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From Despoina to Δ

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From Despoina to Δ

Abstract

Identifies Janie Moore as the sometimes goddess, sometimes human Δ or Despoina in Lewis's early poems, letters, and diaries. The changing nature of her depiction shows the young Lewis developing a surer handling of his chosen mythic references as he matures and reinforces the thesis that they were lovers.

Additional Keywords

Despoina (mythical figure); Lewis, C.S.—Relation to Janie Moore; Lewis, C.S. Poetry; Lewis, C.S. Spirits in Bondage; Moore, Janie—Relation to C.S. Lewis

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FROM ΔESPOINA TO Δ

JOE R. CHRISTOPHER

I. The Use of "D" (or "Δ") to Refer to Janie Moore

C. S. LEWIS'S DIARY, PUBLISHED AS *ALL THE ROAD BEFORE ME*, runs from 1 April 1922 until 2 March 1927. It is not complete: Walter Hooper, the editor, says that, because of publishing restraints, he had to cut the diary by about a third (Intro. 11). Lewis's complete if episodic diary (or series of diaries) actually began in Christmastime 1902, as a number of brief notes about his studies (Schmidt, email of 16 Sept. 2008). But for the present purposes the published diary sets up the problem. Lewis's entry for the second of April 1922 begins with these two sentences: "A beautiful spring day. D busy cutting oranges for marmalade" (15). The entry for the first of March 1927 has these three sentences: "Home for lunch. D seemed still v. tired. We all tried talking French at lunch" (456).

Who is this "D" who cuts oranges for marmalade and who speaks French at lunch with Lewis and others? No mystery attaches to the bare fact here: she is Jane ("Janie") King Moore, the mother of one of Lewis's fellow officers in World War I, with whom Lewis made a home after the war and whom he introduced to others as his mother. She was also, for a number of years, his lover.

The more difficult question is why Lewis refers to her as D. The published diary is mainly copied from Warren H. Lewis's typed version, appearing in *Memoirs of the Lewis Family, 1850-1930* (bound in eleven volumes, 1933-1935). This has never been published, but the original version is at the Wade Center, Wheaton, Illinois. W.H. Lewis types a "D." But, in his introduction to the published diary, Walter Hooper says that a notebook which belonged to C.S. Lewis, now in Hooper's possession, has the entries for 27 April 1926 through 2 March 1927 in Lewis's hand—and in these entries he writes the Greek letter "Δ" (delta) instead. W.H. Lewis's typewriter did not have foreign letters, so he substituted the English equivalent (Hooper, Intro. 10). One wishes this notebook were available for critical appraisal, but this essay will accept Hooper's report for the discussion that follows. What this means is that the question becomes: Why does Lewis refer to Janie Moore as Δ?

The main thesis of this essay is that Lewis refers to Janie Moore as Δ because, in Greek, his nickname for her was Despoina. This is the name (or title)

of a woman in one poem in Lewis's first book, *Spirits in Bondage* (1919), and in a poem of the same time period not collected there. The name also appears in a second poem in *Spirits in Bondage*, probably addressed to a goddess. Lewis's affectionate address to her in two of the poems suggests the relationship. (The minor thesis of this essay is that the three poems have at least some interest in a more general way, as early steps in Lewis's development as a verbal artist.)

II. The Love Affair

Since the argument depends on Lewis and Janie Moore being lovers, some support for that relationship is needed. Probably all serious students of Lewis accept the fact of the affair today, but it certainly was not accepted when Kathryn Lindskoog first suggested it in her 1988 book *The C.S. Lewis Hoax* (64-65). George Sayer, in his biography the same year, quoted Owen Barfield as saying the chances were fifty/fifty (*Jack*, 1st ed., 89). In fact, the present writer did not agree at the time with Lindskoog (see "Is 'D' for Despoina?," published in 1994), but the evidence for the affair has mounted up.

The background is this. In 1917, Lewis was at Oxford University; he had joined the Officer's Training Corps, so he could enter World War I with the King's Commission. His serious training began as he was assigned to a room in Keble College on 7 June. By chance of alphabetical arrangement, Lewis shared his room with Edward Moore, called "Paddy"—an Irishman by birth like Lewis. Moore's mother, Janie—accompanied by her eleven-year-old daughter, Maureen—was renting an apartment in Oxford to see her son as much as she could before he inevitably went to the Western Front. Lewis visited the apartment several times with Paddy and other trainees. These early visits are mentioned by Lewis in letters to his father, starting with a letter on the 18th of June: "Moore, my room mate [*sic*], comes from Clifton [a public school near Bristol] and is a very decent sort of man; his mother, an Irish lady, is staying up here and I have met her once or twice" (*Collected Letters* [hereafter *CL*], vol. I, 322). In a letter from Mrs. Moore to Lewis's father (part of a polite exchange after the death of Paddy), she referred to the five young men who visited the Moores "so often" in Oxford (qtd. Sayer, *Jack*, 3rd ed., 135). Then came Lewis's three weeks of leave, after he finished training. He spent the first two weeks of this leave with the Moores in Bristol. He writes to his father in Ireland that he was not feeling well and Mrs. Moore put him to bed (3 Oct., *CL* I.337), but the illness probably was a lie (cf. Bremer, *C.S. Lewis, Poetry* 54).

During his service in the war, Lewis writes letters to Arthur Greeves, his friend in Ireland, about love entering his life. On [28? October 1917] (all dates in brackets as supplied by Hooper), before he was sent to France, he writes:

Since coming back [to England from Ireland] & meeting a certain person I have begun to realize that it was not at all the right thing for me to tell you so much as I did. I must therefore try to undo my actions as far as possible by asking you to try & forget my various statements & not to refer to the subject. (*They Stand Together* [hereafter *TST*] 200; *CL* I.339)

From France, Lewis writes on 14 December 1917 to say:

[T]hank you for writing to Mrs Moore [...] you may perhaps understand how nice & homely it is for me to know that the two people who matter most to me in the world are in touch. (*TST* 204; *CL* I.348)

Then, on New Year's Eve [1917], he writes from France:

I hope I have gained the new without losing the old and if we were all three—you know my meaning—together somewhere I'm sure we could be very happy, without any clash of interests. (*TST* 205; *CL* I.349)

And next, from a hospital in France, he writes on 2 February 1918:

I must admit fate has played strange tricks with me since last winter: I feel that I have definitely got into a new epoch of life and one feels extraordinarily helpless over it.

He describes some of the things he and Greeves had done in the past as friends, and then continues:

Perhaps you don't believe that I want all that again, because other things more important have come in: but after all there is room for other things besides love in a man's life. (*TST* 206; *CL* I.353)

On 12 February 1918, still in the French hospital, Lewis repeats this idea: "We may have good times yet, although I have been at a war and although I love someone" (*TST* 208; *CL* I.355).

These are all the references to Janie Moore in Lewis's letters to Greeves before and while in France. Of course, the one in which he says that he has told Greeves too much implies he and Janie Moore have done something that cannot be made public. In two of the letters he speaks of love, and in another he names Mrs. Moore as one of the two people he cares for most. Perhaps something can be suggested that explains all of these references without a physical love affair—one thing that comes to mind is that he and she agreed to live as son and mother, but, although he would have had to keep it a secret from his father, why should he tell Greeves not to mention it in letters? One can understand why John Bremer

writes that it is “highly probable” that Lewis began his sexual affair with Janie Moore during those two weeks in Bristol (“Clive Staples Lewis” 28).

That there was an actual affair is confirmed in three writings by George Sayer. He was a friend and former tutee of Lewis, and author of one of the better biographies. He tells of the affair (as he writes) “after conversations with Mrs. Moore’s daughter, Maureen” (*Jack*, 3rd ed., xvii). He discusses the placement of their bedrooms, and says of their being lovers: “I am quite certain that they were” (xvii). He also explains part of the reason for limited information about the affair while Lewis was an Oxford student: “Lewis had to be secretive because if the university authorities had found out about Mrs. Moore he would have been sent down and his academic career at Oxford would have been over” (also xvii). This also applies to Lewis during his early career as a don. The most interesting of Sayer’s three discussions is the interview by Lyle W. Dorsett for the Wade Center. This has not been published, but is available for reading at the collection. At the beginning of the written form (but not on the taped form), Dorsett reports what Sayer told him while walking across the campus: that Maureen Moore Blake had told him that the affair started after the war and lasted a few years before it died out (Sayer, Oral History 3-4). Of course, Maureen was eleven when Lewis first met her brother, her mother, and her—she may not have seen the signs when the affair started. But certainly her word that there was an affair seems definitive, since she was living in the apartments and houses they rented. In another place, Sayer says the affair lasted until Lewis’s “entry into the Church of England in the autumn of 1931” (“C.S. Lewis: The Man” 247), although he (typically) gives no source for the information. Therefore, the information from Maureen Moore Blake (via Sayer) that an affair occurred seems certain, although her datings of the affair are subject to discussion.

Thus one has the three statements by Sayer, all three cited above: the introduction to the written version of Lyle W. Dorsett’s interview with Sayer (1989), the introduction to the third edition of Sayer’s biography (1997), and the brief essay in a book (1998). Sayer might exclaim, like the Bellman, “What I tell you three times is true!”

But the love affair *per se* does not explain the Δ.

III. The Two Poems to Despoina in *Spirits in Bondage*

Before an argument is made that Lewis called Janie Moore Despoina, Lewis’s use of Despoina in his poems should be considered. In his first book, *Spirits in Bondage*, published immediately after the war, Lewis has two poems addressed to Despoina, “Apology” (21-22) and “Ode for New Year’s Day” (23-26).

“Apology” is an *apologia*, a defense, for writing unhappy poems during World War I. The first two quatrains are a request to Despoina.

If men should ask, Despoina, why I tell
Of nothing glad or noble in my verse
To lighten hearts beneath this present curse
And build a heaven of dreams in real hell,

Go you to them and speak among them thus:
“There were no greater grief than to recall,
Down in the rotting grave where the lithe worms crawl,
Green fields above that smiled so sweet to us.”

The next three quatrains are in the poet’s persona, and Despoina does not re-appear. The “present curse” of line three is, of course, World War I. Lewis’s *Spirits in Bondage* was published as by a war poet, and a substantial number of the poems refer to the war, if often in generalized terms. The next line, about “build[ing] a heaven of dreams in real hell” is a restatement of the previous lines: the “heaven of dreams” is a collection of poems of gladness and nobility written during the “real hell” of the war. The second quatrain reverses the sequential phrasing of the argument: this grief (than which nothing is greater) is, in metaphoric terms, the recalling while in the grave of the green fields one once enjoyed—that is, dropping the metaphor, the reading, during the war (or in the war’s immediate aftermath), of poems of pre-war (or pre-war-like) happiness. Further, the imagery of the grave during World War I would inevitably suggest to the readers of the time the trenches and the huge loss of life connected to the conflict. Despoina, to some degree, takes on an aspect of a goddess—Persephone, the goddess of Hades—through this emphasis on the grave and, for that matter, the emphasis on the war being (metaphorically) a “real hell.” If Persephone is considered the goddess of the dead, perhaps the war-time connection is clearer.

Historically, when Lewis refuses to write about nobility (“nothing glad or noble”), he seems to be partaking of the split in the World War I poets between those who did treat the conflict as noble (Rupert Brooke) and those who did not (Siegfried Sassoon). But this topic is handled by John Bremer in a forthcoming book (the earlier version in an edition of limited circulation—*C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and the Great War*—is listed in the Works Cited).

Lewis echoes Dante’s *Inferno* when he writes

There were no greater grief than to recall,
Down in the rotting grave where the lithe worms crawl,
Green fields above that smiled so sweet to us.

In Canto V, when Dante and Francesca da Rimini are conversing,

E quella a me: 'Nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria [...].' (ll. 121-123)

Dorothy L. Sayers translates the passage this way:

Then she to me: "The bitterest woe of woes
Is to remember in our wretchedness
Old happy times [...]." (100)

Lewis is wrenching the context of Dante. In the *Inferno*, Francesca and Paolo were damned for their adulterous love affair (she was married to his elder brother). Lewis (one assumes) had found the passage memorable since he also was involved in adultery: Janie Moore was separated from her Irish husband, not divorced. No wonder Lewis wrote to Arthur Greeves, "I believe in no God, least of all in one that would punish me for the 'lusts of the flesh'" (3 June 1918, *TST* 221, *CL* I.379). For Lewis's poem, the Christian hell is replaced by a "rotting grave" and the former, attractive (if sinful) life by "green fields." Probably Lewis meant to suggest that the pleasant life ("that smiled so sweet to us") was ultimately false: the real truth is war and death.

This brief address to Despoina does not tell a reader much about her. However, her name is more significant than her reception of a hortatory request—that is, her name is the feminine form of the Greek *despotes*, meaning *master* or *lord* (hence the English *despot*); thus, *despoina* means *mistress* or *lady* (in the sense of a woman of rank and perhaps of power). If a sixteenth-century poet had addressed a woman as "My lady," the effect might be similar to what Lewis is doing here—at least, at the most surface level. Janie Moore, as a social hostess—inviting to her apartment her son's friends during military training and inviting various guests to her and Lewis's homes in later years—fits *despoina* in this sense of the word. (It is striking in Lewis's diary how many people come to tea.)

But another level exists. In classical Arcadia, Despoina was the title of a goddess, a title which may be Englished as "The Mistress." She was the daughter of Demeter. As such, she is sometimes identified with Kore ("The Maiden"), another daughter of Demeter—sometimes identified, although the myths give them different fathers: Zeus for Kore, Poseidon for Despoina. Despoina and Kore were celebrated in separate Greek mystery cults, which *may* have involved the revealing of their real names to the initiates. Almost, but not quite, always, Kore is identified with Persephone (possibly a public name), Demeter's and Zeus's daughter in the most wide-spread myth of Demeter. (For most of this classical

background, see Price and Kearns 161-62, 417.) And, according to Walter Hooper, sometimes Despoina was identified with Persephone—as by Plato (the passage from Hooper will be quoted in Sec. V). John Bremer is more specific about the uses: the name *Despoina*

can be found, for example, in Homer (ten instances) and in Plato (seven instances). [...] In Homer it means only the mistress of the house, Penelope, for instance, or Arete, but in Plato no name of woman or goddess is joined to it, although in one instance he adds the term for maid [...]. It is hard to be clear who[m] he means and the compilers of the standard Greek lexicon (Liddell and Scott) indicate it refers to Persephone (and this is repeated by Hooper)[...]. (“From Despoina” 12)

Thus, because of the identification of Despoina with Kore and Kore with Persephone, and sometimes of Despoina directly with Persephone, and since Persephone was the Queen of Hades, Lewis chooses her appropriately to speak to men about the views of those in the metaphoric grave (in the second stanza of “Apology”). It should be stressed that the identification of Despoina and Kore has validity to it despite their different fathers; no doubt these were simply variants of the same myth as they developed in different regions in Greece.

Both of these levels are possible—Despoina as a Lady and Despoina as a goddess—and probably Lewis meant them both. Of course, a third reading of *Despoina* is possible. Since in English *mistress* can refer to a woman in charge of all she surveys—a house or other areas—but also, in English, can refer to a woman as a lover not married to the man she lives with, then *Despoina* can also carry that possibility, as a type of backward pun from English. And Janie Moore was, for a time, Lewis’s mistress in the sexual sense. Whether or not he explained it to Moore, Lewis may well have meant this sense also.

On the other hand, “Ode for New Year’s Day” (the other poem) is clearly addressed to a woman, not a goddess, from the terms of endearment that are used. Here are the passages having to do with Despoina (with the endearments in added italics). The first follows an address to those tormented by this world:

And Thou, *my own beloved*, for as brave as ere [*sic*] thou art,
Bow down thine head, Despoina, clasp thy pale arms over it,
Lie low with fast-closed eyelids, clenched teeth, enduring heart,
For sorrow on sorrow is coming wherein all flesh has part.
[...]
Thrice happy, O Despoina, were the men who were alive
In the great age and the golden age when still the cycle ran
On upward curve and easily, for then both maid and man

And beast and tree and spirit in the green earth could thrive.

[...]

It's truth they tell, Despoina, none hears the heart's complaining
For Nature will not pity, nor the red God lend an ear.

[...]

And O, *my poor Despoina*, do you think he ["the red God"] ever hears
The wail of hearts he has broken, the sound of human ill?

[...]

Ah, *sweet*, if a man could cheat him! If you could flee away
Into some other country beyond the rosy West,

To hide in the deep forests and be for ever at rest

From the rankling hate of God and the outworn world's decay!

The three italicized addresses—"my own beloved," "my poor Despoina," and "sweet"—do not seem likely to be addressed to a goddess. In other words, besides differences in meter and rhyme patterns, these two poems treat Despoina differently—and certainly the second develops her more fully.

For example, when Lewis tells Despoina to "[b]ow down [her] head [and] clasp [her] pale arms over it [...] [f]or sorrow on sorrow is coming," he indicates she is involved in the misery of this world. And, indeed, if this is written to Janie Moore (as this paper contends), this passage may predict or reflect the fact that her son was killed in the First World War. (A later probable dating of the poem makes this a generalized prediction. Although it need not have any reference to Paddy, given the rate of deaths in the war, Lewis could hardly write it without awareness of the possibility of Paddy's death.)

Another indication that the Despoina in "Apology" has deitific overtones and the Despoina in "Ode for New Year's Day" does not, is that the former poem has no reference to a god in it, but the latter has a "red God"—that is, a wrathful, bloody, evil God. In the former, the speaker can be (and probably is) invoking a goddess to tell about his world, while in the latter the "red God" rules over Despoina as well as the speaker. Some critics have said the reference to a goddess means these poems cannot be about Janie Moore (cf. Hooper, qtd. below)—but Janie Moore, who was not a Christian, was probably amused and flattered by her apotheosis in one of the poems.

Obviously, since "Ode for New Year's Day" has endearments to a woman in it, and Janie Moore is the only woman (so far as is known) that Lewis was intimate with in the period, the probability is high that Despoina "is" Janie Moore. Of course, some poets write poems to imaginary mistresses, but the next section will discuss another Despoina poem—one with a Janie Moore-like context. Perhaps no single example provides convincing evidence, but the two Despoina poems about human women make a good case in the context of Lewis's life.

IV. The Third Poem Addressed to Despoina

The third Despoina poem was not published at the time, but it has been printed in a 2004 essay by Don W. King. The time sequence of the composition will be considered in more detail later (in Sec. VI), but the poem, taking its content at the surface level, seems to have been written soon after World War I. In manuscript, the poem is not titled; but King uses the first line: “Despoina, bear with me” (King, “Lost but Found” 183).

The poem itself is a short work of thirteen lines. The lines are shorter than in the other Despoina poems, being usually trimeter in length. The poem opens with eight lines rhyming ABBACDDC; the first quatrain is this:

Despoina, bear with me
A little longer yet:
In fevered curse and fret
I have borne me evilly.

The first three lines are iambic trimeter in rhythm; the fourth line is bothersome: to retain the usual three-stress pattern, “I have borne” must be considered an anapestic substitution for an iamb, and an accent—even if a light accent—must fall on the last syllable of *evilly*.

The next four lines have poor grammatical structure; the first two are a dangling modifier. Perhaps an understood “I was” is before the first line, to turn the lines into a clause—or, despite the period at the end of the first quatrain, perhaps a comma should come at that point, for an enjambment: “I have borne me evilly, / Speaking with madman’s breath[. . .].” At any rate, here is the second quatrain of this octastich:

Speaking with madman’s breath
Words full of wind and pride,
When I grew dim-eyed
Being near to death.

The biographical application to Lewis will be discussed below, but the general situation of the speaker’s emotion-driven volubility while he is faced with death is clear.

The third line is difficult to scan as a regular trimeter—rhetorically, the first-person pronoun needs emphasis, which keeps the line from being a headless iambic trimeter. Perhaps it is an accentual line ending with two stresses. Another possibility is that Lewis thought at the time that a spondee closing a line could be substituted for two iambic feet; cf. the line quoted earlier: “And build a heaven of dreams in real hell.”

The next five lines (EFFEG) manage to contain the first four lines of the second octet and the first line of what should have been the octet's second quatrain. That fifth line is unrhymed in its incompleteness.

Morning has come, has come[.]
Open the window, sweet.
Day bounds upon the feet
Of night. Lo, I am dumb[:]
I shall not speak again.

Don W. King, in his transcription of this poem in "Lost but Found," unfortunately prints the last line as "I shall not sleep again," which loses the whole point of "I am dumb" in the previous line. The poem breaks off without the completion of the second octet because the speaker is "dumb" (silent) and cannot continue to speak. (What he was speaking was the "words full of wind and pride.") The reading of "speak" in the last line was checked with Laura C. Schmidt, Archivist at the Wade Center, and she confirmed it (email of 14 February 2011).

In these last five lines, the enjambment of the third line into the fourth with a full stop after the first foot of the fourth seems awkward after the earlier use of full stops only at the ends of lines, but it may be intended to give emphasis to the last two clauses: "Lo, I am dumb[:] / I shall not speak again." (No punctuation appears after *dumb* in the manuscript.)

Possibly this poem is not intended as two octets, the second broken off. Possibly, instead, Lewis is experimenting with a quasi-Italian sonnet in trimeter lines (ABBA CDDC EFF EG[G])—but the result is the same.

The content is a renunciation of the negativity of many of Lewis's poems in *Spirits in Bondage* (suggested previously by the excerpts of "Apology" and "Ode for New Year's Day"). The bitter poems were examples of a madman's "[w]ords full of wind and pride." Although Lewis wrote the denunciations of the Red God, *etc.*, before he was actually in the war, that does not invalidate his feelings about the slaughter that was going on. And, although "When I grew dim-eyed" seems an odd phrasing in this poem, as if the poet were asserting his need for glasses, the poem indicates, in its use of "When," that this happened *while* the narrator (that is, Lewis) was speaking the "Words full of wind and pride"; thus, the "dim-eyed" implies he was not at that time seeing the world clearly. The cliché is to say that such a person is at the time "blind to the truth." Glasses would not help. The verbal phrase "Being near to death" is a general modifier about the time of the folly—and a causal statement.

The poem affirms a change after his denunciations of the world at war. "Morning has come"; it is no longer night. Despoina is here a woman, called "sweet"; she is requested to open a window (not the actions of a goddess)—and

an open window again suggests a change: the stuffy house is being relieved by fresh air. Of course, the change is slow (“bear with me / A little longer yet”), but it is under way.

Trimeter lines are normally used by poets for light verse; perhaps Lewis felt their shortness made an appropriate change from the more negative poems written in longer lines: “Apology” is in iambic pentameters and “Ode for New Year’s Day” is in iambic hexameters and heptameters. In this reader’s opinion, however, it is not a successful experiment: a serious statement needs the weight of longer lines.

If Lewis ever considered this poem for inclusion in *Spirits in Bondage*, he decided against it. Perhaps he thought the pessimism of many of the poems in the book should be allowed to stand as his statement at the time (and “Death in Battle” made a better final poem); perhaps he decided the trimeters did not work well for what he had to say; perhaps he thought the action of Despoina in opening a window might draw university authorities’ attention to him if the authorship was ever known; perhaps it was written too late to be included (and Greeves copied it as a final statement)—in short, the reason for exclusion is not known. However, artistically, the omission was wise.

Obviously, this poem does not reveal much about Despoina. The term “sweet” is the one endearment. The speaker suggests he will improve in mood and language; if the window is taken as a symbol, then Despoina, in some sense, is letting light and fresh air into his life. She is helping him change, the poem says. These brief touches could well apply to Janie Moore in Lewis’s life (in the early years).

V. To Whom Does Δ Refer?

At this point, the background has been surveyed. Critics faced with Hooper’s reference to Δ in the original diary have said various things. John Bremer, in “From Despoina to Diotima,” with hesitation denies that Janie Moore might be the Despoina of the two poems in *Spirits in Bondage*, finding little of the affection in those poems that one would expect between lovers (13-14). He believes that the Δ of the diary comes from Lewis considering Janie Moore as Demeter, an earth-mother, and/or Diotima, the woman who taught Socrates about love (in Plato’s *Symposium*). Demeter because both the goddess and Moore were blonde, with hair the color of corn, and because Lewis often referred to this *-meter* as his mother, his *mater* (15-16). Since Diotima taught Socrates the ladder of love, in which one abandons physical love for more intellectual and/or spiritual loves, Bremer must add a caveat to that reading:

But we know that one of Jack's [Lewis's] tutors at Oxford said that Jack thought that Plato was always wrong and, accordingly, he made the true nature of love physical—not spiritual—and acclaimed Janie Moore as his Diotima, as the woman who introduced him to the pleasures of the flesh. ("Mistress" 321, based on an account about Lewis as a student in *Memoirs of the Lewis Family* 8.163)

Of course, this is possible—that Lewis nicknamed Janie Moore Diotima because she taught him about love, verbally *and* physically. Lewis did not have to follow Plato's separation of teacher and lover, or accept his ladder of the types of love. Lewis and Janie Moore might have found a certain, pleasant irony in the inversion of Plato's Diotima.

In the next paragraph, Walter Hooper will be accused of leveling meanings—therefore, the present author should not do the same thing in writing this essay. He feels strongly that Δ stands for Despoina alone, but Lewis's decision to reduce the name to a Δ allows the option that Lewis was deliberately playing with other Greek names starting with Δ. If a house-guest at the Kilns picked up the open diary and asked why Mrs. Moore was referred to by a delta, Lewis could always say something to the effect that his Mother had been out spading in the garden one day, and he had referred to her as Demeter—as Earth-mother—and the private nickname had continued for a while. Telling a house-guest that the Δ stood for Diotima might raise other questions, even if Lewis said it was from her he had learned about motherly love. Bremer is the only one who has explored the possibilities of ambiguity. On the other hand, Lewis was given to various abbreviations in his private writing (cf. the common "wh." for *which* in the letters). Perhaps he spoke Δ as "Despoina" when he read the diary aloud to Janie Moore and never considered ambiguity. (For the reading to Janie Moore, cf. Hooper, Intro. 1.)

Walter Hooper, unlike Bremer, does not even briefly hesitate over the possibility of Janie Moore being Despoina; instead he settles on Despoina as a name for Persephone, and nothing else, in those two poems of *Spirits in Bondage*:

Because Despoina is a Greek word for 'mistress' some readers have wrongly concluded that [Lewis] had in mind some person he knew. But Despoina means 'mistress' in the sense of 'Lady of the House', and the name is used as a title by several classical writers for various goddesses. Plato is one of those who used Despoina in speaking of Persephone, and, I believe, given the context, she is the only goddess Jack could have had in mind. (Preface xxx)

Hooper goes on to make an argument involving Persephone as a goddess of the underworld, although his flat citation of the fourth line of "Apology" confuses

the issue; surely the “real hell” of that line is *primarily* a metaphor for war in this world, despite its overtones (or undertones) of Hades. Hooper’s argument that the Despoina of these two poems cannot be a real person ignores how she is described in “Ode for New Year’s Day.” Since he has denied that Despoina refers to anyone, it is not surprising that he elsewhere writes about the Δ in the diary: “I am unable to say whether Δ has any meaning other than being a useful abbreviation” (Intro. 10). Obviously, he does not say abbreviation for what, which is the concern of this essay.

Earlier, the suggestion was made that Lewis probably meant Despoina in three senses: (1) the Lady of the House (the social hostess), (2) Persephone (in one poem), and (3), in an English pun, the sexual mistress. This complexity seems more like the poetic Lewis than does Hooper’s leveling of meanings.

VI. A Chronology with Digressions

A discussion of the chronology of the composition of three minor poems and of the passing around of two notebooks may not be the most exciting reading for students of Lewis. But such a discussion clarifies the dates of the poems, causing them to fit appropriately into Lewis’s love affair. For anyone wanting a simplified list of dates, without digressions, the Appendix to this essay may be helpful.

First, the two Despoina poems in *Spirits in Bondage*. They were written after Lewis’s Easter vacation in Ireland in April 1917; this is the *terminus a quo*. Obviously, they were written before the publication of *Spirits in Bondage* in March 1919; this is the *terminus ad quem*. So basically a two-year period is available for the composition.

Now, how does one know they were written after April 1917? Lewis kept most of his poems in a notebook titled “The Metrical Meditations of a Cod,” described by W.H. Lewis in the *Memoirs of the Lewis Family*:

In the two years intervening between Easter 1915 and Easter 1917, [Lewis] wrote fifty[-]two poems which he copied carefully into an old Malvern Upper Fifth Divinity note book, prefixing them with a chronological list of titles. (qtd. King, “Lost but Found” 163)

Lewis’s manuscript does not survive; but Lewis’s friend, Arthur Greeves, made a copy of Lewis’s poems along with Lewis’s contents page. From No. 1 through No. 49, the poems are dated on the contents page to the vacations in which they were written (or, at least, revised and copied into Lewis’s notebook). The last date is Easter 1917 for Nos. 40-49. But also listed on the contents page following these are Nos. 50-52; they are undated. The obvious inference, with high

probability, is that they were written later. W.H. Lewis says the list is chronological. (For available copies of this contents page, see Greeves in "Works Cited." Greeves's copy itself is in a notebook in the Linen Hall Library, Belfast; what the Wade has a Xerox copy.)

Of these three undated poems, 50-52, Don W. King identifies No. 50, titled "Ode," as an early version of "Ode for New Year's Day" (King, *C.S. Lewis, Poet* 310). Also, No. 51, "Venite," has some lines that were shifted to "Ode" in order to create "Ode for New Year's Day." (King, in one of his very infrequent errors, says that they were shifted to "Apology" and "De Profundis"; probably his statement is some sort of misprint, for it has a double preposition—"from to"—in it [*C.S. Lewis, Poet* 310].) However, to complicate things, in "Lost but Found," King says there is no poem with the "Venite" title (167). As one might expect, the manuscript creates a complication that causes King's position in his essay. After the fiftieth poem comes a page that is blank except for the number "LI" and the title "Venite"; then the next page (without a poem number or a title) has a poem beginning "Oh happy, oh [*sic*] Despoina, were the men who were alive." Here is a conjecture that makes sense of the way Greeves placed the material: Lewis wrote a poem, titled "Venite," that he copied down in his "Metrical Meditations" notebook. He then became dissatisfied with it. (Possibly it was an erotic poem about Janie Moore as Despoina that he decided he couldn't allow anyone to see if he was going to be a student at Oxford; possibly he just decided a poem on some subject was very poorly written; possibly, even probably, it was a poor first version of "Oh happy, oh Despoina, were the men who were alive.") At any rate, he vigorously crossed it out. But that left him with one of his fifty-two poems missing. So he placed a sheet of paper with another poem (or a revised version of the cancelled poem) after the page with crossed-out poem; he left it with the title "Venite" on the previous page. Possibly he even pinned the pages together so the sequence was certain. Greeves, coming to the titled but crossed-out poem on one page and the untitled but clearly written poem on the next, copied the clear writings as they appeared. (This essay will assume "Venite" is the title of the poem on the following page.)

A point about the third of these last three, undated poems on the contents page: No. 52 is "My Own Death Song." According to Don W. King, this is an "early version" of "Death in Battle," mentioned above as the last poem in *Spirits in Bondage* (*C.S. Lewis, Poet* 310). More specifically, "My Own Death Song" is a first-person version, written so—if Lewis died in the war and Greeves published his poems—Lewis would have an appropriate close to his collection. When Lewis survived, he rewrote the poem in the third-person. This ending for both "The Metrical Meditations of a Cod" and *Spirits in Bondage* implies (but does not strictly prove, despite what was just said about the closings) that the manuscript "Metrical Meditations" was felt by Lewis to be complete. This could

be chance—the original note book may have had only room for listing fifty-two items, say on two pages; and “My Own Death Song” may have fallen at No. 52 by accident. But the ending of the contents page of the manuscript with “My Own Death Song” and the ending of the book with “Death in Battle” at least allows for the possibility of planning. Why would fifty-two poems make a unity? Fifty two is the number of weeks in a year. The most famous of such structured books of poetry is Petrarch’s *Rime sparse*, which has a poem (usually a sonnet) for each day of the year. Fifty-two is not as impressive as 366 (for a leap year), but it is the same method of structuring a book of poems.

In addition to these three poems, Greeves’s copy of Lewis’s “Metrical Meditations” has a group of five more. They are not listed on the contents page, but they appear in the sequence of copied poems as Nos. 54-58. (No. 53 is missing. Several possibilities suggest themselves, and the likeliest will be presented later. At any rate, this missing poem does not affect the argument.)

Four of the five are versions of poems that appear in *Spirits in Bondage*. Two of these are tied to the two published Despoina poems—No. 55, to “Ode for New Year’s Day,” being some more lines for the poem, and No. 56, to “Apology,” being the early version. The other two are early versions of “Lullaby” (No. 54) and “World’s Desire” (No. 57). The positioning of these four poems after the time sequence of the “Metrical Meditations” strongly suggests (but does not prove) that they fit the time period established earlier: after Easter 1917 and before the publication of the book.

When these five poems reached Greeves for copying will be discussed further, later in this chronology, but the explanation will not solve all the problems. All one has is the likelihood of the same time period. That certainly is suggested by the appearance of Despoina in three of the poems—the addition to “Ode for New Year’s Day,” the early version of “Apology,” and the final poem, “Bear with me, Despoina”—and, of course, for four of them, the obvious *terminus ad quem* of the book’s publication.

This brings one back to the chronology. After the Easter vacation of 1917, Lewis got back to Oxford on the 26th of April. During most of the time until he entered his full-time military training of June 7th, he had two “parades” each weekday but the rest of his time free. (According to his letter of [27 May 1917], the first parade started after 7 a.m.—one assumes at 7:15—and was over about 8:45; the second was longer, from 2:00 until 4:00 [TST 187; CL I.310]. So three and a half hours per weekday.) He was living in University College and associating with those few students who were in attendance during wartime; he also spent some time with a second cousin, Cherry Robbins, although references to her vanish from his letters to Greeves about the time he meets Janie Moore. His letters to Greeves do not speak of his writing poems during this period, despite

his free time. This silence about compositions seems to eliminate Robbins as having been called Despoina.

On 7 June 1917 Lewis started his full-time training to become an officer, moving into Keble College and assigned to room with “Paddy” Moore. Eleven days later, as mentioned earlier, he comments in a letter to his father about having met Moore’s mother “once or twice” (CL I.322). Lewis writes to Greeves on [10 June], three days after he entered the cadet battalion and eight days before he wrote to his father about Janie Moore, that he was “in a strangely productive mood at present and [that he spent his] few moments of free time in scribbling verse” (TST 192; CL I.321). No way of identifying the poems—if Lewis decided they were good enough to save—is possible. He may have been working on one of the narrative poems he spent much time on. But if one may make an obvious conjecture, Lewis may have been working on (among others) “My Own Death Song”—entering the military full time might well have caused him to focus on his odds for survival.

The following events, leading to the love affair and immediately after, were covered earlier, in the second section. Next, *Spirits in Bondage* can be dated. What is known is that Lewis had plans to produce a book of his poems during his “4” weeks of leave after his training ended: in the same letter of [10 June 1917] in which he announced he was strangely productive in verse, he writes:

When my 4 months course in the cadet battalion is at an end, I shall, supposing I get a commission allright [sic], have a 4 weeks leave before joining my regiment. During it I propose to get together all the stuff I have perpetrated and see if any kind publisher would like to take it. After that, if the fates decide to kill me at the front, I shall enjoy a 9 days immortality [...]. (TST 192; CL I.321)

What seems to have happened—although it can be only informed conjecture—is that, as Lewis started his actual training for the Army, he had to face the fact that the odds of his survival were not great. This caused him to start writing more poems during his training. He had intended to put together a book during the weeks starting 29 September, but his stay with the Moores derailed that, in addition to his having expected four weeks but receiving three. Later it will be argued that he wrote at least the “Ode” and “Venite” of the manuscript Despoina poems during these two weeks in Bristol. He probably left the “Metrical Meditations” notebook with Arthur Greeves during the week he returned to Belfast, so Greeves could make a personal copy and be prepared to submit the poems for publication if Lewis did not survive. This fits the 1917 date Greeves put on his title page:

English Verses Made By
—:Clive Staples Lewis:—
And Copied by His Friend:=
—:Joseph Arthur Greeves:—
Belfast in the Year 1917
(“Early Poems” folder at the Wade; cf. Greeves 308)

Certainly it is after this visit of the 12th through the 17th of October that Lewis writes Greeves about “Metrical Meditations” for the first time, showing that Greeves has the notebook. On [28? October 1917], Lewis writes Greeves *not* to “send the MS. book” until they know where he will be posted (*TST* 201; *CL* I.340). This implies that Greeves has finished making his copy. Then on New Year’s Eve [1917], Lewis writes again,

By the way will you send my MS. book—the Metrical Meditations one—to Ravenswood Rd [the home of Janie Moore in Bristol]—I have yielded to oft repeated suggestions that it should go there. (*TST* 205; *CL* I.350)

At this time, Lewis was in France. That he has to distinguish *which* MS. book implies that Greeves has more than one (and that Greeves gained it between the last few days of October 1917 and 31 December 1917); this will be considered later. Four and a half months later, Lewis was wounded. By the 25th of May, he was in a hospital in London, and Janie Moore was there to see him soon after. (He mentions her hopes that the shrapnel in his chest will give him enough problems to keep him from returning to battle, presumably given him in person, in a letter of the [29th] (*TST* 216; *CL* 1.374); and he uses a “we” in the letter of [17 June 1918]—about going to a production of *The Valkyrie* [*TST* 221; *CL* I.381].) On the 25th of June, Lewis was moved to a convalescent home near Bristol. He told his father in a letter of [20? June 1918] that he had applied for one in Ireland, but they were very full. Probably he applied only for the Bristol locale, since he was by this time lying to his father about Janie Moore (Bremer, *C.S. Lewis, Poetry* 48). And on 17 July 1918, Lewis writes that he is preparing his poems for publication.

Thus the period in which Greeves copied the poems is between the week visit in October 1917 and the end of that month when he evidently had offered to return the notebook, resulting in Lewis’s letter of [28? October]. Since Greeves copied down two parts of one of the Despoina poems (Nos. 50 and 51, parts of “Ode for New Year’s Day”), then Lewis had started writing the poem that addresses Despoina as a loved woman. This fits Bremer’s belief (and seems to confirm it) that the Lewis-Moore love affair began during the first two weeks of Lewis’s three weeks of military leave.

Greeves sent Lewis’s manuscript of the poems to Janie Moore soon after New Year’s Eve 1917—in other words, early in January 1918. Lewis was in France

at this time, and his letters to Janie Moore do not survive, so what comments, if any, were made concerning the fifty-two poems of “Metrical Meditations” are unknown. (She burnt his letters to her in the mid-1940s after she became ill—presumably so not to leave records in case she died [Freud 58].) By late January, Lewis was in a hospital behind the lines with pyrexia (his first surviving letter from a Red Cross Hospital is on 2 February, but he had previously written Janie Moore and expects Greeves will have heard from her about his hospitalization). *Pyrexia*, as a word, simply refers to a high fever (hence the military term, then common, of “trench fever”); the soldiers coming down with pyrexia during the Great War normally had picked up an infection from the bite of lice in the trenches. The fever was often accompanied by various pains and often chills. It was not, by itself, fatal. On 28 February Lewis was back at the front (Bremer, *C.S. Lewis, Poetry* 44).

On 15 April 1918, Lewis was wounded in a leg, arm, and chest by shrapnel from a British shell that fell short. The man next to him was killed. Lewis crawled back from the front lines and was soon hospitalized. While he was in the Liverpool Merchants Mobile Hospital in France, he wrote the poem simply titled “Song” and sent it to Greeves in his 23 May 1918 letter. (It was collected, after revisions, in *Spirits in Bondage*.) Probably (not certainly) Lewis sent a copy to Janie Moore at the same time, to be held with “Metrical Meditations.” The probability arises from Lewis’s care with the notebook(s) to make certain his poems survived.

Then, when Lewis was in the Endsleigh Palace Hospital in London, on 3 June 1918, he wrote to Greeves:

By the way, haven’t you got a reddy-brown MS. book of mine containing ‘Lullaby’ and several other of my later poems? I wish you would send it here, as I have decided to copy out all my works of which I approve and get it typed as a step towards possible publishing. (*TST* 220; *CL* I.378)

This is the first mention of this reddish-brown notebook. Two points are notable. First, it contains “Lullaby.” This is the title of the first poem of those Greeves has in his manuscript which are not on the contents page. Second, it contains Lewis’s “later poems.”

Here is a conjecture that fits the facts as they are available. Lewis left the “Metrical Meditations” notebook with fifty-two poems with Greeves at the end of his 12-19 October 1917 visit to Belfast. He writes Greeves after that, from Crownhill, near Plymouth, on [28? October], that, although he and his fellow officers are in huts, he has a room to himself “with a fire in it” (*TST* 71; *CL* I.339). This is the same letter in which he tells Greeves he told him too much during his visit to Belfast. During the time of presumably fairly light duties, before he was

shifted from the 3rd battalion to the first and ordered to France on the 15th of November, he wrote five or six more poems, numbering them to follow the fifty-two in "Metrical Meditations," putting them in a new, reddish-brown notebook. Then he decided that No. 53 was poor, and he crossed it out. Or possibly he found it too personal about Janie Moore and crossed it out. Finally, just before he was shipped to France, on 17 November 1917, or soon after, finding he did not have time to write poems, he mailed the new notebook to Greeves (one assumes) with a slip of paper, saying on it, "Please add these to your copy and hold this for me." (If he had sent it with a full letter, he probably would have mentioned it in the letter.) Since almost none of Greeves's letters survive, and none of this period, Greeves's reply noting his reception of this (conjectured) package is lost. That Lewis sent "Song" to Greeves by letter in 23 May 1918 indicates that the reddish-brown notebook was no longer with Lewis in France, to further back up the sending of the notebook to Greeves in the previous November.

One of the poems *possibly* in this reddish-brown note book, as No. 58, is the untitled poem beginning "Bear with me, Despoina." If it was in the note book in November 1917, then it has to be a hypothetical situation—a hypothetical recovery—just as "My Own Death Song" was Lewis's hypothetical death in the war, described before he had finished training. This is possible, but it seems extremely unlikely, given the negative tone of the other poems about war. The poem almost certainly was written after Lewis was free of the war and free to visit Janie Moore ("Open the window, sweet"). The poem's position at the end of the sequence of poems copied down by Greeves allows for it to be entered at any time. If Greeves entered it later, then it could have been written even after *Spirits in Bondage* had been published. Lewis could have mailed Greeves a copy after a belated composition. The earliest probable time, under this hypothesis of later composition, is Lewis's visit to Belfast after he was demobilized, arriving on 27 December 1918, with a stay of about two weeks; he could have brought a copy, or he could have written the poem during that visit. This "probable" time does not over-rule the possibility of the poem being mailed to Greeves, but it fits the pattern of the early poems in "Metrical Meditations" being entered during school vacations when Lewis was back in Ireland.

The request for the "reddy-brown" notebook was on the 3rd of June, 1918; about a month and two weeks later, [17? July 1918], Lewis writes:

[...] I am at present busily engaged in copying out the final version of my poems: in a few days the new MS. will be ready for the typist and when it returns thence it will begin the round of publishers.

After a sentence about which publishers he will choose, he goes on:

Of course the book now is very different from the one you have, by the insertion of several new pieces and the alteration or omission of some of the old. (*TST* 225; *CL* I.389)

The most obvious “alteration” of the Despoina poems will be considered in the next section.

Lewis’s reference to the book that Greeves has (“the one you have”) shows that Lewis knew of the copywork. Earlier it was conjectured that Greeves was to see about the poems’ publication if Lewis did not survive the war, which implied that Lewis knew at the time about the copying; further, the leaving of “Metrical Meditations” with Greeves and discussing the return of the notebook after a month, implied knowledge of the copying; but this is the only actual written acknowledgment of Greeves’s manuscript copy.

Less than a month after the previous letter, on [7 August 1918], Lewis reports that Macmillan has rejected the typescript (*TST* 227; *CL* I.392). Slightly over a month later, on [12 September 1918], according to Walter Hooper, Lewis reports that Heinemann has accepted the poems. In the same letter, Lewis reports the substitution of five “new” poems for those the publisher rejected (*TST* 230; *CL* I.397). King, in “Lost but Found,” quotes an 8 October 1918 from Heinemann rejecting five poems, giving their titles (195.n15). Two rejections of five poems each seem unlikely; probably one or the other of the letters is misdated as to the month. Since Hooper, as editor, has brackets around the whole September date, showing he has supplied it entirely, probably the October date is correct.

Subsequent letters to Greeves trace some of the detail of the publication process, but they need not be followed here. When *Spirits in Bondage* appeared on 20 March 1919, Lewis did not mention it in a letter. Probably he had the publisher send Greeves a copy directly. At any rate, Lewis was on vacation in Belfast on 2-24 April, and no doubt he and Greeves discussed it then.

VII. The Three (or Five) Poems to Despoina

If one starts with “Metrical Meditations” and with “Despoina, bear with me,” Lewis wrote five poems to Despoina; if one starts with *Spirits in Bondage* and “Despoina, bear with me,” Lewis wrote three poems to Despoina. When Lewis told Greeves in the [17? July 1918] letter that, as he prepared the poems for their book publication, there had been “alteration [...] of some of the old” poems, this applied to the development of the two Despoina poems in *Spirits in Bondage*:

No. VII, "Apology"

No. VIII, "Ode for New Year's Day."

The most extensive changes occurred to the latter.

"Ode," in "Metrical Meditations," consists of two stanzas. The first is a long stanza, irregularly rhymed, that is generally parallel to the first stanza of "Ode for New Year's Day"; the second stanza is a quatrain that is a forerunner to the fourth stanza of "Ode for New Year's Day." The changes in these two sections are interesting: Despoina is called "my darling" in the original first stanza (this is at the beginning of the last three lines of that stanza, all of which were cut in the revision); an "Ah, Sweet" is substituted for an "Ah God!" at the beginning of the quatrain. (The information about these stanzas comes from Schmidt, email of 1 October 2008.)

The second stanza of "Ode for New Year's Day" is three quatrains taken from "Venite"—specifically, they are revisions of the first, second, and fourth quatrains of that poem. And the third stanza of "Ode for New Year's Day" is a revised version of "Tho' its [*sic*] truth they tell, Despoina, that there's no good complaining." So "Ode for New Year's Day" is a combination of three original poems: it is no surprise that it ends up, at forty-six lines, one of the longest poems in *Spirits in Bondage*. (Both "In Praise of Solid People" and "Song of the Pilgrims" are longer, though with shorter lines.)

One oddity to "Ode for New Year's Day" is in its use of *thou*, *thy*, *thine* and *you*, *your*. In the poem in *Spirits in Bondage*, when Despoina is first introduced, it reads, "And Thou, my own belovèd, for as brave as ere thou art [...]." In the earlier "Ode" (in "Metrical Meditations"), the *Thou* is a *you*; but then the language shifts to *thou*, *thine*, and *thy*. The three lines at the end of the stanza, that were later omitted, use *your* and *you*. The third stanza in its original, separate version and in "Ode for New Year's Day" uses *you*. The quatrain at the end uses *you* in both versions. It seems odd that Lewis did not catch his shift in pronouns later in the poem, since he caught the one shift in the fourth line (with the introduction of Despoina)—and it also seems odd that the editorial staff at Heinemann did not question these shifts. It is barely possible that Lewis meant a formal relationship to Despoina at the first of the poem, giving way to a more familiar relationship later—reflecting the process of his knowledge of Janie Moore. (The formality/familiarity split of the second-person pronouns does not reflect their historical development, but reflects their literary usage in the late Victorian and Edwardian times.)

The source of the other Despoina poem in *Spirits in Bondage*, "Apology," is "If men should ask, Despoina, why I tell," both consisting of five quatrains—with minor revisions, the same five (Schmidt, email of 7 September 2010).

This leaves one poem in “Metrical Meditations” that was not shaped into publishable form for *Spirits in Bondage*, with the first line “Despoina, bear with me.” To sum up the earlier discussion of the poem’s content: the text says that his talk (presumably meaning his poems) had been wild while he was in danger of dying (presumably in the war), but that danger has passed and he will write no more (presumably in that mode). The poem itself—as has been said—implies that Lewis’s denunciations of the God of this world and the prevalence of evil in this world grew out of his fear of death and presumably his knowledge of World War I as a waster of lives. John Bremer, in his book about the early Lewis, suggests Lewis was greatly repressed emotionally (*C.S. Lewis, Poetry* 57, 192-93, 196-99). Certainly his letters to his father (in the first volume of *Collected Letters*) and his letters to Greeves of the time do not reflect the fear of death in the war that appears in the hatred of this world’s God in a number of the poems in *Spirits in Bondage*. One hesitates to say those poems were simply psychological release, but they may well have been the one method available to the Lewis of that period to express his real feelings about the war.

VIII. Ockham’s Razor

At this point an argument has been made that at least two drafts of poems—“Ode” and “Venite” (later combined)—involving Despoina were written about the time C.S. Lewis began his affair with Janie Moore in September 1917. Another poem, the untitled “If men should ask, Despoina, why I tell” (the forerunner of “Apology”), was written slightly later, as was “Tho’ its truth they tell, Despoina, that there’s no good complaining.”

The appearance of the poems to Despoina, especially the affectionate language in the first section of “Ode for a New Year’s Day,” at the same time as the affair with Janie Moore began, very strongly suggests Despoina was Lewis’s nickname for Moore.

Of course, the two published poems are not what anyone would call great love poems. In them, Lewis was denouncing the world as he experienced in wartime. And not much of Janie Moore’s personality comes through—but some of Lewis’s affection appears in the love terms and concern in “Ode for New Year’s Day” (and in the “my darling” of “Ode”). For the beginning of an affair, this was no doubt enough for her. The third Despoina poem, as said, was probably written later, perhaps in 1918, perhaps even later; it suggests the start of a recovery from the feelings aroused by the war.

At this point, one has a three-year gap. *Spirits in Bondage*, with its two poems to Despoina, appeared in 1919. The first entry in the diary as we have it is in 1922. (Hooper’s introduction says the diary with its expanded entries began that year [1].) Perhaps something of value appears in the five years of the

Memoirs of the Lewis Family between Lewis's meeting Janie Moore and the published diary, or the three years between *Spirits in Bondage* and the published diary. Laura C. Schmidt reports that the five-year period covers two and a half volumes of the single-spaced typing in the bound books (email of 24 September 2008). Sooner or later someone will go through those two and a half volumes, looking for anything that reflects on Lewis and Janie Moore. At least, it would be nice to know if a reference to "D" appears—and at what date.

But one can assume that any writings about the beginning of his love affair—if written at all—were destroyed by Lewis at the same time as he told Arthur Greeves to not mention it again; probably W.H. Lewis would not have recorded it in the *Memoirs of the Lewis Family*, in addition. Finally, if there were something obviously of interest in these years, probably scholars, such as George Sayer, who draw on the *Memoirs*, would have found it.

Therefore a three-year gap remains. But the three years were not a horribly long time to Lewis, who was busy being a student at Oxford at the time and managing a life with Janie Moore—and, in a family sense, with Maureen Moore as well. The likeliest possibility is that the Despoina of *Spirits in Bondage* and of "Despoina, bear with me!" is the Δ of the diary. Why would Lewis shift the nickname, except to the degree suggested by the Greek name for poetry and the initial for a diary? After all, he read some of the diary to Janie Moore—and she might well expect continuity. Perhaps the most intriguing way to put it is that *Despoina* was, at a time of infatuation, a celebration of his mistress; a mere Δ was after three years of living together.

Ockham's Razor indicates the simplest, full explanation is most likely valid. That Despoina and Δ refer to the same person, the woman with whom Lewis was in love and with whom he lived (while in danger of losing his position at Oxford as a student and then as a young don, if the sexual aspects were known), is the simplest explanation and the likeliest to be true.

Appendix: The Conjectural Chronology

The following chronology should not be taken as factual about Lewis's life. It reproduces the probabilities argued in the above essay, and probabilities are not certainties. Readers of this essay should have no problem with sorting out what is factual and what is problematic. The purposes of presenting both together are to show, in another mode, what is being argued and, reinforcing this, to show the tightness in time of what is being suggested. Several specific details of Lewis's army service are based on Bremer's *C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and the Great War 1914-1918* (39-51).

1915

Easter vacation. The start of Lewis's copying poems in "The Metrical Meditations of a Cod."

1917

Easter vacation. Lewis's forty-ninth poem is the last one dated in "Metrical Meditations."

April 26. Lewis returns to Oxford from Belfast, after his Easter vacation. During the following period, he has (or soon has) two "Parades" every weekday as part of his military training.

June 7. Lewis begins his full-time military training. He is assigned a room in Keble College with Edward "Paddy" Moore, soon meeting Moore's mother.

June 10. Lewis writes Arthur Greeves that he is writing poems. "My Own Death Song" later becomes No. 52 in "Metrical Meditations."

June 18. Lewis writes his father that he has met Paddy's mother "once or twice."

August 4-October 28. No letters to Greeves survive between these dates.

August 9-11. Lewis is back to Belfast for a few days.

September 25. Lewis is commissioned an officer.

September 29-October 11 or 12. Lewis receives three weeks of leave after his commissioning. He spends two weeks in Bristol with the Moores, and his and Janie Moore's affair begins. Lewis writes two poems about Despoina (later combined). "Ode" and "Venite" become Nos. 50 and 51 in "Metrical Meditations."

October 12-17. Lewis spends the rest of his vacation in Belfast. He loans Greeves his "Metrical Meditations" notebook to copy, for publication if he dies in the war. He tells Greeves about his affair with Janie Moore.

October 18. Lewis joins the third battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry at Crownhill, near Plymouth, his first army posting. During this period of fairly light activity, Lewis writes five poems and copies them in a reddy-brown notebook; one of these is later crossed out. Greeves makes his copy of "Metrical Meditations" as "English Verses Made by Clive Staples Lewis."

October 28. Lewis writes Greeves that he must try to forget what Lewis told him and not refer to it. He also tells Greeves not to return "Metrical Meditations" yet.

November 15. Lewis is shifted to the first battalion and ordered to go to France. He sends the reddy-brown notebook to Greeves.

November 17. Lewis is sent to France.

November 29 (Lewis's nineteenth birthday). Lewis arrives at the front line for a standard rotation.

December 14 and 31. Lewis writes to Greeves about Janie Moore. On the latter date, Lewis instructs Greeves to send "Metrical Meditations" to Janie Moore in Bristol.

1918

January (early). Greeves sends "Metrical Meditations" to Janie Moore.

January (late). Lewis is in No. 10 Red Cross Hospital with pyrexia.

February 2 and 12. Lewis writes to Greeves about Janie Moore.

February 28. Lewis is back at the front.

April 15. Lewis is wounded during the Battle of Arras.

May 23. Lewis sends a copy of "Song" (newly written) to Greeves.

May 25. Lewis is in the Endsleigh Palace Hospital, London.

May 29. Lewis, in a letter to Greeves, gives Janie Moore's views; she is in London.

June 3. Lewis writes Greeves to send him the reddy-brown notebook.

June 25. Lewis is transferred to Ashton Court, Long Ashton, Clifton—a convalescence facility near Bristol. He sees Janie Moore frequently. (He later is moved two more times, not recorded here.)

August 7. Lewis writes that Macmillan has rejected the typescript.

October 8. Heinemann, who has accepted the poems for publication, rejects five of the poems from the typescript. (Lewis provides substitutes.)

December 27. Lewis arrives in Belfast, having been demobilized. Perhaps he brings "Despoina, bear with me" for Greeves to copy into "English Verses Made by Clive Staples Lewis."

1919

January 13. Lewis starts his first term at Oxford.

January 26. Lewis describes his typical day to Greeves, which includes a visit to Janie Moore's and Maureen's rented house from sometime in the afternoon until about eleven at night.

March 20. *Spirits in Bondage* is published.

1922

April 1. The start of the published diary with its references to Δ .



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This essay is a completely new casting of the basic ideas of an essay that appeared in 1994 (see the Works Cited). Specifically, this new version is changed in that it discusses Lewis's affair with Janie Moore, answers (as well as may be) alternate suggestions about the meaning of Δ , and is far more instructed about the chronology of composition (thanks to other people's publications). In addition, the author thanks Laura C. Schmidt, Archivist of the Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, for emails of 16 September 2008, 1 October 2008, 24 September 2008, 30 July 2010, 7 September 2010, 20 January 2011, and 3 January 2012, some of which are cited in the text, as well as for a copy of an essay; and John Bremer for a copy of *C.S. Lewis, Poetry, and The Great War*, for a close reading of the antepenultimate draft of this paper, and for a number of other courtesies. The anonymous reviewer of the paper for *Mythlore* caught a number of mistakes and made valuable suggestions, both for cutting down an even more sprawling paper and for content.

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