Des guirlandes d'astres décorent l'infini
 Le météore automobile luxueux et architectural
 Comme un palais
 est monté sur un bolide énorme qui
 tonne à travers les cieux
 qu'il sillonne d'éclairs
 versicolores et durables comme
 de merveilleux feux de Bengale
 Et doux comme des baisers éternels (LL, p. 427).

The modernity of the images is worth noting, and may recall a poem like "Zone". It is the first time in Lettres à Lou that Apollinaire has spoken of Lou as a star that is metaphorically an "automobile luxueux". Space itself is

filled by reminders of the poet's love, and the star
 "Lou" itself is erotically changed into the most personal
 parts of Lou's body:

Etoile Lou, beau sein de neige rose
 Petit nichon exquis de la douce nuit
 Clitoris délectable de la brise embaumée
 d'Avant l'aube (LL, p. 428).

Apollinaire's erotic imagination persists in seeing
 sexual images in the sky:

Je ne vois que l'étoile que j'aime.
 Elle est la splendeur du firmament
 Et je ne vois qu'elle
 Elle est un petit trou charmant aux fesses
 des nuages
 Elle est l'étoile des Etoiles
 Elle est l'étoile d'Amour
 O nuit, ô nuit dure toujours ainsi (LL, p. 428).

When the bombs streak across the sky blocking Apollinaire's
 view of his star, he transforms his imagination into a bird
 that can fly above the shells reaching up to the magnificent
 star Lou. But the star is subtly changed back into a flesh
 and blood woman in the final lines of the poem in which poet-
 ic imagination and sexual desire join to bring about this
 metamorphosis:

Etoile Lou fais-moi monter vers toi
 Prends-moi dans ta splendeur
 Que je sois ébloui et presque épouvanté
 Que l'espace bleu se creuse à l'infini
 Que l'horizon disparaisse
 Que tous les astres grandissent
 Et pour finir fais-moi pénétrer dans ton paradis
 Que j'éprouve une sensation
 De bien-être inouï
 Que j'absorbe par toute ma chair, toute mon âme
 Ta lumière exquise
 O mon paradis (LL, p. 429).

The real paradise that is thus evoked is that created by the sexual union that the poet longs for. The star in the heavens is only a symbol of Lou's sexual parts for the poet at war. The poet uses his imagination and words to envision the sexual union denied him.

The common factor marking all the poems and prose passages cited in this chapter is, of course, their blatant eroticism. Even in the prose of the two letters that were meant to figure as part of a book to be published after the war, Apollinaire does not hesitate to give personal, intimate details of his erotic relationship with Lou. His candor and bluntness in his liberty of subject and language in these letters are of the utmost importance, because they determine the highly erotic content of the letters rendering them intimate. Were Apollinaire more inhibited the letters would have a totally different character. And were Lou a more intellectual person, the letters would also be quite different and probably more like those Apollinaire wrote to Madeleine Pagès, the young English school teacher from Oran whom he had met on the train in January 1915 on his way back from his leave with Lou. The letters to Madeleine not only contain erotic elements as the relationship between Apollinaire and Madeleine became increasingly close, but

also contain many long discussions of literature which were obviously encouraged by Apollinaire's correspondent. The letters to Lou lack this intellectual facet. It is rare that Apollinaire expounds upon literature or upon any odd bit of knowledge he possesses. The erotic character of the letters is therefore underlined by the imbalance so obviously present.

The eroticism which runs through the letters is more openly and candidly expressed in the prose than in the poetry, where it is somewhat tempered by Apollinaire's judgment in determining just how much eroticism should be injected into verses which he may well have dreamed of publishing. This may be the reason why the poetry was less violent compared to the wild imaginings of certain prose passages, notably the one of January 11, 1915 cited earlier in this chapter, in which Apollinaire dreams of trampling Lou under his artillery boots (LL, p. 96).

Nevertheless, the eroticism is still quite candid and unbridled. Apollinaire's sexual language is as frank as possible, in the poetry as well as in the prose. And so are his allusions to sadistic sexual play. We have seen how common were the references to flagellation, which Apollinaire seemed to consider a necessary ingredient of

his lovemaking with Lou. Even if Lou desired to be beaten, we may well ask ourselves why Apollinaire found pleasure in indulging in such a practice. One possible answer may lie in his childhood experiences. His mother apparently liked to walk around the house with a whip in hand, "comme si c'était pour toute la ménagerie et pas uniquement pour les bêtes".³³ Margaret Davies also writes of Mme Kostrowitzky's violence:

There is no question that they [Apollinaire and his mother] both had the same ungovernable tempers, and at times the same violent behaviour. She would rage around her villa in Le Vésinet lashing out with a whip at her menagerie of animals, and the servants then were quick to get out of her way: one wonders whether certain of Apollinaire's erotic tastes derived from her. During a quarrel with a lover, she did not hesitate to break all the windows in the bedroom...³⁴

We may wonder, indeed, with Mrs. Davies, whether the taste for flagellation did not stem from the life to which Apollinaire was exposed as a child.

The taste for male domination and female submission which is reiterated throughout these erotic letters might also stem from the same source as that of Apollinaire's sadism. But the insistence upon his need to be master of the situation, as evidenced in a poem such as "O naturel désir pour l'homme être roi (LL, p. 233), also uncovers another aspect of Apollinaire's character, his

sense of insecurity which exacted constant reassurance through persistent self-infliction upon his partner.

The overriding importance of the love relationship, particularly of the physical bond between the lovers, pervades the poems and prose passages examined thus far. At one point, Apollinaire even explains the relationship between love and artistic creation--love is the "natural poetry of life". This elevation of human love to such illustrious heights can help elucidate the poet's equating the act of human love with a religious ceremonial, as he does in the poems: "Mon Lou, je veux te reparler maintenant de l'Amour" (LL, pp. 100-01), "Parce que tu m'as parlé de vice..." (LL, pp. 164-65), and "Poème du 9 février 1915" (LL, p. 187). Elevating love to such a high position makes it worthy of the poet and of his lady. Apollinaire's pride and self-importance is apparent. He needed to feel that the consummation of love was deserving of comparison with a religious rite. It is to be worshipped, to be treated as a cult, and therefore to be repeated again and again. This is an amusing justification for the enjoyment of lovemaking. Apollinaire transforms the religious spirit of his adolescence, when he adored the Virgin Mary, into a type of worship of sensuous,

human love. This is actually a rather pagan attitude. Perhaps Apollinaire preached it to Lou in the hopes of rekindling her passion.

Probably the most interesting aspect of the eroticism of Lettres à Lou is the quality of the erotic letters themselves and of their images. The preponderance of especially physical images translates Apollinaire's attempt to render real to his correspondent his physical desires for her. The similes and metaphors are his attempts to make Lou present through his imagination, through his recollections of her, and through his ability to take elements of the reality surrounding him and use them to evoke his sweetheart's presence. The absent Lou is made present and tangible through his poetry.

We may well marvel at the variety of images Apollinaire conjures up to evoke this one woman. He does not repeat himself from poem to poem, but succeeds in finding new similes and metaphors each time. The complexity of his imagination is certainly proven by the impressive abundance of different images he can create for Lou.

It is also interesting to note the preponderance of free verse in these poems. Only two of the twelve poems are written in regular verse form. We may postulate that

the emotional intensity of his subject made it necessary for Apollinaire to seek a cadre larger than that of regular versification, and to pour forth into free verse which would in no way restrict his inspiration. His effusive praises of Lou would not adhere to very much limitation, except perhaps for that imposed by the use of litany in both "Mon cher petit Lou je t'adore" (LL, pp. 268-69) and "En allant chercher des obus" (LL, pp. 362-65). In both poems the effect of the litany is to mesmerize the reader through the repetition of the same words and format. Once more the influence of Apollinaire's religious education stands forth in the choice of the litany as a means of expressing his love and adoration of Lou. But for the most part, it is a great freedom which dominates the erotic poems, a freedom in meter as great as the freedom and audacity in imagery.

The erotic writing is marked by the opposite poles of tenderness and violence. Apollinaire evokes violent sexual lovemaking yet succeeds in creating great lyricism in his verse, as he does in both "Mon Lou, je veux te reparler maintenant de l'Amour" and "Rêverie sur ta venue" (LL, pp. 173-75). Both poems contain a serene ending for a most impassioned poem. And even in suggesting flagellation,

Apollinaire always makes clear the love and tenderness that are behind such suggestions and memories. This mixture of tenderness and violence in the suggestion of carnal love is perhaps the most striking feature of Apollinaire's eroticism in his Lettres à Lou.

Finally, it is the evocation of carnal love, so obviously denuded of companionship, that must draw our attention. The erotic passages are exclusively erotic in nature, and lack allusions to the companionship that one normally seeks in one's relationships with the opposite sex. The emphasis of the relationship of Apollinaire and Lou seemed placed wholly on the physical and the erotic, and not in the least on an affinity of characters and personalities. Thus the eroticism is that much more significant, for it exclusively dominates the passionate letters and flavors the whole relationship between Apollinaire and Lou. Perhaps Apollinaire's situation as a soldier deprived of contact with his mistress exaggerated for him the overriding importance of the physical side of the relationship, or perhaps there was simply little else to explore. This love for Lou lent itself best to the celebrations of carnal, erotic love and was least suited for the suggestion of a friendship

as well. So the erotic dominated, and with it, an effusion of physical images conjuring up the absent woman. Apollinaire's eroticism had to replace the lovemaking rendered impossible by his situation, and thus it adapted itself by taking on a completely carnal nature. Eroticism, coupled with sadism, the elevation of love to a religious ceremonial, and male domination characterize the passionate love letters to Lou, in which Apollinaire's violence and tenderness pour forth.

CHAPTER ONE: FOOTNOTES

1. Raymond Jean, "L'Erotique de Guillaume Apollinaire," Cahiers du Sud, No. 386 (janvier-février-mars 1966), p. 20.

2. Guillaume Apollinaire, Lettres à Lou, ed. Michel Décaudin (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), pp. 92-94, no. 42. Lettres à Lou cited hereafter as LL. The poems alone can be found in the following book: Guillaume Apollinaire, Poèmes à Lou (Genève: P. Cailler, 1955), rpt. in Oeuvres poétiques, ed. Marcel Adéma and Michel Décaudin (1956; entire book rpt. and rev. Paris: Gallimard, "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", 1965), pp. 375-501. Hereafter, Poèmes à Lou cited PL, and Oeuvres poétiques cited OP. In this edition, "Je t'adore mon Lou..." is found OP, PL, pp. 385-86, no. VIII.

3. OP, PL, pp. 387-88, no. IX.

4. André Rouveyre, Amour et poésie d'Apollinaire (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1955), p. 108.

5. Scott Bates, Guillaume Apollinaire (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967), p. 46.

6. Toutou is Lou's other lover; frequently mentioned in the letters.

7. OP, PL, pp. 396-97, no. XIV.

8. OP, PL, pp. 402-05, no. XVII.

9. OP, PL, p. 409, no. XXII.

10. Guillaume Apollinaire, Lettres à sa marraine (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), rpt. in Oeuvres complètes de Guillaume Apollinaire, ed. Michel Décaudin, IV (Paris: Balland et Lecat, 1966), 676. Hereafter, Oeuvres complètes will be cited OC.

11. Guillaume Apollinaire, L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes (Paris: Haumont, 1946), rpt. in OC, III, 908.

12. Guillaume Apollinaire, Tendre comme le souvenir (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), rpt. in OC, IV, 478.

13. The lines of each ideogram of "Poème du 9 février 1915" have been arranged by us to facilitate reading.

14. OP, PL, p. 420, no. XXIX.

15. André Rouveyre, Amour et poésie d'Apollinaire, p. 237.

16. OP, PL, p. 414, no. XXV.

17. OP, PL, pp. 415-16, no. XXVI.

18. OP, PL, pp. 427-28, no. XXXIII.

19. OP, PL, pp. 445-48, no. XLI.

20. Scott Bates, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 45.

21. Ibid., p. 174.

22. Ibid., p. 45.

23. OP, PL, pp. 451-53, no. XLV.

24. OP, PL, pp. 459-62, no. XLVIII.

25. OP, PL, p. 475, no. LV.

26. OP, PL, pp. 476-78, no. LVI.

27. We have underlined the words.

28. We have underlined the words in lines two and three.

29. Tendre comme le souvenir, OC, IV, pp. 547-49.

30. Guillaume Apollinaire, Alcools (Paris: Mercure de France, 1913), rpt. in OP, p. 100. Alcools cited hereafter A.

31. OP, A, p. 42

32. Ibid., p. 43.

33. Marie-Jeanne Durry, Guillaume Apollinaire:
"Alcools", I (Paris:SEDES, 1956), 75.

34. Margaret Davies, Apollinaire (London: Oliver
and Boyd Ltd., 1964), p. 18.

CHAPTER TWO:

WAR AND LOVE

The war was an important factor in determining the nature and course of the liaison between Apollinaire and Louise de Coligny-Châtillon. Had it not been for Apollinaire's enlistment in the 38th artillery regiment and his departure from Nice for Nîmes, the liaison between Apollinaire and Lou might never have begun. Certainly Apollinaire had shared tender moments with Lou prior to his departure, when they both indulged in opium smoking together during the leisurely months of September and October 1914. It is true that Apollinaire wrote letters to Lou even while the two were in the same city. Yet it seems doubtful that the correspondence would have assumed the proportions that it did had the relationship itself between the two not become more intimate. This intimacy was precipitated by the poet's enlistment. Immediately after his departure, Lou went to join him for a week from December 7 to December 16th. It is this week of passion that lay the basis for the continued exchange of letters and for the deepening of Apollinaire's attachment to Lou. The separation caused by the war created the need for an intimacy through correspondence and for the transfer to cerebral eroticism of the poet's carnal desires for his mistress. The letters in both prose and poetry are the

outlets for Apollinaire's passion for Lou and his attempt to overcome his mistress' absence and his own loneliness. Their eroticism is the exorcism of Apollinaire's sexual desire. The war added a sense of urgency to the relationship. It also forced the lovers to part; to see their liaison with a kind of perspective. It increased the cerebral, analytical, even masochistic element in Apollinaire's love and nature. Apollinaire clung to the dream of a relationship with Lou, even though he realized she was not appreciating him nor reciprocating his caring for her.

Apollinaire not only corresponded with Lou, but with numerous friends and colleagues. In his letters he relates his impressions of military life and recounts his experiences, first as an artilleryman in training at Nîmes, and then as an infantryman at the front in Champagne. And throughout this impressive correspondence his belief in the necessity and purpose of the war is evident. Apollinaire's attitude toward the war as a great adventure mixing the grotesque and the fantastic is reiterated time and again. This patriotic acceptance of the war may be seen in Lettres à Lou which also reveals the poet's enthusiasm for war as a new source of poetic inspiration.

The poet's entire correspondence during the war testifies to his "lyrical acceptance of World War I and his role in it".¹

Yet, reading Lettres à Lou, we are struck by the complexity of Apollinaire's attitude toward the war. At first he seemed to accustom himself to the conditions of army training rather quickly, viewing military life through a poet's eyes. Writing to Lou on January 7, 1915 Apollinaire says:

Ce matin il a fallu que j'explique au tableau les différentes mesures angulaires, puis que je parle des trajectoires, puis du problème du défilement. Tu vois si je deviens calé. D'ailleurs c'est intéressant. Le projectile est un petit astre dont il s'agit de connaître la vie, les propriétés afin de le diriger au but. C'est évidemment très poétique et tu le comprends sans faire d'artillerie. (LL, p. 84, no. 39).

The poet did find military training boring at other moments. It was the memory of a loving Lou that was his consolation:

La vie de caserne est rudement em.... Je ne te cache pas que si tu me relèves de la promesse que je t'ai faite, je demanderai à partir pour le front le plus tôt possible.... Ma toute chérie, aime-moi bien, écris-moi. Si je ne t'avais pas, si tu n'étais ma constellation, mon étoile polaire, mon guide, je serais sans ressort et me laisserais aller à l'abrutissement inhérent à la vie de caserne. (LL, p. 51, no. 23).

Apollinaire's desire to achieve great feats in order to make his lady proud of him also shines through: "Prie

pour moi puisque tu es croyante et espérons bien vite des victoires où j'aie ma part afin que tu puisses être aussi fière de moi que je suis fier de toi." (LL, p. 51). His pride in himself as well as his rich literary knowledge reveal themselves when he alludes to the "neuf de la Renommée" in speaking of the men of his squadron: "Maintenant nous sommes 9 à notre peloton, Dieu veuille aussi que ce soient les 9 de la Renommée." (LL, p. 107, no. 47). "Les neuf personnages qui sont réputés les types de la vaillance, de l'honneur et par là de la gloire, sont, d'abord, Josué, David et Judas Macchabée, puis les païens... Hector, Alexandre et Jules César, enfin les chrétiens Arthur de Bretagne, 'le septième de la renommée', Charlemagne et Godefroy de Bouillon."² Apparently, Apollinaire needed to identify with heroes of the past or of literature. Perhaps this gave him added courage.

After leaving for the front in April, Apollinaire writes Lou a letter in which his pride in his Polish blood is most pronounced:

Faut partir, on a besoin de toutes les énergies. Les énergies polonaises surtout. C'est le pays qui a le plus souffert de cette guerre, ma Pologne. Si mon sacrifice peut le sauver, me servirai avec joie de mon grand fouet de conducteur. Sommes la race la plus noble et la plus malheureuse du monde, mais la plus brave. Il faut pas mentir à

son sang. Me sens l'âme des chevaliers
d'autrefois. Tu es ma dame et on aimait sa
dame, sans espoir de toucher son cœur.
Ainsi t'aimé-je. Si tu veux envoie-moi tes
couleurs. Les porterai sous la vareuse et
mourrai en les embrassant s'il faut
mourir. (LL, pp. 242-3, no. 106).

His consideration of himself as a knight of the Middle Ages may enable us to comprehend better his generally optimistic attitude toward the carnage; he poeticized all that he saw. Later on, in June of 1915, when Apollinaire had already been at the front for three months, he once again romantically alluded to the Middle Ages when speaking of the battle: "Je me demande pourquoi on n'habille pas tout le monde en chevaliers du Moyen Age et ne recourrait-on pas pour finir aux combats singuliers sur le billard entre les tranchées. La guerre serait plus rigolote qu'elle n'est si on était obligés de passer son temps à astiquer les armures." (LL, p. 450, no. 189). Instead of condemning the horror of war, Apollinaire acclaimed its glory and the opportunity to show personal merit that war offers the soldier.

Even when describing the terrible realities of war in Lettres à Lou, Apollinaire manages to find a beauty in life to counteract the horror: "Il fait chaud, chaud, chaud, les charognes puent, mais le ciel est épatant; les

Boches nous foutent la paix, mais j'espère que nous ne leur foutrons pas la paix." (LL, p. 438, no. 182).

Evoking the battles, the poet is able to transform the crude reality into a poetic dream:

La bataille commence dans la nuit, je ne sais où, mais pas loin et je l'entends distinctement, ininterrompue. On dirait que le diable fait moudre son café. C'est fantastique, avec les lueurs des obus qui miaulent et éclatent comme si c'était quelque grand roi qui donnerait un feu d'artifice en l'honneur de ta beauté.... L'étoile nommée ptit Lou est là qui me regarde avec douceur, peut-être même avec tendresse. (LL, p. 266, no. 118).

War offered Apollinaire a new source of inspiration, a new fountain from which prose and verse could gush forth. Apollinaire could use new material to add to the novelty of his calligrammatic verse. An entire volume of poetry would be created out of the war, Calligrammes. Apollinaire used some of the poems he sent only to Lou in Calligrammes, but he eliminated the really personal allusions to Lou. In this way, he maintained the privacy of their liaison. Amusingly enough, the only poem of Calligrammes that directly refers to Lou was a poem never sent to her, "C'est Lou qu'on la nommait". Angriily, Apollinaire complains of her cruelty:

Il est des loups de toute sorte
Je connais le plus inhumain
Mon cœur que le diable l'emporte
Et qu'il le dépose à sa porte
N'est plus qu'un jouet dans sa main⁴

Of course, Apollinaire was not about to send such a message to Lou in his letters. It would have threatened the continuation of a correspondence that he desired. Despite the suffering that he endured at her hands, he did not wish to surrender the muse of love who inspired him.

Apollinaire's impatience to go to the front may have been due to his desire to find new inspiration as well as to his boredom with training at Nîmes. He only delayed his request to depart because he hoped Lou would join him during March 1916, but when it became clear that Lou had no such intention, the poet no longer hesitated to ask to be sent to the front. This impatience to participate in the real battle and be involved in action testifies to the poet's enthusiasm for the war. He really enjoyed it, satisfying his need to "join", to "belong", to be among friends and in groups.

Another proof of the poet's acceptance of the war lies in his use of war imagery throughout the intimate Lettres à Lou. It is both the use of this imagery and the manner in which it is used that indicate Apollinaire's acquiescent attitude. Several of the poems in Lettres à Lou are outright war poems, concerned with the glory of the battle.⁴ However, what will concern us in this chapter

is the relationship that Apollinaire establishes in his writing between war and his love for Lou. We shall examine those poems and prose passages in which the war is mixed inextricably with love, creating a rapport between the two.

Of course, war imagery is prevalent throughout many of the letters in both prose and poetry. However, a simple mention of the war does not justify the discussion of a particular poem in this chapter. Apollinaire's ability to write a love poem utilizing the war background, and to establish a connection between love and the war is our theme. In the poems that we shall analyze, we shall attempt to see just what link the poet did see between war and his love for Lou, and the poetic means he used to express it. The poems we shall study are those in which the war imagery plays a major role, and in which a significant attitude toward the war and love is revealed through the verse. We shall not discuss the numerous poems and prose passages that use war imagery to support other themes.

On January 17, 1915, at the conclusion of an erotic letter in prose in which Apollinaire reminisces about Lou's voluptuousness, the poet writes a twenty-five line poem in

free verse concerning the war and his love. The prose of the letter is significant. Apollinaire chastises Lou for indulging in masturbation (LL, pp. 115-16, no. 50). He believes it will destroy her beauty. Yet, what he also must have felt was that an "excessive" solitary pleasure would be a threat to their relationship. She might not feel a need for the physical union with Apollinaire. His own sense of insecurity may have been a motivation for the poem that followed the prose, in which Apollinaire emphasized Lou's importance to him.

The poem evokes the fighting on the western front in 1914 as well as the poet's attitude toward the war and towards his love.

The first four lines express an optimism translated into the signs of life that the poet has seen on the fig trees:

C'est l'hiver et déjà j'ai revu des bourgeons
 Aux figuiers dans les clos. Mon amour, nous
 bougeons
 Vers la paix, ce printemps de la guerre où
 nous sommes.
 Nous sommes bien... (LL, p. 116).⁵

The near identity of the sound of the words "bourgeons" and "bougeons" reiterates the positive movement that the poet portrays. Although it is still winter the springtime with its rebirth of life has been suggested. The coupling

of spring and its buds with the trend toward peace strengthens both good signs. It is noteworthy that Apollinaire states that he has seen the springtime signs of life at the conclusion of the line evoking winter. The season of sterility is about to be eclipsed by spring. This could be interpreted as a subtle reminder of love, so often associated with the season of rebirth.

Yet the second movement of the poem in which the poet evokes the war also suggests the ugliness and the horror of it. It is chiefly a unanimist attempt to imagine and convey the ubiquity and universality of the massacre:

...Là-bas, entend le cri des hommes.
 Un marin japonais se gratte l'oeil gauche avec
 l'orteil droit
 Sur le chemin de l'exil voici des fils de rois
 Mon coeur tourne autour de toi comme un kolo
 où dansent quelques jeunes soldats
 serbes auprès d'une pucelle endormie
 Le fantassin blond fait la chasse aux morpions
 sous la pluie
 Un belge interné dans les Pays-Bas lit un journal
 où il est question de moi
 Sur la digue une reine regarde le champ de
 bataille avec effroi
 L'ambulancier ferme les yeux devant l'horrible
 blessure
 Le sonneur voit le beffroi tomber comme une
 poire trop mûre
 Le capitaine anglais dont le vaisseau coule tire
 une dernière pipe d'opium
 Ils crient.... (LL, p. 116).

The lines suggest that the neutrality of Belgium has been

violated by Germany, her royal family is in exile, and her queen can contemplate the battle field with horror. The filth of war is underlined by the allusion to the infantryman who "fait la chasse aux morpions sous la pluie"; meaning that the soldier scratches himself, chasing away the public lice that sting him. This is a most unbecoming evocation of the war. The horror of the combat is seconded by the two lines: "Sur la digue une reine regarde le champ de bataille avec effroi / L'ambulancier ferme les yeux devant l'horrible blessure". Although the prose passages of Apollinaire's wartime letters to his friends, as well as of his letters to Lou did not underline the ugliness of war, in this poem he does not avoid mentioning the terrible side of the conflict. Yet the poet seems to view the crumbling of the buildings from a somewhat objective "précieux" point of view: "Le sonneur voit le beffroi tomber comme une poire trop mûre". The comparison with an overripened fruit hardly suggests the disaster of the bombardment of a building, and the crashing down of its tower, or the disintegration of a church steeple. ("Beffroi" can signify the church bell as well as a town tower).

The poet is able to suggest the horror of war without

dwelling upon it and eliciting a response of pathos in the reader, because he does not make it the principal focus of his poem.

The main theme of the poem makes its appearance in the third movement, or finale. Human suffering and combat have a purpose; eventually peace will emerge and Apollinaire will be united with Lou:

...Cri vers le printemps de paix qui va
venir. Entends le cri des hommes.
Mais mon cri va vers toi mon Lou tu es ma
paix et mon printemps
Tu es, ma Lou chérie, le bonheur que j'attends.
C'est pour notre bonheur que je me prépare
à la mort
C'est pour notre bonheur que dans la vie
j'espère encore.
C'est pour notre bonheur que luttent les armées
Que l'on pointe au miroir sur l'infanterie
décimée
Que passent les obus comme des étoiles filantes
Que vont les prisonniers en troupes dolentes
Et que mon coeur ne bat que pour toi ma chérie
Mon amour, ô mon Lou, mon art et mon artillerie.
(LL, pp. 116-17).

The soldier, Apollinaire, is fighting for his mistress. He is fighting to make the world safe for them. For them he is even willing to face death, and because of them he preserves his faith in life. In light of the prose that preceded the letter, this constitutes an appeal to Lou to view their relationship as seriously as Apollinaire. He flatters her especially in the closing lines of the poem, suggesting that she has become his whole universe.

This romantic view of love, reinforced by the image of the streaming shells as "shooting stars" counteracts the realism of the middle section of the poem in which the unpleasant realities of the war were evoked. Indeed, Apollinaire is willing and able to face the unpleasantness because he can cling to his romantic dreams enabling him to transform the stark reality around him. The litanic quality of the last lines heightens the romantic picture through their singing quality and reiteration of words. The horror of the combat evoked earlier is justified and given meaning. Optimism prevails over negativism, since the poem commences by evoking the buds of the spring to come and concludes by evoking the poet's loved one who is also his "printemps".

In this first poem of war and love, Apollinaire has united war to love, finding in love the reason that justifies the carnage and makes it all worthwhile. Rather than simply fight for the freedom and welfare of his country, he has personalized the war, paying great tribute to Lou. In his own eyes, he is fulfilling a worthwhile mission, just as the medieval heroes who fought for their lady did. Perhaps he believed this psychological approach would succeed in changing Lou's lighthearted view of their liaison.

A very different and fascinating message is communicated to Lou about the war and his role in it by Apollinaire on January 30, 1915 in a poem entitled "Si je mourais là-bas" (LL, pp. 147-48, no. 63).⁶ The poem consists of five stanzas of regular five-line alexandrine verse, with a final single line added at the end. The poem evokes the death of the soldier-poet, the reaction of his mistress to his demise, and the consequences of it upon the whole world:

Si je mourais là-bas sur le front de l'armée,
 Tu pleurerais un jour, ô Lou, ma bien-aimée.
 Et puis mon souvenir s'éteindrait comme meurt
 Un obus éclatant sur le front de l'armée,
 Un bel obus semblable aux mimosas en fleur.

Et puis ce souvenir éclaté dans l'espace
 Couvrirait de mon sang le monde tout entier:
 La mer, les monts, les vals et l'étoile qui passe,
 Les soleils merveilleux mûrissant dans l'espace
 Comme font les fruits d'or autour de Baratier.

Souvenir oublié, vivant dans toutes choses,
 Je rougirais le bout de tes jolis seins roses,
 Je rougirais ta bouche et tes cheveux sanglants.
 Tu ne vieillirais point, toutes ces belles choses
 Rajeuniraient toujours pour leurs destins galants.

Le fatal giclement de mon sang sur le monde
 Donnerait au soleil plus de vive clarté,
 Aux fleurs plus de couleur, plus de vitesse
 à l'onde,
 Un amour inouï descendrait sur le monde,
 L'amant serait plus fort dans ton corps écarté...

Lou, si je meurs là-bas, souvenir qu'on oublie,
 --Souviens-t'en quelquefois aux instants de folie.

De jeunesse et d'amour et d'éclatante ardeur.--
 Mon sang c'est la fontaine ardente du bonheur!
 Et sois la plus heureuse étant la plus jolie,

O mon unique amour et ma grande folie! (LL, pp.
 147-48).

In the first stanza, Apollinaire suggests his death and the reaction of Lou. We should note the double meaning of "un jour"; his mistress will cry one day. Her pain will not be infinite. The memory of her lover will fade. Appropriately Apollinaire compares the death of the memory of his existence to the extinguishing of a bursting shell, which is further compared to a mimosa in bloom. The richness of the poet's imagery brings the war directly into this evocation of his death. For his death may be the result of a shell, the very same bomb that can be compared to the fading memory that will die out in his mistress' mind.

The second stanza is linked to the first by the repetition of the word "souvenir". The poet is continuing to develop his image. This memory is now burst in space-- it has actually metaphorically become one with the burst shell compared to it in the previous stanza. And it is also synonymous with the poet himself, for it will cover the entire world with the poet's blood.⁷ Not only will the world be drenched in his blood, but so will "l'étoile

qui passe"; the death of the poet will affect the universe. The golden suns of the heavens, compared to the golden fruits of Baratier, a metaphor for the oranges, will all be covered with the poet's blood. His body, burst in space, will encompass the heavens. Yet this violent image lacks the repulsive force it might well possess. The poet does not hover on the image of a fractured body bleeding upon the world, but on the picture of the heavens which are beautifully portrayed through his image, "Les soleils merveilleux mûrissant dans l'espace / Comme font les fruits d'or autour de Baratier".

The third stanza is also connected to the second by the magical "souvenir" which linked the second one to the first. The poet may die but his memory will live on, enjoying an autonomous existence of its own. Forgotten, presumably by Lou, it is nevertheless alive in all things. And the poet, at one with his memory, will directly touch his mistress. His memory will have the power to live "dans toutes choses"; it will become the blood of other living creatures. His blood will rejuvenate life and prevent creatures from aging. The poet says directly to Lou that she will not grow old: "Tu ne vieillirais point toutes ces belles choses / Rajeuniraient toujours pour leurs destins galants".

With the fourth stanza, we return once more to the theme of the poet's blood dripping upon the world and thus imparting renewed life to it. Not only will his blood give the world stronger life but also greater love: "Un amour inouï descendrait sur le monde / L'amant serait plus fort dans ton corps écarté". If the poet cannot live in person, he can live through other human beings and indeed through the whole world. He can become the life force of all creatures and live in them. He will not really surrender life; instead, he will be its source. This concept is clearly put forth in the fifth stanza: "Mon sang c'est la fontaine ardente du bonheur". According to the entire poem, the poet's blood is the source of love and rejuvenation. It is Apollinaire's refusal of death and his denial of its finality. It is his renunciation of the death of his memory on the part of his mistress, and his attempt to somehow render his life eternal.

The romanticization of the fight is seen once more in the imagery chosen. The shell bursting in space is described as a "bel obus semblable aux mimosas en fleur". This is not the kind of imagery designed to provoke our horror and repulsion. The poet's streaming blood and even his death are not evoked to arouse our indignation, nor that of Lou for whom the poem is written. On the poet's part there is an acceptance of his possible death; this

is hardly a poem of protest. It is only a protest against a fall into oblivion, but that is certainly not the same as a criticism of the war, or a show of indignation before its horrors. And the poem does not terminate by a reiteration of the burst shell, memory, or bloodshed, but rather by another mention of the poet's loved one: "Ô mon unique amour et ma grande folie". The poem is written for Lou and it is she who is most important throughout the poem. Both she and the poet will survive despite his mistress' neglectful forgetfulness of him.

This beautiful poem conveys an air of sincerity. A tragic foreboding permeates the poem, and several of the lines are grave and majestic. Apollinaire gives power to the rhyme and rolling rhythm of the alexandrine lines, filled with original, vital images.

Apollinaire's greatest romanticization of the combat can probably be seen in a six stanza poem that he wrote to his mistress on February 7, 1915. In it he totally embraces erotic imagery, seeing in the shells male flowers and in the cannons male genitals fertilizing the female earth. All horror of the bloodshed is eliminated from the poem, and present is only the powerful sexual images linking love to war:

Les moutons noirs des nuits d'hiver
S'amènent en longs troupeaux tristes.
Les étoiles parsèment l'air
Comme des éclats d'améthystes.

Là-bas tu vois les projecteurs
Jouer l'aurore boréale.
C'est une bataille de fleurs
Où l'obus est une fleur mâle

Les canons membres génitaux,
Engrossent l'amoureuse terre.
Le temps est aux instants brutaux.
Pareille à l'amour est la guerre.

Ecoute au loin les branle-bas,
Claquer le drapeau tricolore
Au vent, dans le bruit des combats
Qui durent du soir à l'aurore.

Salut, salut au régiment
Qui va rejoindre les tranchées.
Dans le ciel pâle éperdument
Sur lui la victoire est penchée

Mon Coeur, embrasse les deux fronts
Front de Toutou, front de l'armée.
Ce qu'ils ont fait, nous le ferons.
Au revoir, ô ma bien-aimée (LL, pp. 185-86,
no. 80).⁸

The revulsion that we feel before such a hymn to war
was well-expressed by Mme Durry in her study of Apolli-
naire:

Il l'a chantée, cette guerre, presque comme
une oeuvre d'art... Il lui a semblé participer
à quelque immense priapée de l'homme et de la
terre. Je trouverais presque inconcevable qu'au
milieu du sang et de la mort, dans la boucherie,
Apollinaire ait considéré la guerre en artiste,
ce serait pour moi un scandale, s'il n'y fallait
voir un tranquille héroïsme, puisque tous les

dangers étaient personnellement courus, et
 le triomphe d'un pouvoir d'émerveillement
 sur l'horreur même.⁹

The regular, rhyming octosyllabic quatrains create a singing effect that heightens the element of love Apollinaire wishes to bring out in the poem. It is a work of optimism; the regiment is marching towards victory as the poet states in the fifth stanza. And Apollinaire himself aspires to the same feats as those of Lou's other lover, Toutou, who was already located at the front.

Some of the bright optimism of the poem may be explained by the fact that Apollinaire had not yet departed for the front and had not yet seen for himself what the fighting was really like. It can also be explained by his virile desire to make a courageous impression upon Lou and to emphasize his ability to match Toutou's achievements. To write of his fear would have been unheard of to him.

The constant play with sexual imagery is elucidated by the prose of the letter. Apollinaire was anxiously awaiting Lou's arrival in Nîmes, and even drew the plan of the apartment he had found for her. It was natural that he should have transferred his eroticism to the ensuing poetry. This is another instance of the importance

of considering the poetry in the context of the letter-poem. Without reading the entire letter, we would be unable to comprehend as fully the eroticism seen in the weapons of war. Also, Apollinaire may really have loved war, with its power, virility and aggressiveness. The poetry reflects an almost mystical adoration of the bloodshed, of the physical strength displayed.

"Les Moutons noirs des nuits d'hiver" is the last poem of war and love to be written prior to Apollinaire's departure for the front. The next poem of love and war, "Ma Lou, je coucherai ce soir dans les tranchées" (LL, pp. 256-59, no. 115),¹⁰ was written during his journey to the front on April 6, 1915 from Châlons-sur-Marne at Mourmelon-le-Grand. It is a poem expressing both the poet's reaction to the war and his reactions to a dying relationship with his mistress. Nostalgia and the bleakness of war are evoked side by side.

In the first twelve-line stanza, Apollinaire evokes the life at the front, emphasizing his good temper in the face of the dismal life he is to lead in the trenches:

Ma Lou, je coucherai ce soir dans les tranchées
 Qui près de nos canons ont été piochées.
 C'est à douze kilomètres d'ici que sont
 Ces trous où dans mon manteau couleur d'horizon
 Je descendrai tandis qu'éclatent les marmites
 Pour y vivre parmi nos soldats troglodytes.

Le train s'arrêtait à Mourmelon le Petit.
 Je suis arrivé gai comme j'étais parti.
 Nous irons tout à l'heure à notre batterie.
 En ce moment je suis parmi l'infanterie.
 Il siffle des obus dans le ciel gris du nord
 Personne cependant n'envisage la mort.
 (LL, p. 256).

The gray sky contrasts with the cheerful mood of the new infantryman who is fighting to keep his morale up. The shells are flying in the sky above them, but the men do not expect to die. Again, Apollinaire is rejecting the very possibility of his own demise. Instead, he is painting a "terre-à-terre" picture of the war circumstances for Lou, as he might well do were this a letter in prose.

He turns to love as he outlines for her his poetic projects for the future at the front:

Et nous vivrons ainsi sur les premières lignes
 J'y chanterai tes bras comme les cols des cygnes
 J'y chanterai tes seins d'une déesse dignes
 Le lilas va fleurir. Je chanterai tes yeux
 Où danse tout un chœur d'angelots gracieux.
 Le lilas va fleurir, ô printemps sérieux!
 Mon cœur flambe pour toi comme une cathédrale
 Et de l'immense amour sonne la générale.
 Pauvre cœur, pauvre amour! Daigne écouter le râle
 Je t'envoie un obus plein de fidélité
 Et qu t'atteigne, ô Lou, mon baiser éclaté
 (LL, p. 256).

Seducing her through the letter, the poet sees "un chœur d'angelots gracieux" in his mistress' eyes. He also can foresee the springtime which will soon be in full bloom. Using a phallic symbol, his love burns like a cathedral,

a tall building with a spire on top. Yet it is a raucous death cry that the poet utters to his mistress. ("...Daigne écouter le râle / Qui monte de ma vie à ta grande beauté."). The word "râle" stresses that the love is dying. Apollinaire's attempt to win Lou back can be seen in his reference to her as his "grande beauté". He is evidently trying to soften her with his own sweet words. And his message subtly chastises her, for Apollinaire sends her a faithful love, unlike the love his mistress has been reciprocating. But how is this love sent to her? In the form of a shell. Again, the poet is rendering the missiles of war poetic. The "obus" becomes the means by which the message of love will be sent, metaphorically it is a letter containing passionate kisses.

The burst kiss brings back sad memories to Apollinaire of a disappointed love; and in a short stanza he gives in to the melancholy threatening the bright mood of the first stanza:

Mes souvenirs ce sont ces plaines éternelles
Que virgulent ô Lou, les sinistres corbeaux
L'avion de l'amour a refermé ses ailes
Et partout à la ronde on trouve des tombeaux
(LL, p. 257).

It is interesting to note the modernist image of line three, which arrests the reader's attention. The melancholy quality of the stanza is brought out by each of the

lines. The open vowel of "éternelles" of line one gives the impression that unhappy love has constituted an interminable part of the poet's existence. His sadness is reiterated by the final line of the stanza in which the poet alludes to the graves--perhaps to the graves of his past loves which were all disappointments, or perhaps to the grave burying his expectations of happier moments to come with Lou.

Apollinaire catches himself before falling completely into a melancholy frame of mind. He ebulliently bounces back from his depression and reassures Lou that he is not unhappy after all, for his power over her is greater than she thinks. He is unable to accept the possibility that he has lost Lou forever:

Et ne me crois pas triste et ni surtout morose
 Malgré toi, malgré tout je vois la vie en rose
 Je sais comment reprendre un jour mon petit Lou,
 Fidèle comme un dogue, avec des dents de loup;
 Je suis ainsi, mon Lou mais plus tenace encore
 Que n'est un aigle alpin sur le corps qu'il dévore
 (LL, p. 257).

After this strong declaration, the poet returns to the theme of the war. He must reassure his mistress that he is bravely facing the new dangers at the front, and that his morale is strong. He uses repetition to achieve this effect:

Quatre jours de voyage et je suis fatigué
 Mais que je suis content d'être parti de Nîmes!
 Aussi, mon Lou chéri, je suis gai, je suis gai
 Et je ris de bonheur en t'écrivant ces rimes.
 (LL, p. 257).

In light of the unhappiness he has expressed at the end of stanza two, and in stanza three, the suggestion of good morale is not convincing. Apollinaire gives vent to his anger in stanza six, in which he boldly paints the ugliness of war, uniting it to the deception of women:

Cette boue est atroce aux chemins détrempés.
 Les yeux des fantassins ont des lueurs navrantes.
 Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont
 coupés,
 Les amants vont mourir et mentent les amantes.
 (LL, p. 257).

The theme of female falsity is certainly not new to Apollinaire, it pervades much of his work. As far back as the poems of Le Guetteur mélancolique, Apollinaire proclaimed the double-tongued nature of the female race: "Les femmes mentent mentent".¹¹ And in the Enchanteur pourrissant, it was Viviane who entombed Merlin. The falsity and deception represented by females were decried most famously in "La Chanson du mal-aimé". In composing this stanza to Lou he is bringing to light an old leitmotif. It is as if mentioning this leitmotif has opened an old wound, for in the next stanza he gives in to all the pain Lou

has caused him and to the despair he feels overwhelming
him:

J'entends le vent gémir dans les sombres
sapins
Puis je m'enterrerai dans la mélancolie
O ma Lou, tes grands yeux étaient mes seuls
copains.
N'ai-je pas tout perdu, puisque mon Lou
m'oublie! (LL, p. 257).

The poet's unhappiness is seconded by the mournful quality of his environment: "J'entends le vent gémir dans les sombres sapins". The striking imagery of this stanza successfully communicates the poet's misery, as do the nasal sounds of line one and the cacophony of the second half of line four.

Then, briefly, for four lines, his mind returns to the larger conflict at hand. Death of the soldiers is a projection of his own personal pain and the death of his relationship with Lou. The pauses and repetition of line two reveal his anguish and torment:

Dix-neuf cent quinze, année où tant d'hommes
sont morts
Va-t'en, va-t'en, va-t'en aux Enfers des Furies
Jouons, jouons aux dès; les dès marquent les
sorts
J'entends jouer aux dès les deux artilleries
(LL, p. 258).

Melancholy over battle mixes with melancholy over his disappointed love. The woman who was supposed to love him

and come see him has, like all the rest, deceived him.
 In the next part of the poem, consisting of three stanzas,
 he poignantly evokes his loss against the background of
 the war:

Adieu, petite amie, ô Lou, mon seul amour
 O mon esclave enfuite,
 Notre amour qui connut le soleil, pas la
 pluie
 Fut un instant trop court.
 La mer nous regardait de son oeil tendre
 et glauque
 Et les orangers d'or
 Fructifiaient pour nous. Ils fleurissent
 encor.
 Et j'entends la voix rauque

Des canons allemands crier sur Mourmelon
 --Appel de la tranchée.--
 O Lou, ma rose atroce, est-tu toujours
 fâchée
 Avec des yeux de plomb? (LL, p. 258).

The run-on-line of the second to third stanza connects his disappointed love with the battle in which the forces are engaged. Unlike the beginning of the poem, when Lou's eyes were the seat of "un choeur d'angelots gracieux", her eyes are now unfeeling and cold, the impression that "plomb" creates. Lou is no longer a kind beauty, but a "rose atroce". Her cruelty joins that of the war, and indeed the poet has blended the two in the third stanza of this section. There is both a heartlessness in battle and a heartlessness in the unfeeling treatment of him dealt out by Lou.

The poet makes a final appeal to Lou to soften and show her kind nature in a brief two-line stanza whose conciseness perhaps covers up the poet's pain:

O Lou, Démone-Enfant aux baisers de folie
Je te prends pour toujours dans mes bras,
ma jolie. (LL, p. 258).

In these two lines there is a contradiction in the nature of Lou who is a "démone-enfant" but at the same time can be referred to sweetly as "ma jolie". Her double nature is portrayed. Addressing the "démone" the poet hopes to awaken the angel. But does he succeed even in his own estimation? Not if we are to consider the second line of the last movement of the poem which refers to Lou: "Une diablesse exquise aux cheveux sanglants se signe à l'eau bénite." (LL, p. 258). The red-headed Lou is this diablesse. And once more in the last section the poet intertwines his melancholy over his disappointed love and over the battle:

Deux maréchaux des logis jouent aux échecs
en riant.
Une diablesse exquise aux cheveux sanglants
se signe à l'eau bénite.
Quelqu'un lime une bague faite avec l'aluminium
qui se trouve dans la fusée des obus
autrichiens.
Un képi de fantassin met du soleil sur cette tombe.
Tu portes au cou ma chaîne et j'ai au bras la tienne
Ici, on sable le champagne au mess des sous-
officiers.
Les Allemands sont là derrière les collines

Les blessés crient comme Ariane
 O noms plaintifs des joies énormes
 Rome, Nice, Paris, Cagnes Grasse Vence,
 Sospel Menton, Monaco, Nîmes
 Un train couvert de neige apporte à Tomsk,
 en Sibirie, des nouvelles de la
 Champagne
 Adieu, mon petit, Lou, adieu
 Adieu. Le ciel a des cheveux gris
 (LL, pp. 258-59).

The poet intermingles the two themes of love and war. Believing in superstition, he wears a chain from Lou and she wears a piece of jewelry from Apollinaire. The wounded men cry out, but their screams only awaken in the poet's mind the shouts of the names of the cities in which he has tasted joy, and almost exclusively the names of cities in which he has tasted voluptuousness with Lou. His mind attempts to shut out the ugly reality of the war raging about him. But it cannot completely. There is still the recognition that "le ciel a des cheveux gris". The gray color of the sky harks back to the very first stanza of the poem: "Il siffle des obus dans le ciel gris du nord" (LL, p. 256). An air of melancholy still hangs over the picture the poet paints.

In this poem, Apollinaire has joined his melancholy due to his dissipating love to the melancholy of the gray skies at the northern front. He has tried to conquer his depression but it has reigned supreme in the final analysis.

Despite such optimistic lines as those of the fifth stanza: "Et je ris de bonheur en t'écrivant ces rimes", Apollinaire is still very unhappy, and it is his sorrow rather than his attempts at joy that ring truest.

Yet the sorrow does not stem from his departure for the front or from his fear of death. It is an outgrowth of a much more personal sentiment -- a dying love. The poet is more deeply touched by the disillusionment than by the battle, even though he has at one point evoked "les yeux des fantassins ont des lueurs navrantes" (LL, p.257). Deep down, Apollinaire knew all along that Lou did not deserve all the fine verse he was writing to her. He knew she did not understand him. In this poem, one senses the element of make-believe and of self-deception. The insistence upon his cheerful disposition at points in the poem makes the work that much more poignant. Apollinaire must have realized he could never be happy with Lou after the war. She probably wasn't even satisfied with their intimate relationship, evidenced by the fact that she didn't seek out the opportunities to be with him. And she obviously shared nothing of his life as a man of letters and connoisseur of art.

Unhappiness in love also is joined to the battle in the poem entitled "Agent de liaison" (LL, pp. 284-87, no. 123).¹² Apollinaire had been named to this post on

April 10th, and the new experiences he was having as a liaison officer, plus his pleasant and sad memories of his relationship with Lou make up the fabric of the poem. Written in free verse as one long poem, it follows the free association of ideas that might well cross the mind of a liaison officer as he goes on his round of duty. The poem gains strength by the spontaneity conveyed.

The four line exposition of the poem paints the background of the war against which all will transpire:

Le 12 avril 1915 tormoha
 L'ombre d'un homme et d'un cheval au galop
 se profile sur le mur
 O sons Harmonie Hymne de la petite église
 bombardée tous les jours
 Un harmonium y joue et l'on n'y chante pas
 (LL, p. 284).

This realistic suggestion of war is rendered poignant by lines three and four. The solitude Apollinaire feels within is symbolically represented by "un harmonium" of line four. The torn buildings, ripped apart by war, lead him to evoke his own soul, since there is an apt comparison to be made:

Mon coeur est comme l'horizon où tonne et se
 prolonge
 La canonnade ardente de cent mille passions
 (LL, p. 284).

Through the hyperbole of the sixth line the poet has communicated the state of constant upheaval of his emotions

and sentiments. Early in the poem he is letting Lou know how significant the passions she generates in him are. Then he returns to a long evocation of the war, and now what is emphasized is its colorful nature rather than its horror:

Ah! miaulez. Ah! miaulez les chats d'enfer
Le 12 avril 1915
O ciel ô mon beau ciel gemmé de canonnades
Le ciel faisait la roue comme un phénix qui flambe
Paon lunaire rouant Ainsi-soit-il
On disait au soleil Mahomet Mahomet
Je suis un cri d'humanité
Je suis un silence militaire
Dans un bois de bouleaux de hêtres de noisetiers
Ensoleillé comme si un truteur y avait jeté
ses banques
Je me suis égaré
Canonnier n'entendez-vous pas ronfler deux
avions boches
Mettez votre cheval dans le bois Inutile
de le faire repérer
Adieu mon bidet noir
Un pont d'osier et de roseaux un autre un autre
(LL, p. 284).

Apollinaire addresses himself in these last four lines as is often his habit in his verse. Now what he will see in the forest will awaken nostalgic memories within him; memories that antedate his participation in the war. They will be erotic memories that haunt the soldier deprived of female companionship and constantly exposed in combat to death. He will cling most dearly to life and to the eroticism that is its symbol to him:

Une grenouille saute
 Y a-t-il encore des petites filles qui
 sautent à la corde
 Ah! petites filles Y a-t-il encore des petites
 filles
 Le soleil caressait les mousses délicates
 Un lièvre courageux levait le derrière
 Ah! petites et grandes filles
 Il vaut mieux être cocu qu'aveugle
 Au moins on voit ses confrères
 Enfermons-nous ensemble en mon âme
 O mon amour chéri qui portes un masque aveugle
 Une petite fille nue t'en souviens-tu
 T'en souviens-tu
 Etouffait une colombe blanche sur sa poitrine
 Et me regardait d'un air innocent
 Tandis que palpitait sa victime.
 Soldat Te souviens-tu du soir Tu étais au théâtre
 Dans la loge d'un ambassadeur
 Et cette jeune femme pâle et glorieuse
 Te branla pendant le spectacle
 Dis-moi soldat dis-moi t'en souviens-tu
 Te souviens-tu du jour ou l'on te demanda
 la schlague
 Devant la mer furieuse
 Dis-moi Guillaume dis-moi t'en souviens-tu
 (LL, p. 285).

The cruelty of the young girl who crushes life in her
 innocence seems to awaken the soldier's erotic memories
 of the woman. The cruelty of the girl, and her victimi-
 zation of the bird, provide Apollinaire with a role
 identification. The soldier's memories become increas-
 ingly violent, until he is so carried away by his thoughts
 that he must recall himself to reality forcibly:

Après les ponts le sentier Attention à la branche
 Brisée
 Ah! Brise-toi mon coeur comme une trahison
 Et voilà la Branche brisée (LL, p. 285).

The broken branch is sufficient to arouse memories of a broken heart. Its importance is underlined by separating the words "branche" and "Brisée", and by then repeating the word "brisé" in one of its forms two more times in the next two lines. Repetition has communicated Apollinaire's pain.

The poet recalls us to his situation as a liaison man wandering in the woods. The disposition of the words on the paper suggest Apollinaire's meanderings on his horse:

Un carré de papier blanc sur un buisson à droite
 Où est le carré de papier blanc
 Et me voici devant une cabane
 Que précède un luxe florissant
 De tulipes et de narcisses
 A droite canonier et suivez le sentier
 Enfin je ne suis plus égaré
 Plus égaré
 Plus égaré (LL, p. 285).

But suddenly there is a resurgence of a disagreeable memory of Lou; like an obsessive thought it haunts Apollinaire. Wounded pride is suggested:

Tu peux faire mon Lou tout ce que tu voudras
 Tu ne me mettras plus mon Lou dans l'embarras
 (LL, p. 286).

Apollinaire masters his wandering thoughts and returns for several lines to an evocation of the war, but then the memory of Lou again intervenes as the poet realizes

that the password is "...la Ville où Lou je t'ai connue" (LL, p. 286). He cannot escape thoughts of Lou and both she and the infantry intermingle in the remainder of the poem painting a vivid picture of the loneliness of the liaison officer and the loneliness of the disappointed lover. Some of the lines are particularly moving and memorable:

Enfin je me tirai de cette infanterie
 Je ne sais pas comment
 Te souviens-tu du jour où cette fille sage
 S'arracha quatre dents
 Afin de te donner un précieux témoignage
 De son amour ardent
 L'ombre d'un cavalier et d'un cheval s'allonge
 sur le sol
 La villa du Cafard est dans le bois de X
 Les chatons des noisetiers nuancent les mousses
 Et les lichens son pâles
 Comme les joues de Lou quand elle jouit
 Quel prince du Bengale donne un feu d'artifice
 cette nuit
 Et puis
 Et puis
 Et puis je t'aime
 (LL, pp. 286-87).

The poem is neither a pro-war nor an anti-war statement. War is poetically transfigured into "un feu d'artifice", but Apollinaire also communicates a sense of desperation in two of the lines: "Enfin je me tirer de cette infanterie / Je ne sais pas comment". It is the memory of a disillusioned love that predominates through its constant recurrence. The tone of the poem is one of

melancholy and depression; negative timbres stemming from a lost love Apollinaire wants to recapture, and from the loneliness and fears of the soldier in battle.

More customary than any negativism towards the war, is the acceptance of the bloodshed as a necessary event in the defense of the homeland, which for Apollinaire meant both Poland and France. His poem of war and love written to Lou on April 15, 1915 (LL, pp. 291-94, no. 125)¹³ illustrates his more common themes. The poem is divided into sixteen stanzas of four-line verse and forms part of a prose letter to Lou. The poet begins by evoking the loneliness and sadness caused by his mistress' absence and neglect. His only consolation is the presence of the star in the heavens that he has baptized after his lady:

Mon cœur, j'ai regardé longtemps ce soir
 Devant l'écluse
 L'étoile, ô Lou, qui fait mon désespoir
 Mais qui m'amuse

O ma tristesse et mon ardeur, Lou, mon amour
 Les jours s'écoulent
 Les nuits s'en vont comme s'en va le jour
 Les nuits déroulent (LL, p. 291).

The insistence on the heavy sounds of "s'écoulent" and "déroulent" emphasizes the slowness with which time goes by--it seems to drag while Apollinaire waits to see Lou.

Then Apollinaire evokes his surroundings and the

attitude of the men with whom he is fighting; he insists upon their positive morale:

Le chapelet sacrilège des obus boches.
C'est le printemps
Et les oiseaux partout font leurs bamboches.
On est contents

On est contents au bord de la rivière
Dans la forêt
On est contents. La mort règne sur terre
Mais l'on est prêt.

On est prêt à mourir pour que tu vives
Dans le bonheur

(LL, p. 292).

The fact that many men are content is emphasized by the unusual agreement of the pronoun "on" with the adjective "contents" written in the plural. The soldiers are ready to sacrifice their lives not so that their sweet-hearts and families may survive the holocaust, but so that this particular Lou may survive ("pour que tu vives / Dans le bonheur"). That is the extent to which Apollinaire has restricted the poem. We may wonder if he would have rendered the poem quite so personal and so obviously exaggerated the truth had the poem not been written to a mistress he was trying to please.

The effect of the battle upon Apollinaire is to reduce his carnal desires for his lady which come to the fore only at night when he has no conscious control over

them. Joy is suggested through the metaphors and similes in the last two lines:

Les obus ont brûlé les fleurs lascives
Et cette fleur

Qui poussait dans mon cœur et que l'on nomme
Le souvenir
Il reste bien de la fleur son fantôme
C'est le désir:

Il ne vient que la nuit quand je sommeille;
Viens le jour
Et la forêt d'or s'ensoleille
Comme l'Amour! (LL,p.292)

Love focuses now on Apollinaire's need to have Lou beside him. He dreams of the beaches where they once ran freely together:

Les nuages s'en vont courir les mondes
Quand irons-nous
Courir aussi tous deux les grèves blondes?
Puis à genoux

Prier devant la vaste mer qui tremble
Quand l'oranger
Mûrit le fruit doré qui te ressemble
Et sans bouger

Ecouter dans la nuit l'onde cruelle
Chanter la mort
Des matelots noyés en ribambelle
O Lou, tout dort (LL, pp. 292-93).

The mixture of love and religious idolatry recall the erotic love poems in which love was elevated to the heights of religious ceremonial. Indeed, there seems

to be a mystical association between the carnal love Lou and Apollinaire share and their love of God. This is actually quite pagan but perhaps in thankfulness for having each other, they will pray before the sea. A romantic picture of love is evoked by the waves of the sea that will sing them a hymn of the death of heroes of yesteryear. The seeking-out of the myth in his experience with Lou is not surprising for a man as erudite as Apollinaire. Obsessed with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, he may well have read legends about drowned sailors at sea. His allusion to such men is not in the least extraneous, but rather is enriching to the content of the poem.

The evocation of a dream to come clashes with the reality of Apollinaire's situation. Tempting though it may be to continue dreaming, Apollinaire returns to his actual surroundings:

J'écris tout seul à la lueur tremblante
 D'un feu de bois
 De temps en temps un obus se lamente
 Et quelquefois

C'est le galop d'un cavalier qui passe
 Sur le chemin
 Parfois le cri sinistre de l'agace
 Monte. Ma main

Dans la nuit trace avec peine ces lignes
 Adieu mon cœur (LL, p. 293).

The shells do not explode and terrify the soldiers: "De temps en temps un obus se lamente". Apollinaire is playing down the violent side of the war in favor of a poetic picture that is romanticized. The pain that the poet feels in missing Lou is directly related to her: "Dans la nuit trace avec peine ces lignes". He gives full vent to his emotions in evoking his great dream of their future together:

Je trace aussi mystiquement les signes
Du Grand Bonheur

O mon amour mystique, ô Lou, la vie
Nous donnera
La délectation inassouvie
On connaîtra

Un amour qui sera l'amour unique
Adieu mon cœur
Je vois briller cette étoile mystique
Dont la couleur

Est de tes yeux la couleur ambiguë
J'ai ton regard
Et j'en ressens une blessure aiguë
Adieu, c'est tard (LL, pp. 293-94).

The stanzas are tied together by the run-on-lines at the conclusion of each. The mention of the star, Lou, links the end of the poem to the first stanza. The Baudelairean eyes, linked with the "étoile mystique" is a beautiful symbolist image. Petrarchan arrows are implied in the last stanza, but they don't send a message of love.

They wound Apollinaire, and the sharp hurt he feels is conveyed by the acute vowel sounds of "aiguë". Yet, Apollinaire still needs to dream that Lou's attitude will change, bringing her back to him. He suggests a love that will transcend all others. Perhaps he believed that such a love was possible; perhaps he hoped only to convince Lou that their love would bring her pleasures even she had never known.

The rhyming lines of the poem create a singing quality that enriches the evocation of the poet's dreams of happiness with his mistress. The circular format of the poem, whereby the conclusion returns to the beginning point of the circle, reveals just how conscious Apollinaire was of the style. Both the perfection of form and of content mattered to Apollinaire in this moving work.

Over one month later, on May 22, 1915, Apollinaire wrote his next letter-poem of war and love which combines the light-hearted, jesting tone of the lover with the serious, patriotic tone of the soldier. The poem, "Pétales de pivoine" (LL, pp. 396-98, no. 164)¹⁴, is written in four different parts. The first commences with a mention of the flower petals sent to the soldier by his mistress which set off a series of dreams, plays

on words, and plays of meanings, sexual enough to tease
and entertain a voluptuous Lou:

Pétales de pivoine
Trois pétales de pivoine
Rouges comme une pivoine
Et ces pétales me font rêver

Ces pétales ce sont
Trois belles petites dames
A peau soyeuse et qui rougissent
De honte
D'être avec des petits soldats

Elles se promènent dans le bois
Et causent avec les sansonnets
Qui leur font cent sonnets

Elles montent en aéroplane
Sur de belles libellules électriques
Dont les élytres chatoient au soleil

Et les libellules qui sont
De petites diablesses
Font l'amour avec les pivoines

C'est un joli amour contre nature
Entre demoiselles et dames

Trois pétales dans la lettre
Trois pétales de pivoine (LL, pp. 396-97).

The poem is pretty but not especially profound. The
jesting about lesbianism is made possible by the mul-
tiple meanings of the word "demoiselle" which signifies
in this case "libellules". Of course the relationship
between the flowers, which are of the feminine gender,
and the "demoiselles", then takes on the colors of a

lesbian encounter. The play on words of the third stanza: "sansonnets" and "cent sonnets" sets the scene for the light-hearted, teasing sexual double meaning of "demoiselles" which occurs three stanzas later. The only real weak point of this exposition seems to be the first stanza which, by its three-time repetition of the word "pivoine" at the termination of each line becomes tiresome and somewhat dull. In short, the expository movement of the poem is not especially striking.

It is with the second movement that the serious tone of the poem intervenes. The predominance of flower imagery relates the second movement back to the first, but the theme is quite different. The jesting is gone:

Quand je fais pour toi mes poèmes
 quotidiens et variés
 Lou, je sais bien pourquoi je suis ici
 A regarder fleurir l'obus à regarder
 venir la torpille aérienne
 A écouter gauler les noix des
 véhémentes mitrailleuses

Je chante ici pour que tu chantes, pour
 que tu dances
 Pour que tu joues avec l'amour
 Pour que tes mains fleurissent comme
 des roses
 Et tes jambes comme des lys
 Pour que ton sommeil soit doux
 Lou (LL, p. 397).

The soldier will fight so that his loved one may

flourish; even the bursting shells literally bloom. Again, Apollinaire has given a purpose to his role in the war. The motif of flower imagery continues into the third part of the poem, where it loses its romantic overtones:

Aujourd'hui Lou je ne t'offre en
 bouquet poétique
 Que les tristes fleurs d'acier
 Que l'on désigne par leur mesure en
 millimètres
 (Où le système métrique va-t-il se nicher?)
 On l'applique à la mort qui elle
 ne danse plus
 Mais survit attentive au fond des
 hypogées (LL, pp. 397-98).

Apollinaire alludes to the metallic rings the soldiers make for their loved ones when he speaks of the "tristes fleurs d'acier". The somber mention of death watching over the trenches introduces a graver note into the poem, but Apollinaire chooses not to develop it nor harp on it. He ends his stanza there and immediately returns to the themes of the exposition in the fourth part of the poem:

Mais trois pétales de pivoine
 Sont venus comme de belles dames
 En robe de satin grenat
 Marquise
 Quelle robe exquise
 Comtesse
 Les belles f...es
 Baronne

Ecoutez la Mort qui ronronne
 Trois pétales de pivoine
 Me sont venus de Paris (LL, p. 398).

The fourth section of the poem creates an interesting mixture of the jesting, vulgar tone with the somber tones of death. At the same time that the poet's imagination transforms flower petals into lovely ladies in red dresses; lovely ladies with even lovelier "derrières" ("f...es"), the poet hears the roar of the shells that symbolize death. Beauty and poetic imagination can make life at the front bearable and literally change what one sees, but the reality of death can still not be entirely negated and it remains despite all the poet's dreaming. The poem, by its vacillation between morbidity and vulgarity, is an example of a particular kind of escapism. Trying to ignore the dangers at the front, Apollinaire concentrates his attention on the images that can be conceived from the red flower petals. Death, which hovers above the battlefield, is mentioned only in passing. The major part of the poem deals with the lighter aspects of reality. The attempt to play down the importance and imminence of death through the jesting quality of the poem is evident, and is a clue to just how serious-

ly Apollinaire felt threatened. Psychologically then, the poem is very revealing as a study of the manner in which man reacts to the constant threat of death. Apollinaire's reaction is to deny its significance and see everything through a romanticized poet's eyes. He prefers to harp on the erotic images suggested by the red flower petals than to write of the destructive images suggested by the shells zooming overhead. In "Pétales de pivoine" the poet again establishes a basic link between love and war since it is to protect his beloved mistress that he fights. This is a message that Apollinaire has communicated several times. Apparently, it is essential to his concept of the war.

He goes much further in establishing a connection between love and war--and a very personal connection at that--in his poem "Ode" of August 2, 1915 (LL, pp. 476-77, no. 196)¹⁵. In this poem, directed to Lou and to her other lover, Toutou, Apollinaire actually praises war as having been responsible for bringing out the love that is in people. War is blessed since it is the source of love; both heterosexual love, and the love of a people for their country. Peace is pictured as a barrier between peoples, whereas war has united men

by drawing them together in the fight against a common enemy. Indeed, men do not even fight to preserve their own lives but to achieve death, the heroic death of the warrior. In this way, Toutou and Apollinaire both fight to protect Lou, and Apollinaire appeals to both Lou and Toutou to love and accept him. At the beginning of the poem he even sees himself as the child of their intimate embraces. The poem reveals the great change that the relationship between Apollinaire and Lou has undergone in the intervening months. It has deteriorated to the point that rather humbly Apollinaire must plead with Lou and her lover to hear his words. In actual fact, Apollinaire was wooing the hand of Madeleine Pagès, the Algerian schoolteacher from Oran whom he had met for a few brief hours in a train in January of that year. Apollinaire might have been begging Lou and Toutou to accept his affection here, but he was hardly lacking love in real life.

The most striking characteristic of the poem is the eulogy of war and the criticism of peace. Apparently, for Apollinaire, war had provided him with love and a feeling of comradeship between soldiers fighting together

that one could also call love. And the war had brought him into contact with both Lou and Madeleine. In his personal life, the war had meant a resurgence of love. Prior to the war, he had suffered the vacuum left by the rupture with Marie Laurencin in 1912, finalized by her subsequent marriage. With the advent of the war came a reawakening of his sentimental life, and an erotically-moving liaison with Lou, the likes of which he had apparently never known. In a real way then, the war had been beneficial to him. The praise of war, which we might otherwise find quite surprising, becomes understandable when we consider Apollinaire's personal situation:

Lou Toutou soyez remerciés
 Puisque par votre amour je ne suis pas seul
 Et je nais de chacune de vos étreintes
 Pensée vivante qui jaillit de vous
 Lou Toutou je suis votre petit enfant
 Je tiens à vous, à Lou par le lien
 ombilical
 Jeté sur la terre de France des Vosges
 à la mer
 Ainsi nous sommes unis par la chair et
 les tranchées
 Nous sommes unis par la vie et par la mort
 Bénie soit aussi cette guerre qui
 m'unit à votre douceur
 Avant on ne parlait que de paix
 Et l'amour s'en allait peu à peu de
 nos cœurs et de la terre
 Aujourd'hui, c'est l'Amour éperdu où
 s'accolent

Tous les grands peuples
L'Amour cette guerre
La vraie guerre

Tant de choses nous séparaient
C'était la paix la vilaine paix
Mais nous avons senti tout à coup
Qu'il fallait nous rapprocher nous unir
Pour nous aimer, ô noble guerre
O noble, ô noble amour
Amour sacré qui flamboie et fume
Sur les hypogées tandis que râlent
les projectiles
Nous ne combattons point pour conserver
la vie
Nous menons l'Amour en grande pompe
Vers la mort
Vers le seuil suprême
Où veille la guerrière mort

Ainsi Toutou nous défendons Lou
C'est la grâce, c'est-à-dire ce qu'il
y a de plus rare
Dans l'idée de Beauté
Rien n'est plus noble que ce combat
Esthétique et sublime
Toutou Lou écoutez-moi
Aimez-moi (LL, pp. 476-77).

Clearly, Apollinaire sees in the war the agent responsible for uniting him to Toutou and to Lou. Certainly he speaks out of personal experience when he states: "l'amour s'en allait peu à peu de nos coeurs et de la terre"--objectively, this statement is quite unconvincing. Love is identified as being the "vraie guerre". It is due to patriotism that people are fighting. In a personal sense, love has also torn

Apollinaire's emotions. The comradeship which has since joined men together is brought out in the second stanza of the poem: "Amour sacré qui flamboie et fume / Sur les hypogées tandis que râlent les projectiles".

In the third stanza he begs his two friends to listen to his plea. Speaking to Toutou he writes of the privilege he and Toutou share in defending Lou, for she is the symbol of beauty, and thus the war becomes an aesthetic battle. Such an exaggeration is amusing in its naivete and in the audacity it reveals on the part of the poet. It must have taken much egoism to have written such words. Yet the humble tone of the final lines recalls the apologetic tones of the last lines of "La Jolie rousse", written several years later:

Mais riez riez de moi
Hommes de partout surtout gens d'ici
Car il y a tant de choses que je n'ose
vous dire
Tant de choses que vous ne me
laisseriez pas dire
Ayez pitié de moi.¹⁶

The combination of audacity and humbleness gives "Ode" a very special flavor and character all its own.

However, it is a saddened, reproachful, and ironic

tone which is present in Apollinaire's last poem of war and love sent to Lou during the month of September 1915, only one month later. The poem, "Roses guerrières" (LL, pp. 515-16, no. 212),¹⁷ whose first part forms the poem "Fête" of Calligrammes, communicates first the poet's melancholy caused by his role as soldier, and then the poet's quiet anger at his unfeeling, unfaithful sweetheart for whom he went off to combat. It is not a jesting tone which is present in the poem, nor the light side of war which is portrayed. The poem reveals at first his "black humor" in the face of human destruction.¹⁸ The first part of the poem, written in six stanzas of four-line octosyllabic verse, evokes the soldier's negative sentiments toward the war and his nostalgia concerning his past loves:

Fête aux lanternes en acier...
 Qu'il est charmant cet éclairage!...
 Feu d'artifice meurtrier...
 Mais on s'amuse avec courage:

Deux fusants, rose éclatement,
 Comme deux seins que l'on dégrafe
 Tendent leurs bouts insolemment:
 'Il sut aimer!' Quelle épitaphe!

Un poète dans la forêt
 Regarde avec indifférence
 Son revolver au cran d'arrêt
 Des roses mourir en silence

Roses d'un parc abandonné
 Et qu'il cueillit à la fontaine
 Au bout du sentier détourné
 Où chaque soir il se promène

Il songe aux roses de Sâdi
 Et soudain sa tête se penche
 Car une rose lui redit
 La molle courbe d'une hanche

L'air est plein d'un terrible alcool
 Filtré des étoiles mi-closes
 Les obus pleurent dans leur vol
 La mort amoureuse des roses... (LL, pp. 515-16).

The irony of the first stanza is established by the contrast between the description of war given in the first two lines and the final word of the third line, "meurtrier". The words "feu d'artifice meurtrier" clearly reveal the poet's negative attitude toward the combat which appears so charming with its bright, bursting shells, but which brings death. What is the soldier's role in this fight? His duty is to face the battle as bravely as possible, and to accomplish this he must try not to view it all too seriously; this message is carried by the fourth line of the first stanza, "Mais on s'amuse avec courage".

The soldier's attempt to "have a good time" while faced with combat is seen in the second stanza, where the poet's imagination sees breasts in the two burst

shells. This kind of erotic imagery has become a cliché with him. The eroticism which reveals itself is evidence of the soldier's efforts to face the war. In order not to be thoroughly frightened, he must joke about the shells that threaten him. And the breasts he sees in the sky lead to the epitaph that he imagines and writes for himself: "'Il sut aimer!...'".

Thinking of love makes him turn his gaze towards the forest where he sees the dying roses, and the rose is the symbol of woman, very carnally "une rose lui redit / La molle courbe d'une hanche". The rose brings to mind a very specific part of the woman's anatomy. The precision and concreteness of the image follows the concreteness of the image of two breasts in the sky in its erotic power.

Contrasted with the pleasurable images of the woman is the horrible one of war in the following stanza. The tragic nature of the combat which brings death is translated by the verb "pleurent" of the third line: "Les obus pleurent dans leur vol". Very poetically, Apollinaire ties in the streaming shells that metaphorically "cry" with the death of the roses in the park, symbolic of the death of love. All is related and

explicable in the universe; there is a causal relationship between the dying flowers and the shells that bemoan their loss. The need to relate these two events reflects Apollinaire's need as a poet to see possible relationships between different events and phenomena of life where the average man would see none. The war seemed bearable and even beautiful when Apollinaire could picture the streaming shells as tears lamenting the dying roses.

Now the poet addresses Lou directly, he names his rose by speaking right to her. It is this personal part of the poem that Apollinaire excluded from Calligrammes. It would have exposed the intensity of his relationship to the world:

Toi qui fis à l'amour des promesses
 tout bas
 Et qui vis s'engager pour ta gloire un
 poète
 O rose toujours fraîche, ô rose
 toujours prête
 Je t'offre le parfum horrible des combats

Toi qui sans défleurir, sans mourir,
 succombas
 O rose toujours fraîche au vent qui
 la maltraite
 Fleuris tous les espoirs d'une armée
 qui halète
 Embaume tes amants masqués sur leurs grabats

Il pleut si doucement pendant la
 nuit si tendre
 Tandis que monte en nous cet effluve
 fatal
 Musicien masqué que nul ne peut entendre

Je joue un air d'amour aux cordes
 de cristal
 De cette douce pluie où s'apaise mon mal
 Et que les cieux sur nous font
 doucement descendre (LL, p. 516).

Although the difference between the first stanza of the second part of the poem and the last stanza of the first part is striking since the change from octosyllabic lines to alexandrine lines is quite noticeable, the unity of the poem is preserved by the themes of the rose and of the ugly side of the war, which is brought out in the last stanza of part one and again brought up in the first stanza of part two as the poet says: "Je t'offre le parfum horrible des combats". The tone here is one of irony, for the lady has not kept her promises to the poet and yet it is for her sake that he enlisted. In contrast to the rose and its sweet fragrance the poet offers "le parfum horrible des combats". It is interesting to note that Apollinaire is not afraid to speak sharply to Lou; for this stanza is quite a reproach to her. But, no longer deeply involved with her, and already engaged to Madeleine Pagès, the poet can

afford to write angrily. Lou's beauty contrasts with the morbid images representing the war: "Il pleut si doucement pendant la nuit si tendre / Tandis que monte en nous cet effluve fatal". The war brings death, while Lou personifies life and vitality. The soldier may lose his life in battle, but the lady will not die. And the soldier-poet will comfort himself by singing a love song. He is suffering, and the pain to which he refers seems once more to stem more from suffering caused by lack of reciprocal love than from suffering caused by the war. Yet, in the final stanza of the poem, it is the delicate allusion to love that sustains Apollinaire: "Je joue un air d'amour aux cordes de cristal". Conjuring up images of love and of the beauty of woman, as he has done in stanza five of part one of the poem, is his recourse to life and to sanity.

A melancholy tone unifies all the stanzas. Once more Apollinaire is painting a sad picture of both the war and of a soured love. He is not singing of the glory of the combat in "Roses guerrières". It is the tragic character of war which is underlined, and the tragic character of love which permits us to be deceived

and hurt by those we have chosen to love.

In Apollinaire's prose and poems of war and love different attitudes are expressed, depending upon the poet's mood and upon the state of his relationship with Lou. Both negative and positive attitudes are expressed towards the war. Apollinaire expresses a negative attitude when he also wishes to complain of being ill-loved, or to complain of the infidelity of women. He relates love to war by stating that it is for his loved one that he is willing to risk his life in the combat. It is to insure her safety and well-being that he takes up arms. Love makes the war bearable, for it gives the poet a reason to be fighting.

Thus, Apollinaire has succeeded in establishing a close relationship between war and love in Lettres à Lou. The use of sexual imagery to symbolize the arms of war creates an even more intimate relationship between the two. In the poem, "Ode" (LL, pp. 476-77), war is actually viewed as the helping hand that has let love live and made it possible, whereas peace is viewed as the enemy of love. As shown by the prose letters, Apollinaire envisioned this phase of his life as an epoch

during which, like a knight of the Middle Ages, he could go off to do battle in honor of his lady. It is this concept of his role as a soldier-poet-lover that best explains Apollinaire's sentiments towards the war and towards Lou. He could glorify his role and give meaning to his life by pursuing a love that represented the life force.

CHAPTER TWO: FOOTNOTES

1. Scott Bates, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 138.
2. Robert Guifette, "Le Cri des neuf de la renommée," Guillaume Apollinaire 7, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, Nos. 183-88 (1968), p. 191.
3. Guillaume Apollinaire, Calligrammes (Paris: Mercure de France, 1918), rpt. in OP, p. 218. Calligrammes will be cited hereafter C.
4. "La Fumée de la cantine est comme la nuit qui vient" (LL, p. 58, no. 26); "Dans un café à Nîmes" (LL, pp. 176-77, no. 77); "L'Attente" (LL, pp. 217-19, no. 96).
5. OP, PL, p. 389, no. X.
6. OP, PL, pp. 392-93, no. XII.
7. In commenting Apollinaire's emphasis upon death and blood in Lettres à Lou, Lawler noted the "accent des poètes baroques": James R. Lawler, "Le Dernier livre d'Apollinaire," Essays in French Literature, No. 9 (November 1972), pp. 67-68.
8. OP, PL, p. 407, no. XX.
9. Durry, Guillaume Apollinaire: "Alcools", I, 60.
10. OP, PL, pp. 424-26, no. XXXII.
11. Guillaume Apollinaire, Le Guetteur mélancolique: poèmes inédits (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), rpt. in OP, p. 511.
12. OP, PL, pp. 433-35, no. XXXV.
13. OP, PL, pp. 438-40, no. XXXVII.
14. OP, PL, pp. 471-72, no. LII.
15. OP, PL, pp. 487-88, no. LXIV.

16. OP, C, p. 314.

17. OP, PL, pp. 500-501, no. LXXVI.

18. Apollinaire's gallows humor was first noted in the following article: Leroy C. Breunig, "The Laughter of Apollinaire," Yale French Studies: Surrealism, No. 31 (May 1964), pp. 66-73.

CHAPTER THREE:
NOSTALGIC LOVE

At the time when Apollinaire first began composing poems to Lou, both he and Lou were together in Nice. His first poem to her, an ideogram written on October 8, 1914, is a series of erotic verses to his future mistress in praise of her tempting mouth and graceful hands. His next two verses to Lou were poems written in autographed copies of L'Hérésiarque et Cie and Alcools, reflecting his admiration for her. Once involved in army training, the poet embarked on the composition of texts of erotic love, and of war and love. It was not until two months had elapsed, on February 12, 1915, that the poet first wrote a poem of pure nostalgia to his mistress. By nostalgia we mean a sense of homesickness and longing precipitated by prolonged absence or a sense of being neglected. From the day of his enlistment to this chilly day in winter, he had written eighteen poems that he had mailed to Lou. None had been a poem lamenting Lou's absence, or complaining of his sweetheart's ill-treatment of him. Lou had not given Apollinaire cause to bemoan his sad lover's fate. But when Lou suddenly stopped writing to Apollinaire in February for a few days, the poet's mood turned stormy and brooding. A new facet of his love verse to Lou had been uncovered: the verse of nostalgia due to absence, disappointment and hurt.

The cry of the ill-loved one, or "mal-aimé" as Apollinaire called himself in his famous autobiographical poem, "La Chanson du mal-aimé", was a new sound midst the more cheerful hymns to Lou. The timbre of his lament was to vary depending upon the poet's humor and the degree of provocation offered by his mistress' thoughtless treatment of him. In this chapter, we shall examine prose and poetry of nostalgia which were inspired either by Lou's neglect of Apollinaire, or by sweet, poignant memories of a love relationship that Apollinaire realized was fast deteriorating. We shall endeavor to appraise the similarities and differences between the various poems and prose passages, and also to compare them with the earlier complaints of the "mal-aimé" written in Alcools. Was there an evolution in the poet's expression of unhappy, disappointed love? Was there a change in his fundamental reaction to deception and hurt? If such a change is found to exist, how might we account for it? These are the principal questions to be asked.

In a letter-poem of February 12, 1915, Apollinaire's anxiety concerning Lou's failure to write to him for four days bursts forth. First he writes a poem of five

stanzas of four-line twelve syllable verse, and then he continues in prose saying, "Mon coeur écris-moi, écris-moi, je ne sais pas pourquoi tu ne m'écris pas. Ecris." (LL, p. 191, no. 83). Apollinaire's tension is revealed not just by the form and content of the poem, but by this extension of his concern that Lou write him, into the prose section which follows the poem. He is unable to let go of this leitmotif. The whole letter cries out the pain of him who believes himself forgotten, and it is a poignant letter indeed. The impact of the poem is enhanced by the anxiety expressed in the ensuing prose.

The poem opens very dramatically and strikingly through the force of the images of the second, third, and fourth lines of the first stanza:

Quatre jours! mon amour, pas de lettre
 de toi
 Le jour n'existe plus, le soleil s'est
 noyé
 La caserne est changée en maison de
 l'effroi
 Et je suis triste ainsi qu'un cheval
 convoyé (LL, p. 190).

The two caesuras of the first line translate the poet's upset through the abruptness they create; particularly the first one which is reinforced by the use of the

exclamation point. Placing "quatre jours" at the beginning of the line places emphasis upon the lapse of time in the correspondence which has caused Apollinaire to feel such agitation. The hyperbole of the second line accentuates the poet's despair. In line two, "...le ciel s'est noyé" repeats, perhaps unconsciously, half a line from Baudelaire's "L'Harmonie du soir": "Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige". The surprising image of the fourth line simile evokes the poet's loneliness. He feels as left out as the escort horse whose mission it is to protect but not to actively participate. Like the escort horse the poet is struck by a certain passivity that must now accompany his role. He is helpless in his dilemma; he wants his mistress to write but is unable to force her to do so.

The second stanza also contains a dramatic element expressed through the caesuras and the multiplicity of question marks:

Que t'est-il arrivé? souffres-tu,
 ma chérie?
 Pleures-tu? Tu m'avais bien promis
 de m'écrire
 Lance ta lettre, obus de ton artillerie,
 Qui doit me redonner la vie et
 le sourire. (LL, p. 190).

The poet worries that something terrible has happened

to his mistress. By showing this concern for her, he is again using a means of touching her more tender feelings. It is only after making clear his worry over her well-being that he dares write words which might be considered a subtle reproach: "Tu m'avais bien promis de m'écrire". To add force to his imagery, Apollinaire now glides into a metaphor: "Lance ta lettre, obus de ton artillerie," which is a reminder of the fact that he is a soldier absorbed in the military world. The quality of these lines lies in their extreme, almost prosaic simplicity.

The desperation that the poet experiences, and his great pain are underlined by the third stanza of the poem:

Huit fois déjà le vaguemestre a répondu
 "Pas de lettres pour vous" Et j'ai
 presque pleuré
 Et je cherche au quartier ce joli chien
 perdu
 Que nous vîmes ensemble ô mon cœur adoré
 (LL, p. 190).

Parallel to the "quatre jours" of the first stanza is the "huit fois" of the third. The number of times that the mailman has had to reiterate the absence of letters for Apollinaire, implies that the poet has asked him

diately change his alienated state:

Sans nouvelles de toi je suis désespéré
 Que fais-tu? Je voudrais une lettre
 demain
 Le jour s'est assombri, qu'il devienne
 doré.
 Et tristement, ma Lou, je te baise la main.
 (LL, p. 190).

As in the first stanza, the poet evokes an image of a day grown dark, symbolic of his downcast mood. A letter from his mistress would allow the sun to shine through. It is in great sorrow that the poet will pay homage to his lady: "Et tristement, ma Lou, je te baise la main." Apollinaire wants desperately to convince Lou to write to him. He speaks out rather hysterically, inquiring why she has maintained silence. Essentially, he is distressed over her neglect of him.

The whole poem translates the deep upset that the poet feels over his abandonment by his mistress. He is indignant over this mistreatment. The poem is appealing through its simplicity, but it is not one of Apollinaire's best pieces to Lou. He is better when he uses his fanciful skill with words and images.

It is interesting to note that in the brief paragraph in prose which follows the poem, Apollinaire elaborates upon his concern over Lou's silence, but does so in harsher

language. As in the case of the comparison between the erotic poems and their intimate counterparts in prose, it is the prose which is cruder, and, in this case, sharper. In prose, Apollinaire does not seem so worried about not offending Lou. "Mais, sacré nom d'une pipe, écris-moi. Si tu crois que Nîmes a de quoi vous consoler de l'attente d'une lettre, tu te mets le doigt dans l'oeil. Ecris donc, Lou, je suis furieux que tu me laisses ainsi dans l'inquiétude malgré tes promesses." (LL, p. 191). This is certainly not the poignant tone of the preceding poem. In the medium of prose Apollinaire did not feel constrained to curb his more biting language. The poem communicates the poet's agitation, worry, and impatience, whereas the prose expresses his impatience, worry, and indignation.

From this time on, the correspondence between Lou and Apollinaire diminished in frequency. Lou was visiting her other lover, Toutou, and clearly her main preoccupation was not writing letters to console the neglected poet. Apollinaire could now look back upon December and January as the golden period of his relationship with his mistress, and could feel free to lament the deterioration of the amorous relationship between Lou and himself which had been all too brief. On March 11, 1915, Apollinaire wrote a four-page poem in free verse, part of which was

written as a calligram, to commemorate his lost love. (LL, pp. 200-204, no. 88).² The poem expresses a nostalgia for the days gone by and a feeling of great sorrow. But it expresses neither bitterness nor hate. The poet has regained a sense of perspective over the failure of the love relationship:

De toi depuis longtemps je n'ai pas
de nouvelles
Mais quels doux souvenirs sont ceux
où tu te mêles,
Lou, mon amour lointain et ma divinité,
Souffre que ton dévot adore ta beauté!
C'est aujourd'hui le jour de la grande
visite
Et, tous, mon cher amour nous partirons
ensuite.
C'est question de jours. Je ne te
verrai plus
Ils ne reviendront pas les beaux jours
révolus... (LL, p. 200).

In the first stanza, Apollinaire has established the sweet quality of the memories and of his beloved. He has referred to the memories using the adjective "doux", and has referred to Lou as his "divinity" whose beauty he wishes to admire. His admiration takes on the quality of a cult in the fourth line: "Souffre que ton dévot adore ta beauté". The poet's affection for his mistress is also shown by his reference to her as "mon cher amour" in line six. Despite the fact that

the poet has not heard from his mistress, his words are neither bitter nor harsh. Lou is part of a set of sweet memories and Apollinaire is not reproaching her. Simplicity and sorrow dominate the last one and a half lines: "Je ne te verrai plus / Ils ne reviendront pas les beaux jours révolus...". The days were made beautiful by the love the poet and his mistress shared. Even the passing of the euphoric period of their relationship does not tarnish Apollinaire's memories of the love he shared with Lou.

With the disappearance of happy love, the poet wonders whether his sweetheart's affection for him has survived:

Sais-je, mon cher amour, si tu m'aimes
 encore?
 Les trompettes du soir gémissent lentement
 Ta photo devant moi, chère Lou, je
 t'adore
 Et tu sembles sourire encore à ton amant.
 (LL, p. 200).

The use of the interrogative form and the caesuras in the first line accentuate the poet's anxiety. His pain is reiterated by the verb "gémir" of the second line. The sorrowful sound of the trumpets echoes the poet's state of depression. Contrasted with the melancholy tone evoked by the first and second lines is the

slightly hopeful tone of the fourth; at least in Lou's photograph the poet's mistress is communicating warmth. But the smile may not truly be a happy countenance, since the photograph only seems to smile at Apollinaire. His uncertainty in determining the expression on Lou's face reflects his awareness of Lou's more casual feelings towards him. Objectively, he probably realizes that Lou does not really love him.

The poet's anxieties concerning his sweetheart's whereabouts and her sentiments towards him burst forth in the third stanza:

J'ignore tout de toi! Qu'es-tu donc
devenue?
Es-tu morte es-tu vive et l'as-tu
renié
L'amour que tu promis un jour au
canonnier,
Que je voudrais mourir sur la rive
inconnue! (LL, p. 200).

The theme of the war is introduced in this stanza by the use of the word, "canonnier" to designate Apollinaire who refers to himself as a soldier. The introduction of this word permits the poet to then write his fourth line. The soldier dreams of dying on the unknown shores towards which he is moving. The possibility that Lou has renounced the love she promised him seems like

a much more serious act of infidelity than the renunciation of love promised to just any ordinary man. Somehow the love sworn to a soldier going off to battle is considered sacred, and Lou's failure to keep her promise seems that much more serious. The stanza implies that Apollinaire's life has lost its purpose if he has no one to love.

Apollinaire develops the image of the soldier in the figure of a knight of the Middle Ages:

Que je voudrais mourir dans le bel orient
Quand, Croisé, j'entrerais fier dans
Constantinople.
Ton image à la main, mourir en souriant
Devant la douce mer d'azur et de sinople!..
(LL, p. 200).

He imagines the death he would wish, but under the guise of a victorious warrior. His death will be that of no ordinary man: it will be that of the medieval hero, dying with the image of his loved one. His idealization of death is translated by the third and fourth lines of the stanza in which only the beauty of the ocean is pictured. Apollinaire temporarily escapes his pain through a glorification of his imagined demise.

But he cannot escape his sorrow for long; it returns as a leitmotif to haunt him:

O Lou, ma grande peine, ô Lou, mon
 cœur brisé,
 Comme un doux son de cor ta voix sonne
 et résonne,
 Ton regard attendri dont je me suis grisé
 Je le revois lointain, lointain et
 qui s'étonne (LL, p. 201).

The second line recalls the two famous lines of Apollinaire's poem, "Cours de chasse": "Les souvenirs sont cors de chasse / Dont meurt le bruit parmi le vent".³ Here it is again memories that are compared to "un doux son de cor"; specifically it is Lou's voice that echoes in Apollinaire's mind. The distance which separates Apollinaire from Lou's glance is underlined by the repetition of the word "lointain". Moreover, the expression the poet now attributes to Lou is one of surprise ("qui s'étonne"). The poet does not explain why his mistress' face bears such an expression. Is she astonished that the poet is still staring at her? Perhaps he imagines that she finds his fidelity to her, in light of her casual treatment of him, somewhat surprising. The effectiveness of the stanza is rendered not only by the images, but by the alliteration in the second line which creates the echoing sound of the horn. The image of the horns blends well with the impression of the distant quality of Lou's voice. Indeed, the

stanza is a literary gem in its ability to utilize poetic tools to arouse compassion in the reader.

Apollinaire uses the image of the horn again in the following stanza:

Je baise tes cheveux, mon unique trésor,
 Et qui de ton amour furent le premier
 gage
 Ta voix, mon souvenir, s'éloigne, ô
 son du cor.
 Ma vie est un beau livre et l'on tourne
 la page (LL, p. 201).

The poet pays homage to Lou by kissing her lock of hair; perhaps he also bids her a symbolic adieu. Her voice is identified with his memory of her, uniting this stanza to the preceding one, and it is identified with the horn's sound through the structural composition of the line which offsets the words "ô son du cor" from the rest of the line by the use of the comma and then apostrophe in directly addressing the horn. The call of the instrument is no longer like Lou's voice but it has become her voice. This progression emphasizes the poet's pain, since the plaintive call of the horn is now one and the same as his lover's voice. It prepares the advent of the last line which concisely states Apollinaire's unhappy situation. His life has been beautiful: "Ma vie est un beau livre", but this

beauty which has been due to the love that has filled it may now be fading. A new leaf of the book is being turned and it does not promise joy.

Apollinaire's sadness at this loss of love is accentuated by his use of calligrammatic verse at this juncture in the poem:

Adieu mon Lou mes larmes
tombent
Je ne te reverrai plus
jamais
Entre nous deux, ma Lou se dresse
l'Ombre (LL, p. 201).⁴

The words "tombent", "jamais", and "l'Ombre" are written at the bottom of the rising diagonal lines, and, by their disposition on the page, communicate the poet's depression. The fact that he chooses to use a capital letter for the word "Ombre" is also significant since this reveals how overwhelming the cloud that has been cast upon his love seems to him. The shadow symbolically represents the death of love causing them to part. His words literally fall as do the tears he evokes.

Against this background of depression and unhappiness Apollinaire appeals to Lou to think back upon the time when she loved him:

Et souviens-tu parfois du temps où tu
m'aimais

L'heure
 Pleure
 trois
 fois (LL, p. 201).

Again, the physical disposition of the lines of verse contributes to their effectiveness. The hour does not ring out, it "cries", and the loneliness of its call is translated by the nudity of the lines which in descending order contain shorter syllables. Rhyme also unifies the four monosyllabic lines, isolating them from the previous line and accentuating once more their solitude, and hence, the poet's.

But Apollinaire cannot dwell on pain for too long, he returns to it again and again but departs from it when it becomes too overbearing for him. Thus he suddenly turns his attention to the imminent departure of the regiment in wavy calligrammatic verse that introduces a lighter mood into the poem. He even evokes the chant of the soldiers:

A treize heures trente
 On ira chez le major
 savoir si l'on est apte à partir
 Ensuite l'on chantera

Prenons les par le flanc
 Rant en plan tire lire (LL, p. 201).⁵

With the thought of his departure, Apollinaire immediate-

ly thinks back to Lou:

Garde-moi bien toutes les lettres que
 tu m'as écrites
 Et dont tu n'es que la dépositaire
 Tu dois me les rendre quoi qu'il arrive
 A moins que je ne meure
 Ce qui se peut fort bien
 Mon Lou, mon Lou chéri, j'ai des
 baisers plein les lèvres
 Je t'en mets sur les yeux, sur tes
 cheveux
 Fauves, partout, partout des baisers
 affolés (LL, p. 202).

The insertion of this practical detail at the beginning of the stanza contrasts with the more poetic quality of the first seven stanzas. It reiterates the poet's tension over his relationship. A true writer and sentimentalist, he does not want to lose the mementos of Lou's affection for him. Such a concern emphasizes how romantic Apollinaire is. For the second time in the poem, he alludes to his possible death. This time it would not be the romantic death of the knight. However, it is not his possible death he wishes to emphasize, but the enormity of his love for Lou. In the last three lines of the stanza, through the repetition of particular words, the run-on next to last line, and the caesuras, the poet establishes a more frenetic pace which translates quite well his eagerness to drown his

mistress in a shower of affection. But his love relationship has been shattered and he realizes this; vividly through metaphor he depicts its destruction:

Amour en cristal de Baccarat
 Amour brisé en mille morceaux
 Quel verrier miraculeux
 Pourrait te raccommoder! (LL, p. 202).

This delicate yet forceful image beautifully evokes the torn relationship and the helplessness the poet feels when contemplating the pieces of what was once a whole, flourishing erotic union.

The melancholy Apollinaire feels dominates the entire fifteen line stanza that ensues:

J'entends le vent se plaindre au-dessus
 des garrigues
 Et ronfler la caserne aux cent mille
 fatigues
 Un chien pleure à la mort comme mon
 cœur saignant
 Je perds tout sauf l'honneur ainsi
 qu'à Marignan.
 J'ai perdu mes amours. Où sont-elles
 allées?
 Sont-ce elles dont j'entends les
 plaintes désolées?
 O tête trop lourde, front en feu, mes
 yeux tristes
 O pourpres avénirs comme des améthystes
 Trajectoires de vie que mon cœur
 va suivant
 Comme un obus lancé qui traverse le vent.
 La nuit est temps propice à celui qui soupire
 J'ai goûté le meilleur je vais goûter
 le pire,
 Mais je t'aime ma Lou, comme on n'a pas
 aimé

Et quand tu seras vieille, enfant,
 mon coeur mon âme
 Souviens-toi quelquefois de moi (LL, p. 202).

From this individual failure of a love relationship, the poet generalizes and comments on all the romances that have died; without naming them he is probably alluding to his love for Annie Playden and then Marie Laurencin, as well as perhaps to other less intense and briefer liaisons. There are moving Villonesque overtones in lines five and six. The simplicity of Apollinaire's statement: "J'ai perdu mes amours" is strikingly set off by the period that follows. As in his earlier poem of nostalgia, "Quatre jours! mon amour, pas de lettre de toi," (LL, p. 190), there is a lone dog crying out, with whom the poet can identify. In this instance, through the use of simile, he compares his bleeding heart to the moaning animal. Both have in common the suggestion of pathos.

The poet's pride in his relationship with Lou stems from the fact that he considers it no ordinary experience: "Mais je t'aime ma Lou, comme on n'a pas aimé". Apollinaire finds it necessary to exaggerate the quality of the relationship he has shared with Lou

in order to enhance her regret. At least he can console himself with the thought that he has known something extraordinary. He can feel that he has tasted a very special experience, unknown to others.

To reinforce the impression of a wounded heart already mentioned in the stanza, Apollinaire draws his next lines as a calligram of a pierced heart, picturesquely showing the damage Lou has done to him. The poet has tried to move Lou through lines of traditional free verse and now he attempts once more to move her through pictorial poetry. And his final lines in free verse reiterate the poet's wish to maintain contact with Lou and to revive their love union:

Adieu mon Lou chéri, je t'aime infini-
ment
Si je pars avant de t'avoir revue
Je t'enverrai mon adresse
Et tu m'éciras si tu veux
Adieu, mon Lou, je baise tes cheveux
Adieu, mon Lou, Adieu (LL, p. 203).

The multiple "adieux" echo the poet's sadness at being obliged to bid his lady farewell. It is a farewell sent much against his will. Embracing the locks of hair is testimony of the affection the poet feels and is ready to demonstrate to Lou despite her cold treatment of him.

Throughout the poem which so adroitly mixes regular free verse and calligrammatic verse, Apollinaire has paid homage to his lady and to his love. He has bemoaned the passage of the contented period in his love relationship, and has tried to appeal to Lou to show affection for him once more. He has rejected an acceptance of the end of the relationship through his persistence in continuing to demonstrate affection for Lou. Whether he be placing kisses upon the locks of her red hair, or stating that he will send Lou his new address, Apollinaire is merely choosing different means to communicate the same message: the relationship is not over as far as he is concerned. It has suffered greatly, and he has been wounded, but there is a resiliency in him that will motivate him to fight back against a final end. Some of the lines of the poem are truly beautiful and poignant. The poem is superior in structure, imagery, and depth of meaning to "Quatre jours! mon amour, pas de lettre de toi". Apollinaire, though still suffering, has recovered his sense of perspective, and his aesthetic mastery over his versification and technique.

After receiving Apollinaire's poem of March 11th, Lou did write to him. We may wonder if Apollinaire

was absolutely serious when he wrote back to Lou on March 17, 1915, "Enfin, si je n'avais pas eu de lettre de toi, aujourd'hui 17 date fixée par toi pour ta venue je me tuais demain 18." (LL, p. 205). Was he exaggerating in an effort to frighten her? Had he really taken her neglect of him so badly? It is difficult to ascertain what his real feelings were at this time, but it is certain that he had been very hurt by her unfeeling behavior towards him. Yet another rendez-vous between them was arranged for March 28th in Marseilles, and while anxiously awaiting his forthcoming meeting with Lou, Apollinaire composed another poem of nostalgia. This one was not motivated by feelings of neglect, but rather by the nostalgia of absence kindled by the anticipation of seeing Lou. The poem is entitled "Faction" (LL, p.211, no. 93)⁶ and consists of three five-line stanzas of twelve syllable verse.

Je pense à toi, ma Lou, pendant la faction
 J'ai ton regard là-haut en clignements
 d'étoiles
 Tout le ciel, c'est ton corps, chère con-
 ception
 De mon désir majeur qu'attisent les rafales
 Autour de ce soldat en méditation

Amour, vous ne savez ce que c'est que l'absence
 Et vous ne savez pas que l'on s'en sent
 mourir.
 Chaque heure infiniment augmente la
 souffrance.

Et quand le jour finit on commence à
souffrir
Et quand la nuit revient la peine
recommence

J'espère dans le Souvenir, ô mon Amour
Il rajeunit, il embellit, lorsqu'il
s'efface.
Vous vieillirez, Amour, vous vieillirez
un jour.
Le Souvenir au loin sonne du cor de
chasse
O lente, lente nuit, ô mon fusil si lourd
(LL, p. 211).

The most interesting aspect of this short poem is Apollinaire's brilliant compression of sentiments and attitudes. In the last stanza he reveals his awareness of the passage of time, his hope that happiness will come with the memory of love, and his implication that joy is not to be found in the present. Although he is awaiting a visit with Lou, it is not in this romantic interlude that he places his aspirations; it is in a far off future which will beautify the memories of the love he and Lou shared. At the same time that memory fades with age, it also idealizes what it represents, and so the poet can look forward to the future. When he says to Lou, "Vous vieillirez, Amour, vous vieillirez un jour", he is telling her that she too will grow old and will have fond memories to look back upon. In this

poem it is once more the wonderful memory of the love relationship that is associated with the distant sound of the hunting horns: "Le Souvenir au loin sonne du cor de chasse". And it is the slow passage of the present time during which he awaits his visit with Lou that is indirectly contrasted with the flight of time that will result in the coming of old age: "O lente, lente nuit, ô mon fusil si lourd". The repetition of the word "lente" with its heavy nasal sounds, made weightier by the heavy sound of "lourd" at the end of the line, makes us literally feel and experience the slow passage of time which is oppressing the poet.

It is not seeing Lou and spending time with her that will bring the poet happiness, contrasting sharply with the suffering evoked in the second stanza of the poem. It is in memory; in other words, in looking back upon one's past, that the poet seeks his bliss. Apollinaire, the poet of love, is in this instance the epitome of the poet of nostalgia, since it is really in nostalgia that he believes he will find happiness. He shows perspicacity in realizing that the relationship will end, but he looks forward to the sweetness that will be his when he reflects back upon his

experience.

In a very few words -- just three stanzas of twelve syllable regular verse -- Apollinaire writes a fine poem on the theme of absence. Apollinaire does not enjoy the present fully while it is there, fleetingly, but as a storehouse of painful memories that will some day be pleasant. This is his consolation, reminding one of the first stanza of "Le pont Mirabeau":

Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine
 Et nos amours
 Faut-il qu'il m'en souvienne
 La joie venait toujours après la peine.⁷

During Apollinaire's trip to the front at the beginning of April 1915 the poet sent daily messages to Lou. On April 5, 1915 he mailed her a moving poem of nostalgia, "Train Militaire", (LL, pp. 247-48, no. 109),⁸ which consists of three stanzas of differing lengths of free verse. The first stanza of eighteen lines translates the poet's thoughts as the train carries him away:

Nous marchons, nous marchons d'un immobile
 pas.
 Nous buvons au bidon à la fin du repas.
 Le dernier arbre en fleurs qu'avant
 Dijon nous vîmes
 (Car c'est fini les fleurs des environs
 de Nîmes,)

Etait tout rose ainsi que tes seins
 virginaux.
 Ma vie est démodée ainsi que les
 journaux
 D'hier et nous aimons, ô femmes, vos
 images.
 Sommes dans nos wagons comme oiseaux
 en cages.
 Te souvient-il encor du brouillard de
 Sospel?
 Une fillette avait ton vice originel...
 Et notre nuit de Vence avant d'aller
 à Grasse?
 Et l'hôtel de Menton?...Tout, passe
 lasse et casse...
 Et quand tu seras vieille, ô ma jeune
 beauté
 Lorsque l'hiver viendra après ton bel été,
 Lorsque mon nom sera répandu sur la terre
 En entendant nommer Guillaume Apollinaire
 Tu diras "Il m'aimait" et t'enor-
 gueilliras.
 Allons! ouvre ton cœur. Tu m'as ouvert
 tes bras. (LL, p. 247).

After first evoking the departure of the soldiers in a rather paradoxical way, "nous marchons d'un immobile pas", the poet then suggests the flowers whose rosy hue he compares with Lou's breasts. The surprising element is contained in the sixth and seventh lines which are connected by the run-on line number six. Why is Apollinaire's life outmoded? He compares it through a simile to a one-day old newspaper, suggesting that yesterday's life, when he was close to Lou, is remote and passé, just as everyday the newspaper makes us discard

yesterday's. At the same time that he speaks for himself, he also generalizes to become the mouthpiece of all soldiers: "...et nous aimons, ô femmes, vos images."

In the absence of their sweethearts, the soldiers are forced to worship photographs since there are no women new in their lives. The men of whom he speaks are captives in a double sense: they are captives of the women they love and whose images they worship, and they are physical captives of the train that transports them: "Sommes dans nos wagons comme oiseaux en cages". The omission in this line of the subject pronoun "nous" gives the line a familiar accent appropriate to the language of soldiers. Apollinaire is speaking as a poet-soldier in this poem.

After having generalized to evoke the attitude of all the soldiers towards women, Apollinaire establishes the personal tone of his chant; he is speaking to Lou and appealing to her to recall their tender moments. In addition he evokes the future when, as an old woman, Lou will think back upon the adventures of her youth. Recalling one of the sonnets for Hélène by Ronsard, "Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir à la chandelle",⁹ Apollinaire insists on the pride Lou will feel knowing

that a great poet had loved her. Unlike the sonnet to H  l  ne, Apollinaire's poem is not destined to move his lady simply to carnal love, but to rekindle total affection: "Allons! ouvre ton c  ur. Tu m'as ouvert tes bras". The poignancy of such lines is underlined by the reader's knowledge of the once intimate relationship that had existed between Apollinaire and Lou. Apollinaire realizes that he had physically possessed Lou, but he never really won her soul. Compared to Lou's coldness is the poet's fame which he has just evoked; how insulting it is that he, a great poet, be rejected by Lou. The refusal of his love is that much more difficult for him to bear, given the fact that he does not relegate himself to the category of ordinary men, but has the pride to place himself above others due to his poetic talents. In alluding to his greatness, he is undoubtedly trying to make Lou realize her foolishness in rejecting the offer of affection of a talented human being.

Apollinaire then reverts to his favorite thought, that of the past in which he would like to bask. In a stanza that recalls images from his earlier poetry of Alcools¹⁰ he exalts the universe of the memory:

Les souvenirs ce sont des jardins sans
 limite
 Où le crapaud module un tendre cri d'azur.
 La biche du silence éperdu passe vite.
 Un rossignol meurtri par l'amour chante
 sur
 Le rosier de ton corps où j'ai cueilli
 des roses.
 Nos coeurs pendent ensemble au même
 grenadier
 Dont les fleurs de grenade entre nos
 coeurs écloses
 En tombant une à une ont jonché le sentier.
 (LL, p. 248).

This world is a garden in which Apollinaire evokes both the graceful animals and the plants. His use of the image of the rose blends in with the color of the "grenadier". Red, the color of blood and passion is an appropriate choice in this stanza. Apollinaire projects his love and hurt to the animals and birds in lines two, three, and four. They all become extensions of the poet. The falling flower petals indicate symbolically that love's hour of glory has passed and passion is dying.

These images are a link to the dismal present, suddenly evoked in the third stanza:

Les arbres courent fort, les arbres
 courent, courent
 Et l'horizon vient à la rencontre du
 train.
 Et les poteaux télégraphiques s'enamourent,
 Ils bandent comme un cerf vers le

beau ciel serein.
 Ainsi beau ciel aimé, chère Lou que
 j'adore
 Je te désire encore, ô paradis perdu.
 Tous nos profonds baisers je me les
 remémore.
 Il fait un vent tout doux comme un
 baiser mordu,
 Après des souvenirs, des souvenirs encore...
 (LL, p. 248).

The rapid movement of the passing train plays a trick on the eyes, making it appear as if the trees were fleeing. The repetition of the word "courent" three times in the first lines accentuates this impression. Apollinaire turns his eyes to his surroundings and utilizes the elements around him to conclude his poem. Like the telegraph poles stretching towards the sky, Apollinaire is reaching towards Lou. The eroticism of the verb "bander" expresses Apollinaire's sexual desires for Lou. The use of the antiquated verb, "s'enamourer" in conjunction with the modern phenomenon of telegraph poles is surprising. It reiterates the physical rigidity of love, and hence the eroticism. Apollinaire savors each bit of his memory of this love as his use of the word "remémorer" signifies. Again, as in the poem, "Faction" (LL, p. 211), it is the memory of love that haunts him continually, implied by

the repetition of "souvenirs" in the last line.

In "Train Militaire", Apollinaire has celebrated the power of remembrances and has tried to rekindle Lou's affection by making her recognize her foolishness at not accepting the love of a great poet. This "Ronsard" approach to Lou is new for Apollinaire, although it is not a fresh idea in the world of poetry. It does not appear artificial in its use. The poem bears several of Apollinaire's distinctive marks: the images of hanging hearts, petals falling to the ground and coating it with their fine bodies, the use of an antiquated verb with a modern image, and finally, the cry of the broken-hearted lover: "Ma vie est démodée ainsi que les journaux / D'hier"; "...Tout, passe lasse et casse...". The entire poem sings a beautiful hymn to love, in full alexandrine lines. It is one of Apollinaire's most successful poems of nostalgia.

A most interesting contrast appears at this point in Lettres à Lou between the poems of nostalgia and the letters in prose. After meeting with Lou in Marseilles Apollinaire realized the relationship had deteriorated, but he refused to accept the possibility that it was at an end. Concerning their love he wrote

Lou on March 29, 1915:

Nous ne nous appartenons l'un l'autre pas entièrement en temps de crise. Notre amour, en ce moment n'a qu'une réalité restreinte, amortie si l'on peut dire. S'il fallait en parler, il faudrait l'envisager dans l'espace. Nous nous aimerons toujours et quoi que tu fasses je t'aimerai à la folie. Ce sont des promesses qu'il m'est doux de tenir. Et c'est ainsi que considéré dans l'espace comme une figure géométrique cet amour tend à devenir aussi inefficace qu'un Zeppelin.

(LL, pp. 215-16, no. 95).

He reiterated his belief in the strength of their love the following day: "...JE SAIS que tu m'appartiens plus que tu ne crois peut-être et cela suffit à me rendre légères les peines qui sans cela seraient les plus affreuses." (LL, p. 220, no. 97). Yet the poetry reflects an awareness of the fragility of their love and of the beauty of the memory of it rather than of its actual existence. In the poems "Train Militaire" and "Faction" Apollinaire had concentrated on the loveliness of the remembrance of love, and in some of the subsequent poetry he also wrote of nostalgia. The important fact is that in the prose Apollinaire clung to Lou and to the aliveness of his passion, while in the poetry he was able to give in to his sorrow and to his

awareness of the passing of the great passion between Lou and him. He vacillated between viewing the truth and a need for self-deception.

The bittersweet nostalgia of "Train Militaire" and of "Faction" is present in three of four poems Apollinaire sent to Lou in one letter in poetry on April 10, 1915 (LL, pp. 273-77, no. 120).¹¹ The first poem is the famous war verse modified slightly and placed in Calligrammes, "La Nuit d'avril 1915".¹² The other three poems all deal with Apollinaire's love for Lou and with his disappointment. Each expresses in a different way Apollinaire's nostalgia and his attitudes towards Lou and towards love.

The second poem, consisting of six stanzas of varying lengths of twelve syllable verse, expresses the poet's disappointment in love. In the first stanza the poet situates himself as a soldier in the war writing to his mistress from a primitive hut at the front:

Je t'écris, ô mon Lou, de la hutte en
roseaux
Où palpitent d'amour et d'espoir neuf
cœurs d'hommes
Les canons font partir leurs obus en
monômes

Et j'écoute gémir la forêt sans oiseaux
(LL, p. 274).

The reference to the "neuf coeurs d'hommes" recalls the literary mention of the "Neuf de la renommée". Apollinaire and his fellow soldiers are portrayed by the poet as heroic figures. This image is reinforced by the contrast with the "hutte en roseaux" where they dwell. The fact that the war is raging while the poet writes his work is revealed by the third and fourth lines of the stanza. The sounds of the shells are vividly evoked by the verb "gémir" which has the merit of suggesting the crying sound of the whistling projectiles. The unhappy picture of the destruction of war is suggested by the image of a forest denuded of its birds. Nothing is alive; life has deserted this place and only the instruments of death inhabit it now.

With such a sober setting for his poem, the artist now tells his story. Like a fairy tale, he begins his yarn with the words "Once upon a time":

Il était une fois en Bohême un poète
Qui sanglotait d'amour puis chantait
 au soleil
Il était autrefois la comtesse Alouette
Qui sut si bien mentir qu'il en perdit
 la tête,

En perdit sa chanson, en perdit le
sommeil (LL, p. 274)

Obviously, Apollinaire is referring to Lou in the person of the lark. In case Lou might miss this allusion, Apollinaire italicizes the three letters of her name. With this second stanza the poet has established the character of his two protagonists. The poet is the sufferer, he who composes hymns but loses his creative ability ("sa chanson") when he suffers because his lover has deceived him. She, the Countess "Alouette", is quite different from the poet. She is happy and gay and her ability to sing is not impaired by her infidelity, evoked in the following stanza:

Un jour elle lui dit "Je t'aime,
ô mon poète"
Mais il ne la crut pas et sourit
tristement
Puis s'en fut en chantant: "Tire-
lire Alouette"
Et se cachait au fond d'un petit bois
charmant. (LL, p. 274).

The poet feels he cannot place his trust in the Countess' word and flees from her when she declares her love. He cannot permit himself to believe his lady and then be hurt by her.

But she is persistent and is not content to have her victim escape so easily. This is probably an allusion to Lou's continued correspondence with Apollinaire.

The next two stanzas tell the story of their unhappy love:

Un soir, en gazouillant son joli
tire-lire
La comtesse Alouette arriva dans la
bois:
"Je t'aime, ô mon poète, et je viens
te le dire
"Je t'aime pour toujours. Enfin je
te revois.
"Et prends-la pour toujours, mon âme
qui soupire"

O cruelle Alouette au coeur dur de
vautour
Vous mentîtes encore au poète crédule.
J'écoute la forêt gémir au crépuscule.
La comtesse s'en fut et puis revint un
jour:
"Poète, adore-moi, moi, j'aime un
autre amour" (LL, pp. 274-75).

The lady's deceitful nature is revealed by her contradictory words. The reality of Apollinaire's situation, the fact that this is not just a story that happened to someone else which he is choosing to relate to Lou, is shown by the insertion of the line "J'écoute la forêt gémir au crépuscule". The poet speaks in the first person, and in the present. The present is mixed with this so-called faraway past in which the story takes place. It is the second time the poet has used the verb "gémir" to evoke the sound of the forest, and this time the verb harmonizes well with the painful mood

Apollinaire wants to establish. Nature is suffering as is our mythical poet, who has united the destruction of life to his own emotional distress. All the poet's bitterness and frustration pour forth in the final stanza:

Il était une fois un poète en Bohême
 Qui partit à la guerre on ne sait
 pas pourquoi.
 Voulez-vous être aimé, n'aimez pas,
 croyez-moi!
 Il mourut en disant: "Ma comtesse,
 je t'aime"
 Et j'écoute à travers le petit jour
 si froid
 Les obus s'envoler comme l'amour
 lui-même. (LL, p. 275).

Perhaps the poet set off to battle to accomplish brave deeds for his mistress, but if this were his motivation it has been forgotten midst the current suffering. Again the poet of the present comments unhesitatingly upon the misery of the poet of the past: "Voulez-vous être aimé, n'aimez pas, croyez-moi", rendering up-to-date the story of the poet and the countess Alouette. He has intermingled past and present, informing Lou that it is really the disappointing love story of the poet, Apollinaire, that he has been recounting. The actuality of the events is emphasized by the final two lines in the present:

"Et j'écoute à travers le petit jour si froid / Les obus s'envoler comme l'amour lui-même". The simile of the last line renders more vivid the flight of love which leaves the poet feeling unloved and abandoned. It also links the last stanza to the first in which the poet's surroundings at the front were evoked. The difference is that the last stanza suggests the foolishness of wanting to be loved; the pointlessness of it all, and the ensuing pain, whereas the first stanza merely evokes the horror of war: "Les canons font partir leurs obus en monômes / Et j'écoute gémir la forêt sans oiseaux".

The poet has metaphorically told the story of his unhappy, unsuccessful love for Lou. His frustration and disappointment have pierced through the last stanza: "Voulez-vous être aimé, n'aimez pas, croyez-moi!". His tension has built up through each progressive step of the tale. The impact of the poem has been increased by the mixing of present and past, and the final cry of the last stanza has summarized quite well the dilemma of Apollinaire: "Et j'écoute à travers le petit jour si froid / Les obus s'envoler comme l'amour lui-même".

"Je t'écris ô mon Lou..." is a very successful poem. The playful use of words and sounds (Lou in Alouette) recalls the Medieval poets or the Grands Rhétoriciens. It adds a note of intimacy and mystery, as if only Lou and Apollinaire would understand the poem. The rhythm is rapid and musical, but not soft. There are few adjectives, giving the poem a clear-cut quality. It is nevertheless a doubly tragic poem, with the war setting and the contrast between the trenches and the wistful regrets, and with the voluntary, perhaps masochistic humiliation of Apollinaire who is ready to share his mistress. He is willing to love without being truly loved in return.

Similar themes of nostalgia are treated in the third poem that Apollinaire wrote to Lou on April 10th. Once again the poet speaks of his disappointment in love, but this time he also raises the question of remembrances and of their fate. He thinks back to the oranges that Lou gave him and writes two stanzas about them:

Te souviens-tu, mon Lou, de ce panier
 d'oranges
 Douces comme l'amour qu'en ce temps-là

nous fîmes
 Tu me les envoyas un jour d'hiver à
 Nîmes
 Et je n'osai manger ces beaux fruits
 d'or des anges.

Je les gardai longtemps pour les
 manger ensemble
 Car tu devais venir me retrouver à
 Nîmes.
 De mon amour vaincu les dépouilles opimes
 Pourrissent. J'attendais. Mon cœur,
 la main me tremble! (LL, p. 275).

The poet's high regard for Lou is shown by the fact that he considers the oranges the food of angels, thus he is ranking Lou as an ethereal creature. These oranges were trophies "dépouilles opimes" of his "conquered love", and they simply rotted. The tragedy of their fate is brought out by the disposition of the words; the run-on-line three of the second stanza succeeds in putting full emphasis on the first word of the fourth line, "Pourrissent". The three caesuras of the fourth line create a broken rhythm that conveys the poet's agitation. Not only does Apollinaire state: "Mon cœur, la main me tremble!", but the halting rhythm of the line mimicks the trembling he directly suggests.

Yet of the putrefying oranges there is one that has remained good:

Une petite orange était restée intacte
 Je la pris avec moi quand à six nous
 partîmes
 Et je l'ai retrouvée intacte comme à
 Nîmes,
 Elle est toute petite et sa peau se
 contracte. (LL, p. 275).

The orange is still edible and unspoilt but it has aged: "et sa peau se contracte." Is Apollinaire attempting to tell us that nothing remains the same and that no creature is fixed in time? We all age as does the orange, and our sentiments must also submit to the test of time. It is just that test that his love with Lou has failed; he has already referred to his love as a failure, "mon amour vaincu", and now he mentions that the orange, the symbol of their love, has also grown old. What is its fate, we may well ask at this point. Apollinaire does not hold us in suspense very long:

Et tandis que les obus passent, je la
 mange
 Elle est exquise ainsi que mon amour
 de Nîmes
 O soleil concentré, riche comme mes
 rimes
 O savoureux amour, ô ma petite orange!
 (LL, p. 276).

The orange is equated with his love in the last line. First Apollinaire compares it to his love in line two, and then through the use of a comma in line four

he places them side by side.

The full significance of the symbol of the orange is brought forth in the following stanza:

Les souvenirs sont-ils un beau fruit
 qu'on savoure?
 Le mangeant, j'ai détruit mes souvenirs
 opimes.
 Puissé-je t'oublier mon pauvre amour de
 Nîmes!
 J'ai tout mangé: l'orange et la peau
 qui l'entoure. (LL, p. 276).

The orange is no longer just a symbol of love but rather of the memory of love. And as the remembrance of love it has been destroyed in the process of being eaten by the poet. Would that the poet could so easily eradicate the memory of his unhappy love for Lou. In actual fact he cannot, and this contrast between what he can figuratively accomplish by eating the orange, and literally accomplish by trying to forget Lou, points out the weakness of the human being. Emotionally, he is unable to force himself to erase the painful memory from his mind. It stays to haunt him.

Apollinaire appeals to Lou to think of this orange, of this love of theirs:

Mon Lou, pense parfois à la petite
 orange

Douce comme l'amour, le pauvre amour
 de Nfmes,
 Douce comme l'amour qu'en ce temps-là
 nous fîmes.
 Il me reste une orange:
 un coeur,
 un coeur étrange.
 (LL, p. 276).

The orange that remains at the conclusion of the poem is not a real one that was part of the basket of fruit. It is a figurative orange, symbol this time of Lou's heart, as the last line implies. To make his final statement more emphatic, Apollinaire breaks the line at the sixth syllable and thereby places full weight on the second half of the line, "un coeur, un coeur étrange". Lou's heart is a strange one still unknown to the poet. Even though Lou and Apollinaire have enjoyed a certain intimacy together, the poet still feels that he does not really know Lou. How can he know what she is thinking, what she is feeling, especially with regard to him? She has shown coldness to him and yet has continued to correspond with him and show him that she does care to continue their relationship. The poem is an ingenious, virtuoso tour de force. Apollinaire is confused and is left considering Lou as an unfaithful

lover in the fourth poem written on the same date:

Tendres yeux éclatés de l'amante
 infidèle,
 Obus mystérieux...
 Si tu savais le nom du beau cheval
 de selle
 Qui semble avoir tes yeux! (LL, p. 276).

The poem continues in a lighter vein, but this first stanza ties in well to the preceding poem, with its preoccupation with Lou's infidelity to Apollinaire. Clearly, in all these three poems written on April 10, 1915, Apollinaire was concerned with the infidelity of Lou and with the suffering of the lover left alone with only the memory of his love. Each poem emphasizes a different theme of nostalgia: the first poem speaks of the flight of love and of deception, the second of the deception and the painful memory of the lover and that which the two people shared, and the third evokes only the infidelity of this woman. It does so in a lighter vein and we may wonder if the actual creation of the three poems has exorcised Apollinaire's deep-felt hurt. The poet's rich inspiration is attested to by the composition of the three different poems of nostalgia, one after the other. Each uses very different images to relate similar emotions.

nostalgia for the happier days of love is evoked:

O temps, souffre qu'en moi-même je
 retourne en arrière
 Dans les commencements de cette
 longue guerre
 Voici la mer et les palmiers
 Et cette grande place où tu la vis
 naguère
 Sous son grand canotier (LL, p. 360).

Although Apollinaire has only been actively involved in the war since December 1914, the fight already seems endless. When he thinks back to the days of September and October 1914, the time interval does seem great. Yet it is not Lou whom Apollinaire immediately suggests, but his surroundings at Nice. Lou is not just an isolated memory but part of a warm frame of reference. When Apollinaire thinks of her he cannot help but also think of the environment in which he and Lou enjoyed their relationship. It is with fondness that the poet thinks back on them both.

Once he has evoked the image of Lou under her wide-brimmed hat Apollinaire describes through the power of simile the nature of his relationship with Lou:

O temps, reviendra-t-il le temps où
 nos deux âmes
 Comme deux avions ennemis se ren-
 contreront
 Pour l'idéal combat où mon Lou tu

réclames
La verge d'Aaron. (LL, p. 360).

The confrontation of their two characters is referred to as "l'idéal combat". Apparently, even in recalling the earliest stages of their relationship, Apollinaire is willing to recognize their clash of wills, and picturesquely describes it by writing that Lou would demand Aaron's rod, a biblical reference to Exodus, chapter seven, in which Aaron's rod is used by Moses and Aaron to bring on the plagues of Egypt. The suggestion of Lou calling for the magic rod suggests subtly a phallic connotation. Probably, it is an allusion to the flagellation that was part of their lovemaking.

Apollinaire captures Lou's mysteriousness, her elusiveness, in the following stanza:

Puisque tu es, cœur éternel: La FEMME
Et que je te connais
Onde qui fuit, porte sur rien, insaisi-
ssable flamme
Ou gamin pied de nez (LL, p. 360).

Lou is not just an individual human being, she symbolizes woman for Apollinaire and her characteristics become not just those of one person but those of all women. The poet establishes his superiority

by immediately stating "je te connais". Lou may represent woman, she may be an "insaisissable flamme" but Apollinaire can at least console himself with the knowledge that he knows all this. He has not been fooled.

Woman also has great prophetic powers according to the poet:

Ou bien, ô mon cher coeur, tu es cette
 musique
 Qui monte nuit et jour du creux des bois
 profonds
 Et tes bras blancs levés en geste prophé-
 tique
 Annoncent ce que font

 Et tout ce que feront les longs troupeaux
 des hommes
 Venus sous ton regard chargé de
 volupté
 Te crier leur Désir, dire ce que nous
 sommes
 Et ce qu'avons été (LL, pp. 360-61).

Man has the ability to know woman, but she is the master of men. She can predict what deeds they will accomplish and she is the object of their desires. Woman stands out as an individual against men who fall into "herds". The depiction of men this way is appropriate to Apollinaire at this time; a participant in army life he saw men in troops obeying orders all the time, and did so himself. Interestingly enough,

in his view as expressed here it is the woman who is the prophet but it is the men who are the achievers, responsible for whatever need be done. The elegance of woman is beautifully and delicately evoked by the image of her "bras blancs levés en geste prophétique", and her sensuousness is suggested by the image of her "regard chargé de volupté". These pictures of beauty certainly contrast with the one evocation of men as "les longs troupeaux des hommes".

Men will go off to die for women, a theme which has been brought up earlier in Lettres à Lou when Apollinaire has written of himself as the knight going off to the battle in honor of his lady:

Puis s'en aller mourir par le matin
 livide
 Afin que tes beaux yeux aient le droit
 de choisir
 L'esclave le plus beau pour orner ton
 lit vide
 Afin de t'assouvir.

Et s'en aller mourir par le matin livide
 Afin que ton caprice ait le droit de
 choisir
 L'esclave encor plus beau pour orner
 le lit vide
 Selon ton bon plaisir (LL, p. 361).

Woman is simply a creature of voluptuousness and desire, she has a harem of men from which she can choose her

"slave". For Apollinaire, who regarded woman as the slave in most passages of Lettres à Lou, it is a paradox that he now speaks of woman as the master and man as the slave. He may have wished that she be his obedient captive, but he is able to realize that such a dream would not become reality. These stanzas reflect a more realistic point of view on his life.

Concluding the poem, he joins his fond memories to the present:

O Lou, je te revois sur la grand place
à Nice
Dans le matin ambré ...
Un obus vient mourir sur le canon factice
Que les Boches ont repéré. (LL, p. 361).

The beauty of the morning is suggested by the adjective, "ambré" which evokes both the sweet odor of the perfume and the golden color, amber. It contrasts with the two lines concerning the war. Its peacefulness is accentuated by the implicit comparison with the scene at the front.

The entire poem evokes the powers of Lou and the sweetness and richness of Apollinaire's memory of her. Apollinaire feels nostalgia for the sorceress-like creature whose voluptuous nature he proclaims. Only Lou's sensuousness is suggested in the poem, and it is for this very carnal aspect of the relationship that the poet longs.

Yet it is the pursuit of the purely physical side of his relationship with Lou that he criticizes in a poem written a day or two later, "L'Amour, le dédain et l'espérance" (LL, pp. 366-68, no. 155).¹⁴ In this longer poem in free verse Apollinaire admits his error in having maintained a relationship that was purely erotic, neglecting the companionship so necessary in a balanced, full relationship between two people. In haunting lines he sums up his dilemma:

J'ai bien cru prendre toute ta beauté
 et je n'ai pas eu que ton corps
 Le corps hélas n'a pas l'éternité
 Le corps a la fonction de jouir mais il
 n'a pas l'amour
 Et c'est en vain maintenant que j'essaye
 d'êtreindre ton esprit
 Il fuit, il me fuit de toutes parts
 comme un noeud de coulevres
 qui se dénoue
 Et tes beaux bras sur l'horizon lointain
 sont des serpents couleur
 d'aurore qui se lovent en
 signe d'adieu
 Je reste confus, je demeure confondu
 Je me sens las de cet amour que tu dédaignes
 Je suis honteux de cet amour que tu
 méprises tant

Le corps ne va pas sans l'âme
 Et comment pourrais-je espérer rejoindre
 ton corps de naguère puisque
 ton âme était si éloignée de moi
 Et que le corps a rejoint l'âme
 Comme font tous les corps vivants
 O toi que je n'ai possédée que morte!
 (LL, pp. 366-67).

The love of which Apollinaire speaks in this poem is the spiritual love of two human beings for each other as separate from physical love. With Lou he deceived himself because he believed at one point that he actually possessed the affection of her soul when in reality he did not, or did not to the point that he imagined. He possessed Lou physically, but such a possession is empty as he now realizes; without Lou's soul present in the embrace only a body was offered up to the lover, and Apollinaire can rightfully cry out: "O toi que je n'ai possédée que morte!"

But this cry of protest lacks the bitterness and misogyny of the cries of "Zone" and of the "Chanson du mal-aimé". Apollinaire is not cursing the woman who deceived him; perhaps in this instance he understands that it is he who has fooled himself by exaggerating in his own mind the depth of Lou's feelings for him. He is not placing himself in the posture of the "mal-aimé". Instead, he is ready to persevere. Even if Lou is not with him he will overcome the hurdle through the power of his imagination, and he will envision a voyage of three beings: Lou, Toutou, and the

poet. It is a voyage that will carry them beyond the confines of reality:

Et j' imagine alors des choses impossibles
 puisque ton coeur n'est pas
 avec moi
 Et j' imagine alors que nous allons nous
 embarquer, tous deux, tout seuls
 peut-être trois, et que jamais
 personne au monde ne saura
 rien de notre cher voyage vers
 rien, mais vers ailleurs et
 pour toujours
 Sur cette mer plus bleue encore, plus
 bleue que tout le bleu du monde
 Sur cette mer où jamais l'on ne crierait:
 "Terre!"
 Pour ton attentive beauté mes chants plus
 purs que toutes les paroles
 monteraient plus libres encore
 que les flots
 La barque nous attend, c'est notre
 imagination
 Et la réalité nous rejoindra un jour
 Si les âmes se sont rejointes
 Pour le trop beau pèlerinage... (LL, p. 367).

Unlike the poems of voyage of other poets, Apollinaire's is neither the hymn of the solitary traveler nor that of the lover ready to depart with his beloved. In his relationship with Lou, Apollinaire has accepted the presence of a third party, Toutou, and is ready to go off on the great voyage with Toutou as part of the team. This accommodation on the poet's behalf may indicate a somewhat singular taste in love habits or

simply a fundamentally more casual approach to Lou, which made it possible for the poet to accept Lou's keeping another lover. Apollinaire's awareness of the unbalanced nature of his relationship with Lou that excluded the intellectual compatibility of the two and emphasized only the physical enjoyment might account for his lack of bitterness in this poem of nostalgia, as in some of the others. He was aware of the limitations of their relationship, yet he wished to continue the correspondence and hopefully the love affair.

Although Apollinaire at first protested rather hysterically against Lou's silence, once Lou wrote to him and continued the relationship, even if it were not the close relationship that had once existed, Apollinaire demonstrated the ability to adjust. In his prose and poetry of nostalgia, he reflects a longing for the days when he and Lou were more intimate, and at times he shows despair over the knowledge that his relationship with Lou has been so one-sided, favoring only the passion between them. But his tenacity pierces through the poems, as in the poem, "Silence bombardé par les froides étoiles" (LL, pp. 380-82, no. 159)¹⁵ written as part of a letter on May 17, 1915,

in which he says:

Ptit Lou, je connais bien malgré tout
 ta douceur
 En suivant le Printemps tous les jours
 sur la route
 En me baignant le front dans cette
 ombreuse odeur
 Qui me vient des jardins où je te
 revois toute.
 Ainsi je gagnerai le grand cœur embaumé
 De l'univers tiède et doux comme
 ta bouche (LL, p. 380).

This stubbornness on Apollinaire's part; the belief that he could really regain Lou's total affection, made it possible for him to continue writing impassioned letters and poems to her. It must have helped him sustain himself while at the front. At the same time, the poems of nostalgia reveal his awareness of the deterioration of the relationship, and beautifully evoke the intimacy that once existed, at least in the poet's mind, as well as Apollinaire's enjoyment of the memory of this passionate, singular love.

CHAPTER THREE: FOOTNOTES

1. OP, PL, p. 410, no. XXIII.
2. OP, PL, pp. 411-13, no. XXIV.
3. OP, A, p. 148.
4. We have arranged these lines ourselves, following Apollinaire's line endings in the ideogram.
5. We have arranged these lines ourselves.
6. OP, PL, p. 414, no. XXV.
7. OP, A, p. 45.
8. OP, PL, pp. 421-22, no. XXX.
9. The first stanza may have been an unconscious model for Apollinaire's. It reads as follows:
 Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir à la
 chandelle.
 Assise auprès du feu, dévidant et filant,
 Direz, chantant mes vers, en vous émerveillant:
 "Ronsard me célébrait du temps que j'étais belle."
 Pierre de Ronsard, Sonnets pour Hélène, II (1578), rpt.
 in Ronsard, Poésies choisies, II (Paris: Classiques
 Larousse, 1933), p. 56.
10. The image of suspended hearts recalls the following lines of "Les Fiançailles":
 Au petit bois de citronniers s'énamourèrent
 D'amour que nous aimons les dernières venues
 Les villages lointains sont comme leurs paupières
 Et parmi les citrons leurs coeurs sont
 suspendus" (OP, A, p. 128). The
 ground cluttered with leaves brings to mind the image
 of hands as dead leaves in "Marie" (OP, A, p. 81),
 "Rhénane d'automne" (OP, A, p. 120), and "Signe"
 (OP, A, p. 125). A propos this image in "Rhénane
 d'automne", Michel Décaudin noted: "...nous y voyons
 un souvenir de Stavelot....les tanneries de la région

utilisaient encore de vieux procédés qui nécessitaient l'emploi de feuilles de chêne tendre. La forme d'une feuille si répandue a donné naissance à l'image." Michel Décaudin, Le Dossier d'"Alcools" (1960; rpt, and rev. Paris: Minard, 1965), p. 190.

11. OP, PL, pp. 430-31, no. XXXIV, ii, iii, iv.
12. OP, PL, p. 429, no. XXXIV, i; OP, C, pp. 243-44.
13. OP, PL, pp. 457-58, no. XLVII.
14. OP, PL, pp. 463-65, no. XLIX.
15. OP, PL, pp. 469-70, no. LI.

CHAPTER FOUR:

SERENE LOVE

Clearly, Apollinaire was a sentimentalist and enjoyed singing vigorous hymns of love to Lou. Despite the lack of real companionship between them he felt inspired to create beautiful poems of erotic love, of war and love, and of nostalgia. But there were also other facets of his love for Lou. Mixed in with his great passion was a strain of more tranquil, pure love that also found its expression under his pen. This serene love as we shall call it, was present from the beginning of his liaison with Lou--the first poem of serene love immediately following the poet's romantic week of December 1914 with Lou--to the end of June 1915, well after the honeymoon period of his liaison had ended. Thus the serene love existed side by side with the erotic love. Apollinaire was not a simple man; his emotions involved in his love were quite complex. At times he was capable of stepping back from his relationship and of expressing the contentment he felt in a purer way, and at times his enthusiasm inspired him to write rich passionate verse. At still other moments his self-pity at being poorly loved by Lou led him to pour out his heart in poems of nostalgia. The tranquil

side of Apollinaire's love for Lou is one that we have not yet examined, and since it did indeed exist and contrasted sharply with the impassioned cries of much of the poet's letters to Lou it is fitting that we investigate it now. How did Apollinaire express the calmer strain of his love and what picture of love does he offer us as compared to that depicted in his passionate letters?

In his first poem of serene love, written on December 16, 1914 (LL, pp. 34-35, no. 15)¹, Apollinaire unites military imagery with physical images evoking his mistress. He opens his poem with a two-line stanza containing three metaphors that illustrate Lou's importance to Apollinaire:

Je pense à toi mon Lou ton cœur est
 ma caserne
Mes sens sont tes chevaux ton souvenir
 est ma luzerne (LL, p. 34).

Lou's heart is now the poet's home, protecting and sheltering him; the poet's senses are under his mistress' domination and direction. They are her horses and thus are driven by her, and the memory of her is Apollinaire's shining light, suggested by the image of the bright violet flowers.

Contrasted with the province of love and thoughts of love is the real world surrounding the poet. The military environment has achieved such significance that even the stars in the sky are transformed into sparkling arms:

Le ciel est plein ce soir de sabres
d'éperons
Les canonniers s'en vont dans l'ombre
lourds et prompts (LL, p. 34).

But the twinkling dots of light in the sky differ greatly in the gracefulness they suggest from the soldiers whose clumsiness is evoked by the repetition of the nasal vowel, and by the weighty sound, "u": "Les canonniers s'en vont dans l'ombre lourds et prompts".

The heavy presence of the awkward soldiers contrasts vividly with the memory of Lou that the poet evokes in the following stanza:

Mais près de moi je vois sans cesse ton
image
Ta bouche est la blessure ardente du
courage (LL, p. 34).

The image of Lou's mouth as a burning wound from which come words of courage was already used by Apollinaire in his ideogram to Lou on October 8th. In the ideogram it is the erotic connotation of the word, "blessure",

that dominates, due to the comparison between Lou's lips and the fig's wound:

La mielleuse figue octoveine seule a
 la douceur de vos lèvres
 qui ressemblent à sa blessure lorsque
 trop mûr
 le noble fruit que je voudrais tant
 cueillir parait sur le point
 de choir
 ô figue ô figue désirée bouche que je
 veux cueillir blessure dont
 je veux mourir (LL, p. 16).²

In the poem, "Je pense à toi mon Lou", the metaphor "ta bouche est la blessure" also has a voluptuous connotation, but a literal meaning as well. The mouth enunciates words of encouragement that give strength to the soldier whose situation may place him face to face with death.

The link between Lou and the war is further tightened by the next stanza:

Nos fanfares éclatent dans la nuit comme
 ta voix
 Quand je suis à cheval tu trottes près
 de moi (LL, p. 34).

The surprising metaphor of the second line can be explained by the fact that Apollinaire had named his horse after Lou. "Lou" is with him even at the training center, and Apollinaire rides her as in the posture of the love act. However, compared to Apollinaire's

erotic letters to his mistress, this metaphor is mild and subtle. The physical thoughts of Lou continue to dominate in the poet's mind as is evidenced by the last two-line stanza:

Nos 75 sont gracieux comme ton corps
Et tes cheveux sont fauves comme le
feu d'un obus qui éclate au
nord (LL, p. 35).

The repetition of the verb "éclater" used in the preceding stanza reinforces the war imagery, heightening the evocative power of the four lines considered together. The physical presence of Lou suggested by her voice, by the metaphor of the horse named Lou, by the simile of the cannons compared to Lou's graceful body, and by the comparison of Lou's red hair and the bursting shells, all place emphasis upon the physical and the concrete. Apollinaire evokes his mistress' presence through his images. He misses his lady and wishes that she were with him.

The five two-line stanzas are united by the use of particular metaphors and then similes which place Apollinaire in the presence of his mistress and which establish a close tie between the war and Lou. Despite

the asterisks used by Apollinaire to separate the five stanzas from the final four-line stanza of the poem, these stanzas are linked to the last one by the identity of their theme and by the use of war imagery of the same type as that already used: "la fanfare", "des bat-flanc", and the indirect suggestion of horses:

Je t'aime tes mains et mes souvenirs
 Font sonner à toute heure une heureuse
 fanfare
 Des soleils tour à tour se prennent à
 hennir
 Nous sommes les bat-flanc sur qui ruent
 les étoiles (LL, p. 35).

The poet's enthusiasm for Lou is translated by the accelerated rhythm of the first line of ten feet which runs on into the following twelve syllable line. The use of the word "fanfare" ties this stanza to the fourth. In the following line, Apollinaire uses an interesting and unusual metaphor, that of neighing suns. The "fanfare" taken in the sense of "fracas" has created such a confusion that the stars of the sky seem to be transformed into horses, and the poet and his mistress -- the "nous" of the last line -- become the piece of wood that these star-horses kick. The overriding power of love is shown by the metaphorical disorder that

is the product of love's magic. Moreover, the violence of this passion is rendered by the physical action of the verb "ruer".

The entire poem is unified by war imagery and by the continual evocation of the woman who blends in with the concrete world of weapons. The striking contrast between light and dark; between the shining light of love and the darkness of the night surrounding the poet appears several times in the poem (in all the lines excepting the third stanza), and offers a unifying motif for the different images. The last stanza in which the poet and his mistress transcend the concrete world to lose themselves amongst the stars is a beautiful exaltation of love, elevating it to a metaphysical level.

The importance of Apollinaire's environment in Nîmes remained strong and reflected the deep impression army life was making on the poet. In his next poem of serene love, written two days before his second leave spent with Lou, Apollinaire again used his surroundings as a source of significant images (LL, pp. 70-71, no.32).³ Once more he borrowed from the various objects to create

provocative and rich lines of verse.

Apollinaire begins the poem by addressing Lou and suggesting through his images the sweetness of a delicate twilight and the magic of nightfall:

Mon Lou la nuit descend tu es à moi
 je t'aime
 Les cyprès ont noirci, le ciel a fait
 de même
 Les trompettes chantaient ta beauté
 mon bonheur
 De t'aimer pour toujours ton cœur
 près de mon cœur
 Je suis revenu doucement à la caserne
 Les écuries sentaient bon la luzerne
 Les croupes des chevaux évoquaient ta
 force et ta grâce
 D'aléthane dorée ô ma belle jument
 de race (LL, p. 70).

The poet's contented love is translated by the first and fourth lines where his optimistic sentiments concerning his love for Lou appear. The images have been chosen carefully and all evoke the gracefulness and loveliness of the poet's mistress. The poet returns "doucement", the stables smell sweet, even the horses' hind quarters recall to Apollinaire's mind the delicacy of Lou. And Lou is not just any woman. She is metaphorically une "belle jument de race". Indeed, Lou was not just any ordinary female, she was a member of the

nobility and Apollinaire was proud of this fact. His pride in her noble blood is reflected in this metaphor. To the poet, absorbed in the love he feels for Lou, the military trumpets do not sound out sunset but rather a celebration of Lou's beauty. The poet has succeeded in suggesting both the magnitude of his love and the loveliness of nightfall which complement each other.

The gracefulness of the scene is accented by the next four lines describing the poet's surroundings:

La tour Magne tournait sur sa colline
 laurée
 Et dansait lentement, lentement
 s'obombrait
 Tandis que des amants descendaient de
 la colline
 La tour dansait lentement comme une
 sarrasine. (LL, p. 70).

The repetition of the word "lentement" emphasizes the gentle, gradual fall of night and the rhythmic rotating action of the tower imagined by the poet. The dancing action is also evoked by the simile equating the tower's movement with that of a provocative Arab dancing girl. An undercurrent of sexuality runs through these lines as it did through the previous ones in which Apollinaire was reminded of Lou's gracefulness upon viewing the

the horses' hind quarters. But the sexual feeling that is present is not elaborated upon nor developed in the erotic images Apollinaire was so capable of creating. Rather, the poet has chosen to maintain the delicacy of his portrait of the twilight and of the country landscape. It is his restraint that keeps these lines within the realm of serene love verse rather than erotic love.

His dream of seeing Lou combines with an evocation of his environment in the next eighteen lines of the poem. Apollinaire expertly intertwines his adoration of Lou with observations of his surroundings, indicating that the thought of Lou is present in his mind even as he participates in the activities of his military life. While viewing all those about him, his mind still wanders back to Lou; she is the all-pervasive thought obsessing him.

First, Apollinaire evokes the city of Nîmes and his excitement in anticipation of seeing Lou:

Le vent souffle pourtant il ne fait pas
du tout froid
Je te verrai dans deux jours et suis
heureux comme un roi

Et j'aime de t'y aimer cette Nîmes
 la Romaine
 Où les soldats français remplacent
 l'armée prétorienne
 Beaucoup de vieux soldats qu'on n'a
 pu habiller
 Ils vont comme des boeufs, tanguent
 comme des mariniérs (LL, p. 70).

The thought of Lou and the majesty of the Roman city of Nîmes certainly contrast rather strongly with the description of the old French soldiers. They are awkward and ill-clothed, a picturesque detail diametrically opposed to the gracefulness of Apollinaire's mistress. Perhaps Apollinaire appreciates Lou all the more because he lives surrounded by the spectacle of these old soldiers. It is the evocation of Lou that follows that of the soldiers and thus the picture of Lou is all the more delicate:

Je pense à tes cheveux qui sont mon or
 et ma gloire
 Ils sont toute ma lumière dans la nuit
 noire
 Et tes yeux sont les fenêtres d'où je
 veux regarder
 La vie et ses bonheurs la mort qui vient
 aider
 Les soldats las, les femmes tristes et
 les enfants malades (LL, p. 70).

Apollinaire wants to be completely united to his mistress. Her eyes should become his; she will be more

than just his glowing light serving to guide him. Through Lou the poet will view life and death. Death rescues the suffering soldiers, according to Apollinaire. It is interesting to note that from a desire of complete union with his mistress the poet skips to the evocation of his comrades; at this moment thoughts of Lou alternate with those of the war. One leads naturally to the other. It is equally interesting to note the details of his environment that Apollinaire chooses to utilize in the poem. He appeals to the senses of sight, taste and smell:

Des soldats mangent près d'ici de l'ail
 dans la salade
 L'un a une chemise quadrillée de bleu
 comme une carte
 Je t'adore mon Lou et sans te voir je
 te regarde
 Ça sent l'ail et le vin et aussi
 l'iodoforme
 Je t'adore mon Lou embrasse-moi avant
 que je ne dorme (LL, pp. 70-71).

This three-way appeal renders his images quite vivid. The mixing of Lou with such ordinary observations proves how necessary Lou is to Apollinaire in his life at the army depot. It also indicates a desire on the poet's part to communicate the matter-of-fact details

of his life, so that he may feel closer to her. He wants her to share his life. The poem becomes a "poème-conversation", almost prosaic in character. Apollinaire even blends images of his military world with the thought of Lou in the conclusion of the poem. But at this point, both transcend the concrete world to reach the heights of heaven:

Le ciel est plein d'étoiles qui sont
 les soldats
 Morts ils bivouaquent là-haut comme ils
 bivouaquaient là-bas
 Et j'irai conducteur un jour lointain
 t'y conduire
 Lou que de jours de bonheur avant que ce
 jour ne vienne luire
 Aime-moi mon Lou je t'adore Bonsoir
 Je t'adore, je t'aime adieu, mon
 Lou ma gloire (LL, p. 71).

Apollinaire's apparent belief in the afterlife may in part explain his acceptance of the war, and his ability to derive pleasure from the army life. The metaphor of the stars as dead soldiers is curious, probably indicating his religious turn of mind. Like the previous poem analyzed, this one terminates with an elevation of love. It is Apollinaire's tribute to Lou and evidence of the enthusiasm he feels for her. She is his "glory"; earlier in the poem she was his

"belle jument de race". A lady of the nobility, she merits all his respect and humble admiration. The poet has simultaneously expressed his great love and has flattered Lou. The poem has some fine lines and images, indicating that even when content with his romances, Apollinaire could write good love poetry.

On January 24, 1915, immediately after having spent his leave with Lou at Nice, Apollinaire again composed a hymn of love which while impassioned does not fall into the category of erotic love. In a unique poem of rich imagery, without doubt one of the finest of the verses written to Lou, Apollinaire again celebrated his lady. "Guirlande de Lou" is divided into seven stanzas which are united by the flower imagery and perfumes evoked throughout the poem. Unlike the first two poems of serene love, "Guirlande de Lou" (LL, pp. 134-35, no. 58)⁴ does not introduce prosaic details of the poet's day-to-day life. The poem begins by evoking Apollinaire's environment, but it emphasizes Lou's beauty. Then it takes leave of the real world to celebrate Lou in imagery far richer than that of the first two poems. It is the complex fabric

of images that makes this poem an example of Apollinaire's finest poetry:

Je fume un cigare à Tarascon en
 humant un café
 Des goudriers en manteau rouge passent
 près de l'hôtel des Empereurs
 Le train qui m'emporta t'enguirlandait
 de tout mon souvenir nostalgique
 Et ces roses si roses qui fleurissent
 tes seins
 C'est mon désir joyeux comme l'aurore
 d'un beau matin. (LL, p. 134).

Apollinaire's taste for erudite vocabulary is not often visible in Lettres à Lou, while it is most prominent in Alcools. But in the first line of the poem, Apollinaire does use a literary word. "Humer" denotes well the pleasurable act of swallowing one's beverage while breathing in its rich aroma. Apollinaire savors his coffee as he does his memory of Lou. In this stanza it is Lou who is left encircled by Apollinaire's memory. The poet conjures up images of Lou's lovely body and puts emphasis upon them by the repetition and play on words of line four: "Et ces roses si roses qui fleurissent tes seins". The inverted word order also serves to place full weight upon the image of the roses. Only after having relied on the power

of metaphor does the poet utilize the simile of the last line, reinforcing the image of beauty evoked in line four. Lines four and five belong together because they enhance each other. The entire stanza suggests a nostalgic Apollinaire thoroughly enjoying the thought of Lou.

In the following stanza, Apollinaire continues to dream of Lou as the train moves on:

Une flaque d'eau trouble comme mon âme
 Le train fuyait avec un bruit d'obus
 de 120 au terme de sa course
 Et les yeux fermés je respirais les
 héliotropes de tes veines
 Sur tes jambes qui sont un jardin
 plein de marbres
 Héliotropes & soupirs d'une Belgique
 crucifiée. (LL, p. 134).

The poet plays on the double meaning of the word "héliotrope", which signifies both a sweet-smelling flower and a green stone streaked with red veins. In line three he uses both denotations, enriching his poem through synesthesia. Then Apollinaire introduces a new and seemingly unrelated image, that of crucified Belgium. At first the mention of Belgium in the context of the stanza is surprising, and we wonder what is the connection between it and the metaphor

of the preceding line. Yet a link becomes apparent. The red veins of the marble have called to mind the blood-soaked country. The war is never far from the poet's mind as he returns to the army depot. It is present at the beginning of the first stanza and it makes its appearance once again at the conclusion of the second one. While this is not a poem of war and love because the war is not at the center of all the imagery of the poem, it is nevertheless a poem of serene love relying heavily upon flashes of war imagery.

The presence of flowers with their perfume remains prominent in the next stanza:

Et puis tourne tes yeux ce réséda si
tendre
Ils exhalent un parfum que mes yeux
savent entendre
L'odeur forte et honteuse des Saintes
violées
Des sept Départements où le sang a coulé
(LL, p. 134).

As with the word "héliotrope" the poet plays on the double meaning of the word "réséda" which signifies both a flowering plant and the color yellowish-green. In line one the word is used with the color in mind, and in line two it is used with the meaning of the flower. It is a most remarkable image, suggesting the

eyes as perfumed flowers giving off a pleasant fragrance.⁵ The stanza becomes all the more extraordinary with its reference to raped saints and with its indirect allusion to Mary of the seven swords. The perfume of the "réséda" has awakened the poet's mind to these images from religious history, reminiscent of Apollinaire's thorough Christian education. His familiarity with Christianity is such that he unhesitatingly brings these images into the poem, thus enriching it and rendering it more complex.

It is both flowers and religious images that play an essential role in the following stanza:

Hausse tes mains Hausse tes mains ces
lys de ma fierté
Dans leur corolle s'épure toute l'im-
pureté
O lys, ô cloches des cathédrales qui
s'écroulent au nord
Carillons des Beffrois qui sonnent
à la mort
Fleurs de lys fleurs de France ô
mains de mon amour
- Vous fleurissez de clarté la lumière
du jour (LL, pp. 134-35).

The real Lou is almost forgotten midst the metaphors of lilies. Her hands are transformed into instruments of purification. She is certainly far removed from the voluptuous, sensuous woman of other texts in

Lettres à Lou. The religious spirit of the third stanza still permeates this one. Also present is the tragedy of the war with all the destruction taking place in northern France: "O lys, ô cloches des cathédrales qui s'écroulent au nord / Carillons des Beffrois qui sonnent à la mort". Lou's white hands contrast with this tragic picture.

The evocation of the beauty of Lou's hands is followed by the suggestion of the beauty of her feet:

Tes pieds, tes pieds d'or, touffes de
mimosas
Lampes au bout du chemin, fatigues des
soldats
--Allons c'est moi ouvre la porte je suis
de retour enfin
--C'est toi assieds-toi entre l'ombre et
la tristesse
--Je suis couvert de boue et tremble de
détresse
Je pensais à tes pieds d'or pâle comme
à des fleurs
--Touche-les ils sont froids comme
quelqu'un qui meurt (LL, p. 135).

Lou's feet represent her whole being in this part of the poem. Their "golden glow" symbolizes the warmth of her soul. Frozen since the soldier's departure, they will now be revived. Apollinaire is harping upon his importance to Lou. Through wishful thinking, he has idealized his situation.

The mention of death at the end of the stanza carries over into the following four lines:

Les lilas de tes cheveux qui annoncent
le printemps
Ce sont les sanglots et les cris que
jettent les mourants
Le vent passe au travers doux comme
nos baisers
Le printemps reviendra, les lilas
vont passer (LL, p. 135).

The lilacs are equated with the death cry of dying men. But implicit in the stanza is the suggestion that this too will pass: "Le printemps reviendra, les lilas vont passer". Apollinaire does not develop the morbidity, but chooses instead to go on to one great celebration of Lou:

Ta voix, ta voix fleurit comme les
tubéreuses
Elle enivre la vie ô voix ô voix chérie
Ordonne ordonne au temps de passer bien
plus vite
Le bouquet de ton corps est le bonheur
du temps
Et les fleurs de l'espoir enguirlandent
tes tempes
Les douleurs en passant près de toi se
métamorphosent
--Eroulements de flammes, morts
frileuses, hématidroses--
En une gerbe où fleurit La Merveilleuse
Rose (LL, p. 135).

Lou is capable of magic; she is another Circe here just

as she will be in "Réverie sur ta venue" (LL, pp. 173-75). Pain is changed--perhaps even into pleasure-- as it passes her presence. Sweat is changed to the bloody perspiration of Christ in the Olive garden, an image Apollinaire had earlier favored in his poem, "L'Ermite".⁶ Lou's whole body is metaphorically a bouquet of flowers, summing up all the floral imagery of each section of the poem. She is the great beauty and garden of hope, midst the ugly war. She is the rose sought after by writers as the ultimate symbol of woman, "La Merveilleuse Rose".

The poem with its complex images and synesthesia is a beautiful homage rendered to Lou. It is another indication of Apollinaire's ability to write beautiful love verse not motivated by suffering. "Guirlande de Lou" is a delicate expression of the tenderness the poet felt towards Lou immediately after leaving her. His love and joy seem to motivate this poem, and his whole soul pours forth into the images. The mixture of the war, of religious imagery, and of the quest of the rose unite giving added power to the verse.

The rich imagery of "Guirlande de Lou" remains unmatched by the other poems of serene love. Yet each poem reflects a fine inspiration that we can admire, even if the symbols are not as complicated as those in "Guirlande de Lou". The lyrical poem which ranks second to it in difficulty is "Oriande", a poem sent to Lou in June of 1915 (LL, pp. 446-47, no. 187).⁷ In this poem, the fairy, Oriande, plays the role of Apollinaire's muse, inspiring him to sing hymns of love to Lou. "L'Oriande, du poème du même nom, est une fée belle et bonne. D'après la chanson de geste, Maugis d'Aigremont, elle enseigna au futur enchanteur toutes ses connaissances magiques...Apollinaire nous dépeint une Oriande enchanteresse, entourée de beauté. Elle représente le charme exercé par Lou...".⁸ In addition, Oriande looks to the Orient for her inspiration, thus revealing the significance of the East to Apollinaire. "Pour lui, comme pour maint poète romantique et symboliste, l'Orient représentait un idéal de poésie et de beauté exotique, le berceau des religions et de l'amour, le pays de Sacountale et surtout de Schéhérazade...".⁹ The poem also points up the importance

of the image of the rose. In "Guirlande de Lou" the rose played an essential role, standing for that magical flower responsible for the metamorphosis of the world surrounding the poet. The rose is Lou and it is due to her special powers that the world is transformed before the poet's eyes. Now, in "Oriande", the rose again occupies a privileged place. It becomes the symbol of poetic fervor and deep sentiments. "Oriande" reflects the importance of the personage of the fairy, (an indication of Apollinaire's familiarity with the literature of the Middle Ages so well attested to by his Enchanteur pourrissant), the significance of the rose, and the symbolism of the Orient. It is another serene avowal of love and fidelity to Lou:

La fée Oriande vivait dans son château
 de Rose-Fleur
 C'est ici, quand ce fut le déclin du
 printemps, l'édification
 des Roses...
 Oriande y dort comme un parfum venu dans
 la dernière lettre et qui repose
 Sur mon cœur
 Entre les deux pétales de cette vernale
 rose
 Mais c'est l'été maintenant
 Oriande y vivrait dans son château de Rose-
 Fleur
 Tourné comme nous et l'église
 vers l'Orient (LL, p. 446).

The rose plays a most significant role from the beginning of the poem. Not only does Oriande live in a rose palace, but the poet's heart is also portrayed as a two-petaled rose. It is a spring rose, hence young and full of life. However, the spring has passed, portending the death of the love of Apollinaire and Lou:

Et c'est le soir des roses
Les vieilles paroles sont mortes au
dernier printemps
Des harmonies puissantes et nouvelles
jaillissent de mon coeur
Mais Oriande écrit un L
Au ciel
Résigne-toi mon coeur où le sort
t'a fixé
Et l'été passera...le printemps a passé
Mais Oriande écrit un O
En haut
Et j'accorde mon luth comme l'on bande
un arc
Mais Oriande écrit un U
Sur le ciel nu
Le ciel d'un bleu profond, d'un bleu
nocturne
D'un bleu qui s'épaissit en souhaits, en
amour
En puissante joie
Et de mon coeur de poète
de mon coeur qui est la Rose
Oriande ruisselle
Onde parfumée des chansons
où tu aimes à tremper ton âme
Tandis que la fée s'endort
Oriande s'endort dans son château
de Rose-Fleur (LL, pp. 446-47).

The acrostic that Oriande traces in the sky reduces the poet to subjugation to the name that stands above him in the heavens. It is destiny that has determined the poet's situation in the love relationship. It is some obscure force rather than the poet himself who has chosen the mistress of his heart. We are reminded of the line from "La Chanson du mal-aimé": "Destins destins impénétrables". Unlike the point of view voiced in "La Chanson...", it is not "Les démons du hasard" that dictate choices of love objects, but a good fairy, Oriande. The difference is that now Apollinaire is not bemoaning his fate. He is in love with Lou and is happy about it; earlier, he was bitter about his failure in his relationship with Annie Playden. The insertion of the acrostic in "Oriande" also testifies to the artistic freedom that Apollinaire advocated for the artist. It introduces a lighter element into this poem of serene love, contrasting with the gravity of a complex line such as "Onde parfumée des chansons".

Thus the poem says little about Lou but much about Apollinaire's attitude toward poetic inspiration and

towards love. The forces of destiny or in this case the personage of the fairy, Oriande, rule our choice in the realm of love. Man is not master of his fate, but at least the hymn of love that he sings is of his own making. And in this instance the poem is surrounded by an air of tranquillity established by the setting of the poem. It is the season of the death of the roses, united to twilight. The evening is powerfully evoked through the repetition of the word "bleu", and the trance of sleep is suggested by the repetition of the word "s'endort". Against this serene background Apollinaire evokes his love for Lou. It is filled with the peace brought by night. "Oriande" is far removed from the impassioned love of other hymns to Lou. Although it is not as involved a poem as "Guirlande de Lou", it is nevertheless another successful example of serene love verse.

In a less complicated vein, Apollinaire composed three other poems of serene love to Lou. The first, "La Mésange" (LL, pp. 157-59),¹⁰ reflects Apollinaire's propensity for storytelling. In a charming game of his imagination, the poet dreams that a little bird has been

transformed into Lou. He introduces the tale of illusion by first expressing his overwhelming love for his lady, evoking the image of the faithful soldier-lover who is slave to his passion. Through reliance on the musical effect of repetition of the same words or similar words and phrases in the first five stanzas of five-line octosyllabic verse, Apollinaire reiterates the significance of Lou in his life. Then he tells the story of the bird:

Ce matin vint une mésange
 Voleter près de mon cheval.
 C'était peut-être un petit ange
 Exilé dans le joli val
 Où j'eus sa vision étrange.

Ses yeux c'était tes jolis yeux,
 Son plumage ta chevelure,
 Son chant les mots mystérieux
 Qu'à mes oreilles on susurre
 Quand nous sommes bien seuls, tous deux

Dans le vallon j'étais tout blême
 D'avoir chevauché jusque-là
 Le vent criait un long poème
 Au soleil dans tout son éclat
 Au bel oiseau j'ai dit: "Je t'aime!"
 (LL, pp. 158-59).

The light tone of these stanzas permeates the whole poem. It is established from the beginning by the use of direct, simple statements and repetition. The simpler images are perhaps an example of Apollinaire's

improvised work in a less inspired mood.

Another example of less complicated serene love verse is the poem entitled "Il y a" (LL, p. 252, no. 111).¹¹ As Mme Durry pointed out, the phrase "il y a" reflects the influence of Rimbaud, and is an expression used in much of Apollinaire's writing.¹² What is its meaning? Mme Durry writes: "Il y a. Pas d'expression apparemment mieux destinée à désigner non pas la création du poète mais ce qui est.... Ces mots pourraient servir le réalisme le plus terne et le plus prosaïque. Ils sont faits enfin pour dire une immobilité ou tout au moins une stabilité, une permanence. C'est rassurant, il y a. On peut s'y fier."¹³ Apollinaire uses the expression at the beginning of all but two lines of his poem, creating the effect of a litany which mesmerizes its readers. As he travels from Nîmes to the North to fight at the front, he evokes his surroundings, his memories, and other passing thoughts. The mixture of prosaic details and moving lines is very typical of Apollinaire; his poetry appears to follow a stream of free association. In the vein of serene love writing to Lou, the poem

recalls the second poem studied in this chapter, "Mon Lou la nuit descend..." (LL, pp. 70-71) in which lines containing ordinary details of army life are interwoven with those expressing his adoration of Lou. In the poem, "Il y a", Apollinaire also uses his favorite technique of repetition in lines fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen to achieve reiteration of ideas and the establishment of the rolling rhythm imitating the motion of the train. The effectiveness of the poem is also due in large measure to the order of the lines which alternate thoughts of Lou with observations of Apollinaire's surroundings. The constant return to Lou as the main theme convinces us that this is indeed a poem of love. The lack of erotic images eliminates the verse from the category of erotic love writing:

Il y a des petits ponts épatants
 Il y a mon coeur qui bat pour toi
 Il y a une femme triste sur la route
 Il y a un beau petit cottage dans un jardin
 Il y a six soldats qui s'amuseⁿt comme
 des fous
 Il y a mes yeux qui cherchent ton image
 Il y a un petit bois charmant sur la
 colline
 Et un vieux territorial pisse quand
 nous passons
 Il y a un poète qui rêve au ptit Lou

Il y a un ptit Lou exquis dans ce
 grand Paris
 Il y a une batterie dans une forêt
 Il y a un berger qui paît ses moutons
 Il y a ma vie qui t'appartient
 Il y a mon porte-plume réservoir qui
 court, qui court
 Il y a un rideau de peupliers délicat,
 délicat
 Il y a toute ma vie passée qui est bien
 passée
 Il y a des rues étroites à Menton où
 nous nous sommes aimés
 Il y a une petite fille de Sospel qui
 fouette ses camarades
 Il y a mon fouet de conducteur dans
 mon sac à avoine
 Il y a des wagons belges sur la voie
 Il y a mon amour
 Il y a toute la vie
 Je t'adore (LL, p. 252).

The philosophical Apollinaire is present in the deceptively simple line, "Il y a toute ma vie passée qui est bien passée". Time has flown by and man has grown older as he must. The poet who recapitulated his whole life in "Zone" is present in this line. He is forever aware of the passage of time and of his own march towards death. He is also cognizant of the difference between his life before the war and his present existence. He draws a line separating the two. His entire life has been changed by the war. The war has imposed the new style of love relationship upon

him: the letter exchange broken up by short leaves devoted to passionate lovemaking. War is inextricably bound to this love poem to Lou. Does Apollinaire not say: "Il y a des wagons belges sur la voie" and then in the next line, "Il y a mon amour"? Part of the beauty of the poem stems from this juxtaposition of war observations and the expression of love. The memory of the little girl beating her playmates is of course an allusion to the flagellation practiced by Apollinaire and Lou. But this masked hint at the intimacy of the lovers escapes the outright erotic character of his bolder lines.

The pattern of the poem is broken only two times, the first to give a rather gross observation attached to the preceding line by the conjunction "et", and the second to declare, in three short syllables, the love for Lou. The abrupt departure from the established pattern in the last instance draws attention to the essential message Apollinaire wishes to convey: the affection for Lou. The short last line also emphasizes the theme of love by its brevity. Thus the physical layout of the words against the page champions Apollin-

naire's cause by increasing the effectiveness of the poem.

Although less difficult to seize than "Guirlande de Lou" or "Oriande", "Il y a" is nevertheless an artful, skillfully articulated work which does not fall into the trap of boring us by its repetitive format. The pulsating rhythm of the lines carries the poem forwards, and in combination with the tender sentiments expressed and the harmonious quality created by the repetition of words makes the poem an extremely successful example of serene love verse. It is regretful that Apollinaire's Lou did not fully appreciate either the emotions behind the words, or the artistry of the words themselves.

A more curious example of serene love verse is to be found in a poem written to Lou on April 14, 1915, in combination with a letter in prose in which Apollinaire took a vow of chastity. He was quite proud of this promise as his letter showed: "Que je suis heureux d'avoir eu la force de faire vœu de chasteté et de me sentir la force de l'observer pendant tout le délai que je me suis fixé! Quel bonheur de n'être plus dominé

par l'amour charnel, de n'être plus la proie d'un désir de se dominer soi-même enfin, afin de dominer un jour les autres." (LL, p. 288, no. 124). This strong belief in the importance of purity might seem paradoxical in a man so capable of erotic outpourings and grand sentiments. But Apollinaire was also the adult who, as an adolescent, had worshipped the Virgin Mary. Purity held a special magic for him, and so he apparently believed that he would be fortified were he to take and adhere to this vow of chastity. Stimulated by the excitement of this new undertaking, he wrote lines of verse, celebrating his vow with Lou and evoking the new type of love relationship the two of them would enjoy.

But he does not write in lines of free verse. Interestingly enough, this poem is divided into stanzas consisting of three consecutive lines of six-syllable verse, and two lines of four-syllable verse. At a moment of great exhilaration, the poet adopted the constraints he so often rejected in his poetry. This might seem rather surprising, but it is not the first time that he opted for regular versification. One of his most beautiful poems to Lou, "Si je mourais là-bas" (pp. 147-48),

was written in stanzas of alexandrine lines, and the erotic poem, "Rêverie sur ta venue", was written in stanzas of octosyllabic lines.

In the poem "O Lou, ma très chérie" (LL, pp. 289-90, no. 124),¹⁴ which follows the prose section of his letter to Lou, Apollinaire goes on to praise the new love that the couple will know and that he will bring to Lou. The poem presents Apollinaire as a magician who will teach Lou the new and improved methods of love. We might think of him as a new Merlin about to enchant his lady. Lou is not referred to as a pure creature, but rather as a "demon". The world of demons, angels, and enchanters haunts these stanzas:

Les philtres, les pentacles
 Les lumineux spectacles
 T'apportent agrandis
 Les Paradis
 Les plus maudits.

Nous aurons, je te jure,
 Une volupté pure
 Sans ces attouchements
 Que font, déments,
 Tous les amants

Et purs comme des anges
 Nous dirons les louanges
 De ta grande beauté
 Dans ma Clarté
 De Pureté. (LL, p. 290).

Somehow, in a pure way, they will know passionate love together. Had Apollinaire discovered some new way of loving that could so unite the voluptuous and the pure? The mention of "pentacles" brings to mind Apollinaire's poem "Le Brasier":

Et voici le spectacle
Et pour toujours je suis assis dans
un fauteuil
Ma tête mes genoux mes coudes vain
pentacle
Les flammes ont poussé sur moi comme
des feuilles.¹⁵

What does "pentacle" mean? According to Scott Bates, it signifies a "five-sided astral figure, man, the microcosm-macrocosm, Pan, God, in magic...".¹⁶ Thus the poet will work miracles, bringing to Lou knowledge of the universe.

Such a boast might seem unrealistic, but in the poet's exuberance he sees himself as the all-powerful creator. In moments of artistic creation this must have been how Apollinaire viewed himself, and this would be in character with his enthusiastic nature. The same man who was capable of getting completely carried away with his love was also tempted to get carried away by his poetic fervor and the feelings of power to

which artistic birth give rise. Like Merlin, his enchanter he could cry out to Lou:

J'ai charmé la blessure
De cette bouche impure!
Aime ma chasteté
C'est la Clarté
De ta beauté. (LL, p. 290).

The poem accentuates its message through its short, abrupt lines. They are not as pleasing to us as Apollinaire's longer ones, but they do communicate the bursts of energy and enthusiasm to which the poet was subject in his exhilaration. This manifestation of exuberance over the concept of pure love seems somewhat contradictory and is amusing in light of his blatant, erotic writings to Lou. It is certainly a different type of poem from the other serene love verses, and in its enthusiasm it seems closer to the poems of erotic love. Apollinaire uses all his energy to celebrate the greatness of pure love, and yet it seems to be the very same enthusiasm he exemplifies in his passionate love letters to Lou.

Apollinaire's enthusiasm is clearly one of the characteristics of his serene love poems to Lou, as it is of his erotic poetry. Enthusiasm would certainly

seem to be the keynote to the cheerful letters written to Lou, just as heartfelt despair and hurt were the core of some of his nostalgic letters. The exuberance and contentment that the poet felt during the happy days when he loved Lou are successfully communicated by the poems of serene love. These poems indicate that the man who felt this great passion also had the need to express the purity of his emotion. The love that was so carnal in nature in real life took on a different look in these particular letters, revealing the sentiments and inspiration of the soldier who took the vow of chastity. Even prior to his vow some of his poems to Lou were devoid of erotic content. Thus two needs drove the same man at the same time. On the one hand, there was a strong drive toward sexuality, which was reflected in his letters by the passionate nature of the images, and on the other hand, there was a drive toward purity which was reflected by the tranquil character of certain letters.

The poems of serene love also point up the importance of Apollinaire's participation in the war. More often than not, the poems blend images of the war with images of his love object. The mixture of the two is so

frequent that we would be tempted to place these poems in the category of verses of war and love. Yet these works do not make any significant statement about the poet's attitude toward the war, but merely utilize the images as an integral part of their makeup. They do reflect, however, the degree to which Apollinaire's military environment became a part of him, and how very comfortable the poet was with it.

The concrete physical images that appear in a few of the poems of serene love provide a rapprochement between these poems and the erotic ones. Evidently Apollinaire was very fond of tangible images, even in these verses of pure love. His propensity for the physical rather than for the abstract is a reflection of his love of living. Even in the poems of pure love this enthusiasm for the palpable is evident.

Also present in these poems is Apollinaire's familiarity with religion and with literature of the Middle Ages. The importance of the rose and the poet's quest after it cannot fail but recall Le Roman de la rose. Lou's magical powers to transform the reality about her in "Guirlande de Lou" (pp. 134-35), and Apollinaire's divine

powers in "O Lou ma très chérie" remind us of Merlin, the enchanter, and are a proof of Apollinaire's interest in medieval literature. His curiosity for the occult as evidenced in his short stories is at home here, too. Thus the poems of serene love expose a very important aspect of Apollinaire's personality to us, and go beyond a simple series of lyrical songs of love.

CHAPTER FOUR: FOOTNOTES

1. OP, PL, p. 380, no. IV.
2. We have arranged this poem in lines; it is written in the shape of the imagined fruit.
3. OP, PL, pp. 383-84, no. VII.
4. OP, PL, pp. 390-91, no. XI.
5. The synesthesia of this image is noted in the following article: David Berry, "Guillaume Apollinaire et la poétique de l'oeil," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, No. 4 (1970), p. 647.
6. OP, A, p. 101.
7. OP, PL, pp. 481-82, no. LX.
8. Justine Krug, "Les Références à la mythologie dans l'oeuvre de Guillaume Apollinaire," Diss. Paris 1951, p. 107.
9. Scott Bates, "Un Voyage à Ispahan," Guillaume Apollinaire 7, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, Nos. 183-88, p. 87.
10. OP, PL, pp. 394-95, no. XIII.
11. OP, PL, p. 423, no. XXXI.
12. Durry, Apollinaire: "Alcools", II (Paris: SEDES, 1956), pp. 86-87.
13. Ibid., p. 87.
14. OP, PL, pp. 436-37, no. XXXVI.
15. OP, A, p. 110.
16. Bates, Apollinaire, p. 165.

CHAPTER FIVE:
CASUAL EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE

Apollinaire's versatility as a poetic creator in Lettres à Lou is also evident in his ability to write light verses and prose concerning his relationship with his mistress. He could jokingly refer to Lou's affair with "Toutou", and with her desire to gather many lovers, as a dedicated gardener picks flowers. In the course of his correspondence with her, he wrote ten poems of a more humorous and less serious nature. They merit examination since they reveal another significant aspect of this volume of love letters, namely Apollinaire's humor and spontaneity. His willingness to maintain an erotic, lively, and literary correspondence with this unfaithful mistress required the ability to laugh at himself and at her. The very same poet who could cry out his indignation so convincingly against the woman who had wronged him, also learned to make light of the situation. Yet he continued to write these letters, and to use Lou as a pretext for his poetic and prose creation, because, as an artist, he possessed the ever-present need of self-expression. Even when he realized that his relationship with her was deteriorating, and that the days of ardent love belonged to the past, he went on to write more poems

and prose. It would serve as a monument to his experience in the war. As a creator imbued with the image of his own glory, he wanted these memoirs of his life during the war.¹ Some of his lighter verses are of a purely incidental nature. They are clearly inferior to his other poems to Lou. But several still are marked with the Apollinairian seal of mythological references and curious words which the poet so cherished. They deserve some analysis and attention in our examination of Apollinaire's different veins of love expression in Lettres à Lou.

The first poem is entitled "Sonnet du huit février 1915" (LL, p. 188, no. 82)². The classical form of the sonnet contrasts with the casual language and style. Lou had left Apollinaire in January after three days together and the poet honestly gives a voice to Lou's casual attitude toward the relationship by the language he attributes to her:

Lundi, huit février, ma biche
 Ma biche part.
 Suis inquiet, elle s'en fiche...
 Buvons du marc... (LL, p. 188).

He repeats the same informal language when he writes of

his own sentiments concerning the soldier's situation in the second stanza: "Le militaire est très peu riche / Je m'en fous... ". The light character of the first two stanzas is also underlined by the use of ellipsis: "Suis inquiet", "Vrai qu'au service de l'Autriche". Apollinaire's lack of concern for realistic veracity further contributes to the light movement of the first two stanzas: he mentions the soldier of Austria and then goes on to write of the patriotic Frenchman as if they were one and the same:

Vrai qu'au service de l'Autriche
 (Patate et lard)
 Le militaire est très peu riche
 Je m'en fous, car

Il peut bien vivre d'Espérance,
 Même il en meurt,
 Au doux service de la France (LL, p. 188).

The poet's attention is directed towards the expression of his sentiments and not towards the actual war situation. The tone is playful and melancholy at one and the same time.

Apollinaire also attains an ingenious contrast between the first two more casual stanzas and the last two more serious ones by the use of different vowel

sounds. The sharp sound of the "i" which dominates the first stanza creates an abruptness that is absent in the final stanzas. They contain open vowels and nasals changing the mood from that of a spontaneous innovation to one of a graver nature:

Il peut bien vivre d'Espérance,
Même il en meurt,
Au doux service de la France

Un Artilleur,
Mon âme à ta suite s'élance,
Adieu, mon cœur! (LL, p. 188).

This variety in tone enhances the value of a poem which would otherwise appear purely incidental in comparison with the more complicated poems of passion, war and love, nostalgia, and serene love. The alternating rhyme scheme also gives unity to the four stanzas. The four-syllable line beginning the last stanza brings the poem swiftly to a close. The quick ending is in harmony with the flight of his soul in search of his lover. The sonnet form has been used here to convey Apollinaire's mood of the moment to Lou. Because of the lack of similes, metaphors, mythological allusions and due to the language of utmost simplicity, it is not comparable to his greater poems. It is nevertheless a touching "billet-doux" to

his capricious lady.

Still lighter in nature is his letter of April 19th, which contains the poem "Au soleil" (LL, p. 303, no. 129)³. The poem consists of three-syllable lines that mix rhymed couplets with alternating rhymes. The repetition of words detracts from the value of the verse, and makes the critic believe that little work went into this improvisation as compared with other prose sections of the volume as well as with other poems. Yet this incidental work is endowed with a certain charm stemming from Apollinaire's inventiveness in the play upon Lou's name. In the poem she is transformed into a "Loup" who dares leap forward to watch the author composing his work"

Ce petit Loup
Se hasarde
A venir
Voir courir
Sur ma lettre
Le crayon. (LL, p. 303).

The quick pace of the poem is maintained not just by the use of short lines, but also by the movement implied in the poet's message:

Voudrais être
Un rayon
Qui visite
Mon petit Lou.
Vite vite

Je te quitte
 Et vais vite
 Sur Loulou (LL, p. 303),

This letter-poem inserted midst a series of far more serious letters, expressing Gui's love for Lou and many details on the war, certainly stands out as a minor product of the poet's fancy. We might well wonder whether the poet would have eliminated this poem from his work had he lived to edit his volume.

Of greater merit is Apollinaire's casual poem of April 23rd, inserted into a letter which in itself is of greater interest. The poem, inspired by Lou's presence at Apollinaire's Paris dwelling, is by no means a masterpiece. But it reflects humor and good-natured teasing, which are in perfect harmony with the eleven three-syllable lines:

Amour-Roi
 Dites-moi
 La si belle
 Colombelle
 Qu'on appelle
 Petit Lou,
 Dites, où
 Donc est-elle
 Et chez qui?
 -- Mais chez Gui (LL, p. 314, no. 133),⁴

The poem unites in theme with the opening prose lines of the letter: "Mon Amour, Lu et relu ta mignonne petite

lettre du 19. Tu es tout près de moi dans mon colombier." (LL, p. 314). The affection for his mistress marked in these opening lines echoes in the diminutive word "colombelle" used in the poem.

It is certainly worthwhile to note that Apollinaire felt the need to interrupt his prose letter to express these sentiments in poetry. The prose and poetry served a different purpose for him. The prose could not convey the need to "sing" and to use rhythmic lines which the poet experienced.⁵ Thus he broke into poetry to compose his charming, incidental lines, and then returned to prose to convey the rest of his message to her. Using poetry, he could poke fun at his unfaithful lady and satisfy his need to create music as well.

Several months later, when Apollinaire was already embarked upon his literary seduction of Madeleine Pagès, the young school teacher from Oran whom he had met on January 2nd while returning from a leave spent with Lou in Nice, Apollinaire sent another humorous letter-poem to Lou. This light poem consisting of four octosyllabic stanzas is a greater success than the three preceding casual verses because of the amusing

imagery and the poetic turns of language.

Influenced by his new forest surroundings at the front, the soldier-poet now sees Lou as a "délicate bûcheronne" (LL, p. 463, no. 193).⁶ The casual tone of the poem is produced in the first stanza by the use of the popular verb, "zieuter" and by the reference to Lou's lover, Toutou, as a "matou". The poet teases Lou about her promiscuity in the second stanza, still playing on the theme of the lovers as domestic cats, and he also manages to allude to his mistress' solitary pleasures for which he had always chastised her:

Et moi qui croyais, ma parole!
Que ce chat c'était un Toutou!
Menotte aussi joue un beau rôle...
Décidément, des chats partout! (LL, p. 463).

Using a favorite Apollinairian poetic technique of interruption, Gui introduces a different subject in the third stanza, but succeeds in maintaining a degree of continuity by making reference to his mistress' unpredictable behavior. He can no longer depend upon hearing from her regularly, and doubts that she will really see him after the war--yet he is anxious to prove his invulnerability to her hurtful actions by

assuming, not without some bitterness, a casual attitude about their relationship:

J'aurai mesure de ta bague
Semaine des quatre jeudis
(Tu vois, je prends tout à la blague)
Ou bien après la guerre, dis? (LL, p. 463).

The final stanza again resorts to interruption, and is far superior to the three previous ones. Here, Apollinaire's perpetual curiosity for the unusual appears, and reminds us of two of the most intriguing lines of his famous poem "Zone": "De Chine sont venus les pihis longs et souples/ Qui n'ont qu'une seule aile et qui volent par couples".⁷ A dedicated reader of rare and precious books, the poet suddenly introduces a strange one-winged butterfly. This lovely image, combined with the use of anastrophe in the last line, and the gentler open sound of the word "Douceur", make the last stanza dreamier and poetically more satisfying:

Le papillon qui n'a qu'une aile
S'est envolé; ne l'ai pas vu ...
Mais ton image est là si belle
Me voilà de Douceur pourvu ... (LL, p.463).

Although at first a casual poem, full of humor and teasing, "O délicate bûcheronne" is transformed into a finer poetic creation by the last stanza in which Apolli-

naire becomes more lyrical and difficult in his choice of image. It is a reminder of his greater poetry, and a curious example of the manner in which the poet could jump from mediocre verse to truly fine lines dotted with delicate allusions. The combination of the concrete noun "papillon" and the pleasing abstract one "Douceur", which is of such importance that it is personalized, creates a stanza of verse almost equivalent in quality to that of the complicated poems to Lou.

By August of 1915, Apollinaire was sufficiently involved in his romance with Madeleine Pagès to be able to view his relationship with Lou from a more objective point of view. Thus the lighter verses become more frequent, and the humor is ever-present in them. Inspired by a photograph of a provocative Lou lying in the grass, which is reproduced at the beginning of the volume of letters, Apollinaire composes a poem of four stanzas of octosyllabic verse entitled "A la partie la plus gracieuse" (LL, pp. 479-80, no. 197).⁸ Again, it is of literary and psychological interest to note that Apollinaire experienced the need to compose a poem inspired by the photograph despite the fact that he had

already written a prose paragraph describing Lou's sensuous posture: "Sur la route tu es épatante, les seins libres pointant, couchée dans l'herbe sur le côté, la croupe montagneuse, tu me plais infiniment et je t'adore encore couchée dans l'herbe sur le ventre, le pied haut." (LL, p. 479). Poetry served a different purpose to him, here it was an opportunity to sing forth his praise of her beautiful "derrière":

Toi qui regardes sans sourire
Et de face en tournant le dos
Tu me sembles un beau navire
Voiles dehors... et quels dodos

Promet cet édredon de neige
Neige rose de Mézidon!
Mars, et Vénus, le reverrai-je
Cet édredon de Cupidon?

O gracieuse et callipyge,
Tous les cuils sont de la Saint-Jean!
Le tien leur fait vraiment la pige
Déesse aux collines d'argent...

D'argent qui serait de la crème
Et des feuilles de rose aussi...
Aussi, belle croupe je t'aime
Et ta grace est mon seul souci (LL, p. 479-80).

This poem is a fine mixture of humor, popular language, sophisticated vocabulary, reverie, and metaphor. Lou's "derrière", as evoked by the poet, is metamorphosed from a "beau navire" in the first stanza, to an

"édredon" in the second; then metaphorically to "collines d'argent" in the third, and finally to hills "qui serait de la crème". Each alteration in imagery elevates the beauty of his lady and of his poetry still higher. The inferior elements of the third stanza are the two uses of popular language which inject vulgarity into a poem which would otherwise be more serious and eloquent:

"Tous les culs sont de la Saint-Jean! / Le tien leur fait vraiment la pige". Yet this common language serves the purpose of rendering the poem a more casual work, which befitted Apollinaire's relationship with Lou at the time he composed this poem.

A seemingly simple, light series of verses at first, "A la partie la plus gracieuse" actually is quite complex. Using childishly affectionate language at the end of the first stanza ("et quels dodos"), the poet passes to more difficult imagery in the second, which is attached to the first by the run-on line. The choice of the word "édredon" reminds us of the poem "Zone" in which Apollinaire tenderly spoke of the emigrants at Saint-Lazare:

"Une famille transporte un édredon rouge comme vous /
transportez votre coeur / Cet édredon et nos rêves sont

aussi irréels. The "édredon", as Mme Durry pointed out in her detailed discussion of "Zone", possessed a special meaning for the poet since he had been given one by his mother.⁹ It was probably no accident that he again chose to use the word here, though in a completely different context. The transformation of the "édredon" from white to wine red, as implied by the reference to Mézidon, a town located in the countryside of Calvados, is a tender reference to the sweetness of the love Apollinaire tasted with Lou. Dreaming of the marvels the two lovers tasted together, the poet now must elevate his lover to the level of a goddess, which he so often does in Lettres à Lou.¹⁰ He succeeds in doing so by the use of the adjective "callipyge" which refers to the beautiful buttocks of the goddess Aphrodite.

And so, this poem turns to eroticism, as the buttocks metaphorically become hills of silver and cream, and this, in the poet's delicious reverie, leads him to evoke the intimate "feuilles de rose" mentioned in many of the letters.¹¹ Thus the poem is transformed into an eloquent praise of the passion Apollinaire

has tasted with Lou. But its final beauty and serious tone are subdued and mocked by the prose paragraph that ensues: "Toutou ne s'est-il pas essayé à te photographier non à plumes mais en déshabillé, poses hum! hum! Ça donnerait peut-être encore plus curieux et plus épatant que le petit chef-d'oeuvre que tu m'as envoyé--Mais, que je voudrais donc voir les autres plumes..."(LL, p. 480).

The light humor of this paragraph, combined with the ever-present yearning of Apollinaire for the erotic love he had shared with Lou, which is shown in the last sentence, is quite significant. For it is this mixture of sentiments which is reflected in the poem: the laughing acceptance of the unfaithful, seductive lady, and the undeniable desire to turn back the hands of time and renew the intense love the two had enjoyed. The poem and prose of the letter are a fascinating evidence of Apollinaire's complex feelings with respect to Lou in August, when he was about to ask Madame Pagès for her daughter's hand in marriage. Apollinaire was still nostalgic about his former mistress, and his ambivalent attitudes are well expressed

in the letter, both in the prose and in the poetry. He was not a simple man, and this short work reflects his admirable imagination, humor, and desire to recapture time past, although he realized that this was impossible, even for him. As he had so movingly written in "Le Pont Mirabeau" about another lost love:

Passent les jours et passent les semaines
 Ni temps passé
 Ni les amours reviennent
 Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine.

Less serious in nature is the ten line poem of the following letter, dated August 8th. In the prose at the beginning of the letter, Apollinaire shows his desire to still be Lou's master: "Mais moi, maître, toi esclave, tout de même et malgré tout. Tu pourras bien rencontrer tous les poilus que tu voudras, tu m'appartiens tout de même pour bien des raisons..." (LL, p. 481, no. 198). The poem serves as a comic relief, alleviating Apollinaire's pain and anger at Lou:

Bientôt bientôt finira l'oût [sic]
 Reverrai-je mon petit Lou?
 Mais nous voici vers la mi-août
 Ton chat dirait-il "miaou"
 En me voyant ou bien "coucou!!!"
 Et mon coeur pend-il à ton cou?
 Dieu! qu'il fut heureux ce Toutou
 Pouvoir fourrer son nez partout!!!

Mais, je n'en suis pas jaloux
 Les toutous n'ont pas d'mal aux loups
 (LL, p. 482).¹²

The poem of this letter is certainly not of the merit of "A la partie la plus gracieuse". The flat rhyme scheme is uninteresting, although it serves to tie the short, casual poem together. Once more Apollinaire is questioning Lou's fidelity, wondering what syllables the cat will utter: "coucou" of course refers to the word "cocu". Apollinaire envies Toutou's favored position in the countess' sentimental life, but he affectionately refers to this privileged lover as he always does throughout the letters.¹³ Once more Toutou is pictured as an animal pet, and, of course, the word toutou does signify a domestic dog. And Lou herself is transformed into a creature of the woods. The poem is amusing and humorous, but it certainly does not rank amongst Apollinaire's chef-d'oeuvres. It is of interest; however, because it is an indication of the way in which the poet attempted to adapt to a distasteful amorous situation in which he was no longer the master he always wished to be. Perhaps he consoled himself with the thought that he might

one day share Lou with Toutou in a three-way sexual partnership to which he alludes at the end of the letter: "Est-ce que T. est toujours en disposition de sandwich?" (LL, p. 483).

It is amusing to realize that Apollinaire still needed to dream of Lou although he was seriously involved with Madeleine, even ready to ask her mother for Madeleine's hand in marriage. But he had never shared a sexual experience with her, and it was easier to stimulate himself through a correspondence with the seductive, experienced woman with whom he had already shared pleasure and imaginative sexual dreams.

The theme of Lou as a gardener collecting rare flowers occurs often in the prose of the letters, when Apollinaire wishes to laugh at her promiscuity.¹⁴ Finally, this theme achieves its full expression in three amusing fables the poet sent to her. Of course, Apollinaire, who chose to write calligrammatic verse, free verse, and regular verse might not have been expected to turn to the form of the fable, which was immortalized in French literature during the "Grand Siècle" by La Fontaine. But if we note some of the

literary comments that Apollinaire wrote to his "godmother" during the war, who herself published verse under the pseudonym of Yves Blanc, we would not be surprised by the poet's dabbling in fables:

J'ai la volonté d'être un poète
nouveau et autant dans la forme que dans le
fond mais au rebours de quelques modernes
non fondés en leur art j'ai le goût
profond des grandes époques c'est vous
dire que j'honore infiniment le Grand
Siècle et particulièrement dans ceux
qu'avec raison on appelle les classiques.
Et fervent de Racine, de La Fontaine
j'ai pour Malherbe et pour Maynard l'ad-
miration qui convient à ces merveilleux
versificateurs.¹⁵

In defense of his own freedom in versification,
Apollinaire again referred to La Fontaine in a second
letter to Yves Blanc dated November 19, 1915:

Voyez-vous un Tolstoï, un Dostoïewsky,
un Balzac, un Zola, et plus loin un
Rabelais se bornant à versifier avec
un dictionnaire des rimes. Mais le paran-
gon des poètes français La Fontaine
tout classique qu'il fût...je n'insiste
pas, tant tout cela est évident.¹⁶

When composing his fables to Lou, on August 12th
and 13th, Apollinaire exercised freedom in stanza form
and in rhyme. The first fable, following a prose sec-
tion of the letter, also represents a complete sepa-
ration from the content of the prose (LL, pp. 486-88,

no. 200).¹⁷ So, not only is the genre different, but the theme as well. Once more, Lou is the collector of rare flowers. It is significant that the flowers are "rare", since this fits in with Apollinaire's own self-glorification. As the poet writes, "La fleur était sans prix" (LL, p. 487). But, foolishly, Lou throws away her first flower when she finds a second more attractive one, and repeats this behavior when she notices an even lovelier third blossom. In the end, the final flower fades and Lou, according to the poet, is forced to undertake the entire voyage which has led her from the countryside to Paris over again, in search of the fine rare beauties she so casually discarded en route.

The moral is implicit in the story itself, Apollinaire does not feel the need to spell it out at the conclusion when he simply writes:

Je crois qu'il est sage
De nous arrêter
A la morale suivante...sans insister!

Des Lous et de leurs fleurs il ne faut
discuter
Et je n'en dis pas davantage (LL, p. 488).

Apollinaire, as he himself states at the end of the

first fable, is not attempting to act the role of the great moraliser; he is enjoying himself as a poet exploring the theme of Lou's lovers as precious flowers which he has jokingly interspersed in the letters before:

Cette fable sur les fleurs rares, mon
ptit Lou, ne contient aucun reproche, crois-
le bien. Au contraire, si j'ose m'expri-
mer ainsi, elle vient de ce que ma veine
actuelle me porte assez à faire des fables,
genre un peu délaissé et dont le charme
est cependant très grand. (LL, p. 488).

The fable, though amusing enough in its portrait of Lou and the poet, is not one of Apollinaire's greatest achievements in this volume. Although his fine erudition is demonstrated by his allusion to Jussieu in the second line of the poem ("Entreprenant un long voyage / Ptit Lou hanté par l'histoire de Jussieu"), revealing his knowledge of the family of French botanists, this in itself, of course, does not succeed in making the fable a fine work. The poet does create the desired atmosphere of a mysterious medieval forest when he evokes Lou using the title "Dame", so well befitting this woman of high birth: "La fleur était sans prix / Et Dame Lou voyant qu'elle en valait la

peine / Froissa pour la cueillir sa jupe de futaine." (LL, p. 487). But the charm of these lines is lessened by the flat rhyme and play on words that appear five lines further: "La première fleur tombe / Et la forêt devient sa tombe" (LL, p. 487). In the same way, the cacophony which occurs at the end of the main part of the fable deters from its beauty, although it does communicate Lou's distress: "Et Lou du / Vain personnage / Quittant le bureau, dut / Entreprendre à rebours l'horticole voyage." (LL, p. 488).

More successful in nature is the fable following immediately afterwards, "Le Toutou et le Gui" (LL, pp. 488-90, no. 200).¹⁸ In this poem, Apollinaire has accepted the three-way relationship: Lou, Toutou, and Gui, and again the setting is a forest. But in this innovation "Gui" is not just a flower but "la plante des Druides" (LL, p. 489). Again, the poet has sought to glorify his position in this amorous relationship: "Mais moi je suis l'amour à grandes guides / Je suis le bonheur; / La plus rare des fleurs..." (LL, p. 489). Although he is not the active lover in whom Lou now has placed her interest, Apollinaire

persists in painting himself as the master of the roost when he states:

Le toutou, pour sa part, eut bien plus
 (à tout prendre)
 De Baisers que le gui
 Qui tout alanguit
 Entre deux jolis seins ne peut rien
 entreprendre
 Mais se contente bien, ma foi,
 De son trône digne d'un roi. (LL, p. 489).

The imagery of this fable is certainly more dreamlike in quality than that of the preceding one, and the open vowel sounds and nasals lend a soothing air to these fine poetic lines:

Et leur
 Maîtresse
 Etendue avec paresse
 Effeuillant indifféremment de belles
 fleurs
 Aux mille couleurs
 Aux suaves odeurs (LL, p. 489).

Once more, the moral does not particularly interest the poet, who merely writes: "Il ne faut pas chercher à comprendre." (LL, p. 490). He has been stimulated by the physical surroundings of the forest and by his own poetic verve. He is not acting the role of a serious moralist, as is evidenced in his last short fable to Lou, but is rather choosing to laugh at her promiscuity through his own poetry:

Le ptit Lou s'ébattait dans un joli
 parterre
 Où poussait la fleur rare et d'autres
 fleurs itou
 Et Lou cueillait les fleurs qui se
 laissaient bien faire
 Mais distraite pourtant elle en semait
 partout
 Et perdait ce qu'elle aime

Morale

On est bête quand on sème.
 (LL, p. 491, no. 201).¹⁹

This last fable, written only one day later is indeed inferior to the longer more imaginative second one, especially in its repetition of the open vowel sound which makes the last three lines sound flat (semaït, aïme, sème). Apollinaire is not creating great poetry in this fable, but is exorcising his hurt through humor.

It is again his satirical humor that marks the last of the lighter poems to Lou entitled "Epigramme" (LL, p. 511, no. 210)²⁰ and included in his letter of September 22nd. The poem contains the same theme of the careless gardener:

Mon adorable jardinière
 Toi qui voudrais savoir pourquoi
 Nul ne tape sur ton derrière
 Ne sais-tu donc pas comme moi

Qu'il ne faut pas battre une femme
 Et même avec une Fleur Rare...
 Ouf, Madame (LL, p. 511).

Although the casual expressions of love evidenced in these poems and in some of the prose passages selected in this chapter do not constitute the most moving expressions of passion in Lettres à Lou, they do reveal an extremely important element of Apollinaire's writing: his humor. His ability to laugh at Lou's dismissal of him rather than simply to weep at it in nostalgic lines of verse inspired him to compose the light poems. They vary in their quality as our examination has indicated, some do contain truly fine images, while several seem quite incidental and insignificant in the larger scope of the production of the volume. They testify to the poet's need to create literature, even if it be for the purpose of mocking this unfaithful creature. And they indicate, too, that Apollinaire was not just content to play the role of the betrayed "mal-aimé". He could see humor in his own situation vis-a-vis Lou and did not hesitate to express it. Thus the lighter expressions of love enhance our picture of Apollinaire, permitting us to know more

intimately the poet so renowned for his pain. And we can remain amused ourselves at his need to assert his dominant position with respect to Lou, for even in his "three-way" relationship pictured in the second fable the poet still claims to occupy the seat of the ruler. These varied casual lines deepen our knowledge of Apollinaire, demonstrate his versatility in love expression, and indicate his own awareness of the truth of his objective sentimental situation. Apollinaire did not pretend to be only a man who pitied himself when a love relationship deteriorated. Unlike the poet of "La Chanson du mal-aimé" he no longer had to strike out bitterly against the woman who had betrayed him. Thus these lighter verses indicate a diminution of the misogyny evidenced in earlier lines of Alcools. Perhaps this change stemmed from a maturation that had transpired during the few years since, and from his experiences in a greater struggle intermingled in the lines written to Lou: that of the soldier in the First World War. Indeed, the ability to laugh at Lou and to create poetry of a light nature inspired by this situation add a dimension to our vision of a poet

who might otherwise be considered as an individual capable of viewing only the pathos of his situation. With the passage of months, since the first letters of ardent love and seduction, the poet had matured. He could laugh, and this capacity was indeed precious. For it enabled him to compose amusing lines, witty and intimate, which, though they castigated his lady, did not reflect bitterness. They are an integral part of Apollinaire's Lettres à Lou, indicating, for the first time in his production, that the poet could also poke fun at an unfaithful mistress. And he could do so good-naturedly. This laughter and teasing are refreshing to see, even if they were not elements of his greatest poems to Lou. For the humor was part of the poet's greater *joie de vivre*, and it is that sentiment which permeates these lines as well. Seeing in Lou a muse to stimulate his pen, he sang even when his songs were merely full of humor. For essentially, his desire was a literary one, and Lou served the role of pretext to his poems, whether they were of passion, pathos, or laughter.

CHAPTER FIVE: FOOTNOTES

1. The importance to Apollinaire of Lettres à Lou is revealed in several of the letters in the book itself: "Si tu vas à Paris, mets chez ma concierge... mes lettres et aussi celles que tu m'as écrites (qui m'appartiennent) à moins que tu ne veilles pas me donner ces lettres que j'aurais toujours relues avec plaisir comme un exquis monument de ma vie en 1914-1915." (LL, pp. 205-206). The project to write a special book of letters for publication, which he would entitle Lettres à Lou or Correspondance avec l'ombre de mon amour also reflects the serious intent of Apollinaire with respect to these letters. (LL, p. 222). Their importance is also noted on the following pages: p. 238 and p. 279.

2. OP, PL, p. 408, no. XXI.

3. OP, PL, p. 443, no. XXXIX.

4. OP, PL, p. 449, no. XLII.

5. Apollinaire wrote of the fact that he composed poems while singing; first in a letter to Henri Martineau of July 19, 1913 discussing Alcools: "Je compose généralement en marchant et en chantant sur deux ou trois airs qui me sont venus naturellement et qu'un de mes amis a notés." ("Correspondance", OC, IV, 768). Later, in a letter to Madeleine he stated: "Je suis rudement content que vous aimiez ce que je fais, bien plus: que vous l'ayez pénétré au point d'ajouter: 'Il faudrait chanter vos vers.' En effet Madeleine je ne compose qu'en chantant..." (Tendre comme le souvenir, OC, IV, p. 497).

6. OP, PL, p. 486, no. LXIII.

7. Michel Décaudin, Le Dossier d'"Alcools", p.87. Monsieur Décaudin found a notation in one of Apollinaire's notebooks: "...Les oiseaux pi-i (aux ailes accouplées) n'ont qu'une aile. Ils vont par couple (Poème chinois) Mâles à dr. femelle à gauche.'"

8. OP, PL, p. 489, no. LXV.

9. Durrty, Apollinaire: "Alcools", I, 78-79.

10. The reference to Lou as a goddess occurs several times in Lettres à Lou: p. 50, p. 152, p. 155.

11. The "feuilles de rose", so sexual in connotation, are referred to in Lettres à Lou on the following pages: p. 233, p. 395, p. 406, pp. 423-24, p. 438.

12. OP, PL, p. 490, no. LXVI.

13. Apollinaire's affection for Toutou appears on numerous pages of Lettres à Lou. Typical of the poet's references to Lou's steady lover is the following quotation: "Mon amour exquis, donne-moi aussi des nouvelles de Toutou, qui par son amour pour toi et par celui que tu as pour lui est désormais pour moi une partie de moi-même." (LL, p. 51). Warm allusions to Toutou appear on the following pages of the letters: p. 60, p. 185, p. 195, p. 206, p. 223, p. 345, p. 455, p. 478, p. 522, p. 527.

14. The theme of Lou as a collector of rare flowers makes its first appearance in letter 142, dated April 29, 1915: "Que Lou qui connaît mal la botanique se méfie aussi de ses instincts de jardinière et ne cultive pas de fleurs vénéneuses!" (LL, p. 334). This amusing picture of Lou is seen again on the following pages, aside from the fables themselves: p. 339, p. 418, p. 423, p. 472.

15. Lettres à sa marraine, OC, IV, 672.

16. Ibid., 681.

17. OP, PL, pp. 491-92, no. LXVII.

18. OP, PL, pp. 493-94, no. LXVIII.

19. OP, PL, p. 495, no. LXIX.

20. OP, PL, p. 499, no. LXXV.

CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSION

In considering the expressions of love in Lettres à Lou, the question which finally arises is the esthetic value of these pieces, dashed off to the poet's mistress in the course of the soldier's day, and, with the exception of a few of the poems later included in Calligrammes,¹ never polished by Apollinaire. We have examined and analyzed the letters according to the major themes of erotica, war and love, nostalgia, serene love, and jesting about this capricious mistress who played the role of muse to a poet whose innovations influenced the course of French literature after World War I. What we should now like to consider is the reason for the success and importance of this volume. Had these letters simply been drab accounts of the soldier's daily activities, they would only be interesting autobiographical data for Apollinaire enthusiasts. But Lettres à Lou is a fine literary document, containing poignant, powerful love poetry and prose. To what artistic attributes does the book owe its success, and what dimension does it add to our portrait of the famous "mal-aimé"?

The first outstanding characteristic of the letters is the tremendous variety in versification of the poems they contain. With great versatility, the poet mixes free verse, cubist verse, and regular meter in Lettres à Lou. Interestingly enough, each is successful. An example of a beautiful love poem in free verse utilizing the cubist technique is "Je t'adore mon Lou et par moi tout t'adore" (LL, pp. 92-94). The poet follows a technique of free association, later expanded upon and modified by the Surrealists. All the tangible objects surrounding him and the other soldiers are reminders of Lou. The most ordinary images are transformed into erotic or delicate symbols of the beloved. It is the juxtaposition and the comparison of the everyday reality with the poetic world of Apollinaire's love that render the poem so successful; in the third stanza of the poem Apollinaire writes: "Les clous de mes souliers brillent comme tes yeux / La vulve des juments est rose comme la tienne" (LL, p. 93), and in the fifth stanza he evokes the admirable flavor and color of her flesh: "Un monsieur près de moi mange une glace

blanche / Je songe au goût de ta chair et je songe à tes hanches" (LL, p. 93). The whiteness of the female body, often present in Apollinaire's other writings,² is once more seen here and made to appear delectable through the images and succession of lines.

Another successful poem in free verse enhanced by the poet's "simultaneous" technique is "Mon Lou la nuit descend tu es à moi je t'aime" (LL, pp. 70-71). The weaving together of the poet's real world with his dreams of his mistress acts as an element of surprise:

Des soldats mangent près d'ici de l'ail
 dans la salade
 L'un a une chemise quadrillée de bleu
 comme une carte
 Je t'adore mon Lou et sans te voir je
 te regarde
 Ça sent l'ail et le vin et aussi
 l'iodoforme
 Je t'adore mon Lou embrasse-moi avant
 que je ne dorme (LL, pp. 70-71).

Of course, Apollinaire's belief in the value of surprise was made famous by his manifesto "L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes" in which the poet praised surprise as "le grand ressort nouveau."³ He emphasized the value of even the most ordinary facets of life in poetic creation as playing a role in this technique:

On peut partir d'un fait quotidien: un mouchoir qui tombe peut être pour le poète le levier avec lequel il soulèvera tout un univers. On sait ce que la chute d'une pomme vue par Newton fut pour ce savant que l'on peut appeler un poète ... Les poètes ne sont pas seulement les hommes du beau. Ils sont encore et surtout les hommes du vrai, en tant qu'il permet de pénétrer dans l'inconnu, si bien que la surprise, l'inattendu est un des principaux ressorts de la poésie d'aujourd'hui ...⁴

"Mon Lou la nuit descend ..." is an excellent example of the effectiveness achieved by the use of surprise incorporated into a cubist technique, which, in the last six lines of the poem results in a transfiguration of the universe and a poetic transcendence over death.

Apollinaire also attains great heights of poetic success in his poems of free verse not conceived in the cubist vein. One of the finest examples of moving, nostalgic love poetry is the poem "De toi depuis longtemps je n'ai pas de nouvelles" (LL, pp. 200-203) consisting of free verse and calligrammatic writing. Tinged by Villonesque tones of lament: "J'ai perdu mes amours. Où sont-elles allées? / Sont-ce elles dont j'entends les plaintes désolées?" (LL, p. 202), the calligrammatic lines and pierced heart convey a sincere cry of pain against the cruel hand of destiny. Another superb example of love poetry in free verse is the poem "Ma Lou, je cou-

cherais ce soir dans les tranchées" (LL, pp. 256 - 59) written when Apollinaire had left for the front. Using different meters and rhyme schemes (and sometimes not rhyming at all), Apollinaire creates a poem of great density, conveying his anxiety over the soldier's fear of death, and distress over his lost love. Some of his lines are majestic and touching:

Mes souvenirs ce sont ces plaines éternelles
Que virgulent, ô Lou, les sinistres corbeaux
L'avion de l'amour a refermé ses ailes
Et partout à la ronde on trouve des tombeaux
(LL, p. 257).

Equally poignant is a different stanza of the same poem, written in a different meter:

Adieu, petite amie, ô Lou, mon seul amour
O mon esclave enfuie,
Notre amour qui connut le soleil, pas la pluie
Fut un instant trop court. (LL, p. 258).

The poem closes on a simple line filled with gravity:

"Adieu. Le ciel a des cheveux gris" (LL, p. 259). The variety within this one poem is impressive and enhances its value.

The regular meter does not seem to be reserved to any particular group of poems. Each of the tonalities of love is expressed at times in free verse and at times in traditional verse patterns. There are a number of pieces written in regular meter that are excellent; the poem

"Rêverie sur ta venue" (LL, pp. 173-75) ends with a marvelous final stanza filled with a delicate selection of succinct, almost ethereal images evoking the romantic night sky transformed by the poet-lover's glance:

Et viens-t-en donc puisque je t'aime
 Je le chante sur tous les tons ...
 ... Ciel nuageux ... la nuit est blême ...
 La lune chemine à tâtons ...
 Une abeille sur de la crème ... (LL, p. 175).

In this poem, Apollinaire is using the octosyllabic versification which had so well fit the lyricism of François Villon, and it is a meter he had adopted frequently in his own poetry.⁵ In Lettres à Lou, he also creates outstanding and memorable alexandrine lines, in such poems as "Faction" (LL, p. 211), "Train militaire" (LL, pp. 247-48), and "Si je mourais là-bas" (LL, pp. 147-48). The twelve syllable line, the versification par excellence of the French language, offered Apollinaire a mold that he filled with rich images in his outpourings to Lou. "Si je mourais là-bas" contains magnificent, majestic lines that convey the sincerity of the lonely poet-soldier who believes he will overcome death, immortalize himself, and be the source of rebirth of the universe. It is without doubt one of

the finest of the poems written to Lou:

Souvenir oublié, vivant dans toutes
choses,
Je rougirais le bout de tes jolis
seins roses,
Je rougirais ta bouche et tes cheveux
sanglants.
Tu ne vieillirais point, toutes ces
belles choses
Rajeuniraient toujours pour leurs
destins galants. (LL, p. 147).

The finesse shown by Apollinaire in his use of traditional verse matches his artistry in the poems of free verse. His variety in versification in Lettres à Lou contributes to the spontaneity of the work, and to the reader's enjoyment of the different hymns of love. It is indeed impressive that even these unrevised poems contain the variety in meter and form that mark those of Calligrammes, a work Apollinaire was able to edit before his death. The same versatility was demonstrated in his writings to Lou.

Even more significant than the different manners of versification are the many different similes and metaphors that Apollinaire conceived in praise or lament of this same woman. There is a great density to his poems, a preponderance of nouns and adjectives over verbs. In fact, it is the richness of the imagery and

the repetition of certain sounds within lines, and from line to line as in the manner of the Grands Rhétoriciens, that create the poignancy of much of the poetry contained in the volume. With great dexterity, Apollinaire wove different threads into the fabric of his work; eroticism, the war, the twentieth century phenomenon of the airplane, lines from past works he had written, and the influence of his poetic forerunners. Intertwined throughout the poetry, they work together to create some beautiful poems of love, unique in their candor and fantasy.

Of course, it is the eroticism in particular that explodes in Lettres à Lou, giving birth to passionate images unmatched before in the poet's creation. The eroticism is without doubt the dominant element in the prose and the poetry of love, but it is successful only because it interacts with Apollinaire's fertile imagination to create effective imagery, spontaneous in nature and forever new. The poem "Lou, mon étoile" (LL, pp. 427-29) is an excellent example of a very modern love poetry in which the entire sky is sexualized, an obvious projection of the lover's carnal urge.

By the very inventiveness of the multiple images of the passionate mistress in this one poem, even the introduction of a vulgar line becomes acceptable, for first Lou is "assise dans une météore agencé comme une automobile de luxe", further on she is addressed as "beau sein de neige rose / Petit nichon exquis de la douce nuit / Clitoris délectable de la brise embaumée / d'Avant l'Aube", and then "Elle est la splendeur du firmament / Et je ne vois qu'elle / Elle est un petit trou charmant aux fesses des nuages". The sexual image of the "Clitoris délectable de la brise embaumée / d'Avant l'Aube" is not an isolated case of the success with which Apollinaire could render the tangible ethereal through the use of imaginative metaphors. The poem "En allant chercher des obus" (LL, pp. 362-65), written in the "blason du corps" tradition, also demonstrates the poet's ability to conjure up delicate metaphors and similes that elevate the concrete to the level of fragile abstractions, as in the two following lines: "Je rêve de t'avoir nuit et jour dans mes bras / Je respire ton âme à l'odeur des lilas" (LL, p. 362). The synesthesia of this provocative evocation reflects

the influence of Baudelaire, whose work Apollinaire knew well, since he edited Les Fleurs du Mal for the "Bibliothèque des Curieux". In fact, what is most successful in this extremely erotic poem is the variety in imaginative, delicate images which evoke the power of love itself. Particularly memorable in the poem, "En allant chercher des obus" is the importance given to fragrances, inspired by the memory of Lou's body. Fragrances give birth to marvelous images that transcend the carnal eroticism that lie at their base.

The flower imagery, the lovely fragrances suggested, and the synesthesia abound in the most beautiful of the poems in Lettres à Lou. "Guirlande de Lou" (LL, pp. 135-35) is probably the best example of the use of these delicate images to suggest the depth of Apollinaire's love. Here the use of synesthesia is responsible for several superb images. Even Lou's voice itself is transfigured into a flower: "Ta voix, ta voix fleurit comme les tubéreuses / Elle enivre la vie & voix & voix chérie" (LL, p. 135). The significance of flowers is also apparent in other poems throughout the volume of letters: "Orlande" (LL, pp. 446-47), "Train militaire" (LL, pp.

247-48), "Roses guerrières" (LL, pp. 515-16), "Pétales de pivoine" (LL, pp. 396-98), "Mon cœur, j'ai regardé longtemps ce soir" (LL, pp. 291-94), and in the poem entitled "Lou ma rose" (LL, pp. 424-25). The delicacy of the flower imagery and the scents evoked render Apollinaire's eroticism poetic.

Of course, the importance of the image of the rose itself is not difficult to discern. Used throughout literary history as a symbol of woman, Apollinaire adopts it in Lettres à Lou as the most important of the flowers signifying his mistress. Its color makes it a perfect image of the erotic desires inspired by his capricious countess, and the rose itself was always a flower favored by the poet in his earlier work, Alcools.⁶ Its fascination for Apollinaire is evidenced by the frequency of plays on words focusing on "roses", or by the simple repetition of the closed "o" sound emphasizing the word. In the poem, "Train militaire" the rose becomes the focal point of sound and image as the poet writes: "Un rossignol meurtri par l'amour chante sur / Le rosier de ton corps où j'ai cueilli des roses." (LL, p. 248). In the poem, "Lou ma rose", the

repetition of the word "rose" takes on the singing quality of the internal rhymes of the Grands Rhétoriciens:

Lou ma rose ou plutôt mes roses
 Tu m'as envoyé des feuilles de rose
 O petite déesse
 Tu crées les roses
 Et tu fais les feuilles de roses
 Roses (LL, p. 424).

And in the poems, "Roses guerrières" (LL, pp. 515-16) and "Scène nocturne du 22 avril 1915" (LL, pp. 309-13), the rose becomes the very symbol of life itself, synonymous with love, which war destroys as it takes the soldier's life:

L'air est plein d'un terrible alcool
 Filtré des étoiles mi-closes
 Les obus pleurent dans leur vol
 La mort amoureuse des roses... (LL, p. 516).

Moreover, the rose is also used by Apollinaire with humor in his lighter expressions of love, where its simple erotic connotation is evident, as in the poem "A la partie la plus gracieuse" (LL, pp. 479-80). Used throughout Lettres à Lou to evoke the eternal feminine, from its most obvious carnal suggestions to its most spiritual ⁷, the rose is poetically emphasized by the rhyme scheme, stressing its significance.

Another factor in the fine quality achieved in many of the lines is the evocation of Lou's perplexing gaze which captivates and haunts the poet. The Baudelairean influence seen in the use of synesthesia is also present in the picture of the mistress' eyes evoked throughout the volume of letters. In his article, "Guillaume Apollinaire et la poétique de l'oeil", David Berry notes the importance of the lover's eyes for the poet: "Chez presque toutes ses amoureuses, ce sont les yeux qui l'ont frappé du premier coup, un coup de foudre. Il a d'abord été séduit par les 'grands et beaux yeux de biche' de Louise de Coligny."⁸ There are two poems in particular in which the eyes are tenderly evoked: in "Rêverie sur ta venue", Apollinaire first writes of Lou's "regards irrésolus" (LL, p. 173) and then of her "doux yeux irrésolus" (LL, p. 175), and in "Jolie bizarre enfant chérie", the poet imaginatively suggests her sensuous gaze: "Jolie bizarre enfant chérie / Je vois tes doux yeux langoureux / Mourir peu à peu comme un train qui entre en gare" (LL, p. 329). The Petrarchan power of the mistress' eyes joins with Baudelairean overtones when Apollinaire writes to Lou:

Je vois briller cette étoile mystique
 Dont la couleur
 Est de tes yeux la couleur ambiguë
 J'ai ton regard
 Et j'en ressens une blessure aiguë
 Adieu, c'est tard (LL, pp. 293-94).

The beauty of the lover's gaze, evoked in the finest Symbolist manner, contributes to the multitude of different, suggestive images of this one woman.

The complexity in imagery also results from Apollinaire's life as a soldier, which is intermingled in the course of the letters with the expression of his passion for Lou. His military training, and then his departure for the front brought him into contact with entirely different surroundings. Caught up in the life and death struggle of World War I, Apollinaire wrote love letters that most frequently relate details of his daily life in the militia with emotional outpourings of love. Undoubtedly, the very physical distance the poet was forced to maintain from his mistress most of the time served to exacerbate the eroticism of the lonely soldier for whom love and life were one and the same. The active participation in the war also produced new and perhaps surprising images allying passion

Usually, the "obus" is not portrayed in its destructive role, but, poetically, it is transfigured into "des étoiles filantes" (LL, p. 117), "mimosas en fleur" (LL, p. 147), "une fleur mâle" (LL, p.185), a "baiser éclaté" sent by the poet to Lou (LL, p. 256); or, in reverse, it represents the letter Lou will send him: "Lance ta lettre, obus de ton artillerie" (LL, p. 190). When the relationship with Lou disappointed Apollinaire, the flight of the artillery shells became the symbol of the disappearance of this ephemeral love: "Et j'écoute à

travers le petit jour si froid / Les obus s'envoler
 comme l'amour lui-même." (LL, p. 275). The use of war
 imagery as a symbol of life force rather than of death
 in Lettres à Lou should not repel us, for it is evidence
 of the great joie de vivre which prevented him from sur-
 rendering to the melancholy of the horrors he witnessed
 at the front. Rather than treating life and death as
 opposite poles in Lettres à Lou, he reconciles them, see-
 ing in the weapons symbols of eroticism that would give
 forth life rather than death (LL, p. 185). He bound Eros
 to Thanatos, perceiving a mystical force guiding the war.
 He saw himself as part of a mission whose purpose, as
 expressed in the letters, was to render the world a safer
 place for one's loved ones. Enriching the imagery used
 throughout the volume, the reminders of the war created
 a unique type of personal love poetry, even more poignant
 in some of the finest letters, because it was always ap-
 parent that death and disaster could be lurking in the
 shadows.

In the poetry itself then, the adroit use of different
 types of versification, the effective use of suggestive
 and varied imagery, and the frequent repetition of sounds

work together to create powerful poems of love, most original in nature. The unbridled explosion of eroticism stands side by side with ethereal imagery reminding us of Apollinaire's poetic heritage. The "blason du corps" tradition giving vent to a myriad of provocative images of Lou goes hand in hand with the modernist images, and poems of the cubist technique. There is present in Lettres à Lou a unique combination of the present and the past, resulting in a highly original, successful, spontaneous literary work. Apollinaire's versatility and rich imagination are impressive and admirable.

Equally important in this volume of love letters is the variety in tone. The prose passages devoted to love gush forth with eroticism, unequalled previously in Apollinaire's legitimate works. Apollinaire used the letter-poem to Lou as a way of exorcising his sexual desires for the absent mistress whose own sensuous urges invited his frequent evocations of almost violent love play. The prose passages on love served the poet especially well when he wanted to lecture Lou about her "duty" to be a willing captive, or when he wished to evoke the pleasure the two would experience from

flagellation and completely free love-making. The eroticism and violence of some of the prose passages may call to mind the sadism evident in Apollinaire's stories, but unlike the cruelty of passages in L'Hérésiarque et Cie, La femme assise, Le Poète assassiné, Les Exploits d'un jeune Don Juan, and Les Onze mille verges, the violence exhibited in Lettres à Lou is mixed with tender, gentle passages.

The tenderness towards Lou marked a real change in Apollinaire's view of love. Famous poems such as "La Chanson du mal-aimé" and "Zone" brought out the poet's anger against women, for in each case it was a disappointed love that lay behind the poem. But in Lettres à Lou, it is not bitterness that the poet harps upon when Lou disappoints him. In his poems of nostalgia, he communicates his distress and pain, but he does not curse Lou and cease writing to her. In fact, when Lou made it clear to him that she no longer intended to see him, Apollinaire urged her to continue the correspondence divulging secrets of her love life. Apollinaire was unwilling to deprive himself of a correspondence with Lou, even if the relationship were completely super-

ficial. Feeling that he still had someone to inspire him was more important than dwelling on his mistress' unfaithfulness. Involved in this new posture was a curious ability to accept Lou's other lover, Toutou, and even to imagine a triangular relationship. Apollinaire, who showed such a strong need to dominate his mistress, was nevertheless willing to accept a lesser role in her love life. Even the humor he used in some of the light poems is new in his amorous writing. For the first time he could laugh at a woman who had, indeed, disappointed him; he could write her tender prose passages begging her to take care of her health, and he could intermittently write her erotic poems even when it was clear that there would be no continuation of the real physical relationship they had at one time shared. The different tones of the letters, and Apollinaire's ability to adapt to an essentially distasteful sentimental situation demonstrate a greater maturity. No longer was he just the "mal-aimé" or the "mal-aimant". Facing death in the war gave him a new perspective on human relationships.

Thus it is the adulation of love, the symbol of life, that is most important in these letters. Apollinaire frequently refers to this love for Lou as the "unique

amour" which will open up vistas of pleasure unknown previously to mankind; early in his relationship he wrote of his wish: "que notre amour soit le plus beau, le plus complet que l'on ait jamais éprouvé sous le ciel." (LL, p. 73). The elevation of love to mystical heights seen in Lettres à Lou and the glorification of this particular love is clearly explained by the poet in two prose passages concerning poetry and love. Writing of the poet's mission, he links creativity, prophecy, and love:

Les poètes sont les créateurs ... Rien ne vient donc sur terre, n'apparaît aux yeux des hommes s'il n'a d'abord été imaginé par un poète. L'amour même, c'est la poésie naturelle de la vie ... Je sais que ceux qui se livrent au travail de la poésie font quelque chose d'essentiel, de primordial, de nécessaire avant toute chose, quelque chose enfin de divin ...
(LL, p. 120).

Love - artistic creativity - the divine are connected in the Apollinairian pagan trinity. Love rises to the level of the divine since it is the source of inspiration of his poetry, and his statement to Lou on April 7, 1915: "L'amour, vois-tu Lou, est la grande chose sérieuse de ma vie, et tu es le grand amour." (LL, p. 261) was probab-

ly no exaggeration. The significance of woman, the source of so much of Apollinaire's writing, also pierces through in one of the final stanzas of his prophetic poem, "Les Collines" of Calligrammes:

Et le tiers nombre c'est la dame
 Elle monte dans l'ascenseur
 Elle monte monte toujours
 Et la lumière se déploie
 Et ces clartés la transfigurent.⁹

In Lettres à Lou, a celebration of life itself takes place through the adoration of love and of Lou. It was life that contrasted to death, the backdrop of the war. The pagan cult of carnal love itself, and of artistic creativity constituted a tribute to life. In the glorification of their love, and in poetry and prose evoking a passion that would permit Apollinaire and Lou to transcend barriers of time and space, the poet was denying death in the truest sense.

The originality of his expression of love is greatly enhanced by the two genres in which Apollinaire wrote to Lou. The letter-poem exercising such freedom in intimate expression, and reflecting easy movement from prose to poetry and from poetry to prose was an innovation in itself. The majority of the letters were

written in prose, and discussed Apollinaire's daily life as a soldier, a few of his literary projects, and his sentiments for Lou. Apollinaire seemed to adopt the genre of poetry when he felt the inspiration to write at greater length about the war or about his love for his mistress. It is interesting to note the spontaneity with which he would at times go from one form to another. In his letter of February 7, 1915, the prose is interrupted after four pages; an appropriate poem of seven quatrains of octosyllabic verse is composed in honor of the war and love ("Les moutons noirs des nuits d'hiver"), and then a final paragraph is written in prose, reiterating through the repetition of words and the continual pauses in the sentence, Apollinaire's strong affection for Lou: "A bientôt, donc, ma chérie, je t'embrasse partout, partout, baisers très forts, je t'adore, je ne pense qu'à toi, tu es l'amour unique, l'amour mystique, l'amour charnel, tout l'amour ensemble ..." (LL, p. 186). This intermingling of prose and poetry suited Apollinaire's character well, and added to the intimate tone of the work. Just as he wrote cubist verses to Lou when he felt so inclined,

humorous fables at other moments, and litanic verse in the classical mode on still other occasions, he also expressed freedom in his choice of genre. The poetry, by the very conciseness of the images and by its rhythm and sounds, tends to be the form more easily remembered. And yet, it is due to the background of the poems furnished by the many prose letters, that the poetry can be more aptly appreciated and understood. For even within the the spontaneous prose passages, Apollinaire could write beautiful lines of love endowed with the force of their imagery:

Allons, chère ombre, voici que
selon une juste métamorphose tu t'es
pour moi changée en torche et flamme
tordue, flamme couleur de tes propres
cheveux, c'est la liberté que tu
éclaires, toi qui est la rébellion. (LL, p. 233).

In fact, the intimacy of the letters themselves stems from the mixture of genres, and from the less stylized language sometimes used in the prose. It is through a combination of the two that the very nature of the love relationship is clarified, and that the theme of love can be more readily comprehended with all its nuances of eroticism, the war, nostalgia, tenderness, and humor.

The intimate character of this volume of personal letters gave to the prose and poetry contained a direct, subjective tone unmatched before in the poet's work. The marriage of tradition and of modernism in the images and versification of the poetry, the originality of the freely flowing letter-poem, alternately in prose and in poetry, and the nuances of love that criss-cross through the volume must modify and enhance our portrait of Apollinaire, the great lyric poet of love. Faced with the holocaust of World War I, he turned to his pen to pour forth his joie de vivre. His adoration of Lou, life, and literature created a poignant, powerful book of love letters revealing a more mature Apollinaire. Lettres à Lou is an original, unique hymn to love. The superb quality of much of this unpolished document will remain a proof of the admirable poetic talent that Guillaume Apollinaire exemplified in the tradition of great love literature.

CONCLUSIONS: FOOTNOTES

1. The following poems were included in Calligrammes: "Train militaire" (LL, p. 248), part II with variations is "Vers le sud" (OP, C, p. 234); "Les Soupirs du servent de Dakar" (LL, pp. 439-41) with variations (OP, C, pp. 235-36); "Roses guerrières" (LL, pp. 515-16), part I with variations is "Fête" (OP, C, p. 238); "Rêverie" (LL, pp. 258-59), part IV is "Les Saisons" (OP, C, pp. 358-59); "Le Ciel est étoilé par les obus des boches" (LL, pp. 273-74) with variations is "La Nuit d'avril 1915" (OP, C, pp. 243-44); "Les Feux du bivouac" (LL, p. 506) is found (OP, C, p. 250) and was also sent to Louise Faure-Favier and to Madeleine; "Tourbillon de mouches" (LL, pp. 507-508) is found (OP, C, p. 252) and was also sent to Louise Faure-Favier and to Madeleine; "L'Adieu du cavalier" (LL, p. 508) is found (OP, C, p. 253) and was also sent to Louise Faure-Favier and to Madeleine.

2. The celebration of feminine "blancheur" is pointed out in "L'Otmika", L'Enchanteur pourissant, and Chroniques d'art according to this source: Marcel Thiry and Maurice Piron, Deux notes sur Apollinaire en Ardenne (Brussels: Académie Royale de Langue et de Litterature Françaises de Belgique, 1958), pp. 137-38.

3. L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes, OC, III, 906.

4. Ibid., 907.

5. Jeanine Moulin noted the frequency of the octosyllabic verse in "La Chanson du mal-aimé", "Marie", "L'Adieu", "Cours de chasse", Vitam impendere amoris, and in most of Le Bestiaire. Jeanine Moulin, Textes inédits de Guillaume Apollinaire (Genève: Droz, 1952), p. 74.

6. Jean-Bertrand Barrère, "Apollinaire tendre et obscène," Revue des Sciences Humaines, No. 83 (octobre-décembre 1956), p. 381. The author remarks that "la rose, couleur de chair, est la plus citée de toutes les fleurs (une douzaine de fois)".

7. Apollinaire, in the last line of the poem, "Guirlande de Lou" seems to be seeking the ephemeral perfection when he writes of "La Merveilleuse Rose", (LL, p. 135).

8. David Berry, "Guillaume Apollinaire et la poétique de l'oeil," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, No. 4 (1970), p. 642.

9. OP, C, p. 177.

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